

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

Communication Arts & Sciences

**LETTERS TO FALA: THE RHETORICAL CONSTRUCTION
AND FUNCTION OF FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT'S DOG**

A Dissertation in

Communication Arts & Sciences

by

Bryan Boyd Blankfield

© 2014 Bryan Boyd Blankfield

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

December 2014

The dissertation of Bryan Boyd Blankfield was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Thomas W. Benson
Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Rhetoric
Dissertation Advisor
Chair of Committee

Stephen H. Browne
Professor of Communication Arts & Sciences

Jeremy Engels
Associate Professor of Communication Arts & Sciences
Director of Graduate Studies

Debra Hawhee
Professor of English and Communication Arts & Sciences

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

ABSTRACT

“Letters to Fala” is a historical and critical study of correspondence addressed to or about President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Scottish terrier, Fala. This study focuses on Fala’s rhetorical construction and function, both by and for the White House, media, and citizens.

The study is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the significance of presidential pets and epistolary rhetoric. Chapter 2 examines the media coverage of Fala’s attempted ride to the 1941 Inauguration and the letters sent to the White House commenting on Fala’s actions that day. This chapter sets the foundation for the study by exploring the rhetorical nature of *prosopopoeia* often found in these letters. Chapter 3 explores how Fala was used to mobilize pet owners and animal lovers for the war effort. Chapter 4 describes how animal *topoi* were marshalled in the 1944 election following rumors that Fala had been left behind on an Aleutian isle. Chapter 5 examines how Fala’s starring roles in two Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer shorts helped cultivate a homier view of the president. Chapter 6 concludes the study by summarizing Fala’s rhetorical utility for both FDR and citizens.

This study concludes that Fala was used by FDR to identify with the American people, open novel means of performing citizenship, and soften political messages. Fala was also used by U.S. citizens to identify with the president, express their emotions, and communicate to the president without feeling as though they were overstepping the bounds of social propriety.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	1
Background and Justification.....	7
Methodology.....	22
Chapter Outline.....	23
Chapter 2: “The Friend Left Behind”: Fala, <i>Prosopopoeia</i> , and Intimacy.....	36
<i>Prosopopoeia</i> : The Art of Impersonation.....	38
Fala Enters the White House.....	43
Friend Left Behind.....	50
Responses to Inauguration Day.....	55
Conclusion.....	68
Chapter 3: “A Leader of All Loyal American Canines”: Fala in World War II.....	86
Attitudes toward Dogs: Symbolizing Canines.....	88
Fala’s Participation in War Organizations.....	96
Leading the “Doggie-Rubber-Drive for Victory”.....	108
“Talk to the Chief Why Don’t Ya”: Fala as a Wartime Intercessor.....	116
Conclusion.....	123
Chapter 4: Political Animals: Fala and the 1944 Presidential Election.....	140
Foster’s Fala: Election Anxiety.....	142
Political Animals.....	146
Political <i>Prosopopoeia</i>	155
Speaking for Fala.....	159
Animal Allegory.....	165
Conclusion.....	171
Chapter 5: Filming Fala.....	186
Learning and Laughing: 1940s Movie Culture.....	188
Promotion.....	190
“A Typical American Home”.....	193

“A Dog’s Eye View”	198
Portrayal of the President.....	204
Responses to Fala’s Celebrity.....	209
Conclusion.....	211
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	221
Bibliography.....	230

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2-1: “He Reads His Fan Mail”	45
Figure 2-2: Miss Judy Taylor’s picture to Fala.....	47
Figure 2-3: “Dog”	52
Figure 2-4: FDR chides Fala.....	54
Figure 3-1: Crew of “Mr. Fala”	87
Figure 3-2: “Loyalty”	90
Figure 3-3: Fala’s “Barkers for Britain” dog tag.....	98
Figure 3-4: Ciré Noir Butler holding the Union Jack in her mouth.....	100
Figure 3-5: Dogs for Defense card.....	103
Figure 3-6: “Dogs for Defense” Bond Drive.....	104
Figure 3-7: Dogs request lowered specifications.....	107
Figure 3-8: Fala’s rubber donation.....	110
Figure 3-9: P.G. (Princeton Guard) Edwards’ Collection.....	114
Figure 3-10: “Shucks, Talk to the Chief Why Don’t Ya”	119
Figure 4-1: Fala Wonders Whether to Bury His Bone.....	145
Figure 4-2: “His Master’s Voice”	147
Figure 4-3: “Fala listens to his master”	148
Figure 4-4: Canute plots his new dog house.....	153
Figure 4-5: Private William J. Slaughter, Jr. and his dog campaign for FDR’s re-election.....	155
Figure 4-6: Fala Waving a “Clear It with Sidney” Flag.....	165
Figure 4-7: Animal allegory of Dewey and FDR.....	170
Figure 5-1: Ad mat showing Fala typing a “My Day” column.....	192
Figure 5-2: Family photograph of Eleanor, Franklin, and Fala.....	194

LIST OF TABLES

Figure 2-1: Number of letters sent to Fala and FDR in 1941 that commented on the Inauguration; organized by date.....	56
Figure 3-2: Enlistment ranks in War Dog Fund.....	105

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this dissertation would have been impossible without the help of many people. First and foremost, I would like to thank my committee members, Stephen H. Browne, Jeremy Engels, and Debra Hawhee, for their encouragement and assistance along the way. I am especially thankful for Thomas W. Benson's patient and helpful remarks while serving as my advisor. I truly respect Dr. Benson's humble approach to advising, which allowed me to find my own way as much as possible.

Many archivists and librarians assisted me in my research. I would like to extend my gratitude to the archivists at FDR Presidential Library in Hyde Park, New York, specifically Virginia H. Lewick, Matthew C. Hanson, Sarah L. Malcolm, and William Baehr. Special thanks to the FDR Library's supervisory archivist Bob Clark and collections manager Michelle M. Frauenberger. Whether in person or via email, I have consistently received assistance tracking down any and all information about Fala. I am particularly thankful for their patience while engaging in mundane tasks on my behalf, such as removing the staples from over a hundred Fala letters so that I could better read and photograph them. I would also like to thank Lori Birrell, Manuscript Librarian at the University of Rochester's archives. In May 2013, I examined Thomas Dewey's folders containing papers about his Great Dane, Canute, to see if the dog had received mail during the 1944 Presidential Election. Although I did not find any letters written to Canute, this research trip was productive for reaffirming Fala's uniqueness.

I am deeply indebted to the generous academic and financial support I have received from Penn State's Department of Communication Arts and Sciences. The education I have received here over the years has been instrumental in my development as a scholar. Particularly useful was the research trip funded entirely by my department to the FDR Presidential Library in

March 2012. Moreover, earlier portions of this dissertation began in several seminars: Chapter 4, “Political Animals,” in Rosa Eberly’s public seminar, Chapter 5, “Filming Fala,” in Jeanne Hall’s film seminar, and sections of my paper on Alan Foster’s Fala cartoons, which I first drafted in Susan Squier’s comics seminar also influenced my dissertation. I appreciate their earlier feedback on those manuscripts.

Several of my colleagues have helped me see this project to completion. I am particularly thankful to Mark Hlavacik, Joe Rhodes, and Jeff Kurr. Mark and Joe have been two of my best friends over the past few years. In this time, Mark has remained a tireless and enthusiastic advocate of my research. Joe helped provide me with necessary opportunities to relax, while nonetheless encouraging me to finish in a timely manner. Jeff Kurr’s encyclopedic knowledge of the presidency and willingness to discuss it with me as I finished this project has been truly a godsend.

Most of all, I am thankful for the loving support provided by my family. When the motivation for writing was waning, I often relied on my father’s tireless example to continue typing. To be frank, I am still not completely sure how he does it. Equally important has been my mother’s and siblings’ support. I am grateful for the much needed breaks I was able to spend with them and my grandparents. I am particularly thankful for Stanley Rodger’s reminiscing about life during the 1940s. My grandfather’s recollections were particularly helpful while I wrote my war and film chapters.

I dedicate this project to the memory of Richard Blankfield.

What is difficult for some folks to understand is that Fala is no longer just a dog; he is a personage.

— John H. Crider, *New York Times*, October 15, 1944

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

Domesticated animals have maintained an enduring presence at the White House. Though many of these animals have been livestock, most U.S. Presidents have owned at least one pet during their term(s). Dogs are the most common White House pet of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Owing to their famous owners, these pets are frequently in the public eye. Citizens, who love dogs, want to know more about their president, or both, regularly follow the actions of these animals. Occasionally, some presidential pets become so well known that they become popular personages. People invested in the lives of these pets may even write to the White House, often addressing the animal directly. Presidents sometimes contribute to their pet's popularity by allowing them to have more media coverage. Presidential pets have starred in films, online videos, and even "authored" a book.¹ These animals play an important—often strategic—part in the modern presidency. This dissertation contributes to scholarship on the U.S. Presidency by analyzing the rhetorical construction and function of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Scottish terrier, Fala.

Fala is one of the most famous presidential pets. He lived in the White House from mid-November 1940 until FDR's death on April 12, 1945. Fala's popularity was both attested to and reinforced by his frequent appearance in various forms of media. He starred in two Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer shorts, was the subject of two cartoon series published in *Liberty* and *Collier's* magazines, and had a children's book written about him by FDR's distant cousin, Margaret Suckley. During the 1944 Presidential election, FDR famously mentioned Fala in his Teamster

Union Address (often referred to as the “Fala speech”). Fala’s statue in the FDR Memorial in Washington, D.C., speaks to the public memory surrounding him even now. Fala frequently appeared by FDR’s side, and often traveled with the president when he left the White House. Indeed, news reporters learned to tell the president’s whereabouts by looking for Fala—so much so, that FDR’s Secret Service referred to Fala as “the informer.”² On long train rides, FDR’s train car could be identified thanks to Secret Service agents taking Fala on a walk. Despite the dog’s inability to read, let alone recognize that anyone wrote to him, Fala amassed approximately 1500 to 2000 pages of letters during his stay in the White House.

This dissertation examines Fala’s rhetorical construction and function, both by and for the White House, media, and citizens. Fala’s correspondence and archival materials have been analyzed in light of the following questions: (1) What texts invited the circulating discourse about Fala? (2) Closely related is the question: how did various media portray Fala? (3) Who wrote to or about Fala, in what context? (4) How did people relate to FDR through Fala? (5) How did people portray their relationship with Fala? (6) How did their relationship with FDR or Fala change in light of different contexts? (7) What *topoi*, or commonplaces, were invoked in their correspondence? These questions shed light on Fala’s various rhetorical uses during his time in the White House.

Presidential pets are one of many presidential accoutrements. By “presidential accoutrement” I refer to any part of the U.S. presidency not defined by the Constitution, which has become institutionalized as part of the office. These accoutrements include traditions, such as owning a pet or awarding Presidential Medals of Freedom; people who surround the president, such as the press corps and First Lady; communication mechanisms, ranging from Oval Office addresses to the president’s Facebook and Twitter accounts; as well as official buildings

themselves, for example, the White House and Camp David. Each accoutrement cultivates a rhetorical ambiance,³ which shapes the president's *ethos* and/or influences policy decisions. More to the point, these accoutrements may do so even when the president is not acting as a rhetor. For instance, the practice of returning a military salute, first begun by Ronald Reagan in 1981, reinforces the president's status as Commander in Chief.⁴ Recognizing the rhetorical significance of these accoutrements may better inform our understanding of the presidency. A study of Fala's usefulness provides one important step in understanding a more domestic presidential accoutrement, namely pets.

Each accoutrement presents the president with different rhetorical burdens and blessings. Presidential pets provide opportunities for identification between the president and citizens. These animals offer visual cues to citizens that the president, despite his powerful political office, is still one of the people. Public displays of affection between a president and his pet may humanize the president. Moreover, some pets can underscore that the president is worthy of respect. This is particularly the case for dogs, who are often described as loyal to their masters.⁵ Occasionally, these instances of identification may serve the president politically. Presidential pets allow presidents to reach animal lovers, pet-owners, or those who might not otherwise be interested in politics. Over the years, presidential pets have been deluged with fan mail by Americans young and old, male and female, and from various political parties—regardless of whether these citizens' political affiliations aligned with the president.

Owing to their association with domesticity, pets may contribute to the belief that the president enjoys a strong family life. Presidential pets may compensate for the absence of children in the White House.⁶ Unlike the president's family, however, who might get into trouble for verbal gaffes, pets are incapable of speech. On rare occasions presidents will speak

on behalf of their pets. Doing so typically affords the president an unofficial and thereby safe voice.

Pets may serve as useful presidential props. Presidents and presidential nominees often display their pets to establish a more humane *ethos*. Richard Nixon's invocation of his dog Checkers during a speech to save his vice presidential bid is perhaps the most famous instance. There are many other examples. During the 1928 Presidential Election, presidential nominee Herbert Hoover distributed thousands of autographed photographs of himself standing beside his dog, King Tut.⁷ More recently, President Barack Obama's senior strategist for the 2012 Presidential Election, David Axelrod, chided presidential nominee, Mitt Romney, for driving over ten hours with his Irish setter, Seamus, inside a kennel atop his car. Axelrod tweeted a picture of Barack Obama with his Portuguese water dog, Bo, captioned, "How loving owners transport their dogs."

How presidents name or discuss their pets may also carry political undertones. Several presidents have given their pets symbolic names. President James Garfield, for instance, named his dog Veto; President Gerald Ford owned a golden retriever named Liberty; President William McKinley called his parrot Washington Post; and President Calvin Coolidge humorously named two lion cubs Tax Reduction and Budget Bureau. These names may offer presidents a safe means of disclosing personal attitudes. More recently, Obama remarked that he wanted a "Mutt like me," while seeking a dog for the White House.⁸ Obama's comment hinted at his racial background, while nonetheless downplaying it. A president does not necessarily have to actively invoke his dog, however. As long as a president does not mistreat his dog or own a vicious one, he largely gains positive publicity from merely having a dog around.

Presidential pets may play additional, though less readily apparent functions. Their usefulness becomes especially clear when one compares the letters written to a president with those written to a presidential pet directly. Fala was often invoked in letters addressed to FDR as a useful conversation piece for a much larger discussion. Sometimes people mentioned recent news articles or photographs they had seen about Fala. Other times they simply inquired as to Fala's name, diet, ancestry, and daily actions. While talking about Fala, people expressed their desire to know a little more about their president. The responses they received from White House secretaries helped satisfy their curiosity, established ties between them and their leader, and generated excitement that they received a formal response. People also sent FDR Fala-related gifts. The White House frequently received functional gifts, such as collars, tags, and toys for Fala, as well as paintings, cartoons, or scrapbook collections about the Scottie. People actively sought the good will of their president and/or wanted to make Fala's life even more enjoyable. By giving FDR gifts related to Fala, people showed their support of the president.

The letters written to Fala indicate a potentially more rhetorically astute means for addressing the president. Fala, of course, would not read it, but FDR might. In light of the perceived friendship between FDR and Fala, some believed that a letter sent to Fala would brighten the president's day and offer a momentary release from his monotonous political duties.⁹ The letters addressed to Fala also reveal a degree of social anxiety and recognition of social cues. Proper decorum prevents most people from introducing themselves to a person they perceive of greater importance. Instead, they receive an "in" by having a mutual acquaintance introduce them. A similar practice operates in many of the Fala letters. Instead of addressing FDR directly, they wrote to his dog. Some people took this one step further by pretending to have their own dog address the president's dog. These letters frequently describe the thoughts

and/or feelings of their owners. In essence, they offer a form of rhetorical surveillance in which a citizen may communicate circuitously about themselves to the president.

Aside from advancing a president's character or *ethos*, presidential pets help generate *pathos*. As with small children, dogs often disarm people. They break down social barriers. Dogs allow complete strangers, who may never meet again, to momentarily bond and share something in common. As such, they serve as "social epoxy."¹⁰ Presidential pets may have a profound emotional impact on citizens. Sometimes this emotional impact is so great that they feel led to tell the president. This act of writing to the president about an emotional response triggered by his dog is perhaps more noteworthy than the (frequently mundane) emotions themselves. Since presidential pets cannot read these letters, they are largely a symbolic gesture on the correspondent's part. These letters may also communicate a degree of rapport with the president. Thus, presidential pets not only humanize presidents, they also allow citizens to express themselves.

Since pets cannot speak, they are often viewed as apolitical—and, to a certain extent, rightly so. Many of the interactions people have with the president over his dog are apolitical. Citizens simply want to talk to the president about his or their dog. Although these animals help ground the president in an apolitical sphere, politics still manage to leak through at different times. In the very least, pets provide those who might not address the president with a reason to do so. Moreover, the political usefulness of animals is not limited to presidents alone.

Presidents and citizens may both use presidential pets for political ends.

By analyzing the rhetorical construction and function of Fala, I hope to shed light on the importance of presidential pets more broadly. As a presidential accoutrement, presidential pets often exist in the periphery of better understood executive duties. Nonetheless, pets play an

important role in the formation of a presidential ambiance. Rhetoric about presidential pets often carries a familiar or intimate tone; citizens feel as though they can relate to the president on a personal level. Thus, presidential pets are a rhetorical component of the presidency that draws upon identification over persuasion. Owing to Fala's enduring legacy in the pantheon of presidential pets, closer scrutiny of his White House years may better inform the rhetorical possibilities and limitations of presidential pets.

This project draws upon a number of disciplines, including communication, history, political science, and the nascent field of animal studies. It would be impossible to appreciate the subtlety of some of Fala's correspondence without recourse to historical contextualization. Though this study better informs our understanding of FDR's presidency, especially his last two terms in office, FDR is a secondary if not tertiary concern.¹¹ More important to me are Fala's rhetorical construction and the public's response. By adopting a less conventional view of FDR's presidency, we may better appreciate how citizens envisioned their relationship with him.

Background and Justification

This project contributes meaningfully to three separate ongoing conversations about presidential rhetoric, epistolary rhetoric, and presidential pets. These topics span the fields of history, communication, political science, animal studies, and literature. In this section I briefly review the relevant literature and explain why an analysis of the Fala letters is particularly well suited for advancing these conversations.

New Ways of Thinking about the Rhetorical Presidency

The U.S. Presidency has remained an important area of study for rhetoricians since the 1960s. In part, this was owing to Richard Neustadt's characterization of presidential power as "the power to persuade."¹² In light of the emphasis on persuasion within communication studies, Neustadt's observations were a boon for rhetoricians.

In the mid-1980s, rhetoricians began addressing the "rhetorical presidency," a provocative construct coined by political scientists James W. Ceaser, Glen E. Thurow, Jeffrey Tulis and Joseph M. Bessette, and later elaborated upon by Tulis. The rhetorical presidency theory claimed that presidents have increasingly relied on popular oratory during the twentieth century.¹³ By speaking directly to the American public, presidents may circumvent Congress. This observation was particularly troubling for Tulis and his colleagues, as they considered such presidential behavior as extraconstitutional. In their view, presidents should remain faithful to the letter of the Constitution. By relying on popular oratory, presidents have deviated from the Founders' intent.

Rhetoricians have challenged this construct for nearly two decades, observing that it unduly limits our understanding of the ways a president is rhetorical.¹⁴ Perhaps no rhetorician has crusaded more fervently against Tulis' "rhetorical presidency" theory than Martin J. Medhurst. In two edited collections, *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency* and *Before the Rhetorical Presidency*, Medhurst has marshaled leading rhetoricians to further nuance the scholarship on presidential rhetoric. Medhurst makes the distinction between Tulis's rhetorical presidency and presidential rhetoric. Whereas the rhetorical presidency is mostly concerned with the political institution, presidential rhetoric centers on the art of rhetoric.

The debate over Tulis' rhetorical presidency notwithstanding, both presidential rhetoric and the rhetorical presidency share a few underlying assumptions. Mary Stuckey has recently

observed that “Even those who examine presidential rhetoric rather than seeking to extend the idea of the rhetorical presidency do so with an eye toward the requirements, limitations, and opportunities provided by the executive as an institution.”¹⁵ Accordingly, Stuckey writes, “those of us who work in the areas of presidential rhetoric and the rhetorical presidency are fast approaching the point where we need less codification and more new thinking; we need fewer case studies that illustrate principles we already acknowledge and more work that challenges our understanding.”¹⁶ Although Stuckey offers class, race, gender, and the circulation of presidential messages through new social media as sites of investigation for revitalizing our understanding of the presidency, I contend that we can also understand this political institution by foregrounding citizens’ interactions with the president. In essence, I seek to partially dismantle the pedestal that presidential scholarship places the chief executive on. In so doing, I am guided by Thomas W. Benson’s reflection that “Just as the speaker creates the listener, the listener creates the speaker.”¹⁷ Presidential rhetoric scholarship often focuses on symbolic meanings created by presidents, while overlooking the symbolic meanings generated by citizen participants.

In order to understand how citizens attempt to shape the presidency through their own rhetoric, I turn to the letters they mail to the White House. Rhetoricians examining presidential rhetoric frequently rely on presidential correspondence to enhance our understanding of a president’s political efficacy. Few, however, have treated the letters presidents receive from citizens as their central texts. One notable exception is Gerard Hauser’s analysis of the letters citizens wrote to FDR about whether he should pursue a third term as president.¹⁸ And yet, even Hauser’s account of these letters as a “reticulate public” deflects from their interpersonal nature.

Historians have taken a greater interest in presidential correspondence than rhetoricians. Over the years, they have published multiple collections of correspondence from various

presidencies.¹⁹ Several of these collections showcase the letters preserved at the FDR Presidential Library.²⁰ Except for rare exceptions, such as historian Paul D. Husbands' dissertation on President McKinley's and FDR's mail, few historians consider the stylistic and formal elements of these letters. According to Husbands, historians of the U.S. Presidency tend to "simply corral segments of . . . correspondence into published collections, leaving the letters to speak for themselves with little or no analysis or sense of their broader context."²¹ Historians often organize these edited collections by grouping together letters that contain similar content. In so doing, these collections gloss over the rhetorical moves made by each correspondent.

Admittedly, part of the problem with analyzing FDR's letters is the sheer quantity of them. Herman Kahn, former director of the FDR Presidential Library, has estimated that during FDR's twelve years in office, the president received a least fifteen million pieces of mail, though Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine suggest that FDR might have received twice that number, as much of his mail was forwarded on to other federal agencies and departments.²² It is nigh impossible for any scholar to read all of these letters, let alone analyze them. Some scholars have attempted to overcome this by selecting a randomized subset to analyze.²³ Others have adopted a more thematic approach, such as those addressed to Eleanor.²⁴ Still others have focused on letters related to a specific issue or current event.²⁵ In this study I examine the letters addressed to or about Fala. The Fala letters are a distinct subset of correspondence in the FDR Presidential Library. These letters were recognized as unique during FDR's administration. FDR himself had planned to create a Fala museum at Hyde Park, barely a year after the Scottie arrived in the White House.²⁶ Such analysis offers a comprehensive view of one facet of FDR's presidency. More to the point, analyzing all the letters to or about Fala provides a better foundation for understanding how people related to their president.

Compared to other means of voicing one's political concerns, such as answering polls, letters provide citizens with a unique opportunity to be rhetorical and intimate with their leaders. J. Michael Hogan notes the problematic rhetorical underpinnings of polls—namely, poll data may offer a distorted view of public opinion.²⁷ Unlike polls, letters are mediated less by a third party. Of course, whereas polls are easily perused by presidents, letters are much less likely to be read. And yet, citizens still write in astonishing numbers. Paul D. Husbands notes,

Correspondents to FDR . . . made frequent reference to what by their calculations were the infinitesimal chances that their letter might actually reach the President himself rather than being intercepted by one of his many secretaries. And yet despite all of this they still wrote! Indeed, that persistence, ultimately, is perhaps the most remarkable part . . . : the fact that despite the odds, Americans insisted on addressing themselves directly to their Nation's head.²⁸

Though it may be difficult to ascertain each correspondent's motives for writing, each letter evidences a form of citizen agency in the political process. Even if none of their letters were ever read, each citizen who took a moment to write the White House expressed a rhetorical agency while formulating their thoughts.

FDR's presidency was marked by a revolution in political correspondence. Whereas President Herbert Hoover employed only one person to answer his daily mail, FDR needed twenty-two people to handle the five to eight thousand letters he received *per day*.²⁹ This mass of correspondence helped his administration monitor Americans' reactions to its policies. More importantly, it marked a shift in how presidents understood citizens' desires. Traditionally, presidents would call upon local representatives to inform him of their constituencies. FDR's epistolary juggernaut was so thorough that he did not need to "depend solely on state committees

for information about local conditions.”³⁰ Often FDR’s administration did not anticipate the number of letters they might receive. According to White House mail room worker, Ira Smith, “When [FDR] advised millions of listeners in one of his fireside chats to ‘tell me your troubles,’ most of them believed implicitly that he was speaking got them personally and immediately wrote him a letter. It was months before we managed to swim out of *that* flood of mail.”³¹ Smith’s emphasis on the word “*that*” is especially telling. FDR’s mail room was frequently flooded with citizen letters.

Though FDR could never read all the letters sent to him, he relied on them to inform him of citizens’ reactions. According to FDR’s closest companion Louis Howe, “The President has always insisted that he be sent daily a batch of letters picked at random from the miscellaneous mail. These are letters which might well be handled by departments directly, but the President likes to see a cross section of the daily mail, and not infrequently answers himself, some of the letters contained in the batch.”³² Typically, White House aides would send FDR 35 to 50 “out of the ordinary” letters daily, though sometimes the president would call for bundles of mail to be brought in and he would sift through them personally.³³

FDR’s administration recognized the importance citizens placed in the letters they sent to the White House. FDR’s secretaries took pains to preserve a citizen’s trust that his or her letter mattered. According to Leila A. Sussmann, the White House “Correspondence Section knew that many a White House reply would become a family treasure to be kept and exhibited for a lifetime. When replies went out simultaneously to two writers in the same small community, special pains were taken to word them differently.”³⁴ The White House did not want correspondents to compare their letters and feel that they had simply received a generic formal

response. This was a significant departure from traditional White House policy regarding letter responses.

FDR's Epistolary Presidency

The nearly two thousand Fala letters preserved in the FDR archive testify to a keen interest in the first pet. The Fala letters cover a number of themes, ranging from the war to inquiries about Fala's name and ancestry. Many of the writers were pet owners, but not all of them were. Some expressed a desire to own a dog or a love of Scottish terriers. Others explained the solace they took in reading about Fala since their own dog had died. Correspondents frequently attached newspaper clippings or cartoons of Fala that they thought would cheer the president. Many included gifts such as toys, collars, dog tags, paintings of Fala, and figurines of Scottish terriers. People also sent him cards celebrating intimate holidays, such as Christmas, New Year's Eve, Valentine's Day, and Easter. Fala received far fewer cards for national holidays like the Fourth of July.

Letters are clearly rhetorical texts. Compared to oratory, however, epistles are rarely examined by rhetoricians, especially those from speech communication departments. This scholarly neglect is largely owing to historical reasons. Though people have written letters since classical Greece, they were not integrated into any rhetorical system until the middle ages.³⁵ In Abraham J. Malherbe's overview of classical rhetoricians who commented on epistolary theory, he notes, "The discussion in Demetrius is an excursus, Cicero makes no room for a systematic discussion of it in his works on rhetoric, and the references in Quintilian and Theon [of Alexandria] are casual."³⁶ Ancient epistolary theorists commonly referred to letters as "conversations halved," noting that they were more similar to dialogues than oratory.³⁷

Rhetoricians within communication studies who examine letters often focus on public letters, as opposed to private letters between two correspondents.³⁸ Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail," for instance, has received no less than nine analyses in popular speech communication journals.³⁹ Additionally, speech communication scholars sometimes analyze letters to an editor.⁴⁰ There are a few rare exceptions of rhetoricians within speech communication who examine individual letters.⁴¹ Moreover, whereas rhetoricians in composition may consider the formal properties of letters, speech communication rhetoricians typically do not.⁴² Compared to public letters, private letters have different aims and a smaller audience.

Most of the people writing to or about Fala had never met FDR or his Scottie. They were ordinary citizens seeking connection with a public figure. In light of the previous scholarship on epistles, the Fala letters offer a novel combination. Whereas composition scholars typically examine letters between close associates, and speech communication rhetoricians frequently examine public letters, the Fala letters are mostly private letters written to a public figure. That they are private letters shapes significantly their rhetorical nature. Whereas public letters are often polyvocal—speaking both to the initial recipient and a larger audience—private letters are presumed by the author to have a smaller audience, namely, the addressee.

Letters allow people to address those who are unapproachable in person—whether because they are too distant geographically or socially. Effective letter writing requires a rhetorical sensibility. Demetrius professed that letters "should abound in glimpses of character."⁴³ Such glimpses were to compensate for one's physical absence. Husbands, who analyzes ordinary citizens letters to FDR, observes, "in addressing their letters to President Roosevelt, each correspondent was engaging in a self-conscious and sometimes carefully-

rehearsed act of self-presentation.”⁴⁴ While writing a letter—whether for official or personal matters—one must consider how to balance his or her requests and information while simultaneously presenting their case. The social status of sender and recipient often changes the tone of the letter.⁴⁵ Though epistles may vary widely from personal to business, they share a few underlying qualities. A correspondent writes a letter expressing his or her needs, while anticipating possible reactions from the receiver.

The (re)construction of relationships is one of letters’ chief function. According to M. Luther Stirewalt, Jr., “Letter-writing is creative activity not only in actual composition but also in its use as an instrument for constructing and reconstructing the relationships among people.”⁴⁶ In a sense, letter-writing operates as a microcosmic constitutive rhetoric.⁴⁷ Letter writing casts bonds between people. Indeed, the bonds of relationship often work as an indirect mode of persuasion: namely, one will do something for the addressee not because of any argumentative force, but simply because they are friends.⁴⁸ In a similar vein, Carol Poster argues that “The specific content of the letter is less significant than the very fact of its existence. . . . As long as the letter is obviously of the friendly type, it serves to sustain or build the friendly relationship.”⁴⁹ The frequent presence of *prosopopoeia* in the Fala letters, however, complicates Poster’s belief that content is less important than the medium itself. Closely related to *ethopoeia*, a rhetorical figure in which one speaks as another human, *prosopopoeia* provides voice for a nonhuman subject.⁵⁰ Those writing to Fala often engaged in *prosopopoeia* for their own dog. While many of the Fala letters are friendly, the use of this rhetorical figure decidedly shapes the relationship between the sender and recipient. Even barring instances of *prosopopoeia*, these letters are inherently performative. By engaging in a “conversation halved,” the letter writers imagine what the president or Scottie would be interested in or capable of granting. They adapt

their questions, comments, and requests accordingly. Aside from relating to their recipient, those who engage in *prosopopoeia* may even refashion how both they and their receiver relate with their pets.

The Fala letters represent a wide array of imagined relationships. A glimpse of this array can be determined in the author and addressee—though factors such as the author’s class, race, or gender would also shape a correspondent’s perceived relationship with FDR. A few examples will suffice to demonstrate this impressive range. One citizen may write to FDR because she believes that they share something in common: dog ownership. Perhaps they even own the same Scottish terrier breed. Another citizen might write to FDR simply because she loves Fala and/or FDR’s relationship with his dog. Yet another citizen might address Fala directly—possibly because they felt more comfortable addressing a dog than the president or believed that their letter might stand out more from the others.⁵¹ Those who addressed Fala often did so by writing from the perspective of their dog. These dog letters entailed even more considerations of relationships. People needed to consider how their dogs would relate to Fala and what he would like to read, while knowing that FDR or another human would read the letter instead.

Notably, most of the Fala letters consist of one-time attempts to communicate with the president. Although FDR’s administration was devoted to responding to the letters, the White House secretaries were often terse. There were no invitations for further rejoinder. There are only a few instances in which the same person sent multiple Fala letters. This absence of long-running correspondence further influenced the types of relationships citizens constructed with their president.

Presidential Pets

Nearly every president has owned a pet while living in the White House. This tradition is so strong that serving without a pet in the White House now appears almost untenable. On the night of his election in 2008, President-Elect Barack Obama publicly announced to his daughters, Sasha and Malia, that he would keep his promise—once in the White House, they would get a dog. For many Americans, dogs are the quintessential pet. In the White House, dogs add an aura of domesticity and familial rapport to the presidency.

Fala's publicity often worked to the benefit of FDR. People thronged about the Scottie whenever they could. During a rural education conference at the White House, Eleanor Roosevelt brought Fala out—at the behest of a speaker from Alabama—to perform some tricks. According to the *New York Times*, when Fala appeared, “The formal conference became an excited, laughing, shouting throng. Dignified school officials had suddenly become a bunch of care-free high school kids.”⁵² Fala's popularity transcended age differences.

Fala's popularity can be explained partially by contemporaneous changes in human-animal relations. During the early twentieth century, technological developments altered the ways humans engaged with animals. While technology superseded some animals—as when the automobile replaced horses—other technology strengthened human-animal relationships. The German shepherd, Rin Tin Tin, experienced tremendous success in the movies, leading to an increased demand for the breed. By 1936, 36 percent of all dogs registered by the American Kennel Club were German shepherds.⁵³ More generally, the number of dogs owned as pets increased by mid-century. Susan Orlean notes, “Between 1947 and 1953, the number of dogs in the United States grew from 17 million to 22 million, and the dog population was growing four

times as fast as the human one.”⁵⁴ Pet ownership began to fundamentally change. Dogs were increasingly allowed to live indoors as part of the family unit.

This transition in human-animal relations had important ramifications for humans and animals. As more humans shared their homes with these animals, both were involved in new rituals. Cheaper cameras allowed people to more easily photograph their pets. Dogs were bought rubber chew toys. Pet ownership could enrich a person’s sense of self, and provided new means of relating with other humans. According to Katherine Grier, “Community pets such as Fala offered a point of common relationship between famous people and the public. Roosevelt realized that Fala made him more approachable, and White House public relations departments have been using presidential pets for this purpose ever since.”⁵⁵

Not any dog, however, will become a famous presidential pet. Fala appears to have had the right mixture of affability and doted upon-ness by FDR. Surprisingly, Fala was not the only dog to live in the Roosevelt White House. A January 5, 1941, *New York Times* article introducing Fala to the nation noted, “Dogs always have been associated with the Roosevelt family.”⁵⁶ During FDR’s first two terms, several dogs lived in the White House. Few of these dogs belonged personally to FDR, however. Eleanor owned a Scottish terrier named Meggie. Their daughter Anna Roosevelt kept two red Irish setters at the White House while finalizing her divorce. Their son Elliot’s Bullmastiff, Blaze, also lived at the White House for some time. During the 1930s, FDR owned a Llewellyn setter, Winks; German shepherd, Major; Great Dane named President; and large sheepdog named Tiny Tim. Unlike Fala, who quickly adapted to life in the White House, most of his predecessors were sent away for biting guests or died from mishaps.⁵⁷

Over the last decade, numerous scholars from various disciplines have directed their attention toward animals. Their research attempts to challenge an anthropocentric bias in the humanities, by considering the ways that our disciplines overlook animals. Some relevant animal studies scholarship includes the work of historians Katherine C. Grier, who provides a historical account of pet ownership in America, and Mark Derr, who describes role of dogs in American history.⁵⁸ Though much of the work in animal studies is motivated by ethical concerns,⁵⁹ I draw more heavily upon the presence of animals and their rhetorical usefulness. For instance, Lee Allen Dugatkin takes a markedly different approach to traditional American history by noting Jefferson's attempts to disprove the degeneracy theory. According to this theory, the Americas were a poor climate and thus anyone who came to live there would become frail. To refute this belief, Jefferson sent a giant moose's skeleton across the Atlantic to the Count Georges-Louis Leclerc Buffon, a leading degeneracy proponent. By highlighting Jefferson's obsession with refuting the theory of degeneracy, Dugatkin reveals how arguments about animals may function in political debate. More broadly, he notes how animal *topoi* shaped U.S. national identity from the very beginning. Similarly, Aaron Herald Skabelund notes how dogs in Japan both helped shape and reflected the nation's imperialist attitudes from the mid-nineteenth century throughout the Second World War.⁶⁰ More recently, an edited volume by Adrienne L. McLean explores the presence of dogs in film.⁶¹ The contributors draw attention to several famous dog movie stars and note how they projected cultural values through their acting and media representations. The work of Dugatkin, Skabelund, and McLean challenges scholars to reacquaint themselves with their own disciplines. In many ways, their work echoes concerns voiced by Debra Hawhee, who has researched animal presences in rhetorical theory. Hawhee captures the spirit of animal studies scholarship while asking, "How does attention to an

unexpected topic or subject cause us to look askew at the stories we have told ourselves for so long or the theories we spend so much time ‘mastering’?”⁶² The letters to Fala reveal a new side to presidential rhetoric.

Though the number of animal studies is quickly swelling, there are only a few studies on presidential pets to date. Moreover, most of the presidential pet literature is dominated by popular press accounts. These books are often written by someone affiliated with the current administration about the president’s pet(s). These books include firsthand accounts, such as *The True Story of Fala* (1942), *Millie’s Book* (1990), *Dear Socks, Dear Buddy: Kids’ Letters to the First Pets* (1998), and *I Live Real Close to Where You Used to Live: Kids’ Letters to Michelle Obama (And to Sasha, Malia, and Bo)* (2010). Such books are used to generate interest in the current administration. In part, they do so by emphasizing the popularity of the president’s pet(s). Hillary Clinton noted that “Together, Socks and Buddy have received more than 300,000 letters and e-mails, as well as hundreds of handcrafted gifts.”⁶³ As their titles may suggest, these books are generally targeted toward children. They often function to encourage literacy or writing skills in children.

Several people have sought to catalogue a comprehensive list of every presidential pet. In 1969, Margaret Truman (President Harry Truman’s daughter) wrote a popular press history of presidential pets. More recently, Roy Rowan and Brooke Janis have released a similar historical overview, which focus specifically on presidential dogs. Rowan and Janis demonstrate that nearly every single president has owned a dog. In 1999, a presidential pet museum was founded by Claire McLean, a former dog groomer for President Ronald Reagan’s Bouvier des Flandres, Lucky.⁶⁴ What these historical overviews lack in depth, they cover in breadth—sometimes in problematic ways. Both Truman and McLean describe the White House mice that Andrew

Johnson fed as “pets,” in an otherwise petless presidency.⁶⁵ All animals that have lived in the White House or on its grounds are often classified indiscriminately as pets.

In recent years, communication scholars and historians have scrutinized the uses of presidential pets. These accounts range from individual case studies to overviews of multiple presidencies. John Llewellyn examines the usefulness of pets during a presidential election in his rhetorical analysis of FDR’s “Fala speech” and Richard Nixon’s “Checker’s speech.” Llewellyn draws special attention to the banality and pathetic function of these animals. Presidential pets are not always used advantageously by presidents, however. Kathleen German has examined the negative publicity that President Lyndon B. Johnson received after lifting one of his beagles by the ears.⁶⁶

To date, historian Helena Pycior has provided the most nuanced scholarship on presidential pets. She has shown how President Warren Harding used his dog, Laddie Boy, to cultivate a folksy image and promote animal welfare.⁶⁷ Pycior has also written a “canine biography” for Laddie Boy and Fala.⁶⁸ Pycior describes “canine biography” as a “historical biography with a canine rather than human subject.”⁶⁹ Despite Pycior’s keen interest in detailing the complex interconnections between Fala’s public and private lives, she omits an important aspect of Fala’s public life—namely, how U.S. citizens understood his publicity. Fala’s fan mail provides an important entry point into understanding his public persona. Through analyzing his correspondence, we can better understand how U.S. citizens related to him and often *through* him to FDR.

Methodology

This dissertation seeks to contribute to the scholarship on presidential rhetoric, American history, and animal studies by examining the various ways that Fala was politicized and served as an avenue of civic engagement for U.S. citizens. Historians and animal studies scholars have made important contributions in understanding the function of presidential pets and pets more generally. A rhetorical perspective can recognize and explain the symbolic importance of Fala. Scholars who write on FDR and Fala (if only obliquely) note the dog's tremendous popularity. This dissertation answers how Fala's presence helped shape FDR's rhetorical presidency. Moreover, by examining the rhetoric about Fala, this dissertation offers insight into the significance of the presidential pet-keeping tradition. Almost every president has owned a pet, and during the twentieth century these animals have been increasingly used by administrations to identify with the American public. This study provides a foundation for considering the longer pattern of presidential pet use. By consulting archival evidence, this study offers a sounder foundation than the speculative forms of reasoning typically employed in presidential pet scholarship. Owing to Fala's appearance in a wide variety of media, this study explores how different media contributed to Fala's portrayal, both as a dog and the president's dog. By investigating how citizens engaged Fala, I provide a historical recovery and reveal the rhetorical nature of discourse about animals.

To this end, I perform a rhetorical analysis of the Fala documents held in the FDR Presidential Library. These documents include communications sent to Fala, such as letters, greeting cards, and telegrams, as well as photographs, newspaper clippings, and gifts (ranging from paintings of Fala to toys for Fala). Although I occasionally supplement these documents with portrayals of Fala found outside the archive—for instance, newspaper descriptions of his

activities—I am mostly interested in materials that correspondents felt were important enough to send to Fala. My reliance on outside materials is mostly to contextualize any archived letters.

The dissertation is organized both chronologically and topically, in that each topic progresses generally in a chronological manner. This organization structure is useful for several reasons. A topical approach allows for a more coherent view of the archive inasmuch as it reveals the common threads woven throughout. Owing to the sheer quantity of archival material, I summarize the common themes in each chapter and then illustrate such themes through a close-textual analysis of several artifacts (whether letters, photographs, or film). As a historical recovery, this arrangement allows one to make sense of Fala's role as it developed. It allows for a greater emphasis on continuity and difference as people became more familiar with and emotionally attached to Fala.

Chapter Outline

Throughout Fala's years in the White House, he frequently received letters from all around the nation. Though Fala received a steady stream of letters each month, his correspondence was often punctuated by short bursts of incoming mail. Aside from holiday cards, each of these epistolary eruptions was triggered by his appearance in the media. Moreover, many people who wrote to him engaged in *prosopopoeia*, as though writing from their own pet's perspective. The first epistolary eruption occurred after newspapers published photographs of Fala's failed attempt to ride along with FDR on Inauguration day, January 20, 1941. In chapter 2, I consider how *prosopopoeia* dictates certain inventional routes. In so doing, I provide a foundation for understanding much of the Fala letters.

Chapter 3 examines how Fala was used to mobilize U.S. citizens for the war effort. During World War II, Fala led the rubber campaign by donating his rubber bones for the war effort. In the following weeks, many pets followed suit and mailed Fala photographs of their contributions. Fala also served as the national president of Barkers for Britain, a subgroup of the humanitarian relief organization, Bundles for Britain. Over time, Fala's connection with the war effort made him a logical candidate to petition to stop the meat rations.

Fala is perhaps best known for his invocation in FDR's Teamster Union Address, commonly referred to as the "Fala speech." Animal symbolism is often drawn upon in U.S. party politics—for example, Democrats as donkeys and Republicans as elephants—but Fala's popularity invited more animal references than typical. Those writing to Fala sometimes framed the election as a contest between the "big man with the little dog" (FDR and Fala) and the "little man with the big dog" (Thomas Dewey and his Great Dane, Canute). In chapter 4, I explore how animal *topoi* were marshaled during the 1944 election.

Chapter 5 examines how Fala came to star in two Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer shorts. This historical information is complemented by a close-textual analysis of the shorts and their scripts. The Fala shorts provided viewers with a familiar, yet indirect view of the presidency—a view grounded first and foremost in domesticity and family. By watching Fala perform his daily routine, viewers were treated to intimate glimpses of the president, the White House, and Hyde Park. Whereas news articles about FDR tended to emphasize his latest political ventures, these Fala shorts offered a (seemingly) less political view of the president. In so doing, both shorts offered a strategic portrayal of FDR's presidency.

In Chapter 6, I distill from earlier chapters my main observations and discuss what conclusions can be drawn from them. I then discuss the broader implications of my study for our

understanding of presidential pets and their role in the president-citizen relationship. Lastly, I explain what implications my dissertation may have for further research in these areas.

¹ Throughout George W. Bush's presidency, eleven videos featuring his Scottish Terriers, Barney and Miss Beazley, were listed on the White House website: *Barney Cam* (2002), *Barney and Spot's Winter Wonderland* (2003), *Barney Reloaded* (2003), *Where in the White House is Miss Beazley?* (2004), *Barney has found Miss Beazley* (2005), *Barney and Miss Beazley's Spring Garden Tour* (2005), *A Very Beazley Christmas* (2005), *Barney's Holiday Extravaganza* (2006), *My Barney Valentine* (2007), *Barney Cam VI: Holiday in the National Parks* (2007), *Barney Cam VII: A Red, White and Blue Christmas* (2008). Each year a new video was uploaded around Christmas, though sometimes videos were at other points in the year. While her husband, George H. W. Bush, was in office, Barbara wrote a book as though it were dictated by their Springer Spaniel, Millie; see Barbara Bush, *Millie's Book* (New York: William Morrow, 1990). Though Barack Obama's dogs, Bo and Sunny, have been less in the public eye than those of the Bush's, they have occasionally starred in webvideos. In light of the ease at which videos may be uploaded, it appears that videos of presidential pets will remain a staple of the U.S. Presidency.

² John E. Vacha, "FDR's Fala: The Dog That Swung an Election," *Timeline* 11, no. 6 (November/December 1994): 40.

³ For more on ambient rhetoric, see Thomas J. Rickert, *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013).

⁴ Thomas Jay Nisley, "From Pinstripe Wool to Ripstop Poplin: The US President, Symbolic Politics, and the Salute," *Journal of American Studies* 45, no. 1 (2011): 131–144.

⁵ Lynette A. Hart, “Dogs as Human Companions: A Review of the Relationship,” in *The Domestic Dog: Its Evolution, Behaviour, and Interactions with People*, ed. James Serpell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 164. It does not seem to be a coincidence that dogs are the most common form of presidential pets. Very few cats—creatures renowned for their independent nature—have lived in the White House.

⁶ Helena Pycior describes how “just a week into the President’s term of office, the *Times* editors noted that, although the Hardings brought no children to the White House, news correspondents could ‘weave stories around’ [their Airedale Terrier,] Laddie Boy.” Helena Pycior, “The Making of the ‘First Dog’: President Warren G. Harding and Laddie Boy,” *Society & Animals* 13, no. 2 (June 2005): 116.

⁷ Associated Press, *First Pet: The Presidents & Their Beloved Canines, Felines & Other Four-Legged Creatures Who Made Their Homes at the White House* (Ben Lomond, Calif: Associated, 2010), 39.

⁸ Mary E. Stuckey, “Rethinking the Rhetorical Presidency and Presidential Rhetoric,” *Review of Communication* 10, no. 1 (2010): 42-3.

⁹ See, for instance, Elizabeth A. Parsons to FDR, December 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1942; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York; Charles J. A. Dalziel to FDR, Jan. 17, 1942; Folder: Fala Jan. 1942; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁰ All credit for this phrase goes to Stephen H. Browne.

¹¹ For a more conventional view of FDR's presidency, see: Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Champion of Freedom* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003); Halford Ross Ryan, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's Rhetorical Presidency* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988); Jean Edward Smith, *FDR* (Random House, 2007).

¹² Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1960), 10.

¹³ James W. Ceaser, Glen E. Thurow, Jeffrey Tulis and Joseph M. Bessette, "The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 2, (Spring, 1981): 158-171; Jeffrey K. Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

¹⁴ Martin J. Medhurst, "Introduction: A Tale of Two Constructs: The Rhetorical Presidency Versus Presidential Rhetoric," in *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), xiii–xvi. See Medhurst, ed., *Before the Rhetorical Presidency*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008); Martin J. Medhurst, ed., *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004).

¹⁵ Stuckey, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Presidency," 39.

¹⁶ Stuckey, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Presidency," 39.

¹⁷ Thomas W. Benson, "Rhetoric as a Way of Being," in *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism*, ed. Thomas W. Benson (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 320.

¹⁸ Gerard A. Hauser, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), see chapter 8, “Democracy’s Narrative: Living in Roosevelt’s America,” 232-267.

¹⁹ D. M. Giangreco and Kathryn Moore, eds., *Dear Harry . . . Truman’s Mailroom, 1945-1953: The Truman Administration Through Correspondence with “Everyday Americans”*, (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1999); Harold Holzer, ed., *The Lincoln Mailbag America Writes to the President, 1861-1865* (Carbondale, Ill: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998); Harold Holzer, ed., *Dear Mr. Lincoln: Letters to the President* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1993); Jack McLaughlin, ed., *To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson: Letters to a President* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1991).

²⁰ Robert Cohen, ed., *Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters from Children of the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Cathy D. Knepper, ed., *Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters to Eleanor Roosevelt Through Depression and War* (New York: Carroll & Graf Pub, 2006); Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine, *The People and the President: America’s Conversation with FDR* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002); Robert S. McElvaine, *Down & Out in the Great Depression: Letters from the “Forgotten Man”*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

²¹ Paul D. Husbands, “‘The People’s President’: Letter Writing, the Presidency and Popular Politics in Late-nineteenth to Mid-twentieth Century America,” (PhD diss., Duke University, 2007), 8.

²² Levine and Levine, *People and the President*, ix, 573 n. 2.

²³ McElvaine explains that “approximately 15,000 [letters] were examined at random in the preparation of the present volume,” McElvaine, *Down & Out*, 7.

²⁴ Robert Cohen, ed., *Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters from Children of the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Cathy D. Knepper, ed., *Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters to Eleanor Roosevelt Through Depression and War* (New York: Carroll & Graf Pub, 2006).

²⁵ Hauser, *Vernacular Voices*, 232-267.

²⁶ FDR to Steven Early, memo, Jan. 13, 1942; Folder: Fala Jan. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

²⁷ J. Michael Hogan, “Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy: The Case of Illusory Support for the Panama Canal Treaties,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71, no. 3 (August 1985): 302-317.

²⁸ Husbands, “People’s President,” 444.

²⁹ According to Leila A. Sussmann, on emergencies FDR hired up to 70 workers; Leila A. Sussmann, *Dear FDR: A Study of Political Letter-Writing* (Totowa, N.J.: Bedminster Press, 1963), 60. It is estimated that FDR received no less than 15 million letters during his twelve years in office. Levine and Levine, *People and the President*, ix.

³⁰ Sussmann, *Dear FDR*, 46.

³¹ Ira R. T. Smith and Joe Alex Morris, “*Dear Mr. President . . .*”: *The Story of Fifty Years in the White House Mail Room* (New York: J. Messner, 1949), 156.

³² Quoted in Sussmann, *Dear FDR*, 69. Original italics removed.

³³ Sussmann, *Dear FDR*, 64, 69.

³⁴ Sussmann, *Dear FDR*, 61.

³⁵ According to James J. Murphy, the nature and formal structure of epistles became more theorized beginning in the medieval Europe, owing to the “political necessities of chanceries and royal courts.” James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 189. See also in the same book, Murphy’s chapter on “*Ars dictaminis*: The Art of Letter-Writing,” 194-268.

³⁶ Abraham J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1988), 3.

³⁷ Carol Poster, “A Conversation Halved: Epistolary Theory in Greco-Roman Antiquity,” in *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present: Historical and Bibliographic Studies*, ed. Carol Poster and Linda C. Mitchell (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 23.

³⁸ See, for instance, Stephen H. Browne, “The Pastoral Voice in John Dickinson’s First Letter from a Farmer in Pennsylvania,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 76, no. 1 (February 1990): 46-57; Carol J. Jablonski, “*Aggiornamento* and the American Catholic Bishops: A Rhetoric of Institutional Continuity and Change,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75, no. 4 (November 1989): 416-432; John Lynch, “Institution and Imprimatur: Institutional Rhetoric and the Failure of the Catholic Church's Pastoral Letter on Homosexuality,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 3 (2005): 383-403; Samuel McCormick, *Letters to Power: Public Advocacy without Public Intellectuals* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011); David Zarefsky, “Henry Clay

and the Election of 1844: The Limits of a Rhetoric of Compromise,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 79-96.

³⁹ Edward Berry, “Doing Time: King’s ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 109-131; Richard P. Fulkerson, “The Public Letter as a Rhetorical Form: Structure, Logic, and Style in King’s ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65, no. 2 (1979): 121-136; Mark Gaipa, “‘A Creative Psalm of Brotherhood’: The (De)constructive Play in Martin Luther King’s ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 93, no. 3 (August 2007): 279-307; Ronald E. Lee, “The Rhetorical Construction of Time in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’,” *Southern Communication Journal* 56, (Summer 1991): 279-288; Michael C. Leff, and Ebony A. Utley. “Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric in Martin Luther King Jr.’s ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2004): 37-51; Michael Osborn, “Rhetorical Distance in ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2004): 23-35; John H. Patton, “A Transforming Response: Martin Luther King Jr.’s ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2004): 53-65; Malinda Snow, “Martin Luther King’s ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’ as Pauline Epistle,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71, no. 3 (1985): 318-334; Martha Solomon Watson, “The Issue is Justice: Martin Luther King Jr.’s Response to the Birmingham Clergy,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 1-22.

⁴⁰ Cara A. Finnegan, “Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 31-57; Davis W. Houck, “Killing Emmett,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 225-262.

⁴¹ Jeremy Engels, "Disciplining Jefferson: The Man within the Breast and the Rhetorical Norms of Producing Order," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 411-435; Hauser, *Vernacular Voices*.

⁴² Mary Anne Trasciatti, "Letter Writing in an Italian Immigrant Community: A Transatlantic Tradition," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 73-94; Pamela VanHaitsma, "Queering the Language of the Heart: Romantic Letters, Genre Instruction, and Rhetorical Practice," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (January 2014): 6-24.

⁴³ Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, 19.

⁴⁴ Husbands, "People's President," 311.

⁴⁵ See Murphy's remarks about Julius Victor, 196.

⁴⁶ M. Luther Stirewalt, *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography* (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1993), 6.

⁴⁷ For more on constitutive rhetoric, see Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Quebecois," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 2 (1987): 133-150.

⁴⁸ Poster, "A Conversation Halved," 26-27.

⁴⁹ Poster, "A Conversation Halved," 27.

⁵⁰ George A. Kennedy, trans., *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 47.

⁵¹ Occasionally, people wrote to Eleanor because they felt that their voices would be more likely to be heard. One woman wrote to Eleanor, "Centuries back Catholics prayed to the Virgin Mary because they thought she might intercede with a diety [sic] who could not take time

to hear every petitioner. In some such spirit we turn to you;" quotation from McElvaine, *Down & Out*, 5.

⁵² "Fala Takes Charge of White House Parley; Educators Drop Rural Schools to Cheer Dog," *New York Times*, October 6, 1944: 25.

⁵³ Mark Derr, *A Dog's History of America: How Our Best Friend Explored, Conquered, and Settled a Continent* (New York: North Point Press, 2004), 273.

⁵⁴ Susan Orlean, *Rin Tin Tin: The Life and the Legend* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 159.

⁵⁵ Katherine C. Grier, *Pets in America: A History* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 224.

⁵⁶ "About—," *New York Times*, January 5, 1941, SM2.

⁵⁷ Meggie was prone to biting and was given away after she bit Senator Hattie Caraway and Bess Furman, a newspaper woman. Before Winks was a year old, he died after accidentally running into a fence. Tiny stayed only a short time, owing to the uncomfortably warm climate. Though Blaze only visited the White House, he often received negative press: once when Elliot bumped a returning soldier in order to make room for him; a second time when Blaze viciously attacked Fala in November 1945, requiring the Scotty to undergo stitches. Fearing rabies, Eleanor Roosevelt ordered Blaze to be put down. An autopsy showed Blaze to be fine. FDR may have owned another puppy, not chronicled by White House historians. Grace Tully recounted how "The President had a sweet little puppy soon after we arrived in Washington. It had the run of the house and usually was found around the kitchen or the servants' dining room. Because he was so cute everyone fed him—fed him to death;" Grace Tully, *F.D.R., My Boss*

(Chicago: Peoples Book Club, 1949), 130. Shortly after Fala arrived at the White House, he too became sick from overfeeding. FDR demanded that he alone feed Fala. For general information about Fala and FDR's other dogs, see Roy Rowan and Brooke Janis, *First Dogs: American Presidents and Their Best Friends* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2009), 99-111; Margaret Truman, *White House Pets* (New York: D. McKay, 1969), 65-70; Grace Tully, *F.D.R., My Boss* (Chicago: Peoples Book Club, 1949), 130-31.

⁵⁸ Grier, *Pets in America*; Mark Derr, *A Dog's History of America*.

⁵⁹ For instance, within rhetoric and communication studies: Goodale, Greg, and Jason Edward Black, eds, *Arguments About Animal Ethics* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2010). Among historians, see Mary Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984). For more philosophical treatments of animals, see J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999); Donna Jeanne Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003); Donna Jeanne Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Cary Wolfe, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanism* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Cary Wolfe, *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

⁶⁰ Aaron Herald Skabelund, *Empire of Dogs Canines, Japan, and the Making of the Modern Imperial World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

⁶¹ Adrienne L. McLean, ed., *Cinematic Canines: Dogs and Their Work in the Fiction Film* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2014).

⁶² Debra Hawhee, "The New Hackers: Historiography through Disconnection," *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 15, no. 1 (2012): 124.

⁶³ Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Dear Socks, Dear Buddy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 10.

⁶⁴ For more information, see Presidential Pet Museum, accessed April 12, 2014, <http://presidentialpetmuseum.com/>.

⁶⁵ Truman, *White House Pets*, 4, 170.

⁶⁶ Kathleen German, "Visual Images and Presidential Leadership: A Case Study of LBJ and His Beagles," *Journal of the Communication, Speech & Theatre Association of North Dakota* 21 (2008): 21-32.

⁶⁷ Helena Pycior, "The Making of the 'First Dog': President Warren G. Harding and Laddie Boy," *Society & Animals* 13, no. 2 (June 2005): 109-138.

⁶⁸ Helena Pycior "The Public and Private Lives of 'First Dogs'," in *Beastly Natures: Animals, Humans, and the Study of History*, ed. Dorothee Brantz, 176-203, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010).

⁶⁹ Pycior, "Public and Private," 177.

2

“The Friend Left Behind”: Fala, *Prosopopoeia*, and Intimacy

On January 20, 1941, Fala hopped up alongside President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his presidential limousine. A new addition to the Roosevelt family since November, Fala quickly became FDR’s constant companion. When FDR left the White House, he often took Fala with him. This day was different, however. FDR, who was on his way to the Capitol building for a historic third inauguration, apologized to the Scottie. “Sorry, old man,” he said, “this time you really can’t go.” Bodyguard Tom Qualters hoisted Fala from the car and returned him to the White House. With their seats now vacated, Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn and Senator Alben W. Barkley squeezed in beside FDR. Shortly thereafter, the motorcade departed through the chilly January air.

Fala’s attempted hitchhike should have been unmemorable. For the first time in history, a U.S. President was inaugurated for a third term. Moreover, the capitol celebrated in grand style with a giant military parade, which proudly displayed the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force. (It was hoped that the world, which was slowly becoming embroiled in another massive war, would take note of U.S. military might.) Amongst all this pomp and historic significance, a loose dog should have been forgotten. And it most likely would have been, had Fala’s attempt to ride along with FDR not been captured by photographers. In the following days and weeks, newspapers and magazines across the country published photographs of Fala’s actions. In response, many wrote to the White House to comment about Fala’s inability to join FDR. Many people used this opportunity to identify with FDR by telling him how their dogs were similar.

Curiously, many addressed Fala directly. Moreover, in a trend that would continue through Fala's time in the White House, many did so from the perspective of their own pet. In so doing, these correspondents engaged in *prosopopoeia*—a rhetorical exercise in which one impersonates a non-human.

Presidential scholars have often treated the mail FDR received as evidence of his more personable presidency.¹ This burgeoning intimacy with ordinary citizens has been accounted for in various ways, ranging from his radio addresses,² shrewd control of media,³ and New Deal policies, which positioned citizens in a more dependent relationship on the government.⁴ Several scholars, however, have sought to temper or clarify exactly what is meant by FDR's intimate presidency. Elvin T. Lim, for instance, directs our attention away from the content of FDR's radio messages and emphasizes the act of listening as intimate. Paul D. Husbands, who has examined correspondence between FDR and citizens, asserts that an emphasis on intimacy often implies that people were often quick to write and less deferential while approaching the president than they really were. Moreover, Husbands asserts that claims of intimacy distract from the sometimes careful construction of character in these letters. According to Husbands, "each correspondent was engaging in a self-conscious and sometimes carefully-rehearsed act of self-presentation."⁵

The responses to Fala's inauguration antics further contribute to this discussion about FDR's more personable presidency. Fala appears to have made FDR even more personable during his third and fourth terms. Similarly to Lim and Husbands' interrogation of the word intimacy, I perform a close textual analysis to determine how exactly Fala made FDR more personable. I argue that as with any trope—a word derived from the Greek, *tropos*, meaning, "a turn, direction, course, way; manner, fashion"—*prosopopoeia* dictates certain inventional routes

in these letters. More specifically, those who engaged in *prosopopoeia* were more likely to address Fala and be emotionally responsive toward him.

In what follows, I first examine *prosopopoeia* as a rhetorical exercise. Formerly a cornerstone of a rhetorician's classical education, *prosopopoeia* has largely fallen to the wayside over the centuries. How curious, then, that it appears so frequently in Fala's fan mail. I then contextualize Fala's first few months in the White House and his fan mail prior to his inauguration day photographs. Doing so reveals the extent to which newspapers and readers alike were already following Fala's activities with interest. Next, I engage in a close textual analysis of the letters written to the White House regarding Fala's attempted ride. In this analysis I compare the letters written to Fala and those to FDR. Although Fala and FDR often received mail on the same issues, the tone and content of these letters often varied considerably. By analyzing Fala's correspondence, we can better understand how U.S. citizens related to him and often *through* him to FDR.

Prosopopoeia: The Art of Impersonation

The art of impersonation is an old practice among rhetoricians. In ancient Greece, speechwriters were commonly employed by those who had to speak at court. According to George Kennedy, classical rhetoricians typically distinguished between three types of character speeches: *ethopoeia* (a speech for a real person), *eidolopoeia* (a speech for a dead person), and *prosopopoeia* (a speech for non-existing person).⁶ Derived from the ancient Greek *πρόσωπον*, "face, person," and *-ποιία*, "making,"⁷ *prosopopoeia* is the giving of voice to a nonhuman other. Subjects of *prosopopoeia* may range widely from natural entities like plants or animals to manmade objects, such as cities or architecture. Quintilian included all three types of character

speeches under *prosopopoeia*, however, reasoning that “we cannot imagine a speech without . . . also imagin[ing] a person to utter it.”⁸ Though Quintilian’s definition of *prosopopoeia* encompassed the other two forms of impersonation, he recognized the difficulty in speaking for nonhuman entities. Quintilian observed that one may “give a voice to things to which nature has not given a voice. . . . But great power of eloquence is necessary for such efforts, for what is naturally fictitious and incredible must either make a stronger impression from being beyond the real or be regarded as nugatory from being unreal.”⁹ In short, *prosopopoeia* is difficult because it proposes a voice for voiceless entities. It requires an imaginative orator and an audience that finds the orator’s interpretation credible.

Prosopopoeia differs from a similar rhetorical device: personification. Richard Lanham mistakenly jumbles them together in his widely regarded *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*. Lanham defines *prosopopoeia* as “An animal or an inanimate object is represented as having human attributes and addressed or made to speak as if it were human.”¹⁰ Under the definition for personification, he simply lists “prosopopoeia.”¹¹ Whereas personification describes a nonhuman with human attributes, *prosopopoeia* bestows a nonhuman subject with a voice. Moreover, Lanham includes *apostrophe*—turning from one audience to address another; often an inanimate or personified object—in his definition of *prosopopoeia*.¹² Though Lanham blurs the distinction between *prosopopoeia* and personification, their difference is important. *Prosopopoeia* is, in essence, a performance. This much is recognized in the closely related word for “mask” (*προσωπεῖον*). According to Quintilian, “We must exhibit in those to whom we adapt our voice their exact peculiarities of manner.”¹³ A credible *prosopopoeia* depends upon one’s ability to represent a nonhuman’s presumed character. Not only must a speaker capture the tenor of another’s thoughts, speech, and demeanor, the audience must be familiar enough with the

subject to accept the projected voice. Personification, however, anthropomorphizes and recreates the nonhuman in a human's image. Personification requires little more than an appreciation of human characteristics or mannerisms.

Impersonations, such as *prosopopoeia*, were one of several exercises often included in the *progymnasmata*, rhetorical handbooks for students in ancient Greece and Rome.¹⁴ The *progymnasmata* contained a series of increasingly difficult exercises, ranging from the construction of fables to discussion of laws. Whereas the first few exercises—fables, narrative, *chreia* (anecdote), and proverbs—were designed to improve one's grammar, the later exercises honed one's rhetorical skills. Impersonations were one of the more difficult exercises, in that they “required both psychological insight and portrayal of emotion.”¹⁵ Students had to create a speech that reflected a subject's character, often under a particular circumstance. Aelius Theon, for instance, provides a few examples:

What words would a man say to his wife when leaving on a journey? Or a general to his soldiers in time of danger? . . . What words would Cyrus say when marching against the Massagetae? Or what would Datis say when he met the king after the battle of Marathon?¹⁶

While composing these speeches, students would have to take into account their subject's history, emotions, and language style. Moreover, they would need to consider their subject's relationship with those they would address. Often the relationship between the subject and their hypothetical audience were hierarchical. Theon's examples reveal subjects both speaking to those under their authority—the general to his soldiers—and those addressing their leaders—Datis to his king. A person's language style will often vary greatly depending on the relative status of his or her audience.

Prosopopoeia is a deeply intimate and communal rhetorical device. The success of any impersonation depends on the audience's knowledge of the impersonated. This intimacy may work two ways. In becoming intimate with their subject, rhetors may also learn something about themselves. Gavin Alexander, who examines *prosopopoeia*'s usage in the Renaissance, suggests that "sharing emotion and experience even with a fictive construct is both therapeutic and heuristic; the performer discovers something about herself by comparing her identity to that of another, and by putting on a mask is able to express herself more eloquently than by remaining in her own person."¹⁷ *Prosopopoeia* is potentially liberating, insofar as it encourages one to see the world from another's perspective.

But why use *prosopopoeia*? Although the intentions of those writing to Fala are obscured and myriad, Marjorie Curry Woods and Quintilian provide some rationales. Woods, who is interested in *prosopopoeia* as a modern teaching device, observes, "Adopting the mask of a literary character also allows students to explore feelings that they might hesitate to express in their own voices."¹⁸ Whereas Alexander notes the process of discovery encouraged with *prosopopoeia*, Woods offers an important codicil. *Prosopopoeia* is useful because it is safe. Unlike other forms of public address, a person engaging in *prosopopoeia* can deny any culpability for their words. Similarly to a thespian, they are expressing another's voice. *Prosopopoeia* allows for people to speak vicariously through others. Quintilian came to an analogous conclusion while reflecting upon his experience in the law courts. He wrote:

Even mute objects may touch the feelings, either when we speak to them ourselves or represent them as speaking. But the feelings are very strongly moved by the personification of characters, for the judge seems not to be listening to an orator lamenting the sufferings of others, but to hear with his own ears the expressions and tones

of the unfortunate suppliants themselves, whose presence, even without speech, would be sufficient to call forth tears. As their pleadings would excite greater pity if they themselves uttered them, so they are in some degree more effective when they are spoken apparently by their own mouth in a personification; as with actors on the stage, the same voice and the same pronunciation have greater power to excite the feelings when accompanied with a mask representing the character.¹⁹

Both Woods and Quintilian agree that *prosopopoeia* may deflect unwanted attention from the person actually speaking. Unlike Woods' emphasis on safety, however, Quintilian suggests that *prosopopoeia* may help minimize the appearance of self-interest at play.

Significantly, *prosopopoeia* shares several characteristics with letter writing. Indeed, George Kennedy posits that "letter writing in character may have occasionally been practiced in schools."²⁰ In Nicolaus the Sophist's discussion of impersonation in his own *progymnasmata*, he muses, "To me, it seems also to exercise us in the style of letter writing, since in that there is need of foreseeing the character of those sending letters and those to whom they are sent."²¹ Likewise, Aelius Theon acknowledged the similarities between impersonation and letter writing.²² Both letter writing, which ancient epistolary theorists referred to as a "conversation halved,"²³ and *prosopopoeia* are fundamentally concerned with who is addressing whom in what context. Those writing letters or engaging in *prosopopoeia* must be attuned to shaping character. While instructing on letter writing, Demetrius professed that they "should abound in glimpses of character."²⁴ Additionally, how one's character relates to your audience is equally important for both letters and *prosopopoeia*. Returning to an earlier observation by Aelius Theon, depending on one's status relative to their addressee, one will want to adopt an appropriate tone of voice.

This emphasis on adopting proper tones remains a central feature of epistolary pedagogy to this day. Moreover, the context will shape how one addresses another.

In sum, *prosopopoeia* may be beneficial for several reasons. *Prosopopoeia* fosters a safe place to speak. It may serve minimize one's own apparent self-interest. *Prosopopoeia* also provides rhetors with an opportunity to imagine the world from another's perspective. In this way, *prosopopoeia* is similar to letter writing. Indeed, it is perhaps less surprising that so many people practiced *prosopopoeia* while writing to Fala.

Fala Enters the White House

FDR received Fala from his distant cousin, Margaret Suckley, in July 1940. Fala was originally named "Big Boy," but FDR renamed him "Murray, the Outlaw of Fala Hill"—Fala, for short—after a distant Scottish ancestor. Since FDR was busy campaigning for his third term as president, Suckley kept Fala to train until mid-November 1940. During Fala's first few weeks in the White House, he was occasionally mentioned in newspaper articles and Eleanor Roosevelt's "My Day" columns. Newspapers often noted Fala's playful character and the strong relationship already forming between him and FDR. Eleanor observed that the jovial puppy had become Franklin's "shadow,"²⁵ a doubly fitting description in that it captured both Fala's jet-black hair and proximity to the president. Newspapers reported how FDR had Fala perform tricks each night for his dinner.²⁶ Eleanor regaled her "My Day" readers by relating Fala's antics with a life-size toy Scottie she received for Christmas.²⁷ Even Fala had a present—a rubber bone—placed in his Christmas stocking. The White House staff received silver sterling keychains containing a miniature Scottish terrier.²⁸ Fala had quickly become a part of the White House family.

Fala began receiving mail within weeks of living in the White House. Two of his first fan letters were “signed” by Noodle Van Loon and Rip Patterson—both dogs. Perhaps because of their peculiar addressee, author, or both, these letters were shared by the White House at a press conference after Christmas.²⁹ Van Loon’s letter commented on the recently publicized photographs of Fala as he returned with FDR from a Caribbean cruise. Van Loon gushed: “I saw your picture in the paper and I do admire you and I never was on a train yet and I hope you like these cookies as much as I do.”³⁰ By including multiple thoughts within one sentence, Van Loon’s owner conveyed a sense of energy typical of dogs and their unfamiliarity with grammar. Van Loon closed his letter with a paw-print signature.

Whereas Van Loon reached out to Fala and expressed his hope that they might share something in common—namely, a love of the cookies he sent—Patterson reaffirmed the unique niche Fala had filled in the White House. Patterson wrote, “[*Life*] magazine refers to you as a ‘silent and undemanding companion.’ Don’t ever change! Your master must have few enough who fall into that category.”³¹ Patterson’s comment about “undemanding companion” notwithstanding, he continued, “Perhaps if with one strong puppy leap you hoisted yourself into a nearby chair you might be able to whisper to your master that millions of people throughout the world would find Christmas a happier occasion if it were enriched by the understanding, strength and power of the President’s voice in a Christmas Eve address.”³² Patterson’s request was somewhat peculiar in that FDR always delivered a Christmas Eve address. The publication of his letter, however, may have suggested to others that they could petition FDR through Fala.³³ Or, in the very least, if they had nothing pressing to request from FDR, they could use Fala as a channel to address him.



Fig. 2-1. "He Reads His Fan Mail." As reproduced in *Spartanburg Herald*, December 27, 1940.

Some newspapers published Van Loon and Patterson's letters in whole, while others included a photograph of Fala "reading" his fan mail (fig. 2-1). Thus, what may have been shared by the White House as an amusing curiosity generated more letters.³⁴ Shortly thereafter, Scottish terrier Bonnie Ballou wrote Fala, saying, "I guess if Noodle Van Loon is clever enough to write you, I can. I dig through the newspapers for pictures of you, and enjoy them."³⁵ Having

also seen the picture of Fala reading his fan mail, Lois Kitchin and her curious first-grade classmates wrote to the president:

We saw Falla's picture, in our weekly reader. Did a dog write to Falla? How can a dog write a letter? How can Falla read a letter? Can a dog really read?³⁶

Secretary to the President, Missy LeHand, thanked them for "their friendly interest in writing to him about Fala," but left their questions unanswered.³⁷

Van Loon's and Patterson's letters inspired some people to write Fala, but not everyone knew he had received any fan mail. Some corresponded with him on their own initiative. Writing on January 9, 1941, Lassie Higham (a Scottie) hoped her letter was Fala's first.³⁸ Some individuals, who knew that Fala had started receiving mail, qualified their letters. Judy Taylor, for instance, hoped to be Fala's "first fan letter from a lady of your breed."³⁹ The two Scottish terriers, Higham and Taylor, professed a deep affection for Fala. Higham wrote, "I like your name, its romantic, and it cheers me to know that you are the cuddley type."⁴⁰ Higham likely based her assessment of Fala on a *New York Times* article published shortly before she wrote her letter. The article briefly introduced Fala by explaining his name, temperament, closeness with FDR, and how he came to live in the White House. According to the article, Fala fit perfectly in the White House:

As befitting the first canine creature of the land, Falla has dignity and rarely indulges in howling or yapping. About the only time he loses his poise is when he succumbs to his weakness for lap cuddling. He likes nothing better than to crawl into a friendly lap, curl up and have his ears scratched. For this, he prefers the Presidential lap, but lacking that one, any lap will do.⁴¹

The media quickly portrayed Fala as a loveable, well-mannered dog. This theme was picked up in the *prosopopoeia* letters that Fala received.



Fig. 2-2. Miss Judy Taylor's picture to Fala. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

The Fala letters often carried an emotional valence. Taylor explained, "I know I am being a bit bold, but having seen your picture, I find, to my great dismay, that I, a lady of two years, have fallen desperately in love!"⁴² Taylor enclosed a picture of herself signed "To Falla, with love" (fig. 2-2). There is more to this puppy love, however. If Fala was loved, it was largely owing to his relationship to FDR. Higham noted how "swell" it was that Fala was "FDR['s] dog, inasmuch as my mummie voted for your master."⁴³ Commenting on FDR's practice of taking Fala with him on trips, Taylor explained that if FDR and Fala were "going

places,” it was “directly to the *hearts* of the American people.”⁴⁴ Moreover, in her postscript, Taylor requested that Fala “take good care of your master—for ‘us.’”⁴⁵ Although it is not clear who exactly Taylor meant by “us,” she places Fala in the unique position of watching over FDR for others. Such a sentiment was particularly poignant in that many Americans felt that FDR was tirelessly watching over *them*, helping to secure a brighter future.

These letters are fun, but they also reveal a unique channel used by some Americans to express their deep affection for the president and his policies. Praising the president by writing to his pet allows one to express him or herself without sounding too forward or transgress norms of propriety. Using dogs as a mediator may have also provided correspondents with a strategic locus of ignorance. For instance, Taylor explained, “I hear my mistress mention your master and mistress, quite often in very *glowing* terms, in fact she emphatically states your master is the ‘tops’ and she feels very *safe* with him in the White House, whatever that means.”⁴⁶ By hedging the letter’s praise with a “whatever that means,” Taylor distances the profusion of emotion in the letter. In addition to her mistresses effusive praise of the Roosevelts, she also uses slang to capture her feelings toward FDR. More importantly, Taylor’s mistress feels comfortable expressing this slang through her dog.

This rhetorical subtlety was missed on Ira Smith, who had worked at the White House answering mail since 1897. Reflecting on the Fala letters, Smith later wrote,

There were stories about Fala in the newspapers, and soon letters began coming in for the dog. They were, I believe, the most sickening letters that ever got into the White House mail. Some woman with a dog would sit down and compose the *damnedest* pap as if her little doggie were writing to the President’s little doggie, and it was enough to make you ill. When the Fala letters began arriving in large numbers, most of them ‘signed’

with a dog's footprint, I rebelled. . . . 'I'll take plenty,' I said, 'but I refuse to be a dog's secretary.'⁴⁷

Whenever Smith received a Fala letter, he sent it "over to Mrs. Roosevelt's social secretary, unopened."⁴⁸

Although the White House replied to these letters, they became increasingly circumspect in doing so. In part, the White House secretaries did not recognize initially the significance of some requests. While reminiscing about her years in the White House, former Secretary to the President, Grace Tully, explained how "Fala got me into a political predicament at one point when I causally accepted for him an invitation to become a member of the Tailwaggers Club of California [an animal welfare organization] and sent a dollar to cover induction costs. The Washington Chapter took umbrage when they learned of this violation of jurisdictional loyalty and a certain amount of soothing negotiation was necessary to have his membership transferred in good standing."⁴⁹ Secretaries even learned to be cautious in their responses to private letters. For instance, on January 24, 1941, Missy LeHand replied to Taylor,

Fala was delighted to receive your little note and to have such a nice picture of you. He was especially happy when he learned that his master has the confidence of your household and couldn't wait until he had told him of it.

Fala reciprocates all your friendly sentiments.⁵⁰

Taylor's mistress soon published LeHand's official reply in a local newspaper. In addition, Taylor's mistress sent the White House a telegram from Taylor thanking them for their speedy response. LeHand's official reply was certainly benign and its publication should not have reflected poorly on the president. One of the White House secretaries, however, attached a note to the telegram, stating, "I think this is the gal who published your letter last week. Do you want

to acknowledge this or file?”⁵¹ They decided to file it without responding. After a month of no replies from the White House, Taylor complained to Fala: “I am a most dejected little lady. I have sent you a love letter, my picture, a telegram and a valentine, and I have but one letter from you.”⁵² Though the White House continued to respond to Fala’s fan mail, they avoided encouraging a running correspondence with ordinary citizens—especially when they believed their responses would be published.⁵³ According to Tully, “We . . . decided that we had better stick to more conventional channels of revealing the White House personality [Fala].”⁵⁴

Friend Left Behind

During his stay in the White House, Fala received many requests. The most common request was for his photograph. Photographers—both amateur and professional—often sought opportunities to take Fala’s picture. Freelance journalist Knickerbacker Davis, for instance, wrote to Eleanor on January 5, 1941, “Since the President’s Scotty, Fala, first ‘broke the news’, I have had a steadily growing urge to write this letter. Today’s account of him in the Magazine Section of *The New York Times* sent the urge quite out of control.”⁵⁵ Davis hoped to take some “photo sequences of Fala and the typical daily doings of his White House ‘home-and-family’ life.”⁵⁶ According to Davis, “They would, I am entirely certain, be enthusiastically welcomed as another sign and symbol of the greathearted qualities which are endearing the President more and more to those of us who thank God that his hands are at the helm of America and secure no matter what his decisions as to our future course may be.”⁵⁷ The White House (initially) declined his request, since they believed he wanted to photograph FDR, too.⁵⁸

Davis’s hunch was confirmed less than three weeks later when Fala was photographed on Inauguration Day. As FDR prepared to leave the White House, Fala jumped in his car beside

him. Reporters captured this amusing false-start. In the following days, several photographs of Fala's attempted ride along were published in newspapers across the country. The two most common photographs showed FDR addressing Fala, explaining that he must stay home, and of his bodyguard Tommy Qualters removing him from the car. Many newspapers published both photographs, though some opted for one or the other. Several weeks later, *Life* magazine further contextualized these two photographs by publishing two more photographs of Fala's attempted ride (fig. 2-3). The first photo contains a rather unflattering image of the president, as his bodyguard helped him put on his overcoat.⁵⁹ Fala's ears are barely visible in the lower right hand corner. The second and third were the two most widely published photographs. Fala is absent in the fourth photograph, which shows Speaker of the House Rayburn and Senator Barkley squeezing in beside FDR. Unlike the photos of Fala "reading" his fan mail, the photos of him in the car were not staged. More importantly, for many people, this was the first time they saw FDR interact with Fala.

Newspaper photography is powerful. Photographs are often more readily digestible than articles and can quickly capture attention. Moreover, they are generally assumed to be true reflections of the world. Cara Finnegan refers to this assumption as "the naturalistic enthymeme."⁶⁰ Enthymemes are particularly powerful because they rely on the audience to complete their meaning.⁶¹ Though photographs often invite viewers to speculate as to their contents, the captions accompanying newspaper photographs often shape how they are interpreted. Indeed, the rhetorical nature of newspaper photographs is often concentrated in their captions, which tell readers what they are looking at.⁶²



Fig. 2-3. "Dog." As reproduced in *Life*, February 3, 1941.

The captions for these photographs were frequently *pathos* laden. More often than not, these emotions were attributed to Fala. On January 21, 1941, the *Washington Post* explained, “His pet Scottie wanted to go, felt badly when the President said, ‘No, Fala, you can’t come with me today.’”⁶³ The *Los Angeles Times* wrote, “The inauguration was a sad day for Fala, the President’s pet Scotty, who leaped into the automobile and nestled up to Roosevelt, at the left, but the President told him he could not go. The disappointed Fala finally was lifted bodily from the automobile by a guard.”⁶⁴ Significantly, all of these captions presume that Fala understood FDR. The *Los Angeles Times* described Fala as disappointed *after* he was told he must stay home, but *before* he was lifted out of the car.

These captions were sometimes more circumspect in their attribution of emotion to Fala. According to the *New York Tribune*, “President Roosevelt tells Fala, his Scottie, the sad news that he can’t go to the inaugural.”⁶⁵ Thus, Fala was not necessarily sad, though he received disappointing news. Similarly, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* invited readers to sympathize with Fala. Beneath the photograph of FDR speaking to Fala, they wrote, “Fala . . . couldn’t understand why he couldn’t accompany the President to the inauguration. He jumped in beside the President but was told to stay and guard the White House.”⁶⁶ The difference is slight, but not negligible. Whereas the *Washington Post* characterized Fala as an emotional being, the *New York Tribune* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* were more ambiguous as to how Fala actually felt. Nonetheless, both *New York Tribune* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* encouraged readers to feel sympathy for Fala.

Notably, the caption provided by the *New York Times* took on a negative tone. It read, “Mr. Roosevelt chides Fala, the pet black Scottie of the White House for leaping into the Presidential car in an effort to hitchhike to the inaugural ceremony. Fala had to remain

behind.”⁶⁷ The word “chides” is decidedly less friendly than the neutral “told” more frequently used by other newspapers. Moreover, compared to the photograph juxtaposed to the left, which shows a jovial FDR chatting with Eleanor, FDR looks less enthused with Fala (fig 2-4).⁶⁸ Thus, even a newspaper’s layout may influence how one interprets its photographs.

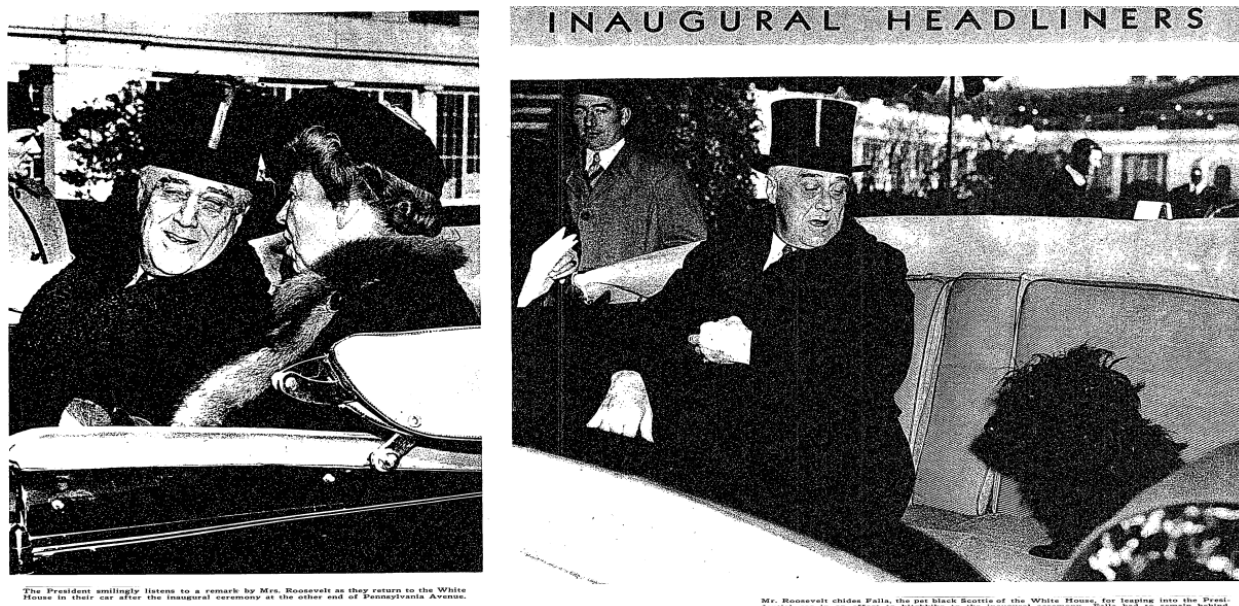


Fig. 1-4. FDR chides Fala. As reproduced in *New York Times*, January 26, 1941.

Another detail that shaped how readers understood Fala’s actions were the newspapers’ characterization of Fala’s actions. Was he a “stowaway”?⁶⁹ Was it an “attempt . . . to accompany?”⁷⁰ Or simply “the Fala incident?”⁷¹ Each description placed a certain emphasis or nuance on the event. Their word choices become especially important when considering the letters people wrote to Fala. Depending on which photograph they saw, people emphasized his removal or attempt to join.

Captions, though they frequently guide the reading of a photograph, are not impermeable. Additional readings occasionally break through, especially if one examines the photograph before reading the caption. Susan Sontag observes that precisely because “Photographs . . . are

inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation, and fantasy,”⁷² viewers frequently turn to the captions to understand what they are looking at. Thus, while captions guide an interpretation, meaning-making often precedes and continues after the captions are read. Indeed, it is even possible that viewers might skip the captions entirely—especially if they believe they already recognize the image or are simply in a hurry to do something else. To get a better sense of the public’s understandings of these photographs, I now turn to the letters Fala and FDR received concerning them.

Responses to Inauguration Day

In the weeks that followed, the White House received twenty three letters and one telegram about Fala and the inauguration. Many of these letters mentioned having seen photographs of Fala’s attempted ride along. Comparing the themes present in the letters addressed to FDR with those to Fala show how different addressees influenced the letters’ content. Inasmuch as Fala was only ascending in his fame at this point, the number of letters analyzed in this section are considerably fewer than what he later received. Nonetheless, they reveal several themes that recur throughout his fan mail.

Fala received letters related to his Inauguration day antics at a quicker pace than FDR (table 2-1). Of the fifteen letters Fala received, eleven were written within three days of the inauguration. This may, in part, explain the profusions of sympathy compared to those in FDR’s letters. *Pathos* often has a very short half-life. Once people express their feelings, they often become less volatile. Writing a letter to Fala may have provided citizens with an emotional release. The flipside is that those writing to FDR and identifying with him may have thought more about their letters. Unlike the letters Fala received, those sent to FDR about Fala seem less

impulsive. Fala is more often invoked in FDR's letters as a useful conversation piece for a much larger discussion.

Date	Letters to Fala	Letters to FDR
January 20	3*	
January 21	4	
January 22	3	
January 23	1	
January 24		1**
January 26		1
January 28	1**	
January 29		1
January 31		1
February 1		1**
February 12		1
February 22		1
February 24	1	
March 3	1	
March 12		1
April 12	1	

Table 2-1. Number of letters sent to Fala and FDR in 1941 that commented on the Inauguration; organized by date.

* This letter is a telegram

**These letters included published editorials. The date for the editorial Fala received on January 28 is unknown. The editorial FDR received on January 24 was published the day before. The editorial FDR received on February 1 editorial was published on January 24.

Of course, it is impossible to determine completely when any of these correspondents saw photographs or received news of Fala's actions on inauguration day. After all, some might have seen Fala's inauguration day picture for the first time in *Life*'s February 3, 1941 issue. Moreover, others may not have read that issue of *Life* the day it was published. Magazines often take longer than newspapers to look through completely. Perhaps they saw the photograph for the first time in mid-February and wrote FDR or Fala that very day. A few correspondents, however, provide clues as to their knowledge of Fala's actions. Twelve-year-old Wallace Hall began his letter to FDR, dated February 22, 1941, explaining, "The day after your inogeration

[sic] our pape[r] showed a picture of your Scotty, being taken from your auto.”⁷³ According to Hall, he had “saved the picture from the daily paper and one from the *Life Magazine*, but they are not very pliane [sic].”⁷⁴ He hoped that the White House would send him a clearer photograph of Fala than he found in the periodicals. Similarly, Ann and Fred Vance of Wand Art Studios sent Fala a rain coat on April 12. They told him, “since Inauguration Day . . . we can not [sic] forget your sweet little face. Every newspaper throughout the country carried pictures, showing you next to your beloved master in the car.”⁷⁵ The Vances may have sent their letter sooner, had they not decided to make Fala a rain coat. As it was, their talk of Fala’s inauguration day antics largely amounted to a conversation starter.

Letters to Fala

Eleven of the fifteen letters addressed to Fala engaged in *prosopopoeia*.⁷⁶ In order to make their *prosopopoeia* credible, many included little details that their pets would presumably write about. They described their animal interests, noted their breed, and referred to their master or mistress. Several included their photographs and/or paw print signatures. Most did not draw attention to their miraculous ability to write, though a few provided an explanation. Jo-Jo Friedman told Fala, “I asked my mistress to write this letter as I’m only four and have not gone to school as yet.”⁷⁷ Occasionally, dogs would apologize for their poor grammar. Patches Welsh closed his letter, asking Fala to “Excus [the] tipewriter, I just got it an aint very good yet.”⁷⁸

Successful *prosopopoeia* depends on speaking words faithful to the thing impersonated. Since dogs cannot speak, they are sometimes endowed with the cultural mannerisms of their breed’s native land. Many of Fala’s Scotty correspondents adopted a Scottish dialect. A Scottish terrier, fittingly named Bonnie, wrote: “I, even though you think me a glaikit, just want

to tell you how sorry I am that you could nae go. I know just how you felt because I ~~know~~ ken how it feels for one of us canines who spend our whole lives loving them to get shoved aside when they have to go off to some public appearance where our presence don't fit in."⁷⁹ Bonnie referred to herself as a "glaikit" or foolish individual and uses the word "nae" instead of "not." The crossed out "know," which is replaced with the Scottish equivalent, "ken," reveals both the performativity of this letter and desire to give it an "air of plausibility."⁸⁰

More generally, some people played up Fala's Scottish-ness. On Inauguration day, Fala received a telegram from Toby stating, "Congratulations on this great day from one Scotchman to another."⁸¹ It is not clear whether Toby was human or his telegram was an instance of *prosopopoeia*. Whoever Toby was, however, he considered Fala a fellow Scot. Scottish terrier Angus MacDuff Kennedy wrote in his daily column, which he mailed to Fala, "It makes my Scottish blood churn within me even to think of it. Why, just imagine a Scotsman—and the Nation's First Dog at that—being hoisted out of the official car and sent scurrying back to the White House."⁸² Clippy Dog Fairman Firestone practically apologized for not being a Scotty: "the thought occurred to me that you might like receiving a fan-mail letter from a doggie like me, even though I am not of your Scottish clan."⁸³ Part of Fala's appeal, then, was his Scottish heritage.

When writing to Fala, many commented on his photograph in the newspaper. Several included photographs of their dog, as though to corroborate their *prosopopoeia*. Almost no one writing to Fala, however, requested his photograph. The one exception was Stefanie Hildegard Richter, who did not engage in *prosopopoeia*. Confiding in Fala, Richter wrote, "I know your master would not mind especially if he knew that the Scottie I lost looked exactly like you!"⁸⁴ In a way, then, a photograph of Fala would serve as a replacement for the one she lost. The closest

anyone engaging in *prosopopoeia* came to asking Fala for a picture was Torchy Firestone who wished he had Fala's photograph, but never made a formal request.⁸⁵ Most people made a distinction between the form of letters appropriate to a dog and the president. Moreover, they recognized what topics could be broached and what could be requested of each.

Nearly every *prosopopoeia* letter Fala received sympathized with his inability to ride along with FDR. Many of the letters explained that they "knew just how he felt." Sneijok, for instance, wrote, "Speaking as one dog to another, I know how this must have hurt you. You must feel as I do: that the more important the occasion, the more important it is for a dog to be near his owner."⁸⁶ The frequent profusions of empathetic sympathy toward Fala—when couched in *prosopopoeia*—suggests that these owners knew how the president's dog felt and believed they understood their dog's feelings, too. Several dogs mentioned how much they liked to ride. Torchy confided,

I often try the trick you did. I get into the garage and when my mistress opens the door in I go. But you can bet when it is an important or special drive they drag me out and I have to stay home. They always say 'sorry Torchy'—sorry nothing[;] if they were sorry they would take me along. I just hope you showed them how you felt, I do.⁸⁷

In addition to identifying with Fala, Torchy's letter reveals one commonality between his owner and the president—both of them apologize to their dogs when they cannot come along, too. Even though many people felt bad for Fala, they still managed to identify with the president.

Significantly, the letters addressed to Fala by a human were sometimes either oblivious to his reported sadness or not sympathetic in the least. E. Bernice Wood, for instance, declared that Fala was "too wise to be loaded down with worldly cares. You hold no anxiety for tomorrow, you do not grieve over yesterday, and yet you are always happy."⁸⁸ Unlike Wood, Louise

Moulton Renner believed that Fala felt sad when he was left behind. Renner was not sympathetic, however. Her short letter is worth quoting in full, in so far as it demonstrates her inability to empathize with Fala. She wrote,

I have just learned, by means of my radio, that you were disappointed this morning when you could not accompany your master to the inauguration ceremonies. That is so typical of life, my lad, and you will soon learn to adjust your-self as I have done. You see, Mr. Fala, I am a totally disabled overseas World War nurse who is blind and in bed all the time. However, I do knit Red Cross sweaters. Best of luck, little dog, and take good care of your master.⁸⁹

As Renner explained herself, it becomes steadily clearer that she speaks from her own life experiences. Unlike those engaging in *prosopopoeia*, Renner did not imagine the world from a dog's point of view.

Along with noting Fala's emotions, many praised his devotion to FDR. Bonnie the Scottie wrote, "I'll bet there wasn't a single person at the inauguration not even including Chief Justice Hughes that really loves the President like you do."⁹⁰ Bonnie added, "I'll bet he was happier to see you on his return than all the grand folk he met at the ceremony, *anyhow I hope so*."⁹¹ Curiously, despite Bonnie's previous statement that she knew just how Fala felt, she hedges her ability to anticipate FDR—another human's—reaction.⁹² After acknowledging Fala's faith in FDR, Wood declared, "We can all learn much from you, dear Fala. If only we could all have as much faith and true love for Our Master."⁹³ Precisely because dogs are faithful and wise creatures, Wood believed they provided good role models. It is not clear whether she was referring to FDR or God in her closing remarks about "Our Master." Either way, Fala's relationship with FDR was portrayed as an attunement to a higher being.

As these letters demonstrate, dogs provide a means of establishing community. Although many wished to become pen pals with FDR or Fala, some expressed their desire to meet, should he and the president be in the area. These invitations came from letters signed by humans and dogs. Stefanie Hildegard Richter promised to serve Fala “the best hamburger you have ever eaten” if he came to Chicago.⁹⁴ Clippy Dog Fairman Firestone told Fala, “Now in March when your master comes down to his part-time home at Warm Springs, Georgia, follow along with him and ask him to allow you to stop off in Atlanta for a visit with me. We will go ‘wig-wagging’ together.”⁹⁵ Though rarely, Fala also received letters recognizing the impossibility of meeting him. “Bucky” Beatty complained, “It would be nice to talk with you, Fala, but I guess I will never get the chance. It is miles and miles to your town and besides you are too high in the world to pay any attention to me.”⁹⁶

Dogs provided not only a means of connecting FDR and his constituents, but also the constituents to each other. Several people used their dog to comment on their neighborhood’s love of FDR. Clippy Dog Fairman Firestone noted that his neighbors, the Fairmans, who he visits “almost daily around lunch time,” also “have the greatest admiration” for the president.⁹⁷ Patches Welsh claimed that “Most evrbudy in our town voted fer him fer the thurd term.”⁹⁸

Letters to FDR

Along with the letters addressed to Fala about the inauguration, eight people wrote to FDR. People who wrote to the president about Fala and the inauguration either had Scotties, collected famous dog pictures, or wanted to share an editorial they published. Unlike the majority of letters written to Fala, no one who wrote to FDR engaged in *prosopopoeia*. The absence of *prosopopoeia* suggests they felt comfortable speaking directly to the president. Using

prosopopoeia could work counter to their aims of identifying with the president. Additionally, they may have considered speaking for their dog, but opted against it for fear that their letter would be taken less seriously.

People read different meanings into the photographs of Fala and FDR. Two people, who were dismayed by the Scottie's shaggy coat, requested the honor of plucking and shearing Fala so that he would be more presentable. Both claimed that they were not seeking payment or publicity. Rather, they felt it was just the right thing to do. Most correspondents, however, inferred similarities between them and the president. Significantly, no one who wrote to FDR sympathized with Fala, despite the frequently *pathos* laden captions. Indeed, FDR's correspondents, who were also Scottie owners, were completely oblivious to such a possibility. Ten-year-old Violet Miller's wrote, "When I saw your picture in the paper with your Pet I know you must love your Falla just as I do my Lassie [a Scottie]." ⁹⁹ Similarly, Mary Ford explained, "I also own, or rather I should say am owned by a Scotty, a young lady, Bonny Daffodil, and so the scene was familiar and touching to me." ¹⁰⁰ The number of Scottie owners writing to FDR about Fala suggests that their relationship with their dog made them an ideal audience for these photographs. In short, those writing to FDR identified with him instead of his dog.

These photographs of Fala strengthened the affection some individuals felt for FDR. Elsie Moshier declared herself "a great admirer of our President, and, if possible, have of late been more so since I have seen how devoted you are to Falla." ¹⁰¹ Moshier's syntax is somewhat peculiar. Within one sentence she switches between an indirect "our President" and a more intimate "you" when addressing FDR. In a way, her sentence grammatically mirrors her sentiment toward FDR. It is only through his relationship with Fala that the president becomes a "you" for Moshier. Further emphasizing their new-found commonality, Moshier continued,

writing, “I am happy to know that your favorite pet is a Scottie, and especially since he appears to be my Mac’s twin.”¹⁰²

Almost everyone who noted a similarity between their dog and Fala sent FDR a photograph of their dog. By sending him their photograph, they indicated their desire for a closer relationship with the president. Similarly to *prosopopoeia*, the personal family photographs sent to the president were means of communicating intimacy. A gifted photograph is something one can cherish as a memento of its sender. Many hoped that FDR would reciprocate by sending them a picture of Fala. Thus, there was often a gesture of good faith on the part of those writing. There was no particular force behind their letters. One could only hope that the president would kindly fulfill their wish. These requests for a photograph were denied, however. The White House never sent anyone a photograph of Fala—save for very rare occasions.¹⁰³

Those who wrote the president often asked many questions about Fala. It may appear that these correspondents simply wanted to learn more about FDR’s dog. And while that is likely the case for many, there seems to be a secondary motive at play. Similarly to a first date in which one asks a prospective partner about him or herself, these queries offered a means of establishing intimacy with the president. In essence, Fala served as a conversation piece. For instance, Barbara Ann Sweeney wrote,

I am sending you a picture of myself and Buttons. I hope you may find time to write me a letter telling me about Falla.

Where does Falla sleep? Buttons sleeps in bed with me. We feed her Armour’s canned food.

My dog is a girl dog, you can’t tell by the name. What is your dog?

In case you have a spare picture of Fala please may I have it, to compare with Buttons? (thank you)¹⁰⁴

In her letter, Sweeney did not merely ask questions. She freely provided FDR with information about her own relationship with Buttons. Sweeney's courteous letter reveals an attempt to better know her president and tell him a bit about her own self. This letter is thus remarkable for at least three reasons. It demonstrates a citizen's desire to better know their president. Her letter also reveals that they felt comfortable doing so. Moreover, Sweeney does not wish to talk politics, but rather mundane domestic issues. Fala provided a talking point for even children to approach the president.

The White House appears to have responded to each letter written to or about Fala. Few (if any) letters, however, fully addressed the questions asked about Fala and his relationship with FDR (and vice versa). For instance, Sweeney received the following reply:

My dear Barbara:

The President has received your friendly little letter, with the enclosed picture, and was much interested in reading about your little dog. I am sorry that we do not have any photographs of Fala available which could be sent you.

I have the pleasure in conveying the President's best wishes to you.

Very sincerely yours,

M. A. LeHand

PRIVATE

SECRETARY¹⁰⁵

Missy LeHand's response, though polite, is rather sterile when compared with Sweeney's letter. The only question she addressed was Sweeney's request for a photograph of Fala. Moreover,

she vaguely referred to Buttons as “your little dog.” This was likely owing to the standardized form that FDR’s secretary’s used to reply.¹⁰⁶ In order to keep up with the five to eight thousand letters on various issues that flooded the White House each day, the administration had to be strategic in their responses. Nonetheless the White House opted to reply to the Fala letters, albeit with a short, somewhat standardized response, rather than ignore them altogether. Thus, responses to the Fala letters show an attempt by FDR’s White House to build a relationship with citizens on more than just politics. FDR’s administration was willing to meet correspondents’ half-way and converse, if only briefly, about their interests.¹⁰⁷

Editorials

No one writing to FDR expressed sympathy toward Fala, save for one exception: the editorials they sent to him. In both editorials FDR received, the editorialist came to Fala’s defense and/or gently rebuked the president for not having taken Fala along with him. Thus, these editorials expanded upon the attitudes found in the captioned ride-along photographs.

On January 23, 1941, Harold H. Smith’s editorial, titled “They Didn’t Understand, Falla,” appeared in Ogallala, Nebraska’s *Keith County News*. Despite the title’s punctuation, which suggests Smith was addressing Fala, he addressed largely the general public. According to Smith, Fala had tried to accompany FDR because “he had so dreamed of protecting his master while he took the oath.”¹⁰⁸ This is a significant contrast from friendship, though still falls within it. Furthermore, Smith declared that Fala “never doubts the president for a moment. To Falla the president is always right. And there should be one heart so faithful at those ceremonies.”¹⁰⁹ Fala was presented as utterly trusting. Smith concluded his editorial, “Anyone who knows dogs grieves for broken-hearted Falla.”¹¹⁰

On February 1, 1941, Frederick Sullens sent Mr. Early two editorials he wrote about the inauguration. These editorials were published four days apart—one on January 20, which he wrote immediately after attending the inauguration, and the second on January 24, in which he maintained that FDR “made a mistake” by not bringing Fala with him.¹¹¹ Of the two editorials, Sullens thought that his one concerning Fala might be of particular interest to FDR. In order to fully appreciate Sullens’s editorial on Fala, it is necessary to briefly summarize his first editorial.

In his inaugural day editorial, Sullens reviewed FDR’s impressive progress since 1933, when he first became president. Sullens’s prose glowed with optimism, but it was also tempered by the war looming on the horizon. According to Sullens, “Mars, grim-visaged god of War, runs rampant throughout the earth and his shadow casts a pall over our shores.”¹¹² The rest of his editorial was equally inspired. Sullens wrote:

Eight years ago the morale of the American people was at its lowest ebb.

Eight years ago great banks were bursting like pin-pricked toy balloons, the land was dotted with idle factories, and sixteen million workers were unemployed. Forgotten men by the millions, with their pathetic wives and hungry children, miserable and shivering, stood in crowded breadlines waiting for the cold dole of charity.

Eight years ago the rich gasped with fright, the middle classes prayed for deliverance and the poor went in hunger.¹¹³

Sullens’ editorial could easily pass as one of FDR’s speeches. In this light, Sullens’ second editorial is particularly interesting given that Sullens engaged in *ethopoeia* for FDR. According to Sullens, FDR “should have said”:

Come on, Fala, it’s going to be a big show and you may enjoy it.

There's going to be lots and lots of people up there on the hill. Most of them are my friends, or pretend to be, but you're a better friend than any of them.

Lots and lots of those folks, Fala, are going to be asking me to do something for them, and that's something you never ask.

All you have ever asked, Fala, is a chance to show your love, a bite to eat now and then, and a place to sleep. You would be just as happy in a hovel as in the White House.

Many of those people who will be cheering me all along the route, Fala, will be cursing and reviling me before the year is ended, and that's something you will never do, even if I treat you rough.

You're my most unselfish friend, Fala, so come along and let's see the big show.¹¹⁴

The difference between Sullens' first and second editorial is readily apparent. Aside his use of *ethopoeia*, the second editorial was nearly devoid of stylistic devices. Sullens adopted a very plain tone for FDR. Even the rare instance of repetition from this passage—"lots and lots"—is indicative of this middling style. By adopting this plain style, Sullens attempted to recreate the intimate relationship between Fala and FDR. Sullens cast Fala as FDR's unselfish confidant. Sullens also showed what it means to be one of FDR's best friends. One does not make requests from him, beyond the necessities, such as food and shelter. Nor does one betray the president when the times get tough or when he disagrees with FDR. Significantly, Sullens prioritized Fala's need to show his love before necessities such as food and lodging. Not only did Sullens characterize Fala as FDR's unselfish friend, he also re-characterized what his readers may have thought of FDR. Unlike the more formal, eloquent president Americans were used to, Sullens presented a homier version of FDR. Thus, Sullens's editorial about FDR and Fala reveals an even more relatable view of the president.

Sullens was not alone in his simpler portrayal of the president. In an article for the *New York Times*, Meyer Berger described FDR's interactions with Fala on Inauguration day. He wrote,

We've often wondered what a President-elect—or re-elect—thinks about as he leaves for his inauguration; whether, with his mind taken up with earth-shaking matters, he wouldn't be apt to keep little things far outside his margin of consciousness.

As Mr. Roosevelt left the White House this morning, though, his thoughts did not transcend his affection for Fala, his black Scottie pup. Fala slipped his leash just as the President got into the car and playfully frisked at the President's feet.

The President smiled. He patted the Scottie's head. He said, 'Sorry, old man; this time you really can't go.'

Tom Qualters, the President's bodyguard, caught Fala up, and the dog, sad-eyed and wistful as only black Scotties can be, was taken back into the White House.¹¹⁵

Berger suggested that Fala kept FDR grounded, but not so much that it interfered with his job as president. Though Berger did not impersonate FDR, his description of the president was similar to Sullens's. Moreover, his prose mirrored this simplicity. Of these four paragraphs, the two describing Fala and FDR's interactions contain the shortest sentences. The most abrupt paragraph is the third one, which describes FDR's response to Fala. FDR smiles, pats Fala's head, and politely apologizes.

Conclusion

After sympathizing with Fala, fellow Scottish terrier, Angus Macduff Kennedy, proudly declared in his daily *Times-Union* column:

But there is one thing which should console and comfort FALLA all the rest of his days, and his grandchildren, too: His pictures, snapped with his Master when he jumped into the car, stole the show from all the Inauguration pictures. I'm prejudiced, of course; but I'm not the only one who thinks so. With my own eyes, I saw the humans at The Master's newspaper office gathered round the papers from New York and all over the country, and every one of them was looking at the pictures of the President and FALLA.¹¹⁶

More than any other, Fala's photographs were strangely compelling. Notwithstanding all the pageantry surrounding FDR's third inauguration, a dog—unable to attend—captured the nation's attention. For a moment, the shaky, yet steadily improving economy and ever encroaching war overseas were both diminished. For that small moment, the nation's eyes were turned toward a man and his dog.

For many, these images encapsulated the friendship between FDR and Fala. The photographs were particularly powerful because they allowed those at home, who experienced a similar friendship with their own dogs, to identify with the president. This is best seen, perhaps, in the letters to FDR by people who owned Scottish terriers. These photographs provided visual evidence that they shared a common link with the president. Those who owned different breeds were less likely to recognize a similar relationship with their own dogs. Some, however, were able to transcend Fala's breed and recognize the friendship between a man and his dog more generally. Whether sympathizing with Fala or suggesting to FDR that he should have brought him along, most correspondents reaffirmed the deep friendship between the two. Yet never did FDR call Fala his friend on Inauguration day—it was simply assumed.

People who commented on Fala's inability to join often sought to identify with FDR or Fala. Depending on whom they addressed, however, their responses were quite different. Almost everyone who wrote to Fala engaged in *prosopopoeia*, whereas none of the letters addressed to FDR did. Moreover, whereas people mostly sympathized with Fala for being left home, those who wrote to FDR commented that he must love Fala as much as they loved their dogs. To a large extent, these different responses were expressed through use of *prosopopoeia*. This trope portrays a rhetor as emotionally attuned to others, precisely because he or she must imitate another individual's emotional state to be credible. The different speeds at which people wrote to Fala compared to FDR suggest that Fala's correspondents were largely impulsive and susceptible to media events.

¹ Though this increase in mail was novel for the presidency and FDR, is not wholly unique for the time. During the time, radio stations also received unprecedented levels of correspondence. See Leila A. Sussmann, *Dear FDR: A Study of Political Letter-Writing* (Totowa, N.J.: Bedminster Press, 1963), 13-14. Other technologies, such as film also played a role. Similarly to radio shows, which were inundated with letters, Hollywood studios also received many letters from passionate fans. In 1928, for instance, the studios received over 32,250,000 fan letters; see Samantha Barbas, *Movie Crazy: Fans, Stars, and the Cult of Celebrity* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 138. Sussmann accounts for this rapid increase by noting increased levels of education; *Dear FDR*, 13. Husbands slightly modifies Sussmann's thesis while noting a shift in education practices. Husbands observes a distinct shift from grammar books in the late nineteenth century to those published in the 1920s. These books gradually shifted their emphasis from grammatical rules to creative expression. See Husbands, "People's President," .

² Speaking of FDR's Fireside Chats, Waldo W. Braden and Earnest Brandenburg declared: "Perhaps for the first time in American history the people of the nation were made to feel that they knew their President personally and that they were receiving inside information first hand on important events. They were stirred and stimulated by Roosevelt's friendly informal manner; they somehow felt that they had a direct part in shaping the policies of the federal government and that Washington was no farther away than the radio receiving sets in their living rooms;" "Roosevelt's Fireside Chats," *Communications Monographs* 22, no. 5 (1955): 302. Even the sound of FDR's voice contributed to this sense of intimacy. According to Patrick J. Maney, FDR's "pleasant baritone voice, his crisp and clear enunciation, his distinctive patrician accent, and his simple and a direct manner made him seem, in the words of one of his advisers, like 'a friend or relative, who had figured out a way to prevent foreclosure of the mortgage;'" *The Roosevelt Presence: The Life and Legacy of FDR* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 72. See also, Amos Kiewe, *FDR's First Fireside Chat Public Confidence and the Banking Crisis* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007).

³ Compared to his three Republican predecessors, FDR maintained a much more robust relationship with the press. FDR generally held a press conference twice a week. These press conferences were typically friendly, informal affairs, punctuated with jokes and laughter. Owing to FDR's disability, he and his administration carefully managed his public image; see Davis W. Houck and Amos Kiewe, *FDR's Body Politics: The Rhetoric of Disability* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2003). No reporter was allowed to photograph show his wheelchair. Moreover, FDR often used newsreels to emphasize his physicality and humanity. For more on FDR's use of newsreels, see Richard W. Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society:*

The Roosevelt Administration and the Media, 1933-1941 (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1985), 26. Thus, FDR drew upon various forms of media to establish an intimate relationship with the American people. FDR's radio broadcasts, which conveyed his strong voice, were further supported by his confident images of the newspapers and newsreels.

⁴ Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 283-85; Sussmann, *Dear FDR*, 15-16.

⁵ Husbands, "People's President," 311.

⁶ George A. Kennedy, trans., *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 47.

⁷ "Prosopopoeia," *Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed January 21, 2013, <http://www.oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/view/Entry/153015?redirectedFrom=prosopopoeia#eid>.

⁸ Quintilian, *The Institution Oratoria of Quintilian*, trans. Harold Edgeworth Butler (London: W. Heinemann, 1921), IX. ii 32.

⁹ Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*, ed. Lee Honeycutt, trans. John Selby Watson, accessed January 27, 2013, <http://rhetoric.eserver.org/quintilian/9/chapter2.html#32>.

¹⁰ Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 123.

¹¹ Lanham, *Handlist*, 114.

¹² Bryan L. Moore, *Ecology and Literature: Ecocentric Personification from Antiquity to the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 207-8n25.

¹³ Quintilian, *Institutes*, accessed January 27, 2013,
<http://rhetoric.eserver.org/quintilian/11/chapter1.html#39>.

¹⁴ The form of impersonation varied across the *progymnasmata* treatises, based on the predilections of each instructor. Aelius Theon only identified *prosopopoeia*, whereas Hermogenes and Aphthonius the Sophist classified the exercise as *ethopoeia*. See George A. Kennedy, trans., *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

¹⁵ Stanley Frederick Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 253.

¹⁶ Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 47.

¹⁷ Gavin Alexander, "Prosopopoeia: The Speaking Figure," in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 110.

¹⁸ Marjorie Curry Woods, "Weeping for Dido: Epilogue on a Premodern Rhetorical Exercise in the Postmodern Classroom," in *Latin Grammar and Rhetoric: From Classical Theory to Medieval Practice*, ed. Carol Dana Lanham (London: Continuum, 2002), 290.

¹⁹ Quintilian, *Institutes*, accessed January 27, 2013,
<http://rhetoric.eserver.org/quintilian/6/chapter1.html#25>.

²⁰ Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 48.

²¹ George A. Kennedy, trans., *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 166.

²² Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 47.

²³ Carol Poster, “A Conversation Halved: Epistolary Theory in Greco-Roman Antiquity,” in *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present: Historical and Bibliographic Studies*, ed. Carol Poster and Linda C. Mitchell (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 23.

²⁴ Abraham J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1988), 19.

²⁵ Eleanor Roosevelt, “My Day,” December 24, 1940, accessed January 9, 2013, http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1940&_f=md055769.

²⁶ “Eleven Stockings to Be Hung On White House Mantelpiece,” *Reading Eagle*, December 24, 1940, second section, 9.

²⁷ Eleanor Roosevelt, “My Day,” January 4, 1940, accessed January 9, 2013, http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1941&_f=md055777.

²⁸ “Roosevelts Greet White House Staff: President Hands Gift to Each as 225 File By in Opening of Holiday Festivities,” *New York Times*, December 24, 1940, 9.

²⁹ Oddly, neither of these letters is preserved at the FDR Memorial Library. They may have been lost during the press conference.

³⁰ “Eleven Stockings,” *Reading Eagle*, 9.

³¹ “Eleven Stockings,” *Reading Eagle*, 9.

³² “Eleven Stockings,” *Reading Eagle*, 9.

³³ For more instances of people petitioning Fala, see Chapter 2: “A Leader of All Loyal American Canines”: Fala in World War II.

³⁴ This trend continued throughout FDR’s presidency.

³⁵ Bonnie Ballou to Fala, n.d.; Folder: Fala Feb. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁶ Lois Kitchin to FDR, March 4, 1941; Folder: Fala March 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Notably, this letter was later published in *The True Story of Fala* (1942).

Throughout Fala’s time in the White House, many people misspelled his name. I have opted to maintain their incorrect spelling while quoting them.

³⁷ Years later, Susan Welch wrote Suckley asking how Fala’s brothers and mother wrote him letters—she had read as much in Suckley’s book, *The True Story of Fala* (1942); Susan Welch to Margaret Suckley, April 7, 1951; Folder: Small Collections: Margaret L. Suckley; Fala; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Suckley explained,

Perhaps you can remember when you were a *very* little girl, before you could write such nice letters as you wrote me. Your mother probably wrote letters for you, to which you may have added a[n] X or a[n] O for kisses.

Now, little dogs are in some ways very much like very little children, but a little dog has paws instead of hands . . . and so the master or mistress of the dog has to write his letters for him.

Suckley’s explanation is rather straightforward and honest: people write for their dogs.

Significantly, Suckley suggested that dogs are like young children, save for their lack of fine motor skills; Margaret Suckley to Susan Welch, April 13, 1951; Folder: Small Collections: Margaret L. Suckley; Fala; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁸ Lassie Higham to Falla, Jan. 9, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁹ Judy Taylor to Falla, Dec. 30, 1940; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴⁰ Lassie Higham to Falla, Jan. 9, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴¹ “About—,” *New York Times*, January 5, 1941, SM2.

⁴² Judy Taylor to Falla, Dec. 30, 1940; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴³ Lassie Higham to Falla, Jan. 9, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴⁴ Judy Taylor to Falla, Dec. 30, 1940; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴⁵ Judy Taylor to Falla, Dec. 30, 1940; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴⁶ Judy Taylor to Falla, Dec. 30, 1940; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴⁷ Ira R. T. Smith and Joe Alex Morris, “*Dear Mr. President . . .*”: *The Story of Fifty Years in the White House Mail Room* (New York: J. Messner, 1949), 154.

⁴⁸ Smith and Morris, “*Dear Mr. President . . .*,” 154.

⁴⁹ Grace Tully, *F.D.R., My Boss* (Chicago: Peoples Book Club, 1949), 130.

⁵⁰ M.A. LeHand to Judy Taylor, Jan. 24, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵¹ Memo appended to a telegram from Judy Taylor and her mistress to Falla, Dec. 29, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵² Judy Taylor to Falla, Feb. 25, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵³ Several people mentioned having learned that Fala not only received, but responded to his letters. See Stubby to Falla, March 12, 1941; Folder: Fala March 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York; Ginger to Falla, March 17, 1941; Folder: Fala March 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵⁴ Grace G. Tully, *F.D.R., My Boss* (Chicago: Peoples Book Club, 1949), 130.

⁵⁵ Knickerbacker Davis to Mrs. Roosevelt, Jan. 5, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵⁶ Davis to Mrs. Roosevelt, Jan. 5, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁵⁷ Davis to Mrs. Roosevelt, Jan. 5, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁵⁸ On March 18, 1941, Davis wrote to the White House complaining photographs he had seen published in the March 17 issue of *Life*. In light of the White House’s earlier denial of his request to photograph Fala, Davis felt subjected to a double standard. Stephen Early clarified that he could not give Davis “permission to take the ‘home and family’ life photographs of Fala.

Now that you have withdrawn that part of your request, and stated that your desire is to take pictures ‘confined solely to Fala’, the situation is different.” See Stephen Early to Knickerbacker Davis, Apr. 2, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Early advised Davis to contact his secretary, Ruthjane Rumelt, to make arrangements for photographing Fala.

On June 1, 1943, Carrie Cousino wrote to FDR requesting a photograph of Fala. Similarly to nearly every request for a photograph, Cousino was denied. Unlike most people, however, she wrote back protesting. After explaining the answer she received from his secretary, she wrote, “I feel like as though you never received that letter yourself because listening to you over the radio speak, and reading so much of you in the papers, I do not think you would refuse anyone such a small request because if you had know [sic] picture of Fala handy I know you would have a snapshot taken at a minutes notice if necessary;” Carrie Cousino to FDR, May 23, 1943; Folder: Fala May 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Though Cousino’s letter was received much later, it nicely portrays the frustration that people sometimes felt over not receiving a photograph.

⁵⁹ The extent to which this image is unflattering is echoed by its omission from *The True Story of Fala*, which maintains the same number of photos—four—but omits starts the photo-narrative with FDR talking to Fala. Qualters is shown removing Fala in the second and third photo. In the fourth photo, FDR sits with the Speaker of the House Rayburn and Senator Barkley. Note that *True Story* has the same last two photos, but the first two photos are different.

These are more flattering for FDR, but also give him a greater sense of friendship. He is extending his hand in the first photograph, inviting Fala to leave.

⁶⁰ Cara A. Finnegan, "The Naturalistic Enthymeme and Visual Argument: Photographic Representation in the 'Skull Controversy'," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 37, no. 3 (2001): 133-149.

⁶¹ Cara A. Finnegan, "Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-century Visual Culture," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 1 (2005): 34.

⁶² Lisa M. Skow and George N. Dionisopoulos, "A Struggle to Contextualize Photographic Images: American Print Media and the 'Burning Monk'," *Communication Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (1997): 393-409.

⁶³ "Picture Story of the President's Third Inauguration . . .," *Washington Post*, January 21 1941, 12.

⁶⁴ "President's Scottie Wanted to Go, Too," *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1941, 3.

⁶⁵ "History-Making President With Family and Friends Throughout a Momentous Day," *New York Tribune*, January 21, 1941, Late City Edition, 11.

⁶⁶ "President's Dog Caught as 'Stowaway'," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 21, 1941, 6A.M. Edition, 5.

⁶⁷ "Inaugural Headliners," *New York Times*, January 26, 1941, RP2.

⁶⁸ Significantly, these photographs reverse their chronology.

⁶⁹ "President's Dog Caught," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5.

⁷⁰ Frederick Sullens, "The Fateful Years Ahead," *Jackson Daily News*, Jan. 20, 1941; Folder: Fala Feb. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷¹ Harold H. Smith to FDR, Jan. 24, 1941, appended editorial: Harold H. Smith, "They Didn't Understand, Fala," *The Keith County News*; Folder: Fala Feb. 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷² Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador USA, 1977), 23.

⁷³ Wallace Hall to FDR, February 22, 1941; Folder: Fala March 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁴ Hall to FDR, February 22, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷⁵ Ann and Fred Vance to Fala, Apr. 12, 1941; Folder: Fala April–May 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁶ Although this is the exact same ratio of letters sent to Fala that engage in *prosopopoeia*, these are not all the same letters.

⁷⁷ Jo-Jo Friedman to Fala, Jan. 21, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁸ Patches Welsh to Falla, Jan. 21, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁹ Bonnie to Falla, Feb. 24, 1941; Folder: Fala Feb. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸⁰ This Scottish was famously drawn upon by FDR three years later in his Teamsters Union Address when he announced that having heard the lies about him, Fala’s “Scotch soul was furious.” See “Address at a Union Dinner. Washington, D.C.,” September 23, 1944. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16563> (accessed April 24, 2012).

⁸¹ Telegram from Toby to Falla, Jan. 20, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸² Angus Macduff Kennedy, “Macduff’s Diary (The Story of a Dog),” n.d.; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸³ Clippy Dog Fairman Firestone to Falla, Jan. 21, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸⁴ Stefanie Hildegard Richter to Falla, Jan. 20, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸⁵ Torchy Firestone to Falla, Jan. 23, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Note that Torchy Firestone is not the neighbor of Clippy Dog Fairman Firestone. Torchy lived in Los Angeles; Clippy Dog, Atlanta, Georgia.

⁸⁶ Sniejok to Falla, Jan. 22, 1941; Folder: Fala Feb. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸⁷ Torchy Firestone to Falla, Jan. 23, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁸⁸ E. Bernice Wood to Falla, Jan. 21, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸⁹ Louise Moulton Renner to Falla, Jan. 20, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Though purely speculative, it is possible that Renner’s inability to see Fala’s photograph influenced her emotional response to the news that he had been left behind.

⁹⁰ Bonnie to Falla, Feb. 24, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹¹ Bonnie to Falla, Feb. 24, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. Emphasis added.

⁹² Bonnie to Falla, Feb. 24, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹³ Bernice Wood also wrote, “You are a very important little doggie and have a very, very, important work. Your faithfulness and keen understanding will help your master through many trials and times when humans may seem cold and disloyal. You are in a position to comfort and help as no other living being can;” E. Bernice Wood to Falla, Jan. 21, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹⁴ Stefanie Hildegard Richter to Falla, Jan. 20, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹⁵ Clippy Dog Fairman Firestone to Falla, Jan. 21, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹⁶ “Bucky” Beatty to Falla, March 3, 1941; Folder: Fala March 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹⁷ Clippy Dog Fairman Firestone to Falla, Jan. 21, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. Clippy spent so much time at the Fairmans that his owner used their name, too, in Clippy’s signature.

⁹⁸ Patches Welsh to Falla, Jan. 21, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹⁹ Violet Miller to FDR, Feb. 12, 1941; Folder: Fala Feb. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁰⁰ Mary Ford to FDR, March 12, 1941; Folder: Fala March 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁰¹ Elsie Moshier to FDR, Jan. 31, 1941; Folder: Fala Feb. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁰² Elsie Moshier to FDR, Jan. 31, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹⁰³ To my knowledge they only did this for those with close ties. For instance, the family who Suckley received Fala from requested a photo and was sent one.

¹⁰⁴ Barbara Ann Sweeney to FDR, Jan. 26, 1941; Folder: Fala Feb. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁰⁵ M.A. LeHand to Barbara Ann Sweeney, Feb. 12, 1941; Folder: Fala Feb. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁰⁶ A further case in point, it is not likely that Missy LeHand replied to all these letters. LeHand’s response has the initials “bvm” typed on the lower right side. M.A. LeHand to Barbara Ann Sweeney, Feb. 12, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹⁰⁷ Provided correspondents were not prejudiced, the White House was willing to engage them; see Sussmann, *Dear FDR*, 55-56.

¹⁰⁸ Harold H. Smith to FDR, Jan. 24, 1941, appended editorial: Harold H. Smith, “They Didn’t Understand, Fala,” *The Keith County News*; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹⁰⁹ Harold H. Smith to FDR, Jan. 24, 1941, appended editorial: Harold H. Smith, “They Didn’t Understand, Fala,” *The Keith County News*; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹¹⁰ Harold H. Smith to FDR, Jan. 24, 1941, appended editorial: Harold H. Smith, “They Didn’t Understand, Falla,” *The Keith County News*; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹¹¹ Sullens, “The Fateful Years Ahead,” Jan. 20, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹¹² Sullens, “The Fateful Years Ahead,” Jan. 20, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹¹³ Sullens, “The Fateful Years Ahead,” Jan. 20, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹¹⁴ Sullens, “The Fateful Years Ahead,” Jan. 20, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹¹⁵ Meyer Berger, “Up and Down Pennsylvania Avenue,” *New York Times*, January 21, 1941, 4.

¹¹⁶ Angus Macduff Kennedy, “Macduff’s Diary (The Story of a Dog),” n.d.; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

3

“A Leader of All Loyal American Canines”¹: Fala in World War II

Six crew members of a medium bomber pose for the camera. Their pensive faces reveal the weight of the war already. One of them, however, with his helmet askew, smirks ever so slightly. Perhaps he is thinking about their plane, which they have affectionately nick-named “Mr. Fala.” The plane’s nose art depicts Fala quickly approaching a fire hydrant on Wilhelmstrasse, a major thoroughfare in Berlin, Germany (fig. 2-1). Atop the hydrant is Adolf Hitler’s head. Facing the Hitler hydrant, a wide-eyed Fala exclaims, “This is *Rea ālly* MY DAY.”² Though Fala’s exclamation references Eleanor Roosevelt’s popular daily column, “My Day,” there is an additional, underlying meaning. Presumably, just as Fala will relieve himself on the Hitler hydrant, the plane will empty its contents on Wilhelmstrasse or some other Axis territory.

Fala’s depiction on the plane is unsurprising. During the war, Fala accompanied FDR on his tours of military bases, munitions factories, and the signing of the Atlantic Charter. Fala’s starring role in the 1943 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer short, *Fala, the President’s Dog*, further established his connection with the military. In the film, Fala regales viewers with stories of Winston Churchill and FDR meeting. He also comments on several military heroes receiving medals at the White House. The short concludes with Fala observing a military parade in Washington, D.C., as U.S. bomber planes fly over the Capitol building. Alan Foster’s weekly comic, first titled “Fala” in *Liberty* magazine and then “Mr. Fala of the White House” in

Collier's, frequently portrayed Fala's thoughts about the war. Approximately two-thirds of the "Fala" comics and one quarter of "Mr. Fala of the White House" were war-themed.³



Fig. 3-1. Crew of "Mr. Fala." Courtesy of the University of Akron, University Libraries, Archival Services.

During World War II, U.S. citizens projected both pejorative and honorific views of nationalism upon dogs. Moreover, various organizations, including the White House, relied on symbolic understandings of pets. Owing to his prominent role as First Dog, Fala was used to mobilize pet owners and animal lovers for the war effort. Fala helped a dog-loving public negotiate the demands placed upon them by World War II, so as to maintain their patriotism. Once Fala became linked to the war, citizens were also able to use him to petition.

Though many dog owners answered calls to involve their pets, some went above and beyond by writing on behalf of their dogs. The wartime Fala letters testify to these citizens' civic engagement—both for the *actions* they recorded and their *act of communicating* these actions to the White House. Although Fala could never read any letters, these dog owners signaled their commitment to the nation by writing to him and his master. Of course, not everyone agreed with the government's policies. Nonetheless, they still believed in the importance of writing the White House.

In order to better understand Fala's role during the Second World War, I first explore the cultural attitudes toward dogs in the U.S. During these years, dogs took on a particularly specific symbolism, as breeds became caught up with nationalities, and owners were called upon to demonstrate their patriotism through their pets. I then hone in on the various ways in which two organizations and the White House used Fala to get citizens involved in the war effort. During the Second World War, Fala served as the national president of Barkers for Britain, an auxiliary of the humanitarian relief organization, Bundles for Britain. He was also enrolled as an honorary "private" in Dogs for Defense. In addition, Fala led the national rubber campaign by donating his rubber bones for the war effort. In the following weeks, many pets followed suit and mailed Fala photographs of their contributions. When the meat rations began to affect the canine population, many dogs wrote to Fala in distress, pleading for more meat. The public's engagement with Fala reveals how our relationships with animals can shape political discourse.

Attitudes toward Dogs: Symbolizing Canines

Nationalistic fervor often reaches its crescendo during wartime. Enemies are demonized or portrayed as savages, whereas one's own nation is cast as rational and civilized.⁴ Often these

characterizations seep into the most unexpected places. “A consideration of nonhuman animals,” writes Aaron Skabelund, “can expose how humans, and especially those with power and wealth, deploy other creatures to define, regulate, and enforce political and social boundaries between themselves and members of their own species.”⁵ The Fala letters reveal how nationalistic fervor shaped even the relationships people had with dogs.

During the war, people wrote to the White House describing wartime tricks they had taught their dogs, such as growling at the name of Hitler. Clippy Dog Fairman Firestone’s master scolded him for jumping on a little puppy, saying, “don’t you ever again try any of that HITLER stuff around this place.”⁶ In a similar vein, Ralph D’Oench taught his Scottie to play dead when asked if he would rather be a Nazi or a dead dog.⁷ D’Oench also explained to FDR how he could teach these tricks to Fala (though there’s no evidence that the president ever did). Tippie MacTavish asked Fala,

Can you do this? Race around the yard, carrying two American flags in your mouth at the same time? All the Bossman says is – “Stars and Stripes forever” or something like that, and off I go.⁸

Whereas MacTavish was content to describe his trick to Fala, many citizens sent the White House photographs of their dogs posing beside U.S. flags (fig. 3-2). In December 1943, for instance, a bulldog named W. C. Doodles sent Fala a Christmas card. The front of the card was adorned with a photograph of Doodles sitting beside a small American flag. In the card, Doodles exclaimed, “Hope you’ll sink your teeth in anyone who tries to harm the President. In the meantime, believe me, I’m guarding the flag!”⁹ Occasionally, owners even dressed their dogs in patriotic gear. These patriotic rituals contained in the Fala letters reveal the ubiquity of

nationalism. Many owners sought to implicate their dogs in the war effort somehow, if only symbolically.



Fig. 3-2. “Loyalty.” Photo by Carl Oehler. Courtesy of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library.

Not every dog, it seems, was deemed patriotic. German breeds were often criticized owing to their country of origin.¹⁰ In the very least, fear of criticism became a preoccupation of many German breed owners. This preoccupation is readily apparent in Baron Friet von den Höen’s enlistment letter for Dogs for Defense, which he forwarded to Fala. In it, Baron Friet von den Höen, a Doberman pinscher, explained,

You may like to know that most of my ancestors were Dutch. What German blood I have in me is better than that of any Nazi. Actually, I am a real American dog. What I want most is to help make the world safe for all dogs and for all good homes like the one I have. And so, I'm willing and glad to go if you will have me, since it means safety for all that we dogs hold dear.¹¹

Owing to the usefulness of larger German breeds for Dogs for Defense, they were less often critiqued than Dachshunds. One Dachshund, Schnitzel Jr., explained to Fala how while riding “in an elevator saw that a lady clutched her dog who was as petty as she and said loudly, ‘I do not want my dog to be touched by that German!’” The Dachshund lamented, “I did not want to touch her dog, but the rule of the dog world requires polite dogs to sniffle and wag tails. I could quote numerous occasions when I was called Goering, Goebels and even Hitler.”¹² Schnitzel Jr. hoped that “the president could sometime . . . drop a hint to the newspapers’ men about the plight of the dachshund [sic], and tell them that he knows that we originated near the noble Nile and that the association with the Rhine, specially [sic] now, is erroneous and unjust.”¹³ Despite Schnitzel Jr.’s attempt to combat “erroneous and unjust” associations, his own name testifies to the extent to which even his owner thought of him as German.

These types of remarks about German breeds being foreigners were present even in the White House. During a press conference on January 2, 1942, a reporter, who was referring to James Roosevelt’s dachshund, stated inquiringly, “You seem to be having an alien out here in the backyard with Fala this morning, Mr. President?” FDR responded in the affirmative, but drolly noted that “He was born in this country. It’s all right.” Although the press conference dwelt momentarily on this humorous exchange, it reveals the extent to which these remarks were

popular. These associations between breeds and nationalities were not simply crafted by ordinary citizens. They were also recognized by the President.

Recognizing the symbolic linkages between breeds and nationalities, C. Fritz Hoelzer hoped to remedy the negative attitudes toward Germans by sending FDR a female Dachshund companion for Fala. Hoelzer advised that FDR name her “‘Hope’ instead of Gretchen.”¹⁴ Possibly because of Hoelzer’s anti-Semitic remarks in the rest of his letter, his offer was rebuffed. Leila A. Sussmann notes that FDR instructed his mail staff to ignore prejudiced letters.¹⁵

On March 30, 1943, a dachshund named Miss Mona Winn wrote to Fala protesting a recent interview, in which he insulted her breed. This was likely a gag interview written by someone unaffiliated with the White House. The Fala papers contain no trace of the interview. Moreover, FDR’s response to the reporter a year earlier suggests his refusal to engage cavalierly in these breed discussions. Miss Mona Winn’s letter is informative in several respects, however. Its presence further confirms the insults directed toward German breeds and the umbrage taken at them. Significantly, the interview reveals that someone thought it was appropriate to criticize a German breed while engaging in *prosopopoeia* for Fala, as though it were something the First Dog would do. This gag interview seems to have been taken seriously by Miss Mona Winn’s owner, Robert W. Winn. In the dachshund’s reprimand, which was written on an official Jefferson City, Missouri, government letterhead, she informed Fala that “Mr. Winn is the former State Treasurer and the present Commissioner of the Permanent Seat of Government. Naturally, I am a strong Democrat and have worked hard for the party in every campaign. Since we have the good of the Democratic party in common, it is another reason to lift your prejudice.”¹⁶ Miss Mona Winn justified her complaint by invoking the Democratic Party.

Citizens frequently projected noble values on their own dogs. Significantly, they did so while drawing comparisons between men and dogs. Rarely did men come out better. Nearly a year before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Ginger wrote Fala, “My mistress prays almost every night that we and all the rest of the dogs ‘over here’ will never have to wear gas masks or go through what our friends are going through ‘over there.’ Somehow, she says, the two footed people can help themselves, but it’s a little hard for us to understand how man, whom we love, can be so cruel to his brothers.”¹⁷ Ginger’s remarks sidestepped conversations about human losses while casting animals as the perfect victims. Animals were framed as the collateral damage to any actions taken by humans. If anything, dogs appeared more humane than humans.

People writing to Fala or FDR often cast dogs as peaceful and faithful. They argued that we could learn much from the way dogs interact with each other. For instance, Gladys J. Carr wrote to Fala, “If we human beings were only one-half as faithful, loyal, and understanding as our canine friends are, this world would be a Paradise-on-earth.”¹⁸ Similarly, in an instance of *prosopopoeia* for Fala by newspaper columnist H. I. Philips (distinct from that referenced by Miss Mona Winn), the Scottie declared: “We dogs never talk of a master breed, a pure Nordic strain or need for more breathing space. A dog who behaved anything like Hitler, Tojo or Mussolini would be in the dog catcher’s wagon in no time as a hydrophobia [rabies] case.”¹⁹ Likewise, a dog named Skeeter wrote, “you know what I resent most? It’s having someone, in my hearing say, ‘Hitler is a dog’. Can you imagine any of our cousins being as mean and cruel as Hitler? As a matter of fact, just *entre nous*, if men only lived as peaceably as we do, they’d be much better off.”²⁰ Skeeter added, “If only Hitler were a dog, there would have been no war.”²¹ Skeeter made a distinction between dogs and men, in which dogs are on the side of the angels

and men are on that of the devil. This message was even more pronounced in a letter from James B. Donovan:

Leave it to a dog to show us the true way of friendship. Friendship as God wished it to be. Here we are humans hateing [sic] and despising our brothers because they are of a different Religion or Nationality when every day we may see an Irishman with a German dog, a German with an Irish dog, a Jew with a Russian Wolf, and a Frenchman with an English bull.

They love their masters, and their masters love them. They bark and wag their tails in friendship. We bark and wag our tongues against their nations, and we are classed as human, and they are called dumb animals.²²

By drawing upon different breeds of dogs, Donovan revealed the foolishness of ethnic divides. Donovan suggested that if we can live with dogs that originated in our enemy's territory, we can surely get along with our enemy. He noted the irony that we are considered human, despite our proclivity to war amongst each other.

At times, dogs could provide therapeutic comfort for citizens. Newspaper accounts of FDR frequently informed citizens of the president's reliance on Fala. FDR reportedly spent an hour a day with the Scottie "to relieve his mind from war worries."²³ Many citizens hoped to assist these relief efforts by writing to FDR about Fala. Several people tried to give the president a laugh and lighten his spirits. Just before Christmas 1941, Elizabeth A. Parsons sent a FDR an eight stanza poem, titled, "A Dogeral to Scotie Dogie Fala Hill." In her poem, Parsons praised Fala's behavior and opined that FDR could trust him completely. Unlike senators who "argue, fuss and stew" and dogs who chase cats, Fala remains steadfast by FDR's side. In her third and fourth stanzas, Parsons wrote:

Dear Scotie doggie you look so wise,
 The wisest doggie of any size!
 Lying there at the feet of your master,
 Never betraying a secret or disaster.

At Roosevelt and Churchill parley at sea,
 You didn't bark one message, to be
 Broadcasted over 'land or sea or air.'
 But at your masters feet, you were there!²⁴

By no means would Parsons ever receive an award for her encomium to Fala, which she accurately described as doggerel. In a note appended to her poem, Parsons explained, "Dear Mr. President [I] am sending you a few verses of the Scotie dog that you are so fond of and which I saw a picture of him in a Waltham [local] paper. Hope you will get a laugh out of it and as I am a lover of all of Gods little dumb creatures I hope you will give him a little pat on his head for me."²⁵ Similarly, Charles J. A. Dalziel sent FDR a short story he wrote about a veteran from the First World War, who owned a mutt named Scamp. Each day Scamp loved to retrieve the veteran's pipe, tobacco pouch, newspaper, slippers, and a magazine. Shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the veteran died from a heart attack and was buried by the local Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. A comrade, who visited the grave to pay his respects two days after the burial, was surprised to find Scamp beside the tombstone, also dead. Scamp was surrounded by master's pipe, slippers, tobacco pouch, a two days' old newspaper and a magazine. In a final act of devotion, Scamp had brought the veteran's things over a mile from his house to the cemetery in the pouring rain, whereat he died from a broken heart. "If its reading contributes a few borrowed moments of relaxation," explained Dalziel, "it will have served a very well worth while purpose, for I am sure that such moments for you, are few and far between, in these anxious days."²⁶ Parsons' poem and Dalziels' short story represent a larger attempt to cheer

FDR during the war. Their creative writings are also a testament to the ability of dogs to bring citizens and president together.

Fala's Participation in War Organizations

During World War II, Fala participated in two canine organizations. He served as President of Barkers for Britain and was enrolled as “private” in Dogs for Defense (DFD). Both organizations solicited Fala's involvement for campaigns targeted at dog-owners and dog lovers. Barkers appears to have had a stronger relationship with the White House than DFD. Unlike DFD's sporadic and unorganized attempts to solicit Fala's participation, Barkers' was more persistent and rhetorically astute in their appeals to the White House. By comparing these organizations and their appeals, we may better understand the difficulties—and benefits—of securing the First Dog's involvement. Moreover, both organizations reveal different ways that people could have fun while engaging their dogs in patriotic activities.

Barkers for Britain

In January 1940, New York City socialite Natalie Wales Latham founded the humanitarian organization, Bundles for Britain. Despite the strong, though not wholly universal, isolationist attitudes of U.S. citizens at this time, Bundles was quite successful owing to its ability to dissociate humanitarian aid and military intervention. Contributions from famous women, such as Clementine Churchill, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Queen Elizabeth, also legitimized its mission.²⁷ Bundles' leadership continually explored new ways to stir media attention and raise contributions. In early 1941, Bundles formed the canine auxiliary, Barkers for Britain. Barkers quickly secured Fala as their National President, thereby casting one of the widest

publicity nets possible. Similarly to Bundles' reliance on female celebrities, Fala gave a terrific boost to Barkers' credibility and visibility.

Fala's help did not come easily, however. The FDR Library's archive reveals the tremendous difficulty Bundles' Executive Director of Branches, Mrs. Paul White, had at securing a formal photograph of Fala receiving his Barkers tag. Initially, Stephen Early refused. He explained, "We have thus far declined to grant such a privilege and should we do so in one instance we would be literally overwhelmed with other requests, probably in behalf of very meritorious undertakings. I am afraid, therefore, that I cannot make an exception in this instance."²⁸ White, however, was not easily discouraged. Over the next two weeks, she made several calls and sent Early's secretary, Ruthjane Rumelt, a cigarette case and Lucite compact. In an April 29, 1941 memo to Early, Rumelt informed him of White's desired photo-op with Fala saying,

Mrs. Paul White has called me AGAIN.

This time she is coming to Washington herself Friday morning early. She is asking if she can have *her* picture taken with Falla.

In view of the bribe I have accepted I can do nothing more than put this in your lap.²⁹ Early finally conceded to White's request. As a courtesy—and perhaps to curry more favor—White thanked Rumelt by giving her earrings and lipstick.³⁰ Facilitating a photo-op with Fala was a significant achievement. Of the couple thousand letters written to Fala, the most common request was for his photograph. Except for Roosevelt's friends or family members, all requests were usually denied. The White House mailroom staff would apologize, saying there were "none available."³¹

On May 16, 1941, the *New York Times* announced Fala's leading position in Barkers, as well as how "dog lovers" might contribute to British War Relief by buying fifty-cent memberships.³² Each member received a complimentary brass dog tag (fig. 3-3). Dog tag notwithstanding, Barkers was able to generate more funds by appealing to "dog lovers," as opposed to "dog owners." Not all members were dogs. The Austin, Texas chapter of Barkers, for instance, admitted cats, a horse, goldfish, and a lovebird to their organization.³³ One woman explained to Fala that she was buying a membership in memory of her dog.³⁴



Fig. 3-3. Fala's "Barkers for Britain" dog tag. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

Barkers operated through several loosely organized regional chapters, each with their own dog president.³⁵ Fala's role in Barkers was largely symbolic, but the White House played along on occasion. In July 1941, the White House engaged in *prosopopoeia* for Fala and sent a paw print-signed letter, designating the governor's dog, Budget, as Chairman of the New York State Chapter of Barkers. The exception was probably owing to Governor Lehman's friendship with FDR and the president's New York connections.

Occasionally, regional Barkers presidents would contact Fala to update him on their progress. These updates exude a strong sense of humor, but also unanimity and patriotic

fervor—both for the U.S. and Great Britain. Buckingham Beefeater, president of the Nashville chapter, playfully declared, “these here ‘Southern Sniffers’ ‘er goin’ ter give the ‘Yankee Yelpers’ a first rate race fer their money. We’uns are agreed that ‘all-out aid to Britain’ is the aim of our owners and we stand together behind them as one pooch to another for the unity of the North and the South to simbaleyes the unity of Great Britain and the United States.”³⁶

Likewise, Ciré Noir Butler (fig. 3-4), president of the Austin chapter, wrote, “I have buried my bones of contention and have offered to declare a truce with every dog who will join the BARKERS FOR BRITAIN and do all its digging and barking for the cause.”³⁷ Ciré’s staged photograph, as well as newspaper clippings picturing her and other dogs performing their administrative duties (in one photograph she and two other dogs sit around a desk with a typewriter, in another photograph a dog stands up against a post box as though mailing a letter), confirm the jovial attitude in which these chapters were organized. Despite describing his letter to Fala as “my first report to National Headquarters,” Buckingham Beefeater never sent any further correspondence to the White House. Indeed, no dog president ran a running correspondence with Fala. In part, this may be owing to a lack of response from Fala.



Fig. 3-4. Ciré Noir Butler holding the Union Jack in her mouth. “To Fala with licks of love from Ciré.” Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

Barkers allowed people to actively participate in the war effort through their pets. Flush Cofer, an Eskimo Spitz, who served as the Assistant Secretary in the Austin, Texas chapter, told Fala, “I shall follow your leadership as cheerfully and fully as my master takes pleasure in following the leadership of your great master.”³⁸ Earlier in the letter, Flush referred to her master, Robert E. Cofer, and noted the letterhead, which indicated he worked in a law office.

Barker’s efforts to secure Fala as their president paid off. By October 20, 1941—only six months after Fala had received the first Barkers dog tag—nearly 30,000 memberships had been sold in the United States and 1,000 in Australia. At fifty cents apiece, these memberships generated 15,500 dollars. Adjusted for inflation, this amount is nearly 250,000 dollars today.³⁹

Although there are no surviving records detailing sales thereafter, Fala continued to receive fan mail throughout the rest of the war from those who wanted to donate to Barkers. The White House, in turn, forwarded these letters to Barkers. Thus, Barkers probably continued to generate funds from these tags.

Dogs for Defense

World War II is largely remembered as a mechanized war, owing to an increased use of tanks and airplanes. Animals, however, still played important roles. Indeed, the part played by dogs actually increased from the First World War. The U.S. did not use military dogs during WW I, but they were actively sought during WW II. This change was largely owing to the efforts of Dogs for Defense (DFD), an organization founded by dog fanciers to promote the use of dogs in war.⁴⁰ Enlisting dogs in the war effort, however, was no simple task. Since there was no compulsory draft for war dogs, owners had to be persuaded to put their dog(s) in harm's way.

Similarly to Barkers for Britain, DFD hoped that Fala might raise publicity for their organization. The DFD appears to have been less successful, at least initially. Whereas Mrs. Paul White of Barkers refused "no" for an answer, those writing on behalf of DFD were easily discouraged and less concentrated in their efforts. The first appeal came in August 1942 from Baron Friet von den Höhen, a Doberman pinscher, who had been recently accepted for training by DFD. Friet explained to Fala that his mistress had no "husband or son to give to her country . . . I am all she has to send to help defense."⁴¹ Friet hoped that more dogs would follow suit. Moreover, he believed that Fala could encourage Americans to enlist their dogs. He wrote:

Many women bravely send their only sons or brothers and their husbands to fight for democracy. I can't just figure out why any dog which could be a war dog *and is not*

needed at home as a guard should not be given to the Army. Of course, the children would miss their pets and the rest of the family would feel as though one of the human members had enlisted—sad, yet proud. . . . If you . . . Falla, could point this out in some way to people who have dogs which are of the right age, size and temperament for war work, I believe that many children and grown-ups would send their pets to ‘Dogs for Defense’.⁴²

There is no evidence that the White House took Friet’s suggestion seriously. Two months later, the White House received a similar appeal from Alene Erlanger, a leading dog fancier and co-founder of DFD. Erlanger hoped to receive Fala’s sponsorship and approval for DFD. One of FDR’s secretaries typed a copy of Erlanger’s letter and set it aside for him, noting, “this letter . . . was so human that I thought you would like to see it.”⁴³ If FDR read Erlanger’s letter, however, he did not act upon it. In December, Mrs. Samuel Eckert, Chairwoman of DFD’s Finance Committee, sent Fala a dog tag. Included was a small drawing depicting a DFD dog accusing a prissy nonmember of being a “slacker” (fig. 3-5). Scrawled beneath was the message, “we hope ‘Falla’ will want a tag. . . . and we shall greatly appreciate his money!” The White House returned the tag, citing their inability to comply with DFD’s request for a financial contribution. Shortly thereafter Eckert apologized for requesting money and the White House accepted a free DFD tag.

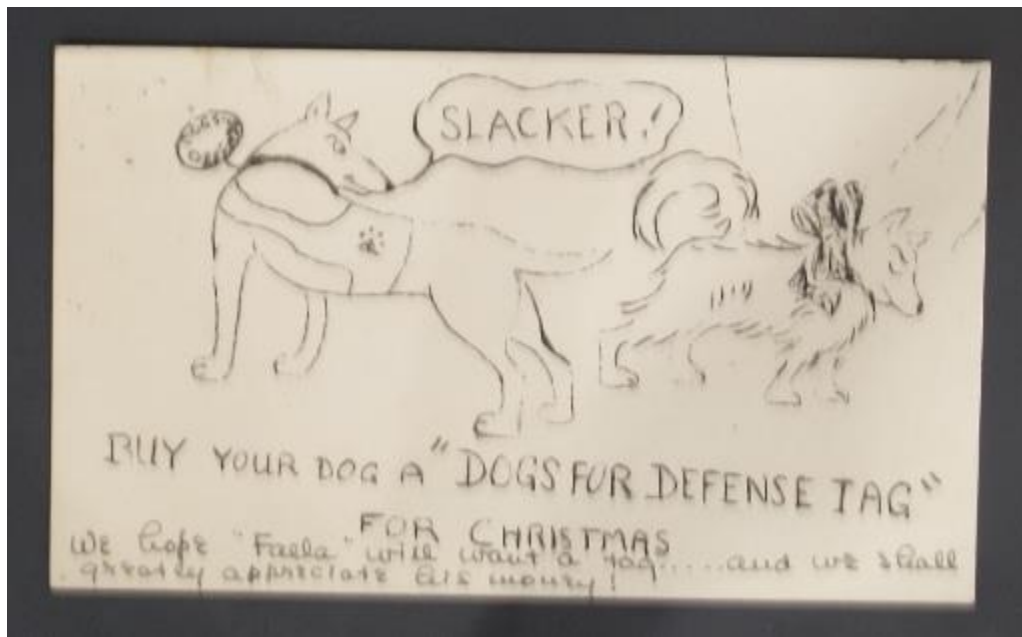


Fig. 3-5. Dogs for Defense card. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

Despite DFD's inability to solicit Fala's support in the fall of 1942, the Scottie helped promote their Bond Drive the following spring. How exactly this transpired is unclear. The archival evidence is silent on this point. Indeed, the only evidence of Fala's participation was a photograph of him and FDR's cousin Laura Franklin "Polly" Delano and Fala beside a War Dog Fund sign, which I found online (fig. 3-6). This photograph notwithstanding, Fala does not appear to have contributed anything further to DFD.



Fig. 3-6. FDR's cousin Laura Franklin "Polly" Delano and Fala in 1943 for the "Dogs for Defense" bond drive.⁴⁴

Many letters addressed to Fala adopted the language of DFD's War Dog Fund, an ingenious donation system that offset its operating costs. Although many people freely gave their dogs to DFD, the organization was a costly operation. Every dog donated to the war effort needed vaccination, training, and shipping across the country to bases. Each dog cost roughly ten dollars to process.⁴⁵ Similarly to the U.S. Treasury's War Bond Drives, which often portrayed civilians as soldiers to increase donations,⁴⁶ the War Dog Fund conflated dogs unable to enlist with soldiers. DFD did so by matching monetary contributions with eleven enlistment ranks for army and navy dogs. Greater contributions earned higher ranks. For instance, whereas

a dollar donation would buy the rank of “private” or “seaman,” a 100 dollar donation would make one’s dog a “general” or “admiral” (table 3-1).⁴⁷ Four months after the fund’s creation, it was averaging around five hundred dollars a day and approximately 8,000 dogs had been “enrolled” in the program.⁴⁸

ARMY OR MARINE DOG		NAVY OR COAST GUARD DOG
Private	\$1.00	Seaman
Private First Class	\$2.00	Third Class Petty Officer
Corporal	\$3.00	Second Class Petty Officer
Sergeant	\$5.00	Chief Petty Officer
Lieutenant	\$10.00	Ensign
Captain	\$15.00	Lieutenant
Major	\$20.00	Commander
Colonel	\$25.00	Captain
Brigadier General	\$50.00	Rear Admiral
Major General	\$75.00	Vice Admiral
General	\$100.00	Admiral

Table. 3-1. Enlistment ranks in War Dog Fund. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

This donation system offered a quirky touch to those writing the White House. Ensign Big Boy, an English setter, for instance, pulled rank on Fala: “I can’t address you as Mr. Fala because I’m a commissioned [sic] officer and . . . you are still a private.”⁴⁹ Alluding to FDR’s time as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Big Boy continued his letter, stating, “I thought that, of course, you’d be a seaman because look who your Boss was before he became our Commander in Chief!”⁵⁰ In November 1943, Corporal Marilyn Hatfield, a Toy Manchester terrier seeking donations for the War Dog Fund, wrote Fala, explaining, “As your honored Master is Commander in Chief of both Army and Navy, he cannot show partiality; hence, he will undoubtedly enter you as both General and Admiral. This will cost him two hundred dollars, but he will agree with us that you are worth it.”⁵¹ Hoping for more publicity, Hatfield closed her letter, stating, “As soon as you enlist, please notify your biographer, Mr. Alan Foster, so that he

can make it known, in his inimitable way, in Collier's Magazine."⁵² There is no evidence that FDR made this sizeable donation. Moreover, the White House secretary appeared confused as to the purpose of the letter, having underlined and drawn a question mark beside the words "As soon as you enlist."

Most of the dogs who donated to DFD and then wrote Fala were lower-ranking privates or ensigns. Seaman Rufus Holt notified Fala that "if I am real good around home my Mother is going to make me a Second Class Petty Officer"⁵³—the equivalent of a three dollar donation. Thrifty, a Scottish terrier, wrote Fala seeking the War Dog Fund's address so he could enlist as a Seaman. According to Thrifty, "I know it will make my mistress, who is doing her full quota of good war work, very proud and happy to know that I'm in some branch of the service."⁵⁴ These letters suggest that many people, regardless of their donation size, wished to announce to the White House how they were contributing to the war effort. These contributions were not simply limited to the donations, however. As Thrifty's letter demonstrates, even a short missive about a DFD donation could indicate that people were actively working to help win the war on the home front.

DFD's rhetoric did not always inspire playful letters. Indeed, it may explain the unusually defensive stance of some correspondents. Even if their owners had been willing to donate their dogs—and many were—most dogs were too small to serve directly in the war (Fala included). Military dogs were required to be at least 20 to 23 inches at the shoulder, and weigh no less than 40 to 55 pounds.⁵⁵ A *Newsweek* article lamented that "Of the country's 20,000,000 dogs, a scant 2,000,000 are big enough."⁵⁶ Hoping to alleviate the shortage, Sandy Brownlee (another Scottie) pleaded with Fala to have the president make an exception for their breed.⁵⁷

Three months earlier, a similar sentiment was captured in one of Foster's "Mr. Fala of the White House" cartoons (fig. 3-7).



Fig. 3-7. Dogs request lowered specifications. As reproduced in *Collier's*, February 6, 1943.

Those who were unable to send their dogs often commented on how their dogs were nonetheless contributing to the war effort. A Boston terrier named "Ensign" Champion Maythorne's Flash Again, who served as a recruiting officer for the War Dog Fund, explained that "it is my great pleasure to be able to purchase War Bonds with my own money, derived from my show wins, breeding fees and sale of my pups. . . . I also contribute to Red Cross and other Civic funds."⁵⁸ Flash Again's rank as "ensign" reveals his owner's ten dollar donation to the war dog fund. Similarly, Mitzie "Girl" Mathis wrote, "I have a stamp book, as have my boss and Mistress—when we get them filled we want to buy us each a bond. . . . we are doing our bit in

every way we can, and Oh Boy! are we glad we are Americans.”⁵⁹ Sandy McGregor declared, “We Scotties have to help keep up morale and yours is a responsible job.”⁶⁰ After apologizing to Fala for not writing sooner, Master Bob “Snarff” Osborn explained that “[I] have been *so* busy with my war work.” Anticipating Fala’s response, “Snarff” wrote, “You may wonder what war work I have. Well, first, I dig moles out of the Victory garden. I also keep some mice away from our precious rationed foods.”⁶¹ The U.S. Government touted victory gardens and food rationing as important means of winning the war. By gardening and rationing, citizens freed up more food for soldiers overseas.⁶²

Dog shows provided American citizens with another opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism. From a more pragmatic standpoint, dog shows provided owners with a justification to keep their darling pets, who were often too small to donate to DFD. According to a *Newsweek* article, Champion Nornay Saddler, a fox terrier, “has given \$10,150 to charity since Pearl Harbor—all from his show winnings, stud fees, and dogfood testimonials.”⁶³ Saddler, who had won more than fifty Best-in-Show cups, was certainly the exception.⁶⁴

Fala was often invited to attend a few dog shows—not as a competitor, but as a celebrity guest.⁶⁵ By July 6, 1943, Stephen Early had denied further access to Fala. Fala had already participated in three stamp and bond sale promotion programs. Someone, who had mistakenly heard that Fala was going to father puppies, offered \$1,000 donation to Navy Relief for one puppy.⁶⁶ Other people asked for permission to depict Fala’s likeness on calendars, paperweights, and other knick knacks to sell and generate revenue for the war effort. They were all denied, however. There was a limit to what could be asked of the president’s pet.

Leading the “Doggie-Rubber-Drive for Victory”

On June 12, 1942, FDR appealed to U.S. citizens to donate rubber for the war effort. Speaking over the radio, he requested “every bit of rubber you can possibly spare—and in any quantity—less than a pound—many pounds. We want it in every form—old tires, old rubber raincoats, old garden hose, rubber shoes, bathing caps, gloves—what-ever you have that is made of rubber.”⁶⁷ Three days later, Tai-Too, a Pekinese dog from Austin, Texas, wrote Fala:

I have lots of pals who own rubber toys, but have not as yet thought of donating them. So I respectfully suggest that you, as First Dog of the land, take the lead in an all-out “Doggie-Rubber-Drive for Victory.” What say you? I am perfectly sure that all loyal canines will respond immediately, and our collective efforts should represent a goodly amount of pure rubber.⁶⁸

Coincidentally, the same day that Tai-Too wrote his letter, Secretary to the President Grace Tully sent a memo to FDR reminding him to “tell the Press that the first concrete contribution to the rubber collection campaign in the White House was made by Fala who is donating his rubber toys and rubber bones.”⁶⁹ FDR may have called the nation to donate their rubber, but Fala was portrayed as leading the White House’s donation. In the days that followed, photographs of Fala sitting behind his donated rubber toys were printed in the nation’s newspapers. The captions accompanying Fala’s photograph often suggested his active, emotional role in donating his rubber toys. One caption explained, “The Roosevelt Scottie gathered up all his rubber toys at the White House and sat by wistfully as they were set aside for the Executive Mansion’s contribution to the scrap rubber collection”⁷⁰ (fig. 3-8). Through Fala’s photo-op, the White House was able to generate more publicity for the drive and invite people to think of even more creative ways to give. Owing to the increased presence of dogs in American homes, Fala drew

attention to one household item that people might overlook. Nothing was too meager to donate. Even the rubber chew toys that Americans threw to their dogs were wanted.



Fig. 3-8. Fala's rubber donation. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

Over the next few weeks, news coverage of Fala's donation inspired many people to contribute to the war effort. For some correspondents, the number of toys donated became a small competition. A dog named Sergt. Teddy described a scrap rubber drive he orchestrated among his canine friends in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.⁷¹ Sergt. Teddy was "pleased to report that we have had splendid results, in many cases our donations were heavier than those of our masters."⁷² Another dog, Janro Hibleaf, from West Chester, Pennsylvania, donated an

astonishing 115 toys.⁷³ A Scottie named Kiltie Lamb sent Fala a photograph of his donation and playfully declared, “You aint got nothin’ on me!”⁷⁴

Not every dog was so generous. According to Ming Toi Kennedy, “I tried to hold out on one old rubber doll but my ‘Ma’ said I would be helping Hitler, and I knew that was bad for I have been taught to growl when that word is mentioned.”⁷⁵ Similarly, Buster Boots Horton did not want to relinquish six of his toys. Moreover, his letter equally reveals the extent to which dogs were seen as part of the family. Horton wrote, “Mother could not find these few pets for I had hid them back in a dark closet when the Scouts called, but I realize now Uncle Sam *needs them* more than I do.”⁷⁶ As a sign of his newfound commitment to the war, Horton closed his letter saying, “if any of the neighbors cats or dogs are still hoarding any good *rubber* toys I will endeavor to scare them out of it.”⁷⁷

Whereas some made donations, George S. Hellman was inspired to dabble in poetry. On July 2, 1942, he sent FDR the poem “Falla’s Example.” Hellman mused that if Fala was willing to donate all his toys, surely humans should be able to give freely, too:

Ball he loved to play with,
Doll he had a way with
Bone he gnawed with rapture—these his dearest joys,
Without sign of blubber
Falla gave his rubber
Eager to contribute all his favorite toys.

Shall we with less elation
Give, give, give the nation
All that shall bring nearer mankind’s victorious day?
Falla of the White House,
Your example is a light house;
Never did a doggie better point the way⁷⁸

Fala was celebrated as a role model for the entire nation. More importantly, the act of writing a poem about Fala's contribution reveals additional effort on Hellman's part in writing to the president.

Most of the letters addressed to Fala about rubber donations engaged in *prosopopoeia* for their pets. These letters often offered a form of rhetorical surveillance, in that the owners used their dog's voice to comment on themselves. For instance, Boots wrote, "I can see by the picture that you very cheerfully gave up 8 of your cherished toys. I felt so proud of the fact that I had donated 22 toys (along with my mistress's rubber over-shoes and my master's hip boots and sundry other things) that I wanted to let you know I was in there pitching with you, too."⁷⁹ By adopting their dog's voice, people could describe their own patriotic contributions without sounding too forward.

Unlike recent wars in the Middle East, the Second World War placed a greater burden on Americans. War was a time of sacrifice. The war fractured families as men were drafted into service. Moreover, those on the home front were repeatedly called upon to donate resources or cut back on their consumption. The rubber drive was merely one case in point. The Fala letters often reveal the deeper underlying rationales for donating to the war effort. According to one Scottie, Sandy MacTavish,

Last night while eating my dinner I noticed my plate was on a newspaper, and who should be sitting there as big as life but you, with all your toys gathered round, and a caption saying you were doing your share to ease the rubber shortage. Well, I ignored you, and started for my dinner, but you kept sitting there looking very patriotic, saying good-bye to your rubber toys. Well, Fala, somehow I just couldn't eat that dinner. I walked out and sat on the lawn and did a lot of thinking. I realized that this was a war

where personal feelings just didn't count. I knew everyone had to do his share, and make sacrifices. Then, I dismissed [sic] all those thoughts from my head, ran for my big rubber ball, and told myself, that the rubber shortage was no fault of mine. But you know, Falla, I didn't have the slightest bit of fun. You just put me to shame. I scurried around and gathered all my toys, and put them right by your picture, and then made such a racket that the master came out to see what all the trouble was. Well, to make a long story short, he understood my feelings perfectly, and we both took a drive to the service station, and each of us turned in our supply.⁸⁰

This letter captures his master's realization that his "personal feelings just didn't count."

Moreover, "everyone had to . . . make sacrifices." And although he might try to justify not donating to the war effort, ultimately, shame drew him around.

The Fala letters reveal the emotional toll, as well as patriotic duty that Americans felt regardless of their financial situation. Noting previous fun times with his owners, who "weren't rich people," "Wimpy" Morgan wrote,

lately, they both look serious all the time, and, sometimes, a little sad. I think it must be because we are in a war now, even tho I don't understand about such things. I just know that instead of going to shows and things so often, my master and mistress spend their spare nickels for little stamps which they put in a little book.⁸¹

By speaking through their dog, the Morgans were afforded a safe, and perhaps, more appropriate, social distance from the president while nonetheless vocalizing their economic struggles.



Fig. 3-9. P.G. (Princeton Guard) Edwards' collection. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

Many people included photographs of their dogs beside rubber toy piles (fig. 3-9), thereby imitating Fala's photo-shoot. Many owners sent FDR pictures of their pets during Fala's stay in the White House, but these rubber drive photos are the only instance in which owners clearly sought to imitate Fala. Whereas many of the Fala letters reveal an owner's identification with FDR through small talk, these photographs reveal the *enactment* of their owner's

identification with FDR.⁸² By their dogs acting similarly, the owners become consubstantial with FDR.⁸³ Aside from communicating a sense of identification, these photographs also help convey the number of toys each owner donated. The flag beside P.G. (Princeton Guard) Edwards signals his family's patriotism. More humorously, one of the rubber rats has a swastika on its side, thereby associating Nazis with vermin, but also something cast to the dogs.

Having heard that Fala donated all his rubber toys, a few people felt compelled to give him new ones. Marie Casey sent Fala two cloth toys, declaring "Such a nice patriotic doggie deserves a few toys to shake and run with."⁸⁴ One year later, Addie Bindursky sent Fala four rubber balls after watching the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer movie short, *Fala, The President's Dog*. In the short, Fala recalls "the good ole days, when the folks had more time to play with me. Say in those days, a fellow could chew off a nice soft ball of yarn without being considered an unpatriotic pup. Ah yes, I . . . had a ball, a *rubber* ball!"⁸⁵ According to Bindursky, there was a "little history" attached to her gift.⁸⁶ Several years earlier, Eleanor Roosevelt had visited a Rehabilitation Colony at Dyess, Arkansas. On her trip, Eleanor also visited an arts and crafts store that employed women in the community and from which Bindursky purchased the rubber balls. Thus, her gift served a dual purpose. Pragmatically, the rubber balls offered Fala a momentary respite befitting a dog. Symbolically, they served as a memento of Eleanor's social work in rural America.

Despite frequent reports that Fala had donated all his toys, one person spied some of Fala's toys pictured in an issue of *Life* magazine later that summer. In a letter to the editor, a cocker spaniel named Doc Powell asked incredulously, "How does this happen when I and all my friends gave our toys to the national rubber drive?"⁸⁷ In response, the editor noted rather tersely that "Fala has given two rubber bones to the scrap-rubber campaign."⁸⁸ Were these two

rubber bones the sum of Fala's total donation or did he donate two additional toys when Doc Powell complained?⁸⁹ The editor is not clear on this point. Much more important, however, is Doc Powell's complaint, which reveals the extent to which some people paid close attention to Fala's public life. Moreover, people did not want to be asked to make sacrifices that the president was not willing to make for his own pet.

“Talk to the Chief Why Don't Ya”: Fala as a Wartime Intercessor

The White House, Barkers, and DFD were not alone in their use of Fala during the war. Citizens treated Fala as a wartime intercessor through whom they could direct appeals to the president. Most of their appeals concerned the rationing of meat, though a few people wrote to Fala before the attack on Pearl Harbor, insisting that the U.S. maintain its isolationist position. Significantly, none of the letters protesting the war engaged in *prosopopoeia*, whereas nearly all Fala's correspondence concerning the meat ration did. This marked difference reveals a general sensibility on the part of citizens, as to how they might best frame their cause. War protests from dogs would receive little credibility. However, since the amount of available meat could be construed as a dog issue, it made more sense to have dogs speak on their behalf—especially if it might draw attention to an issue relevant to FDR, another dog lover.

Fala received only three letters protesting the war. That he received so few is not surprising. At the time, Fala had yet to achieve a high degree of fame, having lived in the White House less than a year. Moreover, unlike the meat ration, which directly affected the habits of dogs across the country and consequently made Fala a fitting target for such appeals, there was no strong link between Fala and the war. The White House and Barkers had not yet established

his wartime worth. Examining the anti-war letters Fala received reveals a variety of rhetorical appeals, though they most commonly draw upon *pathos* and chastisement.

Pleas and petitions are often spun from moments of desperation when one has no other recourse but to humbly beg. As such, they frequently rely on emotional appeals. Fala offered a useful anchor for such appeals. Those petitioning through Fala drew on FDR's relationship with his dog. Kathleen Frank sent a postcard, which stated: "Because you are so close to your master's heart I want you to ask him to please stop pushing these United States of America into Europe's War."⁹⁰ Fala offered a means of approaching the president. Franklin Miller developed this rhetorical technique further, while also identifying with the president. As war loomed, Miller pleaded with Fala. Miller's addressee shifts from Fala to FDR in the third sentence:

Dear Fala,

I am seven years old. Will you please ask the president not to get us into the war. My brother is 22 years old and my mother is cring all the time she said that she don't like you anymore and daddie her voted for you I no that you to be the president my mother said that ust to love you but you are not like George Washington because he could not tell a lie. Nobody nos that I rite this leter only Rover my dog I fond this stamp and papr on the dest. But I love you yet. Teacher said we must. Plese dont send yn my brother to get killd see my name is Franklin to after you I think your dog is nice I saw his picter in the paper.⁹¹

Miller's seamless transition from Fala to the president suggests his true addressee. Whereas Miller associates Washington with his inability to tell a lie (and chastises FDR for falling short), he links FDR with one of his own interests—dogs. Though this letter is plagued with grammatical errors typical of children, it contains an underlying symmetry. By addressing Fala

and requesting that he speak to the president, Miller crafts a narrow audience for his letter. Should Fala do so, only four individuals will know of Miller's letter: him, Rover, FDR, and Fala.

Not everyone, however, sought to manipulate FDR's affection for his pet. The "Prairie Mothers" chastised the president precisely by appealing through his dog. After seeing how much media attention Fala received from his unsuccessful attempt to attend FDR's third inauguration, the "Prairie Mothers" lamented that "dogs get a deal more consideration from the capital, especially the press."⁹² Accordingly, they addressed their petition to Fala, supposing he "might get the Presidential ear, since the shades of Washington and Lincoln have not been able to get even a brief hearing with our President and at a time too, when he needs their ideals so very much."⁹³ These women, who worried about sending their sons in harm's way, hoped Fala could persuade FDR to "tear [the Lend Lease Bill] into a million pieces."⁹⁴ The Lend Lease Bill allowed the U.S. to supply Allied nations, such as Great Britain, France, and the U.S.S.R., with war material even before the U.S. declared war on the Axis powers. As such, it marked a decisive step away from isolationism for the U.S.

Pleas for isolationism completely subsided in Fala's correspondence after Pearl Harbor. Gradually, other issues cropped up—most notably the rationing of meat. In early 1942, the U.S. government launched the "Share the Meat" campaign. Citizens were urged to limit their weekly meat consumption to 2.5 pounds per person. At first, this reduction was completely voluntary. By fall of 1942, however, the government realized that more compulsory measures were required. A meat ration was planned for the spring.

Whereas owners freely gave up their dogs' rubber toys, they bristled at the government's failure to include dogs in the meat rationing program. On September 8, 1942, a cartoon appeared

in the *San Francisco News* joking that dogs would petition Fala for more meat (fig. 3-10).

Notably, people actually wrote letters pleading with Fala. Moreover, they did so from their own dog's perspective.⁹⁵ As First Dog of the land, Fala was the most logical individual to appeal.

After apologizing for taking the "liberty in writing you, a perfect stranger," Topsy von Cellarina, a dachshund, explained, "I know no one in Washington to whom to make this appeal."⁹⁶



Fig. 3-10. "Shucks, Talk to the Chief Why Don't Ya." As reproduced in *San Francisco News*, September 8, 1942.

At the time, commercial dog food was not a regular expenditure for most families. Very few brands existed and the ones that did were often of poor quality. Dogs typically subsisted on table scraps, bones, or cheap cuts of meat from the butcher. Depending on their owner's income and generosity, some dogs ate more meat than others. The ration, however, curtailed the amount

of meat that even the most well-fed dogs ate. Prince, a collie, explained to Fala that he used to eat a pound of meat a day, but “Now I have to worry along on scraps, and the meat my Mistress buys me, out of her allowance.”⁹⁷ On December 22, 1942—three months before the ration began—a Scottie named Sheila moaned, “For over four weeks I have not seen or smelled a bone, for two weeks no meat; liver is so expensive that it turns my stomach if I should be so lucky as to have the butcher save me a few pieces; this sure is an awful comedown for us pooches who are meat hounds.”⁹⁸

Complaints about meat rations ran much deeper than concern for their dog’s diet. Amy Bentley explains, “rationing and shortages altered people’s lives; for some, rationing was one of the few tangible indications of the terrible war being fought overseas. . . . For many, food rationing upset daily patterns and habits of eating, from morning coffee to traditional Thanksgiving dinners. It resulted in a loss of control over these small but significant matters of life.”⁹⁹ Dogs that refused to eat canned dog food or became sick when they did exacerbated the issue for owners. One dog reportedly spent seven weeks in a hospital after trying a brand of canned dog food.¹⁰⁰ It may seem that owners were simply projecting hypochondriac eating habits upon their dogs—especially since dogs regularly eat canned or processed dog food today. And there was likely much projection going on. Yet, many of these dogs had formerly lived on cuts of meat and were now forced to eat processed concentrate. Their pickiness was captured in a letter by Tippie MacTavish, a Scottie who wrote Fala, “they try to camouflage some queer concentrate with [the canned dog food] and say ‘see, Tippie, MEAT!’ Meat, my eye, says I looking at it and then at them. Its [sic] still dog food to me and the answer is still NO.”¹⁰¹ In time, however, most dogs seem to have come around to their new diet.

The lack of control citizens now had over their pet's diet was further exacerbated by their relationship with their dog. People wanted to provide their families with enough red meat to stay healthy—and many people viewed their dogs as part of the family. This is evident in the familial language owners used to describe their dogs. Owners often described their dogs as their children. On March 16, 1943, an eleven-year old black Chow named Soo-Kee told Fala,

I hear my Mother and Daddy talking all the time about what they are going to do about feeding me if this terrible war should stop the selling of meat for doggies. They think because I am so old (I don't feel old) and that my diet is being changed now, that I may up and die. Of course I am very willing to do all I can to help in winning this war, but you know how parents are, always thinking their children, different from all the neighbors, should not be put on a diet of scraps and food such as they never had before. Personally I am very fond of this horse meat that my folks are giving me these days, but my Mother hears that even that may be taken away from me.¹⁰²

Many Americans were genuinely concerned about their pets' livelihood, even when their pets seemingly adapted to the changes in diet. For most Americans, horse meat sounds unappetizing at best and barbaric at worst.

People often justified their pleas for more meat by noting their dog's contribution to the war effort. During the war, dogs were sometimes maligned as a luxury—a sign that one was diverting necessary resources for a frivolous pet. Hence, owners' frequent readiness to donate their dogs to Dogs for Defense or buy them a Barkers tag. Topsy von Cellarina's petition reveals her owner's worry that she was not contributing enough. Von Cellarina explains,

Every night I listen to the broadcasts about meat rationing. What is to become of us?

Are we to face starvation or the death chamber? I am willing to do what ever I can for

my country. They will not take my children or me in Dogs for Defense because we do not meet the requirements for weight and height. We have appeared in Dog Shows, the proceeds of which have gone to various war Agencies and which War Stamps and Bonds have been awards.¹⁰³

She added, "I have a human brother with the army overseas and another waiting call from the Navy."¹⁰⁴ Von Cellarina's letter reveals the anxiety felt by pet owners and their continued efforts to find new channels for their pets. The war lent itself to making the condition of the dogs a life-or-death issue. Those on the home front defended their need for meat by citing physiological reasons or their own contribution to the war. Pokey wrote, "Many of our dogdom are now enlisted in the armed forces doing their bit for the U.S.A. and I want to do mine. But even we dogs must eat."¹⁰⁵ Sissy Half-pint asked Fala, "On behalf of 'man's best friend,' and on behalf of 'all dogs in America,' can't you sneak into Congress and ask them to release some of those bones for us. [sic] That good old bone keeps our teeth in shape so that we can bite off those Nazis."¹⁰⁶

A few dogs offered suggestions for alleviating the meat shortage for dogs. Von Cellarina proposed "small meat ration cards for us pets who so loyally help the moral of our masters in these trying times and who would defend our homes against invasion to the last bite."¹⁰⁷ Ginger, who lived at an animal shelter, requested that table scraps from a nearby army camp be donated to feed the animals. Hoping to justify her request, Ginger added that many of these animals "were once the pets of those who have answered our Uncle Sam's call."¹⁰⁸

Among the letters protesting the meat ration were several inquiries as to how Fala was faring. Was his food also rationed? If so, what did he think of the change in diet? Even if they loved Fala, owners did not want to hear that the president's dog was receiving special treatment

(for instance, Doc Powell's letter to the editor about Fala's rubber toys). Though none of these inquiries were ever answered, an MGM campaign book for *Fala, The President's Dog* addressed the issue in one of their promotional articles: "Yep! White House Dog Food is Rationed Too!" The article assured readers that "Fala is pulling in his belt the same as everyone else" and "feeling the rationing pinch."¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

There were many ways to serve during the war. People could enlist, work in factories, donate materials, ration, and buy war bonds. The letters to Fala reveal the extent to which pets and pet ownership became caught up in the war effort, too. Americans were repeatedly presented with opportunities to involve their pets. These opportunities encompassed a variety of activities both material and monetary. People could donate their dog or their dog's rubber chew toys. People could also donate money to Barkers, purchase enlistment ranks from the War Dog Fund, or allocate their dog's prize winnings from beauty pageants toward war bonds. In every one of these actions, dog owners were reassured that they were doing their patriotic duty. Moreover, that they were doing everything in their power to contribute to an Allied victory.

Perhaps the most striking and comprehensive instance of owners involving their dogs in the war was evidenced by a poem sent to Fala by two Pekingese, Sunny and Mei Ling. They wrote:

Dear Fala,
 We have read your book,
 Our interest was intense,
 And so we write to tell you that
 We think it is immense.

We are two little Pekingese,

So we are Allies too,
And work as hard as we know how,
For Victory, like you

We're being rationed, and we like
Out de-hydrated food,
We used to hate it, but we're glad
To get it now, its good.

We play with cotton dollies now,
With many a mishap,
For all our rubber toys have gone
Like yours into the scrap.

We're very pretty, gay and good,
I'm Sunny, she's Mei Ling,
Named after lovely Madame Chiang,
And here's another thing.

We both are British Barkers too,
And wear with greatest pride,
Our medals, - and we also sold,
Ten others more beside.

When people saw us wearing them,
They did not hesitate,
But gave us money right away,
With orders not to wait.

We sent the medals on at once,
We thought you'd like to know,
How much we have already made
As President, - and so

We send you our distinguished thoughts,
And, - no one listening?
We love to chase the squirrels too.
From Sunny and Mei Ling.¹¹⁰

Sunny and Mei Ling's wartime contributions were commonplace, aside, perhaps, from the sheer quantity of activities they engaged in. Their letter, however, displays a symbolic act underpinning most of the Fala letters. Regardless of whether one addressed Fala or FDR, many

of these letters were a symbolic gesture. Each symbolic response calls forth different challenges and opportunities. Poets must struggle through meter and rhyme. Those engaging in *prosopopoeia* must enter the mind frame of another. Photographers must work with scenic elements. Through such symbolic responses, U.S. citizens were able to entertain, inform, and occasionally identify with the president.

Thus, Fala became a useful persona during the war. For those hoping to reach U.S. citizens, his fame and position as first dog made him an ideal candidate. Similarly, dog owners found Fala to be a useful addressee when directing wartime complaints toward the president. Dog owners used Fala to transform the love of their pets into a patriotic activity. These wartime letters reveal an epistolary citizenship tinged with nationalist attitudes.

¹ Margaret L. Suckley and Alice Dalgliesh, *The True Story of Fala* (New York: Scribner, 1942), 41.

² “Crew of ‘Mr. Fala’,” University of Akron, accessed Jan. 7, 2013, <http://cdm15960.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/search/searchterm/Fala>. It is not clear what date this photograph was taken. A letter addressed to FDR on April 26, 1944, which was sent by the artist's father places the date around then. A picture of the nose art, which he included, insured that the FDR saw it. See F. P. Allen to FDR, April 26, 1944; Folder: Fala May-June 1944; 7288 Jan.-Oct. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. The Hitler hydrant is an image reproduced from Alan Foster's February 13, 1943, “Mr. Fala of the White House” cartoon, which was published in *Collier's*. Foster's cartoon differs from the nose art, in that he depicts Fala surrounded by toys, saying, “The President has a tendency to pamper me.”

³ Foster's comics were produced independently of the White House. Whereas "Fala" had a greater emphasis on war, "Mr. Fala of the White House" emphasized politics.

⁴ Robert L. Ivie, "Images of Savagery in American Justifications for War," *Communication Monographs* 47, no. 4 (November 1980): 279-294.

⁵ Aaron Herald Skabelund, *Empire of Dogs Canines, Japan, and the Making of the Modern Imperial World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 16

⁶ Clippy Dog Fairman Firestone to Fala, Jan. 21, 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷ Ralph D'Oench to FDR, March 1, 1941; Folder: Fala March 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸ Tippie MacTavish to Fala, n.d. [filed May 26, 1943]; Folder: Fala May 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹ W. C. Doodles to Fala, n.d.; Folder: Fala Christmas 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁰ The lack of Japanese breeds familiar in the U.S. appears to have prevented similar remarks.

¹¹ Baron Friet von den Höhen to Mrs. Milton Erlanger, Aug. 11, 1942; Folder: Fala Aug.–Oct. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹² Schnitzel Jr. to Fala, May 3, 1943; Folder: Fala May 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹³ Schnitzel Jr. to Fala, May 3, 1943; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹⁴ C. Fritz Hoelzer to FDR, Sept. 2, 1942; Folder: Fala Aug.–Oct. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁵ Leila A. Sussmann, *Dear FDR: A Study of Political Letter-Writing* (Totowa, N.J.: Bedminster Press, 1963), 55-56.

¹⁶ Miss Mona Winn to Fala, March 30, 1943; Folder: Fala March 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁷ Ginger to Fala, n.d.; Folder: Fala March 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁸ Gladys J. Carr to Fala, April 6, 1942; Folder: Fala Apr. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁹ H. I. Phillips, “Imaginary Interviews: President Roosevelt and Fala,” *The Sun Dial*, Apr. 16, 1943, n.p; Folder: Fala May 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal

File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Significantly, H. I. Phillips explains that the interview was “Occasioned by a recent photo of the President and his Scotch Terrier in the White House;” Phillips, “Imaginary Interviews.” It is not clear which photograph Phillips referred to, though two weeks earlier, photographs of Fala being fed by FDR were published in the *New York Times*.

²⁰ Skeeter to Fala, Sept. 24, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

²¹ Skeeter to Fala, Sept. 24, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

²² James B. Donovan to Stephen Early, Feb. 24, 1942; Folder: Fala March 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

²³ Margo Browne, “Listenin’ in on the President: This Pal Sees All, Hears All, and Aside From an Occasional Yip, Says Nothing,” *New York Journal-American*, May 29, 1942; Folder: Fala May 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

²⁴ Elizabeth A. Parsons to FDR, December 1941; Folder: Fala Jan. 1942; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

²⁵ Parsons to FDR, December 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

²⁶ Charles J. A. Dalziel to FDR, Jan. 17, 1942; Folder: Fala Jan. 1942; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

²⁷ See Anelia K. Dimitrova, “Sending Bundles of Hope: The Use of Female Celebrities in Bundles for Britain’s Public Relations Campaign,” *American Journalism* 14, no. 3–4 (1997): 376–390.

²⁸ Stephen Early to Mrs. Paul White, April 11, 1941; Folder: Fala April–May 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

²⁹ Memo to Stephen Early April 29, 1941; Folder: Fala April–May 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁰ Mrs. Paul White to Ruthjane Rumelt, June 17, 1941; Folder: Fala June–July 1941; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³¹ That the White House never sought to capitalize on these requests suggests a possible oversight during the Roosevelt administration.

³² “President’s Dog Leads Canine Rally for Britain,” *New York Times*, May 16, 1941, 5.

³³ Anita Cook, “Barkers Keep Busy with Aid Campaign,” Folder: Fala June–July 1941; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁴ Elizabeth Wolfe to Fala, Oct. 15, 1941; Folder: Fala Aug.–Oct. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁵ The Barkers of Boston chapter wrote FDR requesting that Fala serve as their honorary president, only to be informed that such a request was impossible to fill owing to Fala’s national position. Grace Tully to Mrs. Emerson, July 18, 1941; Folder: Fala June–July 1941; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁶ Buckingham Beefeater to Falla, June 1, 1941; Folder: Fala June–July 1941; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁷ Ciré Noir Butler to Falla, July 10, 1941; Folder: Fala June–July 1941; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁸ Flush Cofer to Fala, Aug. 31, 1941; Folder: Fala Aug.–Oct. 1941; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁹ “US Inflation Calculator,” accessed October 20, 2012, <http://www.usinflationcalculator.com/>

⁴⁰ For more info on DFD, see: Anna M. Waller, *Dogs and National Defense* ([Washington, D.C.]: Dept. of the Army, Office of the Quartermaster General, 1958); Fairfax

Downey, *Dogs for Defense: American Dogs in the Second World War, 1941-45* (By Direction and Authorization of the Trustees Dogs for Defense, Inc., 1955).

⁴¹ Baron Friet von den Höhen to Erlanger, Aug. 11, 1942; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴² Baron Friet von den Höhen to Falla, Aug. 18, 1942; Folder: Fala Aug.–Oct. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴³ Memo from EMW to FDR, Oct. 13, 1942; Folder: Fala Aug.–Oct. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴⁴ Last accessed February 5, 2013, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=44098092&PIpi=23236960>.

⁴⁵ “Dog Admirals,” Reprinted from *Newsweek*, Feb. 15, 1943; Folder: Fala Oct.–Nov. 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴⁶ James J. Kimble, *Mobilizing the Home Front War Bonds and Domestic Propaganda* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 47-53.

⁴⁷ “Dog Admirals,” Reprinted from *Newsweek*, Feb. 15, 1943; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴⁸ “The Dogs Back Home,” *New Yorker*, May 22, 1943, 12-13.

⁴⁹ Ensign Big Boy to Fala, Apr. 19, 1943; Folder: Fala April 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵⁰ Ensign Big Boy to Fala, Apr. 19, 1943; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁵¹ Corporal Marilyn Hatfield to Fala, Nov. 16, 1943; Folder: Fala Oct.–Nov. 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵² Corporal Marilyn Hatfield to Fala, Nov. 16, 1943; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁵³ Seaman Rufus Holt to Fala, Apr. 1, 1943; Folder: Fala April 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵⁴ Thrifty to Fala, [nd]; Folder: Fala May 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵⁵ See Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 27; Waller, *Dogs and National Defense*, 11. There was also an upper limit on dogs, too. Excepting pack and sled dogs, which could weigh more, dogs were to weigh less than 85 pounds.

⁵⁶ “Dog Admirals,” Reprinted from *Newsweek*, Feb. 15, 1943; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁵⁷ Sandy Brownlee to Fala, May 28, 1943; Folder: Fala May 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵⁸ “Ensign” Champion Maythorne’s Flash Again to Fala, Nov. 8, 1943; Folder: Fala Oct.–Nov. 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵⁹ Mitzie “Girl” Mathis to Falla, March 8, 1942; Folder: Fala April–May 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶⁰ Sandy McGregor to Fala, Apr. 4, 1942; Folder: Fala Apr. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶¹ Master Bob “Snarff” Osborn to Falla, June 22, 1943; Folder: Fala June 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶² For more information on food rationing, see Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); esp., chapter 5, “Victory Gardening and Canning: Men, Women, and Home Front Family Food Production,” 114-141.

⁶³ “Dog Admirals,” Reprinted from *Newsweek*, Feb. 15, 1943; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶⁴ “Dog Admirals,” Reprinted from *Newsweek*, Feb. 15, 1943; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶⁵ Ernest M. Ferrari to FDR, May 31, 1942; Folder: Fala June 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶⁶ Richard J. Vogel to FDR, July 30, 1943; Folder: Fala Aug.–Sept. 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Radio Address on the Scrap Rubber Campaign,” June 12, 1942. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed October 27, 2012, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16272&st=&st1=>.

⁶⁸ Tai-Too to Fala, June 15, 1942; Folder: Fala June 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶⁹ Memo to FDR from Miss Tully, June 15, 1942; Folder: Fala June 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁰ “He’s a Generous ‘Falla’,” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 17, 1942; Folder: Fala Aug.–Oct. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Emphasis added.

⁷¹ Teddy noted that he “took that ‘Sergt’ title from my masters World War Rank.” Sergt. Teddy to Fala, June 25, 1942; Folder: Fala June 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷² Sergt. Teddy to Fala, June 25, 1942; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷³ Memo summarizing C.M. Miles's letter to Fala, [nd]; Folder: Fala Jan.–Feb. 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁴ Kiltie Lamb to Fala, July 2, 1942; Folder: Fala July 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁵ Ming Toi Kennedy to Laddie [Fala], Dec. 21, 1942; Folder: Fala Nov.–Dec. 1942; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁶ Buster Boots Horton to Fala, July 5, 1942; Folder: Fala July 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁷ Buster Boots Horton to Fala, July 5, 1942; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷⁸ George S. Hellman to FDR, July 2, 1942; Folder: Fala Feb. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁹ Boots to Fala, June 22, 1942; Folder: Fala June 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸⁰ Sandy MacTavish to Fala, [nd]; Folder: Fala June 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸¹ “Wimpy” Morgan to Falla, June 18, 1942; Folder: Fala June 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸² Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 55.

⁸³ Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 20-23.

⁸⁴ Marie Casey to Falla, Sept. 16, 1942; Folder: Fala Aug.–Oct. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸⁵ Gunther V. Fritsch (Director), April 10, 1943, *Fala, the President’s Dog* (DVD No. 102), Hyde Park, NY: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Pare Lorentz Film Center.

⁸⁶ Addie Bindursky to Fala, Sept. 16, 1943; Folder: Fala Oct.–Nov. 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸⁷ Doc Powell, “Letters to the Editors,” *Life*, August 31, 1942, 2.

⁸⁸ Editor, “Letters to the Editors,” *Life*, August 31, 1942, 2.

⁸⁹ According to a June 17, 1942 *New York Times* article, titled, “President Wants Auto Floor Mats,” page 17: “Other White House contributions included in addition to two rubber bones from Falla, his pet Scottie, a basket full of rubber toys from Diana Hopkins, young daughter of Harry Hopkins, and a miniature hot-water bottle, for a doll, which the president exhibited with the announcement that it had been sent to him by a lady in Rocky Mount, N.C.”

Thus it is possible that Fala donated even fewer toys than the images would have implied. It is possible that the White House or newspaper photographers intentionally included Diana Hopkin's toys beside Fala to make his donation appear more impressive.

⁹⁰ Kathleen Frank to Falla, Oct. 6, 1941; Folder: Fala Aug.–Oct. 1941; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹¹ Franklin Miller to Falla, [nd]; Folder: Fala Jan. 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹² "Prairie Mothers" to Falla, March 1, 1941; Folder: Fala March 1941; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹³ "Prairie Mothers" to Falla, March 1, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹⁴ "Prairie Mothers" to Falla, March 1, 1941; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹⁵ Notably, no one protested the war by engaging in *prosopopoeia*. There is no reason to consider a dog's opinion of a war's merits.

⁹⁶ Topsy von Cellarina to Falla, Sept. 26, 1942; Folder: Fala Aug.–Oct. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹⁷ Prince to Falla, [nd]; Folder: Fala Apr. 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹⁸ Sheila to Fala, Dec. 22, 1942; Folder: Fala Nov.–Dec. 1942; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹⁹ Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 86.

¹⁰⁰ Sheila to Fala, Dec. 22, 1942; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹⁰¹ Tippie MacTavish to Fala, n.d. [filed May 26, 1943]; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹⁰² Soo-Kee to Fala, March 16, 1943; Folder: Fala March 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁰³ Topsy von Cellarina to Falla, Sept. 26, 1942; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹⁰⁴ Topsy von Cellarina to Falla, Sept. 26, 1942; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹⁰⁵ Pokey to Falla, Oct. 29, 1942; Folder: Fala Aug.–Oct. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁰⁶ Sissy Half-pint to Falla, April 9, 1943; Folder: Fala Apr. 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁰⁷ Topsy von Cellarina to Falla, Sept. 26, 1942; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; Similarly to Kathleen Frank’s anti-war letter, Von Cellarina also emphasized Fala’s proximity to FDR. Von Cellarina wrote, “Tonight when you sit at your master’s side and he strokes your head, would you remind him that our kind are the carnivorous type and appeal our case to him?”

¹⁰⁸ Ginger to Fella [Fala], Sept. 24, 1942; Folder: Fala Aug.–Oct. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁰⁹ *Fala: Campaign Book*; Folder: Fala May 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹¹⁰ Sunny and Mei Ling to Fala, [nd]; Folder: Fala June 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

4

Political Animals: Fala and the 1944 Presidential Election

In 1944, FDR was nominated once again for president by the Democratic Party. In light of the ongoing war, FDR's continued leadership was almost unquestioned by Democrats. Republican candidate Thomas E. Dewey and his fellow Republicans were placed in the difficult position of challenging FDR in the election without undermining his ability to act as commander in chief, lest they appear unpatriotic. A few Republicans, however, tried to navigate this uneasy position. On August 31, 1944, following FDR's meeting with General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz in Hawaii, Republican Congressman Harold Knutson of Minnesota alluded to a rumor that the president sent a destroyer a thousand miles to retrieve Fala after discovering that the dog had been left behind on an Aleutian island.¹ Although FDR had stopped in an Alaskan military camp on the return trip, Fala never stayed behind. By advancing this rumor, Knutson birthed one of the more memorable stories of the campaign.

On September 23, Knutson's words came to haunt the Republican Party. In a speech to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which Dewey's biographer has described as "justifiably celebrated,"² FDR ridiculed Republicans for spreading fantastic rumors about him. FDR's ridicule culminated in a masterfully delivered response to Knutson. Implicating the Republican Party more generally, FDR declared,

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 doesn'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 had left him behind on the Aleutian Islands 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

The Teamsters, who had thoroughly enjoyed the rest of his speech, howled with laughter at this “immortal paragraph.”⁴ Those listening to FDR over the radio wrote to congratulate him for effectively dispelling the Republican lies. Workers for the Democratic National Committee joked that “the race is between Roosevelt’s dog and Dewey’s goat.”⁵ In mid-October they modified their refrain slightly after learning about Dewey’s 125-pound Great Dane, Canute.⁶ Thereafter, Democrats gleefully cast the election as a “contest between a little man with a big dog and a big man with a little dog.”⁷

In years since, the “Fala speech” has become enshrined as a pivotal moment in FDR’s 1944 presidential campaign.⁸ Scheduled one month in advance, the long-anticipated speech made a strong impression on listeners—Dewey included. According to FDR’s speechwriter Samuel Rosenman, “Dewey was made fighting mad, and showed it in his next few speeches by swinging wildly in a way that damaged himself rather than [FDR].”⁹ The “Fala speech” is often praised as though it singlehandedly won FDR the election. Jean Edward Smith, for instance, claimed, “The Dewey campaign suffered a body blow from which it never recovered.”¹⁰ Gil Troy, however, has challenged the speech’s success. Troy acknowledges that “White House mail ran more than eight to one in favour of the speech,” but he tempers any conclusion other

than that these are partisan letters and that FDR was merely preaching to the choir.¹¹ In Troy's analysis of newspaper coverage, he found that after initial positive feedback, many critiqued FDR for mudslinging.

Without a doubt, FDR was preaching to the choir. FDR knew that the Teamsters would provide a receptive and animated audience for his message. Their ardent applause would carry over the airwaves to anyone listening in, possibly securing undecided voters for the Democratic ticket. Remarkably, many who wrote to FDR situated their thoughts about the election in terms of animals. Animals provided Americans with a safer, more natural, and seemingly nonpolitical locus for expressing judgments about the election.

Foster's Fala: Election Anxiety

Fala received a lot of media attention during his time in the White House. The Scottie was often included in newspaper articles about FDR; occasionally, his picture was published as well. Each instance of publicity helped shape Fala's perceived persona. No person alone, however, contributed more to this effort than cartoonist Alan Foster. Over the course of three years, Foster drew approximately eighty-eight cartoons of Fala. *Liberty* magazine published twenty-five in 1942; *Collier's* published sixty-three between December 12, 1942, and August 12, 1944. Originally titled "Fala" in *Liberty* magazine, the series was relabeled as "Mr. Fala of the White House" in *Collier's*. The steady publication of Foster's cartoons helped cultivate a distinct persona for Fala as a cute, little dog, who was somewhat politically naïve.¹² Fala's naïveté provided most of the cartoon's humor. Taking a cue from Foster, many addressed their Fala letters to "Mr. Fala of the White House." Although FDR was a fan of Foster's work, the cartoonist worked independently of the White House. Unlike MGM, who received directions

about which shots were appropriate in their Fala shorts, Foster's cartoons were never dictated by FDR.¹³

Most of Foster's cartoons in 1944 portrayed Fala as increasingly anxious as to FDR's ability to win—and for good reason. Despite FDR's popularity in our public memory today, the 1944 election appeared as anything but a sure bet. "After the 1943 elections," David M. Jordan notes, "the Republicans held twenty-six governorships, in states with 339 electoral votes, while the twenty-two states held by Democrats had only 192 electoral votes. In an era before pervasive television advertising, control of the machinery of state government, with the patronage such control bestowed on a party, was considered very influential in determining how a statewide election should go."¹⁴ There were also the twin issues of FDR's age and declining health.¹⁵ In April 1944, FDR spent four weeks—two weeks longer than planned—resting at Bernard Baruch's estate in South Carolina.¹⁶ FDR took great pains to hide his declining health, but Republicans made strategic use of his public photographs to accentuate his poor condition.¹⁷ At one point, a Gallup poll found that thirty-four percent of Americans believed FDR was too sick to complete a fourth term.¹⁸

By portraying Fala as anxious, Foster helped motivate people to care about the election without being self-defeating.¹⁹ Foster also avoided instilling over-confidence in his readers, which would lead to voter complacency. Because Fala lived in the White House, he was in a prime position to overhear any political gossip. Yet, because he was a dog, Fala was unable to fully grasp politics. For instance, in one cartoon preceding the 1944 Republican National Convention, Fala sat outside an elephant's cage remarking, "I hear you are going to Chicago this summer, too."²⁰ Had Foster frequently depicted FDR as anxious, readers may have had cause to despair at his chances of being re-elected. After all, FDR would have a better sense of the

election than his dog. As it was, Foster rarely included FDR in the cartoon. Foster allowed readers to connect the dots and take pleasure in seeing the “big picture.”

Helen M. Sévegné’s letter to Fala reveals this pleasure. In Foster’s first cartoon of 1944, Fala chased a rabbit and remarked, “We’ll probably need a rabbit’s foot this year.”²¹ Shortly thereafter, Sévegné wrote to the Scottie:

You are a cute pup but I do not believe you are going to catch that rabbit and any way, I do not like the looks of his feet. If you find that you *do* need a rabbit foot in 1944, I’ll send you one that is a good foot + made by an Indian. And I know it will bring you and your master the best of luck. I myself am hanging on to one for I am badly in need of luck. I have been sick and “on the shelf” for a year and cannot even walk much less run after a rabbit but dear little Fala I am very glad indeed *you* can.²²

Although Foster’s Fala was merely a cartoon, Sévegné wrote to Fala as if he had chased the rabbit. Not only was she dismissive of Fala’s ability to capture a rabbit, she disapproved of the rabbit’s physiognomy and offered to send a good, Indian-made rabbit foot. Moreover, Sévegné never mentioned Foster or *Collier’s* magazine in her letter. Few examples are this extreme (most people either referenced Foster or sent in a clipping of the cartoon itself). Nonetheless, many people wrote to Fala after reading about his antics in Foster’s cartoon, as though he possessed the same character traits.²³

Despite Fala’s anxiety about the election, Foster never depicted him as malicious toward Republicans. Instead, Foster emphasized Fala’s uncertainty about living in the White House four more years. Befitting a dog, Fala paused next to a half-buried bone in one cartoon, commenting, “On the other hand, I might not be able to dig this up next year”²⁴ (fig. 4-1). As the election progressed, many wrote to Fala about bones. After the election, “Laddie Boy” Coulter proudly

exclaimed, “my mistress was right in her prediction that Fala wouldn’t have to dig up any special little bone he might have buried under a bush on the White House lawn.”²⁵ Although Coulter did not refer to Foster’s cartoon, her mistress’s description of Fala’s bone under a bush closely resembled Foster’s drawing. In another cartoon, Fala stood gazing at the White House, insisting that “No matter what happens, I’ll always think of it as *home*.”²⁶ Three months later, Foster repeated this theme, but with more acceptance. Fala no longer stood this time. Instead, he sat by a sign that read “Hyde Park.” Gazing upon the boats on the Hudson River, Fala admitted that “This wouldn’t be hard to take for the next four years either.”²⁷

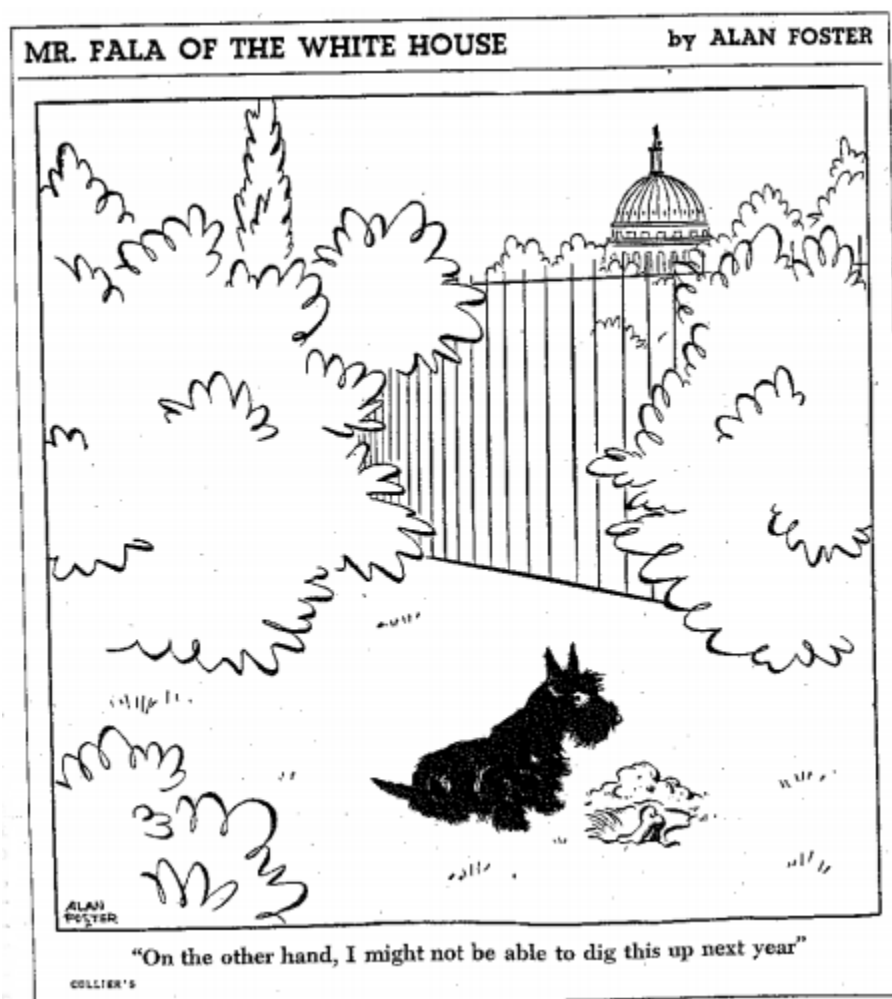


Fig. 4-1. Fala wonders whether to bury his bone. As reproduced in *Collier's*, May 13, 1944.

Publication of “Mr. Fala of the White House” grew increasingly sporadic in 1944. The once-weekly cartoon often appeared once a month, though Foster resumed his weekly schedule throughout April and May. In some ways, this unpredictable publication pattern further underscored Fala’s anxiety. If FDR was not reelected, there would not be any more “Mr. Fala of the White House.” As it turned out, Foster’s last Fala cartoon was published on August 12, 1944—two weeks before Knutson mentioned Fala’s rumored abandonment on an Aleutian isle. The discontinuation of Foster’s cartoon portended a future in which Fala would no longer live in the White House. Those interested in Fala would need to look elsewhere.

Political Animals

Dog ownership underwent fundamental changes during the mid-twentieth century. More people owned pets, and increasingly invited them into their homes. Radios also became a regular fixture in houses across the nation. Dogs would join their owners as they gathered around the radio. The link between dogs and radios was well-established by the Victor Talking Machine Company’s logo, which depicted a puzzled dog gazing at a Victrola phonograph (fig. 4-2). The logo’s caption—“His master’s voice”—implied that the dog was listening, unable to figure out how the machine sounded like his master. Unlike most dogs, Fala could conceivably do so (fig. 4-3). Many who wrote to Fala often referenced this logo, asking him if he was listening. This phrase took on a unique meaning in their correspondence, in that it could imply that FDR was the master of those who listened to his radio addresses. This mastery was rarely perceived as threatening. Similarly to the trust a dog places in his master, many Americans came to rely on FDR. Speaking from Fala’s perspective, Florence Cantor wrote,

Mr. Roosevelt is kind, good and true. He has the interest of every American at heart. He knows his America and what is best for her. He knows the outside world and what is best for it. And he knows how to govern this great country.²⁸

Nonetheless, the familiar logo still had some political punch. Referring to the “Fala speech,” Governor Robert S. Kerr of Oklahoma claimed that “Mr. Dewey heard every word and . . . had one thing in common with Fala. . . . both were listening to their Master’s voice.”²⁹



Fig. 4-2. “His Master’s Voice.”³⁰



Fala listens to his master

Associated Press Wirephotos

Fig. 4-3. “Fala listens to his master.” As reproduced in *New York Times*, July 22, 1944.

Dogs could not understand radio broadcasts, but they occasionally found a particular voice upsetting.³¹ During the election, one owner took her wire haired terrier’s reaction as a humorous sign of a political judgment. The terrier, named Terry Saet, explained:

We had been listening to your master’s campaign speeches and we always feel proud to have him for our president. I guess my mistress wanted to hear what Mr. Dewey had to say and she listened to one or two of his speeches. I know she didn’t like it, she frowned many times and made disapproving noises, so I didn’t like his voice either. The other night she was engrossed in reading and oblivious of the radio going on. All of a sudden I heard the voice, I know, it was the voice she doesn’t like, she didn’t seem to notice so I started growling under my breath, she seemed surprised but still didn’t catch on, I looked

at the radio and then at her and growled some more, and growled louder and louder. I kept this up till she changed the station. My mistress seemed so amazed, you know, Fala, humans often underestimate our intelligence, but I know she was proud of me and said I was a good little democrat and she wished I could vote too.³²

Although this letter was intended to give FDR a laugh, Terry's behavior is particularly revealing. Like any good house dog, who alerts his or her owner of an unwelcome guest, Terry growled at the sound of an intruder. This anecdote allowed Terry's owner to make light of having listened to some of Dewey's speeches.

For some people, pet ownership became a heuristic for judgment about the candidates. Although the number of people who voted for FDR simply because they liked his dog was probably slim, many sought to explain FDR's electability based on his relationship with Fala. Beginning with the platitude, "You can tell something about a man by the kind of a dog he keeps," an article in the *Lawrence Sunday Item* compared Fala and Dewey's Great Dane, Canute. "Everyone knows Fala. . . . Fala is on speaking terms with many important people all over the world. He also knows many school kids. They like to watch him scamper across the White House lawn."³³ Speaking of Canute, the article explained,

When he stands on his hind legs, he is bigger than his master, who is not a very big man. This dog doesn't make many friends; he scares the kids and lots of other people. His master too likes to scare people. As Mr. District Attorney, he put many in jail. Canute's master's name is Dewey; and he wants to take the place of Fala's master as President of the United States.³⁴

The visible difference between the small, cuddly Scottie and large Great Dane allowed for a quick distinction between FDR and Dewey. Both Canute and his owner were characterized as

unduly intimidating, unlike the friendly FDR and Fala. After the election, Estelle Ran wrote to FDR: “I can readily understand why you were reelected president and why Dewey was not—he doesn’t like Fala.” Possibly unaware of Canute, Ran added, “any man who doesn’t care for dogs isn’t fit to be president.”³⁵ Ran’s ignorance is understandable insofar as Dewey made little political use of his dog during the election. Whereas Fala was portrayed as FDR’s dearest companion, Canute was merely Dewey’s dog.³⁶

FDR’s close relationship with Fala also became a means for targeting him. A few people pretended to be friendly with the president before excoriating him. Responding to FDR’s speech, J.P. Grip declared,

Millions of good dog owners thruout [sic] the country are profoundly distressed over the rough treatment the dirty Republicans have given your cute dog Fala. Poor Fala must have shed real dog tears when the [sic] read about the attacks made on him. Of course, your dog can read, otherwise he couldn’t have been so distressed that he never was the same since. It must have been simply awful.³⁷

Hoping to help Fala feel better, Grip offered to send him some better dog food. Grip wrote, “Please let me know how much he will need for the next six months or, say, until the 20th of January, when you move. Then I can send him some. I had in mind to send it no charge, but they tell me you have plenty of money, so you can probably pay for it.”³⁸ Much more subtle was Fido’s letter. Partially imitating FDR’s Mid-Atlantic accent, he wrote,

Falla my fran,

Runt, Rover and I heard Saturday night via Radio that you were unhappy. With the Wah, the Man and Eleanoh we well understand. Since [Dewey’s speech on] Monday night we thought we should send our sympathy as you must now be quite low.

We meet regularly down by the Dog Pound. Expect to see you there soon.³⁹

The suggestion, of course, was that FDR would lose and that Fala would be displaced to a dog pound. Whereas FDR blamed republicans for agitating Fala, Fido averred that the Scottie's disposition was owing to his awful home life and the war. Furthermore, Fido suggested that even Fala recognized the brilliance of Dewey's rejoinder on Monday. The dog pound might be a welcome escape from Washington if anything.⁴⁰

Despite FDR's speech, some people continued to believe that Fala was left behind. The rumor's plausibility largely hinged upon the person's prior opinion of FDR or political affiliation. One man interviewed by the *Kansas City Times* declared, "It sounds just like some extravagant thing such as FDR would do with the taxpayers' money."⁴¹ This man's statement closely mirrors the critique that Republicans launched against FDR during the election: FDR, despite his rhetoric to the contrary, kept overspending. If the economy was improving, it was not from his New Deal policies, but because of the war.

Many people drew upon their experience with dogs to refute the rumor about Fala. They argued that Fala would have run ahead of FDR when the president boarded the ship to leave. One dog, Chica, exclaimed, "even *I* know that it would never have been necessary to send a battleship back for you. . . . we dogs always sense it when our Master or our Mistress is going away!"⁴² Had Fala been left behind, Chica reasoned, "I know you would [swim after the ship], Fala, because *I* would swim the Atlantic Ocean after my little Mistress or poor old Auntie Jay with whom we make our home in Massachusetts, and *they* are only *librarians*, while your Master is the President of the United States."⁴³

Even if Fala had been left behind and needed retrieval, some pet owners did not mind. Insofar as dogs were viewed as part of the family, they could not simply be abandoned. Mary

Agnes Harris opined that dogs “are like human beings, [and] deserve [the] same treatment.”⁴⁴ Although Paul King did not believe the rumor, he wrote, “All thinking dog lovers would surely vote for a President who had such a great love for his Dog that he would at least send a destroyer to fetch him if he was left behind.”⁴⁵ After describing the bonds of affection that Scottie owners share with their dogs, Helen B. Lilly—who did not believe the rumor either—suggested that FDR would have been justified in sending the *entire fleet* to retrieve his dog.⁴⁶ Dog owners recognized the important role that Fala played in the White House. According to King, “a good Dog, like yourself, exerts a physical and spiritual influence on his Master which helps maintain Health. And good health to our President is a most important thing to the American People.”⁴⁷

Fala may not have been left behind in the Aleutians, but some worried that he would not stay in the White House much longer. Rather than declare their support of FDR, many simply wrote to Fala explaining how they hoped he would get to keep his home. The message was clear, however. These letters often pitted Fala against Canute, as illustrated by Reg Manning. Referring to Manning’s cartoon, Laura Cosseboom asked FDR to “Tell [Fala] he needn’t worry about having to move, the big guy on the outside of the fence is just as big a bluff as the fellow with the little black mustache is”⁴⁸ (fig. 4-4). Similarly to the little man with a big dog mantra, Cosseboom drew upon Canute’s size while identifying Dewey by his *little* mustache.



Fig. 4-4. Canute plots his new dog house. Courtesy of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library.

Children also voiced their opinion about Canute possibly living in the White House. Lawrence, a third grader, asked Fala whether he liked Canute. Lawrence did not, since “he wants your home.”⁴⁹ His classmate Betty explained, “We had fun reading about you and Canute. I think Canut[e is] a bad dog to want to take your home away from you. Some in the room don’t think so but I do.”⁵⁰ Neither Lawrence nor Betty could vote, but Fala provided them with a reason to support one candidate over the other.

Several people used their dogs to help campaign for the candidates. Pictures of dogs with “Keep Fala in the White House” signs were circulated in newspapers and sent to FDR. A

Canadian sheepdog named Fluffy welcomed Dewey to Pittsburgh in late October. Fluffy wore an “I’m for Dewey” sign on his collar.⁵¹ Shortly thereafter a jesting FDR supporter engaged in *prosopopoeia* for Fluffy and sent an apologetic letter to the White House. In the letter, Fluffy explained how—unbeknownst to him—he had been volunteered as a Dewey supporter. Fluffy did not know Dewey, and was scared when he saw his mustache, thinking the governor was Hitler. Fluffy explained how he was to be Dewey’s dog and might take Fala’s place in the White House.⁵² After Fluffy learned more about Fala and his master, however, he regretted that they chose him. He did not think that Fala had cause for alarm, though. Closing his letter, Fluffy told him, “*not to worry . . . I just know I won’t ever get to the White House.*”⁵³

After the election, Private William J. Slaughter, Jr. sent the White House six snapshots of his dog’s campaigning efforts (fig. 4-5). Some of Slaughter’s photographs appear redundant, but their backsides are numbered one through six, indicating their proper order as a cohesive unit. Although the photographs lack a date, Slaughter presumably adorned his porch with a “Keep Fala in the White House” sign leading up to the election and then changed it to “We Kept Fala in the White House” afterward.⁵⁴ Moreover, Slaughter appears to have strategically placed these signs underneath his dog’s favorite resting place, thereby attributing a voice to his dog. The sixth photograph is especially touching and revealing of the strong relationship Slaughter shared with his dog. While posing together for the camera in his military uniform, Slaughter placed his cap on his border collie. By sending these photographs to FDR, Slaughter showed his support of the president and demonstrated his own fondness for his dog.

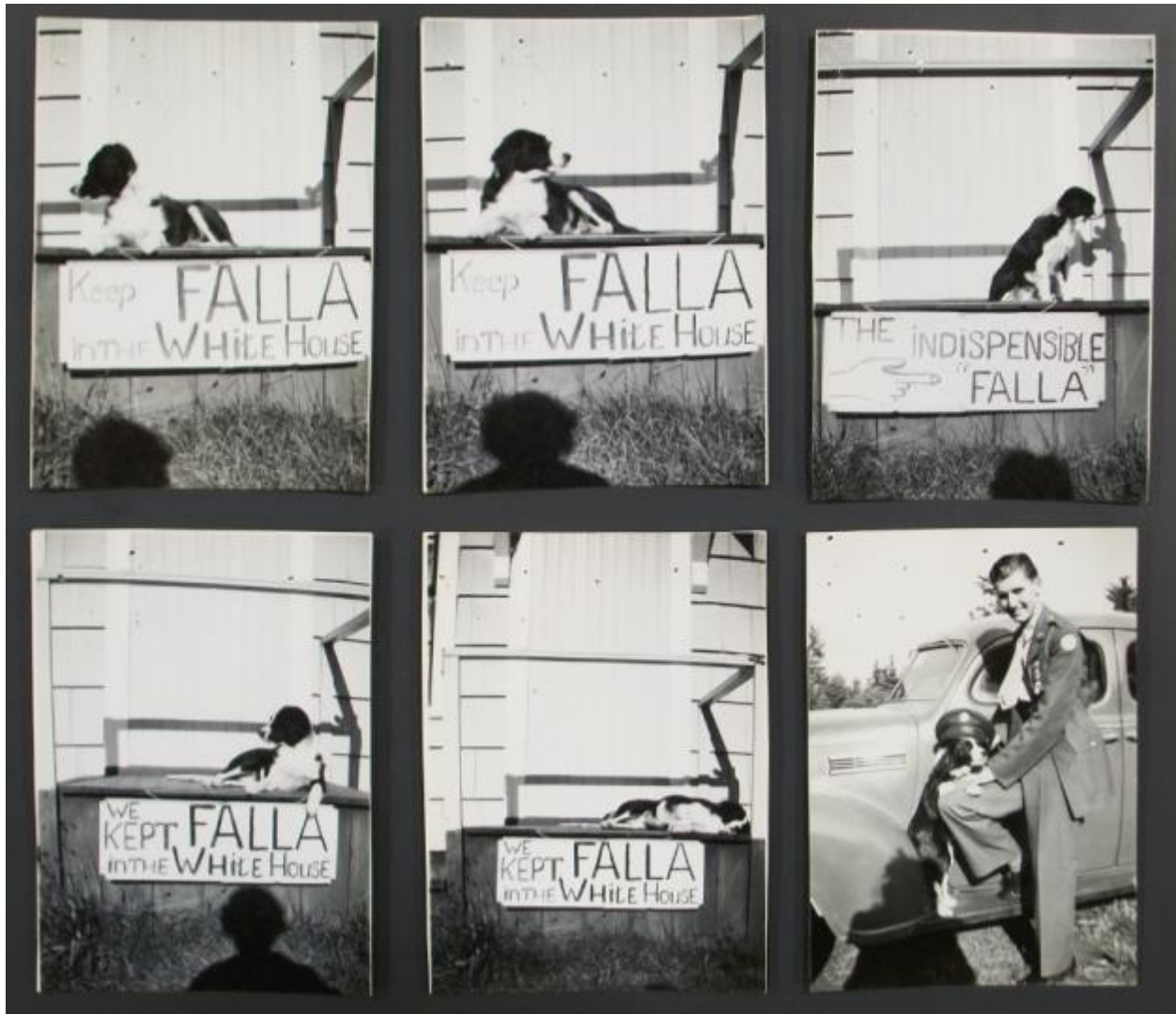


Fig. 4-5. Private William J. Slaughter, Jr. and his dog campaign for FDR's re-election. Courtesy of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library.

Political *Prosopopoeia*

"Bow-wowingly Yours": Animal Prosopopoeia

In order to make their *prosopopoeia* believable, many included little details that their pets would presumably write about. They described their animal interests (ranging from playing outside to the food they eat), noted their breed, and referred to their master or mistress. Several

included their photographs and/or paw print signatures. Most did not draw attention to their miraculous ability to write, though a few provided an explanation. Pitzie Adams told Fala that her mistress was “writing this for me” and assured him that “I am dictating it.”⁵⁵ Chico and Popo, on the other hand, appear to have written without their mistress’ knowledge. Politically aware and religious, they noted, “Our Missie is out so we are writing you to tell you how we pray for you every night now those horrid republicans are picking on you.”⁵⁶ Writing for his dog, Kingswood Asta, Stanley Crooks explained, “She’s a miniature Schnauzer, proud daughter of Kingswood Jubilo Grand Champion, stolen a few months ago. Her captors are probably isolationists and won’t let her send congratulations. I am doing it for her.”⁵⁷

Many of these details serve multiple functions beyond ensuring their *prosopopoeia* appear believable. A casual reference to one’s master allows the White House to learn more about the human, who is really writing the letter. For instance, Poochie Van Contren wrote, “My master must think a great deal of our master because I heard him tell our neighbor that he would vote for your master sixteen times, if he would be a candidate that often.”⁵⁸ Hyperbole notwithstanding, this remark is especially impressive as Poochie later noted that his master was “nearly 75 years (young).”⁵⁹ At that rate, he would vote for FDR until the 2008 election, when he is 139 years old. On the opposite side of the age spectrum is Pitzie Adams’ mistress, Catherine Adams, who was fifteen. Unlike Poochie, who described his masters wish to vote, Pitzie commented that FDR “would get *my* vote if I could vote.”⁶⁰

Unlike the instances of *prosopopoeia* examined in previous chapters, these letters reveal a wide spectrum of political commentary. Sometimes these comments are simply a wish or assurance that FDR will win the election. Fluffy writes, “We have DEWEY on the-run haven’t we? Now, he doesn’t really know which way to go, so he’s going-round-and-round-and-round.

But we know who is going to be elected, don't we Fala? Your Daddy, of course.”⁶¹ Other times the letters contain more overt attacks on the Republican Party. Pinksie, a cocker spaniel “born during the Hoover depression,” exclaimed, “What sheer stupidity on the part of your enemies who with their usual lack of foresight gave your master the weapon of ridicule which set the whole world rocking with laughter!”⁶² Occasionally, the political commentary is subtle. “Boots” Rentz explained that when he was first brought home from the pet store, he “was named ‘Tom Dewey’ but my mistress immediately changed my name to ‘Boots.’”⁶³

The political commentary in these instances of *prosopopoeia* is often complimented by realistic portrayals of dogs. For instance, “Shadow” a five month old puppy wrote Fala, saying,

I bet those straggly black hairs between your eyes stand on edge at the accusations and can't you express in your dog like way that is [sic] doesn't hurt you a bit to shoulder the dirt they sling? Personally, or rather literally I thrive on dirt and today I seem to be thriving on a lick of ant poison but, between you and me Fala, you know at my tender age I'm always hungry and a lick of ant poison I've discovered gets me several eggs poured down my throat!⁶⁴

At first blush, Shadow's explanation that he licked ant poison seems to completely undercut his *ethos*. Yet, actually it reifies the letter's *prosopopoeia*. After all, this is supposed to be a puppy writing a letter. Shadow seamlessly transitions from political commentary about metaphorical mudslinging to actual dirt, which is closer to an actual dog's heart. He concludes by hoping that the “other party wont [sic] throw you a maggot covered bone,”⁶⁵ thereby continuing his blend of metaphor with canine interests.

Those who wrote on behalf of their cats tried to maintain a feline character. Fluffy, who was referred to as “Grace Benson's Kitty-Kat,” told Fala that he “meowed heartily when I heard

[the Teamster Union address].”⁶⁶ While Fluffy seemed rather comfortable addressing a dog, not all cats were. Colonel Pip Terry, who was “otherwise known as Stinky,” informed Fala,

ordinarily I would not be writing to a dog. Not even the President’s dog. But these are extraordinary times and I feel that recent events make sufficient reasons for a change of policy. Perhaps its [sic] because my mother’s name was McNabb and you are a Scottie. Though even more, perhaps its [sic] because we are tax payers and bond buyers in our family and we feel very keenly about waste of money.⁶⁷

Similarly to FDR in his Teamster Union speech, Colonel Pip Terry alludes to Fala’s Scotch heritage. Whereas FDR employed this detail to create a persona for his animal, it serves as an important site of identification between the cat’s owner and Fala, and by extension FDR.

Moreover, as Colonel Pip Terry continues, it becomes clearer that his mother McNabb was not a feline, but rather his human owner. This familial language is employed by several other writers, frequently extending to FDR. For instance, Fluffy, explained to Fala that “My mommie sent a check to the Biltmore for your Daddy’s campaign and has been invited to the luncheon Friday.”⁶⁸

This familial language reveals the close relationship people felt with their pets, and the presumption that Fala shared a similar relationship with FDR.

Occasionally, these dogs cast their neighbors as animals, too. These are often stylized attempts to approve of FDR’s work and offer their continued love and support. For instance, “Poochie” Van Contren, a Democrat Pomeranian commented on the better economy under FDR. He wrote, “all the dogs in our neighborhood appreciate the bigger and better dog biscuits that your master has given us.”⁶⁹ Chica, a dog from Quincy, Massachusetts, explained that “In our window is a service flag. In the windows of the homes of many of the dogs in our neighborhood are service flags. We DOGS think you are grand, Fala! If you need to organize a Dog Corps for

Chewing the Pants off the S. S. M's [scurrilous scandal mongers], just call on your admirer, Chica."⁷⁰ By transitioning from service flags to a Dog Corps, Chica militarizes the dogs. Insofar as service members were across the Atlantic and Pacific fighting the Axis powers, Chica casts the scurrilous scandal mongers as enemies of the U.S.

Speaking for Fala

The Fala letters are awash with examples of *prosopopoeia*, but it was not until the election that many people spoke for Fala. Although FDR did not engage in *prosopopoeia* for Fala in his Teamsters Union address, his speech likely inspired people to do so. By and large, FDR kept Fala in low profile after his speech, but many sought to use Fala as a standard bearer for the president's campaign.⁷¹ They wrote poems or speeches that Fala might give. They also pretended to interview him. Several of these Fala *prosopopoeias* were published in newspapers and enjoyed a wide circulation. Many were sent to the president instead, though often with a note that should he find their poem or speech useful he could use it in his campaign.

There were several benefits to engaging in *prosopopoeia* for Fala. From a pragmatic standpoint, speaking for Fala would likely ensure a modicum of attention that they might not get on their own, as everyone knew of the presidential pet. Fala also served as a useful political prop. Like a ventriloquist act, in which the dummy often speaks more freely than the ventriloquist, Fala *prosopopoeia* offered a means of self-expression. FDR's assertion that his family did not mind the Republican allegations, but that Fala was furious, was a prime example in this respect. One could not argue with Fala because the actual dog said nothing. More generally, owing to the close relationship between FDR and his dog, Fala *prosopopoeia* provided a behind the scenes portrayal of the president. Often the Scottie was portrayed as FDR's

confidant. In one instance of *prosopopoeia* for Fala, the dog declared, “I hear everything—and I could tell you many things. But, of course, I wouldn’t repeat wnything [sic] of a confidential nature. I never betray a trust and The President knows it.”⁷² By expressing Fala’s views, one assumed knowledge of privileged information. More importantly, the perspective-taking necessary for engaging in *prosopopoeia* allowed one to imagine that he or she shared a close relationship with FDR.

Two weeks before FDR’s “Fala speech,” Raine Bennett of NBC “interviewed” Fala to determine whether the rumors were true. Bennett’s Fala explained a number of personal details about himself, such as his breed, the story behind his name, where he was born, and whether he enjoyed Hyde Park more than the White House (he did). Despite the fantastic nature of the interview, Bennett infused it with realism by frequently alluding to the White House lawn (where he was interviewing Fala) and Fala’s behavior. For instance, Bennett noted that Fala “concluded [an answer] with a joyful yelp, as if to say ‘You thought you had me, didn’t you!’ Then he rolled over twice on the grass, in sheer glee, and I felt rather foolish standing there.”⁷³ Fala “merely stood on his head and barked” when asked for his “private, off-the-record opinion of Mr. Dewey,” but a much more vicious side of the Scottie emerged when his rumored abandonment was broached.⁷⁴ According to Bennett, “[Fala] lowered his shaggy little black head, growled, and started for my left leg—nearest the heart.”⁷⁵ Describing Fala’s vicious response may have provided Bennett with a clever conclusion to his interview. It also naturalized Fala’s negative attitude of Dewey by letting his animal nature speak.⁷⁶

By far the greatest example of Fala *prosopopoeia* was that of Zdena Trinká. A North Dakotan author, originally from Czechoslovakia, she composed “An Open Letter to the American People (As Dictated Over the Ether Waves to Zdena Trinká) By Fala: the President’s

Dog.” The inclusion of “ether waves” in her title might sound like the ravings of someone unhinged from reality, but this spiritualist language closely parallels FDR’s medium of choice: the radio.⁷⁷ Trinka sent copies of her open letter to FDR, Hannigan of New York (FDR’s democratic manager), and H.V. Kaltenborn (a prominent radio broadcaster) hoping that it would be circulated to a wider audience. It is unclear whether Hannigan or Kaltenborn circulated Trinka’s open letter. The White House did not. Their decision not to, however, was consistent with their general policy toward requests of this kind.

Trinka’s open letter is remarkable for several reasons. At four pages long, it dwarfs the other instances of *prosopopoeia* for Fala. Only Bennett’s interview comes close in terms of length. And yet, inasmuch as Trinka’s letter does not contain the back and forth of an interview, it contains a greater character development for Fala. Curiously, whereas many drew upon Fala’s Scottish-ness to explain his temperament (FDR included), Trinka’s Fala is more urbane. He is certainly more eloquent:

Gentlemen! Gentlemen! What kind of campaigning is this—that doesn’t spare even the feelings of a dog? I am that embarrassed! To have my private life discussed from the political platform of America. My one little *amour*, as the French say, to be made the target of laughter. My standing in the dog world assailed. To be made a laughing-stock for every Republican mouthpiece! And it all so undeserved. So entirely without foundation. It is no wonder my master says I haven’t been myself since the attack made on me by Mr. Hoover’s protégé.⁷⁸

FDR’s portrayal of Fala called for laughter, but Trinka invokes sympathy. Unlike FDR’s characterization of Fala as furious, Trinka’s portrays Fala as despondent. Trinka’s Fala continues:

I don't feel like myself any more. I no longer feel skittish and Charley McCarthyish, when I catch sight of a coquettish little Scottie lassie, a gay cocker spaniel, a lamblike Bedlington terrior [sic], a Doberman pinscher, or a Belgian shepherd, around the corner. . . or want to engage in a chit-chat with the brau bonnie lassies. Ah me, alas, no longer. I am even off my feed. Not even to please my master, who looks at me with anxious eyes, can I swallow an extra mouthful of food.⁷⁹

These few lines foreshadow the formal development of the entire piece. What initially appeared to be about Fala was really an opportunity to provide an intimate portrayal of FDR. Trinka's Fala serves as the public's eyes and ears to life in the White House. Owing to FDR and Fala's close relationship, Trinka cast Fala as FDR's confidant.

Trinka weaves FDR's remarks at the Teamsters Union all throughout her open letter. In so doing, she engages in *ethopoeia*—a rhetorical figure in which one speaks as another human—for the president. Trinka's FDR dismisses the rumor that Fala was left behind, accuses the Republicans of taking a page out of Hitler's book, chides them for supporting isolationism, and claiming as their own laws ones they had staunchly opposed, such as collective bargaining, maximum working hours, and a minimum wage. Significantly, whereas the real FDR laughed and dismissed Republican lies, Trinka portrayed FDR as somber and deeply troubled that Americans might start believing these Republican falsehoods. This more emotional portrayal is easy to accept because FDR's words are faithful to his speech. Moreover, who would not want to believe that their president deeply cares for their wellbeing? Since FDR's words are faithful, readers of the open letter are also more likely to accept Trinka's Fala as a true representation. Further, inasmuch as Trinka's open letter repeats FDR's actual words, she improves the likelihood that others would remember the president's message.

Aside from the fantastic nature of Trinka's letter, what is most remarkable is her extreme trepidation at engaging in impersonation. Appended to her open letter is a note to the president, which states,

I hope this is one of your good humor days—so my head won't fall in consequence. The enclosed was really Fala's idea. It was he who suggested that I send it to you. . . .

P.S. I hope it's all right? (You won't be too hard on Fala? A large share of the blame is mine)⁸⁰

Trinka initially defended her writing by saying it was Fala's idea, but contradicted this claim in her postscript; thereby vacillating between identities to find the more favorable one. While her trepidation may be a remnant of her Old World enculturation—note her fear of beheading—it demonstrates a profound sensitivity to engaging in *prosopopoeia*. With the exception of Bennett, the radio host, no one else sought to fact-check when speaking for Fala. That this trepidation did not emerge among those writing for their own pets underscores the extent to which they and their pet's identities are closely aligned. Writing for Fala almost always implicated FDR. In Trinka's case it also involved *ethopoeia* for FDR. Even a favorable representation of the president provided her no peace of mind, however.

Speaking for Fala did not always cause anxiety. Many hoped that their Fala *prosopopoeia* would give FDR a chuckle and brighten his day. Charlotte Storm sent FDR her poem, "If Falla Could Talk." In it, she engaged in *prosopopoeia* for Fala to launch a humorous criticism of Dewey. She wrote:

Old ancestor Adam would turn in his grave
If he saw how you two-legged humans behave
They lead a dog's life, their plaintive old song,
To the animal kingdom, thank God I belong.

All the road down from Albany I hear the lie spoken
 Not one thing is right, of praise not a token
 Listen, the foul political vaporings of candidate Dewey:
 "Franklin's old, Franklin's tired" We know it's just hooley.
 He rants and he roots "I've got youth" it is plain gall
 On this recommend he'd stand or he'd fall.

He'd lead this great nation a merry old dance
 The experience he boasts is in his three cornered pants
 His unquotes and misquotes get in my hair
 Let him come near the White House I like my meat rare
 To the foregoing statement I swear with my paws on the Bible
 So change your old diaper Dewey, Sue Fala for libel.⁸¹

Storm took particular umbrage at the lies circulated by Dewey's campaign. Whereas Dewey campaigned that FDR was too old, Storm used Fala to disagree. If anything, she suggested that Dewey was too young by saying that his experience amounted to nothing more than a dirty diaper. Moreover, echoing the Fala's ferociousness in Bennett's interview, Fala is portrayed by Storm as a protector of the White House. In her final two lines, Storm flaunted Fala's usefulness as a political prop by facetiously suggesting that Dewey should sue the Scottie if he was offended.

Engaging in *prosopopoeia* for Fala involved a different set of assumptions and privileges than one's own dog. Fala was a dog, but he was the president's dog. Speaking for or even about Fala therefore entailed some of FDR's *ethos* and identity. Some went out of their way to respect this, but a few people following in the footsteps of Knutson used Fala to level an attack on FDR. One person sent FDR a letter supposedly written by Fala to Dewey. Attached was a note that explained: "we think you should know what is going on behind your back, right in your own home."⁸² In the letter, Fala took issue with FDR's decision to allow alcohol sales in U.S. army camps. Appended to the letter was a citizens' morale survey highlighting the various dangers associated with alcohol consumption. Although this topic was not a major campaign issue by

any stretch of the imagination, the letter sought to insinuate that it was by including a drawing of Fala with a “clear it with Sidney” flag waving from his tail (fig. 4-6). One of the more popular charges during the 1944 election was that FDR had told his party leaders—who were then selecting the next vice-president—to “clear it with Sidney [Hillman],” a prominent communist and labor leader. This maxim was particularly troublesome for Democrats because it suggested that Hillman was dictating FDR’s policy decisions. Fala concluded his letter saying, “Confidentially, Governor Dewey, I think I’ll vote for *you*.”⁸³



Fig. 4-6. Fala waving a “Clear It with Sidney” flag. Courtesy of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library.

Animal Allegory

Besides adopting the persona of their pets, via *prosopopoeia*, Americans often characterized politicians in terms of animals. Animal symbolism is no stranger to U.S. politics. Animals are regularly used in political cartoons. We recognize donkeys as Democrats and elephants as Republicans. During the 1944 election, those who wrote to the White House took this symbolic relationship one step further by engaging in animal allegory. “In animal allegory,” David Herman notes, “nonhuman animals function as virtual stand-ins for humans, by way of

cultural associations that have accrued around particular species.”⁸⁴ As might be expected, Republicans and Democrats were allegorized as elephants and donkeys.⁸⁵ The animal most commonly employed in these allegories, however, were dogs. In light of all the people engaging in *prosopopoeia* for their pets, this is not surprising. Correspondents had a stronger network of cultural associations about dogs to draw upon, as they were more common than elephants or donkeys. Citizens allegorized animals to make judgments about the character and demeanor of the candidates and parties.⁸⁶

People often drew upon the physiognomy of elephants and Great Danes to criticize Republicans and Dewey. The immense size of these animals was used to illustrate the dangers, both economic and military, that the Republicans posed should they be elected to office. According to Norman Dickerson, “Great Danes and elephants are big feeders. They are real hogs and dont save much for the other guy.”⁸⁷ Not only are they greedy, they can pose a danger both to themselves and others. Dickerson continued:

Some of us went hunting last week and found some funny old graves. An old marker had G.O.P. on it. We dug in and believe it or not, there were heaps and heaps of old grey bones and dog biscuit. Just looked as if some Great Dane had been eating off the land when his owner came along and tried to stop him. Being bigger than his master he just bit him through the neck and evidently dispatched him then and there.⁸⁸

Seeking to reassure Fala, Lacie E. Perfect explained that “The huge pachyderm has his immense trunk packed to capacity with propaganda just as foolish as that concerning your transportation from the Aleutian Islands, but although he goes about maliciously spouting it over these United States, he will find on November seventh that we, the people, are not as gullible as he imagines us to be.”⁸⁹

In contrast to elephants and Great Danes, Dickerson sang the praises of donkeys while observing how they are “a good partner. . . . [they] work like the devil and [are] always helping someone.”⁹⁰ Not only are they helpful, he averred that they were better in wartime. So much so, that “we got a rule at the fort here that whenever a private or officer meets a mule he salutes pronto.”⁹¹ Dickerson also recounted a story he heard from a friend in Burma. An elephant, he said, was tasked with moving logs across a stream so that a new bridge could be built for the heavy artillery. The elephant failed to do so and Japanese soldiers overwhelmed the battalion stationed there. By telling this story, Dickerson suggested that a Republican must not enter the White House if the U.S. was to win the war.

One of the most common animal tropes was the description of people as dogs—not as elephants or donkeys. In a poem written by Percy Altire’s dog, he explained to Fala,

There’s a lot of jealous pups
And really low down muts,
That will try to bite your Boss Election Day.⁹²

Although some characterized Dewey and the Republicans as dogs, many of them were hesitant to do so, lest they disgrace dogs—as opposed to politicians. Irene Lee told Fala, “Keep your chin up. You’re a Scottie; but [Dewey] looks like a Bull Pup (with apologies to the Bull Pup).”⁹³ The insult cut two ways—Dewey’s appearance was criticized and a dog was treated as more worthy of an apology than him. The humor partially resides in Lee’s parenthetical aside, which comes unexpectedly. Similarly, Chica described Republicans as a dog, but quickly adjusted her rhetoric. She noted her eagerness “to chew the pants off those scurrilous scandal mongrels! No, Fala, I think that word must be mongers, for some one once turned up her nose at me and said ‘Chica is just a mongrel.’”⁹⁴

Whereas Chica was hesitant to use the term mongrels, another dog, Chiang, blasted the Republicans with invective. He wrote, “This place is crawling with republican mongrels afflicted with a Dewey rabies but I take no back talk from any of them.”⁹⁵ Chiang’s letter is as short as it is fierce. His description of Dewey as rabies situates the Republican candidate as both foreign to dogs and a harmful, maddening disease. Elizabeth Knobel also incorporated rabies in a poem she sent to Fala. Knobel, however, subverted this rabies imagery. Owing to the deceptive simplicity of this poem, it is worth reproducing it in full.

Fala, dear Fala, come home to me now,
 From your tall-storied battleship taking a bow.
 The Victory gardens all need you, my pet,
 For by Rabbit Republicans they are beset.

No, I don’t mean “rabid”— it’s “rabbit,” I wot,
 For they nibble the roots of each Victory plot.
 They’re pink-eyed from weeping at Government woes,
 And, oh, the inadequate tails they expose!

Fala, dear Fala, come home to me now;
 There’s a Rarebit dished up for you that is a wow!
 Though an all-Rabbit diet would not be nutritious,
 Yet when in a stew they are simply delicious!

But after the frost they will get in November
 The Rabbit Republicans none will remember.
 For, like to the lemmings, their sad lot will be
 To be sunk in the waves of a high Fala Sea.⁹⁶

In this poem, Knobel relies on rabbit imagery to describe Republicans. This poem is not simply a cute, homespun poem for Fala. It reveals Knobel’s nuanced awareness of the political climate. In the first stanza, she describes Fala “taking a bow” on his “tall-storied battleship.” There is a degree of cleverness in her use of bow, which both connotes a physical stooping, as though in response to acclamation, but also the front section of a boat. Similarly, tall-storied contains an oblique reference to tall-tales, which Knobel suggests the Republicans have been telling about

Fala. This tall-tale theme is echoed again when she mentions the Republican's "inadequate tails." Like those who employed the term mongrels and promptly withdrew it, Knobel invites her audience to associate rabies with Republicans before replacing it with rabbit. Knobel further casts the Republicans as a destructive force when noting that the rabbits nibbling the "roots of each Victory plot." Here she uses home gardens—called Victory gardens during the war—ruined by rabbits as an analogy for Republicans undermining the war effort. In Knobel's line about rabbit stew, she also implies the secondary meaning of stew; namely, to fuss or become agitated. Thus, it is "delicious," or rather delightful, to see Republicans all in a dither when their lies fall apart. Equally important is the relationship between rabbits and terriers. Fala is portrayed as being in a position of power over the Republicans when she describes the Rarebit (rabbit) stew that has dished up for Fala. Echoing the general theme of this poem is the last stanza, which suggests that after the elections Republicans will be forgotten—ultimately undone or "sunk in the waves of a high Fala Sea" (fallacy).

Many people characterized Dewey and Republicans as dogs, but only one person writing to FDR allegorized him as a dog. According to H. W. Hoy, "I was ask [sic] by a fellow worker my opinion of your speech as compared with Dewey's of last nite. I used the above to express my sentiments. The drawing is a little crude but I'm for you for 4th, 5th + 6th terms"⁹⁷ (fig. 4-7). Although Hoy's title, "Children's page of dog lore" betrays an anxiety of cartoons, his drawing provides a clear vision of the campaign. Hoy depicted FDR as a St. Bernard (a large breed best known for saving humans) complete with his iconic cigarette holder dangling from his mouth, and Dewey as a "feist"—that is to say, "any small nuisance type of dog." Hoy also associated Dewey with the dog in Aesop's fable, who, despite his inability to eat grain, lay in a manger and barked at nearby animals, thereby preventing them from eating. Whereas Fala explains in

perfect English that Dewey is young and inexperienced, the Republican presidential candidate can only emit a few unintelligible “yips.”⁹⁸ The drawing’s composition further nuances the meaning. Fala’s head dwarfs Dewey’s smaller body, and is placed in a dominant position above. Dewey appears the perfect size for a tasty snack. All three dogs surround the “Bone of Contention”—the presidency. Clearly, Dewey has no chance at lifting the bone; much less put it in his mouth. This theme is echoed by Roosevelt, who tells Fala, “Aw – let him nibble a little bit. Its [sic] too big for him to get away with.”

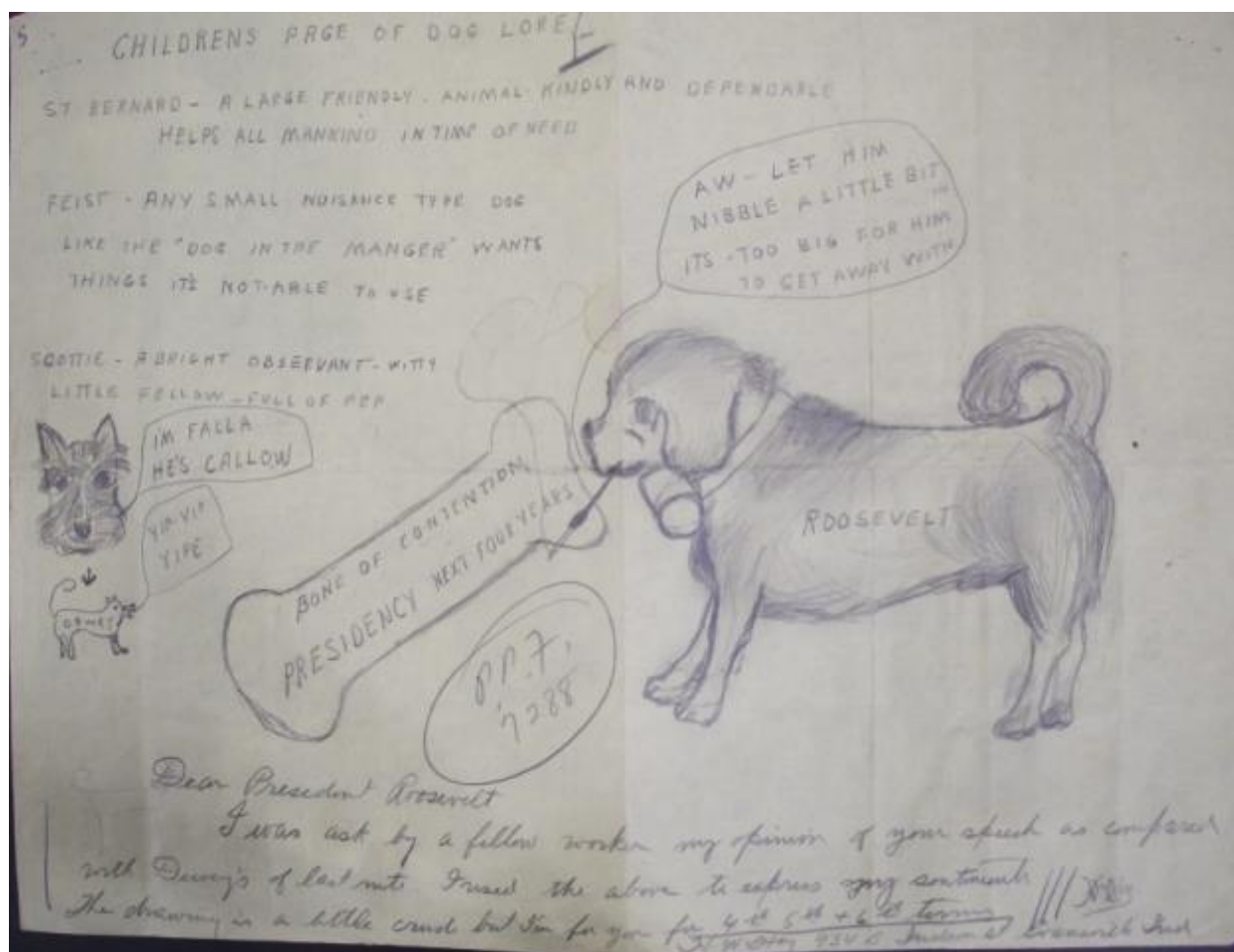


Fig. 4-7. Animal allegory of Dewey and FDR. Courtesy of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library.

Conclusion

The Fala letters reveal how animals were used to both make and express political judgments about the 1944 election. For the most part, animals provided a means to articulate deeply held political positions. By channeling their political views through animals, voters expressed themselves in a manner that deflected attention from their *a priori* conclusions. It was not Zdena Trinko speaking, but Fala. Animals offered the pretense of a non-rhetorical point of view, as humans are the true “political animals.” Similarly, animal allegory naturalized the judgments by drawing upon cultural accepted schemas about different species. Donkeys and elephants were not simply prized party symbols, the behavior of these animals, it was argued, could explain each party’s policies. Along the same lines, the breed of a politician’s dog could reveal their personality.

Using animals to articulate a political position offered another benefit: one cannot argue with an animal. This is why FDR’s remarks about Fala are often celebrated. The suggestion that Fala was offended is so patently absurd, that one cannot respond to it without looking ridiculous—unless, perhaps, he or she also speaks for an animal. By changing the grounds of the debate by engaging in animal-speak, one makes it difficult for others to challenge his or her position. In many ways, injecting animals into political discourse serves to stymie debate.

But even while shutting down debate, animals provided Americans with one more means to become involved, whether they made a sign supporting Fala or wrote to him. By taking FDR’s comments about Fala one step further, they also identified with their president. For many, a dog in the White House was a reassuring signal that the president shared their concerns.

Thus, animals provided both a novel means for American citizens to identify with their president, and new ways of political reasoning in the 1944 election.

¹ Barbara Stuhler, "A Minnesota Footnote to the 1944 Presidential Election," *Minnesota History* 52, no. 1 (April 1, 1990): 27–34. Knutson later inquired whether a plane was used to retrieve the dog; see "Presses 'Fala' Inquiry: Knutson Asks if Navy Sent a Plane to Aleutians for Dog," *New York Times*, September 14, 1944, 25.

² Richard Norton Smith, *Thomas E. Dewey and His Times* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 421.

³ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Address at a Union Dinner. Washington, D.C.," September 23, 1944. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed April 24, 2012, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16563>.

⁴ Samuel I. Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt* (New York: Harper, 1967), 473. Recordings of this speech reveal that this paragraph received the longest bouts of laughter.

⁵ Rosenman, *Working*, 479. This slogan would return, albeit modified, during the next election. Someone from Texas brought President Harry S Truman a goat, named "Dewey's goat."

⁶ Roger Butterfield, "Thomas E. Dewey," *Life*, October 6, 1944, 100.

⁷ It is not clear where this quotation originated. Joseph Gies claims that Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, though there is no source backing this up. See Joseph Gies, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: Portrait of a President* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 203.

⁸ As often happens with famous historical events, divergent details become blurred until a single, intelligible narrative emerges. This speech is frequently read in light of FDR's

uncharacteristically lousy speech delivered at the Bremerton Navy Yard in Seattle on August 12, 1944. FDR suffered great pain as his ill-fitted steel braces dug into his side. Moreover, the weather was especially unforgiving, as the wind blew his papers around and the rain in his face. The “Fala speech” is often portrayed as FDR’s successful response to claims that he was sick, and proof that he was healthy enough to run for a fourth term. Halford R. Ryan has argued against this *post hoc ergo propter hoc* interpretation of FDR’s rhetorical situation. Instead, Ryan situates the president’s exigence in Dewey’s skill at giving radio addresses, which may have even exceeded FDR’s, and the likely low voter turnout that election. See Halford R. Ryan, *Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Rhetorical Presidency* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 64.

⁹ Rosenman, *Working*, 478.

¹⁰ Jean Edward Smith, *FDR* (New York: Random House, 2007), 626.

¹¹ Gil Troy, “‘Such Insulting Trash and Triviality’ Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Fala Speech Reconsidered,” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 25, no. 1 (March 1995): [electronic copy, np].

¹² Ironically, weeks before Clare Luce became implicated in the Fala rumor by Representative Harold Knutson, *Collier’s* magazine explained that she was a fan of Foster’s cartoon “in spite of her anti-Roosevelt platform.” According to Luce, “Mr. Fala may be pro-Roosevelt, but I like him anyway;” *Collier’s*, July 15, 1944, 40.

¹³ FDR expressed to the editors of *Liberty* his interest in meeting Foster shortly after the cartoonist began producing Fala cartoons. After a number of weeks passed with no meeting arranged, Foster wrote to FDR on June 11, 1942: “I have heard nothing more of a definite nature regarding this high privilege, so I am taking the liberty of expressing my gratification personally

and to say that whenever a moment can be spared I am at your command.” Closing the letter, he continued, “As for ‘Fala’, meanwhile, I shall endeavor to ‘keep ‘im barking’.” On June 22, Secretary to the President, M. H. McIntyre, wrote to Foster stating, “Just as soon as the President has a little time he wants you to come down and see him for a few minutes. He is pretty well swamped at the moment, of course, as the Prime Minister is still here and King Peter is expected later in the week.” Unfortunately FDR was unable to meet owing to the busy war schedule.

While Foster was likely disappointed, his misfortune is actually quite fortuitous for this study. Since they never met in person, there was less opportunity for collusion between them. All of their dialogue has been preserved in the form of personal correspondence. Foster was an avid FDR follower, but would occasionally alter reality as he found fit. For instance, on January 26, 1943, he sent a telegram to FDR’s correspondence secretary, Marvin McIntyre asking whether “Fala accompanied the President to North Africa.” Despite receiving the answer “no,” one of Foster’s cartoons was shortly thereafter published in *Collier’s* depicting Fala with FDR in Africa.

¹⁴ David M. Jordan, *FDR, Dewey, and the Election of 1944* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 20.

¹⁵ FDR’s poor health had a tremendous effect on former White House secretary Missy LeHand. According to Conrad Black, “She was so disturbed by the haggard appearance of President Roosevelt in a newsreel . . . that when she returned home, she sought out old photo albums, became agitated, suffered a series of strokes though the night, was taken in an ambulance to Charles Naval Hospital, and died there in the morning of July 31. Missy was only

forty-five.” See Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Champion of Freedom* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 980. Rosenman also mentions increasingly bad health; see *Working*, 471.

¹⁶ Jordan, *FDR, Dewey, and the Election of 1944*, 133.

¹⁷ Smith, *Thomas E. Dewey*, 407. FDR would later ride all day during a storm in NYC with the car roof down to prove that he was hale and hearty.

¹⁸ Smith, *Thomas E. Dewey*, 407.

¹⁹ By no means did “Mr. Fala of the White House” become a doom and gloom cartoon. Foster still drew some cutesy, humorous cartoons of Fala. The anxiety that infuses many of these cartoons, however, is readily apparent and unprecedented in the series’ three year run.

²⁰ Alan Foster, “Mr. Fala of the White House,” *Collier’s* April 22, 1944, 30.

²¹ Alan Foster, “Mr. Fala of the White House,” *Collier’s* January 22, 1944, 62.

²² Helen M. Sévegné to Mr. Fala, February 24, 1944; Folder: Fala Feb. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

²³ It seems probable that Alan Foster would have received fan mail. To my knowledge, however, it has not been preserved.

²⁴ Alan Foster, “Mr. Fala of the White House,” *Collier’s* May 13, 1944, 26.

²⁵ “Laddie Boy” Coulter to Fala, November 13, 1944; Folder: Fala Nov. 1944; 7288 Nov.–Dec. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Notably, President Harding’s dog was named “Laddie Boy” twenty years prior.

²⁶ Alan Foster, “Mr. Fala of the White House,” *Collier’s* April 29, 1944, 54.

²⁷ Alan Foster, "Mr. Fala of the White House," *Collier's* July 15, 1944, 27.

²⁸ Florence Cantor to FDR, October 16, 1944; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

²⁹ Memo summarizing Hon. Robert S. Kerr's letter to FDR, September 24, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Kerr had delivered the Key Note address at the 1944 Democratic Convention.

³⁰ Courtesy of Wikipedia, last accessed May 3, 2013, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:VictorTalkingLogo.jpg>.

³¹ Someone wrote to FDR about her parakeet's negative reaction to his voice. I cannot remember where this letter is in the archive. It preceded the election.

³² Terry Saet to Fala, October 27, 1944; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³³ "Fala or Canute," *Lawrence Sunday Item*, October (???—my photograph didn't catch the exact date), 1944; Folder: Fala Nov. 1944; 7288 Nov.–Dec. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁴ "Fala or Canute," *Lawrence Sunday Item*, October (???—my photograph didn't catch the exact date), 1944; Folder: Fala Nov. 1944; 7288 Nov.–Dec. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁵ Estelle Ran to FDR, November 22, 1944; Folder: Fala Dec. 1944; 7288 Nov.–Dec. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁶ Unlike Fala who received hundreds of letters during the election, Canute does not appear to have received any. The Thomas Dewey Papers, which are archived at the University of Rochester, contain no letters addressed to Canute. In light of the dog’s medical and food bills, which are preserved, it seems likely that Dewey’s secretary would have kept any letters he received.

³⁷ J.P. Grip to FDR, September 25, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁸ J.P. Grip to FDR, September 25, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

³⁹ Fido to Fala, September 28, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴⁰ Along the same lines, Harold V. Sheets wrote, “buck up old Fala, you may get an opportunity to retire and spend the next few years of your life away from the hustle and bustle of Washington. I surely hope so for your part as well as for the good and safe-keeping of the nation.” Sheets closed his letter, “You can count on me in the coming election to do what I can for you.” Harold V. Sheets to Fala, September 25, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴¹ Another person interviewed stated, “I just don’t like that kind of dog. . . . Whenever I come to something about Fala in the newspapers I just skip over it and don’t read it. I don’t see how Roosevelt would care whether or not he left the dog in the Aleutians. I wouldn’t.” See “President’s Dog, Fala, Becomes An ‘Issue’ in the Campaign: Emphatic Opinions Expressed Here Both in Belief and Disbelief of Story of Pet’s Expensive ‘Rescue’ Joked About in FDR’s Speech,” *The Kansas City Times*, September 27, 1944, n.p. [this article was appended to “Laddie Boy’s” Letter]; Folder: Fala Nov. 1944; 7288 Nov.–Dec. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. [4960] Note that he does not like Scottie’s specifically. “Laddie Boy” Coulter’s owner got angry when she read his quote. Coulter, a fellow Scottish terrier concluded, “Anyways we don’t need his vote.” “Laddie Boy” Coulter to Fala, November 13, 1944; Folder: Fala Nov. 1944; 7288 Nov.–Dec. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. [4958]

⁴² Chica [“Auntie Jay” Jessie Douglas Wilford] to Fala, October 4, 1944; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴³ Chica [“Auntie Jay” Jessie Douglas Wilford] to Fala, October 4, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴⁴ Mary Agnes Harris to FDR, September 1, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴⁵ Paul King to Falla, November 10, 1944; Folder: Fala Nov. 1944; 7288 Nov.–Dec. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴⁶ Helen B. Lilly to FDR, October 3, 1944; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴⁷ Paul King to Falla, November 10, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴⁸ Laura Cosseboom to FDR, October 26, 1944; Folder: Fala Nov. 1944; 7288 Nov.–Dec. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴⁹ Lawrence to Fala, n.d.; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵⁰ Betty to Fala, n.d.; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵¹ “Fluffy Vies with Fala: Sheep Dog is ‘Campaigning’ for Dewey in Pittsburgh,” *New York Times*, October 21, 1944, 9.

⁵² The person writing appears to have confused Fluffy’s campaign sign as suggesting that he was being given to Dewey.

⁵³ Fluffy to Falla, n.d.; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. *Italics original.*

⁵⁴ The similar length shadows and grass suggest that these photographs were likely taken on the same day, however.

⁵⁵ Pitzie Adams to Fala, September 24, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵⁶ Chico & Popo to Fala, October 3, 4484

⁵⁷ Kingswood Asta per S.C. to Fala, September 25, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵⁸ Poochie Van Contren, September 23, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵⁹ Poochie Van Contren, September 23, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶⁰ Pitzie Adams to Fala, September 24, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶¹ Fluffy to Fala, October 17, 1944; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶² Pinksie to Fala, September 27, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶³ “Boots” Rentz to Fala, September 24, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶⁴ Shadow to Fala, October 9, 1944; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶⁵ Shadow to Fala, October 9, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶⁶ Fluffy to Fala, October 17, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶⁷ Colonel Pip Terry (otherwise known as Stinky) to Fala, n.d.; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶⁸ Fluffy to Fala, October 17, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶⁹ Poochie Van Contren, September 23, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷⁰ Chica [“Auntie Jay” Jessie Douglas Wilford] to Fala, October 4, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷¹ Two exceptions to Fala’s low profile include his appearance at a White House conference on rural education on October 5, where he did a series of tricks to the conference-goers delight. He also rode along with FDR in New York City on October 20, 1944. On that rainy day, many claimed that Fala stood at attention during a playing of the National Anthem. Shortly thereafter, FDR kept Fala home, joking that all the attention had gone to his dog’s head.

⁷² Florence Cantor to FDR, October 16, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷³ Raine Bennett, “Commentary Feature (Part II),” September 9, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁴ Raine Bennett, "Commentary Feature (Part II)," September 9, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷⁵ Raine Bennett, "Commentary Feature (Part II)," September 9, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷⁶ Although Bennett had fact-checked with the White House about Fala, received final approval for the transcript, and mailed a copy after the broadcast, it is not clear whether his interview inspired FDR's comment that Fala's "Scotch soul was furious."

⁷⁷ For more about the connection between spiritualism and the development of radio, see John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), especially pages 102-5.

⁷⁸ Zdena Trinko to FDR, October 11, 1944; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁹ Zdena Trinko to FDR, October 11, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁸⁰ Zdena Trinko to FDR, October 11, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁸¹ Charlotte Storm to FDR, n.d.; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸² Dog-friends to FDR, n.d. [appended letter from Fala to Honorable Governor Dewey, October 21, 1944]; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸³ Dog-friends to FDR, n.d. [appended letter from Fala to Honorable Governor Dewey, October 21, 1944]; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁸⁴ David Herman, "Storyworld/Umwelt: Nonhuman Experiences in Graphic Narratives," *SubStance* 40, no. 1 (2011): 167. See also Suzanne Keen, "Fast Tracks to Narrative Empathy: Anthropomorphism and Dehumanization in Graphic Narratives," *SubStance* 40, no. 1 (2011): esp. 137–8.

⁸⁵ Often there is give and take, too. The association of Democrats with donkeys dates back to Andrew Jackson's 1828 presidential campaign. Whereas his opponents labeled him a jackass, he embraced the animal for its persistence.

⁸⁶ FDR also engaged in animal allegory while speaking to the Teamsters. He declared, "We have all seen many marvelous stunts in the circus but no performing elephant could turn a hand-spring without falling flat on his back." Additionally, FDR hinted at the belief that ostriches hide their heads in the sand in the following remark: "There are some politicians who kept their heads buried deep in the sand while the storms of Europe and Asia were headed our way," FDR, "Address at a Union Dinner. Washington, D.C."

⁸⁷ Norman R. Dickinson to Fala, September 26, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸⁸ Norman R. Dickinson to Fala, September 26, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁸⁹ Lacie E. Perfect to Fala, September 27, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹⁰ Norman R. Dickinson to Fala, September 26, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹¹ Norman R. Dickinson to Fala, September 26, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹² Percy Altire to FDR, September 26, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹³ Irene Lee to Mr. Fala, September 24, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹⁴ Chica [“Auntie Jay” Jessie Douglas Wilford] to Fala, October 4, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹⁵ Chiang to Fala, n.d.; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹⁶ Elizabeth Knobel to Fala, October 7, 1944; Folder: Fala Oct. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹⁷ H. W. Hoy to FDR, n.d.; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹⁸ This is not an allegory, but much of the same principles still hold. Duky wrote an analogy:

Now take this chap Dewey. May be a sincere sort of gink and all that, but haven’t you noticed that he’s a bit on the yapping side? Like Bubbles down the street, forever yapping, and noone [sic] paying the least attention to him. Just overdid it. Nice dog, but I can’t say that any of us exactly look up to him with adoration in our eyes. The one we have all accepted without reservation as our leader is Captain, who never yaps. Marches

serenely though life, ignoring the petty insults hurled at him by the proletariat of dogdom.

Like your Daddy, Fala—can't be bothered with pettiness in any form—just laughs it off.

And can you tell me of anything that is more soul satisfying than a hearty laugh?

See Duky [Catherine Newton] to Fala, September 30, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

5

Filming Fala

In May 1941, FDR's distant cousin, Margaret Suckley, began working on a children's book about Fala. Bubbling with excitement, she explained to FDR: "I'm *trying* to write a 'true story of Fala'! . . . if I *could* make it interesting, I would offer it up for publication! That *would* be thrilling!"¹ Shortly thereafter, Scribner's offered Suckley a contract for her manuscript. With the assistance of Alice Dalgliesh, editor of children's books at Scribner's, *The True Story of Fala* was published on April 6, 1942.²

Less than two weeks after *True Story*'s publication, Dalgliesh wrote to the White House inquiring as to FDR's policy on filmic adaptations. Dalgliesh explained how someone recently presented her with a motion picture script he "practically sold to Paramount."³ The film was "a sort of propaganda story in which Fala accidentally gave away state secrets when a German dachshund tried to steal them."⁴ Dalgliesh quickly dismissed the script since it had "nothing whatever to do with the book."⁵ Furthermore, she was "sure the President would hate it."⁶ On the odd chance, however, that someone might offer a script based on *True Story*, Dalgliesh wanted to know how to proceed. As the author of *True Story*, Suckley technically had motion picture rights. Because Fala was the president's dog, however, Dalgliesh was not sure how to handle any future movie pitches. "I don't think it likely," Dalgliesh wrote, "that anyone will want to do it in a dignified way, and we have no real interest in it." She conceded, however, that "Strange things happen."⁷

Over the next few months, strange things did happen. Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer (MGM) was allowed to make a short based on *True Story*. It is unclear who pitched the short, though Dalgliesh did not view the book as particularly film-worthy. Owing to Suckley's fastidious collection of Fala's memorabilia, and the absence of any early letters to or from MGM pitching the film, it seems likely that MGM pitched the adaptation to Dalgliesh, who in turn notified FDR and Suckley. By November 2, 1942, Producer Herbert Morgan from MGM finished the adaptation's screenplay. MGM's short, *Fala, the President's Dog* (*President's Dog*), was released on April 10, 1943. In the short, Fala shows viewers one of his typical days at the White House and explains his relationship with the White House staff, president, and visitors. *President's Dog* was well received and MGM began working on another, *Fala at Hyde Park* (*Hyde Park*). Filmed in the fall of 1944, *Hyde Park* was scheduled for a 1945 spring release. War-time delays and FDR's death, however, pushed its release date back to January 29, 1946.⁸ After FDR died, MGM revised the film slightly to account for his absence. In this short, Fala shows viewers around FDR's estate in Hyde Park and reminisces about the "good old days" when "the Chief" was alive.

The Fala shorts were part of a comedic series called *Pete Smith Specialties*—one of MGM's better known filler materials.⁹ The Specialties were widely popular, and ranged from instructional videos to spoofs. Much of their comedy was derived from Smith's ironic narration. According to Leonard Maltin, Smith "always kept the films down to earth, so that moviegoers came to regard him as a friend, and the films as friendly visits rather than movies."¹⁰ Smith's amicable relationship with moviegoers complemented the already friendly portrayal of Fala presented by the media.

As far as shorts go, the Fala shorts are fairly mediocre.¹¹ Even so, they are the most sustained attempts at shaping and using Fala's identity. The Fala shorts provided viewers with a familiar, yet indirect view of the presidency—a view grounded first and foremost in domesticity and family. By watching Fala perform his daily routine, viewers were treated to brief glimpses of the president, White House, and Hyde Park. Whereas news articles about the president tended to emphasize his latest political ventures, these Fala shorts offered a (seemingly) less politically interested view of FDR. In so doing, both shorts offered a strategic portrayal of FDR's presidency.

Learning and Laughing: 1940s Movie Culture

In the 1940s, a trip to the movie theatre involved much more than seeing a film. Moviegoers were treated to a newsreel and a short or cartoon before the main feature. Shorts and newsreels were ten minutes long (the length of one reel). Movie shorts were a remnant of a bygone era when the film industry first established itself. Originally, all films were shorts. Films gradually grew longer than one reel, but shorts maintained a cherished place in theatrical entertainment for several decades. The subject matter of shorts varied widely. Audiences were shown musicals, travelogues, dramas, sports, romances, and educational shorts. Comedies were especially popular. A reel provided the perfect length for a few laughs from well-known characters such as "The Three Stooges" and "Our Gang." Most shorts were in black and white, though as the decade drew to a close they were increasingly shot in color.

Shorts and newsreels may strike a modern moviegoer as superfluous, but cutting either from the program was largely unthinkable. Shorts were fairly easy to produce, profitable for studios, and often the subject of acclaim. Newsreels rarely broke any news (newspapers and the

radio spread news more quickly), but they provided the only means to see extensive footage of current events as televisions were not common until the mid-1950s. Newsreels allowed Americans to see footage of the world around them. Instead of merely reading about or seeing pictures of a battle, newsreels offered a front-line vantage of the war. Newsreels could also provide a more intimate view of the president. Richard W. Steele explains, “Official affairs and particularly the events touching on the President and the ‘first family’ were of enormous public interest. FDR was the nation’s premier celebrity and his appearances on film were as attractive to theatergoers as his broadcasts were to radio audiences.”¹² According to Steele, newsreels served an important function for FDR’s administration:

newsreels gave official events a more dramatic and interesting form than did either the newspapers or radio. The film version of politics emphasized the ‘human side’ of the President as no other medium could. Shots of the President playing water polo with fellow polio sufferers at Warm Springs, placidly entertaining and enjoying his grandchildren at Hyde Park, hauling in a fish on a vacation cruise in the Caribbean—all portraits of a vigorous, down-to-earth- man, full of confidence and enthusiasm for life—helped perfect his image as the happy warrior.¹³

Motion pictures thus played an important role in constructing the film image of FDR’s administration.

Movie attendance rose sharply during World War II. “The war,” Garth Jowett writes, “proved to be an unexpected economic bonanza for the motion picture industry.”¹⁴ Americans who were working long wartime hours in defense plants had extra spending money. On their time off, many frequented the movies as other popular forms of entertainment were limited

during the war. Gas was rationed. Racetracks and nightclubs were often closed. Movies offered a perfect respite from long, tedious wartime work shifts.

On any given night, a theatre's program offered a unique mixture of news and entertainment. Viewers came to laugh and learn. During the war, viewers also imbibed a heavy dose of cultural propaganda. Newsreels, shorts, and main features alike were frequently used to promote devotion to the war effort, so as to preserve an American way of life. As American viewers began to tire of war films, Hollywood began producing more comedies, musicals, and romances. Yet even these seemingly non-war films often implicated the war in some fashion.

Promotion

Of the two Fala shorts, *President's Dog* received greater fanfare. *President's Dog* debuted at the Radio City Music Hall in New York, as part of their Easter Program. Writing to Morgan, Suckley reported, "They tell me that there were many ohs and ahs of approbation when it appeared at Radio City Music Hall. The President tells me they have shown it 4 times in the White House, for everyone loves it. Mr. Churchill loved it too."¹⁵ The National Press Club was also offered a private viewing of the first Fala short.¹⁶ Generally speaking, *President's Dog* was more widely advertised than *Hyde Park*. National periodicals, such as *Time* and *Life*, noted the first short's release. The FDR archive, which meticulously preserved FDR and Fala's memorabilia, contains no promotional material for *Hyde Park*.¹⁷

MGM sent theatre owners a seven page campaign booklet to help promote *President's Dog*. Theatre owners were encouraged to target dog owners specifically. According to the campaign booklet, "Every dog owner is a dog lover and every dog lover is a potential patron."¹⁸ Moreover, the booklet assured that "Most doting dog owners, at the slightest encouragement,

will relate incidents to prove the superior intelligence of their particular pet. A contest for such accounts of local dog lore would provide interesting material for newspaper or radio use, with winning entrants rewarded with guest tickets to your showing of 'Fala.'"¹⁹ The sheer number of letters addressed to FDR or Fala explaining their dog's antics suggests that this claim was well-founded. Theatre owners were also encouraged to promote the film by holding a special benefit showing in which the proceeds would go to Dogs for Defense. Initially, Morgan and Suckley had planned on coordinating a special premier in NYC with Dogs for Defense.²⁰ The showing of *President's Dog* at Radio City Music Hall, however, preempted this war benefit.

Included in the campaign booklet were pre-written reviews for theatre owners to publish in local newspapers. *President's Dog* was often advertised as providing another Roosevelt's perspective. Some reviews even described *President's Dog* as the equivalent of Eleanor's popular "My Day" column (fig. 5-1), which she began writing in 1935 and published six days a week until 1962. Eleanor used "My Day" to express her views on public issues and build a strong rapport with Americans. Befitting a dog, Fala's perspective was much more limited, apolitical, and often cute. One press release noted, "As much as he likes Mr. Roosevelt, there are some things Fala doesn't understand about him. For instance, when they have breakfast together every morning, Mr. Roosevelt always takes coffee, toast and eggs when he could have a nice tasty dog biscuit."²¹ These cutesy, apolitical portrayals of Fala were especially prominent in the *President's Dog*'s promotional art. Referring to a cartoon that showed Fala's removal from a cabinet meeting, the campaign booklet explained, "The affairs of state are a little beyond the ken of . . . Fala. . . . He can't understand why these men sit around talking when they could be outdoors chasing a squirrel."²² Thus, viewers were promised a view of the White House free of politics.



Fig. 5-1. Ad mat showing Fala typing a “My Day” column. Courtesy of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library.

In a similar vein, the campaign booklet downplayed the office of the President. *President's Dog* was described as a “simple tale of a man and his dog.”²³ One review declared that Fala’s “screen exploits will be going out around the globe to entertain millions and maybe, incidentally, to give a graphic idea of the kind of free-and-easy democracy a dog can enjoy in a *typical* American home—even though this household happens to be an official one with big white doors.”²⁴ The reviewer admitted that Fala’s situation was not unique—he lives in the White House, after all—while nonetheless obfuscating this important detail. Moreover, democracy was portrayed not as a beneficiary of people, but of dogs. To modify the popular aphorism that you can tell a lot about a person by how he treats his dog, the review implied that one can tell a lot about a government by how it treats animals.

It is unclear why *Hyde Park* was promoted less than *President's Dog*, though FDR’s death is the most likely explanation. Fala’s fame largely depended on his relationship with the

president. *Life*'s advertisement for the first Fala film is telling in this regard. The advertisement contained two full pages of movie stills. Although FDR briefly appears in the short, nearly one half of these movie stills contain a scene of him with Fala. Moreover, despite MGM's eagerness to produce more Fala shorts while FDR was alive, they never broached the topic again after his death. Fala's relevance was tied to the president.

"A Typical American Home"²⁵

The Fala shorts are largely organized around the Scottie's daily routine. In *President's Dog*, Fala wanders around the White House. He digs up bones in the front lawn, helps secret service men guard "the Chief," flirts with switchboard operators, waits in the kitchen as his and FDR's breakfasts are prepared, and leafs through his scrapbook with Diana Hopkins (the daughter of FDR's aide, Harry Hopkins). In the second short, Fala explores the buildings and grounds of Hyde Park. He shows viewers family heirlooms and leafs through more personal photos, reminiscing about the good old days. In so doing, Fala gives viewers an intimate, behind-the-scenes view of FDR's homes. Although Fala shows viewers around the White House and talks about FDR, he never dwells on political events. Aside from his travels and visitors, Fala appears to live an ordinary life.

The overriding theme of domesticity in *President's Dog* is grounded, in part, by Fala's scrapbook, which serves as a major narrative device. Each time the camera focuses on a scrapbooked photograph, the film cuts to rolling footage related to the image. Gradually, the content of each photograph progresses from family matters to more official, presidential events. The first photograph presents the Roosevelts as an ordinary middle class American family: Eleanor sits at a table knitting, while FDR—with a book open in front of him—reaches down to

pet Fala (fig. 5-2). Viewers are then shown footage of Fala playfully tangled up in a ball of yarn. The second photograph and its corresponding footage show FDR and Fala enjoying a fairly common male pastime: fishing. FDR's official duties start to become clearer in the next few photographs. Fala is shown sitting beside FDR in the presidential limousine, in an attempt to ride along to the 1941 inauguration. As Fala puzzles over his inability to join the president, the short cuts to newsreel footage of FDR being sworn in for a third term. Fala then looks at another photograph of a boat. Unlike the fishing trip, however, the events surrounding this boat were decidedly more political. This photograph was taken during the Atlantic Conference, when FDR met with Winston Churchill to discuss their post-war goals. Whereas the inauguration photograph captures FDR's democratic leadership, the photographs of him meeting with Churchill emphasize his involvement in the war overseas.



Fig. 5-2. Family photograph of Eleanor, Franklin, and Fala. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

Significantly, although scrapbooks often contain an assortment of photographs, newspaper clippings, and other personal mementos, Fala's scrapbook contains only photographs. All these photographs appear to be ordinary and unmediated originals. Even photographs that were widely reproduced in the news, such as Fala's attempt to join FDR at the 1941 Inauguration, are not cut from a newspaper. The Roosevelts are presented as a typical family, which prizes their own private collection of personal photographs. That Fala is accompanied by Hopkins adds a more familial tone, even though she is not one of the Roosevelt's children.

The scrapbook's domestic function is also revealed by differences between the script and the short. Originally, Fala and Hopkins were scripted to look at four more pages in the scrapbook, which revealed how Fala's popularity was cultivated by newspaper photographs of him. The first page contained a photograph of reporters taking Fala's picture as he performed tricks. The next page held three newspaper clippings of the photograph—each clipping written in a different language: English, Spanish, and Russian. The next two pages were to include letters written in Chinese and Spanish.²⁶ The omission of these letters in the short further assists Fala's portrayal as an ordinary dog.

Fala shows viewers around the White House, but the sights are limited. Prior to MGM filming *President's Dog*, FDR combed through the script with White House Press Secretary Stephen Early. Where the script called for "a series of interesting shots which reveal White House locales as the breakfast tray is being carried up to the President's bedroom," FDR underlined "reveal White House locales" in red pencil; using a regular pencil, Early wrote "out entirely" in the margins.²⁷ Similar annotations mark the script throughout. Where the script called for "interior white house corridor," the "in" of interior and "corridor" are crossed out. In the margins is written "exterior only."²⁸ In a letter appended to the script, Suckley explained, "it

is a well known rule that for some time no *indoor* photographs that would show the plan of the White House, have been allowed to be made.”²⁹ Scenes that faked White House locales, such as the kitchen, switchboard room, and FDR’s bedroom were permitted, however. Thus, the film carefully depicts the White House without revealing its interior.

Morgan sought to flaunt Fala’s privileged access in *Hyde Park*. The screenplay planned a close-up shot of a sign near Hyde Park’s entrance, reading, “STOP – NO ADMITTANCE.” Fala, however, tells the audience, “Don’t pay any attention to that—I’ll get you in.”³⁰ This scene did not make it into the film, possibly because they did not want to discourage people from visiting the library, which opened to the public on July 1, 1941.³¹ Suckley and the acting Director, Dr. Nixon, felt that the film would “be a good ‘Ad’ for th[e] library.”³² When Fala enters the library in the film, he ambles past the guard, saying, “Hello Mister! See, I’ve got influence around here.”³³ The script also planned for Fala, when entering FDR’s hilltop cottage, to remark “maybe I shouldn’t take you in here. This is where the Chief and I come when we want to get away by ourselves.”³⁴ Doubts notwithstanding, Fala shows the place anyway. His remarks, however, underscore the privilege that his viewers are enjoying.

Scenes criticizing Eleanor were also off limits. Compared to previous First Ladies, Eleanor traveled extensively, so as to complete her own social work. As a result, she often received criticism for her unwillingness to stay put in the home. In one of *Hyde Park*’s cut scenes, Fala poked fun at Eleanor’s travels while commenting on her luggage. Fala, who was anticipating FDR’s return, exclaims, “Wh ew—False alarm folks—those aren’t *his*!” before casually remarking, “Well, I guess she’s off again.”³⁵ Later in the script, as Fala passes by Eleanor’s cottage, he says, “This place is where the Mrs. does *her* work—when she’s home.”³⁶ Suckley tried to soften the statement by replacing “she’s home” with “the Chief can’t

get home.”³⁷ This scene, however, was also omitted. These scenes may have closely represented Eleanor’s frequent trips, but they would have undermined the portrayal of a happy and more typical American home. More importantly, their omission prevented Fala from rendering a negative judgment of FDR’s wife.

Despite Morgan’s attempt to joke about Eleanor’s frequent absenteeism, he was keenly sensitive to the importance of including FDR’s family. Morgan wanted to include Anna Roosevelt’s son, Johnny, in two scenes of *Hyde Park*. In one scene, Johnny was to ride a pony-drawn carriage while sharing an ice-cream cone with a Hyde Park caretaker’s son and Fala. At the last minute, however, FDR’s grandson could not participate. Disappointed, Morgan wrote Suckley, “We feel that the absence of little Johnny will be a definite loss to our little story, since it will leave us with no other member of the President’s family represented.”³⁸ Without Johnny, Morgan argued, “we will lack the touch of democratic camaraderie which this little scene was intended to convey, which point, of course, will not be made with a non-Roosevelt child.”³⁹ Morgan made one further appeal for Johnny’s inclusion, offering to cover the traveling expense. Johnny was unable to make it, however, and Morgan used two caretaker’s sons instead.

Morgan’s desire for “democratic camaraderie” in the Fala shorts speaks to their use as propaganda. Whereas other propaganda films—such as Frank Capra’s “Why We Fight” series—sought to support American involvement in the war, the Fala shorts suggested that the war had not fundamentally disrupted the United States’ democratic and domestic harmony. Equally important, the Fala shorts presented the White House and Hyde Park as friendly American homes. Though MGM admitted that *President’s Dog*’s was a “propaganda document” in their campaign booklet, they sought to avoid controversy by highlighting enemy propaganda and

noting that the Fala short was “made for entertainment purposes only.”⁴⁰ According to MGM, *President’s Dog*

might well become disturbing to the members of the Hitler-Goebbels propaganda clique. For it shows clearly and engagingly that in the pivotal spot of this nation’s war effort, the White House still remains in every sense a typical American home. . . . The main point of this entertainment-with-a-moral would seem to be that our White House reflects through Fala an American mood that must be constant vexation and puzzle—and an increasing worry—to the Axis propagandists. Fala’s own contribution to the portrayal on the screen of how America is going about its challenging tasks in wartime may have overtones far greater than some of the more ambitious presentations of civilian defense and home-front activity.⁴¹

Thus, the Fala shorts demonstrate that the White House still operates competently and coolly while prosecuting a major world war.⁴² Other nations may be crumbling before the fascist war machine, but Americans have managed to preserve a state of normalcy.

“A Dog’s Eye-View”⁴³

Unlike the film proposed to Dalgliesh about Fala giving State secrets to the Germans, the Fala shorts are fairly banal and presumably truthful accounts. At the start of *President’s Dog*, Fala announces matter-of-factly, “I am a little black dog, who lives in a big white house. . . . People say I’m quite famous, and want to know how I live, what I do around here. Well, right now its early morning. Like any other pooch, I like to dig up bones I bury in the yard.”⁴⁴ Though viewers know that Fala lives in *the* White House, he simply calls it *a* white house. Politics do not factor into his vision. Moreover, the continued emphasis on Fala’s canine

behavior grants fidelity to Smith's narration. Because Fala acts and thinks as a dog should, viewers are less likely to think critically about the shorts.

In both shorts, Fala is portrayed as an extremely friendly dog. Referencing Dale Carnegie, Fala explains "every morning I try out my lesson on how to win friends and influence people."⁴⁵ Everyone in the White House, whether they are working or visiting, all seem to enjoy his company. Having seen *President's Dog*, Mary Merritt wrote a letter to Fala, stating, "I know you [sic] a kind Dog to make friends with, because . . . you make your morning calls around to see your friends."⁴⁶ Fala also gets along well with the many Hyde Park caretakers. Though Fala may chase animals for fun, he is hardly threatening. "[Fala] never quite catches up to any of the squirrels—and probably wouldn't know what to do if he did,"⁴⁷ explains the campaign booklet. When Fala chases and or barks at other animals, the scenes are arranged such that Fala's energy is checked. Immediately after scattering a flock of birds, Fala fails to scare a herd of cows. After scaring a Great Dane, he is frightened by a cat. Fala may be a bundle of energy, but he is no bully.

Differences between *President's Dog's* screenplay and Smith's narration in the film reveal several revisions made to ensure Fala's friendly character. In the script, Fala complains when the White House cook forgets to put his dog biscuit on FDR's breakfast tray. Fala chides the black cook, saying, "I'll thank you not to be so forgetful next time."⁴⁸ In the film, however, this snobbish line was revised to: "No folks. He didn't forget my biscuit, really. That's just a little gag of ours. You know, part of my daily routine." Similarly, when reflecting on his removal from the presidential limousine during the 1941 Inauguration, Fala was scripted to say, "Gee, I was mad that day."⁴⁹ In the film, Fala simply says, "I couldn't understand it." In so doing, Smith softened Fala's demeanor.

Fala's friendliness plays an important role in these shorts. Most immediately, it makes Fala more palatable to dog lovers, whose fan mail indicates their belief that he was a sweet, kind dog. Fala's sociability also suggested the overall atmosphere around FDR. While promoting *President's Dog*, Morgan described Fala as "typical of the informal and friendly air that pervades the whole household from the Chief right down to the kitchen maids."⁵⁰ When he first met Fala, Morgan reportedly decided that a fourth term for FDR was all right with him.⁵¹ Whether Morgan had previously voted for FDR was not mentioned. The underlying theme throughout these shorts, however, is that viewers can learn a lot about FDR's character and the White House's environment through Fala.

Fala's narration is often unreliable in both films. He frequently fails to grasp the finer points surrounding his master's hectic schedule, resulting in ironic statements about the war. In a certain respect, Fala's ignorance stays true to his canine character. After all, dogs know only so much about the world. Nonetheless, his unreliable narration often plays a strategic role in that it requires the audience to complete the meaning intended by the film. Fala's use of irony invites the audience to use their judgment and reject one meaning for another. For example, in a drastic understatement, Fala notes that one morning "things began to happen."⁵² Immediately thereafter a montage shows increased activity in the White House—meetings, communications sent along radio towers, and so on—and ends with a shot of a calendar, revealing the day as December 7, 1941—the day of infamy at Pearl Harbor. Since Fala does not quite grasp what has happened—save that things have gotten much busier around the White House—viewers may revel in their knowledge of the war. More importantly, this format invites the audience to interpret his narration as free from propaganda. A letter written to Fala by Arthur Busbey Jr. illustrates how the dog's naivety functioned rhetorically. Busbey Jr. wrote,

I've seen you in the newsreels and the magazines lately, and in every one the narrator has always mentioned the fact that you dont [sic] get to see your master as much as you used to. Falla, your dog mind wouldnt [sic] understand if I explained that a war is being waged, and that the United Nations . . . are all depending on what your master is doing to help rid the World of tyranny (bone-stealing to you) and the like. He is doing the work of more than one, or two, or even a dozen men Falla, your master is upholding a trust the people of this country have given him. That is why he cant [sic] play with you as much as *he* 'd like to.⁵³

Unlike Fala, who possesses a “dog mind,” Busbey Jr. understands why FDR is too busy to play and tries to communicate it to the Scottie in terms of “bone-stealing.” Moreover, in a subtle twist, Busbey Jr. asserts that FDR wishes *he* could spend more time playing with Fala. By portraying Fala as apolitical and naïve, the films are able to function politically.

Fala's ignorance largely falls within two areas: the war and politics. There are very good reasons for avoiding both. According to Garth Jowett, “American audiences would not tolerate blatant propaganda in their motion pictures, and it was therefore necessary to define a role for the movies which contributed to the war effort without deliberately alienating the large potential audience by overstating the obvious.”⁵⁴ Fala's unreliable narration prevents the propaganda from feeling heavy handed. Moreover, throwing politics into the mix would likely have limited MGM's potential audience size even further. For the most part, both Fala shorts managed to steer clear of any political statements. The one exception occurs early in *President's Dog* when a squirrel outruns and then mocks Fala, saying “Exercise, bub, exercise.” Surprised, Fala replies: “Oh, a Republican!” Yet even this political statement is fairly limited and directed at another animal, as opposed to a disagreeable human. Notably, this scene received the greatest response

from people writing to the White House about the short—most of whom focused on Fala’s athleticism. Only one correspondent used this scene to make a political argument. An “Old Dog” wrote to Fala, “I saw you in your latest picture and you chased a squirrel up a tree. Now if somebody don’t chase a certain big “Squirrely” Guy up a tree we won’t have any coal to roast chestnuts on.”⁵⁵ In 1943, the nation faced an impending coal shortage after the United Mine Worker’s leader, John L. Lewis, organized several strikes. In addition to critiquing Lewis, “Old Dog” complained about Republican governors who refused to take action. The correspondent hoped that FDR might learn from Fala’s actions and take charge of the situation.

MGM became more circumspect about their political comments in *Hyde Park*. This short was filmed in October 1944—only weeks before Election Day. Morgan planned a scene in which Fala commented on a newspaper reporting the presidential election results. To ensure that the scene reflected accurately on the election, two different newspapers were used. Echoing the wartime vocabulary of the time, one read, “F.D.R. Drafted for Fourth Term” the other, “Dewey Wins: F.D.R. to Retire to Hyde Park.” In either case, Fala was to remark, “Gee, I wish I could tell what it says.”⁵⁶ This scene, however, did not make it into the film—possibly because FDR’s death made it irrelevant. The script also called for Fala to watch a Hyde Park librarian open his mail. One of the parcels would contain an inflated toy, which the script made clear should not be an elephant or donkey.⁵⁷ In the film, Fala received a sailor’s cap instead. Posing in front of a mirror, he remarks, “Say—lookie here! This goes on the other end of fellows who wear those bell-bottomed pants. Hmm . . . on them it looks good!”⁵⁸ In so doing, the film avoided a political misstep and praised those serving in the Navy.

In *President’s Dog*, Fala notes that the White House has received a lot of visitors lately. Significantly, he does not recognize that they are because of the war. When Winston Churchill

visits, Fala never refers to him by name or office. Instead, Fala describes him as “a jolly little man from the big boat.” Churchill is not even *the* jolly man, but merely *a* jolly man. Fala elides the grim realities of war through these endearing terms and innocuous descriptions of Churchill’s warship. Fala assumes that Churchill made a “long trip across the water just to tell me he was sorry for not having paid more attention to me on the boat [whereat the Atlantic Charter was signed]. A gentleman if there ever was one.”⁵⁹ Three other visitors mentioned by Fala include Medal of Honor recipients: Butch O’Hare, John Bulkeley, and Jimmy Doolittle—“the man who Dood it!” Doolittle was particularly famous for leading an air raid on Tokyo on April 18, 1942. His military action was especially important for boosting American morale after Pearl Harbor, as it demonstrated that Japan could be targeted by American air attacks. All three men are shown receiving medals and conversing with the president. Although Fala does not quite grasp why they are receiving medals, he remarks that “the Chief seemed awfully proud of them.”⁶⁰

Fala’s war naivety is also strategically arranged. Whereas most of his canine behavior occurs earlier in the film, his ignorance about the war surfaces toward the end.⁶¹ This placement allows the audience to build camaraderie and trust with Fala before being exposed to more overt political propaganda, such as awarding servicemen medals. Moreover, it allows the film to end on a positive tone. In a cut scene, Fala stops digging up a bone to observe a group of war planes flying overhead. He remarks, “Golly . . . there’s more of those big birds . . . there’s getting to be an awful lot of ‘em around here lately.”⁶² In the script, this scene occurs very early—around shots seven and eight. The film contains an analogous scene, though it is placed at the very end. In this final scene, Fala stares out a window and watches a regiment of soldiers marching down Pennsylvania Avenue. Fala was scripted to remark, “look at all those men. They all have on the same suits and they’ve got those big sticks. I don’t know where they’re going, but they look

mighty good to me.”⁶³ Instead, Fala declares, “Yes, those men have done a great job and folks, from where I sit, it looks as if we got a lot more, just like ‘em.” The film then concludes with a quick series of cuts, first focusing on the dome of the Capitol building and then on Old Glory waving proudly as American fighter planes soar overhead in formation.

Originally, the closing shot of *President’s Dog* depicted FDR alone and busy at his desk. Fala was to enter, jump into FDR’s lap, look up at him, and say, “Well, I’m only a dog and I don’t know much . . . but sometimes a dog can feel more with his heart than a human can know with his head; and whatever happens, I know that if everyone keeps marching *together* like those fellows out there, this thing that has the Chief and everybody else worried will be licked.”⁶⁴ Fala admits his ignorance, but the message is clear: a united front will win, even if people cannot comprehend the vagaries of war. Reasoning is supplanted by the sensibility of a dog’s heart. This scene was scrapped in favor of one showing FDR feeding Fala. Writing to Dalgliesh, Suckley noted “The President can’t be asked to do anything but that very important supper act!”⁶⁵

Portrayal of the President

Fala frequently talks about FDR in both shorts. Whereas a newspaper might note FDR’s daily political doings, Fala provides a more intimate portrayal of the president by talking about his hobbies and interactions with visitors at home. More than anything, Fala allows viewers to see that despite his office, FDR is still a regular guy. For instance, while looking through a scrapbook with Diana Hopkins, Fala remembers a fishing trip with FDR (at which point the film cuts to newsreel footage of FDR catching a big fish). Significantly, whereas the script called for footage of “a large, live fish flopping about [the boat] and the dog barking furiously at it,” they

settled on showing Fala sniffing a small fish. Fala explains with a chuckle, “my master always caught big ones, well *almost* always.” Such remarks are a harmless way of undercutting the president, as FDR’s fishing abilities do not reflect his political abilities. He is merely a guy enjoying a common masculine pastime. Likewise, Fala recalls the time Churchill visited Hyde Park. Fala regales viewers by explaining how FDR would grab his old fireman helmet whenever the visitor would smoke, and the two would share a laugh. Fala thereby provides a homier view of the two busy Allies leaders.

The seemingly apolitical nature of the shorts is reinforced by FDR’s limited appearances. In both shorts, FDR appears for less than a minute and never speaks. FDR wished to star in only one scene for each short (though *President’s Dog* includes several pictures and newsreel footage of the president, as well as scenes that use body doubles for FDR). FDR’s reticence to star in more scenes seems mostly owing to his health concerns and busyness during WW II. The few times FDR appears he is often performing everyday domestic tasks, such as eating breakfast in bed, throwing Fala a ball in the yard, or making Fala perform tricks for food while he sits on a living room couch. Aside from one scene of FDR handing medals behind a desk, he is never shown working. Nonetheless, Fala suggests as much. In *Hyde Park*, for instance, Fala explains how he was left behind as FDR went away, presumably on official duties. As Fala walks by a radio, he notes that he used to hear his master through it.

Morgan and Suckley sought to infuse the second short with as many personal details about FDR as possible. Morgan wanted to include shots of FDR’s ice yacht trophy, one of his editorials in *The Harvard Crimson*, a high school report card, ten of his favorite books, and a picture of Churchill. Whereas Morgan was keen on reinforcing FDR’s athleticism and education, Suckley, who knew FDR personally, wanted to emphasize his hobbies. Suckley

asked the president whether they might include some of his stuffed birds, trees, stamp albums, and a children's book.⁶⁶ Of their ideas, only the trophy and trees made it into the film. FDR set aside ten books, but they did not make the final cut. Despite the seeming mundaneness of FDR's trees, they were rich with symbolic significance. While gazing at the president's trees, Fala remarks, "The chief loved to take care of trees. And this one was his favorite. Maybe because it was very sick once and he fixed it up and made it well and strong." During the Great Depression, FDR's leadership helped bind the wounds of a sickly nation. One way he did so was by creating the Civilian Conservation Corps, a public works relief program tasked with planting trees across the nation. Viewers might also read a bit of FDR's own sickness with polio into Fala's remarks.

In *Hyde Park*, Fala spends time gazing at old family photographs. Morgan planned to include ten photographs, which show FDR's childhood, family, and early occupational accomplishments:

- A. FDR, aged 1 ½, sitting on father's shoulder.
- B. FDR, aged 3, wearing skirts and holding shovel.
- C. FDR, aged 8, seated in chair (Carved mahogany).
- D. FDR, with Groton Football team of which he was manager.
- E. FDR, as president of Harvard Crimson, with editorial staff.
- F. Eleanor Roosevelt, as a child.
- G. FDR, at wheel of sailboat in 1907.
- H. FDR and Eleanor with their first children, Anna and James.
- I. FDR, as asst. Secy. of Navy with Adm. Plunkett and Staff at Naval Railway Battery, France, 1918.
- J. FDR, as acting Secy. of Navy in his office with Adms. Sims and McKean, 1919.⁶⁷

All of these photos were taken before FDR contracted polio on Campobello Island. In the film, however, the occupational photographs were omitted. By sharing the family photos instead, the film presents a more intimate side of the president. Morgan made a similar move when he sought to include Johnny in the film. Moreover, similarly to the use of Fala's scrapbook in

President's Dog, the family photographs in Hyde Park are a token of the domestic sphere. Not only are the photographs intimate depictions of FDR and his family, viewers enjoy the intimate experience of peering at them with the president's dog.

In the Hyde Park library, Fala shows viewers many gifts that FDR received. Some gifts are clearly expensive, but many consist of home-made crafts sent to him by ordinary Americans. Two of the more luxurious gifts are an ornate dagger and golden tiara from the Sultan of Morocco. Seeking to impress viewers, the script suggested mentioning that the Sultan's gifts were worth thousands of dollars. Morgan even toyed with the idea of having the special effect crew make Fala's eyes bulge in response. Suckley, however, made clear that these artifacts belonged to the U.S. government—not FDR. In the film, Fala looks at the Sultan's gifts and remarks,

We keep many presents here. . . . Somebody called the Sultan of Morocco sent this [dagger] to the Chief and this [tiara] to the Misses. And did I get presents. They say everything in the whole library belongs to the government. I wonder if that means my presents, too? Who is government anyway? I never met him.⁶⁸

Fala's humorous ignorance protects the White House and/or the Roosevelts from appearing to take extravagant gifts from other countries, while allowing them to show off some of their most valuable gifts.

Aside from impressing the audience, FDR's presents are useful for emphasizing how much people cherish him. Likewise, the public display of these gifts reveals how much FDR treasures their support. As the camera slowly pans across a display case in the oddities room, Fala remarks, "Wish I could tell you how many gifts there are in this room, but then, you can't expect a dog to count above two."⁶⁹ Fala then invites his audience to participate in the film,

stating, “I’m afraid you’ll have to make your own guess folks, because Pete Smith, who is talking for me here, well, he can’t count above two either.”⁷⁰ Before proceeding to the next scene, the camera lingers on a seven-foot-tall papier-mâché sphinx with FDR’s visage and iconic cigarette holder, which was given to the president after he kept dodging questions about running for a third term.⁷¹ Emphasizing FDR’s good humor, Fala notes, “He could always enjoy a joke—even on himself.”⁷²

FDR appears in the very last scene of *Hyde Park*. After hearing a car’s horn, Fala dashes quickly to the driveway. There he finds FDR sitting in his car, waiting. Fala hops up beside the president. FDR provides only a momentary glance back at the camera as he drives away with Fala. The scene, however, is particularly poignant in light of FDR’s death. FDR’s drive is heavily shaded by nearby trees, making it nearly impossible to tell whether it is truly him—it was.⁷³ By the time viewers saw this short, the war was over. FDR had been dead and buried for nearly a year. The sight is so unexpected that it feels as though he has been raised from the dead. The scene shows viewers the intimate bond FDR shared with his dog, unimpeded by the war. As FDR drives away with Fala beside him, the Scottie says,

Yes, it was good to see him. The Chief had been away a long time. He asked me if I had been a good dog while he’d been away. Of course, he knew I had. And so, as we rode over to the main house he told me I had taken good care of the place. I guess he had other important things to think about that day because he didn’t talk much. But talk or no talk I was happy, for here was the best Chief a fellow could have.⁷⁴

Implicit parallels between Fala’s and FDR’s relationship and the American people’s relationship with FDR may have made this conclusion particularly powerful for audiences. Similarly to Fala, viewers may have been pleasantly surprised to see FDR once more. Moreover, just as Fala “had

taken good care of the place” (as “he knew I had”), Americans had finished the war he spent so much energy prosecuting, even unto death. Echoing a wartime saying, Fala concludes, “Yes, it’s nice to daydream . . . but folks say there’s much work to be done. So I better start my rounds. So long!” Viewers were thereby admonished to keep up the wartime work.

Responses to Fala’s Celebrity

Response to the *President’s Dog* was positive. One woman explained to FDR how, having seen the short, “I admired [Fala] to such an extent I spoke about him all evening.”⁷⁵ Curiously, although most of Fala’s fan mail seems to have been written after people read about him in the news, very few people mentioned seeing either film. Indeed, more people (typically schoolchildren), mentioned having read *The True Story of Fala*—the book on which *President’s Dog* was based. A partial explanation for this can be found in an article for schoolchildren, which said, rather uncharacteristically, “Fala says not to send him any fan mail about his movie. He does not have time to read it. He is too busy these spring days keeping the White House squirrels in their place.”⁷⁶ Similarly, Theodore Strauss’s *New York Times* article about *President’s Dog* concluded stating, “Long before the picture was released, Fala was getting quantities of fan mail. He doesn’t even bother to read it.”⁷⁷ Though Strauss is not quite as admonitory as the schoolchildren’s article, his tone undercuts any motivation one might have to write. Furthermore, if most letters written to Fala were really directed to the president, then the absence of letters referencing *Hyde Park* can be explained by FDR’s death. Audiences had no one to write.

Despite the paucity of mail, Suckley’s first-hand experience suggests that *President’s Dog* helped establish Fala’s popularity further. In April 1943, Suckley accompanied FDR on a

tour of western and southern military bases. While walking Fala at Camp Gruber in Oklahoma, Suckley happened upon some troops who

were standing at ease, waiting for F.[D.R.] to come back. They all knew about Fala, had seen him on the screen last week—recognize[d] him from his generally black mop-like appearance! All wanted to pat him, & talk to him. At one point, a soldier picked him up & sat him on a wall. Some thirty crowded around for a touch of him. One boy held up a hair of Fala's & asked how much they would give for it. I suggested to the boy who held him that he charge a quarter a pat! He took it up at once, & there was much joking & laughing.⁷⁸

Camp Gruber was not an anomaly. Writing to Morgan, Suckley exclaimed, “At every plant and army post we visited on the trip, the ‘boys’ had seen, at least, the two minute newsreel of Fala, and many had seen the whole M.G.M. short. Fala was recognized more than ever, and in one place he was almost mobbed. He would look imploringly at me when the army nurses hugged and kissed him. The men were more dignified!”⁷⁹

Fala probably would have starred in another movie short had FDR lived longer. MGM was certainly interested in producing more. Whereas the first two Fala shorts focused on Roosevelt's home life, Producer Herbert Morgan repeatedly expressed his desire to feature a more international scene in future Fala shorts. In January 1945, Morgan suggested a short on FDR's upcoming meeting with Churchill and Stalin at the Yalta Conference.⁸⁰ According to Morgan, he was inspired by someone's—maybe Admiral Leahy, Morgan was not sure⁸¹—suggestion that Fala's next film feature his sea voyages (possibly as a joke in light of Fala's supposed abandonment on an Aleutian isle). Owing to the danger, neither Fala nor Suckley (who helped “manipulate”⁸² Fala in shots) were invited on this trip and she had to nix the pitch.

Not to be discouraged, Morgan wrote to Suckley two months later with another idea. A United Nations Conference in San Francisco was planned for later April. Morgan hoped to “arrange with the State Department for shots at the Conference between sessions, in the corridor or the cloakroom, etc.”⁸³ Morgan thought “it might be interesting for Fala to soliloquize over the array of hats, the divergent nationalities and stations in life they represent.”⁸⁴ Too many complications arose, however, making this idea equally untenable. Nonetheless, on April 11, 1945—the day before FDR died—Morgan wrote to Suckley that he was still hoping to produce another Fala short.

Conclusion

Compared to most public portrayals of Fala, the Fala shorts are certainly two of the richest. The correspondence between Morgan and Suckley reveals their sensitivity to Fala’s importance. Fala allowed for an unpretentious, yet intimate view of the president. The Scottie’s account is frequently grounded in domesticity, which invites viewers to see the president more as a regular guy, despite his office as president. Moreover, Fala’s naiveté prevents the shorts from feeling too heavy handed, while inviting viewers to complete the implicit political meanings.

Through their use of irony, the Fala shorts arrive at a contradictory message overall. On their face, these are seemingly not political. They simply appear to be about a dog’s daily adventures in the White House and Hyde Park. Of course, Fala is the president’s dog, but that is beside the point. After all, the president rarely appears in the shorts and when he does, he plays with his dog. And yet, the film also contains political ramifications. Fala’s remarks are frequently laced with political connotations, waiting for viewers make the implicit connections.

The Fala shorts show viewers that despite the war, everything is operating smoothly in the White House. There is no need to panic. FDR has the helm.

Presidential accoutrements, such as pets like Fala, provide leaders with important sources for fashioning their public image. Presidential nominees may kiss babies to get elected, but presidential pets remind us of a politician's humanity once in office. The Fala shorts offered an intimate view of the president by stressing domestic concerns rather than national issues.

Although FDR's national concerns were ever in the offing in these shorts (for instance, Pearl Harbor), they did not dominate the narrative. They were only ever a temporary interruption from more domestic matters. All together these shorts they contributed to a larger, more composite view of FDR's personable presidency.

¹ In a letter to FDR, Suckley wrote on July 5, 1941, "I never realized how much work there can be when one tries to put some thought into words, on paper! I believe I'm working almost as much on my "True Story" as you do on a speech! Though I'm not up to the 23rd draft yet! After I feel I have a reasonably good *first* draft, if there is an *odd* hour you could spare me, it would be wonderful." Roosevelt and Suckley, *Closest Companion*, 138. It is not clear whether FDR helped.

² *True Story* is so detailed that Helena Pycior has offered this as an opportunity to perform canine biography. See Helena Pycior, "The Public and Private Lives of 'First Dogs'," in *Beastly Natures: Animals, Humans, and the Study of History*, ed. Dorothee Brantz (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 176–203.

³ Alice Dalgliesh to Mr. Early, April 15, 1942; Folder: Fala Apr. 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴ Dalgliesh to Early, April 15, 1942; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. On March 30, 1942, Bernard J. Steele had proposed a series of shorts about Fala to the president. According to Steele,

The principal performers will be dogs, expressing themselves with human voices. Their roles and dialogue will satirize the activities of the various classes of persons, with whom Fala comes in contact, by virtue of his privileged proximity to the President. . . . Fala, our hero, will be profoundly conscious of the importance of his position.

Steele added that these humorous shorts would be “in no way disparaging to the dignity and honor of either public officers or offices.” Bernard J. Steele to FDR, March 30, 1942; Folder: Fala March 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Steele’s idea was summarily rejected.

⁵ Dalgliesh to Early, April 15, 1942; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶ Dalgliesh to Early, April 15, 1942; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷ Dalgliesh to Early, April 15, 1942; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁸ Herbert Morgan to Margaret L. Suckley, March 14, 1945; Folder: Fala—Movies On; Small Collections: Margaret Suckley; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹ Over eighty Specialties were produced before the first Fala short. *Pete Smith Specialties* received over twenty Academy Award nominations, winning two. Leonard Maltin, *The Great Movie Shorts* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1972), 141.

¹⁰ Maltin, *Great Movie Shorts*, 145.

¹¹ For comparison, one might watch *Penny Wisdom* (1937), which is available on YouTube.

¹² Richard W. Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society: The Roosevelt Administration and the Media, 1933-1941* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1985), 27.

¹³ Steele, *Propaganda*, 26.

¹⁴ Garth Jowett, *Film: The Democratic Art* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976), 316.

¹⁵ Margaret L. Suckley to Herbert Morgan, June 10, 1943; Folder: Fala—Movies On; Small Collections: Margaret Suckley; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁶ Roosevelt and Suckley, *Closest Companion*, 205–6.

¹⁷ It is possible that after Fala left the White House, people who would have sent clippings of the short's promotion did not know how to reach Fala. Generally speaking, Fala's correspondence came to a trickle after FDR's death. My searches outside the FDR archive have failed to turn up any advertisements in any major outlets. *Life*, for instance, was silent on the second short's release. Moreover, I have yet to discover any MGM archives containing material about the Fala shorts.

¹⁸ *Fala: Campaign Book*; Folder: Fala May 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁹ *Fala: Campaign Book*; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

²⁰ Herbert Morgan to Margaret L. Suckley, April 19, 1943; Folder: Fala—Movies On; Small Collections: Margaret Suckley; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

²¹ *Fala: Campaign Book*; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

²² *Fala: Campaign Book*; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

²³ *Fala: Campaign Book*; Folder: Fala May 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

²⁴ “Fala, the President’s Dog, Stars in a One-Reel Film”; Folder: Fala May 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Emphasis added. This propaganda was not always entirely subtle either. One suggested press release prepared by MGM noted that *President’s Dog* was “made for entertainment purposes only. Yet, its extraordinary human appeal should make this film a most enlightening propaganda document throughout the Americas and everywhere else in the world where people are human enough to love dogs;” *Fala: Campaign Book*; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

²⁵ *Fala: Campaign Book*; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

²⁶ To my knowledge, no such letters were written to Fala. Fala received an occasional letter from the U.K., Canada, or Australia, but there are none in the archive in any language other than English (and German). This is not to say that he was not recognized nationally. Only, it appears that his publicity may have been exaggerated. During the Second World War, the U.S. was on friendly terms with China and tried to strengthen relations with Latin America.

²⁷ E.M. Adler and Joe Ansen, “Fala” (A Pete Smith Specialty) [script], November 2, 1942, 4; Folder: Fala Nov –Dec. 1942; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

²⁸ Adler and Ansen, “Fala” [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

²⁹ Margaret Suckley to Alice Dalglish, November 15, 1942; Folder: Fala Nov.–Dec. 1942; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁰ Adler and Ansen, “Fala” [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

³¹ It opened for researchers on May 1, 1946. Cynthia M. Koch and Lynn A. Bassanese, “Roosevelt and His Library,” *Prologue* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2001): np, accessed May 29, 2013, <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2001/summer/roosevelt-and-his-library-1.html>.

³² Margaret L. Suckley to Herbert Morgan, October 10, 1944; Folder: Fala—Movies On; Small Collections: Margaret Suckley; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³³ Gunther V. Fritsch (Director), January 29, 1946, *Fala at Hyde Park* (DVD No. 101), Hyde Park, NY: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Pare Lorentz Film Center.

³⁴ Herbert Morgan, “Fala at Hyde Park” (A Pete Smith Specialty) [script], September 26, 1944, 12; Folder: Fala—Movies On; Small Collections: Margaret Suckley; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁵ Morgan, “Fala at Hyde Park” [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

³⁶ Morgan, “Fala at Hyde Park” [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

³⁷ Morgan, “Fala at Hyde Park” [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

³⁸ Herbert Morgan to Margaret L. Suckley, October 16, 1944; Folder: Fala—Movies On; Small Collections: Margaret Suckley; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

³⁹ Morgan to Suckley, October 16, 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴⁰ *Fala: Campaign Book*; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴¹ *Fala: Campaign Book*; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴² President George W. Bush used Barney Cam videos to similar ends after 9/11 and during the Iraq War.

⁴³ Part of an ad line offered by the campaign booklet. *Fala: Campaign Book*; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴⁴ Gunther V. Fritsch (Director), April 10, 1943, *Fala, the President's Dog* (DVD No. 102), Hyde Park, NY: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Pare Lorentz Film Center. The "White House" is not capitalized in the script.

⁴⁵ Fritsch, *Fala, the President's Dog*.

⁴⁶ Mary Merritt to Fala, June 20, 1943; Folder: Fala June 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴⁷ *Fala: Campaign Book*; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴⁸ Adler and Ansen, "Fala" [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁴⁹ Morgan, "Fala at Hyde Park" [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁵⁰ Paraphrased by Theodore Strauss in "A Dog's Life in the White House," *New York Times*, April 25, 1943, n.p.; Folder: Fala May 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵¹ Strauss, "A Dog's Life in the White House," Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁵² Fritsch, *Fala, the President's Dog*, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁵³ Arthur Busbey, Jr. to Fala, April 27, 1943; Folder: Fala Apr. 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Italics added.

⁵⁴ Jowett, *Film*, 311.

⁵⁵ An Old Dog to Fala, June 3, 1943; Folder: Fala June 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵⁶ Morgan, “Fala at Hyde Park” [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁵⁷ Morgan, “Fala at Hyde Park” [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁵⁸ Fritsch, *Fala at Hyde Park*, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁵⁹ Fritsch, *Fala, the President’s Dog*, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶⁰ Fritsch, *Fala, the President’s Dog*, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. True to character, Fala notes in the script that FDR “gave them little things that he put around their neck. But me—I’d much rather get a dog biscuit.” Adler and Ansen, “Fala” [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶¹ One significant difference in both Fala shorts is the patriotic appeals. Whereas the first short contains several patriotic moves, they are absent in the second. The absence manifests itself as early as *Hyde Park*’s script, which was written during the war. Insofar as these are wartime videos the inclusion of patriotic propaganda, which would draw the country together, makes sense. Why these patriotic appeals are absent in the second short is less clear, however.

⁶² Adler and Ansen, “Fala” [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶³ Adler and Ansen, “Fala” [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶⁴ Emphasis original. Adler and Ansen, “Fala” [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶⁵ Suckley to Dalglish, November 15, 1942; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶⁶ Margaret Suckley, scrap of paper, n.d.; Folder: Fala—Movies On; Small Collections: Margaret Suckley; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶⁷ Morgan, “Fala at Hyde Park” [script], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶⁸ Fritsch, *Fala at Hyde Park*, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁶⁹ Fritsch, *Fala at Hyde Park*, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷⁰ Fritsch, *Fala at Hyde Park*, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷¹ Koch and Bassanese, “Roosevelt and His Library.”

⁷² Fritsch, *Fala at Hyde Park*, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷³ Maltin, *Great Movie Shorts*, 151.

⁷⁴ Fritsch, *Fala at Hyde Park*, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷⁵ Carrie Cousino to FDR, May 23, 1943; Folder: Fala May 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁶ “Movie Star Fala”; Folder: Fala June 1943; 7288 Nov. 1942–Dec. 1943; President’s Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁷⁷ Strauss, “A Dog’s Life in the White House,” Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷⁸ Roosevelt and Suckley, *Closest Companion*, 213.

⁷⁹ Margaret L. Suckley to Herbert Morgan, May 3, 1943; Folder: Fala—Movies On; Small Collections: Margaret Suckley; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸⁰ Roosevelt and Suckley, *Closest Companion*, 379.

⁸¹ Herbert Morgan to Margaret L. Suckley, January 9, 1945; Folder: Fala—Movies On; Small Collections: Margaret Suckley; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸² Roosevelt and Suckley, *Closest Companion*, 379.

⁸³ Herbert Morgan to Margaret L. Suckley, March 23, 1945; Folder: Fala—Movies On; Small Collections: Margaret Suckley; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁸⁴ Morgan to Suckley, March 23, 1945; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

6

Conclusion

On October 15, 1944, John H. Crider declared in an article for the *New York Times*, “What is difficult for some folks to understand is that Fala is no longer just a dog; he is a personage.”¹ Crider was probably inspired by Fala’s unexpected politicization during the 1944 election, but the Scottie had quickly become a useful political asset for FDR since he first entered the White House, nearly four years before. In this dissertation I have endeavored to clarify Fala’s rhetorical construction and function. To do so I have examined the approximately 2000 archival materials related to Fala in the FDR Presidential Library. In my analysis I have noted which texts circulated about Fala, and how they portrayed him. In my analysis of the Fala letters, I have paid close attention to the people writing to or about Fala, and the context of their writing. I was particularly interested in how people used Fala to relate to the president, as well as the president’s attempts to use Fala in turn. By analyzing Fala’s earliest correspondence following the 1941 Inauguration, as well as the Scottie’s involvement in World War II, the 1944 Presidential Election, and starring role in two MGM films, I have captured this dynamic president-constituent relationship.

During Fala’s stay in the White House, a number of texts invited discourse about him. These texts ranged from newspaper articles, magazines, radio programs, movies, newsreels, and cartoons. Fala’s frequent presence in the news owed, in part, to FDR’s tendency to keep the Scottie near him. Because of the president and his pet’s proximity, articles about FDR often concluded with a brief mention of Fala.

The media portrayed Fala as a kind, loving dog. At times, he was described as a bit mischievous, but never as malignant. Unlike FDR's previous dogs, there were no reported instances of Fala ever biting anyone. The frequent newspaper reports and photographs of Fala accompanying FDR as he traveled the nation on both official duty and pleasure signaled to citizens the close bond between a man and his dog. To a certain extent, Fala's presence compensated for Eleanor's absence as she attended her own work. Fala was repeatedly described as FDR's best and most loyal friend. Fala's portrayal was also shaped by larger forces, such as the war and the 1944 election. At times, discourses about Fala cast an aura of greatness about him. The Scottie was characterized as a patriotic leader of his fellow canines, who understood the vicissitudes of politics, and would never betray his master's trust. Fala was portrayed as the perfect companion for a president, whom, Paul D. Husbands observes, many esteemed as "both more plainly human and spectacularly (even supernaturally) larger than life."²

Many people wrote Fala letters. Most of Fala's correspondence was inspired by newspaper reports of his latest actions. Fala received the largest volume of mail after FDR used him to ridicule Republicans during the 1944 Presidential Election. Some people, however, were inspired to write Fala after learning that others had corresponded with him. Typically, they found out about this epistolary practice by reading Margaret Suckley's book, *The True Story of Fala*, or newspaper articles. Occasionally newspapers would reprint letters that Fala received. Other times, newspapers commented on the remarkable volume of Fala's correspondence. For instance, Margo Browne explained, albeit hyperbolically, in her *New York Journal-American* article published on May 29, 1942, "The Scottie receives thousands of letters yearly—more than Clark Gable."³ Although Fala consistently received mail during his stay in the White House, the

amount of mail he received varied greatly. Some weeks he received a torrent of mail, while other weeks a mere trickle. After FDR died, Fala's fan mail almost completely stopped.

Though Fala was not the first popular presidential pet, he was the only one of FDR's pets to become a celebrity. Tracing Fala's history in the White House, it becomes clear that Fala's popularity resulted from many happy accidents that transpired over time. The White House seems to have been initially surprised to receive Fala's fan mail, though they did not discourage it. Instead, they extended the courtesy of responding to these letters, as they would any other. Photographs of Fala's antics, such as when he attempted to ride with FDR to the Inauguration, helped propel his fame further, as did the publication of Alan Foster's Fala cartoons and *The True Story of Fala*. FDR was later able to marshal Fala's popularity to ridicule Republicans during the 1944 election. Fala became a useful, though often incidental rhetorical component of FDR's presidency.

It is unclear how many of the Fala letters FDR read. In light of the White House secretaries' somewhat generic assurances that they would relay a correspondent's message to FDR, it is difficult to know when they actually did. Most often, the president was informed of medical details surrounding Fala, gifts, and particularly unusual letters. It is possible that some of the Fala letters found their way to FDR's desk.

Over the years, the White House maintained different positions on the Fala letters. Initially, secretaries responded to most of the letters. Gradually, however, they responded much more selectively. Those addressing FDR were granted higher priority than those to Fala. Similarly, over time most instances of *prosopopoeia* were ignored, though a human writing to Fala would stand a good chance of a response—especially if they sent a gift, such as a photograph or donation to FDR's infantile paralysis fund. By the 1944 election, even letters

signed by humans, but addressed to Fala were not acknowledged. This appears to have been a conscious decision. A secretary scrawled the following on one letter to Fala: “Mr. Hopkins said they would not acknowledge and return snapshot, as requested, because it is a ‘dog’ letter.”⁴ Several factors may have played into this, ranging from a change in staff to increased mail volume. Nonetheless, citizens continued to write to Fala throughout FDR’s presidency.

Most of the Fala letters were sent by people who owned or loved dogs. The frequent use of *prosopopoeia* makes it somewhat difficult to ascertain the exact demographics of these correspondents. Textual and material clues do suggest that the correspondents encompassed a varied demographic. Children and adults, men and women, Democrats and Republicans all wrote to or about Fala. Moreover, typical of FDR’s correspondence generally, the Fala letters appear to be mostly written by middle to lower class citizens, though there are exceptions. That adults also wrote to Fala is important to note, since two fairly recent collections of letters to the White House—*Dear Socks, Dear Buddy: Kids’ Letters to the First Pets* (1998) and *I Live Real Close to Where You Used to Live: Kids’ Letters to Michelle Obama (And to Sasha, Malia, and Bo)* (2010)—may give the impression that only children write to presidential pets. This, however, is not the case. Recent presidents have often used their pets to engage children, but FDR’s administration used Fala to appeal to dog owners or lovers more broadly.

In the Fala letters, people often related to FDR through a shared love of dogs or Scotties. Citizens who owned Scotties frequently explained to FDR how much Fala reminded them of their own dog. Rarely did anyone write anything mean or cruel about Fala or their own dog. Presidential pets seem to be important because they provide citizens with evidence that they share something in common with their leader. Presidential pets make a president more

approachable. More to the point, Fala became a symbol of a more personable presidency. For instance, on January 17, 1942, Charles J. A. Dalziel wrote FDR:

Perhaps you do not know how deeply so many of us have been touched by your fondness for that small, black, shaggy companion of yours.

That seems to us, to be something apart and very appealing—something so very human in our Chief Executive—something which, in a very special way, brings you Mr. President, into our homes. As a neighbor, a ‘Good Neighbor’ who drops in for a casual and friendly chat, and perhaps, to talk about dogs too, yours and ours.⁵

Fala provided many citizens with a useful means of relating to the president. Fala’s presence served to confirm what many citizens thought they already knew about their president: FDR was a kind and humane leader.

This study of Fala’s rhetorical construction and function expands our conception of presidential rhetoric in several ways. In my introduction, I referred to presidential pets as one type of presidential accoutrement. I defined presidential accoutrements as a component of the presidency, which is not outlined specifically in the Constitution, but which has become part of the institution. Presidential accoutrements, such as pets, provide leaders with important sources for fashioning their public image. Fala’s portrayal by the media, FDR, and citizens often contributed to a friendlier, homier view of the president. FDR was cast as a typical American. More generally, presidential pets may remind citizens of their leader’s humanity. It is important to recognize which accoutrements citizens become particularly invested in and accept as part of the presidency.

Citizens’ personal investment in the presidency is underscored by the many Fala letters. Citizens from various demographics used Fala to facilitate their communication with FDR. Each

letter reveals distinct rhetorical choices. The clearest and perhaps most significant rhetorical choice was to whom they addressed their Fala letters. Whereas some people wrote to FDR, others wrote to Fala. Those who addressed Fala often reaffirmed his importance to FDR. They described Fala as FDR's best friend and closest companion. Moreover, as demonstrated in the second chapter, the content of each letter often followed certain formalities depending on whom the letter was addressed. Very few people—if any—engaged in *prosopopoeia* to the president. All of the *prosopopoeia* letters were sent to Fala (though the Scottie also received letters not engaging in this trope). The *prosopopoeia* letters were often playful, though not necessarily disingenuous. Those who wrote as if they were dogs frequently identified with Fala over common animal *topoi*. They spoke of shared activities, such as riding in cars, donating rubber toys, and performing tricks. Pets spoke of their masters, sometimes calling them “ma.”⁶ This familial language is particularly telling as to the close relationship that owners felt with their dogs.

The *prosopopoeia* letters were often characterized by a near-immediate response to Fala's latest publicity. Whether citizens saw photographs of Fala's attempted ride to the inauguration, rubber donation, or heard FDR's address to the Teamsters, they wrote quickly thereafter. Those writing to Fala were more likely to be profuse in emotion. Depending on the context, they were sympathetic, congratulatory, or full of admiration. *Prosopopoeia* enabled citizens to speak about themselves without sounding too forward. By engaging in *prosopopoeia*, citizens could express ideas or sentiments that they may not otherwise.

Unlike the letters addressed to Fala, a letter addressed to FDR often appeared to be sent more casually, with little impetus aside from the desire to identify with the president or request a favor. Fala often served as a topic of small talk for engaging the president. We can better

understand presidential leadership by exploring the various ways citizens respond to the president or prompt their leader to act. Presidential scholarship also benefits by taking note of how citizens relate to their president. Whether citizens were noting their own contribution to the war or carefully crafting a rhyming, metered poem, many of them evidence a degree of care in writing to the president. Even the more casual, humorous letters still express a type of relationship with the president. As many people explained, they hoped their letters would brighten FDR's day.

Thus, this study also advances presidential scholarship by analyzing epistolary practices between citizens and their leader. Though FDR's administration was remarkable for the sheer quantity of mail they received, U.S. presidents continue to be deluged with mail—now often in the form of email. By writing to the White House, citizens communicate their thoughts and feelings about the president or his policy decisions. Perhaps more importantly, the act of sending a letter constructs a relationship between the president and a citizen. More research is needed to determine how letter-writing citizens relate with their president, however. For instance, what other topics do people write to the president on?

Despite Fala's prominence in the pantheon of presidential pets, he was only one of many dogs to live in the White House. Further studies of presidential pets are needed to better inform our understanding of how they are used. For instance, in recent years, the presidency's reliance on email, websites, and social media appear to have shaped the roles of the president's pets. Do citizens relate to presidential pets differently when their relationship is mediated by the White House website as opposed to newspaper articles? Further investigation is needed to determine what new functions presidential pets may play.

Wherever FDR went, he often took Fala with him. Over time, FDR's Secret Service agents nicknamed Fala "the informer," as his presence kept tipping off people as to the president's whereabouts.⁷ This nickname, however, is doubly applicable. Fala did not simply inform citizens where the president was, he also served to inform them of their president's character. By paying close attention to presidential accoutrements, such as presidential pets, presidential scholars may have a better, more informed understanding of the presidency.

¹ John H. Crider, "Fala, Never in the Doghouse," *New York Times*, Oct. 15, 1944, SM26.

² Paul D. Husbands, "'The People's President': Letter Writing, the Presidency and Popular Politics in Late-nineteenth to Mid-twentieth Century America," (PhD diss., Duke University, 2007), 410.

³ Margo Browne, "Listenin' in on the President: This Pal Sees All, Hears All, and Aside From an Occasional Yip, Says Nothing," *New York Journal-American*, May 29, 1942; Folder: Fala May 1942; 7288 June 1941–Oct. 1942; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁴ See Duky [Catherine Newton] to Fala, September 30, 1944; Folder: Fala Sept. 1944; 7288 Jan.–Oct. 1944; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁵ Charles J. A. Dalziel to FDR, Jan. 17, 1942; Folder: Fala Jan. 1942; 7288 Dec. 1940–May 1941; President's Personal File #7288 (Fala Letters); Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁶ This was mostly limited to female owners. Men engaging in prosopopoeia for their dogs typically referred to themselves as "master."

⁷ John E. Vacha, "FDR's Fala: The Dog That Swung an Election," *Timeline* 11, no. 6 (November/December 1994): 40.

Bibliography

The papers of Franklin, Eleanor, Fala, and Margaret Suckley are at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, New York. Whenever that material is used I have provided a full citation in the text. The bibliography below contains all the published sources I have referred to, which I did not find in the FDR Library's archives.

"US Inflation Calculator." Accessed October 20, 2012. <http://www.usinflationcalculator.com/>.

Alexander, Gavin. "Prosopopoeia: The Speaking Figure." In *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, edited by Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber, 97-112. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Arguments About Animal Ethics. Edited by Greg Goodale and Jason Edward Black. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2010.

Associated Press. *First Pet: The Presidents & Their Beloved Canines, Felines & Other Four-Legged Creatures Who Made Their Homes at the White House*. Ben Lomond, Calif: Associated, 2010.

Barbas, Samantha. *Movie Crazy: Fans, Stars, and the Cult of Celebrity*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Benson, Thomas W. "Rhetoric as a Way of Being." In *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism*, ed. Thomas W. Benson, 131-201. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989.

Bentley, Amy. *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998.

- Berry, Edward. "Doing Time: King's 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 109-131.
- Black, Conrad. *Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Champion of Freedom*. New York: Public Affairs, 2003.
- Bonner, Stanley Frederick. *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.
- Braden, Waldo W., and Earnest Brandenburg. "Roosevelt's Fireside Chats." *Communications Monographs* 22, no. 5 (1955): 290-302.
- Browne, Stephen H. "The Pastoral Voice in John Dickinson's First Letter from a Farmer in Pennsylvania." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 76, no. 1 (February 1990): 46-57.
- Burke, Kenneth. *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.
- Ceaser, James W., Glen E. Thurow, Jeffrey Tulis and Joseph M. Bessette. "The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 2, (Spring 1981): 158-171.
- Charland, Maurice. "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Quebecois." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 2 (1987): 133-150.
- Cinematic Canines: Dogs and Their Work in the Fiction Film*. Edited by Adrienne L. McLean. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2014.
- Clinton, Hillary Rodham. *Dear Socks, Dear Buddy*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.
- Coetzee, J. M. *The Lives of Animals*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Cohen, Lizabeth. *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Dear Harry . . . Truman's Mailroom, 1945-1953: The Truman Administration Through

Correspondence with "Everyday Americans". Edited by D. M. Giangreco and Kathryn

Moore. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1999.

Dear Mr. Lincoln: Letters to the President. Edited by Harold Holzer. Reading, Mass: Addison-

Wesley, 1993.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters from Children of the Great Depression. Edited by Robert Cohen.

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters to Eleanor Roosevelt through Depression and War. Edited by

Cathy D. Knepper. New York: Carroll & Graf Pub, 2006.

Decker, William Merrill. *Epistolary Practices Letter Writing in America before*

Telecommunications. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Derr, Mark. *A Dog's History of America: How Our Best Friend Explored, Conquered, and*

Settled a Continent. New York: North Point Press, 2004.

Dimitrova, Anelia K. "Sending Bundles of Hope: The Use of Female Celebrities in Bundles for

Britain's Public Relations Campaign." *American Journalism* 14, no. 3-4 (1997): 376-

390.

Down & Out in the Great Depression: Letters from the "Forgotten Man". Edited by Robert S.

McElvaine. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983.

Downey, Fairfax. *Dogs for Defense: American Dogs in the Second World War, 1941-45.* By

Direction and Authorization of the Trustees Dogs for Defense, Inc., 1955.

Engels, Jeremy. "Disciplining Jefferson: The Man within the Breast and the Rhetorical Norms of

Producing Order." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 411-435.

Fala at Hyde Park (DVD No. 101). Directed by Gunther V. Fritsch. January 29, 1946. Hyde

Park, NY: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Pare Lorentz Film Center.

Fala, the President's Dog (DVD No. 102). Directed by Gunther V. Fritsch. April 10, 1943. Hyde

Park, NY: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Pare Lorentz Film Center.

Finnegan, Cara A. "Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-century Visual Culture." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 31-57.

———. "The Naturalistic Enthymeme and Visual Argument: Photographic Representation in the 'Skull Controversy'." *Argumentation and Advocacy* 37, no. 3 (2001): 133-149.

Fulkerson, Richard P. "The Public Letter as a Rhetorical Form: Structure, Logic, and Style in King's 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65, no. 2 (1979): 121-136.

Gaipa, Mark. "'A Creative Psalm of Brotherhood': The (De)constructive Play in Martin Luther King's 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 93, no. 3 (August 2007): 279-307.

German, Kathleen. "Visual Images and Presidential Leadership: A Case Study of LBJ and His Beagles." *Journal of the Communication, Speech & Theatre Association of North Dakota* 21 (2008): 21-32.

Gies, Joseph. *Franklin D. Roosevelt: Portrait of a President*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971.

Grier, Katherine C. *Pets in America: A History*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

- Haraway, Donna Jeanne. *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003.
- . *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Hart, Lynette A. "Dogs as Human Companions: A Review of the Relationship." In *The Domestic Dog: Its Evolution, Behaviour, and Interactions with People*, edited by James Serpell, 161-78. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Hauser, Gerard A. *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999.
- Hawhee, Debra. "The New Hackers: Historiography through Disconnection." *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 15, no. 1 (2012): 119-125.
- Herman, David. "Storyworld/Umwelt: Nonhuman Experiences in Graphic Narratives." *SubStance* 40, no. 1 (2011): 156-81.
- Hogan, J. Michael. "Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy: The Case of Illusory Support for the Panama Canal Treaties." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71, no. 3 (August 1985): 302-317.
- Houck, Davis W. "Killing Emmett." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 225-262.
- Houck, Davis W., and Amos Kiewe. *FDR's Body Politics: The Rhetoric of Disability*. College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2003.
- Husbands, Paul D. "'The People's President': Letter Writing, the Presidency and Popular Politics in Late-nineteenth to Mid-twentieth Century America." PhD diss., Duke University, 2007.

- Ivie, Robert L. "Images of Savagery in American Justifications for War." *Communication Monographs* 47, no. 4 (November 1980): 279-294.
- Jablonski, Carol J. "Aggiornamento and the American Catholic Bishops: A Rhetoric of Institutional Continuity and Change." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75, no. 4 (November 1989): 416-432.
- Jordan, David M. *FDR, Dewey, and the Election of 1944*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011.
- Jowett, Garth. *Film: The Democratic Art*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1976.
- Keen, Suzanne. "Fast Tracks to Narrative Empathy: Anthropomorphism and Dehumanization in Graphic Narratives." *SubStance* 40, no. 1 (2011): 135-55.
- Kiewe, Amos. *FDR's First Fireside Chat Public Confidence and the Banking Crisis*. College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2007.
- Kimble, James J. *Mobilizing the Home Front War Bonds and Domestic Propaganda*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006.
- Koch, Cynthia M., and Lynn A. Bassanese. "Roosevelt and His Library." *Prologue* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2001): np. Accessed May 29, 2013.
<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2001/summer/roosevelt-and-his-library-1.html>.
- Lanham, Richard A. *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Lee, Ronald E. "The Rhetorical Construction of Time in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'." *Southern Communication Journal* 56, (Summer 1991): 279-288.

- Leff, Michael C., and Ebony A. Utley. "Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2004): 37-51.
- Levine, Lawrence W., and Cornelia R. Levine. *The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.
- The Lincoln Mailbag America Writes to the President, 1861-1865*. Edited by Harold Holzer. Carbondale, Ill: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998.
- Lynch, John. "Institution and Imprimatur: Institutional Rhetoric and the Failure of the Catholic Church's Pastoral Letter on Homosexuality." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 3 (2005): 383-403. Malherbe, Abraham J. *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*. Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1988.
- Maltin, Leonard. *The Great Movie Shorts*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1972.
- Maney, Patrick J. *The Roosevelt Presence: The Life and Legacy of FDR*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- McCormick, Samuel. *Letters to Power: Public Advocacy without Public Intellectuals*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011.
- Midgley, Mary. *Animals and Why They Matter*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984.
- Moore, Bryan L. *Ecology and Literature: Ecocentric Personification from Antiquity to the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Murphy, James J. *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.
- Neustadt, Richard E. *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1960.

Nisley, Thomas Jay. "From Pinstripe Wool to Ripstop Poplin: The US President, Symbolic Politics, and the Salute." *Journal of American Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1-14.

Orlean, Susan. *Rin Tin Tin: The Life and the Legend*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011.

Osborn, Michael. "Rhetorical Distance in 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2004): 23-35.

Oxford English Dictionary. "Prosopopoeia." Accessed January 21, 2013.

<http://www.oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/view/Entry/153015?redirectedFrom=prosopopoeia#eid>.

Patton, John H. "A Transforming Response: Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2004): 53-65.

Peters, John Durham. *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Poster, Carol. "A Conversation Halved: Epistolary Theory in Greco-Roman Antiquity." In *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present: Historical and Bibliographic Studies*, edited by Carol Poster and Linda C. Mitchell, 21–51. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2007.

Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric. Translated by George A. Kennedy. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Pycior, Helena. "The Making of the 'First Dog': President Warren G. Harding and Laddie Boy." *Society & Animals* 13, no. 2 (June 2005): 109–38.

———. "The Public and Private Lives of 'First Dogs'." In *Beastly Natures: Animals, Humans, and the Study of History*, edited by Dorothee Brantz, 176–203. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010.

Quintilian. *Institutes of Oratory*. Edited by Lee Honeycutt, translated by John Selby Watson.

Accessed January 27, 2013. <http://rhetoric.eserver.org/quintilian/9/chapter2.html#32>.

———. *The Institution Oratoria of Quintilian*. Translated by Harold Edgeworth Butler. London: W. Heinemann, 1921.

Rickert, Thomas. *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013.

Roosevelt, Eleanor. "My Day." December 24, 1940. Accessed January 9, 2013.

http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1940&_f=md055769.

———. "My Day." January 4, 1940. Accessed January 9, 2013.

http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1941&_f=md055777.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Address at a Union Dinner. Washington, D.C." September 23, 1944.

Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley. *The American Presidency Project*.

Accessed April 24, 2012. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16563>.

———. "Radio Address on the Scrap Rubber Campaign." June 12, 1942. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley. *The American Presidency Project*. Accessed October 27, 2012. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16272&st=&st1=>.

Roosevelt, Franklin D., and Margaret Suckley. *Closest Companion: The Unknown Story of the Intimate Friendship between Franklin Roosevelt and Margaret Suckley*. Edited by Geoffrey C. Ward. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

Rosenman, Samuel I. *Working with Roosevelt*. New York: Harper, 1967.

Rowan, Roy, and Brooke Janis. *First Dogs: American Presidents and Their Best Friends*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2009.

- Ryan, Halford Ross. *Franklin D. Roosevelt's Rhetorical Presidency*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988.
- Skabelund, Aaron Herald. *Empire of Dogs Canines, Japan, and the Making of the Modern Imperial World*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Skow, Lisa M., and George N. Dionisopoulos. "A Struggle to Contextualize Photographic Images: American Print Media and the 'Burning Monk'." *Communication Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (1997): 393-409.
- Smith, Ira R. T., and Joe Alex Morris. "*Dear Mr. President . . .*": *The Story of Fifty Years in the White House Mail Room*. New York: J. Messner, 1949.
- Smith, Jean Edward. *FDR*. Random House, 2007.
- Smith, Richard Norton. *Thomas E. Dewey and His Times*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.
- Snow, Malinda. "Martin Luther King's 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' as Pauline Epistle." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71, no. 3 (1985): 318-334.
- Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. New York: Picador USA, 1977.
- Steele, Richard W. *Propaganda in an Open Society: The Roosevelt Administration and the Media, 1933-1941*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1985.
- Stirewalt, M. Luther. *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography*. Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1993.
- Stuckey, Mary E. "Rethinking the Rhetorical Presidency and Presidential Rhetoric." *Review of Communication* 10, no. 1 (2010): 38-52.
- Stuhler, Barbara. "A Minnesota Footnote to the 1944 Presidential Election." *Minnesota History* 52, no. 1 (April 1, 1990): 27-34.

Sussmann, Leila A. *Dear FDR: A Study of Political Letter-Writing*. Totowa, N.J.: Bedminster Press, 1963.

To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson: Letters to a President. Edited by Jack McLaughlin. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1991.

Trasciatti, Mary Anne. "Letter Writing in an Italian Immigrant Community: A Transatlantic Tradition." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 73-94.

Troy, Gil. "'Such Insulting Trash and Triviality' Franklin D. Roosevelt's Fala Speech Reconsidered." *Canadian Review of American Studies* 25, no. 1 (March 1995): [electronic copy, np].

Truman, Margaret. *White House Pets*. New York: D. McKay, 1969.

Tulis, Jeffrey K. *The Rhetorical Presidency*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Tully, Grace G. *F.D.R., My Boss*. Chicago: Peoples Book Club, 1949.

Vacha, John E. "FDR's Fala: The Dog That Swung an Election." *Timeline* 11, no. 6 (November/December 1994): 36-42.

VanHaitsma, Pamela. "Queering the Language of the Heart: Romantic Letters, Genre Instruction, and Rhetorical Practice." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (January 2014): 6-24.

Waller, Anna M. *Dogs and National Defense*. [Washington, D.C.]: Dept. of the Army, Office of the Quartermaster General, 1958.

Watson, Martha Solomon. "The Issue is Justice: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Response to the Birmingham Clergy." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 1-22.

Wolfe, Cary. *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanism*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

———. *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Woods, Marjorie Curry. "Weeping for Dido: Epilogue on a Premodern Rhetorical Exercise in the Postmodern Classroom." In *Latin Grammar and Rhetoric: From Classical Theory to Medieval Practice*, edited by Carol Dana Lanham, 284-94. London: Continuum, 2002.

Zarefsky, David. "Henry Clay and the Election of 1844: The Limits of a Rhetoric of Compromise." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 79-96.

Vita – Bryan Blankfield

Education

- 2014 **Ph.D., Communication Arts and Sciences, Pennsylvania State University**
Dissertation: “Letters to Fala: The Rhetorical Construction and Function of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Dog”
Committee: Thomas W. Benson, Stephen H. Browne, Jeremy Engels, and Debra Hawhee
Successfully defended August 20, 2014
- 2010 **M.A., Communication Arts and Sciences, Pennsylvania State University**
Thesis: “Framing Animal-Rights Activism: An Analysis of Grant Morrison’s *Animal Man*”
Committee: Christopher L. Johnstone, Thomas W. Benson, and Jeremy Engels
- 2008 **B.A., Communication (Honors), Roberts Wesleyan College**
Thesis: “Understanding Hypocrisy: Orwell and Burke”
Thesis advisor: Elvera Berry
- 2007 Study Abroad, *Oxford University*

Teaching Experience – 33 sections taught

Effective Speech: Public Speaking Emphasis (CAS 100A).
Effective Speech: Collaborative Communication (CAS 100B).
Effective Speech: Message Analysis Emphasis (CAS 100C).
Introduction to Communication Theory (CAS 202); served as TA.
Introduction to the History of Rhetorical Theory (CAS 201); served as TA.
Persuasion & Propaganda (CAS 175); served as TA.

Grants and Awards

\$2600 Dissertation Grant, awarded by the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences, Pennsylvania State University, May 2014.

\$750 Research Grant, awarded by the Roosevelt Institute to continue research at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, February 2014.

\$1500 Graduate Research Award, awarded by the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences, Pennsylvania State University, February 2012.