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CREATED *IN THE IMAGE OF*:
MORMONISM AND THE RHETORICAL PRODUCTION OF IDENTITY
IN PRIVATELY-PUBLISHED FAMILY HISTORIES

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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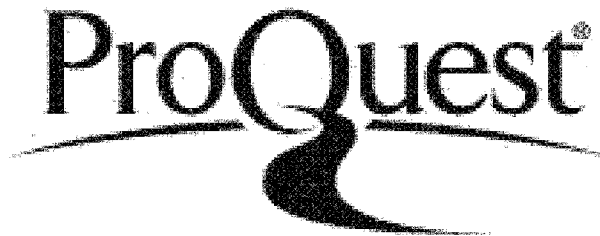


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I am indebted to the authors of these family histories. Many of them within their texts expressed their motivations for writing their history—to preserve their heritage, to strengthen their family, to record the past—but they never mentioned hoping someone would eventually analyze and pick their words apart. My intention was never to criticize or belittle them. If anything, I hope that my research can help others realize what I have come to know: the incredible amount of time, energy, cooperation, dedication, patience, skill, and mental acumen required to research and write one's family history. It is a monumental task, and one that never comes with the regular monetary or scholarly rewards of such efforts.

One day I hope to join the ranks of these fine authors and write my own family history, and I hope it never becomes fodder for some punk's dissertation.

PREFACE

This is a dissertation about many important topics: rhetoric, memory, discourse, community, Mormonism, identity. More importantly, though, it is about *how* all these topics are connected and *why* it is important to articulate these connections.

Deep in one of the following chapters is a section on polygamy. It is only a small aspect of this study, but I begin with it here in the form of a personal narrative for two reasons: first, to give the reader a flavor of Mormon history, culture, and discourse, which is important because the seven family histories analyzed in this study are written about Mormon ancestors. And second, because polygamy is the topic that got me thinking so many years ago (even if not in so many words) about what it means to have one's identity shaped by communal discourse and how one might begin to wrestle some control over that shaping.

A Personal Sketch of Mormonism

When I think of polygamy, I think of sarsaparilla—or, more specifically, how rather unimpressed I was the first time I tried sarsaparilla and how utterly grossed out I was by the thought of Brigham Young having sex with so many women. I was sixteen years old, visiting the Brigham Young Winter Home in St. George, Utah. Before touring the house, we walked around the old-time village, where people were dressed up like pioneers and went about their business as if it were really the Utah Territory circa 1860 and as if Brigham Young himself, the first governor of the territory and the second

president of the Mormon Church, could at any moment walk around the corner and offer a hearty handshake. “I just love your fancy moccasins,” a woman in a bonnet said to me, pointing to my Reebok Pumps with her broom.

The house wasn't quite a mansion, but it had way more rooms than any house in the old west should; unless, of course, it were an Inn or a brothel. But it wasn't. It was the home of a man who had 55 wives and 56 children—though, the tour guide was quick to point out, not *all* of them lived in this house. As I followed the guide and sipped my sarsaparilla, I couldn't help but feel both curious and repulsed. The guide talked about Brigham's noble and charitable character, and she spoke of the sacredness of polygamy, but at sixteen years old, my mind was stuck on one point, and one point only: sex. How often did he sleep with each wife? Did he have a favorite? Were any of the wives more attractive than the others? What if the poor man was simply too exhausted to pay equal attention to his wives?

Growing up Mormon in Utah, I was no stranger to polygamy. There were still polygamous groups and communities scattered about who self-identified as Mormons, and they would occasionally make appearances on the six o'clock news. Most newscasters were dutiful in pointing out that these were “fundamentalist” groups and in

no way affiliated with the *actual* Mormon Church (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)¹.

Polygamy—or “plural marriage,” as church leaders prefer to call it—had been officially introduced into the Mormon Church in 1843, about 13 years after Joseph Smith had founded the church in New York. It isn’t known for sure how many wives Joseph Smith had, but a conservative estimate puts the final tally at 32 (Akenson, 2007, P. 57). Polygamy was quietly and discretely practiced by high-ranking church officials for the next ten years, and it wasn’t until Brigham Young, Joseph’s Smith successor, led the exodus of church members to the Salt Lake valley (still part of the Mexican territory) that the church began publicly advocating the practice of polygamy. For the following fifty years, plural marriage was encouraged and practiced openly. Brigham Young was somewhat of an anomaly with his 55 wives. Most polygamous men—almost always church leaders and only accounting for about twenty percent of the church’s membership—only had two or three wives.

In the 1890s, after Brigham Young’s death, the Mormon Church—wary from the pressure exerted by the federal government to abolish polygamy—officially reversed its position on plural marriage. It was the only way for the church to protect its leaders from

¹ The official name of the church is *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. *Mormon* is a commonly accepted and non-derogatory nickname for the church and its members, stemming from the church’s belief in *The Book of Mormon* (“Referring,” p. 189). Other common monikers include *LDS* and *Latter-day Saint*. For the sake of ease and consistency I will continue using the terms *Mormon* and *Mormon Church*.

jail time and to hopefully incorporate more of them into the government of the newly formed state of Utah. What was once touted as a sacred duty of priesthood holders was now decried as a sin and abomination. Wilford Woodruff, president of the church, delivered a manifesto in 1890, in which he vowed to follow the laws of the land and end plural marriage within the church:

Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise. (p. 1)

Most church leaders divorced their plural wives, but several stuck it out and went into hiding to avoid prosecution from the federal government or excommunication from the church (i.e. having their church membership officially revoked).

Some of these dissenters felt that polygamy was still divinely sanctioned, and they disagreed with how easily Church leaders gave into the demands of the government. And more than a century later, the ancestors of this last group still tote around the *Book of Mormon*² and call themselves Mormons and live in their compounds with their multiple wives and armies of children. Occasionally, one of these men will call himself a modern-day Abraham, and he'll say something that rubs the government the wrong way and land

² *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ*, was published by Joseph Smith, who claims to have translated the book from a set of golden plates hidden atop a hill in Palmyra, New York. According to Smith, the book is the ancient record of a group of people—descendants of Israel—who sailed to the American continent from Jerusalem circa 600 bce.

himself on the evening news where the newscaster smirks and uses air quotes when announcing that another “Mormon” polygamist has been arrested.

While serving as a missionary in Argentina, I found that the topic of polygamy came up often—perhaps not as much as it did with missionaries serving in the United States, but even seven thousand miles south of Utah in the plains of La Pampa, when folks heard the word *Mormon*, the word *polygamy* wasn’t far behind. “We don’t practice polygamy,” I would explain. “In fact, there’s no such thing as a ‘Mormon polygamist’ since any member of the church who advocates the practice of polygamy is excommunicated.” Sometimes this worked, but often folks would ask about Brigham Young. “Sure,” they might say, “your church doesn’t advocate polygamy *now*, but it *did*.”

I didn’t know how to respond to this at twenty. I suppose I had wrestled with the issue of polygamy enough to *kind of* understand the rationale behind it. I had been fed the same rhetoric as the other fifty-thousand missionaries serving around the world: plural marriage was a way for the early members of the church to legally and honorably provide for the overabundance of destitute women who had joined the church; it was something only practiced by the most honorable and noble of church members, and it came about by assignment from church leaders and not out of a desire to sleep with several women; it was an ancient principle practiced by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and if the Lord saw fit to ask his chosen followers to practice it again in modern times—if only for a few decades—then so be it (who were we to question the Lord!).

But in reality, I just couldn't get over it. Even as I assured folks in my hackneyed Spanish that Brigham Young only practiced polygamy as a way to care for these women—that it was more of a *gesture* than an actual marriage—I always had that image burned into my mind when at age sixteen, nursing a warm sarsaparilla, I eyed a heavy, dark-stained door and could see a rotund and aging Brigham Young slipping into the room of one of his younger, prettier brides, looking over his shoulder to make sure his grand-motherly wives weren't watching, and then quietly shutting the door.

At sixteen I knew very well that symbolic gestures don't produce 56 children.

Yet as a missionary, I still told that same story of nobility. I would often liken the story of Brigham Young to the mythical tale of Martin Fierro, the displaced Argentine gaucho of nineteenth century lyrical poesy. Though the two in reality had little in common, I found that it took the attention off polygamy and repositioned Brigham Young in terms these people could relate to: a victim of his nation's government, a displaced leader and family man, a nation builder, a hero. Just as my Sunday-school teachers for so many years had recreated Brigham Young in the image of our modern-day society and values—a patriot and statesman and man of industry—there, on the plains of central Argentina, I recreated his identity in the image of these folks' gaucho ancestors.

I didn't realize this is what I was doing. I simply thought I was saving face, taking attention off the dirty details of my Mormon forebear. It was understandable why I did this as a missionary. Whether I agreed with polygamy or not, I was a spokesman for and the public face of the Mormon Church.

But I've come to realize since then that recreating the identities of our ancestors and forebears in our own image isn't unique to missionaries and spokespersons for the church. The argument I make in this study is that Mormon writers of family history deal with this identity recreation in two distinct ways: they recreate their own and their family's identity in the image of the Mormon Church, and they recreate the identity of their ancestors in their current image. And, I suspect, like my early-twenties missionary self who didn't realize this is what I was doing, these writers of family history may not even realize this rhetorical production of identity is occurring.

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ABSTRACT

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by

Michael K. Peterson

University of New Hampshire, May, 2012

This dissertation is a qualitative study of seven privately-published family histories written by descendants of Mormon polygamists. Using methods of discourse and rhetorical analysis, these texts and various interviews are analyzed with the contention that identity is a rhetorical production and that the authors (either intentionally or unwittingly) fictionalize each of the identities involved—their own, their readers', and their ancestors'—to bring them together in moments of Burkean *identification*. These moments of identification are also analyzed in terms of communal and generational memory, temporal proximity, and communal discourses. An important conclusion in this study is that this rhetorical production of identity often results in silencing and marginalizing certain ancestors, such as those whose actions or values don't mirror the author's or the family's preferred identity—an identity greatly influenced by the communal discourse and identity of the Mormon Church.

CHAPTER I

THE OBSCURE YET UBIQUITOUS GENRE

The truth is that I'm both drawn to and repulsed by privately-published family histories. When I come across one, I can't resist thumbing through it to see what's inside. Like a boy in a curiosity shop, shuffling between jars of two-headed pig fetuses and malformed skeletons, I look at family histories with a bit of disdain. They are utterly macabre, yet I can't stop staring.

For more than twenty years I have kept the family history written by my grandmother displayed on my bookshelf. I have always found the crooked, hand-typed pages unsettling with their black-and-white photographs of men and women who look more dead than alive. Children, even when smiling, look like something from a Stephen King novel. And page after page of genealogical charts—entire lives boiled down to a couple names and dates—have all the charm of a clerk's ledger. And this is *my* family's history. These are my ancestors! Why on Earth, I wonder, would I or anyone else ever want to read somebody else's family history?

I don't think I'm alone in this aversion. This might explain why despite their ubiquitous existence, no one seems to have ever heard of privately-published family

histories³. Ronald Stockton, a political science professor at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, made a similar observation after researching his family's history and attempting to write about it. "Genealogists," he says, "tend to be self-involved by nature and are not often interested in what other genealogists are finding unless it relates to their own family" (2008, p. 59). There are really only three types of people who read a family history: relatives who are actually interested in the history, distant relatives who are autopsying the text for their own family history project, and scholars who see them as sources of data.

At this point, I fall into the third camp, where I view family histories as curious textual and cultural artifacts worthy of analysis. I must confess, however, that despite my initial repulsion to reading other-people's family histories, and despite my attempts to stay neutral and academically removed as I analyze these texts, I find myself, at times, inexplicably moved by some of the stories, and saddened by the stories I know will never be told.

Pilot Study

In 2009, I conducted a pilot study of fifteen privately-published family histories. My study had a two-fold purpose: to outline the common genre conventions of these

³ For the sake of ease, I will simply refer to privately-published family histories as *family histories* or *family history*.

histories, and to identify the aspects of these histories that might merit a more extensive analysis.

I found that family histories are usually written or “compiled,” as many describe it, by self-identified *amateurs*. The common practice after privately publishing the family history is to distribute copies to the family and then donate a hard-copy to the local library or historical society. These family histories are often compilations of journal entries, letters, newspaper clippings, genealogy charts, obituaries, and sporadic chunks of narrative. They range widely: on one end, they are little more than a scrapbook, but on the opposite end, they are refined, like a memoir or biography, with plenty of authorial presence. They also range from beautifully bound volumes with color images to paper-clipped computer print-outs. Now, as more are being published online, they also range from basic blogs to interactive websites. One convention all family histories have in common is they focus on and follow at least one family line through multiple generations while fleshing out the bones of the genealogy.

Beyond this snapshot of the genre, the following two points of interest emerged from my study, both of which set the tone and the stage for this extended study.

Privately-published family histories are both obscure and ubiquitous. Through my conversations with friends, family, professors, and family historians, I realized an odd paradox about the genre: family histories are extremely obscure—not many folks have heard of them, yet they are also quite ubiquitous. There are tens and possibly hundreds of thousands of them in the world. Locally, I found fifteen family histories that had been donated to the University of New Hampshire’s Dimond Library, and the Dover, New

Hampshire Historical Society had several hundred available. There are also several genealogical databases that provide access to family histories; Ancestry.com claims to have twenty-two thousand on file.

Privately-published family histories are neither objective nor innocent. By chance, I noticed that three of the fifteen histories I had picked up came from Mormon polygamist lines. What interested me about this was that all three dealt with their polygamist ancestors differently. In one history, these ancestors were treated as martyrs and nation builders. In another history, they were barely mentioned: the names of the additional wives were in brackets, and someone not familiar with the family or that particular convention would be left to guess what the brackets meant. And in the third history, the polygamous ancestors were cut out altogether, something that the author revealed to me in a phone interview as being intentional, since she was in a time crunch to finish the family history for an upcoming reunion and she didn't have time to write a *proper* chapter on polygamy. After conducting this pilot study, I wondered how representative these three *polygamist* texts were of the overall approach of family historians in dealing with these unconventional ancestors—or, as Lambert (2002) calls it, their “ancestral stain.”

The idea of dealing with the ancestral stain implies some rhetorical positioning on the part of the authors. To whom are these authors writing? How do they hope to portray themselves and their families? What connection do they see between the identity of their ancestors and themselves? These questions form the bridge between my pilot study and this dissertation.

In order to keep these questions manageable, I have opted to look at family histories written by Mormons about their Mormon ancestors. This is due, in part, to the texts in my possession from the pilot study that fit this bill, especially those stemming from polygamist ancestors, but it is also because I want to establish a cultural framework to aid in my analysis. By selecting family histories written by members of a religious community with shared traditions and values and discourse, I can focus on the ways in which the writers of these texts rhetorically construct the identities of themselves, their readers, and their families (past, present, and future) against the backdrop of the Mormon Church's communal discourse and identity.

Rationale

There is no shortage of scholarship on family-history writing. The primary research on the subject comes from the fields of anthropology (see Erll, 2011), sociology (see Widerberg, 2011; Varghese, 2004; Lambert, 2002; Parnham, 2008), communications (see Wolff, 1993), education (see Sleeter, 2008), and history (see Akenson, 2007; Newans, 1981; Rhoads, 1979). There are certain themes that consistently arise in this scholarship, namely issues of language ideology, discourse and identity, the preservation of communal and personal memory, and what it means to be a member of and spokesman for a community. All of these themes and issues are connected, and the unifying glue, I argue, is rhetoric. In their various studies, as these scholars attempt to peel back the social, cultural, historical, and discursal layers to understand what is going on in these family histories, they continually remind us that there is no such thing as objective

history, innocent rendering, or the unbiased reporting of facts. Family-history writing in all its varied genres and forms comes down to the push-and-pull of writers and communities shaping and creating identities amid and against these varied and very real forces.

Discourse as Identity Kit

While they don't specifically address family-history writing, Burgess and Ivanič (2010) contend that the act of writing is an act of identity, and they demonstrate through various analyses of personal and academic writing how identity is a discursual construct (p. 228; see also Burgess, 2004, and Ivanič, 1998, 2006).

In this study, I echo the claims of Burgess and Ivanič and I add to the scholarship of the aforementioned historical, anthropological, sociological, educational, and communications scholars by looking at the intricate relationship between identity and discourse. To understand how identity is rhetorically produced, I turn to the very specific genre of privately-published family histories. To help ground my analysis and avoid making generalizations about disparate texts and contexts, I look specifically at family histories written by Mormons about their Mormon ancestors (with the exception of one, which is written by a non-Mormon about his Mormon ancestors).

These texts serve as ideal sites for analyzing how identity is rhetorically constructed for three reasons: first, because they are written by self-identified amateurs for non-academic, non-monetary, and non-professional reasons—thus narrowing down the motivations and influencing factors behind the production of these texts; second,

because the texts and the identities created therein are influenced by a clear communal discourse—in this case, the discourse of the Mormon Church; and third, because each text is written with a remarkably clear sense of the rhetorical situation—an audience with a shared communal identity, writers who self-identify with that community, subjects (ancestors) that are seen as forebears and members of the community, and all with the shared purpose of materializing this communal identity and memory into a text that will survive and continue to influence future generations of the community.

My contention that discourse and identity are intricately linked is further informed by the work of Gee (1989) who argues that discourse is a type of *identity kit*, "which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular role that others will recognize" (p. 526). A discourse, according to Gee, isn't something that can be learned from reading a book or studying the *rules*. It is acquired through *acculturation* and *apprenticeship*. The studies I have found in the fields of anthropology, history, and sociology that look at the discourse of the Mormon Church all address the *official* discourse of the Mormon Church as found in scripture, sermons, and official publications (see Laird, 2008; Shepherd & Shepherd, 1984a & 1984b; Smith, 2007; Souders, 2009; Van Wagoner, 1995; White & White, 2005). What is utterly lacking in this present scholarship are analyses of Mormon discourse as found in non-official venues—the discourse practices of church members for non-preaching and non-leadership purposes.

In addition to these studies, there are a number of *rhetorical* studies of the Mormon Church: Souders (2009) on the rhetoric of Mormon missionary homiletics;

Bitton (2002) on the rhetoric of early Mormon sermons; Higdon (2004) on the rhetoric of Mormon preaching; Flake (2004) on the political rhetoric of Senator Reed Smoot, a Mormon Apostle; Gore (2006) on Joseph Smith and the rhetoric of happiness; Jones (1992) on the rhetoric of Brigham Young's sermons; Reynolds (1980) on the rhetoric of storytelling in Mormon doctrine; and Shepherd and Shepherd (1984a) on Mormon commitment rhetoric and (1984b) ecclesiastical rhetoric. What's important to note about these rhetorical analyses, according to Souders (2009), is that they represent "only the very barest of treatment" of Mormon rhetorical theory "in a few scattered works and rather oblique fashion by scholars in *other* fields,"—fields, that is, other than rhetoric (pp. 422-423, emphasis added). Souders also notes that these rhetorical analyses adhere to the "dominant American cultural discourses that surround religion," such as those that emphasize "roles of speaker, logic, scripture, divine assistance, and faith in the preacher's repertoire" (p. 423).

Souders calls for more cultural and discourse-based models of rhetorical analysis—a call which I heed by looking at privately-published family histories as sources of Mormon discourse (as opposed to *official* church venues and publications) — they are texts not intended for teacher or leader development or for preaching or instruction of any sort, and they are not intended to be part of the core canon of the church. By analyzing these texts, written by members of the Mormon Church for non-official reasons, I can analyze these family histories as *discourse kits*, and I can begin to fill the hole present in rhetorical scholarship of the Mormon Church.

This study also builds on existing scholarship in composition studies by questioning what it means to rhetorically construct identity. *Community, memory, identity, time, rhetoric*—all of these concepts are related and tied together in the discursal production of identity. By looking at this very specific type of writing with its shared purposes and communities and identity and discourses, we begin to get a glimpse into what exactly it means when rhetorical scholars call writing *an act of identity*. And what unfolds in this study isn't unique to privately-published family histories, but has wider application to the many genres, forms of writing, and rhetorical situations found within composition scholarship.

A Pedagogical Digression

Allow me to digress a moment. In this dissertation, I don't directly address the implications of this study on composition pedagogy, but it is still worth mentioning here. Rankins-Robertson *et al* (2010) have done a marvelous job of showing the various benefits and approaches to using family-history based assignments in basic writing and first-year composition courses. But even without the classroom slant in this study, the findings herein can still benefit our understanding of composition pedagogy. Rhetorical scholarship seems to always have a way of trickling its way into classroom practices. Miller (1998), for example, didn't study 19th century commonplace books in the hopes of getting more instructors to teach that particular genre in their courses. Instead, she analyzed these textual artifacts to understand how people outside of classroom contexts wrote for various audiences and purposes. What she found about how identity positions

are assumed, situational, and impermanent (rather than fixed or determined), and how the authors are able to textually move across class, family, status, and gender positions, certainly has application to the composition classroom, as instructors today are still finding ways of valuing and fostering students' home discourses and unique ways of knowing.

Rhetorical scholars like Miller often look beyond classroom contexts to learn more about what it means to engage in and be shaped by written discourse, an issue that should be at the heart of all composition pedagogy. Similar to Miller, my study aims to help us better understand how identity is rhetorically created in non-traditional or extracurricular texts. This is important as non-traditional genres are becoming more mainstream and becoming the new tradition in composition classrooms: blogs, wikis, and multi-modal texts, for example, are moving into the center of composition pedagogy—genres which value students' community literacy, family history, and personal experience.

As students turn more and more to these genres and these ways of knowing, composition instructors are bound to face writing and issues that make them uncomfortable or that seem to go against notions of academic literacies. Family history writing, as evidenced by the texts in this study, are often infused with and influenced by long-held religious beliefs and traditions. How do we, as writing instructors, value these beliefs and traditions, *academically* speaking? Gere (2001) points out that feminist theory “has opened many new ways of expressing experience, but it has only begun to create spaces for discourses of religion...[and] until these discourses are more fully

developed, it will remain difficult to include articles of faith in personal narratives that issue from the academy” (Brandt *et al*, p. 47). She argues that when dealing with unfamiliar religious (and familial and communal) discourses, writing instructors too often *exoticize* these texts and discourses. When we exoticize this type of writing, we move our students outside of the realm of the traditional, of the valued, of the mainstream. We disempower them and their home discourses. We silence them.

The Rhetoric of Silence

The concept of silence is an important element of this study. Returning, then, from my pedagogical digression to the main rationale of this study—i.e. looking at how identity is rhetorically constructed—*silence* I have found is an inevitable result of identity production in family history writing. Whether intentional or not, certain people and groups are left out or forgotten or silenced, and it is usually those whose identities don’t mesh with the writer’s or the community’s preferred identity. How does this happen? What are the implications of this textual silencing and why is it important that we recognize it?

Silence as a rhetorical tool and as a linguistic art is gaining attention in our field.

In her book, *Unspoken*, Glenn (2004) says

silence and silencing also provide new pathways and new methods for expanding the rhetorical tradition. After all, people use silence and silencing every day to fulfill their rhetorical purpose, whether it is to maintain their position of power, resist the domination of others, or submit to subordination—regardless of their gendered positions. (p. 154)
The silencing that occurs in these family histories, as I will show, is very real.

I can't give voice to all of those who have been silenced, but what I hope to do with this study is to at least point out where some of the silences have occurred and where some, in the future, can be avoided.

Methodology

At the heart of this study are three driving questions that I attempt to answer through a rhetorical analysis of family histories and interviews.

Driving Questions

1. What can we learn about the rhetorical production of identity by focusing on family histories written by Mormons about their Mormon ancestors? How might the communal discourse of the Mormon Church influence and shape this rhetorical production of identity? Is there such a thing as a general Mormon identity being created within these histories? And if so, how does the author establish, position, create, or present the various identities involved: the identity of herself, the identity of her family (past, present, and future), and the identity of the reader(s)?
2. Using a dramaturgical view of the rhetorical stance, where all subjects involved—writer, reader, and subject—are seen as agents in the rhetorical act (both *acting* and being *acted upon*), how does the rhetorical production of identity manifest itself in these family histories? What is the link between this identity production and the concept of *Burkean Identification*?

3. What is the role of (and connection between) *communal*⁴ and *generational* memory in these family histories? How might certain rhetorical moves, such as the recasting of ancestral identity or textual silencing or drawing from certain genres (such as eulogies), affect communal and generational memory?

Textual Analysis

I attempt to answer these questions by analyzing seven privately-published family histories written by Mormons about their Mormon ancestors. In chapter two, I lay the groundwork for my rhetorical analysis, showing how the identities of the three key subjects involved in the rhetorical situation—writer, reader, and subject (ancestor)—are fictionalized by the writer to create moments of Burkean identification.

In order to answer my driving questions and apply my theoretical framework, I have read each of these family histories several times with a three-part rhetorical heuristic in mind:

1. what did the authors choose to include (events, ancestors, artifacts, data sources, etc),
2. how did they include it (word choice, communal discourse, emphasis, style, authorial presence, genealogical grammars, etc),

⁴ Habwach (1992) and Gergen (2002) define *communal* memory as a specific type of *collective* memory. Collective memory tends to be disposable, fleeting, and temporary, while communal memory, rooted in shared experience and a sense of community, tends to be more stable, static, and enduring.

3. and *how else* they could have written about it (silences, alternative sources, rhetorical positioning, etc)?

The goal was to show how identity is rhetorically produced within these texts from the aspect of writer, reader, and subject (see Appendix A for sample of analysis rubric).

In addition to these close readings of the texts, I also interviewed two participants: Michelle Head, the author of one of these family histories, and Tom Peterson, the son of one of the deceased authors. I asked them about the creative processes involved in compiling these family histories in terms of the rhetorical situation, communal and generational memory, and the discursal construction of the self, the reader, and the subject (see Appendix B for sample interview questions).

Through reading these family histories against each other and against the official discourse of the Mormon Church (i.e. publications by church officials), and through comparing these texts with the data generated from these interviews, I have identified the interconnectedness of identity, discourse, and rhetorical positioning.

In analyzing these texts and interviews, I draw on the methodologies outlined by Selzer (2004) on *contextual rhetorical* analysis. He defines rhetorical analysis as “an effort to understand how people within specific social situations attempt to influence others through language” (281). He points out that in order to engage in rhetorical analysis, one need not be (but can very well be) a member of the intended/targeted audience. I include this framework of rhetorical analysis within my content analysis since I am looking at family histories as rhetorical artifacts that are written with purpose.

Selzer offers a continuum for types of rhetorical analysis. On one end, there is *textual analysis*, which looks at a single symbolic act on its own discrete terms, as if the text were timeless, and uses rhetorical terminology as the means of analysis. On the other end is *contextual analysis*, which situates the rhetorical act in the larger conversation, builds a rich description of the moment and cultural environment the rhetorical act took place, looks at external factors, and “tends to reduce a sense of individual genius attached to specific communications without necessarily diminishing respect and appreciation for the outstanding rhetorical performance” (p. 302). This study falls somewhere in the middle of this continuum, as I analyze these family histories as both textual *and* cultural artifacts, and as timeless utterances *and* as contextually-bound rhetorical acts.

Data Sources and Triangulation

The three key sources of data in this study are the seven privately-published family histories, several official documents published by the Mormon Church, and interviews with two subjects involved in the creation of these family histories.

I use the official publications of the Mormon Church to establish a communal discourse and identity as a contextualizing backdrop for the rhetorical analysis of the family histories (see chapter 2 for more details). This, along with the interviews, is done as a form of triangulation and in an attempt to move my study on Selzer’s (2006) continuum further away from a strictly *textual analysis* and closer to *contextual analysis*.

Textual Selection

In selecting texts for this study, I used the following criteria:

1. the text must be written by an amateur (i.e. not a professional historian or author),
2. the text must be privately published,
3. the text must follow at least one ancestral line for more than two generations,
4. and the text must follow at least one direct line from Mormon polygamous ancestors.

In addition to these criteria, I also selected texts that were distinct from each other. Each text serves as its own type of case study, bringing something unique to the table in terms of content, style, and rhetorical positioning. By reading these texts first as *unique case studies* and then reading them against each other as *common samples of a genre*, what emerges is a demonstration of the wider application and more generalizable idea of *identity as a rhetorical construct*. In other words, despite the unique nature of these texts as context-specific rhetorical acts, my findings and implications are surprisingly uniform across all seven texts.

I use four print-based and three online family histories. Many online family histories use the word *organization* or *association* in their titles. I struggled to decide if I would use such sites, since their names imply they are more than online family histories, but actual family-organization websites. I've decided not to discredit them, since these online titles show an important step in the evolution of the genre. Before the Internet, a

family history often served (loosely) as the hub or focal point of a family organization. This continues to be the case as these family histories are created and disseminated online, but the online environment expands the genre possibilities. The inclusion of *organization* and *association* in the titles hints at these broadened possibilities.

Belnap Family History (Belnap, 1974 & 2011)

The Belnap family history actually serves as two separate texts in this study. There is the printed version (1974), which was written by a single author and served as the launching-point for the Belnap Family Organization, and there is the online version (2011), which is collaboratively authored and maintained by the family organization's elected officers. In this study, these two texts are the only instance of multiple family histories written about the same family. I chose these two because of how vastly different they are despite being about the same family: different authors, different mediums, different generations, different purposes, different rhetorical situations, and different forms of identity creation.

Of all the family histories in this study, the print version of the Belnap family history is the most replete with overt Mormon discourse. It is dense with authorial presence, and it reads, at times, like a sermon. The author infuses just about every paragraph with scripture and church doctrine.

This text serves as a rich site for analyzing how the author mirrors the official discourse of the Mormon Church while writing about his family and ancestors. It is also a great source of revisionist history that adheres to patriarchal Christian ideals.

The online family history is less *preachy*, so to speak. It has links to seemingly endless articles and entries. Many of the lines represented in this website come from polygamists, and there is a lot of material dedicated to polygamy. The print version of the family's history appears in this website, but it is just one of thousands of links.

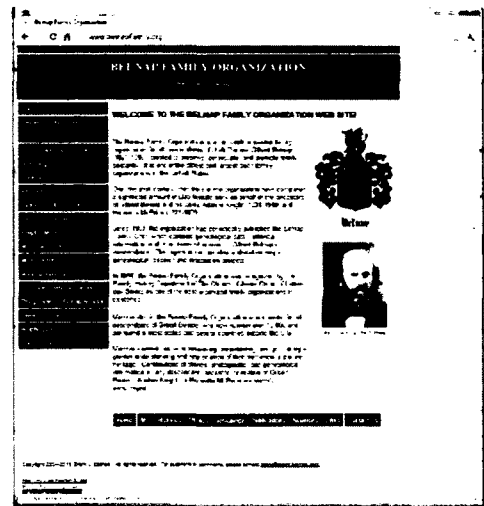


Figure 1.1: Belnap Main Page

Bullock Family History (Bullock, 1964)

Like the Belnap family history (1974), this is a single-author text. Unlike Belnap, however, the authorial presence is lean and the adherence to a Mormon discourse and identity is much more subtle. The author takes a more neutral position. This is as close to a *just the facts* version of a Mormon-authored family history I could find.

The text consists primarily of brief biographical sketches of ancestors. Despite this, there is still abundant evidence of the discursive construction of writer, reader, and subject taking place.

Dalton-Whittaker Family History (Dalton, 2011)

Perhaps what is most unique about this family history (in terms of this study) is that it is the only one written by an author who doesn't self-identify as Mormon. It is being written as an ongoing online project by Rodney Dalton with the help of his cousin Arthur Whittaker (who assists with the research). The author includes dozens of articles and entries about his Mormon polygamist ancestors. The site is massive. If all the pages were printed and bound in standard format, it would be several

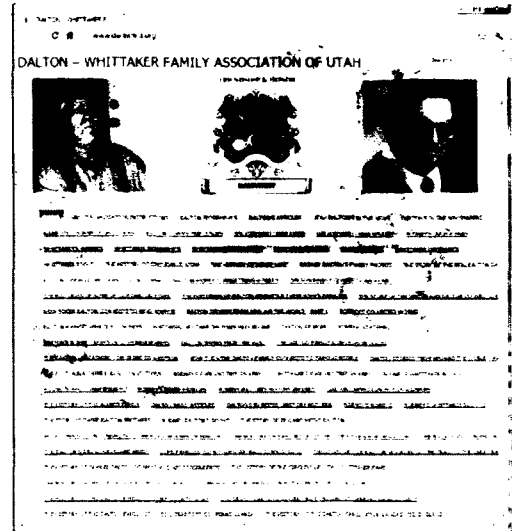


Figure 1.2: Dalton Main Page

thousand pages. I investigate how this online platform without the material restriction of page limits ultimately influences how the authors write about and portray their Mormon ancestors.

Pratt Family History (Grow, 2011)

What makes this online family history unique is that it is the only one that stems from a prominent leader of the early Mormon Church. Two, in fact. Jared Pratt is the central figure, and two of his sons, Parley P. Pratt and Orson Pratt—whose lines are both treated at length—were high-ranking church leaders (Apostles, a rank second only to the Prophet) and practicing polygamists. While this site shares in the valorization of Mormon

historical figures, it also branches out into many family lines not directly connected with the Mormon Church.

Willis Family History (Head, 2006)

What sets this print-based history apart from the others is that it is very scrapbook-like and uses mostly photographs and snippets of text.

It is one of two texts in this study written by a woman (the Parry family history is the other). The author wrote it about her husband's family as a favor to her mother-in-law. As such, she depended heavily on the cooperation and communal memories of her in-laws to put the book together in a somewhat accurate and coherent fashion.

I have interviewed the author to find out how composing the family history as an outsider to the blood-line influenced decisions of identity representation, and to see how the family history was received by the family. What emerges is an interesting dance between the author's own history and predilections and her desire to uphold her husband's family's preferred identity.

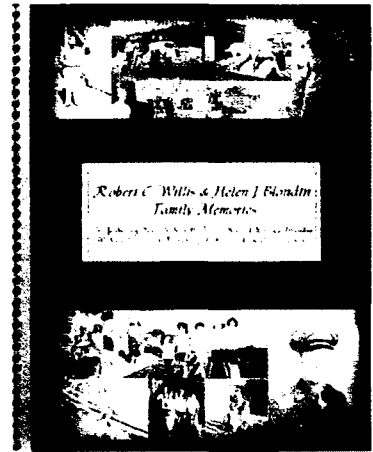


Figure 1.3: Cover, Head (2006)

Parry Family History (Taylor *et al*, 1988)

What sets this history apart is that it is the most open about the topic of polygamy—it has, in fact, an entire chapter dedicated to it. The history's central figure, Joseph Parry, was a mid-level leader in the early Mormon Church, but his legacy has merited nothing but a footnote in the church's official history.

The Parry family history was collaboratively written by four women, each representing one of the four branches of the Parry family (each extending from a different wife of Joseph). It is the only print-based family history in this study to be collaboratively written. The lines had been estranged with little communication since the death of Joseph Parry 60 years previously. At the time of its creation, two of the collaborators self-identified as members of the Mormon Church; it is unknown if the other two collaborators still affiliated with the church. The project took twelve years to complete, and all members of the committee are now deceased. Since I was unable to interview any of the authors, I interviewed one of their sons who is familiar with the family history and the production of this text.

Moving Forward

In the next chapter, I establish the theoretical framework I will use to analyze these texts. My analysis and discussion of these seven family histories will come in the following three chapters, and in the final chapter I will consider my findings as a whole and discuss their implications for family-history writing and rhetoric and composition.

CHAPTER II

FINDING THE *BURKEAN IDENTIFICATION SWEET SPOT*

At the heart of this study is the idea of the rhetorical production of identity. How does the author of a family history establish, position, create, or present the various identities involved: the identity of the writer, the identities of her family (past, present, and future), and the identity of the reader(s)?

In order to answer this, I draw primarily from Burke and Bakhtin (and, to a lesser degree, Goffman and Booth) to develop a dramaturgical version of Aristotle's rhetorical triangle, where all of the subjects involved in the rhetorical act—writer(s), reader(s), and subject(s)—are *agents* who both *act* and are *acted upon*. The identities produced in writing, I argue, fall on a reflective-fictionalized spectrum (*reflective* mirroring the *non-textual* identity—meaning the identity that exists beyond the text or utterance—and *fictionalized* bearing less resemblance to that *non-textual* identity), and I analyze these family histories as sites of this three-part interaction between the textual identities of writer, reader, and subject.

It is important to note that I am *not* arguing that identity exists outside of discourse; rather, I use *non-textual* to refer to those identities which exist before, after, beyond, and apart from the particular text or utterance in question (in this case, the privately-published family history). Likewise, I am not arguing that these *non-textual* identities are fixed or immutable identities that somehow exist outside of discourse. I merely have adopted the terms *textual* and *non-textual* for the sake of ease in discussing

and distinguishing between the identities manifested in these family histories and their corresponding identities that exist elsewhere.

The central contentions in this analysis are six-fold (and will be developed in this chapter): first, that textual identity is a rhetorical construct, and as such is *always* a fiction, no matter how *reflective* it might be of an author's or reader's or ancestor's *non-textual* identity; second, that the writer, along with constructing her own identity, rhetorically constructs an identity that her readers may or may not choose to take on; third, that the writer rhetorically constructs the identities of the subjects involved (the ancestors) in the image of the constructed identities of the author and reader; fourth, that these rhetorically constructed identities can come together and overlap in moments of Burkean identification; fifth, that authorial intent or awareness is not a prerequisite for any of this to happen; and sixth, that all of this occurs in all forms of expressive writing but is especially salient in privately-published family histories.

Setting the Stage: Dramaturgy and Rhetorical Agents

First there was the triangle. Then came the pentad. Then came the circle. Then came a Venn diagram.

More or less.

Two thousand years ago, in Book I of *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle gave us the enduring tradition of the rhetorical triangle, where speaker, listener, and subject come together as co-influencers of the rhetorical act. This triangle has served as a useful basis for rhetorical theory as scholars continue to analyze the relationships between the corners,

such as Booth (1963) discussing the downfalls of writers who focus exclusively on one corner of the triangle, and Ong (1975) and Ede and Lunsford (1984, 1996) theorizing the relationship between a writer and her audience.

Likewise, my study continues this tradition by looking at the relationship of the writer, reader, and subject, but I infuse these corners of the triangle with Burkean notions of *identity*, *identification*, and *agency*, and Bakhtinian notions of *dialogue* and discursive meaning-making.

Perhaps taking Shakespeare’s claim that “all the world’s a stage” literally, Burke (1945) introduced us to the concept of the *Dramatistic Pentad* as a means for analyzing motives in discourse. In this theory, all people are seen as actors or *agents*. The points of the pentad roughly correspond to the five Ws of journalism: who, what, when, where, and why.



Figure 2.1: Burke's Pentad

What's important in this pentad to my theoretical framework is this idea of the *agent*: anyone involved in the scene—i.e. the rhetorical situation—is an agent, meaning

they act *within* and are acted *upon* in the scene. A thorough analysis of discourse or the rhetorical situation will take into account the various perspectives of these various agents and how they interact.

What's important in this conceptualization of *agents* and *agency* in my rhetorical analysis is the idea of subjectivity: there are no objects involved and there are no fixed identities. Perspectives and identities are constantly in flux, constantly changing, and as such, non-textual identities can never be truly captured or transcribed in writing. What that leaves us with are textual *representations*, whether accurate or not, of these subjects or agents. These *representations*, I argue, fall on a reflective-fictionalized spectrum. A writer fictionalizes her reader's identity—she creates, as it were, a *role* that the reader can choose to take on. Likewise, she fictionalizes her own identity—she creates *masks*—and she also fictionalizes the identities of her subjects (the ancestors). These roles, masks, and fictionalized identities might accurately reflect the *non-textual* identities of the subjects involved, but in their textualized or discursal form, I argue, *all identities are fictionalized*. *Reflective* textual identities on one end of the spectrum have the least amount of fictionalizing: they mirror, to some degree, the *non-textual* identities involved. *Fictionalized* textual identities at the other end of the spectrum are those which bear little semblance to the non-textual identity—this is where myths, legends, and heroes reside.

Bakhtin (1981) adds to the conceptualization of the rhetorical agents involved—writer, reader, and “hero”—who simultaneously *act* and are *acted upon*. This discursal relationship of these agents in the reading and meaning-making process is described well by Schuster (1985), who reads Bakhtin as a rhetorical scholar: “Speaker and listener, in

the act of engaging with the hero (which is, like them, both speaker and listener) become charged by the hero's identity. They change as a result of the association, for they are just as affected by the hero as they are by their close association with each other. And so, too, is the hero" (p. 596). The speaker, reader, and hero form more of a rhetorical circle than triangle, the three centrifugally whirling around the axis of discourse. This interplay of speaker-listener-hero allows us to speak of the rhetorical situation not as a snapshot in time, but as an ongoing, ever-changing and dynamic dialogue.

The point of contact in this dialogue that is important to my study is the moment when the identities of writer, reader, and ancestor come together and even overlap. How do writers position themselves and how do they portray their ancestors in such a way that their intended or projected audience will likewise identify or feel a sense of community, belonging, or solidarity?

In figure 2.2 (see page 27), I have created a graphic representation that joins Aristotle's rhetorical triangle with Bakhtin's circle of interacting agents and Burke's (1966, 1969) concept of *identification*. In its simplest form, rhetoric—according to Burke (1969)—stems from the paradoxical relationship between unity and separation: “put identification and division ambiguously together, so that you cannot know for certain just where one ends and the other begins, and you have the characteristic invitation to rhetoric” (p. 25). As social creatures, we desire to unify or identify with certain groups or individuals while still maintaining a degree of separation or individuality. Rhetoric exists within this realm. If people were absolutely divided, rhetoric would be useless; if people were absolutely united, rhetoric would be

superfluous. Jordan (2005) argues that “identification, ambiguously locating as it does both division and tendency to transcend division, presents the *possibility for rhetoric*, figures the inevitability of rhetoric, and stresses the need for rhetoric in language and in social relations” (p. 269, emphasis added). In this Burkean view of the rhetorical situation, rhetoric exists because of our desire for identification in face of our tendency to divide.

In terms of personal identity, Burke (1966) says “we spontaneously identify ourselves with family, nation, political or cultural cause, church, and so on” (p. 301). In his analysis of her great-grandfather’s letters, Dessler (2001) uses Burke to help explain the “strong pull” she felt to align herself politically and ethnically with her grandfather. Burke, she says, in his theory of identification, “recognizes the valid and powerful desire we often feel to view ourselves as included by a chosen community (p. 318). This tug and pull to align ourselves with (or separate ourselves from) an author or a group or a subject matter is the essence of rhetorical agency. A writer produces the identities of the subjects involved in a way that *might* lead to this identification, but it can never be forced.

A writer’s agency is both enabled and limited by the identity she constructs; to adopt a persona is to discard another. She constructs the identities of the text’s subjects (in this case, the identities of her ancestors), often in a way that mirrors her own fictionalized identity; and she constructs an identity for her readers too, should they choose to take it up.

The Venn diagram below (figure. 2.2) shows the discoursal overlap of these subjects’ constructed (i.e. fictionalized) identities. The shaded spot in the middle

represents this moment of Burkean identification, where the textual identities of the writer, reader, and hero overlap. I call this the *Burkean Identification Sweet Spot (BISS)*.

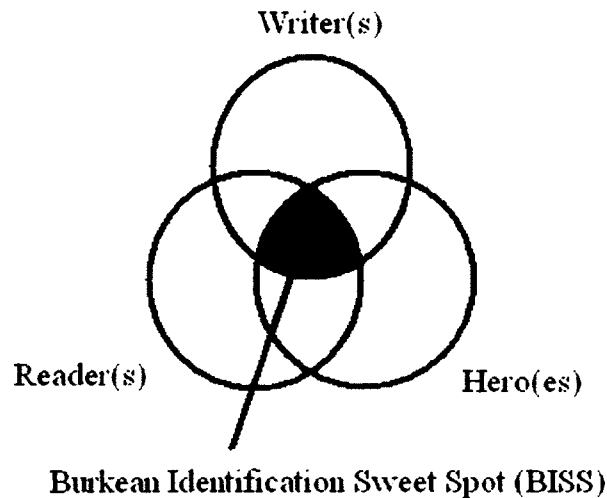


Figure. 2.2: Bakhtin’s Dialogic Subjects and the Burkean Identification Sweet Spot

The type of identification that most likely occurs when a reader engages with a privately-published family history is what Burke (1969) calls *consubstantiality*, this feeling of being of the same substance with another—in this case, the writer and/or ancestor (pp. 21, 55). Two common *pathways* to identification that are relevant to my study are what Burke (1973) calls *empathy* and *cultural rituals*, and I demonstrate in the following three chapters how and when this occurs.

By combining this concept of Burkean Identification with the traditional Aristotelian rhetorical model, I am able to further accomplish an analytical methodology that moves my study away from de-contextualized and “timeless” *textual* models of rhetorical analysis to a more culturally and socially-based *contextual* model. The concept of *identity*—or, more specifically, the *rhetorical production of identity*—is what makes it possible to view these family histories as both *textual* and *cultural* artifacts.

The identity that a writer constructs, according to Crable (2006), is a “fragile rhetorical production” (pp. 1, 4). My study doesn’t seek to offer a timeless, static portrait of these identities. It’s important to remember that my *BISS* diagram only represents a snapshot in time. Like electrons swirling around the nucleus of an atom, these identities are both anywhere and everywhere at any given moment. A reader, for example, might identify with the writer for several pages, but one questionable comment might shift the writer (from the reader’s perspective) outside of the *BISS*. Likewise, a writer might have trouble identifying with, say, a polygamist ancestor and write about him in such a way that also causes the reader, who might otherwise have identified with the ancestor, to identify instead with the writer, but (again) outside of the *BISS*. There is a very real *temporal imperative* involved in this rhetorical conceptualization. Identities are constantly changing. Self-, reader-, and subject-representations are fragile and unpredictable. Just as a questionable comment or the rhetorical recasting of an ancestor’s identity can shift the reader beyond the *BISS*, so can a change in time. Reading my family’s history as a thirty-something scholar of rhetoric, I certainly identify with the writers and my polygamist ancestors differently than I did the first time I read it as a teenager.

While it would be worthwhile to interview several readers of a family history—immediate family members, distant relatives, non-Mormon relatives, scholars, etc.—to get their response to the text from a Burkean-identification perspective, that isn’t the point of this study. What I’m interested in are the textual manifestations of how the writers of these histories rhetorically produce the identities of the subjects involved. What

personas or masks does a writer adopt? Who might the writer see as the typical or intended reader of their family history? How might an atypical or unintended reader affect the rhetorical situation (i.e. where would they end up on the *BISS* Venn diagram)?

In the following three sections, I look at the scholarship behind the idea of a *non-textual* vs. *textual* identity along with the accompanying *reflective-fictionalized* spectrum of rhetorically-produced identity.

Unmasking the Masked Writer: Rhetorical Construction of Self

Persona, *ethos*, voice, implied author, actual author, narrator, performer, actor, agent, character—whatever you call it, there is no shortage of terminology in rhetorical scholarship for discussing the negotiated self-representation of the writer.

It always seems to start with Aristotle. His concept of *ethos* is perhaps the first glimpse of this non-textual vs. textual identity discussion. Aristotle's *ethos* is more an object than a subject: it is the speaker (or writer) freed from cultural and historical and societal forces who is able to pick and choose his arguments and approaches. The speaker acts but is not acted upon. In its textual form, a writer's *ethos* falls closer on the reflective-side of the spectrum, as it implies an accurate reflection of the *non-textual* speaker. The speaker is in control of his subject material and free from outside forces. He can represent himself as he *really is*.

The other side of the coin would be *persona*: this admittedly fictionalized version of the writer or speaker. The concept has ancient Roman roots, where the *persona* served as the fictionalized mouthpiece (often satirical) of the poet (Anderson, 1982). Perhaps

what sets it apart from *ethos* is the acknowledgement that it is a fiction and isn't intended to reflect, mimic, or actually *be* the author's identity.

In his theory of the performance of the self in social situations, Goffman (1969) theorizes that a person, in any social context, is both a *performer* (which roughly corresponds to *ethos* and the non-textual identity) and a *character* (adopting, whether consciously or not, a fictionalized *persona*). Goffman's concept of *character* is influenced by the Marxist notion of the *character mask*, which Marx connects to the Roman concept of *persona*, where the public face masks or skews the writer's history and private thoughts. In Goffman's concept of self-representation, the writer would be seen as both able to act while being acted upon—he is limited by his non-textual identity and empowered by the textual mask he wears.

Similar to Goffman, Booth (1988) distinguishes between the *actual author*, this non-textual identity, and the *implied author*, this fictionalized persona that may or may not mirror the *actual author* (he also includes the *narrator*, which would find itself further down than the fictionalized end of the spectrum). Cherry (1998) argues that in this postmodern and poststructuralist era, we need rhetorical models that include these fictionalized forms of self-representation. Acknowledging the fictionalized persona “allows us to grant agency to the writer, to view her as a determined and choosing being, and it portrays her as a subjective being, existing before the text and subjected to material, cultural, psychological, and sociological conditions” (p. 395).

Likewise, Christoph (2002) advocates rhetorical models which acknowledge these fictionalized identities because traditional models which rely heavily on Aristotle's conception of *ethos* are too stable and give too much control to the writer:

Unlike Aristotle's rhetor, who has no preexisting character and can pick and choose how he represents himself on any given occasion, the poststructuralist writer is limited by political, cultural, and psychological constraints that restrict his or her ability to choose any option for self-representation. This is not to say that a poststructuralist writer has no freedom, but rather to say that this freedom is limited by more than the audience's *ethos*. (pp. 665-666)

Cherry, Christoph, Goffman, Burke, and Bakhtin all share the sentiment that the writer as an agent *acts* and is *acted upon*. At times, the textual manifestation of the writer's identity mirrors the writer's non-textual identity. At times, it is a complete fabrication or fiction. And the writer isn't always able to control the extent of this fictionalizing nor its effect on the overall meaning-making and identification process.

Burgess and Ivanič (2010) emphasize that the authorial self (the *reflective* textual identity) and the discursal self (the *fictionalized* textual identity) are “not necessarily a transparent portrait of the writer's autobiographical self” (the *non-textual* identity). This isn't always intentional—this *character masking* can occur at the subconscious level: “the writer may also go to considerable lengths to manipulate, disguise, and deceive, attempting strategically to convey an impression of herself that will be positively received by the anticipated reader” (p. 248). In Figure 2.3 below, I demonstrate the overlap of these *selves*, showing how they correlate to my *Spectrum of Reflective-Fictionalized Textual Identities*.

The autobiographical self is the *non-textual* self that exists outside of the text—it is the writer sitting in front of the computer in his pajamas, sipping a Mountain Dew, getting ready to write a treatise on the domestic economy. The textual self represents the full range of fictionalized identity, whether or not it accurately reflects this autobiographical self. Similarly, the authorial self is a textual self, but one that is mixed up with the authorial self—it is the realm where the reader's knowledge of the author beyond the text influences the construction of this authorial identity.

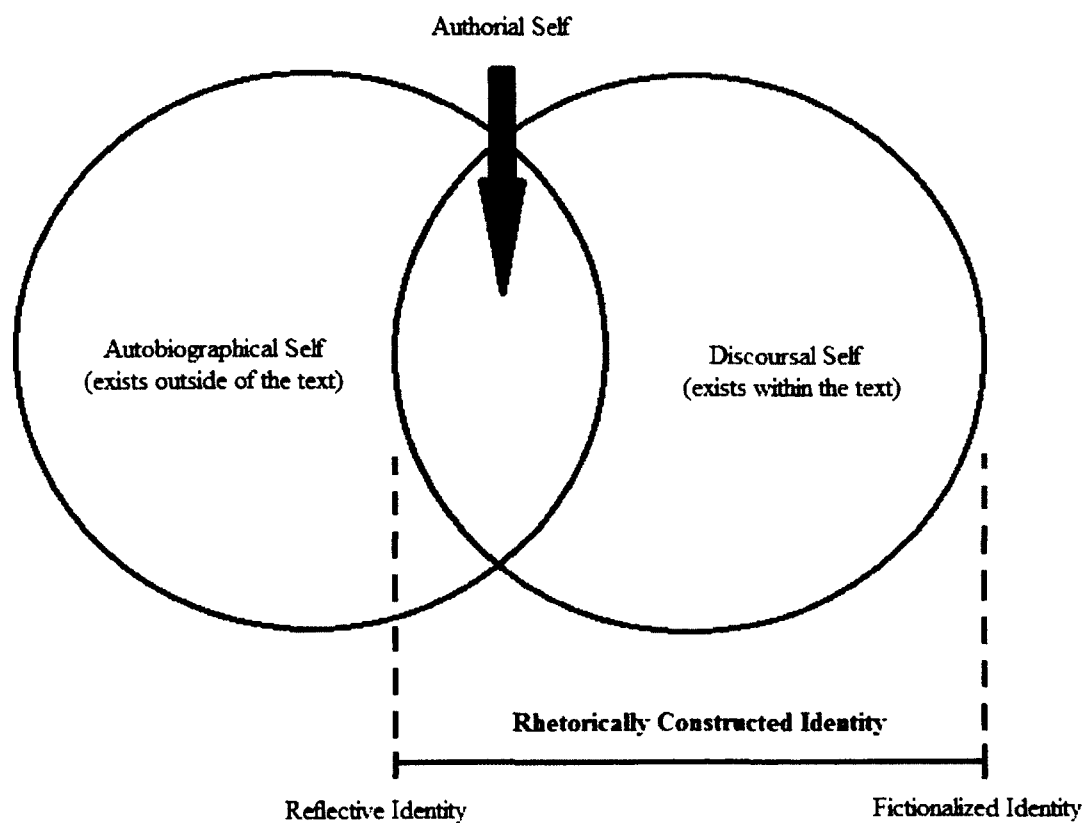


Figure. 2.3: Burgess & Ivanič's Selves and the Rhetorical Construction of Identity

In this study, I extend the overlapping *selves of the writer* introduced by Burgess and Ivanič—autobiographical (non-textual), authorial (textual), and discoursal (textual)—

to include *all* of the subjects involved in the rhetorical triangle; both reader and subject have their corresponding *selves* or identities: the non-textual, the reflective (textual), and the fictionalized (textual). In Figure 2.4 on the next page, I visualize how the Aristotelian rhetorical triangle, Burkean identification, and the rhetorical production of identity come together into a cohesive theoretical model for analysis. In this model, the three subjects involved—writer, reader, and ancestor—are actual, tangible human beings existing beyond and apart from the text. The rhetorical act brings them together into the text, but only their rhetorically-constructed identities can exist in this written discourse. These textual identities might be highly reflective of the non-textual identities, but they can be only that: reflective. They are rhetorical constructs and never the *non-textual* identity. As the author positions herself and her readers and her ancestors in a way that might lead to an overlap of these textual identities (the moment of Burkean identification), these identities slide on a reflective-fictionalized continuum.

In considering this visual, it is important to distinguish between the *text* and the *rhetorical act*. The text is fixed in time and is rather immutable: the words and figures on a page can last centuries without changing. The rhetorical act, on the other hand, is that intangible moment when the reader joins in and lends her non-textual identity to the performance. She might, as I have mentioned, take up the role the author has constructed for her, or she might not. Each moment, each reader, each sitting is different. The text might exist constant and unchanged for millennia, but the rhetorical act and the interplay of constructed identities always changes. The text has no life except that which is provided through the rhetorical act.

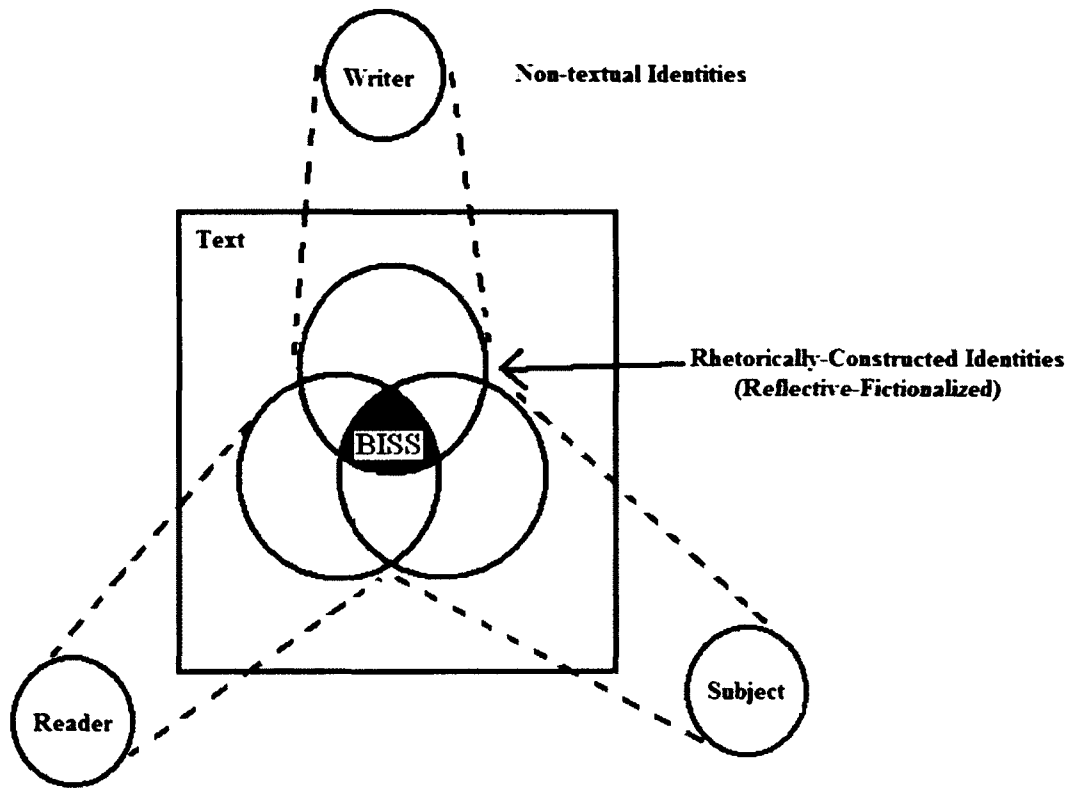


Figure 2.4: Spectrum of Reflective-Fictionalized Textual Identities in Moments of Burkean Identification

In creating the text—in this case, the privately-published family history—the writer might, for example, position the reader as an active, faithful member of the Mormon Church who values the family's past. This, again, might be reflective of the reader, but it might be an utter fictionalization depending on who actually picks up the text. Likewise, the writer might don a mask of her own to hide her own disagreements with the Mormon culture or her family's history. She might write about an unsavory ancestor in a way that fictionalizes his identity and brings it more in line with the author's

and the reader's rhetorically produced identities. The possibilities are endless, and the result is a continual shifting of textual identities that may or may not result in these rhetorical moments of Burkean identification.

In these family histories, I identify some of the masks the writers wear. The writer's perception of the audience is a key component of character masking, since she will don the masks most likely to lead to moments of Burkean identification. Is the writer donning the character mask of *family spokesman*? A *missionary* for the church? A *representative* of the Mormon community? A *justifier* of the family's history? A *preserver* of the family's or the Mormon Church's traditions? A critic of Mormon culture? What other masks might these writers of family history wear—intentionally or unintentionally, forced or willingly? What evidence is there in these family histories of the writers' non-textual identity peeking through these fictionalized masks?

One way I investigate this interplay between the writer's rhetorically-produced *reflective* and *fictionalized* identities is by looking for evidence in these family histories of the Mormon Church's communal discourse appearing, shaping, and influencing how she rhetorically produces her identity in relation to the identities of the church, her family, and her readership. Christoph (2002) argues that in order to understand how these fictionalized representations function in arguments, "it is crucial to look closely at the particular ways in which writers establish authority for themselves through defining and redefining their evolving positions in particular communities—that we look not only at texts but also at material, social, and political contexts" (p. 668). Looking at the influence

of the communal discourse of the Mormon Church on the textual production of the author's identity (and all the identities involved) is one specific way I do this.

A Brief Primer on Mormon Discourse

The following is the briefest of sketches of discourse patterns of the Mormon Church and how they might influence the authors of Mormon-based family histories. Books, articles, and dissertations have been written on specific aspects of this discourse, so I won't assume to do the topic justice in a few paragraphs. What I hope, however, is to offer an introductory primer for those readers unfamiliar with the Mormon Church and its *official* discourse—that discourse established through scripture, public addresses, periodicals, and other writings delivered to the members from ranking church authorities speaking in an official capacity.

Shifts in the Mormon Church's official discourse over the last 150 years have been well documented. The following scholars have all offered wonderful discourse analyses of the Mormon Church: Laird (2008) on organic evolution, Shepherd and Shepherd (1984a) on commitment rhetoric, Shepherd and Shepherd (1984b) on ecclesiastical rhetoric, Smith (2007) on discourse patterns of the church, Souders (2009) on homiletics, Van Wagoner (1995) on transfiguration, and White and White (2005) on polygamy.

There is a disparity, at times, between the Mormon identity that is rhetorically produced within the official discourse of the church and the individual and familial identities produced by its members within these privately-published family histories.

Family histories written by descendants of Mormon polygamists, for example, can serve as sites of identity negotiation as the authors, whether members or not of the church, rhetorically produce their identity and the identity of the family against this larger Mormon identity.

A quick example of what I mean by the Mormon Church's official discourse influencing the rhetorical production of identity can be found in what I call the "tie over the shoulder" principle. Not long ago I asked a Mormon missionary his beliefs on Adam and Eve, whether he felt the biblical tale was literal or figurative. After explaining to him what *literal* and *figurative* meant, he said, "Do you want *my* answer or the *official answer*?" I told him I wanted both, and he then recited a few scriptures and what he felt would be a satisfying "Sunday-school answer." Then he put his tie on his shoulder, explaining it was his way of showing he was now speaking for himself and not as a missionary for the church, and told me what he *really* believed. What a wonderful site of the discursal production of identity. In one moment, he donned the mask of *spokesman* for the church, churning out official doctrine, and in the next moment, donning the mask of *personal philosopher*, articulating his interpretation of that doctrine. But while this young missionary made it quite clear when he was shifting masks (and which masks he was using), these moments of identity shifts aren't always so blatant.

There have been a few shifts in the 20th century in how the Mormon Church talks about its polygamous past and how it positions itself among the rest of the world. For instance, at the end of the 19th century, as the United States government effectively put the kibosh on polygamy, the church shifted its rhetoric from claiming you must *practice*

polygamy to gain its blessings to claiming that you must merely *believe* in polygamy. It's the *I would if I could but I can't so I won't, but I still get the credit, right?* mentality. In a similar fashion, the church at the start of the 20th century shifted from its rhetoric of "protect Zion from the government at all costs" to emphasizing that it was a law-abiding church with patriotic members (see White & White, 2005).

Even after these two shifts, the church for the next hundred years continued to preach that its members were a "peculiar" people who lived "*in but not of the world*" (Cullimore, 1974, emphasis added). Members were taught to obey the law and conform to society, but never at the cost of breaking the commandments. This rhetoric, however, came to a head in the last decade, as the church has taken some unsavory stances in such things as gay marriage, which has brought about a lot of unwanted scorn from the public. Church leaders at the turn of the century might have relished in the hot water, but leaders of today have turned a more PR-oriented cheek. Recently, the church has launched its *I'm a Mormon* ad campaign (eerily similar to the University of Phoenix's *I am a Phoenix* campaign), and is slowly shifting its rhetoric to one of *sameness* and *inclusion* (see Mormon.org). The Burkean message the church wants to send to the world is, "Look, we're the same as you! We drive Fords and pay our bills and watch ESPN." The church is shifting its official discourse from *a people apart* to *a people like any other*. Akenson (2007) says scholars have noticed this shift in the last decade and refer to it as the Mormon Church's "Protestantization" of its public message (p. 284).

The way in which Mormons construct an identity in light of the church's communal discourse is further complicated by the fact that even within the official

discourse of the church, there is ambiguity and contradiction. On the debate of organic evolution, for example, the church has only made two official statements. In 1909 the First Presidency (the presiding authority of the church) stated “these are the theories of man” and that the first and original man didn’t start as anything less than a man (Smith, 1909, p. 75). And in 1925, while not necessarily rescinding the claim, the church made its second and last official statement about evolution when it said, rather ambiguously, “our religion is not hostile to real science” (Grant, 1925, p. 1090). Over the past century, several high-ranking officials of the church have attempted to interpret these statements and add their opinions, but nothing official bearing the rubberstamp of the presiding leadership has come forth. As Laird (2008) demonstrates, even these unofficial statements from leaders lack consistency. Some argue that the very thought of evolution is an abomination, some argue that God used evolutionary processes to create humans, and some play the *if it were so important that we knew, God would tell us* card. For example, in 1997 Gordon B. Hinckley, the penultimate president of the church, stated in a speech to a group of Mormon college students, “People ask me every now and again if I believe in evolution. I tell them I am not concerned with organic evolution. I do not worry about it. I passed through that argument long ago” (p. 379).

Brigham Young University, a peculiar subculture of Mormonism, has published their position on the matter, saying that despite the Church’s unwillingness to take an official stance, the university will continue championing science by teaching organic evolution without reservation. In 1992, BYU put out a pamphlet for students outlining this stance, which is interesting since just four years previously, the president of the

church, Ezra Taft Benson, had written a book in which he encouraged parents to send their children to religious colleges, such as BYU, and to be involved in their education so they could “help expose some of the deceptions of men like...Charles Darwin” (p. 307).

These shifts in the church’s rhetoric—this shift in the discourse of *practice* to a discourse of *belief*, or the shift in the discourse of *exclusion* to the discourse of *inclusion*, or, in the case of evolution, a discourse of *ambiguity* mixed with a discourse of *certainty*—are reflected in the family histories produced by members of the church in late 20th century. This communal Mormon discourse is a reflection of the communal Mormon identity, and as I will demonstrate in the following chapters, ultimately influences how the authors of these family histories construct the various identities involved.

Alliances in Time and Memory: Rhetorical Construction of Reader

As I mentioned in the introduction, most people aren’t interested in reading the histories of other families unless they are looking for information relevant to their own family-history project. Thinking of this reality of a small, rather homogenous audience in terms of the *BISS*, if a writer of a family history knows that her audience almost assuredly will be a family member interested in the family’s history, then what more is needed to land safely in the sweet spot than merely *presenting the facts* (if such a thing were even possible)? There is more going on in the realm of audience-representation than assuming the audience consists primarily of interested relatives. Just as she constructs her own, the

writer rhetorically constructs a textual identity (or role) for her readers that they may choose to take on.

Perhaps the most notable rhetorical scholarship on the relationship between writer and reader is Ong's (1975) theory that writers, who most likely can never know their actual readership, must fictionalize their audience. Bakhtin (1986) complicates this theory by arguing that the audience, even when physically removed and unknowable, is still part of the utterance-creation process, since audience awareness leads to an anticipation of such things as rebuttals or confusion which ultimately affects the utterance (or, in this case, the creation of a family history)—he calls this *addressivity*, which he says is “the quality of turning to someone” (pp. 97-99). Burgess and Ivanič (2010) likewise argue that a reader will always influence the creation of a text and the creation of identity in the sense that the writer is always anticipating or predicting the shared values or beliefs (pp. 247-248).

It is from Bakhtin's idea of *addressivity* that Ede and Lunsford (1984) get their concept of *audience addressed* to refer to an actual, tangible reader, as opposed to *audience invoked*, which refers to fictionalized or rhetorically-constructed versions of the reader. In their 1996 follow-up article, Ede and Lunsford say that their original article “sets the scene—but then fails to explore—the ways in which audiences can not only enable but also silence writers and readers” (p. 815). How, I wonder, is the writer of a family history—in this case, a Mormon writing ostensibly with Mormon relatives in mind—*silenced* by her audience? In what other ways are her identity and the text influenced by this rhetorical construction of the reader's identity?

Berlin (1982) channels Bakhtin well when he argues for more socially-oriented, transactional conceptions of the rhetorical situation: "...the message arises out of the interaction of the writer, language, reality, and the audience. Truths are operative only within a given universe of discourse, and this universe is shaped by all of these elements, including the audience" (266). The audience—whether actual readers who can respond to the writer, or fictionalized and far-removed versions in the writer's mind—are shapers of discourse. The author can never truly know her audience nor hope to achieve Burkean identification with the wide array of individuals who may eventually read her text. What she can do, however, is rhetorically produce the identity of her audience, to create this role for them to step into. In the case of these family histories, the role she creates might be that of an interested family member or of a faithful Mormon or of a conscientious social historian, or it could be a mix of all three. Whether or not that is the non-textual identity of the reader is irrelevant: if the writer can create this role and get the reader to accept it, then she has moved them closer to the *BISS*.

Time and Kairos

An important factor in the construction of an audience identity in the rhetorical situation is *time*. The ancient concept of *Kairos*, this idea of knowing (or imagining) the disposition of the audience at a particular moment, is one aspect of how time influences the relationship between writer, reader, and subject. Texts, according to Burgess and Ivanič (2010) are *heterochronous artifacts* because they are written quickly but endure large spans of time (p. 233). The identities captured in the texts are like snapshots and can

only represent the writer during the brief time of writing, and the identities of the readers can change wildly between readings and between generations.

Burgess and Ivanič's work corroborate the notions of Bakhtin and others of the role and importance of *time* in theories of identity and representation; what I take from it, though, may not be at all what they intended. It has to do with the *authorial self*, which is this odd mix of the *non-textual* and *reflective textual* selves. The authorial self, they explain, only exists insofar as the reader knows something about the writer's *non-textual* self. This authorial or *reflective* self, I argue, exists in the realm of shared or communal knowledge.

To illustrate what this means, let me offer this example: if I write an Op-Ed about local leash laws and I adopt the persona of an upset dog owner (which I'm not), my authorial self can only exist in the text if someone knows I wrote it and knows something about me (like the fact that I don't own a dog). My *non-textual* identity would be *Mike who doesn't own a dog and doesn't care about leash laws*, my *authorial* self would be *Mike who's pretending to own a dog to make a point about over-complicated ordinances*, and my *textual* or *fictionalized* self would be *Mike who owns a dog and is upset that he has to use a leash*. If the reader isn't familiar with my *non-textual* identity, then to them only my *textual* or *fictionalized* self exists. In other words, the audience's relationship with or knowledge of me (as the writer) plays an important part in the rhetorical construction of my identity, and I am limited in how I construct the audience's identity by how much I know about them. I fictionalize my readers, and the more I know about their *non-textual* identity, the better job I can do of producing a *reflective textual* identity for

them, and the less I know about them, the more likely I am to produce a more *fictionalized* version of their identity, which in turn reduces the likelihood of Burkean identification occurring.

To put it simply, if I don't know anything about my readers, how can I appeal to them? The hope (in this scenario) is that my *fictionalized* audience who *doesn't* know me will accept the role I have created for them, the role of *equally angry dog owners*.

Together, we enter the *BISS* and commiserate about having to use leashes (whether or not this actually accomplishes anything is another story).

This relationship between a *non-textual* writer and a *non-textual* reader (and their textual counterparts) is important, especially when we begin to deal with distances in time, space, and communal knowledge. What is the effect on identity and memory when a family-history writer, for example, writes exclusively to a close, homogenous audience who all know her? When writer and reader know each other or at least share communal memories, much more can be *implied* or left unsaid. But as this familiarity is stretched and communal memory or knowledge is no longer shared between writer and reader, the things left unsaid can become forgotten. What happens when the family history is read several generations later when the readers no longer can know the *non-textual* identity of the author or the *non-textual* identities of the ancestors about whom she writes? What happens when someone outside of this intended audience reads the text?

I dedicate chapter three to this question of the link between identity production and communal memory by looking at the role and influence of communal and

generational memory on family history writing, especially in terms of the temporal, physical, and ideological proximity of the subjects involved.

From Fact to Mythology: Rhetorical Construction of Subject

"No two historians say exactly the same thing about the same given events, even though they are both telling the truth." – Walter J. Ong⁵

There is no dearth of scholarship in rhetoric, composition, history, anthropology, and creative nonfiction about the ethics of representation. In the last twenty years, there has been an abundance of scholarship that deals with some of the issues involved with writing about *other* people. As they apply to my study, there are questions of source accuracy (see Akenson, 2007), the ethics of remembering, such as selective memory, the unreliability of memory, and willful forgetfulness (see Choi 2008; Gergen, 2002), mythologizing (see Barthes, 1972; Pillar, 1986), romanticizing (see Jamieson & Campbell, 1982), the validity and effect of sources (see Salvio, 2001; Alu, 2010), the rhetorical recasting of identity (see Lambert, 2002; Stockton, 2008), and the familiarity between the reader, the writer, and the person being written about (see Burgess & Ivanič, 2010). Whatever terminology we use and however we frame these issues, it comes down to the question of how writers construct the identities of their subjects, these *others*, on this reflective-fictionalized spectrum.

⁵ 1975, p. 70.

Autobiographical Sources

How does the hero (the ancestor) in Bakhtin's dialogic model of the rhetorical situation actually become an agent and a co-creator in the rhetorical act? As Schuster (1985) describes it, Bakhtin modified Aristotle's enduring triangle by replacing the subject with "hero"—the writer doesn't communicate to an audience *about* the hero, but the two communicate together *with* the hero as a "genuine rhetorical force" (p. 595). The hero is always a subject, always an influencer of the discourse, and never an object to merely be written about.

One way that this occurs is through the use of the subject's own autobiographical sources. The family histories in this study incorporate such subject-generated autobiographical sources as journal entries, letters, and notes written by the ancestors. When authors draw upon these autobiographical texts to rhetorically construct their ancestors' identities, these ancestors become agents who are able to *act* and not merely be acted upon. They are able to wrestle away, to a small degree, some of the control from the writer in this identity-creation and meaning-making process. Salvio (2001) demonstrates how Anne Sexton was able to accomplish this by preparing her own letters and documents and other autobiographical materials before her death as a means of controlling to some degree how her persona would be constructed by future writers.

The use of autobiographical sources allows these ancestors to become co-shapers of their identity. Their image and identity isn't left wholly to interpretation and imagination. But even as these family historians draw from these autobiographical

sources, sometimes including several pages of journal entries at a time, these sources don't speak for themselves. There is always the imposition of the writer on the text: selective editing, commentary, juxtaposition of the autobiographical texts with other texts and images, and so on. Ultimately, then, the subjects have very limited control in the construction of their textual identity.

Non-Autobiographical Sources

The genres a writer draws upon for representing an ancestor contribute to the reflective-fictionalized persona. As with this representation of writers and readers, this could be either intentional or unintentional. Genre conventions have the power to affect identity creation and skew generational memory—eulogies and obituaries are, perhaps, the most conspicuous culprits, since they tend to highlight the best qualities of the deceased and minimize character flaws.

Other genres can lead to this fictionalized subject-representation, such as meager or inadequate census data or blurbs in newspapers. These moments are especially salient when the writers of these family histories *elaborate* or fill in the blanks or offer their commentary—oftentimes, these facts or reports are infused with the writer's and family's oral traditions and communal memories.

Another genre that factors into this study is the photograph. Photographs are an important and ubiquitous element of these family histories, and their use and placement, while seemingly innocent and haphazard, influences the fictionalizing of an ancestor's identity.

Myth and Mythmaking

It isn't uncommon for Mormon family historians to claim they have drawn their family line all the way back to Adam (yes, *that* Adam). Though none of the histories involved in this study make that claim, a great example is found at georgeqcannon.com, the family-history organization for George Q. Cannon, an early apostle of the Mormon Church, where the authors claim to have solidly traced the family line thirty-two generations, all the way back to Adam. This is the hubristic fictionalization and mythologizing of the family of which Akenson (2007) is critical. But mythmaking manifests itself in family histories in other ways.

Pillari (1986) defines family myth as “fairly integrated beliefs shared by all family members,” and he says these myths serve as a “‘family engineered canal,’ through which culture flows from one generation to the next” (p. 4). Family myth is a critical component of the conversion of communal memory to generational memory, even if they are, as Ferreira (1963) calls them, *reality distortions*.

In his research on the importance of myths and mythmaking in self-identity, McAdams (1993) discusses the individual-communal continuum on which all myths fall: at one end, the individual strives to “separate from others, to master the environment, to assert, protect, and expand the self,” and on the other end, the individual strives to “lose his or her own individuality by merging with others, participating in something that is larger than the self, and relating to other selves in warm, close, intimate, and loving

ways.” (p. 71). This mythmaking, he says, is a form of meaning-making (p. 165). It is a form of identification.

Writers of family history, to some degree, recreate their ancestors in their own image. Through reflective and fictionalized representation, they move them closer and closer to the *BISS*, where the identities of all involved—writer, reader, and ancestor—can overlap.

In the following chapters, I identify specific ways within these seven privately-published family histories that this occurs. In the next chapter, I look at the relationships between the rhetorical construction of identity, communal memory, and generational memory. In chapter four, I look more specifically at the relationship between author and reader, and I argue that the authors of these family histories construct a default Mormon identity for their readers, and I identify several ways in which they do this. In chapter five, I turn to the relationship between author and subject (ancestor), and I argue that these seven family histories are written in a eulogistic manner, meaning the ancestors' identities are rhetorically constructed in such a way as to valorize them and gloss over their attributes that don't correlate with the author's, the family's, and the Mormon Church's current discursively-constructed identity. Each of the seven family histories receive due attention in these chapters, though not all are considered in each topic; instead, I select the two or three family histories in each instance that best open or challenge the conversation.

CHAPTER III

GENERATIONAL ALLIANCES:

FAMILY HISTORY AS MATERIALIZED COMMUNAL MEMORY

In this and in each of the following chapters, I take care to consider the *entire* rhetorical situation and how all the parts interact. In this chapter, I focus primarily on the relationship between writer and reader, showing how these family histories serve as types of materialized communal memory and as vehicles of generational memory. I argue that an important element of the writer-reader relationship (and the textual construction of identity) is communal memory and knowledge. I also look at relationship of time, materiality, and proximity on the rhetorical situation.

I begin by looking at foundational research into communal and generational memory to show its link to the textual construction of identity. I then begin the actual analysis of privately-published family histories by looking at how the authors of these texts have articulated a rationale for their family histories based on this desire to preserve communal memory in the form of materialized generational memory. Specifically, I argue that these authors echo the official discourse of the Mormon Church by citing scripture as justification and impetus for their family history projects.

I continue the discussion of family histories as a form of materialized generational memory by looking at the role of these family histories in formal and informal family history societies. Many of these societies are now online ventures, and I look at the way

in which a turn to producing family histories online influences the rhetorical production of identity.

I conclude by looking at the silencing that occurs within these family histories, both print-based and online, when authors adhere to tacit western genealogical grammars—the *rules of the game*, so to speak, that the authors instinctively and uncritically follow.

Communal, Generational, & Materialized Memory

A central question to my research is how the rhetorical production of identity shapes and is shaped by *communal* and *generational* memory. Communal memory is a type of collective memory. It is rooted in shared experience, a sense of community, and group identity. Communal memory is continually evolving and moving with time—despite its endurance and stability, it is not static or fixed. If a snapshot could be taken of a community's collective memory, we would see an intricate web. If we were then able to fast-forward twenty years and take a similar snapshot, we would see a similar web. Perhaps it would be expanded to include new members of the group. It would certainly have evolved and changed as new experiences and knowledge and memories are added or forgotten or challenged. We could continue taking these snapshots every twenty years until several hundred years have passed and no one knows any of the original community members. In each of the snapshots, we get communal memory, and even though the original snapshot would look vastly different than the final snapshot, there are still vestiges of the original. Lines can be traced from one to the other. When we begin to look at these differences between the snapshots and attempt to account for the changes—

births, deaths, discourse practices, oral traditions, record-keeping technology, misinformation, mythmaking, displacement, fissures in the community, etc.—we begin to talk about *generational memory*. How do communal memories survive the generations? How is lived experience communicated to and imprinted on those who weren't there?

Perhaps the first known example of purposeful materialized generational memory comes between 40,000 and 170,000 years ago from the caves of Pinnacle Point, South Africa. For over a hundred thousand years, *Homo Sapiens*, like their European cousins—*Homo Neanderthalis*—had relied on the simplest of technology to provide their limited diet: the hand axe and the spear, which were used to bring down big game. But climate shifts resulted in the depletion of big game, and *Homo Sapiens* had to turn to other sources of high-protein food: namely, shell fish, which required no small amount of ingenuity to harvest. These early humans had to become savvy to the cycles of the tides and phases of the moon. The direct result was that knowledge, for the first time, was externalized in the form of symbolic marks or writing on the cave walls. *Homo Sapiens* used red ochre from ground up mollusk shells to record for themselves and communicate to others information relating to the tides. These ancient efforts to materialize generational memory had significant impacts on the evolution of humans in terms of cognitive, linguistic, and social development (see McBrearty & Stringer, 2007; Botha & Knight, 2009; Henshilwood *et al* 2002).

Despite the passage of thousands of generations and remarkable improvements in technology, there is still no perfect or objective mechanism of generational memory to adequately record and transmit collective or communal memory. I like to discuss

communal and generational memory in terms of water: communal memories are a lake holding—for the time being—the water, and generational memories are the river carrying the water elsewhere. Like the processes that change and diminish the state of the water—absorption, evaporation, consumption, pollution—communal memory is funneled into generational memory through discourse, both oral and written, and something is always lost, always changed.

Communal memory moves, more or less, laterally, while generational memory moves forward in time. Communal memory is constantly becoming generational memory, and generational memory is constantly becoming communal memory.

There are any number of vehicles of generation memory, and I categorize them in two groups: *materialized* and *non-materialized*. Textual artifacts, such as family histories and journals and photographs are materialized generational memory. Traditions and oral histories and myths are non-materialized. Both contribute to the funneling of communal memory into generational memory (and back into communal memory).

The concept of communal and generational memory is intricately linked to communal discourse and identity. Choi (2008) calls communal memory “an active site where heterogeneous meanings, identities, and powers compete for hegemony” (p. 371). It isn’t necessarily the most factual or accurate narrative that gains dominance and becomes the agreed-upon memory, but the narrative told with the most power or that which is most appealing or most culturally valuable to the group.

In any type of written discourse—not just family-history writing—a writer makes assumptions about what her readers know and need to know. Whether consciously or not,

the writer taps into this understanding of communal memory to decide how to proceed. Even if she doesn't truly *know* her audience, she shares the communal memory and makes decisions accordingly. This sense of communal memory affects generational memory (and thus, *future* communal memory).

If a writer leaves a lot of holes or gaps in the text trusting her supposedly like-minded readers will fill in the blanks, what happens when a readership removed by several generations is no longer able to fill in these blanks? What is lost in this future lake of communal memory because the river of materialized generational memory was so narrow or shallow?

Gergen (2002) contends that communal memories are social possessions. There is a social negotiation involved when groups decide *what happened*, what constitutes an accurate memory, and the best way to report it (p. 163). What counts as an intelligible memory, "will depend on the culture in which the report is made" (p. 163). One way I have found that this plays out in these family histories is when authors draw upon documents written by members of the Mormon Church to build profiles of ancestors. It also occurs when collaborators of a family history decide how a certain ancestor *should* be remembered, rather than how they actually remember him. In this sense, family histories aren't autobiographical but, as Gergen calls it, *sociobiographical* (p. 164).

In his personal narrative about the joy of receiving a privately-published family history from his father, Zinsser (2006) calls family historians "custodians of memory." *Custodian* shows the power the writer has on communal and generational memory. These

custodians can tidy things up, rearrange things, bury or hide things, or toss things out altogether. They have the power to valorize, demonize, or ignore to death their ancestors.

The power of these custodians isn't just in what documents they choose or how they present them. There is also a force behind the narratives they use to tell the stories of their ancestors. Eubanks (2004) argues that, "...memory functions through the telling of stories—that memories are formed in the social act of rehearsing stories of our experiences" (p. 36). My son, not long ago, rehearsed for me the story of when we sat on our couch and watched the twin towers collapse, and I had to remind him that he was only one year old at the time, and the memory wasn't really *his* memory, it was the rehearsal of our shared story. Likewise, the writers of these family histories have the power to influence communal memory through the stories they choose to share and how they share them. These stories become woven into the fabric of communal memory.

Books of Remembrance: The Scriptural Imperative of Family Histories

The terms *communal* and *generational memory* aren't explicitly stated in these seven family histories, but the anxiety of materializing communal memory into generational memory is felt throughout.

There has been a push within the Mormon Church over the last 60 years to preserve communal memory through purposeful tools of materialized generational memory—and this push is reflected in these family histories. Record keeping, especially of family lines and genealogies, has been touted in the church since its inception in 1830. But it wasn't until 1942 that the leaders of the church began to trumpet the importance of

maintaining written family histories as means of preserving communal memory. In the first published call for members of the Mormon Church to write their family histories, Elder John A. Widtsoe, a high-ranking official in the church (holding the office of apostle) wrote the following statement in *Church News*, the Mormon Church's weekly newspaper:

As I view it, in every family a record should be kept of the immediate family: the father, the grandfather, the great-grandfather—at least of those of whom we have a memory. That record should be the first stone, if you choose, in the family altar. It should be a book known and used in the family circle; and when the child reaches maturity and gets out to make another household, one of the first things that the young couple should take along should be the records of their families, to be extended by them as life goes on. It does no harm if there is duplication. There is a strength, an inspiration, and a joy in having such a record near at hand, to be used frequently, the story of our ancestors, their names, the times in which they lived, and something about their lives and accomplishments. Each one of us carries, individually, the responsibility of record keeping, and we should assume it. (p. 49)

And in 1974, Spencer W. Kimball, the president of the church, echoed the call for members to write and maintain their family histories:

I urge all of the people of this church to give serious attention to their family histories, to encourage their parents and grandparents to write their journals, and let no family go into eternity without having left their memoirs for their children, their grandchildren, and their posterity. This is a duty and a responsibility, and I urge every person to start the children out writing a personal history and journal. (p. 4)

The Mormon writers of six of these seven histories have taken these charges to heart (and even though the author of the Dalton-Whittaker family history doesn't self-identify as Mormon, his actions are no less in harmony with these charges). There are several instances, usually in the front or introductory material, where the authors express a desire to preserve their heritage or memories before they fade or are forgotten. But there

are two family histories where the authors directly cite a scriptural basis and imperative for creating their family histories: the Willis Family History and the Belnap Family History. The scriptural citation in the Willis history is brief and consists of just two verses of scripture in the introduction; the Belnap history, on the other hand, is extensive and occurs repeatedly throughout the 600-plus pages. Despite the difference in the amount of scriptural justification and pontification found within these two histories, both serve to create a markedly pro-Mormon, pro-family identity of the authors and readers.

In the following sections, I look specifically at how the authors of the Willis and Belnap family histories cite and use scripture in their texts and the affect this has on the rhetorical construction of identity.

The Willis Family History

In the introduction to her family history, the author dons the mask of *fulfiller of scripture* when she cites a passage from *The Book of Moses*⁶ as justification for writing and distributing the book:

⁶ *The Book of Moses* refers to a section in *The Pearl of Great Price*. It came about from the attempt of Joseph Smith, Jr.—founder of the Mormon Church—to revise the Bible. It is essentially a revision of the first several chapters of the *Book of Genesis*.

“And death hath come upon our fathers; nevertheless we know them, and cannot deny, and even the first of all we know, even Adam. For a book of remembrance we have written among us, according to the pattern given by the finger of God; and it is given in our own language (Moses 6:45-46)” (introduction, no page number given).

The author drops in this reference to Mormon scripture without explaining or clarifying it because of her sense of communal memory (or communal knowledge) with her intended Mormon audience. If this be the *non-textual* identity of her audience, then this constructed identity is *reflective* and will aid in Burkean identification; if, however, the reader isn't Mormon (or familiar with or sympathetic to Mormonism), then the constructed identity of the reader will be greatly *fictionalized* and decrease the likelihood of identification.

The author fictionalizes herself—even if somewhat reflectively—by donning her *faithful Mormon* mask. Communal memory makes the author's work easier yet more restrained. She doesn't have to explain every Mormon-based reference. She can make passing or obscure reference to something and trust her readers will get it.

Beginning her family history with this scripture reveals to us the author's intended audience and some of her motivations for writing the book. Since there is no explanation given as to what *The Book of Moses* is, it can be assumed that she envisions her readers as not only being familiar with the scriptural reference, but potentially in agreement—she doesn't position her readers as passive affiliates of the Mormon Church but as practicing members who find value in beginning their family history with scripture. In a sense, she invites her audience to take on the textually constructed role to be a “scriptural people” like herself. It is important to note, however, that this character mask isn't a radical

departure from what the author says is her non-textual identity. In an interview, the author self-identified as a faithful Mormon and firm believer in modern-day scripture. The author offers the scriptural reference with no explanation as to its origins and with no other attempts of explaining her reasoning for including it or her opinions about it. The scripture becomes the textual embodiment of her identity. It is her mask she dons for this particular audience, for this particular purpose.

No matter how perspicuous an author is with her words and descriptions, something is always skewed and changed in her attempt to transcribe her non-textual identity into text. Therefore, the author here dons this mask, just as all the authors of these family histories—as I'll point out at various times—continually don certain masks in their attempts, be they intentional or not, to move their readers and their subjects into the *BISS*.

The Belnap Family History

Within the printed Belnap family history (1974), the author makes an interesting move in his scriptural justification for writing the family history. He cites two stories from *The Book of Mormon*, one involving a group of people who sailed from Jerusalem to the Americas *with metal plates*⁷ to keep records (and who subsequently thrived), and a

⁷ Mormon tradition holds that the ancient inhabitants of the American continent—i.e. the descendants of Israel—recorded their history by scratching what Joseph Smith calls “reformed Egyptian” symbols onto thin sheets of brass and gold, thus making them durable through the elements and the generations.

group who sailed to the Americas *without* metal plates to keep records (and who subsequently imploded). For the group that thrived, “this book of remembrance served as an instrument for preserving their culture” (p. 12). He cites these two histories as “proof” of his claim that a family history can help unify a family and protect them from “crumbling into factions of self-seeking individuals” (p. 12).

This anxiety of the unraveling family is a recurring theme in the printed Belnap family history. The author calls for readers to use his family history and to create their own, as needed, as means for “receiving from the past and transmitting heritage to the future” (p. 8). In the introduction to his text, he argues that writers of family history are operating under a two-fold obligation: “first [we must] collect from our immediate ancestry their stories so as to preserve them for ourselves and our posterity. Second, we must document our own that they may also be passed on as a legacy” (p. viii). He then says he hopes the book “will be used as a Book of Remembrance similar to those of older days—a type of ‘scripture’ to a specific family and lineage” (p viii). He wants readers to “draw upon it frequently as a resource for...Family Home Evenings⁸ and other family get-togethers” (p. viii). He concludes by saying that the stories within the family history

⁸ Family Home Evening is an informal program of the Mormon Church wherein members are encouraged but not required to dedicate an evening each week, usually Monday, to be together as a family. While there is no mandated format for Family Home Evening, traditionally it consists of an opening prayer, a short gospel message, and an activity. Church policy prohibits any other church-sponsored activities on Mondays so as not to interfere with Family Home Evenings, eve to the point that all Mormon temples across the world are closed on Mondays.

(many of which I will discuss in greater detail in chapter five, such as how the family is descended from the Norse god Odin) are “rich and are capable of making traditions which will unite generations in a time in which families are being pulled apart” (p. viii).

The mask the author dons is that of a *preserver of family values and traditions*, and the role he creates for his reader is that of someone who likewise values family, but may not fully appreciate the dangers that families currently face.

The author of the printed Belnap history says in the introduction to the text that his history has a greater purpose than recording the family’s genealogy—there is a scripturally-based imperative he feels to write the history and share it with the family:

This book is only indirectly a genealogical volume of our ancestry. It is more than just a history of those whose blood lines converge on us. Their stories collectively and individually become the story of every man's pilgrimage through despair and life darkness, through suffering and anguish, through bitterness and sorrow, through doubt and cynicism, through rebellion and hopelessness to the feet and the understanding of God. This search for God and the discovery of the mechanism of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for each person the final revelation and the only thing to bring meaning in life for men. Without this search for, revelation of, and change by the Christ can man be lifted to the noble level and purpose for which he was created. This can only be achieved within the frame work of family relationships. Without Christ and family man lives only as an animal, without comfort, wisdom, and eternal purpose, and his life is futile, no matter his station or power or birth. (p. vi)

These authors of the Belnap and Willis family histories seek to control how communal memory will be transformed into generational memory. They justify their efforts and take on a unique Mormon identity by citing Mormon scripture and the words of past presidents of the church. They aren’t just explaining to the reader why they have done this, but they are positioning the reader as a co-keeper of this communal memory and potential shaper and transmitter of generational memory. They are instilling in the

reader this imperative to textualize and preserve these memories. By drawing on these markedly Mormon-laced sources to make their argument, these authors don the masks of *faithful Mormon, preservers of heritage, and champions of genealogy*. Likewise, they fictionalize the readers as people who can or should want to someday wear these same masks, but whether or not these readers accept these roles (or whether or not this is a *reflective* identity) is out of the authors' hands.

Family History Societies

Privately-published family histories often serve as a hub for family-history societies or family organizations. Of the seven histories chosen for this study, four make direct reference to their role in the family's organization: Pratt, Belnap (print and online), and Dalton-Whittaker. Before the advent of the Internet, it was common to find a family-organization's bi-laws, charters, officers, contact information, and other organizational material within the family history (such as Belnap, 1974). It is even more common to find Internet-based family histories that trumpet themselves as the family organization's hub. I will discuss this shift to online venues in greater detail in the following section—what's important to note here is that there has been a long-standing relationship between family organizations (both formal and informal) and the production of privately-published family histories. Even when they are produced as solo ventures, there is a great deal of cooperation involved in their production. How the authors view themselves and their role within these family organizations can impact the rhetorical production of identity within

these histories. Does the author, for example, position himself as a spokesman for the family? Does he imagine his readers exclusively as members of this organization?

Family history societies and family organizations (the two terms can be used more-or-less interchangeably) differ from *families*. Families, as it were, are the whole kit-and-caboodle. Whether you like it or not, if you're born or adopted into a family, you're part of that family. A family history society, on the other hand, consists of *select* members of a family. Usually, they are on a volunteer basis, but occasionally, as is the case with the Pratt Family Organization, large family history societies have bylaws for selecting, electing, and sustaining officers. Those involved in family history societies generally have a sense of their heritage and a desire to bolster the efforts of channeling communal memory into effective forms of generational memory, such as the creation and dissemination of privately-published family histories.

Rhoads (1979) notes a boom in interest in family history societies in 1977, after the "Roots" television series. "Millions of Americans became intensely aware of their own lack of knowledge about their personal and communal histories" (p. 9). Shortly thereafter, he notes, President Carter said that "everyone should know his roots in this plastic throwaway world because to know one's family and community gives one a sense of the permanence of the society in which we live" (p. 10). Thirty or so years have passed since this boom, but I would argue the interest hasn't decreased, especially now with vast improvements in technology.

As Newens (1981) notes, family history societies are rapidly growing as people sidestep the narratives told to them by professional historians and attempt to take control

of their ancestry. In speaking about ancestors formerly marginalized or vilified (referring to the pre-20th century plebian classes of Britain), he says that “such lives are no longer regarded as they were by most members of previous generations, and even today by many, as of no possible interest or importance—to be forgotten or even concealed out of shame” (p. 155). The growth of respect for family history, he says, is “inevitably associated with a growth in self-respect” (p. 155).

The three family histories I look at here approach the family organization in unique ways. The Pratt Family Association (Grow, 2011) is extremely organized and one of the oldest formal family societies in the United States. The Belnap Family Organization began with the creation of the privately-published family history in the seventies (see Belnap, 1974) and is now organized with elected officers, organization bylaws, newsletters, and an extensive website. The Dalton-Whittaker Family Organization is very informal and has only two officers: the site’s creator and his cousin, who are self-appointed and who have put no mechanisms in place (that I can find) to locate and train their successors.

The Pratt Family History

Despite the recent surge in family organizations, some are quite old. The Jared Pratt Family Association was founded in 1881 by Orson Pratt, an apostle⁹ in the Mormon Church, “to engage in ancestral research, as well as to keep track of the Pratt descendants” (main page). The website’s author estimates that Jared Pratt has over 40,000 descendants, 26,000 of which have been identified by the family organization. Orson Pratt, upon establishing the family organization, gave this charge:

This record is written, to be handed down to future generations, not only to preserve the genealogy of my forefathers, but to collect and register therein, from generation to generation, the dates of births, marriages, places of residence and deaths of all the descendants of my four brothers and myself. . . . It is to be hoped that all our posterity of whatever branch or name will be sufficiently interested to preserve their genealogy to the latest generation. (main page)

The authors of the family history are quick to point out that Orson Pratt’s prophetic words have certainly come to pass, as the Internet is now making it possible for this vast lineage to connect with their extended family and trace their own collateral¹⁰ lines.

⁹ In the hierarchy of the Mormon Church, the Prophet is the president, and there are fourteen apostles below him (two of which are his counselors, the other twelve forming the *Quorum of the Twelve*). A close approximation would be that of the Pope and his cardinals.

¹⁰ A lineage other than the traditional patrilineal (or father-son) line that follows a single name—in this case, “Pratt.”

The Belnap Family History

The Belnap Family Organization was established in 1963 for “preserving, perpetuating, and promoting a greater understanding and appreciation of their tremendous pioneer heritage” (2011, main page). The authors boast on the main page that in 1968, the organization was recognized by the Family History Department of the Mormon Church as “one of the best-organized family organizations in existence.” The website takes over as the family organization’s hub. Previously, that honor belonged to the printed family history (Belnap, 1974). Now, the printed history is just one of many thousand PDFs housed on the website.

The author of the printed Belnap history (1974) says that family organizations (and in this case, their textual byproduct, the privately-published family history) serve “as a means for bringing the family to Christ...to more effectively advance the individual members toward eternal life” (p. 5). The author, as the family historian and as an elected member of the family organization, uses the family history to establish not only the clear identity of the extended family as active, faithful members of the Mormon Church, but to rally other members of the family to take up the charge of maintaining that identity: “We have provided the basis whereby we can keep in contact with our families, and our goal must be continually kept in mind *to see that all of our family are encompassed within the framework of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*” (p. 8, emphasis added). He concludes by lauding the family organization and its potential in bringing its members together: “By working in our family organization, all who have participated have become ‘family oriented’ and feel that they are part of an eternal operation” (p. 9).

In the Mormon community, family organizations aren't just about connecting the present family with each other and familiarizing them with their ancestors, but about connecting *all* generations of the family: past, present, *and* future. The byproduct of this effort might be the privately-published family history, but the objective is more spiritually and *eternally* grounded: this idea that these families will continue to exist as a coherent social unit in the next life. Mormons write about their long-deceased ancestors not just to learn some interesting facts about them but in the hope of actually meeting them some day. There is a sense of duty instilled in Mormons to "save" their ancestors who didn't have the chance to hear the gospel in their lifetime, so they scratch out their genealogy and conduct "temple work." In a nutshell, it goes like this: Mormons believe that a person must be baptized by proper authority by immersion (being completely dunked under water) in order to gain Eternal Life (i.e. the chance not only to live *with* God but to actually become a god someday). Mormons feel a sense of duty to make this baptism by immersion available to everyone who has ever lived, so they construct temples, and members of the church work tirelessly to gather genealogical information for their ancestors, and then they get baptized by proxy for them. The whole thing is a bit more complicated than that, but what's important to understand is that a great deal of the genealogical zeal found in Mormonism is driven by this imperative to find the information of deceased ancestors and perform this temple work on their behalf.

Or at least that's the ideal—the *official* stance on the matter—though individual members react differently to this notion of the eternal family and what it takes to foster it. The author of the Belnap family history wants his family to take action just as he has. He

is tireless in his call to readers to become family historians like himself. In the introduction, he pleads for his readers to create their own "sub-family" histories to "fulfill his assignment as part of the Four-Generation¹¹ program of the church" and says that even though he has done much of the family's genealogy, "by our doing all of your work for you we would deprive you of tasting the sweet fruits of genealogical work and involvement" (p. vii). He wears the mask of *competent and successful family historian* and he creates the role for a reader who has the desire and potential to do what he has done, but who still needs some prodding and encouragement. He calls his family history a proto-type for each family's "more personalized Book of remembrance involving the more immediate generations of your family" (p. vii). The purpose of the text, among other things, is to recruit leaders among the rising generation to take over as officers of the family organization—and not just anyone, but family members who have taken on and will continue this distinct Mormon identity.

The Dalton-Whittaker Family History

The Dalton-Whittaker Family Association is a subgroup of the overarching Dalton Genealogical Society, which is self-described as a "single-name" family history society—meaning that the central point of identification in this history is the name

¹¹ In short, all members of the church are encouraged to create a four-generation family tree and submit it to the church's genealogical archives.

Dalton. The Dalton Genealogical Society includes links to these smaller, localized family history societies, such as that of Dalton-Whittaker (i.e. the family history used in this study). The Dalton Genealogical Society is massive. More than anything, it's a consortium of these smaller family history societies. It's at the level of this Dalton-Whittaker Family Association that the family's history is being written and identity being shaped.

Unlike the Belnap family organization with its extensive bylaws and elected officers, the Dalton-Whittaker Family Association has only two *official* members: R. G. Dalton and his cousin A. R. Whittaker. There is no mention of who will continue this project when these two self-elected family patriarchs can no longer continue the project, though there are several petitions throughout for family members to continue submitting their own material. Unlike the author of the printed Belnap family history (1974), who constructs the identity of his readers as future family historians who will someday take his place, the author of the Dalton-Whittaker family history constructs the identity of a reader who might be interested in reading about and possibly helping the writer preserve the family's memories, but not as one who will eventually take over this family-history project. On his mission-statement page he asks readers to submit their photos and documents to him, because "time is running out on your old media. Don't let your

memories fade away!”¹² He doesn’t position these readers as *future family leaders in training*, but as somewhat passive readers and contributors.

What emerges from looking at these three family histories in the context of (in)formal family history societies and family organizations is the realization that these texts aren’t written in a vacuum. These aren’t solo ventures by writers who want to scratch out their history and then pass it along to whoever will read it. Rather, these are collaborative and cooperative ventures that shape the way in which the identity of the family is produced. Perhaps some authors have wrestled all the power and authority they want to write the family’s history in the way they see fit, and perhaps they would never admit to having to answer to anyone, but it is clear through this language of family organizations in each of the family histories that there is due consideration of the larger communal identity of the readers at the forefront of these authors’ minds.

Genre-Based Silence and Genealogical Marginalization

A form of silencing prominent in these family histories is what Huckin (2002) calls *genre-based silencing*: those that are governed by genre conventions, such as the over-valorization of the deceased in eulogies—or, as I’ll demonstrate—the incorporation of tacit genealogical grammars within these genres.

¹² http://www.daltwhitt.org/?page_id=2

Akenson (2007) in his extensive study of Mormon genealogy has concluded that Mormon family historians, for the most part, follow a common genealogical grammar, such as using *couple* to mean any man and woman who produces offspring, *line* or *lineage* instead of *pedigree* to refer to an ancestral line, *polygamy* for plural marriage instead of the more accurate term *polyandry*, and the incorporation of both *patrilineal* and *matrilineal* lines (pp. 88-94).

Akenson notes the imbalance, however, of dedication given to patrilineal over matrilineal lines in Mormon genealogy. This same trend is evident in all seven of the family histories in this study: all follow a very clear patrilineal line. Matrilineal lines within these histories are *incidental* or *collateral*, and they are most commonly incorporated to show connections to notable persons not found within the direct patrilineal line. That these family histories adhere to a patrilineal grammar isn't a surprising revelation when one looks at the *ego* or central ancestor in each history: Joseph Parry (polygamist and Mormon pioneer), Gilbert Belnap (polygamist and Mormon pioneer), Robert Willis (member of the Mormon Church), Jared Pratt (Mormon pioneer, father of several polygamists and Mormon leaders), and James Bullock (polygamist and Mormon pioneer).

To understand why these authors might favor these patrilineal lines, it is important first to clarify the difference between *genealogy* and *family-history writing*. These family historians use genealogy as a source of data—a backbone for their history. While these family histories include and incorporate these genealogies—often in the form of family trees or kinship charts—it would be impossible to include every line of descent

within the history—especially in terms of narratives, biographies, vignettes, journals, letters, and so on. The number of ancestors and surnames multiplies exponentially with each preceding generation—going back twelve generations, for example, will yield over 4,000 direct-line ancestors (i.e. parents, grandparents, great-grandparents). When you factor in such things as re-marriage, children, brothers and sisters, and multiple wives, the numbers become astronomical.

The imperative to keep a family history manageable could be one explanation for this imbalance of patrilineal genealogies. All seven histories of this study center on *single-name kinship*. Single-name kinship, just as it sounds, is a type of genealogy where one traces her line through several generations using a single name as the unifying criteria. In western cultures, single-name kinship usually produces one thing: a patrilineal genealogy. Choosing up front to follow one line with a shared surname can make it much easier to decide who to include and who to cut. And then, when the author wants to make connections to certain ancestors who don't fall in that line (such as royalty), they can use these collateral or matrilineal lines to get there.

But there is more to single-name kinship than simplifying the decision-making process. There is an odd correlation in all of these family histories between the family's identity and the family name. The authors of the Parry family history mention heraldry—the study of a family's coat of arms—as a driving force behind many genealogy projects (introduction, no page number). The study of heraldry is by nature a patrilineal affair. In most western cultures, in order to study one's family line within a single surname, one must follow the patrilineal line from father to father as the name is passed down. Of the

fifteen family histories I analyzed in my previous pilot study, every one of them followed this single- name patrilineal line. Why this obsession with a name? How does a surname unify a family? What are the consequences of mapping out a family's history and lineage based on a name? One obvious consequence is a short supply of truly matrilineal family histories. To research one's mother and then her mother and then her mother and so on means incorporating a slew of surnames. Doing so makes a grammar of descent explicit, for now there is no argument but that one is selecting himself or herself as the genealogical ego and tracing the family line back in time. By tracing one's patrilineal line, on the other hand, one can mask (and I argue this is done subconsciously) his or her attempt to trace a genealogy of descent under the guise of a genealogy of ascent.¹³

In the Dalton-Whittaker family history, the author places a great deal of emphasis on the name "Dalton." In the site's mission statement, he even admits that the history is dedicated to more than just their family and ancestors, but to *all people named Dalton*, with or without relation: "There are many pages & categories for these two families, who

¹³ Wallace *et al* (1960) note that some cultures, such as Hawaiian, favor genealogies of *ambilineal descent*, where a person—the genealogical *ego*—is free to determine her lineage through either the matrilineal or patrilineal line, or through a combination of both. While all of the histories in this and my pilot study follow the western tradition of patrilineal descent, perhaps it would be appropriate, given this propensity to occasionally branch off to show collateral connections, to say these histories adhere to a grammar of ambilineal descent. But I won't, since ambilineal implies a balance, and I contend that each of these histories begins and ends with the patriline, and matriline are merely supplemental.

are based in Utah and other parts. It will also tell histories & stories about other Dalton families around the world not related to the Utah Dalton–Whittaker families.”¹⁴

Why this anxiety among the western world to unify one’s family history with a single name, with one unbroken patrilineal line to a prominent male ancestor? Why does a ten-generation genealogy of a shared name feel more substantial and unifying than ten generations of disparate “maiden” names?

Bloch (1989) argues that “something fundamental changed in the articulation of sexual difference” in the early centuries of Christianity (p. viii). This “enduring break” from previous Platonic, Stoic, Jewish, Gnostic, and Roman traditions has to do with “linking of the feminine with the aesthetic—the decorative, the ornamental, and the materially contingent” and has become “one of the deep-seated mental structures of the West,” which has “served historically to define woman as being outside of history and thus to naturalize the notion of the female as secondary, less essential” (p. vii).

Elsewhere, Bloch (1987) argues that textually, women have historically been portrayed as “secondary, collateral, supplemental” to the traditional, patriarchal histories (p. 13).

It is no mere coincidence that in the grammar of western genealogy, especially as articulated by the Mormon family historians in this study, that matrilineal lines are referred to as *collateral* lines. The author of the Belnap family history (1974), for example, uses the terms *grandmother* and *collateral* interchangeably when referring to

¹⁴ http://www.daltwhitt.org/?page_id=906

these lines. Echoing these deep-seated mental structures of western civilization, these “secondary, collateral, supplemental” lines are only included to illustrate interesting stories and anecdotes, to fill in gaps when the patrilineal lines lead to a dead end, or to show connections to more prominent ancestors ancillary to the main patrilineal line.

In reading the Joseph Parry family history, it was no small point of confusion to remember which child or grandchild belonged to which wife of Joseph. The wives are mentioned in Joseph’s substantial biography, and each has her own two-to-three page biography, but in every other instance, such as the brief biographies of the children and grandchildren of Joseph Parry, there is rarely any mention as to which wife they belonged, causing the reader to continually flip to the genealogy charts to remember. They are referred to, at times, as Joseph’s fifth son, or Joseph’s first daughter. While this certainly could be incidental to the family history not being written as a seamless narrative like a memoir or biography (i.e. a lot of raw data is presented in a relatively short space and readers are expected to hold the information together with the glue of their own communal memory and knowledge), the argument can also be made that most of the attention in the history goes to Joseph Parry and his sons. The wives at every turn, while spoken of with reverence and affection, are supplemental. They are mere details to the bigger, grander stories of Joseph and his priesthood-bearing sons and grandsons.

The Dalton-Whittaker history follows the same pattern, though the author attempts to rectify this by including a page entitled “The History of Some of our Dalton

Wives.”¹⁵ But even with this attempt to valorize the women in his family’s history, they are still physically separated from the main history, relegated and cloistered—as it were—to the margins, to this page where they serve almost as an afterthought, an appendage.

While all of the family histories in this study follow a clear patrilineal line that favors male ancestors, the Belnap family history (1974) offers some surprisingly overt arguments about the importance of the male line. In the first three chapters, the author talks repeatedly about the patriarchal order and the priesthood (i.e. the authority reserved exclusively for males to perform certain acts in the Mormon Church, such as baptizing new members).

To begin, he quotes two early presidents of the Mormon Church—John Taylor and Brigham Young—to show the natural order of a male leading over his family. President Taylor says that “family unity begins when a father holding the priesthood and having participated in the *new and everlasting covenant of celestial and eternal marriage*¹⁶ has a right to officiate in the patriarchal order as the patriarch of his own family” (p. 5). He then says that Brigham Young “gives us the pattern as follows” for a unified family:

¹⁵ http://www.daltwhitt.org/?page_id=725

¹⁶ I could write a whole dissertation on what this means. In a nutshell, it means a man is married to a woman (or multiple women) in a temple by someone holding the priesthood.

All the families of the earth will be governed as one family and every man will preside over his own family. I will show you the order of the Kingdom as regards to my own family; one of my sons is placed here, another there, another there, and so on. Yet I shall be their ruler, their savior and governor. They would have innumerable posterity, but all would join in harmony with my counsel; I should console, comfort, and advise them all. This is the order of the Kingdom, that men shall rise up as Kings and Priests of God. (pp. 5-6)

The author follows up this quote by saying that “at the head of any family organization stands a father. He is the head of his house; he is the patriarch of his posterity. Such a natural and obvious focus in this dispensation of the history of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is our own patriarchal convert ancestor, Gilbert Belnap.” (p. 5). He says this book centers on Gilbert because “through whom the full blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its eternal covenant are fulfilled, pertaining not only to our ancestry, but to his posterity” (p. 5). He says that he “presided over us here on the earth and will undoubtedly have that presiding role in the eternities to come. He based his role as the father of his posterity, using the principles of righteousness and the virtues of godliness. He followed the pattern of the Prophet Brigham Young, with whom he was closely associated” (p. 5).

It’s worth noting that these proclamations of God’s sanctification of the patriarchal leadership of a family is accompanied by a full-page photo of a man, probably in his fifties, wearing a white shirt and tie, reading glasses, balding, sitting on a chair and reading from a book with a warm smile while fourteen women and children (and a couple men in their twenties) sit around him and listen (see figure 5.3). There is no caption to explain who this man is or what the circumstances are, but taken together with these passages, the interpretations are rather limited: this is the author’s ideal family unit: a

father teaching his wife and his children the written word—preferably *his* written word (p. 7).

Later, in the same section, the author declares that “there is no finer thing to belong to than a patriarchally-oriented family and it will be so always and forever” (p. 11). When men and women adhere to and preserve this ideal within these written family histories, they “duplicate [Christ’s] saviorship” by sharing “not only the temporal, but the spiritual blessings of eternity...great, therefore, is the responsibility to pass from generation to generation the role of the patriarchal family order” (p. 663).



Figure 3.1: Model Patriarchal Family, Belnap (1964), p. 7

The author does take care to address the role of women within their ancestry: “It is also interesting to note in the history of our ancestors, particularly within the framework of New World civilization, how the role of woman and mother was elevated to its full and dignified place in the human interpersonal relationship” (p. 86). He then extends this to show the even more elevated role of these Belnap women as members of the Mormon Church:

the pioneers that gave us such splendid ideals in the sanctity of the home and the dignity of labor, and the exaltation of motherhood; back to the Pilgrim fathers and mothers who established in this land of America, the Christian home, the sacred trinity of civilization — the father, the mother, and the child. (p. 87)

The author applauds the early members of the church, particularly the pioneers who were ahead of their time in realizing the sanctity and value of women. He says that the pioneers—particularly his ancestors—“came to realize that manhood, womanhood, and the sanctity of the home were the cohesive powers which mean prosperity and perpetuity in the earth” (p. 87). He attempts to valorize womanhood and give due credit to the women in his history, but he does so by showing how they fit into, support, and sustain the patriarchal order. Women in his history are consistently applauded for keeping clean homes, for raising healthy children, for showing faith in God, for showing devotion to the Mormon Church, for supporting their husbands, for following their (male) church leaders, and for persevering without complaint in the harsh pioneer conditions. They are never applauded for striking out on their own, for resisting their male-dominated culture, for becoming educated, for having careers, or for challenging the status-quo. If these

women exist within the family, they are not written about—or at least not portrayed in this light—in the Belnap family history. In fact, they are not written about in any of the family histories within this study.

The identities of these ancestors are fictionalized as women who happily play well their part in support of their men. How does a conscientious reader, then, find herself empathizing with this fictionalization in a moment of identification? The power of this identification doesn't come in the author's ability to rationalize or argue for this personification, but in his ability to silence or ignore any counter argument. How can one argue that these women were noble and great after all they went through? Who would dare speak ill of them? This goes back to my original argument that the author isn't constructing the reader's identity as that of a critic or academic; instead, the reader is positioned as *faithful Mormon, member of the family, and future genealogist*. She is imbued with this Belnap identity, with the Mormon identity. She is a better person for this, and this is because of the great men and women of her family history. This fictionalized reader is one who wouldn't dare sully the name of the family or the church by questioning this. To do so would be to dis-identify with the family, to fall into that group of "self-seeking individuals" who the author says are already bringing about the destruction of the family (p. 12). To not get sucked into the *BISS*, to not accept this fictionalized role offered by the author, the reader must consider for a moment what's really at stake when ancestors are selectively fictionalized.

Rhetorical silencing occurs in these histories by many tactics and for many reasons, and while it is difficult (and perhaps unfruitful) to prove intention, I contend that

it occurs both intentionally and innocently. And perhaps that is where the real danger lies: that it occurs so innocently and unknowingly and will thus be perpetuated innocently and unknowingly in future family histories. These texts, as materialized generational memory, influence future communal memory, and these textual silences become a type of communal amnesia—an amnesia from which there may be no recovery.

CHAPTER IV

PATHWAYS TO IDENTIFICATION:

CULTURAL RITUAL AND THE MORMON AUDIENCE DEFAULT

This chapter is an extension of the previous chapter in that I continue to focus on the relationship between reader and writer, though the third corner of the triangle—the subject—will begin to factor more and more into my analysis of the rhetorical situation.

Here, I analyze how the family identity of these histories are shaped and produced by the communal discourse and identity of the Mormon Church. The default audience identity in these histories, I argue, is a reader who is pro-Mormon and pro-family, though this default is challenged by the readership projected by the author of the Dalton-Whittaker family history, who neither self-identifies as Mormon nor seems to construct his audience as Mormon.

Constructing the audience identity in this way, I argue, leads to Burkean identification through the pathway of *cultural ritual*. Another specific rhetorical tool I isolate in this chapter that follows this pathway to identification is *ancestral valorization* through the authors' continual emphasis of blue-blood and black-sheep subjects.

The Rhetorically-Constructed Mormon Audience

Of the seven family histories in this study, six are written with a Mormon audience in mind. The only exception to this is the Dalton-Whittaker family history,

though the author recognizes in the introduction that many of his ancestors (and therefore the current family) were Mormon. At every turn, these family histories mention common Mormon themes, such as polygamy, Utah pioneers, genealogy, baptism, baby blessings, and temple work. But the author of the Dalton-Whittaker family history, the lone non-Mormon writer, is the only historian that takes the time to elucidate these concepts to readers who may not be familiar. Perhaps this is done in an attempt to create the reader in his own non-Mormon image, or perhaps it is because he doesn't take reader's familiarity with Mormon discourse and identity for granted.

Is it hubris for the authors of these other six family histories to assume that all of their readers, both present and future, will be active members in the Mormon Church? Or is the subtler implication not so much that they will be members, but that they *should* be? In order to truly (and by default) be a Belnap, or a Parry, or a Pratt, must one also be a Mormon? What happens when the reader can only partially identify with the writer and the extended family? Is the reader alienated when, say, they acknowledge their blood kinship to Gilbert Belnap, Utah pioneer, but not to his polygamous ways or his beliefs in the Mormon Church? What does it mean when the author assumes that his or her religious kinship to the central ancestor should be the default kinship held by all generations of the extended family? Does it create fissures between, say, the Mormon Belnaps and the non-Mormon Belnaps?

In terms of Burkean identification, the six family histories that continually invoke Mormon discourse and bring up these common themes of Mormon culture without clarification bring the reader and author closer to the moment of identification by means

of what Burke calls *cultural ritual* (1973). By assuming that the reader is familiar with and values these cultural rituals—that they share this language and capital—the author invokes this Mormon culture as the unifying common denominator between all subjects at stake. This, I argue, may very well occur between the non-textual and reflective identities of each subject involved: the author could very well be a faithful member of the church, acting—as it were—as a spokesman for the church, and the reader may also self-identify with mainstream Mormonism, and conjuring up images of an ancestor who aptly reflects the Mormon way of life serves to bring these three subjects together into the *BISS*. The rhetorically constructed identities of these three subjects, however, may not be *reflective* at all of the *non-textual* identities. The non-textual author, for example, might not self-identify with the church, but for the sake of saving face with family members will play the part of an active, worthy church member who knows well the terminology and cultural traditions. The reader may be a distant relative who isn't a member of but is still familiar with the Mormon Church, and who is able to read the history with that knowledge and understand where the author is coming from. And the ancestor might have cared very little about the Mormon Church, but all the author knows of her—or chooses to portray of her—comes from a very Mormon-centric eulogy. In this scenario, each subject's *non-textual* identity falls well outside the *BISS*, and only their *fictionalized* identities overlap.

There are similarities in the *fictionalized* readers' identities constructed in all seven of these family histories. None attempt to appeal to a general audience. All invoke an audience of interested family members, and to a lesser degree, a readership of

potential family-historians. Six of the seven construct a readership of like-minded Mormons. None, however, are directed to an academic audience or an audience of potential critics. If these be the *non-textual* identities of the readers, they are not rhetorically constructed as such; instead, we find only this *fictionalized* audience of mainstream-Mormon family members (who should be) interested in genealogy.

While all of the six histories created by Mormon authors incorporate a communal Mormon discourse and therefore a markedly Mormon identity of author, reader, and ancestor, the three I want to focus on in this section are the Belnap (1974), Bullock, and Willis family histories. I look at the way the first two seem to fall back onto the Mormon identity default of its intended readers, and in the third history, I look at assumptions the author makes about her audience's *non-textual* identity beyond the Mormon default.

The Belnap Family History

When the author of the Belnap family history preaches to his readers about the importance of carrying on the Belnap's noble heritage and continuing the work of genealogy, he is clearly speaking not only to an audience of relatives and descendants, but an imagined audience of Mormons who share his beliefs in family history, temple work, and the prospects of "Eternal life." He says "we belong to the Church that has the power now to seal upon the earth and seal in the heavens" (p. 5). This "we" is a small but telling word. The author, his readers, and the ancestors are lumped together in this group-identity of faithful members of the Mormon Church. Later, however, the author subtly acknowledges that not all of his readers, nor all of the Belnap family, are necessarily

practicing Mormons: “To us as a family and *to those of us in the Church*, we believe the Pilgrim fathers and those who immediately followed after them were divinely led to this land” (p. 76, emphasis added).

In the introduction, he makes a similar move and says, “*Those of us who belong to the Church* must envision our role as more than working out our own salvation, we must bring the consciousness of eternal heritage to a lineage that extends in both directions of time, to the past as well as to the future” (p. 3, emphasis added). Despite these two concessions of the possibility of non-Mormon family members reading the history, the book continues to be a barrage of Mormon doctrine and concepts hurled about freely with no explanation or clarification.

The author makes another interesting assumption about his audience. While it can be easily surmised that the intended audience is his immediate and extended family, he makes the peculiar statement that “most all of us have had a smattering of English history” (p. 57). This statement implies that he acknowledges some of his readers aren’t descendants of the history’s central figure, Gilmore Belnap, who emigrated from England, otherwise he would have said, “all of us,” rather than “most all of us.” Who are these few readers who aren’t of English descent? Is his assumption that others who aren’t affiliated with the family would be reading it? Or is he simply referring to those who have married into the family and don’t share this English bloodline? It is clear, however, from the introduction that the author is addressing a family readership: “As you read the history of this book you will be interested and empathize because they are your own

"flesh and blood." In addition you will begin to feel the strength and meaning that comes from being "sealed" together" (p. viii).

The "sealed" in this passage is another non-explained Mormon reference having to do with temple work. Likewise, in the online Belnap history (2011), the assumption is that the readers are not only members of the family, but active and knowledgeable members of the Mormon Church. The second of six paragraphs on the website's main page credits the family members who have done so much to complete "the significant amount of LDS temple work" for the Gilbert line. No explanation or clarification is given. It is assumed that the readers will know what temple work is and what it has to do with family history. In the fourth paragraph, the author acknowledges the work of the members of the family organization in "preserving, perpetuating, and promoting a greater understanding and appreciation of their tremendous pioneer heritage." The focus of the online history isn't the diverse and extended Belnap line, but on that narrow, linear Mormon pioneer line—the same lineage of focus in Belnap's 1974 history.

The Bullock Family History

The author of the Bullock family history follows this same pattern of dropping Mormonisms without explication. Though his history isn't nearly as heavy-handed and preachy as the author of the Belnap family history (1974), there is still the sense that the reader he had in mind is one who understands and self-identifies with the Mormon Church. Most of the vignettes and biographies (one-to-ten pages) of the ancestors within the history are dedicated to either showing the ancestors' dedication to the Mormon

Church or explaining their lack of dedication. Names of prominent church leaders in history are bandied about along with important events and places. For example, Brigham Young is mentioned 31 times, Joseph Smith 12 times, temples 253 times, pioneers 28 times, and priesthood 3 times, all without clarification. It is important to note these instances because these vignettes and biographies are all written in the third person and the author never addresses the audience. The constructed-identity of the reader, therefore, isn't revealed by what is said, such as "You, my fellow Mormon," but by what *isn't* said, such as an explanation of what "temple work" is.

The Willis Family History

The authors make other assumptions about their audience beyond whether or not they affiliate with the Mormon Church. Some assumptions are based on perceived communal memory. When I interviewed Michelle Head, author of the Willis family history, she noted that since her intended audience was a fairly small, homogenous group, she could get away with producing a family history that was less polished and less professional than, say, a published biography. The readers of the family history could bring with them their communal memories and their shared understanding of the family's history, identity, and values. This is evident as one reads the sad story of Howard Willis who died at the age of 23. He was electrocuted by a power line while hanging phone lines in a Utah canyon. This information is revealed several pages after we read about Robert Willis, his brother, moving back to help on the farm after the death of his brother. The story is very disjointed and nonlinear. Someone familiar with Robert and Howard would

read these parts and know the story line and get, I suppose, the full impact of reading about how his death affected Robert. But an outsider to the family might have to flip back and forth between the sections before realizing the death that drove Robert to return home was the same death of Howard several pages later.

This lack of unifying narrative is permissible when the readership is familiar with the material. If this family history were to be extended to a wider audience, however, many steps would need to be taken to unify and streamline the narrative, lest the reader be confused and the impact of the story be lost. As of now, the history reads like a repository of great material for an essay or book-length biography, but it isn't there yet—the materials are present, but the house hasn't been built. This, according to Michelle, is okay, given what her audience expects and what they already know.

In these various family histories, fictionalizing the audience as a homogenous group who shares the same values and communal memories as the author serves to facilitate the production of the text. Not every term or name or event needs to be explained. By creating this audience of like-minded readers who share this common discourse and identity, the author can drop references to scripture and significant Mormon texts under the assumption that it will build up his or her ethos and stir something inside of the readers. Given the incredible amount of work involved in writing a family history, often with limited resources (such as maintaining a reasonable page count for printed histories), these authors need to rely on the ease that this shared discourse and rhetorical positioning provides.

Producing the Family Identity

This assumed relationship between the reader, writer, and ancestor is reflective of the desired identities portrayed within these family histories. In the *BISS*, the family's rhetorically produced identity lies in the overlap between the three reflective-fictionalized identities. The three histories I focus on here to demonstrate how this is done are the Willis family history, where the author constructs the family's identity around the reflective-fictionalized identity of the history's central figure, Robert Willis; the Belnap family history (1974), where the author digs deep into the family's *probable* history to construct a family identity of *God's chosen*; and the Parry family history, where the author draws upon the family's well-documented history of stone masons, singers, and dedicated members of the Mormon Church to construct a family identity that also sets the pattern and cadence of the several dozen biographies found throughout the text.

The Willis Family History

In the introduction to her family history, Michelle positions herself as somewhat of an outsider. She acknowledges that it is her husband's family, but then she reifies her place in the group by saying it is also her "son's heritage." She talks about bonding with her husband's grandmother as she interviewed her and got information about the box of photos that was the impetus for the family history. In a way, the introduction of the family history is a story of *adopted inclusion*: creating the family history was her way of weaving herself into the family's heritage, a way of defining herself as one of them, and in turn, shaping their own identity. In order to don the mask of an insider and someone

capable and authorized to write this family's history (and thus a co-creator of their identity), she uses the introduction to show her old and outdated identity of an outsider who is not perfectly qualified to write the family history. This is an effective move in terms of Burke's (1973) concept of *pathways* to identification in that it can draw empathy from her readers as she invokes the family's existing ideals and values.

In my interview with the author, she told me she didn't want to portray the family or construct their identity in any way other than that which Helen, her husband's grandmother, wished. For the most part, she thinks, she accomplished this, though she acknowledges in the section on Robert Willis that a great deal of her can be seen in the text. Most of the photos of Robert were burned in a fire, and Michelle was left with very little to piece together. There were some journal entries and some recollections from the family, but the majority of what is found in that section comes from sources outside of the family. Thirty-eight of the forty-six pages about Robert are dedicated to the time he spent fighting in World War II. At first, Michelle said she had no choice in this, since the war was such a defining part of Robert, and since there was an utter lack of photos from other times in his life. But then she admitted she was drawn to the war days, because of her own relatives who fought in the war. She says putting together this section was a great source of pride. Michelle, as the author—a self-identified outsider to the family with her anxieties of portraying the family's history and identity in a pleasing manner—subtly recast and reified the identity of the book's central figure, Robert Willis, as a World War II veteran. A family member versed in the oral history can read this and know that the war was only one of many interesting aspects to Robert. An outsider, on the other

hand, would be left to affiliate Robert almost exclusively with this veteran persona. The persona itself might be *reflective* of Robert's identity, but the utter lack of other elements of his identity is what moves it down the fictionalized spectrum away from his *non-textual* identity. And as the book's central figure, Robert's somewhat *reflective* identity becomes the family's *fictionalized* identity: a family of patriots and fighters, a family that loves the United States and all that it stands for. How would the identity creation of Robert and the family have differed had the author focused, instead, thirty-eight of the forty-six pages on Robert's love of farming or carpentry, with the war meriting only a page or two?

Michelle uses snippets of Robert's journal entries throughout the section on the war, which also serves to tip his identity representation toward the *reflective* end. But the fictionalizing still occurs as Michelle is forced to decide which parts of the journal to include and which to leave out. She arranges the journal entries with photos of Robert along with maps, pictures, and other data that she found on the Internet. The end result is this rich mixture of the *reflective* persona of Robert as told in his own words, such as how he "would rather fight japs than herd sheep," and the more-*fictionalized* persona influenced by these outside and non-autobiographical sources, all selected and positioned by the author who continually kept in mind the overarching identity she wanted to construct of the family (p. 72).

The Belnap Family History

Michelle's attempts to build up a family identity of model citizens and patriots in the Willis family history—an identity on par with the Mormon Church's recent discourse of a *people like any other*—stand in stark contrast with the Belnap family history (1974), written during the Mormon Church's years of defining itself as a *people apart*, wherein the author positions his family in opposition to the society and government. It isn't anti-government or unfriendly to American ideals, but at every turn the concept of *family*, and the Belnap family specifically, is portrayed as an enlightened group who must fight for its rightful place in society, who must fight against the decaying moral structures in America and the world. "The home and family is the great palladium of freedom," the author says. "It is the greatest resistant to encroachment; it is the greatest inspiration to defense or combat; it is the greatest justification and the surest foundation for independence" (p. 86). He concludes the family history by invoking "the Lord's blessings" on his extended family, "that we might continue the unity we have enjoyed in the past, and expand to even greater heights of patriarchal kinship, affection, and relationship. May we share together the blessings of eternal life" (p. 665).

The world, according to the author, is devolving into a state of disunity, a state of rampant individualism and selfishness. "We in the Belnap Family Organization," he says, "do not hold to this notion of procrastination or disunity, and strive rather instead to obey the commandments of the Lord" (p. 5). He says the most wonderful thing in life is a "sense of belonging...to a loyal, affectionate family, with whom one can feel a real oneness" (p. 6). Elsewhere, he asks readers to continue the tradition of the family

organization: “We all know of our noble heritage, and it is for a different type of security that we honor our name and bind ourselves together as a family unit” (p. 36).

In the Belnap family history, the author decries “government paternalism,” which he blames for the “deterioration of the family” (p. 8). He claims that “psychological, social, and economic needs, even in an affluent society, and more so in an impoverished society, are best met within the framework of our own family” (p. 8). He speaks of “Priesthood Welfare,” this Mormon ideal of caring for one’s family and neighbors, of helping others to become self-reliant and provident. It’s a very libertarian and conservative ideal. The family identity established by the author is that of a *self-reliant extended family*—or rather, a family that relies on God and each other, and not on Government handouts or oversight. While he doesn’t portray a family that is hostile to the government, it is a family that holds on to ancient ideals and rises above the decay and destruction that comes from secular governments that attempt to replace the good things that can only come from strong family structures rooted in a faith in Christ.

The author dedicates an entire chapter that endlessly repeats the idea that the Belnap family is elect and spiritually strong and chosen in heaven before this life began to come to this Earth and destined for greatness, citing examples of their ancestry’s involvement in political reform and historical events from the signing of the *Magna Carta* on. After nearly a hundred pages of this, he concludes that

All of the Belnaps (Belknap) we have read about are remarkable people. They are versatile, strong of heart, and mind and body, and were the men and women who laid the foundations of this nation. Spiritual, economic, and political foundations of an enduring kind, they were laid simultaneously with the foundations and walls of their houses, equally well conceived and serviceable to their posterity. (p. 119)

The identity that the author wants to create and portray of his family—past, present, and future—is clear. He doesn't mince words in this. He also makes direct reference to family histories as a form of generational memory, so that future generations won't deprive "young people...of their birthright,"

which is to be conscious that they are the children of a high destiny in the line of great men who performed great deeds, members of a noble family throughout the centuries who had faith when men were hopeless, who fortified reason against unreason, vindicated justice against violence, and in the jungle of animal passion cleared the spaces where the air is free and clear and tranquil. (p. 11)

He boldly justifies his family history and elevates the identity of his and his family's identity when he claims that "the consciousness of greatness can be preserved only by the memory of greatness" (p. 11). He says that "a sense of history is the secret magic by which a people can be lifted to a sense of their own noble heritage, a heritage which stems from the concept that truly *we know our identity as the actual children of God*" (p. 11, emphasis added).

The current generation, according to the author, needs to "look to the older generation as sort of our elder statesmen and senior diplomats in our large family" (p. 6). America "has become great," in part, because the Belnaps are great—generation after generation of "successive improvement" and "well-founded family who base their ideals on principles of free agency" (p. 86).

In this section, as the author writes his justification for compiling and publishing the family history, he emphasizes that the Belnap family didn't just exist, but that it was great, and that all of them are the children of God. Families are noble and divinely

sanctioned, he believes, especially the Belnap family. His family history serves as a type of thunder cry to not only reify the family identity in this bold image but also as a warning to future generations to not sully this identity or let it fade away.

The Parry Family History

The authors of the Parry family history also use their family history to portray a distinct family identity, though not as forcefully and ambitiously as the author of the Belnap family history. In a section entitled “Origin of the Parry Name,” the authors make two claims about what it means to be a Parry: 1) it is a family of great singers and churchman (even before the age of Mormonism); and 2) it is a family of stone masons. This is, perhaps, the only *explicit* identity creation offered by the authors, though the several dozen lengthy biographies and the scores of micro-biographies (i.e. those less than a page) provide anecdotes and examples that consistently emphasize three elements of each ancestor’s life: their service in the church, their role in (and love of) the family, and their role in the community. There is a smattering of other interesting details here and there—anecdotes and odd trivia—but just about every biography given could feasibly be concluded with the line: *She served faithfully in the church, she loved her family, and she was an important member of the community.* So the overall sense of identity we get of the Parry family from this history are singing stone masons who go to church, provide well for their families, and who leave their indelible mark on their communities.

There are three moments when the authors mention specific works of stone masonry by her ancestors, and the three moments show how their masonry was an

important part of the Mormon Church's history. First, there is Chauncey Parry, who helped build the monument for Martin Harris, a friend of Joseph Smith and founding member of the Mormon Church (p. 107). Second, there was John Parry, who invented a stone cleaning agent which he used to clean the marble of the Brigham Young statue in Salt Lake City. And third, on several occasions they mention several male ancestors who were stone masons of the Manti Temple, built in the late 1800s in central Utah.

In addition to being church-loving stone masons, the authors portray their family as nation-loving citizens. One such line, typical of the other entries, reads, "all were patriotic, and celebrated the 4th and 24th of July¹⁷" (p. 90).

Each family identity is uniquely constructed against the general identity of the Mormon Church. While these family identities are never created in opposition to this Mormon identity, they are unique when juxtaposed with each other. The authors construct their readers as family members who share these identities, but as I have mentioned before, the identity of the readers might be something different altogether. But even when these vastly different readers engage in this rhetorical act, I argue that there can always be resonating echoes between their *non-textual* identities and these *textual* identities created by the authors. Even if the reader of the Parry family history can't identify with Mormonism or Utah pioneers or stone masonry, at times there might be

¹⁷ July 24th, also known as Pioneer Day, is a state holiday in Utah. It commemorates July 24th, 1847, when Brigham Young and his group of Mormon pioneers first rolled into the Salt Lake Valley.

something that draws her just a little bit closer to the moment of identification. It is impossible for the authors to predict what this might be. Perhaps, as often is the case, it is the simple invocation of a name, as a reader peruses a history of men and women who share her surname and thinks—even if for just a moment—“I’m a Parry. These are *my* people.”

Ego and the Pioneer Spirit

A heuristic for understanding how writers of family history rhetorically produce the identities of their ancestors, especially in terms of rhetorical recasting, is to look not at how they are portraying them, but *how else* they could have been portrayed. What other ways could Gilbert Belnap, for example, have been portrayed other than as a pioneer? Or, perhaps more tellingly, why begin the history with Gilbert? This was a conscientious decision, and even if Gilbert seemed like the obvious or logical choice for starting the history, he was still positioned as the central figure. The technical term for this central figure from whom the genealogical line begins, according to Akenson (2007), is *ego*.¹⁸ Gilbert is the ego of the Belnap (1974, 2011) family histories. Any other ancestor could just as easily have played the part: one of Gilbert’s wives, perhaps, or his

¹⁸ See also Peoples & Bailey, 2009, who call genealogical charts “Kinship Diagrams”—the *ego* is the “reference individual” to whom everyone on the chart is related (p. 183).

father, or his son, or his mother. Why Gilbert? What does choosing him say about the way the author rhetorically produces the identity of the family?

The ego in six of these seven family histories was a Utah pioneer. The only exception is the Willis family history, where the central figure, Robert Willis, was a contract ranch hand and an active member of the Mormon Church but born about thirty years too late to be a pioneer.

The pathway to identification employed by the authors in many of these histories is *empathy*, and this is most evident in accounts of these pioneer ancestors. As these subjects are portrayed in pathetic terms, detailing their suffering, their sickness, their stoicism, and their hardships, the authors fictionalize their identities so that everything that would define them as anything but a stalwart and faithful pioneer is forgotten. These men and women are portrayed as the special, as select. And who wouldn't want to claim kinship with them? The fictionalized reader who ostensibly is a blood relation and shares in their Mormon tradition, is told through anecdotes and descriptions of how these ancestors were just like them: men and women who loved their family, who loved their god, who loved their country, who felt pain and hunger and defeat, who yearned for comfort and peace and happiness, who fought for religious freedom, who suffered persecution for their beliefs, and who always came out on top. These people were no different than the reader, should she find herself in a similar situation. And perhaps she will, someday. The fictionalized reader will empathize with this pathetic lot for several reasons: because they are all human, they are all Mormon, they are all devout citizens and patriots, they all want freedom and happiness, and they all are God's select children. The

fictionalized personas come together in the *BISS* and relish in this moment of accepting that *this* is what it means to be a member of this family, a member of this church, a descendant of this subject. Whether or not this actually happens is another story—but it can. The author has the power to manipulate her own identity, to don these Mormon-themed masks, she has the power to fictionalize the identity of her ancestors, and she can construct these fictionalized identities, these roles, for her readers to take on. She can present these moments of empathy where the reader, whatever her *non-textual* identity might be, can choose to take part in this fictionalization of herself, to recast herself in the image of these ancestors and in the image of this collective family identity and lose herself in this moment of Burkean identification.

In this section, I look at the Parry and Bullock family histories to show how the authors construct a very pioneer-centric identity of the current family, and I juxtapose these with the Dalton-Whittaker history, where the author includes quite a bit of material about his pioneer ancestors, but he does so rather detachedly and in a way that resists the construction of this modern-day pioneer identity.

The Parry Family History

The authors of the Parry family history never miss an opportunity to show how their ancestors were either pioneers who moved to Utah with Brigham Young, or who were the sons and daughters of pioneers who grew up in the harsh conditions of the Utah Territory. There is one interesting biography in this mix, however, of an ancestor who, for whatever reason, chose not to be a member of the Mormon Church (the authors don't

say why). It is interesting because she is still portrayed as a pioneer, and she is still described in idealistic Christian terms—more so, perhaps, than the other ancestors. Perhaps this is done to acknowledge that even though she wasn't affiliated with the church, the family shouldn't view her as the black sheep or judge her unfairly. Despite her lack of membership in the church, she was still every bit as much of a pioneer and as noble as the other ancestors. Ann Henrietta Parry Greenwood is described as experiencing “all of the trials and privations of pioneer life” (p. 93). There is an odd instance of authorial presence in the biography of Ann. The particular author says, “I have never forgotten the times when I knelt in prayer with her when I was a small child and also when I was a young girl in my teens. It made a lasting impression on my life and helped to increase my faith” (p. 94). It's as if she wants to put her own personal seal on Ann in vouching for her soul and her good spirit. She goes on to say that Ann and her “noble husband” had 12 children and “reared a united and industrious family” (p. 94). She concludes that Ann “set a worthy example that all her posterity might well follow. Her love of God and her fellow man, her tolerance, her faith and unselfishness, her industry and untiring service to bring happiness to others are all worthy of emulation” (p. 94).

There is no doubt that one of the authors knew and loved Ann, but where she couldn't drop the normal Mormon nomenclature to describe her dedication to God and family, she resorted to personal testimony, as if pleading her case before a jury of judgmental peers, that Ann fit well within the Parry family identity despite her lack of membership in the Mormon Church.

Elsewhere, the authors make a similar case and plea for another set of ancestors: “Although Charles and Ada did not attend church meetings regularly on Sunday, Charles held no Church position, and they did not keep the Sabbath Day holy, they were good people. The Bible, a set of books of a religious nature—the Book of Life, a Universal Dictionary, and a set of encyclopedias were in their home” (p. 195).

The overall production of a family’s identity within these texts is also shaped by what is excluded. Joseph Parry’s fifth wife, Olive Ann Stone, was the niece of Thomas Stone, a signer of the Declaration of Independence (Maryland). This, however, is never mentioned in the family history, though Tom Peterson—son of one of the authors—told me in an interview that it is a point of pride in the family’s oral history. Instead, Olive is introduced as coming from “sturdy Connecticut stock” and “was possessed of the vigor, courage and stamina necessary for a real pioneer” (p. 98). Unfortunately, none of the family history’s four collaborators are alive, so I can only speculate why they would choose to portray Olive in this way. Why not mention her *royal American* heritage? Why, instead, portray her as a sturdy pioneer woman? I suppose it’s because that’s what she was. While her links to the nation’s history are interesting, within the context of the family history and the Parry identity, her role as a pioneer and a plural wife to Joseph are of greater importance. She was a Parry by marriage, and all the things that made her *not a Parry* are ignored and forgotten. Her uncle’s accomplishments are irrelevant to the narrative of a God-loving group of stone-cutting pioneers. She is portrayed, therefore, as a Parry, and nothing more.

Pioneers in these family histories are consistently portrayed as suffering from hunger, fatigue, exposure, loss, sorrow, and sickness; the assumption is that this made them better, nobler, worthier than the average person. That is the subtext of this and the other family histories, including Belnap (2011 & 1974), Bullock, and Pratt.

The Bullock Family History

The Bullock family history follows a similar pattern to the Parry family history—an endless stream of uber-positive biographies that tout the ancestors as stalwart pioneers and members of the Mormon Church. On the rare occasion when a sketch of a non-LDS ancestor is found, they are portrayed in a positive, Mormon-like light. For example, there is a two-page tale of Thomas Adamson, raised a member of the church, who married in a Mormon temple and was later divorced (and lived a hard life full of tragedy). After his divorce, he went *inactive* in the church—meaning he stopped participating in worship services or church activities, though he didn't forsake the church or formally withdraw his name from its records. His biographical sketch follows a similar pattern as all of the others in the history: a paragraph dedicated to his education, to his career, to his community service, to his family, and it ends with a very touching paragraph about how much he loved spending time with his daughters and how he would take them with him sheep herding (p. 112).

Another non-Mormon ancestor treated at length in the family history is Doctor Newell Harris Bullock. The author makes no overt excuses or justifications for Newell's lack of membership or interest in the Mormon Church. Instead, he dedicates four pages to

Dr. Bullock's accomplishments as a physician, scholar, and community member. It ends with a quote by a reverend who gave the eulogy at Dr. Bullock's funeral: "He shall live in the hearts and lives of many useful citizens in all the years to come. Such a heritage to his loved ones is altogether priceless" (p. 160). There is no doubt the author had a great deal of respect for this physician ancestor and was eager to identify with him. This is one of those rare moments when the idea of Mormonism becomes a non-issue. Not a peep is made that even hints to it, and it reads as if it could have been lifted from any number of family histories not created by members of the Mormon faith.

These ancestors who don't quite fit the constructed pioneer identity of the family are an anomaly, though, and more common are the repeated stories of pain and suffering among the author's pioneer ancestors who "eked out a miserable existence" (p. 97). A typical entry would be like that of Clarissa, who "was born in a small log cabin in Pleasant Grove. Like most pioneer families, her family shared the poverty and privations incident to building up the new community" (p. 185). He concludes her biography by saying "she was faithful and devoted to her family and the church. She stands as pure gold, tested in adversity, and set an example for her family and descendants to emulate" (p. 186).

Perhaps the most revealing treatment of *pioneerism* comes when the author writes about the family history's central figure, the *ego*, James Bullock. The author goes into great detail to show his enduring faithfulness to the Mormon Church—a faithfulness that has endured beyond his death: "[He] was one of the thousands of pioneers who paved the way for the establishment of Zion in the West...he has left a numerous and

growing posterity; many who are prominent in the church” (p. 8). Of all James’ qualities or legacies he could have emphasized, he focused on those prize descendants who are still active and prominent in the Mormon Church—these descendants whose identities mirror the preferred fictionalized identity of the family.

The Dalton-Whittaker Family History

The author of the Dalton-Whittaker family history has created a section that includes several hundred pages of what he calls “typical Mormon experiences,” though none of them are about his actual ancestors (he cites the material as coming from “The History of the LDS Church,” but there is no documented publication by this name). He is attempting to set the stage, as it were, for understanding his ancestors without actually making any direct reference to them. He says, “Please note that our Dalton’s lived the very same experiences that the other pioneers did in Nauvoo and then the crossing of the plains.”

It is worth pointing out that the Dalton-Whittaker family history is the only one written by a non-Mormon about his Mormon ancestors, and it is the only one to draw from second-party materials to portray his ancestor’s *pioneer*ity. While the authors of the Parry, Belnap, and Bullock family histories go to great lengths to retell their ancestors’ pioneer stories and to sketch their lives from this pioneer lens, the author of the Dalton-Whittaker family history instead focuses on the other details and aspects of his ancestors’ lives and refers readers to these secondary works if they want to learn more about what it means to be a Mormon or a Utah pioneer. The role he casts for his reader is

similar to the identity he constructs for himself: potentially interested in Mormon history, but not necessarily a member of the Mormon Church. Is this evidence that the author doesn't want to produce this pioneer identity for himself and the extended family, but to keep it safely contained only to the identity of his ancestors? While he certainly doesn't critique or disdain his ancestors for their Mormon ways, he makes no effort to give credit for his or his family's greatness to the Mormon Church. Mormonhood and this pioneerity, as it were, are incidental and not part of the family's larger projected identity.

Ancestral Heroes: Blue Bloods and Black Sheep

While most of the ancestors portrayed in these family histories are run-of-the-mill folks who left no indelible mark—individually speaking—on the American landscape (or at least won't be found in traditional history textbooks), there are a certain number who fall more on the extreme sides of this hum-drum scale—what I (and other genealogists) colloquially call *blue bloods* and *black sheep*.

Blue blood refers to the propensity of family historians to trace *direct* and *collateral* lineages to royalty. Likewise, *black sheep* refers to this same propensity to trace (and highlight) lineages to outlaws and notorious historical figures.

Within the context of this study, I extend and rethink the definitions of these terms. I use *blue blood* to refer to tracing lineages (and emphasizing the familial link) to notable historical figures regardless of royalty, such as famous figures in U.S. history or high-ranking leaders in the Mormon Church. Many times, the central and beginning

figure of a family's history will be a famous historical figure. Paul Revere, for example, might have dozens of family histories that use him as the beginning figure—the *ego*—and then trace his descendants down a dozen different lines. This blue-blood valorization happens quite often in the family histories of this study. It raises some important questions as these authors write about their notable Mormon ancestors, such as Joseph Smith and Brigham Young.

In perhaps the biggest deviation from its original meaning, I move outlaws and notorious figures into this category of *blue blood* when deliberate emphasis is made to show a connection to these subjects, such as tracing a collateral line through many generations just to show the connection to one subject. On the other hand, I use *black sheep* when the author deliberately de-emphasizes the connection to these subjects, such as ignoring, silencing, glossing over, or otherwise rhetorically recasting the ancestral identities so as not to upset the author's portrayal of the family's identity. If, for example, a family historian were to dedicate a chapter to their distant cousin, William H. Bonny, I would call that a blue-blood connection. But if that same historian deliberately omitted information on a direct-line ancestor who was convicted of sexual crimes, I would call that a black-sheep connection (or black-sheep omission). In other words, authors connect with blue-blood relatives in order to enhance, improve, or make the family's identity appear more historically prominent and important, regardless if these ancestors were kings or despots, and these same authors ignore and recast black-sheep ancestors who threaten to alter or belittle the identity produced within the family history.

A common form of blue-blooding within the seven family histories of this study is what I call the *Mormon shout out*. There are two ways in which writers emphasize their connection to prominent Mormon figures in history: first, by showing direct or indirect blood or legal relations; and second, by mentioning the moments when their ancestors came in contact with these figures. These two forms of Mormon blue-blooding, I contend, are part of the mythmaking process involved in family-history writing. Pillari (1986) says that family myth can contain “folklore, legend, saga, a taboo, a secret or a superstition, a ritual, and/or family rules depending upon what helps the family to stay together irrespective of whether the family myth is negative or positive” (p. 6). These myths are powerful as families tend to rewrite their histories in the image of that myth. This is especially true of family histories that stem from ancestors who were prominent members of the Mormon Church. These family historians use these blue-blood connections to rewrite themselves in the image of the well-published and documented image (whether *reflective* or *fictionalized*) of their Mormon blue-blood ancestors.

Four of these family histories go to great lengths to show connections to notable historical figures, both Mormon and non-Mormon: the authors of the Belnap family history (online version) break from their patrilineal (i.e. father-son) tracing of the family’s history to trace tangential matrilineal connections to these famous people; the author of the Dalton-Whittaker family history traces all of the famous Daltons he can find in history, even though he admits the family isn’t related to most of them (it is the *name* rather than the blood connection that interests him); and the authors of the Bullock and

Parry family histories repeatedly show how their ancestors rubbed elbows with prominent members of the early Mormon Church.

The Belnap Family History

The home page of the Belnap Family Organization has a link to a “notable relatives”¹⁹ section, which lists a hundred or so people to whom the Belnaps can claim kinship, such as William Shakespeare, Laura Ingalls Wilder, and Sir Francis Bacon. Among this list are eight presidents of the Mormon Church. It’s worth noting that *none* of these relations are direct. All seven family histories in this study follow a single line, a multi-generational patrilineal (or patriarchal) order, which follows the line from the male progenitor through the other males until the most recent generation—this is why in all of these histories, except for some variation in the spelling of the name (such as the evolution of Belknap to Belnap), the distant first ancestors profiled bear the same last name as the most recent generations.

None of the prominent figures on this page fall within that more-or-less straight line from the fabled Ebenezer Belknap²⁰ to the present Belnaps. Instead, the authors rely on these collateral/tangential/matriarchal lines to show these relations. It has the feeling

¹⁹ <http://www.belnapfamily.org/notablerelatives.htm>

²⁰ I say “fabled,” because as I’ll discuss elsewhere, the author admits that no clear link can be made between his family and Ebenezer Belnap—he only assumes they’re related.

of the game *Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon*, where a person can show how any actor can be traced back to Kevin Bacon through six movie connections or less. It all boils down to basic social-networking theory, where certain people who are well connected act as hubs. Essentially, if you can make a connection with one well-connected person, you are now connected with *everyone* to whom they are connected (Tilly, 2005). While you could feasibly connect yourself to anyone on the planet given enough connection points—e.g. you to your neighbor to his neighbor and so on until a million people later you find the connection—social-networking theory shows that you can connect any two people on the planet in six connections or less if you focus on these hubs or well-connected persons/groups. Likewise, family historians know if they can show a connection to a certain person, no matter how convoluted and “iffy” that connection is, they can then claim kinship with everyone else related to that person. In other words, if I know my neighbor has demonstrated she is related to Alexander the Great, and I want to do the same, I can skip the tedious task of tracing my lineage to Alexander and figure out, instead, how I’m related to my neighbor. From this perspective, it would seem that any family historian with the time and resources and imagination can connect himself with just about any prominent figure that he chooses. So what’s important to this study isn’t so much to whom the authors are connected (or how), but to whom they *choose* to connect themselves.

The Dalton-Whittaker Family History

The author makes two interesting connections in his history, neither of which are actual relations, but both of which he concedes have helped shape the collective identity

of the Dalton's in Utah. The first is the story of Butch Cassidy²¹ who lived near and shopped at a store owned by the author's ancestors. He dedicates about twenty pages-worth of text to tell the story of Butch Cassidy. In a similar move, he also dedicates many pages to the "Dalton Gang," four brothers in the late 1800s who robbed and plundered and were eventually shot down by law enforcement. He includes a rather macabre photo of the deceased brothers lined up next to each other with their guns and rifles lain across their laps. "Remember when we were kids," he says, "and people would ask us if we were related to the Dalton Gang. We always said yes. Well we grow up still not knowing until some of us went crazy into genealogy; we then found out us Utah Dalton's are not related."²²

²¹ http://www.daltwhitt.org/?page_id=70

²² http://www.daltwhitt.org/?page_id=645

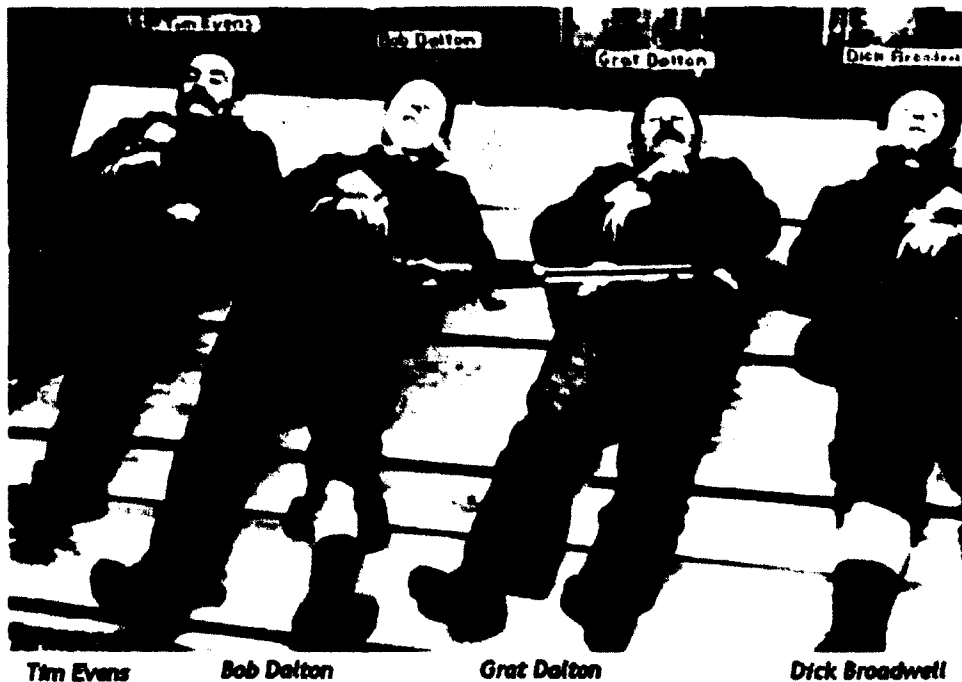


Figure 4.1: The Dalton Gang, Dalton (2011)²³

It's easy to see why one would want to show the connection between themselves and someone like Shakespeare or Churchill or Butch Cassidy or a gang of old-west bandits, but what does it say when they go to such lengths to show their connection to eight Mormon presidents or to other figures in Mormon history? The obvious answer is that they are attempting to show their own family's prominence within the Mormon community. These writers position themselves as active, faithful members of the Mormon Church, and they assume their readers will likewise want to self-identify in that

²³ http://www.daltwhitt.org/?page_id=1036

way. What happens, though, when the readers of this particular online family history doesn't want to self-identify with the Mormon Church?

The author of the Dalton-Whittaker family history, in a similar move to the Belnap family history, includes a page entitled, "How the Utah Dalton family connects to famous people," in which he shows how the Dalton family is related to the Mayflower Pilgrims, Brigham Young, Joseph Smith, and certain Utah Governors.²⁴ He explains that "Brigham Young married many wife's, being the polygamist he was," and then goes on to show how one of the 55 wives, Zina Diantha Huntington, had a brother whose daughter married a Dalton. "Now I agree that this is a stretch," he says, "but we like to say we are connected to these famous people 'By Marriage.'"

The Bullock Family History

The second way these family history authors connect their families to prominent Mormon figures, as I mentioned, comes about through what I call the *Mormon shout out*—instances when there is no relation but the author emphasizes interactions her ancestors had with these figures. The author, in the very first paragraph of the biography of James Bullock (the central ancestral figure in the genealogy) mentions how James was introduced to the Mormon Church, and in the second paragraph he mentions that James was a member when Joseph Smith was martyred and that he and his wife had heard

²⁴ http://www.daltwhitt.org/?page_id=1036

Brigham Young preach on various occasions (p. 3). There is a pattern of telling James' history form the framework of Mormon history throughout the book. Another good example comes with the vignette of Alexander Hill Bullock, "one of the early pioneers to Utah," who is said to have seen "the Prophet [Brigham Young] on several occasions as he passed the Bullock residence" (p. 97). What's particularly interesting about Alexander's vignette is that it ends with his eulogy that was delivered by Heber J. Grant, the seventh president of the Mormon Church. It is reprinted in its entirety—a favor not afforded to the other ancestors whose eulogies weren't scripted by a prominent Mormon leader.

The Parry Family History

The authors of the Parry family history do something similar to Bullock—both of these histories offer several dozen short biographies of ancestors along the patrilineal line, and in almost every case, within the first couple of paragraphs, the authors detail when they joined the church or what contact they had with famous Mormon figures. For example, in the section dedicated to polygamy, the authors note that Camp Serene, the nickname of Joseph Parry's home, "was the stopping place for many prominent men during this stormy period," and they specifically mention George Q. Cannon, a high-ranking official in the church (holding the office of apostle), and Joseph F. Smith and Joseph Fielding Smith, descendants of Hyrum Smith (Joseph Smith's brother) who would both later become presidents of the church (p. 210).

In each case, the authors use these *Mormon shout outs* to build the ancestor's *ethos*, their Mormon "street cred," as it were—these ancestors in their workaday and

relatively anonymous and forgotten worlds came in contact with men and women whose names fill books on Mormon history, culture, and doctrine. To connect one's ancestors with these notable Mormon figures is a way to establish one's own roots and stronghold on the Mormon Church. It's about building cultural capital. If one's ancestors were important enough to rub elbows with Brigham Young, then by association the author is important enough to have her name mingled with the names of Mormon leaders, both past and present.

The authors of these four family histories go to great lengths to show their connection to prominent historical figures, even when there is no blood relation: associations with historical figures, shared surnames, overlapping histories, obscure collateral lineages; whatever it takes to show that connection.

Some relatives, however, don't require any degree of jockeying to show their relation. Instead, they are direct bloodline ancestors, and they don't always fit into the constructed identity of the author, the family, or the Mormon Church. In these moments, the authors are left with a choice: ignoring the ancestors, including them by constructing a reflective textual identity, or including them by utterly fictionalizing them to bring them in line with the other textual identities at play.

CHAPTER V

MYTHOLOGIZING THE HERO:

FAMILY HISTORY AS EULOGY & REVISIONIST HISTORY

*How far can we know the real life of our ancestry
in each successive age of the past?* – Wilford Belnap²⁵

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how the authors of six of the seven family histories constructed a distinct *Mormon* audience identity, and I concluded by showing their propensity to valorize certain historical figures to help bolster that identity—looking, in particular, at the emphasis on connections to pioneers and early Mormon leaders. In this chapter, I continue to look at the ways in which these authors rhetorically construct the identities of certain ancestors in the attempt to construct this overall family identity that is in line with the Mormon Church's discursal identity.

I hypothesize that these family histories are written as a type of *extended eulogy*, where the ancestors are mythologized and valorized (and sometimes silenced). I look at the potential impact of the eulogizing of two specific ancestors on the families' generational memory.

²⁵ Belnap, 1974, p. 42

In addition to the silencing that occurs from eulogizing ancestors, I look at the silencing that occurs in these family histories from the use of revisionist historiography—specifically that which is done with what I call the “Mormon lens.”

Family History as Extended Eulogy

Bakhtin’s heroes, the subjects involved in the rhetorical situation—in this case, the ancestors—are agents who both *act* and are *acted upon*. What power do these heroes have to construct and control their identity in discourse? In chapter two, I suggested that these ancestors have some control in that they can produce autobiographical texts, such as journals and letters, that can be incorporated into family histories, but this control is limited since it is up to the author of the family history to decide what to include and how to include it. Journals and letters can be edited. Often, quotes or chunks of texts are extracted and decontextualized. Authorial presence can be injected through summary, paraphrase, or direct commentary. Whatever the case may be, these autobiographical texts only offer a limited amount of agency for the ancestors to write their identity. Where once these ancestors were able to construct their own identity in the context of unique rhetorical situations, such as writing a letter to a grieving spouse, now these texts are being coopted into a new rhetorical act, a new context: the privately-published family history. These ancestors are no longer the writers or the creators, they are the subjects. The authors of these family histories can use the words of these ancestors, but ultimately they will be shaped and reformed by the new identities at play in this rhetorical situation:

the identity of the writer, of her family, of her readership, of the present-day Mormon Church, and so on.

This unique rhetorical situation with its new breed of identities heavily influences how the identities of these ancestors are constructed. What I have found in reading these family histories is that often these long-deceased ancestors are written in a distinctly eulogistic manner, and this, I argue, is done in an attempt to bring the writer, reader, and ancestor into moments of Burkean identification. This eulogizing has the result of constructing the identities of these ancestors in the image of the author, her present-day family, and the Mormon Church, and the result of fictionalizing and mythologizing these ancestral identities.

This eulogizing of ancestors isn't a surprising revelation. Family-history writers are faced with the same challenges as any writer in deciding what to include and how to include it when writing about somebody else, and given the nature of these family histories—that they present the family in the best light possible—it stands to reason that the authors would choose to portray their ancestors in the best of terms, even if that means glossing over or ignoring important elements and characteristics altogether. Family histories are written in the context of communal (familial) memory, experience, and expectations. Choi (2008) calls communal memory “an active site where heterogeneous meanings, identities, and powers compete for hegemony” (p. 371). In his article, Choi demonstrates how different groups, such as American forces and South Korean civilians, constructed their own “official” narratives of certain events that occurred during the Korean War. Within the different groups, narratives were shaped and

memories agreed upon—there was no room for counter narratives within these groups. The narratives of communal memory are constructed and written by way of consensus, and details and events that go against that narrative are forgotten and silenced. “Such a willful forgetfulness in the act of remembering has been called by different names: concerted forgetting, organized oblivion, and collective amnesia” (p. 372). Similarly, the narratives constructed within these families and textualized in these histories have been shaped and honed through the generations by such things as the families’ sense of identity and the communal discourse of the church, and this inherently results in selective remembering and selective amnesia. I contend that the amnesia that occurs as the result of these family histories isn’t malicious, and it isn’t always intentional, but it isn’t wholly innocent nor accidental. Decisions are made by the author and the family in every step of the writing process. There are restraints in resources, such as limits in page count or what’s considered a “valid” memory or whether a source is credible. There are also restraints in communal judgment, such as what characteristics of an ancestor or what memories or events accurately reflect the preferred image of the group.

What does it mean to eulogize a person?

Eulogy, when broken into its Latin roots, means “well speaking” (*eu* “well” and *logia* “speaking”), or “to speak well of.” Eulogies generally are written for those who knew or were somehow affected by the deceased person. An important element of the rhetoric of eulogy is *temporal propinquity*. They are written (or at least delivered) shortly after the person’s passing, usually in a funeral-type setting. Another element, perhaps less universal, is the oral nature of eulogies. While some are transcribed and recorded—

several such transcriptions appear in the seven family histories in this study—the majority of eulogies are delivered orally with no transcription. They are ephemeral public addresses.

Recently, I had the unenviable task of writing and delivering the eulogy for a member of our church congregation who had died of a stroke. He was a quiet man who often sat in the back of the chapel. He never smiled. I had tried to engage him in conversation on several occasions, but his responses usually consisted of a “yup,” or “mm-hmmm.” For the last couple of years, he had joined our family for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner, but even seated at our kitchen table, he still said little.

After he passed, I tried desperately to find out more about him, and I was surprised to learn he had six siblings, five children, and scores of grand- and great-grandchildren. None, it seemed, were part of his life. As I spoke with some of these family members and other members of our church who knew the man, I learned the dark details of his past. I won't broadcast his misdeeds here except to say that I began to understand why his extensive family excluded him from their holiday traditions, and why they no longer wanted to be a part of “his” church.

When the funeral began, I sat on the stand and watched many of these family members file in, and I could see so much of this man in their faces. Even then, just moments from the funeral, I still hadn't decided what to say. What could I say, other than that he was extremely quiet and had a large family? What twist could I put on this man's life that would somehow console the family, yet not make me a complete liar?

I bring up this experience for two reasons. First, I want to demonstrate the oral and immediate nature of eulogies. They are shared experiences requiring temporal and physical proximity: a group sharing a moment in place and time (usually in a chapel shortly after the passing of a loved one). In the experience I had of offering a eulogy, those in attendance knew the man to varying degrees. Most, I assume, were familiar with his stained history. As I spoke of the man in general terms and brought up such things as redemption and life after death, there were a few nods and a lot of blank stares. Whatever the folks in attendance took away from the eulogy, I haven't a clue. But what I can safely assume is that they were able to draw from their own memories of the man, from the family's oral history, from their shared and communal experiences, to fill in the wide gaps left in my remarks. Perhaps the most telling moment came when I spoke about the man's faith in Christ and his hope of redemption. His ex-wife lowered her eyes and nodded. The eulogy was very much an interaction—it was an understanding of the subject, it was a collective experience. It was a rich, shared moment that required mutual understanding.

The second reason I share this experience is to point out the influence of communal identity on the eulogy. How would this man's eulogy have differed had his estranged wife, not a member of the Mormon Church, asked her Baptist minister to offer the eulogy? Or how might my eulogy have differed had the entire congregation self-identified as Mormon (or at least "Mormon friendly")? The group or communal identity is an important element of this oral, immediate rhetorical situation.

What happens, then, when we attempt to textually eulogize our long-deceased ancestors, when the imperative of physical proximity and temporal propinquity is gone? When wounds aren't fresh? When the audience is unfamiliar with the subject's oral history or are positioned outside of the family's communal memory? What do we benefit from attempting to write the history of our family and our ancestors in this eulogistic manner?

Goldzwig and Sullivan (1995) say that eulogies are most closely associated with the Aristotelian notion of epideictic address—speeches that praise or blame. Eulogies lean heavily, if not exclusively, on the praise side of that spectrum (p. 127). According to Jamieson and Campbell (1982), eulogies have five functions:

1. they acknowledge the death,
2. they transform the relationship between the living and the dead from present to past tense,
3. they ease the mourners' terror of confronting their own mortality,
4. they console the mourners by arguing the deceased lives on,
5. and they reknit the community.

The two conventions these family histories and traditional eulogies have in common is the tendency to *praise* (while ignoring the dirty details) and to *immortalize* the deceased. To a lesser degree, they also *reknit* the community (i.e. family).

The difference, however, is that these family histories aren't a vehicle for transforming the relationship between the living and the dead from *present* to *past* tense, and they don't seek to console the mourners (unless the history, I suppose, were written

soon after the death of a relative, which is not the case in any of the seven histories in this study). Newkirk (1997) describes well these healing, psychological, and temporally-based objectives in his summation of a eulogy:

From whatever source—a survivor's guilt, a desire to forgive, a sense of loyalty, a need to see life itself as meaningful—we depend upon these occasions to provide us with a memory that sustains us, one in which the sins, complications, and dividedness of human nature are put aside, at least momentarily. (p. 55)

If the objectives of a family history aren't to aid the mourner, then what are the objectives of writing them in this eulogistic manner? Similar to eulogies, obituaries are written for the immediate psychological and social needs of the *present* (Haley, 1977). They are usually written immediately following (or shortly before) the subject's death, and the primary audience includes people in the present who knew and were affected by the recently deceased. Biographies, on the other hand, are generally written much later (unless you're Steve Jobs), when the haze of sadness is gone, when myths have already started, when people aren't as worried about hurting feelings or speaking ill of the deceased.

A logical deduction would be that privately-published family histories would function more like biographies, with similar genre conventions and outcomes. But they don't. Unlike biographies or memoirs or even autobiographies, which might capitalize on a family's seedy and sordid history, the seven family histories in this study do just the opposite: they act like a eulogy or obituary. The feelings of the subjects (ancestors) and the readers (the descendants and extended family) are protected. Unsavory conduct and misdeeds are ignored or glossed over. Positive characteristics are amplified and

overpower any negativity. Ancestors, centuries gone, are still spoken of with all the reverence and care of a recently deceased aunt or uncle. And the whole thing seems to be held together with an underlying understanding of how things *should* be remembered.

Sue Hertz, a member of my dissertation committee, has made the keen observation that as far as family-history genres go, *memoir* seems to be about exploiting the author's darkest and most painful secrets, while these privately-published family histories seek to keep those secrets safely hidden. I would extend this by saying memoir is about *reflection* and *refraction*, while family history is about *deflection* and *retraction*. There is a selective remembering involved in these genres, and selective memory, I argue, can further lead to the construction of *fictionalized* representations (as opposed to *reflective* representations). This leads to caricatures and one-sided protagonists and myths and legends and heroes.

In true eulogies, this isn't necessarily a problem. The audience members and readers tend to be close in time and affiliation—they know the deceased, and often they are grieving, and this benevolent fictionalization can serve as a healing salve. What happens, though, when we expand this gap in time, space, and affiliation, so that the readers of the eulogy-like family histories can no longer *read between the lines* or fill in the blanks? For example, when the authors of the Parry family history say that their great-grandmother, Dorothy Swope Silva, “would switch to a Welsh dialect” when she became “excited or provoked,” I can't tell if the authors are talking tongue-in-cheek or literally (p. 59). I imagine if the statement were made at a funeral, the congregation could smile or nod along and recall old Dorothy and her temper, and they would appreciate the eulogist

for euphemistically referring to it. Or maybe not. Maybe Dorothy had no temper at all, and “excited or provoked” just means happy or surprised. Who knows? Those who could read between these lines are deceased, so we are left with this fictionalized version of Dorothy, and we are left to guess what in the world it really meant when she suddenly started speaking Welsh.

In the following two sections, I show two examples of ancestors who are written about in a eulogistic fashion, and I analyze how the authors fictionalize these ancestral identities to better match the family’s preferred identity. I question the ramifications of this rhetorical recasting on the construction of the family’s identity and on the family’s communal and generational memory.

Selective Amnesia and the Reified Hero: The Case of Grandpa B

There is a man in the Willis family history who is given the nickname of “Grandpa B.” He is the father of the family history’s central figure, Robert Willis.

The author of the history revealed to me in an interview two important characteristics of Grandpa B: he was “mean and crotchety,” due in part to alcoholism, and he was very selective with his affections. He kicked Helen, his pregnant teenage daughter, out of his house and forced her to give the baby up for adoption. Later in life, after Helen married, Grandpa B. came to live with them.

None of that appears in the family history, except that he came to live with them, and what we get is the portrait of a man who loved horses and worked hard and delighted in doting upon children. There is no mention of alcohol or abuse.

Most of the biographical snippets and anecdotes we get of Grandpa B. come from the eulogy written by his granddaughter. As could be expected when drawing upon a eulogy to write a biography, the better qualities of the deceased are touted and the negative qualities completely ignored.

The author said she knew the family would have to draw heavily upon their communal memory to fill in the blanks of this textual version of Grandpa B. They all know the real story and what he was capable of, even if that side of him—that non-textual side that loomed heavy in the family’s oral history—never made it into this scripted family history.

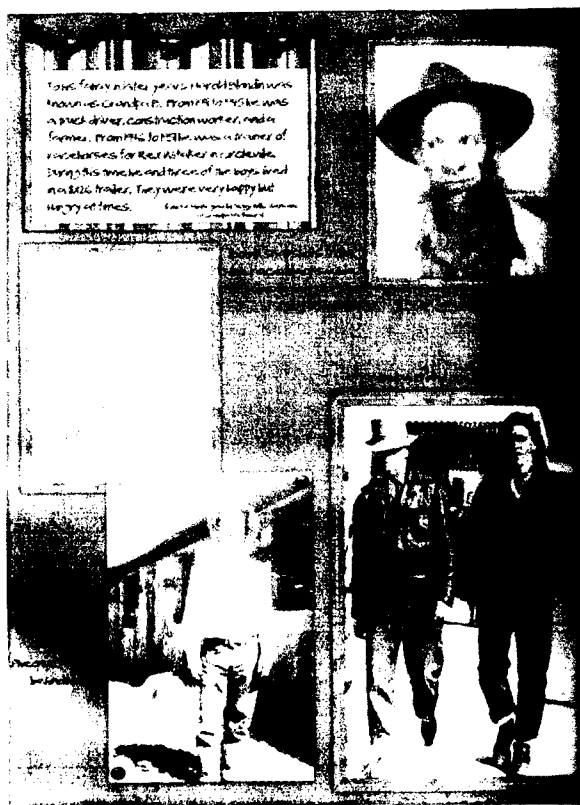


Figure 5.1: Grandpa B., Head (2006), p. 48

I asked the author why she chose to portray Grandpa B. in this way. She said that the decision really wasn't hers. Having only been married into the family for a few years, she felt very much like an outsider, and she felt pressure to write the family history in a way that would be pleasing to the family, especially to Helen Willis. Most of the information for the history came about from the author interviewing Helen, who demanded that "nothing negative or taboo" appear in the history. She wanted it to be "upbeat and positive," and she wanted it to portray a "good Mormon family" without mention of alcohol, physical or sexual abuse, lack of faith, or inactivity in the church. The author also pointed out that most of Grandpa B.'s dark history was revealed to her by other members of the family, and since it didn't come from Helen, she wouldn't even think of including it in the history.

What effect will this family history have on the family's generational memory? As the oral traditions fade and future generations are left to learn about Grandpa B. from this family history, the image of a half-drunken man smacking his grandkids and telling them to fetch his pipe will be replaced, instead, by the image (as portrayed by a black-and-white photo juxtaposed to his vignette) of a svelte Grandpa B in his forties wearing rolled up blue jeans and leather boots walking alongside a horse jockey. Did his granddaughter who wrote the eulogy, or his great-granddaughter-in-law who wrote the family history, know the power they would have to recast and fictionalize the identity of Grandpa B?

Are there other reasons to cast Grandpa B in this positive light? Was it to not offend those relatives who might have felt differently about him? Was it to not reopen old

wounds? Was it out of shame? There is, I believe, a connection with this recasting and fictionalizing of Grandpa B's identity and the feelings and needs of the living audience—those who share in these communal memories of the actual Grandpa B. Perhaps this is the author's attempt to fulfill the eulogistic objective of *seeking to console the mourners*—though, I would argue, that ignoring the abuse and failing to validate the victimization of certain mourners would hardly serve to console them (Goldzwig & Sullivant, 1995, p. 127). In this case, the identity of the reader is fictionalized as one who finds comfort in the writer never mentioning the reality of what Grandpa B. put the family through.

Over several pages, the sad story of Grandpa B.'s childhood is told: his brother dying shortly after his birth, his mother dying a few years later of a morphine overdose, the adoptive parents giving him back after only a couple of years, and being passed around between family members while his father worked in Wyoming and then eventually disappeared forever to Canada.

If the next section portrayed Grandpa B. as he actually was—mean, bitter, abusive, alcoholic—the reader might be sympathetic given the details of his childhood. But instead, he is portrayed as a hard worker (which I'm sure he was) and a family man. Almost all of the information from his adult life comes from his eulogy. The author of the eulogy, his great-granddaughter, talks about how he “had become quite active” in the Mormon Church later in life and served as a Sunday-school superintendent (p. 50). The story is supplemented by an interview with Grandpa B.'s son, Robert (now deceased), in which he says, “He was a wonderful old man...he enjoyed being around young people.” Robert says he learned two things from Grandpa B.'s example: patience and love (p. 51).

Robert's assessment of Grandpa B. is juxtaposed with a black-and-white photo on the next page. There are two boys, smiling, standing by each other. They are outside somewhere. The sun is bright, and against them is the crisp shadow of Grandpa B. as he takes their picture.

The interpretations of this picture are limited. On one page we get Robert's declaration that Grandpa B. "enjoyed being around young people," and on the next page we get this photo (the caption only points out that it is, in fact, Grandpa B.'s shadow). The image at its denotative or face-value level is affected by the text that accompanies it. This connotative level where myth resides is what Barthes calls the "coded iconic message" (p. 33, 1977).

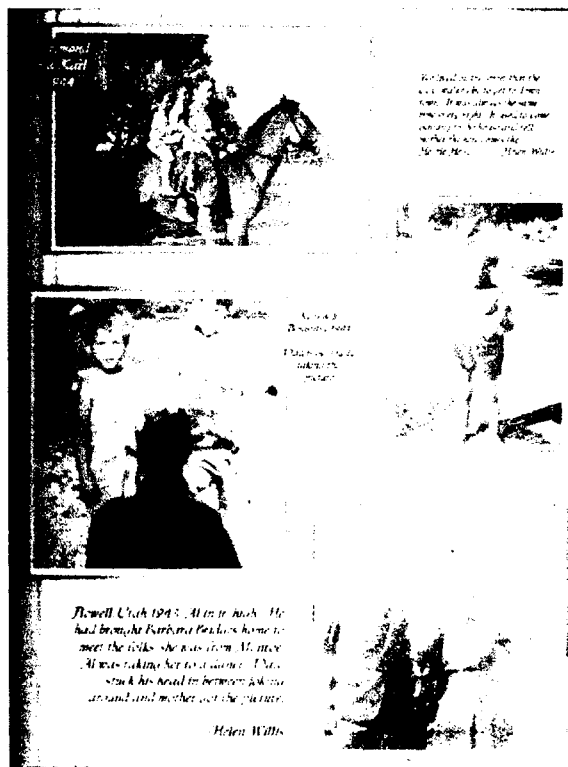


Figure 5.2 Grandpa B., Head (2006), p. 55

The image and the text work together to limit the meanings of the photograph: “the text directs the reader through the signifieds of the image...remote-control[ling] him towards a meaning chosen in advance” (pp. 39-40). According to Barthes, photographs are never innocent or without connotation (p. 45). That is certainly true of this photograph of Grandpa B., which has the power to rewrite his identity for future generations—those who may not know anything else about him—and for those who knew his non-textual identity, and—for whatever reason—choose to cling to this kinder, more acceptable *fictionalized* version of himself. The eulogistic words invoked by his family and the correlating photograph leave a distinct and lasting impression on the reader that might be impossible to shake.

The Things We Don't Speak of: The Case of Uncle Amos

When I interviewed Tom Peterson, the son of one of the deceased authors of the Parry family history, I asked if he noticed any gaps or holes or *fictionalized representations* in the history. He referred me to the section on Amos Parry, his great uncle. He pointed out that in the written history, Amos “was viewed as a genial old bachelor, benign and sainted.” The reality, however, was that “it was quietly spoken by some relatives that he was gay, only they called it homosexual in those days. There was some rumor of his liking young boys, but from the biography he was loved by all the children. So I’m not sure what is truth or fiction.” In the family's oral history and communal memory, Uncle Amos is regarded as a closeted homosexual and possibly even a pedophile (though Tom doesn't elaborate how the latter rumor started). This doesn't

come through in the history. The authors, instead, focus on his identity as a hard worker and a miser. His leaving the church as a teenager is blamed, in part, on his desire to keep his hard-earned money to himself. One of his regrets later in life, the authors say, was the money he had contributed to the church that he could have shared, instead, with his family. There is a brief section about a woman that Amos had courted, saying he “enjoyed her company,” but that he ultimately refused to marry her because she was divorced with two children, and he “did not want the responsibility of raising the children” (p. 155).

I asked Tom why he thought Amos might have been portrayed in such a way. “Nobody wants to share dirty laundry,” he said. “Much more important in an LDS environment to portray your family as celestial. So I think it was a combination of embarrassment and the mores of the LDS culture.”



Figure 5.3: Uncle Amos, Taylor (1988), p. 156

Tom also pointed out that once the family history was written, “they intended it to be part of the Church History program and available to the public.” So the identity of Amos Parry was fictionalized and recast from a homosexual, possibly pedophiliac bachelor to a hardworking and sensitive man who knew the value of a penny.

Why would the authors rhetorically produce an identity for Uncle Amos that didn't fully jibe with the family's oral history and the communal memory? Perhaps it is due to the social stigma of homosexuality within the Mormon community. In the official discourse of the Mormon Church, homosexuality is seen as an immoral and therefore unclean act. Speaking on behalf of the church's official stance, President Gordon B. Hinckley (the penultimate president of the church), made the following statement:

People inquire about our position on those who consider themselves so-called gays and lesbians. My response is that we love them as sons and daughters of God. They may have certain inclinations which are powerful and which may be difficult to control. Most people have inclinations of one kind or another at various times. If they do not act upon these inclinations, then they can go forward as do all other members of the Church. If they violate the law of chastity and the moral standards of the Church, then they are subject to the discipline of the Church, just as others are. (1998, p. 71)

The discourse of “love the man, hate the sin” isn't unique to the Mormon Church, but it is often invoked to discuss the church's stance on the subject. The authors of the Parry family history likewise invoke this doctrine as they emphasize Amos' temporal or physical cleanliness while more subtly lamenting his spiritual uncleanness.

The authors' use of the word *clean* to describe Amos is significant in terms of Mormon discourse and identity. The word comes up often in these family histories to describe ancestors. It is usually found in descriptions of hardship or poverty, such as

pioneer times and early settlement in Utah and Idaho. The concept of cleanliness is an important part of Mormon discourse. Another example of this discourse of cleanliness is found in the Willis family history: the daughter of Sears Willis tells the story of her father as a trapper in for the Utah Biological Survey in 1919. Despite his long absences from his family while working, she says “he had very high ideals and believed in giving a full day's work for a day's pay. He lived a *clean moral life* and provided well for his family” (p. 14).

This idea of cleanliness and portraying ancestors as clean came up in a couple of other places. Elsewhere in the Parry family history, while speaking about one of Joseph Parry's wives, the authors say that “notwithstanding their poverty, they were taught the laws of health and cleanliness” (p. 99). The author of the Bullock family history uses the word *clean* 27 times in his history, and the author of the Belnap family history (1974) uses it 51 times, almost always in this same context of describing ancestors and their homes and their lives and their children. The concept of cleanliness is central to Mormon doctrine. Temporal cleanliness mirrors spiritual cleanliness, and both are essential elements of godliness. The terms *clean*, *unclean*, and *cleanliness* appear in the Mormon scriptures²⁶ 412 times (and if you factor in synonyms and antonyms, such as *filthy*, *stained*, or *pure*, then the count goes to 763 times). It is no surprise, therefore, that these

²⁶ The King James Version of the Old Testament and New Testament, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine & Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. These word counts came through an index search at LDS.org/scriptures.

authors, in bolstering the general Mormon identity of themselves, their readers, their families, and their ancestors would depend so heavily on this discourse of cleanliness, especially when justifying the decisions made by Uncle Amos.

Cleanliness and morality are often used interchangeably in Mormon doctrine. The authors of the Parry family history point out Uncle Amos's "clean" temporal life, though they only hint at what they considered his unclean spiritual life. Without knowing something of the Mormon culture and the Parry family's oral history, it would be difficult here to read between the lines to know they are speaking in terms of Uncle Amos's homosexuality.

Amos' biographical sketch concludes with these hopeful words for the state of his soul in the next life:

All of the family are proud of Amos, and understand in looking back over his life that he, being as sensitive a person as he was, allowed his early life to cloud the true happiness he could have derived in his lifetime. He lived a clean, fine life and much happiness must await him in the life to come.
(p. 156)

The authors talk about Amos not only in terms of his life, but his afterlife. He is immortalized, not just in the aspect of his memory living on in written word, but in the sense that he is spoken of as still living "in the life to come." There is something tender yet grating about the anxiety these authors feel for the eternal soul of Amos. It is somewhat of a dismissal of his earthly existence—i.e. they think he dropped the ball, but they still see hope for him in the next life.

The authors blame what they view as Amos' shortcomings on how sensitive he was as a youth. The blame, if any, is taken off the family and off of the Mormon Church.

Whatever issues the authors feel he had are portrayed as the product of his own passions and decisions and not the result of his upbringing, and not a reflection of his membership in either the Mormon Church or the Parry family. The family shares in the successes and triumphs of its forebears, but it is up to each ancestor to shoulder the sole responsibility of his or her poor decisions. The love may be *unconditional*, but the family identity is not.

In regards to my previous postulation that family-history writing tends to be about *deflection and retraction*, Tom Peterson made the following observation about his Uncle Amos:

After giving it more thought, I believe the reason the Parry family wrote a positive bio on Uncle Amos is found in the inherent LDS culture of perfectionism. LDS members are taught that they can be perfect, even as their Father in Heaven is perfect... Therefore, as Uncle Amos' history was written, the authors did not want to admit to the LDS constituency that one of the family had failed at being the "perfect" LDS man.

Tom indicates that the authors of the family history kept constantly in mind that the history would be submitted to the records of the church and therefore there was a certain anxiety felt to portray the family in a very Mormon-centric light, to the degree that certain information would be omitted about relatives and ancestors such as Amos. It is unclear who they envisioned would read the history—though the intended audience is clearly the *family*, a secondary audience of church officials and judgmental non-family readers also shaped the production of the text. The constructed identity of the reader, therefore, shifted from that of *close-knit family member* to *someone who might be a family member but who might also be looking for dirt by which to judge the family*. The result of this is the further fictionalizing of Amos' identity.

In his analysis of the discourse of homelessness, Huckin (2002) demonstrates how the five forms of *textual silencing* manifest themselves in discourse: *speech-act silences*, *presuppositional silences*, *discreet silences*, *genre-based silences*, and *manipulative silences*. Four of these five forms of textual silencing occur in the eulogistic recasting of Grandpa B.'s and Uncle Amos's identities. The exception is *speech-act silences*, which only occur within *spoken* rhetorical acts, such as giving someone the silent treatment or intentionally speaking in a volume or tone so certain people won't hear. While these types of silences certainly occur within oral family histories, such as withholding information from a relative or failing to include a living relative within a contemporary history, they don't come into play in this analysis of written texts that only deal with deceased relatives.

Presuppositional silences are those that serve communicative efficiency by not stating what the writer apparently assumes to be common knowledge. Huckin refers to the use of enthymemes and syllogisms as an example of the assumed common knowledge of the audience. In the case of family histories, where the intended audience is a small, homogenous group, the assumed common knowledge refers to this communal memory that the audience taps into to fill in the blanks. When the author talks about Grandpa B.'s love of the church in the last few years of his life, there is no need to mention his lifetime of inactivity in the church, because the communal memory provides this information. Likewise, when the Parry authors discuss Uncle Amos's lack of happiness, the intended audience is one that knows Uncle Amos's struggles and life choices. These are those moments of filling in the blanks and reading behind the lines that I argue are so critical

when writing family histories in this eulogistic manner. For whatever reason—to not speak ill of the dead, to not reopen still-healing wounds, to salvage the family’s collective identity, and so on—these aspects of Grandpa B.’s and Uncle Amos’ lives are silenced, and they run the high risk of becoming textually silenced and utterly forgotten when this current pool of communal memory has passed. In other words, when the reader's identity created by the author is no longer *reflective* but *fictionalized* (because the reader doesn't know the oral history of Uncle Amos), she cannot "fill in the blanks" of Amos' *fictionalized* identity to co-construct with the author, even if just in her mind, a more *reflective* representation of Amos. His *fictionalized* persona is all that survives.

Discreet silences are those that occur when the writer avoids stating sensitive information in an attempt to be tactful, politically correct, or to avoid taboo topics.

In similar fashion to the presuppositional silences, discreet silences come about from the impetus of avoiding stating sensitive information. The difference, however, is that there is no intention of the reader being able to read between the lines. Some things, or so it seems, are better left unsaid, better never to be remembered.

In the two cases outlined above, this discreet silencing occurs out of a desire to rhetorically produce the author’s, the family’s, the ancestor’s, and the Mormon Church’s identity in a noble, non-abrasive light.

More at stake here, too, than with the presuppositional silencing is the idea of sensitivity to the needs of the audience. There are close living relatives of each of these subjects who will have potentially read the family history, such as Michelle Head

worrying about portraying Grandpa B. in a way that would be upsetting to his daughter, Helen.

Genre-based silences are those that are governed by genre conventions, such as obituaries avoiding negative comments about the deceased. The bulk of this chapter focuses on this type of silencing, so I won't repeat myself here, other than to stress that a great deal of the information provided about Uncle Amos and Grandpa B. came from previously written eulogies, tributes, and obituaries, which adhere to certain genre conventions, such as highlighting positive qualities of the deceased, reassuring the survivors that they live on (and that there's hope for them in the next life), and silencing, glossing over, or justifying negative qualities.

Manipulative silences are those that deliberately conceal relevant information from the reader. This type of silencing most often occurs in advertising and political propaganda. Manipulative silences differ from discreet silences in terms of intended audience. When a family historian omits or invents information about a certain ancestor so as not to offend family members who might have been affected by the deceased's actions, that's a discreet silence. When the author, on the other hand, omits or changes information to save face with a wider audience—in this case the extended family, the Mormon Church, or anyone familiar with the family or Mormon Church—we get manipulative silences. Tom Peterson, in a follow-up interview, mentioned to me that the Parry family history was written with a wider audience in mind—namely the Mormon Church—and that it was intended to be submitted to the archives of the church: “Therefore,” he says, “as Uncle Amos' history was written, the authors did not want to

admit to the LDS constituency that one of the family had failed at being the ‘perfect’ LDS man.” Likewise, when I interviewed Michelle Head, she mentioned that she didn’t want to portray anyone in the family history in a way that went against the family’s current Mormon values.

Unlikely Heroes: Mormon Polygamists

Just as the authors attempt to achieve Burkean identification by drawing empathetic pathways between their audiences and their pioneer ancestors, the authors also draw on empathy to help readers identify with polygamist ancestors. There could be any number of ways to portray polygamy and these ancestors: the men could be cast as sexual and domineering beings; the women as timid and oppressed; the church as a dark net of secrecy and civil disobedience; the act of polygamy as a blotch on Mormon history; and the polygamists as deserving of the persecution they received for their crimes. But they’re not. Instead, these polygamist ancestors are portrayed as upstanding citizens, as nation builders, as trailblazers, as pioneers, as victims of the government, as defenders of religious freedom, as men and women (and children) who love their families and love the United States and who just want to be happy. These fictionalized personas that represent only the positive and best sides of these polygamists can potentially pull the reader in, even if the reader is not a family member nor a Mormon. First and foremost, these ancestors are portrayed as human beings who mean no harm.

The only family history that never mentions polygamy is the Willis family history. The other six bring up the issue to varying degrees, but all in a unique way. The

author of the Dalton family history cut-and-pasted hundreds of pages worth of material on the subject from other sources, though he never makes his own commentary on the matter, nor does he specifically address the polygamists in his history—the borrowed material, however, is meant to be representative of his own ancestors. The five texts I look closely at here are the Dalton-Whittaker family history, where the author cuts-and-pastes material explaining polygamy but makes no commentary on the issue, the Belnap print-based family history, where polygamy is hardly mentioned at all; the Belnap online family history, where great attention is given to *justify* the practice of polygamy by the authors' ancestors; the Bullock family history, where the topic is glossed over except of the inclusion of one detailed and ultimately sad anecdote of a female ancestor who was coerced into plural marriage; and the Parry family history, whose authors dedicate much of the family history to the topic, including an entire chapter on polygamy, and including a transcription of Joseph Parry's journals wherein he discusses some of the hardships involved with being a Mormon polygamist.

The Dalton-Whittaker Family History

Though the author of the Dalton-Whittaker family history doesn't self-identify as Mormon, he says "As we know by now our Utah Dalton's were L. D. S. or Mormons." He explains that "Almost all of our Dalton ancestors after they joined the Mormon

Church practiced plural marriage.”²⁷ What follows are several dozens of pages of cut-and-pasted material about polygamy in the early Mormon Church.

The author admits to freely borrowing passages on the matter from other sources, mostly from other privately-published family histories, without giving citation or verifying if the information was correct or accurate. “My assumption,” he says, “is that if someone took the time to publish something, or add it to their genealogy, I will accept it as truthful...it is up to the readers to believe or not what is written in the Dalton-Whittaker Family Association Web Site.”²⁸

The author makes no commentary or critique on the issue of polygamy, and he includes no actual biographies or vignettes of ancestors who were practicing polygamists. Despite this, and even though the polygamy material is borrowed, we can still get a sense of how the topic fits into the author’s sense of the family identity. He could have borrowed material from any number of critics of the Mormon Church; instead, he uses material from official Mormon Church publications and from other Mormon-based family histories. This suggests a number of possibilities about the rhetorical construction of identity in the text: that the author is constructing his reader as either a member of the Mormon Church or sympathetic to the Mormon culture; that he is constructing the identity of his ancestors as important members of the family, even if their religious ideals

²⁷ http://www.daltwhitt.org/?page_id=1048

²⁸ http://www.daltwhitt.org/?page_id=676

don't currently jibe with the overall family identity; and that his purpose with the family history isn't to critique his ancestors or the Mormon Church nor to alienate members of the family who still currently affiliate with the church.

Perhaps due to his lack of membership in the Mormon Church, this author is the only one to offer a *humorous* take on polygamy when he quotes Mark Twain:

With the gushing self-sufficiency of youth, I was feverish to plunge in headlong and achieve a great reform here [to abolish polygamy] — until I saw the Mormon women. Then I was touched. My heart was wiser than my head. It warmed toward these poor, ungainly and pathetically homely creatures, and as I turned to hide the generous moisture in my eyes, I said, “No; the man that marries one of them has done a deed of Christian charity which entitles him to the kindly applause of mankind, not their harsh censure, and the man that marries 60 of them has done a deed of open-handed generosity so sublime that the nation should stand uncovered in his presence and worship in silence.”²⁹

The Belnap Family History

In the Belnap (1974) history, the word *polygamy* is only used twice—and in both instances it is within a quote from someone else. In every other instance—thirty-five times, to be exact—the word of choice is *wives*. For example, on page 12 we are introduced to “Gilbert Belnap, and his wives.” This can be tricky, since wives could just as easily refer to consecutive rather than concurrent wives. In just about any other non-Mormon family history, *wives* would be read, by default, to mean consecutive and non-

²⁹ http://www.daltwhitt.org/?page_id=1048

overlapping. But with a family history stretching from Mormon pioneers, the reader is left to compare the text (i.e. the biography or life sketch) with the genealogical charts to see if *wives* refers to polygamous or plural wives. In most cases in the Belnap history, this is the case. I can only guess the author's intention for avoiding the words *polygamy* and *plural*.

Where the print-based family history is stingy with the topic of polygamy, the authors of the online version of the Belnap family history devote quite a bit of material to the topic. There is no direct link to polygamy, but doing a quick site search reveals several dozen articles where the topic is raised.

The author of the site has included a page entitled, "The Unfolding Restoration: Doctrinal Developments Since 1844,"³⁰ which serves as a page of links used to contextualize, explain, and rationalize Mormon polygamy. The first set of links (fifteen total) are "selected scriptural references" that show the doctrinal foundation for polygamy. It goes on to list other primary sources, five secondary sources, and a bibliography of another fourteen sources that discuss the topic. Many of the primary sources are neutral—they are links to such things as the Morill Anti-Bigamy Act of 1862—but all of the non-neutral links are pro-Mormon: they are books and articles written by Mormon leaders and professors. There are no links to critiques of polygamy or

³⁰ <http://www.belnapfamily.org/brentjbelnap/institute/pluralmarriage.htm>

the Mormon faith. And why should there be? This is, after all, a family history dedicated to the heritage of a Mormon polygamist.

The authors of the site offer another page where they discuss polygamy in the family's history directly. On a page entitled, "Polygamist Ancestors,"³¹ they give a bullet list of "some interesting facts," such as the fact that of the nine polygamist male ancestors, only two had more than two wives at once. Most of the facts detail some of the convoluted genealogy that occurs with polygamy: multiple divorces and deaths and overlaps and wives who were also sisters or cousins, and so on. The page is actually pretty handy, considering that this history, like most others in this study, takes a great deal of attention from the reader to piece together who was married to whom and gave birth to what. Perhaps of most interest to this analysis is the first paragraph, where the author offers what I call a "lessening of offenses" for his polygamous ancestors.

Listed here are the 17 direct-line ancestors of Brent J. Belnap who were practitioners of LDS polygamy. Most direct-line LDS ancestors who lived during the "Polygamy" period of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-days Saints did not practice polygamy: Of those males who joined or were born into the Church between 1830 (the founding of the Church) and 1890 (the Manifesto), only 9 (or 37.5% of approximately 24) practiced polygamy. Of females, only 8 were polygamous.

Though they weren't lumped together on one page, I found sixty-four articles and pages on this site that refer to polygamy. Some are academic, talking about such topics as polygamy and its connections with the Muslim faith. There is no commentary about these

³¹ <http://www.belnapfamily.org/brentjbelnap/familyhistory/polygamistancestors.htm>

articles, whether or not the author agrees, or how it relates to the family. The tone seems to be that if the author found something non-damning relating to polygamy and Mormonism, he added it to the site. As with the page dedicated to polygamous links, these other pages seem to be very pro-Mormon—not that they advocate the practice of polygamy, but they minimize the gravity of the practice as it relates to Mormon history and they paint a very understanding and sympathetic tapestry for the reader by which to judge the family.

One such page, oddly enough, is a vignette about Joseph Parry, the central figure of the Parry family history, and Gilbert Belnap. The two were imprisoned on charges of polygamy while serving together as Mormon missionaries in what is now central Idaho. The following passage portrays these two as victims, highlighting the deplorable conditions they suffered while in prison:

He and forty eight other men were kept in a cell twenty by twenty feet. It was very dirty and there were not sufficient bunks and he and several others had to sleep on the tobacco spotted floor. In one corner was a privy. Imagine the stench from so many breathing and the use of this. The Church leaders, Lorenzo Snow and Rudger Clawson and many others were imprisoned at the same time and were forced to live under the same terrible conditions. They had to live with the worst criminals who used tobacco, foul language and taunted the brothers shamefully. The guards were very spiteful with the Mormon prisoners and persecuted them at every opportunity, putting them in the sweat box at the least provocation. The “Sweat Box” was a room 5 x 5 x 3 feet. A man could neither stand

nor lie down, but had to sit on the floor the entire time and eat bread and water. (p. 5)³²

The author then shifts from highlighting the pain and suffering of Gilbert and Joseph to point fingers at the law enforcement officers and prison guards “responsible” for them being there:

There were 10 guards at the penitentiary. They all had short lives, after the men were released to come home, and had terrible deaths. It looked like God’s judgment was upon them. All kinds of indignities were practice upon the brethren.

The author of these passages absolves his polygamist forebears. They were victims through and through. The only ones he faults are the guards as evidenced by their horrible deaths which came about because of “God’s judgment.”

The Bullock Family History

In the Bullock family history, the topic of polygamy is only brought up on a handful of occasions, and it is done so with discretion. Ebenezer Bullock, the first noted polygamist, had two wives, but the act of polygamy is only mentioned once in his biography: “1876 Ebenezer married his second wife, Veta Josephine Fjeldsted. Both wives lived in the same house in separate apartments, and Josephine was a great help to Mary” (p. 259). The remainder of the biographical vignette focuses exclusively on Ebenezer: his “great ambition and courage,” his love for and dedication to his children

³² http://www.belnapfamily.org/Joseph_Parry_Biography.pdf

and grandchildren. When he died, he “left a host of loving relatives and friends, who had wonderful memories of a truly fine gentleman” (p. 259).

The longest of the three treatments of polygamy in the Bullock history talks about Elizabeth Bullock and her reluctance at the age of sixteen to marry polygamist Daniel Duncan McArthur, who had been told by Brigham Young “to be at the Endowment House on the following Tuesday to have a plural wife sealed to him” (p. 204). His first wife readily consented, since Elizabeth was “a nice girl.” But when Daniel asked Elizabeth’s mother for permission to marry her, she told him she was “a little too young...but if it was President Young's desire they would not object.” Later that day, Elizabeth, not wanting to go against Brigham Young’s request, consented to marry Daniel. Daniel, however, respected Elizabeth’s mother’s wish to wait a year before the marriage, at which time he then married both Elizabeth and another woman named Mary.

The passage in full reads thus (see Appendix D for a sample of the text):

When Elizabeth was only sixteen years of age she was asked to marry Daniel Duncan McArthur. On one occasion on a Friday President Brigham Young met Daniel and told him to be at the Endowment House on the following Tuesday to have a plural wife sealed to him. He went and consulted with his wife. She agreed and said that Sister Bullock had a nice girl, and so did the Hill family. Daniel went to the Bullock home and told Sister Bullock what President Young had said. Sister Bullock said her daughter was not at home, but she thought that Elizabeth was a little too young. Daniel then went to the Hill home. They also thought their daughter was too young, but if it was President Young's desire they would not object. As Daniel was leaving the Hill home, Sister Bullock met Daniel with Elizabeth. She said she had reconsidered it, and did not want to go against President Young's request. Sister Bullock had one wish, and that was for Elizabeth to remain home for one more year, which she did. Daniel went the second mile on Brigham Young’s request, and married Elizabeth Bullock and Mary Brice Hill on the same day, on 13 Feb. 1858, in the Endowment House, Salt Lake City, Utah.

This passage is unique in the history in that it doesn't gloss over the plural wives like the other biographies and vignettes. Instead, we get a glimpse of what it meant to enter into plural marriage at this time: Brigham Young as the orchestrator behind the marriages, the family's reluctance but final acquiescence because they didn't want to disobey a command from a prophet of God, and the wives' utter lack of say in the matter. It's impossible to say why Bullock chose to flesh out this tale of polygamy while glossing over all other instances in the family history. Perhaps it is because of the direct connection of the tale with Brigham Young. This, I argue, is a mythologizing moment in the family history where the author deliberately makes a blue-blood connection in the form of a *Mormon shout out* because Brigham Young, while certainly the central figure in the history of Mormon polygamy, was not the sole authority and orchestrator of these polygamist marriages. In fact, most polygamous marriages at the time were done under the direction of the local bishop.³³ At no other time in these family histories do the authors mention who petitioned, sanctioned, or performed the plural marriage, except—as in this case—when it was Brigham Young.

³³ A bishop, a nonpaid position reserved for male priesthood holders, presides over a local congregation of up to 300 members (called a *ward*) and acts much like a priest or pastor or minister in other religions.

The Parry Family History

Unlike Bullock and Belnap, the authors of this history aren't shy about using the word *polygamy*. Joseph Parry, the central figure or *ego* of the history, had five wives, though not all at the same time (wife one died before Joseph joined the Mormon Church; wives two and three were polygamous until wife two filed for divorce; and later wives three, four, and five lived in polygamy). The authors dedicate an entire chapter to polygamy, entitled "Polygamy Years—Camp Serene" (see Appendix E for a sample page describing Camp Serene). Camp Serene was the nickname of the property owned by Joseph Parry where polygamists who were "persecuted" (notice they say *persecuted*, not *prosecuted*) under the Edmunds Law could find sanctuary "during this stormy period" (pp. 208, 210). Joseph and other Mormon leaders and polygamists are repeatedly portrayed as victims of the US Marshals who "crusaded" to arrest and disturb the lives of "the brethren and their harassed wives" (p 209).

The authors argue that "it was not easy to live in polygamy, for it was a form of marriage that called for the highest motives and the most unselfish actions that mortal man was capable of achieving" (p. 210). The authors also step back and take a more objective stance when explaining that "for the polygamist, the act represented a violation of his right to practice religion according to his own conscience. For the non-Mormon, polygamy was a flagrant case of disobedience to the law" (p. 212). It is important to note that they only delineate between the *polygamist* and the *non-Mormon*. Where does the Mormon non-polygamist fit on this spectrum? Is the reader led to assume that all Mormons side with these polygamist ancestors? It's difficult to say, but given the content

of this chapter on Mormon polygamy and the sympathetic strokes with which the authors paint their polygamist forebears, I conclude that they view polygamy as their ancestors' religious right.

Elsewhere in the family history, when plural marriage is mentioned, it is spoken of in terms of "entering into polygamy" or "living in polygamy" or the "practice of polygamy" (pp. 52, 106, 171). There are occasional references to wives not getting along, such as Joseph's second wife who was ultimately granted a divorce by Brigham Young (p. 52). It is never spoken of as a negative thing. The authors take a very matter-of-fact approach, though they never delve into what it means to be a polygamist, and they never offer their own commentary on the matter. They do offer one parenthetical explanation, however, the first time polygamy is mentioned in the history: "As an explanation of polygamy, there were so many women converts who were arriving in Utah, with no means to pay for their sustenance, that the older men were encouraged to marry the converts, and provide for their living" (p. 66).

When I interviewed Tom Peterson, he said that Joseph had been arrested for refusing to divorce his plural wives. Joseph, he said, felt a sense of duty to support these women, and there was never a "husband-wife relationship." I don't doubt that Joseph's intentions were noble, but I question how one can claim that polygamists only acted out of a sense of duty to provide economically for these women when the mere fact of *offspring* suggests a very real husband-wife relationship. What is the impetus for glossing over, ignoring, or denying this conjugal relationship? Is it to remove *sex* from the equation, and thereby recast these male polygamists as something other than sexual

beings? By deemphasizing the reality of sex in a polygamist relationship, the authors seem to unintentionally draw attention to the idea that there might be something carnal, worldly, shameful or dirty in the arrangement (drawing by omission from the Mormon discourse of cleanliness).

In his analysis of Mormon polygamy discourse, Smith (2007) contends that “Mormons of any stripe, it may be not too much to say, have lost the ability to think and act like their outrageous forebears, whose combination of mysticism and pragmatism, sex and spirit, god and humanity is certainly one lamentable loss of modernization” (p. 38). I agree, especially after what I have read about these polygamous ancestors. It is this idea of *thinking*, or not being able to think like their forebears, that influences the way the authors of these family histories portray their polygamous ancestors, how they rewrite them to more aptly fit within the chosen image and identity of the current family. The authors of the Parry family history can identify with their polygamist ancestors insofar as they are cast as spiritually *clean*, as believers of God, and as defenders of their religion and their God-given rights. These ancestors, however, are not portrayed as normal human beings with actual sex drives. By casting their ancestors in ideal terms—as men and women serving God—and to a lesser degree in pragmatic terms—as men and women making the best of a bad situation (i.e. the imbalanced ratio of men to women in the church)—these authors are able to maintain the current family identity by producing the identities of their ancestors in this current family image. There is something wholesome and clean and orderly and completely *nonsexual* underlying this image. The polygamist relationship is drained of its sexual implications. The possibility of these polygamous

men being sexually-driven creatures isn't presented. The possibility, however, of the women being forced unwillingly into these relationships sneaks through.

There are several accounts of plural wives in these histories who sought divorce (Parry family history, p. 52), women who initially declined proposals to be a plural wife (Bullock family history, p. 204) and women who refused to share a house with the other wives (Bullock family history, p. 259). I find it odd that only the women are shown in this light, because showing a male polygamist who disliked the concept but did it anyway out of sense of duty or who was compelled by his church leaders would add more credence to this idea of polygamy as a noble and virtuous act. Like these women who wanted no part of it but did it anyway, these men could be seen as true followers of their beliefs and the Mormon Church despite the discomfort involved. But these types of polygamous men aren't portrayed in these histories. They are touted as noble creatures, ever willing to serve their god, ever obedient and humble, but never reluctant. *Never reluctant*. The authors cling to these attributes because they are in-line with the family's current identity: law abiding, church going, nation building citizens. The authors, their current family, their ancestors, and the members of the Mormon Church are all portrayed in these noble, clean, nonsexual terms.

To the very end of his biography within the family history, the authors portray Joseph Parry as the most noble of men. At the end of his transcribed journal, there is a single paragraph written by one of the family historians:

Throughout his entire life, Joseph Parry labored untiringly for his Church and remained active almost to the hour of his death. It was on a fast day that his demise came, on which day he had attended his meetings, bore his testimony, blessed a number of babies and attended services in the

evening. He knew no death for the change was instantaneous. He was 86 years of age on April 4, 1911, and he passed away August 6, 1911. The last thing he did was write a check for his fast day donation. (p. 43)

This paragraph encapsulates the tone of the entire family history, that Joseph Parry, above all else, loved the Mormon Church. More than his dedication to family, and more than his devotion to God, he is portrayed as a man who was loyal to Brigham Young and the Mormon faith.

In a short essay that one of the authors, Lucile Parry Peterson, included in the family history,³⁴ Joseph is portrayed in many ways. In the approximately 500 word vignette, she underlines the different roles that Joseph played: an adventurer, an obedient convert to the Mormon Church, a loving husband, an early pioneer to Utah, a successful businessman, a compassionate man, a tireless missionary, a brave soldier, a polygamist (married to five “strong and courageous women” and father to 23 children “who have become outstanding Utah citizens”), an enthusiastic politician (at the municipal level), a leader in the arrival of the railroad in Ogden, a progressive educator, an active Church member, and a loving father and grandfather. “Indeed,” she says, “Joseph Parry of Ogden was a **great man**” (pp. 217-218, emphasis original, see Appendix F for full-text scan).

³⁴ To my surprise, I also found this vignette in the Belnap (2011) online history, as Joseph Parry served as a missionary companion with Gilbert Belnap, the central figure of the Belnap history.

Joseph Parry, just like the multitude of ancestors portrayed within these seven histories, is eulogized and portrayed in the best of terms. Even when primary and autobiographical sources are used to create the identities of these ancestors, they are used selectively, always with this larger image and identity of the family and the Mormon Church at stake. Why eulogize the long deceased? Perhaps it's all about pandering: pandering to an audience of family members, to an audience of Mormons, to an audience of folks who might unfairly judge, to an audience of folks who don't want to be unfairly judged, to an audience of family-members who might want to share in this communal memory. Whatever the reason, these ancestors are eulogized, their identities fictionalized by ignoring their worst deeds and by recasting their weaknesses as strengths.

Eulogizing these ancestors gives the authors power to produce their identity and their family's identity in the image of their choosing.

But at what cost?

Revisionist History and the Mormon Lens

When Akenson (2007) expresses anxiety over folks building their family histories on bad information—warning that everything built upon one bad date or misprinted name or misplaced line is, in essence, a *fiction*—he wasn't talking about the mythologizing and fictionalizing of ancestors. He was speaking about basic record keeping—clerical errors—but the family histories, I contend, which are written about and built upon these fictionalized identities are in danger of being just as erroneous and damaging to future generations.

Akenson calls Mormons a “scriptural people,” and as such, their approach to genealogy a type of “salvation history” (pp. 19-20). Here, he is speaking specifically about the practice of baptism-by-proxy (also known as “baptism for the dead”) in Mormon temples. Genealogy, in this regard, really is a form of “salvation history.”

As I read these seven privately-published family histories, though, I hear the echo of Akenson’s argument throughout the texts, even though they are being written for purposes other than fulfilling temple work. As I’ve noted elsewhere, these histories are a chance to create and reify the family’s chosen identity and they are a chance to create the family’s ancestors and genealogical line in the image of the current family—in this case, the image or constructed identity of *faithful Mormons* and *mainstream Americans*.

This recreation of the family’s identity—several generations spanning hundreds of years—into an acceptable and desirable identity, I argue, is a form of revisionist history.

To be clear, I in no way want to argue that revisionist history, by default, is corrupt or undesirable. Revisionist history is often conflated with *propaganda* and *negotiationism*, deceitful tactics used to hide certain truths and prey on ignorance. At the same time, I don’t use the term in the sense of academic revisionist history, which implies rigorous scholarship to dispute and bring new light to existing knowledge. The revisionist history present in these family histories falls somewhere in the middle of these two extremes, between complicit deceit and the revelation of truth, where make-believe, wishful thinking, myth, and lore mix with facts, credibility, and traditional knowledge.

I applaud these family historians in their attempts to read and reread traditional history from their familial and religious lenses. As McPherson (2003) contends, Revision is the lifeblood of historical scholarship. History is a continuing dialogue between the present and the past. Interpretations of the past are subject to change in response to new evidence, new questions asked of the evidence, new perspectives gained by the passage of time. There is no single, eternal, and immutable "truth" about past events and their meaning. The unending quest of historians for understanding the past—that is, "revisionism"—is what makes history vital and meaningful.

The type of revisionist history that these family histories offer is also known as *pseudohistory*. Carroll (2003) suggests the following criteria for a topic to warrant the term pseudohistory, all of which hold true for these seven family histories:

1. The work uncritically accepts myths and anecdotal evidence without skepticism;
2. the work has a political, religious, or other ideological agenda;
3. the work is not published in an academic journal or is otherwise not adequately peer reviewed;
4. the *evidence* for key facts supporting the work's thesis is selective or speculative or controversial or incorrectly/inadequately sourced or interpreted in an unjustifiable way or given undue weight or taken out of context or distorted (be it accidental or fraudulent);

5. competing (and simpler) explanations or interpretations for the same set of facts, which have been peer reviewed and have been adequately sourced, have not been addressed;
 6. and the work relies on one or more conspiracy theories or hidden-hand explanations, when the principle of Occam's razor would recommend a simpler, more prosaic and more plausible explanation of the same fact pattern.
- (p. 305)

In this section, I show the ways in which some of these family historians rely on a revisionist historiography, particularly one from a unique Mormon perspective. The main text I analyze here is the Belnap family history (1974), which will take up the bulk of this section, and I look at how some of the other texts, to a lesser degree, take part in this revisionist history. Belnap dedicates hundreds of pages to rewriting the history of his family to show how they have come to be the divine and chosen people they are today. The other connections aren't quite as lofty, such as the Dalton and Bullock family histories showing *possible* connections to notable medieval knights.

The drive to historicize or contextualize one's family within traditional history is understandable. It breathes life into the biographies and vignettes and genealogical charts. The authors of the Pratt family history say they "hope to understand not merely the Pratt family (the names and dates of our ancestors), but the Pratt family 'in' history."³⁵ They

³⁵ http://jared.pratt-family.org/main_pages/histories.html

argue that in order to “understand and appreciate” their heritage, they need to “see our Pratt ancestors as *real people*, with struggles and triumphs of their own.” The authors historicize their ancestors to show they are real people, and they do this by portraying them as faithful members of the Mormon Church, as pioneers, as nation builders.

The author of the Belnap history does this too, explaining that “in order to understand the nature of our ancestral position, their feelings, moods, motivations that determined their direction and destiny, and hence our own, one must understand the people and the times in which they lived.” (p. 57).

Each of the family histories in this study does this. The authors build in tidbits of information, timelines, and other background information to contextualize ancestors against the broad landscape of American and world history. But it is a very selective contextualization. The authors pick and choose what information to provide and how to provide it so as to show the importance of their ancestors, to give meaning to their existence, and to validate the efforts put forth in creating the family history. In fact, Belnap claims that his revealing “true nature of men and women who were here before us” through this family history is just as “astonishing and ennobling” as major scientific revelations, such as “weigh[ing] the stars” and building airplanes and submarines (p. 43).

Several of these histories go a step beyond showing these ancestors’ importance in traditional history by attempting to portray the Mormon Church as a critical part of American and world history—a movement of sorts designed and destined to happen since the beginning of time, and their ancestors as the means for bringing it to pass. In a way, the authors would argue the world and not just the Mormon Church or their descendants

owe these ancestors a debt of gratitude for helping to bring to pass the worldwide prominence of the Mormon Church.

The author of the Belnap history, perhaps, is the most outspoken when it comes to this revision of history through the Mormon lens. He says that the “central core of this book is the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the encompassment of Gilbert Belnap into that great Latter-day movement” (p. 123).

In the first several chapters, the author infuses traditional and social history as national, colonial, British, world, regional, local, and familial history is all blended and seen through the lens of the Mormon movement (what he continually calls “the restoration,” meaning the restoration of Christ’s church in these “the latter days”).

When he talks about the Belnap line before Gilbert’s conversion to Mormonism, he talks about how Gilbert’s ancestors ultimately put Gilbert in the right place, at the right time, with the right mindset to join the church, even to the point of influencing the events of world history that would allow the Mormon Church to be established in the first place (p. 83). He offers an extensive history over a hundred pages of European and British history, most of the time making no direct reference to the Belnaps, but at every turn showing how these historical events would eventually lead to the establishment of the United States, the emigration of the Belnaps from England to Massachusetts, the founding of the Mormon Church, and ultimately the Belnap family’s role in the early days of the church.

The author has no qualms with revising history through his familial and Mormon lens. He says he not only wants to show Gilbert Belnap’s history and personality, “but to

reconstruct the whole fabric of each passing age, and see how it affected him and hence affects us, his descendants” (p. 43, emphasis added).

He sums up centuries of events that lead to the rise of America—the northern migration of the early Goths before the Romans, the fall of the Roman empire, the Viking attacks on Britton, the reformation and Protestantism—and says

the momentous changes of these...conflicts gave rise not only to the birth of a new nation, but to the birth of several new ideas and concepts of freedom which were to influence not only the political nature of the environment, but the religious tenor and attitude of the people which made them very receptive to the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ a few short decades hence. (p. 103)

He refers to Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island and the first Baptist church in America, who he says “made as complete an evaluation of Christian religion as he possibly could” and concluded “that the true Gospel of Jesus Christ was not to be found on the earth” (p. 83). He says Rogers “prophetically” surmised “that the time would come in which the Gospel would be restored in its fullness once again to the earth. It was from such noble causes that this colony was sustained and thrived” (p. 83). The author argues that the colonies were established and thrived and that America eventually won its independence from Britain for the sole purpose of making the establishment of the Mormon Church possible. The Belnap family line, he contends, were critical players in this, both secularly and religiously. Even when it doesn’t seem obvious, the sum total of the myriad generations before Gilbert lead to the moment when he would join the church: “It is important to see the evolution of this thought process among the ancestry of Gilbert Belnap in order to determine the motivation and readiness for the experience of aligning himself with the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ in this dispensation.” (p. 97).

He goes back several centuries, in fact, to when the Anglos and Saxons invaded Britton. “This people was being prepared by their concentration in the British Isles and Scandinavia for the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this latter day” (p. 29). The Vikings, as it were, were endowed with a marauding spirit—a spirit inherited from what he contends is their ancient forefather, Manasseh of Israel—and were guided by the hand of God as they plundered and murdered and pillaged and razed:

Never since the days of the Germanic and Scandinavian invasions of Britain had such a national movement been seen. The Saxon and Viking had colonized England. Now, one thousand years later, their descendants were taking possession of America. Many different streams and branches of the blood of Israel were to make their confluence in the New World and contribute to the manifold character of the future United States. (pp. 83-84)

In this and other parts of the history, the author extracts the best parts of these ancient ancestors when building up the family identity: from the Vikings, he discusses their restless and conquering spirits that are never content to settle (pp. 22, 29). These Viking ancestors, whether actual or not, are not portrayed in any negative terms—there is no mention of their atrocities—but rather they are portrayed as the driving force behind Europe’s explorers and adventurers who eventually settled and developed the American continent. These are the same positive qualities and attributes he identifies in the Belnap line through the millennia and that he emphasizes in Gilbert Belnap, the family history’s central figure.

Though the authors of the Parry family history don't go into as great of detail in making explicit connections between their ancestors and the events that shaped both Church and world history, they do make a revealing claim in the introduction about the family's Coat of Arms: "Interest in heraldry (the study of Coats of Arms) is increasing daily. This is especially true among people who have a measure of family pride and who realize a 'Coat of Arms' is one of the rare devices remaining that can provide an incentive to preserve our heritage" (intro, no page number). They argue "the Motto on the crest, 'A prudent man God Will Guard,' certainly denotes that God played a very great part in our early Parry ancestors' lives. ... A Coat of Arms is a symbol of distinction in the British Isles."



Parry Coat of Arms

Figure 5.4: Parry Coat of Arms, Taylor (1988)

That God has guided the family lineage centuries before the central figure of the history was born is an important element in histories of both Belnap and Parry.

Akenson (2007) notes that in the grammar of genealogy, most Mormon family historians follow the academically and culturally sanctioned grammar of *ascent*, meaning that the historian starts with an ancestor and then traces the lineages from that subject

until the most recent generation. The ancestor is the *ego*, and his or her tree branches out exponentially for several generations until the line becomes too unruly (he notes, for example, the massive and abandoned project of mapping Brigham Young's line of ascent and how the Internet is making it possible once again for family historians to pick up the project). Showing, however, how one's ancestry has led to the current generation's membership in the Mormon Church is counter to this grammar of ascent. Rather, the family histories in this study all utilize a grammar of *descent*. In essence, the authors are saying, "this is who we are, and this is how we got here," rather than the more academic, "here is an important figure in history, and these are her descendants."

Typical of histories based on a grammar of descent are tales of mythical origins. There are essentially four myths of origin found in the Belnap (1974) history: *Father Abraham* of Old Testament fame; *Odin*, the deity of Norse mythology; and—a little more down-to-Earth, *Robert Belknappe*, a famous English knight, and *Abraham Belknap*, a Puritan pilgrim. The connection to these figures (and deities) isn't coincidental: "They are histories of those who filled prophecy and those who will fulfill prophecy" (p. 13). The gist of these origins, told in detail over several dozen pages, is this: Father Abraham begat Isaac who begat Jacob who begat Joseph (who was sold into Egypt) who begat Manasseh. Manasseh and his tribe emigrated from the Middle East to Northern Europe and would later be known as the Saxons. One of these Saxons, he contends, was an actual warrior named Odin who held onto some of the ancient Hebrew traditions and who would later become mythologized as a god. Manasseh's and Odin's descendants would eventually become the conquering Vikings and breed with the Britons. After many

lineage depends on myth and wishful thinking. By invoking a grammar of descent, however, the author is able to show that this *might be* the family's patrilineal line. These so-called *ancestors* are hand-picked in order to shape and create the family line in the image of the family's current ideals and identity: pioneers, children of God, Mormons. It situates them as the end result of centuries of fulfilled prophecy. It establishes them as a special group.

The author concedes that there is some guessing involved in all of this. He even warns the reader, when talking about Sir Belknappe, that "now comes the entirely hypothetical 'if'" (p. 69). He concedes elsewhere that "this is only a hypothesis, without real proof" (p. 74).

He reasons that even though there is no hard evidence that Gilbert is related to Abraham, the pilgrim, or Robert, the knight, that given the history of the Belnap name, the likelihood of these figures *not* being related is slim. "No other Belknap immigrant has yet been found at any period in North American history. This greatly simplifies our genealogy in that all North American Belnaps (Belknaps) barring adoption of the name, can trace their genealogy to Abraham Belknapp as their immigrant ancestor" (p. 89).

That, it seems, is quite enough for the author to declare a solid lineage from modern times to the ancient prophets and Norse deities. That the prophet Abraham, however, was *real* never comes into question for the author: "The man Abraham is no more a myth or legend than his city or his civilization. The same is true of each of our other antecedents on back to the time of Abraham. We will try to represent them as living individuals in the framework of the time in which they resided" (p. 13). He also says that

there is “valid and scientific substantiation” behind what he calls the “latter-day revelation” that Anglo-Saxon people are descended from Abraham (p. 22).

In the Belnap family history’s introduction, the author acknowledges his attempt to tell the family history through a Mormon revisionist lens:

This book emphasizes the history of your lineage as it is traced back in time to our roots in ancient Israel. Each step of the lineage is set in the framework of the times and we see each ancestor through the window of history. We see them as they experience the struggle which is life. We see some without the benefits of freedom or without the joys of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We see their instrumental role in laying the groundwork for the reestablishment of freedom and an environment conducive to the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We see the gospel encompass the life of one man and forever change his destiny and the potential of all of us. We see the expansion of what he did through the lives of his children and grandchildren. (p. vii)

The author goes to great lengths to describe Abraham Belknap’s role as a pilgrim from England and how the pilgrims helped establish the United States. He then sets up a parallel story of Gilbert Belnap and the Mormon pioneers, arguing that the pioneers are pilgrims and worthy cohorts in the building of the United States: “It is equally true with the Mormon pioneers...built the foundations of the Kingdom of God here on earth” (p. 85).

The author, while not apologetic by any means for his revisionist historiography, does offer justification for any fictionalization or wishful thinking in his history. He says he strives to bring his ancestors to life because “our imagination craves to behold our ancestors as they really were, going about their daily business and daily pleasure,” and even if he has to do this with limited information, filling in the blanks when necessary, this is okay, because “even a small part of the loaf may be better than no bread” (p. 42).

Considering, however, the extent to which the author fictionalizes his ancestors and how he reaches into history and hand-picks prominent figures with which to associate his family, I don't trust his claim to be offering the reader what little loaf of bread there is. It feels more like several loaves picked-apart and reconstructed into something else entirely.

In a similar move, the author of the Dalton-Whittaker history also follows a grammar of descent in proclaiming that Sir Robert Dalton, a twelfth century English crusader, might have been an ancestor:

So we can imagine Sir Robert riding from his home in Byspham, clad in his best armour, wearing his plumed helm and carrying his great broad sword, his lance and with his shield in azure blue with the silver lion on his chest.³⁶

This author acknowledges there are mistakes and misinformation perpetuated within his family history, but it isn't a reason to shy away from writing his family history nor fleshing out the lives of his ancestors: "it is our hope and prayer that we have not perpetuated too many in this volume and perhaps it has served instead to correct many gross misconceptions of the past" (p. 92). His apology, however, is centered on minor errors, such as names of places or exact dates, but he makes no apology to starting his family history on the assumption that his family could very well be (though there's no historical credence) descended from royalty.

³⁶ http://www.daltwhitt.org/?page_id=569

Similarly, the author of the Bullock history chooses to make a possible though unfounded royal connection as the start of the known Bullock line, saying they “claim descent from the famous warrior Donald Balloch, a grandson of John McDonald, Lord of the Isles, who married Lady Margaret Stewart, daughter of King Robert II of Scotland” (p. 1). In this section, he talks about the possible origins of this patrilineal line through a discussion of the origins of the name “Bullock.” He details three possible origins, admitting that there is a great deal of myth and folklore involved with each one—and he says he *chooses* to ascribe to the Donald Balloch story. As with the authors of the Belnap and Dalton-Whittaker histories, the author of the Bullock history reaches into history and hand selects the blue-blood “ancestor” on whom he wants to build his family line.

Revisionist History as Presuppositional Silencing

I hypothesize that how we portray or ignore our ancestors can have significant consequences in the (re)writing of a family’s history. A common practice in writing family histories, for example, is to draw heavily from extant family histories (usually those written about a different family line extending from a common ancestor). If certain ancestors have been silenced or written out of these extant histories, then the present-day writers of family history are likely to unwittingly continue the silencing.

Textual silencing, I argue, factors into the rhetorical construction of an ancestor’s identity. Writers of family history must pick and choose what to add and what to leave out, which ancestors to include and which ones to exclude, which ones to portray and flesh out and which ones to summarize in a line or two. This is done out of necessity, or

else each family history would be the size of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (which, in the case of online histories, is starting to occur!).

Sometimes, however, the silencing of ancestors is intentional (even if the author doesn't realize it). In the previous chapter, I noted that Choi (2008) calls this "willful forgetfulness" and "collective amnesia" (p. 372). I like to use the term *ancestricide*³⁷ to describe this silencing to death of our ancestors.

The second form of silencing that Huckin (2002) introduces—presuppositional silencing—serves as a useful way to discuss the potential effects of silencing certain ancestors. Presuppositional silences, Huckin tells us, serve a communicative efficiency by not stating what the writer apparently assumes to be common knowledge, such as enthymemes and syllogisms. It is difficult to determine if certain silences are presuppositional, discreet, or manipulative without knowing the author's intentions. It's impossible to say by merely reading a text if the author omitted information or recast an ancestor in a certain light out of a desire to deceive, to forget, to be discreet, to be brief, or for any other number of reasons. Without knowing the intent behind these decisions, I stick with the concept of presuppositional silence, since it taps into this idea of communal memory and common knowledge—the authors, for whatever reasons, make decisions based on what they assume their intended readers know or should know.

³⁷ The only use of this word I can find elsewhere is an oil painting entitled "Ancestricide" by Derek Beggs, which portrays an orangutan hanging from a cross, implying that creationist beliefs are killing off (the memory or reality of) our true ancestors.

As with the cases of Grandpa B. and Uncle Amos, presuppositional silences occur when the author omits potentially important information not for the sake of discretion or manipulation, but because of the homogenous state of her intended readership—those who can tap into the family’s communal memory to fill in the blanks. This can occur for many reasons, such as resource restraints (i.e. page limits) or stylistic restraints (e.g. brevity being the soul of wit).

The author of the Willis family history acknowledges this potential for communal memory to be forgotten if not transcribed into materialized generational memory. She sketches the sad life of Grandpa B. whose mother died of a morphine overdose and who bounced between families for years, only to find out in adulthood that his biological father who had emigrated to Canada would have taken him, but his deceased mother’s parents had refused to assist the man with finding and taking custody of his son. While talking about a set of short-term adoptive parents, the author notes that the “information was passed down orally within the family” (p. 42). Fortunately, she was able to interview some of the older generation who still recalled this oral history, and now it has been transcribed, materialized in this family history. The communal memory of a few has become generational memory, preserved in part by this family history.

Though the reasons for silencing an ancestor’s *actual* story—and thus his or her non-textual identity—aren’t necessarily malevolent, the results can be irreparable. As an author constructs her readers as a group who share this communal memory, she is free to personify and fictionalize her ancestors accordingly. She assumes her readers will draw from their knowledge in keeping the *non-textual* identity alive, even if only in thought.

How many generations will pass before this *non-textual* identity is forgotten? As future generations opt to continue or to write their own family histories, and they are left to draw from these extant sources—only these *fictionalized* and *non-reflective* identities of their ancestors will continue.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS & CONCLUSION

In his discussion of the virtues of rhetorical analysis, Selzer (2006) says to “remember the limitations of your analysis; realize that your analysis will always be somewhat partial and incomplete, ready to be deepened, corrected, modified, and extended by the insights of others” (p. 303). He also reminds us that these analyses can be part of “the unending conversation” that Burke celebrates (p. 303). In this regard, I don’t claim to have offered the end-all, definitive analysis of privately-published family histories, but one more of what I hope to be many voices in the unending conversation of family-history writing.

In this study, I set out to analyze privately-published family histories on three fronts: as textual artifacts of a particular community, as sites of rhetorically-constructed identity, and as forms of materialized communal memory—and, perhaps more importantly, I set out to analyze how these three fronts intersect and influence each other.

In this chapter, I revisit the findings of my analysis in terms of these connections, pointing to the limitations of the study, the areas in need of more research, and the implications of these findings for rhetoric and composition, family-history writing, and other fields.

Mormonism, Discourse, and the Rhetorical Construction of Identity

At the heart of this study is the question of how identity is rhetorically constructed within privately-published family histories. Early in this project, it became evident that in order to adopt *identity-construction* as a lens for analysis, I would need to look at family histories that were generated from within a distinct community. I chose to adopt the Mormon Church as this central community for four reasons: first, because I had several of these texts available from my pilot study—all of which were written by Mormons about their Mormon polygamist ancestors; second, because focusing on family histories written by members of a religious community with shared traditions and values and discourse, I could focus on how the authors rhetorically constructed the identities of themselves, their readers, and their families against the backdrop of the Mormon Church's communal discourse and identity; third, because each of these family histories were written with a remarkably clear and similar sense of the rhetorical situation: an audience with a shared communal identity, writers who self-identify with that community, subjects that are seen as forebears and members of the community, and all with the shared purpose of materializing this communal identity and memory into a text that would survive and continue to influence future generations of the community; and fourth, because of my own membership in the Mormon community and the *insider knowledge* it could provide me as I analyzed these family histories against the communal identity, memory, knowledge, and discourse of the Mormon Church.

I wanted to know whether or not a distinct Mormon identity would emerge in the way the authors constructed the various identities involved in the rhetorical situation, and

whether or not the official discourse of the Mormon Church ultimately influenced this identity construction. After analyzing these seven texts, my final conclusion is a simple yet resounding *yes*. The authors of these texts continually referenced Mormon doctrine and history and scripture without clarification or elaboration, as if to suggest an anticipated Mormon readership; the authors portrayed their ancestors in the best of terms, in a remarkably eulogistic manner, not just to portray them as productive citizens, but as model members of the Mormon Church, and when these ancestors weren't model members, such the cases of Uncle Amos and Grandpa B., the authors rhetorically recast them and eulogized them and fictionalized their identities to the point that they were portrayed in a scrubbed-down, sanitized way that wouldn't detract from this family-as-model-citizens identity; authors continually emphasized and shared anecdotes of their ancestors who knew or interacted with prominent leaders of the early Mormon Church, and these authors traced out tenuous and sometimes convoluted collateral genealogical lines to show the families' connections to these Mormon leaders.

All of these instances taken together show a distinct Mormon identity influencing and emerging in these texts. Even though the family histories varied in tone and structure and polish—some appearing like scrap books, some like long-winded sermons, some collaborative, some single-authored, some online and ever-evolving, some decades old—the unifying thread in each of them is this emphasis on the author's family epitomizing what it means to be faithful Mormons. Unlike other forms of autobiographical writing, such as memoir, the authors of these family histories pick and choose the details of the family and portray them and position them in such a way so as not to call into question

their ancestors' nor the family's wholesomeness or goodness or citizenship in the community or church. To put it simply, these histories were not used as venues for airing the families' or the authors' dirty laundry.

Community is an important element of family history writing. The family itself is a community—one with its own values and rituals and traditions and identity. Perhaps due to the primary intended audience of these histories being the family, the authors keep this family-identity constantly in mind as they put these histories together. The authors don't use these histories to stamp out their own individual identity, especially one that runs counter to the communal identity. There is no critique of the family. There is no critique of the other communities with which the family identifies. Even in the case of the Dalton-Whittaker family history, where the author doesn't self-identify as a member of the Mormon Church, it was still an important community in the family's history, and to critique or belittle the Mormon community would be, in effect, to critique or belittle the Dalton and Whittaker families. The communities involved in the family histories are multi-layered: the family itself, the region (e.g. Utah), the church, the movements (e.g. pioneers, polygamists, pilgrims), occupations (stone masons, ranchers), and so on. The authors celebrate all of these communities and take great care to show how their ancestors embody and even champion these communities and all that they stood for. Even when these ancestors were part of communities that run counter to the family's or the Church's current identity, such as polygamist groups, the authors focus on what it is about their ancestors being a part of these communities that made them great—such as their faithfulness to their spouses or church leaders or their perseverance despite government

pressure—rather than how membership in these communities might be cause for the current family to distance themselves or alienate these ancestors.

There might be evidence of communal identity and discourse taking place and shaping all types of personal or autobiographical writing, but perhaps not so prominently as in family-history writing. To write about one's family is to write about one's community and one's place in it. I have concluded that the operative words for considering the difference between individual and communal identity in privately-published family histories and other forms of autobiographical writing are *because* and *despite*. The author of the privately-published family history aims to show how well she turned out *because* of her family, because of the communities affiliated with the family, while the author of the memoir, for example, tends to show how well she did or didn't turn out *despite* her family and the communities that shaped her. This, of course, is a gross overgeneralization, but to speak of these genres in terms of these polarities helps to open a discussion of why these privately-published family histories read completely different than more common and popular versions of autobiography and personal writing. Who, beside a family member, would want to read a story of why someone's family were model citizens, free of blemish, free of blame, fictionalized to the point of saintliness, cohesive and faithful to their religious communities? Where is the struggle and counter-narrative that would make these a *New York Times* bestseller? This is not the aim or purpose of privately-published family histories.

There is a distinct Mormon identity that shapes and appears in these family histories, and any authorial presence in these texts serves to establish and trumpet the

family identity (especially as it meshes with this Mormon identity). Despite this, the authors still write themselves into these texts in very distinct ways. Christoph (2002), in her critique of poststructuralist notions of subject positions, argues that authors of autobiographical writing, no matter how similar in their communal affiliations, can never be seen as interchangeable and featureless members of a homogenous group. In her study of autobiographical writings by pioneer women, she concludes that

even individuals who seem to be similar along broad lines do not identify themselves identically. It is only through looking more closely at texts that we can explain how writers construct the individual differences that make 'the personal' in writing truly personal. (p. 678)

It is important to not pigeon-hole the writers of these family histories as *typical* Mormons who are all writing with the same motivations and purposes and sense of identity. The authors have created seven distinct texts. Even the two family histories written about the Belnap family—the online and the printed version—vary greatly in tone and professionalism and adherence to the Mormon identity. The printed version, as I have shown, is written much more as a polemic against the United States and its current threat on the modern-conception of the family and as a treatise on how patriarchal-based families can and should operate. Nary a paragraph passes in the printed history that doesn't include a reference to Mormonism. The online version, however, functions more as a repository for all things Belnap, and much less is said about Mormonism, and there are no polemics or treatises except those which are buried in lists of links to supplementary materials.

I was surprised in this study to notice how inextricably linked the identities of author, reader, and ancestor are. This is, perhaps, for the same reason that the very

rhetorical triangle exists: one part can never be considered in isolation, but all must be considered together. The individual subjects in their separate corners only exist insofar as the relationship between them exists. And these identities can't be discussed out of context. The backdrop of the Mormon Church is critical to understanding the production and fictionalization of these identities and how they might come together in moments of Burkean identification. A similar study that looks at family histories not produced within a certain community or religion would yield, I believe, similar results, as long as the researcher took care to understand the context and the values of the family and the writer.

The identities rhetorically constructed in these family histories proved to be inseparable from the communal identity and discourse of the Mormon Church. Before analyzing these texts, I suspected this might occur, but I was surprised by the degree to which these authors clung to this Mormon identity. It caused me to reflect on Flannery O'Connor's complaint in *Mystery and Manners* of supposed "Southern writers" who too often wrote as if they were from anywhere or nowhere at all (1969, p. 57). Their distinct southernness, she argued, was washed away and became evident in name only; to merely call oneself a Southern writer was not the same as imbuing one's writing with *southernness*. These family histories—or at least the six written by self-identified Mormons—never offered this *token* communal identification bemoaned by O'Connor. All of these authors imbued their texts with this distinct *Mormon-ness*. Christoph (2002) helps theorize what is happening here when she identifies the three ways in which writers construct their identity in text: *identity statements*, which would be these token but unsubstantiated or non-demonstrated claims of being southern or Mormon, *moral*

displays, which show how a writer fits into a certain community, and *material associations*, which allow the writers to actually demonstrate or perform that identity, such as using regional maxims or dialects (or in this case, invocations of official Mormon discourse) (p. 670). To put this in simpler terms, to rhetorically construct one's identity, one must not only claim to be something, they must also be able to "talk the talk and walk the walk." All six of these Mormon authors were able to do this within their texts, even when authorial presence was lean, as they wrote their family histories in a way that reflects a unique and undeniable Mormon identity.

Further Implications for Family-History Writing

My pilot study and this dissertation have revealed that privately-published family histories are both an *obscure* and *ubiquitous* genre. There are tens of thousands available online and in local libraries and historical societies. And while there has been scholarship in several fields about family-history writing in general—most of which I have reviewed in earlier chapters—this dissertation is the first actual *rhetorical* analysis of privately-published family histories in existence. I have taken just one of many possible approaches to studying and understanding this genre. This study focuses on family histories grounded in the community of the Mormon Church—or, to be more specific, Mormon descendants of Mormon polygamists. There is still more research to be done in regard to the connection of community and family-history writing—communities, that is, other than the Mormon Church. More studies are needed that take a similar approach of grounding family histories in these distinct communities and that look at the relationships between

such things as communal discourse, knowledge, identity, the rhetorical situation, communal and generational memory, and silencing. Similarly, more studies need to be conducted that investigate the purposes and *impact* of these family histories. What else do these family histories do for a family? What role might they potentially play in the family or the community beyond the topics and connections that I have made in this study? How do these family histories shape and impact a family and/or community?

Burkean Identification and Rhetorical Agency

How can composition and rhetoric scholars discuss such an elusive thing as identity, especially when the identities of the people being discussed are unknown? I haven't met the authors of these family histories nor their families nor their ancestors. All I know are the words they have left me in their texts. All I know is my response to these texts, my understanding of the Mormon Church, my understanding of what it means to be part of a family and part of a community. I have made a lot claims in this study, but what I haven't claimed is the existence of some type of static identity that can be uncovered and picked apart. Just as I don't feel anyone could really say anything accurate about me or my dreams or my ambitions or my intentions based on the many journals, essays and stories I have written, I doubt the authors of these family histories would admit that I've somehow pegged them for who they *really are* and unveiled the fundamental core of what makes them tick. Identity is fickle, elusive, and ever-changing. But that doesn't mean we can't talk about it in concrete and meaningful terms.

The theoretical framework I have established for this study—namely, the *Burkean Identification Sweet Spot (BISS)* and its complementary *Spectrum of Reflective-Fictionalized Textual Identities*—provide a way to identify and consider how textual identities are constructed and interact, even if these identities are nothing more than ephemeral constructs. To develop these models, I have drawn upon classical rhetorical models and contemporary theories of discourse, identity, community, and memory to develop a theoretical model of rhetorical analysis that takes into account any number of factors on the rhetorical situation, including social, cultural, communal, and discursal forces. Identity is treated as a construct, and the model acknowledges both the connection and the ultimate difference between one's textual and non-textual identity (i.e. the identity that exists and evolves before, after, during, and apart from the text in question).

I have found that when looking at a rhetorical act, considering the textual construction of identity of all subjects involved (writer, reader, and subject) on a *reflective-fictionalized* spectrum not only makes for a revealing heuristic for analysis, but opens up important conversations about what is occurring rhetorically within the act. Even when a writer attempts to transcribe her *non-textual* identity into text, the only thing she can ultimately do is don a mask that either resembles that identity (*reflective*) or hides or distorts it (*fictionalized*). Likewise, all she can do is create a role for her audience to pick up, should they so choose, which is more likely to occur if the role is *reflective* of their *non-textual* identity, and less likely to occur if it is *fictionalized* or *non-reflective*. And she constructs the identities of her ancestors in this same *reflective* or *fictionalized*

manner. Identity from every aspect within these texts is a rhetorical construct, and textual identity is always a fiction, even when it is *reflective* of the *non-textual* identity.

A large part of my study is this idea of Burkean identification, and how these fictionalized identities overlap in the *BISS*. What makes this lens so effective for analyzing family histories is that these texts are essentially arguments masked as non-arguments. On the surface, they appear to be objective, a mere recording and reporting of names and dates with a few flavorful details sprinkled about. But when one considers these issues of identity and discourse and silencing, it becomes evident that a great bit more is at stake than simply getting the facts straight. They are arguments, as well crafted and influential as any rhetorical text can be. The concept of the *BISS* can be used to analyze any argument-based text, but it's especially enlightening when used to analyze texts where the argument is more subtle and tacit, where the authors may not even realize or acknowledge they are making an argument at all. While it is impossible to determine authorial intent in this regard in these seven family histories, from the interview I had with one of the authors and from the statements made within the texts, I argue that none of these family histories, nor the vast majority of family histories written throughout the world, are not done so as intentional arguments. That argumentation occurs at a more subconscious level. This lack of authorial intent on the part of persuasion is what makes using the *BISS* as a lens for rhetorical analysis so revealing, because so much of what is happening occurs without intentional consideration or manipulation, which can be further enlightening in terms of identification and the discursal construction of identity. If the old adage is true, that the best way to judge a person's character is to observe how she

acts when she thinks no one is watching, then it is equally true for written discourse: if we want to understand how an author rhetorically constructs identity, then we need to analyze texts where she doesn't realize she's making an argument. Family histories fit well this bill.

Further Studies in the BISS

More studies of Burkean identification (specifically, the *BISS*) in other genres written by members of distinct discourse communities could corroborate and complicate the findings in this study. I have built this study around family histories written by people who are a part of the Mormon Church and influenced by that particular communal discourse. A study of family histories (or any type of autobiographical or expressive writing) written by members of any religion or any group with a shared sense of community could just as easily and fruitfully be analyzed with the *BISS*. More of these culturally and socially-based rhetorical studies that take into account the connection of discourse and identity are needed to help us better understand the complexities of any given rhetorical situation. As I have demonstrated in this study, timeless and static rhetorical analyses that don't take into account external influences, such as communal discourse and the cultural context of the act, will fail to adequately capture and explain the deeper factors at play. The goal will never be to separate these components or peel back the layers until we reach the universal equation of rhetoric. Everything is contextual. Like snowflakes, no two rhetorical acts can be exactly the same. We might find similar contexts and similar conditions, but ultimately, too much is at play individually, socially,

historically, and culturally. The goal, therefore, is to capture rich descriptions of these various rhetorical acts. This study, I hope, has done that. My theoretical framework of the *BISS and the Spectrum of Reflective-Fictionalized Textual Identities* provides a useful heuristic and common language for other case studies that attempt to look at these intricate connections between rhetoric, discourse, and identity.

How useful might these theoretical frameworks be for considering other genres and forms of writing? Analyses of other types of personal and autobiographical writing, I believe, will yield similar results. Referencing the previous claims I have made about the purposes of memoir writing—namely that the authors don't normally seek to credit the family or community for their successes nor do they attempt to hide the family's indiscretions—a study of memoirs incorporating these theoretical models might reveal some important findings about what it means to create one's identity both in alliance with and contrary to the community with which one affiliates. Another important question along these lines is whether or not these theoretical frameworks for looking at the rhetorical construction of identity are useful for non-personal and non-autobiographical genres. How do issues of identity factor into less subjective forms of writing, such as technical and transactional writing?

While this study has revealed many important things about how identity is rhetorically constructed in light of communal identities, so much is left to be considered, especially in terms of impact—how do the families read and receive these privately-published family histories? One final study I hope to conduct in reference to the *BISS* would be an ethnographic case study of a family and its written history that could take

into account both authorial intent and reader response. Such a study would need to include a methodology to allow for studying a family history as it is being written, interviewing and observing the writer at various stages in the writing process, interviewing several readers of the finished family history, ethnographically observing and documenting the family and the community, and investigating the *impact* of the family history on the family and community in terms of such things as generational memory.

Identity and its Link with Communal & Generational Memory

A central question to this study is the link between communal and generational memory, and the link between identity construction and memory. As I have just mentioned, impact is a difficult thing to research, and it is an element that the scope and methodology of this dissertation can't answer. These family histories are materialized communal memory, thus making them forms of generational memory which can serve to impact future communal memory. I have hypothesized the many ways this could happen within these family histories, such as several generations from now not knowing the "real" story of Grandpa B. once the family's oral history has metamorphosed to match the written history. When no one is there who knew Grandpa B. to "fill in the blanks," then what becomes of him? This fictionalized textual identity becomes the only existent identity. What research tools are available to turn this conjecture into concrete knowledge? How can we truly measure and gauge the impact of these family histories and of this rhetorical construction of identity on the current family and future generations.

Studies with more quantitative approaches could, for example, shed some light on the impact of the adherence to certain genealogical grammars within family histories. In these seven Mormon-based family histories, I noted that all of them follow a clear grammar of *descent* and *patrilineage*. This isn't a Mormon phenomenon. Of the several dozens of non-Mormon family histories I have reviewed these last few years, all follow this grammar of descent. It's a practice of hubris, showing how these past generations all lined up to yield the grand prize: the author and his family. The patrilineal profusion of these histories is also all-too common in western genealogy. In my pilot study of fifteen family histories (twelve of which were non-Mormon), all of them followed patrilineal lines, all of them invoked a grammar of descent, and all of them centered on a single name. Why, I wonder, are so many family historians obsessed with a name? Why are so many interesting lines forgotten and the memory of so many great ancestors snuffed out for the sake of tracing the lineage of one surname? Why is my father's father's father more worthy of generational memory than my mother's mother's mother? Because we share a name? Because he'll share a name with my children? Who can ever know the true ramifications of the western-world's love affair with patrilineal lines of descent and its obsession with single-name heraldry? And who will even acknowledge this imbalance? It's an invisible grammar, a default setting, a structural silencer. The greatest victim, I contend, are our female forebears whose lives are grossly fictionalized, silenced, or utterly forgotten.

And that is the other unfortunate limit of this study: the unknown ramifications of this identity production, this fictionalization, this generational memory on individuals,

families, communities, and future generations. It would require no small amount of ethnographic research—observation and interviews and longitudinal follow-up—all things this study is unable to provide. All I can offer now is conjecture that future communal memory is indeed affected by these textual instruments of generational memory.

I don't pretend that these family histories are grander or do more than they really do. They are only one aspect of a family's collective identity, and just one of many ways in which communal memory is transformed into generational memory. Regardless, they still have the potential to rewrite a family's history, and—as I have shown—not everyone survives the revision. Whether intentional or not, certain people and groups are left out or forgotten or silenced, and it is usually those whose identities don't mesh with the writer's or the community's preferred identity. This textual silencing has real implications. As scholars of rhetoric and composition, we are uniquely positioned to help give voice to those who have previously been silenced. As we turn to alternative rhetorics and discourses, as we help individuals and academics value the myriad of unique ways of experiencing and knowing the world and of expressing and utilizing that knowledge, as we peel back the rhetoric and discourse that propagates and perpetuates the silencing of certain groups and individuals, as we bring these new genres and ways of knowing into our classrooms, we give voice to the previously silenced, we amplify the voices of those on the verge of silence, we help empower others to seek out those who have been silenced in corners we never even thought to look.

Practicing What We Preach: Community Work and Insider Knowledge

In the introduction to this study, I offer Miller's (1998) work as justification for studying how identity is rhetorically created in non-traditional or extracurricular texts. Non-traditional genres, such as blogs, wikis, multi-modal texts, journals, and even family-history writing are becoming more mainstream and becoming the new tradition in composition classrooms. These genres, I argue, are an important step in our field—especially as it pertains to classroom practice—because they value students' community literacy, family history, and personal experience.

It was easy for me to justify why family-history writing, then, should have value within composition studies, but I wasn't quite prepared to give myself the same permission I was willing to give my students: to value personal experience and insider knowledge in my scholarly pursuits. When I embarked on this project, I was reluctant to position myself within the study as an insider and member of the Mormon community. When I discovered how many of these family histories were written by Mormons about their Mormon ancestors, and the different ways they wrote about their polygamist ancestors, I felt a sense of dread as I realized I would most likely end up writing about these distinctly Mormon texts. I assumed I could position myself as an outsider, never revealing my place in the community. To use my own terminology, I wanted to fictionalize my textual identity by donning the mask of a neutral composition scholar informed about but not necessarily a part of the Mormon community, and I wanted to fictionalize my reader as someone who either didn't know I was a member of the

Mormon Church or who wouldn't let that knowledge get in the way of my disinterested rhetorical stance.

After reading and analyzing the texts, and in the middle of drafting the early chapters, it occurred to me how wasteful it was to be a lifelong member of the Mormon Church, a leader of a local congregation, a returned missionary, and to never mention my place and experience, to pretend to be a neutral and curious outsider backing up his claims with primary and secondary sources. In their study of the value of using family-history writing assignments in basic writing courses, Rankins-Robertson *et al* (2010) discuss the value of family-history writing in getting students to bring their own experience and unique ways of knowing into their writing, to value their own experience and communities as valid and fruitful sources of research, to bridge their home communities and discourses with their newfound academic communities. Why is it I would agree with this notion and hope to offer the same thing to my students yet shy away from enacting it myself as a writer and scholar? What value would come from hiding my identity as a member of the Mormon Church in the shadows as I adopt a non-member persona? After deciding to *write myself* into the study, so to speak, I continued to feel the anxiety of over-revealing, of diminishing the validity of my work by admitting membership in the community being studied, of identifying myself as a scholar of religious or Mormon rhetoric and thus limiting the wider-implications my work could have on composition studies.

There is value in composition scholars accepting and using their membership in their own nonacademic communities—these communities that shape their way of

knowing and interpreting the world—and using that knowledge and insight in their own scholarship. Gere (2001) points out that feminist theory “has opened many new ways of expressing experience, but it has only begun to create spaces for discourses of religion...[and] until these discourses are more fully developed, it will remain difficult to include articles of faith in personal narratives that issue from the academy” (Brandt *et al*, p. 47). My place as an insider in the Mormon community has allowed me to read and analyze these texts in a unique way—one that is in no way less rigorous or legitimate or valid than had an outsider decided to study Mormon-based family histories, and one that has given me a unique perspective and motivation that would be lacking in an outsider.

To how many communities do we belong beyond our academic walls? What are the genres and textual artifacts important to these communities, and what can our insider knowledge bring to a study of these things? In just the area of family-history writing, what could we discover about identity and memory and discourse and a host of other topics if composition scholars (or scholars of any field) would take up the call to value their insider status and not hide from their home discourses and identity and, instead, combine their unique ways of knowing with the more rigorous forms of academic scholarship with which they are already accustomed?

While family histories and textual artifacts grounded in religious communities will certainly yield important findings, there are countless other communities and (sub)cultures meriting further *insider* research. What could we learn, for example, when scholars, positioned as self-identified community members, study such things as unofficial newsletters circulated between Marines in Afghanistan, or the local histories

written by a Native American tribe, or the wiki sites maintained by role-playing gamers or amateur bodybuilders or seasoned vegans, or apology letters written by members of a self-help group, or informational pamphlets written by any number of organizations? There are so many extracurricular textual artifacts rooted in communal identity and discourse. Using our insider's perspective to study these unique rhetorical acts will help us continue the tradition of expanding and diversifying our collective knowledge in the field of rhetoric and composition.

I decided to practice what I preach. Here's to hoping other composition scholars will do the same.

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE ANALYSIS RUBRIC

Family History:

Author:

Writer

Authorial Presence
Mormon Discourse
Other Masks & Persona Stuff

Reader

Holes, Gaps
Assumed Knowledge/Memory
Family History Societies
Online Stuff

Subject

Autobiographical Sources
Other Sources
Blue Blood/Black Sheep
Rhetorical Recasting
Textual Silencing
Myth/Mythmaking

Misc Observations:

APPENDIX B: CONTRIBUTOR/AUTHOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Who do you envision reading this family history? What do you know about your actual readership? Who else do you envision might read it?

How have you adapted the content of the family history to these readers?

Has writing your family history knowing it will be accessible on the Internet affected your decisions about what to include or how to portray your family's history?

How do you decide which ancillary family lines or distant ancestors to include in your family history and which to exclude? Where and how do you draw the line?

How do you fill in the gaps or blanks when there is limited information on your ancestors?

Have you come across contradictory data or reports or accounts in your research, and how did you reconcile this when writing your family history?

Who have you worked with on this family history? Was this a collaborative or a cooperative effort? Who have you turned to in deciding what information to include (and how to include it)?

How do you hope your readers will view you as a writer (in relationship to your family and the Mormon Church)?

APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

University of New Hampshire

Research Integrity Services, Service Building
51 College Road, Durham, NH 03824-3585
Fax: 603-862-3564

07-Sep-2011

Peterson, Michael K.
English, Hamilton Smith Hall
19 Whippsoorwill Ridge
Farmington, NH 03835

IRB #: 5240

Study: *Airing the Digital Laundry: The Privately-Published Family History as Genre and Activity System*

Approval Date: 01-Sep-2011

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) has reviewed and approved the protocol for your study as Exempt as described in Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 46, Subsection 101(b). Approval is granted to conduct your study as described in your protocol.

Researchers who conduct studies involving human subjects have responsibilities as outlined in the attached document, *Responsibilities of Directors of Research Studies Involving Human Subjects*. (This document is also available at <http://unh.edu/research/irb-application-resources>.) Please read this document carefully before commencing your work involving human subjects.

Upon completion of your study, please complete the enclosed Exempt Study Final Report form and return it to this office along with a report of your findings.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact me at 603-862-2003 or julie.simpson@unh.edu. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study. The IRB wishes you success with your research.

For the IRB,



Julie F. Simpson
Director

cc: File
Newark, Thomas

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE TEXT FROM BULLOCK FAMILY HISTORY

CHAPTER X

ELIZABETH BULLOCK and DANIEL DUNCAN McARTHUR family

ELIZABETH BULLOCK, dau. of James Bullock and Mary Hill, was b. 18 Sept. 1841, Nauvoo, Hancock, Illinois; d. 28 Jan. 1913, St. George, Washington, Utah, bur. in the St. George Cemetery, Washington, Utah; md. 13 Feb. 1858, DANIEL DUNCAN McARTHUR, in the Salt Lake Endowment House, Salt Lake, Utah.

In the summer of 1841 Elizabeth's parents moved from Essa Township, Simcoe, Ontario, Canada to Nauvoo, Hancock, Illinois. Shortly after their arrival Elizabeth was born at Nauvoo. She crossed the plains with her parents to the Salt Lake Valley when she was only seven years of age. Her father died of pneumonia in 1850, just two years after their arrival in the valley.

When Elizabeth was only sixteen years of age she was asked to marry Daniel Duncan McArthur. On one occasion on a Friday President Brigham Young met Daniel and told him to be at the Endowment House on the following Tuesday to have a plural wife sealed to him. He went and consulted with his wife. She agreed and said that Sister Bullock had a nice girl, and so did the Hill family. Daniel went to the Bullock home and told Sister Bullock what President Young had said. Sister Bullock said her daughter was not at home, but she thought that Elizabeth was a little too young. Daniel then went to the Hill home. They also thought their daughter was too young, but if it was President Young's desire they would not object. As Daniel was leaving the Hill home, Sister Bullock met Daniel with Elizabeth. She said she had reconsidered it, and did not want to go against President Young's request. Sister Bullock had one wish, and that was for Elizabeth to remain home for one more year, which she did. Daniel went the second mile on Brigham Young's request, and married Elizabeth Bullock and Mary Brice Hill on the same day, on 13 Feb. 1858, in the Endowment House, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Elizabeth was very quiet and unassuming; and would not offend anyone. She was always willing to do more than her share of the work. She always thought of others before herself. She lived in the same house as the other wives. Each had their part of the responsibilities. Elizabeth took care of the milk and butter, prepared dinner, made bread, helped with the meat, sausage, corned beef, etc. She made cider vinegar for sale from their apples. She helped with the laundry, made mens clothes and mens hats. She did much gardening, and saw that the

APPENDIX E: PARRY HISTORY SAMPLE TEXT: "CAMP SERENE"

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POLYGAMY YEARS - CAMP SERENE

The Bernard White farm home in Perry was near the railroad in a strategic location near "The Switch," so that people could get off and on the trains unobserved by the marshals. It was also at the end of a long lane with no other roads leading into the lane. Therefore, anyone coming towards the house could be seen for sometime before he came to the door. There were numerous barns and other outbuildings that could serve as hiding places. One secret room was cut out of the hay in the barn, reinforced so that no one could accidentally fall into it, and equipped with a secret panel as an entrance. No one except Bernard and Jane, his wife, and those on "The Underground" know of its existence, and certainly the children never suspected that there was anything unusual about the barn, for they never found this room until years after the "Crusade" was over.

This was a period of great excitement and secrecy that David, Ada and Annie have never forgotten. As Barnard said that if the children did not know anything they could not tell anything, they found many strange things going on at home for which they received no explanation. As children today play "cops and robbers," these children played in dead earnest the game of outwitting the marshals.

Every person was suspect. The children were instructed never to tell a stranger anything--not even their names--for that might incriminate their father. All the children in the community were in on the same game. No one ever told anyone anything about what went on in his own home.

The house at Perry had not been remodeled when it became known as "Camp Serene." With a limited amount of house room, Bernard and Jane found it hard to care for the many "guests" who arrived by night. Therefore, Barnard began an extensive remodeling job on the house, aided by his brother-in-law William Fife and some of the men on the "Underground." How the family ever managed during this period to create an atmosphere that would gain the home the name of "Camp Serene" can hardly be understood. Nevertheless, that was its name.

Jane was an excellent manager and Bernard a good provider. There seemed to be an almost unlimited supply of cured pork in the summer and beef in the winter plus great quantities of fruits and vegetables, flour, milk, and eggs. Jane and the two hired girls tackled the problem of feeding any number of "guests" who might arrive. Just making enough bread for everyone was a task.

At first the people on the "Underground" just used Camp Serene as a "Station." With the exception of Joseph F. Smith, no one stayed there very long. Many a time the children would go to bed at night with just their own family there. But when they awakened they found themselves in beds made on the floor and a group of thirty people in the house. Yet they were not to ask questions or to talk about anything they saw. The people disappeared just as mysteriously as they had come, going on the train to California or by white top or wagon to the next station--P.G. Jensen's on the north in Brigham City, or by easy, careful stages to William Streeper's in Centerville from whose house they could secretly make their way to Salt Lake City. But the children did not know about the stations or the names of the people. What

APPENDIX F: TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH PARRY. TAYLOR *ET AL*, PP. 217-218.

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REMINISCENCES OF GRANDDAUGHTER LUCILLE PARRY PETERSON
OF HER GRANDFATHER JOSEPH PARRY

Joseph was an adventurer as he left his home in Newmarket, Wales, at age 17, to seek his fortune.

He was an obedient convert to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as he followed its Prophet and leaders.

He was a loving husband as he and his new wife planned their trip to America.

He was an early pioneer as he arrived in Utah in 1852 with the 13th Company of Welch immigrants.

He was a successful business man as he cleared the land, sold building lots, built homes, and business areas in Ogden. The two story 75 x 125 foot brick building he built at the northwest corner of 23rd and Washington Ave. in Ogden was so well built it has now been incorporated in the Ogden City Mall. It was in 1899 Joseph built this building and it was in this building that he and his sons conducted a business selling monuments and headstones and specialized in investments. In 1952 the family sold the building to the Northgate Co. Real Estate, subsidiary of Allied Stores.

He was a compassionate man as he harnessed his best teams to his strongest wagons, and loaded them with food and clothing and travelled back into the vast prairies to meet the starving weary pioneers as they ended their three months journey to Utah.

He was a tireless missionary as he taught the Indians in the northern country, taught his relatives and friends in far away Wales and England, and taught the immigrants in Utah as they arrived from the European countries.

He was a brave soldier as he served as Captain and Chaplain of the Infantry that fought the federal army in Echo Canyon, sent by President Johnson, whose mission was to annihilate the saints.

He was a polygamist, who had five wives, strong courageous women who gave birth to 23 children. Many of these children and grandchildren have become outstanding Utah citizens.

He was an enthusiastic politician as he was elected and re-elected as alderman of the 3rd District of Ogden.

He was a leader and socially accepted as he helped plan the welcoming reception for the Railroad officials as the railroad arrived in Ogden.

He was a progressive educator, as he served on the Ogden School Board.

He was an active Church member, as he served in a Bishopric and for 27 years as a High Councilman of the Weber Stake.

He was a loving father and grandfather. I felt the love Grandfather had for little children when, at age 4, I sat on his lap. He hugged me and called me "his little Mary."

Grandfather endured to the end, for on the day of his death he named and blessed three tiny new born infants in the Fast and Sacrament meeting in the 3rd Ward.

Indeed, Joseph Parry of Ogden was a great man.

SINCERE TRIBUTE TO OUR BEAUTIFUL LAND

"God built Him a continent of glory and filled it with treasures untold; He carpeted it with soft-rolling prairies, and columned it with thundering mountains; He studded it with sweet-flowing fountains and traced it with long winding streams. He planted it with deep-shadowed forest, and filled them with song. Then, He called unto a thousand people, and summoned the bravest among them. They came from the ends of the earth; each bearing a gift and a hope, the glow of adventure was in their eyes, and in their hearts the glory of hope...

"And out of the memory of bounty of earth and the labor of men, out of the longing hearts and the prayer of souls..., out of the memory of ages and hopes of the world; God fashioned a nation in LOVE..., blessed it with a purpose sublime; and called it AMERICA!"

(Written by an unknown Rabbi long ago)

"To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest critics and to endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to give of one's self; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived--this is to have succeeded."

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)