"This is Roosevelt's World" - FDR as a Cultural Icon in American Memory

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"Every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably." – Walter Benjamin

"Man's desire to be remembered is colossal." – Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Introduction

This dissertation studies the construction of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as a cultural icon in American memory, particularly by FDR himself. It combines cultural history and cultural analysis, in inquiring how the Roosevelt icon has developed diachronically and who has had agency over it, and in asking how that icon functions culturally and ideologically in the present. It focuses on the agency FDR himself exerted over his future remembrance. This dissertation does not claim to make new discoveries about Franklin Roosevelt as a historical president. Rather, it studies how he is remembered through cultural artefacts – novels, popular biographies, films, documentaries, museums, and memorials – and how he himself contributed to that remembrance. It analyzes the rhetorical means through which various agents, including himself, his family, party members, supporters, and detractors, have over time negotiated the creation of FDR as a cultural icon.

As such, the question who FDR "really" was, or what representation is most "correct", is not at stake. Instead, I ask why and how a particular Roosevelt image or narrative functions rhetorically in shaping the icon at a particular moment. This says something about the time, place and culture in which an image or narrative operates, and about how the cultural artefact functions rhetorically. In other words, this dissertation is driven by a wish to understand how memory is produced and functions in culture, and not by which memories are historically correct.

How memory is produced and whether it is historically correct are fundamentally different questions. Although I am interested in historical events, people and processes too, I do not try to establish precisely what happened or what the past was really "like", but instead how the traces and representations of historical events, people and processes function in the present. I do not use historical texts and other documents as a source of information about the past, but rather to analyze how they, through their form and rhetoric, help to shape memory in the present. A single historical document often does limited justice to "what really happened" – to combat this, a historian would have to find more documents, and try to contextualize each of them to establish a full picture. For me, a single document in all its peculiarity can be very important, if there is reason to believe it has contributed to the memory of an event or the production of that memory. I am interested in traditional historical texts and archival material, but also in literary or artistic materials – understandably mistrusted or disregarded by historians as a source for understanding the past because of their fictional nature – because they can have great impact on how historical events are remembered and employed in the present. For instance, *Gone With The Wind* – Margaret Mitchell's epic 1936 novel, and to an even larger extent Victor Fleming's 1939 movie adaptation – is an entirely useless source for *historians* of the Civil War or slavery. It is wildly erroneous on every level in its depiction of

the 1860s South, slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. It is, however, useful to cultural historians researching the 1930s, because it illuminates how the Civil War was remembered at that time. And for me there is an additional layer of interest here: for better or for worse, *Gone With The Wind* continues to shape popular imaginations of the slavery South before, during and after the Civil War. Why is it so powerful? Most people know on some level that it is not a historically accurate representation, yet, somehow it continues to entertain and, in the process, almost as a side-effect, to shape cultural memory.

Many historians find it deplorable that fictional literary, visual, and artistic representations of the past, despite their imprecise or incorrect account or depiction of history, are so important to cultural memory. I share that view, but find it important to understand how such artefacts and texts that represent or misrepresent the past nonetheless do have great agency over cultural memory. It is wrong and upsetting if a text like *Gone With The Wind* shapes how people view the US South and US slavery history, but academic historiography can only do so much to put this right. Therefore, instead of turning away from such "false" representations of the past, I want to understand two things: what in the nature of these cultural texts and artefacts is it that makes them so attractive – how does their beauty work, in aesthetic and rhetorical terms? And secondly: why are they so attractive *to us*? What desires, needs and ideologies in the present are served or fulfilled by a particular representation of the past? Answers to these questions will on the one hand shed light on the rhetorical strategies underlying the success of compelling texts like *Gone With The Wind*, and on the other hand on the culture in which they are received. Especially when a representation of the past is evidently wrong, and yet at least partly constitutive of cultural memory, then there is all the more reason to assume that either the representation is highly persuasive in its form, or highly satisfying for some reason to its audience in the present, or both.

A telling example is Tony Badger's essay "The New Deal Without FDR: What Biographies of Roosevelt Cannot Tell Us." The essay puts forward a fierce argument blaming "the presidential synthesis", and the "seemingly insatiable appetite for more and more biographical detail about Roosevelt" for obscuring and leading historians away from far more important analyses of the New Deal in overarching, structural social and economic terms (244). However, at the same time, Badger's essay itself does not engage at all in scrutinizing "the New Deal without FDR." Instead, most of the essay actually engages in the discussion about Roosevelt's personality and daily life that Badger feels is unhelpful to understanding what really matters:

> We now know what Roosevelt had for breakfast, what drinks he mixed for himself at cocktail hour, that he despaired of the food served at the White House. We know that from 1919 Eleanor and he slept in separate bedrooms. But does the biographical detail about Roosevelt that we now have in such abundance help us to understand the New Deal's legacy?

> What the recent work has carefully clarified is the extent of the effect of polio on Roosevelt. A rehabilitation counsellor, a paraplegic polio victim and Geoffrey Ward have documented just how crippled Roosevelt was and "the splendid deception" involved in the collaboration of the media which ensured that neither photographic nor film evidence allowed the American people to see the true extent of his disability. Few Americans knew that the President was so wheelchair bound or had to be lifted like a baby to so many locations. (250)

Most of the essay is apophatic in this fashion – it denies that "biographical detail" can "help us to understand the New Deal's legacy", yet constantly engages in it, in a manner that is rather prurient. While supposedly assuming the moral high ground, Badger feasts on sensational detail about the Roosevelts: the separate bedrooms, the despair about the food, Roosevelt's need to be "lifted like a baby." All the authors Badger mentions who have investigated "the effect of polio on Roosevelt" are in some measure speculative about the mental and psychic effects the disease had on him, but none of them is so shamelessly voyeuristic and crude as to describe the outlook of FDR's incapacity by likening him to a baby.

Badger probably does this in an attempt to parody, or at least exaggerate, the biographical historiography he is criticizing, but at the same time he cannot resist recounting page after page of trivial but also highly memorable Roosevelt anecdotes. The article is really more a part of biographical debates about FDR, than of a debate about the New Deal without Roosevelt, despite the title, especially since Badger keeps arguing with the views previous Roosevelt biographers have taken. He argues, for instance, that it was not the polio attack that, as common FDR wisdom has it, "toughened his inner core", but rather his marital crisis in 1919, after ER discovered his affair with Lucy Mercer (251). So, Badger seems, in spite of his principles, irresistibly drawn towards joining the biographical debate and speculation about FDR.

This dissertation of course risks falling into the same trap of being enticed by Roosevelt narratives rather than dispassionately analyzing how their temptation works. I do not in the least wish to deny my own positionality and the context I grew up in, in which FDR was indeed an admired icon. My family is traditionally left-wing Democratic, "social democrats" in European terms. My grandparents were alive at the time of the New Deal and applauded it, and similar government programs in Europe. All but one of my grandparents were Jewish, and thus belonged to a particular type of victims of World War II – who were saved by an allied coalition led by Roosevelt. So I come from a context in which Franklin Roosevelt was a celebrated, if not often mentioned figure. However, it remains essential that this thesis retains a critical distance from its object to analyze how the FDR icon attracts and fulfills desires in different places and contexts, because this alluring quality is, I hope to show, precisely the decisive reason for FDR's success as a cultural icon after his death. FDR was also virulently hated, and continues to be so in some parts of US society, but he tried hard and largely succeeded in being a seductive

figure, a potential vehicle for a wide range of narratives, and a stakeholder in his own future remembrance. FDR was and remains a key player in historical and other representations of the 1930s and 1940s, and was committed to staying relevant into the far future.

The academic field of memory studies often focuses on cases of redress and repair: doing narrative justice to people, whom we now feel have been wrongfully marginalized, and who seem to have been forgotten – often because they left few traces in the form of archival records and other documents. Memory studies rehabilitates them, by giving them a voice in one way or another, often through oral history or fiction (Frisch 155). Of course, FDR was and is hardly in need of being rehabilitated in memory. As such, questions about his place in memory sometimes do not seem to fit well within memory studies. Memory studies, moreover, tends to focus on how and why present rememberers do, can, or should engage in remembering a particular event or person, and less on how the object of remembrance positioned himself for future memory. There is a great deal of literature on this topic too – particularly about image-making of kings and politicians, for example Peter Burke's book *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* – and also within celebrity studies, about the production of oneself as a seemingly authentic brand, persona or public image. In a sense, my reading of FDR's production of himself as a cultural icon fits into that debate better than into memory studies, but it has relevance in both. FDR created many sites of memory, some of which, most obviously the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential library, were explicitly interpreted as attempts at memorializing himself from the start, and continue to operate with more or less the same aims, though in a different context. In researching such sites, I have increasingly come to think of Roosevelt as a brilliant example for how to rhetorically position oneself so as to be remembered as an icon. Of course FDR was able to do so in large part because he simply was very powerful and led the United States through the most difficult and decisive years of the twentieth century, but his enormous talent and cunning in what I will come to call *autofabrication* was certainly also a key factor.

In any case, the questions – how does a memory, a text or an artefact negotiating the past, work; and what interest does it serve in the present? – are at the heart of this dissertation. It is, in that sense, not a historical dissertation. It mainly uses methods of literary studies – close-reading, in particular. However, many of the texts that I analyze are not literary texts. The Roosevelt icon is the central "text", but this text has a very wide range of expressions. It starts with Franklin Roosevelt himself, as a historical person, who, increasingly assertively, set out to shape his public image as a politician, in order to be elected to various offices, and in 1932 to the presidency. During his presidency Roosevelt publicly spoke, wrote and signed a plethora of texts, and also held radio speeches, press conferences, appeared in photographs and film footage, wrote letters and otherwise created texts, images and other artefacts that somehow represented him, initially for the then-present, but increasingly to create an icon for the future. During his life, and especially after his death, he was also often represented by others. For instance, there are many films, documentaries, and novels that incorporate a Roosevelt character, or that otherwise represent him.

Of the many artefacts representing Roosevelt during and since his life, constituting and negotiating an accumulative FDR icon, I have picked the most important exemplars. All of the selected objects of study are indeed exemplary, in the sense that each one might have been substituted by others similar to it in the points that I highlight. All are, however, also chosen for their individual importance, both qualitatively, in the sense that they prompt new perspectives on, or insights into how the FDR icon and its memory can work, and quantitatively, because they have been widely disseminated, and therefore, presumably, contributed to his remembrance relatively prominently. The six categories I employ – novels, popular biographies, films, documentaries, memorials and museums – are not entirely rigid, but chosen because they all provide fictional or non-fictional narrative representations of FDR, unlike, say, the many streets, avenues, drives and parks named after him. Moreover, they are all more or less stable and enduring texts, so that, in many cases, I am able to study how they have operated in different periods and contexts. A few, especially some biographies, I have studied both as primary objects contributing to the dynamic Roosevelt icon in various ways, and as sources of historical information about Roosevelt. Where there is any possibility of confusion about this, I indicate why and how I use a particular text at a particular moment.

FDR has since his death consistently ranked as one of the top three US presidents – regardless of whether the jury consisted of historians, experts of another kind, or lay people – usually together with George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Despite this, no analysis has been made of FDR as an icon in American culture. Such studies have been made of other iconic American presidents.[1] There are studies in cultural history that have thematic overlap with the development of Roosevelt's public image in American history, such as Emily Rosenberg's *A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory* (2003), but no study focusing on the development of Roosevelt as an icon. This may be because the FDR icon, now that Roosevelt the man's death is seventy years ago, hovers on the edge of lived memory. There are people alive still who remember living through his presidency, but for most he is really a historical figure, recent yes, but no longer directly relevant to politics – rather a cultural figure, embodying the time in which the United States acquired its global position as world hegemon. However, this is precisely why FDR forms a particularly intriguing case study of the production of a cultural icon.

Outline and Pilot Study: The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library in Hyde Park

In the following section I will explain and exemplify how this thesis is built up. I clarify briefly what the central point of each chapter is, without going into theoretical detail, arguments, or specific case studies. I do, however, show how the pinnacle of each chapter plays out in one particular site, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library in Hyde Park (NY), which I

1 E.g. Barry Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol* (1987), and *Abraham Lincoln in the Post-Heroic Era: History and Memory in Late Twentieth Century America* (2008); Andrew Ferguson, *Land of Lincoln, Adventures in Abe's America* (2007).

consider the most important site of memory remembering FDR, and created by him. Thus the FDR Library will function as a kind of pilot case to introduce each of the chapters.

Before embarking on that, something about this thesis' general structure: it is divided into two parts, the first, spanning chapters 1-4, with an emphasis on the cultural history of FDR's creation of his public image at the time, and iconic status for posterity. This first part treats FDR's image-making for future remembrance theoretically and historically. The first two chapters form the theoretical foundation, outlining my view on image-making (chapter 1) and memory-making (chapter 2). They are followed by a historical account of FDR's specific image-making and the creation of the unique FDR "voice" (chapter 3), and an assessment of FDR's efforts to produce his own future remembrance (chapter 4). The case of FDR, as it is presented in chapters 3 and 4, could be regarded as an early model, sowing seeds for, and providing a keyhole perspective on how the process of what I term *autofabrication* works in the modern, mass-mediated United States.

Part Two, chapters 5-8, concern the politics of representing FDR in popular culture and public history since 1945. These chapters show how artefacts and acts of remembrance have negotiated cultural memory since FDR's death, and how his impact on his own remembrance remains palpable even if it has found new cultural frames and appropriations. Recent cultural artefacts representing FDR form case studies, grouped around four key themes in FDR memory: the New Deal, World War Two, FDR's disability, and Eleanor Roosevelt. Each of these themes elucidates a central development within the politics of American culture between 1945 and 2014, so that together, these themes draw up FDR as a relevant embodiment of key aspects of post-war America.

Chapter 1 teases out the dynamic between being created as a self, and creating one's public image, in other words, between FDR's *self-fashioning* and his *autofabrication*. I use self-fashioning in Stephen Greenblatt's sense, meaning the shaping of personality (self) through society's demands and ideologies, to fit the precise "vacancy" that needs to be filled. Autofabrication indicates the making of a leader's *public image*, by himself, and often by others in his entourage. Like any political leader, Roosevelt's identity was fashioned by the mold of the society he inhabited, and like any democratic society, that society gave political mandates to leaders it regarded as fitting its cultural and ideological requirements. FDR could fulfill many of those requirements in the US of the early 1930s, but did not quite fit most of the usual presidential templates; he was, for example, neither a frontier figure, nor a war veteran as most candidates before him had been. I argue that his failure to fit easily into these sets of expectations might have hampered him, but in fact provided him with space to fill the presidency in his own way, and with unusual leeway to fabricate his own public image. In his autofabrication FDR was careful to associate himself with all that was modern and with the future. This strategy propelled his autofabrication forward into later remembrance

of his presidency. Moreover, FDR's public behavior and expressions suggest authenticity – a rhetorical act required particularly from modern media celebrities, which works only when it seems not to be a construct. I argue FDR could come across as authentic, because his self-fashioning is especially hard to separate from his autofabricated public image.

The Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library provides an excellent example of a site that is crucial both to FDR's self-fashioning and autofabrication. The FDR Library at Hyde Park is situated on the Roosevelt family estate, yards away from Springwood, the home in which FDR grew up, and where his overbearing mother – he was her only child – lived until her death in 1941. Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt are buried in the Rose Garden between the two buildings. The FDR Library is the first presidential library in the United States, and the very idea of a presidential library – an archive and a museum dedicated specifically to one president – was Franklin Roosevelt's. US Presidents had not previously been obliged to publicize their presidential records, and in many cases they did not. If they did, the archives would usually go to the Library of Congress. The FDR Library, designed and built by FDR on his home estate, and deeded to the federal government, houses his records and a museum, which initially displayed his personal collections and "oddities" sent to him by admirers, was revolutionary and established a practice followed by all presidents since and laid down in federal law in 1955 (Clark 50-53).

The FDR Library was dedicated in 1941. Eleanor Roosevelt bequeathed Springwood, the home, to the National Park Service upon FDR's death in 1945, as he had wished, and a year after his death it was opened to the public.[2] Thus, the estate came to house two major tourist attractions in the Hudson Valley, steps away from each other. One might read Springwood as the home of FDR's self-fashioning, the privileged social and cultural environment where he was formed and educated, and the library as a key site of this autofabrication. The library is the most explicit place in which he offered his own representation of himself – immediately also read as self-memorializing[3] – not through a statue or other visual tribute, but through publicizing his documents and collections, though with a clear connection to his private life, created by the adjacency to his lifelong home. The site however also shows that self-fashioning – the environment that created FDR as a person – and autofabrication – the representation of his presidency and person that he himself constructed – are entangled in complex ways. The very fact that FDR built the library beside the home, and that he deeded both to the federal government show that that entanglement itself was part of his autofabrication, a strategy to link his political and his private life so as to give the impression of continuity and transparency between the two. That continuity was emphasized by the fact that the museum initially showcased many of Roosevelt's private collections of stamps, ship models, and stuffed birds.[4]

2 http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/facts/
3 I discuss this at length in "Roosevelt in Zijn Eigen Museum" ["Roosevelt in His Own Museum"] *Tweede Levens*. (2010): 125-137.
4 http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/library/onedefinitelocality.html

The museum and the library as a whole, however, have undergone dramatic changes in the process of remembering FDR beyond his death. This is the central concern of the second chapter, about the production of memory**.** I distinguish between two concepts, one similar to the memory-version of self-fashioning, cultural memory, and the other a memory equivalent to autofabrication, remembrance. The dynamic in which intangible social and cultural identity fashioning interlocks with autonomous image fabrication is thus extended into the afterlife of the subject. This chapter investigates that relationship with regard to FDR as an icon from his death on April 12, 1945 onwards. Cultural memory and remembrance are expressions that have been used in many contexts; I enlist remembrance to refer to cultural acts of remembering and artefacts that suggest and inspire a particular practice of remembering past events or people. Remembrance by definition, then, involves agency and one or more people or institutions who consciously assume power over who and what is remembered. Remembrance is always ideologically charged, even if it denies this claim. Cultural memory is the context and complement of remembrance: it is the sense of the past that lives in society, shaped on the one hand by society's needs and ideologies in the present, and on the other by previous experiences of remembrance, and memory of experiences. As Adrian Parr says "… [T]he movement of memory cannot be clearly situated within space and time. (…), although it can be said to produce space-times." (1) This captures nicely the omnipresent yet elusive quality of cultural memory. Chapter 2 shows how consciously managed and politically charged Roosevelt remembrance shapes and negotiates the vaguer, more elusive position of FDR in cultural memory.

In the FDR Library, the museum that visitors see now, is a clear product of a remembrance practice created by the museum curators, who are employed by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The private non-profit Roosevelt Institution has built the wing housing special exhibitions. Both the NARA, and the Roosevelt Institution and the National Park Service (NPS) that administers the home are institutions with a direct or indirect link to FDR. NARA is a federal body established during FDR's presidency, the home was deeded to the NPS as one of its early historic sites. The idea that the NPS should manage national historic sites alongside US natural heritage also dates from the 1930s and FDR was a warm supporter (Meringolo 110-111). The Roosevelt Institution is a partisan body, a private non-profit organization dedicated to furthering the legacy of the Roosevelts.[5] Roosevelt intended the library mainly to open his archives to the public, but, under the influence of presidential foundations, presidential libraries have increasingly become shrines to the presidents they remember (Clark 17-60). The FDR Library is actually, among presidential libraries, the least celebratory and the most even-handed in addressing also the problematic and painful sides of Roosevelt's presidency. Like the involvement of the non-partisan federal bodies in Hyde Park, this even-handedness is in line with Roosevelt's own wish to be remembered not just as a hero, but as an example for future generations to learn from and improve on (Roosevelt, Library Dedication Speech).[6]

5 http://www.rooseveltinstitute.org/about
6 http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16138&st=Roosevelt+Library&st1=

In other aspects too, the Library on the one hand propels FDR as a heroic American icon in extrapolation of his autofabrication, and thus, presumably, in ways he would have applauded, but also in ways he might have liked less, or in any case, could not have foreseen. For instance, his wheelchair, an element FDR carefully kept out of the public view, is now emphasized in the home as well as the library museum. It is framed consistently as a mark of Roosevelt's resilience in the face of adversity, but as such, it is more a product of cultural memory – i.e. of what agents in the present consider a relevant aspect of the past – than of a culture of remembrance that Roosevelt himself tried to instigate through autofabrication.

Chapter 3 is a more historical treatment of FDR's production of himself as a public icon during his presidency. It discusses in detail how he and his staff and other advisers and supporters created and managed his public image and voice, focusing on his presidential campaign and presidency (1932-1945). It expands autofabrication to include public image management as performed by agents such as Eleanor Roosevelt, FDR's friends, advisers, staff, and his administrations in a broad sense. It traces how FDR's speeches were co-created with spin doctors and ghostwriters, to reveal an image-making machine multiple the size of any previous US president's. It goes on to treat FDR's negotiations of the media – radio, newsreels, photography – as well as his relations with the press and opinion pollsters, in order to show the basic movements he performed to create a consistent public image. This chapter argues that the intertwining of Roosevelt's literal voice and his narrative and metonymical voices created both a sense of casual authenticity and a degree of plasticity, which allowed various – often contradictory – national, political and cultural narratives to adopt him as a vehicle for their messages.

The FDR Library museum on the one hand tells some of the stories of FDR's autofabrication as a collective effort, and on the other showcases it, telling its own story. For instance, the museum has recreated 1930s and '40s living rooms and kitchens in which visitors can listen to parts of FDR's famous radio "Fireside Chats", as if they were doing so at the time they were held and in the situation in which they were heard by his contemporaries. At the same time, the FDR Library makes concrete the division between, on the one hand, the full body of all documents, letters and other papers which FDR signed, wrote, and spoke – those are stored in the archive on the second floor of the building, which the overwhelming majority of visitors do not see – and, on the other, the recordings, letters, pictures and film footage that carefully and selectively construct the public image and voice for the benefit of the museum visitors, located on the ground floor. The museum exhibition especially foregrounds an FDR voice and image that is a selection which uses the elision between the physical and metonymic voice and image. For instance, visitors can see the actual shoes and leg braces that shaped and are shaped by FDR's legs, and they are invited to put themselves into FDR's shoes figuratively. This intertwines public and private aspects of FDR, creating a sense of authenticity through a strategy FDR himself used as well during his presidency.

Central in chapter 4 are Franklin Roosevelt's efforts to build his cultural legacy – his autofabrication in the interest of his future remembrance. This chapter focuses on what Roosevelt, his entourage, and his administrations did to position him for a particular place in cultural memory, and specifically, how they created a number of indexical and iconic sites of remembrance. The first part of the chapter discusses the indexical nature of the New Deal. Although few buildings, infrastructures, artworks or other products created as part of the New Deal actually portray FDR, they reference him indexically. Given the continuing overwhelming presence of the New Deal in the American landscape, Roosevelt remains in a sense almost physically present. This chapter does not argue that FDR hired artists to blow his trumpet in a direct celebratory fashion of himself as an icon, but that the presence of New Deal cultural products and infrastructure nonetheless functions as a form of FDR remembrance that continues to be subtly active in American cultural memory. Secondly the chapter focuses on more pointed acts of future memory-making FDR initiated: the publication of his *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* and his design, building and dedication of the first presidential library.

The FDR Library museum as it operates in the present is both evidently a product of FDR's autofabrication for the future, and it revives his voice in a modern context. The museum on the one hand depoliticizes him, through the personal and non-partisan treatment of his person and presidency. On the other hand, it shows how the many positive outcomes of his presidency – particularly the victory over the Great Depression, the US's global success in winning World War Two, and the Four Freedoms and the UN – are clearly results of FDR's foresight and courage, which have turned out, and, supposedly, were always intended, to be positive for the United States and the world as a whole. This politicizes FDR's achievements, while retaining the suggestion they are a result of global consensus, unequivocally benefitting the entire world.

Chapter 5 is the first chapter of the second half, which thematically treats the development of the FDR icon since his death in 1945. It analyzes the strategies through which the New Deal is depoliticized in remembrance. Despite its highly partisan and controversial nature, the New Deal has become depoliticized in a process that is in fact highly political, and was initiated by FDR himself. I distinguish two depoliticization strategies which are mobilized to depoliticize the FDR icon with regard to the New Deal, that FDR used also: personalization and mediatization. The central case studies of this chapter are the FDR characters in various stage and film adaptations of *Annie*, and the First Hundred Days – the New Deal's honeymoon period at the start of Roosevelt's first presidency. By now, this has evolved into a media ritual, in which presidents and other elected government executives are measured against FDR after their first three months in office. This ritual is now practically entirely divorced from the remembrance of the New Deal, certainly from its controversial nature, although it remains connected to FDR.

While Harold Gray, the author of *Little Orphan Annie* (1924-1964) strongly disliked FDR, the 1977 Broadway musical *Annie* connects the girl hero with a great deal of Rooseveltian Hoover-

bashing, New Deal characters and a very celebratory view of FDR and his activist politics. Gray's brainchild Annie is adopted into hagiographic FDR remembrance and FDR is, despite the various *Annies*' celebration of the New Deal, imported into a fundamentally Republican narrative of what it means to be American. To make this possible, each new adaptation, especially the hugely successful 1982 musical film, has included FDR and the New Deal in ever more depoliticized versions.

At the FDR Library museum, the First Hundred Days are regularly revived, most recently in a special exhibition in 2008, when Barack Obama entered office. The more general exhibition tends to depoliticize the New Deal through personalization: the focus is on the many letters to Roosevelt that are on display, written in response to the first Fireside Chats. In their individuality and in their treatment of FDR as an older brother or family friend, they personalize both the American experience of the Great Depression and the New Deal. In a short documentary film about Roosevelt's legacy, written and narrated by Bill Clinton, he says, over photographic and film footage of the Great Depression and the New Deal:

> Even though Franklin Roosevelt was the architect of grand designs, he touched tens of thousands of Americans in a very personal way. To ordinary Americans, Roosevelt was always more than a great President, he was part of the family. My own grandfather felt the same way. He believed that this president was a friend, a man who cared about his family's future. My grandfather was right about that.

Of course, the fact that this is Clinton's voice and text politicizes Roosevelt's legacy, but on the other hand, by letting individual people, "ordinary Americans", such as, presumably, Clinton's grandfather, represent the beneficiaries of the New Deal, viewers are persuaded that Clinton's grandfather was right indeed, and that "this president … cared about his family's future." By pulling the representation and remembrance of the New Deal into the personal and the familial, it is drawn away from political debates about government spending.

Chapter 6 explores how Franklin Roosevelt is allegorized to represent the US's role in World War Two, and in the global order**.** FDR has become one of the most centrally iconic US presidents first and foremost as a result of his role in World War Two. Be it as the *primus inter pares* of the Greatest Generation, or as the eager interventionist who was proven right by the attack on Pearl Harbor, FDR is remembered as embodying the United States at war. This chapter investigates how FDR remains adaptable to a broad range of American war allegories. It proposes that allegories can work to bridge the distance between past and present, making the past relevant to the present. The Roosevelt character in many recent war movies and novels is an allegorical figure of this kind: he can function both synecdochically as if he were a randomly selected American man whose war experiences are representative of the American experience of World War Two in general, and metaphorically, as if he single-handedly embodies the nation at war. Either way,

FDR characters in cultural artefacts representing World War Two provide a way for us to relate to the American experience of World War Two, both in its vastness, and in its particularity. The healing of the break between past and present through FDR figures is never entirely successful, yet successful enough to drive continued attempts at doing so.

A key text to explore how FDR is allegorized is Michael Bay's 2001 movie *Pearl Harbor*. *Pearl Harbor* essentially substitutes FDR's disabled body for the trauma of Pearl Harbor. In the movie's plot, FDR is the only one able to respond to the attack because of his previous conquest of polio. This also works visually: whenever the footage of Pearl Harbor becomes too confronting, the scene cuts to FDR in his wheelchair. Thus, FDR is cast as the particular body through which the vast trauma of Pearl Harbor can be comprehended and addressed. Clinton, in this documentary about FDR's legacy at the FDR Library, performs this same movement in his opening sentences. Listing what Americans studying the 1930s and '40s will perceive through understanding FDR, Clinton says:

> …the victory of democracy over fascism, of free enterprise over command economies, of tolerance over bigotry. And they will see that the embodiment of that triumph, the driving force behind it, was President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Though he was surrounded by turmoil, he envisioned a world of lasting peace. The triumph of freedom in the face of depression and totalitarianism was not foretold or inevitable.

This posits Roosevelt as the embodiment of, and driving force behind the victory of American ideology over fascism, communism, and anti-Semitism. It casts FDR as the personification of that triumph, so as to make it graspable to a twenty-first century audience. "Freedom" in "the triumph of freedom" might be read as "Roosevelt", and stressing that his triumph was "not foretold or inevitable", pushes home the sense that while history may seem to follow a clear storyline it does not. This text cleverly nuances the relationship between past and present by underlining that contingency, while at the same time offering FDR as a narrative bridge.

Chapter 7 argues that FDR's disability drives the continued relevance of FDR as an allegory for a troubled America, casting FDR, and by extension the US, as a figure made more perfect through struggle. It develops the notion that FDR's disabled body supports – and can paradoxically therefore be made to stand in, and stand up, for – American national narratives of remembered and currently experienced hardship. Particularly, this chapter engages with Alison Landsberg's term prosthetic memory, interpreting it in the context of FDR's disability, arguing that individuals and groups can project artificial memories onto FDR's beleaguered body. I suggest that FDR's use of prosthetic devices and other fake extensions made him peculiarly cognizant of the mechanics of prosthesis and therefore enabled him to engender as well as embody prosthetic memories. To argue this case I first show how FDR's disability can hardly exist as a real memory, since it was invisible during his presidency, which is evidence for the fact that memories of the disability

are artificial, later inventions with a relevance for the present. Then I show how various recent movies – particularly *Hyde Park on Hudson* and *FDR American Badass!* (both 2012) – use the FDR icon, and effectively turn him into a prosthetic memory.

FDR's disability is a central vehicle at Hyde park, operating in the FDR Library museum, which displays many of the prosthetic devices he employed, at the home with exhibits one of his wheelchairs, and generally on the grounds. The tour most visitors take is led by an NPS guide and leads from the Wallace Visitors Center to Springwood, past the Roosevelts' graves, and then to the museum, which is self-guided. On the way from one building to the next, one passes the long path on which FDR tried to learn to walk again – something that is not visible, but pointed out by the guides. Also, between the visitors center, the library and the home, there is a wind vane with a wheelchair as its basis, reminding visitors of its centrality to FDR's life. The parts of the site regular visitors enter are all on the ground floor, easily accessible to anyone, and the ramps at most doors are explicitly original, made for FDR. Thus, every part of the site directly or indirectly shows that FDR was wheelchair-bound, and FDR's disability functions to connect the home, the library and the visitors center. As such, it is now assertively present as a conduit between all the other, more static, sites – thus acquiring a function in FDR memory that is itself prosthetic.

The final chapter shows both Eleanor Roosevelt's role in FDR's autofabrication and remembrance as an icon, and her own place in cultural memory as a heroic figure with considerable political power. The central argument of this chapter is that FDR and ER together expanded the arena of politics from the white, male-dominated official bodies to other spheres, mainly the domestic. As First Lady ER could operate politically on the margin of the official administration, and FDR could relegate to ER issues that were politically burdensome for him to address. The Roosevelts together performed an expansion of the political arena similar to the one later proposed by feminist theorist Cynthia Enloe in *Bananas, Beaches, Bases, Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (1987). Although they did not have Enloe's radical agenda, the fact that they performed a similar movement, made them both "future-proof." The Roosevelts' shared expansion of the political arena empowered marginalized groups, but this empowerment was often so small or informal that it may actually have hampered more serious demands for recognition, emancipation and civil rights. Through ER issues were often depoliticized. ER's involvement for instance with African Americans seemingly included them, but simultaneously shored up more radical requests for civil rights.

ER's absence-yet-presence in the political sphere persists in cultural memory particularly through her portrayal as absent-yet-present in FDR's private life. She is routinely portrayed as powerful – often as narrator or focalizer, as in the 1976 *Eleanor and Franklin* television biopic. Or she is a bridging character, between Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt in Ken Burns' *The Roosevelts* (2014) and between Louis Kahn's Four Freedoms memorial on Roosevelt Island and

the United Nations building on Manhattan. Through this meaningful invisibility or silence, ER continues to contribute to FDR's presence and visibility as a cultural icon. She fascinates, yet at the same time leaves space for highly feminized characters like FDR's mistress Lucy Mercer to contribute to the construction of his masculinity in cultural memory.

At Hyde Park too, ER is highly absent-yet-present. Parts of the basic exposition at the museum are of course dedicated to her, foregrounding her writing and her role as FDR's agent. One wing at the end of the chronology, both in the museum's presentation of history and in its suggested order of perusal, is dedicated especially to ER. It is an extra wing added onto the original structure in 1970, specifically to house ER's archival materials.[7] On the ground floor it presents her as "First Lady of the World", suggesting both the expansion through ER of the President's power in terms of geographical space, and extending it beyond FDR's death in terms of time. Thus, ER's figurative expansion of FDR's sway is reflected at the FDR Library in that she gave him an extra wing. A similar reflection can be found in Eleanor Roosevelt's cottage Val-Kil, which the general public can visit. It is on the margins of the estate, the tour going there focuses on her private life and relationships, and thus it is both a trek to the outskirts that the main stream of visitors do not make, and yet also an expansion into new, less visible, territory, that nonetheless adds to the narrative as a whole.

All in all, Hyde Park as the site of the Roosevelt Historic Home and the FDR Presidential Library, reflects all the key autofabrication, remembrance, representation and negotiation strategies that this thesis highlights, and which FDR and later agents representing him employed. These, in summary, are the expansion of the notions of voice and image to become metonymical of FDR; depoliticization, the politics of consensus, mediatization, and personalization; casting FDR as an allegorical figure and his disability as a prosthetic device justifying his continued relevance as an icon; and finally, expanding the arena of the political through his wife.

7 http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/library/onedefinitelocality.html

Chapter 1: Self-fashioning and Autofabrication

Introduction

In the preface of Ken Burns' and Geoffrey Ward's coffee table book accompanying their 14-hour documentary *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History* (PBS, 2014) Burns formulates what inspired him to make this documentary series: "Seen close-up, for all their seeming difference from the rest of us – their riches, their fame, their historical importance – the Roosevelts seem familiar" (xii). The Roosevelts were not only relatives, Burns seems to say, but are also intimately relatable for 21st-century audiences. He continues by providing three underlying justifications driving the documentary and the book. First on the level of civic engagement, the Roosevelts "dealt, as we deal, with great public questions that are still achingly present in their urgency: What is the role of government? What can a citizen expect of that government? What are the qualities of lasting leadership? What is the correct balance between principle and pragmatism?" (xii). The problems they had to address in their various public functions are still recognizable today – indeed the Roosevelts are presented as exemplifying still pertinent best practices in these dilemmas. Second, they are recognizable as individuals dealing with universal themes: "But more than that, as individuals, they wrestled in their personal lives with issues familiar to everyone everywhere: betrayal and forgiveness, grief and self-doubt, courage and cowardice, loyalty to family and the need to be one's own self" (xii). These more personal themes too are as relevant and unresolved for us now as they were for them and therefore, their heroic stories mirror our own. And finally, "the Roosevelts' lives" pose an "ultimate mystery" which the makers hope to "provide clues to": "How is it that these three utterly different people, each of whom endured so much pain and loss and fear – 'wounded people,' Geoff Ward calls them – could leave us such a legacy of hope?" (xii).

Each of these points are generic to biography and biopic, indeed to storytelling: some sort of question or cavity in understanding is a basic condition to warrant a biography, and while not every story addresses the themes Burns lists, these are indeed "familiar to everyone everywhere" and therefore often work to make stories about them relevant across eras. Burns' documentary about the Roosevelts – or, in terms of structure and time allotted, really about FDR, with Theodore and Eleanor Roosevelt as important book ends – does indeed set out, as practically every other Roosevelt biography or documentary, to get to the heart of the Roosevelts on an intimate level. Nonetheless, even if using an "ultimate mystery" as a justification for storytelling and "wounded people" as a universally germane theme are common strategies, the Roosevelts, FDR in particular, lend themselves especially well to this emplotment. FDR is one of the most intensely examined of all American presidents: only George Washington and Abraham Lincoln have been written about more often (Smith x). Most of these works explicitly set out to give a new interpretation of who he really was, what he ultimately felt or thought, or what he obscured and revealed through his enigmatic texts and behavior.

This chapter does not primarily address the mysteries, enigmas and unanswered questions the Roosevelt icon offers, but rather theorizes the mechanics of becoming such an icon. Burns refers to four aspects that I consider to be at the heart of this issue: first, who FDR is "as [an] individual", second what environment he is a product of – "riches" as well as what he endured – third what it is that makes him a relatable public icon, i.e., the fact that he is so easily understood as wrestling "with issues familiar to everyone everywhere", and fourth the "great public questions" that he answered in such a way that they permanently changed the parameters of American government. These four elements are, I will argue, key in the production of a political leader as a cultural icon. In order to be able to study that production, this chapter will outline the dynamic between the familiar, and often misused, concept of self-fashioning, as introduced by Stephen Greenblatt in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980) and what I will call *autofabrication*. Essentially, self-fashioning covers the first two aspects: a self's individuality and how a self is the product of a cultural and social environment; and autofabrication the other two: the production of a leader's recognizable public image and the simultaneous exertion and obscuring of his immense power.

Mediating between these four aspects requires an iconic leader to be a skillful and manipulative politician. Whereas self-fashioning is a process every individual is engaged in, autofabrication is an extension of self-fashioning, specific to the making of icons, particularly political leaders. Political leaders, especially in democratic systems, are exceptional on the one hand because they are bound to represent a far larger constituency than just themselves, and therefore need a public image that is recognizable for an immense range of citizens. On the other hand they possess and often use their ultimate power over subjects' life and death, but need to seem benevolent and considerate to all those they purportedly represent. I will focus first on how autofabrication emerges from and interlocks with self-fashioning, and then argue that a successful autofabrication needs to encompass an extremely plastic public image, so as to appeal to a wide variety of audiences and address "issues familiar to everyone everywhere."

Self-fashioning and Autofabrication: Complementary Concepts

Ken Burns focuses mostly on the making of the Roosevelts as individual selves, both through their own agency and through environmental factors influencing them: their personal struggles as well as what happened to them to make them what they became as historical characters. In this sense, he is partly concerned with what Stephen Greenblatt calls 'self-fashioning':

> Self-fashioning is in effect (…) the cultural system of meanings that creates specific individuals by governing the passage from abstract potential to concrete historical embodiment. (3-4)

Greenblatt here defines in theoretical terms and in a larger, essentially Foucaultian frame, what Burns is talking about when he refers to "loyalty to family and the need to be one's own

self", seeing both the individual and his or her environment as parts – which may be pulling in different directions – of a cultural system of meanings that as a whole produces identity. Greenblatt goes on to explain how literature written by the individuals whose self-fashioning he studies operates in this cultural system:

> Literature functions within this system in three interlocking ways: as a manifestation of the concrete behavior of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which behavior is shaped, and as a reflection upon those codes. (4)

Greenblatt sees literature as an expression of the author's self, as reflective of larger cultural codes that shape the author's and other people's behavior, and also as an occasion to rethink those codes to allow them to develop. Burns' documentary concentrates on Roosevelt as a product of "(family) loyalty and the need to be one's own self" and in doing so it treats FDR to some extent as a writer of his own narrative, as Greenblatt does with literary authors. While FDR did not write literary texts, he was as a statesman a versatile creator of implicit and explicit texts that do the three things Greenblatt lists: make manifest his own concrete behavior, express the cultural codes that shaped it, and reflect on and develop such codes.

However, neither Greenblatt nor Burns directly address what happens when an individual becomes, more than an author, the embodiment of authority, and can thus produce texts that are legally and practically a performative of power. To address the cultural production, representation and remembrance of political leaders, rather than authors and texts, I build on Greenblatt's concept of self-fashioning, expanding his theory by including a notion of practice through executive power. To do so I add autofabrication as a corresponding concept to complement self-fashioning, with "auto-" referring explicitly not to the self in a Freudian sense, but to the independent making of one's public image.

Fabrication, with its implication of falsity, may seem too tendentious a word to refer to image-making, especially in the case of an authoritative and seemingly authentic leader like FDR. However, I use it following Burke, and moreover, specifically to refer to Hannah Arendt's application of the word. As Keith Breen explains in *Hannah Arendt and the Law*, for Arendt politics in the ancient world was an issue of collective action: "Action here consisted in *praxis*, that is, acting and speaking in public, whereby citizens revealed to the world their unique identities, 'who' they were." (17). Because the *polis* was the space to represent oneself, political power and violence, understood by Arendt as limitations imposed on self-expression, were direct opposites. In Arendt's reading, political life however – deplorably – became a matter of *poiesis*, 'work' or 'making', both in the sense of 'art' and of 'fabrication' (Arendt 195). *Poiesis* by definition implies representation, and thus, some degree of re-shaping, which Arendt understood as violence to the originals inherent in representation. As such, Breen explains, for Arendt, political power through *poiesis* became directly associated with force used to condition

originals to fit representations. Autofabricating political leaders, I will argue, are both acutely – often deviously – aware of this force they use to impose limits on their constituents, and of the need to artfully obscure this. Moreover, they understand that making an authoritative icon of themselves involves reshaping their selves – another exploit that must be made invisible.

Burns' documentary and many other academic and popular cultural artefacts have noted that Franklin Roosevelt juggled these roles and interests with particular success: he was an individual, but also the resultant of a particular culture, the leader of a political party, a public icon and from 1933 until his death the embodiment of executive power. As such he is an intriguing case study, in the dynamic between discourse and practice, between being shaped and shaping, and between self-fashioning and autofabrication. He has occupied both ends of the self-fashioning/autofabrication dialectic in the course of his life: while he successfully kept his disability out of the public view and therefore was never openly stigmatized by society, he came close to the brink after his bout of poliomyelitis in 1921, and was, on the other hand, among the most regal, activist and belligerent presidents in American history. Especially after 1940, when he had, unprecedentedly, been reelected to a third term, he became an institution in his own right.[1] His identity and image were shaped intensely by what his culture and society demanded, even more so than Greenblatt's exemplary renaissance authors, because as a presidential candidate he had to live up in detail to what the electorate expected from its leader. Simultaneously, he acquired unprecedented power over the lives of others, as well as over his projected identity, representations and remembrance (Maney 193).

Although I argue that self-fashioning is too limited a concept to grasp the cultural production of FDR, Greenblatt did intend self-fashioning to refer to all aspects of self-making: by the person whose identity is being shaped, as well as by others, and including the person's influence on other selves. Greenblatt locates the concept historically in the sixteenth century:

> Perhaps the simplest observation we can make is that in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process. Such self-consciousness had been widespread among the elite in the classical world, but Christianity brought a growing suspicion of man's power to shape identity: "Hands off yourself," Augustine declared. "Try to build up yourself, and you build a ruin." This view was not the only one available in succeeding centuries, but it was influential, and a powerful alternative began to be fully articulated only in the early modern period. (2)

Although Greenblatt refers to a "manipulable, artful process", he does not mean a public image that may be removed from the internal experience of selfhood, but the production of selfhood

1 See for instance Jean Edward Smith, *FDR*; Alan Brinkley, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*; James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt, The Lion and the Fox*; Patrick J. Maney, *The Roosevelt Presidency.* John Gunther, *Roosevelt in Retrospect: A Profile in History.* Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt, A Rendezvous with Destiny.*

internally as well as externally. Greenblatt's term includes autofabrication as an element of self-fashioning, which makes sense for the discussion of writers or players in a renaissance court. Although the "self" in self-fashioning mostly refers to the shaping of identity, Greenblatt implicitly allows it at times to mean "auto-", from the Greek *autos*, referring to the self-steering, free will-driven nature the fashioning of identity may take on. However, these are different uses of "self-", and especially for a modern politician, the autonomous act of projecting a particular public image, while occluding the less than glorious parts of his story, is a separate and essential part of legitimizing his political power. That the leader and his aides are fabricating an artfully concealed construction need not be a problem as long as the act is skillfully carried out, crafting a convincing sense of authenticity, that is, the impression that private identity and public image merged entirely. However, to grasp this distance between self and image in the making of political leaders as cultural icons, I need to distinguish autofabrication from self-fashioning.

I draw apart autofabrication and self-fashioning for two more reasons: first, because FDR did not only embody both his public image and the broader cultural "text" that produced him, he also to some extent authored both public image and cultural text. FDR did not literally write much, but through the autofabrication of his public image co-authored himself as a cultural text. The result is that author and text threaten to become inextricably confused in a way that is not the case with Greenblatt's writers whose texts are ontologically separate from their bodies. Secondly, FDR, as indicated, was at once a flesh-and-blood individual with his own personality, a man dependent on what was acceptable within his society's ideological framework, a public icon, and the embodiment of his society's executive authority. This cluster of elements is dialectical: FDR resolutely exercised power over the last two, the first two are the aspects in which his self was shaped by environmental forces; the politician FDR represents a fifth aspect, charged with mediating between these four aspects. To draw out this dialectical nature of the cultural production of a head of state, I regard the first two elements as self-fashioning – with Greenblatt – and the opposing two as autofabrication.

These five aspects: an individual – a "body natural" to use Ernst Kantorowicz's paradigmatic phrase (24) – a self intensely shaped by societal demands, a manipulative politician, a public icon, and the embodiment of power – a "body politic" (21) – are uniquely combined in statesmen. This is especially so in a tremendously powerful president of the United States at a particularly formative moment in twentieth-century world history. Two of these aspects, the fashioning of individual identity, and the fact that any elected presidential self is an outcome of apparent collective social and cultural demands, are clearly part of self-fashioning as Greenblatt formulates it. The aspect of a president's embodying formal power over life and death is, however, hardly part of the process of cultural shaping that Greenblatt describes. The aspect of giving shape to a public image may be part of self-fashioning, but Greenblatt does not separate a leader's public image management, which can acquire its own momentum, from that of other actors representing the leader, independently or with their own agenda, nor from the collective

reception of the image projected. This independent shaping of their own public image, in the interest, and through the use, of their unique power, is precisely the point at which leaders deviate from others, and where self-fashioning is too limited a concept.

On the other hand, there is a host of theorists who have considered the fabrication of iconic leaders, quite apart from their making as individuals. Presumably all political leaders consider at some point the mediation of themselves as cultural texts to their subjects, and the question of how they will "go down in history." Although this is especially imperative in a democratic context because one needs a favorable and widespread public image in the present to be elected or re-elected, and particularly feasible in a modern, mass-mediated context because wide dissemination is so easy, it is an issue of all time. Augustus famously had his facial image impressed on the Roman coin, thus clearly publicizing his iconic image in the most literal sense. The paradigmatic monograph analyzing "the making of great men", in the sense of creating a public image, is Peter Burke's *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (1992). Burke introduces his book as "a case-study of the relations between art and power, and more specifically of the 'making of great men'" (2). It was intended particularly as

> …concerned not so much with the man or the king as with the image. Not with his self-image, although this has been reconstructed. Not with his image in the eyes of posterity, which has been the subject of other studies. It is the public image of the king on which the book will focus, the place of Louis XIV in the collective imagination. (1)

Thus Burke focuses on the making of Louis XIV's public image, the visual and textual performance of kingship produced for the sake of visibility, in a process of clearly Arendtian fabrication. Burke does not engage with Louis XIV as an individual or a product of his culture, but as a celebrity who needed an artistic and artful apparatus to create a public image that would determine the collective imagination. However, fabricating a public image in the way Louis XIV's image was made, that is, divorced from the king's personality, has become impossible with the advent of modern mass media. Self-fashioning and autofabrication may be different things, but successful autofabrication in the modern context hinges on the idea that the public image is authentic, that is, in synchrony with the leader's "real" self. Thus, in autofabrication the need for authentic self and public image to coincide, or seem to do so, has become both a key value and an important rhetorical trope (Boorstin 182).

It is telling in this context that there are two books titled *The Making of FDR*, neither of which actually discuss "the making of great men" in the sense in which Burke interprets it. Richard Goldberg's *The Making of Franklin D. Roosevelt: Triumph over Disability* in fact studies the development of Roosevelt's self, particularly how his disability presumably influenced his personality. Linda Levin's *The Making of FDR: The Story of Stephen T. Early, America's First Modern Press Secretary* focuses on Roosevelt's press secretary, so Levin's book does concern FDR's

fabrication rather than his self-fashioning. Stephen Early was a key agent in Roosevelt's public communication and the book is a biography of Early more than a study of Roosevelt's public image. However, the fact that "the making of FDR" is both used in the sense of the creation of his self and the creation of his image suggests that a complicated entanglement of the two is at stake.

Autofabrication is thus a tangent of self-fashioning, which must seem to be involved with the leader's internal self, but in fact is the leader's performance of self, crucial to the negotiation of his public image on the one hand and wielding of executive power on the other. It is no coincidence that precisely these last two aspects are also central to Kantorowicz's formulation of the body politic, although he is not involved with its cultural production, but rather with its theological embedding as operative in medieval Europe. Together self-fashioning and autofabrication cover all aspects of the social and cultural construction of statesmanship – self-fashioning covers the fact that a statesman is an individual and a resultant of a culture, and autofabrication covers the aspects of independent public image creation, and the embodiment of power. The four 'corners' that this dialectic draws up meet in the fifth aspect at the heart of democratic statesmanship: the fact that the leader is also an elected and manipulative *politician*. I see self-fashioning as a dialectic between individual characteristics and environmental shaping, and autofabrication as a dialectic between public image management and executive authority. Those two dimensions are axes that cross each other at the center, which is where the political aspect of leadership is located. They draw up a field of negotiation in which the cultural production of statesmanship is performed: the dynamic of self-fashioning and autofabrication allows the politician to transform into a statesman. That dynamic in turn lays out the fundaments for future remembrance, an issue to which I will return in the next chapter.

From Self-fashioning to Autofabrication

First, however, it is important to note that there is, in FDR's as in most cases, a diachronic movement from self-fashioning to autofabrication. To become a statesman, one must first be fashioned as an individual self, and be cast, both in the pottery sense of "molded", and in the dramatic sense of "thrown" into the role, as representative of the collective. With formal power the need and agency for autofabrication increase immensely, a process that normally happens through political leadership, but the stages are by no means clearly separate – a young politician already starts to autofabricate himself as much as he can, and however powerful FDR became, he continued to depend profoundly on the mandate of the nation that empowered him, as well as on his own body and personality. With due attention to this nuance, autofabrication is a process that is firmly embedded in the performance of statesmanship. While the word may suggest autofabrication is done by a leader alone, as a painter who paints his own portrait, it is usually a more collective effort. In FDR's case, certainly, there was a fairly large inner circle of autofabricators involved – press secretaries, public relations men, speech writers – who under FDR's auspices worked on "spinning" his autofabrication. This was the time when advertising

and public relations became major businesses, and FDR greatly expanded the White House staff responsible for his autofabrication accordingly (Boorstin 205, Schoenherr 40). However, this could only be done once he was president, and the shift from self-fashioning to autofabrication merits specific attention.

Essential to the process of self-fashioning are, according to Greenblatt, on the one hand "submission to an absolute power or authority situated at least partially outside the self – God, a sacred book, an institution such as church, court, colonial or military administration", and on the other "something perceived as alien, strange or hostile. This threatening Other – heretic, savage witch, adulteress, traitor, Antichrist – must be discovered or invented in order to be attacked and destroyed" (9). If we project this onto FDR, it is easy to see both concrete authority figures and opponents, but the Authorities and Others that Greenblatt refers to are impersonal, abstract and pervasive. The American political establishment seems to have been FDR's Authority: the quest to approach and eventually acquire power over it drives him, and his uncle Theodore Roosevelt is the closest concrete embodiment of the political establishment whose particular example FDR followed in great detail. The Other is formed by the social forces holding him back in his quest, concretely, the social constructs that marginalized disability.

FDR aspired to the presidency from very early on, and greatly admired his distant relative Theodore Roosevelt, who became president when Franklin was 19. On the day of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's wedding, President Theodore Roosevelt, brother of Eleanor's deceased father, gave the bride away and was the guest of honor, eclipsing the bride in a way that prefigured Eleanor Roosevelt's own special brand of autofabrication, which reverberates in her remembrance, as I will show in chapter 8. FDR habitually addressed Theodore Roosevelt as "Uncle Theodore" (Smith 37), and his later political career mirrored TR's in striking detail: they both became Assistant Secretary of the Navy, ran unsuccessfully for vice-president, and became governor of New York. FDR strongly believed from the 1910s onwards that he could follow Theodore Roosevelt's path to the presidency (Smith 99-116). In a roundabout way, TR became an even more important precursor, when, as a result of a bout of poliomyelitis, FDR's legs were paralyzed.

When FDR became wheelchair-bound in 1921, the older social expectations were that he would drop out of public life. A cripple was regarded as a burden on society, to be shifted to its margins. A widespread assumption was that polio affected the mind as well as the body, and most polio survivors were relegated to institutions in which they were treated as utterly dependent, mentally as well as physically, to the point that they would usually start behaving as such (Gallagher 32). Given that Roosevelt was a wealthy cripple, he did not go to such an institution, but was expected, among others by his mother, to retire to his estate and live out the rest of his days there in relative luxury, but out of public view. However vigorous a sailor and athlete he had been, responding to quintessentially American values of freedom, sportsmanship and closeness to

nature, all contributing to the self-fashioning of a successful American man in the 1920s, after he had become disabled there was no escaping the fact that he no longer suited the ideal. Roosevelt's loss of ability made him entirely unsuitable in the well-established paradigm, in which infectious disease – particularly polio – was seen as one of society's threatening Others, the victims of which must be purged from public life.

One central way in which Roosevelt battled this Other, polio, was by banishing the disease rather than its victims: from 1924 on, he developed a polio rehabilitation clinic in Warm Springs, Georgia, and the charity organization that he set up, March of Dimes, eventually, in 1955 succeeded in finding a polio vaccination (Rose). In the body, Roosevelt personified a new paradigm already in the making, in which disease could, like other forms of adversity, strengthen and toughen a true American, the way the Frontier experience might have done to earlier generations (Turner 4). By doing so, he cast himself no longer as a potentially great man "lost" to polio, but as a reformer, who had not only survived the disease, socially and otherwise, albeit through hiding its effects, but also fought it as a national epidemic, and through his exuberant presence and success allayed widespread fears of its crippling nature.

Before FDR's election, several presidential "templates" had been in vogue, such as the Founding Father president, the frontiersman president, and the Civil War veteran president (Rossiter 75). FDR was none of those, but was lucky to be able to mold himself also outwardly on the model of Theodore Roosevelt, who was the first of what would come to be regarded as the Governor Presidents, which is why it is important that both were Governor of New York before their presidencies. Like FDR, Theodore Roosevelt had not been a clear example of one of the models – his predecessor McKinley had been the last Civil War veteran to become president – and one of the ways in which TR handled that issue was by fashioning, and later autofabricating, himself as a frontiersman and a cowboy. He had worked as a rancher and exuded enormous physical strength, exuberant health and confidence (Morris 347). Without claiming to have been born in a log cabin – as had been essential for instance in Andrew Jackson's and William Harrison's campaigns (Boller 72) – he revived the presidential template of the frontiersman president that had served them. After 1921, Franklin Roosevelt could no longer match any of these entirely, but he worked extremely hard to develop his chest and arm muscles, so that his upper body was and looked very strong (Gallagher 20). Where TR was often photographed on horseback, FDR had his photos taken in his car, presenting a modernized version of his uncle and predecessor. Moreover, since TR's precedent, more people had entered the presidency from governor positions, particularly FDR's mentor and other iconic president, Woodrow Wilson. So when FDR ran for president he followed a recent template that suited him better than earlier available models, and had simultaneously been doing what he could to live up to and modernize the existing templates.

This measuring up to self-fashioning expectations and modernizing traditions remained a balancing act. Roosevelt like any other successful American with aspirations to the highest

political office still had to allow himself to be molded by basic cultural assumptions of what it meant to be a successful American. Copying Theodore's career worked out well in part because Theodore Roosevelt was a presidential model FDR could match up to, and someone who had himself also modernized the model of the US president. More than his predecessors, TR understood the importance of mass publicity, and he was more than an administrator (Schoenherr 7, MacGregor Burns and Dunn 121). Although Theodore must have been crucial for Franklin's self-fashioning, it was not until FDR was president himself that it became advantageous to publicly stress his links with his uncle: by the time he had truly acquired his own position he could advertise his having voted for TR, and adopt the name "New Deal" for his major domestic change program, named in reference to Theodore Roosevelt's 1906 Square Deal program (MacGregor Burns and Dunn 142). Thus, TR was probably an important factor in FDR's autofabrication, or rather, in creating space for him to get away from cultural molds he would not have been able to fit into. However, society, and its self-fashioning forces, were also beginning to shift fundamentally and overwhelmingly, turning Roosevelt from a highly unlikely candidate for the presidency, into someone who could manipulate to some extent the ongoing transition so as to suit himself. Thus, the boundary between self-fashioning and autofabrication became in his case unusually fluid.

Emerging from an old Dutch family as a crippled but rich inheritor, FDR could not lay claim to being a self-made man, a particular proponent of America's success in achieving its Manifest Destiny or an embodiment of the American Dream. TR had not had most of these characteristics either, but had adapted himself, for instance by working as a cowboy for some time, whereas FDR, partly because TR had leveled the path, could get away with being an outlier. By the time Franklin Roosevelt's political career was budding, space had been created for him to modernize the older ideals of Manifest Destiny towards new versions, for instance, by arguing that it was America's duty to uphold international law and order (Quarantine Speech, 1937) and to become the world's "arsenal of democracy" (Fireside Chat 16, 1940). Indeed the implicit presence of the older rhetoric of America's Manifest Destiny and American Civil Religion enhanced his argument against isolationism in the late 1930s (Rosenberg, *Spreading* 115). At the same time, FDR's move away from Emersonian rhetorics of self-reliance and "rags-to-riches" interpretations of the American Dream was well-received against the background of the Depression, which rendered so many American dreams ridiculous and gave the lie to so many people's sense of self-reliance (Cullen 117). One presidential template that FDR could conform to to some extent was that of the president as benevolent parent to the nation – an American archetype that had existed since the Founding Fathers. That was not a role he could step into before he was president, also because of his relative youth, but he did find an early entrance to it, via his role of informal friend or older brother – a role he mainly developed in radio addresses, as the many letters he received in response attest. Here again, he did not only adopt a modern medium, but also update a much older ideal, in an apt response to society's need for modernization of cultural archetypes.

But however much TR had helped FDR to gain control over his public image, FDR also realized that the family connection with TR and the Roosevelt name meant that he needed to steer clear of his famous uncle. One way in which he did that was by joining the Democratic Party, whereas Theodore had been a Republican president. This may however seem to be a greater difference than it really was. At least initially, neither Theodore, nor Franklin were strongly attached to their parties and both were known for being realists rather than idealists (Freidel 16-17). They essentially shared all main political beliefs, which were best summarized under the term Progressivism.[2] Theodore Roosevelt after his presidency left the Republican Party and started his own new Progressive Party, thus splitting the Republican electorate and giving the 1912 election victory to the Democrat Woodrow Wilson (Davis *The Beckoning* 274-276). Despite the difference in party affiliation, Franklin Roosevelt voted for Theodore on all occasions the latter ran for (vice)president (Tugwell 17). He may indeed have chosen to join the Democratic ticket in New York State mainly because as a Republican he would always have been overshadowed by the then still much more famous Teddy Roosevelt, and therefore would stand no chance of election as a Republican (Smith 99-116).

This tendency of FDR to define himself against others is part of a larger pattern in his autofabrication. During his presidency Roosevelt's declared enemies were first the Great Depression and then the Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan). These opponents were particularly crucial to the fabrication of Roosevelt's public image, as his two still popular nicknames, Dr. New Deal and Dr. Win-the-War, attest. Although Roosevelt's ideals seem to have derived primarily from antitheses to politics he strongly opposed, he became increasingly associated with his own active agenda. 'Dr. New Deal' and 'Dr. Win-the-War' suggest as much: they rather stress Roosevelt's actions against the Depression and fascism than the mere fact of his opposition. However, because Roosevelt was rather an ideological complement of the "isms" of the day – colonialism, fascism, communism – than an ideologue himself, and because he had to represent an extremely wide spectrum of Democratic party wings and members, he increasingly became an emblem and a mascot of democracy in the broadest sense. Although this was probably not initially an intentional strategy, it later became an active tool for Roosevelt to cast himself as representative of the ideals that all true Americans shared. Indeed, his eminently practical "Try something, if it doesn't work, try something else" approach to the New Deal (Polenberg 6), was relatively successful in fighting the national spirit of desperation also because it tapped into the quintessentially American conviction that acting is better than theorizing – a principle that must also have had a role in FDR's self-fashioning.

A primarily technological development that Roosevelt was the first to utilize in making his way up to the presidency, was the rise of radio. His use of radio will be discussed in detail in chapter 3, but it is important to point out here, that radio gave him a new and unusual opportunity for

2 MacGregor Burns and Dunn 121; Davis *The Beckoning* 224.

autofabrication. Roosevelt could not only advertise himself via the radio, but could also use the US's evolution towards what Benedict Anderson has called an "imagined community" (46). Anderson defines the nation as "an imagined political community." The nation is "imagined as a community, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always perceived as a deep horizontal comradeship" (7). Thus Anderson uses "imagined community" to define the nation in the era of free citizens who are no longer subjects of a divine ruler. The term is, however, also easily applicable to describe the effect of mass media. Anderson wrote about upcoming nations and nationalism in the nineteenth century, when newspapers and novels were the main forms of mass media through which nationalism was dispersed, but radio was arguably a much more powerful medium to create a "deep horizontal comradeship" across an entire nation, even one as large as the US. FDR's radio addresses were broadcast at such a time that they were more or less prime time radio for all Americans across time zones, and they were broadcast live, so that everyone – at times more than 80% of American citizens – could hear the President live at the same time.[3] Thus, Roosevelt did not only manage his own autofabrication through his use of radio, but also profoundly influenced the imagined community that had practically and ideologically created him.

Roosevelt operated in a modern mass media landscape that was rapidly evolving. This meant that the circumstances of his fabrication were obviously different from Louis XIV's. In the age of mass communication, a politician's self and public image must seem to coincide if the public image is to be successful. I define authenticity in practical terms as congruence between the stories one tells oneself about oneself and the stories one tells others about oneself. For politicians in a democratic system, who, on the one hand exercise more brutal power than they can sell to their electorate, and on the other, have to represent their constituents metaphorically embodying all of them, doing this is impossible by the nature of their role. Nonetheless, it remains important to be perceived as authentic . Some, like sociologists Alexander and Jaworski, even consider it the pinnacle of presidential success (2). For a politician to come across as authentic it must seem as if there is no autofabrication, only self-fashioning. Of course, achieving that suggestion requires an act of autofabrication in itself, so that authenticity becomes a rhetorical performance. This need for appearing authentic is a particularly twentieth century American issue, as Jaap Kooijman argues in *Fabricating the Absolute Fake: America in Contemporary Pop Culture* (19), and may thus not necessarily have been a concern for Louis XIV, as it was for FDR.

In the twentieth century democratic American landscape in which Roosevelt operated, there were also far more mass media channels and more active agents, who could express themselves more widely and with less restraint, than Louis XIV's fabricators had to deal with in seventeenth century France. As a result, Roosevelt both had to make himself heard from among more voices,

3 Ryfe; Goodman 62; McLoughlin 201.

had more channels through which to engage with a mass audience, and more of a political need to do so. In Roosevelt's case a wide range of dependent, independent, sympathetic and disapproving voices contributed to his public image, because virtually every individual or organization was free to engage with it. Nonetheless, Roosevelt's own PR machine, in which he was not the only agent, but the ultimately responsible director, set the tone and provided a leading voice in the fabrication of the FDR icon (Winfield 231).

Although FDR, before 1933, was consistently engaged in positioning himself well for the presidency, and started to become successful at doing so early in his career, this is not yet autofabrication. He played the game of self-fashioning by its implicit rules, successfully, no doubt, because he intuitively understood them, but before 1933 he was still attempting to fit the mold, rather than changing it. During his first campaign he had a special campaign biographer "prove" his physical health and mental well-being, suggesting that FDR was far more able-bodied than he really was (Costigliola 125). I do not draw attention to this to argue that he fabricated untruths about his health, but rather to showcase the extent to which he had to insinuate that he was more physically fit than he really was. Other examples of his posing as almost entirely physically "normal" are rife – including photos and film footage of FDR "walking" to the rostrum before speeches, and many photos that conceal he is leaning into something or on a second walking stick hidden behind his leg.

Figure 1. FDR with a visible and a hidden walking stick, Warm Springs, GA, 1928 (Collection of Stefan Lorant, International Center for Photography, NYC).

Although Roosevelt's taking ownership of his own image began early on during campaigns for political office, the more transformative acts of autofabrication could only happen when as president he acted as a powerful figure. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library – the first ever presidential library – was Roosevelt's idea, its construction beginning in 1938, and opening in 1941. Those dates bracket another key moment in his presidency: his unprecedented third term re-election in 1940. After that, and especially after the United States became officially engaged in World War II, FDR's executive power – now also as commander in chief during wartime – became almost limitless. This extreme power conferred upon an elected president in a democracy traditionally highly suspicious of the corrupting effect of power vested in a single individual, yet also in need of continuity because of the ongoing war, called for a great deal of autofabrication. Autofabrication, particularly, of FDR as a masculine yet mild and humane parental figure to a country in wartime, became necessary to create a sense of self-confidence and unity in the war, and to occlude the less heroic, or indeed criminal, elements of his presidency. As a war president in his unprecedented third and fourth terms, FDR acquired more room for autofabrication. The novelty and uniqueness of the situation allowed him to shape expectations of what his legacy would be.

Autofabrication

As noted, Greenblatt does not stringently distinguish between authors and their texts, seeing both as cultural artefacts of the same society, nor between practice and discourse: the practice he studies is the production of discourse. But in the final pages of *Renaissance Self-fashioning* he does, inadvertently and without theoretically framing it as such, outline an opposition between self-fashioning and autofabrication in his discussion of Shakespeare's *Othello*: he reads Othello as a product of self-fashioning without agency and Iago as an embodiment of autofabrication without self. Greenblatt's discussion of *Othello* is a tour de force which works very well on the level of close-reading, but stretches the term self-fashioning too far, in order to make it incorporate Iago as well as Othello. I would argue that Iago is actually a literary archetype for what I mean by autofabrication, in the sense that, of the four aspects that determine the cultural production of a statesman, Iago embodies the two on the autofabrication dimension. Iago exerts power over life and death in the play, albeit not as the diegetic king, but rather as the malevolent director on stage, the narrator and the character who manipulates and directs all the play's action, and he is also the character most deeply invested in producing his own public image, which in Iago's case is entirely divorced from any "true" internal selfhood. Indeed, that is precisely what Iago does not have, as Greenblatt implies (236). Nor does *Othello* portray Iago as a product of his culture, the other tangent of self-fashioning. Those two elements are embodied in Iago's foil, Othello, who does have a life narrative, and whose position is untenable exactly because of the problematic fit between his background and the cultural expectations of his role. All the issues of power, race, and sexuality that are on the table are played out through politics, a language game with real-world implications, that Iago manifestly wins, although the anxieties involved in

autofabrication without underlying selfhood do emerge in full. Though obviously more than a textual phenomenon, FDR became adept at autofabrication through textual presence that shares much with Iago's.

Greenblatt introduces his treatment of *Othello* with a long and scathing discussion of sociological research by Daniel Lerner (*The Passing of Traditional Society*). He agrees with Lerner's initial assumption that modern western societies inculcate in their peoples a "*mobile sensibility* so adaptive to change that rearrangement of the self-system is its distinctive mode" (224), but goes on to vehemently disagree when Lerner argues that other, "traditional" societies lack "empathy" – defined by Lerner as "the capacity to see oneself in the other fellow's situation" – a trait Lerner considers crucial to western societies. Greenblatt rightly points out Lerner's disregard for the role of power in this process, arguing that what Lerner calls empathy, is what enabled European colonists to trick native peoples into slavery, by improvisationally making use of their rudimentary understanding of the natives' cultural and religious practices. Greenblatt goes on to suggest that precisely this "empathy" is what Iago – and FDR, I would add – deviously use to wield power, calling "that mode *improvisation*" (227, italics in the original). This improvisation is not defined by its "spur-of-the-moment quality" but rather by "the ability both to capitalize on the unforeseen and to transform given materials into one's own scenario" (227). FDR possessed exactly that ability in a high degree, and, to use Greenblatt's words: "understood the impromptu character of an improvisation [a]s itself often a calculated mask, the product of careful preparation" (227).

Iago is a perplexing but also a revealing example of autofabrication because the persona that he fabricates for himself is so empty – he does not give himself any narrative body: precisely the flexibility of the role-player that he derives from his emptiness, is, while extreme in Iago's case, typical of successful autofabrication. Of course the historical FDR was not *only* or in the first place an actor subsuming an identity not his own, nor was he *only* made up of text, but the toothless yet incessant insistence of critics to pinpoint Iago's motives resembles the ever-continuing zeal with which FDR biographers try to get to the heart of his being, as if some revelation were still to be discovered.

Roosevelt himself on May 15, 1942 famously commented in a conversation with Henry Morgenthau:

> You know I am a juggler, and I never let my right hand know what my left hand does.... I may have one policy for Europe and one diametrically opposite for North and South America. I may be entirely inconsistent, and furthermore I am perfectly willing to mislead and tell untruths if it will help win the war. (Kimball 7)

While winning the war is the unequivocally stated aim here, the first part of the statement resembles Iago's "I am not what I am" as well as the liar's paradox in that Roosevelt is entirely and

compellingly transparent about his dissembling. "You know" stresses the addressee's awareness of the trickery while it is happening. FDR is honest and open in this text about his duplicity in his war practice. The reference to his left and right hands primarily fits in with the juggler metaphor, but on a secondary level refers to his tendency to tell different cabinet members, officers, and other close assistants ("right hands") different and conflicting things (Goodwin 23). It may even be read as referring to the left and right wings of the political spectrum to which he performed contradictory narratives. A juggler is to some extent by nature an improviser in Greenblatt's sense, juggling the elements that offer themselves in a particular situation, but essentially performing a perplexing and confusing act, that may seem impromptu, but which can only be pulled off because of the juggler's practiced skill.

The juggling Roosevelt does in this now epigrammatic statement puts a bewildering yet falsely reassuring spin on his actual behavior as a wartime president. In its attractive ability to puzzle while claiming to be revealing, it draws attention to itself as text. In its content it posits and in its form it performs FDR as a nimble figure through language, drawing attention away from his physical inability to move independently, and this nimbleness altogether obscures what it is that he misleads and tells untruths about. Thus FDR engages in autofabrication *as a textual figure*. He did very real things, indeed he exerted his presidential power in unprecedented ways and to extreme extents, sending more than 12 million American soldiers into combat, incarcerating nearly 122,000 Japanese Americans without proof of disloyalty, but this was made possible primarily through his texts – which I consider to have been performative in several ways.

On the most obvious level, the president issued executive orders, texts with legal status, commanding the execution of specified acts, such as the internment of potentially disloyal citizens on the West Coast, Executive Order 9066 (February 19, 1942). Such texts are explicitly performative "by virtue of the power vested in me as president", as Executive Order 9066 has it, so they stay away as far as possible from fabricating FDR as a public icon or an individual. Rather, the opposite is going on: "by virtue of the power vested in me" is passive in various ways, as "by virtue of the power" suggests that FDR is not personally doing anything, but the depersonalized "power" is, not of its own accord, but "by virtue", which means "because of", but implicitly signals that there is a moral justification involved. Moreover, "vested in me" draws attention to the fact that anyone, given the democratic structure even perhaps everyone, did the vesting, that is, except FDR. This glosses over the fact that FDR actually exerted "the power" personally, when he had a choice to do otherwise. Executive Order 9066 is a very specific and much debated example, and much of its wording is formulaic and not typical of FDR, but my point here is that FDR did not shun the execution of extreme power including the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* for particular ethnic groups, but he used his power through extremely impersonal means and language. EO9066 was held up by the Supreme Court during FDR's presidency – it was only rescinded decades later by Gerald Ford in 1976 – so it was a decision supported by the system of checks and balances. Still, EO9066 is a text FDR issued, which had

great practical impact on the lives of people, while it does what it can to refrain from shaping FDR's public image as a person. I see it as an act of autofabrication, in its near-denial that there is an individual exercising tremendous power here, although that is what is going on. With over 290 executive orders per year in office, FDR is the president who issued by far the most of them of all presidents before and after him.[4]

The most clearly autofabricating texts FDR produced, however, were not performative in the usual sense, but did act on a practical level by almost or entirely concealing what he did in other domains. His Fireside Chats, for instance, were politically influential in the sense that they often had very tangible impact on public opinion about particular issues, but they also importantly contributed to constructing FDR's public image as an authentic and human individual (Buhite xx). Four days after the issuance of Executive Order 9066, on February 23, 1942, FDR delivered his 23rd Fireside Chat, a glowing war speech, in which he frames himself and early-1942 America in sweeping historical and geographic contexts. It begins by mentioning that today is George Washington's birthday, and ends:

> And General Washington ordered that these great words written by Tom Paine be read to the men of every regiment in the Continental Army, and this was the assurance given to the first American armed forces:
> "The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the sacrifice, the more glorious the triumph."
> So spoke Americans in the year 1776.
> So speak Americans today!

Thus, Roosevelt frames the American war effort in 1942 as a contemporary version of the American Revolutionary War, typical and constitutive of true Americanness. In the process he associates himself with General George Washington – significantly: the military leader rather than the president, albeit in a moment that Washington used the literariness of words to inspire his army. In the rest of the Fireside Chat FDR exhorted his "fellow Americans" to look at a map of the world to understand the global movements and stakes of the war. The language is rife with moral righteousness, referring to the United States in Roosevelt's own earlier phrase as the world's "arsenal of democracy" –an expression that has continued to reverberate – and indexing the Four Freedoms, which he first formulated in the State of the Union address on January 6, 1942, six weeks before this Fireside Chat, and which have become more than almost

4 Up until Theodore Roosevelt no one had issued more than 40 Executive Orders per year as president, TR upped this to 144 and it stayed high, around 200/year, until FDR's presidency, when it became nearly 300. The number has since declined dramatically to between 30 and 40 in the last few decades. See http://fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/every-presidents-executive-actions-in-one-chart/

any Roosevelt text part of his cultural and political heritage. This Fireside Chat shapes FDR as a man – a person as well as a masculinity – through his morally just military mission in the world. It both attends to American foreign policy and to his own outward image, and is thus clearly an act of autofabrication, but although it successfully constructs a public image of a profoundly frank and morally upright man, it is at no time really inward-looking. The fact that FDR had, just days before, ordered 122,000 innocent citizens to be locked up without due process or stated end-date is wholly absent and irrelevant to this speech, a text that – unlike the Executive Order – reached the majority of Americans, and was delivered to most of them in Roosevelt's own intimate radio voice. Thus this Fireside Chat is an act of autofabrication in the active sense that it helps construct Franklin Roosevelt's public image, as well as his relation to the US, and the US's relation to the world as a whole, but it is so in a secondary fashion as well. It obscures one of the most immoral acts of his presidency, and contributes to the framing of the Japanese internment as an event for which no one bore personal responsibility.

Another similarly crucial pair of moments in FDR's autofabrication are his Four Freedoms speech – the traditional State of the Union address he gave on January 6, 1941, so before official American involvement in World War II, and his meeting off the coast of Newfoundland with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill on August 14, 1941, producing the Atlantic Charter (Smith 128). In the Four Freedoms Speech Roosevelt formulated his definition of freedom ("the supremacy of human rights everywhere") and specified the Four Freedoms at the heart of human rights:

> In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression – everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way – everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want – which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants – everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear – which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor – anywhere in the world.
>
> That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb. To that new order we oppose the greater conception – the moral order. A good society is able to face schemes of world domination and foreign revolutions alike without fear. Since the beginning of our American history, we have been engaged in change – in a perpetual peaceful revolution – a revolution which goes on steadily, quietly adjusting itself to changing conditions – without the concentration camp or the quick-lime in the ditch.

> The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society.
> This nation has placed its destiny in the hands and heads and hearts of its millions of free men and women; and its faith in freedom under the guidance of God. Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights or keep them. Our strength is our unity of purpose. To that high concept there can be no end save victory.

The most frequently quoted lines are the ones in which FDR names the four freedoms, and because they are usually quoted in isolation this seems a purely idealistic text, largely or entirely divorced from its historical circumstances and practical impact.[5] They did however have great impact, not only rhetorically at the time of the address's delivery, but also in the formulation of the United Nations' aims, and it is one of the most central and best remembered statements of FDR's principles. But this long excerpt also shows how the speech functioned as a whole, and was in the first place a war message at a time the United States was not yet involved directly in the war, and public opinion – unlike FDR – still largely opposed involvement. Roosevelt explicitly states his opposition to "the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb" and uses clearly belligerent words – supremacy, struggle, strength, victory – in a more or less metaphorical context, but the pointed theme of all these metaphors is war. While the speech seems to be, and tends to be remembered as, a plea for freedom and human rights and against violence, Roosevelt invoked those high principles to ready the nation for war. At the same time, his formulation of the Four Freedoms is a constitutive part of his autofabrication, both in what was then the present and for his future remembrance, presenting his character as kind, fatherly and morally firm, and linking his principles directly to the ideological foundations of the United States. When saying that "Since the beginning of our American history, we have been engaged in change – in a perpetual peaceful revolution", he uses "we" to ostentatiously place himself and his contemporaries in the same glorious historical context of peaceful change. Simultaneously, to say that "there can be no end save victory" implies that there will be war. Thus the autofabrication lies in FDR's proposition of a public image that stresses his uniquely American peacefulness, morality and zeal for freedom. The latent message that is insinuated in passive terms, and which the assertive autofabrication covers up, is that under FDR the United States will go to war.

The first key and most direct reconfiguration of the Four Freedoms speech, is in the Atlantic Charter, issued on August 14, 1941. The meeting between FDR and Winston Churchill that produced the Atlantic Charter, a pivotal policy statement which officially formulated their

5 Although there are many degrees to be distinguished here: at one end of the spectrum the Franklin D. Roosevelt memorial in Washington DC simply lists the four freedoms, and at the other extreme the Four Freedoms memorial in New York City quotes the speech from "In the future days" to "in our own time and generation", incorporating more of a sense of the historical circumstances that inspired Roosevelt's formulation of the four freedoms.

shared aims for the postwar world, was held in secret on HMS *Prince of Wales* in Placentia Bay, off the coast of Newfoundland. This secrecy is in itself worthy of note: while there was of course a security issue involved, FDR and his staff went out of their way to an unnecessary extent to present alternative narratives to convince the American public of his whereabouts (Smith 128). The Atlantic Charter itself is a key document in its statement of agreed principles between the US and Great Britain, including the projected end of European/British colonialism, the envisioning of the United Nations as a global body to assert the four freedoms as central aims and ends of humanity, and the statement that "the Nazi tyranny" must be destroyed. Its point 6 illustrates this all-encompassing quality very well:

> After the final destruction of Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.

Apart from the principles Churchill and Roosevelt formulate for the entire world here, including refraining from national expansion and explicating "freedom from fear and want" as ambitions every nation ought to have, this point became especially important because of the opening subclause. Hitler read the Atlantic Charter days after Roosevelt and Churchill drafted it – diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany were still intact and functioned – and he allegedly and understandably interpreted it as a declaration of war (Paterson et al. 179).

The first meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill, and the Atlantic Charter they produced, form a key turning point in World War II, even before the US was officially engaged. However, while this is one of the moments in which Roosevelt used the presidential power at his discretion most forcefully and influentially, the meeting was clouded in secrecy, and the text of the Atlantic Charter is extremely impersonal. The Atlantic Charter formulated some of Roosevelt's most favored principles, both personally and in the construction of his public image, as we have seen in the discussion of the Four Freedoms speech, but the Atlantic Charter refrains from stressing those links between "the president" and FDR as a public icon and an individual person and politician. The Atlantic Charter's text refers to Roosevelt as "the President of the United States" twice, and never uses his name. This is all the more striking since "the President of the United States" is on both occasions mentioned alongside "the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill." Despite the fact that the Atlantic Charter was for Churchill a more problematic message to bring home, because it stated the vision of a world without colonialism, obviously a sacrifice for Great Britain, but gave no clear guarantees of American help in fighting the war, Churchill owns the message personally, whereas Roosevelt ostensibly acts only through the power invested in the President. Indeed, there is no official signed version of the Atlantic Charter; the text was telegraphed to London and Washington. Roosevelt at a press conference in 1944 said about this: "There isn't any copy of the Atlantic Charter, so far as I know. I haven't got one. The

British haven't got one. The nearest thing you will get is the [message of the] radio operator on *Augusta* and *Prince of Wales*. That's the nearest thing you will come to it ... There was no formal document." (Gunther 15-16).

Conclusion

Statements like the one above, with their bantering tone, tendency to draw up smokescreens, and near denial of the existence of the Atlantic Charter in official form, remind of the "I'm a juggler" epigram: Roosevelt openly and in a personable – friendly as well as person-like – manner states that he has acted presidentially at his discretion on behalf of the nation, without attaching his name to any document. The Atlantic Charter is a pivotal policy statement and a product of Roosevelt's personal interaction with Churchill and with the country he represented, but disagreed with about the need for overseas intervention in the war, yet his name is as far away from it as possible, a fact he cared to stress explicitly. His active autofabrication of his iconic image lies elsewhere: it is part of his public addresses such as the Four Freedoms speech. The autofabrication involved in Roosevelt's treatment of the Atlantic Charter is its passive counterpart: the obvious secrecy surrounding the meeting and the explicit denial of the existence of a formal document themselves contribute to the image of FDR as a compelling but elusive icon.

Chapter 2: Agency in Cultural Memory and Remembrance

Introduction

Franklin Roosevelt, like most statesmen, realized he did not only need to autofabricate his public image to enable him politically to wield the power invested in him for the then-present, but also for the then-future. Not a historian and writer like Winston Churchill, FDR nonetheless understood he would become a historical icon, and dedicated the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, with the now famous words:

> To bring together the records of the past and to house them in buildings where they will be preserved for the use of men and women in the future, a Nation must believe in three things. It must believe in the past. It must believe in the future. It must, above all, believe in the capacity of its own people so to learn from the past that they can gain in judgment in creating their own future. (Library Dedication Speech, June 30, 1941)

Roosevelt here suggests it is the Nation that "bring[s] together the records of the past ….", tellingly, because in this particular instance, it was FDR personally who initiated anything, rather than the Nation. This is important because it is an example of FDR presenting himself as embodying the Nation in a situation in which he served his personal interest, but which accrued momentum as a national event. It has since become standard practice for presidents to create individual presidential libraries, regulated by federal law (Clark 50), and this quotation by Roosevelt is cited time and again in justification.[1] FDR said this in the context of his own presidential library's dedication, but the three beliefs articulated are general ones Roosevelt held and clearly acted on in his autofabrication for the future. He believed that "the past", his present, contained lessons for the future, and that the future would be able to discern those. In his asserted belief in the capacity of the people "so to learn from the past that they can gain in judgment in creating their own future", he juggles two notions of using the past: on the one hand the idea that academic history contains "lessons" or good examples to follow, and on the other the idea that the past can be made applicable to present needs. Roosevelt thus explicitly expressed his trust in future generations' ability to learn from his papers, and continue to draw lessons from his work, however different they might become. By dedicating this library, he added his papers to the archive of cultural memory – the repository of traces from the past upon which everyone in every newly evolving present can draw.

What form that future learning might take remained an open question. Barry Schwartz in *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (2000) considers this same question when he writes:

1 E.g. by Koch and Bassanese, Clark , Hufbauer.

> How, then, are we to regard Lincoln? Is he a model *of* society or a model *for* society (Geertz 1973c 93-94)? A mirror or a lamp for the present? A reflection of the concerns of the day or a pattern for understanding and dealing with them? (…) These questions admit of no realistic answers. To conceive of collective memory as a mirror of reality is to conceive a fiction, for if, independently of historical evidence, our changing understanding of the past uniquely parallels changes in our society, then the only relevant reality would be the present, and the very concept of collective memory would be meaningless. To conceive the meaning of the past as fixed and steady is likewise meaningless, since any event must appear differently as perceptual circumstances change. (7)

Schwartz here essentially draws apart two functions of collective memory: to be enlightened by the past, and to employ the past as a reflection of the desires and needs of the present. The latter of these is Halbwachs's seminal definition, the former seems to be the one Roosevelt is leaning towards in his dedication speech (Erll and Rigney 1). This is no surprise, because that is the use of the past in which he has most of a stake as a historical statesman. The speech suggests FDR believed others would be able to learn from his example. But at the same time his plea for faith in the future, his stress on the Nation's future "people *so* to learn from the past" suggests that it is not yet clear *how* that learning will take shape. Roosevelt did not leave a text outlining what he thought the future should admire and emulate in him, but rather a massive archive of documents that might inform such interpretations. Although setting up a library and museum at the site of his home proposes particular remembrance practices, Roosevelt was more invested in making himself available to cultural memory in a broader and more serendipitous sense.

I have argued that Roosevelt succeeded in using social, cultural and technological transitions to assume some control over factors that could have fashioned him in unwelcome directions, and to turn them into vehicles of active autofabrication. This chapter theorizes the possibility to additionally shape one's own remembrance, beginning by outlining the difference between cultural memory and remembrance, and the role of representations and agents representing Roosevelt. It elucidates how Roosevelt in a sense rode the waves of key twentieth-century American developments so prolifically, that most central themes of Roosevelt's autofabrication overlap with crucial developments in twentieth century America, and therefore with the principal topics and issues in the process of memory-making that has gone on since his death. This chapter shows what mechanisms in the creation of cultural memory and remembrance underlie the dynamics of remembering and representing FDR since 1945.

The previous chapter focused on how self-fashioning and autofabrication conceptually work, and how they complement each other in a modern democratic mass-media context. As discussed, Greenblatt argues in the wake of Foucault that any self is a product of what its culture and context demand, and of the individual's own character and active positioning. But a politician in a position of power can also make his own history in a broader sense – by managing his public

image positively and through obscuring negative aspects – for the sake of future remembrance. Autofabrication is thus also crucial to understanding Roosevelt's remembrance. Autofabrication is done in the first place for the present and the very near future – in many politicians' case to be re-elected – but it is also actively involved in the production and management of future remembrance.

FDR was involved in his autofabrication, by constructing a particular public image, and by keeping that public image textually as separate as possible from his practices as power-brokering president. However, during his presidency as well as after his death, he has also been portrayed and represented by a host of other agents with varying agendas. The interaction of his own textual making of himself and the texts others made of and about him later elucidates both the processes of autofabrication and memory-making. I argue that because his autofabrication was so porous in its ability to allow other narratives to absorb elements of FDR's public image, the FDR icon assumed a degree of agency of its own, determining the meaning of later representations of him. The power of FDR's discourse and rhetoric, textual and otherwise, lies in the fact that they continue to seem relevant to situations different from the ones in which they were first uttered. FDR fabricated himself so that he was extremely available for future imagined communities or collectives to be part of narratives employed to read the ideologies and needs of the present into the past. To put it differently, the FDR icon produces and propels a kind of discourse that has survived since Roosevelt's death, and continues to give him and his self-defined beneficiaries a degree of actual power in the present.

To substantiate these claims, I first extrapolate the autofabrication and self-fashioning dialectic into the realm of remembering the past, suggesting that cultural memory is the 'memory equivalent' of self-fashioning, and remembrance the equivalent of (auto)fabrication-in-the-future. Remembrance is a practice, a ritual that was created by particular individuals or institutions with specific aims and political agendas, whereas cultural memory, while also shaped by social interests and political ideologies, is vaguer, harder to grasp, and yet more omnipresent. One way of putting it is that cultural memory can be seen as the archive of the past, and remembrance the choice of documents, narratives and experiences an agent selects to represent the past. What is attractive about that metaphor is that, like archives, cultural memory seems a neutral, passive repository, when in reality through privileging some stories and marginalizing others, cultural memory too has a measure of control over the past, even if the agents in cultural memory – in a physical archive, these would be the archivists – are hard to pinpoint (Schwartz and Cook 1). A problem with the metaphor, however, is that remembrance is not simply the selection of stories from cultural memory to create a certain practice, but also includes that practice itself, that is, what people do with narratives and representations of particular elements of the past.

Following my conceptualization of these terms, I will discuss the serendipitous yet important nature of agency within cultural memory, and then the potential for autofabrication for future

remembrance. Following that, I discuss – in conversation with and departure from Pierre Nora – how remembrance and cultural memory meet in particular physical or metaphorical *lieux de mémoire*, and how representation by other agents influences what elements are hidden and which ones are made surreptitiously present. Throughout I will give examples drawn from the case study started in the previous chapter: Roosevelt's Four Freedoms in remembrance and cultural memory.

From Self-fashioning and Autofabrication to Cultural Memory and Remembrance

The interpretation of cultural memory as the archive of possible culturally acceptable narratives is close to, yet different from Jan Assmann's celebrated definition in "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity." Cultural memory, as Assmann understands it, concerns events that are no longer part of 'lived' memory in society, but are culturally inherited, becoming fixed legends or myths, functioning as cultural touchstones. At the other end of the spectrum he posits the concept of communicative memory, which comes into existence in everyday interaction between people. Communicative memory is evanescent, and allows for diversity and contradiction; it is made up of the informal, loosely shaped memories people share and does not involve high political stakes. The life of communicative memory is about eight decades, as long as there are people alive to recount what they lived through. In between cultural and communicative memory there is, to borrow Jan Vansina's expression a "floating gap" (23-24). However, rather than thinking of cultural and communicative memory as temporally following each other, separated by a gap, I propose a more spatial dynamic, which allows me to refine Pierre Nora's opposition between *lieux* and *milieux de mémoire*, an opposition which disregards precisely the crucial negotiation carried out in the "floating gap." Doing so is important, because, as within autofabrication, disguising the fact that there is a negotiation artificially increases the authority of the remembrance practices that emerge as dominant.

My use of cultural memory shares with Assmann's the idea that cultural memory is something that can be drawn from, but, like FDR, I think of the repository of traces, including documents and lived memories ("communicative memory"), as part of cultural memory. This is not to say that Assmann's opposition between cultural and communicative memory is not useful. Indeed, in between these poles Aleida Assmann has, in *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit* developed an elaborate hierarchy. However, she focuses less on the fact that the existence of a floating gap provides space for invisible power play. What the Assmanns refer to as "figures of memory", I call remembrance. While I recognize the elegance of their term, suggesting the configuration that happens in remembering, as well as the ritualized choreography within that process, I also find "memory" a term too intangible to use for situations in which pinpointing who is directing the process of re-membering is of the essence. As Adrian Parr has it "memory, unlike remembrance itself, is not *in* space and time" (10), whereas negotiating remembrance practices is. So to stress

the active agency involved, I follow Jay Winter's suggestion to use remembrance as to denote ideologically charged acts of reconfiguring elements of memory (*Performing* 15). Remembrance is thus the configuration of narrative elements agents draw from the archive of cultural memory to produce, and have others invest in a particular version of a particular story.

The archive as a metaphor for memory is well-known,[2] but links between image-making in the present and later remembrance are little theorized. Image management of leaders is treated independently from memory studies. However, if the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library shows one thing, it is that image- and memory-making are not separate. FDR created the library as an act of autofabrication, not primarily to represent himself to his own present but to the future, as his dedication makes explicit. In the years since his death the library has changed dramatically, sometimes in ways FDR envisaged and sometimes differently. But in any case he, as the remembered object, is also a key player in negotiating the remembrance itself. His autofabrication concerns more than his image in the eyes of his contemporaries; it projects itself forward into the realm of remembrance. Roosevelt steered his future remembrance among other things by appointing friends and relatives as representers. By giving his documents to the National Archives and Records Administration he added them to the repository of cultural memory. However, by housing them in a separate building on his own estate, and having the National Park Service manage his home on the same estate, he contributed to creating a particular remembrance of himself and his presidency (Hufbauer 41).

(Auto)remembrance is thus an extension into the future of autofabrication, while cultural memory is broader, more the collective product of a culture, in short more like self-fashioning. Like self-fashioning, cultural memory is concerned also with the internal and the personal, as well as a cultural resultant of forces that exist, but are hard to pinpoint. Like autofabrication, remembrance is a practice that independently and often consciously constructs an iconic image, making ideological choices in the process, to offer particular narratives and to suppress other elements. I find it useful to think of memory as "the past made present", as Richard Terdiman formulates it, but more specifically remembrance is the practice, by a society, or agents or groups within society, of making particular parts of cultural memory present. Cultural memory, like remembrance, is ideologically charged but it simultaneously seems the collective and implicit product of a porous group. Remembrance, conversely, is consciously designed and fabricated by agents who can be identified. Remembrance practices can be the product of autofabrication. As with autofabrication and self-fashioning, it is important in creating remembrance to suggest that it coincides with cultural memory as produced by society at large, and for a narrative to be embedded into cultural memory, it must possess a degree of adaptability to the needs of pre-existing cultural memory.

2 E.g. Joan Schwartz & Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory" *Archival Science* 2, 2002. 1-19.

Both mechanisms, self-fashioning and cultural memory on the one hand, and autofabrication and remembrance on the other, are particularly pertinent to the analysis of the creation of iconic statesmen in memory. What is at stake here is the interplay in which Roosevelt's iconic status in American memory – which Roosevelt narratives are being remembered and forgotten – is determined by the historical role Roosevelt played and by what memory communities need and want in terms of iconic figures and narratives at the time of remembering, which is obviously always in flux. Most studies in the field of cultural memory focus on the second of these – what cultural needs are met by remembering particular narratives in the present. Remembrance is often used to refer to the more performative or ritualized aspects and forms of cultural memory.[3] I do so too, but view remembrance in a more political context, consciously designed and produced by particular agents, and which can be – an in FDR's case often are – products of successful management by the remembered person.

Although conflicts about which historical narratives need to be told and remembered are illuminating when analyzing who has agency over cultural memory, most cultural memory is not especially contested. Not because everyone agrees, but because there is no need to agree. Different memory communities have and create different historical narratives, which function as social memories within their own groups' collective consciousness, often without needing to impose that narrative on others. Such social memories of specific groups, can, however, become politically active, for instance when a national memorial with a particular representation of history is at stake. It is useful here to introduce Aleida Assmann's four types of memory: individual, social, cultural and political/national memory. These types of memory differ in that they are increasingly coercive and collective. Whereas individual memory is very free-ranging and often unmediated, or mediated only in very informal and limited contexts, political memory is limited to one interpretation that is well-preserved in a clearly established, often national, place.

Individual memory is a single person's 'lived' memory of an event, which nonetheless does exist in a social context; social memory concerns memories that exist within a particular collective; cultural memory has taken a more definite shape through being mediated in a particular form. Political memory is the most limited and coercive form of memory: it presupposes a consensus about the interpretation of the remembered event and implements that interpretation as 'the' collective memory (Jonker 21; Assmann 21-60). Most "memory wars" or "history wars" are sparked in the process of creating political memory. I find this classification useful to understand why some narratives of the past-made-present are more visible or more contested than others, but Assmann stresses the classification rather than the fluidity of the classes. Because these types of memory are defined by the places of their occurrence – the brain, social communities, cultural narratives, national commemorations – the focus is less on the ways in which memories can shift from one category to another.

3 Rigney 18; Winter "Historical Remembrance in the Twenty-First Century" 9.

Agency in Cultural Memory

Autofabrication for the sake of one's future image can involve either attempts to shape, manage or contribute to future remembrance practices, as FDR did for instance when he created the museum on the first floor of his presidential library, and chose agents to manage its permanent and temporary exhibitions. It can also shape and inform future cultural memory, as he did through his literal and figurative contribution to the national archive on the museum's second floor. As noted, because cultural memory and its movements are harder to pinpoint, it is also more difficult to identify agents exerting power over it, but cultural memory nonetheless reflects needs and interests of society or dominant groups or institutions within society.

One important monograph, both in its treatment of memory and because it is close to it in terms of subject matter, to analyze the seemingly serendipitous dynamic of cultural memory, is Emily Rosenberg's *A Date Which Will Live, Pearl Harbor in American Memory* (2003). Although its case study, the attack on Pearl Harbor of December 7th, 1941, is not an active agent in determining its own remembrance, it does investigate how "Pearl Harbor" in cultural memory has historically developed since 1941 into the twenty-first century. The first part of Rosenberg's book describes its immediate "reception", close-reading Roosevelt's official reaction and the impact that had in public debates and discourse surrounding Pearl Harbor in the first fifty years after the event. The second part looks in more detail into the development since 1991, when Pearl Harbor was invested with new academic and public interest, and ends ten years later, following the attacks of September 11, 2001, with the omnipresent comparisons of the attacks on the Twin Towers with Pearl Harbor.

Although Rosenberg does not really address it explicitly, she does seem to acknowledge the difference between cultural memory and remembrance, and she particularly also pays attention to the historical development of fabricated elements in cultural remembrance, which may not seem fabricated. She for instance draws attention to the fact that Pearl Harbor was immediately received in the tradition of great tragic American losses such as the Battle of the Alamo and Custer's Last Stand. The old phrase "Remember the Alamo" was immediately appropriated to Pearl Harbor both in newspaper headlines and in governmental war propaganda, which "reiterated the 'remember' theme" (16). This theme was introduced by Roosevelt in his Pearl Harbor speech: "[A]lways will our whole Nation remember the character of the onslaught against us." Rosenberg shows how that theme has survived in iconic textual and visual cultural artefacts through the Cold War – then changed into the call for vigilance: "Remember Pearl Harbor, Keep America Alert", 1964 – into the twenty-first century (31). Although Rosenberg does not explicitly point this out, it is a good example of a case in which FDR adopted an older topos and in doing so propelled it into cultural memory by buying into the "Remember" appeal.

One of the key elements Rosenberg cites as reasons for the revived interest in Pearl Harbor, is the so-called memory boom in the USA. "Memory boom" is a coinage of Jay Winter, used to

describe a development that started in the 1970s, and was first analyzed by French historian and philosopher Pierre Nora (Winter, "Memory Boom"). Partly in search for ways to remember and cope with the trauma of the Holocaust, popular interest in history and academic interest in memory both grew immensely in the 1960s and 1970s. This happened more than twenty years after the end of the Holocaust, partly sparked by the decolonization wars, as Michael Rothberg argues in *Multidirectional Memory* (6). Initiatives to commemorate World War Two ingnited huge debates about what elements of communicative memory were to be part of cultural memory, and how to select from that repository the most suitable "official" remembrance practices.

In the 1970s, for instance, oral history gained ground within social history. The testimonies of eyewitnesses of historical events were taken, initially in an effort to create more sources. This new source material was soon problematized by historians. Accounts from memory are of course flawed, often demonstrably so, the narrator has little distance from the recounted events, and many memories seem influenced to a large extent by later experiences, to name only some of the problems (Vansina 3-11). This is not to say that other sources do not have any of these problems – even the most cold and administrative archival sources were created by people and institutions with interests and power over what they kept and left out – but memory studies as an interdisciplinary academic field has grown up around the idea that memory is important, but also very complex and problematic by nature. The kinds of issues identified are different in various subdisciplines; oral historians and psychologists, each for different reasons, might focus on how "historically correct" memories are., are foregrounded. Rosenberg, as a cultural historian, focuses on how influential remembrance practices are in shaping cultural memory. I similarly ask how American remembrance practices produce and mediate particular elements of the past so as to allow them to enter cultural memory.

Although there are differences between disciplines, on the whole the focus in how to assess cultural memory has shifted towards studying the dynamics underlying its production (Erll and Rigney 5). While The History Workshop in Great Britain in the 1970s, in which groups of professional and amateur historians started telling and collecting oral history, started out with the ambition to create source material for social history which would include the experience of the poor, the uneducated, social minorities and women (Frisch xviii). The discourse that came out of that movement, found, for instance in Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen's *The Presence of The Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, has become distinctly refocused towards civic engagement. It particularly aims to "give a voice" to the repressed, and value even contradictory stories as equally true. The original idea, however, that oral history based on individual memory would add more sources, is now generally regarded as flawed, which is not to say that oral history has lost its appeal. Authors like Alessandro Portelli have argued that the importance of oral history lies not in its contribution of new facts, but rather in the insight it provides in how memory and storytelling work. Portelli's famous essay "The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Memory and the Events" illustrates this beautifully. Portelli discovered that interviewees, asked to tell the

story of a mass strike in which a young man died, consistently dated the incident in the wrong year. Rather than discarding the oral reports on that basis, he managed to locate the origin of this collective misplacement. While the oral reports did not yield new details about the event, they did show how events are remembered collectively, and thus shed light on the mechanics of storytelling and memory-making.

The other key current in the study of cultural memory initially centered on "sites of memory." French historian Pierre Nora, introduced the term *lieux de mémoire* in 1984, arguing that this concept was crucial to modern societies, which no longer had *milieux de mémoire* – nostalgically defined as "real environments of memory" (7-8) – but instead had consecrated sites of memory "where memory crystallizes and secretes itself" (7). In Nora's understanding, these sites are essentially ruins, "remains", "the boundary stones of another age, illusions of eternity", "moments of history, torn away from the movement of history" (12). This idea that *lieux de mémoire* are ruins, practically dead to the modern societies they inhabit seems flawed. It fits largely with Nora's own seven-volume series discussing what he has selected as France's most important *lieux de mémoire*, which are mainly sites of dominant canonical history, although it also includes places of contested memory. Nora's choice of sites, while extensive, is basically a 'safe' selection of loci of textbook history, presented to invite remembrance according to protocols whose institutional authors occupy authority positions. The memorially ruinous state of those sites is a result of the fact that prescribed remembrance is too dominant there, at the expense of 'warm', communicative, if perhaps controversial memory. Neither Nora's *Lieux de mémoire*, nor for example, Henk Wesseling's (et al.) Dutch equivalent *Plaatsen van herinnering* (4 volumes, 2005-2006) effectively engage with any cultural debates about how to remember a particular site, but rather tend to confirm the canonicity of the dominant narrative, contributing in the process to their social irrelevance. Although there are exceptions, any new practice that visitors might want to engage in with respect to most of the *lieux de mémoire* Nora addresses is made more difficult and less attractive by the overbearing stock remembrance.

Nora himself seems to have been aware of this to some extent: he briefly suggests a distinction between "dominant" and "dominated" *lieux de mémoire*, reformulated by Hue-Tam Ho Tai as "'winner's history' and anti-hegemonic counter-memory" (920). Ho Tai's rewording of the dominant kind as a form of history and the dominated variety as a form of memory is telling: a more fruitful use of the term *lieux de mémoire* is as denoting places, concrete or abstract, where cultural memory continues to be in flux. Or more precisely, where the public, institutions, scholars, educators other stakeholders continue to negotiate cultural memory and remembrance, by proposing remembrance practices. Thus, I regard *lieux de mémoire* as those places, concrete or abstract, that continue to function as *milieux de mémoire* concentrated in particular places: sites where negotiation takes place, and which are not, as Nora suggests empty ruins, congealed places of no-longer relevant pastness, but active sites of identity politics.

A specific aspect of such sites is that they are at once collective, signposted to the public and recognized on a state or national level, but also leave room for individual memory and interpretation. Ann Rigney defines "sites of memory" as "actual locations or symbolic points of reference that serve as dense repositories of historical meaning (a 'minimum of signs with a maximum amount of meaning', as Nora put it) and hence as communal orientation points in negotiations about collective self-definitions." (18) This concept of *lieux de mémoire* as places which are variously used and interpreted by a multitude of "memory communities" – social groups, each with their own ideas of what is important and thus worth remembering – has more or less come to replace the idea of "collective memory" introduced by historian Maurice Halbwachs in his seminal *La mémoire collective* (1950). Nonetheless, Halbwachs' idea that memory and remembrance are best studied as social processes in the present, rather than as direct representations of the past has become widely accepted. Moreover, Pierre Nora's theory of more or less fixed, canonical sites of memory, providing relatively stable points of reference for individuals and groups to remember a shared past, has been developed towards theories of a more dynamic idea of cultural memory developing over time, "in which individuals and groups continue to reconfigure their relationship to the past and hence reposition themselves in relation to established and emergent memory sites." (Erll 2)

Both these currents – the increased interest in history centered around *lieux de memoire* on the one hand, and on the other the movement towards using 'lived memory' as an instrument for emancipation, giving voice to the masses – have been instrumental in increasing the interest of Americans in history. This increased interest is evidenced by the massively increased sale of historical novels and non-fiction, the massive interest in historical sites and museums, and the emergence and popularity of the History Channel. Michael Kammen has written much about this in *The Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (1991). A paradoxical aspect of the increased interest in the past among the general public is that it both encourages multiple versions of stories to exist alongside each other, calling for "shared authority" between professional historians and community members with personal knowledge and memories of the past, and at the same time leads public historians – museum directors, documentary makers, bibliographers – to make accessible products that give a clear-cut interpretation of historical events (Frisch 183-191). Historical canons, deciding which issues are the most important are more popular than ever, while simultaneously the other current towards a multitude of voices goes against the tendency to create single accepted versions of historical events.

Historical canons obviously lead to conflicts, because they create a hierarchy in which events are most important to remember. Most negotiations of cultural memory are essentially matters of power relations: which stories get most attention? A famous example of conflict between those with first-hand memories and personal involvement on the one hand, and public historians and policymakers trying to provide an academically sound and politically correct

view of events on the other, is the conflict over the Enola Gay exhibition by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. The exhibition critically surveyed the political and technical processes surrounding the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, showing, among other things, the Enola Gay – the aircraft used for the bombing. The Smithsonian Institution was criticized heavily, and eventually forced to change the exhibition, by World War II Veteran lobby groups, who found the treatment of the incident offensive and unpatriotic (Linenthal and Engelhardt).

Most of the US's official National Historic Sites, *lieux de mémoire* administered to by the National Park Service, however, present a rather bland and general version of the sites' history, exactly in order to avoid divergence (Meringolo 115-116). The political choices underlying those sites is often very implicit, but it is telling that the National Park Service – originally created to preserve and service the US's national natural heritage – also cares for the nation's cultural heritage, the National Historic Sites. This link between natural and historical heritage carries the overly deterministic suggestion that what is deemed national history has that role by a kind of natural inevitability. This policy that the NPS also administers National Historic Sites was in fact created by Roosevelt as part of the New Deal, in part to expand federal preservation efforts into the cultural realm, and also to create work for unemployed historians, archaeologists, and tour guides. Roosevelt's Springwood home, on the same estate as the FDR Library, was among the first historic sites to become an NPS managed historical tourism attraction (Kammen 467). Although Roosevelt presumably also endowed his house to the National Park Service in order to aid it in becoming a federal agency preserving historic as well as natural heritage, there is an inescapable suggestion that his home carries a similar kind of incontestable natural presence as the Grand Canyon. Michael Kammen has interpreted this movement towards invented remembrance as a return to inventing traditions, as Eric Hobsbawm described this in Ranger and Hobsbawm *The Invention of Tradition* (1983). However, it is worth noting that FDR did nothing to influence or shape the content of how his lifelong home would be presented to future audiences. The fact that the transfer of his house to the NPS is an effect of his own arrangements makes it an act of autofabrication, positioning FDR to some extent as a natural phenomenon. Yet the fact that he did not detail how it would be presented to visitors implies that it is a contribution to cultural memory rather than the insertion of a particular remembrance practice.

Although Roosevelt both made his home available as a site of remembrance and provided a context in which this could be presented as a kind of natural heritage, he did not create the remembrance practices installed there, as prompted by the guided tours, the labels, self-guided part of the experience, the choice of narrative available onsite. The choice of material presented there is guided in part by the latest insights of academic history, but also by what seems to work well in interaction with the site. Historical evidence is a powerful instrument in putting forward a version of an event, but so are a well-rounded or sensational narrative, or a catchy phrase used by an authoritative or famous proponent of that version. Emily Rosenberg, in her introduction to

A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory, makes a similar point, by choosing to conflate history and memory entirely, stressing the role of mediation memory:

> In recent American culture, I would contend, historical memory (to which I will refer as 'memory' or 'history/memory') is inseparable from the modern media, in all their forms. Even so-called 'lived memory', which revolves around individual 'experience' and 'testimony' takes shape in interaction with diverse media effects and also must attract and be recorded in some kind of mediated form if it is to last and become part of known 'history' (3-4).

Rosenberg's conclusion about cultural artefacts representing "history/memory" in America is that "in America, there is increasingly no effective memory or history outside of media, broadly defined" (4). This is striking in its seeming assumption that America is special in this respect, unlike other countries where memory or history could exist outside of media. It recalls Baudrillard's claim in *America* that "American life *is* cinema", i.e. that American culture is hyperreal to the extent that there is no point in trying to identify "the real thing" from the collection of simulacra.[4] Although I would not say that American culture or memory is necessarily more profoundly mediated than other cultures, I do argue that Roosevelt was particularly alive to its mediated nature, and in part therefore a successful agent in mediating a specific range of images and narratives. Unlike Baudrillard or Kooijman, Rosenberg does sustain the concept of chronology in mediation. *A Date Which Will Live* essentially writes the history of the cultural memory and remembrance of Pearl Harbor, explaining developments in the context of predating changes in the social and political landscape. This interest in diachronic development is in keeping with the shift of interest within the study of cultural memory from the spatial towards the temporal. Sites of memory remain central but are studied as they develop over time in dialogue with various memory communities, instead of the earlier focus on their spatial dimensions.

Autofabrication for Future Remembrance

Politicians in power – often very consciously – add "raw" material to a kind of intangible repository of future cultural memory, but autofabrication for the future is perhaps more logically associated with setting up future remembrance. Ranger and Hobsbawm in *The Invention of Tradition* discuss the creation of ritualized remembrance practices, which, though not shaped by the remembered, are invented to work in the future as well as in the present. They identify a tendency to invent new traditions starting in the nineteenth century, which they read as part of nation-states creating a sense of national identity, remembering a past as well as setting up practices for the future. Michael Kammen argues that the early invented traditions Ranger and Hobsbawm studied, were overtly nationalistic and hardly critically debated, but

4 Baudrillard 101; Kooijman 71, 11-12.

that Americans even now, use history to "depoliticize" the past. If that is true, it is particularly relevant to this study, because, as I shall argue in chapter 4, Roosevelt himself, despite being a very controversial and partisan figure, tried to depoliticize himself as well. The coincidence of his own depoliticization and that which American cultural memory according to Kammen has tended toward, contributes to depoliticized remembrance practices, which are politically charged precisely for that reason. Cultural memory has come to need personal FDR anecdotes, which he gracefully provides, to the detriment of critical attention to more political aspects of his public role.

Many studies, like Rosenberg's, analyze the workings of cultural memory and remembrance by tracing one exemplary case and reflecting on the relevant underlying theoretical insights. My addition to this debate lies in the fact that I research how a remembered person can exert a degree of agency over his own role in cultural memory beyond the grave, an issue in which the role of representation is central. Ann Rigney's *The Afterlives of Walter Scott* (2012) is important in that respect because Rigney there proposes the idea that Walter Scott influenced his own remembrance. I explore that idea for Roosevelt's case, but also more generally and theoretically slightly differently.

The Afterlives of Walter Scott traces what Rigney calls the "social life" of Scott's cultural presence in the Anglophone world, since the appearance of Scott's first *Waverley* novel in 1814, until the centenary of his death in 1932. The book investigates how Scott and his novels were remembered and continued to have a cultural afterlife in that long century. This tells an important story about the cultural impact of Walter Scott's novels in the English-speaking world, but it particularly also provides a keyhole perspective on the process of cultural memory. Rigney shows how Walter Scott was active in contributing to the development of a memory culture in the nineteeth century. She draws attention to Scott's *procreativity*: the capacity of his work to generate new versions in other texts and media. This meant that his work lent itself easily to appropriation to later generations' ideological, aesthetic and creative needs (12).

Such procreativity is also one of Roosevelt's strengths in steering his own memory, and, as in Scott's case, a risk too: in a sense Roosevelt's utterances and mediagenic forms are at times so adaptable, that they can survive without leaving any conscious indexical link with him in collective memory. Like Roosevelt, Scott was also himself very interested in memory-making. His novels created a kind of fictional collective memory for the English-speaking world, thereby turning the past into a shared narrative commodity, while simultaneously – by turning it into an object of display – providing the conditions for taking leave of it (4, 202). Rigney argues that Scott's aptitude at turning the past into a commodity may have helped to create the conditions for Scott himself to have been so easily forgotten as he has been in the twentieth century. Roosevelt's interest in memory-making was, however, both more self-serving and more typical of a political leader, and, by consequence, also of a more general political nature. It was also, probably at least by his own interested standards, more successful.

Although other iconic American presidents have no doubt also autofabricated their public image for the future, this is strikingly absent from the various monographs about the remembrance of George Washington, and to an even larger extent Abraham Lincoln. Barry Schwartz has considered both Washington's and Lincoln's roles in American memory: Washington in *George Washington, the Making of an American Symbol* (1987), Lincoln in *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (2000) and *Abraham Lincoln in the Post-Heroic Era* (2008). The first of the Lincoln books discusses the first hundred years after his death, the second is a sequel, treating Lincoln in American history and memory in the late twentieth century. Schwartz is a sociologist, who is more interested in the function of these heroic "great men" in later society, particularly in terms of cultural memory, but also in terms of the power relations that shape remembrance practices. However, Schwartz disregards Lincoln's own autofabrication and impact on his later remembrance, which he certainly did have; instead Schwartz seems to believe that there is a clean break between the living Lincoln who was a controversial politician in the then-present, and the dead Lincoln who was a national focus of American cultural memory: "Only when Lincoln died, only when his own heart stopped beating, did the pulse of the twenty million throb into it" (23). This somewhat dramatic statement assumes on the one hand that the historical Lincoln exerted no agency over the iconic Lincoln that survived him. On the other hand, it suggests that the "twenty million" – Northerners, presumably – throbbed in unison, that is, agreed about the shape his icon should take, which, given the extremely polarized war situation in which Lincoln died, seems unlikely. Even though his violent death will have influenced greatly how Lincoln was perceived, he obviously did not become an uncontroversial national hero immediately at that moment, nor did the Lincoln icon entirely cease to be a product of his own autofabrication.

Another historian writing about Lincoln in American memory is Merrill Peterson, whose *Lincoln in American Memory* (1994) remains important. Its chronological discussion of Lincoln's reputation after his death includes many of the phases that can also be distinguished in Roosevelt's afterlife, including the shift from 'warm' lived memory to 'cold' academic history, and a chapter called "What would Lincoln do?" on his posthumous agency in the Civil Rights Movement. However, as Schwartz points out, it does not address "what ideological issues his image articulated" in different periods, nor does it quite take this agency seriously, much less consider Lincoln's role in trying to manage his agency of his future role as a cultural icon. Thus, neither of these treatments of Lincoln in American memory addresses the historical Lincoln's agency, as Rigney does for Walter Scott. Scott, however, was no politician and did not vie for an illustrious place in history. Indeed, Rigney argues Walter Scott employed his agency over his future remembrance to make himself forgettable:

> Scott's entire *oeuvre* can be seen at one and the same time as a major contributor to the cult of memory in modern societies and as a huge investment in making that past irrelevant as an active force in the present. He showcased the past, but only in order to provide the imaginative conditions for taking leave of it. (4)

Rigney argues that Scott "having thematized cultural transience … had become in part its victim." (217) Although Roosevelt is of course a very different type of case study, there are, I think, important commonalities between Scott and FDR. Firstly, Rigney clearly sees Scott as having influenced his own afterlife, although this worked very differently for him as a literary figure than it would for a politician, and despite the fact that Scott clearly did not have a self-preserving or self-congratulatory agenda. Secondly, it seems that Scott and FDR had in common that they saw and treated the past, in synchrony with the cultural developments of their times, as an active force in the present capable of being "defused" or neutralized by showcasing it. Roosevelt, however, did that in different ways from Scott, and certainly did not become "its victim", but rather the champion of memory that he now is.

Remembering The Four Freedoms

Although there is clearly an ongoing negotiation about the presence of the past – which past, what meaning that past is attributed in the present, how the relevant past is to be selected, how historically correct it is , to what extent remembered agents can themselves influence later cultural memory – it is difficult to pinpoint precisely where this negotiation takes place. Pierre Nora's term *lieux de mémoire* is helpful here, although it has its problems too. One of these is that *lieux de mémoire* can be abstract 'sites' too, so that there is still no tangible locus that can be identified as a space of negotiation. One of Roosevelt's important *lieux de mémoire* – highly flexible because not tied to a specific place – is his formulation of the Four Freedoms. The Four Freedoms remain highly important in projections of Roosevelt as a public icon, but at the same time their formulation precludes a great deal of opposition. Wherever one is on the political spectrum, at least two of the four are likely to be compelling. The two "freedom *of*"s, speech and religion, point to individual liberties, and the two "freedom *from*"s , fear and want, promote collective freedoms, requiring an active role from government. As such the Four Freedoms balance left-wing and right-wing priorities as well as individual and collective needs, effectively offering a set of principles containing something for almost everyone.

The Four Freedoms have been and continue to be echoed endlessly in various political and cultural contexts. They are part of the Atlantic Charter drawn up by Roosevelt and Churchill, and from there found their way into the charter of the United Nations. They were also the basis for a renowned series of war propaganda posters by Norman Rockwell, and the central words are repeated in many FDR memorials, most centrally in the Four Freedoms Park on Roosevelt Island in New York City (Murray 35). Also, the Roosevelt Institute annually awards four Four Freedoms Medals, one for each freedom.[5] In those and other forms the Four Freedoms Speech has continued to resonate and been rekindled time and again in new contexts. The previous chapter discussed the political use the Roosevelt Administrations made of the Four Freedoms

5 http://www.fourfreedomsawards.org/

during his presidency – to frame the American war effort and to autofabricate FDR's public image – this chapter traces how their trajectory continued into FDR's remembrance, to show how they continued to work as a vehicle for him to retain agency over his remembrance, and to nuance how *lieux de mémoire* and representation can function within this dynamic.

The Four Freedoms Park is an intriguing case in point. Located at the southernmost tip of Roosevelt Island (NYC), the memorial is Louis Kahn's last design, built posthumously and opened in 2012.[6] The memorial is a project driven mainly by the Roosevelt Institute, the previously mentioned foundation, especially Ambassador William vanden Heuvel.[7] The Roosevelt Institute is also linked to the Roosevelt family in the sense that both the Board of Directors and the Board of Governors are chaired by Roosevelt grandchildren. The Roosevelt Institute is committed to "carrying forward the legacy and values of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt" and includes a Democratic think tank, the Four Freedoms Center.[8] The Four Freedoms Park has a highly abstract and stylized design, basically triangular, with a walkway on each side leading through a highly schematically constructed park to a square outdoor "room" at the very tip of the island. The room provides space to sit, and a box that contains a bust of Franklin Roosevelt facing away from the room. The outside of the box that can be seen when sitting in the outdoor room is engraved with a section of the Four Freedoms speech. The pointed triangular shape of the memorial indexes the United Nations Headquarters, Roosevelt's distant vision which he did not live to see fulfilled, like a compass needle. The memorial clearly itself is the project of an ideological institution, built with private funds from likeminded philanthropists remembering FDR as a champion of freedom, and visited by a presumably sympathetic public. The FDR Four Freedoms Park Conservancy, the board that has built and now manages the memorial is linked to the Roosevelt Institute and active in proposing remembrance practices at the site, such as an annual wreath-laying ceremony to remember FDR's death, and educational programming, such as the FDR Four Freedoms digital resource, a smartphone application offering spoken and visual explanation and interpretation of FDR and the memorial. At the same time the memorial is Louis Kahn's last design, inviting an audience interested in memorial architecture rather than in Roosevelt, an element that is not so much part of the agenda of the Park Conservancy. Louis Kahn is discussed briefly on the website and on the Park billboards, but primarily in the context of his reverence for FDR, and the fact that Kahn was helped early in his career by Roosevelt's New Deal.[9] Despite the Conservancy's stress on FDR, it is also clearly a site for remembering Louis Kahn, then, and although posthumous building of an architect's design is no doubt always slightly unfaithful to his original intentions, Gina Pollara, the executive director of the building project, cited faithfulness to Kahn's design and a commitment to his architectural intentions as her primary motivation in accepting her commission (interview August 3, 2010).

6 http://www.fdrfourfreedomspark.org/overview
7 Interview with William vanden Heuvel, August 4, 2010.
8 http://www.rooseveltinstitute.org/programs/four-freedoms-center
9 http://www.fdrfourfreedomspark.org/overview

Figure 2. Four Freedoms Park, Roosevelt Island NYC

The remembrance of FDR and of Louis Kahn do not conflict at the site – some individuals and institutions are more interested in the one, others in the other, but both groups are essentially contributing to and recalling from different areas of cultural memory through the lens of this site. However, a more territorial contest has to do with the space the site occupies. Roosevelt Island was called Brackwell island after its colonial owner since the late seventeenth century. Located off Manhattan it was a logical place to isolate people, so it housed both various hospitals, most famously the smallpox hospital at the entrance to the memorial, prisons, and a lunatic asylum, in a peculiarly literal illustration of Foucault's phenomenology of the othering of aberrance in *Madness and Civilization*. For this reason, the island was renamed Welfare Island in 1921, and in memory of FDR's commitment to the poor, old and incapacitated, Roosevelt Island in 1971 (Pollak). It is perhaps no surprise then, that the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association vehemently opposed the fact that the Four Freedoms Memorial contains no explicit reference to Roosevelt's own disability. To stick to Kahn's design means to focus on FDR's ideals of freedom and worldwide internationalism, rather than to give undue attention to a handicap that clearly did not obstruct him in carrying his ideals to fruition. On the other hand, not to show the disability can be construed as portraying FDR as merely charitable to the deprived, glossing over the fact that he was one of them, which would emancipate the site from a place of exclusion to a place of redress. The practical outcome, is that the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association is now building The FDR Hope Memorial, in front of, but not as part of, the FDR Four Freedoms Park, with an initial donation from the Roosevelt Institute, portraying FDR in his wheelchair, reaching out to a girl on crutches, in order to "educate future generations about FDR and about Roosevelt Island, a vital community of 'enabled' residents."[10] Thus, the Four Freedoms Memorial functions

10 http://www.fdrhopememorial.org/about-the-memorial/

as a *lieu de mémoire*, used by various groups to implement particular remembrance practices, shoring up particular narratives of the site and the Roosevelt's meaning to it and to the world. It remains a site – not just a *lieu*, a placeholder, but a geographically and socially located *milieu* – alive with debate and memory-making as long as various interpretative remembrance practices continue to vie for the same ground, literally and figuratively, in cultural memory.

Figure 3. FDR Hope Memorial (design by Meredith Bergmann)

Representation: A Dynamic of Elision and Presentation

Autofabrication entails the acts whereby a leader shapes his public image, remembrance produces a representation that is successful if it finds its way into cultural memory. One crucial issue in the production of both autofabrication and remembrance that I have touched on, but not explicitly addressed yet, is that of representation, a key element in any translation of FDR from body natural to icon. I use Roger Chartier's work on representation in *On the Edge of the Cliff: History, Language, and Practices* to flesh out two key aspects of representation in the context of autofabrication and remembrance: first, representation necessarily and meaningfully occludes elements of the original, and it is important to understand who holds power over these elisions; and second, representations by nature also presentify themselves, and thereby the agents to whom the task of representing has been delegated.

As is clear from the discussion of the Four Freedoms Park as contested ground, there is always a power issue at stake in representation. Autofabrication feeds into the archive of cultural memory directly – mediated of course, but not through delegation to representatives. Remembrance on the other hand happens through representation by delegates, and this introduces the presence

of these representative agents, with their own interests and agency. Chartier stresses these three elements in the process of representation:

> …the importance of the notion of *representation* (…), a notion that pertains on three levels of reality: first, on the level of collective representations that embody, within individuals, the divisions of the social world, and organize the schemes of perception by which individuals classify, judge and act; second, on the level of forms of exhibition and stylization of the identity that those individuals or groups hope will be recognized; third, on the level of the delegation to representatives (single individuals, institution, or abstract instances) of the coherence and stability of the identity thus affirmed. (90)

These three levels of representation – 1. representations embodying the divisions of the social world and schemes of perception; 2. Forms of exhibition that those subscribing to 1. hope will be recognized; 3. The delegation to representatives of the identity thus affirmed. – correspond to how I perceive self-fashioning/cultural memory, autofabrication, and remembrance. Self-fashioning and cultural memory are joined together, not because they are the same, but because they both pertain to collective understandings that embody the social world and organize schemes of perception, about the present (self-fashioning) or the past (cultural memory). They are also similar in that, although a power issue is at stake here as elsewhere in representation, it is hard to identify who actually possesses control. The second parallels my notion of autofabrication: representations are forms of exhibition and stylization of the identity that the autofabricator and his assistants hope will be recognized, and the autofabrication is successful if its public projection of itself is indeed recognized. The first two coincide temporally: in autofabrication (self)representations are put forward that organize the social world, and these representations are effective insofar as they are indeed recognized and affirmed within self-fashioning, and later in cultural memory. The third level pertains to the cultural delegation to agents representing the iconic leader. This is actually an outcome of a negotiation between 1 and 2: once a representation is established through the interaction of autofabrication and self-fashioning, "the identity thus affirmed" is relegated to representatives of the leader, who in turn establish practices of remembrance, that seek to find their place in cultural memory. Representations on this level are also matters of the delegation of power. FDR delegated the representation of his public image for the future to various agents as part of his autofabrication, but in "carrying forward his legacy" his delegates also make decisions that implicitly or explicitly use FDR's agency, despite the fact that he has not had an actual say in the concrete matter at hand.

This last step establishes a kind of iteration – the person or institution in charge of the representation itself needs to claim a place in society, and eventually in cultural memory, and doing so often involves not just a representation of the icon legitimizing it, but an act of autofabrication itself. Chartier discusses how representatives "presentify" themselves through what they represent. He says about this: "A double meaning and a double function are thus

assigned to representation: to make an absence present, but also to exhibit its own presence as image, hence to constitute the person who looks at it as the looking subject." (91) Chartier makes this specific to the figure of the king. FDR is of course not a king, but has often been accused of acting as if he were one,[11] because he moved so easily in precisely this kind of material:

> Like the Eucharist, the portrait of the king – in painting or in writing – is simultaneously the representation of an absent historical body, the fiction of a symbolic body (in which the kingdom replaces the church), and the real presence of a sacramental body visible in the species that conceals it. (93)

I think of "the representation of an absent historical body" as the autonomously developed public image, the primary product of autofabrication – even if the king did not make the portrait, he certainly had power over its existence and its kind of portrayal, and "the fiction of a symbolic body" as part of self-fashioning, the place the king is attributed by society, as himself embodying the nation. "[T]he real presence of a sacramental body visible in the species that conceals it" is a religiously invested formulation of the other aspects of an iconic leader, one in the realm of self-fashioning: the species, i.e. the person in a bodily sense and the other in the realm of autofabrication: the real presence of a sacramental body, i.e. the vessel of power. The crossing point negotiating between the two – or actually among the four – which I have called the iconic leader's role as a political leader, Chartier locates in the tangible, regal, body that conceals its ritual function.

The concealment performed in this secondary level of representation of the iconic leader thus mirrors his own autofabrication. The elisions that occur in constituting acts, places and products of remembrance are crucial for the survival of an iconic leader in cultural memory. To give an example, one of the most persistent representations of the four freedoms, and thus indexically of FDR are Norman Rockwell's Four Freedoms posters, created in 1943 and used by the Office of War Information to sell war bonds. Each poster represents one of the four freedoms, but each also represents a Christian, white, middle-class nostalgic view of America, interpreting the four freedoms as concretely referring to American family life, Thanksgiving, workmanship, and Protestantism. The controversial aspects of freedom from want – after all the ideological foundation for the to many Americans highly suspect New Deal – is stifled by the huge Thanksgiving turkey Rockwell uses to represent white middle-class American family life.

Roosevelt commissioned and later praised Rockwell's representations of the Four Freedoms, writing to him: "I think you have done a superb job in bringing home to the plain, everyday

11 E.g. Alfons Lammers, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Koning van Amerika.* [*Franklin Delano Roosevelt: King of America*]

Figure 4. Four Freedoms posters Norman Rockwell (Wikimedia Commons)

citizen the plain, everyday truths behind the Four Freedoms ... I congratulate you not alone on the execution but also for the spirit which impelled you to make this contribution to the common cause of a freer, happier world" and to *The Post* in which they were first published: "This is the first pictorial representation I have seen of the staunchly American values contained in the rights of free speech and free worship and our goals of freedom from fear and want." (Murray 60-61). Thus, FDR sanctioned this representation of the four freedoms as representing the view of "staunchly American values," allowing Rockwell to gloss over FDR's activist social and economic agenda, and the presence in America of people who were non-white, poor, or not Christian, while avoiding doing so himself. As such, through this obviously problematic, yet popular representation, FDR's Four Freedoms became ingrained in American memory in a new way than their original formulation had done: in a new medium as well as with a concrete narrative content that the original formulation does not have. FDR was especially successful in his autofabrication and at surviving in cultural memory through remembrance because he understood this. He autofabricated himself as on some level an empty container, a highly flexible vessel which can contains a host of multiple meanings, and then allowed artists like Rockwell, independent to some extent, but paid by his administration, to fill in his abstract words with visual narratives that resonated in new ways.

The Four Freedoms posters at the same time of course also presentify Norman Rockwell, who before this series was regarded as a somewhat pedestrian and unoriginal artist. The Four Freedoms series made Rockwell's name as an artist who otherwise would probably not have been remembered. The same is true for almost any Roosevelt representation by a delegate person or institution, especially by those who take charge of his remembrance. A perhaps facile case in point is the Dutch Roosevelt Study Center, located in Middelburg, where the Roosevelt family has some of its roots. The Roosevelt Institute, as noted, annually grants four Four Freedoms Awards, and the award ceremony takes place in alternate years in Middelburg and in New York. As such, the award does not only celebrate FDR's international achievement, the point the Roosevelt Institute stresses, and his rootedness in the old world, but it also presentifies the Roosevelt Study Center and Middelburg as a historically important town.

Conclusion

To conclude I return to the Four Freedoms Park, as a key example of how both Roosevelt's own autofabrication and this particular *lieu de memoire,* representing him by delegation to the FDR Four Freedoms Park Conservancy, have incorporated absences and dissimulations in order to allow for a range of interpretations, so that FDR's relevance in the present becomes a sustainable commodity. The memorial is extremely puzzling in a number of ways: first, while it points to the United Nations Headquarters, explicitly indexing it as FDR's vision, coming directly out of the Four Freedoms on a rhetorical, and the Atlantic Charter on a political level, the bust of FDR that is part of the memorial is actually looking away from the UN building. Second, Eleanor Roosevelt, FDR's wife and the first US delegate to the United Nations is a gaping absence in the memorial. She is the grotesquely unmentioned figure who hovers in the air between the island's tip and the UN Headquarters. And third, although the outdoor room is ostensibly made for visitors to sit and debate politics, inspired by FDR's Four Freedoms speech engraved in the wall, one can from that point neither see FDR's iconic representation, the bust, nor the UN Headquarters. Thus, the visitor is positioned amid a positivistic linear and diachronic presentation of history, supposedly as a democratically empowered co-creator of world peace and dialogue, but at the same time part of a disembodied void, from which it is impossible to oversee the implications of abstract discourse.

These three issues are related. The diachronic logic of the memorial, laid out as an arrow pointing from the vantage point of history into the future, across the precipice to the UN building, simultaneously presentifies and occludes FDR as well as Eleanor Roosevelt. Because of the clear abyss, literally the water between the memorial and the UN building, but metaphorically of Franklin Roosevelt's early death, and because of Eleanor's role in carrying out his vision, as well as her well-known modesty, she really is there in a representational sense. Indeed her invisibility suggests complete transparency in her translation of his vision into practice, as if representing him did not presentify her. At the same time, FDR's bust is facing away from the UN and instead

looking back towards the nineteenth-century Smallpox Hospital. This positioning of Roosevelt as backward-looking character is arresting – he is usually represented as a herald of progress, well ahead of the troops. It is significant that it is the bust, the physical body, that is looking back. Although I do not think the Park Conservancy intends visitors to make this connection, it is in keeping with Roosevelt's own plasticity in autofabrication that it gives space to this reading, and it aptly encompasses all the aspects of the production of iconic leadership I have outlined. Roosevelt's physique is turned to the past, facing the smallpox hospital as an emblem of the kind of place that might have truly disabled him socially and politically. Thus the two aspects contained in self-fashioning – Roosevelt as an individual and as the resultant of a self-fashioning culture – are lodged in a past that is *there*, but no longer the pinnacle of what is relevant. The engraved excerpt of the Four Freedoms speech encapsulates the act of autofabrication, the textual space in which Roosevelt shaped his public image. The text works both to feed the discussion of the memorial visitors in the outdoor room, and thus to shape remembrance practices within cultural memory, and secondly, invisibly to wield power over the future.

Chapter 3: Creating An Iconic Image: FDR's Autofabrication, 1932-1945

Introduction

Roosevelt publicly expressed himself in many ways and through many channels, both verbally and through visual images. The body of these public expressions is large and although it is hard to establish what precisely was authored by FDR personally, I propose to consider all these public expressions as forms of autofabrication (Winfield 13-14). FDR had a range of advisers, cabinet members, and ghostwriters who helped to produce the public FDR voice. This FDR voice, seemingly paradoxically, was perceived as authentic, even if audiences knew that it was in a sense a collective production. This chapter sets out to understand the collective rhetorical production of that authentic voice. I consider three basic rhetorical modes of Roosevelt's voice: first, Roosevelt had a voice in a narrow, literal sense, that is, the sound waves emanating from his chest, including his elocution, tone and accent. This constitutes the *synecdochic* voice, contained in his body and representing him as a body and as a person. Second, I distinguish his voice in a *metonymical* sense: the mass-mediated Roosevelt voice, including a set of narratives and political convictions that were commonly communicated through that voice. This is close to 'voice' in the narratological sense of "the sensibility through which we *hear* [a] narrative, even when we are reading silently" (Abbott 243). It is fortunate that Abbott stressed "hear", because particularly in FDR's case, the metonymical voice often came through the radio and was therefore literally heard. The third way in which I want to consider FDR's voice is as an autofabrication effort carried out by a collective that together produced the public FDR voice. This collective authoring of his speeches, images, and other presentations constitutes FDR's *indexical* 'voice', that is, it indexes him – it is associated with him because it points in his direction.

I will argue that what made these various rhetorical modes of FDR's voice come across as one coherent and omnipresent, yet authentic whole, successfully autofabricating the private person as well as the president in an integrated manner, is the fact that the different modes of voice constantly intermingle in complex ways. For example, the professionally ghostwritten speeches could have functioned as merely indexing his voice – that is, the political convictions his administrations stood for – but they became his metonymic voice because he fine-tuned the text, and ad-libbed during its delivery, and synecdochic because he spoke it in his own literal voice. And, conversely, the famous fake tooth FDR used to avoid whistling through his front teeth during radio addresses aesthetically improved the quality of his synecdochic voice, but using it was a conscious and considered choice made by the team who professionally created FDR's indexical voice (Tully 100).

FDR was the perfect performer of the public Roosevelt voice, entangling various modes of voice, so as to lead the autofabrication of his larger-than-life public image. Many scholars have

tried to analyze to what extent Roosevelt authored his speeches, often analyzing manuscript versions with scribbled additions and deletions in Roosevelt's hand.[1] Although I am interested in the dynamic that produced them, I do not contribute to the debate about to what extent Roosevelt was really author of his speeches, because I regard any help Roosevelt had from ghostwriters as part of his indexical voice. He was not the sole author of the speeches but definitely endorsed the texts he spoke and owned the voice, both in the sense that he chose what texts to speak or sign and in the sense that nobody else could assume this metonymic or synecdochic voice.

Having set out the basic theoretical framework and assumptions in the previous chapters, I will in this chapter and the next concentrate on the concrete autofabrication strategies Roosevelt used. These are broadly divided in two categories: FDR's autofabrication that created his public voice and image as president (chapter 3) and his autofabrication for the future, that is, his attempts to acquire a degree of agency over his remembrance (chapter 4). The current chapter is divided in three subsections, discussing firstly the people – spin doctors, staff, ghostwriters – who helped Roosevelt to create his public voice and, thus, image, in mostly indexical ways; secondly the media Roosevelt employed to fabricate a voice and image metonymic for himself; and finally the press and public opinion polls that kept Roosevelt in touch with the electorate, metonymically but also symbolically.

Most of the evidence in this chapter consists of well-known facts and quotations from public speeches. Roosevelt's, and others', private words in conversation, letters, or elsewhere are no direct part of his creation of his own public image unless published or used publicly. These are nonetheless sometimes important sources for this chapter, because Roosevelt and his correspondents do refer in private to their efforts in making and influencing Roosevelt's public image.

Spin Doctors, Advisers, Staff, and Ghostwriters

Next to Eleanor, the most important of the people representing Roosevelt to the public in the years leading up to his first election as president was Louis Howe (Maney 16). Louis McHenry Howe was Roosevelt's closest friend and most devoted political adviser. They first met in 1911, when Howe was covering Roosevelt's campaign for state senator as a journalist. Howe became a key figure, both in repairing the break between Franklin and Eleanor, following Eleanor's discovery of her husband's affair with her secretary Lucy Mercer in 1918, and in getting FDR back into politics after his bout of poliomyelitis in 1921. Howe was above everything else a political strategist, who, from the very first, believed that Roosevelt could and should become US president, and made it his personal crusade to get Roosevelt there (Rollins 3, Stiles 4). Though

1 E.g. Houck 98, Rollins 418, Levine 19.

Howe did not at all aspire to being in the limelight, he has become something of a celebrity in his own right – an enigmatic, cunning, and powerful, but physically slight man, whose endlessly recurring epithets are "ghoulish" and "gnome-like."[2] This is relevant because he did more than produce the indexical Roosevelt voice – he even on occasions replaced Roosevelt physically, a tradition started in 1912, when FDR was ill in bed throughout his campaign for the State Senate (Smith 92).

In early 1933 Howe was made chief of Roosevelt's White House secretarial staff and main adviser, especially on matters of public opinion, until his death in 1936. Alongside Howe, Roosevelt employed two secretaries, Marvin McIntyre and Steve Early, both also personal friends of the President who had also performed important roles in Roosevelt's 1932 campaign. Marvin McIntyre was appointments secretary until 1938, when he became ill, and later returned as correspondence secretary. Steve Early was press secretary throughout the Roosevelt presidency (Schoenherr 1). With the growth of the media landscape and the development of modern communication, public relations and marketing, the presidential secretariat had also grown, and under Roosevelt became larger and more professionalized than ever before. Howe, McIntyre and Early were not only clerks, but important political figures in the Administration, making wide-ranging policies in their areas of expertise (Schoenherr 40).

Samuel Rosenman was Roosevelt's main speechwriter and also editor of his *Public Papers and Addresses*, and as such he was most consciously occupied with representing Roosevelt to future generations (Hand, *Counsel* 118). Other important figures are his private secretaries, Grace Tully and Marguerite LeHand, and the ghostwriter of Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address, Raymond Moley. All these people, and indeed many more, were occupied daily with aspects of FDR's autofabrication, each at least for part of his long presidency. Many have also taken a large role in the furtherance of his posthumous status as a cultural icon by publishing their memories of Roosevelt in diaries, memoirs, or Roosevelt biographies, and by remaining active in other ways, for instance, in commissions to create Roosevelt memorials.[3]

Roosevelt started to seriously expand the apparatus of his autofabrication in the months leading up to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in January 1932, gathering around himself two more or less separate teams, one of political campaign managers, headed by Howe and James Farley, Chairman of the New York State Democratic Committee, and a group of intellectuals occupied not primarily with the campaign itself, but with developing Roosevelt's policies (Freidel 66). This group was headed by Samuel Rosenman and Raymond Moley, and included FDR's former law partner Basil O'Connor, Adolf Berle, and later biographer Rexford

2 E.g. Smith 82, Maney 16, Rollins 63.

3 E.g. Samuel Rosenman later published *Working With Roosevelt*; Grace Tully wrote *F.D.R. My Boss*; brain truster Rexford Tugwell's entire career after 1945 was dedicated to writing political biographies of FDR; cabinet member Frances Perkins published *The Roosevelt I Knew*.

Tugwell. Journalist James Kieran referred to the group as "FDR's brains trust" in *The New York Times* for the first time in April 1932, and that has since been its nickname (Rollins 331). As part of developing and articulating Roosevelt's policies, they wrote his speeches, and initially indexically, but eventually metonymically represented FDR's brain. The only one who was really involved in both teams was Louis Howe – sometimes to the chagrin of the brain trust, because Howe, a former editor, was wont to rewrite speeches at the very last minute, and use the power he derived from having more information than the others (Rollins 329-332).

Howe basically orchestrated Roosevelt's first nomination and campaign (Stiles 166). There are many examples of how politically astute and intuitively brilliant he was at sensing what would work in terms of image-making. For example, following John Mack's speech nominating Roosevelt in Chicago, while the candidate himself was at home in Albany, the organ played "Anchors Aweigh", Roosevelt's own choice. When Howe sensed the effect of this mournful song, he gave orders to switch immediately to "Happy Days Are Here Again", which has been the standard Roosevelt campaign song ever since (Rollins 342). Once Roosevelt was nominated, he famously took an airplane to the Convention immediately to accept his nomination in person – an entirely new feat, technologically and otherwise, arranged by Howe. It formed a dramatic break with the tradition that a candidate would receive his formal nomination at home weeks after the event, and officially accept it from there. In his acceptance speech Roosevelt addressed these "foolish traditions", making clear that he was not only the Democratic presidential candidate, but also a party reformer – or as Raymond Moley wrote to Louis Howe on November 12, 1932: "You and Jim [Farley] have done more than elect a President. You have created a new party that ought to hold power for twenty-five years." (quoted in Rollins 349). Although the acceptance speech – including such climactic policy promises as "I pledge you, I pledge myself to a new deal for the American people" – was a collective product of the brains trust, the show as a whole was devised by Louis Howe.

One of Howe and Farley's key campaign strategies was to write thousands of letters to Democrats all over the country, keeping in very close touch with campaigning party members at the local level. This letter-writing strategy had been Roosevelt and Howe's favorite before, and it remained useful later, when Roosevelt as president wanted to keep in seemingly personal touch with American citizens, both because it offered him insight into public opinion, and because it created a sense of proximity between the President and the people (Sussmann 60). Moreover, various campaign biographies were written, mostly under the direction of Howe and focusing on FDR's life story. The most serious of these was Ernest Lindley's *Franklin D. Roosevelt: a Career in Progressive Politics* (1931), but Howe's staff also helped FDR's mother Sara Delano Roosevelt to write her memoir *My Boy Franklin* (Rollins 313).

A special case was Earle Looker's book *This Man Roosevelt* (1932). Looker was a Republican journalist who wrote celebratory biographies about him from that vantage point, including a

now famous investigation into FDR's physical health. Rollins speculates that Howe may have set Looker up to start this investigation, and in any case Howe ordered 50,000 reprints of the *Liberty* article Looker published about it. This in turn led to a secret arrangement between Howe, Looker, Roosevelt and the magazine, by which Looker published a 400-word article over Roosevelt's signature every two weeks (Rollins 313). Thus, Looker turned from a contributor to FDR's indexical voice – indexing him across an unusually large political rift for a campaign biographer – into a writer of his metonymical voice. It seems likely that Looker was never really opposed to Roosevelt's candidacy – he was rather too easily "converted" – but the shift from opponent to ventriloquist typifies the building and consolidation of Roosevelt's autofabrication apparatus.

Roosevelt's first inaugural address, delivered on March 4, 1933, at a time of extreme national despair, is one of the most obvious defining moments in shaping his public persona and image. Roosevelt began by establishing explicitly the mutual expectations and the relationship between himself and the American citizens.

> My friends, this is a day of national consecration. And I am certain that on this day my fellow Americans expect that on my induction into the Presidency I will address them with a candor and a decision which the present situation of our people impels. This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. (…) This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory.[4]

By far the most famous phrase of this passage – quoted and otherwise invoked by the majority of later Roosevelt representations – is "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Presumably, most Americans will have come across it in various forms of public history and popular culture. If any single phrase supports the hypothesis that Roosevelt's own attempts to manage his public image have a continuing influence on Roosevelt representations, it is this one. In this inaugural address – the quintessential first impression for a newly elected president – Roosevelt clearly casts himself as a friend of the people – "My friends", "my fellow Americans" – and a brave and honest leader in hard times. He stresses the word 'frank', using it twice – "frankly", "frankness" – in his first few sentences as president, associating himself implicitly with the characteristics that name suggests. "Frank" works metonymically and by means of association; it forges a link between text and person, and is constative as well as performative. "I am Frank" could on the one hand be paraphrased as "I am fortright" and on the other hand resonates on the level of informal

4 http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3280

intimacy and personal contact – FDR's actual friends called him Frank. This new suggestion of intimacy was further strengthened by the fact that for the first time ever, Americans listened to an incoming president's inaugural address gathered around their radios (Craig 154).

In terms of content the First Inaugural Address is both full of metaphors and imagery – "the unscrupulous money-changers stand indicted in the court of public opinion", "we must move as a trained and loyal army" – and at the same time relatively concrete statements, broadly outlining the New Deal and all but threatening Congress into granting him "broad executive power to wage a war against the emergency." The leading metaphor is that of a nation at war, which both implies that an unusual level of unity, discipline and personal sacrifice is asked of the people, and that Roosevelt will have to be granted unusual executive power, all this whilst giving the general impression of a courageous, and avoiding that of a dictatorial president. Also, it contains a number of fairly direct attacks on Hoover – "Stripped of the lure of profit, by which to induce our people to follow their false leadership, they have resorted to exhortations, pleading tearfully for restored confidence"[5] – and to be sure, Roosevelt's inaugural address did restore public confidence much more than any of Hoover's recent efforts had done (Houck 10-14). Thus, the First Inaugural Address casts Roosevelt as a strong, frank and fearless man, sensitive to his fellow Americans' hardship and ready to take action against it, at the expense of a largely unidentified group of "money-changers", with Hoover as the only individually recognizable outsider. This worked all the better because between his election and inauguration Roosevelt had been pointedly silent, while the crisis rapidly increased (Houck 130).

The First Inaugural Address was not written by Roosevelt alone. Unlike most of his addresses, however, this one was not circulated widely before it was delivered. Davis Houck relates in his book *FDR and Fear Itself: The First Inaugural Address* (2002) how Roosevelt commissioned Columbia University professor Raymond Moley to draft the address. Moley – selected for the job by Louis Howe – had previously written speeches for Roosevelt, and traveled with Roosevelt throughout the presidential campaign to write and adapt speeches for him. On a few occasions they brainstormed together and Roosevelt gave his ideas for the inaugural address and possible metaphors to use in it. Moley, however, came up with the first draft, which they discussed again on the night of February 27/28 (103). This discussion changed the draft extensively, and it was changed further by Louis Howe. Otherwise, according to Houck, only Eleanor and – unbeknownst to Franklin – her friend, Associated Press reporter Lorena Hickok, read it (134).

Despite the fact that Moley wrote the main drafts for the inaugural address he remained relatively unknown. According to Houck this was by specific design of Roosevelt, who copied Moley's draft of the address in his own hand, in order to 'own' the speech in the eyes of history by making

5 Herbert Hoover was projected, particularly by the Roosevelt campaign, but also more generally, as extremely hands-off, opposing federal efforts to halt the Depression. He tried to restore confidence in the economy through speeches, which Roosevelt – like many contemporaries – perceived as counterproductive (Carcasson 349–65).

it seem metonymic and, through the hand, synecdochic (98). Houck goes to great lengths to explain how Moley understood this to be necessary and even, in a dramatic gesture, threw the draft in his own typescript in the fire at the end of his last discussion of it with Roosevelt in the night of February 28 – keeping, however, his notes and diary, so that Houck's book could still be written. While some of Houck's claims seem somewhat speculative, especially given the fact that he largely bases himself on Moley's archive and ego-documents, *FDR and Fear Itself* is a minute reading and discussion of the various remaining drafts of the inaugural address. Perhaps Moley exaggerated his own role in devising the speech as much as Roosevelt later tried to understate Moley's importance. However, the inaugural address was clearly not widely disseminated before it was held and comparatively few people worked on it.

More speech writers were involved in drafting Roosevelt's famous radio addresses. He was aided in writing the Fireside Chats by about twenty people over the years, though usually not more than five to seven at the same time (Schoenherr 109). Roosevelt usually made changes and additions to their drafts, in his own hand on paper as well as during his live radio delivery. Indeed, while he seems often to have asked various speechwriters to draft one Fireside Chat for him, he eventually combined them, borrowing their ideas and phrases (Levine 19). One speechwriter, Charles Michelson, remembered that Roosevelt had asked him and two others to prepare a speech. Roosevelt listened to all three of their drafts and then:

> …stretched himself on a couch and with his eyes on the ceiling dictated his own version, occasionally using one of our phrases but generally culling the best ideas that had been submitted and putting them in his own way. So far as I know, this was the practice with every speech… Take it from one rather experienced in the formation and presentation of speeches: Franklin Roosevelt is a better phrase maker than anybody he ever had around him. (cited in Buhite and Levy xvi)

Whether or not Roosevelt was as good a phrasemaker as Michelson would have him, he was certainly extremely good at recognizing potentially great phrases. Through this collective process of writing, followed by Roosevelt's vocal dictation, the indexical voice was intermingled with the synecdochic. Michelson's emphasis on Roosevelt's bodily positioning and "his eyes [focused] on the ceiling" contribute to the corporeality of Roosevelt's voice, even as it is collectively produced. Rosenman even goes so far as to argue that:

> the speeches as finally delivered were his – and his alone – no matter who the collaborators were… No matter how frequently the speech assistants were changed through the years, the speeches were always Roosevelt's. They all expressed the personality, the convictions, the spirit, the mood of Roosevelt. No matter who worked with him in the preparation, the finished product was always the same – it was Roosevelt himself. (5-6).

The assertion that "the finished product … was Roosevelt himself", and the idea that the speeches "expressed the personality, the convictions, the spirit, the mood of Roosevelt", implies that the speeches were entirely metonymical, to the point of erasing the professional speechwriters around FDR, whom he suggests are entirely interchangeable. Indeed, it is part of the professionalism of a speechwriter to deny that he did any work at all, and the eradication of his own voice is necessary to enable ventriloquism. At the same time, Roosevelt as an individual was very receptive to autofabrication for a large audience by a team, because he could transform a collectively produced indexical voice to a metonymic and synecdochic one. His public voice spoke carefully and collectively produced texts to which he contributed his unique physical voice, presentation and improvisation talent, particularly over the radio.

Media

> I never saw him –
> But I knew him. Can you have forgotten
> How, with his voice, he came into our house,
> The President of the United States,
> Calling us friends…[6]

Author and poet Carmer here refers to a sentiment that seems to have been extremely widespread in the United States between 1933 and 1945: the sense that Americans knew President Roosevelt well on a personal basis, as a result of his "coming into their houses", as a family friend through the radio. This poem, published two days after Roosevelt's death, refers to the Fireside Chats, Roosevelt's most famous and most puzzling media expressions. Between March 12, 1933 and June 12, 1944 Roosevelt addressed the American people in thirty-one radio speeches. The term Fireside Chat was coined by CBS's Harry Butcher in 1933, and was picked up immediately by the rest of the press (Levine 17). Roosevelt himself soon also adopted the name, particularly liking the informality suggested by "chats", or "talks", rather than "addresses", though he did stress that the coinage was not his own invention. The Fireside Chat of June 24, 1938 begins:

> I think the American public and the American newspapers are certainly creatures of habit. This is one of the warmest evenings that I have ever felt in Washington, D. C., and yet this talk tonight will be referred to as a fireside talk.

This beginning is of course a joke, but the joke is on the American public and newspapers, and seems to deny that "fireside talk" is a term his own administration endorsed. Roosevelt was known as and admired for being an easy jester, and this joke is particularly successful: through its benignant mockery, it attributes the association with the fireside to the public and

6 Carl Lamson Carmer, "April 14, 1945"

press, rather than to himself. Roosevelt implies he is not speaking by his own fireside, his fellow Americans may be by their firesides, or by the modern replacement of a fireside as the center of familial gathering, the radio. Roosevelt's quip stresses various implicit assumptions: firstly that Roosevelt, through his synecdochic and metonymic voice, visits Americans in their family homes, and secondly that it is the people's own feeling that the heart of the family home is the most appropriate place for talks with the president. In jokingly distancing himself from the term, Roosevelt transfers responsibility for using it to his audience. Successfully so: it has remained one of the most popular phrases in relation to Roosevelt and his presidency, and there are many widespread conceptions and misconceptions about the speeches – that they were held weekly, that they were intimate – which seem to have been inspired or supported more by the name Fireside Chats and other aspects of form than by their content. As Henry Fairlie described it in *The New Republic*:

> Radio sets were not then very powerful, and there was always static. Families had to sit near the set, with someone always fiddling with the knobs. It was like sitting around a hearth, with someone poking the fire; and to that hearth came the crackling voices of Winston Churchill, or George Burns and Gracie Allen, and of FDR. The fireside chats… It was not FDR who was at his fireside… it was we who were at our firesides.[7]

While focusing on the reception side of the Fireside Chats – families had to sit near the radio, fiddling with it was like poking the fire – Fairlie here also stresses the metonymical quality of a radio voice. Realizing that FDR was not the one at his fireside, Fairlie nonetheless shows how FDR's radio voice brought others to stoke their fires in a metaphorical sense.

There is some discussion as to the number of Fireside Chats, caused by the fact that Roosevelt used the radio to address the nation more often than the thirty or so addresses that are counted as Fireside Chats. *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* lists 83 radioed addresses, of which 27 are considered Fireside Chats. However, in 1973, tape recordings of all but three of the Fireside Chats were issued by Mass Communications, Inc., which asserted that there were actually thirty-one of Roosevelt's radio addresses that should be considered Fireside Chats (Buhite and Levy xv). These were defined as informal presidential addresses of 15 to 45 minutes, not only broadcast via the radio, but expressly written to be presidential radio addresses, and broadcast throughout the United States at the same time, as close to prime time as possible. Radio was the first mass medium that could achieve temporal simultaneity in that way, and therefore a strong force in creating an imagined community. It created what Hadley Cantril called "the largest grouping of people ever known." In a series of articles she wrote on radio for the *New York Times Magazine* in the spring of 1932, political correspondent Anne O'Hare McCormick spoke of "the incredible audience," "millions of ears contracted into one ear and

7 January 27, 1982, cited in Levine 1.

cocked at the same moment to the same sound." (Levine 1) Here again, the synecdochic "ears" contracted into one metonymic national "ear" works to elide the difference between countless physical ears, the listeners they belong to, and the collective of a nation listening together to the same voice, which in turn is both synecdochic of the corporeal FDR and metonymic of his radio presence and message.

Roosevelt was not the first president to be broadcast on the radio. Both Warren Harding and Herbert Hoover had the technology available, and used it, though neither with very much awareness of the specific needs and qualities of the medium, nor with much measurable impact. Other contemporary leaders, such as Hitler or Stalin, were broadcast on radio, but did not have a specific radio style. Their speeches were aimed primarily at large gatherings of their party members, and while they, to some extent also work when heard over the radio, they have none of the specific intimacy and awareness of the private sphere they enter, that Roosevelt's speeches did have, and they do not work on three rhetorical levels at once. Churchill did develop a radio broadcasting style of speaking that did work somewhat similarly, but only later, during World War II. Roosevelt was among the first generation of very successful and specifically talented radio speakers, together with figures such as W. K. Henderson, Father Coughlin and Walter Winchell.

Radio in the 1930s became by far the most accessible and most widely used mass medium in the United States. In the course of the 1930s more than 80% of American households acquired a radio set and some Fireside Chats are estimated to have been heard by more than 85% of the adult population (Levine 17). Hadley Cantril and Gordon Allport estimated in the mid-thirties that "our countrymen spend approximately 150,000,000 hours a week before the [movie]screen, but nearly 1,000,000,000 hours before the [radio] loud-speaker." It is striking that they and other commentators in the 1930s thought of radio in particular as a means of mass education and as a strong agent in further democratization. As Levine and Levine note: "Lew Sarett and William Trufant Foster compared radio to the ancient Greek Acropolis: 'a place from which the Elders might speak to all the citizens at once'" (Levine 1). The perception of radio as "a place from which the Elders … speak to all the citizens at once" prefigures Jacques Lacan's theory of radio: Lacan understood radio as a super-egoic voice. "Radio transforms the voice into aural material that shakes us up because it seems to be audible everywhere, all at once" (Liu 258). Thus, in Lacan's view, radio divorces the synecdochic voice from the body, transforming it into, not just a metonymic, but also a symbolic force, a kind of superego, coming both from outside and from within the listener.

This is at odds with the supposedly innate democratizing effects of the radio – as are Hitler's inflammatory speeches, which, though not primarily meant for the radio, were also effective as radio broadcasts. German theorists such as Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin have both argued in the 1930s that radio was too one-sided a medium to be democratic or to establish meaningful contact between speaker and audience. Brecht particularly focused on the unilateral

quality of radio: "Der Rundfunk hat eine Seite, wo er zwei haben müsste" (130)[8], disabling the possibility of audience response or debate between sender and receivers; Benjamin equally felt that radio did not allow for real contact to be established between performer and audience, but rather stressed the impossibility for the sender to receive feedback from the audience, instead having to blindly reach "the consumers who constitute the market." However, "[t]his market, where he offers not only his labor but also his whole self, his heart and soul, is beyond his reach" (Redmond and Holmes 27). While Benjamin might have been surprised by FDR's success in reaching his "market", he evidently did grasp the metonymic and synecdochic potential of radio.

Roosevelt partly evaded these problems of radio's one-sided quality by inviting his listeners to respond to his Fireside Chats in writing, and consequently received an unprecedented amount of mail from American citizens. This combination of a new medium and an old one, contributed to the democratic image of radio in America and the correspondence had the advantage of seeming extremely personal (Craig xvii). Although Roosevelt did not answer most letters personally, many letter writers – at least those who were positive about the Administration and its policies, or at least friendly – did receive a response from the White House. These responses were often short and mostly formally acknowledged the letter rather than answering it, but a great effort was nonetheless made to give the letter writers the feeling they were being heard. Bunches of the letters were selected by the staff and ER for FDR to read, and both Roosevelts did also respond personally to some letters (Levine 8).

In many of his radio addresses Roosevelt explicitly invited particular groups of listeners to write to him to share their thoughts, or to fill out and return surveys the government held.[9] This strategy helped to create a sense of intimacy and personal contact between Roosevelt and his listeners, and provided information about the public opinion. Radio networks often invited audiences to write in response – indeed, in the early days of radio, this was the only way available to radio stations to glean the listeners' reactions to their programs. So Roosevelt was not the only radio speaker who did this, his requests built on a custom, which he made "a central part of this process" (Levine 5). Indeed, "Roosevelt's radio speeches helped to make participants – even activists – out of his audience." (5) This led to an unprecedented flow of letters to the President – in some weeks following Fireside Chats, more than 450,000 letters would be delivered to the White House. As Ira Smith, the White House Chief of Mails, remembered, especially after the first few Fireside Chats people "believed that he was speaking to them personally and immediately wrote him a letter. It was months before we managed to swim out of that flood of mail" (Smith and Morris 213-4). When, however, the volume of the mail to the White House decreased, Smith recalls, "we could expect to hear from him or one of his secretaries, who wanted to know what was the matter – was the President losing his grip on the public?" (151).

8 "The radio has one side, where it ought to have two." (my translation).
9 E.g. amongst the unemployed, as in FC11.

Yet, despite the democratic image of radio, Roosevelt could also be argued to have used it to side-step Congress, traditionally regarded as the most democratic body in the federal government and the most immediate representative of the people. Journalist Stanley High noted about the Fireside Chats:

> The spirit, even more than the content, of his "My Friends" speeches was something new in the annals of our democracy. There is a latch-string-is-always-out quality about them. They invite familiarity. … [The nation] sends its orders to its Congressmen. But it talks things over with its President. (37-8)

This sense that radio, the Fireside Chats in particular, could contribute to a more direct democracy was especially useful to Roosevelt, since he was often unhappy with the way he and his policies were mediated by the press. Roosevelt had a good relationship with many journalists, but strongly believed that most newspaper owners disliked him, and unfairly accused him of trying to manipulate them (White 28).

In that light it makes sense that Roosevelt felt the need to address the public directly, not mediated by a radio program or the possibly hostile newspaper press. The way the Fireside Chats were broadcast – simultaneously by the two competing nationwide radio broadcasters at the time, NBC and CBS – ensured that FDR had great power over the broadcast, so that the medium seemed neutral, and therefore amplified, metaphorically as well as literally, Roosevelt's voice as a leader who stood above partisan politics. He felt that "…I was able to accomplish reform and progress only because the public was ready for them, wanted them, and was willing to help me carry out the people's will." Because of this he could go "over the heads of the Legislature and sometimes over the almost united opposition of the newspapers of the State" (PP&A Vol. 1, 8). All in all Roosevelt was convinced the radio had been an important medium of communication for him since his governorship: "The use of the radio by me in those days not only to appeal directly to the people, but also to describe fully the facts about the legislation which were not always given by many press reports, was the beginning of similar use of the radio by me as President in what have come to be known as 'Fireside Chats'. The radio has proved to be a direct contact with the people which was available to only two presidents before me. It has been invaluable as a means of public approach" (PP&A Vol. 1, 8). Clearly, Roosevelt was very aware of the agency radio gave him in his autofabrication, not only in terms of how the public viewed him, but also in the sense that it effectively helped him as a politician to strengthen the presidency at the expense of the legislative power.

It is hard to be definite about how conscious Roosevelt and his staff were about the autofabricating qualities of the Fireside Chats. Did they deliberately merge indexical, metonymical and synecdochic modes of Roosevelt's voice to enhance its rhetorical force? There are only a few direct clues that provide evidence of a strong consciousness of the autofabricating qualities, but the extreme care with which the addresses were made and broadcast does suggest a great

awareness of and interest in their effect on Roosevelt's public image. Despite the consistent impression that Roosevelt held his Fireside Chats weekly, or otherwise frequently and regularly, he was, for instance, very aware of the need not to appear on the radio too often. Many letters in reaction to the Fireside Chats asked and advised the President to address the nation in this way more often, but as Roosevelt wrote in a letter in March 1942: "Sometimes I wish I could carry out your thought of more frequent talking on the air on my part, but the one thing I dread is that my talks should be so frequent as to lose their effectiveness." A week later he wrote in another letter: "For the sake of not becoming a platitude to the public, I ought not to appear oftener… I am inclined to think that in England Churchill, for a while, talked too much, and I don't want to do that."[10] Both of these statements suggest that Roosevelt was consciously orchestrating the effects of his radio addresses on his public image.

When reading the texts of the Fireside Chats they strike as content-heavy: they seem to concentrate more on policies, programs and problems that Roosevelt and the nation encountered, than on Roosevelt's person or the relationship between him and the Americans. However, in terms of form, the Fireside Chats were extremely carefully set up and organized. Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins has suggested that Roosevelt relished the ease with which he could manipulate his radio appearance, presumably because it synecdochically represented him, without any risk of unduly exposing his wheelchair. His synecdochic voice was clearly that of a patrician, but that seems not to have alienated the listeners – many probably felt that that was entirely suitable for a president. Most Fireside Chats were broadcast from a professional studio in the White House, where he did have a small audience present to create an atmosphere of intimacy (Perkins 110).

Although the content and tone of most of the Fireside Chats is businesslike and even castigatory, Roosevelt famously began practically each Fireside Chat with "My friends" or "My fellow Americans." From the enormous number of letters and telegrams Roosevelt received from "ordinary Americans" (his phrase) after each Fireside Chat was broadcast – most notably, after the first one on the Banking Crisis, on March 12, 1933 – the impression arises that he was regarded by many of the letter-writers as a kind of older brother or friend. Many writers stress that they have never felt inclined to write to their president, but do so now, because Roosevelt in his address has taken them so seriously and has addressed so exactly their most pressing worries (Sussmann 59). In 1933 the radio audience was still "young" – the medium was relatively new – and therefore perhaps naïve in their perception of radio as a medium approaching personal communication. However, listening to the Fireside Chats was not their first or only experience of radio entering the private sphere, and the Fireside Chats did clearly stand out to many listeners as particularly intimate and moving.

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10 FDR to Russell Leffingwell, March 16, 1942, in *Franklin D. Roosevelt: Selected Speeches, Messages, Press Conferences, and Letters,* ed. Basil Rauch, 310-11; FDR to Mary Norton, March 24, 1942 in *FDR: His Personal Letters, 1928-1945*, ed. Elliott Roosevelt, 2: 1300.

"Intimate" has ever since remained one of the most popular qualifications for the Fireside Chats, even though this qualification does not really do justice to the content of the texts. Many have argued that the Fireside Chats were more accessible than other presidential speeches, and that this has contributed to the sense of intimacy and contact between Roosevelt and "the common man"[11], but rhetorician Elvin Lim argues in "The Lion and the Lamb: De-mythologizing Franklin Roosevelt's Fireside Chats", using content analysis, that this is a misconception. According to his analysis, the Fireside Chats are not easier to understand or more intimate than other presidential speeches. However, whether a misconception or not, the idea that the Fireside Chats are intimate and easy is overwhelmingly present in films, documentaries, popular biographies, and more general academic writing about Roosevelt. Lim spends a great deal of attention addressing and defusing the misconceptions he sees, aiming to assess how the Fireside Chats should really be understood, rather than to understand how the alleged or real misconception evolved.

The use of content analysis and other quantitative techniques is helpful in convincing one that the Fireside Chats are neither intimate on a textual level nor particularly accessible in their discourse to a general audience. As Lim shows, in the Fireside Chats Roosevelt used more words like "prices", "banks", "money", "recovery", "wages", and "coal", and other economic terms than he did in other public addresses, or than presidents before and after him did, and used many multisyllabic words of Latin origin, long sentences and unusual style figures. Lim also convincingly argues that the Fireside Chats are not the entirely novel media performances they were and are sometimes taken to be, but in fact build on a long tradition of presidential soapbox oratory. It is true that the Fireside Chats are both in tone and content more confrontational and castigatory than one might expect on the basis of their informal-sounding name and their reputation. Roosevelt repeatedly refers to political opponents as "a few selfish men" (FC3), "money changers", "prophets of evil", "petty chiselers" (FC4), "self-seekers", "theoretical die-hards", "doubting Thomases" (FC5), "enemies of American peace" (FC13), "rumor mongers" (FC18), "noisy traitors", "betrayers of America", and "would be dictators" (FC19). The comparison with stump speeches is justified – indeed Roosevelt seems at times to emulate his uncle, an expert in the genre. It is, however, not enough to simply state that the Fireside Chats were not intimate. They were perceived as such by their listeners, as phrases in letters to Roosevelt like "Having just heard your most loving, clear voice… I cannot help, but to try and express my feeling" attest, and still are (quoted in Levine 3). While the public opinion may simply have been misguided, it makes sense to take the public reaction seriously. If the public reaction to the Fireside Chats is not a straightforwardly 'correct' assessment of them, where does this supposed miscommunication come from?

The Fireside Chats may have been perceived as intimate because they were listened to in the private sphere. Of course this is true of all radio, but Roosevelt's special success lay in transforming an indexical voice to a metonymic and synechdochic one, as the "most loving clear

11 E.g. Winfield 105, Schoenherr 110.

voice" the letter writer refers to, attests. Stump speeches, despite their often aggressive tone also had an intimate quality, deriving from the fact that speaker and audience were in the same space, and thus also gave room for audience reactions, which the letters to the President may be seen as a, mostly symbolic, substitute for. Moreover Roosevelt's name-calling is always aimed at "a few selfish/scared/evil people", who are of course not the "fellow Americans" which the Fireside Chats address, thus defining an outgroup (Tajfel 67). The outgroup functions as an Other to be distinguished from Roosevelt and his audience – "my friends" – strengthening the ingroup sentiment of fellow Americans, who are all listening to their president on the radio at the same time. Thus Roosevelt's name-calling is not in itself intimate, but it does help to create a sense of connection between those who do not consider themselves to be one of the "few selfish people", that is, presumably most of the listeners. This sense of connectedness was available across the millions of individual firesides and thus a factor in creating an imagined community that clearly did feel intimate. Moreover, Roosevelt thus cleverly played to the wish of his listeners to belong to the ingroup of his fellow Americans. Using that phrase over and over, throughout the twelve years that he held Fireside Chats, rhetorically helped to rid him of partisanship and create a sense that the dissenters were only very few. That was of course not the case, indeed he needed to create that idea probably because he encountered so much political resistance, but the strategy worked to a large extent.

Stanley High's argument that the strength of the Fireside Chats was in "the spirit, even more than the content" is thus, after all, more relevant than Lim's analysis of the contents. Although Lim's argument that the Fireside Chats were in terms of content anything but intimate holds true, the form was intimate in a number of ways: the setting in which they were heard, Roosevelt's voice and presentation, his creation of a sense of community through excluding opponents, through phrases like "my friends", and through his efforts to stimulate response and to take this seriously. Roosevelt seems to have been especially astute at creating a sense of intimacy and personal contact, not by being soft-hearted or personal in what he said, but rather in the way he said it. Frances Perkins, Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor, remembered being present in the room while Roosevelt gave some of his Fireside Chats live on air:

> His voice and his facial expression as he spoke were those of an intimate friend. After he became President, I often was at the White House when he broadcast, and I realized how unconscious he was of the twenty or thirty of us in that room and how clearly his mind was focused on the people listening at the other end. As he talked his head would nod and his hands would move in simple, natural, comfortable gestures. His face would smile and light up as though he were actually sitting on the front porch or in the parlor with them. People felt this, and it bound them to him in affection. (72)

Here again the intimacy is stressed upfront. The situation Perkins describes is somewhat odd: she heard these performances as a member of a small audience of people engaged in FDR's

autofabrication. One might think these people were called up to act as a live audience to help FDR talk more naturally, but it does not seem to work as such. The live audience is in fact an almost ghostly presence – which makes sense in that they are co-producers of FDR's content and indexical voice, but the act he performs here is to transform that to a synecdochic voice, helped by the gestures and smiles, a metonymical one, through the "focus on the people listening at the other end", and a Lacanian symbolic voice, allowing listeners to feel "bound…to him in affection."

Although voice works in the first place on an aural level, another medium through which Roosevelt could present himself as an articulate, frank, informal and energetic leader, was photography. The issue of what does and what does not constitute autofabrication in photography is complex. With texts, one needs to figure out who wrote what, and who had the final say over a text – in this case, the answer is Roosevelt – literally. Photographs have a congruent, though less manageable dynamic. Who posed for a photograph? Who composed the picture as a whole? Whose idea was it to take a particular photo? What are its implications? Who can choose to publish particular photos and not others?

Roosevelt often took time to pose for press photographs, and Stephen Early made many photos available to the press and others, in both of which cases they may be considered as part of Roosevelt's autofabrication. However, many pictures were also taken by press photographers without Roosevelt's active awareness or participation, in the same way as there appeared articles about him. Even then, Roosevelt did have a hand in what pictures were taken, and which could be published, as his famous 1932 words "No pictures of me getting out of the car, boys" attests (Schoenherr 148). Roosevelt's autofabrication in photographs, thus consists on the one hand in his staff taking and publicizing official photographs, and on the other in his posing for press photographers and trying to manage which pictures they would and would not shoot or publish (Winfield 114). He did not, however, have anything approaching real control over which pictures of him were published, and it is in most cases impossible to know to what extent precisely he or his advisers managed this, although it is clear that they did to some extent and it is clear that hardly any photos of FDR in his wheelchair ended up being published (Schoenherr 145).

Previous presidents had dealt with journalists wishing to photograph them in various, relatively haphazard ways. Wilson disliked being photographed and thought it the duty of photographers to stay away from him. Coolidge on the other hand, felt he ought to make himself available to be photographed, and was as a result sometimes used by photographers who wanted to picture him in silly or embarrassing situations (Schoenherr 17). Both Wilson and Coolidge had presidential secretaries, but these were primarily clerks; no one actively managed how the President would or might be photographed, other than the President himself. Steve Early – like secretaries Howe and McIntyre a former newspaperman – on the other hand, did not only manage Roosevelt's press relations and organize press conferences, he also made and guarded policies surrounding Roosevelt's radio and camera appearances (Winfield 109-110).

Photography had, by the 1930s, gained considerable impact, mainly through magazines such as *Time* and *Life*, which printed many photos and were distributed nationwide, and Roosevelt was a photogenic man, keen to give the press photographers surrounding him "something to shoot" ((Winfield 114-5, Schoenherr 139). His informality and vivid facial expressions made for striking pictures, in a period when technology had advanced far enough to allow photographers to take pictures with short exposure times and little preparation, and to allow papers to print these quickly in high quality. Roosevelt was more conscious than Coolidge of the impression particular photos might make and more restrictive towards photographers, who did however know that they could always take engaging pictures of him. There are counterexamples to the statement that Franklin Roosevelt was the first US president to smile in photos, but these are few; he seems to have been the first to make it a habit. While exposure times for pictures had been very short for some decades already, so that it was physically easy to appear smiling or laughing in a photograph, it was hardly considered appropriate for the president for a long time. FDR, however, seems to have been aware of his own ability to appear confident and congenial through his photos. Other visual elements that Roosevelt was the first president to be photographed with – and which have stuck to his image in the long term – are his cigarette holder – often described as "at a jaunty angle" – a cocktail, his fedora hat, and his car. The association with "Happy Days Are Here Again", enhanced by his ending of Prohibition, is another example of a practically metonymical link between Roosevelt and a particular atmosphere of relaxed confidence that contributed to the image of a confident, modern and informal man.

Steve Early's role in regulating the press in a sense created the circumstances in which Roosevelt could easily be pleasant with journalists and photographers. Early set the conditions for journalists to be around the President or to attend press conferences, giving them detailed rules about photographing. While he did not forbid members of White House staff to take informal pictures, he required those to remain private. After a birthday party for Roosevelt in 1934 he sent around pictures taken by a White House photographer, asking that:

> The photographs made at the birthday dinner this year are given to each member of the gang with the understanding that each of the pictures shall be safeguarded against duplication… It is respectfully requested that none of these photographs be exhibited or that their existence be discovered by an outsider (cited in Schoenherr 146)

Attempts such as these to control the dissemination and publication of pictures of Roosevelt have been extremely successful, partly because Early was resolute to punish offending members of the press, for instance by exclusion from the presidential press conferences. Other reasons why candid photos were not often published were that it was still relatively hard technologically to take real snapshots, and that photographers themselves were respectful of the president's privacy. For instance, in one oft-cited case, when a Republican newspaper cameraman tried to

picture Roosevelt being carried, colleagues blocked his view and moved his camera, so that the picture could not be taken (Schoenherr 148).

FDR's autofabrication strategies in many ways actually resemble the formal language of Hitler and Stalin – as do his use of public works projects, his architectural projects to ensconce himself firmly in the American landscape, and his personalization of the political field. However, unlike Hitler and Stalin, who also used cinema for their autofabrication, with Eisenstein as Stalin's and Riefenstahl as Hitler's marionette film directors, Roosevelt seems to have been relatively reticent in using film to have himself portrayed. That he was aware of the potential of cinema, and used it to get across his aims and accomplishments, becomes clear from Pare Lorentz's films about New Deal projects, which Roosevelt commissioned.

Pare Lorentz, made films which – in Roosevelt's words – "show America as it really is" (Lorentz 34). After seeing Lorentz' film *The River* about the southern states, Roosevelt put Lorentz on the payroll of the WPA – Works Progress Administration, one of the largest public works programs – and made sure that his film was distributed on a large scale to movie theaters. Later Roosevelt commissioned Lorentz to make thirty 3-5 minute films about pending New Deal public works programs. These reached an enormous audience at the time, and some of them are still available in the educational section of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, aptly called the Pare Lorentz Center. At a public dinner Roosevelt introduced Lorentz as "my shooter" (Lorentz 55). Thus, while Lorentz did not directly make propaganda for Roosevelt, it is clear that Roosevelt realized that Lorentz' work promoted his public image. It is striking, in this context, that FDR did not engage a "shooter" or film crew to film himself, his speeches or other public performances. He was clearly aware of the potential of cinema, but did not think of it as an appropriate medium for presenting himself in the body. It is tempting to assume that Roosevelt did not use cinema to assert himself as an iconic figure because he was not keen to expose his disability through the moving image.

However, there were newsreels which showed Roosevelt. Newsreels blur the boundary between autofabrication and portrayal by others in ways comparable to photography. The Roosevelt clips in newsreels are practically all of parts of public addresses or other public appearances, so of situations in which Roosevelt was well aware that he was watched and filmed. In that sense they are visual registrations of Roosevelt's well-considered performances. However, the editing of the reels – in which the storytelling happens – was not monitored. Roosevelt had no hand in which parts of his performances were eventually shown, whether, how and from what angles they would be filmed, what the voice-over comments would be, or how the news story would be framed in general. Therefore, the newsreels do not add very substantially to Roosevelt's autofabrication, beyond the texts that he spoke in them and acts like his "walking" to the rostrum.

Press and Polls

Roosevelt is famous for his excellent contact with journalists and the press. Historian John Tebbel writes that "he understood the press as no president has before or since."[12] Betty Winfield in *FDR and the News Media* conjectures that Roosevelt "may have publicly personalized the presidency so much through his astute use of the existing mass media that he created unreasonable expectations for those less personable and less talented presidents who followed him." (2) "Publicly personalizing the presidency" through the use of mass media is clearly essential in Roosevelt's public expressions in general, and particularly important for his dealings with the news media. Although Roosevelt's easy bantering with the press is perhaps more a part of his public image than the actual essence of his administrations' press contact, he was personally on excellent terms with many members of the press, which decreased its watchdog role and therefore increased Roosevelt's political leeway (Winfield 28). Citing a reporter's surprise at the general enthusiasm Roosevelt aroused among his colleagues, Richard Polenberg argues that "Roosevelt made so favorable an impression on the working press largely because of his informal, colloquial manner." (44) While Roosevelt of course proclaimed the press to be a strong element in democracy,[13] he did not actually encourage their watchdog capacity. Rather, he wanted to secure space in the news media for White House news from his perspective. He would not personally have said so publicly, but his press secretary acted on that basis, among other things by organizing press conferences twice per week, which obviously created a regular expectation of White House news.

Roosevelt opened his first presidential press conference with "It is very good to see you all and my hope is that these conferences are going to be merely enlarged editions of the kind of very delightful family conferences I have been holding in Albany for the last four years."[14] The suggestion that press conferences should, or even can, be delightful and familial has remained an important notion since. The press conference as an institution, set up by Theodore Roosevelt, who used it very successfully for influencing the news directly, had been languishing throughout the previous three presidencies. Roosevelt, who had already had success with press conferences as governor of New York, revived it and was the first president to employ a former newspaper man, Stephen Early, as press secretary, and give him responsibility for the public relations and media policy of the White House, rather than regarding it as a merely administrative job (Schoenherr 40-41). Roosevelt was active, and often successful, in influencing the press, mostly because he strategically provided them both with large amounts of information, and with good, though non-committal quotes, photographs and other materials. Roosevelt's belief that the press disliked him despite his efforts to be accessible, is only partly justified. Many newspapers were

12 Tebbel, *The Media in America*, New York: Mentor Books, 1974.
13 "The constant free flow of communication among us – enabling the free interchange of ideas – forms the very bloodstream of our nation. It keeps the mind and body of our democracy eternally vital, eternally young." – FDR, Radio Address to the New York "Herald Tribune" Forum, October 24, 1940, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15884&st=&st1=
14 Roosevelt, Press Conference, 9 March 1933: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=14672

indeed critical of the New Deal, but also gave a great of attention to Roosevelt and the White House news he chose to present to the press (White 50-52).

Stephen Early's role was difficult at times because he both had to ensure that the press had good access to White House and executive news stories, and had to protect the privacy of the First Family and the public image of the president. Early was widely known as particularly fair and respectful to journalists; he was liked as a former colleague, despite difficulty he had protecting Roosevelt against the press and, conversely, defending his colleagues from Roosevelt's conviction that the press disliked him. His attitude was ambivalent, sometimes even hypocritical. It is telling that Roosevelt, who greatly profited from the new photo magazines, was deeply chagrined when Henry Luce, owner of the most important one – *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* – established a foundation to study the freedom of the press, out of worries about government control over the American mass media (Winfield 232).

Early himself was less negative about the intentions of the press, and particularly attempted to give all news media equal chances at obtaining news stories and photos. Thus, the practice was established that Roosevelt would give press conferences twice a week, once on a Tuesday afternoon, and once on a Friday morning, so as to give reporters for morning and evening papers equal chances at news scoops. He also prepared the conferences, discussing with Roosevelt what might be asked, and what Roosevelt might want to say. Few notes were taken during these meetings – Roosevelt generally discouraged note-taking in meetings, in itself a form of obscuring his autofabrication – but Early did make presidential quotes on paper available for the press, which they were allowed to cite. While they were allowed to ask questions at press conferences without submitting these previously, as had been the habit under previous presidents, they were not free to quote what the President said during those conferences, most of what was said was "off the record" or "as background", and might not explicitly be attributed to Roosevelt. Moreover, despite Roosevelt's claims to delightfulness and familiarity, Early set up a rather intimidating process for the press of waiting and being checked before they were allowed to enter the Oval Office in which the conferences were held. (Schoenherr 45) This created an ideal setting for Roosevelt to be apologetically late, and to do what he was good at:

> In twenty minutes Mr. Roosevelt's features had expressed amazement, curiosity, mock alarm, genuine interest, worry, rhetorical playing for suspense, sympathy, decision, playfulness, dignity, and surpassing charm. Yet he said almost nothing. Questions were deflected, diverted, diluted. Answers – when they did come – were concise and clear. But I never met anyone who showed greater capacity for avoiding a direct answer while giving the questioner a feeling he had been answered. (Gunther 22-23)

Although this elusiveness eventually did harm Roosevelt's popularity with the press, as journalists increasingly understood that the press conferences were not always useful, they did

help Roosevelt to develop a public image of amiability and hospitality, and they were an excellent way to launch 'trial balloons' to test public opinion through the reactions of correspondents.

Roosevelt's personal, jovial, bantering behavior towards reporters, stands in some contrast with the kind of rhetoric he used when he addressed the larger public, as he did in his Fireside Chats. In both cases his rhetorical skill would lie primarily in the presentation – his words were generally co-authored, or at least discussed beforehand with one or more assistants – but in larger addresses to a less tangible and visible audience Roosevelt needed to be less tongue-in-cheek, and to say without cynicism what really was the key message. Thus, he became what he had once said he hoped to be, "a preaching president – like my cousin Theodore", though the actual preaching was not, as in Theodore's case, to the press, but rather to the people in his more direct addresses.[15] However, his preaching was lightened by his jolly image, and on the other hand stood out all the more clearly, because it formed a serious note amongst many more frivolous ones.

Roosevelt was good at sending messages that inspired trust and confidence, but he was also an excellent listener. He was extremely sensitive to public opinion, both in the sense that he was good at picking up the general sentiment about issues, and in the sense that he found it very important. As his speechwriter Stanley High wrote: "The President seldom goes wrong in his forecast of public reaction. He is sensitive to public opinion as some people are sensitive to weather" (quoted in Holli 64). However, as Melvin Holli has shown in *The Wizard of Washington: Emil Hurja, Franklin Roosevelt, and the Birth of Public Opinion Polling* (2002), Roosevelt did not only go by his own sentiments and predictions; he was also the first president to use and hold mass opinion polls to estimate the public sentiment on political issues. Previously public opinion had mainly been gauged during election campaigns by relying on local party members' reports on what was thought and felt in their district, a strategy Roosevelt used as well. Moreover, the *Literary Digest*, phone companies and some other organizations held polls which were generally non-representative and not random; they, for instance, only polled people with phone lines, i.e. members of the upper middle classes, and as a result their predictions were usually skewed. While the *Literary Digest* at times polled millions of people, these were all from among their own readership and therefore a biased sample. Emil Hurja, originally a mining engineer, transferred statistical methods he used for sampling raw materials to public opinion polling. On the basis of the essentially flawed data from the *Literary Digest* polls he created corrected versions, controlling for the *Digest*'s biases, which predicted election outcomes more accurately. (Holli 44)

The Democratic National Committee in 1928 did not see the value of Hurja's randomized samples, but in the months leading up to the 1932 campaign he did convince DNC chairman James Farley.

15 Schlesinger, *The Coming of the New Deal*, 558. It is striking that FDR refers to Theodore as his "cousin", here, because formerly he tended to call him "Uncle Theodore" – the closest family tie with TR was after all that he was Eleanor Roosevelt's uncle. FDR's promoting himself from nephew to cousin of TR's may have been occasioned by FDR's election to the presidency, which in a sense brought him on a par with TR.

This was partly an effect of another poll, carried out by New York democrat Jesse Strauss, which predicted that Franklin Roosevelt would win the nomination at the 1932 Chicago convention. Soon after Roosevelt's nomination many commentators became convinced that this poll had actually influenced the convention's choice for Roosevelt. Thus, the DNC became aware of the possible self-fulfilling effect of polls, in which the poll itself created a bandwagon effect, which, according to Holli, convinced the committee to employ Emil Hurja in the presidential campaign. Hurja's polls helped FDR's campaign in various ways, particularly because they determined very precisely where campaign funds could most fruitfully be spent. Roosevelt regularly spoke with Hurja about which issues he should particularly address in different areas. (Holli 46) After Roosevelt's election Hurja first became patronage dispenser in the Administration, but later returned to public opinion polling for the DNC for the 1934 congressional campaign, and for Roosevelt, to measure the public reactions to particular speeches and policies, and more general approval ratings. Holli argues that "we cannot say for certain that it was Hurja's advice that moderated the president's behavior, but … we can say … that Roosevelt was the first president to make systematic use of public-opinion polls such as Hurja's to measure reaction to his policies and speeches." (Holli 66)

Conclusion

Roosevelt generally operated on the side of public opinion, but simultaneously tried to steer and inform it, for instance in the "Arsenal of Democracy" speech, in the direction of American military intervention in the war in Europe. Thus Roosevelt used public opinion reports to navigate his course, but did not uncritically go along with their outcomes, unless something seemed to be the only decision the American electorate would accept. He received more letters from citizens than any other president, and took these seriously, as a qualitative insight into, but also as a quantitative indicator of public sentiment. As he said to Louis Howe, he especially valued personal mail from everyday folks, because it constituted the "most perfect index to the state of mind of the people."[16] He interpreted the number of letters, as he told reporters, as a clear sign of "an increasing and wholesome reawakening of public interest in the affairs of government."[17] But most importantly, the Fireside Chats and the letters written in response, constituted a form of direct contact between himself and the public. This contact seemed synecdochic, involving FDR's actual hand, and metonymic, involving his hand-writing and choice of words, but really was symbolic – an act performed mostly not by FDR but by staff members substituting him, yet creating the sense that the President was available for direct interpersonal contact. The autofabrication of FDR as an intimate and strong presence was created mainly through the combined force of these inextricably entangled rhetorical modes.

16 Louis McHenry Howe, "The President's Mail Bag," American Magazine, June 1934, 23 – cited in Levine 5.
17 *New York Times*, December 27, 1933.

Chapter 4: Creating Legacies: FDR's Autofabrication for Cultural Memory and Remembrance

Introduction

At the start of Roosevelt's presidency in March 1933, the American economy was at an all-time low, millions of Americans had lost their savings, become unemployed, or seen their mortgages foreclosed (Schlesinger, *New Deal* 3). Roosevelt had during his campaign in 1932 promised "a new deal" for all Americans, especially those "forgotten men at the bottom of the economic pyramid."[1] He was elected by a landslide in November 1932, and kept extremely quiet in the months between his election and inauguration, to the point that Hoover later accused him of doing nothing on purpose so as to let the economy sink lower in order to make his entry to the presidency more dramatic (Alter 182). Whether Roosevelt was actually that calculating remains hard to prove or disprove, but Hoover was by that time as unprecedentedly unpopular as expectations of Roosevelt were soaring. His first inaugural address has remained one of his most iconic moments, and set the tone for the next period of major new legislation and reforms. Roosevelt called Congress into special session to pass emergency laws, and while he did not actually bypass Congress at all, his First Inaugural demanded "broad executive power" from the Congress, such as the President is usually only granted as Commander in Chief during war (Schlesinger, *Imperial Presidency* 113).

At Roosevelt's instigation, Congress enacted a massive number of new laws, including dramatic ones like the ending of Prohibition and the release of the Gold Standard, and he made enormous appropriations, amongst others for the Civilian Conservation Corps, through which millions of young unemployed urban men were put to work in national parks and forestry projects. The scale of the New Deal meant that hundreds of agencies were set up to carry out the plans and new legislation (Davis, *New Deal Years* 69). This led to what soon was called the "alphabet soup" of New Deal agencies, most of which were involved in providing relief for the poor and unemployed, recovery of the economy and reform of the financial system. The scale and scope of the New Deal as well as the speed with which new legislation was drafted and enacted meant that Roosevelt had to give the leaders of the individual programs a free hand, and that much of the New Deal was carried out under Roosevelt's responsibility, but without his direct involvement (Badger, *New Deal* 9-10).

There is little evidence that Roosevelt ever thought of the products of New Deal programs in terms of autofabrication, but some of these have so tangibly shaped the physical and cultural landscape of the US, that they cannot be disregarded entirely as an ingredient of Roosevelt's public image.

1 FDR, Nomination address, July 2, 1932, Chicago.

There is of course a political legacy of the New Deal, that is still debated in partisan terms, which perhaps influences Roosevelt's current public image, but more significant is the impact generated by the omnipresence of products of New Deal programs in the American landscape. Among the best conserved and most visible in the long term are the many parks, roads and public buildings that were built as part of it. Roosevelt's administration commissioned public works on a massive scale, many of which still remain famous landmarks associated with the New Deal, and thus with Roosevelt, such as the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Golden Gate bridge (Davis, *New Deal Years* 90). Moreover, there were New Deal programs to provide jobs for white collar workers, intellectuals and artists without work – historians, writers, photographers, visual artists, film makers, actors – most notably the Federal Writers Project (Penkower 1-8). Some of their most famous products included the American Guide Series, in which historical guidebooks were written for every state and many smaller regions, and the so-called "Negro Culture in America" project, which collected oral histories of surviving ex-slaves (Penkower 140). Extremely famous, also, are the Post Office mural paintings in almost every post office throughout the country and Dorothea Lange's and others' photographs of the Dust Bowl sand storms.

Most Roosevelt representations in this thesis are, to use Charles Sanders Peirce's terms, iconic – that is, they are in some way an image of Roosevelt, and even when not necessarily visual images, they at least resemble him in one way or another, because they share qualities or properties of some kind (Silverman 19). However, Peirce also distinguishes indexical signs:

> This is a real thing or fact which is a sign of its object by virtue of being connected with it as a matter of fact and by also forcibly intruding upon the mind, quite regardless of its being interpreted as a sign. It may simply serve to identify its object and assure us of its existence and presence. But very often the nature of the factual connexion of the index with its object is such as to excite in consciousness an image of some features of the object. (359)

Thus, an index "identifies" or points towards its object to "assure us of its existence and presence", often drawing out "some features of the object." Applied to the legacy of the New Deal, these cultural artefacts can be seen as indexical references to Roosevelt, not because they resemble him, but because they are connected to him, both historically and in cultural memory. Such indexical references can moreover recall particular features of FDR, for instance, his enormous influence on the American cultural, intellectual, and physical landscape. In that respect objects and cultural artefacts produced in the New Deal also function symbolically to represent FDR, that is, as signs that are habitually understood as representing him, separate from the indexical relationship.[2]

2 "A *symbol* is a representamen whose special significance or fitness to represent just what it does represent lies in nothing but the very fact of there being a habit, disposition, or other effective general rule that it will be so interpreted. Take, for example, the word '*man*.' These three letters are not in the least like a man; nor is the sound with which they are associated." Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers*, IV, 359.

The cultural legacy of the New Deal is enormous, and spans a huge range of infrastructural, cultural, historical and other sites and artefacts, such as post offices built in the neocolonial style that was then in vogue, books, and artworks, like the mural paintings in those post offices. Also, many photographs were taken of the Dust Bowl in Oklahoma and elsewhere in the Mid-West, as well as of the Great Depression throughout the country and of New Deal laborers at work. These photos, artworks, and films often portrayed, and were themselves, products of the New Deal, which has spawned a set of cultural practices and customs evolved during it that remain associated with it. As Michael Kammen has argued, the cultural impact of the New Deal was not only on the direct level of physical and cultural landscape, it also changed the American mindset with regard to its cultural heritage:

> There is a very real sense in which Americans broke with an ingrained habit of mind (let the private sector do it) in order to rescue and restore to prominence a range of particular traditions. Needless to say, impoverished yet creative people were also salvaged in the process. That was the principal objective, in fact. The circumstances were such that assisting Americans helped to save Americana. (444)

The shift in "habit of mind" which these programs – designed with "the principal objective" to help "impoverished yet creative people" – sparked, from the idea that the federal government should "assist Americans" to the cultural perception that "saving Americana" too was its task, was not an explicitly expressed aim of the New Deal, but FDR welcomed it abundantly. The move towards a paradigm in which the objects people were employed to save were considered worth saving with public money in and of themselves, is a key legacy of the New Deal. This shift from private to public sector in perceived responsibility for "rescu[ing] and restor[ing] to prominence a range of particular traditions" has important political implications, which FDR applauded. This intensifies the indexical connection between FDR and the artistic products created and artefacts preserved through the New Deal, but FDR did not use the agency he had as New Deal president for self-promotion in iconic terms. At the same time, FDR's autofabrication included large-scale projects to position him as an icon for the future, particularly the foundation of the FDR Presidential Library and the publication of the *Franklin D. Roosevelt Public Papers and Addresses*. These are iconic representations; they do not portray him visually, but they nonetheless portray him through his words, documents, artefacts and other media. And within the new cultural framework in which Americana were publicly preserved, his own documents and collections were too.

This chapter focuses on Roosevelt's autofabrication acts to ensure his continued presence in the American landscape beyond his death, indexically, iconically and symbolically. It concentrates on the most tangible artefacts that either index, resemble, or symbolize him, because that is presumably what he was most aware and in charge of. The more indexical of these are products of the New Deal, whereas sites and artefacts that represent FDR in an iconic

fashion are clear products of his autofabrication. Then there are symbolic representations such as streets, bridges and parks named after him, which he had no influence over, and which are arbitrarily chosen. Unlike products of the New Deal, the many Roosevelt Streets and F.D.R. Drives in the United States have no iconic or indexical connection to Roosevelt, the link is symbolic, produced only by the name. What complicates the Peircean division is the fact that FDR contributed politically to the context in which his own cultural heritage could both thrive and become depoliticized.

Depoliticization as a Political Strategy for Present and Future

As said, Michael Kammen in *Mystic Chords of Memory* argued that the principal objective of the New Deal was to salvage "impoverished yet creative people", and cites "help[ing] to save Americana" as a resultant effect (444). Others, like artist Edward Laning, have argued that the Roosevelts' personal loyalty to their artist friends played a role in the Roosevelt Administrations' patronage of the arts; he alleges that the Roosevelts, further than being humanitarians with artist friends, had no particular interest in art. [3] However, like any political leader, Roosevelt was, humanitarianism and loyalty to art-loving friends aside, also well aware that acting as a patron for artists could boost his public image. This practice among political leaders is obviously much older than Roosevelt, and he must have been aware of its potential. However, what distinguishes him from others is that he did not use New Deal buildings and other artistic products directly to blow his own trumpet, but rather to forge a climate of public responsibility for American heritage in which his own initiatives could thrive.

However little Roosevelt may personally have been interested in art in a highbrow aesthetic sense, he strongly felt that the American federal government should be more involved in the preservation and management of American cultural heritage. This conviction was part of a larger trend in American society: the 1920s saw a great rise in the collective interest in objects that are specifically American cultural artefacts, such as American books, antiques, objects of American folk culture, and less tangible objects of patriotic Americanism, such as frontier narratives, evidenced for instance by the foundation and immediate success of a monthly called *The Americana Collector* (Kammen 311). Such Americana were mostly collected by individual collectors, but, in the belief that the laboring masses must be educated and entertained, also often displayed for the public in, often privately owned, museums, (324). Before the stock market crash of 1929, many private collectors also simply invested in Americana. After that, the New Deal essentially took over the project of "saving Americana" and making patriotic folk history accessible to the masses, creating a cultural practice of historical awareness in the federal government and a new sense of responsibility for the public sector to take care of, and assume power over, cultural heritage and remembrance.

3 Cited in O'Connor 90.

Roosevelt himself was highly sensitive to the potentially unifying and consensus-building effect of historical analogies and to the uses history and cultural memory could have for him, and surrounded himself by formal and informal advisors in such matters. In 1936, for instance, he acted on the advice of his assistant secretary of state, R. Walton Moore, who argued that "'while the campaign is under way, a stop at Jefferson's home might be highly productive in terms of public relations" (452). During campaigns he stressed his connection with heroic statesmen such as Lincoln and Jefferson, partly in order to associate himself with the entire electorate rather than with Democratic voters only (452). In 1936 too, Roosevelt unveiled the head of Thomas Jefferson at Mount Rushmore, saying in his dedication speech:

> …we can perhaps meditate a little on those Americans ten thousand years from now when the weathering on the face of Washington and Jefferson and Lincoln shall have proceeded to perhaps a depth of a tenth of an inch – meditate and wonder what our descendants, and I think they will still be here, will think about us. Let us hope that at least they will give us the benefit of the doubt – that they will believe we have honestly striven every day and generation to preserve for our descendants a decent land to live in and a decent form of government to operate under.[4]

Here FDR explicitly raises the question of future remembrance, and by shifting the perspective so far into the future, to "Americans ten thousand years from now" he directly aligns himself with "Washington and Jefferson and Lincoln" who are portrayed at Mount Rushmore. The effect of this far horizon is that he can easily suggest he is in a league with those illustrious presidents because he shares their broad ambition for "a decent land to live in and a decent form of government to operate under." While this ambition seems so vague and bland that it is an empty claim to make, FDR does implicitly include "to preserve" as one of the government's duties. Preservation of American landscape and Americana was much more his specific agenda than that of Washington, Jefferson or Lincoln, but this speech suggests that, like honoring the Founding Fathers, preservation through the public sector is one of the sacred duties of American patriotism. Thus, he affiliates himself with Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln through a rhetorical figure that seems to make irrelevant their ideological differences, and at the same time he suggests they shared his political agenda. Thus, Roosevelt both acted as an agent in idealizing a supposed consensual American history, and activated that history to his own electoral advantage.

Kammen argued that using cultural memory to depoliticize the past, is a crucial American strategy for dealing with American history, and saw Franklin Roosevelt as a particularly exemplary proponent of that tendency. The above example illustrates what I think he meant, both because it is an instance of how looking back into the past can provide a sense of

4 FDR, August 30, 1936.

collectivity in the present that sidesteps partisan differences, and in the sense that it shows how FDR could make this effect operative for his own political and partisan ends. However, Kammen uses the term depoliticization without making clear what precisely he means by it. When he says "Americans have been inclined to depoliticize their past", he suggests that American memory tends to become a-political, that is, to lose its political charge. But the fact that Roosevelt could use the depoliticization of the past, or could depoliticize himself through forging a link with national historical figures to his electoral advantage implies that it is after all a political phenomenon. Indeed in FDR's case, it seems to have been a political strategy, though perhaps not so much a strategy driven by ideological convictions as by practical opportunism.

Roosevelt's lack of ideological profiling has often been regarded as a political advantage. As, for instance, Patrick Renshaw has said in *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (2004):

> [W]here Hoover's greatest handicap in dealing with the depression had been his philosophy, FDR's greatest asset was his lack of one. "Philosophy?" he once quizzically told a questioner "Philosophy? I'm a Christian and a democrat – that's all." (100)

Here FDR's movement resembles the previous example: he associated himself only with those labels that the overwhelming majority of Americans at the time would have to agree with, however much they might oppose Roosevelt's actual politics. I have argued in the first two chapters that Roosevelt was very successful in presenting a kind of emptiness or enigma. This works well to keep later Roosevelt narratives intriguing, but he also himself used it as a politician to seems less partisan, and thus in a sense to depoliticize himself, albeit to his political advantage.

Claude Lefort argues in his essay "The Question of Democracy", in the tradition of Ernst Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies* (1957), that:

> Under the monarchy… power was embodied in the prince, and it therefore gave society a body. And because of this, a latent but effective knowledge of what *one* meant to the *other* existed throughout the social. This model reveals the revolutionary and unprecedented feature of democracy. The locus of power becomes *an empty place*." (17)

Lefort goes on to argue that that innate emptiness at the heart of power in modern democracies "implies an institutionalization of conflict" and that the "locus of power cannot be occupied … it cannot be represented." I would argue that Roosevelt employed a stance of ideological "emptiness" in an attempt to occupy the locus of power, especially during the New Deal years (1933-1937), which dramatically fell apart when in 1937 his attempt to "pack" the Supreme Court with new, Democratic, or at least Roosevelt-loyal, Justices failed, and many central New Deal measures were declared unconstitutional.

Chantal Mouffe argues that modern democracy is characterized by an irreconcilable combination of liberalism, focused primarily on individualism and human rights, and democracy, focused primarily on equality and popular sovereignty. This uncomfortable combination inevitably leads to conflicts of interest between the majority vote on the one hand and the pluralism of individuals on the other. Mouffe accepts Lefort's idea of an empty space at the heart of power and argues that this must be seen as a positive site for confrontation between opposing interests. In *The Democratic Paradox* (2000), she argues against late-twentieth century political movements like Tony Blair's "third way" which supposedly transcended the left-right opposition in politics, and the "Clintonization" of politics in America (108-9), because she considers such movements purely "aggregative", reducing democratic politics to "the negotiation of interests", without transforming antagonism in plural societies to a productive political agonism (117). Mouffe does not explicitly say so, but one might argue that Roosevelt is a kind of archetype of consensus-driven politicians like Blair, Clinton and Schröder, which she sees as a risk for the health of society's pluralism, and particularly for those groups in society that need to seek emancipation. Arguably, for example, FDR's non-committal friendliness to African Americans put off the growth of the Civil Rights Movement until well into the 1950s.

For Kammen political seems to mean the same as partisan, and depoliticization of history then refers to the fact that historical narratives in an American context tend to become more collective because they lose their partisan colors to a blander more general patriotic American mode of cultural memory. However, as we have seen in Roosevelt's case, the movement from controversial partisan issues in the present to a projected memory of and affable national consensus, is itself a shift of framework with a highly political impact, of a kind that Mouffe deplores. Suggesting the evolvement of a bland general consensus about the interpretation of events in cultural memory, however fabricated this may be, robs the democratic process of its empty locus of power, which Roosevelt manages to occupy precisely because he also projects himself as an ideologically empty body politic. This is the opposite of Mouffe's ideal that the political should be agonistic.

Roosevelt used history to depoliticize himself in the then-present, as in the Mount Rushmore example, but he also through the New Deal contributed to a cultural context in which preservation of American cultural heritage was perceived as a government function. And because this preservation was a national effort, it was logical to depoliticize the cultural legacy concerned, in the sense of divorcing it from its partisan context, and seeing it as a broader collective legacy. However, this shift in itself is politically charged, and its seeming flatness is in part the reason Roosevelt continues to be hated so viscerally in some circles, who oppose the idea that preservation is a government task in the first place.

The Legacy of Policy: The Indexical Nature of the New Deal

Buildings, infrastructure, national parks and lasting cultural artefacts, such as the many artworks, murals, American state guidebooks, oral histories and photographs that were produced as part

of New Deal programs are classical objects for statesmen to want to leave behind. The link with the world's great mausoleums, monuments and examples of royal patronage is easily made, as Roosevelt must have been aware, and he may have consciously stayed away from such arguably dictatorial gestures. Given that he later suggested that he did not after his death want a personal memorial to visually portray him, it seems likely that he did not wish artists and others paid by his unprecedented, and by no means universally accepted, public spending to heroically and iconically portray and idolize him all too explicitly. Yet, even if the legacy of the New Deal in the American landscape refers so little to Roosevelt in an iconic sense, the New Deal's distinctive style remains recognizable and indexically connected with FDR.

Rhetorically the New Deal relied heavily on the sense that restoring the American economy was a matter of modernizing concepts of civilization and patriotism. In his first State of the Union address as president, on January 3, 1934, Roosevelt said:

> Civilization cannot go back; civilization must not stand still. We have undertaken new methods. It is our task to perfect, to improve, to alter when necessary, but in all cases to go forward. To consolidate what we are doing, to make our economic and social structure capable of dealing with modern life, is the joint task of the legislative, the judicial, and the executive branches of the National Government. Without regard to party, the overwhelming majority of our people seek a greater opportunity for humanity to prosper and find happiness.

Although he does not mention the New Deal explicitly, Roosevelt here practically equates his social and economic program with civilization and inevitable progress. He states explicitly that such programs are the task of National Government and a need of "the overwhelming majority of our people", "without regard to party." Of course his paraphrase of what that majority of people seek is so broad – "greater opportunity for humanity to prosper and find happiness" – that it would be hard to oppose, wherever one stands with "regard to party." Such attempts to unite the nation by stressing the national importance of federal political choices is of course in part the president's function. To argue that policies or programs serve the entire nation's interests is politically strategic, and the New Deal was after all intended to help everybody. However, what makes the New Deal exceptional as a broad social and economic program, is the fact that nation-building, preservation, memory-making, and stimulating what has since come to be called the heritage industry, were themselves among it aims. The implication is that FDR's key political program came to occupy a wide range of historical sites and cultural arenas, not with the New Deal's political ideals, but rather through a depoliticizing, that is neutralizing, national framework.

The New Deal needed to create nationally constructive and preferably uncontroversially useful projects, and this may have suggested the initial idea to organize projects that would develop, research and glorify American heritage, which then became an end in itself. History

and Americana were good topics for New Deal art projects exactly because they tended to be regarded as uncontroversial – at a time when native and African American points of view were largely ignored – and because they could be argued to be useful to "the entire nation", even if that did not in fact include most minorities. Karal Ann Marling has argued that the reason most of the 2500 Post Office murals presented historical tableaux is that they supplied the "most popular mode and theme in federal and other public facilities because the past was comparatively non-controversial." (210). Marling seems to mean that historical themes were uncontroversial compared to themes from the present, arguing throughout, that, while both history and future were acceptable since "Yesterday ensured all of America's happy tomorrows", a certain taboo rested on representing the Depression and the present of the 1930s (211).

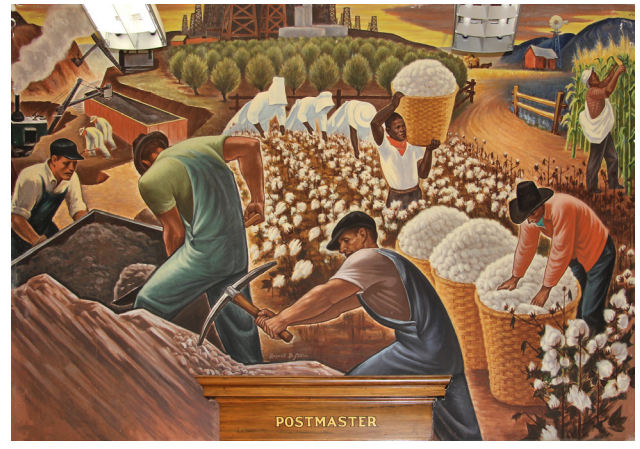

Figure 5. Post office mural, Maxwell Starr, Rockdale Texas (Wikimedia Commons)

A seeming consensus about historical themes was also perhaps still comparatively achievable at that particular time. This possibility has since been overturned by a range of cultural agents and emancipatory movements, memory wars, and other broad cultural developments, which have in various ways reassessed which people, events, structures and perspectives deserve priority in historiography, and rethought the meaning of historians' authority in a fundamentally fragmented world. Many post office murals with historical themes that perhaps seemed comparatively uncontroversial at first became so in the 1960s and 1970s. To give an example, murals like the one above, by Maxwell Starr in the Rockdale, Texas Post Office, may then have looked harmless – black and white laborers working together on mining and harvesting cotton. However, the Civil Rights Movement has unmasked such bland depictions of suggested racial harmony as painful misrepresentations of past and present.[5]

5 http://www.texasescapes.com/TexasArt/Rockdale-Texas-Post-Office-Mural.htm

Another example of a historical scene in a post office mural is this painting in the post office in Mart, Texas, done in 1939 by Jose Aceves:

Figure 6. Post office mural, "McLennan Looking for a Home", José Aceves, Mart, Texas. Photo: Barclay Gibson.

It is a classic frontier scene, showing an American family going west to carve out a better life and tame the wilderness. The men stand and hold guns, the women sit in the wagon which forms the family's temporary domestic sphere. The baby in the left woman's lap suggests the fertile future this family is moving towards. This mural depicts a cliché of American history, in which a supposedly empty continent was discovered, developed and civilized by white agrarian frontier families like this one – simple but courageous and honest people who domesticated the wilderness. Variations on this American grand narrative have become suspect – the American continent was hardly empty or in need of salvation and this formation narrative does not apply to most Americans. However, in 1939 it still worked as a historical and therefore not immediately controversial illustration of 'the' American past.

In the 1930s history was not only a convenient source for artwork, but the sense that historical sites and national heritage must be created and managed was also fashionable. Alfred Kazin has called the American Guide Series symbolic of the "reawakened American sense of its own history" (quoted in Mangione 371), a sense that Roosevelt clearly caught very well and stimulated (Kammen 450). Kammen argues that "Part of FDR's success in projecting an appealing image lay in his distinctive capacity to connect innovation with tradition." (451) He was distinctive in his very early conviction that the federal government should preserve, manage and make accessible American cultural heritage, and particularly also in valorizing politically the strategic benefits of taking charge through the New Deal of the portrayal of the

past, even if, again, FDR did not dictate that portrayal – the mere fact that its portrayal was a federal effort depoliticized it.

FDR believed the federal government should be involved in preserving American heritage. Another important innovation that FDR was personally involved with was the creation of the National Historic Sites Act of 1935, which commissioned the National Park Service to preserve and manage publicly accessible National Historic Sites, along with its management of the National Parks (Meringolo 146). This would, he argued, enhance patriotism: "The preservation of historic sites for the public benefit, together with their proper interpretation," he declared to Congress in 1935, "tends to enhance the respect and love of the citizen for the institutions of his country, as well as strengthen his resolution to defend unselfishly the hallowed traditions and high ideals of America."[6]

The choice for the National Park Service to carry out the management and presentation of historic sites is interesting, because the National Park Service had traditionally only taken care of protecting and making accessible the United States' natural heritage. To let the NPS manage American historical legacy as well, carries a rather deterministic and self-congratulating suggestion that American history too must be seen as a kind of natural wealth and resource. Because the decision which sites are "of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States", as the National Historic Sites Act has it, is a federal one, only sites whose historical importance is consensually agreed upon can achieve that status. Kammen might argue that this depoliticizes the past, but on the other hand, that consensus is a political compromise between some agents, usually not the more radical ones.

It is, in that context, a significant act of autofabrication on Roosevelt's part that he bequeathed his Springwood estate, including the Roosevelt home and his own grave, to the National Park Service, in two related ways. In the Peircian sense of the words, his life-long home indexes him, and on a secondary level represents him iconically, because the place molded FDR's character, and the home outlines him by providing a kind of photo-negative perspective conjuring up an FDR-shaped space. This is reflected in the FDR Library museum too, through the exhibition of shoes, clothing, leg braces and wheelchairs that he filled, and which continue to carry a visible impression of his body. Moreover turning the Springwood Estate into an NPS Historic Site posits Roosevelt's home and therefore himself as an iconic figure in the more general sense, as somehow akin to a kind of natural national heritage. As such FDR is presented through his Hyde Park home as quintessential American heritage to be managed federally, which seems to claim a future position for himself as an occupant of the empty space at the heart of political power.

6 Quoted in Barry Mackintosh, "The National Park Service Moves into Historical Interpretation" *The Public Historian* 9 (1987), 54.

The Legacy of Documents: The Public Papers and Addresses and the FDR Library

Most of Roosevelt's autofabrication during his presidency was directed at people living and voting at the time, though he was aware that newspaper articles, radio speeches, and photos would also influence how he would be remembered by future generations. Although he sometimes commented on this, the level of conscious impact on particular decisions this awareness created is difficult to measure. Two of his autofabrication projects, however stand out as particularly aimed at future generations. Both had to do with preserving the documentary evidence underlying his decisions, and more broadly, the paper trail of his presidency and life. The first of these projects is the compilation of the still most-used and authoritative *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* – a selection of Roosevelt's writings and speeches in 13 volumes, published between 1938 and 1950. The second is an expanded version of that: all Roosevelt's papers are housed in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, New York.

The FDR Library and Museum was the world's first presidential library. Reactions to the idea of creating such an institution have been extremely diverse from the beginning. On the one hand the idea was well received, presumably also in the light of the newly strengthened interest in the preservation of heritage. However, the FDR Library was also easily interpreted as a monument created by Roosevelt to celebrate himself. Benjamin Hufbauer has called presidential libraries, shaped on the blueprint of the FDR Library "presidential temples" and "American pyramids", arguing that presidential libraries essentially are a kind of memorial (*Presidential Temples*). Whether or not that is true, the FDR Library and Museum Roosevelt built at Hyde Park, on the site of his family home, where he was later buried, functions metonymically. Of course the site of the library has undergone change since his death, yet the FDR Library has over time represented Roosevelt broadly as he wished to be represented. Whereas New Deal buildings, infrastructure and other cultural artefacts that remain indexically associated with Roosevelt are spatially widespread, the FDR Library functions as a metonymic representation confined to one particular place, but it has been a constant reminder of how FDR wanted to be remembered.

Roosevelt publicly stressed his belief that he would primarily be judged by future generations on the basis of his political choices and decisions, and therefore wished to make the papers underlying these decisions available to the future public. This suggests that Roosevelt believed in the justifiability of his political choices, but especially in the willingness of future generations to judge him fairly. Unlike Winston Churchill or Eleanor Roosevelt, FDR did not write books to interpret his own presidency – instead he left his papers to be reordered into new narratives by new generations as they might deem appropriate. Roosevelt was no doubt also aware of another kind of legacy he was creating: the memory of himself as a cultural icon and a persona, associated with much more than politics in the narrow sense. The physical adjacency of the FDR Library and his lifelong home Springwood strengthens the iconic nature of the Library.

The Public Papers and Addresses

A key figure in both the creation of the FDR Library and *The Public Papers and Addresses* was Samuel Rosenman, Roosevelt's main speechwriter and the editor of *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*. He also added to the memory of FDR in another way, by writing one of the first Roosevelt biographies. In the introduction to this memoir *Working with Roosevelt* (1952), Rosenman stressed the importance of words in Roosevelt's presentation:

> One measure of him as a President and as a man is what he said and wrote in his public life. More than any other president – perhaps more than any other political figure in history – Franklin D. Roosevelt used the spoken and written word to exercise leadership and to carry out policies. (13)

This is a stark statement – made by someone who was very clearly a partisan figure – but it does convey a sentiment expressed more widely, that Roosevelt's rhetorical skill was without equal. Even if Roosevelt did not use the spoken and written word "more than any other president", both of these major autofabrication projects iconically represent him through his words, and not through visual images resembling him, although the museum has increasingly acquired that role.

The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1928-1945 is the most comprehensive and most available overview of Roosevelt's public media expressions. They contain the official papers of FDR and the texts of his speeches, from his governorship through his presidency. What sets this selection apart from other works is that Roosevelt officially sanctioned this publication, and wrote – or at least signed – introductions and notes to the first nine volumes, which were published during his life. This official selection, made by Samuel Rosenman, cannot be thought of as an objective representation of all Roosevelt said or wrote publicly, but it does reveal what aspects of his public life Roosevelt thought it important to publicize. As such it is not only a place to read what exactly Roosevelt said and wrote in public, but also itself an instance of Roosevelt managing his own public image. The volumes' paratext, and their selection of Roosevelt's public expressions, shed at least as much light on his autofabrication as the documents contained in the series. Thus, for gaining an impartial overview of, for instance, Roosevelt's press conferences, publications such as *The Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (25 volumes) may be a more appropriate source. However, *The Public Papers and Addresses* are of paramount importance for assessing a legacy Roosevelt deliberately created. Alongside the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library – where Roosevelt's papers are kept in full – this series is a monumental as well as a partisan extraction of those complete papers, which still functions as the most widely disseminated and authoritative anthology of Roosevelt's public expressions.

The thirteen volumes of *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* appeared in three installments: volumes 1 to 5, treating the period 1928-1936 came out in 1938, the next four,

about the period 1937-1940 were published in 1941, and volumes 10 to 13, covering 1941-1945, became available in 1950. Thus each subseries is dedicated to one term of Roosevelt's presidency, with the first also including his governorship of New York, and the last also including the early months of his fourth term until his death in April 1945. The titles of the volumes are partisan, even tendentious. If one were to take one's idea of the Roosevelt governorship and presidency from the volume titles alone, the story would read:

1928-32: The Genesis of the New Deal
1933: The Year of Crisis
1934: The Advance of Recovery and Reform
1935: The Court Disapproves
1936: The People Approve
1937: The Constitution Prevails
1938: The Continuing Struggle for Liberalism
1939: War, and Neutrality
1940: War, and Aid to Democracies
1941: The Call to Battle Stations
1942: Humanity on the Defensive
1943: The Tide Turns
1944-5: Victory and the Threshold of Peace

These titles obviously indicate strong pro-Rooseveltian interpretations of events, which are in some cases highly debated still. Did Roosevelt really develop the New Deal in the years before 1933? The phrase was coined by Rosenman for FDR's 1932 acceptance speech of the Democratic Nomination, and while Roosevelt certainly wanted to claim continuity in his social and economic philosophy between his governorship and his presidency, many New Deal programs were based on older progressive ideas, whereas others were improvised briefly before their actual enactment. Similarly, it is hard to see 1934 – the year the Dust Bowl hit the Great Plains, the year Hitler assumed the title of Führer, the year Japan took over Manchuria – primarily as the year in which recovery and reform advanced. Perhaps from an administration viewpoint, these examples are far-fetched – it is easy for a historian to point out with hindsight what was important in the past – but a notable amount of Roosevelt-centered storytelling occurs in these titles. For instance, the titles "The Court Disapproves", "The People Approve" and "The Constitution Prevails" together suggest a sequence of events which puts a positive spin on the Supreme Court Crisis.

Even more striking in terms of Roosevelt's long-term image creation is a title like "Humanity on the Defensive." Roosevelt did not himself create this title – Rosenman did, after FDR's death – but it is an early example of the strong tendency towards universalizing Roosevelt's leadership – using a kind of all-encompassing rhetoric Roosevelt himself often employed – which is also often found in later hagiographic assessments of him. An example of Roosevelt's own tendency

to universalize his position is his coinage of the name "United Nations" for the world body to be created after the war, named after the "United Nations" – the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and China fighting the Axis Powers (Reid 461).

One important question to answer about *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* is who wrote them, but even more important is whom they were written for. Both questions are addressed to some extent in the introduction to the series. Many of the public papers and addresses themselves were obviously drafted by Roosevelt and his staff, often including Rosenman, and all were sanctioned by Roosevelt. The paratext of the series – the introductions to each volume, the general introduction, the notes to individual documents – largely carry Roosevelt's name and signature, except for the last four volumes, published in 1950. While the exact extent to which these have been ghostwritten by Rosenman and others remains unclear, Roosevelt personally conceived the project as part of his larger plan to establish the Presidential Library at Hyde Park, and as such did take it very seriously.[7] He had already published selections of his gubernatorial papers and addresses prior to his election, and prior to his meeting Rosenman – some of which appeared again in the first volume of *The Public Papers and Addresses*, accompanied by extemporaneous remarks, probably ghost-written by Rosenman during the Hoover-Roosevelt interregnum.[8]

Although Roosevelt in the General Introduction to *The Public Papers* rather off-hand explained that he knew "of no one better equipped for this task" than Rosenman (*Public Papers* I xiv), the choice to appoint his main speechwriter – if not officially a member of the White House staff, but a New York Supreme Court judge appointed by Roosevelt – as editor of *The Public Papers* is important, and unique in presidential history. It gave Rosenman, both writer of many of Roosevelt's words, and editor of *The Public Papers*, great power over the composition and selection of what would become history. Historian Samuel Hand indeed identifies Rosenman as the "Thucydides of the New Deal" – the only, and therefore forever used and reused, source on Roosevelt's role in the New Deal: "Although Franklin D. Roosevelt deliberately set in motion the machinery which established Rosenman's position, it is highly improbable that the President ever anticipated the full impact which Rosenman would assert on New Deal historiography."[9]

It is nonetheless clear that Roosevelt trusted both Rosenman's talents and his loyalty and they seem to have agreed on the historical importance of *The Public Papers*. Both draw particular attention, within *The Public Papers* and elsewhere, to the fact that they are addressed in the first place to future generations of historians. All modern presidents of course know that their words will be weighed by future generations, but Roosevelt and Rosenman seem to have been particularly explicitly aware of future generations as a key audience for *The Public Papers and*

7 Samuel Hand, "Rosenman, Thucydides, and the New Deal", 334.
8 Hand, "Rosenman, Thucydides", 335.
9 Hand "Rosenman, Thucydides", 334.

Addresses.[10] Rosenman in his editorial Foreword to the series excuses possible redundancy in the eyes of current-day readers:

> The important papers in these volumes are covered by comments and notes written by President Roosevelt. This feature is unique in editions of Presidential papers. (…) It is hoped that these books in the years to come will be a source of historical data about this significant period in history. If some of the notes seem to deal with subjects well known to readers of today, it should be remembered that they are written not only for the present, but for those who in the future may seek to interpret the policies of President Roosevelt from his public utterances and acts, and from his comments with respect to them. (*The Public Papers* I xviii-xix)

Rosenman here explicitly combines *The Public Papers'* aim to inform future readers and the fact that Roosevelt contributed his own comments and notes to enhance the future understanding of his presidency. Thus *The Public Papers* set out to offer FDR's own interpretations of his presidential acts and documents to a future audience. Roosevelt, too, explicitly identifies his future audience in his Word of Thanks: "As these volumes will be principally useful in the future to Government officials and students of history, the contribution of those who have assisted is of great value to permanent accuracy in assaying the period in which we live." (*The Public Papers* I xiv). More grandly, the series' motto – ostensibly in Roosevelt's voice – is "These volumes are dedicated to the people of the United States with whom I share belief in the principles and processes of democracy." Though of course both Roosevelt and Rosenman were aware of the emotive effects of such grand claims, neither seem to have been cynical or insincere in making them.

The FDR Library

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library was set up and dedicated by him personally, making available his own presidential archives and most of his personal documents. It is one of the key building blocks that have contributed to Roosevelt's continuing renown and popularity, perhaps instead of a memoir or autobiography, such as Churchill's extensive memoirs. The FDR Library as an institution has received relatively little critical scholarly attention – except from Benjamin Hufbauer and Richard Cox, and recently from Anthony Clark. Otherwise there are only a number of FDR Library chapters in larger books about presidential libraries and collections, which tend to be neutrally descriptive, and a number of articles written by staff members and policy makers of the library itself.[11] The latter are, understandably, mainly celebratory of the project.

10 Hand "Rosenman, Thucydides", 335-6.

11 E.g. *Presidential Temples: How Memorials and Libraries Shape Public Memory*, Benjamin Hufbauer, 2005; *Presidential Libraries and Museums: An Illustrated Guide*, Pat Hyland, 1995; *Presidential Libraries and Collections*, Fritz Veit, 1987.

Nonetheless, it is the key Roosevelt archive for researchers and museum for general audiences, tourists and students, and as such it is an important example of how Roosevelt contributed to the cultural memory of his presidency. Roosevelt envisaged it mainly as a site for ritualized remembrance, in the sense that much of his archive was not actually meant to be accessed by the larger public. Rather he wished to display particular elements of his relationship with the people:

> Of the papers which will come to rest here, I personally attach less importance to the documents of those who have occupied high public or private office than I do to the spontaneous letters which have come to me … from men, from women, and from children in every part of the United States telling me of their conditions and problems and giving me their own opinions.[12]

The letters which Roosevelt refers to here are indeed among the easiest documents in the FDR Library to access because a selection of them is exhibited at the entrance of the ground floor museum. The actual archive is primarily meant for academic researchers. Roosevelt himself sketched drawings for the building in Dutch style, to honor the family's Dutch origins, and initiated the Library's building and dedication. The format – with a ground floor that is basically a museum, and a second floor housing the actual archive, which is accessible for researchers – is Roosevelt's. Tourists visit the museum and the house on one ticket, including a tour of the estate, where Franklin, Eleanor and Franklin's dog Fala are buried (Koch and Bassanese).

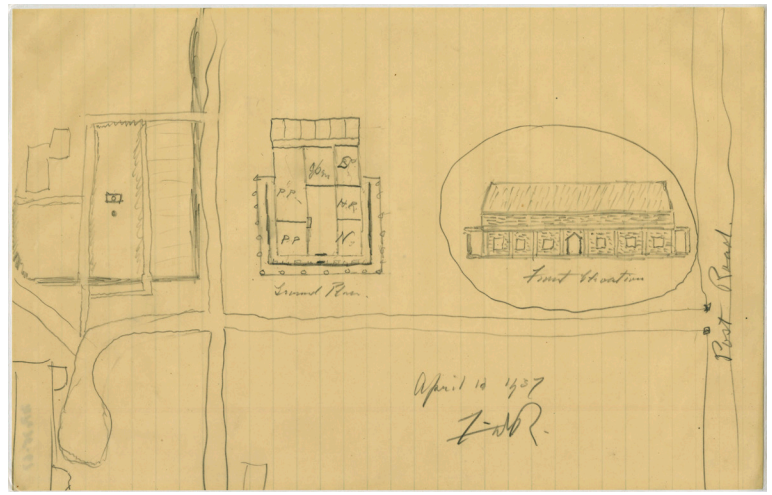

Figure 7. FDR's sketch of the library, April 12, 1937 (courtesy of the FDR Library).

12 Franklin Roosevelt, speech held at the FDR Library cornerstone ceremony, Hyde Park (NY), November 19, 1939.

The FDR Presidential Library was the first presidential library in America. All following presidents have housed their archives in a personal presidential library since, although unlike Roosevelt usually after their presidency. Indeed, some preceding presidents' presidential libraries have been set up, for instance Herbert Hoover's, following FDR's example. Before Roosevelt, no law or policy existed to prescribe what should happen with the personal archives of former presidents. The archives of most presidential papers of nineteenth century presidents have been collected or bought by the National Archives and Records Administration or the Library of Congress in Washington. The archive of George Washington is a painful example of how some of these collections were treated before. Washington himself left his papers to his nephew, who lent them to someone else. They ended up in an attic, where they were recovered many years later, damaged heavily by rats and water.[13]

Roosevelt started to make serious plans for his paper legacy in 1937. He had clear ideas about where and how his documents should be kept: "Because these papers relate to so many periods and activities which are not connected with my service in the Federal Government, (…) it is my desire that they be kept as a whole and intact in their original condition, available to scholars of the future in one definite locality." He also knew where this should be: "I have carefully considered the choice of locality and for many reasons have decided that it would be best that they remain permanently on the grounds of my family home at Hyde Park, Duchess County, New York.", although the "many reasons" are not given, at least, not for choosing the family home specifically. Rather, he stressed the advantage of keeping the entire collection together: "It is my thought, however, that an opportunity exists to set up for the first time in this country what might be called a source material collection relating to a specific period in our history."[14] While these are good arguments to create the Library FDR had in mind – and many Roosevelt scholars including myself have to be grateful that this collection centering on his person stayed together – it still remains a powerful and conscious feat of autofabrication.

Roosevelt's wish to keep his archive together, concentrated around his person is not surprising. This is easily read as vanity: he felt that his person, indeed his public persona, should be the central figure in the history of his presidency. Roosevelt was clearly also convinced that it was important that there should be an academic institution for the study of himself and his presidency. Alongside that, he wanted an exhibition space to show a general public his many personal collections – stamps, ship models, books – but also letters and gifts he received as president, including a two meters high papier-maché sphinx with Roosevelt's own face. The sphinx and other gifts were exhibited for many years in a special room called 'Oddities' in the museum (Koch and Bassanese). After a long absence, the 2013 refurbishment brought the Oddities room, including the sphinx, back.

13 Benjamin Hufbauer, "The Roosevelt Presidential Library, A Shift in Commemoration", 176.
14 Franklin Roosevelt, press conference, December 10, 1938.

That Roosevelt called his archive the Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Library is confusing but significant. To the historians who backed his plan and to the press, he represented it as a plan for an archive, but it was also intended as a museum. As he wrote already in 1937 to his friend, the building's architect Henry Tombs, he expected at least three thousand visitors to the museum per day. This made him suggest that the library's "reading room would not be a reading room at all for students but rather a very carefully designed living room, which would contain portraits, several of my favorite paintings and perhaps a thousand of my books (…) This room, incidentally, I could use myself in the work preparing the collections during hours when the public was not admitted."[15] So, the new institute was to be a museum for the majority of the visitors, an archive for later historians, and a library in the secondary sense of a gentleman's "reading room." Although Roosevelt did not himself want to name the library after himself, he did insist on "Library" as part of the new institute's name; more accessible than "archive" and more serious than just "museum."

Despite that well-considered name, invoking the aura of academic rigor and objectivity, the museum did and still does function in part as an FDR monument. It celebrates the life and memory of Roosevelt. But before as after the renovation of 2013, the museum has been evenhanded in assessing Roosevelt's decisions – it offers many opportunities for "confronting the issue" of problematic acts and episodes in FDR's presidency, such as the Japanese Internment, the fact Roosevelt did not allow more Jews to enter the US in the late 1930s and early '40s, his unfitness at the Yalta peace conference. At the same time the exposition of letters and gifts

Figure 8. Exhibition of letters to the President

15 Hufbauer, *Presidential Temples* 29.

from fans gives a strong impression of how popular he was. The museum now, in accordance with modern theories about experiential learning, also offers an interactive and immersive experience, making visitors – most of whom are presumably sympathetic already – come away with a positive and nostalgic sense of FDR, his era, and legacy.

Roosevelt attached great importance to ensuring that his plans for the library would have the support of historians, partly to give form and lend weight to the academic character of the pursuit, but presumably also to avoid accusations that it was a display of self-congratulation (Hufbauer *Temples* 181). The latter succeeded in part. The December 11, 1938 *New York Times* headlined "Roosevelt Estate to House Archives, Go to Public Later," had as sub-headline "Historians Back Idea."

Both *The Public Papers and Addresses* and the FDR Library are highly iconic representations of Franklin D. Roosevelt – they resemble him, in the case of T*he Public Papers* textually, and the case of the library also in the sense that the museum part is rife with photos of FDR and objects he owned. These include his car, his leg braces, his shoes, letters and gifts people sent him – objects that iconically as well as indexically and symbolically delineate his shape, the shoes on a bodily level, and the letters in terms of the personality he was attributed by those who wrote to him. Through such objects, which chart the physical and social fabric he fitted into, the museum outlines a silhouette-like iconic FDR-shaped space. At the time Roosevelt created the FDR Library, the museum profiled him in another manner by showing his personal collections. As such it has always brought him into relief through showing the mold he inhabited, because unobtrusively filling a vacuity was itself a key strategy in his autofabrication.

Conclusion

Through the New Deal and its contiguous tendency to make heritage preservation a federal issue, Roosevelt shaped a context in which the past could be depoliticized. This choice was political in the present at that time, and the selection of representable history itself had political implications, not so much in partisan terms, but rather in the sense that it silently defined a mainstream – a selection that was supposedly inclusive, but in effect left very little room for political agonism.

Even critical voices such as Dorothea Lange's and Arthur Rothstein's iconic photographs of the Dust Bowl, or John Steinbeck's novels, which effectively showed the impotence of the Roosevelt Administration to protect American citizens, were also directly associated with or employed by New Deal programs, neutralizing their criticism by incorporating it. Moreover, many of their images, in part through their wide dissemination, soon acquired a nostalgic quality. Lange's most canonical photo of a woman who has fled the Dustbowl to California with her children is a case in point, despite the fact that it portrays real despair, it is also an aesthetically beautiful,

pieta-like portrayal of sorrowful motherhood (Fig. 9) And because Lange's and others' implicit and explicit criticism of the Administration was itself part of the New Deal, it was both expressed and immediately also domesticated. This control through inclusion was only rarely, and much later, replaced by actual censorship, for instance in Lange's case, once she started to take photographs in Japanese relocation centers that exposed their atrocities. Many of those photos were impounded by the army and only resurfaced in 2006 (e.g. Fig. 11).

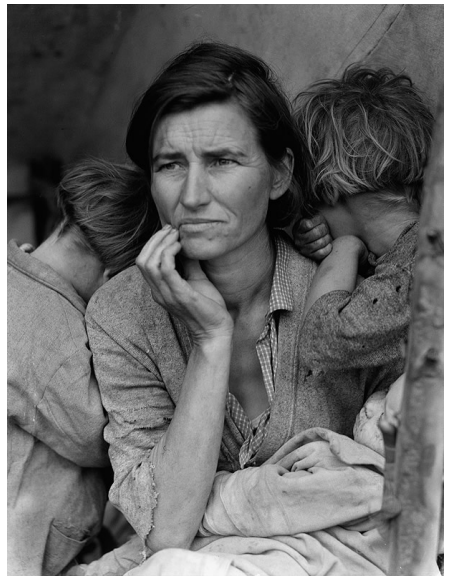

Figure 9. Dorothea Lange, Farm Security Administration. Woman with children in tent. California, 1936.

Figure 10. Arthur Rothstein, Farm Security Administration. Young boy in dust storm, Oklahoma, April 1936.

Figure 11. Dorothea Lange, Office of War Information, Japanese girl tagged for internment, 1942.

Chapter 5: Dr. New Deal – Depoliticization for the Sake of Cultural Memory

Introduction

The Great Depression and the New Deal together remain a crucial episode in American twentieth century cultural memory. The 1930s and particularly the New Deal are essential to how FDR has been remembered in America since his presidency. As the first enormous challenge Roosevelt faced as president, the Depression, to which the New Deal was his response, has always been strongly associated with FDR in cultural memory. "Dr. New Deal" – his own coinage – remains one of FDR's most popular nicknames.[1] However, Anthony Badger has rightly pointed out how strikingly little the remembrance of Roosevelt's New Deal seems to have to do with the actual political measures that comprised the program. This chapter sets out to understand why the remembrance of the New Deal as an attribute to FDR tends to engage so little with the actual political program, while at the same time the New Deal remains central to the Roosevelt icon.

I have argued in the previous chapter that FDR during his presidency could be seen to occupy a locus of power through his rhetorical and ideological plasticity that ought in Lefort and Mouffe's view to have remained empty as an essential site of democratic agonism. In a similar way, I will argue here, FDR became a persistent occupant of a key position in American cultural memory. FDR remains widely perceived the epitome of a universally beloved people's president, and when looking at cultural representations of FDR, it seems clear that the New Deal is one of the standard ingredients contributing to that image, together with World War II, Eleanor Roosevelt, and the fact that he was disabled.

The New Deal has left a wide range of cultural legacies, which continue to provide indexical links to FDR. Some are cultural artefacts created as part of a New Deal program, including especially recognizable post offices with mural paintings, novels and films like *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939-1940), the still authoritative series of Federal Writers' Project's *American Guidebooks* to the states, and iconic photographs like the works of Dorothea Lange and others. Other legacies of the New Deal associated with FDR are customs or cultural practices rather than artefacts. Major political changes that have evolved from the New Deal include legislation such as the repeal of Prohibition and the introduction of the Social Security Act, which more or less defined the beginning of the American Welfare State (Badger, *New Deal* 229-230), and the increase in power of the Executive branch of government, which Roosevelt claimed from Congress in his first inaugural address. It was an increase in peacetime executive agency that remained in place beyond the New Deal and FDR's presidency (Schlesinger, *Imperial Presidency* 209-210).

1 Alter 334; Press Conf. Dec. 28, 1943: presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16358

Most of these legacies are no longer controversial political issues, or if they are, they are no longer blamed on FDR. Political opponents of federal involvement with healthcare and welfare issues, for instance, would now sooner blame the heritage of Johnson or Clinton than Roosevelt. Thus the New Deal has really acquired a place in *cultural* memory: it continues to be relevant as part of the cultural history of the United States, which in itself constitutes a depoliticization. On the one hand the political changes, even if they were spawned by the New Deal, have now become so detached from it that the association is all but lost. On the other, the changes in the physical and cultural American landscape are preserved as cultural and material capital, rather than as government efforts to intervene in the capitalist market economy. One of the most political legacies of the New Deal is that, because agencies like the National Park Service have to be neutral and non-partisan, the narratives they produce to interpret American history are inevitably consensual and synchronic with mainstream cultural memory.

In this chapter I will show how the New Deal, which was highly controversial throughout the 1930s, is depoliticized in cultural memory in various ways, and instead, is turned into a friendly but also ideologically vacuous attribute to Roosevelt. This process of depoliticizing the New Deal in cultural memory, I will argue, follows two routes – personalization and mediatization – both of which make use of and expand the ideological plasticity which Roosevelt himself already embodied. However, in this process of cultural memory, depoliticization can never quite escape being politically charged. As a result, Roosevelt haters still also have room to "unmask" him as a fundamentally wrong, even dangerous, politician. I will present two case studies of the production, development and proliferation of remembrance practices, one of which shows how the New Deal was depoliticized through personalization – that is, through portraying it as the key expression of Franklin Roosevelt as a good and empathetic man. The second case shows how the First Hundred Days of Roosevelt's first term as president – the period in which most New Deal programs and measures were launched – over time was turned into a versatile media practice that new American presidents cannot escape as a widely mediatized first litmus test of their effectiveness. In conclusion, I will show how, in the margin, the New Deal, particularly its expansive and depoliticizing strategies, remains an object of justifiable frustration to political opponents. I will also address why this frustration is nonetheless unable to spark real political debate, as did happen during Roosevelt's presidency, when the Supreme Court ruled many New Deal measures unconstitutional, and FDR in response tried, unsuccessfully, to add extra Justices to the Supreme Court.

Annie

The following scene is taken from the 1982 musical film – and Christmas television classic – *Annie*. This film must for many Americans born after 1970 have been the first cinematic representation of Franklin Roosevelt they have seen, possibly even their first exposure to his iconic character in general. Orphan Annie and her benefactor Oliver Warbucks make a trip to the White House, in order to keep away from Annie's view the hundreds of couples who claim

to be her parents after Warbucks has offered a large reward. They are received by Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt and have tea with them. The story is presumably set in 1933.[2]

White House lawn – Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt (FDR and ER) await the landing of Oliver Warbucks' (OW) helicopter.

FDR: Aren't Republicans ostentatious?

ER: Franklin behave! It's astonishing that he's here at all.

FDR: Hahaha!
(to Warbucks) What do you call this thing, Oliver?

OW: An autocopter. Don't need an airport, just a backyard. They say it can land on a dime, whatever that may be.

FDR: Hahaha! I appreciate your coming down, it means a great deal.

OW: It means nothing. It means only that Annie wanted to meet you.

Annie: It's nice to meet you, Mr. President Roosevelt.

FDR: My pleasure, Annie. And thank you for bringing the old goat. We'll make a New Dealer of him yet.

OW: Inconceivable.

ER: Don't mind him, Oliver

FDR: Come along, Annie! My uncle Theodore, Teddy Roosevelt, used to teach his children to walk on stilts. Now I can't teach you to walk on stilts, but I can teach you to roll in a chair with wheels, my own private rollercoaster.

Inside the White House.

OW: The New Deal, in my opinion, is badly planned, badly organized and badly administered. You don't think your programs through, Franklin. You don't think what they're going to do to the economy in the long run.

FDR: People don't eat in the long run.

ER: People can't feed their children.

FDR: The lucky ones end up in orphanages.

ER: The older ones are abandoned to steal, to starve.

OW: The business of this country is business. You have to organize…

FDR: Take them off the dole and put them to work! That is precisely what I intend to do.

ER: In the national parks, building camps, clearing trails, fighting fires, planting trees…

OW: Hold it, hold it!

FDR: I want to feed them, and house them, and pay them, not much but enough so they can send home to their parents, so they can hold up their heads again and be proud to be Americans.

2 The clip discussed here is available on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2kkmCnznx4 [5:27-9:52]

Annie: That's a swell idea!
OW: It isn't a swell idea, Annie, it's mistaken foolishness! Big-hearted and empty-headed. Which parks? Which children? What will it cost? Who's going to organize it? Who's going to run it?
FDR: I, er, was hoping you would.
OW: Me?
FDR: And Annie.
Annie: Leaping lizards!
OW: Out of the question!
Annie: How could I help?
OW: Wait a minute!
FDR: You could help us recruit the young people.
OW: Now hold everything!
FDR: Many of them have given up hope, Annie, they think their government doesn't care whether they live or die. With your help, we can convince them that with a little extra effort on their part…
OW: I want to say something!
Annie: There's a song I used to sing in the orphanage, when I'd get sad, it always cheered me up.
OW: Eleanor…
Annie: Just thinking about tomorrow / Clears away the cobwebs and the sorrow / Till there's none
When I'm stuck with a day that's grey and lonely / I just stick out my chin and grin and say:
The sun will come out tomorrow / so you gotta hang on till tomorrow / Come what may…
Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love you tomorrow / You're only a day away
ER: Oh Frank…
FDR: You'll help us too, won't you Oliver?
OW: Er…
ER: Think of the children! Think of Annie!
Annie: The sun will come out tomorrow…
FDR: Sing Oliver, that's an order from your Commander in Chief!
You too, Eleanor!
ER: I can't sing!
FDR: Sing!
All sing.

All the iconic and long-standing FDR attributes are present: Eleanor, the compassionate yet shrewd wife, the armless wheelchair made of a common dining room chair, the White House,

and FDR's cigarette holder, hat, pince-nez glasses, and buoyant manner. Letting a president appear in a children's musical film in itself depoliticizes him, or otherwise, can be seen as a mark of how depoliticized he had by this time already become. However, this scene is actually surprisingly political in its content. FDR pounces on the occasion for the visit to enlist Oliver Warbucks' astronomic funds and organizing capacities for the execution of New Deal employment programs, which Warbucks as a staunch and self-made Republican obviously opposes. Roosevelt's first words to Annie – "My pleasure, Annie. And thank you for bringing the old goat. We'll make a New Dealer of him yet" – welcoming though they sound, clearly express the fact that he is mainly interested in her as a conduit for approaching her benefactor. He is in fact addressing Warbucks, and Eleanor – "Don't mind him, Oliver" – accordingly responds directly to Warbucks.

The entire scene works in a similar fashion: Annie's presence is primarily important because she enables the exchange in the first place, and because she presents a kind of live specimen case of whom the New Deal purportedly aims to help. This lends a sentimental dimension to FDR's plea, which has its effect on Warbucks as on the viewer. When Warbucks raises the quintessential rational, and with hindsight to some extent justified, argument against the New Deal – "The New Deal, in my opinion, is badly planned, badly organized and badly administered" – Roosevelt immediately steers the discussion, with his wife's help, in the highly emotive direction of poor underfed orphans. It seems as if he engages with Warbucks' argument because he repeats his phrase "in the long run", but he does not actually do that at all. Only later, when Warbucks repeats his case – "Which parks? Which children? What will it cost? Who's going to organize it? Who's going to run it?" – does Roosevelt address the issue by taking a set of more or less rhetorical questions literally, and making Warbucks himself responsible for the program. This does not only defuse Oliver Warbucks' reasoning against the New Deal as "mistaken foolishness, big-hearted and empty-headed", but also the viewer's possible hesitation. This effect is enhanced by the fact that the movie's heroine immediately decides that the New Deal is "a swell idea."

When FDR says "the lucky ones end up in orphanages", Warbucks and the viewer obviously already know how bad Annie's experiences in Miss Hannigan's Dickensian orphanage have been, and how much luck a healthy and self-reliant American child needs to survive there. The same maudlin line of argument is continued by Eleanor, who introduces the aspect of the potential moral decay of the poor children – "The older ones are abandoned to steal…" – and sums up what the poor would, as part of the New Deal, do to earn money to feed their children: work "…in the national parks, building camps, clearing trails, fighting fires, planting trees." This elaborates on the emotionally patriotic line of argument that FDR has taken up earlier when he said he wanted people to "be proud [again] to be Americans." This direct link between New Deal laborers' patriotism and preserving and embellishing the American landscape was indeed very Rooseveltian, and the restored pride in America remains visible in the landscape especially in National Parks and the many other distinctive specimens of New Deal infrastructure. This has

the same depoliticizing effect here as in the 1930s historical context, because it shifts a central point of partisan disagreement to the realm of national American pride.

The weakness of this cinematic Roosevelt's argument comes at the only time when he does have to really address Annie: "You could help us recruit the young people", because after all, how many "young people" does Annie know? And are these children supposed to support the New Deal by contributing to the workforce? Recruitment for the relief programs was an administrative matter, not one of convincing the poor to accept the offered work. On an extradiegetic level, however, Roosevelt and Annie's joint effort to sell the New Deal to "the young people" does work – the fact that Annie is convinced works both to counter Warbucks' cynicism and to signal to the movie's presumably young audience that the New Deal is indeed a swell idea. This movement depoliticizes the New Deal in a way that is a blueprint for the personalization strategy: the persuasive power comes from Annie's charming and charismatic personality.

Within the universe of the film too, Annie's reaction, in accordance with her protagonist role in the narrative, does eventually resolve the situation: the song unites all present and effectively Americanizes the New Deal, even for Republicans. The early New Deal did, besides immediately and concretely helping people, function to restore confidence in a vague and generalized way, like "Tomorrow." However, the song lyrics "When I'm stuck with a day that's grey and lonely / I just stick out my chin and grin and say: / The sun will come out tomorrow…" are actually much more obviously Republican-style self-sufficient and independent than the plan Roosevelt is presenting, which is aimed at people who can emphatically not wait until the sun will come out again to save them from poverty.

Figure 12. Annie, Oliver Warbucks, the Roosevelts and George Washington (IMDb)

Ideals of self-reliance, rags-to-riches social mobility and strong family values – even for those who, like Annie and Oliver Warbucks, have no family to begin with – are visually borne out in the above still from the same scene. It casts Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt – together with the portrait of George Washington – as parental figures framing the orphan Annie and her wealthy patron Oliver Warbucks. The presidential couple and their illustrious predecessor in the White House, foster the American dream of common people that purportedly typifies the American experience. Annie is the striking presence and the focus of the picture, the others are arranged around her as exemplary historical, feminine, financial and political antecedents, offering all the ingredients Annie needs to attain her own dazzling success. Annie and Oliver Warbucks as a combination represent both ends of the classic, supposedly unassisted progress from rags to riches – although the film's plot shows the relativity of this. Annie and Oliver Warbucks also encompass both extremes of other spectrums: poor-rich, starting-arrived, female-male, recipient-benefactor, so that together they in a sense span the entire American populace, proudly surrounded and shielded by Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, as parents of the nation. The portrait of George Washington in the background nationalizes the situation still more, by lending it the validation of national history and unity. However, Mouffe and others would be quick to point out that non-whites, non-heterosexuals, and other minorities are silently marginalized as non-existent within this supposedly inclusive representation of American citizenship.

This scene or anything as crudely sentimental and overdone, obviously did not actually take place. This cinematic Franklin and Eleanor externally look very dissimilar to the historical figures they represent and there are no known cases of FDR bursting into song, using his power as Commander in Chief to get political opponents to join in, or demanding to be allowed to sing "a solo for the President." Roosevelt's Secretary of Commerce and New Dealer Harry Hopkins actually did once respond to an attack on the New Deal by saying "People don't eat in the long run" (Cohen 267-8), as FDR does here. But although the phrase is in a sense associated with the New Deal as an argument and a catchphrase, it is not Roosevelt's.

However, many elements of this Roosevelt representation are strikingly faithful in one way or another to Roosevelt's autofabricated public image. He famously claimed the role of Commander in Chief in peacetime, a role previously reserved for presidents during wartime only, which brought him increased executive power during the Depression, even if he did not in practice bypass Congress in making key decisions (Schlesinger 209). The entire rhetoric surrounding this, casting the New Deal as a war against want, which FDR started in his First Inaugural, has remained extremely influential, and has often functioned to stress the New Deal's victory in restoring American morale, even if it was not overly successful economically. Roosevelt soon took the opportunity to link the New Deal to the threat of war and the survival of American democracy, saying on June 27, 1936: "Here in America we are waging a great and successful war. It is not alone a war against want and destitution and economic demoralization. It is more than that; it is a war for the survival of democracy." Such reasoning has taken attention off the

memory of the New Deal's economic problems and focused it on remembering its moral success, and following that, the success of the democratic United States in World War II. As Jonathan Alter has formulated it in his national bestseller *The Defining Moment: FDR's Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope* (2006): "The first time he saved democracy, in 1933, he accomplished it more on his own, by convincing the American people that they should not give up on their system of government. Before he confronted fascism abroad, he blunted the potential of both fascism and communism at home." (xv) Examples such as this one show how the New Deal has become depoliticized in mainstream American memory: attention moved away from controversial economic measures, towards much vaguer democratic and patriotic ideals that were harder to disagree with.

"Tomorrow", in all its vagueness about what exactly it is that will bring relief, equally exemplifies that shift of attention from the economic details of the New Deal to its triumph in saving American morale. The song offers restored confidence more than material relief, mirroring both the Republican stance at the time and the main remembered outcome of the New Deal. However, there of course was a difference between the Hooverian confidence in Emersonian rugged individualism and the New Deal's social activism, as Alter notes:

> The result was a new notion of social obligation, especially in a crisis. In his second Inaugural, in 1937, FDR took stock of what had changed: "We refused to leave the problems of our common welfare to be solved by the winds of chance and the hurricanes of disaster." (xv)

There is an obvious political dispute here about the role of government in a crisis, but also an intriguing agreement between Roosevelt's rhetoric, and that of "Tomorrow." When referring to "the winds of chance and the hurricanes of disaster", Roosevelt couches chance and disaster in terms of unsettling weather circumstances, a simile which was peculiarly appropriate during the Dustbowl years. Although the song essentially, unlike FDR, advertises waiting for better weather – "The sun will come out tomorrow" – both thus invoke meteorological metaphors. These metaphors are depoliticizing by the nature of the weather as a quintessentially uncontroversial and apolitical conversation topic. Moreover, they invoke a much older national frontier discourse of both enduring, but also fighting and subjugating weather circumstances.

Despite this for a children's musical film relatively unapologetic political content, the 1982 *Annie* has come a long way in terms of loosening and ritualizing the ties with the actual political New Deal, and thus in depoliticization, compared to its forebears. The film was based on a 1977 Broadway musical written by Thomas Meehan (book) and Martin Charnin (lyrics). The Broadway musical included songs like the scathing "We'd Like to Thank you Mr. Hoover" and "A New Deal for Christmas" and featured, alongside Franklin Roosevelt, a number of his New

Deal staff.[3] In "We'd Like to Thank You Herbert Hoover" a chorus of impoverished Americans sarcastically comment on Hoover's broken election promises:

> Prosperity was 'round the corner
> The cozy cottage built for two
> In this blue heaven
> That you gave us – Yes!
> We're turning blue!
>
> They offered us Al Smith and Hoover
> We paid attention and we chose
> Not only did we pay attention
> We paid through the nose.
>
> In ev'ry pot he said "a chicken"
> But Herbert Hoover he forgot
> Not only don't we have the chicken
> We ain't got the pot!
> (*Annie Libretto/Vocal Book*, I-3-17 and 18)

Such personal Hoover-bashing, written more than forty years after Hoover had left office, suggesting that Hoover cheated his people in the elections and had not got the least idea of the extent of their poverty, echoed the Roosevelt campaign of 1932. "Prosperity is just around the corner" is a legendary Hoover quotation repeated endlessly by the Democratic campaign, even though Hoover never actually said it (Alter 89). The scene is set in a "Hooverville" – a popular name for the shanty towns of the unemployed and homeless erected during the Depression – a coinage from one of FDR's ghostwriters, Charles Michelson (Alter 88). That Roosevelt was personally involved in the hate campaign against Hoover is clear from the following memo, which he dictated to Howe:

> Here's a subject for a campaign cartoon:
> Caption: Are you carrying the Hoover banner?
> Below this: Picture of a man holding his trouser pockets turned inside out
> Underneath: The words "nuff said." (quoted in Alter 88)

The 1932 FDR campaign expressions "Hoover flag" for empty pocket, and "Hooverville" both survive in American idiom. While Hoover did not make social security for all American citizens

3 Louis Howe, Henry Morgenthau, Cordell Hull, Francis Perkins, Harold Ickes – *Annie Libretto/Vocal Book* II-3-11.

a federal responsibility, his administration did more to battle the Depression than Roosevelt's campaign suggested, and Roosevelt largely continued Hoover's domestic policies to fight the Depression (Badger, *New Deal* 190). Nonetheless, renderings of New Deal cultural memory like the *Annie* Broadway musical show that the memory of a dramatic break from total stagnation and indifference to the despair of the multitudes under Hoover to confidence and support from Roosevelt has survived in mainstream popular culture. Such anecdotes indicating the emotionally radical nature of the shift from Hoover to Roosevelt evolved at a very early stage. Jonathan Alter cites the famous story of Eleanor Roosevelt's visit to the "Bonus Army", a group of impoverished First World War Veterans who marched on Washington early in 1933 to demand advance payments on their war pensions, and whom the Hoover Administration sent the Army to disperse. As one marcher said: "Hoover sent the army and Roosevelt sent his wife" (Alter, ill. 34). Even though FDR did not advance the veterans' money any more than Hoover did, this sums up the sentiment underlying most surviving narratives and anecdotes from the early New Deal and Roosevelt's assumption of office.

That the most famous musical and film performances of *Annie* are so adamant in their positive assessment of Roosevelt and the New Deal is all the more striking since Harold Gray's comic strip *Little Orphan Annie* (1924-1964), on which the musical is loosely based, did not endorse FDR's domestic politics at all. Gray was indeed highly conservative and used the comic strip to vent his frustration about the New Deal, which to his mind went against the most fundamental principles of American liberty. As he wrote in 1952: "I . . . have despised Roosevelt and his socialist, or creeping communist, policies since 1932, and said so in my stuff, so far as I was allowed to do so. (…) I hate professional do-gooders with other people's money" (Heer np). The comic, according to Jeet Heer, was not specifically conservative in the 1920s, but became so after the start of Roosevelt's New Deal which sparked increasingly virulent reactions from the political right. Over the course of the 1930s *Little Orphan Annie* became so explicitly conservative that some newspapers stopped running the comic, despite its enormous popularity (Young 107, 297-8).

All in all, *Annie* has moved from a highly politically controversial comic strip during the 1930s to a blander, but still fairly explicitly partisan musical, though with radically different colors in 1977, to a milder film, which nonetheless remains clearly nostalgic in its treatment of FDR and the New Deal. This trend is continued in a yet more recent *Annie* film: the 1999 television movie directed by Rob Marshall. This latest cinematic rendering of *Annie* in a sense confirms the depoliticizing development seen in earlier versions: Roosevelt makes a historically unlikely but iconic grand entrance in his wheelchair, and some other New Dealers, for instance left-wing Supreme Court justice Louis Brandeis do appear in the movie as well, but only in direct relation to Annie's narrative, and without even the mention of broader political issues. Both the shift from New Deal criticism in the 1930s to nostalgia in later versions of *Annie*, and the increasing depoliticization of Roosevelt throughout *Annie*'s development seem representative of wider trends in the reception of Roosevelt as a cultural icon.

First Hundred Days

The diachronic development of various versions of Little Orphan Annie – comic strip, musical, and film – forms an exemplary case study of how the New Deal is depoliticized in cultural memory through portraying it as a character attribute of Franklin Roosevelt as a person. This case is positioned squarely in the area of popular culture remembering the New Deal. The second case study, focusing on the media practice of highlighting the First Hundred Days of a new president, is another example of depoliticizing the New Deal through another strategy. The First Hundred Days of Roosevelt's presidency were marked primarily by the unprecedented bulk of political measures, bills signed, appropriations made, agencies founded. Because the amount of new legislation and appropriations was so enormous, beating FDR's First Hundred Days in terms of legislative and executive impact became a practically unreachable goal for presidents to aspire to.

Over time the First Hundred Days have mainly become the end of a president's honeymoon, marked by catchy phrases and easily marketable potential news-making, associated with Roosevelt's astuteness in public relations, but detached entirely from the New Deal as a political program. That practice, which Roosevelt started, has turned the end of the first hundred days of any new presidency into a moment for measuring the new executive against Roosevelt, and conversely created an unofficial but important four-yearly opportunity for ritually remembering FDR's legislative success at the inception of the New Deal. As a result, the New Deal has in cultural memory lost much of its political poignancy to a blander and more general sense of nostalgia. The First Hundred Days custom is now mainly a media ritual practically divorced from the New Deal; it remains only tentatively indexically linked to Roosevelt, and even more loosely to the New Deal. This process is instrumental in the depoliticization of the New Deal for the sake of cultural remembrance.

William Leuchtenburg's *In the Shadow of FDR: From Harry Truman to George W. Bush* (2001; 1st ed. 1983) comments on how later presidents had to deal with Roosevelt's legacy to the office, the political and sometimes the cultural or media practices that he left. For instance since FDR, the president was expected to hold many informal press conferences in which journalists could ask questions without submitting these beforehand – if they did not do so, the press would complain (167-8). Leuchtenburg convincingly argues that the effect of such customs is that later presidents have had to live up to standards set by Roosevelt. The First Hundred Days of any new administration have become such a central initial yardstick and media moment for new presidents, that no presidential first hundred days can escape comparison with Roosevelt's legendary First Hundred Days. To organizations committed to nurturing the remembrance of FDR in American culture, those occasions also provide a logical moment in the American public arena to bring back to public consciousness the first hundred days of the New Deal.

As a political program the New Deal is, of the themes discussed in this thesis, perhaps the one that is still most seriously criticized, partly because left-right polarization in American politics remains relevant. However, as a feat of mass communication to restore national confidence in

the economy and government, it remains widely admired. The many historical analogies with the New Deal that have appeared since the onset of the 2008 credit crisis and Obama's election attest to this duality.[4] They on the one hand discuss with varying outcome the question how economically successful the New Deal was, and on the other present FDR's rhetorical success in quickly restoring confidence as exemplary. Many of such analogies appeared briefly after Obama's election and re-election, and during his presidency's first hundred days.

A honeymoon period at the start of a new presidency – or political leadership in general – has probably always existed in one form or another, but the specific reference to a president's First Hundred Days in office has been in vogue since FDR used it on July 24, 1933 (Alter 273). Roosevelt did so to refer to the length of the special session of the 73rd Congress – which he had called immediately after his inauguration, and which had produced a record amount of new legislation. However, it has come to be used first by FDR confidant and brain truster Raymond Moley (Alter 273) as the expression to refer to Roosevelt's first hundred days in office. Ever since, a new executive's First Hundred Days form an inescapable litmus test. The comparison of the First Hundred Days between presidents obviously gives FDR an unfair advantage: in his case the phrase was invented precisely because he had achieved so much, even just in terms of new legislation, in one hundred days, whereas for any following president the length of the period is arbitrary. Nonetheless, using and marketing the first hundred days of a presidency as an indicator of the new president's executive power and ability to make a mark, has become a tradition with considerable weight, not only within America but worldwide. This ritual of reviewing this first period is extremely popular with the press. Politicians too seem to favor the public assessment of their performance after hundred days, since on the one hand they will usually already have achieved things they are proud of, and on the other, will not yet be accused of ineffectiveness or failure to keep campaign promises, since after hundred days it is obviously premature to write off a new leadership as ineffective.

As Leuchtenburg has shown the only president who did not have to deal with the First Hundred Days custom was Harry Truman, who became president when FDR died. In the grave circumstances of world politics in the spring of 1945, it would have been inappropriate to celebrate the First Hundred Days. Even on his reelection in 1948 the phrase came up less than Truman's domestic reform agenda, the Fair Deal – obviously named after the New Deal, in part because it aimed to continue the New Deal legacy (Hamby vii). For Eisenhower it was different – journalists focused on his First Hundred Days, even if he himself as a Republican did nothing to compare his honeymoon months to FDR's. In a broader sense Eisenhower did feel he had to continue New Deal programs, perhaps to his chagrin. As he said in 1956: "Should any political party attempt to abolish social security and eliminate labor laws and farm programs, you would not hear of that party again in our political history" (Leuchtenburg 49). So by comparison, the First Hundred Days

4 E.g.newspaper or magazine articles with headlines like Robert Shiller's "What Would Roosevelt Do?", or David Kennedy's "What Barack Obama Can Learn From FDR."

custom was for Eisenhower possible a relatively welcome FDR tradition, because it did not actually interfere with politics. Kennedy as a Democrat with an old and well-known family friendship to the Roosevelts intended to make much of his own hundredth day as president. Indeed the speech he would hold at its occasion was written, but the event was canceled, because as Leuchtenburg says "it was painfully clear that April 28, 1961, bore no resemblance to the hundredth day of FDR's first administration" (111). Johnson was less modest, believing soon that he overshadowed Roosevelt –"This Congress is a lot more impressive than the Hundred Days Congress" – which backfired against himself, and implicitly against Roosevelt (quoted in Leuchtenburg 146). Leuchtenburg even argues that "as a result of Johnson's behavior, the Roosevelt emphases were more than ever perceived to contain ingredients of evil as well as good." (160).

With Nixon the tide changed, in the sense that Roosevelt's First Hundred Days had lost most of their political relevance, although an inhouse-memo claimed that "the nation is still suffering from the first 100 days of Johnson, from the first 100 days of Kennedy , and even, lingeringly, from the first 100 days of Roosevelt" (quoted in Leuchtenburg 170). The Roosevelt inheritance was by then however hardly directly political anymore; it was limited to the expression "first 100 days" and the custom to pay special attention to that period that had survived, a media practice that later presidents expanded – notably Clinton, but Reagan in fact much more successfully so (217, 278-9).Thus, the First Hundred Days became more of a cultural media practice than a political touchstone, practically devoid of actual New Deal remembrance, let alone remembrance of the New Deal as a controversial political program. On the other hand, it remained a moment to look back to FDR's early days, in a highly formulaic, ritualized manner.

Obama, who had in his campaign primarily positioned himself as the cultural and political inheritor and executor of Abraham Lincoln's emancipation agenda, at the start of his presidency nonetheless had to actively deal with this Rooseveltian legacy. In his speech held at the May 2009 White House Correspondents' Association Dinner, in which the president traditionally "roasts" himself, his administration and White House journalists, Obama said about this:

> All in all we're proud of the change we've brought to Washington in these first hundred days, but we've got a lot of work left to do, as all of you know, so I'd like to talk a little bit about what my administration plans to achieve in the next hundred days. During the second hundred days we'll design, build and open a library dedicated to my first hundred days. It's going to be big, of course.
> (...)
> In the next hundred days we will house-train our dog Bo. (…) In the next hundred days I will strongly consider losing my cool. Finally, I believe that my next hundred days will be so successful I will be able to complete them in 72 days.[5]

5 For video footage of the speech: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0GwZFAV1Lw&feature=channel.

Obama wisely embraces a tradition he cannot get away from anyway in a spirit of self-mockery: no president's first hundred days have truly measured up against Roosevelt's own massive achievements in the spring of 1933. However, Obama's anaphoric repetition of the phrase "In my next hundred days…" is not only self-mocking: it simultaneously draws attention to the rather arbitrary journalistic stress on "Hundred Days" as a particularly conclusive period of time. Thus, Obama's joke is not only directed at himself, but also at the media practice. Similarly, the references to opening a library, and to "our dog Bo" are part of – and make fun of – Rooseveltian customs that dedicated presidential libraries, and included the presidential family dog in speeches (see chapter 8).

Thus, the First Hundred Days have since Roosevelt become a cultural phenomenon that new presidents cannot avoid dealing with. However, the reverse is also true: with every new administration the First Hundred Days media practice provides an opportunity for various organizations and other agents interested in stimulating Roosevelt's cultural remembrance to give attention to the New Deal and FDR. A comment of Obama's that he had read a book about FDR's First Hundred Days massively increased the sales of all three books mentioned above that fitted the description: Jonathan Alter's *The Defining Moment: FDR's Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope* (2006), Anthony Badger's *FDR, The First Hundred Days* (2009), Adam Cohen's *Nothing to Fear: FDR's Inner Circle and the Hundred Days that Shaped Modern America* (2009), even though none of these probably was the book that Obama did read (Rich).

Obama's election in 2008 also provided the ideal context for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Museum at Hyde Park to organize a temporary exhibition "Action and Action Now – FDR's First 100 Days." The title is a Roosevelt quotation but can also be read as "Action [then] and Action Now", and as such implicitly sets audiences up for a comparison between the economic and financial crises of 1933 and 2008. The exhibition guidebook actually cites the 75th anniversary of FDR's First Inauguration as its inspiration, but the fact that 2008 was an election year and 2009 saw the first 100 days of another new Democratic president promising change and restored confidence probably gave the exhibition its relevance more than a 75th anniversary. The exhibition's title is taken from Roosevelt's inaugural address: "This Nation asks for action and action now." (March 4, 1933), and the exhibition invoked and repeated a plethora of famous FDR maxims, including "the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid", "I pledge you, I pledge myself to a New Deal for the American people", "This is a call to arms", and "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." The exhibition more or less chronologically took visitors through the year 1933 on March 4th of which the Hundred Days started, showing photos taken in 1933, newspaper articles, cartoons, letters to FDR and recreating the presumable atmosphere of the 1930s in terms of entourage. Thus one could sit in a reconstructed 1930s living room to listen to a recording of FDR's inaugural address "over the radio", to create a sense of identification with American citizens in 1933.

The narrative started in a room titled "America, 1933", and represented the situation of the country in the depths of the Depression – the room was a black box, indicating the darkness of the situation, and showed enormous photos, mainly the iconic picture of unemployed men queuing outside a Depression soup kitchen, actually taken in 1931.

Then the immediacy of the crisis is highlighted by the chapter "The Banks Collapse", followed by the advent of Roosevelt in "A New President, A New Deal." The rest of the exhibition concentrated on the main things Roosevelt and the New Deal did: "Saving the Banks", "Constructing a New Deal", "Financial Reforms", "Jobs and Relief", "Rural Reforms" and some attention for Roosevelt's ending of Prohibition. Special attention was given to "FDR's Conversation With America", which displayed many letters FDR received after his inaugural address and first Fireside Chat. Like other original documents these came from the archive part of the library. On the whole the exhibition was, as might be expected, given the exhibition's location, organizers and fundraisers – the Roosevelt Institute – positive and celebratory of Roosevelt and the New Deal. The focus of the first 100 days is conducive to that effect: results could not yet be measured and one thing the exhibition did well was recreate the honeymoon feeling of a new presidency, which also existed in the 2008-2009 present.

The "Action and Action Now" exhibition did eventually ask "Did it Work?" and was nuanced in its analysis. The conclusion, taken from the exhibition guide booklet, is:

> The coming years would be difficult. There would be many setbacks. But a confident new president had set a course, boldly committing the government to battle the Depression. In the process, he restored most important element needed for recovery – hope.

This summarizes exactly those difficulties that the rest of the exhibition, given its focus on the First Hundred Days does not have to show, like the increasing resistance from businesses everywhere, the New Deal programs that turned out to be unsuccessful and ill-organized, the Supreme Court cases about the constitutionality of many New Deal programs. This conclusion acknowledges those problems, without attributing blame to FDR – indeed the first two sentences are passive and suggest difficult circumstances rather than flaws in the president's own policies. At the same time it ritually repeats what is by now a cliché in cultural memory: if the New Deal did nothing else, it at least restored hope.

Conclusion: Impotent Opposition

Michael Kammen in *Mystic Chords of Memory* argues that cultural memory in America, especially in the twentieth century, functions as a kind of nationally shared sense of history, creating an atmosphere of consensus that can be used to overcome partisan or other political divides. This seems by now a rather naïve reading, especially in the light of the "memory wars"

of the last decades, in which various memory communities have clashed over what should be the "official" national memory of a particular event.[6] Such confrontations have actually, especially since the 1960s, resembled Mouffe's ideal of radical opposition in the locus of power much more than Roosevelt's implicit model of friendly but noncommittal consensus.

Kammen, however, rightly shows that both Theodore Roosevelt at the beginning of the century and Franklin Roosevelt to an even larger extent became experts at using cultural memory to stress the unity of America rather than the fragmentation. As an example, Kammen explains how Roosevelt depoliticized American party history, through associating himself with Abraham Lincoln. Whereas Lincoln was a Republican president and Roosevelt a Democrat, many Americans according to Kammen "simply assumed that Roosevelt and Lincoln surely shared a party affiliation and represented a prominent line of continuity in American leadership" (452). FDR's uses of the past were eventually "shrewd and self-serving" (450): he used the impression of national consensus for his partisan and controversial political aims. The same American tendency to depoliticize the past that FDR used to present himself as Lincoln's political descendant, also occurred when Roosevelt himself became a historical icon.

This trend, however, of using the past as a depoliticizing and consensus-building force, is not purely specific to FDR. The first half of the twentieth century also saw a strong tendency towards the creation of shared cultural memory without any involvement of FDR, such as the start of many "American Studies" programs at American universities in the late 1930s (Kammen 509). It rather seems as though Roosevelt was very correctly sensing and riding a wave that was already there and had in fact started to gain momentum in the late nineteenth century (Ranger and Hobsbawm). The growing accessibility of memory sites, and thus the increased presence of ritualized remembrance practices as a force in society can and does also work the other way: the fact that a much wider range of memories were mediated and far more rememberers could find channels to make themselves heard, also created divergence in the general gist of cultural memory, and a clearer difference between various memory communities with different agendas. Both effects are visible in the cultural memory of the New Deal, but the consensus-focused, depoliticized, ritualized and generally positive assessment of the New Deal remains the dominant force in mainstream cultural memory. Both the case of *Annie* and that of the First Hundred Days practice exemplify this trend.

However, such celebratory exhibitions as that in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library museum in Hyde Park, New York, to some extent inevitably only reached those who were already open to a positive interpretation of FDR's political program. The opposite exists as well. To this day, highly polarized responses to the New Deal also keep appearing. Such histories are agonistically political in the way Mouffe proposes, although she seems to have expected such reactions in

6 See e.g. Linenthal and Engelhardt, *History Wars: The Enola Gay and the Battle for the American Past*, 1996.

general more from the political left than from the conservative right that produces them now in the case of FDR and the New Deal.

One example is Jim Powell's popular *FDR's Folly: How Roosevelt and His New Deal Prolonged the Great Depression* (2003). The chapter titles are all along the lines of: "Why Did FDR Seize Everybody's Gold?", "Why Did New Dealers Make Everything Cost More in the Depression?" and "Why Did the New Dealers Destroy All That Food When People Were Hungry?" (v). What strikes about those titles, other than their belligerence, is that they are not so much focused on FDR only. Other, more depoliticized "New Deal" memory practices more or less all tend to have lost sight of the actual New Deal, and have instead adopted a strong focus on the person of FDR, in the case of *Annie*, or on ritualized and repetitive invocations of particular phrases and media customs. *FDR's Folly*, however, directly confronts the politics and ideology underlying the New Deal. And although most of the book's claims are highly tendentious, there is a core of righteous indignation that Mouffe would agree with. The cultural memory of the New Deal is, as Powell repeatedly stresses, too much concerned with "Franklin D. Roosevelt's charismatic personality, his brilliance as a strategist and communicator, the dramatic One Hundred Days, the First New Deal, Second New Deal, the 'court-packing' plan, and other political aspects of the story." (Powell vii). It is striking that Powell considers these issues "political", because they are exactly also topics that have been central to the depoliticization of the New Deal.

The political aspect for Powell lies exactly in the fact that the catchphrases he sums up actually function to create a kind of empty consensus about the New Deal as a nostalgically remembered past, when it should be treated as a phase in which liberal democracy was seriously endangered. Powell quotes law professor Richard Epstein saying:

> A fine despot may do wonders for a while: public roads may be constructed, the trains may run on time, and the Dow may reach three thousand. But a bad despot, or a good despot turned bad, has quite the opposite effect. Our concerns go beyond potholes, train delays, and the bear market. We worry about tyranny, terror, confiscation, segregation, imprisonment, and death. (262).

Here, and elsewhere, Powell comes closer than most would dare to comparing FDR's strategy of depoliticizing the political in order to claim power, to similar strategies used by Hitler and Stalin at the same time in Europe. While I do not think his negative analysis of the New Deal is correct, this latter point is to some extent true: Roosevelt remains a kind of despot in cultural memory, exactly because his autofabrication and remembrance are so consensus-focused that, in their relative emptiness, they all but eliminate the space for substantial disagreement, the locus of power which should function as a site for conflict. It is, however, indicative of the success of the depoliticization of the New Deal into the future, that arguments such as Powell's have so little effect on mainstream representations of the New Deal. They are essentially confined to a relatively

small circle of right-wing Republicans, who cannot revive the political debate beyond their own radical margin. This may in part be because they are so radical, but primarily, because almost all other cultural representations of the New Deal have become so consensually depoliticized.

Chapter 6: Dr. Win-the-War – FDR's Versatility as an Allegory for American War Narratives

Introduction

As someone who became president more than eighty years ago and died seventy years ago, Roosevelt's presidency falls squarely into the "floating gap" Jan Vansina distinguished between Jan Assmann's cultural memory on the one hand and communicative, lived, memory on the other. Few people alive today remember consciously living through his presidency, which is not yet mythologized in the way Washington's or Lincoln's are. Moreover, the last decades have seen a shift in popular interest away from leadership narratives towards the experiences of common people and communities. Nevertheless Roosevelt characters have continued to be central to cultural artefacts representing World War Two, and I argue this is because FDR lends himself exceptionally well to being allegorized in various ways, positive as well as negative. I will outline and exemplify these and analyze how Roosevelt allegories activate and enable particular remembrance practices.

As John Bodnar argues, "the public performance of the victory in the 1990s had privileged romantic myths about ordinary individuals more than the contributions of wartime leaders like Franklin D. Roosevelt" (227). There are many examples that back up this claim, including Studs Terkel's successful oral history "*The Good War*": *An Oral History of World War Two* (1984), journalist Tom Brokaw's best-selling *The Greatest Generation* (1998) and Ken Burns' seven-part documentary *The War* (2007), which narrates the war from the perspective of four paradigmatic American communities. Each of these mainstream and successful cultural artefacts are part of the new mode of privileging "romantic myths about ordinary individuals" Bodnar describes, and if FDR comes up at all, it is either indirectly, as a source of inspiration, or as a paradigmatic figure, a common man himself, who happened to be called upon to fulfill the role of president. It is easy to read the FDR Memorial in Washington DC (1997) as such: it portrays Roosevelt both as a common man himself, and as someone surrounded by other ordinary individuals, in the shape of sculpted human figures – more a representative *pars pro toto* than an elevated leader like Jefferson or Lincoln in their Washington memorials.

Such synecdochic representations of Roosevelt are not allegorical – they treat him as a randomly chosen individual, "your typical American", but not as a metaphor for America as a whole – but do suit Roosevelt's autofabrication. Essentially the movement towards the social history of the people mirrors FDR's successful rhetorical embodiment of the common man. His public image is forever joined to his foregrounding of the plight of "the forgotten man." And even though that phrase is taken from the context of New Deal, it sits well with the post-1970s popular interest in "people's history", bottom-up, revisionist history, with Howard Zinn as its main proponent in the

United States, and the History Workshop movement in the UK. While Brokaw is by no means a postmodern or left-leaning oral historian – his mode is that of the documentary maker even if *The Greatest Generation* is a book – he too invokes Roosevelt explicitly to pull together the experiences and popular perception of countless common Americans whose war stories he tells. He cites Roosevelt's famous and endlessly echoed epigram: "This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny",[1] and continues the generation trope in his introduction:

> I am in awe of them, and I feel privileged to have been a witness to their lives and their sacrifices. There were so many other people whose stories could have been in this book, who embodied the standards of greatness in the everyday that these people represent, and that give this generation its special quality and distinction. (…) This is the greatest generation that any society has produced. (xxx)

This revives and interprets Roosevelt's "rendezvous with destiny" and is, moreover, a strong claim in its own right which Brokaw is not shy or cynical about. The book's basic cultural assumption is that while Europe was bogged down in Nazism, communism and Old World imperialism, America became the dominant world power thanks to its freedom and democracy, and the moral uprightness and bravery of its people, which it was then in honor bound to share worldwide. In this context, World War Two remains one of the most basic moral touchstones, with a clear-cut opposition between good and evil that escapes relativism, as Michael Rothberg discusses as length in the introduction to *Multidirectional Memory*. Thus, the war also provides Roosevelt with a logical and heroic place in history, as a *primus inter pares* in various ways: on the one hand a man of the people and on the other an eminent receptacle to accommodate, communicate, and give weight to others' stories. While the war operates to provide Roosevelt with the stamp of moral righteousness and lasting remembrance, he is the one who has positioned himself so as to be able to fill so many different roles as representative of that remembrance.

Although Brokaw, like Terkel and Burns, tells the stories of a number of individuals, each of whose experiences stand in a synecdochic relation to the American experience as a whole, he, arguably – like Burns but unlike Terkel – suggests that those stories in sum "embody the standards of greatness" of American society and culture during World War II, i.e. that collectively they *symbolically* represent the nation over and above the sum of their parts. As such *The Greatest Generation*, through a title that provides an indexical link with FDR, as a whole takes on an allegorical notion of representing the nation. Moreover, it includes war narratives of a number of "Famous People" (Brokaw xiii), most notably President George Bush, who says "Serving in World War II, I was a tiny part of something noble" (278), and actually resists Brokaw's suggestion that his narrative is representative of the American experience in a much larger sense: "In a way, America came to know itself better through this common experience" (273).

1 Brokaw 3; Roosevelt, speech before the Democratic National Convention, June 27, 1936.

Robert Burgoyne's *Film Nation: Hollywood Looks at U.S. History* argues that Hollywood film has moved, from mainstream heroic historical narratives undergirding American grand narratives, towards narratives that allow for narration "from across", and negotiation with perspectives from "outside" or "below" (3):

> [R]ecent historical films can be seen as part of the ongoing revisionary enterprise of the late twentieth century; they reenact the narrative of nation in terms of its tributaries, in terms of stories of ethnic, racial, and gender struggles to reshape the national narrative, and to make the experiences of marginal groups a "formative and necessary part of the story." (6)

This "ongoing revisionary enterprise" may be seen as a cinematic variety of the interest in synecdochic people's histories and in the plights of those marginalized by the grand narrative. However, the marginalized individuals, while they do function as exemplary of bodies larger than themselves, are not embodiments of the nation as a whole. Nonetheless, those late-twentieth century films do represent historical narratives as allegories of nationhood, Burgoyne concludes:

> Despite highly critical messages concerning the national past, the films that form the core of this study preserve and revivify some of the basic tropes of traditional narratives of nation – the image of a mystic nationhood that is revealed only on the battlefield, for example, or the importance of warfare in molding a sense of ethnic and national community. (7)

Thus, the films Burgoyne analyzes, are like older less critically nationalist films, in that their synecdochic portrayal of members of marginal groups eventually does "revivify basic tropes of traditional narratives of nation", who are centralized to narrate allegorical stories of nation. The dynamic Burgoyne's analyses find again and again is that of complex historical narratives, which allow for non-dominant synecdochic elements "from across" the rift between the dominant mainstream and the margins of society, yet eventually preserve allegorical "narratives of nation." Like *The Greatest Generation*, many of the films Burgoyne analyzes, suggest that "mystic nationhood" in which the whole is larger than the sum of its parts, is attained through experiences of war and battle. This mystic nationhood is the allegorical outcome of collectivized individual war experiences, as told in historical narratives. White male figures like George Bush, in Brokaw's case, or Forrest Gump – one of the characters Burgoyne analyzes in depth – are by far the likeliest carriers for the allegorical construction of nationhood through war experience.

This is relevant to our understanding of Roosevelt as an allegorical figure, for several reasons. First, it is important to note that FDR's versatility to war remembrance is not only as an allegorical figure; he is also able to provide implicit endorsement and an indexical connection to synecdochic narratives of seemingly randomly chosen individuals outside the circuits of power. Second, it shows how mainstream historical narratives tend to function as allegories for

nationhood, though often moderated by synecdochic figures "from across." This association of the grand narrative with allegory and the marginal with synecdoche is particularly important since FDR can occupy both positions. Although we shall see that he is mostly an allegorical figure, as one might expect of a heroic president, we will encounter examples of FDR as an individual shaking up and revising national narratives as well.

Allegory and Multidirectional Memory

I consider allegory to be a metaphor extended into narrative. Just as a metaphor "treats something as something else" (Culler 72), an allegory is a text with a symbolic secondary narrative. The narrative of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is famously not just the story of the pilgrim's adventures, but also of man's religious growth. Many narratives of Roosevelt's "overcoming" his disability, carry an implicit narrative of America overcoming major and debilitating challenges, for instance the attack on Pearl Harbor. Detailed examples will follow, but what is important for now is the idea that an allegory involves two narratives, a literal level and an allegorical level, which influence one another: because something works as it does on one level, it presumably works similarly on the other. However, the relation between those levels is not always the same. How and why a narrative, or, as in the case of FDR, a person, is allegorized has implications for what it is possible to show or obscure through the underlying narrative. Moreover, I argue that FDR as an icon in cultural memory is not just open to functioning as an allegorical figure for a range of ideologically diverging narratives, but also to different accompanying modes of allegorization. I broadly discern three of these: FDR can function as a *screen* on which the past is projected for the present, as a *bridge* to cross the rift between past and present, and as a ruin or a fragment of the past in the present.

Each of these modes of allegorization provides a link between the past and the present, each functioning in a different way. They are thus also modes of remembering, strategies of transposing the past to the present, so as to make elements of the past understandable for a present audience. This transposition is obviously never disinterested, and the choice of mode of allegorization directs the shape of the narrative in the present, based in one way or another on historical events and texts. In the context of cultural remembrance – the negotiation of memory – Michael Rothberg has coined the apt and productive term multidirectional memory, to study these "dynamic transfers that take place between diverse places and times during the act of remembrance" (11).

Rothberg's agenda is in the first place to move out of the paradigm of competitive memory in which various ethnic, religious, and other groups compete for attention in cultural memory in what seems to be a "zero-sum game", into an understanding of memory as multidirectional. He argues for instance that the remembrance of the Holocaust has not only usurped, but also aided the cultural acceptance of remembrance of American slavery ("the black holocaust"),

and that decolonization in the decades after World War Two gave rise to particular forms of remembrance of colonialism, but also influenced how the Holocaust was remembered. While I agree with his view, for me the most important point lies in the complex interaction Rothberg analyzes between pairs of temporally and otherwise different cultural texts. Whereas in his study these texts mostly share the fact they can both be seen as memory, for me the interaction is between a historical context and the memories it has produced. I regard the FDR icon within that as a go-between of sorts, and analyze the various ways in which he is used to mediate.

Icons like Lincoln or Washington equally function often and successfully as allegorical figures, carrying a range of complex and chaotic pasts into narratives remembering those pasts in the present. Indeed, a key characteristic for anything to be thought of as an icon is its potential to transgress beyond the "parameters of its initial making, function, and context" (Kemp 3). FDR is a special case because he is unusually adaptable, allowing for a considerable but not limitless range of allegorizations and synecdochic representations. He has become a versatile figure on screen – poignantly so, because it is a medium the historical FDR tried to avoid – whose narratives are often profoundly tied to his beleaguered body, inviting comparison with other bodies.

Franklin Roosevelt appears as a character in many films, most of which are – primarily or also – about World War Two. Although he is often a minor character representative of authority and the highest level of decision-making, his character is usually developed narratively at least to some extent. Such films use historical elements and attributes from Roosevelt's life and as a rule lend themselves well to being read as an allegory or vehicle for a national American narrative. As Kemp argues, iconification and allegorization both imply transplantation of themes and transgression of parameters, to often far-flung other contexts (3-5). Still, it is no surprise that the initial transgression of presidential icons happens into the realm of national narratives and patriotic remembrance. What precisely these narratives entail or argue differs, but FDR is often, as one might expect, implicitly or explicitly allegorized to represent the US and its ideology, e.g. in *Pearl Harbor*, *Annie*, *Hyde Park on Hudson*. Nonetheless, there are also cases and moments in which the opposite happens: American nationhood is reconfigured through the absence or failure of the FDR character.

Screen Memory and *Pearl Harbor*

To explain what kinds of mechanisms *Multidirectional Memory* analyzes on the collective scale of cultural remembrance, Rothberg discusses Freud's concept screen memory, which operates on the individual level, and suggests that multidirectional memory uses a similar mechanism on a collective level. In his essay "Screen Memory" (*Deckerinnerung*, 1899) Freud interprets early, seemingly irrelevant childhood memories of psychologically healthy people as screens

for repressed traumas or desires in the present.[2] The German *Deckerinnerung* points to the covering-up that the early memory performs, but the English translation is in a sense more felicitous than the original, because it also refers to the fact that the memory functions as a projection screen for what is repressed, which is therefore discoverable through analysis. Freud does not doubt the authenticity of the essence of the childhood memories, but rather reads peculiar details as manifestations of why an otherwise irrelevant memory has been retained. Such manifestations may thus be projected onto the screen of another "innocent" memory, or remain hidden behind it. A second reason why the English translation "screen memory" is so felicitous, is because the cinematic screen is particularly inviting to latent content, and relatively open to its analysis.

A screen memory is not directly an allegory – rather it is a memory that incorporates elements that, beyond their literal meaning, have a symbolical meaning, referring to the latent content that the manifest memory screens, or screens off. These elements do not directly represent the repressed content, but are literal in the screen memory, and symbolical of the repressed content in the latent narrative. Thus, there are, like in allegories, two levels – in Freud's example one memory and one desire, but it could also be two memories, an innocent one and a guilty or traumatic one, for instance – which are in complex conversation with each other. They are not equal, or even necessarily very similar, but their pairing is somehow productive. The displacement itself can seem productive. The traumatic or otherwise uncomfortable content is "parked" where it seems innocuous and harmless. However, to narratively address the traumatic or guilty content is eventually more productive. This requires acknowledging that there are indeed two levels, which need disentanglement and working through. Many Roosevelt representations can fruitfully be read as collective screen memories, screening off and, when analyzed, bringing into focus, fears, desires and traumas central to American nationhood. Particularly representations of Roosevelt's disability in the context of World War Two can be read as addressing issues that seem connected to but in reality are far removed from the historical FDR or World War Two.

An almost embarrassingly simplistic example is that of 2012 movie *FDR American Badass!*, in which FDR contracts polio because he is bitten by a Nazi werewolf. The poison paralyzes his legs, but spurs him on first to become US president and then to, singlehandedly, with the use of various threatening hypermodern war machines, particularly the "Delano 2000" wheelchair-tank hybrid, defeat the Axis powers. Roosevelt's disease and prostheses seem to be the peculiar details in FDR memory that refer to underlying other issues in our own time. It is telling in that context that his disability and wheelchair have in recent cultural memory become virtually FDR's primary attribute, whereas they were hardly directly relevant to his presidency. *FDR American Badass!* turns his disability into a virtue, a mark of martyrhood, giving him the status

2 Sigmund Freud, "Screen Memory", 301-322.

of a war veteran. As the survivor of an alien infestation by a virus, an invisible enemy threat that is looking to infect and terrorize the United States from the inside, the *Badass* FDR appears as a leader to a far more modern America. I do not argue that *FDR American Badass!* is or intends to be a political commentary – the producer in an interview assured me that it does not mean to be – but in its very triviality the film responds to fears and threats that exist today.[3] These are, no doubt unintentionally, projected onto the past, in such a way that the Nazis become werewolves (monsters, yes, but strikingly more like terrorists than like Nazis) and Roosevelt in combination with his superpower wheelchair becomes the epitome of swaggering yet morally righteous American proactiveness.

FDR American Badass! however, is not a mainstream Hollywood movie – it was made in Hollywood, but not by one of the major studios. A more subtle and more widely distributed example of a film that uses a screen FDR as a plot device to screen off the national trauma of Pearl Harbor while revealing it indirectly through FDR's body is Michael Bay's *Pearl Harbor* (2001). Released in the year of the 60th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and months before the terrorist attacks on 9/11, it became a box-office success and an Oscar winner in the months after. Although the movie was viewed by many in its shadow, it was produced and made most of its revenue – a gross of just under $200,000,000 against an estimated budget of $140,000,000[4] – during the last triumphalist months of the long 1990s (1989-2001) in which the United States was the unchallenged world hegemon (Hobsbawm 19). It features an important FDR character, but, like *The Greatest Generation*, *The War*, or *Saving Private Ryan* (Spielberg, 1998) and other cultural representations of World War Two from about the same period, it is a film about the heroism of common American fighting men. However, the Roosevelt character is very important, because it introduces, alongside synecdochic individuals representing America, an allegorical one who embodies it, and who, more specifically, functions as a screen for traumatic collective memory of Pearl Harbor.

As Emily Rosenberg argues in *A Date Which Will Live*: "Pearl Harbor" remains "one of the most emotive icons in American culture", a "dramatic story" that has been "told and retold in thousands of print and visual representations" and "invoke[d] … in variable, even inconsistent, contexts." (10). Pearl Harbor as a set of national American narratives is captivating, both in the sense that those narratives are told and retold infinitely, and in the sense that there is a limiting and repetitive loop, that imprisons parts of the experience, away from being settled or understood in the present. FDR can function as an allegory to lift "Pearl Harbor" out of its loophole of culturally reenacted trauma, in the film *Pearl Harbor* particularly, because he functions as a screen, protecting the viewer from all too painful imagery and allowing for elements of the trauma to be projected onto his body.

3 Interview with Ross Patterson, September 3, 2014.
4 http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0213149/business?ref_=tt_ql_dt_4

The historical Roosevelt understood that the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor and other American bases on December 7th, 1941 would loom large, but would also be problematic in American memory. In his historic address the next day, FDR called it "a date which will live in infamy", and asserted: "Always will our whole Nation remember the character of the onslaught against us."[5] "Pearl Harbor" has indeed ever since remained a key "emotive icon in American culture", for instance, as the first point of reference to be invoked following September 11, 2001. However, only parts of it are habitually referred to in mass culture productions, while others are not. Part of the problem lies in recognizing what the attacks did to the US and how the US allowed them to happen. There is a stark contrast between the habitual self-impression of the United States as proactive and shrewd, and the devastation caused by the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor. Some of the cognitive dissonance at the time was dissipated, Rosenberg convincingly argues, through the – much older – trope of the US as a "sleeping giant", an innocent and benign but extremely strong superpower, awoken by a "dastardly attack" as FDR termed it in his Pearl Harbor speech (December 8th, 1941).

The Sleeping Giant metaphor also comes up in *Pearl Harbor*, when a Japanese general just after the raid expresses his fear that "all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant." However, the film's main defusing mechanism in making Pearl Harbor bearable as an event to be incorporated into the American narrative is the Roosevelt character, who functions as an allegory both to make the attack on Pearl Harbor fathomable for a twenty-first century audience, and as part of that, to circumspectly address the collective trauma incurred. The film's primary heroes, airforce pilots, respond to the pain and humiliation of the attack not with words, but with a silent determination to take revenge; they go to war in a quiet rage. Instead of narrating the attack in words or images, at a number of key moments when the shock and pain of the attacks are shown at their worst and most unbearable, these are broken off by a cut to the Roosevelt character. Thus, the screen shows FDR literally screening the attack itself off from view. When this happens, there is a particular interest in his wheelchair, which as a metonym becomes an important element in the allegory, representative of both the debilitating effect of war and the possibility to overcome the impact of external siege.

Pearl Harbor represents precisely that take on the function of Roosevelt's wheelchair. His first entrance, showing the wheelchair before its occupant, already signals that the President's disability is attributed an important role in the film, however tentatively it is related to its subject and action. In the same scene, introducing the narrative of the decision-making officials, Roosevelt opens the meeting by saying :

> I'm afraid I'm in a bad mood. Churchill and Stalin are asking me what I'm asking you. How long is America going to pretend the world is not at war? … But our people think Hitler and his Nazi thugs are Europe's problem. [33:00].

5 Franklin Roosevelt, Address to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War, December 8, 1941.

Clearly at this stage, that is also what the present chief officers think, but Roosevelt sees ahead, and characterizes the enemy in terms of a spreading infection, made worse by America's petrified denial of its global contagiousness. Thus Roosevelt, together with the film's audiences, who, presumably, know largely what happened during World War Two, recognize the threat of contagion. As a figure in and from the past, with interpretations and a kind of discourse that rather suits the present, his character makes the past accessible for audiences in the present, and already foreshadows the resolution of the conflict at the moment America is still at its most defeated.

Further into the film, following dramatic footage of the Pearl Harbor attack, including a series of shots of lost or to-be-amputated limbs, Roosevelt is wheeled towards a messenger whom he asks "How bad…?". This cut and Roosevelt's question, suggesting that he too is somehow a direct, physical victim of the attack, conjures up a link between his disability and the invalidity of those anonymous Pearl Harbor veterans. This suggests that Roosevelt embodies the US as a beleaguered nation and implicitly evokes a sense that Roosevelt is the ideal man for this job because he is experienced, if not directly as a war veteran, then at least as someone who knows what it means to be the bodily site for a fight between good and evil. As such, his particular narrative of conquering disability is an apt placeholder for what is too devastating about Pearl Harbor to address head-on. The scene seems to argue that trauma is best confronted frankly and straightforwardly as Roosevelt does in *Pearl Harbor*. Clearly here, the Roosevelt allegory functions both to mend and to communicate to a twenty-first-century audience the trauma of Pearl Harbor. On the other hand, the scene's own shift to Roosevelt as the focus of attention also hints at the failure of achieving true resurgence: it suggests that the direct confrontation with Pearl Harbor is so painful that an allegorical substitute is needed.

The more manifest triumphalist allegory, however, is later confirmed and elaborated on, first by the combination of Roosevelt's famous war speech (cited above) in voiceover, with more extensive and dramatic footage of Pearl Harbor, connecting the sheer atrociousness of the trauma to the reassuring and fearless voice and message of FDR. This documentary-style interlude repeating words and visual images that remain highly familiar in cultural memory, is followed by another scene of a meeting between FDR and his military chiefs of staff. Again, Roosevelt is portrayed as eager to fight back and show America's spirit. Again, body metaphors are used to connect, or indeed metaphorically replace, Roosevelt's body with that of the nation, for instance when FDR invokes a boxing expression: "We are on the ropes, gentlemen." This casts the US and Roosevelt personally in the same position of being nearly beaten down physically and mentally, with the difference that Roosevelt has already had time to recover from his injuries, at least psychologically, an experience the rest of the nation, evoked here by the military leaders surrounding him on the screen, clearly have not yet had, as their panicked response in the meeting signals. In a charismatic and meditative monologue Roosevelt says:

> Gentlemen, most of you did not know me when I had the use of my legs. I was strong and proud and arrogant. Now I wonder every hour of my life, why God put me into this chair. But when I see defeat in the eyes of my countrymen, in your eyes right now, I start to think that maybe He brought me down for times like these, when we all need to be reminded who we truly are, that we will not give up or give in.

The scene ends dramatically when, in answer to this speech, one of the generals says "what you're asking can't be done." Roosevelt, refusing all help, gets up out of his wheelchair, and replies: "Do not tell *me* it can't be done!" Here, the cinematic Roosevelt implies that it is precisely his disability that has caused him to be mentally prepared and equipped, unlike the others, for a crisis situation like this. The primary meaning of "in this chair" is "in this wheelchair", but it could also be taken to refer to "this position" or indeed "in this throne"; this conflates the office of the presidency with being disabled, underlining that the two are united in one person, and stressing the divine interference at work here. As such Roosevelt's body politic takes on the trauma, and screens it off from the nation as a collective. When the cinematic Roosevelt says that "maybe He brought me down for times like these, when we all need to be reminded who we truly are", he implies that being "brought down" by polio is after all an empowering experience, strengthening him perhaps not physically but psychologically, to be able to buck up a nation under duress. The scene's own drama and its dramatic juxtaposition to the shocking Pearl Harbor footage that precedes it, produces a structure in which Roosevelt is an obvious emotive embodiment of Pearl Harbor. In that allegory, Roosevelt's courageous move out of his wheelchair foreshadows the future of America. From being "on the ropes", it will – like Roosevelt – move on to become more powerful than ever.

Roosevelt's literal standing-up, as well as, by implication, his metaphorical re-sistance to the idea that "it can't be done", is, however, also troubling. Physically, the cinematic Roosevelt cannot really stand independently, and his refusal of help makes the gesture more powerful, but simultaneously exposes his vulnerability, not just physically but also psychologically. One of the widespread narratives surrounding Roosevelt's paralysis and his process toward rehabilitation and integration of the disability in his life, is that he utterly refused to acknowledge that he would not walk again. Gallagher and other chroniclers of Roosevelt polio narratives regularly repeat how in social situations FDR often professed that "with a year or two more of progress he would be able to discard his braces and walk unassisted" and that even in private, he kept assiduously practicing to walk in ways that were realistically unattainable given the permanent condition of his leg muscles (Gallagher 64). By implication, the suggestion is that denial is also part of what was at stake in the situation of the US after Pearl Harbor. However, this suggestion seems unintentional, which strengthens the allegory on the one hand, but on the other, weakens its power as a repairing force. Because Roosevelt's vulnerability is exposed as well as the nation's, he becomes a more viable screen to project the national disaster onto, but at the same time it points to the fact that doing so is a coping strategy rather than a durable working-through of a collective trauma.

Owensian Allegory and *The Plot Against America*

The above cases work as allegories in the sense that they present two layers of narrative, that of Roosevelt's body and that of the attack on the US. They work as screen memories in the sense that they – as memories often do – anachronistically conflate the two. In that process FDR becomes the screen onto which the collective trauma is projected. This is a multidirectional process, changing both the narrative of FDR's disability by suggesting he is a kind of war veteran himself, and reinterpreting that of the attack on Pearl Harbor, suggesting it is the noble suffering that underlies America's rise to world power. *Pearl Harbor* is, on a secondary level, legible as itself a screen for the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers. It was not made of course as a film to address the fears and trauma incurred on 9/11, but it works well as such nonetheless, precisely because it does already without knowledge of 9/11 allow for temporal, geographical and corporeal conflation of events. Many other allegorical Roosevelts function differently, because they maintain more distance between the literal and the allegorical level.

In "The Allegorical Impulse", Craig Owens argues that allegories function because of their "capacity to rescue from historical oblivion that which threatens to disappear", and that "its two most fundamental impulses" are "a conviction of the remoteness of the past, and a desire to redeem it for the present" (68). Thus Owens stresses that allegories function as bridges, connecting the past and the present, and particularly, making the past comprehensible for the present. Allegories select and emphasize those elements of the past that lend themselves to translation to the present. Allegorizations of Roosevelt – narratives in which Roosevelt can be read as an allegorical figure representative somehow of his time and context – usually work in ways pointed out by Owens as well. In the reification of World War Two many key elements gravitate to the Roosevelt icon, who remains a relatable representative. Roosevelt representations can, as discussed, be a healing factor in resolving and overcoming painful or traumatic history for the present. Because the allegory is instrumental in narrativizing a troubled past, it is healing, if we take seriously the central claim of trauma theory, that the impossibility to convert the trauma into narrative is its key characteristic (Bal et al., 1999). However this healing is, as Owens argues, never entirely successful – allegory works to mend problematic history, by presenting an interpretation of it that is relatable in the present. But that also overlooks precisely those elements that are not relatable, i.e. cannot be narrativized. Those elements are simply left out of the allegorical representation, without attracting attention, but also without losing their poignancy.

The particularly rich case study which I employ to illuminate how FDR can be allegorized as a bridge between past and present, while also drawing attention to that which is significantly left out of the transposition from past to present is Philip Roth's novel *The Plot Against America* (2004). This is a counterfactual historical novel, in which Roosevelt is not reelected in 1940, but beaten by staunch isolationist and champion aviator Charles A. Lindbergh. The iconic Lindbergh, like FDR, can function as a bridge between a remote past and the present because of his technological

modernity and focus on the future: he is a pilot, uses modern media, and campaigns personally, using aspects of his private life. Because of his political convictions, however, Lindbergh does not lend himself easily to being modernized in memory, unlike FDR. Thus *The Plot Against America* portrays Roosevelt as particularly amenable to Owensian allegorization, while itself presenting a fragmentation of America through following up one of the sharp edges of the triumphalist narrative. Thus Roth's book essentially glorifies FDR, maintaining him as a bridge between past and present, while also showing what might have happened, which because of this bridge all too easily forgotten. Thus, Roth belies the Greatest Generation rhetoric of Tom Brokaw and others. The fact that Roth needs to remove FDR to do this attests to the strength of his character as allegorically upholding the discourse of American moral righteousness.

In Lindbergh's 1940 America fascist tendencies are increasingly abounding, to the detriment of main character and focalizer, the secular Jewish child Philip Roth. This novel essentially in a fictional exercise takes Roosevelt out of the locus of power, and asks what might have happened if he had not then embodied America. As a result, the novel should indeed be read as a plot against America's heroic reading of itself: a country where anti-Semitism and racism in general were actually painfully close to the isolationism of more than half of its population in 1940. Roosevelt is thus cast as the allegorical figure holding together both a nation and its congratulatory self-perception in cultural memory, but what the novel does, is to extract FDR from his historical context, leaving that context an ideological ruin.

Although Franklin Roosevelt is a looming absence in Roth's counterfactual novel, he is represented in relative detail: many of the very personal Roosevelt trivia in the child Philip Roth's awareness are still part of cultural memory and have become more so through the publication of this novel in 2004. *The Plot Against America* does not only honor old Roosevelt myths but uses them to frame its narrative and bridge the gap between the family history of its child protagonist and world history. Its plot intervenes in history in the most literal way possible: it is a fictional autobiography in which Franklin Roosevelt is beaten in the 1940 elections by Charles Lindbergh. The novel's basic plot revolves around the anti-Semitism young Philip's family is subjected to as soon as Lindbergh, and not Roosevelt, has become president. It is important to note that, while Roth changes the course of history, he is very reticent in changing actual historical facts other than who became president in 1940: the isolationist and anti-Semitic things Charles Lindbergh is quoted as saying, he did say in reality, though not of course as president or presidential candidate as he does in the novel. Roth incorporated an extremely extensive list of historical sources and data as an appendix, so as not to create any confusion about what happened historically, and what was added by him.

The novel shows how young Philip's knowledge of Roosevelt's personal life helps him to feel represented by his president and helps him to reduce the world to a scale he can cope with. Thus Philip's experience mirrors that of twenty-first century readers: Roosevelt functions as a vehicle

for grasping a time and political context that is otherwise incomprehensible. Early on, Philip introduces himself as "a third-grader a term ahead of himself – and an embryonic stamp collector inspired like millions of kids by the country's foremost philatelist, President Roosevelt" (1). Stamps remain important throughout the novel, linking the child, whose identity and personal history is profoundly reflected in his stamp album, with national history, and literally bring it down to his scale and level of comprehension. Thus the pictures on the stamps, for instance of American national parks symbolize for Philip his attachment and belonging to the US, and his later nightmare that each national park picture is overlaid with a giant swastika symbolizes the alienation and exclusion from his home soil he experiences as soon as the atmosphere changes after Lindbergh's election. Similarly, the fact that no US stamp has yet been issued portraying a Jew significantly brings the level of latent anti-Semitism in America home to Philip and the reader, and the fact that he cannot part with his stamp portraying Charles Lindbergh in his airplane Spirit of St. Louis suggests even to himself that he too, despite Lindbergh's overt anti-Semitism, still harbors admiration for the strength and visual attractiveness he exudes.

In many ways Charles Lindbergh in *The Plot Against America* can be read as a foil for Franklin Roosevelt: the fictitious Lindbergh is in some ways obviously very different from FDR, but in other ways actually very similar. Many of the successful media strategies that Lindbergh uses in the book, such as literally appearing out of the blue – dropping from the sky – are actually strategies that Roosevelt also used, famously in 1932 when he flew to Chicago to personally accept his nomination for the presidency by the Democratic National Convention. Also Lindbergh's attractive media presence, his communicative genius and his strong personal link with innovation and modernity are reminiscent of FDR. Part of the effect is that the novel suggests that these elements – which also served the charismatic European dictators well – were perhaps as decisive in the re-election of FDR in 1940 as his internationalism. Like FDR, Lindbergh in *The Plot* works hard to personalize the presidency, that is, to use elements of his private life in a public manner to garner sympathy. For instance, Lindbergh's public dealing in the novel with the loss of his son through a kidnapping is comparable to Roosevelt's victory over polio. Both are presented as losses that have made the President a stronger person who can empathize with others' suffering. Equally, the active role Lindbergh's wife Anne Morrow takes as writer and publicly visible First Lady is reminiscent of Eleanor Roosevelt's position during and after Franklin Roosevelt's presidency.

Other indirect but obvious references to Roosevelt are made for instance through Philip's cousin Alvin, who, when Lindbergh becomes president, joins the Canadian army and loses his leg fighting in England and has throughout the rest of the novel to struggle not only with learning to walk on a prosthesis, but particularly also with his anger and frustration at his incapacitation. In a similar manner, radio reporter Walter Winchell, who later in the novel becomes presidential candidate, represents and foregrounds the massive social and political power of radio. Winchell is historically too, like FDR, one of the first public radio figures who developed a successful and charismatic radio style, who was politically similar to Roosevelt, so Winchell is an obvious choice

to replace Roosevelt in his fictional absence. Through shifting such defining characteristics of FDR onto other characters in the novel, Roosevelt remains conspicuously present through his best known personal and public emblems.

The novel insinuates that without FDR America might have become fascist, or at least, that the FDR icon allows Americans in the present to believe that fascism was no factor in 1940s America. In his essay "The Story Behind *The Plot Against America*" (*New York Times*, 19 September 2004), Roth acknowledges that it remains important, significant and by no means coincidental that America did not become fascist when other countries did. Rather, he argues that it could have happened more easily than one tends to think with the benefit of hindsight:

> I imagined something small, really, small enough to be credible, I hoped, that could easily have happened in an American presidential election in 1940, when the country was angrily divided between the Republican isolationists, who, not without reason, wanted no part of a second European war – and who probably represented a slight majority of the populace – and the Democratic interventionists, who didn't necessarily want to go to war either but who believed that Hitler had to be stopped before he invaded and conquered England and Europe was entirely fascist and totally his. Willkie wasn't the Republican to beat Roosevelt in 1940 because Willkie was an interventionist himself. But if Lindbergh had run? With that boyish manly aura of his? With all that glamour and celebrity, with his being virtually the first great American hero to delight America's emerging entertainment society? And with his unshakeable isolationist convictions that committed him to keeping our country out of this horrible war? I don't think it's far-fetched to imagine the election outcome as I do in the book, to imagine Lindbergh's depriving Roosevelt of a third term.

So what *The Plot Against America* essentially does is bring out the contingency of history, in various ways. In doing so, it also exposes the way in which icons like FDR tend to be employed to make what we study as history seem more inevitable than it really was. Casting Lindbergh as World War Two president instead, Roth brings out the isolationist and anti-Semitic tendencies that did also exist in the US at the time, not so much because of what Lindbergh in the novel actually does, but because he releases pre-existing popular sentiments. In that sense it dispels or at least questions the popular historical plot that America's Greatest Generation was simply good and righteous during the "Good War." As such, it engages in the memory wars about who gets to tell what story of America's role in the World War Two, not through criticism of Roosevelt, but rather through exposing the implicit effect of most Roosevelt allegories, which, like *Pearl Harbor,* allow one to believe in a purely heroic United States, in which any brokenness only contributes to its moral uprightness and determination.

Some of the conservative responses the novel received were predictably rabid. Bill Kaufmann for instance, calls the book "a repellent novel, bigoted and libelous of the dead, dripping with hatred

of rural America, of Catholics, of any Middle American who has ever dared stand against the war machine." Taki Theodoracopulos writes: "One cannot suspend disbelief, as fiction requires, when a hero like Lindbergh is besmirched, no matter what Roth says about not trying to send a message. One cannot suspend disbelief when it was American farm boys who died fighting those who were murdering Jews." Although these authors point to an ethical problem inherent in fictionalizing historical characters, Roth's efforts to detail historical events in the novel effectively dismiss their argument, and moreover, the point is not so much that the novel denies America's heroic role in the war, but rather says something about the clear-cut celebratory quality the past tends to assume in the process of becoming "History." Calling to mind Walter Benjamin's storm and chaos in the Angel of History vignette, Roth writes:

> Turned wrong way round, the relentless unforeseen was what we schoolchildren studied as 'History,' harmless history, where everything unexpected in its own time is chronicled on the page as inevitable. The terror of the unforeseen is what the science of history hides, turning a disaster into an epic. (113)

Roth, however, in *The Plot Against America*, also does "turn a disaster into an epic", by providing a plot, a consistent narrative, even if that narrative exposes unpleasant traits of 1940s American society. In doing that, Roth shows how a connection with FDR couches historical events more firmly into triumphalist American war memory. However, the act of reconnecting past and present through the reinstatement of FDR in the novel is highly problematic. In terms of plot, it is by far the most contrived and the least credible moment – the need to provide closure and a return to the historical course of events is clearly problematic after the novel's extensive investment in an alternative. The removal FDR icon is employed in *The Plot* to expose festering American anti-Semitism in an era whose moral imperfections have been forgotten, in part through FDR allegories, but when Roth tries to reinstate the FDR icon as the nation's embodiment and thereby rebuild the bridge, he is not wholly successful. As Owens argued, healing of the breach between past and present through allegory is not entirely possible.

Benjaminian Allegory and *The Golden Age*

All examples discussed so far have been largely celebratory of FDR – even those critical of the United States have sustained the heroic public image of FDR as a larger-than-life icon. However, Roosevelt was also a very controversial and intensely hated politician, and in many environments remains so in cultural memory, though perhaps less rabidly so than during his presidency. The Roosevelts in both *Pearl Harbor* and *The Plot Against America* are fundamentally healing figures in the remembrance of past trauma and strong links, connecting past and present in a meaningful and positive way, but, as Owens notes, allegories also tend to involuntarily show up some of the cracks they heal. Walter Benjamin even goes so far as to argue that that is the main

thing they do: in his short essay "The Ruin"[6] he maintains that history "stands written on nature's countenance in the signscript of transcience", suggesting that any representation of history in the present is by nature associated with loss and fragmentation:

> The allegorical physiognomy of natural history, which is brought onstage in the *Trauerspiel* is actually present as ruin. In the ruin, history has merged sensuously with the setting. And so configured, history finds expression not as a process of eternal life, but rather as one of unstoppable decline. Allegory thereby proclaims itself beyond beauty. Allegories are, in the realm of thought, what ruins are in the realm of things. (180)

Benjamin proposes a reading of allegories as ruins, fragments of the past that continue to exist in the present, not to integrate history or make the past relatable to the present, but rather as reminders of life's "unstoppable decline." This reading may, in terms or memory studies, be read as a prefiguration of Pierre Nora's later claim that *lieux de mémoire* are dead or near-dead traces of a congealed past, where previously there were lively *milieux de mémoire*. Although Benjamin does not explicitly address anything like what Nora called *milieux de mémoire*, both share the notion that the modern landscape is littered with literal and figurative ruins, whose meaning lies not in their ability to produce a connection with the past, but rather in their stress on the loss of that connection, which both deplore.

Gore Vidal, in *The Golden Age* (2000), the last of seven novels that together make up the Narratives of Empire series, too, deplores the corruption and fragmentation of American politics. *The Golden Age* ironically and disenchantingly deflates the maneuvering of FDR in a way that is almost sadistic. Vidal was a Democrat, but also eager to deflate mythologized heroes as a historian – although he used fiction to allow himself leeway for speculation he would not have had in historical research. In *The Golden Age*, a corrupt and power-mongering Roosevelt invites the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and deviously engineers his re-election in 1940. The novel describes the years 1939-1954 from the perspective of Caroline Sanford, fictional Roosevelt friend, and her nephew Peter Sanford. Thus, while the focalization is supposed to be sympathetic, it is also critical and aware of the hiatus between Roosevelt's public image and his individual character and manipulation. Caroline, for example, reflects on the fragility of her Roosevelt connection: "The nation was littered with former Roosevelt intimates who had been found unusable." (178) Through such comments on FDR's disloyalty to "unusable" friends, Gore Vidal, though a staunch Democrat, resists hagiographic interpretations, favoring a representation of Roosevelt as he assumes FDR was seen by contemporaries in Washington.

6 In *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media,* 180-186. Cambridge (MA): Belknap Harvard, 2008. Written in 1925; published in 1928. *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, 353-358. Excerpted from *Origin of the German Trauerspiel*, section 3, "Allegory and Trauerspiel." Translated by Michael W. Jennings.

Through the eyes of Caroline and Peter, Vidal also offers a glimpse no historical monograph could give on the relationship between Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt:

> Eleanor had been late in joining them. "There has always been something odd about my blood. But the doctor says there's nothing really wrong." As the President wheeled himself past her, he gave her a friendly slap on the bottom. "But what did he have to say about this big fat ass of yours?" Without a pause, Eleanor had said "I'm afraid, dear, you were never mentioned." Even the President had laughed, with every appearance of heartiness; and Caroline had glimpsed another aspect of the Roosevelt relationship. It was the shy Eleanor who held the knife and so was the one to be feared. (81)

Although witty and endearing in a way, Caroline's analysis is that it is really Eleanor who despite appearances holds power in the relationship. Elsewhere too, it becomes clear how deeply Eleanor Roosevelt is engorged in the wielding power over, with and in lieu of her husband:

> Peter was awed by the millions of votes these three men represented; and he watched, again with awe, as Mrs. Roosevelt put her lions through their paces. She spoke to them in a low voice; they listened closely. This was brute power and she was now exerting it. (124)

Although Eleanor Roosevelt is here entirely on top of the party bosses she is commanding, she is also tainted both by her association with them, and by her exertion of power she has not democratically won. Both these passages eroticize Eleanor Roosevelt by representing her as the one holding the whip. In the first instance this belittles FDR, and in the second it contributes to his re-nomination in 1939, but in both cases she is the decisive player, not FDR. Throughout, the novel goes out of its way to debunk Roosevelt's positive and inflated public image and simultaneously expose the manipulative performance of power. In doing so, Vidal punctures the imperial and glorifying cultural memory of FDR, while at the same time the loss of integrity in politics is presented as regrettable. The FDR icon in this instance is not the heroic representative of a glorious past, legible for Americans in the present and contributing to historical justification for American overseas interventions in conflicts. Rather, the pettiness and deceitfulness of the historical FDR is brought out. Though writing fiction, Vidal does claim a form of historical veracity and this leaves the iconic figure disappointingly fallible and unattractive. *The Golden Age* thus carries out Benjamin's vision of allegory as deplorably fragmenting.

The Golden Age is on some level a conspiracy novel: its plot revolves around Roosevelt's advance knowledge, indeed conscious provocation of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. The title refers to the 1940s as a pinnacle moment for America as a central power in the world, but also back to the eighteenth century in which the US came into its own domestically, as an independent former European colony. It refers back to Vidal's earlier novel *Burr*, another counternarrative in which he argues that Thomas Jefferson had illegitimate offspring with his female slave Sally Hemings.

Vidal's suggestion is that his novels present the other side, the unheard and unwanted narratives of American history, and thus, "The Golden Age" is an ironic reference to undue credit given by officially sanctioned history. The title is also reminiscent of "The Gilded Age" – a term for roughly the 1870s and 1880s coined by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner in their novel *The Gilded Age, A Tale of Today* (1873), that satirizes the greed and corruption of politicians. The Gilded Age is their ironic name for the era following the Civil War, marked by seeming success and growing wealth, but actually characterized by poverty, immigration problems and raging corruption. *The Golden Age* thus reads Roosevelt similarly as a supposedly glorious era, which is in fact fundamentally – through FDR himself – permeated with corruption. And finally, *The Golden Age* implicitly claims to also be "A Tale of Today": published in 2000, it is a product of the previously mentioned long 1990s, in which the US was the unchallenged world hegemon – superficially again a golden age, though in fact plagued by internal and external conflict and impending danger.

While Vidal, rightly or wrongly, attempts to lay bare mechanisms of power, politics and iconification which, despite the vindictiveness of his tone, he essentially seems to deplore, he does, by writing a counternarrative that effectively supports a popular conspiracy theory, tap into a long Republican tradition of mistrusting and discrediting FDR. In his afterword to the novel Vidal writes:

> It was well known in the whispering gallery of the day that FDR had provoked the Japanese into attacking us. In fact, our pre-eminent historian, Charles A. Beard, was on the case as early as 1941 with *President Roosevelt and the Coming of War*. Needless to say, apologists for empire have been trying for fifty years to erase him.

The whispering gallery in Washington is indeed the key location in which *The Golden Age* is set, and the novel speculates about what it is one might have heard there. However, the conspiracy narrative Vidal presents is also one that has been repeated like an incantation in Republican circles ever since. The notion of a whispering gallery thus assumes a new meaning – it is not just a place where one hears whispered the truth that never makes it into the history books, but also one in which repetitive sounds create a rhythmic babble, a right-wing antithesis to the similarly ritualized tale of the "apologists for empire" whom Vidal here upbraids.

Conspiracy narratives about Pearl Harbor have indeed flourished since the early 1940s, and are eerily echoic of one another. The argument Beard made in *President Roosevelt and the Coming of War, 1941: Appearances and Realities* is echoed in Charles C. Tansill's still popular *Back Door to War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1933-1941* (1952). The same arguments and sources are also to be found in Robert B. Stinnett's *Day of Deceit: The Truth About FDR and Pearl Harbor* (2000) and Gordon Prange's *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (1981, 60th anniversary reprint, 2001). Although such retellings are plenty and often successful through many reprints,

they are essentially very similar in narrative structure, phrases and tone, as their titles attest. In these books the same sequence of events is conjectured to have taken place as Vidal lets occur in his novel. Thus there is a sense of collage, creating a Benjaminian allegorical structure of the kind that Owens aptly calls "the epitome of counter-narrative, for it arrests narrative in place" (72). These are counternarratives, not only in the sense of narratives that go against the dominant reading, but also in the sense that they defy further narrativization.

The Golden Age, however, is different from these echoic whispering gallery arguments, not only because it is a novel, but because the novel is mildly sympathetic of FDR even while it exposes him as an Emperor-like leader with imperial ambitions not unlike Hitler's and Mussolini's. Vidal does not reject politics itself, but its corruption, whereas most other conspiracy theories, over and above disliking a big-government imperial president like FDR, express a wholesale mistrust of all politics and the state as such. As a result, they do not deplore, but actually relish the demolition of FDR as an icon. The fact that FDR continues to function as a gratifying icon to hammer on, however, is in itself telling of how flexible the icon is in allowing for a range of different kinds of allegorization. Roosevelt as a ruin that continues to invite ritual destruction, has, to return to Rothberg's thesis, a particularly interesting form of multidirectionality. Practically any government involvement can be interpreted as yet another version – even a copy, in a Beaudrillardian sense – of FDR's double-dealing in the case of the war engagement or the New Deal. Neither of these are the original instance, but they are key notes in an incantation, sung by the neoconservative movement in the 1980s, and more recently by the Tea Party, that is itself part of the fabric of American society. While *The Golden Age* enacts Benjamin's pessimistic interpretation of allegory as an ever declining ruin of the past that lives on in the present to disappoint, there is also a strongly anti-government contingent of natural FDR-haters who forever recast and repeat the same narrative which easily subsumes a fixed array of Roosevelt narratives.

Conclusion

FDR is an unusually fruitful cultural icon, especially to represent the nation and state because he is open to various kinds of allegorization. These allegorizations all connect past and present in one way or another, leading to a multitude of potential configurations of Roosevelt narratives in cultural memory. The Roosevelt icon lends itself to the projection of screen memories, in which he becomes the receptacle for collective issues and traumas that cannot comfortably be addressed directly. In other cases, the two texts involved in the allegory are not overlaid and mixed up to the same extent, but there is a clear correspondence between them – while their distance from each other is retained, the allegory provides a bridge between them. The FDR icon, because it is so easy to present as relatable, often forms that bridge. And finally, at times, Roosevelt is, sorrowfully or gleefully, presented as a ruin from the past that persists in the present. Although these are three different modes of allegorization, especially the first two are not always rigidly separable. The point is that all these diverse narratives use FDR allegories as a driving force.

In the following chapter I will explore why the Roosevelt icon is so open to interpretation as an allegorical figure. As a president he is obviously a logical metaphor for the nation as a whole, but he is so in a wide variety of ways. In line with Robert Burgoyne I have argued that, while Hollywood historical films – and, I would add, other mainstream narratives of nation – have in recent decades complicated their construction of historical narratives to include marginalized groups and troubling issues, Roosevelt as an iconic leader has continued to function in these narratives as an embodiment of the United States. He seems to do so to an unusual extent and in an unusually broad variety of ways, compared to other presidents. The key attribute to enable this, I will propose in the following chapter, is his disability, which allows him to function as, what Mitchell and Snyder call a material metaphor.

Chapter 7: Prosthetic Memory and the Dynamics of Disability

Introduction

"A house divided against itself cannot stand", that other paradigmatic presidential icon, Abraham Lincoln said in 1858 at a moment when the United States was about to collapse. In this chapter I will argue that, now that again both the US's role in the world, and its internal unity and international robustness are increasingly perceived as feeble,[1] the FDR icon acquires a peculiar new relevance as someone who literally could not stand and yet became an embodiment for all that is moral and victorious within the US and around the globe. In 1990s and later American Roosevelt representations, there is a recurrent insistence that his disability was "FDR's greatest strength", as the rallying cry of the National Organization on Disability had it in 1997 (Stein 51), and that FDR "Lifted himself from his wheelchair to lift this nation from its knees", as Jean Edward Smith put it in the motto for his best-selling biography *FDR* (2008). I am not concerned with whether his disability was the historical FDR's greatest strength or whether it was instrumental in helping lift America from its knees, but will argue that the disability is the greatest strength of the FDR icon in cultural memory, because remembrance practices can productively employ it to screen historical trauma and alleviate fears of impending American collapse. In doing so I will trace how the cultural remembrance and memorialization of his disability has been shaped over the last few decades, progressively more strongly and articulately as a means to shore up an increasing sense of domestic incapacity and international infirmity.

That I will not consider in great detail to what extent the historical FDR was helped, informed or toughened by his disease and having to cope with disability, does not mean that I doubt he was. Many others have written about this and most of these arguments are compelling, yet inevitably speculative in their reverse-engineering of how a long-dead and highly reticent historical person was psychologically affected by his disability. I do, however, trace the history of how FDR's disability was remembered by various groups and agents within the US. Particularly, I want to consider the disappearance act of FDR's ability and the appearance of the disability in American memory.

History of Remembering FDR's Disability

When early in July 2013 an eight-second clip of President Roosevelt in his wheelchair surfaced, it became instant world news (Walsh). No such footage had been available previously, barring a single well-known photograph of FDR in his wheelchair taken in 1941 by Margaret Suckley (see front), and another one that has hardly been disseminated. Without actually revealing anything

1 See for instance Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*.

previously unknown, the discovery of the clip made an incredible impact as news. It has been well-known that Roosevelt had had adult-onset poliomyelitis ever since the news of his illness was spread in 1921.[2] That he was unable, as a result, to walk unassisted and was wheelchair bound has been stressed more and more since the 1960s and particularly the 1980s when academic and popular monographs focusing on FDR's disability started to appear and receive widespread attention. From the very beginning, the attention to Roosevelt's disability was shrouded in narratives of how it positively enhanced the development of his character, and later, when it became more central in popular awareness, narratives of how he tried to hide its extent.

There are broadly three phases to be distinguished in the public perception of Roosevelt's disability.[3] The first starts briefly after Roosevelt became ill with polio in February 1921 and lasts until his death in 1945. In this period Roosevelt's physical condition was an issue in the public discussion first in the late 1920s upon his reentry into politics, then in 1932 when he became a presidential nominee, and finally in 1944 during his campaign for the reelection when his health was visibly deteriorating. The second phase is from April 1945 until the appearance in 1985 of Hugh Gallagher's *FDR's Splendid Deception*. Since his death in April 1945 Roosevelt's ill health in the last part of his presidency and his affliction with polio grew strongly as a focus for the greater public, initially in the wake of his sudden decease, and later when he was championed as a hero by the disability rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s. In those contexts the narrative of Roosevelt's illness and particularly the process of his "conquering" the setbacks incurred became central – often on a psychologizing level, describing the disability as a positive character-building experience.

In the third phase, public perceptions and representations of Roosevelt's disability continue to be profoundly influenced by Gallagher's book. *FDR's Splendid Deception* was a departure from previous narratives, in its stress on Roosevelt's secrecy about his affliction, and the machinery he employed to play down the extent of his disability. Moreover, Gallagher argued, as opposed to previous authors, that the psychological influence of the condition on FDR had been very profound, not only positively. This book has had an extremely widespread and positive reception – it has, among other things, been crucial in determining the final design of the national Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial in Washington DC, and has more decisively than previous images and stories of Roosevelt's disability narrated FDR as president who was first and foremost a polio-survivor, both stressing the positive effects this had on his service to the nation and the toll it took from him personally.

I briefly discuss each of these phases to point out the central moments, sites and artefacts that have contributed to FDR's widespread iconification as a disabled president over time. Together

2 Although there is an alternative theory that suggests he had Guillain-Barre syndrome, see Goldman et al. 32-40.
3 Christopher Clausen, "FDR's Hidden Handicap", *The Wilson Quarterly*, summer 2005,and Barbara Floyd, "Hugh Gallagher's Splendid Reception", *The Disability Studies Quarterly* 2010. Both these articles make a similar division.

these describe the large arch – now nearly a century since the onset of his illness – of key points representing changes in the public perception of Roosevelt's condition. I contextualize these culturally, and try to pinpoint what cultural needs these representations have served. While the phases outlined above are helpful to distinguish because they are clearly separated by particular insights, narratives, genres and audiences, they can hardly be considered clean breaks from one paradigm to another. Even if it is logical to consider 12 April 1945 a watershed moment in popular awareness of FDR's physical issues, public speculation about his health was already rife before his death in late 1944 and early 1945. Equally, psychologizing FDR's recovery process in the way Gallagher did already start in the 1970s.[4] However, the point is to show how and when FDR's disability became visible to a wide audience and address what function that element of the FDR icon acquired in cultural memory.

Franklin Roosevelt became ill in February 1921 when vacationing at Campobello Island (New Brunswick, Canada), probably having been infected on a visit to a boy scout camp (Davis *Beckoning* 651). He was diagnosed with infantile paralysis. When it became clear that he would probably remain crippled, his mother Sara Delano wished him to withdraw from political and professional life and retire with his wife and children to the family estate in Hyde Park. This response must be read against the background of the then current perception of polio as affecting the mental as well as the physical capabilities of the afflicted. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century "physical 'defects', both scientists and the casual observer increasingly assumed, went hand in hand with mental and moral 'defects'" (Nielsen 100-101). Most people who were physically disabled through polio ended up institutionalized in Spartan polio hospitals that increased their dependence on the help of professional caregivers. As an elite survivor FDR would in that paradigm be expected to become a wealthy invalid withdrawn from public life and taken care of by family servants. Eleanor Roosevelt and his personal advisor Louis Howe, however, supported FDR to reenter the public arena and resume his political career, despite his impairment which was a social drawback as much as a physical problem (Gallagher 53). FDR himself strongly and against all odds believed in the possibility of a full recovery and was committed to doing all in his power to improve, to the point of seeming ridiculously in denial. He pursued a large number of classical, new and alternative therapies to regain strength in his legs. He was treated several times at the supposedly salutary baths and revalidation clinic at Warm Springs, Georgia, and in 1927 turned them into a hospital and rehabilitation institute for polio victims.

Roosevelt returned to politics as leader of Al Smith's 1924 presidential campaign. This culminated in his historic "Happy Warrior" address nominating Smith as Democratic candidate and put him squarely back into political focus (Davis *Beckoning* 771). This is also the first time Roosevelt

4 Aside: *FDR's Splendid Deception* is employed here both as a paradigmatic representation of FDR's disability, and as a detailed source of information about its subject.

'walked' to the rostrum to deliver a speech, aided by a stick on one side and his son James's arm on the other. He was paralyzed from the waist down, so that he could only stand due to the steel braces on his legs, the fact that the rostrum was screwed to the floor, and thanks to his well-developed arm muscles (Gallagher 93).

When Roosevelt became governor of New York in 1928, his physical health became a topic of public interest, initially employed by the Republican campaign to prove Roosevelt's unfitness for the office. In a press inquiry about this Al Smith reacted famously: "But the answer to that is that a governor does not have to be an acrobat. We do not elect him for his ability to do a double back-flip or a handspring" (Ward, *Roosevelts* 267). Christopher Clausen indeed asserts that "Republicans soon stopped talking about Roosevelt's physical condition for fear of creating a sympathy vote for him" (26). During the campaign for his first presidential election the issue returned, and this time, Roosevelt invited Republican journalist and sympathizer Earle Looker to have him examined physically. Looker's article in *Liberty Magazine* (July 1931) "Is Franklin D. Roosevelt Physically Fit to Be President?" in its opening paragraph says:

> It is an amazing possibility that the next President of the United States may be a cripple. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Governor of the State of New York, was crippled by infantile paralysis in the epidemic of 1921 and still walks with the help of a crutch and a walking stick.

Although Looker cast himself as a Republican, he worked closely with Roosevelt's advisor Louis Howe, and Howe bought 50,000 reprints of this issue of *Liberty Magazine* for the Roosevelt campaign (Rollins 313). It is typical for the framing of Roosevelt's disability in the 1930s: on the one hand it was entirely clear and explicit that Roosevelt was "a cripple", and on the other hand no mention is made of a wheelchair. Saying that FDR "still walks with help", suggests both that he continues to walk and that he may soon stop needing help, and guides attention away from the fact that it is debatable whether Roosevelt's way of moving himself while upright constituted walking at all. Although the "amazing" in the "an amazing possibility" clearly primarily denotes surprise, it also carries a positive connotation. The assertion that FDR is "Governor of the State of New York" already implies that he is fit for high office, and the reference to "the epidemic of 1921" frames him as an innocent victim among many other citizens of a malevolent virus.

Clearly, both before and during Roosevelt's presidency Americans knew that the President had had poliomyelitis and was an 'invalid' as a result. Roosevelt did not so much hide as play down his disability in public – it was not widely known that he was unable to walk or stand unaided. He was publicly active in setting up charitable institutions, such as the rehabilitation hospital in Warm Springs, which he felt had benefitted him in his recovery and, famously, The March of Dimes, still one of the US's largest charities, which supported polio victims and financed research in order to develop a vaccine. This drew attention to his

own polio history, but also framed it as *history*, suggesting that FDR had had polio, but that now that he was recovered, he put his powers to helping others overcome the disease – as he had, was the implicit suggestion.

In his public functions Roosevelt was careful not to be seen, photographed or filmed in his wheelchair or while being lifted, for instance from his car. This was successful at the time – press photographers did not shoot, much less publish, pictures or film footage which showed Roosevelt in such helpless conditions (Winfield 114). This has changed dramatically: Roosevelt representations now deal very explicitly with the fact that he could not walk. Roosevelt presented himself mainly to the public through radio speeches, which obviously does not include a visual representation. He dealt with the disability as a factor in his public perception mainly through silence, accommodating the disability without drawing attention to doing so. The famous photos from Yalta, showing Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin – seated – exemplify this. One exception occurred weeks before his death: in one of his last public speeches, he explicitly apologized for addressing Congress from his chair:[5]

> I hope that you will pardon me for this unusual posture of sitting down during the presentation of what I want to say, but I know that you will realize that it makes it a lot easier for me not to have to carry about ten pounds of steel around on the bottom of my legs; and also because of the fact that I have just completed a fourteen-thousand-mile trip. (Address to Congress on Yalta, March 1, 1945)

However inconsistent this is compared to his previous silence on the issue of his own bodily condition – especially during the 1944 campaign, when he was visibly unwell and made intense efforts to appear as energetic as ever – this opening is also consistent with his previous treatment of his disability. Although he does not stand at this particular moment, he talks about standing, and about the physical energy he usually brings to public speaking, as he does even now, having just traveled 14,000 miles.

Roosevelt died of a cerebral haemorrhage on April 12, 1945 at the "Little White House" in Warm Springs, Georgia, his cottage at the site of the polio rehabilitation institute he had founded, where he went to recover physically. The occasion of his death drew a great deal of attention to his physical body, perhaps because of the surprising location and the unexpected moment, but also because Roosevelt's body, previously invested with political power and thought of primarily as representing the nation, suddenly became provokingly natural. In the wake of the news of how and where he died, obituaries gave attention to his general health and physical condition, far more than they had done during his presidency, and White House journalists started to become more open about witnessing Roosevelt's physical appearance (Lomazow 187).

5 Franklin Roosevelt, Address to Congress on Yalta, March 1, 1945.

Figure 13. Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin at Yalta, February 1945 (US Government photographer, Wikimedia Commons)

In a probing study of "Reactions to the Death of President Roosevelt" Harold Orlansky in 1947 already established that:

> Republican Party propagandists had publicized reports of Roosevelt's poor health during the November 1944 election campaign. But after Roosevelt's re-election, the press was silent on the subject, although ill-health of the President is a major news story. This silence is significant in itself, since it can be ascribed to compelling social motives rather than ignorance. Apparently the myth of a vigorous, energetic leader is not restricted to dictatorships. The cult of physical strength reaches deep into the body politic. (237-238)

While Orlansky obviously takes Roosevelt's ill health and subsequent death as his starting point, his remark about "the myth of a vigorous, energetic leader" also bears on Roosevelt's disabled body. He suggests that Roosevelt's weak body was not referred to out of a kind of embarrassment or fear to harm the status of Roosevelt as a mythic leader and perhaps even by implication weaken the nation in the midst of its struggle with the dictatorships in Europe. In any case, he points out that the occlusion of the extent of FDR's disability was not simply Roosevelt's strategy, but also a societal response to worrying information. Moreover, he thus explains that following FDR's death both the illness and the disability became less precarious issues to address.

In the fifteen years or so following Roosevelt's death it became increasingly universal knowledge that FDR had had polio and that this incapacitated him to a larger extent than was visible during his presidency. May and Hill suggest that this new awareness was mainly interpreted within the

frame that "disability conferred extraordinary prowess on other senses" (May and Hill 604).[6] Thus, it was regarded as a misfortune that strengthened other parts of his body and mind. In the late 1940s and early 1950s the most common reading of Roosevelt's disability was that – as Eleanor had once said in an interview – "perhaps a blessing in disguise."[7] If the episode had affected Roosevelt's character development, it was only to make him stronger, more resilient and more capable of empathy with those in trouble. FDR's daughter Anna Roosevelt elaborated on the same idea writing a piece in 1949 for *Woman Magazine* titled "How Polio Helped Father."

Practically all narratives of Roosevelt's illness and disability shared this gist, on the one hand understating the extent to which it affected him, and on the other suggesting that it was something that had been successfully conquered. Its effects were interpreted as primarily positive on the level of character development, strengthening his determination and teaching him empathy. This was, certainly initially, a clear departure from former attitudes towards disability and polio, away from earlier forms of ostracizing the disabled. Roosevelt contributed to that change through his example and by creating, funding and developing in Warm Springs, Georgia, a polio rehabilitation center he had 'discovered' in his own rehabilitation process. The announcement to the world of the discovery of Jonas Salk's polio vaccine on April 12, 1955 – on the tenth anniversary of FDR's death – completed the narrative that the challenges and suffering of an individual man had led, through the March of Dimes – itself a reference to the radio news show "March of Time" – to a victory over epidemic disease for the entire world.

An important moment in the coloring-in of the narrative of FDR as a character strengthened through polio was when, in 1960, the biographical film *Sunrise at Campobello* (dir. Vincent Donehue) came out, based on a 1958 play by Dore Schary. Beginning at the family's vacation home on Campobello Island, New Brunswick, on the border between Maine and Canada, in the summer of 1921, *Sunrise at Campobello* depicts FDR in early scenes as vigorously athletic, enjoying games with his children and sailing his boat. He is suddenly stricken with fever and then paralysis, and subsequent scenes focus on the ensuing conflict in the following weeks between the bedridden FDR, Eleanor Roosevelt, his mother and Louis Howe over FDR's political future. A later scene portrays FDR literally dragging himself up the stairs as, through grit and determination, he painfully strives to overcome his physical limitations and not remain an invalid. In the final triumphant scene, FDR is shown re-entering public life as he walks to the speaker's rostrum at the 1924 Democratic National Convention, aided by heavy leg braces and on the arm of his eldest son, a "Happy Warrior" as much as Al Smith, whom FDR nominated in his address with that title. Although this narrative continued the older suggestion that Roosevelt had gained mental strength because of his illness and disability, the reticence about the topic

6 This theme is articulated in their 1984 article about popular views on disability and regarded as a "historical image", suggesting that by 1984 it was outdated. (That the emancipation of people with disabilities was not completed in 1984 is given away by the glaring objectification in the article's title "How Shall We See Them?")
7 Quoted in Theodore Lippman, Jr, *The Squire of Warm Springs,* 1977, 81.

gave way to popular visibility and celebration of FDR's handicap, and, to some extent, to the emancipation of disabled people through Roosevelt's success.

Also in 1960, one of the first monographs about Roosevelt's manner of handling his disability appeared: Jean Gould's *A Good Fight, The Story of F.D.R.'s Conquest of Polio.* As the title suggests, the book stressed the victory narrative, in which Roosevelt had overcome polio as a prelude to overcoming the nation's major crises of the twentieth century. Both of these narratives follow a basic pattern Mitchell and Snyder outline in their book *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*: the disability is the reason for telling the story in the first place, and narrative closure is provided by the suggestion that the disability is "conquered."

Mitchell and Snyder argue that this pattern is near-universal: narratives in almost any culture are, they argue, more than readers tend to notice at first sight, rife with disabled characters, who deviate from the norm and are regarded as aberrant and less than complete. These characters have two main roles:

> Our thesis centers not simply upon the fact that people with disabilities have been the object of representational treatments, but rather that their function in literary discourse is primarily twofold: disability pervades literary narrative, first, as a stock feature of characterization, and second, as an opportunistic metaphorical device. We term this perpetual discursive dependency upon disability *narrative prosthesis*. (47)

As has become customary in the field of disability studies, Mitchell and Snyder regard the dominant perception of disability as imperfection or the ominous and meaningful absence of ability as a cultural construction communicating a significant point about the mainstream, able, culture. First, they argue that the disabled individual, unlike the run-of-the-mill able-bodied, requires a narrative justification, and therefore inspires storytelling. Such stories often end with the punishment or restoration to able-bodiedness of the protagonist. Second, disabled bodies function as metaphors: "physical and cognitive anomalies promise to lend a 'tangible' body to textual abstractions; we term this metaphorical use of disability the *materiality of metaphor*, and analyze its workings as narrative prosthesis" (47-48). The implication of this theory is that FDR characters and their "conquest" of polio as portrayed in these films are materialized metaphors for something else – I will argue: for the United States, as a from the 1960s on, increasingly wounded nation.

To explain these processes, Mitchell and Snyder analyze Sophocles' *Oedipus*. Presumably because of his own experience with having a limp, incurred as a result of his father's abandonment in his infancy, Oedipus can solve the Sphinx's riddle by answering "the man who walks with a cane" (61), and later his self-blinding coincides with the moment he becomes a seer, both literally – he understands what has happened – and in the sense that he becomes an interpreter of what

the able-bodied do not normally perceive. Mitchell and Snyder also draw attention to other treatments, and non-treatments, of Oedipus's disabilities in the plays, for instance the fact that his limp is mostly disregarded, but this particular element of the physically disabled as extra able in a metaphorical sense seems especially relevant to Roosevelt narratives. In the same way as Oedipus could foresee because he could not literally see, the narrative perception of FDR's inability to walk has become that of a strength or an element uniquely enabling him to "lift the nation from its knees."

One other element that Oedipus and FDR share, other than their hardly visible yet important disabilities, is their position as supreme leader. Ernst Kantorowicz theorized the now classic double act of embodiment medieval kings performed, as on the one hand a "body natural", a tangible and vulnerable physique, and on the other a "body politic", which in the middle ages meant that political power was located absolutely and by divine order in the King (21-24). This distinction of "the King's two bodies" has been expanded by later critics to include political leaders who were neither royalty nor medieval absolute leaders, because it is a fruitful way of thinking about a leader as both an individual body and the embodiment of a larger institution. This terminology has also been applied to FDR, particularly to the issue of dealing with his disability, for instance by Houck and Kiewe in *FDR's Body Politics: The Rhetoric of Disability*, by Frank Castigliola in "Roosevelt's Body and National Power" and by Sally Stein in "The President's Two Bodies." Such texts tend to suggest that either the public perception, or the autofabrication of FDR's body politic was informed by his disabled body natural, but they hardly touch on the role of cultural memory in this process, which is what this chapter sets out to understand. I adopt Mitchell and Snyder's approach to representation of disability in literature as *narrative prosthesis*, with the nuance that I apply that notion to cultural texts and the narrative texture of historical events rather than to literary texts. I will also use their concept of the "materiality of metaphor" to argue that the FDR icon, because of his disability, is unusually fit to engender *prosthetic memories*, a term I will explain through a study of the movie *Hyde Park on Hudson* (2012).

A handicap that could not have been remembered from Roosevelt's actual presidency, because it then simply was not visible to the public, entered cultural memory through such films as *Sunrise at Campobello*. However, there remains a contrast between the implicit and indirect awareness of his invalidity during Roosevelt's presidency and its portrayal in the decades that followed it as a conquered misfortune, and the public image of FDR in a wheelchair that has evolved in the last few decades. In recent representations of Roosevelt, memorial, cinematic or documentary, his wheelchair has practically become FDR's most defining and recognizable feature. In movies about World War II made over the last decades, when viewers see a man in a wheelchair enter the scene, they understand immediately that this must be FDR. So whereas many knew about Roosevelt's invalidity during his presidency, his wheelchair has come to occupy center-stage only relatively recently. An early example is the 1982 musical film *Annie* (discussed at length in

chapter 5), in which the protagonist is received by Roosevelt who is in a wheelchair, and offers in passing to teach her to ride one too. This image recalls the famous 1941 photo of FDR in his wheelchair with Ruthie Bie (front).

Part of the reason for the increasing omnipresence of wheelchair imagery whenever Roosevelt is represented is no doubt the evolving focus on the visual and the cinematic quality of most recent representations. However, a more political explanation for the rise to fame of Roosevelt's wheelchair is that following the success of the Civil Rights movement, disabled Americans too started to demand more equal opportunities, culminating in 1990 in the Americans with Disabilities Act (Pletcher and Pletcher). As part of that process, Roosevelt was roped into a rigorous campaign of identity politics, but in a broader sense too, interest in the "human-angle" perspective on his invalidity increased throughout US society. A scholarly classic from the early era of disability activism is Theodore Lippmann's book *The Squire of Warm Springs* (1977) which cast FDR as an early disability rights activist, and a visionary therapy designer who hailed the radical belief that for polio survivors, the physical rehabilitation was an element in the social and emotional adjustment process rather than vice versa.

But the real turning point in terms of remembering Roosevelt's disability came with Hugh Gallagher's paradigmatic *FDR's Splendid Deception: The Moving Story of Roosevelt's Massive Disability – And the Intense Efforts to Conceal It from the Public* (1985). This book created and reinforced popular narratives about FDR's experience of polio and the resultant disability. Hugh Gallagher, himself disabled as a result of a bout of polio, suggests that Roosevelt very actively, indeed obsessively, tried to hide his disability. Gallagher particularly argues that the polio episode and FDR's failure to recover fully were extremely traumatic, and had a highly formative effect on his character. According to Gallagher Roosevelt went through periods of intense depression as a result (22-23). Various authors have argued that this may have been Gallagher's projection of his own post-polio depression, suggesting in itself the FDR icon's openness to operating as a screen.[8] Nonetheless, Gallagher's book has been immensely important in shaping the cultural memory of FDR's disability, because it foregrounded the extent of his handicap, particularly the wheelchair, and emphasized the presumable suffering involved in dealing with it, physically, emotionally and socially. Moreover, it turned the strategy of downplaying Roosevelt's invalidity, which kept it vague in cultural perception during his presidency, into an additional burden in cultural memory. *FDR's Splendid Deception* has also had an enormous impact on the long process surrounding the development of the FDR Memorial in Washington DC.

Gallagher perhaps recognized himself in FDR, and the comparison with FDR is indeed easily made. Philip Roth does so too, in *The Plot Against America* which features young Philip's cousin

8 E.g. Barbara Floyd in "Hugh Gregory Gallagher's Splendid Reception", *Disability Studies Quarterly* 30: 3-4 (2010).

Alvin, who goes to war in Europe in 1940, fighting with the Canadian army, and is crippled. Through Alvin, Roth shows what situation disabled men found themselves in, with heavy uncomfortable braces and ill-fitting prostheses, and Alvin's ensuing passivity stresses the contrast between what most crippled young men were reduced to and FDR's resilience and opportunity to continue to be publicly active, due to his wealth and supportive environment. Roth's 2010 novel *Nemesis* does something similar. Its protagonist Bucky Cantor is a vigorous young games teacher who contracts polio and is severely disabled by it. Rather than trying to overcome its effects Bucky withdraws from his community, breaks off his engagement and leads an isolated and depressed life. Alvin and Bucky can be seen as foils for Roosevelt – the polio victim who, in contrast to others, did come back a stronger and more engaged person. Like *The Plot Against America*, *Nemesis* suggests that Roosevelt was an individual outlier, not because of his disability, but because he could continue his career in spite of his disability. Through such foils as Alvin and Bucky, Roth effectively shows how Roosevelt's disabled body was turned into a materialized metaphor of American grit in the face of adversity in cultural memory.

Later documentary films like *Warm Springs* (2005), and *FDR: A Presidency Revealed* (2005), and experiential guided tours like that of the Roosevelt Home in Hyde Park (NY) have echoed the interpretation of Roosevelt as unusually resilient, often with the connotation that this form of being exceptionally buoyant and irrepressible is also profoundly American. *Warm Springs* essentially starts where *Sunrise at Campobello* leaves off. It focuses on Roosevelt's discovery of the hot baths at Warm Springs and his development of the pools into a polio rehabilitation center. The film stresses how Roosevelt successfully turned the setback of his individual disease into something positive and constructive for polio victims throughout the nation, suggesting simultaneously that he single-handedly pulled the extremely poor, backward and segregated village of Warm Springs from a state of dilapidation into the twentieth century. This narrative functions as a bridge in cultural memory, between Roosevelt's conquest over his disability to a pilot project for the New Deal.

In modern representations, Roosevelt's disability is practically always portrayed as a nearly insurmountable personal trauma, which he nonetheless overcame, adding to his massive accomplishment, ability to empathize, and charm. This aspect is now overemphasized, initially mainly by the American disabled lobby, to the point of suggesting that it was Roosevelt's most important characteristic. This is far removed from Roosevelt's own attitude toward his disability. FDR and his team autofabricated the disability, and especially the wheelchair out of view, and the memory of it has appeared after his death, based on later representations. While FDR restrained the presence of his disability in his public image, its intensive use is now usually part of directly celebratory remembrance practices. I argue that Roosevelt's disability and the presumed trauma surrounding it in his private life have become a central aspect of the FDR icon, because they can easily function allegorically for other American traumas in cultural memory. The historic FDR's silence surrounding his disability is an important enabling factor in this metaphor.

Memorializing FDR's Disability: from Hiding to Highlighting

While the FDR icon, through the disability as one of its key attributes, lends itself well to narratives of inclusive consensus, on a more concrete level the historical Roosevelt did not want to be portrayed in an iconic fashion, in a Peircean sense. The now famous quotation often cited in discussions of this topic comes from Roosevelt's personal friend Chief Justice Felix Frankfurter's diary.[9] According to Frankfurter, Roosevelt wanted a small and simple monument, about which he said:

> [It should be] placed in the center of that green plot [in front of the National Archives in Washington D.C., and should be] a block about the size of this (putting his hand on his desk). I don't care what it is made of, whether limestone or granite or what not, but I want it to be plain, without any ornamentation, with the simple carving "In memory of…."

It is typical for Roosevelt to have formulated such a modest wish, while at the same time he was engaged in building the first presidential library for the public on the grounds of his private estate. As a museum and archive dedicated to the study of and education about Franklin D. Roosevelt, it has often been read as a massive memorial in its own right. However, the one time he explicitly expressed himself on the question of a monument with no other function than to remember, Roosevelt was clear. He did not want to be remembered through a statue of his body natural, but made a point of being memorialized in connection with the body of his work, near the National Archives, where most of his executive impact is laid down on paper, as the FDR Presidential Library does too.

Nonetheless, there are some statues of Roosevelt in the US. While other nations have built iconic Roosevelt statues without much trouble,[10] the conspicuous circumspection of American memorial artists signals how sensitive this issue became in the US. The memorial that Roosevelt himself wanted, according to Frankfurter, was built only in 1965, and the eventual, large Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial on Washington's Cherry Walk was dedicated on May 2, 1997. Stein writes about the first official memorial representation of Roosevelt in her article, the Roosevelt dime, struck in 1946:

> [T]he numismatic portrait exceptionalizes Roosevelt by withholding any indications of a body below the head. Coins admittedly offer cramped spaces for portraiture, the small size of the dime being most restrictive. Even so, the physiognomy on the Roosevelt dime stops unnecessarily short with the chin, especially compared with the way necks and sometimes shoulders figure as prominent supports in the case of the Lincoln penny, the Jefferson nickel, and the Washington quarter. (42)

9 Cited by Frankfurter himself in a 1961 article in *The Atlantic Monthly*.
10 The Statue of US President Franklin D. Roosevelt on Grosvenor Square in London, for instance, was erected in 1948. It portrays Roosevelt standing, using a cane. A Roosevelt statue in Oslo (also erected in 1948), shows him seated.

While this particular argument appears far-fetched, Stein's argument that Roosevelt is unnecessarily disembodied is true for most early American Roosevelt monument designs. The FDR Presidential Library now features a statue of Roosevelt, and some busts, which obviously circumvent the difficulty of portraying his disability. The statue is of Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt in the Library's Kerr Memorial Garden, and does portray them in full, but this was only made in 2003.[11]

Figure 14. Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt, Sculpture by StudioEIS, Senator Robert S. Kerr Memorial Garden, Hyde Park (my photo)

The original, privately funded, memorial in Washington, which followed FDR's wish to the letter, was dedicated exactly twenty years after Roosevelt's death on April 12, 1965. Preparations for a larger national memorial started in August 1955 with a joint resolution of Congress, Public Law 84-572, establishing the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial Commission, to select a design, acquire funding and oversee the construction of a public FDR memorial in Washington DC.[12]

The initial design, by William Pedersen and Bradford Tilney was chosen by the memorial commission in 1962, selected by an expert jury from 574 entries in a national competition. The design consisted of eight giant "steles" – the highest of which was to be 167 feet, higher than the Jefferson Memorial – each inscribed with parts of Roosevelt's speeches. The presence

11 http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/library/wallace.html, There are other examples of this from recent dates, e.g. Edward Hlavka's sculpture of FDR standing at a lectern in Rapid City, South Dakota (2006): http://www.vanderkrogt.net/statues/object.php?record=ussd40&webpage=ST
12 "The Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial", Report to the President and Congress, 30 May 1978.

of the texts as the only supplement to abstract form underscored the absence of Roosevelt's body from the monument, or as a favorable critic noted the design "quite literally made FDR's words his monument" (Stein 44). While this is essentially what Roosevelt himself did too, through his attempts to associate his memory primarily with his library and radio speeches, the design was criticized for being impersonal and remote from FDR's character and personality. Clearly, this memorial did not offer the needed space to embed issues of the present in Roosevelt remembrance (Rainey 381).

The second major attempt at an appropriate design for a large Roosevelt Memorial, had the same problem and was even more abstract and eerily disembodied. After Pedersen and Tilney had resigned their commission in 1965, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial Commission selected Marcel Breuer in 1966 to propose a new design. This consisted of a pinwheel of seven long triangular darts, centered around a granite cube showing Roosevelt's face in an incised halftone photojournalistic portrait. Breuer's reason for choosing the cubic centerpiece is strangely telling:

> I chose the cube because it is the very center, the very base of form – practically perfect… The globe is comparable, but it isn't static; it moves too much. I preferred the great stability, the "standing power," of the cube. FDR had "standing power" too. (Lippard 51)

Although FDR's twelve-year presidency did provide stability in a tumultuous era, "Standing power" is of course exactly what FDR did not have – the correct expression is *staying* power – but the slip suggests how present the memory of a standing FDR still was in 1967. The cube is an attempt at making the memorial "static", although Roosevelt, despite his disability, was emphatically not, nor is the FDR icon. To make the proposed memorial more of a Roosevelt Memorial – but inadvertently also more of a hiding game – audio recordings of Roosevelt's speeches were to be played continuously as part of the memorial. The new design was thus as abstract as its predecessor. Both designs did contain a visual image of Roosevelt, but both halfheartedly so, portraying him either unwillingly in response to criticism, or only vaguely. Both used Roosevelt's speeches, and in both cases this accidentally but undeniably worked to draw attention to the absence of his body (Rainey 382).

In 1972 Congress decided to add the assistant director of development from the National Park Service, Raymond L. Freeman, to the Memorial Committee (Rainey 383). Educated by the previous failures Freeman articulated the requirements for the design more precisely than before: it was to be "a 'landscape solution' that would harmonize with the beauty of the existing park-like setting; that water be a significant element of the memorial environment; that no major structure dominate the site; that an image or images of Roosevelt were appropriate; and the recreational area be retained."[13] Landscape architect Lawrence Halprin made the first version of

13 The Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial, Report to the President and Congress, 30 May 1978, 6.

his eventually successful design in 1974. It consisted of a series of four 'outdoor rooms', each one dedicated to each of Roosevelt's four terms as president, as well as to the Four Freedoms. Halprin was torn about the position in which he wanted to show Roosevelt:

> In his notes from 12 March 1974 [Halprin] indicated that he would like something "bigger than life, standing with cape and cane and braces – because that's how most of us remember [FDR]." Four days later, Halprin changed his mind … [and] also admitted to himself, "The statue issue is a tough one in terms of scale. Also should [FDR] be seated as he normally was when we saw him or standing… I think sitting is better – but how?" (Tuchman 98)

It is striking that Halprin remembers Roosevelt in the first instance in a standing position, echoing in a sense Breuer's Freudian reference to "standing power." Insofar as Halprin has seen Roosevelt standing at all, only the upper half of his body would have been visible and the cane and braces would have been out of sight. The difference in formulation between "[standing], as most of us remember" and "seated as he normally was when we saw him" suggests that Halprin became aware of the fact that memory, even a presumably collective memory, as the use of the plural pronoun suggests, may have differed from the actual position Roosevelt was usually seen in. However, even Halprin still remembered FDR as able to stand, and clearly does not in the first place envisage a wheelchair.

While the Roosevelt figure that Halprin eventually chose for the monument was still "bigger than life" it did not have the huge proportions he initially envisaged (Rainey 385-386). Moreover, Halprin eventually chose to include a number of statues by various sculptors in the Memorial, not only of Roosevelt himself, but also depicting scenes, such as men in a breadline (Figure 16), and a man listening to a radio. Such scenes are both vividly visual and invite the visitor to participate. The walls of the Memorial have inscriptions of passages from famous speeches and Fireside chats, but that is practically the only element of the former designs that remained. In contrast to the earlier abstract designs, Halprin's is extremely accessible, almost more like an interactive outdoor museum than a memorial.

The memorial shows Roosevelt seated and clad in a giant cape, which obscures the object he is sitting in or on, leaving open whether it is a wheelchair. In the version that was officially dedicated in 1997, the memorial remains ambiguous: Roosevelt's disability is not denied, but it neither is it openly visible. In that sense it is strikingly similar to Roosevelt's own manner of dealing with it. While both Roosevelt and Halprin kept to the strategy of not lying about the disability, but choosing to obscure it fairly actively – a strategy the Roosevelt family approved of – in the 1990s it had become debated. Lobby groups such as the National Organization on Disability, headed by Alan Reich, strongly opposed the way in which the Memorial persisted in what they perceived as treating Roosevelt's disability as something that needed hiding. Michael Deland, a board member of the National Organization on Disability argued that FDR "lived in

Figure 15. Franklin Roosevelt, National Memorial, Washington DC (my photo)

Figure 16. Sculpture of a breadline at the FDR Memorial (my photo)

a wheelchair and history should record it."[14], thereby raising the question who should decide what "history" must record. Reuben Rainey argues that "it is clearly the prerogative and the responsibility of those who benefit from the deeds of an individual to decide how that individual will be appropriately commemorated" (Rainey 378), to counter the arguments of those who have wanted to limit Roosevelt's memorialization to the preference he himself expressed to Felix Frankfurter. However, the idea that disabled Americans should take particular responsibility for the Roosevelt memorial, since they benefited from his presidency more than others, is by no means obvious. It rather seems that movements like the National Organization on Disability wanted Roosevelt to represent them retrospectively more than he actually did – claiming the icon thereby, as a prosthetic figure. Hoping to defuse the threatening escalation, Halprin added tiny wheels to the legs of the chair in which Roosevelt is seated in the Roosevelt Memorial's main sculpture (Figure 17).

Figure 17. The "Wheelchair" part of the sculpture of Franklin Roosevelt at the National Memorial (my photo)

Protesters against the plans to portraying Roosevelt in the Memorial without visible signs of his disability, using the slogan "Don't hide FDR's source of strength", threatened to disturb the dedication ceremony of the Memorial, until President Clinton asked Congress to mandate an addition to the planned monument showing FDR in his wheelchair. So the first dedication on 2 May 1997 went on undisturbed, after the appendage to the Memorial – itself a prosthesis to sustain an already debilitated monument – had been ordered. At this dedication Clinton said:

14 Meghan Mutchler. "Roosevelt's Disability an Issue at Memorial." *New York Times*, April 10, 1995, A8.

> It was that faith in his own extraordinary potential that enabled him to guide his country from a wheelchair. And from that wheelchair, and a few halting steps, leaning on his son's arms or those of trusted aides, he lifted a great people back to their feet and set America to march again toward its destiny. (quoted in Houck and Kiewe 3)

With the juxtaposition of the wheelchair and the march of America toward its destiny Clinton suggests that the wheelchair was instrumental in lifting the great people. Portraying America as having fallen on the march toward its destiny and needing to be lifted works particularly well because the wheelchair of the man doing the lifting is all too real, if invisible in the memorial at that moment. The suggestion is that America metaphorically went through what Roosevelt had experienced in the body, and that the election of a disabled man as its savior was a natural part of America's Manifest Destiny.

After the dedication Halprin went back to work with the added assignment and asked sculptor Robert Graham, who had already made some of the other sculptures for the monument, to design one of Roosevelt in his wheelchair. In 2001 a "Prologue" was added to the memorial – an anteroom to the four other outdoor rooms, empty except for a sculpture of Roosevelt in his wheelchair – and wearing his glasses – in the middle. The sculpture is life-size, but looks smaller in the large space, and out of style with the rest of the memorial. Artistically its addition is certainly no improvement, but it does show how awkwardly political Roosevelt's disability still is. The controversy is resolved to some extent, but the compromise remains uneasy: it is still visible that there has been one. In the sequel to his previous speech, held at the dedication of the Prologue to the Memorial on 10 January 2001, Clinton continued:

> By showing President Roosevelt as he was, we show the world that we have faith that in America you are measured for what you are and what you have achieved, not for what you have lost. (Houck and Kiewe 4)

Here Roosevelt's wheelchair is not cited as a mark of strength for himself, but it does inspire the faith Clinton refers to. Clinton stages it as an expression of the grand narrative of American exceptionalism: the fact that Roosevelt could be the hero he was, shows America sees people's personally acquired merits and does not judge them by their misfortunes. In a sense Clinton here completes the argument he began in 1997, suggesting that the heroism that was first Roosevelt's own great strength was transferred to the nation. This resolution to a long and painful process of creating a national Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial essentially ropes FDR into a long tradition of disabled figures in literature and memory as narrative prosthesis.

Figure 18. FDR in his wheelchair, Prologue to the National Memorial (my photo)

Historical Interpretation and Prosthetic Memory: Freeman Tilden and Alison Landsberg

In the 1950s journalist Freeman Tilden was employed by the National Park Service to research and write about America's National Parks and National Historic Sites, and to create guidelines for NPS guides to interpret the sites in order to educate visitors about their national heritage (Tilden ix-xvi). Tilden wrote several books, the most important of which are *The National Parks and What They Mean to You and Me* (1954) and *Interpreting Our Heritage* (1957). The latter was commissioned by the NPS and continues to be used as a handbook for public historians who want to teach history to audiences outside the context of formal schooling, usually at an historic site that needs a narrative interpretation to make it accessible to the general public. The short book is centered around six principles that Tilden lays out, which he calls *Interpretation* by guides:

I. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.

II. Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
III. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.
IV. The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
V. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.
VI. Interpretation addressed to children (…) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. (9)

The first principle particularly expresses what I regard as a central tenet of American historical tourism: practically any historical site offers a sensuous experience to the visitor; history must be presented as experiential. Tilden's paradigmatic claim is that national heritage can only take on meaning for the individual visitor when the interpretation offered somehow connects it to his or her own experience. Interpretation is an act of translation from the enigmatic heritage site or object to the personally relatable experience of the visitor. An example he gives comes from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Home at Hyde Park:

> It is the room where the President was born. You could put up a label and say, "President Roosevelt was born in this room." That is accurate information. Or in personal contact with his group the interpreter would be at liberty to state the fact in any elaborated way he might please. But someone had an inspiration here. What you see is a reproduction of the telegram sent by the happy father, James Roosevelt, to a friend announcing the arrival in Hyde Park "of a bouncing boy, weight 9½ pounds, this morning." It is just what you or I would have done, and you instantly feel kinship not merely with the Roosevelts, but with the whole mansion and area. (14)

The personal and relatable telegram inspires, Tilden suggests, a feeling of kinship in the visitor. The Roosevelts, and the whole mansion and area become familiar, not just in the figurative sense, but in the sense that one is invited to identify both with the proud father himself, and with the addressee – a close family friend. Thus, interpreting for Tilden means to offer a pedagogical bridge from the individual to the larger narrative, through the personal or the experiential, so that the visitor can relate to it on a sensuous and emotional level. Such interpretation must involve "the whole man" and aim to "provoke." Likewise the wheelchair in the FDR Home and other adjustments became objects that allowed visitors to experience who FDR "really" was, creating a sense of him that American citizens who experienced his presidency could not have had. Thus, Tilden's Interpretation offers experiences to visitors that are intended to be or seem similar to the experience of a site's history, to be like a close friend of the Roosevelts receiving their telegram or wandering around their house. Tilden is interested in interpreting scientifically

or historically proven truth, but also in provoking "the whole man" to undergo an encounter with history. He provides strategies of experiential learning to teach history. The experience, however, also offers visitors an artificial image of FDR in a wheelchair, which is strangely at odds with the lived memories of people who experienced his presidency.

The FDR Home is still managed by the NPS, and the guides interpreting the site in group tours still work essentially with Tilden's principles. This means that each tour is different, because Interpreters are different (Principle III), but particularly also that most tours include the invitation to "imagine what it was like to be FDR" through imagining what it was like to be in a wheelchair. There is a wheelchair exhibited in the home, and on most tours attention is drawn to the hand-pulled lift by which FDR could move himself upstairs, including the fact that he did not want the lift to be electrified, because he was afraid that in case of fire he would be unable to leave the house. Through such emotive and vividly imaginable fears, visitors are encouraged to sympathize with FDR, almost literally by being put in his seat. Thus, the goal is to create the impression, mostly through the concrete use of the actual site, that visitors can experience history from the front rows. The assurance that "this is where it happened" allows for the insertion of props like FDR's wheelchair, turning it into a public attribute, which it had not been during FDR's presidency.

Tilden's concept of Interpretation, designed for National Park Service educators to help visitors connect their personal lives to the national heritage presented, is a forerunner of Alison Landsberg's term *prosthetic memory*. Tilden's approach is a crucial marker of American strategies of dealing with the past – a strategy that Michael Kammen also noted in *Mystic Chords of Memory*. Largely because of Tilden's influential manual, museums and heritage sites have come to think of an experiential approach as the single best way to present and make accessible their material, so the prosthetic memory that Landsberg analyzes, is a cultural phenomenon produced in America since the middle decades of the twentieth century.

Landsberg's *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (2004) theorizes memories that operate in mass culture and are created primarily through cinema and other experiential mass media, such as interactive museum exhibitions. Her widely adopted term "prosthetic memory" refers to memories generated not through direct "lived" experience or "organic" family memory but through experiential representations. Such representations, she argues, create prosthetic memories; prosthetic because they are non-organic and interchangeable, but also useful and capable of influencing the body they are appended to. Prosthetic memory is a mediated form of memory, alongside memories a person has lived through, or "organically" inherited from parents or other ethnic or cultural forbears. Landsberg argues that while people realize that prosthetic memories are not real, they can still, to some extent function as such. Prosthetic memory "emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, at an experiential site such as a movie theater or museum" (2).

While I see Landsberg's point – memory is by nature constructed in the present, and always a flawed representation of the past – I find it important to distinguish degrees in the extent to which historical narratives can come to function as memories. For instance, seeing a documentary about historical events one has experienced from a distance, produces memories of watching a documentary, but additionally, those memories can seem like real memories of the event, especially if one's lived experience of the event was also mediated by television. Watching historical films about slavery or mass migration to the US may also produce memory-like images, but there is no confusion about the artificial nature of those "memories." This is fundamentally different for, in my personal case, footage of the fall of the Berlin wall, or a documentary about 9/11 – these are events that occurred during my life, so that later representations are easily integrated in always already mediated original traces of the event in organic memory.[15] Prosthetic memory, then, can be placed in between Assmann's cultural memory, which is more fixed and functions as a cultural point of reference for a particular group, on the one hand, and communicative memory, which is negotiated in the social realm of lived experience on the other. Remembering through the experience of film, interactive museums, or heritage sites is more intensely specific and experiential than imbibing the topoi of cultural memory, but less so than direct experience.

Landsberg calls this kind of memory acquired through mass cultural commodities 'prosthetic' for four reasons. Firstly, it is not organically inherited or the product of lived experience. The memory is like a prosthesis in the sense that it is fake, even if it seems like and serves as a memory of lived experience. For example, when people "remember" FDR's wheelchair, this cannot be a memory of something they saw in reality, even if they were alive at the time, because the wheelchair was invisible then – as Lawrence Halprin's memory of FDR as standing suggests. The wheelchair is a prosthetic element: both a helpmeet for FDR and a device appended in cultural memory.

Secondly, prosthetic memories are products of sensuous experiences that require integration into one's sense of self: "like an artificial limb, [they] are actually worn on the body (…) Also, prosthetic memories, like an artificial limb, often mark trauma" (20). To give an example, the breadline in the national FDR memorial invites visitors to join the line, as if to experience bodily what the Great Depression what like, in an act of immersion in the past of the sort that Tilden advocated. Thirdly, like prostheses, they are interchangeable and commodified to fit a mass audience, even if the same movie, exhibition or documentary can produce different prosthetic memories in different people. Finally Landsberg regards prosthetic memories, like

15 Aleida Assmann, in *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit* in fact notes the same issue, though without noting the distinction between coincidence with lived memory and the absence thereof: "Wer, wie bei den Protestanten Nordirlands üblich, an vielen Feiertagen im Jahr an rituellen Märschen durch Belfast teilnimmt oder sich mit der Schulklasse nach Auschwitz begibt, um dort die Geschichte körperlich in sich aufzunehmen, ist darum bemüht, in sich selbst die rigiden Schranken zwischen Erfahrungsgedächtnis und Wissensgedächtnis aufzuheben. Eine nicht vorhandene Primärerfahrung wird dabei durch eine Sekundärerfahrung ersetzt." (59-60)

other prostheses, as useful, because "they help condition how a person thinks about the world and [they] might be instrumental in articulating an ethical relation to the other" (21). Thus, prosthetic memories can bridge differences between members of different ethnic or cultural groups. Landsberg argues, for instance, that prosthetic memories of slavery history can be assumed not only by African Americans, and Holocaust memories are appropriated by non-Jews as well.

Roger Michell's movie *Hyde Park on Hudson* (2012) exemplifies how and why the FDR icon, who as the film stresses, himself depended on many physical and metaphorical prostheses, is so successful at producing prosthetic memories. The film's focalizer is Daisy – a nickname FDR gave to his removed cousin, friend and perhaps lover Margaret Suckley – who in the film becomes his mistress, one of his various lovers after his marriage with Eleanor has, at least sexually, failed. Like his wheelchair, leg braces and other means of support, FDR treats Daisy and other mistresses as perfectly ordinary and natural extensions of his body and entourage. They are present, also in the public view, without being given specific attention or being somehow justified or defended. Like the wheelchair, Daisy is unapologetically visible for FDR's visitors, but their presence is passed off as so natural that to inquire further would be illogical and impolite. As such, FDR in *Hyde Park on Hudson* has physical and affective appendices that are inconspicuous to the point of not being noticed, a fact he is acutely aware of, as he makes explicit in a private discussion with King George. The film promotes this discreet manner of handling deficits and their solutions, and it practices what it preaches: its own glaring omissions and wild assumptions, by projecting an endearingly imperfect yet ultimately unspoiled America, fulfill cultural needs that are there without drawing attention to themselves or their fulfillment.

The film, starring Bill Murray as FDR, tells the story of the British royal visit to Roosevelt's Hyde Park estate in the Hudson Valley in June 1939, to ask the United States for support in resisting the Nazi attacks on Great Britain. This plea for help from America's former colonizer is projected as a symbolic moment in the countries' history, at which the US takes over the role of young, laid back but idealistic superpower from the elderly and ridiculously formal Great Britain. That element is thickly underscored in the film: the King and Queen constantly fear that they are being made fun of, when actually their own stiff behavior is what sets them apart in the relaxed world they have entered. Their extremely informal reception at Hyde Park is necessitated and enabled by Roosevelt's disability: he shakes their hands while remaining seated in his driveway. This is ostensibly not an affront, but an irrelevant necessity, yet it explicitly projects Roosevelt as a naturally enthroned leader, both in America and vis-à-vis the world as represented by its former colonizer. The chair operates as the literal supporting device for FDR and in terms of prosthetic memory as the metaphorical seat of American global dominance.

Roosevelt's private life is projected as instrumental: its informality, the amateurism of his mother's cookery, and the King's bedroom decorated with cartoons of British Redcoats losing

the Independence War all signal that America as FDR represents it is casually indifferent to the British King and the respectful reception his position once commanded. Roosevelt's wheelchair is instrumental time and again in the show of blithe informality: his requisite "Please forgive me for not getting up" excuses but also stresses the potential disrespect that the informality could be construed to represent. Later, Roosevelt asks the King to push his wheelchair, with a similar effect: the King's etiquette demands that he interpret it as meaningless, indeed pleasant familiarity, but it does put him into an unusually, perhaps even impertinently, subservient position, especially given Britain's dependence on US intervention in the war at that moment, which is already a painful subversion of former power relations. This ambiguity about a gesture that can be seen as pleasantly casual, but also as exposing unequal power relations, creates and reinforces a prosthetic memory of FDR's wheelchair. It suggests that the wheelchair contributed not only to Roosevelt's physical and rhetorical mobility, but is also a vehicle transporting America to its post-war position of world leadership, and its viewers to the experience of America in 1939.

Although Landsberg, in theorizing the creation of such artificial memories, clearly takes the prosthesis metaphor seriously, arguing that adopted prosthetic memories can attain the function of a supporting limb for one's own lost history, she uses it as a starting point. She does not pursue the idea that characters with disabilities who are using actual prostheses – also in the films she focuses on – often are the ones to provide occasion for the narrative that generates prosthetic memories in the first place. Although the metaphor does prompt her theorization of prosthetic memory, she hardly attends to the idea that people or characters with disabilities themselves can function as narrative prostheses, as Mitchell and Snyder argue. Landsberg does not really engage with the disability studies debate that her term invokes, and therefore remains focused on audience's creation of prosthetic memories, and not on agents like FDR who are able to inspire them. Thus she overlooks one of the most central ideas of disability studies: that disabled people are especially practiced at wielding prosthetic devices, and therefore, at functioning as prostheses to their cultural context themselves. Landsberg's argument remains ableist in the sense that it focuses on how prosthetic memories function for "normal" mass audiences, but disregards both that disabled people have an unusual ability to negotiate prosthetics, and that they often are the narrative justification for storytelling, also when this constitutes the raw material for prosthetic memories in able audiences.

The role of disability is, however, very important in making both *The King's Speech* and *Hyde Park on Hudson* memorable. Both after all take the disability of their protagonist as a starting point, *The King's Speech* even as its title. In *Hyde Park on Hudson*, the key meeting between FDR and King George follows just after King George has pushed Roosevelt's wheelchair; the president with paralyzed legs and the stuttering King have a highly intimate personal conversation supposedly decisive for the bilateral relationship of the US and the UK. Roosevelt is in this situation clearly the one on top, geopolitically, but primarily on a personal level. King George tries to express himself, but is caught up by his stutter, and exasperatedly cries out "this goddamn

stutter!", to which Roosevelt coolly responds: "this goddamn polio." Roosevelt goes on to explain his personal theory that as long as he ignores his disability others will not even notice it, saying:

> Let me confess something to you now, as you've been so honest with me. No one ever mentions the fact that I can't use my legs. It's never referred to. Not by anyone. And I used to think it was because they were embarrassed about it. [*gets up out of wheelchair, starts "walking"*] But now I think it's because it's not what they want to see. Of course, you and I, we think that they see everything that we are. All our flaws. Our transgressions our failures. [*laboriously moves over to desk*] But that's not what they're looking to find when they look to us. And God help us if that ever changes. Can you imagine the disappointment when they find out what we really are? [51:30]

Roosevelt's words here are interestingly juxtaposed with his movements: during this explicit speech about how he keeps his disability implicit, by not drawing attention to it, he draws particular attention to it by trying to walk which the paralysis makes impossible. *Hyde Park on Hudson*'s general take on Roosevelt's genius seems to be that he was a brilliant manipulator of people and appearances. While perhaps in the film, Roosevelt's contemporaries do not see his handicap, the movie audience do so all the more except that to them it is not a handicap but another attribute that helps to show the brilliance of his manipulation. Thus, the "walking" that Roosevelt does has a different meaning for the cinematic King George than for us: for King George it is a demonstration of how desperately trying to be physically capable may actually draw more attention to one's invalidity than its acceptance; to a modern audience, it rather suggests Roosevelt's utter ease with consciously projecting whatever image he needs at a particular moment.

In the discussion of screen memories in the previous chapter, I argued that Roosevelt often functions as a screen for particularly uncomfortable aspects of past events, which do not find their way into cultural memory, because they are painful, awkward, or humiliating. Essentially these are traumas that are not absorbed into narrative memories, because later generations do not want or are unable to bear witness to them. This leaves gaps in cultural memory, and therefore in the movies and other cultural artefacts that provoke prosthetic memories in their spectators. These gaps may be filled with screen memories, a process in which the trauma, in the past or present, is overlaid or otherwise tangled up with much more gratifying memories of Roosevelt's disability. The memory of Roosevelt's disability is then the innocuous screen: not a fantasy but a real memory of which the historical relevance seems hard to understand with hindsight, except as a prosthetic device to address something else. The fact that it is Roosevelt's *disability* that enables the icon to function so well to inspire prosthetic memories is crucial. The FDR icon is itself a narrative prosthesis in Mitchell and Snyder's sense: a narrative device to justify storytelling that is culturally needed, because it fills a gap, as well as a material metaphor for the brokenness and healing that is desired on a national level. As such representations of

Roosevelt's disability are in a sense prosthetic in two ways: firstly by Landsberg's definition because they supply inauthentic memories that shape subjectivities in the present, and secondly because they use the literal disability and prosthesis as a placeholder for memories that remain distressing to narrate directly.

Landsberg's lack of attention to the second point, that commodified and mass-mediated prosthetic memories of FDR's prosthesis function to screen off repressed but wide-ranging anxiety about American unity and health, is similar to Roosevelt's own treatment of his disability. As Davis Houck argued in *FDR and Fear Itself* (2002), and later in *FDR's Body Politics* (Houck and Kiewe, 2003) FDR did not directly refer to the fact he was disabled, but the language of, amongst others, the First Inaugural Address is full of sickness and body metaphors referring to the nation – "stricken Nation", "conditions in our country", "our great Nation will endure" – implicitly shaping his own relationship with it. Most famous among these is "let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance", which casts the nation as paralyzed, and himself as the firm and assertive healer. The following sentence speaks of "a leadership of frankness and vigor", both a pun on his own name and a reference to his vigorous upper body, which is what people saw. Through this strategy FDR, consciously or not, stressed the strength and unique insight his paralysis is culturally perceived to carry, tapping into the trope of the blind seer, without making explicit his own disability.

On the face of it, *Hyde Park on Hudson* suggests that Roosevelt's silence about his disability was an intentional media strategy, but even more glaringly absent, also from the summary of outcomes following the narrated events in voiceover at the end of the film, are the unpleasant aspects of American history in the war years. The film's own pointed absence of any reference to Pearl Harbor, for instance, performs a movement similar to FDR's silence about his disability. Of course, the narrated royal visit took place in 1939, well before Pearl Harbor or any concrete threat from the Pacific on American soil, but the fact that it is not referred to in any way nonetheless stresses only America's role in the war as primarily a matter of disinterested moral superiority, diverting attention away from its beleaguered state in 1941. The final voiceover is, however, very explicit about Roosevelt's own wish to repress the presence of bad news in his private life. Describing the illness and death of his secretary and former mistress Marguerite LeHand, the narrator says:

> When she fell terribly ill, he paid for everything. He even changed his will, giving her half should she outlive him. But to the surprise of nearly everyone, he did not visit her once in the hospital. I asked him why. "It's a terrible fault of mine," he said. "I find it too painful to be around illness."

Thus in the midst of the film's ominous silence about the debilitating attack on America two years after the British royal visit, it does focus on Roosevelt's attempt to negate the existence of

disease in his life. On the one hand he does what he can, materially, to exorcise it, and on the other he refuses to engage with it on an emotional level. Roosevelt's feeling that being "around illness" is "too painful", mirrors the sense that addressing Pearl Harbor is too painful for the film to engage in. In what follows, the audience see FDR being carried and lifted into his car by assistants. After having installed himself he says "Ok boys, take it away!" to press photographers who then start taking pictures of him. Thus the same indirect denial of imperfection is repeated. The narrator ends:

> A year passed. And then another. And another. I watched him grow tired and frail and ill. He tried to hide this from everyone. He knew how to do that. From everyone but me. Everyone still looking to him. Still seeing whatever it was they wanted to see. In a time, not so very long ago, when the world still allowed itself secrets, Franklin Roosevelt was mine.

The narrator through her presumed understanding of Roosevelt can feel that she owns him, and his full story, because she can fill in the void that he leaves in his silence about his physical and psychological inadequacy. She assumes the role of addressee of an implicitly told story. This movement, as well as the sense of privilege involved, mimics that of the American tendency Robert Burgoyne notes in *Film Nation*, to fill in a prosthetic narrative – in this case about Roosevelt's disability – rather than to create more detailed narratives addressing one's own painful past, such as Pearl Harbor, or present, such as the realization that the country is no longer the relaxed yet vibrant world leader. Thus *Hyde Park on Hudson* creates prosthetic memories, both screening off past traumas and present discomfort. Like Roosevelt, despite its claim that the world no longer allows itself secrets, *Hyde Park on Hudson*, gives viewers "whatever it [i]s they want to see."

Landsberg's understanding of prosthetic memory as useful to overcome antagonism between groups in society, because they can share prosthetic memories regardless of background, thus parallels FDR's treatment of his own narrative in its lack of acknowledgement that there is a difference between the disabled and others in culturally perceived and real ability to use prosthetics. The disability and wheelchair narratives are apt because they provide room for prosthetic memories to diverge in their interpretation of how FDR embodies the US without seeming to do so. They stress America's technical prowess, but simultaneously also already include the disintegration of the body natural. FDR's successful attempt to technologically and medially conquer the fragmentation of his body natural screens the fragmentation of the American body politic off from memory.

The concrete narratives of Roosevelt's disease and disability, which involve actual prostheses (wheelchair, crutches, leg braces), are then exemplary of what happens on a conceptual level: mass-mediated narratives about him take on the function of prosthetic memories to their audiences, in which FDR becomes a narrative prosthesis for the audience, and a material metaphor for another trauma. The silences kept by Roosevelt and his staff provide room for film

makers and their audiences to fit metaphorical prostheses, narratives interpreting traumas that are overtly attributed to Roosevelt, but actually stand in for more collective ones. Roosevelt's silence about his wheelchair means that it has come to lend itself well as a prosthetic site for the adaptation of other trauma narratives. This essentially Freudian process is indeed useful, but not in the laudatory way Landsberg suggests: it is useful as a band-aid or a cover, as a means to create a sense of wholeness, without actually addressing the heart of the matter, be it a trauma or a potentially explosive opposition of interests. As such, Roosevelt would probably have been happy with the current emplotment of his disability, however secretive he may have been about it at the time.

Conclusion: Prosthetically Enhanced Memory

Robert Burgoyne in *Film Nation* discusses this opportunistic use of prosthetic memory, which Landsberg somewhat naively terms "useful", calling it "prosthetically enhanced memory":

> It is my argument that, rather than viewing prosthetic memory in the positive sense of creating an interface with 'past lives, past experiences, past bodies' so as to ground individual subjectivities 'in a world of experiences larger than one's own modal subjectivity', *Forrest Gump* revises existing cultural memory in such a way that it becomes prosthetically enhanced. (108)

His argument that *Forrest Gump* prosthetically enhances American cultural memory, is somewhat like mine about *Hyde Park on Hudson*: it shows how the movie turns the American past Gump lives through into a nostalgic celebration of the 1960s and 1970s by removing or glossing over the traumatic events of those decades – effectively, that is, by literally running past, but not addressing gender issues, racial struggle and other 'problematic' elements. This use of prosthetic memory as beatifying enhancement of a troubled past is far removed from the interpretive enhancement Tilden called for. Although nostalgically healing, and narratively improving the past no doubt happens at national heritage sites, Tilden and the NPS aim for academically founded and even-handed interpretation, whereas *Forrest Gump* lays no claim to historical correctness, even if its success relies on a sense that it does represent a shared past. However, Burgoyne, like Landsberg, seems to overlook the role of disability in the prosthetic enhancement he calls attention to. Forrest Gump, the movie's focalizer and protagonist, is severely disabled as a child: his legs are in braces, because of a back problem that magically dissolves into an ability to run unusually fast, and mentally challenged throughout – he has an IQ of 75. His commander and later friend and colleague Lieutenant Dan loses both his legs in Vietnam. Although these disabilities, the prosthetics they require, and the characters' special abilities obtained through them are crucial to the film's plot, as well as to the manner in which it works to generate a prosthetically enhanced view of the American past, Burgoyne's chapter on prosthetic memory in *Forrest Gump* does not address these.

However, despite the seeming blindness to the fact that Gump's leg braces start off the narrative, and his learning disability provides the guileless innocence that carries it forth, Burgoyne is right that "the film evokes the cultural encyclopedia of the sixties and seventies chiefly in order to construct a virtual nation whose historical debts have all been forgiven and whose disabilities have been corrected." One film that elucidates well how useful a disabled main character is in achieving such an effect is *FDR American Badass!* (Garrett Brawith, 2012). Its trailer cuts intriguingly between various scenes in the movie. Starting with footage of the film's representation of World War Two – Roosevelt going to war in Europe, personally and singlehandedly – one then hears him declare in front of his airplane "The only thing we have to fear is…". But before this famous maxim is finished with "…fear itself", the trailer cuts across to a shot of FDR (Barry Bostwick) addressing a crowd from his wheelchair and jokingly referring to his paralysis as "Marco … Polio." Thus we hear "The only thing we have to fear is … (Marco) Polio …" and then "…fear itself!" There is a doubling here that is central to the movie: Roosevelt's polio is effectively connected to World War Two through his body; his disability is treated as if it were the war projected onto FDR's physique. Roosevelt in the movie contracts the polio in an encounter with what turns out to be a Nazi werewolf in the 1930s, rather than in 1920, which is historically the case, and the disease acts on his body as the war on the US as a nation: paralyzing but simultaneously inspiring courage and needed impetus to move forward in destroying the Nazi threat. Roosevelt's by now celebrated adage about "fear itself" historically spoke to the fear which led to the economic and financial paralysis of the country in 1933, but in the movie it refers on one level to the need for national bravery in the face of Axis attack, and on another to Roosevelt's personal angst and laconic pluck in the face of debilitating disease. Thus, Roosevelt's personal mishaps work as an allegory for an America at war: FDR in the film embodies America both in its suffering from and conquest of the Axis powers. Of course, *FDR American Badass!* does not make an outright claim to historical accuracy. Rather it stands in the tradition of *The Naked Gun* movies: intentionally silly, visibly low-budget, yet clearly made with love. Nevertheless, it does negotiate with the past, aestheticizing it and making it harmless through the use of Roosevelt's disability. It is important in that respect that its producer Ross Patterson made it for a highschool audience, with the explicit aim to "make FDR seem cool" (interview, September 3, 2014). Patterson did aim to some extent to interpret FDR in Tilden's sense, but the product is prosthetically enhanced through the use of FDR as a narrative prosthesis.

Chapter 8: Eleanor Roosevelt's Covert Expansion of Autofabrication – A Double Deal

Introduction

Ken Burns' documentary series *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History* (2014) was generally well-received by reviewers, but one point of criticism raised by Mary Jo Binker and Brigid O'Farrell – both scholars affiliated with the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers project of the George Washington University – is that Eleanor Roosevelt receives less attention than is her due. In an article on History News Network they reflect on how Eleanor Roosevelt herself might have assessed the series:

> As a savvy producer and consumer of television, ER would have been the first to appreciate Burns's series on her family. She would have welcomed his interest in their lives and accomplishments but she would have been puzzled and dismayed at the amount of time devoted to her private life. She would have been particularly unhappy about the portrayal of the last seventeen years of her life (a mere 35 minutes in a fourteen-hour program).
>
> (…) From 1945 until her death in 1962, ER took the ideas about community, inclusion and democracy that she, her husband, and uncle espoused, and pushed them much farther than Theodore or Franklin ever dreamed. However, because she usually exercised political power indirectly and often played down or obscured her own achievements, ER's contributions are often overlooked and undervalued.

Binker and O'Farrell's interest in how Eleanor Roosevelt would have perceived this documentary is in itself striking – they stress that she is both an object of remembrance who ought to have a say in the form that remembrance takes, and an expert "producer and consumer of television." I, however, do not think Eleanor Roosevelt would have been either puzzled or dismayed about the relatively small amount of time devoted to her *private* life at all. As Binker and O'Farrell say, ER "usually exercised political power indirectly and often played down or obscured her own achievements." Although this may have been motivated in part by a sense of insecurity, I see it as part of ER's highly successful self-presentation and exercise of political power. This chapter will argue that Eleanor Roosevelt presented herself and exercised power very astutely, while intensely aware of the far-reaching effects of her approach, both for herself and for her husband as cultural icons at the time and into the future.

As a starting point, it is worth noting that Binker and O'Farrell initially object to the scant attention given to ER's "private life", and then go on to discuss Americans' ignorance of what she did in her *public* life after 1945. Equally telling is their use of "espoused" in their discussion

of ER's furthering of the Roosevelts' political ideals – to employ a word that derives so clearly from "spouse" suggests a complex relationship between ER's political work and her role as FDR's wife, and familial link between both presidents. This obfuscation of ER's private and public lives is significant, because it is central to her self-presentation, as well as to her later representation. More specifically, I will argue here, it is key to understanding the autofabrication and remembrance of both FDR and her.

Eleanor Roosevelt, both as an individual and as a cultural icon in her own right, is habitually elided, and it is only too easy to do so. As discussed in chapter 2, this is exemplified in the Four Freedoms Park on the tip of Roosevelt Island in New York City. The memorial contains a bust of Franklin Roosevelt, and points to the United Nations Headquarters, but not a single reference is made to ER, who carried FDR's vision beyond his death, and operated at the heart of the United Nations' beginnings. Visitors to the memorial who are aware of ER's role in FDR's White House and the UN will presumably understand that she is hovering in the air between the bust of FDR and the UN building. She looms large at the site, but cannot be seen or heard. Her presence rather consists in a silhouette quietly at work in the extended space the memorial occupies, treading beyond its physical boundaries, only visible to those already in the know, but, just as Binker and O'Farrell suggest "exercises political power indirectly." In this memorial as elsewhere, Eleanor Roosevelt functions to expand the arena of our perception. If the space between the memorial and the UN building is not read as a meaningful part of the artwork, ER's agency remains invisible. Yet such invisibility also enabled her to achieve unprecedented impact on contemporary politics, as well as on the politics of remembrance, both as a key player in FDR's autofabrication, and in creating her own public image.

I have previously proposed to think of self-fashioning and autofabrication as complementary concepts to illuminate the cultural production of political leaders. Self-fashioning relates to the making of an individual self, driven by the person involved, and also to the self as the product of environmental circumstances, shaped by cultural and ideological demands. This concept on its own works well to think about the fashioning of most selves, but to consider the making of iconic political leaders something more is needed. I introduced autofabrication to incorporate on the one hand the fact that political leaders embody power over the life and death of their subjects, and on the other the fact that political leaders in modern democratic systems represent their electorate, and thus need to project themselves as recognizable public icons that a diverse audience can identify with, and that can function to obscure their exertion of power. Franklin Roosevelt exemplifies a very successful autofabrication, as his largely celebratory remembrance attests. Eleanor Roosevelt is a crucial agent in FDR's autofabrication and, because she survived him and remained publicly active and visible, of his legacy. What makes her particularly important is her faculty to informally and indirectly expand his influence into areas such as the domestic sphere, entertainment parts of mass media, and into the years after his death. ER made FDR's autofabrication more powerful, because she mitigated his influence into areas that

are not habitually considered the realm of presidential leadership, as well as beyond his own lifetime.

Eleanor Roosevelt's covert expansion of FDR's cultural and political reach, and even less visibly but no less importantly, her own, is in the first place enabled by her gender, an idea I take from Cynthia Enloe. The construction of ER's femininity allowed and continues to allow for an expansion of autofabrication and remembrance, in four directions, two associated with the tangent of autofabrication engaged in occlusion of power, and two associated with the creation of a favorable and sustainable public icon. I will first contextualize my argument by briefly introducing Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's self-fashioning with regard to one another,[1] and how they have addressed the obviously intensely gender-related reputation problem of their troubled marriage so as to continue to meet cultural expectations in the short as well as the long run. If, for instance, FDR's mistress Lucy was, in his life, the clearest symptom of his marital problems, she became a necessary factor in the construction of his remembrance, to assert his continued sexual potency, and therefore his masculinity, which was problematic because of his disability.

Second, I address ER's use of her self-defined "casual unawareness" as a vehicle for contributing to and expanding the reach of FDR's autofabrication, using the same casual unawareness to fabricate herself as a political agent, and acquire enormous clout for someone who was not formally elected for political office. In doing so, I discuss a range of cases that show how Eleanor's role in autofabricating FDR and herself has borne out into cultural memory and remembrance practices. Essentially, the dynamics in autofabrication and remembrance are the same: through their partnership, the remembrance of FDR could become more explicitly shaped as narrative, more depoliticized, more private and more officious. At the same time, ER could autofabricate herself as a political leader in her own right though seemingly modest ("casually unaware"), and as such indirectly exert political power.

Expanding the Realm of Politics Through "Casual Unawareness"

Cynthia Enloe's paradigmatic monograph *Bananas, Beaches, Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (1990) radically expands the study of international politics beyond usual focus on powerful white men in dark-blue suits and red ties who hold final sway over the complex machinations of global international politics. Enloe argues that for a real understanding of this impenetrable and seemingly unalterable apparatus of world order, it is necessary to expand the focus to include the tourists, chambermaids, prostitutes, military wives at foreign bases and all

1 This has been done to an extreme extent by others, some of which are discussed in this chapter (e.g. Goodwin). Some others are: Joseph Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of Their Relationship, based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers*. New York: Norton, 1971; Hazel Rowley, *Franklin and Eleanor, An Extraordinary Marriage*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.

others who have little formal power, but are impacted by and are part of the global choreography of international politics. Enloe's question "Where are the women in international politics?" is fruitful, because it leads to an understanding of politics that is not limited to official institutional loci of power. The status quo of women around the world supporting the international political system as secretaries, wives, chambermaids, seems so natural and fixed that the people involved are, in perfect harmony with patriarchic ideology unaware of their contribution. Since Enloe made this argument, however, some American women have achieved great formal power in international politics – Madeleine Albright, Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice – indeed, I see Eleanor Roosevelt as a paradigmatic enabler of that possibility.

Enloe, for example, examines how wives of soldiers at foreign bases played essential roles in turning the basis into a community and also in creating and sustaining relationships between American military bases and their local surroundings. As such these women were vital to the success, perceived legitimacy and continued existence of many bases. However, they only started to claim recognition in the 1980s, until which time their crucial contribution had been taken for granted by themselves as well as by the male military leadership (73). Enloe argues that this presumption of wifely support is essential for male leaders, without being recognized as such. This internalized conviction that female contributions ought to be invisible sacrifices made out of devotion and borne in silence, rather than requiring a formal due in money or power on an equal footing with men, is what Enloe lays bare. Her book wants to radically pull into the light the contributions of women, be they military wives, prostitutes, or chambermaids, in order to show the size and space of their agency, and their unused room for negotiation.

Enloe's introduces an expanded notion of the realm of politics to show the potential for empowerment of those who are not or only marginally involved in political decision-making. If Eleanor Roosevelt had a similar agenda it was far less pronounced or radical, but she did understand that other spheres than the traditionally political could hold sway over political decision-makers. The key difference between Enloe and ER is that, instead of creating or demanding visibility to gain recognition, Roosevelt used the political invisibility of her gender and traditional spheres of operation to covertly exercise power. By operating informally, on the edge or outside of politics, she used this power to contribute to the enfranchisement of women, laborers, and minorities, by helping them in civically and medially symbolic ways, outside of traditional politics. But more importantly, her success in doing so allowed her on the one hand to radically expand the reach of FDR's autofabrication, and become a political agent herself in need of her own autofabrication. Autofabrication, as I have argued before is by nature inspired by the need both to put forward an iconic public image, and to obscure evidence of power-mongering, and this is especially true in ER's case, who was not officially entitled to the political power she had. Thus, ER, in practice if not explicitly in theory, shared Enloe's vision that power could be exerted from marginal and seemingly non-political spheres – or in other words, that the political realm was bigger than most perceive it to be, but unlike Enloe, she perceived this

invisibility as an opportunity to extend her agency to help the marginalized, rather than a problem reinforcing the status quo.

In the 1920s and '30s Eleanor Roosevelt became acutely aware of her ability to fill the gap left by FDR's paralysis, for instance by traveling, campaigning and attending social and official functions in his stead. Later she learned to use her prerogative to narrate and disseminate his story. This empowerment of women through the shortcomings of men – through paralysis or otherwise – alerted her to the complex expectations of American femininity. In a "My Day" column on August 13, 1942, she wrote about the effort of women to preserve the "prewar world" in the absence of their husbands. She quotes at length from a text a friend has sent her of an inscription on a statue of the Pioneer Woman, a quintessentially American archetype:

> … the line in the inscription which I like best: "And with all she lived with casual unawareness of her value to civilization."
>
> There we have the secret which should be driven home to every woman. In countless homes in this country today, there are women who are "casually unaware" of the great accomplishments which are theirs. They will be recognized by history, but today we forget them because they do their daily tasks so casually that their heroism and the vital place which they fill in our world passes almost unnoticed, and certainly unsung in the present. (Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day" August 13, 1942)

Part of what is praiseworthy about the frontier woman, according to the inscription – which ER and her friend both affirm remains of paramount relevance in 1942 – is her "casual unawareness" of her contribution. She is crucial but does not command, or get, her due reward in money or power, because she is unaware of her value. Her modesty and the casual nature of her accomplishment is part of her "value to civilization." ER does not suggest that it should be otherwise, she does not spur the women "in countless homes" on to demand recognition of the "great accomplishments which are theirs." However, she does explicitly stress that they "fill a vital place", at home and during the war also in jobs left vacant by men, and moreover, that "their heroism" will be "recognized by history." It "passes almost unnoticed" because women's heroism culturally includes their renunciation of any claim to recognition in the present, but ER argues future narratives will not leave women's heroism "unsung." However, she also writes that this casual unawareness is "the secret which should be driven home to every woman," alerting readers publicly to the value of women's contribution, while simultaneously stressing the importance of its hidden nature. Thus, she draws attention to women's uncashed checks, and at the same time praises their generosity for not demanding recompense. This was her own strategy too, although she did require compensations in other forms, though characteristically, not for herself, but for groups and goal she chose. In the broadened definition of the political – including groups and interests that were not always regarded as part of that realm – Eleanor Roosevelt thus did claim political power, while simultaneously disguising it.

Self-fashioning – Marriage from Traditional to Political Partnership

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt (1884) was a lonely and serious child, both whose parents were mostly absent; her mother died when Eleanor was eight, and her father when she was nine years old. Less than ten years later she met Franklin Roosevelt, her father's fifth cousin, whom she married at twenty in 1905. The marriage produced six children, one of which died in infancy, in the next eleven years, and met its formative crisis in 1918, when Eleanor discovered a bundle of love letters in Franklin's suitcase from Lucy Mercer, her social secretary. When she discovered the affair she offered Franklin a divorce, instead of which he vowed not to see Lucy Mercer again – after his mother threatened to disinherit him if he would divorce Eleanor, and his assistant Louis Howe had stressed to him that a divorce would mean the end of his political career.

In practically all representations, and no doubt in real life, Eleanor Roosevelt's position changed through this crisis, from that of a young wife in support of her husband's career which she was hardly involved in, into that of a more independent agent secretly crucial to her husband's success. In this narrative, as it is often presented in biographies and biopics, the marriage crisis paradoxically figures as Eleanor Roosevelt's moment of emancipation, pivotal to the development of her budding career as not just FDR's wife, but an activist public figure in her own right. I am not contesting this course of events, but want to draw attention to how ER and later representers narrativized this experience, because it helps to understand both her self-fashioning – what cultural narratives applied to her situation, and which ones did she choose to apply? – and her remembrance. Eleanor Roosevelt years later said to a friend about her discovery: "the bottom dropped out of my particular world, and I faced myself, my surroundings, my world, honestly for the first time" (Lash, *Love Eleanor* 66). She interpreted the shock as a confrontation with "myself, my surroundings, my world" leading explicitly to a more "honest" "facing" of that world, that was a confrontation with the political realism of her world, and her position of limited but employable power. ER did not passively bear her ordeal, but her novel maturity was brought about by something that happened to her. ER's newly gained independence must be harmonized with her femininity, to address the culturally problematic incongruity between female autonomy and gender expectations. By thinking of her political activism as a function of how her marital love turned into mutually advantageous partnership, it becomes something that forced itself upon her. Similarly Louis Howe, acutely aware of the need after 1921 to have a mobile Roosevelt operate alongside, and literally in the name of FDR, is often credited, by ER and later representers, as crucial in coaching her to occupy a mature position as an independent agent beside FDR. Such factors – Howe's mentorship, FDR's need for an able substitute – contributed to enabling ER to juggle her femininity with a public role and the acquisition of political sway. Thus she, and most later narrators, could read her growing political activism and agency as flowing from her feminine casual unawareness, that was in itself fashioned and fabricated on the basis of an acute political assessment.

In the following I will develop the notion of autofabrication to include the specific ways in which Eleanor Roosevelt expanded FDR's autofabrication in relation to her own. Although many more

aides, assistants, advisers, and cabinet members were involved in FDR's autofabrication, ER was not just one of them, but someone who immensely extended the reach and bearing of the process. This contributed to FDR's public image at the time and continues to play a key role in how he is remembered: while many recent FDR representations include Eleanor Roosevelt in one way or another, the style and positioning of many remembrance practices is also a product of ER's autofabrication of FDR. Moreover, ER's is a double act: although ostensibly involved in negotiating FDR's autofabrication, she became, despite not being an elected official, so powerful that she accrued her own autofabrication. Each in a very different style, both FDR and ER in this process became omnipresent as well as less visible or less strongly profiled than they would have been without Eleanor Roosevelt's expanded form of autofabrication. To elucidate how this worked I will discuss a series of examples to illustrate what directions I discern in the process.

I have defined autofabrication as possessing two tangents: on the one hand a leader needs to develop and sustain an iconic public image, and on the other he needs to obscure negative elements of his exercise of power. The latter of these, the unobtrusive embodiment of power, is expanded by and through ER in two ways: first, where FDR was central to what Robert Cover calls a *nomos*, a normative universe, ER was a formative figure in FDR's narrative. Second, whereas everything FDR did or said was bound to be interpreted in the context of partisan politics, ER functioned as a depoliticizing factor, able to attend to political issues as if they were not political, or outside of the political sphere. Or to put it differently, she silently managed to broaden the very scope of the notion of politics in terms of gender, for instance, but also in relation to social issues. In terms of the other tangent, the production of a public icon, ER enabled the creation of a more private or personal public image of the President, and secondly her First Ladyship enlarged the presidential icon from the official into the officious. These last two aspects overlap partly, and have together, I will argue, contributed to a modern version of the president and First Lady as parents to the nation, both metaphorically as parents of the nation as a whole, and synecdochically as parental figures to potentially every citizen.

Eleanor Roosevelt as Agent: Writing, Hiding, and Depoliticizing FDR's Embodiment of Power

The first dialectic through which Eleanor Roosevelt in a sense expanded FDR's reach, along the lines of culturally constituted gender expectations, is that which Robert Cover has called "Nomos and Narrative." A *nomos*, in Cover's definition, is a "normative universe" which turns on the constant creation and maintenance of "a world of right and wrong, of lawful and unlawful, of valid and void" (95). As head of the executive branch of federal government, FDR was profoundly involved in the creation and maintenance of that "world of right and wrong" on a political and legal level. While neither endowed with the power of legislation nor jurisdiction, he literally signed into law the bills that regulated and ordered American society and lives around the world. He was both in the executive and the dramatic sense of the word the lead actor,

though simultaneously, he needed as part of his autofabrication to consider the desirability of displaying his power. Eleanor Roosevelt's narrative of the *nomos* FDR inhabited and participated in shaping, functioned as one vehicle for displaying some and occluding other elements of this. In fact ER effectively became FDR's narrator, increasingly so over time, continuing to act as the agent of his *nomos* and of his legacy after his death.

But also during and before his presidency, ER functioned as a narrative proxy of her husband's political work. As mentioned, from 1921, when FDR became ill with polio and needed years to recover enough to be able to appear in public again, ER acted as his proxy in political campaigns, traveling around and speaking on his behalf. Her activity here foreshadowed the labor done during World War Two by many American women in substitution for the fighting men, and through that work, their emancipation. As in the case of those war workers, ER had the opportunity to present in the public sphere because there was a clear vacancy that needed to be filled. This was before she started to narrate FDR's nomos, but it may have alerted her to the possibility and necessity of doing so, for which she started to use her writing.

Eleanor Roosevelt was not technically involved with the politics of lawmaking, but she did importantly contribute to the production of narratives underlying and substantiating the politics of FDR's administrations and ideals. She functioned as a narrator of FDR's *nomos* in the sense that from very early on until her own death, 17 years after his, she narrated his person and presidency. Her "My Day" columns for instance, before as well as after FDR's death, are filled with references to "the President" and "my husband", often to explain what FDR thinks, says, believes, or would have said, so that she comes to function as a kind of megaphone in the public debate of FDR's opinions, even if she also often said she did not agree with them. After his death, she retained this function as FDR's narrator. On April 4, 1955 – ten years after FDR's death – Eleanor Roosevelt weighed into the Cold-War debate about the meaning of the Allied conferences at the end of World War II, writing: "I am (…) sure that my husband said nothing to Stalin that he had not previously said to Mr. Churchill." ("My Day").

Although she continued to represent the President on campaign trails and many informal occasions during the White House years, the most important way in which ER filled a gap left by her husband was through writing. Franklin Roosevelt spoke and acted – suitably for an executive and a dramatic actor. He left voice recordings as well as a library filled with documentary material of his presidency, but he wrote very little, and often prohibited note-taking in meetings with cabinet members or advisers. His signature was primarily performative, an act to transform a formulaic text into law, not a narrative kind of writing. ER, in contrast, signed off her writings with her name to stress their personal nature. Unlike Churchill, who, as the subtitle of David Reynolds' book *In Command of History, Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (2007) has it, was both a major actor in and narrator of World War II, FDR did not "write" the war or any event during his presidency. His wife, on the other hand, wrote a daily newspaper column

practically without missing a day from 1936 to 1962, wrote, often monthly, articles in numerous magazines and a total of four autobiographies: *This Is My Story*, *This I Remember*, *On My Own*, and *The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt*. I have argued previously that the fact Franklin Roosevelt did not leave much writing or any memoir is part of his modernity and his preference for media – radio, photography, newsreels – that would accrue even more importance in the future. Yet at the same time ER's writing contributed proverbially to his immortality, furthering the issues and ideals of his *nomos* through narrative.

In many "My Day" columns Eleanor Roosevelt goes further than simply to tell stories of her own days as First Lady and Franklin Roosevelt's public and private life which engender cultural narratives and memories of both. She addresses her audience, recommends and endorses various cultural artefacts representing his presidency and their lives. On March 18, 1949, her column is dedicated to a pictorial narrative book to appear soon titled *Franklin Roosevelt at Hyde Park*. She commends it as "the story of a whole era that has passed", thus stressing the book's narrative force, and by implication FDR's synecdochic quality as a representative of "a whole era" and a normative universe:

> It is not just a pictorial history of my husband. It is the story of a whole era that has passed. Few people in the future will live the kind of life depicted in this book but the record will be there, and I think it is well for us to remember that out of this kind of living came great democratic leaders.

ER thus claims that "a pictorial history of my husband" has the potential to represent "a whole era that has passed", and assert the importance of remembering it as an example because "this kind of living" produced "great democratic leaders." Thus Eleanor Roosevelt suggests the book indeed represents a normative universe, a seemingly a-political paradise that brought forth great leaders.

By writing moreover, that "I know my husband would have enjoyed [it] tremendously", she endorses the book by proxy as if it were authorized by Franklin Roosevelt himself. Thus she produces and amplifies FDR's narrative in his absence, while casting it as officially endorsed. Through this, ER gives the book a place in FDR's autofabrication suggesting it carries his personal approval, while absolving him of any accusations of scheming to put himself in the picture posthumously.

In another column ("My Day", February 4, 1958) ER reviews the opening performance of Dore Schary's play *Sunrise at Campobello*, a dramatic rendering of FDR's illness with polio and initial rehabilitation (see chapter 7). She on the one hand emphasizes the play's fictionality, but on the other gives estimates of the distance between individual characters in the play and in real life: Louis Howe, for instance, looked differently but "could easily have said any of the things that were

put into his mouth", actor Ralph Bellamy "suggested my husband very successfully", and about the dramatic rendering of herself she writes: "Miss Mary Fickett did an excellent job of being a very sweet character, which she is in the play. I am afraid I was never really like Mr. Schary's picture of myself, so I could even look upon the portrayal of myself in a fictional light!" Especially the latter comments, about FDR and herself, are carefully phrased to both affirm the narrative portrayal as legitimate and at the same time to mark the distance between the dramatized version and the real experience in the Roosevelts' private life in the 1920s. Her comment on Mary Fickett's portrayal of herself as "very sweet" shows she refuses to regard herself as such – while endorsing the idea that sweetness is a positive trait, she herself is impervious to that compliment within the negotiation of power. Her presence at the opening night and her positive review of the play,however, in themselves already lend weight as well as a suggestion of veracity to the play. *Sunrise at Campobello* was turned into a successful film in 1960, nominated for four Academy Awards and winning a Best Actress Golden Globe Award for Greer Garson's role of Eleanor Roosevelt. Thus, both within the cinematic universe of *Sunrise at Campobello* the ER character is crucial to the narrative's success, and outside of that the real Eleanor Roosevelt enabled its making – she mentions in a June 1960 column that the filming was "in full swing" at the main house and her private cottage at Hyde Park – and advertised and officiously authorized it.

ER's role as the agent of FDR's legacy, and particularly a key narrator of his story has itself become part of a tradition of remembering FDR. In the 1976 television movie *Eleanor and Franklin* (Daniel Petrie, based on the book by Joseph Lash) – until the 2014 broadcast of Ken Burns' *The Roosevelts* series the most authoritative television biopic of FDR – the Eleanor Roosevelt character is the focalizer of the narrative. Through her narrativization the stress naturally falls on their youths, their relationships with each other and the rest of their family, friends, and Franklin's colleagues. This personal and intimate perspective profoundly influences the portrayal of FDR. Indeed, nowhere in the current or previous chapters have I been tempted to write "Franklin", except in the previous sentence: the film presents him, through Eleanor's eyes, as a Franklin, someone addressed intimately by his first name. I have discussed examples of FDR's attempts in speeches to cast himself as an open and amicable person, for instance through his repeated use of the word "frank", and "frankly", in his first Inaugural Address, but if this was successful at the time, it has not carried on into a tradition of calling him "Franklin" without Roosevelt, except in the combination with "Eleanor" or through an ER character's focalization. Thus, despite his seeming informality, he remained at a distance, except for ER, who became a conduit to his private life.

In *Eleanor and Franklin*, a young FDR reflects on this issue in a conversation with ER, saying: "I've always felt I was an actor – I consciously have to charm people. Some people think I'm insincere." [1:13] This use of the word actor is important, primarily because this cinematic FDR interprets the historical FDR as having to "consciously charm people", suggesting within this cultural representation that he was consciously fabricating his own public image, indeed whose

construction of his own sincerity was not always believed when he was a young man. This issue of autofabrication as a matter of being able to produce a convincing construction is foregrounded because the person playing FDR who says "I've always felt I was an actor" is obviously an actual actor. What may seem insincere about being an actor in the young FDR character is transparent and congruous in the person playing him. That genuineness will emerge for the FDR character as well, when he is no longer just an actor in the *nomos*, but also a character, played by an actor, in later narratives. As president FDR could politically and legally act and through that enact and embody the normative universe bigger than himself, a dynamic in which he needed to consciously charm people, at times unsuccessfully or at the cost of being thought "insincere." Eleanor Roosevelt, however, could, directly through her own narratives of FDR's presidency, but also via later endorsements of Roosevelt narratives, and fictionalized ER narrators, contribute to casting FDR's power in his *nomos* in a favorable light, and at times keep that power out of the limelight, by turning him into an actor or character in her narrative.

However, she did not only serve his autofabrication, but also her own, by presentifying her political priorities and ideals to him during his presidency and in his name during and afterwards. She did so literally after his death, by signing off "Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt", where she had previously used her own name "Eleanor Roosevelt." Perhaps when FDR was still alive there was more of a need to demarcate the distinction – precisely to allow ER her freedom to speak for herself – but using his name as a widow, she also clearly projected herself as his placeholder. At the same time, Eleanor Roosevelt had to remain "casually unaware" of her contribution, publically devoting herself to narrating FDR with the honesty and the openness which indeed has remained essential to her image. When she did act on her own behalf, or better, in the interest of others whose cause she applauded, she had to do so implicitly. ER's political agency, however, remained subliminally present after FDR's death, partly through her public roles, mainly as US delegate to the General Assembly of the United Nations, and Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights, but also in a vaguer cultural sense. In a December 1945 Gallup poll respondents were asked to name potential candidates who "might make a good president", and Eleanor Roosevelt came fourth (Cook 394).

This fantasy of ER as presidential candidate has proved persistent. Robin Gerber's historical "what if?" novel *Eleanor Vs. Ike* (2008) has Eleanor Roosevelt run for president against Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 and win, thus allowing her a position of power in an imagined *nomos*. Although ER never in real life had the aspiration to become president or otherwise run for political office, and despite the fact that she would not have had a serious chance to be nominated within the Democratic party – not just because she was a woman, but also because she represented the party's radical left wing – the idea that she could have been a good candidate is easily revived by Gerber. Ellen Feldman in her appraisal called the novel "oh-so-timely" in the context of 2008, when Hillary Clinton was running for the nomination as Democratic candidate. It seems indeed that – much as Feldman's own novel *Lucy* may have been inspired by Bill Clinton's Lewinsky

affair – Gerber is led to remember ER as a potential presidential candidate by the events of 2008 – ER even encounters a five-year-old Hillary Rodham. If the novel aimed to stage a fictional premediation of Hillary Clinton's candidacy, Eleanor Roosevelt was the only historical character Gerber could have cast in the lead role. However, the novel does more than that – it draws Eleanor Roosevelt into the center of political power, a position in which it is only too easy to imagine her. Although, consistent with classic patriarchic values, in real life FDR was a leading figure in his *nomos* and ER a narrator of his narrative and focalizer in the story about his history, she also had a tendency toward the other side of the dialectic, and simultaneously, as participant in his autofabrication, could draw him towards the narrative pole.

Closely linked to Eleanor Roosevelt's role as narrator of her husband's presidency, ER occupied a position in which she often depoliticized issues for him, thus politically deftly drawing them out of the realm of executive power, a mechanism I discussed in chapter 5. Her ability to do so, offered his administration an extra pathway, for instance, to keep the more radical left wing of the party in the Democratic fold, and this in return gave ER unusual political clout for a First Lady. ER resided in the White House, in the sense that she lived there, but she effectively also had an important political role there, despite not being elected for political office. She was very important to the Roosevelt Administration as a channel of communication with groups and spheres traditionally outside of the political arena, both through writing for many lady's magazines and appearing in radio shows aimed at women, and through lending her ear to representatives of marginalized groups, most importantly to Civil Rights leaders (Cook 94-95). As such, Eleanor Roosevelt was able to help many groups to some extent, and in traditionally non-political spaces, though in ways that did have impact, not on a formal political level, but in terms of civic empowerment. She, for instance, gave her own press conferences accessible to women only, to force the press to employ female White House correspondents (Cook 411-413).

Perhaps the most famous instance is ER's resignation as a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, following the club's racist refusal to allow black opera star Marian Anderson to perform in its auditorium (Cook 23-24). Instead ER invited Anderson to perform at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC, an iconic moment in Civil Rights history, although also an ambivalent one. ER's acts were often crucial for the careers of those directly involved – the female journalists and Marian Anderson – and symbolically important for the groups they represented, but at the same time she politicized the issue in a realm where it would not immediately lead to demands on FDR to address racism in his presidential balancing act, or even draw attention away from such efforts. Though a civically and medially vast event, Anderson's performance at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939 did not give the vote to disfranchised African Americans. The event can be regarded as premediating the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, but on another level it may have canalized feelings in the African American community, thus helping the Administration in sustaining the inequality. In terms of autofabrication, such mediagenic actions by ER, for instance, may have obscured or counterweighted painful race

issues, such as FDR's refusal to speak out in favor of the anti-lynching Costigan Wagner Act, which was subsequently narrowly defeated as a result of Southern Democratic opposition in Congress.[2] Thus, ER's public and widely publicized civil rights activism gave FDR in a sense the political leeway to retain his popularity with African Americans, while refusing to actually use his political sway to act in their support.

Thus Eleanor Roosevelt's activism could address problems experienced by marginalized groups, by seeming to allow them entrance to the traditional political arena, without doing so. The recognition and solutions offered through her interference existed in the public sphere, but not in the heart of power politics. This benefitted those involved, as well as FDR's administrations because they precluded more pervasive demands, but they also gave an important measure of informal power to Eleanor Roosevelt. In fact for someone who was not elected she might be argued to have had an inordinate amount of political clout within the White House, precisely because she could keep so many issues out of it. Thus, while she had the same kind of understanding of politics as Enloe – that the scope of the political is actually much larger and involves more people than those elected to make and enforce political decisions – ER used it to depoliticize issues, rather than to politicize them as Enloe proposes. However, through the route of depoliticization, ER's interventions did continue to have political repercussions, for instance during the McCarthy era, when she became chairwoman of left wing organizations, such as NAACP and ADA, a successful method for dodging accusations of communist sympathies (Fazzi np).

On the other hand, ER's political clout hinged, as said, also on her invisibility in the political sphere. Much as she continues to be remembered as a First Lady politically astute enough to be a potential president, her overt absence equally survives in cultural remembrance. This means that she is often overlooked as a political agent, or at least granted less attention in mainstream remembrance than the groups she promoted – women, African Americans – consider to be her due. This is an effect of the same casual unawareness that was essential in negotiating her position of power. Thus, few visitors to the Roosevelt Historic Home and FDR Presidential Library make it to ER's cottage Val-Kill, Eleanor Roosevelt is only implicitly present at the Four Freedoms Park in New York, and she has only 35 minutes out of 14 hours dedicated to her in Ken Burns's *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History*.

Eleanor Roosevelt's Role in the Making of a Public Icon

Through her writings, Eleanor Roosevelt could introduce carefully selected aspects of the Roosevelts' private life into the public view. During the war, she for instance regularly stressed that all four Roosevelt sons had commissions in the US army. This helped to deflect accusations

2 Cook 91. See also "NAACP History: Costigan Wagner Bill": http://www.naacp.org/pages/naacp-history-costigan-wagner-act

that, while FDR had, against his promises some felt, sent other people's sons into war and selfishly abused his power to keep his own safe, and it profiled the presidential family as dedicated and patriotic on a personal level.

In the same way in which ER could thus treat politically sensitive issues about his private life outside of the political arena through her writings, FDR could depoliticize issues by drawing them out of the realm of serious political debate, and address them in other modes. Even if she was not always the one to do it, an important contribution of ER to this style of depoliticization, was the introduction of their private family sphere as a vessel for doing so. As such, she supplied FDR as a public icon with a private dimension, not by exposing his personal life, but by adding the private as a dimension to the public image. FDR himself applied the same tactics, for instance when in 1944 he attacked Republicans who had accused him of using public means for his private needs. In a Radio News campaign speech on September 23, 1944 he said:

> These Republican leaders have not been content with attacks on me, or my wife, or on my sons. No, not content with that, they now include my little dog, Fala. Well, of course, I don't resent attacks, and my family don't resent attacks, but Fala does resent them. You know, Fala is Scotch, and being a Scottie, as soon as he learned that the Republican fiction writers in Congress and out had concocted a story that I'd left him behind on an Aleutian island and had sent a destroyer back to find him—at a cost to the taxpayers of two or three, or eight or twenty million dollars—his Scotch soul was furious. He has not been the same dog since. I am accustomed to hearing malicious falsehoods about myself ... But I think I have a right to resent, to object, to libelous statements about my dog.[3]

Not only does this turn serious – and probably to some extent justified – charges into a joke, it also removes the issue from the locus of political debate about governmental expenditure to the homely, cute and obviously non-political site of the Roosevelts' family dog, away from the presidential body politic. The rhetorical deftness lies in the fact that Roosevelt is accused of spending public money on his dog, thus drawing Fala into the political sphere, and deflects the attack through the same movement that the accusers object to. Rather than to defend his spending, or even to answer the charges made, he switches to discussing the accusations' supposed effects on Fala. Thus relocating the discussion to the private sphere, he depoliticizes the issue, and ironically, in doing so, objects to that very movement. In a very broad paraphrase, he asks that Fala be left out of the game, while at the same time bringing Fala into it himself. This rhetorically invalidates the charges by displacing them into the private sphere, which is all the more ironical because the actual displacement of the dog, and its alleged rescue with government means is what led to the discussion in the first place.

3 "Biography of Fala D. Roosevelt", FDR Library Website. http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/education/resources/bio_fala.html

This use of Fala and persons from his private sphere is characteristic also for FDR's depoliticization of his remembrance. Fala survived FDR by seven years, and thus in mass media moved from being one of FDR's often photographed and described attributes to one of ER's, one of the most publicly visible assets to pass from him to her in 1945. Even the earliest exhibitions in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum included a "Fala corner" dedicated to the remembrance of the family dog. Although the Fala speech is an important element in it, this remembrance is almost ostentatiously non-political.

Remembrance practices have, however, also worked in the opposite direction, using aspects from the Roosevelts' private lives to salvage politically and culturally complicated elements of his public image to fabricate a sustainable icon. Roosevelt's paralysis from the waist down makes him a problematic public icon in cultural memory, because his impaired physique an able-ist and patriarchic culture calls into question his virility. One obvious way of culturally asserting FDR's masculinity is via his sexual potency – a route taken, for instance, by teen movie *FDR American Badass!* (2012) in which the FDR character asks "Does my cock still work?" moments after finding out his legs are paralyzed. Through its very triviality the film betrays an important aspect of FDR as a public icon in cultural memory: if his legs no longer worked, it is all the more important to know that the commander in chief at least functioned well sexually. Anecdotes of his marriage with Eleanor Roosevelt cannot provide this reassurance because their sexual relationship ended – at least in cultural memory – after the marital crisis in 1918. Treatment in popular culture and actuality of FDR's mistress Lucy Mercer Rutherfurd, and alleged other extramarital affairs, usually functions at least on one level as proof of FDR's continued virility. Thus, they introduce narratives about FDR's private life into a broader public sphere to address the politically and ideologically charged issue of the president's capability to function as an able man.

Ellen Feldman's novel *Lucy* (2003) is an intriguing case because it combines in a sense the movement from public to private with a movement from official to officious history. It is well researched historically, and sticks closely to historical details in so far as they are known in telling the story of FDR's relationship with Lucy Mercer Rutherfurd from her perspective. She is the narrator of a narrative that could only be part of the officious story, and her agency over that narrative certainly draws it out of the traditionally political into the realm of popular speculation about the president's private life. The fact that the Lucy character is the story's narrator, makes her a kind of illicit derivative of ER's role as narrator. Lucy Mercer Rutherfurd did not actually tell her side of the story, but in projecting her as narrator of the affair, Feldman is careful to position the love story within the context of FDR's political work and against the background of the US's involvement in World Wars I and II, employing the public interest in FDR's private sphere and the novel genre to catch the attention of a new audience to deliver a hagiographic public history lesson about FDR:

> The times were dire. The pressures on Franklin were unbearable. He saw war coming, as he had two decades earlier, but now he was not a young firebrand in the administration eager to get into it. He was the administration, and he knew we would not be able to stay out of it. The problem was, he explained to me, he could not get too far ahead of the American people in racing to meet it. "Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars," he'd promised the mothers and fathers of America during the campaign, though he'd been fairly certain they would. The catch, he confided, was by that time the United States would be in the war, so it would not be foreign. And all the while the isolationists in America First, like Charles Lindbergh and Franklin's cousin Alice Longworth, fought his policies, and impugned his motives, and spread stories about him and Eleanor and the children, who were now old enough to get into trouble on their own. (Feldman 212-213)

In this excerpt and throughout the novel, the narrative is mainly historical – both in the sense of supported by detailed historical evidence, and in the sense that it reads like a very favorable biography of FDR, addressing his political career more than his private life. It puts a positive construction on things FDR has been criticized for, as for instance on his rhetorically brilliant, but misleading campaign promise that he would not send Americans into "foreign wars", and then sending them into a "domestic" war which was nonetheless on the other side of the globe. Here the fictional Lucy actually echoes a "My Day" column Eleanor Roosevelt published on November 21, 1944, in which she explains that FDR actually kept his promise. Through its complicit narrator, the novel strongly exculpates FDR's infidelity – "the pressures on Franklin were unbearable" – a strategy that works well because the narrator is so clearly historically accurate in her analyses elsewhere. Nevertheless, *Lucy* recounts the narrative of FDR's presidency, while filling up the gaps, from a vantage point that is just outside the realm of the political, the public, and the official. Lucy, both protagonist and reminiscing narrator, has a particular position only available to a fictionalized mistress from which to complete the narrative and assert FDR to be sexually able, a private issue that is politically and culturally important to his remembrance.

Thus, Eleanor Roosevelt did not function as a vehicle for showcasing FDR's masculinity to later audiences – other female ER foils do so in cultural memory, not just Lucy, but also FDR's secretary Marguerite LeHand ("Missy"), his distant cousin Margaret Suckley ("Daisy"), and to a lesser extent his private secretary Grace Tully. These women figure importantly in many biographies (e.g. Geoffrey Ward's *Closest Companion,* about Daisy) and some wrote biographies of FDR themselves – Grace Tully published *F.D.R. My Boss* (1949), narrating his story, and thereby occupying yet another element of what might be considered Eleanor Roosevelt's position, reinforcing his masculinity and natural dominance in the process as evident in the title "My Boss." The film *Hyde Park on Hudson* (2012) puts this phenomenon of "FDR's women" center stage, while implicitly suggesting that Eleanor Roosevelt's subversion consisted in part in, or even resulted from, her alleged homosexuality.

There are various women ER allegedly had romantic relationships with, most notably journalist Lorena Hickok and suffragist Marion Dickerman (Cook 27-37). Although there is little historical evidence to show that these friendships were erotic, the suggestion that ER was lesbian remains important in cultural memory, because it provides a seemingly fitting explanation of ER's sexuality – on the margin, as most of her political interests were in socially marginalized groups and subversive of normative standards, as a powerful woman in a patriarchy, however casually unaware, by definition is. At Historic Hyde Park, this issue of ER's private life is mostly relegated to what used to be her cottage at Val-Kill, a site itself geographically and in terms of presentation on the margin of the larger site. Whereas the details of FDR's sex life is a private matter with great public appeal, because it resolves a cultural snag in his public image, the issue of ER's sexuality is relevant only to a limited audience, fascinating to some and repulsive to others. Playing it out in popular culture works well as a symbol of her general subversiveness and attraction to margins, but even if it is sometimes overemphasized in later popular culture because it fascinates, it remains a very limited factor in her autofabrication as a public icon.

Eleanor Roosevelt's role in FDR's presidency was, as I have argued, that of a window on the border of the political apparatus: she functioned as a channel of communication between the President and the public that went both ways, and which allowed her to incorporate her own views and priorities. In doing so, she enlarged the arena of politics, drawing in spheres, groups and issues that would otherwise have been excluded. One important way in which she did so was by addressing issues the Administration could not officially say anything about, unofficially. FDR often spoke to journalists off the record, but even then his space was limited, and in a sense ER had the role to supplement FDR's public image with an unofficial, radical voice. Together FDR and ER could decide, whether or not they actually discussed such things explicitly, that ER would address an issue – always á *titre personnel* – providing those involved with a kind of "soft" acknowledgement by the president. One motive, from the FDR Administration's perspective, for this was often to deflect demands for "hard" political measures or monetary compensation, and thus a form of depoliticization. Eleanor Roosevelt's treatment of issues as officious mouthpiece for FDR could obscure what the President was doing elsewhere, so that such contributions to the public icon were the flipside of autofabrication in that they elided the exercise of power. At the same time they carried their own form of soft power.

The story of ER's visit to the Bonus Army (1933, discussed in chapter 4), leading one veteran to say "Hoover sent the Army, Roosevelt sent his wife", is exemplary here. The veteran's comment has been echoed by innumerable journalists at the time, and historians, schoolbooks, documentaries and websites since. Although of course, this was an important, and intentional, affirmation, it was not an official government statement. As such it is a classic Rooseveltian example of symbol politics. Eleanor Roosevelt was kind, compassionate, good at making the veterans feel they were being seen and heard, but their demand for money was not granted or even seriously considered.

In American cultural memory, the Roosevelts' informal and personal approach is still prevalent, and ER's officious acting as presidential substitute or supplement is a central part of that. Even the fact that ER could guide attention away from other issues, and allowed FDR an unofficial second voice, to own or to distance himself from as he saw fit is in itself reflected in remembrance. An example of this is in *Hyde Park on Hudson* (2012) when throughout the film the suspicion is raised that the Eleanor character takes the initiative to serve hotdogs to the British King and Queen to humiliate them publicly through a vulgar snack associated with the American Independence Day. Thus she is remembered as rebellious and politically active on the sly in the emotive margin of otherwise pragmatic and rational international politics. However, in the end the film suggests that the hotdogs were FDR's plan after all, having made deliberate use of his wife's reputation and defiant attitude, in order to deflect any suspicion away from himself. What has come to be known as the Hot Dog Summit of 11 June 1939 was, according to David Woolner, planned in detail by FDR, including the hot dogs (Michaels). Whether or not there is a historical basis to believe that he attempted, as he does in the film, to suggest that the hot dogs were his wife's malicious idea, it is exemplary of an actual as well as a currently popularly remembered dynamic between them.

A key effect of casting Eleanor Roosevelt as an officious voice alongside FDR's official one, especially together with her introduction of the private into the public icon, is that Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, in autofabrication as well as remembrance, are extremely successful as the nation's projected parents. The broad knowledge that during the presidency they had no sex life is no problem here – indeed it might be thought of as an asset, especially since they did have five children to prove that they had had this in the past. This lack of an erotic relationship between them opens up the potential to fantasize about erotic relationships between FDR and others. And yet, despite the imagined or real lack of sexual monogamy, they were real parents, and successfully functioned as symbolic parents to the nation. This remembrance as a presidential couple whose officious acts and expressions are interwoven in their public policies and administration, is borne out for instance in Doris Kearns Goodwin's paradigmatic *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, The Home Front in World War II* (1994). This biography weaves the Roosevelts' private and public lives into one, starting with what in a film would be a parallel projection of the German occupation of Europe in 1940 and FDR's illness with polio in 1921. Thus, the home front is consistently interpreted as "national American" on the one hand and "domestic", actually within the intimacy of the Roosevelts' household, on the other. The suggestion throughout is that the Roosevelt home is a direct reflection of America as a whole, casting the family as an inclusive allegory for the nation and all its citizens.

No Ordinary Time consistently uses the first names of its narrative's *dramatis personae*, and, like the *Eleanor and Franklin* biopic, it often stages ER as the narrator – obviously because the personal, familial side of the narrative relies heavily on ER's autobiographical writings. As the use of the first names already signals, the biography is intensely intimate. It strongly links

private events in the Roosevelts' lives to public affairs of American engagement in the war. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, for instance is framed in an elaborate discussion of the deaths of FDR's mother and ER's brother in the months previous to December 7th, 1941. A great deal of attention is spent on the personal memories and grieving processes of both FDR and ER, and the recurrent suggestion is that both worked so concertedly on preparing for the war they realized was coming, partly to alleviate their mourning, for instance when Goodwin quotes ER's memoir: "I think it was in an attempt to numb this feeling that I worked so hard at the Office of Civilian Defense that fall" (279-280).

The final chapter similarly links ER's personal grief over her husband's death, and her discovery that his extramarital relationship with Lucy Mercer-Rutherfurd had been revived to her decision to continue to bear out his political and ideological legacy. As the war ended, ER, according to Goodwin, also made peace with the past of her troubled marriage.

> For the rest of her life, her son Elliott observed, Eleanor "chose to remember only the lovely times they had shared, never the estrangement and pain." She loved to quote word for word the things they had told one another. She kept up the traditions he had established for the family – including the picnic on the Fourth of July and the reading of Dickens at Christmas. Maureen Corr, Eleanor's secretary during the forties and fifties, remembers her "constantly talking about what Franklin did or what Franklin said or… how Franklin thought about this or that. And every time she mentioned his name you could hear the emotion in her voice and see the glow in her eyes." …
> In these first months on her own, Eleanor derived constant comfort form a little verse sent to her by a friend. "They are not dead who live in lives they leave behind, In those whom they have blessed they live a life again." These simple lines, she wrote, inspired her to make the rest of her life worthy of her husband's memory. As long as she continued to fight for his ideals, he would continue to live. (633)

Goodwin here interweaves public and private, suggesting that ER's constant mentioning of "what Franklin did or what Franklin said" was primarily motivated by her personal grief and wish to retain affectionate memories for herself. The final sentence suggests that ER's motivation for continuing "to fight for his ideals" after FDR's death was to keep alive his memory, where I would read this as a pretext to claim space for her own political ideals. Goodwin does in this manner include the Roosevelts' private life, and particularly ER and the dynamics of their marriage in her discussion of the American executive war leadership. However, she does not, like Enloe, expand the scope of what she regards as political through including the Roosevelts' private lives, but rather treats them as parental figures to the nation. Together, or really, as a family, they are treated as premediating the US at war, and therefore able to guide the US through it. Goodwin does not, like Enloe, include the private and the officious in what she regards as political, but rather treats it as a separate level that mirrors

the public level of international politics, a movement that ER's role alongside FDR in a sense makes possible.

Goodwin in her preface compares America and the Roosevelts noting that they share: "the sense of a cause successfully pursued through great difficulties, a theme common to America itself and to the family which guided it" (11). She suggests that the success of both hinged on the greatness of the difficulties and that the Roosevelts' success in "guiding" America depended on their knowledge of those same "great difficulties." "The family which guided it" firmly implants Eleanor Roosevelt into an adjunct position in leading the US, while expanding the presidency into the private and the officious, to benefit FDR's public icon as a paternal war president.

Conclusion

After Franklin Roosevelt's death in April 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt continued to be politically active, though not in elected office. She was, most famously and importantly, the United States' first delegate to the United Nations General Assembly, and chairperson of the UN Committee on Human Rights. Within that capacity, she helped to draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Within the United States, Eleanor Roosevelt became a public intellectual, who wrote and published many opinion pieces and books, appeared on a wide range of radio and television shows, and chaired various boards and committees. She was also involved, as her husband had been in the first decade of the twentieth century, in battling the enormous power of the Democratic Party machine of Tammany Hall. However, on the whole, her position as a public intellectual, educating the American public, was the role that suited her best in the years between 1945 and her own death on November 7, 1962 (Black, *Casting Her Own Shadow*).

Although ER remained very influential in her post-war career, her lowered visibility, was an explicit choice – she was often invited to run for political office but continued to present herself rather as FDR's "aura", even if her projects in reality were more her own than extrapolations of FDR's. As she wrote about this in an article in *Look Magazine* in 1948, following her refusal to run for vice-president with Harry Truman:

> At first I was surprised that anyone should think that I would want to run for office, or that I was fitted to hold office. Then I realized that some people felt that I must have learned something from my husband in all the years that he was in public life! (…) The simple truth is that I have had my fill of public life of the more or less stereotyped kind. (Quoted in Neal)

Clearly she continued to autofabricate herself as FDR's wife, suggesting that any fitness for political office people might assume would be learned from him. Moreover, even if she continued to exert great influence, and while also continuing to pose as someone who only reluctantly, despite herself, and to her own surprise, had a public life at all. Binker and O'Farrell in their

HNN article about ER in *The Roosevelts* indignantly note about the period after FDR's death, that "[t]his period is a complete mystery to most Americans who usually associate ER with Franklin and assume that her role in American life ended with his death in 1945 or that her postwar life merely echoed his New Deal. Neither of these statements is true" (np). While they are right about this, it was Eleanor Roosevelt's own conscious autofabrication that produced the perception in "most Americans" of the "mystery", the strong associating with "Franklin", as well as, finally, the impression that ER's independent and autonomous later politics always remained a continuation of the New Deal.

Conclusion

In *TIME 100* of April 13, 1998, one of the most authoritative American historians, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., assertively and eloquently espoused an essential interpretation of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as a key player in twentieth century world politics:

> Take a look at our present world. It is manifestly not Adolf Hitler's world. His Thousand-Year Reich turned out to have a brief and bloody run of a dozen years. It is manifestly not Joseph Stalin's world. That ghastly world self-destructed before our eyes. Nor is it Winston Churchill's world. Empire and its glories have long since vanished into history. The world we live in today is Franklin Roosevelt's world.

Schlesinger in 1998 – arguably at the height of global American power – read "our present world" as having been vied for in the 1930s and 1940s by four major ideologies, each with a historic statesman as its embodiment: Nazism and Hitler, communism and Stalin, imperialism and Churchill, and finally, victoriously, the proponent of freedom and democracy: Franklin Roosevelt, the personification of America. Hitler's "Thousand-Year Reich" was limited to the "dozen years" it turned out to last in reality; the "ghastly" quality of "Joseph Stalin's world", up to and including its self-destruction, both revives the ghost that is elemental to communism, and highlights its inherent harmfulness. "Churchill's world" is shrouded in nostalgia, something that may have been glorious at the time, but has simply and passively "vanished", floated away. The surviving paradigm for Schlesinger is Franklin Roosevelt's, and as if to hammer home that that paradigm reigns around the globe, the final short sentence starts and ends with "world."

Even after 9/11, Schlesinger's interpretation of FDR's place in today's world continues to be embraced in some circles, albeit with more difficulty. That difficulty, however, is also already embedded in Schlesinger's statement, which in its lack of cynicism invites reading against the grain. Schlesinger unwittingly highlights the similarity between the leaders he cites, including FDR. The anaphora, presumably intended to point out that these four leaders, with their radically different ideologies, were competing for the same ground, actually stresses that similarity. However different their ideologies were, Hitler, Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt had worldviews that were, to some extent, aesthetically comparable. Although their utopian ideals differed a great deal, they each believed that the organization of society – perhaps even of the world – was one vast project demanding a large-scale and integrated approach. Their various aesthetics took different forms, but overwhelming architecture and infrastructural projects were on each of their agendas, and their approaches to the mass media also had much in common. One reason why FDR was so early to grasp how serious the Nazi threat to European and world peace was,

is that he knew Germany well, and had an unusually profound understanding of – though no political affinity with – Hitler's worldview.

While their politics were fundamentally different, there existed a real overlap between FDR and the other three leaders' autofabrication styles, particularly in their visual and aural rhetoric, and use of modern mass media.[1] FDR, like Hitler and Stalin, believed in developing unprecedentedly large employment programs, often creating enormous bureaucratic and infrastructural apparatuses, and was also convinced of the suitability of film, social realist poster art and radio addresses for government communication and propaganda. Churchill and FDR both had intimate, personal, and persuasive radio styles, and while Churchill's colonial imperialism was indeed outdated, the more Rooseveltian, still-current American forms of cultural diplomacy and the colonization implicit in US-driven global capitalism are hardly less imperialistic in nature. Finally, the point Schlesinger makes here is not all that obvious – few people would, having been provoked to "Take a look at our present world", independently have come up with his conclusion that "The world we live in today is Franklin Roosevelt's world."

However, because of the United States' continued cultural and military dominance in the world, and because of the still operative United Nations, the perceived universality of the Four Freedoms and the Declaration of Human Rights, this claim that the current world order is Franklin Roosevelt's continues to ring true. Or at least, it continues to be popular in American cultural artefacts representing Franklin Roosevelt. Fifteen years after Schlesinger said the above, Ken Burns' *The Roosevelts, An Intimate History* effectively resumes, and insofar as necessary revives, that frame. This view of Rooseveltian America as the world's moral high ground also fits in perfectly with the ever popular perspective in which the US continues to occupy the pedestal John Winthrop put it on when he pronounced his colony a "City upon a Hill" in 1630. Following a tradition started by Winthrop on the May Flower, Schlesinger's "The world we live in today is Franklin Roosevelt's world" reinforces the idea that the United States, embodied in this case by Franklin Roosevelt, is the world's moral focus.

A similar perspective is borne out in the many uses of the moral and military success of the American intervention in World War II as an argument in favor of American intervention in conflicts overseas. Former Bush speechwriter David Frum's coinage "Axis of Evil", for instance, consciously echoed the "Axis powers" of World War II, drawing a parallel between that and the War on Terror, which was important to the rhetorical justification of latter. Frum wrote about this in his book *The Right Man: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush* (2003): "By identifying the Iraqi and Iranian regimes with the Axis of the 1940s, Bush was challenging all those European governments that had denounced the rather pallid menace of Jörg Haider in Austria

1 This is for instance also reflected in Nancy Mitford's 1935 novel *Wigs on the Green*, in which FDR is habitually listed among European dictators: "the rooms had been hung with life-size photographs of Hitler, Mussolini, Roosevelt and the Captain" (65).

to join him in confronting the transplanted fascism of the Islamic world." (Frum 244). Politically speaking, Jörg Haider is, certainly from a European perspective, a more obvious reincarnation of fascism than the Islamic world, but in rhetorical terms the association between the Axis Powers and the Axis of Evil is understandable, as an extrapolation of the endlessly echoed parallel between Pearl Harbor and 9/11. And in both cases the contrasting body is "the free world", an international coalition led by the President of the United States. Within this frame, Franklin Roosevelt continues to operate as an archetype, a blueprint of modern American presidents with enormous domestic and international authority.

This image of Franklin Roosevelt as a personification and architect of a modern America prevails in American cultural memory, even among haters in some form or another. Several factors conspire to lead to FDR's position as an icon of America, which I have discussed in this thesis. Some of those have in the first place been generated by him as a historical figure shaping his own public image and future remembrance, others are the product of a later cultural environment that could appropriate the FDR icon to meet a particular need in the present. But mostly these two driving factors of FDR's iconic remembrance coincide, an effect he steered towards, although sheer luck was no doubt also involved. His efforts to associate himself with modern media and technology have ensured in many cases that he seems unexpectedly contemporary in later contexts, for instance as a president who smiles in photographs or who habitually travels by airplane. On the other hand, associating himself so strongly with radio, a medium that was soon overtaken by television in importance, he actually was modern but also part of a relatively short-lived radio culture that soon vanished in youthful beauty. As such, Roosevelt is remembered often as the first modern media president, but also as a kind of precursor of the really contemporary mass media.

In any case, Franklin Roosevelt was not only an important president, but also an unusually successful cultural icon. He was extremely astute at presenting himself – both to his contemporaries and to future memory: open and visible as an approachable and authentic leader, while simultaneously veiling his less mediagenic aspects and acts. These include his wheelchair, but as importantly: the less picturesque exertion of the executive power at his personal discretion. As discussed in Part I, various factors in FDR's presidency and performance can be identified which explain his success as a cultural icon.

Roosevelt was particularly successful at interweaving his self-fashioning and autofabrication: the culture and environment that shaped him as an individual might not have seen in him the most viable candidate for the presidency, but that situation also provided space for him to take the initiative in defining the parameters of his position at an early stage. He then continued assertively to construct his public image. This public image was, on the one hand, geared primarily to making himself appear attractive to his audiences, but on the other, that attractiveness included a strong impression of congruence with his innate personality.

He also influenced both future remembrance and cultural memory. The set-up of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library FDR built between 1938 and 1941 in Hyde Park elucidates the difference between the two: the first floor is an FDR museum, curated initially by Roosevelt himself to showcase his collections, gifts, and letters he had received, and as such is a carefully composed selection of objects and documents he and his staff had chosen for him to be remembered by. The second floor houses the archive, containing the seemingly non-selected body of FDR's presidential and personal papers, made accessible to the public, but not usually accessed by most tourists. The first floor thus offers a remembrance practice, one that has changed since the 1940s but has always remained celebratory of FDR, and has both become more explicitly remembrance and more clearly a practice, an invitation to particular acts. The second floor is rather FDR's addition to cultural memory, the broader more serendipitous collection of memories and traces of the past that can feed into cultural memory.

Chapter 3 could be considered a concrete realization of the argument in the first chapter that FDR fruitfully intermingled the complex collective effort that constituted his autofabrication and self-fashioning FDR achieved this through allowing different modalities of his voice to amalgamate: his literal voice synecdochically represented his body, his voice metonymically constructed himself as a mass-mediated presence, and his collectively authored official voice indexed him as a persona. The enmeshing of these literal and figurative voices is similar to, indeed a concrete effect of Roosevelt's merging of self-fashioning and autofabrication. Chapter 4 shows how cultural memory and remembrance interacted to make space for the depoliticization of FDR's cultural legacy – depoliticization that is all but a-political. Because FDR seemed a nonpartisan and practical searcher for concensus, he precluded a great deal of political agonism. Indeed, because FDR was so efficacious at turning cultural heritage preservation into a habitual federal engagement, it has, since in the early 1940s no longer seemed surprising that his own house and archive are federally preserved and managed cultural heritage, instituting a range of remembrance practices. Other federally created sites too became indexically representative of him, and therefore contributed to his position in cultural memory.

In the decades since his death, FDR has been represented in cultural artefacts mostly as the winner of World War II, the international champion of democracy and human rights, but also as modernizer of the welfare state, emancipator of people with disabilities, and the first US President to give space to and profit from an activist First Lady. I have identified these four themes as the most evident and noticeable categories in representing FDR, in the present and in the period since 1945. Each theme has evolved over time, meeting as a result of constantly emerging cultural needs for new interpretations of the past, depending primarily on developments in the present. All four of these themes, however, cover the majority of later Roosevelt representations that were widely disseminated in the period 1945-2014, and more importantly: they each point to some of the key mechanics by which FDR has become such a popular cultural icon in American memory.

Cultural artefacts remembering the New Deal distinguish themselves by a progressive depoliticization of the Roosevelt icon – a trend FDR himself instigated. As I have argued on the basis of two diachronic case studies, this depoliticization happened in two ways: through an increasing focus on FDR as a person, a character with individual traits, away from the political aspects of the New Deal, and through the creating of progressively ritualistic media customs, invoking the First Hundred Days as a presidential communication and media practice without referencing their actual political impact. In representations of World War II FDR often has the role of an allegorical figure. In a manner similar to the paradigmatic example at the beginning of this conclusion, allegorizations of FDR function to cross the divide between past and present. When FDR is taken out of a representation of World War II, a firmly ensconced cultural memory of that war starts to slide in unwanted and uncomfortable directions, as Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America* exemplifies.

Chapter 7 explored how Roosevelt's disability appeared in cultural memory. While FDR's legs were paralyzed, as many knew, very few people were aware that he was wheelchair-bound, implying that the wheelchair can only have made its entrance in memory later on. Such memories nonetheless seem authentic, because even if few people never saw him in a wheelchair, he did use one, and later cultural artefacts have ensured that he is portrayed as such. This artificial memory is credible in part because it is close to what some people alive now still actually lived through, and in part because remembering FDR's disability and the wheelchair fulfills a cultural desire in the present. A Roosevelt allegory in which FDR and the prosthetic devices he employed together can both embody traumas and gaps in the past and present of the United States, and confirm the potency of its technological solutions. If FDR was in some ways a regal figure, the wheelchair was his throne, the object that empowered him and showed this power. This reading, while it might have been harmful of FDR's image at the time, now operates as a powerful testament to FDR's and the United States' ability to resolve internal invalidity.

In a sense, chapter 8 extrapolated that perspective: Eleanor Roosevelt was not a prosthetic device, but she did operate to expand FDR's reach in every possible direction: temporally beyond his death, and both during his own life and after, into spheres where, traditionally, politics had little place. Moreover, within the public sphere, because ER engaged herself intensively with civil rights, labor and women's rights leaders, she provided her husband with the political leeway to operate in the political center. Eleanor Roosevelt moreover functioned often as the narrator, in the present and for the future, of the normative universe FDR helped shape. Through her role as non-elected associate of the President, she could depoliticize issues, and she assumed a key role in drawing the attention to her husband from the public into the private, and from the official into the officious. This worked both during his life and in the years after his death, in which she became the key agent of his legacy. This clearly expanded FDR's reach and impact as a cultural icon, but it gave her great agency too. ER used this agency on the one hand to further her own ideals as if they were her (late) husband's, and on the other hand, consistently

avoided drawing too much attention to herself in this pursuit. Thus, her key role in transposing FDR's ideals to the present is made invisible through her own belief in the need for women to capitalize on their "casual unawareness" of the magnitude of their contribution. As such, unlike the wheelchair, her role in FDR's politics as well as in the construction of the FDR icon continues to be underestimated and underrepresented.

Finally, the most important, and also the most seemingly self-contradictory, key to FDR's achievement in shaping himself as a vehicle for a wide range of changing narratives in American memory, is his plasticity. The FDR icon remains attractive because it is highly malleable to suit the needs and ideologies of many different audiences over time and in the present. Schlesinger's claim as a historian that "The world we live in today is Franklin Roosevelt's world," is an ideologically problematic overstatement, but the power of the cultural icon does indeed lie in the fact that FDR lends himself so well to being cast as such.

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Samenvatting

“Dit is Roosevelts wereld” – Franklin Roosevelt als cultureel icoon in de Amerikaanse herinnering

Het citaat in de titel verwijst naar een uitspraak van historicus en biograaf Arthur Schlesinger Jr. in *Time 100* in 1998 waarin Schlesinger stelt dat de wereld van nu niet lijkt op de toekomstvisies die twintigste-eeuwse leiders als Hitler, Stalin of Churchill hadden, maar het rechtstreekse product is van Franklin Roosevelts visie. De wereld is uiteraard veranderd sinds Schlesinger dit in 1998 zei en het was ook toen al betwistbaar of Roosevelts visie zich ooit werkelijk zo ver uitgestrekt heeft de toekomst in, maar het is toch illustratief voor een opvatting van de recente Amerikaanse geschiedenis die in de Verenigde Staten nog altijd gangbaar is. Kort door de bocht gezegd: in de jaren ’30 en ’40 had je in Europa nazisme, fascisme, communisme en kolonialisme, maar de moreel superieure en op termijn enige succesvolle ideologie was die van de VS, gekenmerkt door kapitalisme, democratie en vrijheid, belichaamd door de president uit die periode (1933-1945): Franklin D. Roosevelt.

FDR is daarmee een bijzonder interessante casus: nog afgezien van of het klopt dat de (Westerse) wereld van nu geschoeid is op de leest die hij ooit bedacht heeft, valt bij Schlesinger en in allerlei andere contexten op dat hij blijkbaar als zodanig herinnerd wordt, of althans, dat die herinnering actief gevoed wordt: Roosevelt was niet alleen een staatsman, maar ook een visionair wiens idealen voor de toekomst van de VS en de wereld nog steeds relevant zijn. Hoewel Roosevelt allang niet meer tot het zodanig recente verleden behoort dat zijn politieke en maatschappelijke werkelijkheid nog echt dichtbij de huidige ligt, en ook de media en beeldvormingsstrategieën ingrijpend veranderd zijn, overleeft hij als herkenbaar referentiepunt in Amerikaanse cultuuruitingen, zoals films, romans, documentaires, biografieën, musea en monumenten. Als je kijkt naar ‘ratings’ wie er de “beste president van de VS ooit” was, komt FDR meestal bij de beste drie (Washington en Lincoln zijn vaak de nummers 1 en 2) en vrijwel iedere president wordt vroeg of laat met hem vergeleken. Toen Obama aan het begin van zijn presidentschap met de financiële crisis geconfronteerd werd, zond zelfs het politiek conservatieve Fox News een minireportage uit over de vraag wat FDR gedaan zou hebben in deze crisis en hoe Obama in diens voetsporen zou moeten treden.

Tegelijk valt op dat veel van dat soort representaties van Franklin Roosevelt niet zozeer inaccuraat zijn, als wel anachronistisch. Om een voorbeeld te geven: veel films die in de jaren ’40 spelen (*Pearl Harbor*, *Monuments Men*) tonen beelden van een man in een rolstoel met een sigarettenpijpje en gaan er dan vanuit dat hun publiek in één oogopslag begrijpt dat dit President Roosevelt moet zijn. Het klopt dat FDR in een rolstoel zat en rookte, maar het publiek in de jaren

’40 zag hem nooit zo. Met name de rolstoel werd bewust en zorgvuldig buiten beeld gehouden. Gewone burgers wisten wel dat hij polio gehad had, maar niet dat hij niet kon lopen. Roosevelts rolstoel is dus als het ware de collectieve herinnering binnengereden: hij was er historisch gezien wel, maar maakte tijdens FDRs presidentschap geen deel uit van de beeldvorming en pas achteraf is het een van zijn meest herkenbare attributen geworden. Niettemin “herinneren” veel mensen die in die periode jong waren zich duidelijk dat Roosevelt in een rolstoel zat – niet omdat ze dat toen gezien hebben, maar omdat ze beelden die ze later zagen als het ware geprojecteerd hebben op hun “echte” herinneringen.

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt hoe deze dynamiek werkt: hoe functioneert Roosevelt als cultureel icoon in het Amerikaanse geheugen? Mijn benadering is zowel historisch als meer literair-theoretisch. Historisch omdat ik onderzocht heb hoe Roosevelt zelf als president zijn eigen beeldvorming probeerde te sturen, en in hoeverre dat later doorgewerkt heeft. Om terug te komen op het voorbeeld van de rolstoel: die hield hij zelf angstvallig buiten beeld, maar vrij snel na zijn voor velen plotselinge overlijden, werd zijn fysieke gesteldheid en daarmee ook zijn handicap onderwerp van publieke belangstelling. Nog veel meer bekendheid en aandacht kreeg Roosevelts handicap vanaf het begin van de jaren ’80, en zo groeide de rolstoel uit tot een van de bekendste trivia over hem. De vraag is waarom de herinnering zich zo ontwikkeld heeft. In het begrijpen daarvan richt ik me op twee factoren: enerzijds wat FDR en zijn staf zelf deden om een bepaalde beeldvorming te creëren en anderzijds de context van het herinneren zelf. Dit is de historische kant van mijn onderzoek, waarin ik het diachronische verhaal van FDRs beeldvorming en de deels daaruit voortvloeiende herinnering aan FDR vertel.

De literair-historische en ook meer theoretische kant van mijn onderzoek richt zich op de vraag hoe de retoriek van Roosevelts eigen woorden en beelden en van latere Roosevelt-representaties werkt: waarom blijven bepaalde verhalen hangen en andere niet? Welke culturele en maatschappelijke wensen en ideologieën van het heden worden gediend met het inzetten van Roosevelt in een bepaald narratief? Hoe kon Roosevelt zelf, zonder in de toekomst te kunnen kijken, zich als het ware retorisch voorsorteren voor een bepaalde plek in de herinnering? Om dit soort mechanismes te analyseren gebruik ik methodes en theorieën uit de letterkunde en cultuurwetenschappen, bijvoorbeeld over de verschillende manieren waarop allegorieën kunnen werken en wat voor retorische tropen Roosevelts radiogebruik karakteriseren.

In termen van wetenschappelijke disciplines is dit onderzoek soms lastig te vangen – het is interdisciplinair, zowel cultuurhistorisch als cultuur-analytisch, hetgeen past bij het bredere label waar het onder valt, amerikanistiek, een multidisciplinair veld dat meer gedefinieerd wordt door de bestudeerde regio dan door een bepaalde disciplinaire verzameling van methoden en technieken. Preciezer gezegd combineert dit proefschrift inzichten uit “celebrity studies”, de subdiscipline die de culturele en maatschappelijke productie van “celebrities” (door henzelf en door anderen) bestudeert, en “memory studies”, het vakgebied dat onderzoekt hoe individuele en

collectieve herinneringen functioneren. Een van mijn centrale stellingen daarbij is dat memory studies door zijn gerichtheid op hoe herinneringen werken in het heden, te weinig aandacht heeft voor de invloed van herinnerde personen zelf, en anderzijds, dat celebrity studies te weinig kijkt naar hoe beeldvorming en herinnering zich over de tijd en in verschillende contexten, verschillend ontwikkelen.

In het eerste hoofdstuk introduceer ik het begrip *autofabrication*, dat een complement is van de in 1980 door Stephen Greenblatt ingebrachte term *self-fashioning*. Deze twee begrippen lijken op elkaar, maar er zijn drie belangrijke verschillen: self-fashioning gaat met name over de vorming van het Zelf in Freudiaanse of meer precies Foucaultiaanse zin, terwijl autofabrication gaat over het vormen van het eigen publieke imago (met andere woorden: autofabrication doe je zelf, maar het gaat niet over je eigen innerlijke persoonlijkheid, maar over je imago). Ten tweede wordt iemands self-fashioning bepaald door alle personen en andere actoren en discursieve praktijken die op één of andere manier vormgeven aan iemands zelf, terwijl autofabrication gaat over dat deel van de imagovorming waar de persoon in kwestie zelf macht over heeft (bijvoorbeeld als diegene communicatieadviseurs in dienst heeft). Ten derde is autofabrication eigenlijk alleen voor politieke leiders relevant – om twee redenen. In een indirect democratisch systeem representeert zo iemand per definitie veel meer mensen dan alleen zichzelf, en de mensen die op hem[1] gestemd hebben moeten toch op één of andere manier zichzelf kunnen herkennen in hun leider. Dat vergt balanceren, en dat wordt nog bemoeilijkt doordat politieke leiders in de twintigste eeuw meer dan ooit onder druk kwamen te staan – onder andere door nieuwe media als fotografie, film, radio en televisie – om *authentiek* te zijn, of op z’n minst te lijken. Enerzijds ligt er dus een appèl voor politiek leiders om hun innerlijke zelf zo openhartig mogelijk voor het voetlicht te brengen, en anderzijds moet het imago dat ze daarmee scheppen voor iedereen, man en vrouw, jong en oud, links en rechts, aantrekkelijk en herkenbaar zijn; een onmogelijke opgave. Hoofdstuk 1 laat zien hoe Franklin Roosevelt daarmee omging.

Het tweede hoofdstuk trekt de spanning tussen self-fashioning en autofabrication door naar het terrein van de herinnering aan Roosevelt, waarbij ik een onderscheid maak tussen cultureel geheugen (*cultural memory*) en herinneringspraktijk (*remembrance*). Over de betekenis en werking van culturele (collectieve, communicatieve) herinnering is veel geschreven, onder meer door Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Jan en Aleida Assmann, Mieke Bal, Ann Rigney en Astrid Erll. Bijzonder aansprekend vind ik de definitie van Richard Terdiman: “Memory is the past made present” (letterlijk: “Herinnering is het verleden zoals dat aanwezig wordt gemaakt”). Terdimans definitie benadrukt dat herinnering een constructie in en van het heden is. In een wat lossere vertaling, zoals “Herinnering is het aanwezige verleden” blijven twee cruciale aspecten onderbelicht. Ten eerste heb ik dan de ambiguïteit van “present” niet vertaald:

1 Politiek correcter zou het zijn om hier hem/haar te schrijven, maar het betreft nu, en zeker 70-80 jaar geleden, eenmaal meestal een man.

herinnering is niet alleen het aanwezige verleden, maar leeft ook in de tegenwoordige tijd en heeft dus relevantie voor het heden. Ten tweede is er de passieve constructie die besloten ligt in “made”: herinnering wordt weliswaar gemaakt, maar er is een zekere mate van serendipiteit en onzichtbaarheid in wie of wat daar invloed op heeft, dus is het moeilijk vast te stellen wie er macht heeft over culturele herinnering. Adrian Parr zegt het zo: “Memory is not in space or time, although it can be said to produce spacetimes.” (“Herinnering is niet in ruimte of tijd, maar het produceert wel tijdsruimtes”). Culturele herinnering is een ongrijpbaar fenomeen, te vangen in tijd noch ruimte, maar het produceert wel narratieve werelden met invloed in onze wereld van dit moment.

De tegenhanger van culturele herinnering is herinneringspraktijk, een begrip waarbij juist wel voorop staat dat aanwijsbare actoren specifiek materiaal in specifieke vormen her-inneren en anderen doen herinneren. Herinneringspraktijk is actief en het is duidelijk wie er macht over uitoefenen. Om een voorbeeld te geven: het is heel ongrijpbaar wat nu eigenlijk “de” culturele herinnering aan de Tweede Wereldoorlog is, maar het is duidelijk en transparant dat de Stichting Vier Vijf Mei de jaarlijkse herdenking – een herinneringspraktijk – op de Dam in Amsterdam organiseert , en naar haar goeddunken het draaiboek en de uitgesproken teksten aanpast (hoewel daar natuurlijk ook weer een veel schimmiger spel tussen politici, lobbyisten en belangengroepen achter schuilgaat). In die interactie tussen wat een cultuur en maatschappij zich ‘toevallig’ op een bepaald moment herinnert en welke herinneringspraktijken er in die maatschappij leven, was Roosevelt, tijdens zijn leven en over zijn eigen graf heen, actief.

Anders dan veel machthebbers liet Roosevelt geen memoires achter, maar een bibliotheek – eigenlijk een archief en museum – gewijd aan zijn leven en presidentschap en gevestigd op zijn eigen landgoed. Op die manier verbond hij de politieke ontwikkelingen in de VS en daarbuiten, en de belangrijke gebeurtenissen op het nationale en internationale toneel op een heel persoonlijke manier aan zijn eigen imago. En omgekeerd liet hij zien dat er achter al de grote, schijnbaar ongrijpbare politieke machinaties, een man van vlees en bloed zat, die zijn best deed zo goed mogelijk te beslissen over zaken waarover hij vaak niet alle benodigde informatie had. Door geen memoires te schrijven, liet Roosevelt enerzijds een kans liggen om zijn keuzes achteraf te verdedigen – dat kon ook niet, want hij stierf voor het einde van zijn vierde termijn als president – maar anderzijds gaf hij door de FDR Library na te laten, wel inzicht in waar hij zijn beslissingen als president op gebaseerd had. En bovendien is de FDR Library als museum en toeristische attractie in feite veel flexibeler in het representeren en begrijpelijk maken van Roosevelt en de periode waarin hij president was, dan een boek.

Het derde hoofdstuk bespreekt systematisch wat Roosevelt deed om zijn eigen imago vorm te geven, wie hij daarvoor in dienst had – veel meer adviseurs, schrijvers, pr-managers en andere medewerkers dan zijn voorgangers – en wat zij deden, via welke media hij zijn imago vormgaf voor het heden van toen en voor de toekomst, en hoe hij omging met pers en met de publieke

opinie. Ik laat daarbij zien dat Roosevelt verschillende retorische en semiotische modi in elkaar liet vervloeien. Zijn fysieke stem die als een *pars pro toto* zijn hele persoon representeerde, zijn metonymische stem, dat wil zeggen de door massamedia verspreide “stem” (zijn radiostem bijvoorbeeld), die Roosevelts woorden, maar ook zijn centrale narratieven en overtuigingen vertegenwoordigde, en zijn indexicale “stem”, representaties die naar hem verwezen maar geproduceerd werden door een heel team van adviseurs en schrijvers van zijn speeches die gezamenlijk een mediale Roosevelt creëerden, vloeiden in elkaar over, met als effect dat de representaties die nauwelijks nog direct door FDR gecreëerd werden toch als persoonlijk overkwamen.

Net als het derde hoofdstuk gaat het vierde over wat Franklin Roosevelt en zijn staf deed om de beeldvorming over hem te sturen en te managen, maar waar het derde hoofdstuk zich primair richt op Roosevelts *autofabrication* en het begrijpen en beïnvloeden van de publieke opinie op dat moment, gaat het vierde hoofdstuk over Roosevelts omgang met zijn toekomstige erfenis, oftewel met het creëren van bepaalde *remembrance practices* en het toevoegen van materiaal aan het culturele repositorium van herinneringen. Deels betreft dat de al eerder genoemde FDR Presidential Library, en ook de uitgave van het 13-delige *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, dat nadrukkelijk op toekomstige generaties gericht is. Voor een nog groter deel gaat het hier over de erfenis in het Amerikaanse fysieke en culturele landschap van de *New Deal*, Roosevelts uitgebreide sociaal-economische programma om de VS uit de Grote Depressie te halen. Het hoofdstuk laat zien hoe de materiële, sociale en culturele producten van de New Deal in het Amerikaanse landschap Roosevelt weliswaar niet op basis van gelijkenis afbeelden, maar wel als indexicale verwijzingen functioneren. Dat wil zeggen dat, bijvoorbeeld, de duizenden muurschilderingen in Amerikaanse postkantoren als indexicale reminders blijven werken en dat Roosevelt dus mede door de enorme culturele en architectonische voetafdruk van de New Deal in de culturele herinnering blijft. Ik beargumenteer in dat hoofdstuk dat Roosevelt zichzelf in de beeldvorming in feite depolitiseert, in elk geval in termen van partijpolitiek, op een manier die zeer politiek geladen is en consensus zoekt en wil afdwingen, in plaats van ruimte te bieden aan agonisme – het erkennen dat de belangen van verschillende groepen elkaar uitsluiten (conform de analyse van Chantal Mouffe). Het is dus niet zo dat FDR de New Deal gebruikte om zichzelf te laten ophemelen door werkloze kunstenaars, maar het federale, ideologisch schijnbaar onproblematische karakter van hun werk draagt er, in combinatie met het feit dat het als index voor Roosevelt werkt, toe bij dat Roosevelt als oncontroversieel en ideologisch neutraal wordt voorgesteld.

Het vijfde hoofdstuk vormt het begin van het tweede deel van dit proefschrift, waar ik de focus verleg van de vraag wat Roosevelt deed om zijn eigen beeldvorming te maken en te besturen, naar de vraag hoe FDR zich als icoon in de beeldvorming sinds zijn dood tot nu ontwikkeld heeft. Het vijfde hoofdstuk behandelt de positie van de New Deal in populaire en politieke cultuur sinds 1945, aan de hand van twee transmediale narratieven die al sinds Roosevelts tijd in

verschillende versies bestaan. Het laat zien dat er in de Rooseveltrepresentaties van na 1945 een vergelijkbaar effect optreedt als Roosevelt zelf beoogde in zijn autofabrication: ze werken over het algemeen depolitiserend en verbeelden of noemen de New Deal in contexten die nauwelijks nog als politiek gezien kunnen worden en juist daardoor hebben ze ideologische implicaties. Het eerste voorbeeld is dat van het roodharige weesmeisje Annie, oorspronkelijk een stripfiguur bedacht door de conservatieve cartoonist Harold Gray, maar tegenwoordig vooral bekend van de Broadway musical *Annie* en verschillende verfilmingen van dat verhaal. Hoewel Gray een hekel had aan Franklin Roosevelt, speelt FDR én diens New Deal, met name in de musicaltekst van Thomas Meehan (1977) een belangrijke en zeer positieve rol. Dat komt terug in de film *Annie* uit 1982, waarin de New Deal neergezet wordt als levensreddend programma waar ook rijke Republikeinen zich uiteindelijk graag achter scharen, en wordt, in steeds minder politiek geladen varianten herhaald in latere filmbewerkingen.

Het tweede narratief – ontstaan tijdens Roosevelts eigen eerste termijn als president – is dat van de Honderd Dagen. Tijdens FDRs eerste honderd dagen als president is er een enorm pakket aan nieuwe wetten en maatregelen doorgevoerd en zijn er tientallen programma's en organisaties opgericht om de hervormingsagenda door te voeren. Daarmee zijn Roosevelts eerste honderd dagen extreem succesvol, en sindsdien bestaan het idee dat de eerste honderd dagen van een nieuw presidentschap cruciaal zijn en als graadmeter kunnen dienen voor de effectiviteit van een president. De uitdrukking "Eerste Honderd Dagen" en de traditie om een nieuwe president na honderd dagen langs de maatstaf van Roosevelt te leggen is op een vreemde manier depolitiserend. Het is een soort ritueel dat niet meer rechtstreeks met de sociale, economische, financiële, politieke of culturele impact van de New Deal te maken heeft, maar waar Roosevelt toch bijna per definitie als ongeëvenaarde winnaar uit de bus komt. Niet vanwege de feitelijke inhoud van zijn succes, maar door de kennelijke slagkracht die eruit spreekt.

Van de verschijningsvormen van (afgeleiden van) de New Deal, ga ik in het zesde hoofdstuk over naar de representatie van Roosevelt als president tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog. In dat hoofdstuk ga ik na hoe Roosevelt als allegorische figuur ingezet wordt om de Tweede Wereldoorlog te belichamen voor hedendaagse publieken. FDR wordt vaak als "projectiescherm" voor oorlogsnarratieven gebruikt, waarbij dan bijvoorbeeld de impliciete suggestie is dat zijn handicap een resultaat is van oorlogsgeweld (*FDR American Badass!*). Verder wordt hij ingezet als bliksemafleider om oorlogstrauma's af te schermen (dat gebeurt bijvoorbeeld in *Pearl Harbor*). In bredere zin wordt Roosevelt als allegorische figuur vaak gebruikt om de Amerikaanse ervaring van de Tweede Wereldoorlog navoelbaar en relevant te maken. De FDR-icoon vormt dan als het ware een narratieve brug tussen verleden en heden (Craig Owens), al is het niet helemaal mogelijk om het verleden op die manier echt te vatten. De dynamiek van dat proces is goed zichtbaar in Philip Roth's roman *The Plot Against America* (2004), een roman die helder laat zien dat de Roosevelt-icoon bepaalde centrale aspecten van de Amerikaanse rol in de Tweede Wereldoorlog als het ware heeft "meegenomen" de culturele herinnering in, maar dat andere,

minder positieve, aspecten mede daardoor ook vergeten konden worden. Anderzijds zijn er ook voorbeelden van hoe Roosevelt-representaties juist de fragmentatie en het verlies van een oude politieke cultuur kunnen benadrukken. Dat gebeurt bijvoorbeeld in Gore Vidals roman *The Golden Age*. Die titel is ironisch; het boek gaat over een corrupte, manipulatieve en machtsbeluste FDR, die een soort slangenkuil om zich heen creëert waarbinnen hij hard werkt aan een integer imago voor de buitenwereld. Ook in de wereld van Roosevelt-haters is een traditie waarin hij als belichaming van het ultieme kwaad verallegoriseerd wordt, maar die is eigenlijk zo repetitief dat dat niet leidt tot narratieven die buiten een kleine kring resoneren. Kortom, er zijn zeker ook voorbeelden van negatieve FDR-verbeeldingen, maar de meerderheid is positief, en in ieder geval valt op dat Roosevelt op tal van verschillende manieren als allegorische figuur kan dienen. Dat is wellicht een van de redenen waarom hij zo aantrekkelijk blijft als icoon.

Een ander aspect van FDR dat zeker de laatste decennia voor een groot en divers publiek aantrekkelijk is gebleken is het feit dat hij in een rolstoel zat. Hij had als 39-jarige polio gehad en als gevolg daarvan was hij vanaf zijn middel verlamd. Tegenwoordig weet bijna iedereen, zeker in de VS, dat Roosevelt in een rolstoel zat, maar tijdens zijn presidentschap was dat nagenoeg onbekend onder gewone burgers. Het is dus vrijwel van niemand een echt 'beleefde' herinnering en toch is het de culturele herinnering ingeslopen. Het eerste deel van hoofdstuk zeven laat zien hoe en wanneer dat gebeurde, aan de hand van een min of meer chronologische historische behandeling van de belangrijkste Roosevelt monumenten in de VS. Alison Landsberg heeft het concept *prosthetic memory* ontwikkeld, waarmee ze dat effect bedoelde: "herinneringen" aan gebeurtenissen die men niet werkelijk meegemaakt heeft, maar waarvan het gemakkelijk is te geloven dat het een authentieke herinnering betreft. Landsberg rekent beelden uit het verleden, bijvoorbeeld filmbeelden uit historische films, al snel als herinnering, waarbij ik de nuance aanbreng dat de meeste mensen zich uitstekend bewust zijn van het fictieve karakter van dergelijke beelden. Echter, er is ook een groep "prothetische herinneringen" die wel authentiek lijken, met name omdat "echte" herinneringen aan belangrijke gebeurtenissen ons ook meestal in gemedieerde vorm bereiken. We kunnen ons dus zaken die wel tijdens ons eigen leven zijn gebeurd maar waar we niet bij waren (bijvoorbeeld "9/11" of "De val van de muur") herinneren alsof we ze met eigen ogen gezien hebben, terwijl wat we dan voor ons zien beelden betreft uit een latere documentaire. Zo "herinneren" mensen die Roosevelts presidentschap meegemaakt hebben, zich sinds de jaren '70 vaak dat ze hem in de jaren '40 al in zijn rolstoel hebben gezien, maar dat is historisch heel onwaarschijnlijk. Veel waarschijnlijker is, dat het hier een *prosthetic memory* betreft – in dit geval des te opmerkelijker omdat het gaat over een achteraf geproduceerde herinnering aan een artificieel hulpmiddel. Zowel de rolstoel zelf als de herinnering eraan zijn dus toevoegingen aan FDR (het eerste aan zijn lichaam, het tweede aan zijn herinnerde persona).

In het vakgebied *disability studies* is veel theorievorming over de rol van mensen met een handicap of afwijking in verhalen. Daar zijn er veel van, meer dan de meeste mensen zich in eerste instantie bewust zijn: kreupele helden en blinde zieners in Griekse mythen, oorlogsveteranen,

dwergen in sprookjes, autistische vertellers in bestsellers uit de 21e eeuw. Hun handicap vervult in narratologische termen vaak een belangrijke functie: hun afwijkende lichaam (en/of geest) vormt als het ware de aanleiding tot het verhaal en markeren in hun anders-zijn waar de grenzen van het normale liggen. Er is dus een wederzijdse afhankelijkheid: veel verhalen hebben hun gehandicapte personage nodig en die functioneert dus in zekere zin zelf ook als prothese, als hulpstuk om onze eigen normaliteit te begrijpen. Als je nu met dit in gedachten kijkt naar hoe Roosevelts handicap vaak op de voorgrond staat in recente representaties, dan zie je dat de prothetische herinnering aan zijn protheses dient als aanleiding om hem opnieuw relevant te maken. Hij wordt vaak voorgesteld als een soort prothetisch hulpstuk dat eigenhandig de VS uit het slop (van de Grote Depressie en de Tweede Wereldoorlog) trok, en dat zijn rolstoel daar een rol in speelde: "hij stond op uit zijn rolstoel om het land overeind te helpen" zoals Bill Clinton het in 2001 verwoorde. Clintons impliciete suggestie is dat FDR's handicap hem hielp om Amerika overeind te helpen – zo zat het denk ik niet, maar wel in narratologische termen: Roosevelt is belangrijk gebleven deels doordat zijn handicap en verhalen over hoe hij die "overwon" blijven helpen om de problemen in het heden behapbaar te maken. Verhalen over FDR's omgang met zijn handicap bieden in zekere zin een strategie om met handicaps en imperfecties in brede zin om te gaan.

Het laatste hoofdstuk gaat over de rol van Eleanor Roosevelt in het creëren van FDR's publieke imago en plaats in het culturele geheugen. Eleanor Roosevelt was met name in de periode dat ze *First Lady* was, én in de culturele herinnering, op intrigerende wijze zichtbaar op sommige terreinen en onzichtbaar op andere. Politiek gezien had ze officieel geen functie, maar ze stelde zich op als steun en toeverlaat van ondervertegenwoordigde groepen kiezers, zoals zwarte Amerikanen. Daardoor betrok ze hen enerzijds in de politiek in een tijd dat veel zwarten geen stemrecht hadden, en kon ze soms via haar man hun positie verbeteren. Anderzijds werd het daardoor soms ook makkelijker voor Franklin Roosevelt om als president problemen van zwarte Amerikanen uit de weg te gaan, want Eleanor Roosevelt 'zorgde' al voor hen. Op deze manier vergrootte Eleanor Roosevelt in zekere zin de politieke arena ten opzichte van het klassieke beeld van de regerings- en parlementsgebouwen in Washington DC met hun witte mannelijke populatie. Ze breidde het politieke veld uit naar vrouwenclubs en –bladen, krantencolumns, radioprogramma's voor huisvrouwen en arbeiders, en organisaties van zwarte Amerikanen, waar ze zichtbaar en actief was. Ze transporteerde "politiek" in enge zin van het formele naar het informele, van het publieke naar het privédomein, van het directe naar het meer indirecte. Daarmee had ze, paradoxaal genoeg, tegelijk ook een depolitiserende rol – ze had geen officiële politieke macht en kon dus de betrokkenheid van het Witte Huis laten zien zonder daadwerkelijk iets te doen.

Anderzijds had ze na FDR's overlijden een enorm publiek aanzien en verstrekkende macht, zeker ook als het gaat om het vormgeven van FDR als cultureel icoon. Ze schreef en publiceerde heel veel en daardoor kreeg ze al in de jaren '30 de rol van "verteller" van FDR's presidentschap – een

rol die ze tot haar eigen overlijden in 1962 behield. Daarmee had ze veel invloed op zijn publieke imago in de Amerikaanse herinnering en bovendien ontleende ze aan haar rol als First Lady een grote invloed op politieke kwesties die zij belangrijk vond, met de al dan niet terechte claim dat ze haar overleden mans visie volvoerde. Net als tijdens FDR's presidentschap nam Eleanor Roosevelt in de jaren na zijn dood een positie in die zowel de herinnering aan hem levend hield, als haar eigen, vaak moeilijk zichtbare maar daardoor des te grotere macht ten goede kwam. Hoewel Eleanor Roosevelt een zeer machtige vrouw was, die ook veel vrouwenkwesties op de agenda gezet heeft, was ze geen radicale feminist. Ze maakte veelal juist gebruik van de genderspecifieke verwachtingen van anderen in haar communicatie. Ze benadrukte haar eigen bescheidenheid en neiging zichzelf weg te cijferen, en het belang van haar rol wordt, mede daardoor, ook vaak onderschat of weinig gerepresenteerd, maar vaak stuurde ze daar juist op aan. Zo maximaliseerde ze haar invloed, zonder bedreigend te zijn voor de dominante orde. In het bijzonder gold dat voor Franklin Roosevelt, de belichaming van de dominante orde wiens bereik en slagkracht ze juist vergrootte. Later trad ze op als bezorger van zijn politieke en culturele nalatenschap, door zijn verhaal te vertellen en te zorgen dat hij politiek relevant bleef.

Mijn conclusie over Franklin Roosevelt is, dat hij zichzelf – volgens mij bewust, al valt dat niet echt vast te stellen – presenteerde als een aantrekkelijke, persoonlijke, informele en retorisch krachtige entiteit, maar zijn publieke imago tegelijk zo flexibel mogelijk maakte. Hij liet veel ruimte voor verschillende interpretaties van zijn daden en woorden, en daardoor bleef hij enerzijds mysterieus en boeiend, en anderzijds aanvaardbaar voor een zeer breed publiek. Hij werd daarin bijgestaan door zijn vrouw, en een grote groep loyale vrienden, adviseurs, kabinetsleden en communicatiespecialisten, die ook bijdroegen aan het representeren van Roosevelt na zijn dood. Deze plasticiteit van FDR als geconstrueerd icoon was en is natuurlijk niet ongelimiteerd, en het is ook zeker niet zo dat hij ooit werkelijk alom geliefd is geweest. Hij is ook een dankbaar object van animositeit en afschuw, ten dele omdat hij enerzijds zo mild en inschikkelijk leek en anderzijds politiek wel degelijk radicaal opereerde. Hij hoorde bij een generatie politiek leiders die de inrichting van de maatschappij graag als één groot project zag, dat onder leiding van de overheid een succes kon worden. Roosevelts visie klinkt als enige van die groep nog steeds door, niet alleen omdat die moreel zo goed, of historisch zo succesvol was, maar vooral omdat hij steeds opnieuw aantrekkelijk is.

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Curriculum Vitae

Sara Polak (1981) graduated from the Vossius Gymnasium in Amsterdam in 1998. She studied mathematics for one year, and then switched to the BA English Literature at Cambridge University (UK). After graduating in 2003, she became a funeral director. Between 2005 and 2007 she completed the University of Amsterdam's two-year Research MA program in Literary Studies (*cum laude*), with a focus on American history and literature, and, as a side-project, a BSc in psychology. She then started a small enterprise writing life narratives and family histories, and initiating community memory projects, leading among other things to the publication *Meerstemmig Verleden*, about the cultural memory of Dutch slavery history (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2011; with Paul Knevel and Sara Tilstra). In the fall of 2008 she started teaching in the American history program at the University of Amsterdam, and in the fall of 2010 took up her current position as lecturer and PhD candidate (50/50) at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society. Since then, she has spent several periods in the US, most importantly as a Fulbright scholar from August 2014-February 2015 at Yale University, and had her two children.