

## BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PROPAGANDA: PUBLIC CONTROVERSY OVER PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY DESIGN

Gordon R. Mitchell and Jennifer Kirk

*While there is abundant scholarship on extant presidential libraries, rejected presidential library proposals are comparatively understudied. Here, we analyze the public controversies surrounding Richard Nixon's and Ronald Reagan's ill-fated plans for housing their presidential libraries at Duke and Stanford Universities, respectively. These parallel cases offer a glimpse into what Thomas Farrell terms "social knowledge in controversy" – episodes where prevailing social precedents governing human decision-making evolve in the crucible of public argument. What are the presumptions about how presidential libraries should be built and operated? How did they shape the public argument at Duke and Stanford during the early 1980s, and in turn, how did those schools' ultimate decisions to reject the Nixon and Reagan Library proposals reinforce or mold the presumptions? Through examination of primary documents housed at the Stanford and Duke University archives, we generate insight regarding the evolving political function of presidential libraries, and explore the utility of Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's theory of argumentation as a tool of rhetorical criticism. Such inquiry is especially timely in the contemporary milieu, where public controversy simmers regarding the 43<sup>rd</sup> American president's future library at Southern Methodist University, and where issues of government transparency and accountability persist as salient topics of public and scholarly concern. **Key-words:** Presidential libraries, Perelman, Olbrechts-Tyteca, argumentation, controversy.*

When Professor of Economics James Rosse was appointed as chair of a faculty committee to consult on proposals to site the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library at Stanford University in 1983, he quickly sought input from those with experience in establishing and overseeing similar facilities (Rosse, 1983a, 1983b). Rosse knew that the incipient controversy at Stanford would be colored by what Chaïm Perelman calls "presumptions" – shared notions of common experience that define "what normally happens and what can be reasonably counted upon" (Perelman, 1982, pp. 24–25). What are the presumptions about how presidential libraries should be built and operated? How did they shape the public argument at Stanford during the early 1980s, and in turn, how did Stanford's ultimate decision to reject the Reagan Library proposal reinforce or mold the presumptions? Close examination of primary documents housed at the Stanford University archives provides an opportunity to consider these questions and generate insight regarding the evolving political function of presidential libraries. Further, this path of inquiry affords the opportunity to develop Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's theory of argumentation by deploying it as a tool of rhetorical criticism in case studies that feature rich and textured episodes of public controversy (cf. Farrell, 1986; Golden, 1986; Makau, 1986).

While commentary on extant presidential libraries abounds (e.g. Cochrane, 2005, 2006; Craig, 2006; Drake, 2007; Flowers, 2007; Geselbracht, 2006; Glenn, 2007; Horrocks, 1994; Houck, 2006; Huffbauer, 2005, 2006, 2007; Lyons, 1995; Stuckey, 2006), the public controversies surrounding rejected presidential library proposals remain understudied. Here, we couple analysis of the Stanford Reagan library controversy with a second "negative" case

study involving argumentation leading up to Duke University's decision to reject a proposal for housing Richard Nixon's presidential library on its campus in the early 1980s. These parallel cases offer a glimpse into what Thomas Farrell terms "social knowledge in controversy" – episodes where prevailing social precedents governing human decision-making evolve in the crucible of public argument (Farrell, 1976). Such inquiry is especially timely in the contemporary milieu, where public controversy simmers regarding the sitting president's future library at Southern Methodist University, and where issues of government transparency and accountability persist as salient topics of public and scholarly concern.

### FROM "THE PEOPLE'S RECORDS" TO PRESIDENTIAL TEMPLES

Throughout much of American history, presidential papers were the personal property of the president, who would retain sole custody of the documents after leaving office (Hufbauer, 2005, p. 25). This changed in 1941, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the first presidential library to store, preserve, and provide access to his presidential papers. Roosevelt (1941) believed that these papers were "the people's records" and should be freely accessible in a democracy. For the most part, future presidents followed Roosevelt's example, adhering to a standardized process codified in the 1955 Presidential Libraries Act that calls on private foundations to design and build presidential libraries, which once completed, are donated to the federal government and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) (Geselbracht & Walch, 2005). There are currently 12 presidential libraries under federal control, with one (the new George W. Bush Library at Southern Methodist University) under construction.

In a recent twist, the presidential libraries created over the past several decades have transformed prevailing conceptions about the nature and purpose of the libraries, with a widening array of actors now drawn into design discussions. These actors include former presidents, presidential foundations, NARA officials, community groups, and academic institutions hosting the facilities. The creation of academic institutes operating in conjunction with the libraries is increasingly popular, and these institutes, like the Clinton School of Public Service (University of Arkansas) and the Bush School of Government and Public Service (Texas A&M), extend their president's influence into higher education. This trend started when President Lyndon Johnson created the Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin to educate graduate students interested in careers in public service; the University funded the venture with an initial payment of "\$18, \$20 million" according to Johnson's preliminary estimates (qtd. in Hufbauer, 2005, p. 73). The formal university ties that link academic institutions and presidential libraries add more cooks to the kitchen, a factor that complicates library governance, and as we shall see, tends to stimulate controversy.

The advent of side-car research institutes has played a significant role in the evolution of presidential libraries in that the institutes ratchet up the tension between two opposing functions art historian Benjamin Hufbauer identifies as inherent in presidential libraries: an "archival" function, which preserves and catalogs the president's records for use by scholars and the public, and a "monumental" function, which honors the former president by acting as a personal memorial (Hufbauer, 2005, p. 8).

In intriguing respects, Hufbauer's dichotomy parallels Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's distinction between education and propaganda (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, pp. 51–54). According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, education involves

TABLE 1.  
FUNCTIONALITY OF PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES

Hufbauer, <i>Presidential Temples</i>	Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca <i>New Rhetoric</i>
Monumental Function	Education
Archival Function	Propaganda

the epideictic transmission of commonly accepted values to audiences predisposed to embrace community norms and traditions, whereas propaganda operates in the realm of the contingent, where uncertain or incomplete knowledge creates conditions ripe for controversy. Here, the memorial component of presidential libraries tracks with Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's concept of education, with "presidential temples" serving as vehicles to instill into future generations the values inherent in the office of the U.S. presidency. In related fashion, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's notion of propaganda compares to the archival function of presidential libraries, especially when one focuses on how the libraries can serve as conveyor belts that deliver freshly-declassified documents to researchers seeking to unlock previously hidden information about controversial episodes of presidential governance.

One reason why the tension between the memorial/education and archive/propaganda functions of presidential libraries is the source of rich dispute is the lack of formal rules governing presidential library design. The Presidential Libraries Act of 1955 does not explicitly set forth required components of a presidential library but merely mandates that sufficient space and equipment be donated to the Federal Government and that a government representative, "in negotiating for the deposit of Presidential historical materials, shall take steps to secure to the Government as far as possible, the right to have continuous and permanent possession of the materials" (U.S. Congress, 1955). The Act provides for exhibit space for presidential materials in a museum and also for workspace for the former president if desired, but it stops short of codifying detailed design requirements.

In large part, this statutory vacuum is filled by a dynamic set of norms and conventions flowing from episodes of argumentation and decision connected with specific controversies relating to library design. As Farrell notes, such "social knowledge" is formed when joint rhetorical action yields "conceptions" of relationships "among problems, persons, interests, and actions, which imply (when accepted) certain notions of preferable public behavior" (Farrell, 1976, p. 4). Individuals coalesce to share their "direct or indirect experience[s]" with others to form a "generalizable" interest (Farrell, 1976, p. 5). This generalized interest forms common expectations for society, and these expectations serve as "social precedents" structuring subsequent decisions.

Farrell's theory of social knowledge cues attention to how arguments relating to the design, planning, and creation of presidential libraries not only shape the evolving "social precedents" in this area, but also allocate the burden of proof in argumentation, since as Perelman notes, interlocutors' contributions to a dispute are evaluated against the backdrop of presumptions, or settled starting points, that obtain in a given case. This may help explain the impetus behind Stanford professor Rosse's early attempts to gather information from Duke regarding that school's experience in sorting through a comparable library controversy. Through correspondence, memoranda, and other forms of communication, interlocutors in

presidential library design controversies present ideas, debate their significance and importance, and ultimately reach conclusions about what actions should follow.

The discussions about presidential library design are infused with political significance, as these facilities are resources that enable citizens to realize their "right to know," an extension of the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment that spells out an affirmative duty of the federal government to make information available for public inspection (O'Brien, 1981). Yet as Davis Houck astutely points out, "archives function as sites of preferred memory," and as such, the information available in any presidential library is there "because someone wanted it there – not necessarily because it adds to our understanding of the historical record" (Houck, 2006, p. 134).

Presidential libraries have been analyzed in some scholarly research, particularly by information science scholars and notably by art historian Benjamin Hufbauer. In addition to his book, *Presidential Temples: How Memorials and Libraries Shape Public Memory*, in several articles Hufbauer discusses the evolution and function of presidential libraries, specifically their commemoration of presidents in museums (Hufbauer, 2006, 2007). Other scholars analyze the political dimensions of such museums from various vantage points (Cannon, 2005; Craig, 2006), while information science scholars and historians explore how presidential libraries play a role in constituting presidential legacies (Cox, 2002; Craig, 2006). In the field of rhetoric, Houck's (2006) work is complemented by Mary E. Stuckey's (2006) lucid examination of access issues in the libraries. However, negotiations to create and control libraries and the resultant change in presidential libraries over time have yet to receive thorough rhetorical analysis.

In order to fully understand the consequences and arguments affiliated with presidential libraries, this essay examines President Reagan's and President Nixon's failed plans to establish presidential libraries at Stanford and Duke Universities, respectively. These two cases exemplify the most controversial and argumentative negotiations for presidential libraries. In both examples, controversies were too great to overcome and the planned libraries were not constructed. Through study of the argumentation associated with each case, it becomes possible to appreciate how presumptions were negotiated and social knowledge updated, with the resulting record of discussion and decision leaving an imprint that is likely to surface in library controversies yet to unfold.

### THE NIXON LIBRARY THAT WASN'T

On August 10, 1981, Duke President Terry Sanford wrote press liaison Bill Green regarding plans for announcing the "tentative" placement of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library at Duke University, Nixon's law school alma mater. As Sanford (1981a) explained, "[i]f we proceed with the Nixon Library and make the announcement on August 19, you will have a major responsibility in handling the press and preparing advance stories. 'They' tentatively favor a Duke location. I favor New York." The "us and them" tension present in this letter would only grow stronger as more individuals participated in negotiations.

After Sanford spread word of the plans, he issued a memorandum to Duke's Academic Council detailing the ground rules for impending discussions regarding Duke's involvement with the proposed library. Sanford's (1981b) memorandum invited input from faculty and other community members, but also explained that he and the Board of Trustees would make the final decision.

*The Duke Community Weighs In*

The Duke community responded quickly to Sanford's call for input, with most participants asking for more time and debate before reaching any conclusions. Several Academic Council meetings in late August and early September of 1981 were dedicated to discussing at least in part the stipulations and conditions involved in the Nixon Library planning. An Academic Council Resolution formed two sub-committees of the Select Committee on the Nixon Presidential Library, one on governance and one on library relations, "to investigate, assess, and report on all matters concerning the proposal" (Academic Council, 1981a, 1981b). The result of this initiative would not be determined until late October, so the Board of Trustees voted in favor of the Nixon Library while additionally allowing for continued input from the Duke community (Executive Committee, 1981). This provided for increased discussion between Duke's Academic Council, Board of Trustees, President Terry Sanford, faculty, students, alumni, and representatives for President Nixon over Nixon's involvement with the library and ultimate control of the presidential papers and the library/museum. In these discussions, a significant number of skeptics opposed the library, expressing reservations both orally at Academic Council meetings and in written correspondence to Sanford. Common points of concern included the possibility of limited access to President Nixon's presidential papers and that the university's affiliation with a museum that would somehow glorify Nixon's presidency.

In the coming months, Academic Council meetings and debates would produce more resolutions on topics ranging from the negotiation timeline, the academic benefits of a presidential library, and the impact of a close association between President Nixon and the university. On September 26, 1981, Sanford (1981c) assured the Academic Council and faculty members that, despite continued planning, their concerns would not be ignored or overlooked as negotiations continued. However, the Sub-Committee's report and the Council's resolutions formalized the negotiations and reflected a possible end to community contributions to the debate. The possible termination of faculty consultation caused some community members to collectivize their opposition. The Committee Against the Nixon Duke Library (CANDL) was a movement by faculty, students, and alumni that sought to galvanize opposition to any Nixon presidential library on campus (CANDL, 1981b). By using mass mailings and pamphlet campaigns, CANDL publicized their opposition to Nixon Library plans and pressed for negotiations to include all interested individuals.

CANDL directly attacked the primary support for the library in its public campaigns by highlighting what it believed to be the true nature of the library. In one flyer, the group quotes a statement from Chairman Alex McMahon of the Board of Trustees that touts the project's archival value, and then juxtaposes McMahon's argument with dissonant comments by individuals at six prestigious universities questioning whether the library would be an archive or a monument. For example, Warren E. Miller, Director of the Center for Political Studies Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan states, "[u]nless Duke University feels it appropriate to contribute to the public rehabilitation of Mr. Nixon, I cannot imagine why it should contribute to creating another institution that would impede rather than facilitate scholarly exploitation of the Nixon papers" (qtd. in CANDL, 1981c). Other CANDL publications used political cartoons to satirize Nixon as the devil and depict his ultimate control of the University, demonstrating the group's primary opposition to the lack of academic control over the library and questioning its value as a scholarly archive (CANDL, 1981a). In these exchanges, one sees the struggle over the proposed library

playing out as an argument regarding the archival versus monumental function of the facility. In Hufbauer's historical account, presidential libraries from Roosevelt to Ford had prioritized their archival qualities. CANDL drew on that presumption to place a burden of proof on Nixon Library proponents, obliging them to show how the proposed library would be valuable for Duke research, without becoming a symbol that would celebrate the Nixon legacy.

### *Elusive Documents*

In the fall of 1981, Duke's Academic Council continued its investigations into matters involving library plans. On October 21, the Sub-Committee on Library Relations issued a report that highlighted access to presidential papers as a key factor in the deliberations. Also in late October, the Sub-Committee on Governance reported that there were "certain deficiencies in the arrangement for faculty participation in University governance" warranting fuller faculty consultation by the University President and Board of Trustees (Academic Council, n.d.). These reports spurred further negotiations with Nixon representatives, but with greater involvement from Duke faculty members. With academic concerns playing a larger role in the argument, it is understandable that discussions at this stage focused on issues relating to scholarly access.

Professor Williams of the English Department and Professor Snow of Physiology each questioned whether Nixon was the appropriate individual to discuss access to his presidential materials because the federal government controlled them (Academic Council, 1981a). Additionally, Political Science Professor James David Barber (1981) reminded the Academic Council, "The documents we have are hypothetical." However, supporters of the project, particularly President Sanford, maintained that the presidential records were likely to have their highest accessibility on a university campus and this important archive (to 20<sup>th</sup> century American history) would bring prestige to Duke's archival system (Academic Council, 1981b). It is clear that even in early negotiations, the use of the presidential archives as an academic resource was very attractive to some faculty members and Duke administrators.

While questions of scholarly access turned largely on logistical issues, a second locus of controversy concerned the symbolic ramifications of siting the Nixon Library on Duke's campus. Many individuals in their communications to President Sanford included reservations to the project based on President Nixon's possible crimes and presidential legacy. Nixon's perceived immorality was CANDL's primary objection to the project and many of their mass media campaigns reflected this. The organization's first letter to coalesce faculty sentiment against the library states, there is an inherent "inappropriateness of a university memorializing a president who resigned in disgrace. . . [and] a presidential library is inevitably a memorial" (CANDL, 1981b). Other opposition letters included Duke administrative faculty member Meg Washburn Davis's (1981) colorful remarks to Sanford: "No, no, no, no! How can you countenance such a thing? . . . All of our efforts would suffer under a dark cloud and we would be hard put to counteract the negative effect. How can we recommend a university associated with dishonor?" Again, supporters dismissed this claim by assuring the university would control the archives and would reject an overly memorialized museum. Early in the negotiations, on August 31, 1981, the Academic Council passed a resolution "categorically reject[ing] the creation of any museum or memorial as part of a 'Nixon Presidential Library' on or adjacent to the Duke campus" (Academic Council, 1981a).

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's theory of argumentation explains how the dissociation of linked concepts can have a significant impact on the trajectory of an argument. By parsing independent elements from a previously unified whole, speakers can reframe the terms of dispute and create new opportunities for persuasion. Consider the Duke faculty council's attempt to deploy dissociation in public argument, evident in its August 31, 1981 resolution that urged parties to transcend the dispute by treating the presidential archive and presidential museum separately. Echoing Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's views regarding the transformative potential of dissociation as an argumentative technique, commentators speculated that the Council's recommendation might break the logjam. *Library Journal* reported that negotiations might progress more easily after the interlocutors agreed that a "museum component" would be located "off campus" and the library would not exceed 55,000 square feet ("Compromise on Nixon," 1982). Unfortunately for the interlocutors, this maneuver did not prove successful, as points of disagreement hardened. On September 3, 1981 the Academic Council (1981b) went one step further, voting that the Board of Trustees should terminate all negotiations for a Nixon Library as outlined by Sanford's memorandum to the Council announcing the discussions. The Board of Trustees did not accept the Academic Council's resolution and continued negotiations. The link between a Nixon archive and a Nixon museum continued to be a sticking point in negotiations.

#### *The Duke-Nixon Divorce*

In 1982, negotiations "stalled" as faculty unrest continued and Nixon representatives could not guarantee that the Library would serve as a valuable academic resource, its primary justification (Duke University Library, n.d.). Two years later, Nixon was still in court petitioning for control of his presidential materials, and the National Archives still would not approve presidential library plans without assurance of public access to the documents ("Nixon library stalled," 1984). Thus, the federal government seconded Duke's concerns over access. By abandoning negotiations, the university affirmed that the most important purpose of a presidential library is to provide access to what Roosevelt called "the people's records." Without the records, some Duke community members believed that the library would serve only as a monument to Nixon and would not allow for critical study of his presidential administration. With this move, the Duke community strengthened the prevailing presumption that the archival function of presidential libraries should remain paramount.

After failing to place his library at Duke, Nixon sought another site in San Clemente, California, before finally settling on forming a private library run by his presidential foundation in Yorba Linda, California. Here, Nixon bucked the guiding precedents of accumulated social knowledge, and there were steep costs associated with such a maneuver. As a maverick facility in the presidential library system, this private library would not house Nixon's presidential materials, instead making available the documents under Nixon's personal control, his pre-presidential and post-presidential papers.

By 2007, the National Archives had asserted its centripetal force and brought Nixon's Yorba Linda library under NARA control, such that now, Nixon's presidential papers are under the direction of Timothy Naftali, a historian who has been praised by former Watergate prosecutor Richard Ben-Veniste as "an energetic advocate of the people's right to know" (qtd. in U.S. National Archives, 2006). The newly merged Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum has embraced the precedents set by federally operated presidential libraries. This latest change to the Nixon Library may serve as an example to interlocutors

in future presidential library negotiations. In this case, the exception, a presidential library bucking precedent, may end up proving the rule, namely that strong social presumptions steer decision-makers to privilege the archival function of presidential libraries.

### BROKEN GEOMETRY IN THE REAGAN-HOOVER-STANFORD TRIANGLE

Just as Duke's community was debating the possibility of hosting Richard Nixon's Presidential Library, members of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University were taking early steps to reach out to President Ronald Reagan with an invitation to host his future presidential library. On February 24, 1981, after discussions with his colleagues, Hoover Institution Director Glenn Campbell issued an invitation to the President to locate his presidential library at the Hoover Institution (Rosenzweig, 1981). Campbell cited Reagan's association with Hoover as an Honorary Fellow and its possession of his gubernatorial, campaign, and transition papers as his primary support of the project (Campbell, 1981). Shortly thereafter, the Reagan administration expressed interest to Hoover and back-channel discussions of the library began between Reagan, Campbell, and Stanford University President Donald Kennedy.

In January 1983, President Ronald Reagan (1983) officially responded to Campbell's invitation and thanked him for the opportunity to place his library where he had a "long association as an Honorary Fellow of the Hoover Institution" and could unite his papers in a singular facility (Reagan, 1983). This letter marks the opening of formal negotiations between the Reagan administration and Stanford representatives, with telephone negotiations between Kennedy and top Reagan advisor Edwin Meese III soon to follow. By early 1983, things were moving fast – perhaps too fast – for Kennedy, who expressed reservation at the speed of the negotiations and informed Meese that further deliberation by interested individuals at Stanford was necessary before any "realistic" decisions could be made (Kennedy, 1983b).

#### *Community Voices*

In the summer of 1983, Kennedy informed the Stanford community of the negotiations and established an informal faculty advisory group, the Rosse Committee, to report the faculty's position on the negotiations to himself and the Board of Trustees, who would determine if the library came to Stanford (Kennedy, 1983c). The Rosse Committee contacted all Stanford faculty by memorandum and requested their input so that the group could present its findings on October 1, 1983, just a few days after students and faculty returned from summer hiatus. Several faculty members and students felt that this timeline did not allow for proper negotiation. Many of the early opposition arguments to the Reagan Library Complex first identified a lack of time to deliberate and weigh options related to the plans.

Additionally complicating the negotiations was an ongoing effort to investigate the Hoover Institution's ties to Stanford. Political Science professor John Manley spearheaded a campaign to examine the university's relationship with Hoover before Reagan Library negotiations were made public. For years, Manley publicized his concerns about Hoover, petitioning faculty members and releasing statements to newspaper editors attacking Hoover and its director, W. Glenn Campbell, for its partisanship and existence as a "conservative think-tank" on what was supposed to be a politically neutral campus (Manley, 1987). The addition of a Ronald Reagan Presidential Library under the direction of the Hoover Institution was an extension of Hoover's power that Manley could not endorse. He became

one of the project's greatest opponents and attempted to convince other faculty members to join him in opposing the Hoover Institution.

The Rosse Committee issued its report to the Board of Trustees in October 1983, reflecting the negative and positive faculty responses to the Reagan Library proposal. In the report, the Committee focused on concerns raised by individual faculty members and highlighted points of argument that needed to be resolved in future negotiations. Overall, the Committee found that further negotiations would enhance the Trustees' decision-making ability and would help answer questions about the nature of presidential libraries (President's Advisory Group, n.d.).

On December 13, 1983, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution approving the location of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library at Stanford "in affiliation with the Hoover Institution" (Campbell, n.d.). Glenn Campbell believed that Stanford could "take pride" in being associated with a presidential library, an important scholarly resource in American history (Campbell, n.d.). However, this resolution was just the beginning of a new round of negotiations. Library opponents continued to voice their opinions as official talks about the governance and structure of the presidential library continued. In studying the arguments for and against an affiliation between Stanford University, the Hoover Institution and the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, one finds that the discussions centered on issues related to the University's academic control, the structure/components of the library, and the location of the library on the university's campus.

Primary opposition to the Reagan Library at Stanford University arose over issues of control and operation of the complex, particularly the proposed Center for Public Affairs. The Hoover Institution's original invitation to the Reagan administration set the terms that the library would be controlled by the Hoover, not Stanford University, and further negotiations indicated that Reagan had no interest in Stanford apart from its involvement with the Hoover Institution (Trustee's Committee, 1983). Some faculty members questioned this arrangement, arguing that issues of academic control necessitated that Stanford be highly involved in library operations.

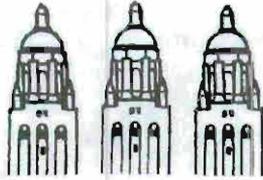
Skepticism came from other quarters as well, including the Stanford Community Against Reagan University (SCAReU), a student-run group dedicated to publicizing opposition to the Reagan Library and "protect[ing] the integrity of Stanford's academic purpose" (SCAReU, n.d.). SCAReU distributed brochures and mass mailings (much like CANDL) and used sensationalism to get their message to the public. In SCAReU's fliers, the imagery of three looming Hoover Towers was paired with a re-named Stanford "Ronald Reagan University" to suggest that the presidential library (and the Hoover Institution) would have much more power than most faculty, students, and alumni might realize. A typical pamphlet emphasizes non-partisanship and calls for "ACADEMICS NOT POLITICS," in arguing against placement of the library on Stanford's campus (SCAReU, n.d.).

While vivid student pamphlets circulated, faculty forums further charged the controversy. One excerpt from a Faculty Senate meeting shows that Professor Michael Bratman of the Philosophy Department directly addressed the tension between the library's academic use and its use as a museum to honor Reagan. Bratman's colloquy with Kennedy serves as a representative anecdote revealing dimensions of the unfolding controversy:

**Prof. Michael Bratman**, philosophy: . . . (Paraphrase) Do you pretty much agree with the Rosse report that "a Ronald Reagan Museum has little or no academic value to Stanford but a small fraction of the library space could be usefully devoted to exhibits supporting its principal function as a scholarly resource?"

**Kennedy**: I support and agree with that . . . one [sic - originally "ome"] might permit a moderate amount

# WELCOME to RONALD REAGAN UNIVERSITY



## SCAReU ??

### Stanford Community Against REagan University

Figure 1. SCAReU Brochure (Source: Box 5, Folder "5-SCAReU Brochure," SC428, John Manley Papers, Stanford Special Collections, Palo Alto, California)

of straying from that as long as the exhibition space is minimal and as long as it is focused on the serious process of examining the presidency.

**Bratman:** (Following up on Jamison and Abernethy's concerns) The problem seems to be that beliefs about institutional endorsements seem self-fulfilling. There's [sic originally "Tjete's"] a significant number of people in the general population who will see such an action (as acceptance of the Reagan library) by Stanford as an endorsement, even if we don't. It seems to be a reasonable conjecture about the way the world works. (Can we think of ways to make it absolutely clear that having (a Reagan library complex [sic originally "coimplex"]) we are not engaged in some form of institutional endorsement or non-endorsement - [sic originally an underscore] that we're just not taking a stand about the work of the Reagan administration. (Kennedy, n.d.)

Kennedy also responded to student inquiries about the Reagan Library, for example penning a letter to undergraduate Luke Cole (member of SCAReU) in which he reminded Cole, "the possession of scholarly resources does *not*, in the academic community constitute a positive value judgment about their authors" (Kennedy, 1983a). Kennedy's position clearly diverged from Campbell's vision for the library: as Campbell stated, "Stanford can take pride in being selected as the site for a presidential library that will be a significant contribution to our national heritage" (Campbell, n.d.). The pointed tenor of the exchange led some commentators to recall fireworks in Durham. The *Library Journal* reported that Stanford/Reagan negotiations had "become nearly as polarized as that occasioned by the Nixon Library proposal at Duke" ("Reagan library at Stanford," 1983, p. 2291).

In the Stanford dispute, there were also substantive parallels that linked the two episodes of controversy. Just as opponents of the Nixon Library questioned the facility's scholarly value, so too did Reagan Library skeptics press interlocutors to establish more fully the academic benefits establishment of the library would bring to Stanford. For example, Professor McCall of the Classics Department observed in a Faculty Senate meeting:

The real heart of the difficulty is the perception, unfortunately or otherwise, of the proposed center. I take it as given [sic- originally "give"] that the deal . . . will be managed by the university. I also take it as given that the [sic originally the is "nthe"] name of the President will be attached to the beginning of the title. But I also think that the university can, and obviously must make it business to be sure from the beginning that the openness to all views is there, which it certainly can do when it has management of the personnel and the director. (qtd. in Kennedy, n.d.)

Many individuals in the Stanford community objected to the presence of a museum in affiliation with the archives and additionally, to the creation of the Center for Public Affairs because of its partisan affiliation. In a letter to President Kennedy, Richard C. Placone questioned, "How can Stanford maintain a position of objectivity when speaking on issues of national concern, while appearing to woo the Reagan Library committee to choose the campus as its location?" Pushing back against what he saw as a drift toward Hufbauer's monumental function of the library, Placone (1983) concluded, "we should not allow the illustrious name of Stanford to become associated with something as transitory as a politician - president or not." On the other hand, project supporters maintained that the Center for Public Affairs would be neutral and would serve only as an addition to the library to increase the use of its archives. Meese stated, "as to political neutrality, it is very important that the proposed center for public affairs be nonpartisan in appearance as well as in fact" (Meese, 1984a).

While concerns over lines of authority emerged as a key locus of the Stanford controversy, the location of the proposed library complex also proved to be contentious, as plans called for the facility to be sited in a liminal space not controlled by the university but not separate from it either. Per precedents for presidential libraries set in the 1955 legislation, Stanford would donate land to the complex, but could not control the library itself. As negotiations progressed into 1987, the location of the library proved to be a great obstacle to agreement. In a statement, former Academic Senate chairs condemned the architectural plans for the library and its extensive use of space catering to tourists and non-Stanford users (Abel et. al, 1987). Instead, they advocated a smaller building that would better fit within the structural development of Stanford and would not stand out on campus as separate from the university.

#### *Separation Anxiety*

One of *The New Rhetoric's* great strengths is that it establishes a theory of argumentation that enables critics to illuminate how interlocutors disentangle concepts to achieve persuasion. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca hold that arguers rely chiefly on two mechanisms in this regard - "dissociation" and "breaking of links" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, pp. 411-414.). Parties to the Stanford controversy frequently practiced both. Sometimes, they attempted to separate aspects of the library from each other, other times they sought to split the library from the university, while in different contexts they aimed to divorce the Hoover Institution from Stanford University. In each of these maneuvers, speakers worked to reconfigure the field of controversy by re-arranging the conceptual vocabulary structuring the dispute, and interlocutors pushed back against such attempts when they perceived that

such reframing would undermine their position in the argument. For example, in negotiations for the Center for Public Affairs, Campbell refused to negotiate on the components of the complex separately. In a memorandum, he reminded Kennedy, "[t]he inescapable fact of the matter is that President and Mrs. Reagan consider the Library, the Museum, and the Center for Public Affairs to be part of an inseparable whole and, I am sure, they would consider a separate agreement in respect to only one or two elements of the Reagan Presidential Library complex to be unacceptable" (Campbell, 1983). Meese agreed, and in correspondence with William Kimball, President of the Board of Trustees, he stated that rejecting a Center for Public Affairs on the basis of political concerns was "not in accordance with the overall purpose of the complex as we have understood it since the Director of the Hoover Institution, Dr. Glenn Campbell, on behalf of the University, first extended the invitation to locate the presidential library complex on the Stanford campus" (Meese, 1984a). By 1984, the continuous faculty murmurs that the Center for Public Affairs should be "structured under normal academic governance" had reached a volume that the Board of Trustees could not and did not ignore. It therefore rejected any Center for Public Affairs unless it met faculty governance criteria (Kimball, 1984).

However, in an attempt to secure approval of the entire complex later in negotiations, Meese in turn dissociated the Center for Public Affairs from Stanford. He stated, "the proposed Center for Public Affairs would have no connection with Stanford University. This would be announced clearly at the outset and emphasized as the operations of the center develop . . . the Stanford name would not be used in any way to promote or describe its activities" (Meese, 1984b). While critics such as Professor Manley and SCAReU premised much of their argumentation on the notion of an unbroken Stanford-Reagan-Hoover triangle, Meese used dissociation to point out that such a unified concept was mistaken, given that the original proposal had called for the Reagan Center to operate separately from the Reagan Library.

### *The Library Endgame*

In both the Nixon and Reagan cases, negotiations began in private and a delay in involving the broader communities stimulated resentment and skepticism. At Duke, the public machinations of CANDL and calls for open debate from the faculty show how library critics sought to try their case in the wide court of public opinion. Supporters, on the other hand, used counter-arguments that appealed to the narrower audience of official decision-makers, namely the Board of Trustees. Reagan Library interlocutors used similar tactics. Manley and SCAReU publicized their arguments in newspaper editorials and press releases, while supporters of the library focused on convincing President Donald Kennedy and the Board of Trustees.

Yet there were notable exceptions to this general trend. Although most of Campbell's correspondence was with Donald Kennedy and Bob Beyers (Stanford's News Service director), Campbell also made several public statements on his support of the library, often stating that Stanford should be honored to be affiliated with a man as great as Reagan and to acquire such prestigious archives. In 1985, Campbell's Hoover Institution issued a press release stating that its Board of Overseers "warmly endorsed" the Reagan Library proposal. And in early 1987, Campbell declared that Stanford could "boast" of its "Reagan connection" (qtd. in Avallone, 1987). In the eyes of skeptics, this statement colored the library as distinctly partisan and caused some faculty to doubt University control of the Reagan complex. In May 1987, *Library Journal* reported in its "Late Bulletins" that negotiations

between Reagan and Stanford had fallen through because of the "most crucial and emotional issue . . . the political nature of the facility." The *Journal* went on to blame the breakdown in negotiations on the aborted plan for the Center for Public Affairs ("Late bulletins," 1987, p. 15). Yet, in January 1988's *American Libraries*, a news brief identifies Palo Alto citizens' opposition to increased traffic and tourism as the primary reason for Reagan abandoning negotiations ("Reagan library finds," 1988, pp. 9-10).

A mixture of academic and location concerns ultimately scuttled plans for a Reagan Library at Stanford. On March 25, 1987, in a letter to the Faculty Senate that also addressed the Board of Trustees, 12 former Academic Senate Chairs explained how these two vectors of opposition interacted:

We have sensed growing faculty uneasiness over proposed plans for this structure. The justification for locating the Library on Stanford lands - and, in particular, on a site close to the center of the campus - has been that its archival resources will be valuable for research and teaching purposes. Yet faculty participation in the library planning process has been minimal, and faculty concerns over the relationship between library size, functions, and proposed site have not, in our judgment, been taken sufficiently into account in the planning process. (Abel et al., 1987)

Thus, negotiations never fully addressed the purpose of the library and its control by the university. Although it was clearly meant to be primarily a scholarly archive, as even Edwin Meese and Glenn Campbell asserted, issues of academic control were never addressed to the degree or outcome that Stanford faculty demanded. Communication broke down and the Reagan administration pursued a different path. The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library opened in 1991 in Simi Valley, CA, unaffiliated with a university and without a Center for Public Affairs. Stanford faculty and community members contributed to the social knowledge of presidential libraries by requiring control of the academic, the most significant, portions of the presidential library. Without guarantees for control, the university would not participate in "legacy-building" through the presentation of static history, but rather mandated that an archive remain open for the dynamic study of history as an open book.

### TAKING STOCK OF THE ILL-FATED NIXON AND REAGAN LIBRARIES

Presidential library negotiations calibrate the trajectory of relationship between a former president and the American public, and also help define conditions under which citizens interpret the nation's institutional history. The most recent round of negotiations involve President George W. Bush and his attempts to finalize plans with Southern Methodist University (SMU) to house a presidential library, museum, and a policy institute on that campus, with former deputy chief of staff Karl Rove serving as a key advisor in the process.

Rove visited the University of Pittsburgh on March 3, 2008 during a lecture tour. He was a special guest at the first author's Cold War rhetoric class and also gave a speech that both of the authors attended. In a question and answer session following his speech, this paper's second author took the opportunity to discuss Mr. Rove's involvement in the SMU negotiations, asking, "In recent press coverage discussing the conclusion of negotiations that will officially place the George W. Bush Presidential Library, you are described as an 'unofficial' advisor. I wonder if you could speak to the nature of your relationship with the future presidential library and what you hope and expect the library will become." In discussing his role, Rove explained that the first step in creating a presidential library is visiting other presidential libraries and meeting with their directors and staffs to examine what worked, what didn't, and what would meet the criteria desired by President Bush. From Rove's own

description, he first examined precedents and then negotiated to introduce new elements to George W. Bush's planned presidential library. Much like the Reagan controversy discussed previously, Rove is currently in negotiations with Southern Methodist President R. Gerald Turner over the design and control of the library-affiliated policy institute (see Singer, 2008; Zito, 2008). In May 2008, U.S. Archivist Allen Weinstein delivered the commencement address at Southern Methodist's graduation ceremonies. Weinstein used the occasion to reflect on the nature of Bush library negotiations, in the process echoing several of the themes brought forth in analysis of earlier controversies developed in the previous pages.

Even most opponents of the proposed independent Bush policy institute have acknowledged that a popular, well-run presidential library center will redound to the benefit of SMU. The major cost to the University will be the challenges to that community and to the Bush Library community, as both evolve, to maintain the greatest measure of cooperation and civility at all times, while resisting the temptation to turn normal policy disagreements into burning, divisive public issues. No university is better prepared for civility and cooperation than SMU. You have dealt with issues and kept your community together with dignity and grace. (Weinstein, 2008)

Weinstein's delicate observations about the need for civility in public discussion of issues prone to ignite fierce controversy reflects the tone of sharp exchanges between SMU faculty and administration regarding plans for the new Bush library (e.g. Albanese, 2006, 2007; Armbruster, 2008; Bedard, 2007; Blair, 2007; Blumenthal, 2007; Burka, 2007; Jost, 2007; Zeller, 2006). Such comments also reinforce a finding of our study, that presidential library negotiations are sites of argumentation where a lack of codified rules governing institutional decision-making introduces contingency and invites competing viewpoints to be shared in the crucible of public debate. It is precisely in these sorts of dialogic settings where *The New Rhetoric's* insights have their greatest potential utility, as argumentative presumptions are invoked, molded, and applied to structure exchanges and allocate burden of proof.

Accordingly, analysis of the argumentative techniques and central themes of dispute in related cases yields comparisons and patterns that can not only enrich historical understanding, but also elucidate the storehouse of social precedents that have accumulated in the fullness of time. For example, the Nixon case shows that when institutions of higher learning are involved in controversies over presidential library design, there tends to be strong pressure to configure the library as an archive, rather than as a monument. In rejecting the proposed Nixon library because of unresolved questions about its capacity to serve as an academic resource, Duke interlocutors stamped a social precedent holding the library's archival function paramount. In the Reagan case, Stanford community opposition to the proposed Center for Public Affairs set a new social precedent for presidential libraries. The breakdown of negotiations solidified a principle that privileges strong academic governance of external institutes associated with presidential libraries on university campuses. These two presumptions – priority of the archival function and academic control of side-car institutes – are likely to structure the burden of proof in ongoing Bush-SMU negotiations, especially as Bush works to define more clearly his proposed policy institute and elaborate his vision for how the institute will relate to the other elements of the evolving library complex.

Our analysis also yields theoretical implications regarding the nature of argumentation as elaborated in *The New Rhetoric* and elsewhere. As we have seen, controversies surrounding presidential libraries are characterized by arguments concerning concepts rotating in constellations, especially around the function of the library itself. Almost from the very beginning of negotiations, the terms used to describe the Reagan-Stanford library complex served as lightning rods for dispute, as correspondence among Edwin Meese, Donald Kennedy and

Glenn Campbell shows. Such dynamics provide an excellent illustration of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's observations regarding the role of conceptual parsing in argumentation: "Depending on whether the connecting links between elements are regarded as 'natural' or 'artificial,' as 'essential' or 'accidental,' one person will see a dissociation where another sees only the breaking of a connecting link" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p. 412). Here, Kennedy's parsing of the library and museum from the Center for Public Affairs exhibited dissociation, as the maneuver attempted to separate what Campbell viewed as a properly unified library "complex." Conversely, Campbell and Meese pushed hard to convince audiences that Hoover and Stanford should be considered as discrete and independent entities. This approach conforms to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's notion of "breaking of links," in which interlocutors seek to divide that which has been artificially or accidentally conflated. A similar pattern of argument is evident in the appeals of Stanford's faculty members, who pursued "breaking of links" to untangle the archival and monumental functions of the proposed Reagan complex, functions they thought should never have been fused together in the first place. The complicated and cloudy definition of presidential libraries fed the ongoing argumentation. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's distinctive terms clarify the arguments made by each interlocutor and in turn illustrate why negotiations failed. In the presidential library controversies herein studied, different expectations for the libraries and missed opportunities to extricate permanent expectations for presidential libraries doomed the negotiations and ultimately the planned libraries. Future research might revisit Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's distinction between dissociation and breaking of links to investigate especially how normative overtones color the distinction (e.g., whether elements are "natural" or "artificial"), and how the distinction itself can function as *locus* of controversy in argumentation (cf. Gross & Dearin, 2003, pp. 81-97).

Finally, our analysis presents an opportunity to reflect upon *The New Rhetoric's* distinction between "education" and "propaganda." We observe that in controversies over presidential library design, the terms education and propaganda track with Hufbauer's monumental and archival library functions. Yet this four-fold pairing might fail to ring true for readers who would expect the scholarly function of the archives to serve an educative role and conversely that spectacular displays of presidential memorabilia would constitute propaganda. Such a vernacular formulation would seem to square more fully with common sense notions of propaganda as despicable manipulation and education as open-ended inquiry. The gap between these quotidian meanings and the terms of art deployed by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca may shed light on the cultural context in which *The New Rhetoric* was written. While David Frank makes a persuasive case to read *The New Rhetoric* as a corrective to the noxious propaganda of the Nazi regime (Frank, 1997), Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's citation of Harold Lasswell provides a hint that the authors of *The New Rhetoric* did not view propaganda as an inherently pejorative term (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p. 52). In Lasswell's famous formulation, "as a mere tool [propaganda] is no more moral or immoral than a pump handle" (Lasswell, 1937, p. 525). Applied to a theory of argumentation, this morally neutral view of propaganda places normative responsibility for its use in the hands of practitioners, who can deploy the tool to shake up settled opinion, for better or worse.

A similar reconstruction of the *New Rhetoric's* usage of "education" as a term of art reveals that Perelman's experience with education differs from many notions of liberal arts education popular in the United States around the time of the publication of *The New Rhetoric*. As Renato Jose de Oliveira observes, "having been educated in a traditional system, in which the pedagogic roles are well defined (the teacher teaches, the student learns), Perelman

doesn't see the educative process as something that has the objective of stimulating polemic, controversy" (de Oliveira, 1999; cf. Perelman, 1979, pp. 134–137). This observation may cue the interest of American teachers of argumentation, who tend to couch their pedagogy firmly in a tradition that privileges the critical thinking windfalls flowing from controversial, back-and-forth classroom exchanges. Future studies might profitably explore how this pedagogical tradition meshes with *The New Rhetoric's* theoretical scaffolding and normative foundations, and perhaps use the resulting insight to illuminate public controversies regarding presidential libraries yet to be built.

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