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AUTONOMY-DEPENDENCY PARADOX
IN ORGANIZATION-PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS:
A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF A UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM

by

Christopher Erik Wilson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Communications

Brigham Young University

August 2009

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Christopher Erik Wilson

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

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

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

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ABSTRACT

AUTONOMY-DEPENDENCY PARADOX IN ORGANIZATION-PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS: A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF A UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM

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Department of Communications

Master of Arts

This study presents an exploration of the autonomy-dependence paradox inherent in organization-public relationships that is informed by paradox theory, structuration theory and scholarly and philosophical literature on authenticity. These theories suggest that relationships between organizations and their publics are defined by interdependence, or the centripetal and centrifugal forces of autonomy and dependence that cause tensions that can influence the decision making of the relational partners. They also suggest that organizations must use their agency, their knowledge of relational structures, and their understanding of their authentic selves to manage their own behavior and communication rather than that of their publics. The case studies presented in this paper were assembled from fourteen semi-structured in-depth interviews of museum professionals at the Brigham Young University Museum of Art, museum archival documents, and news media reports. The data shows that organizations can benefit from adopting a framework based paradox theory, structuration theory, and authentic

leadership theory to avoid harmful defensive mechanisms and vicious cycles by seeking divergent solutions. The value of this study is that it illustrates how paradoxical tensions can influence the decision-making process in organizations, as well as the ways in which organizations can manage their own behavior and communication in spite of natural tendencies to manage and control stakeholders and publics. This study also shows a need for future research to explore other paradoxes in the field of public relations, conduct more case studies of different types of organizations, and develop methodologies to evaluate the effect of these strategies on the health of organization-public relationships.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have always been scared of anything that requires a thesis. The word conjures images in my mind of endless reams of paper, towering stacks of books, stern university professors eerily hovering above me, taunting me with unanswerable questions, and years of my life slipping away irretrievably into oblivion. You may think this sounds melodramatic. But, having completed this thesis, I am here to tell you that I did go through many reams of paper. I read through what seemed like towering stacks of books and journal articles. I spent many hours gathering and analyzing data, as well as writing and editing. Looking back, the time now seems like a blur. And I defended my enormous research paper to a committee of three professors. Luckily they were not hovering above me. And even luckier for me, they did not ask me unanswerable questions. They were actually really nice and complimentary. The thesis always seemed to me like an impassable mountain, looming in the distance.

Now that I have finished, as weird as it sounds, it still feels like an impassable mountain. But somehow I am leaving it behind with no knowledge or recollection of how I crossed over. The one thing I do know is that I would not have been able to make it without the support of my family, the guidance of the professors on my committee, and the cooperation of the BYU Museum of Art staff. I also know that the Lord played a big part as well. As the Apostle Paul declared to the Phillipians, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phillipians 4:13, King James Version).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In October 1997, the Brigham Young University Museum of Art, located in Provo, Utah, opened a touring exhibition of works by Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) titled *The Hands of Rodin: A Tribute to B. Gerald Cantor*. This exhibition featured 54 bronze and plaster sculptures that were meant to highlight Rodin's "fascination with the diverse forms of hands and their expressive capabilities" and his "mastery of portraying the lines of the human hand while communicating their strength, movement and expression" (Past Exhibitions, n.d., ¶ 6). Museum press materials acknowledged that Rodin was considered to be the most important sculptor of his time and was "widely regarded as . . . the finest sculptor since Michelangelo" (Winters, 1997, ¶ 1). However, when the exhibition opened at the museum, four sculptures were left in their crates. Among these sculptures were three nude works, including *The Kiss*, one of Rodin's most well-known works, and another work depicting sexual impropriety.

The decision not to show these works caused a number of vocal students to protest on campus what they perceived as censorship. The story of the university's decision not to show the sculptures, which also smacked of censorship to those in the media, appeared in newspapers across the globe. The museum director "insisted that censorship had not occurred" because not exhibiting those particular works insured the exhibition's integrity to highlight hands in Rodin's work (Kamman, 2006, p. 85). The decision also raised eyebrows in the art world. The curator of the Rodin exhibition was aware that university and museum officials, who belonged to The Church of Jesus Christ

of Latter-day Saints, “were troubled by both the poses and presentations” of the four Rodin sculptures in question; however, she added that “Rodin’s subject matter is the nude, so you can’t really not have nudes if you want to have a Rodin show” (Kamman, 2006, p. 85-86).

Others in the local community, especially members of the LDS Church, were supportive of the university administration’s decision not to show the sculptures. A letter to the editor from a member of the community was representative of this group’s feelings about the criticism of the university and the museum in the local and national press:

The public display of nudity is not essential to teaching or learning about art. Why can’t we leave such displays in their proper places, such as classes on human anatomy? Why does the *Salt Lake Tribune* find it so surprising that BYU would reflect the teachings of the religion that sponsors it? The only controversy surrounding this incident has been created by the media and will be quickly forgotten when the media moves on to create the next “flavor of the day” controversy. (Ball, 1997, ¶ 3)

Seven years after the Rodin controversy, the BYU Museum of Art hosted a traveling exhibition from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, about the artistic contributions of the ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilizations. The exhibition, titled *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World: Egypt, Greece, Rome*, was designed to educate visitors about the way these cultures influenced each other as well as the ways these cultures continue to influence Western civilization. Before coming to BYU, this exhibition was on display for five years at the Nagoya/Boston Museum of Fine Arts in Japan; and following its run in Provo, the exhibition was scheduled to travel to additional

North American venues before returning to Boston. Once again museum officials were faced with making a decision about displaying nude works with this exhibition. While there were a few nude works in the Greek section of the exhibition, the work that caused the most concern was a marble statue of a nude male torso, especially with large numbers of elementary-school children expected to attend the exhibition on field trips. In the end, the museum exhibited all of the nude works but mediated the impact of the pieces within the exhibition by contextualizing them within the display. Museum officials also worked closely with the two stakeholder groups who would be most affected by the decision: the university administration and the Utah State Office of Education. At the end of the exhibition's year-long run at the museum, the museum officials were surprised that they did not receive one complaint about the works.

These two incidents expose the paradox that art museums face when making decisions that have consequences on their stakeholders and publics. If art museums become too dependent on their governing bodies or their visitors in the decision-making process, they will likely face the protests of a vociferous art community seeking to protect the art museum as an institution of high culture. If art museums feel they are completely autonomous, at liberty to collect and exhibit artworks that are too extreme or avant garde for the communities they represent, they will likely face the prospect of community outcry and possible public sanction. Zolberg (1994) recognized this paradox, explaining that art museums are “praised for collecting and preserving works of art for a discerning public” on one hand, but on the other hand, “they are called upon to draw in to that public a population with little understanding of fine art” (p. 49). According to Zolberg, this paradox forces art museums to make an either/or choice between providing

“a safe haven for high art” or “catering to a crowd it [the museum] did not select” (p. 49).

James Wood (2004), director of the Art Institute of Chicago, acknowledged that this autonomy-dependency paradox is the central challenge facing American art museums. He argued that the public’s trust in an art museum is based on the art museum’s exercise of autonomy to “preserve elite values and precious works of art” that are made available to everyone (p. 108); however, this view limits the relationship between an art museum and its publics and stakeholders to concern over the care and preservation of art objects. James Cuno (2004), director of the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and former director of the Harvard University Art Museums, suggested that art museum publics are best served when art museums focus on their autonomy and ignore their dependence on the publics they serve:

Recalling that what we are and what we do is for the benefit of the public, nevertheless the increased focus on visitors carries with it an interesting paradox, namely, that when the visitor, as opposed to the work of art, occupies center stage, he is likely to be less well served, not better served. As the museum strives to attract him and please him, he will, inevitably, be catered to. . . . By definition that is not a broadening or enhancing experience of the kind that we are obligated to provide. (p. 157-158)

MacDonald (1992) explained that the debate over whether American museums should have autonomy to make decisions based on quality or whether they should recognize their dependence on the market has become a significant battleground. He lamented that proponents of both sides of the issue have become so polarized that they see the issue as an either/or choice: “One of the greatest challenges facing museums

today is to reconcile these two elements of our reality” (p. 165).

Organizational scholars have studied the paradoxes inherent in organizing with the intent of understanding how to negotiate the tensions these paradoxes create without resorting to self-destructive defensive mechanisms. Paradoxical tensions also have caused public relations scholars to define the practice in terms of either/or dichotomies, forcing organizations to decide if their communication efforts will be symmetrical or asymmetrical, one-way or two-way, pro-active or reactive, and socially responsible or self-interested (Rawlins & Stoker, 2007, July). Additionally, paradoxical tensions can influence practitioners to promise management that the public relations function can establish and maintain “mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on which its success depends” (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1994, p. 6) when organizations and the public relations practitioners they employ only have control over their own actions and communication strategies. On the contrary, Blewett (1993) noted that organizations do not own their publics and public relations practitioners cannot manage publics in the same way they manage their personal budgets or bank accounts.

Cameron and Quinn (1988b) suggested that studying paradox allows for “richer analyses in which we are forced to look more deeply than usual, and to ask about the positive opposites that might not be recognized in a given situation” (p. 304). After a review of the relational dialectic literature, Hung (2007) identified three contradictions that are inherent in organizational-public relationships: integration/separation, stability/change, and expression/privacy. According to Hung, contradictions are the key agent for relational change because the tensions they produce simultaneously pull individuals together and push them apart. However, the relational dialectic framework

proposes that these “interdependent but mutually exclusive tendencies cannot be fulfilled at the same time,” (Hung 2007, p. 452). In contrast, organizational scholars using a paradox framework suggest that living within a paradox can not only be manageable, but can result in breakthroughs that could not be achieved in any other way.

Scope of the Study

The primary focus of this study is an exploration of the autonomy-dependency paradox in organization-public relationships. Similar to the relational dialectic contradiction of integration/separation, this paradox exists because organizations are both autonomous from and dependent on their publics. This paradox has previously been referred to as interdependence by organizational management researchers, public relations scholars, and social exchange theorists (Canary & Zelle, 2000; Gollner, 1984; Grunig, Grunig & Ehling, 1992; Hung, 2007; Murphy, 2007; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Provan, 1982) and is a key component to the relational dynamic between organizations and publics more commonly referred to as control mutuality (Hon & Grunig, 1999).

Purpose Statement

The intent of this study is to explore how the tensions caused by the autonomy-dependency paradox contributed to the decision-making and communication processes of the BYU Museum of Art during the planning and promotion of the Rodin and Mediterranean exhibitions. This study will then evaluate how a paradox framework can bring greater depth and understanding to public relations theories about organization-public relationships, specifically those theories that address the paradox of organizations and publics being simultaneously autonomous from and dependent on each other. The study will conclude by evaluating how structuration theory and authenticity can help

organizations more effectively manage their behavior and communication in the face of the centripetal and centrifugal tensions of the autonomy-dependency paradox.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Paradoxical Frame

After a review of the existing paradox literature, Lewis (2000) defined a paradox as “contradictory yet interrelated elements—elements that seem logical in isolation but absurd and irrational when appearing simultaneously” (p. 760). Paradoxes have become important in organizational science because organizations are inherently paradoxical (Cameron & Quinn, 1988a). Ford and Backoff (1988) explained that in the act of organizing “distinctions are drawn that are oppositional in tendency: differentiation and integration, collectivity and individuality, stability and change, uniformity and complexity, morphostasis, the maintenance of structure, and morphogenesis, creation of new structure” (p. 82). Rapid technological change, globalization, and increased diversity in the workforce are responsible for creating paradoxes that force managers to “increase efficiency and foster creativity, build individualistic teams, and think globally while acting locally” (Lewis, 2000, p. 760).

These paradoxes become more apparent internally as organizations deal with an increasingly complex and turbulent business environment and face greater competition at home and abroad (Cameron & Quinn, 1988a). The recognition of paradox is likely to occur more often as the rate of societal and organizational change increases (Rawlins & Stoker, 2007). Additionally, the unprecedented flow of and access to information makes these paradoxes more apparent externally to an organization’s stakeholders and publics:

Twenty-four hour cable news channels and the Internet provide “immediate scrutiny of paradoxical tensions brought on by these changes and the actions taken to respond to tensions” (Rawlins & Stoker, 2007, p. 5).

Organizational researchers have described their efforts to identify and manage paradoxes as a perspective or framework through which to evaluate existing theory. Cameron and Quinn (1988b) explained the purpose of their research was not to develop a “set of specific, testable hypotheses explaining paradox,” but to use a paradoxical framework as a “stimulus for asking new and richer questions” (p. 289). Similarly, Eisenhardt and Westcott (1988) noted that the contribution of paradox to management thinking is the “recognition of its power to generate creative insight and change” (p. 170).

Cameron and Quinn (1988a) explained that paradoxes represent divergent rather than convergent problems. A convergent problem “deals with distinct, precise, quantifiable, ideas that are amenable to empirical investigation” (p. 5). Convergent problems are solvable, and answers “tend to converge into a single accepted solution” (p. 5). Paradoxes are divergent problems because they are not “easily quantifiable or verifiable” (p. 5), and they do not have one single accepted solution. According to Cameron and Quinn (1988a) the more paradoxes are studied “the more the solutions tend to diverge, or to become contradictory and opposite” (p. 5). They proposed that “wrestling with divergent problems” will lead to greater breakthroughs and insights than what can be learned by solving a convergent problem (p. 6).

Paradoxical Tensions and Defensive Routines

The simultaneous presence of mutually exclusive opposites causes what Vince and Broussine (1996) referred to as “paradoxical tension” (p. 4). Lewis (2000) described

the tensions generated by paradox as “a double-edged sword” (p. 763). On one edge, tensions caused by paradox hold the potential to be agents of positive change, “spurring actors to rethink existing polarities and recognize more complicated interrelationships” (p. 763). The other edge represents the potential for an individual or an organization to become trapped in reinforcing cycles that “perpetuate and exacerbate” the tensions caused by the paradox (p. 763).

Cameron and Quinn (1988b) explained that the entry point into a reinforcing cycle, where “an action continues to create negative outcomes which, in turn, lead to the same action again,” is in making either/or distinctions—choosing one pole of the paradox while ignoring or rejecting the other (p. 295). They also suggested that choosing one pole may not necessarily lead to a reinforcing cycle; it may lead to what Hofstadter (1979) called a strange loop, where the initial choice leads to a desired outcome, but over time the continuation of that choice leads to opposite or unintended results that ultimately intensify the paradoxical tension.

Many times these either/or choices are defensive routines or reactions established by individuals or organizations to deal with potential embarrassment or threat posed by paradoxical tensions (Argyris, 1988). Defensive reactions constitute what Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974) termed first-order thinking. Lewis (2000) defined first-order thinking as “slight alterations to the logic and behaviors” that organizations have used in the past (p. 764). The main reason organizations engage in first-order thinking is “to preserve the fundamentals of the existing order of things by changing the non-fundamentals” (Esterhuysen, 2003, p. 2). This type of thinking produces solutions that are part of the problem and contribute to reinforcing cycles (Lewis, 2000).

In contrast to first-order thinking, Watzlawick et al. (1974) defined second-order thinking as decisions that ultimately change the system itself. The radical nature of this type of change has as its objective the transformation of an organization's "basic structure, culture, defining values and overall form" (Esterhuysen, 2003, p. 2). Second-order thinking allows organizations to break free from reinforcing cycles and "entails critically examining entrenched assumptions to construct a more accommodating perception of opposites" (Lewis, 2000, p. 764).

Managing Paradox

Managing paradox involves "exploring, rather than suppressing, tensions" (Lewis, 2000, p. 764). Vince and Broussine (1996) argued that the only way to derive benefit from a paradox is to embrace it rather than try to resolve it: "Staying with the paradox makes it possible to discover a link between opposing forces and opens up the framework that gives meaning to the apparent contradictions" (p. 4). Handy (1994) suggested that managing paradox in the sense of trying to plan for or control it is itself paradoxical. He argued that the management of paradox should be thought of in terms of coping—the original meaning of the word management.

Organizational scholars have identified four different methods of managing paradox: acceptance, confrontation, compromise, and transcendence (da Cunha, Clegg & e Cunha, 2007; Lewis, 2000). These strategies permit organizations to move beyond the either/or distinctions that lead to reinforcing cycles by enabling them to look at paradox from a both/and perspective (Ford & Backoff, 1988). Acceptance assumes that organizations are aware of the paradox and have learned to live with it (Cameron & Quinn, 1988a; da Cunha et al., 2007; Lewis, 2000; van de Ven & Poole, 1988). In this

view, paradox is “something to be sustained or endured, not tackled” (da Cunha et al., 2007, p. 13). van de Ven and Poole (1988) argued that acceptance is a good first step, “an enlightened conceptual stance,” because in accepting a paradox individuals and organizations “acknowledge that things need not be consistent; that seemingly opposed viewpoints can inform one another” (p. 23).

Confrontation is a strategy that calls for organizational members to discuss paradoxical tensions in order to “subject their ways of thinking to critique, thereby raising their chances of escaping paralysis” (Lewis, 2000, p. 764). van de Ven and Poole (1988) explained that one way to confront a paradox is by “clarifying levels of reference and the connections among them,” such as part-whole, macro-micro and individual-society relationships (p. 23).

Another strategy identified by da Cunha et al. (2007) and van de Ven and Poole (1988) is compromise. Compromising to paradoxical tensions can take the form of a contingency approach “where the organization chooses the right mix of opposites” (da Cunha et. al., 2007, p. 14). A compromise may emerge from an organization’s “outright inability to hold such a state of tension, allowing a solution to emerge from its pattern of actions and decisions” (da Cunha et. al., 2007, p. 14). van de Ven and Poole (1988) described this strategy as taking the “role of time into account,” (p. 24). Similar to the contingency approach, when looking at paradox from a temporal perspective “one horn of the paradox is assumed to hold at one time and the other at a different time,” (van de Ven & Poole, 1988, p. 24).

The last strategy identified to manage paradox—transcendence—holds the most potential for second-order change in organizations (Bartunek, 1988). Transcendence

involves looking at paradox from new perspectives (Rothenburg, 1979; Poole & van de Ven, 1988; da Cunha et al., 2007). Lewis (2000) observed that organizations need to develop the ability to think paradoxically to transcend a paradox. Paradoxical thinking leads to critical self-reflection that may help managers “reframe their assumptions, learn from existing tensions, and develop a more complicated repertoire of understandings and behaviors that better reflects organizational intricacies” (Lewis, 2000, p. 764).

Paradox in Organization-Public Relationships

The focus on relationships between organizations and publics as the unit of analysis in public relations provides a natural starting point to look for paradoxes in public relations practice. Scholarship in organizational-public relationships, also known as relationship management, has primarily focused on relationship formation (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Grunig & Huang, 2000), relationships types (Ledingham, 2006; Hung 2005), and strategies for evaluating and managing relationships (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Ledingham, 1998; Ledingham, 2003).

Relationship management focuses on the organization-public relationship in terms of its behavior towards, and not just its communication with, key publics (Ledingham, 2006). Establishing and maintaining healthy relationships with key publics provides a better measure of public relations effectiveness than relying on communication outputs and outcomes, and ultimately provides benefits for both the organization and its publics (Ledingham, 2006; Hon & Grunig, 1999). Developing mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders and publics requires organizations to practice the two-way symmetrical model of communication that requires both the organization and its publics to work together to achieve common goals (Hon & Grunig, 1999).

The most obvious paradox that affects the organization-public relationship paradigm is embedded in the very nature of relationships: two parties becoming dependent on each other for the fulfillment of individual needs while, at the same time, they try to influence each other to achieve their individual goals (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Murphy, 1991). Using a relational dialectic framework, Hung (2007) described how these opposing centripetal and centrifugal relational forces draw relational partners together and push them apart. Hung identified three tensions inherent in organization-public relationships: autonomy/connection, novelty/predictability, and closedness/openness. Hung explained that she adopted a dialectic framework because public relations researchers “must look into the whole context of relationships” (p. 450) rather than just evaluating relationships by measuring relationship outcomes as perceived by publics. The primary focus of this paper directly relates to Hung’s autonomy/connection tension, in which organizations are both autonomous from and dependent on (or connected to) their publics.

This paradox has been referred to as interdependence by organizational management researchers, public relations scholars, and social exchange theorists (Canary & Zelle, 2000; Gollner, 1984; Grunig, Grunig & Ehling, 1992; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Provan, 1982) and is a key component to the organization-public relational dynamic (Hung 2007). Grunig, Grunig, and Ehling (1992) explained that managing interdependence is the main objective of public relations:

The reality of interdependence means that organizations have relationships with outside stakeholders—with publics and other organizations—whether they want such relationships or not. Relationships limit autonomy, but good relationships

limit it less than bad relationships . . . Building relationships—managing interdependence—is the substance of public relations. (p. 69)

The approach advocated by public relations scholars to manage interdependence is based on social exchange and resource dependency theories (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Grunig, Grunig & Ehling, 1992; Hung, 2005; Ledingham, Bruning, & Wilson, 1999). Because these theories do not address the autonomy-dependence paradox inherent in organizational-public relationships, they can lead organizations and public relations practitioners to react to paradoxical tensions with defensive mechanisms that could potentially damage relationships or establish hollow quid pro quo relationships (Stoker & Tusinski, 2006). The following sections provide an exploration of the paradoxical tensions and defensive mechanisms that can result from the application of both of these theoretical perspectives.

Paradox and Social Exchange

Social exchange theory holds that social relationships involve the voluntary exchange of resources to accomplish individual goals that can only be achieved through cooperation and reciprocity (Oliver, 1990; Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Lawler & Thye, 1999; Ledingham, Bruning, & Wilson, 1999; Leichty, 2005). Oliver (1990) explained that social exchange theory is based on the idea that partners enter into relationships seeking “balance, harmony, equity, and mutual support” (p. 245), and anticipating that the benefits of the relationship will “far exceed the disadvantages, particularly the loss of decision-making latitude and the cost of managing the linkage” (p. 245). However, Lawler and Thye (1999) stated that “*Self-interest* and *interdependence* are central properties of social exchange” (p. 217); and Macy (1991) explained that the

tensions between these two paradoxical poles can lead to social traps.

According to social exchange theory, transcendence of the autonomy-dependency paradox can be achieved when relational partners establish mutually beneficial relationships in which they cooperate and sacrifice to supply the other's wants at lower cost to self than the value of the resources provided by the other (Ledingham, Bruning, & Wilson, 1999; Leichty, 2005). When the rewards of the exchange exceed the costs, both parties benefit and the exchange relationship will likely continue (Ledingham, Bruning, & Wilson, 1999; Leichty, 2005). In this type of relationship, both parties live within the tensions created by the paradox, sacrificing autonomy by increasing their dependency on each other for mutual reward. However, when the costs of the exchange exceed the rewards—one party benefiting at the expense of the other—the paradoxical tension becomes more acute. Relational partners may resort to defensive mechanisms, such as ending the relationship if a suitable alternative exchange partner can be found; otherwise, the unsatisfactory relationship may continue (Ledingham, Bruning, & Wilson, 1999; Leichty, 2005). Finding a new exchange partner does not eliminate the paradox, it only shifts the paradox to a new set of relational partners. The inability to leave an asymmetrical relationship increases the paradoxical tension as one party becomes dependent on the other for exchange while preferring the autonomy to seek a different partner.

Ledingham (2006) explained that expectations play a significant role in relationships built on social exchange. "Entities in a relationship have a level of expectations regarding others in the relationship and that failure to meet or exceed expectations will decide whether a relationship continues" (p. 473). Coombs

(2000) proposed that damage to a relationship occurs when relational partners have different expectations of each other or “when an organization is acting inconsistently within the relationship” (p. 77).

Macy (1991) explored the social traps of exchange relationships through a Prisoner’s Dilemma framework, where two partners choose between cooperation and defection. The Prisoner’s Dilemma results in a matrix with four possible outcomes: reward, temptation, sucker, and penalty. When both partners chose to cooperate and sacrifice, they are rewarded with a mutually beneficial relationship. When both partners chose to defect, they are both punished because they do not exchange any resources. The remaining two outcomes occur when one or the other partner is tempted to take more than they give, while the other partner—the sucker—is cheated because of a willingness to sacrifice. The paradox, or social trap, of the Prisoner’s Dilemma is that both partners would be better if they chose to cooperate; however, the better payoff comes when one party takes advantage of the other. When both partners are afraid of being the sucker, the defensive reaction of both parties is to defect, resulting in the worst possible relational outcome.

Paradox and Resource Dependence

Resource dependence is a theoretical framework that exposes the power dynamics in exchange relationships (Aldrich, 1976; Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Cook, 1977; Emerson, 1962; Leichty, 2005; Oliver, 1990). The desired relational outcome of resource dependency theory is autonomy and control, not cooperation and reciprocity (Oliver, 1990). “The more power an organization has, the more influence it has to determine the nature of the interorganizational exchange” (Cook, 1977, p. 66). Control is important

because it enables autonomy in organizational decision-making, allowing organizations to manage their environments and avoid uncertainty (Aldrich, 1976; Oliver, 1990; Schermerhorn, 1975). In resource dependency theory, organizations gain power by exploiting the dependencies of relational partners: The more relational partner B depends on relational partner A for resources, the more power A has over B (Emerson, 1962).

The resource dependence perspective is itself a defensive mechanism to the autonomy-dependency paradox. This perspective advocates that organizations exert their autonomy at the expense of the autonomy of their relational partners, which can lead to a number of negative reinforcing cycles for both partners in a relationship. Emerson (1962) proposed that relational partners use two different strategies to deal with the tensions caused by this paradox: cost reduction and balancing. Cost reduction is an attempt of the dependent partner to reduce the relational tensions by changing organizational values in a way that will allow the organization to accept the imbalanced relationship. Balancing is comprised of a number of tactics a dependent partner can employ to bring equilibrium to the power imbalance, such as withdrawal from the relationship, increasing the powerful partner's motivational investment in the relationship to make the powerful partner more dependent, and forming coalitions with other groups to increase "the power of weaker actors through collectivization" (Emerson, 1962, p. 37).

Autonomy-Dependency Paradox and Relationship Management

The relationship management literature acknowledges that organization-public relationships are formed and maintained through a combination of behavior and symbolic communication, which are "intertwined like strands of a rope" (Grunig, 1993, p. 123). When an organizational decision has consequences on a public, organizational behavior

affects the relationship (Grunig 2005; Hon & Grunig, 1999). Relationships can also be affected by communication. Ledingham (2006) argued that communication is a tool in the “initiation, nurturing, and maintenance of organization-public relationships” (p. 466). According to Grunig (1993), when an organization and public have a good behavioral relationship, good communication can improve that relationship. However, “a poor behavioral relationship can destroy attempts to use communication to build a symbolic relationship or to improve a behavioral relationship” (p. 123).

The organization-public relationship literature primarily focuses on interactions based on the social exchange model, seeking to transcend the autonomy-dependency paradox by establishing mutually beneficial relationships through two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2006; Hon & Grunig, 1999). The literature also advocates that organizations should manage their relationships to ensure stability by exerting influence on its surrounding environment, which reflects a resource dependency paradigm of control and autonomy (Ledingham, 2006; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). The simultaneous use of both the social exchange and resource dependency paradigms to define organization-public relationship theory underscores the paradox that continues to have a significant influence on public relations theory and practice; Organizations are pulled by the paradoxical tensions caused by their desire to be autonomous and ensure stability and the need to be dependent and cooperate with stakeholders and publics for mutual advantage.

Hon and Grunig (1999) included a measure of this paradox in their relationship outcome measurement tool called control mutuality. They defined control mutuality as “the degree to which parties agree on who has rightful power to influence one another”

(Hon & Grunig, 1999, p. 19). They pointed out that while a power imbalance in an organization-public relationship may be normal, the most stable and beneficial relationships are achieved when organizations and publics “have some degree of control over the other” (Hon & Grunig, 1999, p. 19).

Murphy (1991) explored the autonomy-dependency paradox from a games theory perspective. Her solution was to employ a mixed-motive model, which established a middle ground on a continuum that ranged from zero-sum to pure cooperation. In this middle ground, participants try to achieve their own interests while, at the same time, trying to help other participants meet their goals. In the Excellence Study, Dozier, Grunig & Grunig (1995) adopted a modified version of the mixed-motive model, arguing that an organization uses asymmetric and symmetric communication either to pull the public’s position closer to its own or to acquiesce to the public’s position. In the middle of the spectrum, the authors proposed a “win-win zone” where mutually beneficial agreements can be reached.

These attempts at combining both the social exchange (two-way symmetrical) and resource dependency (asymmetrical) paradigms to manage the autonomy-dependence paradox can perpetuate defensive mechanisms that lead to abuses of power masked by artificial attempts at symmetry and cooperation. A number of public relations scholars have drawn attention to the ways in which organizations can use two-way symmetrical relationships for manipulative purposes (Berger, 2005; Durham, 2005; Hung, 2005; Rawlins & Stoker, 2007, July; Roper, 2005; Stoker & Tusinski, 2006). Many of these practices, which center on achieving an organization’s goals while appearing to be self-sacrificing and cooperative, are merely defensive mechanisms that can be viewed as

inauthentic and insincere communication by an organization's stakeholders and publics (Rawlins & Stoker, 2006). Additionally, public relations scholars have recognized that some publics may choose to exert their own autonomy rather than cooperate with organizations; and, in some cases, they may even behave in ways that are destructive to relationships in spite of organizational efforts to establish two-way symmetry (Grunig, 2006; Leitch & Neilson, 2001; Murphy & Dee, 1992).

The examples cited above demonstrate that stakeholders and publics have the ability to affect relationships with organizations independent of an organization's attempts to control or manage the relationship (Blewett, 1993; Durham, 2005). According to Blewett (1993), the language used in public relations literature implies that public relations practitioners try to manage—meaning control—their publics. He argued that public relations professionals can and should manage an organization's communication practices and techniques but they have no control over the outcome of communication with a public (Blewett, 1993). He explained that attempting to manage communication outcomes “would be like a doctor claiming he or she can or should manage a patient's health or the outcomes of transactions with a patient about his or her health” (Blewett, 1993, p. 15). Blewett (1993) concluded that the appropriate relationship between an organization and public is a relationship of co-responsibility where each party “accepts the responsibility and accountability for its portion of the relationship” (p. 15). These insights underscore the need for public relations scholarship to assist organizations in recognizing paradoxical tensions and in managing their own response to these tensions with second-order thinking and divergent solutions, rather than trying to control the outcomes of their communication with their publics.

Transcending the Autonomy-Dependency Paradox

This section proposes two frameworks that may assist public relations scholars and practitioners in thinking divergently about the autonomy-dependency paradox: structuration theory and authenticity. In combination, these frameworks provide a pathway to second-order thinking about both the behavioral and symbolic-communication components of organizational-public relationships identified by Grunig (1993). Structuration theory calls for organizations to understand the relationship structures that are co-created with their publics. It also calls for organizations to recognize and accept the agency of their publics when making decisions that affect them or when communicating with them. The concept of organizational authenticity provides valuable insights that can assist organizations in managing their own reactions to the paradoxical tensions of organization-public relationships by staying true to organizational values and goals in both behavior and communication. Both structuration and authenticity require that organizations maintain congruence between their behavior and communication.

Structuration and Paradox

While social exchange and resource dependency theories are used in public relations to explain how an organization should manage interdependence on a micro level with individual relational partners, public relations theorists have adopted sociological theories to understand and explain how organizations should manage interdependence on a macro level with multiple stakeholders and publics. The two paradigms advocated by public relations scholars represent opposite extremes of a long running sociological debate that questions “whether human behaviour is determined by the structural

institutions of society or if human behaviour creates and determines those structures” (Rawlins & Stoker, 2002, p. 670). The functionalist approach views social reality as objective, orderly, and external to the individual, while those who advocate an interpretivist approach view society as a construction that grows out of the interactions between individuals (Putnam, 1983). Ultimately, the way in which an organization views the role of human agency in its relationships and the nature of social structures has a significant impact on how that organization responds to the autonomy-dependence paradox.

Functionalist Paradigm

Functionalism is the dominant paradigm in the field of public relations and organizational communication (Holtzhausen, 2000; Mumby, 1997; Natasia, 2009; Trujillo & Toth, 1987). The primary unit of analysis in functionalism is the organization, which is assumed to be a static and immutable structure that is external to individuals (Miller, 2000; Putnam, 1983). Additionally, this perspective views social reality as external to the individual and asserts that individuals are the products of their environments, absorbing and responding to externally controlled events (Miller, 2000; Putnam, 1983). Because the organization is the focus of the functionalist perspective, it is biased toward management, organizational efficiency and maintaining the status quo (Miller, 2000; Putnam, 1983). Trujillo and Toth (1987) explained that it is ultimately concerned with “how organizations (as articulated by management) can maintain social order” through effectiveness and efficiency to ensure their financial health (p. 202).

The functionalist paradigm in public relations is manifest primarily in the use of general systems theory to explain interdependence. Systems theory compares

organizations to biological systems that coexist with other organisms within a larger, more complex environment (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1994; McElreath, 1997; Pieczka, 1996; Plowman, 2005; Trujillo & Toth, 1987; Witmer, 2006). From this theoretical perspective, organizations “engage in exchanges with their environments, producing changes in both the systems and their environments” to accomplish organizational goals and to ensure organizational survival (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1994, p. 211). Within the systems theory framework, public relations practitioners function as boundary spanners who enable feedback from the environment in the form of “information (input) that helps the organisation adapt their goals, structures and processes (throughput) to changes in the environment,” and then communicates messages, or output, that helps the environment adjust to those changes (Rawlins & Stoker, 2001, p. 270).

According to systems theory, organizations can be classified according to the “nature and amount of interchange” they have with their environments (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1994, p. 212). The two classifications described in the public relations literature on systems theory reveal the poles of the autonomy-dependency paradox. On one hand, organizations that “believe they are independent of environmental influences” are classified as closed systems (Plowman, 2005, p. 840). Cutlip, Center, and Broom (1994) noted that closed systems do not allow new information through their system boundary, resulting in eventual disintegration because of their failure to adapt to external change pressures. On the other hand, organizations that recognize their dependence on other systems in their environment and utilize the three components of the feedback loop—input, throughput, and output—to adapt to the changing conditions of their environment are classified as open systems (Plowman, 2005). Open systems adapt and adjust to

“counteract or accommodate environmental variations” (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1994, p. 212). According to Cutlip, Center, and Broom (1994), organizations that adopt an open systems model of public relations can maintain their relationships “by adjusting and adapting themselves and their publics to ever-changing social, political, and economic environments” (p. 223). Systems theory has been the theoretical approach behind much of the theory building in public relations research including the four models of public relations, two-way symmetrical communication, and the Excellence Theory (Trujillo & Toth, 1987; Toth, 2002).

Some scholars have criticized systems theory because it represents a structural functional view of relationships and interaction (McElreath, 1997; Pieczka, 1996; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002; Witmer, 2006). According to the structural functionalist approach of systems theory, the structures of the relationships that define organizations are based on the “functions performed by those relationships for the organization” (McElreath, 1997, p. 15). In other words, relational structures, or the ways in which relational partners interact, can be changed by redefining the functions, or roles, performed by relational partners. Similarly the functions of relational partners can be changed by changing the structure of the relationship. Rawlins and Stoker (2001) explained that the structural-functional approach of systems theory “advocates changing structures to change people” (p. 270). Putnam (1983) noted that functionalist approaches view individuals as products of their environment, because “the external world determines, or at least shapes, individual options for appropriate behavior” (p. 36). According to McElreath (1997), the major weakness of systems theory is that it plays down and ignores “the power of individual free will and leadership” and is “based on the

notion that the most important factors explaining and predicting organizational behavior are structural and functional variables” (p. 16).

Other scholars have identified deficiencies in the ability of systems theory to address the power advantages that favor organizations in the functionalist paradigm (Plowman, 2005; Pieczka, 1996; Natasia, 2009). Trujillo and Toth (1987) warned that the organizational bias inherent in functionalist systems theory could lead to “organizational myopia” (p. 209). Because of this potential power imbalance, they advised that “public relations researchers and professionals should consider additional perspectives as they practice their craft” (p. 209).

Interpretivist Perspective

The primary unit of analysis of the interpretivist perspective is the values, goals, and interactions among individuals that create and sustain coalitions (Putnam, 1983; Miller, 2000). Theorists who advocate an interpretivist perspective “believe that reality is socially constructed through the words, symbols, and behaviors of its members” (p. 35). Individuals are seen as proactive creative agents who exercise free will in their interactions with others (Miller, 2000; Putnam, 1983). From this perspective organizations are viewed as complex social relationships that originate through human interaction in “symbolic processes that evolve through streams of ongoing behavior” (Putnam, 1983, p. 35). Because the individuals who are engaged in these ongoing interactions never abandon their different personal objectives, the organization can be seen as a pluralistic array of “factionalized groups with diverse purposes and goals” (Miller, 2000, p. 56). Consequently, interpretivists are not overly concerned with the stability of organizations (Trujillo & Toth, 1987).

Trujillo and Toth (1987) explained that the interpretivist approach in public relations is centered on the symbolic management of issues and images as well as the symbolic management of the organization itself. “Interpretive approaches invite public relations researchers and professionals to understand how organizations use symbols and how publics assign meaning to organizational life and society” (p. 210). Natasia (2009) explained that interpretivist approaches in public relations are largely based on the work of Kenneth Burke “who argued for a dialectic process, in which rival parties use symbolic exchange to come to agreement about cultural structures or events” (p. 10). The major strands of public relations research that adopt an interpretivist perspective are sense-making approaches, rhetorical approaches, and cultural approaches (Trujillo & Toth, 1987). Sense-making approaches are concerned with “how organizational audiences attribute meaning to organizational information” (p. 210). Rhetorical approaches to public relations view organizations as symbolic contexts in which “organizational members and outsiders are active choice-making publics who use different language strategies in various contexts” (p. 212). From this perspective, public relations is “one key process through which organizations and publics create and influence their relationships” (p. 211). Cultural approaches to public relations “share a general focus on how an organization and its publics collectively define and participate in organizational reality” (p. 213).

One of the main criticisms of the interpretivist perspective is that it does not provide a sufficient explanation of “the centrality of power and the struggle over interests in social life” (Tucker, 1998, p. 57). Natasia (2009) commented that although the interpretivist paradigm grants publics more power in organization-public relationships,

the public relations theories developed to reflect this paradigm still focus on organizational speech, essentially ignoring the speech of individuals and groups. Heath (2005) noted that an interpretivist rhetorical approach to public relations is at its best “founded on the substance of good reasons,” but at its worst it can be overly focused on accomplishing organization objectives through, “deception, manipulation, slander, character assassination, distortion, misinformation, and disinformation” (p. 750).

Structuration and Transcendence

As is the case with social exchange and resource dependency theories, without an understanding of the autonomy-dependence paradox, organizations using either a functionalist or an interpretivist approach to public relations can be influenced by paradoxical tensions that may lead an organization into defensive mechanisms and reinforcing cycles. Researchers have found Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory useful in understanding and managing paradox (Harter, 2000; Poole & van de Ven, 1989), in part because it is a theory developed to transcend the structure/action dichotomy reflected in functionalism and interpretivism (Durham, 2005; Edgar, 2007; Falkheimer, 2007; Miller, 2000). This theory can also provide insights into the autonomy-dependency paradox because of how it addresses power in relationships:

Power, in this relational sense, concerns the capabilities of actors to secure outcomes where the realization of these outcomes depends upon the agency of others. . . . Power within social systems can thus be treated as involving reproduced relations of autonomy and dependence in social relations. (Giddens, 1979, cited in Loyal, 2003, p. 80)

Giddens developed structuration theory to address the functionalists’

underestimation of “the human capacity to make choices in social life,” and the interpretivists’ overemphasis of agency at the expense of “the influence of historical forces and institutional constraints on human action” (Krone, Schrod, & Kirby, 2005, p. 294). Edgar (2007) explained that structuration theory recognizes a partial truth that exists in the extremes of functionalism and interpretivism, “for society is patterned so that the isolated and self-interested actions of its individual members take on the appearance of having been planned or co-ordinated” (p. 339). Structuration theory attempts to achieve a balance between human agency and structure “by stressing the need to understand interrelationships between the two” by reconceptualizing the structure/action dualism as a duality: the duality of structure (Krone et al, 2005, p. 294).

According to Falkheimer (2009), the duality of structure explains that social structures—the traditions, institutions, and rituals that guide social interaction—are “reproduced or transformed through repetition (on a macro level) of individual acts” (p. 108). Loyal (2003) explained that the duality of structure views agency and structure as two sides of the same coin, where the creation of structure “concurrently draws upon and reproduces structure in a manner akin to the way a speech act draws upon and reproduces the totality of language” (p. 73-74). In other words, the duality of structure asserts that social structures are “the medium of human agency as well as the outcome of human agency” (Falkheimer, 2009, p. 108). Rawlins and Stoker (2002) explained that Giddens’ concept of the duality of structure accounts for the ability of individuals to “incorporate and monitor the situations and conditions that produce and reproduce the social order” and then by their choice of action, individuals can “produce and reproduce the very process that will constrain or enable them to repeat that action” (p. 271). Therefore, from

a structuration perspective human agents should not be theorized as autonomously creating structures (the bias of interpretivism), nor should structures be theorized as totally determining human action (the bias of functionalism). Rather human action should be understood as it is both enabled and constrained by social structures (Krone et al, 2005).

Giddens defines structure as “an internal construct composed of an agent’s memory” (Rawlins & Stoker 2002, p. 271). These structures can be related to the expectations that relational partners have of each other (Coombs, 2000; Ledingham 2006). In structuration theory, individuals have autonomy to either act in accordance with their knowledge of previously learned social norms (Banks & Riley, 1993; Witmer, 2006) or to act in ways that create new social structures (Banks & Riley, 1993; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002). Banks and Riley (1993) explained that “agents always have the capability to make a difference, even in the face of institutional settings predicated on others' power and control” (p. 172). Additionally, structuration theory posits that individuals are capable of actions that are based in self-reflection and motivated by individual goals as well as actions that are based on habitual routines that are generally taken for granted (Banks & Riley, 1993; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002). Rawlins and Stoker (2002) explained that self-reflexive action, referred to as reflexivity, represents an individual’s ability to understand and explain the logic and reason of their actions. Banks and Riley (1993) noted that reflexivity constitutes more than just self-consciousness or self-awareness. They proposed that reflexivity signifies “being immersed in the continuous flow of action and deriving from experience a logic of action that enables agents to go on” (p. 177).

Banks and Riley (1993) noted that social structures consist of rules and resources

that are “formed, codified, memorialized, and concretized” through interactions that occur over time (p. 176). Socially constructed rules are behavioral recipes that provide the definitions of what certain behaviors mean and which behaviors are appropriate in certain circumstances (Harrison, 1994). Structuration theory identifies two types of rule structures: structures of signification, which are created and reproduced through communication and interpretation, and structures of legitimation, which represent relational norms that are legitimized through interaction (Harrison, 1994; Loyal, 2003). Organizations can foster structures of legitimation, or the ethical, legal, and cultural norms of social structures, through structures of signification, or communication (Rawlins & Stoker, 2001). Achieving legitimacy in a relationship “depends upon the morality of what the organization says and does in relationship to the norms that have guided its communications and actions in the past” (Rawlins & Stoker, 2001, p. 273). This type of interaction is capable of producing and reproducing new and lasting relational structures (Rawlins & Stoker, 2001). Resources are the capabilities that allow one partner to exert influence or control over another in a social interaction (Banks & Riley, 1993; Harrison, 1994). Harrison (1994) referred to interactions based on resources as structures of domination. Structural changes based on domination through resources are not long-lasting because powerful relational partners ignore the agency of weaker partners forcing a change that may be incompatible with the weaker party’s values and potentially resulting in the power balancing mechanisms of resource dependency (Rawlins & Stoker, 2001; see also Emerson, 1962).

Edgar (2007) provided a concise explanation of the essentials of Giddens’ structuration theory:

Giddens presents social life (and centrally the reproduction of society) as a circle. Agents interact with others. Their taken-for-granted social competence allows them to make sense of the situation, and to carry on within it, according to routine practices. Agents thereby create (and sustain) the very conditions that make their social action possible. Their knowledge of society and social competence is thereby regenerated (along with society) by the very success with which they conduct the interaction, or repair difficulties encountered within it. (p. 340)

A structuration view of organization-public relationships embraces the tensions of the autonomy-dependency paradox. This view has the ability to shift the focus of public relations from ensuring organizational stability and reducing uncertainty through relational control to enabling organizations to become participants in, rather than managers of, the creation and perpetuation of relationship structures. Durham (2005) noted that structuration theory can assist organizations in reconceptualizing relationships with publics: “Rather than being defined as distinct parts of a power imbalance, institutions and those they would affect are bound to each other within a common social context” (p. 34). Falkheimer (2007) proposed that viewing public relations through the lens of structuration theory means that practitioners should see communication as a process of developing shared meanings and sense making, where organizational members mutually construct a social reality. Cozier and Witmer (2003) commented that “from a structurationist perspective, public relations is a communicative force in society that serves to reproduce and/or transform an organization’s dominant ideology, rather than solely adapting to a stakeholder group or public (cited in Falkheimer, 2009, p. 111). Falkheimer (2007) also noted that structuration theory “supports the perspective on

public relations as an important practice and profession that may lead to reproduction of social structures as well as emancipation and transformation” (p. 290).

Rawlins and Stoker (2002) argued that organizations cannot unilaterally change their environments because the structures that govern the environment are co-created and reproduced through interaction. Because of the duality of structure, an organization’s sense of self and position in the environment is only known in relation to an organization’s public and stakeholders: “This position is a result of past interactions with stakeholders and the future expectations of who, what and where the company should be” (Rawlins & Stoker, 2002, p. 272). Rawlins and Stoker argued that organizations should become aware of how their actions will impact their relational partners, and accept their duty to behave in a way that is respectful of their relational partners’ agency. To achieve this kind of self-consciousness and respect, Rawlins and Stoker (2002) argued that organizations must come to an understanding and knowledge of themselves “that is, more than a simple sense of their ‘position’ in their society, a sense of the part their action might play in relation to the parts played by other people’s actions in maintaining or progressing their society’s aims” (Shotter, 1983, p. 37).

Authenticity and Paradox

The understanding of self that Rawlins and Stoker (2002) argued that organizations need to achieve can be explained by the scholarly literature on authenticity. As noted earlier in this paper, when organizations feel the tensions of the autonomy-dependency paradox, the natural reaction is to choose one pole over the other. The decision to choose the autonomy pole can lead organizations to use public relations as a defensive mechanism in an attempt to manage or control the outcomes of communication

with their publics and stakeholders. If organizational behavior is focused on management and control, but organizational communication is focused on mutual benefit and finding “win-win” situations, then publics and stakeholders may begin to feel that the organization is insincere or inauthentic. This section will explore the scholarly literature on authenticity and how it can be applied to help organizations think paradoxically about its relationships with its publics. This section will address two aspects of authenticity in organization-public relationships: 1) The process of discovering the true organizational self and becoming the embodiment of it, and 2) The ability of organizations to understand and accept their publics’ need for authentic relationships.

Decline of Sincerity and Rise of Authenticity

According to American literary critic Lionel Trilling (1972), the “enterprise of sincerity” has been an important definitive characteristic of Western culture for the last 400 years (p. 6). Trilling defined sincerity as the congruence between an individual’s expressed feelings and their actual feelings. In other words, sincerity is “whether a person represents herself truly and honestly to others” (Erickson, 1995, p. 124). Trilling (1972) noted that the difficulty in being sincere is first in knowing one’s own self and then showing it. To illustrate this point, Trilling cited a line delivered by Polonius to the departing Learnes in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*: “This above all: to thine own self be true. And it doth follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man” (p. 3). Trilling explained that Polonius’ description of sincerity is an essential condition of virtue that can only be attained by being true to oneself. In other words, “sincerity is the avoidance of being false to any man through being true to one’s own self” (p. 5). According to Trilling, being true to oneself connotes loyalty, constancy, honesty, and

reconciliation with the own self. Trilling concluded that finding one's true self and becoming honestly aligned with it "is not to be attained without the most arduous effort (p. 5-6).

After 400 hundred years of the supremacy of sincerity, Trilling (1972) asserted that the concept of sincerity has been devalued and has lost much of the authority it once had. Lindholm (2008) explained that the "irreversible plunge into modernity" followed by Protestant moral idealism and the rise of scientific reason eroded the value of sincerity, shifting the focus from "being as one appears, to discovering what one truly is" (p. 3-4). According to Trilling, the demise of sincerity in contemporary society is linked to its strategic use as a means to fulfill a public end:

If sincerity has lost its former status, if the word itself has for us a hallow sound and seems almost to negate its meaning, that is because it does not propose being true to one's own self as an end but only as a means. If one is true to one's own self for the purpose of avoiding falsehood to others, is one being truly true to one's own self? The moral end in view implies a public end in view, with all that this suggests of the esteem and fair repute that follow upon the correct fulfillment of a public role. (p. 9)

The public view, or the focus on one's appearance to others, can lead to insincerity, the incongruence between expression of feeling and an individual's true feelings. When an individual attempts to deceive others that the true self believes one thing when it really believes another, that individual is considered a hypocrite (Trilling, 1972). Trilling explained that hypocrites are individuals enacting a role. The hypocrite knows what is expected by others and performs the expected role intending that his or her

expression will conceal his or her true nature. The hypocrite is concerned about the truth and is willing to lie to conceal it. However, when an individual is more concerned about appearances than the truth, that individual is considered a “B.S. artist” (Rawlins & Stoker, 2006). According to Rawlins and Stoker (2006), “bullshit,” or B.S., is misleading communication that is used to give a favorable impression of the communicator. They argued that B.S. falls short of lying because the intent of the individual is not to deceive, he or she is merely unconcerned about the truth and willing to make up whatever is convenient to make himself or herself look good: “The B.S. artist does not care whether what he says is true or not, he just picks out, or makes up, what best fits his purpose” (Rawlins & Stoker, 2006, p. 420). They argued that the difference between liars and B.S. artists is that liars attempt to conceal the truth while “the B.S. artist hides that he’s not really interested in the truth” (Rawlins & Stoker, 2006, p. 420).

If a public-oriented view of sincerity can lead to insincerity, hypocrisy, or B.S., Trilling (1972) suggested that true sincerity can be found in authenticity. According to Trilling, authenticity suggests “a more strenuous moral experience than ‘sincerity’ does, a more exigent conception of self and of what being true to it consists in” (p. 11). The origin of the word authenticity is from museum practice “where persons expert in such matters test whether objects of art are what they appear to be or are claimed to be, and therefore worth the price that is asked for them—or, if this has already been paid, worth the admiration they are being given” (Trilling, 1972, p. 93). Trilling’s discussion of authenticity, based on the ideas of philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, conceived of authenticity as “merely being not inauthentic” (p. 94). By and large, other philosophers seem to agree that authenticity cannot be defined positively, necessitating that

authenticity be defined by what it is not (Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Rawlins & Stoker, 2006).

Definitions of Authenticity

Erickson (1995) is one of the few scholars who have attempted to positively define authenticity. She explained that authenticity is a self-referential concept defined as “existing by the laws of one’s own being” (p. 124). Avolio and Gardner (2005) adopted Harter’s (1989) definition of authenticity that encompasses both “owning one’s personal experiences, be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, or beliefs” and acting “in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings” (p. 320). Lindholm (2008) asserted that “authentic objects, persons, and collectives are original, real, and pure; they are what they purport to be, their roots are known and verified, their essence and appearance are one” (p. 2). Similarly, Gilmore and Pine (2007) proposed two standards of authenticity: 1) being true to your own self, and 2) being who you say you are to others. Gilmore and Pine argued that individuals and organizations have to contend simultaneously with both the public and the private aspects of being, even “while one of these may overshadow the other” (p. 96). Based on philosophical observations by Heidegger, Erickson (1995) noted that authenticity is “not an either/or experience” (p. 122). Individuals are neither completely authentic nor completely inauthentic, but somewhere in between because of the “complex, changing, and inconsistent” behaviors enacted by individuals (Erickson, 1995, p. 122). Additionally, individuals become more authentic when they realize they are partners who must cooperate with other individual agents in the social construction of reality, because the authentic self both shapes and is shaped by social exchanges with

others (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Eagly, 2005; Erickson, 1995).

Seeking to understand the true self with the intent of becoming the perfect embodiment of the true self in expression is a difficult undertaking that requires strength of mind and will in an environment that is constantly being shaped and reshaped by social interaction. Trilling (1972) related authenticity to strength:

The sentiment of being is the sentiment of being strong. Which is not to say powerful: Rousseau, Schiller, and Wordsworth are not concerned with energy directed outward upon the world in aggression and dominance, but, rather, with such energy as contrives that the centre shall hold, that the circumference of the self keep unbroken, that the person be an integer, impenetrable, perdurable, and autonomous in being if not in action. (p. 99)

Maintaining organizational authenticity requires the strength and commitment of organizational leaders who make the decisions about organizational behavior and communication. Avolio and Gardner (2005) identified four characteristics of authentic leadership. These principles can be adopted by organizations to assist them in becoming more authentic than inauthentic. Organizational leaders seeking to employ this model of authentic leadership must develop positive psychological capital, positive moral perspectives, and heightened levels of self-awareness, as well as practice disciplined self-regulation to align their values with their intentions and actions (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Organizations can develop positive psychological capacities by instilling within the organization confidence, optimism, hope, and resiliency. This type of positive thinking helps to “heighten the self-awareness and self-regulatory behaviors . . . as part of a process of positive self-development” (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 324).

Organizational authenticity also requires that organizational leaders adhere to positive moral perspectives, which Avolio and Gardner (2005) describe as “an ethical and transparent decision making process whereby authentic leaders develop and draw upon reserves of moral capacity, efficacy, courage, and resiliency to address ethical issues and achieve authentic and sustained moral actions” (p. 324). Self-aware organizations are “cognizant of their own existence,” as well as “what constitutes that existence within the context within which they operate over time” (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 324). Self-awareness is a constant struggle to understand organizational values, identity, and goals: “Self-awareness is not a destination point, but rather an emerging process where one continually comes to understand his or her unique talents, strengths, sense of purpose, core values, beliefs and desires” (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 324). According to Avolio and Gardner (2005), self-regulation is a process of self-control that involves organizations in the alignment of their values with their intentions and actions. This process is composed of three different stages that when followed lead to organizational authenticity, which the authors also term organizational transparency: “(a) setting internal (either existing or newly formulated) standards, (b) assessing discrepancies between these standards and actual or expected outcomes, and (c) identifying intended actions for reconciling these discrepancies” (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 325).

Authenticity also provides a valuable lens through which to view publics. Lindholm (2008) explained that Rousseau believed that individuals simultaneously sought authenticity in “communion with the unique inner self-restraint to all social pressure” and “self-loss in the equalizing public collective” (p. 9). Western culture’s embrace of authenticity means the individual in society can make personal judgments

based on their own “inner light” about whether the rules of society are moral and equitable (Lindholm, 2008, p. 7). Lindholm (2008) explained that just as a “dissatisfied congregant had a duty to find another church more in tune with his or her values,” authentic individuals make similar decisions about the government (p. 7). If religion or government did not have the same values, “the citizen had an obligation to stand up in opposition and seek, or establish, an alternative collective that would offer a more genuinely authentic reality” (Lindholm, 2008, p. 7). The implication for public relations is that as organizations become more authentic, the individuals who comprise an organization’s publics may decide that the organization does not share their values and look elsewhere to fulfill their impulse to be part of an authentic collective. This echoes structuration theory and Blewett’s (1993) prescription for organizations to manage their own behavior and communication rather than trying to manage the behavior and communication of their stakeholders and publics.

Art Museums and the Autonomy Dependency Paradox

Art museums occupy an interesting position in the civic and social life of the United States. Originally, art museums were established in large American cities in the 1800s by the cultural elite to refine and uplift the understanding and common taste of the general public (Weil, 2007a). The art museum’s position in relation to the public was one of superiority with virtually unrestrained autonomy:

Museums were created and maintained by the high for the low, by the couth for the uncouth, by the washed for the unwashed, by those who knew for those who didn’t but needed to know and who would come to learn. The museum was established to ‘do’; what was to be ‘done’ was the public. (Weil, 2007a, p. 32)

However, Weil (2007a) explained that fifty years into the twentieth century, the positions of the art museum and the public were reversed. The public rose to occupy the superior position while the art museum fell to a position of servitude. Because of this change, Weil (2007a) proposed that the relationship between an art museum and its publics “must be understood as a revolution in process” (p. 32). Brenson (2004) explained that this change was a response to political, economic, and aesthetic pressures that museums could not ignore.

McClellan (2003), Wood (2004), and Lowry (2004) traced the ancestry of contemporary art museums and their authoritative educational and moral missions to the establishment of the Louvre in Paris where treasured artworks once owned by the monarchy, the church and rich aristocrats were confiscated at the height of the French Revolution and displayed free of charge for “the shared enjoyment of the nation’s new found artistic heritage . . . in a royal palace turned palace of the people” (McClellan, 2003, p. 5). The purpose of this new institution was “aimed to cement the bonds of equality and citizenship” (McClellan, 2003, p. 5). Weil (2007a) recounted that the primary reasons for establishing the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York were to elevate the populace by providing “a wholesome alternative to the seamier forms of diversion that might otherwise tempt the working class inhabitants” (p. 33) of these large metropolitan cities that would purify their tastes and have a positive influence on their moral character.

Weil (2007a) noted that since the beginning of the twentieth century, the relationship between the art museum and the public has been changing. Weil commented that museums have lost their position of mastery and now fulfill a role of service to the

public because they have become dependent on government and corporate funding, as well as earned income from admissions and gift shop sales.

It seems clear, at the most elementary level, that the greater the degree to which a museum must rely on some portion of its support on ‘box office’ income—not merely entrance fees but also the related funds to be derived from shop sales and other auxiliary activities—the greater will be its focus on making itself attractive to visitors. Likewise, the greater the extent to which a museum might seek corporate funding—particularly for its program activities—the more important will be that museum’s ability to assure prospective sponsors that its programs will attract a wide audience. Under such circumstances, it should be hardly surprising that museums are increasingly conscious of what might be of interest to the public. (Weil, 2007b, p. 32)

McClellan (2003) identified two major inconsistencies that reveal the “tensions within art museums that compromise their ability to fully extend themselves to the public” (p. 2). The first inconsistency is that art museums have to balance the preservation and care of rare and valuable art objects with the public access, with the scales perpetually tipped in favor of preservation. The second inconsistency is that art museums are “ beholden to private interests and make little attempt to hide their descent from private collections,” which creates an aura of privilege and elitism, while at the same time art museums are trying to integrate themselves as relevant institutions in the public sphere (p. 2).

The revolutionary nature of the changing relationship between art museums and their publics has been the subject of much debate among museum scholars and

professionals. Should an art museum focus exclusively on its collection and the limited audience that finds it appealing, or should an art museum spend time developing interpretive materials, educational programs, and marketing strategies to attract a larger audience (Kotler & Kotler, 1998)? According to Kotler and Kotler (1998), the issue at the center of these two opposing questions is the balance between autonomy and dependence, or in their words “who or what agency defines and determines a museum’s offerings: museum professionals or audiences and the marketplace” (Kotler & Kotler, 1998, p. 30). Zolberg (1994) also recognized this paradox, explaining that art museums are “praised for collecting and preserving works of art for a discerning public” on one hand, but on the other hand, “they are called upon to draw in to that public a population with little understanding of fine art” (p. 49). According to Zolberg, this paradox forces art museums to make an either/or choice between providing “a safe haven for high art” or “catering to a crowd [the museum] did not select” (p. 49). Brenson (2004) cautioned that the “the transformation of the museum into a hospitable, multipurpose space” for the public can encourage more people to find meaning in art and increase the influence of museums in the “perception and formation of culture,” but it can also “lead museums to exploit the public, deceive themselves . . . and put the museum in the service of political and economic interests that do not want imaginatively testy art to be shown or the difficulty and edginess of familiar art to surface” (Brenson, 2004, p. 103).

MacDonald (1992) explained that the debate over whether museums should exercise their autonomy to make decisions based solely on quality or whether they should recognize their dependence on the market has become a significant battleground: “One of the greatest challenges facing museums today is to reconcile these two elements of our

reality” (p. 165). Similarly, Janes and Sandell (2007) explained that two of the key complexities “that buffet museums like a strong wind” are the economic view “of marketplace thinking in museum management” and the self-referential view of the museum’s “ability to be guided by a clear sense of purpose and values” (p. 8). They proposed that it is not an exaggeration to think that “creatively managing the tension between market forces and museum missions may turn out to be the most vital issue confronting museums in the twenty-first century” (p. 8).

Some art museum directors defend the idea that the art museum occupies a position of superiority and that the art object ultimately is more important than the public. James Wood (2004), director of the Art Institute of Chicago, argued that the public’s trust in an art museum is based on the art museum’s exercise of autonomy to “preserve elite values and precious works of art” that are made available to everyone (p. 108). James Cuno (2004), director of the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and former director of the Harvard University Art Museums, explained that “acquiring, preserving, and providing access to works of art is the basis for an art museum’s contract with the public and the foundation of the trust that authorizes that contract” (p. 52). Philippe de Montebello (2004), director of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, suggested that art museum publics are best served when art museums focus on their autonomy:

Recalling that what we are and what we do is for the benefit of the public, nevertheless the increased focus on visitors carries with it an interesting paradox, namely, that when the visitor, as opposed to the work of art, occupies center stage, he is likely to be less well served, not better served. (p. 157-158)

While one aspect of the public trust may be derived from the preservation,

presentation and care of precious art objects, today's art museums are dependent on a wide array of diverse publics and stakeholders. Brenson (2004) explained that museums now need the public to help them determine the meanings of art and to figure out why, or if, art matters; but more importantly museums need the public to "help them figure out their identity and purpose" (Brenson, 2004). University art museum may feel these tensions more acutely than other private or public art museums. Drucker (2007) presented an interesting case study analysis of a university art museum that documented an intense and passionate debate among various university administrators over whether the campus art museum should be dedicated solely to the academic pursuits of the university faculty or should attempt to serve as a broad-reaching community resource.

The intense media scrutiny of BYU's decision not to exhibit the four works of art in the *Hands of Rodin* exhibition and the concern of BYU museum officials about showing nude Greek sculptures in the *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World* exhibition because of how they would be received by the community, especially school children, are examples of how paradoxical tensions can come to the surface when art museums make decisions that affect their stakeholders and publics. Kotler and Kotler (1998) observed that as museums have tried to increase their visibility and expand their audience, they have become more susceptible to external pressures: "Museums in the past were largely self-contained and not dependent on the community or on large, diverse audiences . . . However, as museums move closer to their communities, they risk becoming lightning rods" (p. 36).

According to Kotler and Kotler (1998), many museum controversies result from the differences between community standards and the professional standards of museum

practice. Kamman (2006) suggested that the increasing democratization of American culture and the increase in the number of artists, museums, galleries, and critics has “inevitably made controversies more likely to occur” (p. xi). More people also have access to art museums than ever before. More people are attending art museums, traveling art exhibitions make multiple stops across the country, and more art is being displayed in public spaces (Kamman, 2006). Kamman concluded that “as freedom of expression is perceived to increase, so do calls for what amounts to censorship” (p. xi).

Research Propositions

This study proposes that relationships between organizations and their publics are defined by interdependence, or the centripetal and centrifugal forces of autonomy and dependence. There is constant tension between the two poles of this paradox that can influence the decision making of the relational partners. However, certain decisions of either the organization or its publics can intensify the paradoxical tensions in the relationship, increasing the need for the other relational partner to find a way to reduce the tension. First-order thinking in reaction to the increased tension can lead organizations to choose one pole over the other, resulting in defensive mechanisms that ultimately could produce unintended consequences and reinforcing cycles.

This study also proposes that organizations can use structuration theory and authenticity to think divergently about the autonomy-dependency paradox. These theories suggest that organizations should not try to manage or control their publics to preserve their autonomy, but that organizations should recognize their dependence in the relationship and manage their own reactions to the tensions caused by the paradox. The following propositions are drawn from the literature on structuration and authenticity.

1. Organizations should acknowledge that they are dependent on the relationship structures that have been co-created and will be reproduced by interactions with stakeholders and publics (Erickson, 1995; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002).
2. Organizations should recognize that stakeholders and publics can influence the relational structure through their agency, which means there will be consequences for organizations (Eagly, 2005; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002; Stoker & Tusinski, 2006).
3. Organizations must become self-aware, which entails understanding what they value as well as why they have adopted those values and why they behave in certain ways (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002).
4. Organizations must use their agency, their knowledge of relational structures and their understanding of their authentic selves to manage their own behavior and communication rather than that of their publics (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Eagly, 2005; Rawlins & Stoker, 2001; Stoker & Tusinski, 2006; Rawlins & Stoker, 2006, March).

Research Questions

The purpose of this case study analysis is to investigate the viability of the theoretical propositions proposed in this research. In order to evaluate these propositions, the case studies presented in this research will investigate how organizational decision makers at the BYU Museum of Art experienced the tensions of the paradox, how they reacted to these paradoxical tensions, and how they managed their behavior and

communication in relation to their stakeholders and publics as a result of those tensions.

Five research questions will be considered in this study:

RQ1: Did organizational decision makers recognize the paradox and/or the elements contributing to the paradox?

RQ2: How did organizational decision makers experience the tensions of the paradox?

RQ3: How did organizational decision makers view the organization's relationships with its publics?

RQ4: Did organizational decision makers believe they stayed true to the values and mission of the organization in their decision making?

RQ5: Did organizational decision makers believe their communication with their publics was aligned with their decision making?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

A case study methodology was selected to conduct this research because of the complex nature of studying paradox. Cameron and Quinn (1988b) explained the purpose of their research about organizational paradox was not to develop a “set of specific, testable hypotheses explaining paradox,” but to use a paradoxical framework as a “stimulus for asking new and richer questions” (p. 289). Paradoxes also require divergent rather than convergent thinking. According to Cameron and Quinn (1988a) the more paradoxes are studied “the more the solutions tend to diverge, or to become contradictory and opposite” (p. 5). They proposed that “wrestling with divergent problems” will lead to greater breakthroughs and insights than what can be learned by solving convergent problems (p. 6). The case study, as a qualitative methodology, more readily allows for divergent thinking.

Researchers have provided varying definitions of case studies; however Stacks (2002) stated that “there is no more descriptive approach to public relations than the case study” (p. 71). Yin (1984) defined the case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 23). He also stated that case studies are effective in answering explanatory “how” and “why” questions “about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control” (Yin, 1984, p. 20). According to Yin, the case study methodology also allows researchers to “deal with operational links that need to be

traced over time” (p. 18). Stacks (2002) defined a case study as an in-depth study “of particular people, organizations, events, or even processes” that provides a “richly detailed and complete understanding of the case under study” (p. 71). George and Bennett (2005) defined a case study as a “well-defined aspect of a historical episode that the investigator selects for analysis, rather than the historical event itself” (p. 18). Berg (2007) compared the case study methodology to Geertz’s (1973) notion of “thick description” because it explores the processes that individuals create and use to make sense of the phenomenon under investigation.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed that case study research has the ability to enhance the reader’s understanding of the research and has “certain characteristics that are especially advantageous to the naturalistic inquirer” (p. 358). They argued that a case study methodology allows researchers to reconstruct the respondents’ perspectives, to provide readers with a vicarious experience by presenting a “holistic and lifelike description” that also can be judged for researcher bias and internal consistency, and to provide the “thick description” necessary for readers to understand situational contexts and make judgments of transferability (p. 359-360).

In this study, the influence of paradoxical tensions on organizational decision-making will be studied in the context of the Brigham Young University Museum of Art. This case study will be similar to the controlled comparison research design that George and Bennett (2005) described as “the study of two or more instances of a well-specified phenomenon that resemble each other in every respect but one” (p. 151). The advantage of a controlled comparison case study design is that it “provides the functional equivalent of an experiment that enables the investigator to make use of experimental logic to draw

causal inferences” (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 2005). However since the case studies in this research differ in more than one way, the methodology will not be a true controlled comparison research design. The two cases that will be compared in this study are the Brigham Young University Museum of Art’s *Hands of Rodin* exhibition in 1997 and *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World: Egypt, Greece, Rome* in 2004. The case of the *Rodin* exhibition at BYU represents an extreme case for the art museum. Under normal operating conditions, the autonomy-dependence is present in the museum’s relationships with its publics, but its tensions are not acutely manifest. In the extreme case of the *Rodin* exhibition, the tensions resulting from the paradox increased and had an effect on the decisions made by partners in the organization-public relationship. The second case, the events surrounding the *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World: Egypt, Greece, Rome* exhibition, caused the museum to confront similar issues and feel similar tensions as the first case, but the outcomes were more positive for all relational partners involved. This analysis will compare the cases to identify the methods used by the museum to negotiate the paradox in both cases and to understand what the museum learned from the first case that was applied to the second.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths of the case study methodology include achieving high levels of conceptual validity, deriving new hypotheses, exploring causal mechanisms, and assessing complex causal relationships. Case studies are also particularly good at “assessing *whether* and *how* a variable mattered to the outcome” rather than at “assessing *how much* it mattered” (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 25).

A number of weaknesses are frequently identified for case study research. The

first weakness cited in the literature is that case study research, because of its typically small sample sizes and qualitative research methods, is not generalizable to larger populations (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Stacks, 2002; Yin, 1984). This view of qualitative research and case study methodology in particular reflects the bias some researchers have for statistics and quantitative methodologies (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Single case studies have been used throughout history to prove the validity of important theories in the physical sciences, and in the social sciences: “the strategic choice of case may greatly add to the generalizability of a case study” (p. 226). In contrast to the emphasis on statistical significance that presupposes the generalizability of quantitative research, “case study researchers are more interested in finding the conditions under which specified outcomes occur, rather than uncovering the frequency with which those conditions and outcomes arise” (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 31).

Another weakness typically cited is that case studies are good for generating hypotheses but other methods should be used for testing those hypotheses or building theory (Flyvbjerg, 2006). However, according to Eckstein (1975), case studies “are valuable at all stages of the theory-building process, but most valuable at that stage of theory-building where the least value is generally attached to them: the stage at which candidate theories are tested” (cited in Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229). This perceived weakness is also based on the notion that case studies are not generalizable; however, generalizability of case studies can be increased by strategic case selection (Flyvbjerg, 2006). In the case of this research extreme cases were selected to “reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229). Yin (2009) also argued that the results of

good case study research can be generalized back to theory, which then can be applied to additional individual cases.

The third weakness typically associated with case study research is researcher bias, and, in particular, the tendency for the research to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions, because qualitative research relies on the subjective interpretations of the researcher (Flyvbjerg, 2006). However Flyvbjerg (2006) argued that the case study methodology has its own rigor that is "no less strict than quantitative methods" (p. 235). He also reported that many case study researchers "typically report that their preconceived views, assumptions, concepts, and hypotheses were wrong and that the case material has compelled them to revise their hypotheses on essential points" (p. 235). According to Yin (2009) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), a rigorous methodology can be established by following systematic procedures to minimize researcher bias and increase the dependability and reliability of the research.

Bias

To eliminate researcher bias and maximize the ability of this research to test and build theory, this study used the three strategies identified by Yin (2009) to ensure a rigorous case study methodology: 1) using multiple sources of evidence; 2) establishing a chain of evidence; and 3) allowing a draft report to be reviewed by key informants. The multiple sources of evidence for this case study analysis included documentation (mass media reports), archival records (museum files), and one-on-one interviews with key organizational decision makers.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to members of the BYU Museum of Art staff who were

involved to some degree in the planning and mounting of the exhibitions considered in the two case studies explored in this research. The study did not include members of the museum staff who were not involved directly in these two exhibitions. Additionally, this study did not include any members of the university faculty, staff, or administration. Archival documents and news media reports for both cases were de-limited to those documents that specifically mentioned the cases under consideration or that contributed to contextual understanding of the circumstances of each case.

Limitations

The results of this study were impacted by several factors that are inherent in the specific research design of this study. A qualitative design was selected because of the exploratory nature of the topic, as well as the need to explore multiple divergent solutions because of the nature of paradox. The small number of interview participants, the context of the particular cases, and the circumstance-specific nature of case study research will prevent the results of this study from being generalized to communication practitioners at other art museums; however, the results will be generalized to the theories proposed in this study about paradox and organization-public relationships. During the interview process, every effort was made to solicit responses that were not biased by the interviewer; however, due to the personal nature of the interview process, the respondents' familiarity with the interviewer, the potential for current museum employees' not to want to reveal their true feelings while still employed by the university, and the possibility of inherent bias in the interview questions, may have lead museum staff members to give what they considered to be safe or institutionally acceptable answers.

Factors such as time, access to interview participants, and the amount of archival and documentary material for these two cases influenced the outcome of this study. The number of interviews was limited by the time required to conduct, transcribe, and analyze the data as well as the time frame of the study. The deceptively busy schedule of museum employees limited the availability and amount of time they were able to spend in the interviews.

Participants

Participants in this study were selected because of their involvement as Museum of Art employees with either *The Hands of Rodin* exhibition or *The Art of the Mediterranean World* exhibition. Participants included people who are currently (as of this writing) employed at the museum and others who no longer work for the museum. Three participants were interviewed for both case studies.

Participants were invited to be involved in this study in-person by the interviewer. Interviews were scheduled to last between thirty minutes and an hour. All interviews began with a brief discussion about the purpose of the study and an invitation to discuss the consent form, a signed copy of which was then given to the interviewees who participated in the study. As part of this introduction, participants in the study were assured confidentiality in reporting the results of the study (see Appendix A for a copy of the participant consent form).

Procedure

Data were gathered through 14 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with current and former (at the time of this writing) employees of the Brigham Young University Museum of Art. Interviews began with a brief introduction and conversation about the

research project. Most interviews began by asking participants what they remembered about the discussions and events that occurred due to the nude artworks in both of the exhibitions considered in this research. Beginning the interviews in this way allowed the researcher and interviewer to develop a rapport; it also reduced anxiety about the research topic, enhanced the openness of the interview, and allowed the interviewee to detail the chronology of events in the case without researcher imposed bias (Berg, 2007).

Additional questions were then asked to focus the interviewee on specific areas of interest to this study. Appendix B contains a complete list of the additional questions asked to interviewees.

Data also were gathered from archival documents from the museum that included meeting minutes, internal memoranda, exhibition contracts, exhibition object lists, and exhibition-related materials produced by the museum or the exhibition organizers.

Additional data were gathered from news media sources. The museum had an archive of much of this media coverage, but to ensure completeness of the record, the researcher performed searches on Lexis Nexis and ProQuest to find all of the applicable material. Microfilm records housed at Brigham Young University's Harold B. Lee Library were also used to find those media sources not contained in the online databases.

In order to increase the trustworthiness of the research, six interviewees received a copy of the completed case studies to check them for accuracy and researcher bias in a process called member checking (Yin, 2009). In order to increase the dependability of this research, in-text citations in the case study section establish a chain of evidence to give readers access to the same information available to the researcher and to reveal the multiple sources used to construct the case studies.

Analysis

All interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder, transferred to the interviewer's computer, and transcribed using Express Scribe software to assure that the interview data considered in the analysis were complete, as well as to enhance the reliability of the data analysis. Transcripts of the interviews were content analyzed to identify the paradoxes, tensions, relationships, pressures, and inconsistencies discussed by each participant. The interview data were also compared with notes and observations made by the researcher. The interview coding process involved an examination of the metaphors, themes, patterns, and relationships mentioned in the interviews. Following the initial content analysis of individual interviews, the transcripts were grouped according to case study and were compared against one another to identify patterns and themes. The chronologies of events that emerged from the interview data were then compared to the data collected through museum archival documents and news media reports to construct the chronological narratives of the case studies. Once both case studies were complete, the case studies were provided to six research participants for member checks of the data. The results of the individual studies were analyzed in relation to the research propositions of the study in an analytical process known as pattern matching (Yin, 1984). Then both cases were compared and contrasted to determine if and how museum officials had changed in their response to the autonomy-dependency paradox over time.

The research protocol questionnaire and the description of interviewees comprise Appendix B and Appendix C of this report respectively.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY

The following case studies are provided as a means to explore the viability of the propositions of this study. The first case study examines Brigham Young University's decision to withhold four nude Rodin sculptures from a traveling exhibition of the French sculptor's work in October 1997. The second case study examines the BYU Museum of Art's decision to exhibit a handful of nude works in an exhibition on the ancient cultures of Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

The Hands of Rodin: A Tribute to B. Gerald Cantor

An Institution of Academic and Religious Education

Brigham Young University traces its roots to Utah's pioneer heritage ("History of BYU," n.d.). On October 16, 1875 Brigham Young Academy was established in Provo, Utah, by Brigham Young, who was the second president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ("History of BYU," n.d.). Brigham Young Academy, which became Brigham Young University in 1903, was founded on the principle that secular learning would be fused with the religious teachings of the LDS Church ("History of BYU," n.d.). Young told the academy's first principal, Karl G. Maeser, "Brother Maeser, I want you to remember that you ought not to teach even the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the Spirit of God" ("History of BYU," n.d.).

BYU is still sponsored by the LDS Church and is part of the Church Educational System, which also includes BYU-Hawaii, BYU-Idaho, and the LDS Business College ("History of BYU," n.d.). Brigham Young University's Board of Trustees, the highest

governing body of the institution, is comprised of members of the First Presidency of the LDS Church, which is also the LDS Church's highest governing body, and other church leaders (Walch, 2003). BYU's promotional materials indicate that the university is recognized for "its extensive language programs, talented performing arts ensembles, outstanding sports programs and devotion to combining solid scholarship with the principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ" ("BYU Overview," n.d., ¶ 2).

The mission of Brigham Young University since 1981 has been to "assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life" by broadly preparing individuals who "will not only be capable of meeting personal challenge and change but will also bring strength to others in the tasks of home and family life, social relationships, civic duty, and service to mankind" ("BYU Mission Statement," n.d., ¶ 1-2). An important part of the university's mission is to accomplish these goals in an environment that is "enlightened by living prophets and sustained by those moral virtues which characterize the life and teachings of the Son of God [Jesus Christ]" ("BYU Mission Statement," n.d., ¶ 1-2). The university's mission statement also expresses the belief that the role of the university is intimately tied with the work of the LDS Church and that the university can ultimately be a positive influence "in a world we wish to improve" ("BYU Mission Statement," n.d., ¶ 6).

Another guiding university document notes that a common aim for all teaching at the university, including those who teach in classrooms as well as those who "direct activities outside the classroom," is to "develop students of faith, intellect, and character who have the skills and the desire to continue learning and to serve others throughout their lives" ("Aims of a BYU Education," n.d., ¶ 1). These educational goals are

accomplished by providing an education that is “(1) spiritually strengthening, (2) intellectually enlarging, and (3) character building, leading to (4) lifelong learning and service” (“Aims of a BYU Education,” n.d., ¶ 3).

Students enrolled in the university, as well as the organization’s administration, staff, and faculty members, are required to sign the university’s honor code as a condition of enrollment or employment (“The Honor Code,” n.d.). The honor code, which was initiated by students in 1949, reflects the ideals and principles of the LDS Church, allowing for students at the university to receive an education “in an atmosphere consistent with the ideals and principles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (“Honor Code,” n.d., ¶ 1). The honor code emphasizes “honesty, living a chaste and virtuous life, abstaining from alcohol and tobacco, using clean language and following other values encompassed in the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ” (“Honor Code,” n.d., ¶ 2). Some of those church doctrines include avoiding “vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic” forms of entertainment (“Entertainment and the Media,” n.d., ¶ 3), showing respect for the human body by wearing modest clothing (“Dress and Appearance,” n.d.), and abstaining from physical intimacy until marriage (“Sexual Purity,” n.d.).

A local newspaper article examining the university’s history after 100 years of operation noted that BYU “has evolved from a podunk school for Mormon kids snuggled in quaint, isolated Utah Valley to become the second-largest private university in the United States” (Walch, 2003, ¶ 7). The university has an enrollment of more than 30,000 students, “with more than 100,000 people around the world taking online courses each year” (Walch, 2003, ¶ 7). However, the writer also explained that despite the growth in

enrollment, “remarkably, little has changed in the way of the school's mission” creating an ongoing tension between the academic and spiritual missions of the university (Walch, 2003). “For the past 100 years, that mandate [to be a religious university] has grated against a second charge, to develop a university with a worldwide reputation for academic excellence” (Walch, 2003, ¶ 9).

The Brigham Young University Museum of Art

The Museum of Art officially opened on the Brigham Young University campus in October 1993 (Winters & Fielding, 1993). At a dedication ceremony for the new building, Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the First Presidency of the LDS Church and the university's Board of Trustees, remarked that the museum was the embodiment of the doctrines of the church: “This new facility, so beautiful, so striking, and so inspiring, is an expression of the doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: ‘If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things’” (Hill, 1993). The idea of building an art museum on the BYU campus first surfaced in the 1950s, when university leaders began a serious effort to collect significant works of art for the university (Winters & Fielding, 1993). In the early 1980s, the university had been collecting museum-quality artwork for nearly 50 years, but did not have adequate facilities to store or display an art collection that had grown to nearly 14,000 works (Winters & Fielding, 1993).

In 1982, when James Mason was appointed dean of the university's College of Fine Arts and Communications, the college leadership identified the construction of an art museum as one of its major priorities (Winters, 1993). In 1986, Mason and the BYU administration received authorization from the university's Board of Trustees to begin

fundraising for the art museum with the understanding that all the money for its construction would come from private donations and not from the LDS Church (Winters, 1993). After about six years of fundraising and two years of construction, the \$15.5 million, 100,000-square-foot art museum was completed after consulting with experts from the Smithsonian Institution, The J. Paul Getty Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the National Gallery of Art (Reese, 1993; Winters & Fielding, 1993). At the time, the BYU Museum of Art was the largest museum facility between Denver, Colorado, and San Francisco, California, containing more than a dozen art galleries and state-of-the-art storage facilities (Reese, 1993; Winters & Fielding, 1993).

While one of the museum's primary purposes was to safeguard, preserve, and exhibit works from the university's extensive art collection, it was also designed to accommodate significant national and international touring exhibitions (Winters & Fielding, 1993). Within its first few years, the museum was a venue for two "blockbuster" touring exhibitions—*The Etruscans: Legacy of a Lost Civilization* from the Vatican Museums, and *Imperial Tombs of China* from the Chinese government—that attracted more than 500,000 university students, public school students, and community members and their families from across the state and the surrounding region (Hall, 1993; Williams, 1995). Because of the success of these exhibitions, the museum quickly became known as a major cultural destination in Utah—not just an art museum for students at the university. Part of the emphasis on these "blockbuster" exhibitions was to get the word out about the museum. Mason, who became the museum's founding director, believed that the most effective way to market the new museum was to mount blockbuster exhibitions that would bring many people to the museum and increase public

awareness of it (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009).

Within the university's organizational structure, the art museum was designated as a non-academic unit in the College of Fine Arts and Communication, reporting directly to the dean of the college. Once museum reports and proposals reached the college level, the dean of the college then had the responsibility of communicating this information to the university administration. The university administration is then answerable to leaders of the LDS Church who form the university's Board of Trustees. Typically signatures of those involved, at least at the university level, in this reporting process were required before an exhibition proposal was implemented by museum administrators (Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Interviewee 14, personal communication, March 12, 2009).

Bringing Rodin to BYU

Administrators at the BYU Museum of Art first heard about the traveling Rodin exhibition organized by the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation in the first few years of the museum's existence (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Interviewee 14, personal communication, March 12, 2009). The Cantor Foundation was established in 1978 "to promote and encourage appreciation of excellence in the arts" ("The Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation," n.d., ¶ 1). One of the activities the foundation sponsored in support of its mission was to circulate traveling exhibitions composed of works from the foundation's extensive collection of Rodin bronzes ("The Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation," n.d.). This particular exhibition, titled *The Hands of Rodin*, had a special focus on works from the foundation's collection that demonstrated "Rodin's

mastery of portraying the lines of the human hand while communicating their strength, movement and expression” (“Past Exhibitions,” n.d., ¶ 5). The exhibition was of enough significance that it would be traveling to other major venues, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Arkansas Art Center, and the Portland Art Museum (“Past Exhibitions,” n.d., ¶ 9). Museum staff members were excited at the prospect of bringing a high-quality exhibition of Rodin’s work to BYU (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Interviewee 14, personal communication, March 12, 2009). While museum staff members did not feel this exhibition was comparable in appeal to its previous blockbuster successes, it was viewed as a rare opportunity to show Rodin’s work in Utah, and more particularly, to give students studying Rodin’s work at the university the opportunity to see in real life the art they studied in textbooks and slides in visual art, art history, and humanities classes on campus (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Interviewee 14, personal communication, March 12, 2009).

Because of the university’s religious affiliation, museum staff members already had wrestled with questions about when and how to show works of art that contained nudity (Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Interviewee 14, personal communication, March 12, 2009). In fact,

staff members noted that because they had received complaints about works in other exhibitions that contained nude or semi-nude figures they had decided not to pursue certain traveling exhibitions because they were not a good fit for BYU (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Interviewee 14, personal communication, March 12, 2009). At this early stage, some staff members recognized that nudity might be an issue in this Rodin exhibition (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Interviewee 14, personal communication, March 12, 2009). However, there seemed to be a general consensus among the staff members that people inside and outside the art world were familiar enough with Rodin and his works that there would not be a problem, or at least that any issues with nude works could be worked out in favor of showing the pieces prior to mounting the exhibition (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Interviewee 14, personal communication, March 12, 2009).

With the Rodin show we thought we were dealing with recognized masterpieces, and that . . . if we were going to test the waters on what we could and couldn't do, it would be better to do it over something of enough quality that there was enough artistic justification for doing it. Not that we want to do nudity for nudity's sake, but that is certainly an element in a lot of great art. (Interview 13, February 23, 2009)

The museum director met with representatives of the Cantor Foundation and made tentative arrangements to bring the Rodin exhibition to BYU (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Interviewee 14, personal communication, March 12, 2009). However a few staff members noted that the director did not involve key members of the museum administration in evaluating the merits of bringing this particular exhibition to BYU (Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 14, personal communication, March 12, 2009). Sometime after the initial meeting between the museum director and Cantor Foundation representatives, museum officials received an information packet about the exhibition that included photographs of the works and an object list (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). In 1996, about a year before the exhibition was scheduled to arrive at the museum, the museum director was preparing for retirement and was becoming less involved in the museum's day-to-day operations (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Because of the director's limited involvement, a staff member who was acquainted with the photographs of the works in the exhibition became concerned that nobody on the museum staff or in the dean's office had thought through the possible implications and controversies that might arise from bringing an exhibition that included nude Rodin sculptures to BYU (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

The staff member sent the information packet, containing the photographs and object list, to the dean of the college with a note cautioning that if there were going to be problems with any of the works, it would be better to deal with the problems now rather

than later (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). After a few weeks, the dean returned the information packet to the museum staff member with a note indicating that he did not have any problems with any of the works (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

A Time of Transition

During this same time period, the university, the Cantor Foundation, and the museum experienced changes in leadership. The university's Board of Trustees appointed Merrill J. Bateman, the presiding bishop of the LDS Church, as the 11th president of the university in November 1995. Bateman was appointed to replace the current president who was leaving his post at BYU for health reasons (O'Brien, 1995). Bateman was chosen from the ranks of the General Authorities of the LDS Church, marking the first time that a governing church official had been appointed as BYU president (McEntee, 1995; O'Brien, 1995). At the time, the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Utah's largest-circulated daily newspaper, noted that the decision to install a high church leader as the president of BYU was a move by the LDS Church to re-enforce the university's commitment to the church's religious standards and values (McEntee, 1995; O'Brien, 1995). Bateman officially took over the president's post on January 1, 1996. In his first address to the student body, faculty and staff, he stressed the importance of using "the measuring rod of the gospel" to judge what and how to teach at BYU (Bateman, 1996, ¶ 31). He noted that the university could achieve its "prime obligation to teach secular truth" because the gospel encompasses all truth (Bateman, 1996, ¶ 19-20), and assured faculty members that "a personal commitment to gospel standards by faculty members will increase, not

decrease, academic freedom” (Bateman, 1996, ¶ 27). He also explained the relationship between the university and the LDS church in light of questions of limited academic freedom at BYU raised by the *Tribune*:

Is the university apart from or a part of the Church? Following the announcement of my appointment as president of Brigham Young University, the *Salt Lake Tribune* carried an article on what it means to have a General Authority as the school's leader. The major point of the article concerned the university's relationship to the Church. The news reporter suggested that although some might have assumed prior to the announcement that the university was a secular institution distinct from but reporting to the Church, the call clearly indicates that the university is an integral part of the kingdom. The article surprised me in that I had never thought of Brigham Young University separate from the Church. Prophet after prophet has stated clearly that Brigham Young University is a religious institution with a divine mission, even though secular education is a key part of its purpose. Given the organizational structure by which the university is governed, it seems paradoxical that some might think that Brigham Young University is not an integral part of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church itself is an educational institution, and Brigham Young University is one of its key components. (Bateman, 1996, ¶ 13)

In the spring of 1996, officials at the Cantor Foundation decided to honor B. Gerald Cantor's 50 years of collecting Rodin works with their upcoming traveling exhibition (Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, 1996). The official name of the exhibition at that point became *The Hands of Rodin: An Exhibition Celebrating B. Gerald*

Cantor's Fifty Years of Collecting. Because this exhibition was now intended as a tribute to the sacrifice and dedication of the man who had assembled “the world's largest and most comprehensive private collection of works by Rodin” (“B. Gerald Cantor,” n.d, ¶ 5), the foundation decided to supplement the exhibition with some larger, more spectacular works from the Cantor collection (Interview 4, January 23, 2009; Interview 13, February 23, 2009; Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, 1996). The original exhibition of 41 sculptures expanded to include 58 works that featured some of Rodin's better-known works, including *The Kiss*. New exhibition object lists were sent out to the venues sometime after April 4, 1996 (Interview 1, January 16, 2009; Interview 4, January, 23, 2009; Interview 13, February 23, 2009; Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, 1996). This new object list also noted that some of the works were tentative because requests to borrow these works from other institutions were not yet confirmed (Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, 1996).

On July 3, 1996, 79-year-old B. Gerald Cantor passed away in Los Angeles, California (Pace, 1996), leaving his wife Iris to assume the leadership responsibilities of the foundation (“The Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation,” n.d). Because of Cantor's long history of philanthropy in the arts and medicine, as well as his successful financing enterprise, Cantor's death was widely reported in the media (see “Death,” 1996; “Obituaries,” 1996; “In the nation,” 1996; “Deaths elsewhere,” 1996; “B. Gerald Cantor,” 1996). An article in the *New York Times* reported that Cantor “amassed the world's most comprehensive collection of Rodin sculpture in private hands and gave much of it away to dozens of cultural institutions” (Pace, 1996, ¶ 1). After receiving a donation of 50 Rodin sculptures from Cantor, the director of the Brooklyn Museum said, “I don't know

any other person who has done so much on such a grand scale for one artist” (Pace, 1996, ¶ 4). Cantor began what his wife called his “love affair with the art of Rodin” on a visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1945 (Pace, 1996, ¶ 17; see also “The Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation,” n.d). “I was at the Metropolitan Museum one day and saw Rodin's ‘Hand of God,’ and I was fascinated by it. In 1947, I saw another version of ‘Hand of God’ in a Madison Avenue gallery and I bought it” (Pace, 1996, ¶ 18). A few years later, in the mid-1950s, Cantor reported, “I bought Rodin's ‘The Kiss,’ and then it really started. It brought back to me the feeling I had before” (Pace, 1996, ¶ 18). Cantor explained that for him these works were “a source of strength, power and sensuality” (Pace, 1996, ¶ 19).

Over the course of his lifetime, Cantor and his wife collected approximately 750 large-and small-scale Rodin sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs, and memorabilia (“The Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation,” n.d). By the time of Cantor’s death, he and his wife had given away more than 450 works from their collection to approximately seventy museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Stanford University Museum of Art (“The Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation,” n.d). This left the Cantor foundation with approximately 300 works in its own collection with which to create traveling exhibitions to fulfill its mission “to bring the works of Rodin to a broad public audience” (“Exhibitions,” n.d, ¶ 1).

After Cantor passed away, the name of the exhibition was changed again, this time to honor the life of the man who assembled this collection. *The Hands of Rodin: A Tribute to B. Gerald Cantor*, as it was now called, was a fitting tribute to the prolific

collector since the experience that moved him to start collecting Rodin's work was a sculpture of hands ("The Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation," n.d; "Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation," n.d.b).

In November 1996, the university appointed a new director of the art museum. The museum's new director, Campbell Gray, was an Australian citizen with the right qualifications for managing a university art museum, although all of his experience was outside the United States (Interviews 4, January 23, 2009; Interview 3, January 23, 2009; Interview 13, February 23, 200). Gray received a doctorate in art history from the University of Sussex in England and an undergraduate degree in art education and museum management (Gagon, 1997). He also worked for a number of years as an educational officer at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney and as the founding director of a regional Australian art gallery (Gagon, 1997). When BYU officials first approached Gray about the director position at the BYU art museum, he was skeptical about it (Gagon, 1997). Coming to Utah would mean leaving his homeland and starting his career from scratch in a new country (Gagon, 1997). Another complication was that, even though Gray was a member of the LDS Church, he perceived the university "to be very conservative and restrictive" (Gagon, 1997, ¶ 8). However, a visit to the campus and some "soul-searching" changed Gray's thinking: "if you treat knowledge as a discipline . . . and if it has a greater relationship with our overall progression here on earth, then BYU is far from a restrictive environment. It is really an exciting place to be" (Gagon, 1997, ¶ 8). Gray also wanted the university leadership to know that if he was appointed he would change the way the museum was managed; the museum would not just be a place for students to relax or be entertained, which was the model under which he perceived the

museum to be operating (Gagon, 1997). Under Gray's directorship, the art museum would be a place for serious scholarship, and it would take an active role in contributing to the academic discourse at the university:

At the time of my interview I said to the people, if you're looking for a person who is going to bring cohesion and policy direction to this place and that is the focus you want to pursue, then I'm not your person. However, if you want a museum where the professional staff are regarded as scholars, where they're doing research not only in their discipline but in the museological manifestation of their discipline, then we can talk. (Gagon, 1996, ¶ 11)

The Decision is Made

The Cantor Foundation sent the BYU Museum of Art a new object list at the end of July 1997 in preparation for the exhibition's scheduled opening in October (Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, n.d.a). A few works had been removed from the previous object list, which meant that the updated exhibition now consisted of 54 works, including some that museum staff members thought could have been problematic nude sculptures (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). With the opening of the exhibition approaching, museum administrators began a serious review of the new object list and the contract for the exhibition (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 13, 2009). Working under the assumption that the exhibition had been approved institutionally by the dean of the college, museum officials signed the contract with the Cantor Foundation at the beginning of August (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Iris & B. Gerald Cantor

Foundation, n.d.a). However, after carefully looking at images of the works in the exhibition, museum officials were concerned about the possibility of a negative reaction from the community to a few of the nude works in the exhibition because museum personnel had received complaints about less provocative works in the past (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). One staff member said, “I thought there was a potential of there being a problem, that there would surely be people who would be offended because we had had people offended by much less explicit stuff over the years we had been open” (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

In fact, issues of nudity and pornography had also come to a boiling point in the surrounding community during this time period. In December 1996, criminal pornography charges were filed against the owners of a local movie rental chain (Miller, 1996b; Romboy, 1996b). Two months earlier, a five-year-old wandered into the adult section of one of the movie rental stores by mistake and picked up a video box that depicted a couple having sex, prompting a phone call to the local police from the boy’s concerned mother (Costanzo, 1996; Miller, 1996a). Prior to the trial, concerned residents formed an anti-pornography group that included local church leaders and city officials (Romboy, 1996a). Other concerned parents from the community later gathered 2,500 signatures on a petition to oppose what they called “pornographic materials and concern about loosening public morals” (Miller, 1996a, ¶ 9). One of the organizers of the group explained the reason for the public outcry against the movie rental chain: “The whole

issue is this: I chose to live here because I wanted to raise my children in a wholesome environment. We pay our taxes here; we have every right to decide what we want in our community” (Miller, 1996a, ¶ 13). In August 1997, another group of local residents banded together to fight the introduction of semi-nude dancing at a nightclub in downtown Provo (Walsh, 1997). The leader of the community group explained that this type of activity was not appropriate for Provo: “This doesn't really fit in our community. The moral fiber of this community is quite high. We have to defend it” (Walsh, 1997, ¶ 7).

Not wanting the university leadership to be surprised by unanticipated complaints from the community about the Rodin exhibition—let alone an organized community protest—museum administrators decided the best way to mitigate this problem was to invite the new university president to attend the exhibition opening, see the questionable works in person, and generally give an institutional stamp of approval to the exhibition (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Museum administrators sent images of the works in the Rodin exhibition to the university president for him to review prior to the exhibition opening along with a letter inviting the president to participate in the opening (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Because the dean of the college had signed off on the exhibition many months before, museum officials were fairly confident that the university would support their decision to exhibit the entire show, even though a few works might generate complaints from some community members (Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication,

January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Interviewee 14, personal communication, March 12, 2009). One staff member noted that it was possible “the whole thing could go down okay,” that the university president would see these works as “classical, recognized art, familiar to many people, and widely published” (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). However, word came back to museum decision makers that the university president did have a problem with the works they thought were problematic, as well as some other works that museum administrators had not considered to be a problem (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 14, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

During this same time period, museum employees had been sending out regular updates to the local media to generate excitement in the community for the Rodin exhibition (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). When word came back from the university president that he was uncomfortable with some of the works, the regular communication from the museum to the media abruptly stopped (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009). Museum officials assumed that the situation would be resolved rather quickly—one or two discussions at the most—that the exhibition would go on, and that the communication with the media would resume; but the discussions lasted two months (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). The reason for the lengthy deliberation was that

university administrators and museum leaders who were involved in the initial discussions ultimately decided to wait until the works arrived at the museum to make a final decision about what to do with them (“Four Rodin,” 1997; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Waiting until the works arrived also ensured that the exhibition stop in Provo “would not be endangered” (“Four Rodin,” 1997, ¶ 6; see also Sonne, 1997b), but waiting also prolonged the media silence since museum officials were in a kind of limbo about what was going to happen (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009). Because of the abrupt silence, it soon became apparent to the media that something was going on, and reporters began to ask questions that museum officials could not answer (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009). The lack of response from the museum sparked the media’s curiosity about what was happening with the exhibition (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009).

When the works arrived, the group of university administrators and museum officials who were involved in the initial discussions about the potentially problematic nude works went to see them at the museum (Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Ultimately this group made the decision not to exhibit three of the nude figures: *The Kiss*, *The Prodigal Son*, and *Saint John the Baptist Preaching* (Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009, Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). A staff member explained that there were two reasons for not displaying these works: 1) These works would be too difficult for some

members of the community to accept; and 2) Showing these works would cause concerned community members to raise the issue of nudity at BYU in the media, shifting the focus of the audience away from the intended message of the exhibition (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009).

Exhibition materials from the Cantor Foundation noted that *The Kiss*, a sculpture of two naked figures kissing and intimately embracing one another, is one of Rodin's most sensual sculptures (Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, n.d.b). The sculpture depicts the story of Francesca and Paolo from Dante's *Inferno* and was originally conceived as part of Rodin's *Gates of Hell*. The nudity and sensuality of the sculpture "shocked viewers when it was first exhibited in 1887" (Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, n.d.b, p. 5). *Saint John the Baptist Preaching* depicts the Biblical New Testament prophet who baptized Jesus Christ as a striding nude figure. *The Prodigal Son* depicts the lament of the wayward son from the New Testament parable who found himself destitute after abandoning his family and squandering his inheritance. Sometime shortly after this decision was made, museum staff members preparing to install the exhibition discovered language in a label for another work that caused university leaders and museum administrators to remove it from the exhibition as well, even though it was not a nude sculpture (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). The label text that was sent from the Cantor Foundation for *Final Study for the Monument of Balzac* indicated that the figure in the sculpture was masturbating underneath the robe he was wearing (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16,

2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). The decision-making group determined that the remaining 50 works of art, which included other nude sculptures, would be shown as scheduled in the museum's installation of the exhibition (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

Reaction to the Decision at the Museum

Museum staff members were deeply conflicted about the university's decision to withhold the four works from the exhibition. While everyone on the museum staff was willing to accept and uphold the decision, most staff members had conflicting feelings about the need to uphold the religious standards of the university and the desire to exhibit well-known works of art created by an important sculptor that museum professionals and art historians at other institutions recognized as significant (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). There was unanimous agreement among museum staff members with the decision to not exhibit *Final Study for the Monument to Balzac* because it depicted an act of sexual impropriety that was abstractly rendered in the work but explicitly described in the label; however, many felt that the other works excluded from the exhibition would not cause a problem even though they were nude (Interviewee 1, personal

communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Some staff members felt that museum visitors would not be offended by *The Kiss* because it was such an iconic and well-known work of art (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). One staff member remarked that *The Kiss* was such an iconic image that “even though the subject matter may have been questionable for us as a church university, the image was iconic and one that people had seen so many times that it never occurred to me that it would be problem” (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009). Staff members also felt that nudity was an important part of the message in *The Prodigal Son* because the nakedness of the figure communicated the need for repentant souls to be “stripped bare before God,” to “leave nothing unsaid” or to keep nothing hidden from God (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

The sculpture of *Saint John the Baptist Preaching* posed a unique problem for the LDS Church-sponsored university. Because the leader of the LDS Church is revered by church members as a prophet (“Follow the prophet,” n.d.), the prospect of displaying a sculpture of a naked prophet caused museum and university leaders to question whether it would be appropriate and respectful for the museum to display this work (Interviewee 1,

personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Some staff members did not think displaying this work would be a problem because it was a well-known and critically accepted work by a master sculptor (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Another staff member noted that it had not occurred to anybody that any of these pieces, other than the Balzac sculpture, would cause a problem (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009).

Museum staff members recognized that the pending implementation of this decision put the art museum in an awkward situation (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Staff members noted that they felt a desire to uphold the standards of the church and the university by supporting the decision on one hand, and a desire to be accepted by professional museum colleagues across the country by showing important art historical works on the other hand (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). “We are constantly trying to align our professional practice with the norms and values of the church. Some of those decisions that touch on universal factors such as

sexuality and depictions of the human body make it difficult for us to accede to the expectations of the public secular world out there” (Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009). Staff members described this predicament as “a no-win situation,” or “an indefensible situation,” because while members of the LDS Church or the local community could understand the religious context of the university that informed the decision, other groups that did not understand that context, such as museum professionals and the media, “could not see our point of view” (Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009). Another staff member noted that the decision was probably a close call for “people of intelligence and good will” within the university who could easily find themselves on opposing sides of this issue and that any decision could have resulted in public criticism (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

Staff members also recognized the limits of their decision-making ability as an entity within a larger organization (Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). These staff members noted that under most circumstances, the university allows the museum considerable autonomy in putting together its exhibition program; however, they also noted that the museum’s autonomy is dependent on “the confidence of the university administration” in the decision-making ability of the museum staff (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13,

personal communication, February 23, 2009). Furthermore, museum personnel indicated that they felt an expectation from within the university that the museum would uphold the moral standards of the university and the church in its decision making, even if those decisions were not accepted outside the university (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). One staff member explained that this experience tested the boundaries of what the museum was able to exhibit with the result being that the “fence was a little closer in and a little higher than we thought” (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

At this stage, there were also varying degrees of recognition among museum staff members of the effect of the museum’s decisions on groups outside the university as well as the ability of outside groups to influence the decisions of the museum (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). As noted earlier, a few staff members had experience dealing with “vociferous” members of the community who complained about artworks in the museum that contained nudity, which caused the initial concern about some of the Rodin works (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23,

2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Staff members identified a need to be respectful of the religious sensibilities of the museum's audiences, but some also felt that a few of the works being excluded would not offend those sensibilities (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). However, all seemed to be in agreement that most people in the predominantly LDS community would be in harmony with the Rodin decision made by the university (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). One staff member pointed out that the relationship between the museum and its audiences is dialectical, "a relationship that is completely interdependent and completely contingent upon each other," and that the Rodin decision was intended to preserve and honor a relationship with a community that would not expect the university to show these works (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009).

Explaining the Decision to the Media

A month prior to the Rodin exhibition opening at the museum, the American Association of University Professors released a 20-page report in their journal *Academe*, the result of a three-day visit to BYU a few months earlier to investigate accusations of academic freedom violations at the university (Carter, 1997a; Egan, 1997a). The report stated that "Infringements on academic freedom are distressingly common and . . . the

climate for academic freedom is distressingly poor” (Carter, 1997a, ¶ 4). University leaders confirmed that there were some restrictions on what faculty can do, say, and teach but administrators claimed the right to impose those restrictions as a private religious university (Carter, 1997a; Egan, 1997a). BYU’s academic vice president commented that “BYU intends to remain true to its intellectual and spiritual mission. If we abandoned our mission, there would be no reason for us to exist. AAUP's goal is to impose a secular model on religious colleges and universities” (Carter, 1997a, ¶ 6-8).

On Friday, October 24, 1997, three days before the exhibition was scheduled to open, university and museum officials were ready to make their decision public. Museum administrators called the Cantor Foundation to inform them of the decision (Wertheimer & Brandwynne, 1997). University leaders decided to assign the museum director to be the institutional spokesperson on the issue because of his expertise in visual art and professional museum practice (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). One staff member commented that by the time the university and the museum “were ready to face the media to talk about it [the decision], it had been whipped up into this frenzy of secrecy and intrigue. And it had already become a mountain; and the media were going to find the mountain and dissect it” (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009).

On Sunday, October 26, 1997, three stories about the Rodin exhibition ran in local newspapers: one in the *Salt Lake Tribune* and two in *The Daily Herald*, Provo’s community newspaper. The *Salt Lake Tribune* article contained a brief mention in an

inside article about the upcoming exhibition using language that was pulled from the museum's press release, focusing on Rodin's ability to use hands to convey meaning and emotion (Forsberg, 1997; Winters, 1997). The smaller of the two articles that ran on the front page of *The Daily Herald* talked about the importance of hands in Rodin's work (Van Benthuisen, 1997a), while the larger article focused on the university's decision to not exhibit the four works (Van Benthuisen, 1997b). Both articles were continued on inside pages of the newspaper's main section, and the jumps were accompanied by black and white images of *The Kiss*, *Final Study for the Monument to Balzac*, and *Saint John the Baptist Preaching*. The beginning of the second article centered on the surprise of Rachael Blackburn, acting director of the Cantor Foundation, that BYU was not showing these works: "We haven't had any other institutions that felt the need to not exhibit any pieces by Rodin" (Van Benthuisen, 1997b, ¶ 3). The article then paraphrased the museum director's explanation about how administrators at the university discussed the issue for two months but ultimately decided that in the "best interest of the exhibit and the values of the community" the works would be left out (Van Benthuisen, 1997b, ¶ 4). The article then provided a direct quote for further explanation from the museum director: "We have felt that the nature of those works are such that the viewer will be concentrating on them in a way that is not good for us" (Van Benthuisen, 1997b, ¶ 5).

The article returned to Blackburn, who called the decision an act of censorship, adding, "We are accepting of what they feel they need to do, but their position isn't one that we support ourselves" (Van Benthuisen, 1997b, ¶ 8). The museum director's response to this accusation was that the decision was not censorship but a complex calculation that took into account the feelings of the university, the LDS Church, and the

surrounding community (Van Benthuyesen, 1997b). He added that showing these works would have been disrespectful to the church and the community (Van Benthuyesen, 1997b). The article ended with the museum director's explanation of the reasons for not showing *Saint John the Baptist Preaching*, which Rodin sculpted as a nude figure to underscore the prophet's mortality: "Everyone knows the prophet is mortal. But this conception of prophet is made less than what we would regard as reverent or honorable. It doesn't show the prophet side of the man at all" (Van Benthuyesen, 1997b, ¶7).

On Monday, October 27, 1997, the opening day of the exhibition, *The Daily Herald* article about the university's decision, which had been rewritten by the *Salt Lake Tribune* ("BYU bans," 1997) and distributed by the Associated Press (AP), appeared on the AP Web site ("Nudes from Rodin," 1997) and in *The Seattle Times* ("Across the nation," 1997), *CNN Online* ("University censors," 1997a), and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Wanat, 1997). The first few paragraphs of many of these articles made specific mention that the university was excluding one of the most famous works, *The Kiss*, by one of the most important sculptors of all time ("Across the nation," 1997; "BYU bans," 1997; "Nudes from Rodin," 1997; "University censors," 1997a; Wanat, 1997). These articles also mentioned the university's controversial decision to edit portions of *Schindler's List* three years earlier and the recent accusations of limited academic freedom at BYU ("BYU bans," 1997; "Nudes from Rodin," 1997; "University censors," 1997a; Wanat, 1997). *The Chronicle of Higher Education* added a quote from the museum director asserting that the decision was the opposite of censorship because it was intended to respect "the basic integrity of the exhibit" (Wanat, 1997, ¶ 3). The other major daily newspaper in Utah, the *Deseret News*, also ran an article about the now

controversial decision that offered a different explanation about the reason the works were not shown. The museum director explained that the university's problem with the works was not a concern about nudity but rather with a lack of dignity, and that these works did not convey a positive message about the exhibit or Rodin (Haddock, 1997).

The student-produced BYU campus newspaper, *The Daily Universe*, ran two stories about the Rodin exhibition. One story focused on the expressive nature of hands in Rodin's work (Sonne, 1997a). The second story explained that the university's decision to not exhibit the four works was because of concerns for the museum's audience (Sonne, 1997b). The museum director explained that "every museum functions directly in relationship to its audience . . . We feel that both because of the audience here and the symbols of this university and the community . . . that these particular works just have the kind of content that most people would rather not think about" (Sonne, 1997b, ¶ 3-4). The director further explained that works of art are not just beautiful objects; they are also a means of communicating messages. "One of the roles of a museum is to encourage people to think about those things, and so we go through a lengthy process looking at meanings and how our audiences . . . will think about the works" (Sonne, 1997b, ¶ 13).

On Tuesday, October 28, 1997, seven more articles were printed in local and national newspapers about the university's decision. Versions of the AP story ran in the Idaho Falls *Post Register* ("BYU censors nudes," 1997), the *New York Times* ("Footlights," 1997) and *USA Today* ("BYU officials," 1997). The French news service *Agence France Presse* ("Four Rodin," 1997) also distributed a story about the decision, but instead of quoting the museum director, the story quoted an official from the university's public relations office. The university spokesperson explained that the reason

these works were not shown was because the university had a “great obligation” to a community with “a very conservative code of conduct” and “a very strong feeling towards sensuality” (“Four Rodin,” 1997, ¶ 2). The spokesman conceded that most students at the university would “prefer that the works were shown,” but explained that the university was not making a judgment on the artistic value of these works; it is just “a peculiar place with a peculiar set of old-fashioned values” (“Four Rodin,” 1997, ¶ 7).

The *Salt Lake Tribune* published two articles and an editorial cartoon that went beyond the initial reporting in the AP story. One article reported the surprised and bewildered response of a curator from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York: “I wouldn’t have thought that it [*The Kiss*] was still very controversial. There are a great many things that are more shocking on television” (Egan, 1997b, ¶ 2). The article also gave space for the museum director to defend the institution against accusations of censorship: “Censorship connotes a sense of fear. If we had a sense of fear, we wouldn’t do this because of the media attention we are drawing” (Egan, 1997b, ¶ 5). The article also notes the magnanimity of the Cantor Foundation in dealing with this situation whose spokesperson said the foundation was not interested in criticizing BYU’s decision, but nevertheless, thought it was unfortunate (Egan, 1997b). The other article was a tongue-in-cheek opinion piece that compared religious orthodoxy in Provo to Tehran, Iran, pointed out the distinctions between nudity and sex, and noted that *The Kiss* is so tame that it is only capable of offending someone at BYU (Kirby, 1997). The editorial cartoon, depicting Rodin as a BYU art student, begged the question: How would *The Kiss* have turned out if Rodin attended BYU? (Bagley, 1997).

An article in the *Deseret News* repeated the same explanation for the decision that

was reported in the previous day's story: The works detracted from the message of the exhibition because they lacked dignity (Carter, 1997b). The article also reported that the museum would not be distributing a free pamphlet provided by the Cantor Foundation to accompany the exhibition, although the BYU Bookstore was planning on selling two books about Rodin (Carter, 1997b, see also Meyers, 1997a). The rest of the article focused on the reaction of the Cantor Foundation to the university's decision. Blackburn is quoted again saying, "Rodin's subject matter is the nude figure, generally. If you get Rodin, that's what you get" (Carter, 1997b, ¶ 4). Blackburn also noted that their Rodin works had not caused a controversy at any of the previous institutions with which they had worked, "including some universities and museums with religious affiliations" (Carter, 1997b, ¶ 5). She added that the foundation was willing to live with the university's decision (Carter, 1997b).

By Wednesday, October 29, 1997, the story about the university's decision to keep four works out of the Rodin exhibition was getting more national exposure and was beginning to receive increased global attention. Newspaper stories based on the original AP story appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Dale & Turner, 1997), *The San Diego Union Tribune* (Eigner, 1997), *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland, Ohio ("U.S.," 1997), *The Ottawa Citizen* ("University censors," 1997b), and *The Chicago Sun Times* (Smith, 1997). At 7 a.m. Eastern time, *CBS This Morning* broadcast a story about the university's decision featuring an interview with the museum director. The reporter began his segment underscoring Rodin's significance as an artist and the fact that one of his most famous works, *The Kiss*, was being kept in storage noting, "It may be too sexy for BYU audiences" (Decker & Robelot, 1997, ¶ 2). The museum director explained that the

decision was made because “in various aspects of the community, there’s concern about opening up for view the kind of sacred, intimate relationships that occur between men and women. And I think that that’s a genuine concern in the community in certain aspects. And so we decided not to present that” (Decker & Robelot, 1997, ¶ 3). An hour later, *CBS This Morning* co-host Cynthia Bowers gave a brief recap of the story (Bowers, 1997).

That evening National Public Radio’s *All Things Considered* broadcast two reports about BYU’s Rodin decision: one was an interview with the museum director and the other was an interview with the acting director of the Cantor Foundation (Wertheimer & Brandywine, 1997a; Wertheimer & Brandywine, 1997b). The museum director explained that the works were removed from the exhibition because of the university’s sensitivity for the community and the potential for the works in question to take the focus of museum visitors away from the intended meaning of the exhibition (Wertheimer & Brandywine, 1997a).

What people need to understand is that every museum has a relationship with its audiences . . . that is always flexible and dynamic and open. And in this process, we have made decisions in relationship to the potential for some people within our community, certainly not all, to think of issues that are not in accordance with the whole curatorial intention of the exhibition itself. (Wertheimer & Brandywine, 1997a, ¶ 5)

When asked by the hosts of the program why the university had also removed a sculpture of John the Baptist, the director explained that nudity was not the issue; the issue was the reverence that people in the LDS community have for prophets (Wertheimer &

Brandywine, 1997a). “We’re talking about a context here, a context of a religious university, a religious setting, where when visitors come to see, they have certain expectations already” (Wertheimer & Brandywine, 1997a, ¶ 13). In the other interview, Blackburn expressed her surprise at learning about the university’s decision: “We have three traveling exhibitions, all of work by Rodin, all over the country, and then this is the first time any censorship issues have come up. So, we were taken aback” (Wertheimer & Brandywine, 1997b, ¶ 2). Blackburn told the hosts that they never considered canceling the exhibition at BYU but wished the show would be presented in its entirety because the works that were pulled were major pieces in the show (Wertheimer & Brandywine, 1997b).

The four pieces that were pulled are figurative and they contain hands which Rodin modeled to extend the meaning of the sculpture. And I think each one of them bring very individual, or they make the point, in four individual ways, of the way that Rodin was interested in showing expression through the hands.

(Wertheimer & Brandywine, 1997b, ¶ 7)

The campus newspaper, *The Daily Universe*, published another story this day about the Rodin decision. In this article the museum director explained that the works were not exhibited because university leaders believed these particular works “might have detracted from the sensitive messages of the exhibition” (Sonne, 1997c, ¶ 4).

According to the director, one of those messages was Rodin’s expressive use of hands and the other was that the exhibition was a tribute to collector B. Gerald Cantor (Sonne, 1997c). The director also explained the museum’s relationship and responsibility to its audiences: “One of our responsibilities is to know more increasingly, as time goes on,

who our audiences are, what they're thinking, what they're feeling. We have a responsibility to make sure we don't offend people to the degree that the museum becomes useless" (Sonne, 1997c, ¶ 6). A spokesperson from the university's public relations office also explained in the article that because of the university's standards and its honor code, BYU was not the place to see these works, even though it would be appropriate to view them elsewhere (Sonne, 1997c). The spokesperson also noted that the media coverage about the decision would be good for the university:

I think they're [people who see the media coverage] going to get the right idea about BYU—and that is, we have certain standards that would cause others to regard us a peculiar or different or simply not following the mores of the world at large—and yes we admit to that and make no apology for it. (Sonne, 1997c, ¶ 10)

The article also cited the opinions of students who were for and against the university's decision (Sonne, 1997c). One student was disappointed because he felt that "both Rodin and the [university] administration are inspired" (Sonne, 1997c, ¶ 13). Another student seemed to be conflicted about the decision:

I understand that there is a really fine line when it comes to art and what is acceptable and what is considered nude and what is considered indecent as far as BYU is concerned. And I understand that we have to think about the community and things like that, but I think sometimes we're sacrificing cultural education for the Honor Code. (Sonne, 1997b, ¶ 18)

Student Protest and Public Response

Thursday, October 30, 1997, marked a turning point in the focus of local media coverage of the Rodin controversy. While newspapers across the country continued to

publish portions of the AP story about the decision—*The Charleston Gazette* (Haught, 1997) and the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* (“In the News,” 1997)—local editorial writers began to address the university’s decision. An opinion writer at the LDS Church-owned *Deseret News* wrote about seeing a Rodin exhibition with her 14-year-old son in Logan, Utah, and having a wonderful experience (Karras, 1997). The writer questioned how art that has been acclaimed as some of the best works ever created could be considered “undignified” (Karras, 1997). The writer concluded that the university as a private institution was entitled to make its own decisions, even if those decisions caused people in other parts of the country to “judge all members of the LDS Church and to a lesser extent the state of Utah” by those decisions (Karras, 1997, ¶ 14). Writers for the student newspapers at both BYU and the University of Utah were in agreement: the works should be shown (Kowalski, 1997; “Nudity at BYU,” 1997). The *Daily Universe* article titled “Allow free agency in deciding what art is and isn’t” repeated the museum director’s now familiar explanations of the decision, and then called for a solution that did not take the decision to view these works out of the students’ hands (Kowalski, 1997). The *Daily Utah Chronicle* article criticized the BYU decision to pull the works from the exhibition and questioned the rationale for trying to bring the exhibition to the university:

Knowing the subject matter represented by Rodin, and the way in which his nudes are portrayed, it is ludicrous BYU would opt to show the artist’s work at all . . . At the same time, BYU could have avoided this whole media circus it claims to loathe but invites through silly actions if they had just politely declined the opportunity to show the exhibit. (“Nudity at BYU,” 1997, ¶ 5)

An even more significant shift in the media coverage occurred on Friday, October

31, 1997. The previous day, more than 200 BYU students staged a protest about the university's decision in front of the main administration building on campus (Carter, 1997c; Cole & Sonne, 1997; Meyers, 1997; Van Benthuisen, 1997c; "Y. students," 1997). Justin Jones, a BYU senior, and his wife decided to organize the protest while reading news accounts of the Rodin decision on Wednesday because "for some BYU students, this would have been their only chance to actually see these works" (Meyers, 1997b, ¶ 5). Jones applied for a permit to hold the protest, but was told that it would take five days to get approval (Meyers, 1997b; "Y. students," 1997). He decided to hold the demonstration the next day anyway (Meyers, 1997b; "Y. students," 1997). University officials offered to set up a meeting between Jones and university administrators and the museum director, but a university spokesperson reported that Jones refused the offer. The spokesperson also stated that if the protest were carried out, it would be considered an unapproved demonstration by the university (Meyers, 1997b; "Y. students," 1997). Students at the protest chanted and carried homemade signs with expressions that included "Don't define my culture," "It's art not pornography," "Don't ban Rodin," "We can protect ourselves," "Would we have to put shorts on David?" and "We know we are a peculiar people but do we have to be a ridiculous people?" (Carter, 1997c; Cole & Sonne, 1997; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Van Benthuisen, 1997c).

Jones commented to a reporter covering the protest that what the students were really after from the university was respect: The university administration did not consult with the Student Advisory Council before making the decision (Carter, 1997c; Van Benthuisen, 1997c). "I think student voices count at the university. Had students been

included in the decision . . . we wouldn't have this protest" (Carter, 1997c, ¶ 13). Some students were worried about the implications the Rodin decision would have on their ability to find a job or get accepted to a graduate school. Jones's wife told a reporter that the national press about BYU's Rodin decision would affect the way future employers would evaluate her. "BYU has received national press, bad press, embarrassing press, and I have to go look for a job in two months and this is going to affect people's opinions about BYU. I want people to know that we put up a fight" (Cole & Sonne, 1997, ¶ 8). University administrators circulated a flier at the protest explaining that their offer to discuss concerns about the decision with the protest organizers was denied and inviting students to comment further about the situation to university and museum administrators (Carter, 1997c; Van Benthuyzen, 1997c). University officials also tried to explain to the students at the protest that the decision was made because the museum served a wider community than just the students on campus (Carter, 1997c; Van Benthuyzen, 1997c).

This same day, the *Salt Lake Tribune* ran an editorial that expressed gratitude to BYU for bringing the Rodin exhibition to Utah, but also expressed disappointment in the university's decision. The editorial began by noting that the fact that *The Kiss* "shocked sensibilities when it debuted in 1886" was a historical curiosity, except at BYU "where 19th century prudishness is au courant" ("Closeting Rodin," 1997, ¶ 1). The editorial noted that although the museum director explained to the media that these works lacked dignity "unlike other nudes in the exhibition" (¶ 2), *The Kiss* was considered by many people to be one of Rodin's masterpieces. The editorial writer also found irony in the decision of a religious university banning two religious artworks, and questioned the university's commitment to academic freedom because "Mormon leaders have

emphasized in recent years that the school's religious mission is paramount over all other considerations" (§ 5). However the crux of the editorial writer's dissatisfaction with the university's decision had to do with trust.

The officials of BYU and the LDS Church must define their university as they see fit. It's a shame, though, that BYU students and thousands of other Utahns cannot be trusted to view "The Kiss" and the other works and draw their own conclusions. The job of an art museum is to display the works and let each person form his or her own opinions. ("Closeting Rodin," 1997, ¶ 6)

During the remaining three months of the exhibition, portions of the AP story continued to appear in newspapers across the United States and in other countries, including *The Palm Beach Post* (Schwan, 1997), London's *The Guardian* ("Postview," 1997), *The Boston Globe* (Ribadeneira, 1997), *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* ("Arts Briefs," 1997; White, 1997), *The Sarasota Herald-Tribune* (Altabe, 1997), *The Chronicle of Higher Education* ("The Kiss," 1997), *The Denver Post* (Kreck, 1997), *The Oregonian* (Ryan, 1997), *The New Republic* ("Notebook," 1997), Melbourne, Australia's *Sunday Age* ("Under achievements," 1997), and *The Arkansas-Democrat Gazette* (Schnedler, 1997). Other articles and opinion pieces also ran in local newspapers debating and critiquing the university's decision (Cannon, 1997; Haroldsen, 1997; Harrie, 1997; Hicks, 1997; Sykes, 1997).

Two articles in the Sunday, November 2, 1997, edition of *The Salt Lake Tribune* essentially marked the end of the local editorial coverage of the Rodin issue. The main article appeared on the cover of the arts section and was a review of the exhibition; however much of the review focused on the controversy (Godfrey, 1997). The article

attributed the decision to pull the works to the university's desire to keep visitors' focus on the hands in the sculptures and "not all those other body parts" (§ 1). The museum director explained that the decision was "based on what would have altered people's view of the exhibit's intended meanings" (§ 6) and that the removal of the sculptures did not create any negative space in the gallery display. However the author disagreed, noting that "walking through the exhibit does leave the feeling that something is missing" (§ 8). At the end of the article the author noted that the works in the exhibition conveyed a wide array of emotions that included "fear, supplication, despair and regret," but also pointed out that "perhaps the original curator" of the exhibition included the four works that BYU officials pulled to allow the "audience to experience the master sculptor's depictions of passion and power" (§ 25). A smaller article noted that BYU was the only venue on the exhibition tour that had any problems with the nude works (Eagan & Godfrey, 1997). A university spokesperson explained that officials knew the decision would not be popular but nevertheless university leaders made the decision because of the university's context: "The issue is not nudity. It really is context, and our best—and pretty well informed—sense of what is appropriate in this community" (§ 7).

Shortly after the Rodin controversy was first reported in the news media, letters from passionate writers on either side of the Rodin issue began to pour into the editorial offices of *The Salt Lake Tribune*, *The Deseret News*, *The Daily Herald*, and *The Daily Universe*. These letters continued to be printed for the remaining months of the exhibition's stay in Provo. Of the 50 letters published during this three month period 34 were critical of the Rodin decision, and 16 were supportive of the decision. There were four different themes in the critical letters. A number of letters accused university and

museum administrators of being small-minded, ignorant, prudish, or incompetent:

- “As a recent and proud graduate of this venerable university and a member of the church in good standing, I am shocked and outraged at this small-minded decision” (Kowallis, 1997a, ¶ 1; Kowallis, 1997b).
- “This situation is another sorry example of what happens when institutions become obsessive about their public images” (Soulier, 1997, ¶ 11).
- “Not only am I laughing, the whole world is . . . doncha just love it” (Platt, 1997, ¶ 3).
- “I can’t believe the university would be so narrow about the works of a great artist” (Stokes, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “It is beyond me that a learning institution of the caliber of BYU could be so blind as to consider great works of art an offense to the public” (Jackson, 1997, ¶ 3).
- Rodin’s sculpture *The Thinker* represents “the kind of deep contemplation BYU’s art museum should engage in before making decisions based on fear and imagination” (Taylor, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “It seems to me, the decision was based on the opinions of the lowest common denominator among us, instead of trying to educate us and lift us all” (Dunford-Jackman, 1997, ¶ 3).
- “To paraphrase the BYU Museum of Art directors: Nudity? You say there is nudity? Why were we not informed of this nudity? Who is this Rodin fellow anyway?” (Harrigan, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “As both a resident of the county and an LDS Church member, I really feel embarrassed at the decision to deny a place for some of the master’s major works”

(Knowles, 1997, ¶ 2).

Other letter writers were not convinced by the explanations of the decision given to the media by university and museum officials:

- “Now I have to suffer through BYU’s inane declaration that some of the greatest works ever sculpted in the history of mankind ‘detracts from the dignity’ of the Rodin exhibit” (Blair, 1997, ¶ 2).
- “Outside the reaches of the white-washed and out-of-touch ‘Y,’ we can wear beards, long hair, and/or earrings. . . . Stop using the ‘community’ as a scapegoat for your own prudishness” (Parker, 1997, ¶ 3-4).
- “Other art gallery directors across the country must be totally shocked, as I am. Gray says this is not censorship. What is it? I’m confused” (Burton, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “I am frightened at the simple-minded explanation of this fiasco. Why agree to show a Rodin exhibit if you don’t have a rooted appreciation for some of his most important works?” (Campbell, 1997a, ¶ 4; see also Campbell, 1997b).
- “Gray’s comments are nonsensical. How would such a magnificent piece of art destroy any integrity?” (Harty, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “Why did BYU request this exhibit if it didn’t agree with its content?” (Kerby, 1997, ¶ 5).

A few letter writers felt that the university had strayed to far from its academic mission with the Rodin decision, pointing out inconsistencies between the decision and their past experiences with the university or the LDS Church:

- “It seems silly for students to learn of and read about Rodin’s art in classes taught at BYU yet not be allowed to personally view his most famous works on campus”

(Nielson, 1997, ¶ 2).

- “My [LDS] mission president in Paris allowed me and other missionaries to visit the Rodin museum” (Helmer, 1997, ¶ 1).
- Two male nudes were removed from the exhibition because of their message. “Why wasn’t the same concern shown for the two nude female figures [that remained in the exhibition] one who is used as a symbol for the sin of vanity and one who is used to represent woman as a tool of the devil?” (Braithwaite, 1997, ¶ 9).
- “If Brigham Young University were to remain consistent in its efforts to protect humanity from the ravishes of ‘perverted’ artwork . . . then it should at least, in the education of all students on its campuses, abolish the study of Michelangelos, the Tchaikovskys, the Tolstoys, and great portions of our social history” (Pitt, 1997, ¶ 3).
- “I attended the Etruscan exhibit at BYU. Didn’t any of them notice that the slaves in the Etruscan murals were naked, while their masters were clothed?” (Cassidy, 1997, ¶ 3).
- “I am proud to be at a university where they cut all male nudity (which is trash) but preserve female nudity (because it is artistic)” (Trent, 1997).
- “Now, the sages at BYU, having scheduled an important art exhibit by the historically famous sculptor Auguste Rodin, decide to engage in self-censorship of some of the most famous sculptures in that traveling exhibit—one would assume, to protect the citizenry from themselves” (Holstein, 1997, ¶ 1).

A number of letter writers felt the university made the Rodin decision to exercise

control over the students on campus and people in the community:

- “What utter chaos would reign if the powers that be were to let this message [of *The Kiss*] be known to the student body of the university that believes the glory of God is intelligence” (Wood, 1997, ¶ 3).
- “It is an ancient pattern of structured societies to censor objectionable art” (Bogdanich, 1997, ¶ 2).
- “How do church authorities square their recent ban on certain sculptures by Auguste Rodin with the concept of ‘free agency’?” (Owens, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “Keeping ‘The Kiss’ in the crate has to do with *power*, a tiresome, pathetic, scary need to control the heart and mind” (Stromquist, 1997).
- “I found the statement of the BYU official somewhat chilling. He said that people looking at the censored art ‘might think the wrong things’” (Latimer, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “It’s too bad they couldn’t trust us to . . . learn a new way of seeing. . . . Instead they have deprived us all of a great and rare blessing” (England, 1997, ¶ 4).
- “My guess is the next sculpture to be censored in Utah will be Rodin’s ‘The Thinker’—not only is he nude, but he’s thinking” (Roberts, 1997, ¶ 2).
- “Having attended BYU, I am sure that widespread thinking (especially in the nude) anywhere near its campus would lead to its destruction” (Visick, 1997, ¶ 2).
- “In the spirit of teaching correct principles and letting people govern themselves I think it would be wise for the MOA to let me decide what is appropriate art and what isn’t” (Baker, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “I hope that your students and townspeople are properly insulted at being treated as mindless children” (Worshti, 1997, ¶ 2).

There were three different themes in the letters from those who supported the university's decision. A number of letter writers felt that BYU, as a private university, was entitled to make its own decisions without input from others:

- “A ‘right’ to see nude statues? Give me a break. I am pleased that we have intelligent people on the Board of Trustees and the BYU Administration who can make decisions like the one to ban the nude statues” (Childs, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “At a private school, you don’t have First Amendment rights as you would, say, at Utah State University or the University of Utah” (Both, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “The Y. is a church-owned private institution. It is entitled to set whatever standards it deems proper. No one is compelled to accept those standards, but if they find them too restrictive then such students should seek their education elsewhere” (Jensen, 1997, ¶ 2).
- “Don’t directors of museums, such as the Director of the BYU Art Museum, have the right to make such decisions without immature picketers waving placards and acting more like junior high students than university students?” (Christy, 1997, ¶ 8).
- “That’s the point of having a church-run school—not so that it can be swayed by popular demand, but so that it can exist independent of it” (Fournaris, 1997, ¶ 2).
- “I am weary of the narrow-mindedness that would deny the freedom of a private institution to choose its own policies” (Allred, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “BYU brought the exhibit here, they arranged for it and took care of all the details. . . .Therefore it is their prerogative to pull any and all pieces that may seem offensive to them” (Cook, 1997, ¶ 3).

- “What is wrong with a private, religious institution deciding to display only artwork which is in harmony with the teachings of the religion that sponsors it?” (Ball, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “BYU is a private institution and has a First Amendment right to reject any or all of the Rodin exhibit” (Johnson, 1997, ¶ 2).

Other letter writers expressed support for the university standing up for the beliefs of the LDS Church:

- “It’s refreshing to see an institution that stands up for what it believes, regardless of internal and external pressures to conform to society’s prevailing attitude” (Jarman, 1997, ¶ 1).
- “I believe we need to set certain standards of decency and modesty, not only in the honor code, but in what we tolerate in the name of ‘art’ and then stick by them” (Hiatt, 1997, ¶ 6).
- “To the students who used this event as an excuse to attack the Honor Code, might I remind you that there are many young people who would give anything to take your place here at BYU?” (Newport, 1997).
- “BYU should be commended for upholding their standards and convictions. Somebody in this world needs to” (Olsson, 1997, ¶ 5).
- “The point is, in our view, these subjects [nudity and intimacy] are not for public display, but should be held sacred and in private. . . . I applaud BYU’s decision to set an example of morality in a time when many people seem to be forgetting what that concept is” (Wheeler, 1997, ¶ 5).
- “Congratulations to BYU for not displaying certain pieces of Rodin’s exhibit. I

admit the human body is beautiful, but it is also sacred, and not to be on exhibit” (Whiting, 1997, ¶ 1).

Another letter writer explained that there was nothing wrong with the works or BYU’s decision not to show them. They simply were not a good fit at the university:

- “The Museum of Art acted prudently, not prudishly, in choosing to not exhibit certain nude sculptures. The question is not whether most us in the university community would not be offended, but whether some in our community would be embarrassed, and what a high-profile part of the university dedicated to the ‘higher law’ should do in that situation” (Wardle, 1997, ¶ 2).

One letter writer was just glad to see the exhibition, with or without *The Kiss*. “Most people writing letters about the BYU Rodin exhibit seem to be missing the point. There is an exhibit to see” (Marx, 1997, ¶ 1).

Additionally, museum personnel received numerous letters, phone calls, and e-mails either applauding the decision to stand up for the standards of the LDS Church or condemning the decision and insulting the people who made it (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009). There were also two additional acts of protest reported in the media. On Sunday, November 2, 1997, university officials found pictures of *The Kiss* glued to various locations in a building on campus (Woodland, 1997). On November 30, 1997, 12 visitors staged a silent demonstration at the museum by wearing white T-shirts with images of the four banned works (Egan, 1997c). One of the protestors commented, “When BYU accepts an exhibit like this, they have a responsibility, at the very least, to show the art and educate people

so they can appreciate it. When you're in the business of having an art museum, it's the least you can do" (Egan, 1997c, ¶ 2).

Thursday, November 14, 1997, essentially signaled the end of the media coverage of the Rodin decision. The president of the university held a previously scheduled question and answer session with students in which he specifically answered questions about the Rodin decision ("BYU President," 1997; Carter, 1997d). The president took responsibility for making the decision and acknowledged making a mistake in "failing to issue a formal statement about why the statues were being excluded" (Carter, 1997d, ¶ 8; see also "BYU President," 1997). The president explained that one work was withheld because of the sexual act in which the figure was engaged while the other works were withheld because they did not fit the exhibition theme ("BYU President," 1997; Carter, 1997d). He also explained that the values of the larger community, and not just the university student body, had to be taken into consideration because of the large number of schoolchildren who visit the museum every year ("BYU President," 1997; Carter, 1997d). Finally, he promised that the university would avoid future controversies by not contracting to show exhibits that may contain questionable material:

The university does not have an obligation to bring to campus things that might contradict the values of the (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). I'm not trying to force my values on anyone else. This is not a decision about people's rights. It's a decision about what's appropriate to bring to the institution. (Carter, 1997d, ¶ 12)

In the Shadow of Rodin

Most museum staff members were surprised by the scope of the media response

to the decision and the polarized reaction on campus and in the local community (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). A few staff members commented that the extensive media coverage of the decision made this an embarrassing situation to be in professionally (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009). It was surprising to one staff member that there was no room for a nuanced discussion about the issue: “It was black and white, and there were people on both sides of the fence professing their religious devotion and at the same time this extreme anger” (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009). Another staff member noted that museums remove works of art from exhibitions on a regular basis for a variety of reasons—including the appropriateness of artworks for a particular community (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009). “I was floored because this happens in museums all the time. I think it was because of who we are and what we stand for that this was an opportunity for someone to make a big deal out of it” (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009). Another staff member, who expected the decision to be controversial but did not think it was going to be as big a story as it turned out to be, explained that the local reaction was the result of differing views held by members of the LDS Church about their place in contemporary American society and the value that church members place on perceptions of their religion created by the media (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

We want to be seen as respectable, responsible, mainstream people. We don't want to be marginalized. But we want to be different enough that being a Mormon makes a difference from being something else. And it's a kind of narrow pathway to walk sometimes. And I guess this was one of the places where we touched the boundaries. (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 13, 2009)

There was general agreement among museum staff members that the museum's relationships with its various stakeholder groups were affected by this decision, and the media firestorm and public debate that followed. Most staff members felt that the experience of working closely with the university administration to make the decision and deal with the controversy without causing any additional problems helped to strengthen the relationship between the university and museum and to increase the university leaders' trust of museum decision makers (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). However, one staff member pointed out that the experience also could have heightened the awareness of university leaders to the potential for the museum to be a source of embarrassment for the university in the future (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Others noted that for a few years after the Rodin experience, museum personnel were required to prepare detailed documents about the museum's exhibition program for the university administration (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). Staff members were not worried about the museum's relationships

with groups on campus and in the community that were supportive of the university's decision because the actions of the museum helped to confirm and reinforce their expectations of the university (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

Museum officials were more worried about their relationships with campus groups and community members who did not agree with the decision (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). At the time, the dean of the college remarked that the Rodin controversy would have a half-life of 10 years, and staff members were in general agreement that the effect of the decision on these groups has diminished as the museum has provided relevant and important exhibitions over time (Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). There was a similar, if not greater, concern that the museum's relationships with other museums and art organizations would be damaged to the point that these institutions would not lend artworks or exhibitions to or approve accreditation of the Museum of Art in the future (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal

communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Museum staff members noted that after some time had passed, eventually the museum director was accepted into the most prestigious professional association for museum directors in North America, the Association of Art Museum Directors, and there has never been a problem borrowing works from other institutions (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Staff members noted that the group that probably was affected most by this decision was administrative and staff employees working at the museum (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). A couple of staff members noted that the Rodin experience made the museum “gun shy” (Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). “I think we are even more careful now than we were. I think that we are more sensitive to the fact that we are going to have a part of an audience that is greatly offended by a work of art” (Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009). Another noted that the museum needed to “find some middle ground where we [the museum] can show great art without causing problems” (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

Most museum staff members had a hard time determining whether or not the

decision made about the Rodin exhibition was consistent with the mission and values of the BYU Museum of Art. Staff members agreed that what was consistent about the decision was that it upheld the values of the LDS Church and was an effort to respect the sensitivities and values of the museum's audiences (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). However, a few staff members were torn, expressing a concern that important art historical works were not able to be shown in an art museum (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009). Another staff member noted that the way the museum interacted with the media was not consistent with the museum's mission of engaging, nurturing, and building: "I thought it [the museum's interaction with the media] was secretive and arrogant and a bit elitist. And I think that flowed over to the audience" (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009). Yet another staff member commented that the Rodin decision was not inconsistent with previous decisions because the museum had not shown works in prior exhibitions because of nudity concerns. "This was actually probably a good litmus test. It was a place where it probably really was a close call and where it really might have gone either way. And we probably would have had controversy either way" (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Every museum staff member agreed that a more consistent approach to dealing with this kind of situation in the future would be to scrutinize images and object lists of proposed exhibitions more carefully and work out

any problems with the lender before committing to any exhibition (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

Museum staff members also had a difficult time evaluating whether they were effectively and accurately communicating the reasons for the Rodin decision because many were not involved in the decision making process or in talking with the media. Generally, staff members felt that the situation got out of hand before anyone had a chance to put together a coherent media strategy and that communicating a religiously based decision to people who do not share the same world view is a difficult task (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Staff members also expressed a desire to be more open and transparent in their communication with stakeholders, especially the media (Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

In spite of the controversy, museum and university administrators noted that the exhibition was well attended (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009; Meyers, 1997b). One staff member speculated that “as a result of the controversy . . . [the museum] might have had triple the visitation we might have expected” (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). The exhibition was free to

the public; however, without a ticketing mechanism, museum officials had no way of determining the number of visitors who attended the exhibition.

Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World: Egypt, Greece, Rome

A New Vision

In the years following the Rodin controversy, under the guidance of the museum's new director, the staff created a new vision for the museum. The museum's exhibition program would be focused on academic scholarship and alignment with university curricula and discourse (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). During the first few years of the new director's tenure, the post-Rodin exhibition schedule relied on contemporary art exhibitions to change the perception of the museum from a place to see the blockbuster exhibits the museum had shown in the past to a center for ideas and learning, where exhibitions did not create a spectacle of ancient treasure, but required deeper thought and engagement from the visitor (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). This exhibition strategy grew out of museum administrators' efforts to develop a new vision statement for the museum. This process began shortly after the new director's arrival at the museum prior to the Rodin controversy (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009). The completed vision statement reflected the museum's new academic philosophy and also incorporated the spiritual and academic aims of the university:

The Museum of Art is a place where the heart and mind are brought together to seek knowledge and values, self-affirmation and spiritual understanding. We hope that your experience in the Museum will nurture a more reflective mind, a

capacity for deeper inquiry, a stronger commitment to excellence and integrity, and heightened appreciation for others and their ideas. (“About the museum,” n.d.)

Egypt, Greece, Rome, Provo

Sometime between December 2001 and January 2002, museum officials learned about an opportunity to mount a traveling exhibition from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, comprised of artifacts from the three most influential civilizations of the ancient world: Egypt, Greece, and Rome (Thompson, 2004; *Art of the Ancient*, 1999). Before the exhibition was sent on the road, it was on display for five years, from April 1999 to March 2004, as the inaugural exhibition of the MFA, Boston’s sister museum, the Nagoya/Boston Museum of Fine Arts in Japan (*Art of the Ancient*, 1999). After preliminary negotiations, the museum was scheduled to be the exhibition’s first venue on a North American tour that would end with the works eventually returning to Boston (Thompson, 2004). The exhibition, scheduled to be on view at the museum for one year, consisted of 204 objects that spanned a time period ranging from pre-dynastic Egypt, circa 5000 B.C., to the late Roman imperial period, about 350 A.D. (BYU Museum of Art, 2004). The museum employee in charge of organizing the exhibition wrote of the general excitement at the museum to bring this exhibition to Provo:

We are extremely fortunate to receive this rare and exciting material that the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, has agreed to lend us. Furthermore, it’s wonderful that we’ll be able to enjoy it for a full year. That is a most unusual opportunity. (Thompson, 2004, ¶ 8)

The exhibition, titled *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World: Egypt, Greece,*

Rome, was divided into three sections representing each of these ancient civilizations (*Art of the Ancient*, 1999; BYU Museum of Art, 2004). The Egyptian section of the exhibition was the largest in terms of number of works with objects dating from as early as 5000 B.C. to as late as 100 A.D., including pottery, jewelry, reliefs, canopic jars, and a mummy (*Art of the Ancient*, 1999; BYU Museum of Art, 2004). The Greek section of the exhibition was much smaller than the Egyptian section but contained ceramic works from the Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods as well as classical Greek statuary, coins, and jewelry (*Art of the Ancient*, 1999; BYU Museum of Art, 2004). The Roman section of the exhibition was the smallest, and it included examples of sculpture, ceramics, coins, and glasswork (*Art of the Ancient*, 1999; BYU Museum of Art, 2004). The exhibition was curated with the intent to demonstrate how these three civilizations “influenced one another throughout their histories” (*Art of the Ancient*, 1999, p. 17) and how they continue to influence the modern world (BYU Museum of Art, 2004).

Another Difficult Decision

In the spring of 2003, museum officials began to evaluate the exhibition to determine whether or not to take the show (Lambert, 2003b; Thompson, 2004). One of the issues staff members were concerned about during this evaluation period was that a few works in the Greek section of the exhibition were nudes (Lambert, 2003a). The nude works that museum staff members were worried about consisted of three small bronze male figures (10.2, 11.3 and 16.6 centimeters high), painted terra-cotta sculptures of a full-frontal nude Aphrodite (23.1 centimeters high) and of a clothed Aphrodite standing next to a smaller rendition of a nude Eros (38 centimeters high), nude male figures painted on a red-figure vase (37 centimeters high), and a fairly detailed marble torso of a

male god or athlete (40.5 centimeters) (*Art of the Ancient*, 1999; Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009).

Staff members were not surprised that there were nude works in this section of the exhibition; in fact, most staff members expected these kinds of works to be included in an exhibition about the ancient world (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Interviewee 9, personal communication, February 13, 2009; Interviewee 11, personal communication, February 19, 2009). Those who were involved with the exhibition felt that these classical depictions of the human form were not intended to be sensual and had become acceptable, even “conservative,” because of their ancient date of creation (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Interviewee 9, personal communication, February 13, 2009; Interviewee 10, personal communication, February 18, 2009; Interviewee 12, personal communication, February 20, 2009)—unlike the nude works in the Rodin exhibition, which were intended to be sensualized, personal expressions of an artist who “set out to create work of a controversial nature” (Thompson, 2003, ¶ 7).

However, museum staff also recognized that, even after seven years, the Rodin controversy would have an impact on their decision to include or exclude any of the nude works in this exhibition (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10,

2009; Interviewee 9, personal communication, February 13, 2009; Interviewee 10, personal communication, February 18, 2009; Interviewee 11, personal communication, February 19, 2009; Interviewee 12, personal communication, February 20, 2009). One staff member explained that at this time the museum was “clearly in the post-Rodin era” and always would be because the Rodin controversy was such a “defining moment for the museum” (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009). Another staff member commented that there was not “any doubt that the Rodin experience has informed everything that we do around the subject [of nudity], ever,” adding that the controversy surrounding the Rodin decision helped museum personnel better understand potential community reactions, including the possible “flash points, both on the positive and negative side” of the issue (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009).

According to museum staff members, negotiating these difficult circumstances in the post-Rodin era involved balancing the various—and sometimes conflicting—expectations of outside groups that had a stake in the decisions made by the museum, along with the need to uphold the spiritual and academic mission of the university (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009; Interviewee 9, personal communication, February 13, 2009; Interviewee 10, personal communication, February 18, 2009). One staff member explained that because these complicated decisions are not “black and white,” the museum has to “tread carefully” to try to maintain “maximum freedom of action” (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009). According to this staff member, treading carefully consists of realizing that there are “some things the museum

can do more of and some things the museum can do less of;” however, doing less of some things does not mean that for a staff comprised of individuals with “quite a bit of art historical sophistication and appreciation that this is done without pain on our part. This frequently pinches” (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009).

Another staff member explained that the museum has an obligation not to embarrass the university in a community that can be extremely sensitive to these issues, but struggled to describe how the museum should take into account the community’s sensitivities: “I think we don’t let the community dictate our exhibition program, but it would be really ridiculous to ignore them and not respect their sensitivities” (Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009). This staff member also pointed out that these decisions are two-edged swords: If the museum makes a decision based on respect for the values of the local community, the professional museum community could be offended, or visa versa (Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009). And if either group becomes offended, the media could get involved to point out the inconsistencies or hypocrisy exposed by the decision (Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009; Interviewee 11, personal communication, February 19, 2009).

The consensus among staff members was that the museum was most likely to offend the professional museum community because the museum would tend to choose its alignment with the university and the church over its alignment with the museum world (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009; Interviewee 10, personal communication, February 18, 2009; Interviewee 12, personal communication, February 20, 2009). One staff

member explained that the unique mission of the university separates the museum from the rest of the professional museum community and the art world in general: “We can’t be all things to all people. We like to blend in. We like to say, ‘look we are just like everybody else . . .’ But there comes a point where our doctrine becomes evident and we need to uphold those differences” (Interviewee 10, personal communication, February 18, 2009). Another staff member noted that it is hard for LDS Church members to separate BYU from the standards of the church that supports it: “Once we raise these questions [about modesty and nudity], we’ve endorsed them. . . . And that’s a reality we have to live with: If we show it, we support it” (Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009). Another staff member explained that even though there is a price to pay with the professional museum community for being aligned with the university and the local community, “professional respect from peers is something I think we all value, that within our system of restraints we still try to glean as much of that as we can” (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009).

Other staff members talked about not wanting to desensitize the museum’s visitors to nudity and sexuality. They advocated only including nude works when there was a valid academic justification that the works were important to the transmission of the exhibition’s message and would not detract from the standards of the university (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Interviewee 10, personal communication, February 18, 2009; Interviewee 12, personal communication, February 20, 2009). However one staff member noted that even with this type of careful scrutiny of exhibitions and works of art, it is still hard to know

how any of the museum's stakeholders who are sensitive to this issue will react (Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009).

Early on museum officials decided that this exhibition was consistent with the retooled academic mission of the museum, and instead of a broad marketing campaign for the show, museum personnel would focus their resources on the groups most likely to benefit from the academic discourse of the exhibition: university students and middle school students in grades 6 through 9 (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Thompson, 2003). Museum staff members working on the exhibition felt strongly that these particular nude works were integral to the exhibition because the accurate and proportional depiction of the human form was an important cultural and artistic contribution of classical Greece (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Thompson, 2003). One staff member asserted that the museum "would have been untrue" to the message and intent of the exhibition had these works been excluded: "If you take the Greek human form out, and you try to talk about the impact of these periods on later civilization, we would have actually spun it incorrectly" (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009). Another staff member explained how these sculptures fit into the overall mission and objectives of the museum:

We are an educational institution, stretching minds and hearts, causing people to have a greater understanding of their place in the world and the production of other people and their thoughts about the world, and in the process appreciating others and their ideas, developing empathy, forgetting oneself. And under those

circumstances, as long as that which the artist is thinking is of value, is of worth to think about . . . then it's important for us to show it and enter into that kind of discussion. (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009)

Despite the strong desire to show these works, staff members were still worried about the potential problems associated with elementary school children exploring a gallery with nude works of art, particularly the easily noticeable marble sculpture of the male torso (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). They were also concerned about not creating another Rodin-like problem for the university (Interviewee 6, personal communication, February, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Interviewee 11, personal communication, February, 2009; Interviewee 12, personal communication, February 20, 2009). In spite of the uncertainties of how the museum's various stakeholders would react, museum staff decided to try and make a case to include all of these works in the exhibition (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Interviewee 9, personal communication, February 13, 2009; Interviewee 12, personal communication, February 20, 2009).

Involving the Stakeholders

Before the contract for the exhibition was signed, museum officials determined that they needed to get support for their decision from the Utah State Office of Education and the university administration (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4,

2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Lambert, 2003c). The museum educator assigned to work with the public schools made a phone call to the arts coordinator at the Utah State Office of Education to let this person know about the nude works that would be a part of the exhibition and to get feedback on the decision (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). The educator explained that none of the nudes were erotic or sensual and that the museum could send images of these works for review by state public education officials (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009). The educator also talked about the concern at the museum over the large male torso and described preliminary plans to place it in an area of the gallery that would not be directly on the school tour route (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009). The immediate response from the state arts coordinator came as somewhat of a surprise for museum officials (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009). The arts coordinator immediately alleviated any concerns museum officials had about the support of the public school system for their decision to exhibit the nude works, explaining that the museum would be remiss not to show these works because they were an important part of western cultural heritage (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009). The arts coordinator also explained that the museum's experience contextualizing artworks made it the optimal place for students to learn about the idea that the human form was one of the great advances of Greek civilization (Interviewee 7, personal

communication, February 6, 2009).

In June 2003, museum staff members working on the exhibition held a team meeting to discuss the language that would be used to address concerns about the nudes in the exhibition (Lambert, 2003e). The basic position of the team members was that their intention in showing these works was not to “offend or undermine moral values or principles,” but to educate visitors about the importance of the development of the nude figure and the influence of that artistic achievement on future civilizations and other academic disciplines (Lambert, 2003e, p. 1). As a result of the meeting, the museum’s chief registrar, who was acting as the in-house curator for the exhibition, was asked to write a justification for showing the nude works that could be used to address concerns from the public (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 9, personal communication, February 13, 2009; Lambert, 2003d). This justification memorandum ultimately described how museum officials had a “deep desire to remain respectful to the feelings of our audience” and made a serious effort to “examine the issues surrounding the appropriateness of making them [the nude works] available to our visitors” (Thompson, 2003, ¶ 2). The justification also emphasized that museum staff had also consulted with officials at the university and the public school system before determining that “all of the objects in this exhibition are compatible with our museum purposes and standards, and that displaying them will have a positive educational value” (Thompson, 2003, ¶ 3).

In addition to crafting the language they would use to talk about their decision, museum staff members working on the exhibition thought about ways to contextualize these works within the gallery so visitors could understand the reasons they were

included (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). Because many of these works were small, staff members determined that they could be grouped with other works in a way that would not draw attention to themselves (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). Staff members also proposed that the larger work, the male torso, could also be displayed with an assortment of other works that represented the same ideas— the golden mean, mathematics, and proportions—and that those ideas could be highlighted with text panels on the wall next to the objects and an orientation video that explained these same ideas nearby (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). One staff member reported that this effort to contextualize the nude works was not meant to completely eliminate negative reactions, but to create an environment where negative reactions would be seen as extreme or unreasonable (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009).

As mentioned in the justification memorandum, museum staff members also worked closely with university administrators to get their support for showing the nude works (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). Museum administrators felt it was imperative to have university support for the decision because it would ensure that the university administration understood the situation and were not surprised by possible complaints (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Interviewee 11,

personal communication, February 19, 2009; Interviewee 12, personal communication, February 20, 2009). Having university support for the decision also gave museum staff members a stronger position when addressing concerns and complaints about the works (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). Museum officials worked within their reporting structure to alert the university leadership about their desire to include these works in the exhibition (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Interviewee 11, personal communication, February 19, 2009; Interviewee 12, personal communication, February 20, 2009). The entire scope of the exhibition, the contextual strategies designed for the problematic works in the gallery, the language developed to explain the decision, and the way in which extreme reactions would be handled were first communicated to the dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communications, which were then communicated to the university administration (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009), which at this point was led by a new university president who was also appointed from among the ranks of the General Authorities of the LDS Church (Walch & Moore, 2003).

The proposal from the museum was not automatically accepted by the university. In spite of all the museum's proposed efforts to mitigate the problem, university leaders were still concerned that there would be a negative response to these works (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). Museum staff members were also concerned that there would be a negative reaction to the works based on their experience with the Rodin exhibition and the impassioned complaints museum personnel received

about nude and semi-nude works both before or after the Rodin exhibition (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Interviewee 11, personal communication, February 19, 2009). However, university leaders felt that museum officials had done about as much as they could to mitigate and minimize the potential for problems with these works and agreed to support the museum's decision (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). With support from the public school system and the university in place, museum administrators proceeded with the legal negotiations, officially contracting to exhibit the show in November 2003, seven months before it was scheduled to open (Lambert, 2003f).

Public and Media Reaction

After the exhibition opened on June 4, 2004, a large number of school groups began to schedule tours, and museum staff members debated whether or not to alert teachers about the nude works before they brought their classes (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009). In the end, staff members decided to address any questions that teachers asked; however, they decided not to make a big deal of the nude works because they had the support of the State Office of Education (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009). To prevent problems with non-public school groups, museum staff members instructed the museum tour schedulers to transfer calls from home and private school teachers who had questions about nudity in the exhibition to a designated person who would explain about the nude works, the reason they were in the exhibition, and the strategies the museum employed to contextualize them in the

gallery (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009). Staff members also debated whether or not to avoid the areas of the Greek section of the exhibition that contained nude works (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009). However, museum tour guides noticed that school groups tended to walk right by the groupings of the small nude works, and if a question was raised about the nude male torso, tour guides explained that it was an example of the application of the Golden Mean. They also explained that the Golden Mean ultimately led to the development of classical architecture (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009).

Museum officials felt it would be counterproductive to make a big deal with the media about the decision to include the nude works (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Interviewee 11, personal communication, February 19, 2009). All museum communication with the media was focused on the educational discourse of the exhibition (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). The exhibition received significant coverage that included many color images of the major works in the show in Utah's two major daily newspapers—*The Deseret Morning News* (Gagon, 2004) and *The Salt Lake Tribune* (Karras, 2004)—as well as Provo's community newspaper *The Daily Herald* (Clark, 2004; Fellow, 2004); and not a mention was made of the nude works. Other media outlets, including the BYU campus newspaper, *The Daily Universe* (Giles, 2004; Santiago, 2004), *The Church News* (Swenson, 2004; Swenson, 2005) and *BYU Magazine* (Winters, 2004) published positive reviews of the exhibition and the educational programming surrounding the exhibition.

The *Salt Lake Tribune* asserted that the last time an exhibition of this scope visited Utah was “when the Ramses II show made a stop in Provo in the mid-1980s” (Karras, 2004, ¶ 3). The reviewer for *The Deseret Morning News* even wrote that this was an exhibition “for every age group—especially children—and should be experienced several times over the course of its stay in Provo” (Gagon, 2004, ¶ 19).

By the time the exhibition closed a year later, 57,326 people attended the exhibition, including 28,535 public school students and 13,539 visitors from the BYU campus community (Francom, 2005). Museum officials were able to track the attendance to this exhibition because they ticketed the exhibition. Students and employees of the university could obtain free tickets, but members of the community were charged \$5 per ticket (BYU Museum of Art, 2004; Francom, 2005). Discount tickets were available to public school groups and seniors. (BYU Museum of Art, 2004; Francom, 2005). Much to the surprise of museum staff members, there was not one complaint to the museum or the university about the nude works in the exhibition (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Interviewee 10, personal communication, February 18, 2009).

A Positive Experience

Museum staff members felt that this experience with the Mediterranean exhibition was positive and helped to strengthen relationships with some of the museum’s key stakeholder groups (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10,

2009). A few staff members explained that working with the university administration on complicated issues has helped to increase the trust and confidence of the university leadership in the museum's decision makers, which has resulted in the autonomy of the museum to host a wide variety of exhibitions (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). They also commented that working through these issues with the university administration demonstrates the level of thought the museum has invested in these decisions (Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009) and helps to reinforce to the university that the museum is "a part of this institution, that we are not separating ourselves from it, that they [the university administration] have some ownership in us" (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009).

As a result of positive experiences with significant exhibitions like the Mediterranean exhibition, museum staff members also felt more confident about the way the museum was perceived by groups outside the university (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009; Interviewee 10, personal communication, February 18, 2009; Interviewee 11, personal communication, February 19, 2009; Interviewee 12, personal communication, February 20, 2009). One staff member noted that the fact that there were no complaints about the Mediterranean exhibition could be attributed to the level of trust the community had in the museum to show things that should not be offensive to them (Interviewee 11, personal communication, February 19, 2009). A few staff members commented that one exhibition

alone cannot change relationships and perceptions, but that a consistent exhibition program of “dynamic, adventurous, provocative, stimulating exhibitions” (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009) would have the power to build respect over time (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). However, these staff members also noted that there would be some groups “whose views are never going to change” (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009; Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009).

Along the same lines, other staff members noted that the museum’s decisions over time were establishing a consistent identity for the museum (Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009; Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009; Interviewee 10, personal communication, February 18, 2009; Interviewee 12, personal communication, February 20, 2009). In fact, the justification memo written to provide support for the inclusion of the nude works in the Mediterranean exhibition alluded to the idea of an identity that is consistent with the museum’s mission: “On other occasions, we have declined to show objects that we have judged to be incompatible with our mission” (Thompson, 2003, ¶ 4). One staff member observed that perceptions about the museum are based on the decisions the museum has made in the past (Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009). Another staff member elaborated that the museum has been accepted as a museum “that is a little bit peculiar and conservative but has the potential for interesting discourse” because of its decisions (Interviewee 10, personal communication, February 18, 2009). This staff member added that the museum has not “gone away” because of the criticism it received during the Rodin controversy,

“and we haven’t sunk into a pit of rejection; in fact we are often courted by people outside of our circle of influence for interesting reasons” (Interviewee 10, personal communication, February 18, 2009).

One staff member saw this process of consistently making decisions that were in line with the mission of the institution as a way of building up immunity to outside pressures that could influence the museum to behave in ways that were inconsistent with its mission (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009).

I feel it’s kind of like this shield against these pressures . . . that they’ll come at us with the intellectual or the provincial or the irresponsible kind of approach. But I feel like we’re pretty self-actualized in being able to know how to handle those pressures and to not let them get in and change what we do—that we are not reactionary. (Interviewee 7, personal communication, February 6, 2009)

Another staff member explained that paying “less attention to the outside world and more attention to our own values” could help the museum be consistent in achieving its goals and objectives (Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Recognizing Paradox

The first proposition of this study was that relationships between organizations and publics are defined by interdependence—or the autonomy-dependence paradox—and that the constant tension generated by the poles of this paradox can influence the decision making of relational partners. A natural consequence of this proposition is that organizational decisions or decisions made by publics can intensify the paradoxical tension in the relationship, increasing the desire of the relational partners to reduce the tension. First-order thinking in reaction to increased tension can lead organizations to choose one pole over the other, resulting in defensive mechanisms that ultimately could produce unintended consequences and negative reinforcing cycles.

The case studies presented in this research clearly demonstrate that BYU Museum of Art employees felt the tensions caused by the autonomy-dependency paradox. The research also shows that these tensions had an effect on organizational decision-making and communication. Additionally, these case studies reveal that the BYU Museum of Art experiences the autonomy-dependency paradox on two distinct but closely related levels, increasing the tension when both levels of the paradox are manifest. The first level of the paradox is common to all art museums and is embedded within art museum culture and practice. The autonomy-dependency paradox at this level is manifest when art museums are forced to reconcile their historical mission of showing the public artworks that museum professionals think the public needs to see with the need to show the public

artworks that the public wants to see. In other words, the central question of this level of the paradox is “who or what agency defines and determines a museum’s offerings” (Kotler & Kotler, p. 30), the autonomy of the museum or dependence on the market?

The second level of the paradox exists specifically for the BYU Museum of Art because the museum is part of Brigham Young University. The autonomy-dependency paradox at this level has a direct correlation to the university’s struggle to integrate secular academic pursuits with the religious principles and values of the LDS Church. This level of the paradox is manifest when museum decisions could be seen to compromise the spiritual and religious mission of the university. The central question of this level of the paradox asks whether the academic mission of the university, which would allow the museum a great deal of autonomy, or the religious mission of the university, which would cause the museum to be more dependent on religious criteria, “defines and determines [the] museum’s offerings” (Kotler & Kotler, p. 30). This second level of the paradox may be the most important for the museum because it reflects the essence of Brigham Young University, of which the museum is a part. A BYU official addressing concerns over academic freedom at the university explained that “BYU intends to remain true to its intellectual and spiritual mission. If we abandoned our mission, there would be no reason for us to exist” (Carter, 1997a, ¶ 6- 8).

Hands of Rodin

A review of the events in the *Hands of Rodin* case study demonstrates that both levels of the paradox were manifest, although museum officials did not recognize the paradox inherent in the situation. However, museum officials were influenced by the tensions caused by the first level of the paradox: museum versus market. Initially it

appears that the museum was leaning more to the market side of the paradox with this exhibition, trying to anticipate what the public wanted to see. Prior to the *Hands of Rodin* exhibition, museum officials hosted a few market-oriented blockbuster exhibitions as part of a public relations campaign to create awareness for the new museum. These exhibitions were very successful in both drawing crowds to the museum and increasing awareness of it. While staff members did not view the Rodin exhibition as a blockbuster, they assumed that many people knew about Rodin and promoted the show to the media as if it were a blockbuster. However, the paradox of this situation was that the museum director, who made the initial agreements to bring this potentially crowd-pleasing exhibition of a big-name sculptor to BYU, was acting autonomously from the museum staff that usually would have a say in whether or not the museum should pursue a particular exhibition.

Museum officials also felt the tensions related to the second level of the autonomy-dependency paradox: academic freedom versus religious standards. Museum officials struggled to reconcile their autonomy to function as a serious, academic art museum with their dependence on the religious values and standards that were an integral part of the university's mission and identity. Nevertheless, they recognized that their decisions were constrained by their affiliation with the flagship university of the LDS Church. As a museum staff member noted, "We are constantly trying to align our professional practice with the norms and values of the church. Some of those decisions that touch on universal factors such as sexuality and depictions of the human body make it difficult for us to accede to the expectation of the public secular world out there" (Interviewee 3, personal communication, January 23, 2009).

During the initial stages of the *Hands of Rodin* exhibition, museum staff members understood that they could not exhibit certain types of art at BYU because of the religious standards of the university. In fact, during the first few years of the museum's existence, museum officials had already decided not to pursue certain traveling exhibitions because they were deemed incompatible with the mission and values of the church-owned university. However, because of the museum's reaction to the first level of the paradox, a questionably appropriate exhibition was headed to the university that caused the second level of the paradox to become manifest. This second level of the paradox created tensions that caused museum officials to be concerned about how it would be received by university leaders and members of the community. Museum officials felt that the university administration would be most concerned about the exhibition because of the negative reaction it could cause in the community. They recognized that certain works, especially nude or sexually explicit works, would be offensive to some members of the community audience who would not expect that kind of art to be shown at an LDS university. Museum officials had first-hand experience with community members who voiced complaints about fairly conservative nude or semi-nude works in previous exhibitions, and they were aware of the sensitivity of the entire community to issues of nudity and sexuality because of the well-publicized community protests against local businesses featuring pornography and semi-nude dancing.

While museum officials recognized the potential complication of this exhibition, they also wanted to exercise their prerogative as an art museum to exhibit important works of art that were educationally valuable and highly esteemed by museum professionals in the art world. Museum officials felt that bringing these Rodin sculptures

to the university would benefit the many art history and humanities students at the university who would have the rare chance to see these well-known masterpieces in person without leaving campus. The desire to show these works led some staff members to feel confident that people who were not all that familiar with the art world would be familiar enough with these well-known works that the nudity issue could be worked out in favor of showing them.

In spite of their desire to show these questionable works, museum officials ultimately recognized they needed the institutional support of the university administration to exhibit them, as well as university assistance in addressing potential community concern about the display of those works at an LDS Church-operated institution. Museum officials made initial attempts to get university support for the exhibition, but circumstances changed when a new president was appointed at the university, a new director was appointed at the museum, and the composition of the exhibition changed to include new works that were not part of the exhibition when the original approval was given by the dean of the college. With the opening of the exhibition drawing closer, the potentially explosive nature of the situation became more apparent to the museum leadership. It was at this point that museum officials approached the new university president because they anticipated a community reaction to the sensual nature of a few of the nude works in the exhibition. Museum officials felt that some members of the community would see these works as contradictory to the moral standards and values of the LDS Church and cause a controversy that would subsume the intended experience of the exhibition. What museum officials did not anticipate was that having this exhibition at BYU caused the university leadership to experience the tensions of the

second level of the paradox, which led to an examination of whether or not the works were compatible with the university's paradoxical mission. Museum officials ultimately came to understand that there were certain issues relating to the second level of the autonomy-dependency paradox that would require them to relinquish their autonomy and fall in line with the university.

The combination of the museum's reaction to both levels of the autonomy-dependency paradox, coupled with the university's reaction to the second level of the paradox, produced two unintended negative consequences. The first unintended consequence was the polarization of the museum's stakeholders and publics. The decision not to exhibit the most well-known sculptures by an important artist for religious reasons was viewed as censorship by many on campus and in the community, as well as by the news media and professionals at other museums. While many people on campus and in the community agreed with and supported the university decision, others, including BYU students, were torn by the paradoxical tensions manifest in the aftermath of the university decision. One student reported, "I understand that there is a really fine line when it comes to art and what is acceptable . . . and what is considered indecent as far as BYU is concerned" (Sonne, 1997b, ¶ 18). The second unintended consequence was that these paradox-influenced decisions thrust the museum into the very situation it was trying to avoid: allowing questionable works to overshadow the exhibition. The museum had originally intended for this exhibition to continue, albeit on a smaller scale, the public relations effort of bringing crowd-pleasing blockbuster exhibitions to the museum to raise community awareness of the new institution. However, the combination of a market-oriented exhibition, a concerted effort to excite the media about the exhibition, and a ban

on the most significant works in that exhibition by a university that aspired to accommodate both intellectual and spiritual missions caused the museum to operate in crisis communication mode, defending decisions rather than promoting the exhibition.

Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World

The *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World* case study clearly demonstrates that museum officials had a better recognition and understanding of both levels of the autonomy-dependency paradox because of the Rodin experience. By the time of the Mediterranean exhibition, museum staff had a different orientation to the first level of the paradox. The newly formulated museum mission was focused more on showing visitors what the museum thought they needed to see rather than on showing people what they wanted to see. The museum had even begun a new public relations campaign to change the image of the museum in the minds of its stakeholders and publics to reflect its new mission. In the years since the Rodin exhibition, the museum had shown a number of contemporary art exhibitions to change the perception of the museum from a place to see blockbuster exhibitions to a center for ideas and learning, where exhibitions were not intended to create a spectacle, but required deeper thought and contemplation from museum visitors. As a result of the increased focus on academically based exhibitions, the marketing and public relations efforts of the museum in relation to the exhibitions changed as well. Instead of trying to excite the news media in hopes of drawing large crowds to the Mediterranean exhibition, museum personnel decided to focus their efforts on the groups most likely to benefit from the academic discourse of the exhibition.

Museum of Art staff also had adopted a more proactive approach to the second level of the autonomy-dependency paradox by the time of the Mediterranean exhibition.

From the moment museum officials seriously began to consider the exhibition, the issue of the nude works in the show immediately came to the forefront. Once again, museum officials felt these works had significant educational and cultural value, but knew from experience that these nude works could potentially activate the second level of the paradox. One museum staff member described that the museum now understood that there were “some things the museum can do more of and some things the museum can do less of” (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009). However, having a better understanding of the paradox does not remove the tensions it creates. This same staff member as much, describing how making these tough decisions was still difficult and somewhat painful for a staff comprised of individuals with “quite a bit of art historical sophistication and appreciation” (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009).

In spite of this deeper understanding, museum officials still were struggling to determine how much influence other groups, especially the community, had on their ability to make decisions regarding the secular/religious dualism of the university. One staff member affected by these paradoxical tensions explained, “I think we don’t let the community dictate our exhibition program, but it would be really ridiculous to ignore them and not respect their sensitivities” (Interviewee 6, personal communication, February 5, 2009). They also realized that if forced to make a decision that was not acceptable in the professional museum community, museum officials would side with the university and its primary audiences rather than seek the approval of their peers. “We can’t be all things to all people. We like to blend in. We like to say, ‘look we are just like everybody else . . .’ But there comes a point where our doctrine becomes evident and we

need to uphold those differences” (Interviewee 10, personal communication, February 18, 2009). In the end, museum officials felt that these works were not sensual in nature and were such an important part of the exhibition that they would try to include them.

In an attempt to live within both levels of the autonomy-dependency paradox, museum officials identified the stakeholders that could potentially constrain the museum’s behavior early in the exhibition planning process. Because one of the main audiences for this exhibition was projected to be middle-school age students, museum staff members realized they needed the support of the Utah State Office of Education to assure school teachers that the exhibition was appropriate for their students. Even though museum officials did not feel that the nude works in this exhibition would cause problems for university students and faculty, they recognized that the university administration would have to approve and support this decision as well because displaying the works would be seen as institutional, and by extension, church support of these works. Finally, museum officials recognized the need to contextualize these works in the gallery space to help community visitors going through the galleries on their own to understand why these works were included, and why they were an important part of the educational experience of the exhibition.

Paradox Management Strategies

Museum officials used different paradox management strategies in the two cases reviewed in this study, providing additional insight into their level of understanding of the paradox. One interpretation of the events leading up to the university’s decision about the Rodin sculptures is that museum officials adopted a defensive mechanism to deal with the potential embarrassment or threat posed by the paradoxical tensions of the Rodin

situation (see Argyris, 1988). When museum officials decided to approach the university administration, they were seeking the administration's support and assistance in dealing with what they saw as a potential negative reaction from the community. It could be argued that the museum's decision to go along with the university's decision, even though some members of the museum staff felt that some of the works should not be excluded, was evidence of first-order thinking characteristic of defensive mechanisms, which are primarily used "to preserve the fundamentals of the existing order of things by changing the non-fundamentals" (Esterhuysen, 2003, p.2). By going along with the university's decision, the museum would be seen institutionally as a team player and not be sanctioned for stepping out of line with the university.

Another interpretation of the events leading to the university's decision about the Rodin sculptures is that museum officials adopted a compromise approach to deal with the paradox. According to da Cunha et al. (2007), compromising to paradoxical tensions can take the form of a contingency approach "where the organization chooses the right mix of opposites" (p. 14). van de Ven and Poole (1988) described this strategy as taking the "role of time into account," (p. 24). Similar to the contingency approach, when looking at paradox from a temporal perspective "one horn of the paradox is assumed to hold at one time and the other at a different time," (van de Ven & Poole, 1988, p. 24). Museum officials enjoyed considerable autonomy in their ability to determine the museum's exhibition program up until the point that museum officials realized that the Rodin exhibition they agreed to exhibit might cause problems for the university and the community. Because museum officials were under the impression that the exhibition had been approved institutionally they felt like they were being responsible in inviting the

university president to the opening of the exhibition to assist the museum in quelling any negative response from the public. Once the university president realized that some of these works were more problematic than museum officials thought they were, museum officials abandoned the autonomy horn of the paradox in favor of the dependency horn, subjecting themselves and their decision making to the university to ensure the moral and religious integrity of the institution. After the controversy was over, museum officials returned to the autonomy horn of the paradox, selecting and exhibiting exhibitions without much intervention from the university. In fact many museum staff members felt that their support of the university's decision resulted in increased trust in their decision making.

The museum's decision to support the university in the Rodin decision did not propel the museum into a self-destructive reinforcing cycle. On the contrary, by the time museum officials began dealing with the nudity issue in the *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World* exhibition, they had learned to recognize the paradox and live within the limits of their autonomy. Being aware of the paradox and learning to live with it constitutes the paradox management strategy of acceptance (Cameron & Quinn, 1988; da Cunha et al., 2007; Lewis, 2000; van de Ven & Poole, 1988). van de Ven and Poole (1988) argued that acceptance is a good first step in dealing with paradox because individuals and organizations "acknowledge that things need not be consistent; that seemingly opposed viewpoints can inform one another" (p. 23). This strategy allowed museum decision makers to exercise autonomy in deciding to exhibit the nude works, which they felt were an integral part of the exhibition, while at the same time acknowledging that they needed to secure support from the stakeholders that would be

affected by their decision. As a result of the university's increased trust in the museum, and the perceived broad autonomy of the museum, in the wake of both the Rodin and the *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World* exhibitions, museum officials seem to be flirting with a strategy for transcendence of the paradox, namely that increased organizational autonomy is directly related to increased recognition of organizational dependence.

Structuration, Authenticity, and Relationships

This study also proposed that organizations could use structuration theory and authenticity to think divergently about the autonomy-dependency paradox. These theories suggest that organizations should not try to manage or control their publics to preserve their autonomy, but that organizations should recognize their dependence in the relationship and manage their own reactions to the tensions caused by the paradox.

Structuration

According to structuration theory, social structures, or mutually understood norms of behavior, are “the medium and the outcome” of social interactions between individual agents through space and time (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). This study proposed that structuration theory could provide a framework to assist organizations in thinking divergently about the autonomy-dependency paradox. Organizations that adopt a structuration perspective acknowledge that they are dependent on the relationship structures that have been co-created and will be reproduced by interactions with stakeholders and publics (Erickson, 1995; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002) and recognize that stakeholders and publics can influence the relational structure through their agency (Rawlins & Stoker, 2002; Eagly, 2005; Stoker & Tusinski, 2006).

The case studies presented in this research clearly demonstrate that structuration

theory can be a useful tool in helping organizations manage their responses to tensions produced the autonomy-dependency paradox. *The Hands of Rodin* case study illustrates the problems that result when organizations do not understand the relational structures that have been co-created over time and space with stakeholders and publics, and fail to acknowledge the agency of these groups to affect those structures. This case study also underscores the danger organizations face when they engage in routine action—assuming that because certain actions have been successful in the past that those actions will continue to be successful in the future. *The Art of the Mediterranean World* case study demonstrates the ability of organizations to work within the parameters of existing relational structures while recognizing the agency of stakeholder and publics to achieve structural change that is mutually accepted by all relational partners. This case study also shows the importance of reflexive action, or the ability to understand and explain the logic and reason of organizational actions.

Hands of Rodin

Duality of structure. Structure and action are the two components of Giddens' duality of structure. The duality of structure recognizes both the influence of co-created relational structures to enable and constrain the action of individuals and the ability of individuals to reproduce or change relational structures through agency and action. The *Hands of Rodin* case study demonstrates that museum officials did not understand the relational structures they had co-created with stakeholder groups at the time they initially made the decision to host the Rodin exhibition. This case study also demonstrates that museum officials did not recognize the agency of the stakeholder groups that would be affected by this decision. Because museum officials did not understand these relational

structures or recognize the agency of stakeholders to affect the structures, the relational outcome museum officials expected from their action was not the same as the relational outcome that actually occurred. Many of the museum personnel interviewed for the case study expressed surprise at the reactions of various stakeholder groups both to the initial decision to host the exhibition and the subsequent decision to withhold the four works from the exhibition.

While museum officials seemed perplexed by the contentious outcome of the situation, it appears that the medium of the museum's interaction and the outcomes of it were, in fact, the same as predicted by Giddens. The museum's actions in contracting for the Rodin exhibition were based on misunderstanding—misunderstanding of the museum's reasons for wanting to bring the exhibition to BYU and misunderstanding of the expectations of stakeholders about the kinds of artworks that are appropriate for the BYU Museum of Art to exhibit. Because misunderstanding was the medium of interaction initiated by the museum, the outcome of this interaction was also misunderstanding—misunderstanding with the university administration, with the Cantor Foundation, with BYU students, with professional peers, and with members of the community. Three main factors contributed to the museum's misunderstanding of relational structure and the agency of affected stakeholder groups: 1) The museum was a new institution that was still forming relationships with stakeholders and publics; 2) The still-forming relational structures enabling and constraining the museum were subjected to radical change just prior to the Rodin exhibition; and 3) Museum officials were not reflexive about their actions, relying instead on routine actions established before the structural changes occurred.

The first factor contributing to the museum's lack of understanding was that the museum was still a relatively new institution at the time of the Rodin exhibition. According to structuration theory, interactions require that individuals are brought into close enough proximity to interact with each other. Multiple interactions over time form and codify social structures, which individuals store in their memories until a time and a place where individuals are reunited and social structures are retrieved from the memory to produce and reproduce interaction (Banks & Riley, 1993). Although the university had been collecting and exhibiting art for many years, the structures enabling and constraining the relationships between BYU's first publicly accessible art museum and multiple stakeholder groups were still being "formed, codified, memorialized, and concretized" over space and time (Banks & Riley, 1993, p. 176). During the first four years of the museum's existence, museum officials had many opportunities to interact with university administrators because museum exhibitions went through an approval process that involved the dean of the college and other university leaders. Museum staff members were faced with a few opportunities to consider questions about when and how to show works of art that contained nudity in the context of a religious university. These multiple interactions with university officials and among museum staff members formed the basis of how museum staff members understood the rules and resources of the museum's relationship with the university.

During the same time period, however, the museum had limited opportunity to interact with a wide range of off-campus publics and stakeholder groups. Two blockbuster exhibitions brought in hundreds of thousands of visitors and received attention from the news media for a limited period of time, but the remainder of the

exhibitions at the museum before the Rodin exhibition did not have a broad appeal. Because the majority of the community did not visit the museum regularly, museum officials did not have a well-defined understanding of the rules and resources that had been co-created through their interactions, and for that matter, neither did the individuals who comprised this group of visitors. Some of the interactions with more frequent museum visitors in the first few years of the museum's existence revolved around questions of nudity. Occasionally museum staff members addressed complaints from museum visitors about nude or semi-nude artworks on view in the museum. Because of the frequency of these interactions, museum officials had a better understanding of how this group of visitors would react to displays of nudity in the museum. This group also had come to understand how they could respond to museum actions with which they did not agree.

The second factor contributing to the museum's lack of understanding was that just prior to the Rodin exhibition, the relational structures that had guided the museum during its first few years were subjected to radical change in a relatively short period of time. These structural changes to the museum's relationships were the result of new actors assuming prominent and influential positions both inside and outside the museum. In a little less than a year's period of time, a new president was appointed at the university and a new director was hired at the museum. Both of these new actors brought with them strong beliefs about how their respective institutions should function. The new university president, who was a General Authority in the LDS Church, felt strongly that because the university was an integral part of the church, university personnel should use "the measuring rod of the gospel" to judge what and how to teach at BYU (Bateman,

1996, ¶ 31). This stance was an early indicator that the new president would be more prone to side with the religious mission of the institution, rather than its intellectual and academic mission.

The new museum director also brought a new philosophy to the museum. He was interested in transforming the museum from an institution that he perceived to focus on entertainment to an institution that actively contributed to the academic discourse of the university. It was not long after the new director's arrival that he and the museum staff began to work on a new mission for the museum. This meant that the museum was in a state of philosophical flux during the Rodin exhibition that affected the relational structures that had already been established with internal and external stakeholders. The director was also from a foreign country, which meant that not only would he have to learn the relational structures that had been established over time at the museum, he also would have to learn the relational structures associated with a new culture.

The death of B. Gerald Cantor, the founder of the Cantor Foundation, also played a role in the restructuring of the museum's relationships. In the wake of Cantor's death, the foundation placed increased significance on their traveling *Hands of Rodin* exhibition by turning it into a tribute to the prolific art collector. Not only did the exhibition take on sentimental value for the Cantor Foundation at the time of B. Gerald Cantor's death, but it also took on additional works that were not part of the original exhibition that the previous museum director agreed to exhibit. One of these works, *The Kiss*, would be at the center of the controversy surrounding the exhibition. Under the leadership of Cantor's wife Iris, the foundation now had a vested emotional interest in promoting the philanthropic efforts of its founder. This change would affect the way the foundation

responded to the university's announcement of not exhibiting the Rodin works.

In terms of structuration theory, these leadership changes not only affected the rules of the relational structures, but also affected the resources through which the new actors could exercise control in their relationships. Because of the museum's dependence on the university, the university had multiple resources at its disposal to ensure that the museum would act in accordance with university wishes. The addition of new objects to the exhibition also changed the resources of the museum's relationship with the university, the Cantor Foundation, and its visitors. The museum was now going to have on its premises one of the most-recognized sculptures of all time; and museum and university officials would have the ability to control their relational partners' access to it.

The third factor contributing to the museum's lack of understanding was that museum officials were not reflexive about their actions. Instead, they relied on routine actions established before the aforementioned structural changes occurred. Structuration theory explains that individuals are capable of actions based in self-reflection and motivated by individual goals, as well as actions that are based on habitual routines that are generally taken for granted (Banks & Riley, 1993; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002). Self-reflexive action, or reflexivity, represents an individual's ability to understand and explain the logic and reason of their actions (Rawlins & Stoker, 2002). Additionally reflexivity constitutes more than just self-consciousness or self-awareness. It signifies "being immersed in the continuous flow of action and deriving from experience a logic of action that enables agents to go on" (Banks & Riley, p. 177).

Museum staff members were not able to explain in much detail how the decision to bring the Rodin exhibition to the museum fit within their understanding of the

relational structures in place at the time, providing a clear indication that they did not understand the existing structures and were acting out of routine. Another indication that museum officials were not self-reflexive about their actions is that the museum director at the time did not involve key museum staff members in the decision to bring the exhibition to the university. Apparently this exhibition seemed like such a great opportunity that no discussion was needed on the affect the decision to host the exhibition might have on stakeholders and publics. The director also became less involved in the day-to-day operations of the museum after agreeing to bring the exhibition to BYU, leaving the task of clearing the exhibition with university officials to other museum staff members. Perhaps the strongest indication that museum officials relied on routine action was that after the exhibition had been approved by the dean of the college, museum personnel proceeded as if the exhibition was approved institutionally, even after aforementioned structural changes occurred at the university, the museum, and the Cantor Foundation.

The only mention made about the impact of the exhibition on groups outside the museum was that nudity might be an issue for certain visitors from off-campus. However, most staff members felt that Rodin was well-known enough that the exhibition would not be a problem. The tenor of the explanations seemed to indicate that the museum had never experienced serious problems with an exhibition before, so why would this exhibition be any different? Relying on routine action, rather than being reflexive about the rules and resources of relational structures, contributed to the museum's inability to recognize the autonomy-dependency paradox in this situation. Self-reflection about the relational structures the museum co-created with stakeholders and publics, as well as the

possible affects of the museum's decision to host the Rodin exhibition on those groups, would have revealed the dependencies the museum did not take into consideration when making the decision.

Structures of signification and legitimation. Structuration theory identifies two types of rule structures: structures of signification, which are created and reproduced through communication, and structures of legitimation, which represent relational norms that are legitimized through interaction (Harrison, 1994; Loyal, 2003). Organizations can foster structures of legitimation, or the ethical, legal, and cultural norms of social structures, through structures of signification, or communication (Rawlins & Stoker, 2002).

The interactions between museum officials and university administrators before the Rodin exhibition opened at the museum illustrate how two groups can experience congruent, or legitimate, change that is mutually constructed by two parties. Once museum administrators recognized that there might be a problem with some of the works in the Rodin exhibition, they entered into a two-month long dialog with university officials about how to handle the problematic works. In the end, the university president made the decision to withhold four works from the exhibition, including *The Kiss*. Museum officials supported the decision and even defended it publicly. The university president summarized the shared understanding between the university and the museum in the question and answer session for students near the end of the exhibition. He explained that the museum had to take into consideration the values of the larger community, and not just the university student body. He also explained that the university would avoid future controversies by not contracting to show exhibitions that may contain

questionable material. Most staff members felt that the experience of working closely with the university administration to make the decision and deal with the controversy without causing any additional problems helped to strengthen the relationship between the university and museum and to increase the university leaders' trust in museum decision makers.

There were also members of the community for whom the university's decision was a legitimation of existing relational structures. This group of people wrote letters to the editor defending the museum, the university, and the decision to withhold the Rodin sculptures. For example, one letter writer asked, "what is wrong with a private, religious institution deciding to display only artwork which is in harmony with the teachings of the religion that sponsors it?" (Ball, 1997, ¶ 1). Another letter writer explained that "it's refreshing to see an institution that stands up for what it believes, regardless of internal and external pressures to conform to society's prevailing attitude" (Jarman, 1997, ¶ 1). Members of this group also sent letters of support and phoned museum personnel to applaud them for standing up for standards of the LDS Church. For this group the decision did not need any explanation. The decision was consistent with the ethical, legal, cultural, and in this case in particular, religious norms to which they expected the university to adhere.

Structures of domination. Conversely, museum officials felt that their relationships with the groups that did not agree with the university's Rodin decision, including members of the community, as well as professional and academic peers who have the ability to veto loans of artworks and exhibitions, were damaged. Some of these organizations obviously felt that the museum had stepped far outside the bounds of

professional museum practice, expressing surprise and disappointment, and accusing museum officials and university leaders of censorship. These accusations were surprising to members of the museum staff. “I would never in a million years have thought that it would be that big a deal because museum cut pieces out of exhibitions all the time for various reasons” (Interviewee 1, personal communication, January 16, 2009).

From a structuration theory perspective, the university and museum adversely affected these relationships by controlling access to the resources that were an integral part of the relationship: the four sculptures that were physically on the museum premises but kept out of sight in their shipping crates. There were ten letters to the editor in local papers that accused museum and university administrators of attempting to exercise control over them by not exhibiting the sculptures. According to structuration theory, resources are the capabilities that allow one partner to exert influence or control over another in a social interaction (Banks & Riley, 1993; Harrison, 1994). Harrison (1994) referred to interactions based on resources as structures of domination; other scholars have noted that structural changes based on resource domination are not long-lasting because weaker partners are forced to change in ways that may be incompatible with their values, potentially resulting in the power balancing mechanisms of resource dependency (Rawlins & Stoker, 2001; see also Emerson, 1962).

In addition to controlling access to the resources of the relationship, museum and university officials failed to recognize the agency of these stakeholder groups. Before the Rodin decision was made, museum officials and university administrators did not consult with any of the groups that reacted negatively when the decision was announced. Most notable among these groups was the Cantor Foundation, whose officers were told about

the university's final decision three days before the exhibition opened. These groups were not a concern for university and museum officials in thinking about what to do with the questionable Rodin works.

The explanations of the university's decision to withhold the works also seem to indicate that the museum and university were not interested in the agency of these publics, but were more interested in controlling what those who would come to the exhibition would think and feel. These communications had an air of elitism and paternalism to those who felt that they could not exert influence in the relationship. Some of these messages, for example, explained that university and museum officials made the Rodin decision in the "best interests of the exhibit and the community" (Van Benthuisen, 1997b, ¶ 4) because in their view the artworks in question could cause viewers to concentrate on them in a way that is not good for us" (Van Benthuisen, 1997b, ¶ 5). Other communications from museum and university officials alluded to an organizational desire to control the visitor experience by withholding the artworks. For example, a museum spokesperson explained that the decision to withhold the works "was based on what would have altered people's view of the exhibit's intended meanings" (Godfrey, 1997, ¶ 6).

The power balancing mechanisms that these groups used to exert their agency consisted of protests covered by the media, and opinion pieces and letters to the editor in the local newspapers. The organizer of the student protest explained to the media that the main reason for the protest was that students were not consulted about the decision. He noted that "had students been included in the decision . . . we wouldn't have this protest" (Carter, 1997c, ¶ 13). The messages on student protest signs also expressed a desire to

exercise agency. These messages included such slogans as “Don’t define my culture,” and “We can protect ourselves” (Carter, 1997c; Cole & Sonne, 1997; Van Benthuisen, 1997c). Editorials in the various newspapers contained statements criticizing the decision because it limited individual agency and demonstrated a lack of trust. For example, a *Salt Lake Tribune* editorial lamented that “BYU students and thousands of other Utahns cannot be trusted to view ‘The Kiss’ and the other works and draw their own conclusions” while also pointing out that “the job of an art museum is to display the works and let each person form his or her own opinions” (“Closeting Rodin,” 1997, ¶ 6). As noted in the case study there were numerous letters to the editor of the campus, local and statewide newspapers that the explanations of the decision either did not make sense or that the university was trying to take away the writers’ ability to think and decide for themselves. One letter writer who sitting on the fence about the decision was excited to have the exhibition in Utah, but was concerned about the university saying that it was censoring works of art so people would not think the wrong thing.

Time, space, and reflexivity. After the Rodin controversy ended, it was apparent that museum officials had learned something about the relationship structures that had been created and reproduced with these groups as a result of their interactions during the controversy. In essence, the media coverage of the Rodin controversy enabled interaction between the museum and all of the museum’s stakeholders by bringing them into the same space. Additionally, the extended media coverage and three-month run of the exhibition provided the museum with multiple opportunities to interact with these stakeholder groups. In the end, the multiple interactions between the museum and its stakeholders caused museum personnel to become more reflexive about their actions and

resulted in museum personnel developing better understanding of their relational structures.

Many museum staff members made self-reflexive statements about the museum's actions in the Rodin controversy, recognizing the need to be more open and transparent with their stakeholders. Some noted that the Rodin experience made the museum "gun shy" (Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009; Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). One staff member in particular explained: "I think we are even more careful now than we were. I think that we are more sensitive to the fact that we are going to have a part of an audience that is greatly offended by a work of art" (Interviewee 2, personal communication, January 16, 2009). Another staff member reported that the museum's interaction with stakeholders through the media was "secretive and arrogant and a bit elitist, and I think that flowed over to the audience" (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009). Another staff member noted that the issue of nudity in art was touchy to begin with for people in Utah because members of the LDS Church have a wide range of views on the subject:

We want to be seen as respectable, responsible, mainstream people. We don't want to be marginalized. But we want to be different enough that being a Mormon makes a difference from being something else, and it's a kind of narrow pathway to walk sometimes. And I guess this was one of the places where we touched the boundaries. (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 13, 2009)

Much of what museum staff members learned from the Rodin experience influenced, to a great degree, the development of a new mission and vision for the museum that incorporated both the religious and academic facets of the museum's identity. The

experience was also an impetus for the museum to begin influencing their relational structures in a positive way by showing exhibitions that required deeper thought and engagement from visitors in stead of exhibitions that focused on famous artists and blockbuster works of art.

Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World

Duality of structure. The interaction of museum officials with the stakeholders who would be affected by the decision to show in the *Art of the Mediterranean World* exhibition demonstrated that museum officials had a better understanding of the museum's relationships with its stakeholders and understood the importance of allowing these stakeholders to exercise their agency in co-producing the structures of the relationship. Before museum officials signed the contract to bring this exhibition to the university they actively sought out the stakeholders who would be affected by their decision and discussed the matter of the nude works with them. These groups included the university administration, which had just experienced another change in leadership, and the Utah State Office of Education. The result of these discussions was that all of the relevant stakeholders came to agreement that these were the types of works that the museum should be exhibiting. Once again in this case study, the medium and the outcome were the same. Museum officials were sure of their actions, they better understood the potential reaction of their stakeholders, and they approached the issue of exhibiting the nude works with openness, transparency, and genuine dialog. The outcome of this interaction was open and transparent response from the museum's stakeholders and positive response to the resulting exhibition from the media and museum visitors.

Reflexive action. From the moment museum officials learned about the possibility

of bringing the *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World* exhibition to BYU, they were engaged in reflexive action. Museum officials did not rely on habitual or routine action, which proved to be so disastrous during the Rodin controversy. Museum officials recognized that the museum was “clearly in the post-Rodin era” and always would be because the Rodin controversy was such a “defining moment for the museum” (Interviewee 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009). The Rodin experience was so powerful on the minds of the museum staff that one expressed that there was not “any doubt that the Rodin experience has informed everything that we do around the subject [of nudity], ever” (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009). The controversy surrounding the Rodin decision helped museum personnel better understand potential community reactions, including the possible “flash points, both on the positive and negative side” of the issue (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009).

After some internal debate, museum personnel determined that the nude works were an integral part of the exhibition. They also determined that the nude works were consistent with the museum’s new mission and the university’s religious mission. After making this evaluation, museum personnel began the process of figuring out how to work within their existing relational structures to achieve legitimation for this decision through open and transparent communication and dialog. First, museum personnel drafted a strong rationale to argue for the inclusion of all the nude works in the exhibition. Next they devised a contextual framework that would surround these works in the gallery space, allowing museum visitors to understand the reasons for their inclusion. Finally, museum personnel prepared response strategies for visitors who were offended by the

works. Museum staff members than played an active role in communicating to these actions to the stakeholders who would be affected by the decision to bring the exhibition to the university.

Museum officials did not try to force their decision on these stakeholder groups by attempting to exercise control through relational resources, rather they acknowledged the agency of these groups to draw their own conclusions about the museum's decision. Museum officials expressed a "deep desire to remain respectful to the feelings of our audience" and made a serious effort to "examine the issues surrounding the appropriateness of making them [the nude works] available to our visitors" (Thompson, 2003, ¶ 2). As part of this process of recognizing the agency of stakeholders, museum employees called the Utah State Office of Education to get feedback about the museum's decision to exhibit the nude works in the exhibition before the museum contracted to bring the exhibition to BYU. Museum officials expected to get some push back from the state education office, but were pleasantly surprised to hear of their support for the decision. A similar example of recognizing the agency of museum stakeholders occurred when the museum worked with the university administrators to assure them that museum officials had done enough to contextualize the works, even though the university did not immediately accept the proposal from the museum. This negotiation with the university was also completed before museum officials signed the exhibition contract, leaving the door open to pass on the exhibition should negotiations not turn out the way museum officials anticipated.

Time, space, and structure. Additionally, the museum's positive engagement with stakeholders to create and reproduce relational structures since Rodin has seemed to heal

some of the museum's relationships with a few of the stakeholder groups that became defensive during the Rodin controversy. According to museum staff members, there has not been trouble borrowing works or contracting for exhibitions with other art institutions. Museum staff members report that they have attended many professional conferences and have not been treated poorly by their peers. And the museum's director was eventually accepted into the most prestigious association for art museum directors in North America. A few staff members commented that the museum's consistent program of "dynamic, adventurous, provocative, stimulating exhibitions" (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009) has built up relationships with a number of these groups over time. However some staff member also noted that there are some groups "whose views are never going to change" (Interview 5, personal communication, February 4, 2009).

Authenticity

Avolio and Gardner (2005) identified two fundamental principles necessary in achieving organizational authenticity: self-awareness and self-regulation. They defined organizational self-awareness as knowing the contextual factors that constitute an organization's existence over time. They defined self-regulation as a process of aligning organizational values with intentions and actions. Rawlins and Stoker (2002) noted that authenticity is crucial to the practical application of structuration theory in public relations because organizations must first become aware of how their actions will impact stakeholders before they can behave in ways that are respectful to their relational partners' agency. This study proposed that the literature on authenticity could provide an additional framework to assist organizations in becoming self-aware and self-regulating.

This study also proposed that organizations become self-aware by understanding what they value, why they have adopted those values, and the reasons they behave in certain ways (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002). Additionally, this study proposed that self-aware organizations must use their agency along with their knowledge of co-created relational structures to manage their own behavior and communication rather than that of their publics (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Eagly, 2005; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002; Rawlins & Stoker, 2006; Stoker & Tusinski, 2006).

The case studies in this research clearly demonstrate that when museum officials achieved a deeper sense of organizational self-awareness and understood the need for self-regulation, they were able to stay in the paradox, exploring its tensions rather than attempting to suppress them. This enabled museum officials to manage the museum's behavior and communication in relation to those tensions rather than resorting to defensive mechanisms focused on control and autonomy that exacerbate tensions for the museum's stakeholders and publics. Additionally, these case studies reveal that self-awareness and authenticity are fundamentally linked to paradox. The case studies show that the museum must understand and reconcile three different layers of its identity to become self-aware: 1) What it means to be an art museum; 2) What it means to be a university art museum; and, 3) What it means to be an art museum at a university operated by the LDS Church. The simultaneous interaction of these three different identities is the origin of both levels of the autonomy-dependency paradox experienced by the museum. The interaction of the first two layers of the museum's identity defines the first level of the paradox, and the interaction of the second two layers defines the second level of the paradox. Therefore, the paradoxes of museum vs. market and

academy vs. religion are embedded into the very fabric of the museum's existence and are integral components of the museum's identity. In other words, the BYU Museum of Art would not be the BYU Museum of art if both levels of the paradox did not influence its decisions and communication, and in order to become self-aware the museum must understand and embrace the paradoxes that define it.

Hands of Rodin

Self-awareness. The *Hands of Rodin* case study demonstrates that museum officials struggled with self-awareness. Museum officials were not organizationally self-aware because they had not yet come to understand the unique contextual factors that defined the museum's existence. One of those contextual factors was the autonomy-dependency paradox. As discussed earlier, in the first few years of the museum's existence, museum officials responded to the first level of the autonomy-dependency paradox by favoring market-dependence over museum autonomy. The initial decision to bring the Rodin exhibition to BYU reflected the same philosophy. Museum officials hoped that an exhibition featuring a well-known artist who had created iconic works of art would be exciting opportunity for the surrounding community. At the same time, museum staff members were also interested in the educational value the exhibition could provide for the students and professors on campus, who would have a rare opportunity to learn from these works in person rather than just studying them in a book. These two motivations for agreeing to host the exhibition demonstrate that museum officials were struggling to reconcile the first two levels of organizational self-awareness. Museum officials clearly understood what it meant to be an art museum in the broadest sense. With a schedule of high-profile exhibitions of wide public appeal, the museum was

positioning itself to be a regional destination for visual arts in Utah. However, museum officials had not come to terms with the second layer of its unique identity: the fact that the museum was also part of the academic university community. Although museum officials noted that the Rodin exhibition would be of educational value to university students and professors, this motivation almost seemed to be an afterthought. The main focus of the exhibition was directed off campus.

As previously explained, museum officials also struggled with the second level of the autonomy-dependency paradox, which has its roots in the third layer of the museum's identity: the university's affiliation with the LDS Church. Museum staff members were aware that the museum was expected to uphold the same standards of the LDS Church as the rest of the university. They also knew from experience that nude works of art were problematic for some museum visitors who thought an LDS university should exhibit nude artworks. However, museum officials wanted to show works of art that they thought were important, and they felt that problems with nudity in this exhibition could be overcome because of the iconic nature of the works. One staff member summed up the museum's attempts to deal with these paradoxical tensions by noting that these works were pushing the edge of what could be shown at the museum, even though these works were considered masterpieces.

The other contextual factor that museum officials did not understand was the relational structures that bound the museum to its stakeholders. As noted earlier, the newness of the museum coupled with the changing nature of the museum's relational structures resulted in museum officials not understanding their relational structures. Understanding the relational structures that bind organizations to stakeholders is

important because an organization's sense of self and its position within its environment can only be known in relation to an organization's past interactions with stakeholders and publics, as well as their "future expectations of who, what, and where the company should be" (Rawlins & Stoker, 2002, p. 272).

Some of the museum's stakeholders expressed their concern through the media that the museum's decision to bring the Rodin exhibition to BYU was not consistent with past interactions and did not meet their expectations for who, what, and where the museum should be. Representatives from the Cantor Foundation pointed out that any Rodin exhibition is going to contain nude works, implying that museum officials knew what they were getting into when they signed up for the exhibition. An article in a student run newspaper at the University of Utah questioned the museum's decision about the exhibition as well. "Knowing the subject matter represented by Rodin, and the way in which his nudes are portrayed, it is ludicrous BYU would opt to show the artist's work at all" ("Nudity at BYU," 1997, ¶ 5). An editorial in the *Deseret News* asked a similar question: "It would make more sense to simply not bring in the Rodin exhibit than to put it on display minus four of the pieces that art aficionados would most like to see" (Hicks, 1997, ¶ 9). The *Salt Lake Tribune* published an editorial that pointed out the irony in a religious university banning religious sculptures ("Closeting Rodin," 1997). Letters to local newspapers also asked the same question: "Why did BYU request this exhibit if it didn't agree with the content?" (Kerby, 1997, ¶ 5), and "Why agree to show a Rodin exhibit if you don't have a rooted appreciation for some of his most important works?" (Campbell, 1997, ¶ 4).

Explanations of why the decision the university made the decision to withhold the

four sculptures from the exhibition delivered by museum officials and university spokespeople to the media also reflected a lack of self-awareness to some stakeholder groups. These explanations were not consistent with the expectations these groups had of what an art museum should be—the first and second layers of the museum’s identity. The message that university and museum officials attempted to communicate to their stakeholders through the media was that they made the decision out of respect for the museum’s conservative community audience. The message of respect for community values remained a consistent theme in the statements made to the media by university spokespeople throughout the controversy although it took a few different forms that varied in their effectiveness. The most inauthentic statements reported by the media carried an air of superiority and control as noted in the previous section. These statements seemed to indicate that the university and museum wanted to prevent visitors from focusing on these questionable works so visitors would not think certain things. The statements also asserted that the works were pulled from the exhibition because they lacked dignity. The inconsistency was that museum leaders believed that the purpose of the art museum was to “connect and engage with an audience . . . and expand not only in number but in intellect and appreciation and . . . affection for art” in a way that encourages the appreciation of others and their ideas, and nurtures self-reflection and self-awareness (Interviewee 4, personal communication, January 23, 2009). This inconsistency between the explanation about why the decision was made and the true nature of the art museum experience was a key factor in the negative response of some stakeholders and publics to the decision.

One group in particular that took the museum and the university to task in the

media for being inauthentic was the Cantor Foundation. In the earliest media reports, foundation representatives expressed shock and disappointment that BYU was not going to exhibit these works. Additionally, foundation representatives noted that these works had never been a problem for any other institution, including other religiously affiliated museums that had hosted Cantor Foundation exhibitions. A few days later, when university and museum officials explained to the media that the works were pulled from the exhibition because they were not consistent with the curatorial intent of the exhibition—to examine the expressiveness of hands in Rodin’s work—Cantor Foundation representatives directly addressed the notion that the pulled works did not fit with the theme of the exhibition. A newspaper interview quoted a foundation representative saying, “Rodin’s subject matter is the nude figure, generally. If you get Rodin that’s what you get” (Carter, 1997b, ¶ 4). On NPR, the same representative commented that hands were an important element in the sculptures that were pulled:

The four pieces that were pulled are figurative and they contain hands which Rodin modeled to extend the meaning of the sculpture. And I think each one of them bring very individual, or they make the point, in four individual ways, of the way that Rodin was interested in showing expression through the hands.

(Wertheimer & Brandywine, 1997b, ¶ 7)

While some groups saw the museum’s public explanations of the Rodin decision as inauthentic, other groups felt that the decision and the explanations were completely authentic. The decision and the subsequent explanations were consistent with the expectations these groups had of what an art museum on the campus of an LDS Church-owned university should be—the third layer of the museum’s identity. While museum

officials mostly talked about concern for museum visitors, university officials explained that the decision was made to uphold the standards of the church. On a few occasions a university spokesman emphasized that BYU was “a peculiar place with a peculiar set of old fashioned values” (“Four Rodin,” 1997, ¶ 7). The same spokesman mentioned to another media outlet that the extensive coverage of the Rodin decision would be a net positive for the university and the museum:

I think they [people who see the media coverage] are going to get the right idea about BYU—and that is, we have certain standards that would cause others to regard us a peculiar or different or simply not following the mores of the world at large—and yes we admit to that and make no apology for it. (Sonne, 1997c, ¶ 10)

For the most part, people in these groups agreed with the decision, and even defended it in the media. However, as noted earlier there were those who shared a religious connection to BYU who felt that the decision reflected badly on the museum, the university, the LDS Church, and even the entire state of Utah. A sign carried by one of the student protesters sums up the angst felt by these conflicted people: “We know we are a peculiar people, but do we have to be a ridiculous people?” (Interviewee 13, personal communication, February 23, 2009). It could be argued that these people felt the paradoxical tensions created by this situation as acutely as museum staff members, who wanted to support the moral standards of the LDS Church and at the same time wanted to exhibit important works of art, indicating that they could have felt that the museum was simultaneously authentic and inauthentic. These paradoxical tensions coupled with feelings of helplessness in affecting the Rodin decision ultimately led to the protest on campus and the passionate letter writing campaigns.

Self-regulation. The *Hands of Rodin* case study also demonstrates that museum officials struggled with self-regulation. Museum officials did not self-regulate because they had not yet set internal standards against which they could assess discrepancies between their standards and the expected outcomes of their decisions. Because museum officials had not figured out how to reconcile the three layers of their identity, it was hard for them to set a standard against which to judge the decision to bring the Rodin exhibition to the museum. The outcome of the case study demonstrates that the third layer of the museum's identity was the most crucial in setting a standard against which to judge the decision; however, museum officials only appear to have seriously considered the first two layers of the museum's identity in initially judging the appropriateness of their decision.

Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World

The *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World* case study clearly demonstrates that museum officials had become more self-aware of the three layers of the museum's identity. Early in the evaluation of the exhibition, museum officials determined that the nude works in the show were not of the same order as the sensual, provocative works that caused the Rodin controversy. Staff members explained that classical sculpture has a certain air of conservatism because of its age and history of cultural acceptance. They felt that not showing these sculptures would be inconsistent with the mission of the museum and the educational message of the exhibition.

We are an educational institution, stretching minds and hearts, causing people to have a greater understanding of their place in the world and the production of other people and their thoughts about the world, and in the process appreciating

others and their ideas, developing empathy, forgetting oneself. And under those circumstances, as long as that which the artist is thinking is of value, is of worth to think about . . . then it's important for us to show it and enter into that kind of discussion. (Interviewee 8, personal communication, February 10, 2009)

Once museum officials determined that these works were in line with the mission of the museum, which also encompassed the mission and values of the university, they proceeded to engage the stakeholder groups that had a vested interest in the decision in open and transparent dialogue that was exposed for potential scrutiny regarding their reasons for the decision. It could be argued that these conversations were as much about convincing the stakeholders that the decision was the embodiment of the museum's true self as it was a discussion about concerns over nudity in the exhibition. It is also worth noting that the university administration had to be convinced that this decision was consistent with the mission and values of the museum and the university. This seems to indicate that museum officials were comfortable enough with the two levels of the paradox at this point that they could help other groups navigate through its tensions. Another indication that the museum's decision was seen to be authentic was that the media did not find the decision to show these works inconsistent. The media stories that were written about the exhibition were extremely positive. Museum visitors from campus and the community did not seem to see inconsistencies in this decision either as there were no complaints about the works, even though there was ample time in the year-long run of the exhibition for someone to complain.

These case studies illustrate that authenticity is "not an either/or experience" (Erickson, 1995, p. 122). Organizations are neither completely authentic nor completely

inauthentic, but somewhere in between because of the “complex, changing, and inconsistent” behaviors enacted by individuals (Erickson, 1995, p. 122), as demonstrated by the group of BYU students who protested the Rodin decision and other LDS Church members in the community who wrote to protest the decision on the editorial pages of local newspapers. As demonstrated by the actions of the museum in the *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World* case study, organizations become more authentic when they realize they are partners who must cooperate with other individual agents in the social construction of reality, because the authentic self both shapes and is shaped by social exchanges with others (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Eagly, 2005; Erickson, 1995).

Organizational authenticity. As demonstrated by the extensive preparations made by museum officials to discuss their decision to show the nude works in the *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World* with their stakeholders and contextualize the objects in the galleries for the museum visitors, maintaining organizational authenticity requires strength and commitment of organizational leaders to become self-aware and exercise self-control in the face of paradoxical tensions. The actions of museum officials documented in the *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World* case study demonstrate that Avolio and Gardner’s (2005) four characteristics of authentic leadership can be used effectively to help organizations be more authentic than inauthentic. Museum officials clearly had adopted a positive psychological stance that instilled within the organization confidence, optimism, hope, and resiliency needed to stand up for a decision they felt was authentic. Museum officials also adhered to positive moral perspectives, which Avolio and Gardner (2005) described as “an ethical and transparent decision making process” (p. 324), by openly communicating with stakeholders about the reasons they made the

decision and preparing communication materials to explain their reasoning to potentially disgruntled visitors.

During the evaluation of the *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World* exhibition, museum officials demonstrated a clear understanding of organizational goals and also of the context that defined the museum's existence. Engaging the stakeholders who had a vested interest in the decision early in the process and the care that went into developing the contextual framework surrounding the works in the exhibition space indicate that the museum officials were acutely aware of all three layers of the museum's identity as well as the relational structures also a key component of that identity. Based on their experiences in the Rodin exhibition and their new understanding of the mission of the museum, museum officials had set internal standards by the time of the *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World* exhibition. While evaluating the exhibition, they exercised self-control discussing the discrepancies between museum standards and the outcomes of potential decisions, which were influenced by paradoxical tensions. Ultimately, as a result of this process, they identified a way to reconcile internal museum standards with external behavior.

Authenticity and Agency

These case studies demonstrate that self-awareness is not a destination point, but an emerging process that is influenced by the paradoxical tensions that define organizations and organization-public relationships. As organizations become self-aware, they have a better ability to self-regulate which keeps them in the midst of the paradox, to explore its tensions rather than succumb to them. Organizational authenticity also has an interesting implication for public relations practice. According to Lindholm (2008) a key

component of the idea of authenticity is that individual agents can make personal judgments based on their own “inner light” about whether they want to be involved with a certain institution or not (p. 7). Lindholm (2008) explained that just as a “dissatisfied congregant had a duty to find another church more in tune with his or her values,” authentic individuals began to make similar decisions about the government (p. 7). If religion or government did not have the same values, “the citizen had an obligation to stand up in opposition and seek, or establish, an alternative collective that would offer a more genuinely authentic reality” (Lindholm, 2008, p. 7). A common theme mentioned by museum staff members was that no matter how many excellent exhibitions the museum hosts or long the museum may go without a controversy, there will be some stakeholders who will never forget the Rodin controversy or forgive the museum for it.

Even though organizations may become self-aware and develop the ability to self-regulate, there may be stakeholder groups or publics that decide that the organization no longer shares their values and may look elsewhere to fulfill their impulse to be part of an authentic collective. This is not an indication that the organization is no longer trustworthy. It is an indication that the organization is not holding anything back. The organization has become the embodiment of its authentic self which has allowed the stakeholder group or public to decide on for itself whether it wants to continue the relationship or not. In this situation organizations can adopt the conflict management strategy identified in the organization-public relationship literature of agreeing to disagree (Hon & Grunig, 1999) instead of trying to force a two-way symmetrical relationship with an uninterested party. However, organizations should always leave the door open for reconciliation with these stakeholder groups should they decide to align

themselves with the organization again in the future.

Summary

In summary, the *Hands of Rodin* case study demonstrated that museum officials did not recognize the autonomy-dependency paradox, did not understand their changing relational structures, and were not organizationally self-aware. These factors combined to create a situation in which the museum lost its autonomy, was viewed as inauthentic by some stakeholder groups, and ultimately brought to pass the very situation it was trying to avoid. The *Art of the Mediterranean World* case study demonstrated that over time, the museum became a self-aware and self-regulating organization because it recognized the autonomy-dependency paradox and understood the relational structures that bound the museum to its stakeholders and publics. Museum officials realized that by recognizing and working within existing relational structures and acknowledging the agency of stakeholder groups, they were able to exercise more autonomy in making decisions that affected those groups. Their actions also demonstrated their trust in these groups as well as their own organizational trustworthiness. The result was a well-attended, complaint-free exhibition. These findings indicate that organizations can foster stronger relationships with stakeholder groups and publics by recognizing their relational dependence, by acknowledging the agency of stakeholders and publics to act independently of the organization's desires, and by becoming self-aware and self-regulating. These four factors can have a significant impact on assisting organizations in coping with paradoxical tensions.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Art museum administrators are confronted with a paradox when making decisions that have consequences on their stakeholders and publics. If art museums become too dependent on their governing bodies or their visitors in the decision-making process, they will likely face the protests of a vociferous art community seeking to protect the art museum as an institution of high culture. If art museums feel they are completely autonomous, at liberty to collect and exhibit artworks that are too extreme or avant garde for the communities they represent, they will likely face the prospect of community outcry and possible public sanction. According to Zolberg (1994), this paradox forces art museums to make an either/or choice between providing “a safe haven for high art” or “catering to a crowd [the museum] did not select” (p. 49). In the words of Janes and Sandell (2007), two of the key complexities “that buffet museums like a strong wind” are the economic view “of marketplace thinking in museum management” and the self-referential view of the museum’s “ability to be guided by a clear sense of purpose and values” (p. 8). They asserted that “creatively managing the tension between market forces and museum missions may turn out to be the most vital issue confronting museums in the twenty-first century” (p. 8).

In the case of the BYU Museum of Art, museum officials must negotiate the tensions of the autonomy-dependency paradox on two different levels. On the first level, museum administrators must negotiate the tensions created by their desire to show visitors works of art that museum officials think they need to see and their need to bring

visitors to the museum be showing works of art that visitors want to see. On the second level, museum officials are pulled and pushed by the tensions that are inherent part of BYU's intellectual/academic and spiritual/religious mission. The inability of museum personnel to recognize these paradoxical tensions in relation to the *Hands of Rodin* exhibition and subsequently be negatively influenced by them, both in decision making and communication, demonstrates the necessity for public relations practitioners to assist organizations in recognizing and managing organization reactions to paradoxical tension.

The paradoxical tensions that push and pull organizations and their stakeholders between the dual realities of autonomy and dependence can cause any organization to misuse the public relations function. Responding to these paradoxical tensions without a framework to understand them and respond effectively to them can cause organizations to define public relations in terms of either/or dichotomies: symmetrical or asymmetrical, one-way or two-way, pro-active or reactive, and socially responsible or self-interested (Rawlins & Stoker, 2007, July). Additionally, paradoxical tensions can influence practitioners to promise management that the public relations function can establish and maintain "mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on which its success depends" (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1994, p. 6) when organizations and the public relations practitioners they employ only have control over their own actions and communication strategies.

As noted by Cameron and Quinn (1988b), studying paradox allows for "richer analyses in which we are forced to look more deeply than usual, and to ask about the positive opposites that might not be recognized in a given situation" (p. 304). This research reveals that using a framework that utilizes structuration theory and authenticity

to assist organizations in understanding the autonomy-dependency paradox in organization-public relationships can help organizations avoid defensive reactions and destructive self-reinforcing cycles by managing their own behavior and identity, which in turn will improve relationships with stakeholders and publics.

The case studies in this research demonstrated that relationships between organizations and their publics are defined by interdependence, or the centripetal and centrifugal forces of autonomy and dependence, and that the constant tension between the two poles of this paradox influence the decision making of the relational partners. This study found that acceptance was a good first step in dealing with paradox that could lead to transcendent breakthroughs in the future. For instance, the idea mentioned indirectly by museum staff members that increased organizational autonomy is directly related to increased recognition of organizational dependence on stakeholders.

This study also demonstrated that organizational leaders should adopt a structuration theory perspective of their relationships with their stakeholders and publics. This perspective can help organizations think divergently about the autonomy-dependency paradox by assisting them in realizing they are dependent on the relationship structures that have been co-created and will be reproduced by interactions with stakeholders and publics (Erickson, 1995; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002), and in recognizing that stakeholders and publics can influence the relational structure through their agency (Eagly, 2005; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002; Stoker & Tusinski, 2006). This study found that organizational acknowledgement of the agency of stakeholders and publics is a key step in moving organizations deeper into paradoxical tension where true breakthroughs can be achieved and reinforcing cycles can be avoided.

Finally, this study showed that organizations that consider their authenticity can more effectively negotiate paradoxical tensions by managing organizational responses to those tensions rather than attempting to manage the behavior of their stakeholders. This perspective also can assist organizations in thinking paradoxically by encouraging organizations to become self-aware (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002), and to use their knowledge of relational structures along with their understanding of their authentic selves to self-regulate (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Eagly, 2005; Rawlins & Stoker, 2002; Rawlins & Stoker, 2006, March; Stoker & Tusinski, 2006). This study found that organizational leaders can use the principles outlined in the theory of authentic leadership to find the strength to withstand paradoxical tensions, allowing the organization to be more authentic than inauthentic, and to part ways with stakeholder groups or publics that no longer want to be associated with the organization.

Future Research

While this research underscores the complexities of dealing with paradox in organization-public relationships, and provides support for a framework that can enable organizations to think divergently about this paradox, it simply provides a starting point for future research. This case study analysis has dissected and contextualized past events in the specific organizational context of a university art museum in an effort to evaluate the viability of its research propositions. Additional case study research needs to be conducted to evaluate the viability of the research propositions for organizations in other industries and contexts. More research also needs to be conducted to evaluate the viability of the theoretical framework proposed in this research in assisting organizations in thinking paradoxically about the autonomy-dependency paradox during their real-time

decision making. Since paradoxes require divergent thinking, researchers using quantitative methodologies would be hard pressed to use convergent measures to evaluate the theoretical framework for thinking about relationships proposed in this study.

However, it may be possible to measure the effectiveness of this framework in terms of the strength and health of organization-public relationships. This could be done by using a co-orientation approach to measure the perceptions of the organization-public relationships of the organization and of its publics. Ideally, the organization involved in this research will have adopted the paradox framework proposed in this study to test its affect on organization-public relationships. Future studies could use Hon and Grunig's (1999) relational measures of control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, commitment, exchange relationship, and communal relationship.

Future research should explore the links between structuration theory, authenticity and Hon and Grunig's (1999) relational measure of trust. The results of this research make a strong case for the relationship between authenticity and the trustworthiness of organizations. The results also demonstrate that organizational authenticity fits well with the three dimensions of trust proposed by Hon and Grunig (1999): 1) Integrity, or "the belief that an organization is fair and just," 2) Dependability, or "the belief that an organization will do what it says it will do," and 3) Competence, "the belief that an organization has the ability to do what it says it will do" (p. 19). Organizational acknowledgement of the agency of stakeholders and publics is a key step in moving organizations deeper into paradoxical tension where true breakthroughs can be achieved and reinforcing cycles can be avoided. The recognition of agency is also a demonstration of trust, a key component in organization-public relationships (Hon & Grunig, 1999).

Additionally, while much of the public relations literature focuses on what organizations can do to become more trustworthy in organization-public relationships, Rawlins (2007) noted that there is evidence in recent research to suggest “that trust can only be gained in relationships when the autonomy of both parties in the relationship is respected and even enhanced” (¶ 33). Rawlins (2007) explained that PR culture often encourages adversarial relationships where audiences can be seen as pawns in a larger power struggle. This view of public relations practice is antithetical to trust because the organization does not open itself to stakeholders and publics and does not recognize their agency to act and influence the relationship. Future research should also explore the links between trust and the concept of agency proposed in structuration theory, which can play an important role in making the recognition of stakeholder and public agency a key component of organizational-public relationship research.

Finally, future research should also explore the viability of using an issues management framework to assist organizations in dealing with paradox. Issues management could be useful in determining which issues are most likely to increase paradoxical tensions for organizations, allowing organizational decision makers time to develop strategies based on second-order thinking to address the paradox. Heath (2002) explained that issues management should be viewed as a “stewardship for building, maintaining and repairing relationships with stakeholders and stakeholders.” (p. 210). Using a paradox framework, issues management would require that organizations identify and scan for potential issues and situations that can arise with different stakeholder groups and publics that have the potential to increase paradoxical tensions. Once these issues are identified organizations can begin to prepare for how they will

respond in these situations so the shock of the paradox will not send an organization into defensive mechanisms and reinforcing cycles when paradoxical tensions are suddenly manifest.

It is hoped that this research will serve as a starting point for future researchers to examine other paradoxes inherent in the theory and practice of public relations.

Hopefully, this research provides insights that can be valuable in helping organizations think divergently about the paradoxes in public relations that have yet to be explored.

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APPENDIX A

Research Subject Consent to Participate

Introduction: This research is being conducted by Christopher Wilson in partial fulfillment for the Masters of Arts program in Mass Communication at Brigham Young University. The aim of this study is to gain a better understanding the relational dynamics between organizations and their publics and stakeholders through a case study of two past exhibitions at the BYU Museum of Art. You were selected to participate in this study because you worked at the museum during the planning and implementation of one of these exhibitions under consideration.

Procedures: For this study you will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher regarding your role in planning and mounting either the *Hands of Rodin* exhibition in 1997 or the *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World* exhibition in 2004, or both. Questions will include information about your recognition of potential problems with artworks in the exhibitions, your feelings about the nature of the situation caused by these artworks, your feelings about the decisions made about these artworks, and your evaluation of the congruence between the decisions and the mission and values of the museum as well as the congruence between the decision and the museum's communication with its publics. If you agree to participate in this study, the researcher will contact you to schedule an appointment for an interview. Interviews will last approximately 30 minutes to one hour.

Risks: There are minimal risks for participation in this study. However, you may feel emotional discomfort when answering questions about personal beliefs. The researcher will try to be sensitive to this.

Benefits: There are direct benefits to those who participate in this study because the results may help the museum improve its relationships with its publics. Additionally, it is hoped that this study will result in a better understanding of the relational dynamics between organizations and their publics that can be applied beyond the scope of the museum.

Confidentiality: All information provided in the research process will remain confidential and will only be reported as group data without identifying information. All data, including tapes and transcriptions from the interviews will be kept in secured storage. Only those directly involved with the research will have access to the interviews. After the research is completed, the questionnaires and tapes will be destroyed.

Participation: Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate entirely.

Questions about the Research: If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Christopher Wilson by email at chris_wilson@byu.edu or by phone at (801) 422-8287, or Dr. Bradley Rawlins at brawlins@byu.edu or by phone at (801) 422-1697.

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants: If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact Christopher Dromey, PhD, IRB Chair, Brigham Young University, 133 TLRB, Provo, UT 84602, dromey@byu.edu, (801) 422-6461.

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will and volition to participate in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

Research Protocol

Interviewees will be contacted initially in-person or by telephone to inquire about their willingness to participate in this research study. They will be informed that:

- The purpose of the study is to better understand the dynamics of relationships between organizations and their publics and stakeholders.
- Interviews will last from 30-45 minutes.
- All information shared during the research process will be confidential and that only the interviewer will have the names of interview participants.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Participants will receive a copy of the transcription to review for accuracy and clarification.
- If participants are willing to participate they will be asked to sign an informed consent form.
- Participants can withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.
- Participants may be asked to participate in a member check of the case study narrative that will comprise the findings section of the research study.
- A copy of the final report will be supplied to interested participants.
- Interview dates, times and locations will be arranged for all individuals who willingly agree to participate in the research project.

Interview Questions:

RQ1) Did museum decision makers recognize the paradox and/or the elements contributing to the paradox?

1. When did you first realize that there was a potential problem with the nude artworks in the exhibition?
2. Why did you think it was going to be a problem?
3. Who did you think it was going to be a problem for?
4. What did you think their reaction would be? Why?
5. How would you describe the situation the museum was in because of these artworks?

RQ2) How did museum decision makers experience the tensions of the paradox?

1. Do you remember what it felt like to be in this situation? Can you describe it for me?
2. Were there pressures on the museum to behave a certain way?
3. Where did those pressures come from?
4. How influential on the museum were they?

RQ3) How did organizational decision makers view the organization's relationships with

its publics?

1. Once the decision about the artworks was made, how did expect the museum's various publics/stakeholders to react?
2. Why did you feel they would react this way?
3. How did the publics'/stakeholders' actual reactions to the decision about the artworks affect your view of the museum's relationships with them?

RQ4) Did organizational decision makers believe they stayed true to the values and mission of the organization in their decision making?

1. Do you feel that the decision about the artworks was consistent with the mission and values of the museum? Why do you feel that way?
2. Is there anything that could have been done to ensure that this decision was consistent with the mission of the museum and its values?

RQ5) Did organizational decision makers believe their communication with their publics was aligned with their decision making?

1. Do you feel that the way the decision about the artworks was communicated to the museums publics/stakeholders was consistent with the reasons the decision was made? Why do you feel that way?
2. Is there anything that could have been done to improve communication about this decision with the museum's publics/stakeholders?

APPENDIX C

Interview Participants

Interview #	Interview Date	Exhibition	Sex
Interview 1	January 16, 2009	Rodin	F
Interview 2*	January 16, 2009	Rodin	F
Interview 3*	January 23, 2009	Rodin	M
Interview 4*	January 23, 2009	Rodin	M
Interview 5	February 4, 2009	Mediterranean	F
Interview 6	February 5, 2009	Mediterranean	M
Interview 7	February 6, 2009	Mediterranean	F
Interview 8**	February 10, 2009	Mediterranean	M
Interview 9**	February 13, 2009	Mediterranean	F
Interview 10**	February 18, 2009	Mediterranean	M
Interview 11	February 19, 2009	Mediterranean	F
Interview 12	February 20, 2009	Mediterranean	F
Interview 13	February 23, 2009	Rodin	M
Interview 14	March 12, 2009	Rodin	F

* Rodin interviewees who were also interviewed for Mediterranean exhibition

* Mediterranean interviewees who were also interviewed for Rodin exhibition