THE CANDIDATE AS COMMODITY: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PENETRATION OF THE POLITICAL ARENA BY MARKETPLACE DISCOURSE

by

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ABSTRACT

The historical development during this century of the processes of representation associated with commercial goods and those put to use by political leaders is examined in this thesis in order to explore the extent to which they tend to correspond at a given time.

The project has two main inputs: the concept of "cultural frames" for goods set out by William Leiss, Stephen Kline and Sut Jhally in Social Communication in Advertising, on the one hand, and on the other an examination of the image-building practices of four American presidents undertaken for the purposes of this project.

The four presidents -- Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909), Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945), John F. Kennedy (1961-1963) and Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) -- were chosen because the presidency of each falls within one of the four cultural frames. The cultural frames are four broad time periods or categories identifying the evolution of advertising style in western industrial society during this century.

Examining the four presidencies through the instrument of the cultural frames, this project extends the applicability of the cultural frames into the area of political representation. It does so by linking the trends
represented in the cultural frames with the changing ways in which, as a specific process of communication, the image of the political leader has been projected.

This study argues that the pervasiveness of the marketplace discourse in an ever-expanding industrial society, a discourse able to draw on increasingly sophisticated media techniques, has greatly changed the nature of political representation and has promoted a process of commodification in the political arena.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Is the political leader the ultimate commodity, the ultimate object of persuasion in 20th-century consumer society? And have the leader’s presentation, packaging and positioning for consumption evolved in concert with those of other commodities? In order to explore these questions, this thesis uses the "cultural frames for goods" set out by William Leiss, Stephen Kline and Sut Jhally (LKJ) in their book Social Communication in Advertising in order to view the changing ways in which, as a specific process of communication, the images of some of this century’s American presidents have been presented for consumption. It poses and explores an analogy between the phases of developing 20th century market practice which LKJ identify and their contemporaneous phases in the construction of organized political imagery, with the wider purpose of examining the relationship between representation and the political process.

The cultural frames are a set of broad chronological parameters which LKJ proposed after identifying certain trends in the style, form and social orientation of 20th-century advertising. The cultural frame describes those principles, images and forms of communication which
characterise the period and which arise from the relationship linking marketing and advertising, the mass media and popular culture.

It is this notion of cultural frames which forms the basic theoretical framework for this project. (1)

Processes of signification and representation define how a society reproduces itself over time as much as the prevalent forms of work and production do. For LKJ, the marketplace cannot be viewed narrowly as a mere forum for economic transactions, but rather ought to be seen more broadly as a cultural system: the privileged institution for the reworking and transmission of the symbols that shape human lives in consumer society. Consumer society, in addition, is distinguished not only by its vast array of goods but also by something which often goes unnoticed: the ubiquitous images and symbols by means of which our society relates products to individual wellbeing and status.

The marketplace is, therefore, a cultural system with goods as the communicators in a "market-oriented discourse through and about things (which) creates a powerful set of symbolic processes, founded on an internal tension that simultaneously unifies and differentiates between persons." (2) The significance of this tension in the process of social reproduction, I will argue, emerges most strongly in
the presidency of Ronald Reagan, one of the four presidents selected for this study. The notion of "ultimate commodity" -- referring to the political leader -- suggests an extreme degree of commodification, defined in terms of the complexity and range of the needs supposedly satisfied, symbolic and material, as well as the great cost, time and sophistication involved in the marketing, parcelling and positioning of the political candidate in modern capitalist economies.

The questions posed at the outset will be addressed through case studies of the ways in which the images of four American presidents of the last 90 years were presented. Various aspects of the images -- abstract as well as tangible representations -- of presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan are examined, using the theoretical concepts embraced in the notion of cultural frames as a tool of investigation. These aspects include the presentation of the presidential image, the ways in which the media were used, the construction of a "personal" style for the political leader, the issues they addressed to bolster their images, and the cultural and political context in which they operated, be it before their election, during their terms in office, or both. As with ordinary consumer products, the campaign to sell the leader is an ongoing one.
Each of the four presidencies in question reveals a distinct relationship with a particular mass medium dominant at the time, and I shall try to show that the available technology profoundly affected the nature of each president's political communication. At the same time, with each restructuring of the media hierarchy flowing from technological advancement during the 20th century, the importance of media and campaign advisors and speech writers increased -- in step with the importance of the process of communication through the mass media itself. For Theodore Roosevelt the ascendant mass medium was newspapers; second cousin Franklin D. Roosevelt successfully exploited radio; the television debate between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy was seen as pivotal to the outcome of the 1960 election and as having won America's youngest elected president the highest office; and former movie actor Ronald Reagan used the same electronic medium to significant advantage. All four were particularly suited to the media configuration of their day and cultivated a proficiency at using the dominant medium. Thus their relationships with these media are an important part of this study. It is worth noting that the possibilities of each new technological breakthrough were often slowly grasped. The newspaper industry had the ability to reproduce photographs by the halftone method as early as the 1890s (3) and Theodore Roosevelt certainly had a sense of what he stood to gain by
having his picture appear regularly in newspapers. Yet it was not until the success of *The New York Daily News* (4), in its first five years after being founded in 1919 — a success which was widely ascribed to its use of many large photographs — that the United States saw the full emergence of something resembling the range of uses of newspaper photographs that we know today. Likewise, television was widely available in the United States beginning in the late 1940s, but it was not until 1960 that Kennedy showed how television, skilfully used, could propel a lesser-known candidate to the forefront and enable him to neutralise a candidate who was initially far better known to the electorate. These illustrations of the evolutionary nature of communication systems also demonstrate the significant role of technological change in the processes to which the notion of cultural frames refer.

Theodore Roosevelt’s time in office (from 1901 to 1909) falls within the period of newspaper dominance and the first cultural frame, which LKJ set in the period from 1890 to 1925. It is in this period that we see the emergence of mass media society, a society made possible by industrialisation and technological advancement.
In the first phase of mass marketing, before the emergence of the consumer society, familiar objects were replaced by industrial articles, promoted largely on the basis of their own 'abstract qualities': their utility, advanced technology, low cost and efficiency. (p. 277)

But advertisers and marketers found out that this was not enough. LKJ explain the limitations of this frame for them:

Thereafter, marketing and advertising strategies sought with ever greater self-awareness to fill the void left by the disappearance of traditional cultures by creating a sense of social solidarity in messages about the relations between persons and things. Whereas the new system of commodity production emptied the world of the traditional material elements in the lives of groups, the new system of mass marketing sought to refill that world with its own form and content. (p. 277)

This study will show how the "strong tone of veneration about products" (p. 279) carried in advertising messages in this phase will find parallels in the presentation of Theodore Roosevelt’s image.

Roosevelt’s years in office coincided with the fierce battle for circulation between newspaper barons William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer and the beginning of the age of mass photographic reproduction. In this case study it will be shown how important this context was in the creation of Roosevelt’s image.
Franklin Delano Roosevelt held office from 1933 to 1945, a period which saw the rise in dominance of radio, a medium he used effectively with his "fireside chats" beamed to the nation. This period coincides with phase two in the cultural frames, incorporating the years 1925 to 1945. LKJ point out that this was the initial phase of the consumer society in which "the utilitarian aspects of goods were subordinated more and more deeply beneath a network of abstract, or symbolic, qualities and values." They explain that this period "marked the transition point where the earlier denotative discourse, reflecting the quite specific attributes of qualities to things, became subordinated thereafter to a far more expansive connotative discourse, rooted in suggestion, metaphor, analogy, and inference." (p. 284)

Television rose to prominence in the period from 1950, during which Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy in 1960 became America’s first presidential candidates to debate live on television. These developments fell within LKJ’s 1945-1965 span in which "consumers were encouraged to consider what the product could do for them, personally and selfishly." (p. 289)

LKJ saw this period as one in which "objects are released from bondage to authoritative symbols." They argue that "for the first time in the consumer society, things
enter the sphere of ordinary human experience, and the means of entry is the metaphor of 'personality.' " (p. 289) As with the other presidents in their respective contexts, the relevance of this transition to the Kennedy presidency will be argued in the case study.

The medium of television was seen as decisive in Kennedy's success, both in getting him into power and making him the powerful symbol that he was while in office. Commentators on the Kennedy-Nixon debate both then and now suggest that Kennedy's showing in the four televised debates was pivotal to his election as the 34th American president, which he became with a very narrow majority after overcoming such disadvantages as his age, his perceived inexperience, his religion, and his roots in the wealthy New England aristocracy.

The fourth and last president whom this project examines is Ronald Reagan. He took office in the last part of the fourth cultural frame (1965-1985), in which the "identifying features of the three preceding periods are recalled and synthesised." (p. 295) In this period:

The product-related images are gradually freed from serving only the narrow utilitarian qualities of the thing itself (idolatry), abstract and authoritative symbols (iconology), or a too restrictive array of interpersonal relations (narcissism). Here utility, symbolism and personalisation are mixed and remixed under the sign of the group.
Consumption is meant to be a spectacle, a public enterprise: product-related images fulfil their totemic potential in becoming emblems for social collectivities, principally by means of their association with lifestyles. (p. 295)

This thesis argues that Reagan can be seen as such a sign given the way he successfully projected himself as the leader of a newly styled America. Labelled "The Great Communicator," Reagan was adept in electronic media techniques and was a highly successful presidential candidate in the political marketplace. Chronologically, Reagan straddles the margin between the fourth cultural frame and its as-yet-unidentified successor.

Tabulating the evolution of the message systems bound by the cultural frames, LKJ pose newspapers/magazines as the dominant medium in the first cultural frame; radio dominates in the second cultural frame; and television prevails in the last two frames. (p. 279) In each period the medium which dominates public discourse significantly affects the ways in which the image of the candidate/leader is presented. Robert Denton, in his book The Primetime Presidency of Ronald Reagan, points to the change in presidential message brought about by the changes in media:

Andrew Jackson utilized a friendly newspaper, the Washington Globe, to espouse his policies. Theodore Roosevelt, a master of public relations, understood the impact of delivering
powerful messages reprinted in daily newspapers with dramatic photographs. He seldom refused a photo opportunity. Woodrow Wilson, while lacking personal charisma, initiated regular press conferences and even commissioned motion pictures to capture newsworthy events. Franklin Roosevelt, of course, mastered the media of radio and motion pictures. And now we have Ronald Reagan being proclaimed as a "great communicator" -- and he is great largely because of his mastery of the television medium. (5)

Now retired, the master of electronic media even won the right to use videotape to give testimony in the trial of John Poindexter, Reagan's former national security advisor.

The four presidents selected for this empirical study were not only chosen because the time in office of each coincided with the rise to dominance of one of the three mass media but also because all four were high-profile American leaders (not surprisingly given their effective use of the dominant medium of their day) and therefore left behind abundant material, both pictorial and written, on their images. Two of the four former presidents, Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy, have presidential libraries in their native areas, at Hyde Park, New York and Boston, Massachusetts respectively, both of which I visited in the course of this study. Theodore Roosevelt was in power before the era of presidential libraries was ushered in with Herbert Hoover, and Reagan's library is still in the process of being set up in California.
The reason American presidents were chosen for the study is because of the current sophistication of the selling and polling techniques used in political campaigning and the extent of mass media influence in the United States. Institutionally, the United States uses the presidential primary system in the selection of a political head, a mechanism that can be seen as analogous to the pre-testing period to which marketers subject products before launching them. Increasingly, these selling and polling techniques are being used in other countries. The current conservative governments in both Britain and Canada have benefited considerably from the marketing skills learnt from Republican strategists, who have met with success in three consecutive presidential elections.

This exploration draws on, but also in some ways takes issue with, the work of cultural theorist Neil Postman, author of *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, a critique of what Postman calls "Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business." He argues that while modern voters still vote out of "self-interest," as did their parents, the meaning of "self-interest" has changed in the period of "image politics."

... my father voted for the party that represented (his) interests, but "interests" meant to (him) something tangible -- patronage, preferential treatment, protection from bureaucracy, Thanksgiving turkeys for indigent
families ... Most of the rest of us vote our interests, but they are largely symbolic ones, which is to say, of a psychological nature. Like television commercials, image politics is a form of therapy, which is why so much of it is charm, good looks, celebrity and personal disclosure. (6)

This argument echoes some of the notions embraced within the relevant cultural frames, and will also be evaluated against material gathered on the public performances of the four American presidents selected for this project.

Postman again strikes a chord with LKJ’s discussion of the initial phase in consumer culture as quoted above. He says:

... just as the television commercial empties itself of authentic product information so that it can do its psychological work, image politics empties itself of authentic political substance for the same reason. (p. 136)

The empirical research conducted for this thesis, with the interpretive element which attends any data-gathering project, shows that the packaging of politicians is nothing new. It was certainly around when Theodore Roosevelt, on whom the benefits of a photo opportunity were never lost (he recorded the fact on film that he was the first president to fly), was selling his political image and predates his term in office. It is in order to trace how the packaging for
consumption has changed over time, and to consider the implications that flow from this transformation, that the four cultural frames are used. This project, then, would take issue with the frequent careless assumption that image politics is something relatively recent, something that is the product of television culture. While the idea of the packaging of the political leader is pushed back at least until the beginning of this century, however, this is not done at the expense of a proper recognition of the significant changes that have taken place within this persuasive practice. Rather, this project sets as one of its tasks a tracing back of the notable changes in the public discourse over the past 90 years.

One such change attracting critical attention involves what Kathleen Hall Jamieson calls the grammar of television, which she says has given rise to a different kind of public discourse. Jamieson, in a television panel discussion with Bill Moyers during the November 1988 election in which she claimed the current American voter was cynical and indifferent, laid the blame on the discourse of television, which she said has a different grammar, a grammar which is visual and which through association and analogy allows distortion and misrepresentation impossible in a verbal argument. (7) Here, Jamieson sees at work much the same practices to which LKJ refer when they identify association
and analogy as the central rhetorical elements in the discourse of advertising. Nor is she alone in attributing voter cynicism to the influence of television. Abigail McCarthy, in a 1981 article entitled *Why We Stay Home: Authenticity and the Vote*, ascribed the decline in voter participation in U.S. national elections to a perception that voting is no longer an authentic act. McCarthy asserts: "Much of the loss of authenticity has to be attributed to the power of the television medium." (8) These arguments are explored in chapter two of the thesis.

It is perhaps only in this television era that Denton could make the claim: "Political advertising has become the political oratory of this age." (9)

So the process comprising the selling techniques devised by the marketers and advertisers of the complex commodity of the political leader, on the one hand, and the corresponding process accompanying commercial goods, on the other, undergo a parallel cultural transformation through each of the periods defined. To use LKJ's term, the "masks" which are donned by political candidates in order to persuade us of their merits are constructed in much the same way as those placed on other goods through product advertising in consumer society.
Just as the advertising campaign for the refrigerator is perennial, so, too, the advertising campaign for the political leader in the United States is ongoing. In a chapter called "Personalities vs. Issues" written for The Great Debates, a book on the Kennedy-Nixon television encounters of 1960, Samuel Lubell points out:

Both the Democrats and Republicans have reorganized their party machinery so it will function day in and day out, year in and year out. And the business of image-making is also becoming a continuous operation. (10)

This study of the relationship between representation and the political process was inspired by a concern about the implications for democratic participation -- the promise held out by 20th-century liberal pluralist democracies -- of the discourse of public persuasion conducted by and mediated through marketing, advertising and the mass media in consumer society. Given the increasing sophistication of the techniques used to sell political candidates, and that the evolution of this marketing message finds approximate correlations in the vending practices for ordinary commodities, it is likely that the tendency not to make direct claims or promises (which originated in 1930s advertising) will make it ever easier for campaigning leaders to skirt important issues and still succeed in holding on to public office.
The remainder of this thesis is organised as follows. Chapter two elaborates on the issues and concerns raised in the introductory chapter, mapping the conceptual terrain while setting the context of this study. Chapter three lays out the methodology. The fourth chapter is designed as a set of case studies setting out the examination of the presidents as well as analysing and interpreting this information through the cultural frames, and is divided into four sections. The concluding chapter looks at the implications, mulling the consequences for democratic participation of the selling of the political leader in consumer society.

Concerns about the increasing commodification of the political leader and the large amounts of money being spent on the selling of the political candidate are addressed in the conclusion of this study.
Notes

1. Some of the techniques used for the marketing of particular presidents may straddle two cultural frames. Traces and elements of techniques developed and used in a cultural frame can also sometimes be seen in others.


CHAPTER 2
MAPPING THE TERRAIN

In the previous chapter, I proposed that the shifting trends in the presentation of the political leader could be shown to have a close relationship with those for consumer goods in 20th-century industrial society. LKJ argue that the message system through and about goods is a "privileged discourse" -- indeed, it provides the daily information through which people in industrial societies have grown used to interpreting the world; it is a cultural inheritance which is taken for granted. So privileged is it, I will argue, that major elements of it are readily transported out of the realm of consumer activity and into the arena of politics, so that it becomes a discourse not only about and through goods, but beyond them as well.

This commercial discourse prevails in most areas of modern industrial life, rendering it the commonsense way in which to consider and talk about things. It maintains its preponderance by being continually reshaped and perpetuated by people who draw their ideas, their inspiration and their habits from the society at large, which is seen as the natural order. The mass media contribute greatly to the consistency of the information flow in industrial society, not only because of repetition and the number of people reached by the same messages, but also because these media
are owned and presided over by groupings with an interest in the preservation of the market economy.

To one degree or another there has been an awareness throughout this century among politicians and their handlers that they can learn from the marketplace's techniques for building a broad acceptance for goods. The relatively unsophisticated technology of the first part of the century, of course, limited the persuasive capacity of the market culture, and the extent to which commercial techniques could overlap with the political process. So while the power of the image to convert was not lost on political leaders such as Theodore Roosevelt, the practice of image promotion was at a fairly rudimentary stage, tied as it is to the technological possibilities for mass dissemination. Joe McGinniss titled his book on the election of Richard Nixon in 1968 The Selling of the President. In it he refers to "a striking new phenomenon -- the marketing of political candidates as if they were consumer products." (1) It would probably not have seemed appropriate to McGinniss or any other writer of the day to use such a title had the subject been Theodore Roosevelt and the time 60 years earlier. But McGinniss appears to be largely unaware that he is describing a process which had already been in operation for some time and which was now adjusting to a changing environment of expanded production and increasing
commodification, greater intensity of promotion and heightened sophistication of media and marketing techniques -- all developed in the marketplace.

While Roosevelt himself was adept at self-promotion, the idea of political leaders selling themselves did not take root until much later. An illustration of this is the approach made by Bruce Barton, one of the founders of American advertising, to Republican presidential candidate Calvin Coolidge in 1924. According to Warren I. Susman, Barton proposed that Coolidge incorporate some of the techniques of advertising into his campaign, based on the assumption that if you could sell a product, you could sell a president. Coolidge, saying such a development would be "unpresidential," turned him down. (2)

But over time the pervasiveness of the dominant marketplace discourse has facilitated a process of commodification in political candidates. The expression "selling oneself" does not sound strange to the ear schooled in the discourse of the marketplace today, nor does the title of McGinniss's book appear so to the eye accustomed to the painstakingly parcelled product. The packaging, positioning and projected popularity of the candidate now appear as the prime concern in electoral politics.
In a recent book entitled *When Presidents are Great*, Marcia Lynn Whicker and Raymond A. Moore devote much space to the selling abilities of presidents from Hoover onwards and, in a chapter entitled "Presidents as Salespeople," actually rank them in four categories of "selling skills" -- in their relations with the media, public, Congress and world leaders. Interestingly, from the point of view of this thesis, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Kennedy and Reagan top their "overall selling score" list with 3.00, 2.50 and 2.50 respectively, while the remaining presidents range in score from 2.50 down to a low of 1.00 for Hoover. (3)

The political leader in consumer society, I suggest, emerges as the ultimate commodity, surpassing all rivals on the public stage in such attributes as the potential for use or advantage, the range of symbolic and material needs it is expected will be met and the cost and sophistication of marketing.

Comparisons between the amounts spent on the promotion of the image of Theodore Roosevelt, the first president examined in the case studies, and Ronald Reagan, the last, are meaningless. However, in any terms the amount spent on the election of a president is vast, and growing quickly. In 1980, the year Reagan was first voted into power, the U.S. presidential election, including the pre-nomination period, cost $275 million overall, the most expensive up until that
time, according to campaign finance expert Herbert Alexander in the book *Money and Politics in the United States*. (4) Alexander supplies a sample of the candidates' spending priorities in a breakdown of the media spending by the Reagan-Bush committee which shows a heavy leaning towards television: 74.5 percent on television, 10.3 percent on radio and 15.2 percent on print. (p. 26) The case studies in chapter four which look at image politics through the cultural frames, examining the presentations of the four presidents chosen, will explore the significance of this medium in the political discourse of the fourth cultural frame, that which covers Reagan's initial victorious presidential campaign.

The elections held in the last decade in three modern capitalist economies, the United States, Britain and Canada, have all seen unprecedented spending on the marketing of the victorious candidates. By far the leader, though, is the United States, where a complex set of laws makes it possible for vast sums of money to be brought to bear in presidential elections. In addition to the massive election fund-raising which parties and individuals conduct, and contributions from special interest groups who, through donor lists or membership clubs, find ways around the ceilings on individual donations, the reformed campaign finance laws of the 1970s specify various formulas under which candidates
can receive large sums of government money for their campaigns.

Of the $275 million it cost to elect a president in 1980, which was $115 million more than was spent to elect a president four years earlier, about 37 per cent, or $100.6 million, of the money was supplied by the U.S. government, which translates into the taxpayer and voter. These funds came from voluntary contributions made by some 35 million taxpayers each year by designating a dollar each on their federal income tax forms for the Presidential Election Campaign Fund, says Alexander. (5) In the United States the ceilings on spending apply only to candidates who seek federal matching funds. This is a form of assistance based on a formula that matches the federal contribution to that raised by the candidate under certain circumstances. According to Alexander, the total campaign funding from all sources brought to bear by and on behalf of Reagan in 1980 was $64.6 million, as opposed to $53.93 million for Carter. (6)

The sophisticated marketing techniques used to sell political candidates, while most highly developed in the United States, are by no means confined to that country. Its selling practices are in fact being emulated by other political parties, notably by the two ruling conservative parties of Britain and Canada.
The 1988 Canadian election was far and away the most expensive election in the country's history, according to a number of observers, including journalist Charlotte Gray. While the legal limit on election spending in Canada is $8 million per party, she says, unofficially the three parties spent more: the Conservatives at least $18 million. (7)

In reaction to concern that elections were threatening to become multimillion-dollar extravaganzas, the 1974 Election Expenses Act put an official ceiling on the amount that a party can spend to win votes during the seven weeks of a Canadian election campaign. The purpose of the act was to reduce any unfair advantage to the wealthiest parties. Advice and technical help from the Republican party machine in Washington on aspects adopted from the advertising of consumer products such as modern sampling, electronic data processing and direct mail helped the Canadian Tories to boost income three-fold between 1980 and 1984, Gray says, and also added to their skills in persuasive techniques.

The Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher in Britain has been another beneficiary of the marketing expertise of the Republicans' handlers, and money again appears as an important element here. According to a television documentary, The Marketing of Margaret, by the BBC's Panorama team, the Conservatives spent five million pounds on the carefully strategised and monitored 1983
campaign, far more than the opposition Labour Party could muster, and it helped give the Tories a landslide victory. The British Conservatives acquired the expensive services of the well-known advertising agency Saatchi and Saatchi in their selling campaign. They also hired a former vendor of foods and Mars chocolates, Chris Lawson, and former television staffer Gordon Reese, both of whom had been careful observers of the American electoral process, to groom the British prime minister, now in her third term in office.

As the expensive persuasive techniques of advertising become more prevalent in election selling, an increasing number of voices are heard saying that image politics, by which is normally meant political discourse in the era of television, threatens democracy. British journalist and former London Sunday Times editor Harold Evans, for example, told television journalist Bill Moyers in a documentary during the 1988 American election campaign that he feared for democracy. He made the remark during a panel discussion that followed the screening of a British Channel Four examination of the selling of the leader.

In another example, actor Leslie Caron, on introducing the British television programme The Marketing of Margaret, voices a similar concern. Abigail McCarthy sees
the relationship of citizens to leaders as one of persons to packages rather than persons to persons.

Democracy requires that the relationship of citizens to leaders be that of persons to persons. For too long a time ours has been the relationship of persons to packages ... packages with human face and form -- and, somewhere within the wrappings, no doubt, a winning but fallible human personality -- but a package put together by pollsters, image-makers, pulse-takers, and speech-writers. Voting under such conditions is not making a choice; it is buying a product. (8)

I will emphasize in this thesis the evolution of image politics in the United States during the 20th century, while recognizing the need for concern over democratic participation in the political process in mass media society, as well as over the increasing commodification of the political leader, and over the realization that the dominant medium of television limits some discourses while enhancing others. This focus is chosen in an attempt to enhance understanding of the relationship between representation and the political process.

Before taking issue with the conventional wisdom on image politics, however, further elaboration on the central notion of the leader as the ultimate commodity is required. Consumer culture, replacing traditional pre-industrial and early industrial society, multiplies the activity of commodity exchange; an activity which poses deliberation.
over one's purchases of consumer goods as an important process, as an alternative to community participation for people who are, for the most part, defined as commodities themselves, a striking example of which is the player in professional sport. (9) Commodities, of course, fulfil symbolic as well as material needs.

The political commodity is called upon to satisfy a complex set of needs for the consumer in mass media society, cut loose from traditional meaning, not least of which is the need for the consumer to find an identity within the image of the leader. Roland Barthes, in an essay called "Photography and Electoral Appeal," sees the political candidate as forging a personal link with the voter. Barthes sees candidates as offering the voter through their likeness

... a type of social setting, the spectacular comfort of family, legal and religious norms, the suggestion of innately owning such items of bourgeois property as Sunday Mass, xenophobia, steak and chips, cuckold jokes, in short, what we call an ideology. (10)

During the 1984 election campaign, Todd Gitlin, in an observation on 20th-century political image-making that fits the third and fourth cultural frames especially well, took the argument a step further: "All seems image, which is the mass democratic equivalent of vanity." (11)
In addition to candidates, perhaps it is the myth of "democracy" itself that is being "sold" in America's election extravaganzas, given that voting records indicate that almost half of the electorate refuses, for whatever reason, to even go to the market. To link up with some of the current debates among cultural theorists of consumerism and with Neil Postman's concern about the television age, the idea has been expressed that if an experience is simulated on, say, television, this perhaps removes the need to do it in real life. So, the idea goes, if "democracy" is staged on television, then perhaps it is felt there is no need to participate in it in reality. Commenting on the four televised debates between Nixon and Kennedy, Harold D. Lasswell says:

Undoubtedly another postulate is that candidates are supposed to encourage voting by making the election issues appear to be of great significance.

He also ponders whether a facility in debate is an important skill for the "leaders of popular government," asking:

Does this mean that oral facility is essential? ... What about Jefferson's famous disinclination to speak? (12)

The United States has the second-lowest voter participation rate of all the western democracies. This begs a question -- Why, if the selling of the candidate is such a grand affair on which so much is spent, are voters so
reluctant to go to the marketplace? In the 1932 election Franklin D. Roosevelt was voted into office by 52.4 per cent of the eligible population. Since that time, the highest percentage turnout which the United States has achieved is the 62.8 per cent who chose between Nixon and Kennedy in 1960, as the following table shows. (13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Turnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The XXIV Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in January 1964 removed any poll tax requirement for the franchise.

* The XXVI Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1971 lowered the voting age from 21 to 18.

Evans, in the documentary referred to above, claimed that 50 million more voters would need to vote in the then upcoming presidential election, November 1988, for the percentage turnout to equal that achieved in 1876, although of course the franchise was by no means universal then.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson has argued that the present voter is cynical and indifferent. She laid part of the blame for this on the discourse of television, which she said has a different grammar, a grammar that is visual and which through association and analogy enables distortion and misrepresentation impossible in a verbal argument.
Television's discourse is taken up in detail in chapter four. The notion of regular elections selling democracy has a parallel in the advertising industry, where the bulk of work done is aimed at keeping existing products in the market.

Media consultant Tony Schwartz, writing in Media: The Second God, sees television making its audiences a political force with a power outside of that which is theirs as voters through the ballot box. As a media practitioner who has worked on a number of political campaigns, Schwartz takes a very different stance from theorists such as Postman and Hall Jamieson, who scrutinize political communication.

People don’t stay home on Election Day merely because they are not good citizens. Many stay at home because they don’t feel the ballot box influences government and public affairs. But that doesn’t necessarily cut them off from the political process. Watching and reacting to key events on television enables them to have an effect on government. Their reactions are quickly measured by polls to which politicians pay close attention. (14)

Schwartz, however, argues differently about the role of television and the ballot box in the political process in an earlier part of his book:

The media have replaced political parties as the main channel of communication to the electorate and the vehicle for organizing people and getting them out to the polls ... The
media, rather than a political party or club, now inform and form our political views and behavior. (15)

For C.B. Macpherson in *The Real World of Democracy* the promotion and selling of the liberal society -- with its ideals of a free exchange of goods and ideas in a competitive market place and representative democracy based on recurring elections with government seen as the neutral arbitrator -- is precisely the task of the liberal state. He argues that, in 19th and early 20th-century western societies, before the franchise became universal,

... the job of the liberal state was to maintain and promote the liberal society, which was not essentially a democratic or an equal society. The job of the competitive party system was to uphold the competitive market society, by keeping the government responsive to the shifting majority interests of those who were running the market society. (16)

Macpherson argued that voting rights were eventually extended to all because the pervasive logic of the competitive market society made their continued denial too difficult to justify -- another way of saying that the privileged discourse of the marketplace, inevitably, exerts a powerful influence on the political process. Seen this way, it becomes almost a natural progression that political leaders will follow the lead of the marketplace in the search for new and better methods to win public approval.
This process can be seen at work in the phenomenon of the Progressive movement in the United States in the early part of this century. Candidates for president saw the opportunity which the emerging market discourse offered as a way to circumvent the domination of the Republican and Democratic party bosses, who had great powers to determine who would be the party's presidential candidate. Theodore Roosevelt was the first president to realise the significance of the primary process, and to see that the state and local primary procedure could be used at the presidential level to wrest power from the party hierarchy by giving rank and file voters a say in the nomination process. He used this strategy in 1912 in his bid for the presidency. Roosevelt, elected vice-president in 1900, became president when William McKinley was assassinated in 1901. He was re-elected in 1904, receiving a decisive 7,628,834 votes to the slightly more than 5 million for his Democratic rival. (17) He then took leave of politics but returned to contest the Republican nomination for the 1912 election, trouncing incumbent President William H. Taft in the primaries by 1,164,765 votes to 766,326 (18) -- clearly the choice of the rank and file. Yet the party bosses, through their control of the party machinery, had little difficulty arranging a first-ballot victory for Taft at the nominating convention. The Chicago Tribune ran a banner headline saying "THOU SHALT NOT STEAL" (19) which, in the
opinion of historian John Allen Gable, "expressed the sentiments of millions of Americans." (20)

Although there was more at issue than the lack of democratic participation in the presidential nominating process, the fact that Roosevelt's breakaway Progressive party was able to beat Taft into third place in finishing second to Democratic winner Woodrow Wilson (21) in 1912 is perhaps, in part, an indication of the growth of the idea that the freedom to choose among manufactured products should logically be matched in the political marketplace.

The problem posed by the power of the party bosses remained, however, and this, as well as the way in which the third president selected for this project, John F. Kennedy, used the primaries successfully to gain popular support, will be examined and analysed in chapter four, where it will be argued that primaries can be seen as operating in much the same way as pre-testing for the commonplace commodity. This account of the origins and history of the presidential primaries points to an interpretation of the weakening of party political power quite different to the one-sided version subscribed to by Schwartz, as quoted above.

Postman, one of the contemporary communication theorists dealing with television's impact on image politics in the United States, expresses an indignation about the
nature of public discourse in the television age which seems to blind him to the long history of concern with image in political discourse, stretching back to ancient Greece, the city state that symbolizes the word democracy for the western mind. While I agree with Postman's McLuhanesque assertion that television demands a different kind of content compared to other media, and draw heavily on this insight (shared by a number of theorists, including Hall Jamieson) and use his analysis in an examination of the two presidents who found an ally in television, I take issue with his careless conceptualization of image, and his nostalgic view of politics in the time before television. Presidential campaigns before the television era were not the picture of erudite articulation on the part of the political leaders and attentive listening on the part of the audiences that Postman paints. Paul F. Boller Jr. in his book Presidential Campaigns presents a different view.

But presidential campaigns, even at their fiercest, were always more than contests in scurrility. They were also great entertainments. The scurrilousness, in fact, was to some extent part of the fun and the invective at times joyously creative. As early as 1792 the voice of the people, it was said, was "the voice of grog" at election time. From almost the beginning, America's quadrennial confrontation was in part a circus, carnival, vaudeville show, pageant, extravaganza, spectacle, the Greatest Show on Earth.
Boller then juxtaposes this with a quotation from 1966 to explain the nature of the democratic process in America in which he attributes to Reagan these words:

\[
\text{Politics is just like show business. You have a hell of an opening, you coast for a while, you have a hell of a closing.}
\]

As further evidence for this contention he quotes Carl Schurz on the 1840 campaign:

\[
\text{The immense multitudes gathered at the meetings came to be amused, not to be instructed. They met, not to think and deliberate, but to laugh and shout and sing. (22)}
\]

Postman, who seems to limit the word image to mean only the visual ways in which the mind is offered an idea, prefers -- albeit in a most witty manner -- to castigate television discourse, which he warns is making us "sillier by the minute," (p. 24) rather than to closely examine the history of representation in the political process. For him "the epistemology created by television not only is inferior to a print-based epistemology but is dangerous and absurdist." (p. 27)

Carleton University classics professor Trevor Hodge, writing in The Globe and Mail of Sept. 29, 1988, points out that Pericles and fellow Grecians were certainly aware of the importance of the visual. The politician, if he (only men had the right to address the assembly, the supreme
legislative and executive authority of which all male citizens were members) wanted a measure passed, had to persuade the male populace by any means possible, argues Hodge, and therefore relied heavily on the impact of the immediate, visual, personal presentation.

Pericles did not blow-dry his hair, but he did have a high, domed forehead that he evidently felt might put people off; so in the Assembly he always made a point of appearing in military uniform, whose bronze helmet would cover up his cranial deficiency. (23)

Postman, by limiting the scope of his examination of image-making practices, loses the opportunity for the type of insight ancient Athens can offer, bearing in mind of course the great difference in technological environment that separates the two historical instances of image fabrication. Discussing the 1984 American election, he complains that the debates between the two candidates were quite different to those between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas in 1858, which he idealizes for their length and erudition.

Post-debate commentary largely avoided any evaluation of the candidates’ ideas, since there were none to evaluate. Instead, the debates were conceived as boxing matches, the relevant question being, Who KO’d whom? The answer was determined by the ‘style’ of the men -- how they looked, fixed their gaze, smiled and delivered one-liners ...

Thus, the leader of the free world is chosen by the people in the Age of Television. (p. 97)
Between Postman and Hodge we get a sense of how, on the one hand, the role of ancient Athens and Rome in the cultural roots of western democracy has been mythologized and consequently how the meaning of the word democracy itself has been muddied; and on the other, of how easily it is overlooked that crowds or audiences have always been swayed significantly by the "feel" of a politician who is speaking, as opposed to the pure substance of what is being said. Hodge argues:

So, paradoxically, the great achievement of political television may have been to bring us back to ancient Greek democracy.

As for opinion polls, they also would strike a chord with an ancient Athenian. We usually sneer at a government that charts its course by the polls. Decisions should be taken by Parliament -- shouldn't they?

An ancient Greek would be very clear on the matter: polls are very much more democratic than Parliament. They are a direct, frequent, reasonably reliable statement of what the people want, and should be obeyed unquestioningly. (24)

The first two chapters dealt with the notions that inform this project as well as the placing of this thesis within the discipline of communications and the mapping out of the historical and theoretical context. The third chapter is concerned with the methodology employed.
Notes


5. Alexander, p. 11.

6. Alexander, "The Regulation and Funding of Presidential Elections," *The Journal of Law and Politics* (Fall, 1983), p. 54, Table 1. Nor is the costly selling exercise restricted to election times: the presidential inauguration of the most recently elected president, George Bush, was widely reported by U.S. news media as having cost at least $25 million. The political leader must continually be touted; in much the same way that the consumer is repeatedly reminded of the virtues of a washing powder.


9. See Richard Wightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears, eds., *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History 1880-1980* (New York: Pantheon, 1983), p. 12: "Individuals have been invited to seek commodities as keys to personal welfare, and even to conceive of their own selves as commodities."


15. Schwartz, p. 139.


17. Hoffmann, p. 338.


19. Chicago Tribune, June 18 1912.


24. Hodge.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this thesis, the relationship between representation and the political process is examined by focusing on the ways in which the images of the four 20th-century presidents selected were presented to America’s voters. Aspects of the images, verbal and visual, cultivated and projected by Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, both before and during their presidencies, are scrutinized, then detailed and documented in four case studies so as to gauge their transformation over time. This empirical method sprang from the idea that the pervasiveness of the marketplace discourse in an ever-expanding industrial society has for some time been changing the nature of representation in the political process, and is aimed at seeking out specific manifestations of this trend. The postulation of the political leader as the ultimate commodity is a reflection of the weight of the evidence gathered.

For the most part, secondary sources had to be relied on for this descriptive research, with aspects of the four presidents’ political lives making up the research material for the four case studies. The fact that all but one of the presidents studied are dead meant that histories,
biographies, autobiographies, journals, letters, posters, film and video clips and the like formed the bulk of the research material. Reagan’s time in office overlapped with the researching of this thesis, and thus there was the advantage of seeing, albeit in a mediated way, the promotion of this presidential image in action. An added benefit was that the controversial Reagan presidency inspired considerable coverage which in turn spawned articles, books and documentaries on the kinds of issue this thesis investigates -- those related to the selling of the candidate. In addition, people who were associated with the promotion of Reagan and his presidency, be it as advocates, adversaries or audience, are still available to deliver comment.

Of the four presidents, two -- Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy -- have had presidential libraries set up for them by the U.S. National Archives, and these were visited to obtain a sense of the respective styles of their presidencies and to ascertain whether appropriate material was available for use in this study. While the respective collections were too vast to establish, on a brief visit, exactly what material was indeed available, the differences in style were more easily detected. Some visual material was obtained, and in addition the visit to the Franklin D. Roosevelt library turned up some political cartoons that
effectively illustrate some of this thesis's important arguments on the nature of presidential promotional representations during the second cultural frame, the period 1925 to 1945. However, obtaining permission to use material can be difficult as copyright is often vested in people who have died or in organisations no longer in existence, and in these cases a description of the visual material will be given in its place. More time was devoted to Franklin D. Roosevelt than the others, not only because of the material found but also because the second cultural frame is that which marks the emergence of the consumer society and is pivotal to an understanding of the cultural frames that follow.

David Powers, who worked for John F. Kennedy from 1946 until his death in 1963 -- in senatorial campaigns, primaries and throughout the presidential campaign of 1960 -- and who is a joint author on a book about Kennedy, is now at the John F. Kennedy library in Boston and the material used in this thesis includes an interview conducted with him. (1)

Reagan's presidential library, to be located in California, is still in the process of being set up, and Theodore Roosevelt's presidency came before the U.S. National Archives established presidential libraries under its jurisdiction following Herbert Hoover's time in office.
The opportunities, therefore, to peruse primary documents for this project for either Theodore Roosevelt or Reagan were limited. However, Theodore Roosevelt's former home in Oyster Bay, New York was visited.

The empirical research in chapter four, which is divided into four sections (one on each of the four selected presidencies) is analysed in terms of the ideas incorporated in and associated with the cultural frames as set out in chapters one and two, and observations on the marketing and promotion of the political leader are then made.

After the expression "ultimate commodity" had been formulated in relation to the political leader, the cultural frames were seen as an appropriate manner through which to evaluate this assertion. The electorate, in terms of this analysis, were considered as consumers persuaded by leaders, their publicity staff and media handlers that a particular candidate could serve their needs. This thesis, as a historical research project based on the belief that image politics has been present in political discourse for some time and was certainly around in Theodore Roosevelt's day, uses the cultural frames to monitor exactly how the packaging and marketing of the leader in America have changed over time as the market-industrial society has expanded.
The comparative analytical approach embodied in choosing to examine four presidents in four different historical contexts brings into sharper focus the evolutionary nature of the process being studied and thus enables this thesis better to consider the implications that flow from the transformation and expansion of promotional practices and to speculate on what this will mean for consumer society in years ahead. The limitations of a study of this nature prohibit an exhaustive investigation of this latter aspect, but it is seen as a starting point for an elaboration on parts of this thesis in further studies of ideology and image.

American leaders were selected for this project for two reasons: the extreme pervasiveness in the U.S. of promotional practices and the manifold communication possibilities available in this sphere as a result of the country's technical media sophistication, and, flowing from this fact, the extent to which the U.S. is looked to for the current wisdom in technical media development and by other political leaders interested in advancing their promotion. All four of the presidents chosen had prominent profiles, making research on them easier. In addition, of course, the period in office of each meshes with a particular cultural frame as well as the period of dominance of a particular medium in the media hierarchy.
To avoid being constrained by the selective procedures of theorists and historians who have sifted through the data on the American leaders before this project and delivered their own interpretations, attempts have been made to draw on primary sources for this project where possible but, as discussed above, such opportunities are limited. Of course, this does not imply a denial that selection always takes place, in this project or any other; the privileging of certain information, if only unconsciously, is unavoidable.
Notes

1. The interview was conducted by telephone from Vancouver to Boston on March 1, 1990.
Biographical outline: Theodore Roosevelt

1858: Born in New York City
1880: Marries Alice Hathaway Lee
1881: Elected to New York state assembly, the youngest man in the body
1884: Wife Alice dies after giving birth to daughter Alice; mother dies on same day
1886: Runs for mayor of New York; finishes third; marries Edith Kermit Carow in London, his second wife
1889: Appointed civil service commissioner by President Harrison
1893: Re-appointed by President Cleveland for two more years; worked to eliminate the spoils system by using competitive examinations and extension of the merit system; improved working conditions and placed women on same competitive level as men in many positions
1895: Appointed New York City police commissioner; institutes reforms aimed at curbing police corruption
1897: Appointed assistant secretary of the navy
1898: Commands Rough Rider regiment in Spanish-American War; elected governor of New York state; institutes reforms and confronts power of political bosses
1900: Elected vice-president on Republican ticket
1901: President William McKinley assassinated, Roosevelt becomes president
1902: Begins enforcement of Anti-Trust Act of 1890
1904: Re-elected president
1906: Wins Nobel Peace Prize for his part in ending the Russo-Japanese War
1910: Accepts Arch Hoxsey’s invitation to fly
1912: Progressive presidential candidate; second in election; survives assassination attempt
1919: Dies in New York City
1927: Mount Rushmore carving finished after 14 years; Roosevelt appears with Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln
The first cultural frame (1890-1925) / Theodore Roosevelt

... I wish to preach, not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; to preach that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph.

-- Theodore Roosevelt in a speech before the Hamilton Club, Chicago, April 10 1899. (1)

In this speech setting the tone of his most prominent years in public office, Theodore Roosevelt, by presenting attributes of hardiness and durability, invites reverence for his commitment to these ideals and by so doing draws an analogy between these characteristics and himself. He proclaims himself a devotee of perseverance; he offers the idea of a leader who will work hard, confront challenges and overcome difficulties; in short, he not only suggests a set of strong, practical personal qualities but projects himself as a heroic bearer of these qualities.

Roosevelt's presidency from 1901-1909 falls within LKJ's first cultural frame, the period 1890-1925, which they label the "idolatrous phase" because

... advertising messages at this time carried a strong tone of veneration about products. What generated this tone
was the industrial system's newly-discovered sense of power and accomplishment ... (2)

The overt selling strategy can be described as "rational" because its discourse is saturated with descriptive narratives about products and their many qualities, about the great range of their potential uses and benefits, about their commonsense advantages ...

(p. 279)

... the great majority of goods had some sensible quotient of genuine utility, and the lavish descriptions of their qualities contained an unmistakable undertone of equally genuine pride in their manufacture ... (p. 280)

The strong correlation in imagery between Roosevelt's words and presentation and LKJ's descriptions for the first cultural frame holds good under scrutiny: the "veneration," "newly-discovered sense of power and accomplishment," his "many qualities," "lavish descriptions" and "genuine pride" are all present in this and many other statements of Roosevelt's.

The marketing strategy of the first cultural frame, described by LKJ as "rational" when its discourse about the product is descriptive and full of praise for its qualities, is evident in an election poster from one of Theodore Roosevelt's early campaigns. The poster approximates the style prevalent in advertisements of the time in that the language focuses on the image itself and on the product's qualities. The poster, which at the bottom carries the names
of 18 people attesting to Roosevelt’s good character, is similar to the type of advertisement common in the first cultural frame but not unique to it in which an authoritative person endorses a product and commends its utility and beneficial qualities. A similar form endures in contemporary advertising where, for example, a celebrity is identified with a product. Under the large heading "21st Assembly District" and some details on its street boundaries, the Roosevelt poster reads:

We cordially recommend the voters of the Twenty-First Assembly District to cast their ballots for Theodore Roosevelt for Member of Assembly and take much pleasure in testifying to our appreciation of his high character and standing in the community. He is conspicuous for his honesty and integrity, and eminently qualified to represent the District in the Assembly. New York, November 1st, 1881. (3)

The tone of this election poster in Theodore Roosevelt’s first campaign is the tone adopted in most of the promotional material that followed, whether in material directly related to an election or otherwise; both, as this thesis argues, having a similar promotional function for the political leader.

Using the notion of political leader as commodity, this project argues that Roosevelt’s commitment to what he called the strenuous life, and all that it entails, can be seen as the main plank in his promotional strategy. It was an
appropriate theme for an age of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation in which Americans were acquiring a sense that their country was advancing, materially and politically, and Roosevelt, newspaper hero of the Spanish-American War of 1898, identified himself with this process of modernisation and reform more successfully than any other leader of the time.

An astute example of this strategy was a 1912 campaign speech in which Roosevelt linked the new industrial society, the presidency and his own robust image in a tight mutual association. He was addressing a crowd at Carnegie Hall in New York while the Progressive party’s candidate in the presidential election of that year.

I believe it should be a very powerful office, and I think the President should be a very strong man who uses without hesitation every power that the position yields. (4)

A strong component of what LKJ refer to as the "industrial system’s newly-discovered sense of power and accomplishment" was derived from technological advancement, and, during Roosevelt’s time in the presidency, three developments in particular stood out. On Dec. 12 1901 Guglielmo Marconi transmitted the first radio message across the Atlantic; on Dec. 17 1903 the Wright brothers achieved powered flight for the first time (Theodore Roosevelt later became the first president to fly); and the turn of the
century also approximately marked the appearance in American streets of motorised vehicles, leading to the introduction in 1909 of Henry Ford’s Model T, the first mass-produced automobile. Another relevant occurrence here was the screening of the first commercial motion picture in New York in 1896 by Thomas Alva Edison.

In terms of communication technology, however, Roosevelt’s career and the first cultural frame fall squarely into the period of dominance of print media, and especially newspapers. Prior to 1890 posters and billboards were the prevalent media. When Roosevelt returned from the Spanish-American War -- which, as assistant secretary of the navy, he had had a significant role in promoting -- he became, in quick succession, governor of New York, the successful Republican vice-presidential candidate and finally, after William McKinley’s assassination, the incumbent in the highest political office of all. Theodore Roosevelt, it could be argued in the light of Robert W. Desmond’s summation below, was about to become America’s first mass media president.

The Spanish-American War, in its total effect, stirred the press of the United States to greater activity in handling news, introduced true mass circulations, gave life to magazines in their attention to current news subjects, brought an advance in news photography, and introduced motion picture photography as an adjunct to news reporting. (5)
The advance in news photography which Desmond refers to was made possible by the perfection after 1890 of the halftone method of printing, a decade after the New York Daily Graphic, on March 2, 1880, appeared with the world’s first newspaper photograph prepared and printed without the help of an engraver. (6)

The press was an integral part of Roosevelt’s political strategy; during the Spanish-American War, for example, victorious images were constructed for news photographers, such as a picture of Roosevelt and his regiment, the Rough Riders, hoisting the American flag atop the strategic hill of San Juan they had just captured. Kathleen Hall Jamieson and David S. Birdsell, describe Roosevelt as a "master of the pseudoevent -- from San Juan hill on ..." (7) Roosevelt, from the start of his political career, concentrated on striking an alluring pose. He planned this in fine detail and set strict rules for himself: for example, he never allowed himself to be photographed while playing tennis, for he knew this image would associate him with a small elite and might alienate the voting majority. (8)

Roosevelt knew that if this robust image was to reach the large audiences important to his political future, he needed to cultivate a relationship with the press, the medium that dominated the media hierarchy of the period. Newspapers owners of the time, in turn, were locked in a
particularly fierce circulation battle, using sensational stories and dramatic pictures to attract readers, and a figure such as Theodore Roosevelt, with his ebullient style, potent poses, and daring exploits, gave them the type of copy they needed. The relationship between Theodore Roosevelt and the dominant medium of the time can be seen as a symbiotic one; he was right for the newspapers of the time, and they with their dramatic pictorial style were the ideal vehicle for his promotion.

The emergence of mass-circulation print media concerned with fresh news had important effects on the political process. Steven Schoenherr, in a dissertation on Franklin D. Roosevelt, provides the example of how the growing demand for news by newspapers affected the role of the president’s secretary. He notes that until the first administration of William McKinley began in 1896, the president’s secretary, being little more than an overworked stenographer, had had as his primary task the management of White House correspondence. This began to change in 1898 when McKinley appointed as secretary a clerk called George Bruce Cortelyou, who, while assembling a staff beneath him, was soon running the White House’s communications in conjunction with the president. The transformation of the post got under way in earnest when Roosevelt, who had become president in
1901 after McKinley's assassination, appointed William Loeb Jr. as his secretary in 1903. Says Schoenherr:

Beginning with William Loeb, the duties of the secretary broadened to relieve new burdens on the presidency. One of the heaviest of these burdens was the increasing demand for news. The technologies of the mass circulation newspaper, motion picture, half-tone photograph, and radio caused the President to devote more attention to the technique of image-building and public relations. An increasingly important aspect of the secretariat was helping the President deal with the new media. The staff was enlarged to include specialists such as public relations experts and speech writers. (9)

This extract forms part of Schoenherr's description of the changing role of the presidential secretary in his unpublished dissertation, Selling the New Deal: Stephen T. Early's Role as Press Secretary to Franklin D. Roosevelt. He says that under Cortelyou the secretariat increased to include a secretary, two assistant secretaries, two executive clerks, four clerks, of whom two were telegraphers, plus numerous stewards and messengers. Under Loeb, Cortelyou's successor, the secretariat became a powerful institution and by 1908 Loeb had enlarged it to include 50 clerks and stenographers.

Loeb handled the President's press relations with great skill, and became the first secretary to hold his own press conferences with reporters. He maintained friendly relations with the growing number of correspondents assigned to cover the White House,
providing them with a corner of the front alcove as a sort of press room in which newsmen could conduct their business. Collecting editorials from a wide selection of papers, he kept Theodore Roosevelt advised on public opinion and press reactions to the administration. (10)

Many of the photographs taken of Theodore Roosevelt which are still available, a number of which are now held at the Library of Congress, attest to the image of a lusty, feisty, vigorous and manly figure, and the two photographs of Theodore Roosevelt included in this project form part of the pattern.

Roosevelt on horseback is a favourite pose, some of these pictures dating back to his days as a frontiersman and rancher. This icon, with its strong, resonating notion of individualism, is continually returned to in advertising, presumably because of its perceived power to engage the American psyche, and is still present in contemporary advertising discourse, for example in the promotion of Marlboro cigarettes.

The image of Roosevelt as the robust man on horseback is used in a political cartoon depicting his victory over the spoils system while civil service commissioner, a position he held for six years following his appointment in 1889 by President Benjamin Harrison and re-appointment by President Grover Cleveland. The cartoon shows Roosevelt on a
bucking horse with a whip entitled "Reform Law" in hand and hat lifting off his head to reveal a note inside which reads "The Commission Means Business -- T.R." The saddle has written on it "Civil Service Reform" and "Spoilsman" is written on the hind of the horse. (11)

The evidence of the various biographies and accounts of his political life points to a man with an ever-present eye for opportunities for self-promotion, and Roosevelt seems to have realized that the position of civil service commissioner, while not lucrative or prestigious, had great potential. His report on blackmail in the U.S. Customs House in New York was the beginning of a series of disclosures on the patronage system of the time. William Davison Johnston, in TR: Champion of the Strenuous Life, refers to this period in Washington as Roosevelt's "six years' war" after which, he notes, "26,000 more jobs were no longer political plunder." (12)

These portrayals of the potent Roosevelt and their accompanying themes concur with those discussed by LKJ in their mapping of the first cultural frame, and could be drawn on continuously in the selling of Roosevelt as the political leader. In addition, Roosevelt's strategy of eliminating the spoils system by introducing competitive examinations and merit-based induction found easy legitimization in the developing commercial discourse,
embedded as it is in the philosophy of liberal pluralism, which was increasingly taking hold and establishing itself as the privileged discourse.

Other favored photographic poses showed Roosevelt in uniform during the Spanish-American War, gesturing vigorously while delivering a speech, engaged in one or another task of work such as clearing woods near his home Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay, or writing in the Amazon while on an expedition. According to Herman S. Frey, Roosevelt, a prolific writer, published over 2,000 works, including books on history, natural history, politics and travel. (13)

In contrast to some of the image-making during Ronald Reagan's presidency, which is dealt with in the fourth section of this chapter, there was usually some substance to the photographic claims made by Roosevelt. This is not to say that Roosevelt did not engage in any fabrication: as the following anecdote shows, he was eager to make the utmost use of the available media technology and had a motion picture crew accompany him during his 1912 campaign tour.

During his Western tour, T.R. arranged for his special train to stop at a little station in Arizona so some of the Rough Riders from Spanish-American War days could ride over to shake hands with their old commander ... the moving-picture man in the party (whom T.R. had christened "Movie") saw a chance to get some good campaign shots, so he yelled over to T.R. that he was going to start cranking the camera. T.R. got the point,
grinned, turned to the Rough Riders, arranged them appropriately around him, and began orating ... T.R., pretending to be giving an impassioned campaign speech, spouted any nonsense that came into his head: "Barnes, Penrose and Smoot -- do you remember the charge up San Juan? -- Jack Greenway, one of the best men in my regiment -- recall of judicial decisions -- the man with the muckrake -- Alice in Wonderland is a great book -- Bob Evans took the fleet into the Pacific --" ... The Rough Riders listened in astonishment, while T.R. campaign workers, standing behind the camera, almost doubled up in laughter. "That’ll be a corker, Colonel," said "Movie" finally, stopping the crank. (14)

James David Barber describes Roosevelt as "a war hero with enormous energy and a genius for publicity (who) ... fit the battle story perfectly." (15) Barber’s effusive language testifies to the success of the soldiering politician’s image-making strategy.

Roosevelt’s political career was helped a great deal by the intense rivalry between newspaper barons Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst and the consequent rise of the sensational, war-mongering "yellow press" in New York City before and during the Spanish-American War. Barber, who comments that Roosevelt "was terrific copy," quotes historian Frank Luther Mott who, writing in 1950, said that he was "probably more constant page-one news than any other President the country has had." (16) Barber goes on to quote a journalist friend of Roosevelt’s who said:
Roosevelt’s fighting was so much a part of the life of the period, was so tied up to the newspapers ... as to constitute almost the whole of the passing show. (17)

It was exactly a year from the time Roosevelt was appointed assistant secretary until the U.S. Congress voted for war with Spain, from April 19 1897 to the same date the next year. Having found a willing partner in the press in promoting war, Roosevelt sought a continuation of this close relationship in the resumption of his political career. In his book The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt, in a chapter entitled "The Most Famous Man in America", Edmund Morris describes Roosevelt’s behaviour after he stepped ashore on Long Island upon his return from Cuba after the war.

He wore a fresh uniform with gaiters and scuffed boots. A cartridge belt encircled his waist, and a heavy revolver thumped against his hip as he "fairly ran" the last few steps on to the dock.

Roosevelt was courteous to the official welcoming party -- doffing his hat and bowing to the women on line -- but out of the corner of his eye he caught sight of a group of newspapermen, and soon made his way over to them.

"Will you be our next Governor?" a voice cried.

"None of that. All I’ll talk about is the regiment. It’s the finest regiment that ever was, and I’m proud to command it." (18)
Morris, in his notes, makes two relevant observations about this passage.

Obvious as such a publicity policy may seem in this media-conscious age, it was near-revolutionary in the shadowy world of New York State politics at the end of the last century. A comprehensive study of TR's whole career as a publicist has yet to be written: should any skilled historian undertake the project, it would be of revelatory significance and interest. (19)

Samuel and Dorothy Rosenman, in their book Presidential Style, support the view of Roosevelt as a political leader making good use of new possibilities for mass communication.

Roosevelt was the first President to go out of his way to talk frequently with the working newspaper men, give them good stories to print when other news became scarce in the capital and generally to seek their goodwill. It all paid off: no previous President had ever received as much coverage as he did. After developing close contacts with the reporters, he used the mass communication which they could provide to bolster his political leadership through public opinion. He knew, and he repeatedly said, that before asking for public support, the public would have to be an informed public. It was only the press and his own public speeches which could supply the information; there was no television or radio. (20)

The idea of Roosevelt the political good, satisfying the needs of the people in terms of the message system of the first cultural frame with its advertising strategy of utility, is lent support by a remark in a letter written by
Roosevelt himself. Reminiscing to an old friend in 1908, Roosevelt -- who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906 for his part in ending the Russo-Japanese War (something of an irony considering his pro-war stance on other occasions) -- said of his style:

While President, I have been President emphatically. (21)

Paul Boller Jr., in his book *Presidential Campaigns*, says Theodore Roosevelt was the most popular president since Andrew Jackson (1829-1837). Assessing Roosevelt's 1904 presidential campaign, Boller argues thus:

His "Square Deal" -- which included conservation of the nation's natural resources, regulation of the big corporations in the public interest, and friendliness to labour unions -- attracted wide support. (22)

After his return to politics following his break with the Republicans in 1912 he became the only third-party presidential candidate to beat one of the two main parties, an achievement largely brought about by the strategic use of primaries, seen in this thesis in a similar light to the pre-testing of commercial products, as discussed in chapter 2.

American politics in the first part of the 20th century was dominated by debate over the appropriate governmental response to the economic and demographic changes which were
taking place. Roosevelt built a career by opposing what had gone before, especially corruption and entrenched power and privilege.

William H. Harbaugh describes the youngest man to become the American president (he was 42 when William McKinley was assassinated and he took the office) in these terms:

His vaunted self-confidence derived more from experience and achievement than inherent security. Roosevelt's is the story of a man driven: of a man whose strength came from the conquest of fear, not from the lack of it; of a man compelled again and again to prove himself and possessed, happily, of the moral and physical stamina to do so. (23)

Harbaugh and others, who describe in glowing terms the achievements and qualities they attribute to Roosevelt, tell the childhood story which became part of the Roosevelt mythology. The 12-year-old Roosevelt, asthmatic from birth and puny in build, was told by his father that he would have to build himself up by his own efforts. "I'll make my body," he retorted. (24)

Harbaugh, in what could be termed an assessment of the "product" and the product presentation, says:

His formidable powers of rationalization notwithstanding, he had a realistic insight into his own abilities; and neither as a boy nor a man did he overestimate them. If he indulged in
self-praise it was because of deserved pride in deeds performed and barriers surmounted. (25)

While Roosevelt excited adulatory crowds during several hundred speeches on a 21,000-mile, eight-week, 24-state election tour by train in 1912, Samuel and Dorothy Rosenman do not believe he could have aroused television audiences in that same way and say they do not think he would have made an "attractive television personality." They quote Professor Thomas A. Bailey thus:

Theodore Roosevelt, with his falsetto voice, staccato delivery, clenched teeth, flailing fists and Old Testament dedication, might well draw more laughs than votes.

But, the Rosenmans add:

... in all his speeches all during his life he would exude a style of great sincerity. (26)

It has also been observed that the actual intellectual content of Theodore Roosevelt's speeches was often not an important part of the image he projected. In his public appearances he offered an enduring spectacle, and seems to have been more concerned with leaving the impression of an active, virile and truculent leader, always ready to fight on behalf of the people he sought to bring to his side.

Roosevelt's speeches before and during his presidency were not models of very good speech-writing. He depended more on violent gestures with fist or with
fingers, on his gleaming white teeth, which he constantly displayed in a grin wherever possible, on the thrust or quick motions of his body -- and on the extremism of his epithets and name-calling ... They must have been very enjoyable to listen to with all their colorful name-calling and denunciation, and with his razzle-dazzle personality, and the violent gesturing, of which many photographs remain. (27)
Roosevelt, who hunted game in Africa (with the press in attendance), climbed the Matterhorn and became the first president to fly, was an archetypal political product of the first cultural frame.

In particular, his political discourse was rooted in that area of the contemporary message system through and about goods which celebrated the vitality and emerging creative power of America's new industrial system. Like a brand new product especially useful because of special qualities which the new system could build into it, Roosevelt was the personification of a new America which, for example, could go to war and defeat an old enemy in four months. His crusading feats against corruption and institutional privilege, whether as a police chief, assemblyman, governor or president, embraced the idea of a new, better and more effective political instrument in which lay the future. The image of a man who, in his own life, could take the limited physical bequest of nature and transform it into something powerful, as Roosevelt did with his own body and being, was a strong affirmation of the nation's new direction and helped to make Roosevelt inseparable from it in the public mind.

Roosevelt's image-making was intrinsically utilitarian and rational. He would go out into the world and actually do the type of thing of which his message was constructed, as
has been shown. There were many of these -- like the commercial goods of his time, Roosevelt offered effusive descriptions of himself.

In common with the language of certain items in the marketplace, Roosevelt created images that made him a part of the celebration accompanying the technological advancements of his time, while at the same time, again in common with commercial discourse, he proclaimed his ability to perform faster and better the tasks traditionally associated with the political product.

Communication through and about the political leader in the first cultural frame was influenced by the fact that the consumer of the message, the voting audience, was male. Women did not become part of the political marketplace until they were enfranchised by the 19th amendment to the constitution in 1920, and had not yet been drawn into the workplace in sufficient numbers to give them the economic leverage as wage-earners which they would later acquire. The process by which they were to be drawn into the system, however, had already begun in Roosevelt's time. According to Herman S. Frey, Roosevelt, in addition to improving working conditions for civil servants, also placed women on the same political level as men in many positions within the service. (28)
The political and economic enfranchisement of women was bound to have an influence on public discourse and was perhaps a development which facilitated the transformation from rational, utilitarian language to the more symbolic language of the second cultural frame. The degree of homogeneity present within the voting public in the early part of the century made possible straightforward, rational messages in persuasive discourse; a communication strategy no longer appropriate in the highly segmented environment of the contemporary era, the period of the fourth cultural frame, dealt with in the fourth section of the chapter.

The resilient image which Theodore Roosevelt presented during his political life resulted in his appropriate inclusion among the four presidents whose giant faces are carved in stone on Mount Rushmore. The 14-year project begun in 1927 by sculptor Gutzon Borglum and completed by his son Lincoln saw the etching of the faces of Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt and Lincoln into the 6,000 foot mountainside in South Dakota to a scale of men 465 feet tall.
Notes


11. Johnston, p. 36.


16. Barber, p. 35.
17. Barber, p. 35.
24. Harbaugh, p. 15.
27. Rosenmans, p. 33.
28. Frey, p. 3.
Biographical outline: Franklin D. Roosevelt

1882: Franklin D. Roosevelt born at Hyde Park, New York.
1904: Editor of Harvard Crimson; graduates from Harvard, enters Columbia law school.
1905: Marries Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, his fifth cousin.
1907: Admitted to New York bar; joins a Wall Street law firm.
1910: Elected a New York state senator with 52% of vote.
1912: Re-elected to state senate with 62% of vote.
1913: Appointed assistant secretary of the navy by President Woodrow Wilson.
1920: Nominated as vice-presidential candidate on Democratic ticket with James Cox. Resigns navy post but loses election. Returns to law practice.
1921: Crippled by poliomyelitis.
1924: Forms new law practice, Roosevelt and O'Connor.
1927: Founded Georgia Warm Springs Foundation for polio victims.
1928: Elected governor of New York with 50.3% of vote.
1930: Re-elected governor with 62% of vote.
1932: Elected president against Hoover; gets 57.4% of vote.
1933: Survives assassination attempt in Miami, Florida; resigns from law practice; inaugurated as president; commences New Deal legislation; Prohibition repealed.
1936: Re-elected against Alfred Landon with 60.8% of vote.
1940: Re-elected against Wendell Willkie with 54.8% of vote.
1941: Institutes Lend-Lease plan of military help to Britain; signs Atlantic Charter with Churchill; Japan attacks Pearl Harbour; U.S. declares war.
1943: Meets with Churchill in Casablanca to discuss strategy; later that year holds first of the Big Three meetings with Churchill and Stalin.
1944: Re-elected against Thomas Dewey with 53.5% of vote, with Harry Truman as vice-president.
1945: Attends Yalta summit with Stalin and Churchill; dies of cerebral haemorrhage at Warm Springs, Georgia.
The second cultural frame (1925-1945) / F.D. Roosevelt

This great nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So first of all let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself -- nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.

-- Franklin D. Roosevelt, inaugural address, March 4, 1933 (1)

These now famous lines from Franklin D. Roosevelt’s inaugural speech, with their strong abstract and symbolic elements, show a consistency with the discourse that characterised the second cultural frame, iconology, 1925-1945, as mapped out by LKJ and characterised thus:

... the initial phase of the consumer society -- the utilitarian aspects of goods were subordinated more and more deeply beneath a network of abstract, or symbolic, qualities and values. (p. 284)

Roosevelt, by labelling the fear that descended upon America in the depths of the Depression as "nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes ...", frames his discourse in such a way as to almost deny the devastation of the time -- a period in which by 1933 over 12 million workers (25 per cent of the total work force) were unemployed, 5,000 banks had failed, and production, wages, prices and profits were at extremely low levels. His inspirational message of a "great nation" reviving and
prospering was presumably the one he believed would be best received by a population ravaged by the economic hardship that followed the crash of October 1929. A rational setting out of the country’s economic ills was not something that was needed; people were only too aware of the country’s economic situation; these were perhaps the things the newly elected president and his aides kept in mind while formulating the address he was to give the nation. (2)

Historians reviewing this period see the style of Roosevelt’s 1932 campaign as suggestive of the way in which he dealt with polio — avoiding any indication that his paralysis might be permanent and reassuring family, friends and public alike that it would not be so. The words of confidence and affirmation which he pronounced, they would argue, stood in dramatic contrast to Hoover’s perceived style in the face of the Depression.

The non-concrete, abstract words extracted above from the first inaugural address were delivered by a man who — in contrast to former president and distant cousin Theodore, who hunted game, climbed mountains and was generally active — was unable to walk or stand without help, something he did only on ceremonial occasions. Yet, although crippled, FDR, as he was known, was voted into office by decisive majorities in four consecutive presidential elections.
Pointing out that icons are symbols, LKJ argue that in this second format, called iconology, a transition takes place: a rational, denotative discourse emphasizing the manifest qualities of goods becomes one in which these attributes become subservient to symbolic virtues in a more all-embracing, non-rational connotative discourse. According to LKJ the discourse of the second frame is "rooted in suggestion, metaphor, analogy, and inference" although, of course, it is not only in this frame that these characteristics can be observed. (p. 284)

A pattern resembling this process can be detected when the differences in political representation between Theodore Roosevelt and FDR are examined through the lens of LKJ’s descriptions. As shown, the former almost always stressed his direct dynamic potential and attributes of strength whereas, as will be demonstrated further, FDR's renderings were often intentionally indeterminate. Taking this further, LKJ identify part of the climate within which Roosevelt's discourse was able to meet with such approval and perhaps also within which were possible the deceptions involved in holding down the presidency while a cripple:

Paradoxically, when utility is rooted in the product's own characteristics satisfaction too is circumscribed, since it is derived from allowing the product to carry out the functions for which it was designed. When use is rooted in the consumer's psychological state, however,
anything goes, for then something is useful only in so far as and as long as one believes this to be the case. (p. 242)

These coincidences in the discourse promoting goods and the discourse promoting political leaders during the iconology format again suggest that the approach embodied in the cultural frames can be useful in analysing the political process in consumer society. There are many examples in the writings of those who have examined Roosevelt's life supporting the particular "fit" being examined here. Joseph Alsop, describing Roosevelt's election campaigning in 1932, notes:

Roosevelt's campaign speeches were deliberately vague. He called for a change of direction but proposed no concrete programs. The campaign was aimed at getting votes, not at defining a new philosophy of government. (3)

Commenting on the criticism Roosevelt had to take when he immediately abandoned his ridiculous 1932 campaign promise to cut government spending and balance the budget, George E. Reedy writes:

Fortunately, Mr. Roosevelt was still in the "honeymoon" period and the problems confronting the American people were so great that no one really cared about budget cutting. He was never again, however, granted such leeway and he quickly learned to match words with action and to forgo statements, or at least make them so fuzzy that they were incomprehensible, when he clearly lacked the resources to back his promises. (4)
Roosevelt’s election strategy, which he had begun to formulate after the Democrats’ defeat in the 1924 presidential election, is described in similar terms by Kenneth S. Davis in his work on FDR. On particular issues, it was to avoid as far as possible taking positions that were clear enough so as to enable any substantial number of voters to disagree.

... he should continue to define and stake out as his own a position "just a little left of center," which was broad enough and sufficiently vague in its boundaries to serve as a gathering ground for an unbeatable "Roosevelt party" that included not only widely diverse elements of the current Democratic Party but also disaffected progressive elements of the Republican Party, along with a majority of those who deemed themselves politically "independent." (5)

Alsop’s statement appears to be less an articulation of cynicism about Roosevelt’s motives than a recognition of a certain discourse -- even though it is not spelt out in this way in his work -- a discourse compatible with that described in the second cultural frame. This lack of cynicism becomes apparent when Alsop expands his assessment of Roosevelt’s 1932 election campaign by stating that his concern for the most desperate of the Depression’s victims -- farmers and workers -- was not in doubt. Davis’s analysis not only sheds light on the discourse of the time but also demonstrates that politicians were becoming as
mindful as marketers and advertisers of the segmentation of society into groupings requiring different communication messages and strategies. Their disposition to these market segments becomes particularly important in the fourth cultural frame.

It was not only symbolic language that Roosevelt used in his representations; symbolic gestures also formed part of his promotional repertoire, as the following example illustrates. On hearing that he had received the 1932 Democratic nomination, the crippled Roosevelt flew to Chicago, presenting himself not as a man handicapped but as one of verve and action. By becoming the first candidate to receive the nomination there and in this manner, he broke with the long-standing tradition according to which winners would wait in contrived ignorance until a committee appointed by the convention brought the news. In an unexpected speech carried nationwide by the radio networks, he told those gathered in Chicago that he felt it a foolish tradition that the candidate should profess ignorance of his nomination until formally notified and actually asked that this gesture be seen in symbolic terms. Paul F. Boller Jr. quotes FDR thus:

You have nominated me and I know it, and I am here to thank you for the honor. Let it ... be symbolic that in so doing I broke tradition. Let it be from now on the task of our Party to break foolish traditions. (6)
The drama that surrounded this surprise gesture generated much favourable publicity, heightened by the fact that scheduled flights by airliners were still something of a novelty.

Roosevelt’s nomination and subsequent election victory can be seen in symbolic terms. A country, once prosperous but now economically crippled, elects an ambitious man, at one time extremely fortunate, vigorous and destined for great things but who has had to overcome great odds to return to political life after being crippled by poliomyelitis at age 39. If Roosevelt can pull himself back from the brink, then so can the nation. His words spin a magic, an aura which veils the horror of economic circumstance; the country reciprocates the gesture by ignoring the handicap of its president; an act in which it, too, has an interest.

This thesis argues this was so partly because the product presented as symbol outstripped the product as utility under the prevailing norms of the second cultural frame. Richard Goldberg notes in his book *The Making of Franklin D. Roosevelt: Triumph over Disability*:

In 1932 the nation, paralyzed by fear and shattered by economic depression, required a symbol of regeneration. Roosevelt became that symbol. The same handsome young man who had appeared before the 1920 convention overcame his
handicap to lead the nation. If ever there was a need for juxtaposition of myth and fact, it was in 1932. (7)

If the country did not wish to see itself as being led by a cripple, Roosevelt certainly did not want to be seen as one, and, as in his earlier days, he was ever mindful of his image. Hugh Gregory Gallagher, in a book appropriately called *FDR's Splendid Deception*, notes that although there are over 35,000 still photographs of FDR at the presidential library, there are only two of the man seated in his wheelchair.

No newsreels show him being lifted, carried or pushed in his chair. Among the thousands of political cartoons and caricatures of FDR, not one shows the man as physically impaired. In fact, many of them have him as a man of action -- running, jumping, doing things. (8)

Gallagher argues that this was not by accident. Explaining the ways in which the image of FDR was managed, a strategy which could easily be called "impression management," Gallagher says:

It was the result of a careful strategy of the President. The strategy served to minimize the extent of his handicap, to make it unnoticed when possible and palatable when it was noticed. The strategy was eminently successful ... (p. xiv)
Roosevelt’s excursions were meticulously planned and executed by the secret service under strict rules imposed by the White House which were carefully obeyed. Roosevelt was never carried in public, and if he had to be lifted in or out of a car, this would be done in the privacy of a garage or a screen would be put up for this purpose. Nor was Roosevelt to be seen dragging himself from one spot to another or sitting in a wheelchair in public: he would either be seen standing while leaning on the arm of an aide, or seated in an ordinary chair. His trousers naturally concealed his steel braces and withered legs.

Yet all this would not have been successful without the co-operation of reporters and photographers, as an incident related by Gallagher demonstrates. Gallagher writes that Roosevelt’s instructions included a provision that all podiums from which he spoke had to be sturdy and bolted to the floor, but that on one occasion during the 1932 campaign this was not done. Roosevelt and the podium crashed to the floor in the presence of reporters and photographers, but his fall was not mentioned in the press, nor were any pictures taken of the incident. This protocol, particularly that part of it precluding the taking of pictures of him looking crippled or helpless, had been established during his gubernatorial campaigns. (p. 93) Gallagher says this call for censorship was rarely violated and notes that on
one occasion when it was -- an instance in 1937 when Life magazine published a photograph of Roosevelt being pushed across a field in his wheelchair -- the anger of the White House media staff was aroused, even although the picture had been taken from such a distance that it did not attract much public attention. (p. 94)

One particularly astounding photograph in the FDR library collection which illustrates the effectiveness of Roosevelt's approach concerning his disability was taken on a visit to Groton, Roosevelt's former school, in June 1932. A carefully contrived photograph shows Roosevelt standing alone in an apparently spontaneous pose against an open car door which, inconspicuously, is giving him support. (9) Gallagher also relates a story which gives an indication of the extent to which Roosevelt was aware of the importance of the media in the public perception of his disability. When the poliomyelitis attack occurred in 1921, an intentionally misleading account was supplied to the press. Gallagher writes that when the New York Times reported there had been some temporary paralysis of FDR's legs below the knees, readers were assured: "He will definitely not be crippled." The next day, FDR sent a jaunty message to publisher Adolph S. Ochs:

... while the doctors were ... telling me ... that I was not going to suffer any permanent effects ... I had, of course, the usual dark suspicion that
they were just saying nice things ... but now that I have seen the same statement officially made in the New York Times, I feel immensely relieved because I know it must be so. (pp. 19-20)

Gallagher notes that although Roosevelt was the favourite subject of cartoonists for over 12 years, never, as far as is known, was he represented in a wheelchair, on crutches, or in any other way as impaired. A selection of cartoons from this period is included below which is typical of those in the collection at the Franklin D. Roosevelt library and amply illustrates Gallagher's assertion. The conformity of these active portrayals is additionally surprising for the fact that many of these cartoons were carried in Republican newspapers and magazines which were otherwise hostile to the Democrat Roosevelt; still, they did not show the president as a cripple but instead as a virile athlete, jumping over hurdles, swimming, the victor of a boxing match, waterskiing or engaged in one or another strenuous activity. Even the cartoon from Esquire magazine (discussed later in this section), which deals with the fierce antagonism felt towards Roosevelt by certain interest groups, especially business groups, refuses the depiction of Roosevelt as a cripple.

Gallagher, commenting on this subterfuge, says that on the occasions that FDR's press secretary Stephen Early was
asked about Roosevelt's handicap he would merely respond, "It's not a story." In contrast to Early's assertion, Gallagher says it was more likely the case that Roosevelt did not want the fact of his handicap advertised, something which would be hard to prevent in modern times.

Such a deception as this -- practiced by both the President and the press -- would be quite impossible in the age of television. (p. 95)

Richard Goldberg concurs, noting that as a presidential candidate in 1976, George Wallace could not hide the fact that he was in a wheelchair. (10)

Of the cartoons obtained for this project from the collection at the Franklin D. Roosevelt library, one was drawn shortly after the 1932 Olympic Games. Albert T. Reid's cartoon for the Aug. 25, 1932 edition of the Ray County Conservator in Richmond, Missouri was titled Now for the Political Olympics and not only has Roosevelt running a hurdles race against Herbert Hoover but over "high hurdles."

In a cartoon by Hamber which appeared in the Birmingham Age-Herald in Alabama on Dec. 13, 1933 and refers to Roosevelt's New Deal policies, he is depicted as easily being able to walk a tightrope, balancing "bales of advice from ultra-conservatives" against "reams of advice from extreme radicals."
A cartoon by Berryman which appeared in the Washington Star of June 6, 1934 has Roosevelt swimming in "political obstacles" while saying to a bystander, "Come on and learn! See what ability to swim has done for me." This, says the library information card accompanying the cartoon, was a playful promotion for a YMCA/Washington Star "Learn to Swim" summer programme.

This depiction could also be informed by Roosevelt's conquest of the obstacles posed by his handicap, something in which swimming played a significant part. In a determined
pursuit of a cure for his paralysis in the first seven years after the 1921 polio attack, Roosevelt spent a lot of time at the Warm Springs resort in Georgia, where in 1924 he found that by swimming he could exercise his limbs in a way impossible in any other activity. After a few years he had built his muscles up to a point where he could walk with braces and two canes, an important achievement from the point of view of his image since the alternative was crutches -- the universal symbol of the cripple which he was determined to avoid. In 1926 he bought the resort and converted it into a centre for polio victims. He paid frequent visits during his years as president and it was at Warm Springs that he died.

Roosevelt's symbolic role, discussed earlier, is also evident in the cartoons. A depiction published in the New York World Telegram of July 29, 1935 dealing with his relief programmes is heavy with symbolism. A well-built Roosevelt with muscular legs and dressed in boxing shorts has his arm raised in victory as the audience cheers his victory over "Depression." His weapon is a huge boxing glove on which is written, "That $4,800,000,000 Relief Fund."

McKay's Esquire magazine cartoon of November 1938 deals with the other side, the negative, anti-Roosevelt sentiment felt towards the president and his New Deal. As mentioned, it nevertheless still steers away from depicting Roosevelt
as handicapped. Instead, a young schoolboy writes "Roosevelt" on the pavement outside the home of a schoolgirl, perhaps his sister, who complains to a shocked mother standing in the doorway of the affluent home: "Mother, Wilfred wrote a bad word."

While many Americans knew FDR had suffered from an attack of infantile paralysis in 1921, and, as a consequence, was handicapped, few knew that he was totally crippled. Given the depiction of Roosevelt as the virile, strong leader, and the fact that the public never saw photographs depicting him as a cripple, observers note that many were shocked when they saw Roosevelt in person for the first time.

The subterfuge was so successful that even a prominent American who would have been expected to know about FDR's disability admits he was ignorant on this score until after Roosevelt's death. Former U.S. president Richard Nixon reveals this in a recent *Time* magazine interview:

> Although I had always had a lively interest in public affairs, I was not aware until after his death that Franklin D. Roosevelt was crippled by polio. I vividly recall seeing newsreels that showed him in Washington and abroad. They never showed a wheelchair or crutches, nor did newspaper accounts mention his disability. The media actively kept the secret for him. Some may disagree, but I believe the press deserve great credit for not disclosing
his condition. Today they could not do so because of the television cameras that follow a President everywhere. (11)

The sensitivity to the power of the medium of television which Nixon displays here stems perhaps from the fact that most analysts attribute his defeat in 1960 largely to a poor performance in relation to that of his suave opponent, John F. Kennedy, in the presidential debates on television.

The public perception of a charismatic president was carefully managed by Roosevelt and his White House staff, especially press secretary Stephen Early and close advisor Louis Howe. Most photographs focused on the animated head of FDR, which mostly bore a smile and the somewhat impish affectation of his customary cigarette holder sticking out jauntily from the side of his mouth and was positioned atop a powerful upper body. Boller, discussing the presidential campaign and FDR’s image, notes that H.L. Mencken criticized FDR’s "Christian Science smile," but claims that "many thought the Democratic candidate’s breezy affability was good for the nation’s morale." (12)

Gallagher sees this largely voluntary suppression of a significant aspect of Roosevelt’s political leadership as extraordinary. He attributes it in part to the good working relation Roosevelt had with the press who, Gallagher claims,
were both affectionate and respectful towards Roosevelt, but makes the pertinent observation that this pretence would not have been possible without the unspoken consent of everyone -- Roosevelt and his staff, the media and, in particular, the American population. An illustration of the press’s role in this deception appears in Steven Schoenherr’s unpublished dissertation Selling the New Deal: Stephen T. Early’s Role as Press Secretary to Franklin D. Roosevelt, which traces the relationship linking FDR, the media and his press secretary Early. Schoenherr notes that on one occasion when a photographer from a Republican newspaper did try to take a picture of Roosevelt being carried, other photographers assigned to the White House prevented him from doing so by blocking his view and moving his camera. (13)

Schoenherr’s work indicates that Roosevelt’s selling skills were not limited to the marketing of himself; his New Deal policies faced opposition from a number of quarters, especially within the business community, and thus required active selling, something any marketer might advise in the face of buyer resistance in certain circumstances and a theme picked up in the Jan. 4, 1944 Chicago Tribune cartoon by Parrish, titled "What He Wants is a New Outfit" and included here.
Gallagher explains the phenomenon thus:

In a very real way a great nation does not want a crippled man as its President; it does not wish to think of its leader as impaired. Roosevelt was undeniably and obviously a crippled man. Literally millions of people saw him moving down his railroad ramp, bent over like a praying mantis, or hobbling painfully slowly on the arm of his son. Crippled or not, the nation wanted this man, with all his magnificent qualities, as its leader. So an agreement was struck: the existence of FDR’s handicap would simply be denied by all. The people would pretend that their leader was not crippled, and their leader would do all that he could not to let them see that he was. The generally accepted line was that FDR had had polio and was now a bit lame; he had been paralysed, but now he was recovered. He was a "cured cripple." (p. 96)
Roosevelt’s strong, unflattering voice on the radio, too, belied the fact that the man whom the population got to know through his 31 fireside chats was delivering his talks from a wheelchair during his years in the White House, from 1933 to 1945. Roosevelt’s extensive use of the medium of radio, the medium in the ascendancy in the second cultural frame, was an especially important element in his promotional strategy, especially as it was through this medium that he was able to transcend the negative publicity that he received from the large contingent of Republican-owned newspapers. As with the symbiotic relationship between the "yellow press" and Theodore Roosevelt dealt with in the first section of this chapter, the relationship between Franklin D. Roosevelt and the dominant medium of the time, radio, can also be described as symbiotic. Roosevelt’s voice and demeanour were well suited to the medium, and good radio needs commentators who realise the medium’s possibilities for intimacy as well as how to exploit these possibilities.

A New York Daily News political cartoon by Batchelor dated 1934-1935 is entitled A Man Talking to his Friends and captioned Voice of the People. It shows an image of Roosevelt, seated before microphones in a radio studio setting, floating in the sky above a town skyline. It illustrates Roosevelt’s mastery of the medium that so easily
disguised the fact that it was a mass medium beamed at millions.

Roosevelt, aware of the importance of promotion and publicity from the start of his political life as a young delegate to the 1912 Democratic national convention in Baltimore, hired a New York Herald reporter named Louis McHenry Howe to handle his publicity, says Schoenherr. Howe was a major player in Roosevelt's promotional practices for the first 20 years of his political career. Howe remained as advisor until his death, and even moved into the Roosevelt household although he was himself married with children. Early, then working for the news agency United Press International, and who was later to become Roosevelt's press secretary, got to know FDR while covering the 1912 convention. Schoenherr, citing a letter written in 1948 by Early, illustrates the nature of the exchange in the symbiotic relationship between the media and political leader when he writes:

"I got to know him because I liked him as a personality and for the additional reason that he always was good copy for a newspaper reporter. (14)"

Roosevelt continued his tradition of cultivating an image while assistant secretary of the navy, a position he held from 1913 to 1920, the year before his polio attack. He relished the ceremony of naval inspections and, notes
Schoenherr, even designed his own flag to be flown during inspections which was good advertising both for a strong navy and for the Roosevelt persona.

Radio was the technology that dominated the media hierarchy during the second cultural frame, and Roosevelt used this medium to its utmost effect in the presentation of his image as mentioned above. Besides this, he was an able communicator, as Gerald D. Nash agrees in the introduction to a book he edited called *F.D. Roosevelt*.

Much of FDR's effectiveness was due to his great skill in communication. (16)

Roosevelt's use of radio, which included such devices as his famous "fireside chats," was seen as a powerful force in his three re-elections and a counter to the negative Republican press, as discussed previously. Schoenherr, quoting from Early's papers, says that while the total daily circulation of all newspapers in the U.S. in 1933 was only 10 million on average, an estimated 53.7 million people listened to over 20 million radio sets (p. 67). In the 1932 campaign the most significant departure from previous practice was the use of radio, and all of the addresses of both candidates, the incumbent Herbert Hoover and challenger Franklin Roosevelt, were aired. Radio was one of the largest single expenses, estimated at a total of $5 million for both
parties, according to Samuel L. Becker and Elmer W. Lower. (17)

This entry of a mass medium as an important new factor in a presidential election has a parallel in the 1960 election between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy, dealt with under the next cultural frame. They became the first two presidential candidates to debate on television, the reigning medium in the third and fourth cultural frames. Becker and Lower say that Roosevelt, in his 1936 campaign, demonstrated the power of radio to overcome unfavourable newspaper coverage, the medium which was dominant in the previous cultural frame. (18) James A. Farley, chairman of the Democratic National Committee and manager of the successful Roosevelt campaigns in 1932, 1936 and 1940, had the following to say:

The influence of the radio in determining the outcome of the 1936 election can hardly be overestimated. Without that unrivalled medium for reaching millions of voters, the work of overcoming the false impression created by the tons of written propaganda put out by foes of the New Deal would have been many times greater than it was, and, to be candid, it might conceivably have been an impossible job. (19)

Roland Marchand of the University of California, Davis, in his book Advertising the American Dream, says of the medium:
Radio was the most tantalizing, yet most perplexing, new medium ever to confront advertisers. No other media had offered such potential for intimacy with the audience. Radio surpassed all others in its capacity to deny its own status as a mass medium. Moviegoers congregated in public crowds, and newspaper and magazine readers were affected by the "distancing" qualities of print. But radio carried the human voice directly into the privacy of the home, to the center of the revered family circle. In that setting, listeners might readily imagine that the speaker was talking personally to them. (20)

James David Barber writes of FDR that "radio men called him 'a real pro.' " (21) Barber says Roosevelt had said:

> I know what I’ll do when I retire. I’ll be one of those high-powered commentators. (22)

Gallagher says that for millions of Americans Roosevelt’s voice on the radio "conveyed his genuine and intimate concern." (p. 113) This was an important perception in the time of the Depression. The reassuring voice also helped to allay the anxiety of living in the mass machine age, with its rapid pace of change and imposition of formal market relations. This was perhaps far more important during the 1930s than it would have been had there not been an economic depression, for the feelings of alienation brought on by the machine age must have intensified as the conclusion was drawn that no benefits had accompanied the change. The power of the machine age had turned against
those who had created it. Roosevelt’s campaign song, "Happy Days are Here Again" referred to an earlier time, a time such as that in which Theodore Roosevelt had lived, in which the machine age was seen as benign; the slogan for FDR’s New Deal programmes perhaps also drew on this kind of happier association with modernity.

Roosevelt was the first president to whom radio became available as a mass medium following the development in 1927 of the AC radio, which could be plugged into the household electrical supply. Before this important breakthrough radio had been a technology used only by enthusiasts, although they were fairly numerous, for a radio set would bring with it the great inconvenience and expense of having to transport heavy batteries for frequent recharging -- batteries which could burn a hole in the living room carpet if they leaked.

Becker and Lower point out that it was a radio speech at the 1924 Democratic convention that launched Roosevelt on the comeback trail after he had contracted infantile paralysis in 1921. They say that radio was first used in a presidential election campaign in 1924 at a time when there were over 500 stations in operation and an estimated three million receiving sets. (23)
Becker and Lower counter the belief that political advertising was the result of advertising agency influence on politics in the 1940s, a perception flowing from the fact that advertising agencies only became a consumer society institution in the 1930s. They claim that the first nationwide political commercials appear to have been aired in 1928 when the Republicans organized 6,000 so-called "Minute Men" to make very short talks on 161 radio stations with top audience coverage. The party supplied "canned scripts to local speakers and planned the broadcasts so that the same speech was heard all over the country on one night." In addition, say Becker and Lower, the parties for the first time attempted to balance their political addresses "with high-class and appropriate entertainment features," something the writers attribute to the New York Times of Sept. 16, 1928. (24)

Becker and Lower point out that it was in the 1936 presidential campaign that the influence of the advertising agency first became apparent. (25) They quote Ralph D. Casey's article "Republican Propaganda in the 1936 Campaign," which reveals some of the effects of this influence.

Word went out that the medium no longer would be used simply to present the candidate but "to sell the idea of the campaign." ... The rule was laid down that (Republican candidate) Landon's speeches must not exceed 30 minutes.
"Make it brief and people will remember what you’ve said," was the dictum. (26)

This desire for brevity was converted into an increased use of spot announcements in the presidential campaign. By this time the number of radio stations on the air had risen to 814 and there were 40 million radio sets, say Becker and Lower.

Roosevelt is also the first president reported to have employed speech writers, using Sam Rosenman, Raymond Moley, Louis Howe and Robert Sherwood, and on at least one occasion having Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, who held her post from 1933 to 1945, write one of his speeches. The tradition stood, making Herbert Hoover the last president to have written his own speeches.

Roosevelt went even further than this, though, and could be said to have institutionalized ghost writing in presidential politics. His speeches were the product of team work, as were his promotional and election strategies. These practices of Roosevelt’s went back as far as his 1912 campaign for re-election to the New York state senate, when former newsperson Howe wrote most of Roosevelt’s prepared speeches. By the time of his campaign for the governorship of New York in 1928 Rosenman had joined the staff and would remain Roosevelt’s chief speech writer until 1945. He made a major contribution to Roosevelt’s speeches for radio, which
were aimed at establishing a bond with people listening in their homes and had been an important device in Roosevelt’s earlier circumvention of the political party bosses.

During election campaigns Rosenman and other advisors close to Roosevelt, who were to become known as the Brain Trust, travelled in the train or auto cavalcade and, together with Roosevelt, drafted the words he was shortly to use. During Roosevelt’s governorship, Rosenman, Moley and the other members of the Brain Trust would travel to the New York state capital, Albany, once a week to discuss drafts of speeches as well as policy, a useful arrangement for the crippled governor whose mobility was restricted.

Once in the White House, Roosevelt’s speech writing methods were institutionalized in much the same way as production in other areas of industrial society -- to their production methods were added facets of standardisation, teamwork, and an almost assembly-line-like approach. Roosevelt’s secretary, Grace Tully, collected proposals, while he himself would dictate ideas as they came to him, and people such as Sherwood and Moley drafted manuscripts. The team, usually headed by Rosenman, would then move into the cabinet room and work through multiple drafts before the session with Roosevelt began. Schoenherr notes that press secretary Early also played a role, regularly reviewing and editing speeches with an eye to their effect on public
relations and trying where possible to get as many of the speeches broadcast on the radio as possible. (27)

However, in contrast to later presidents such as Reagan, Roosevelt did not allow others to create entire speeches for him; his contribution and style were present.

The modern tendency of politicians to bring to market whatever ideas the public opinion polls tell them will sell has its roots in the Roosevelt era. The methods used in today's polls acquired their form in the 1930s when traditional methods began to falter -- a trend exemplified in the famous gaffe of the renowned Literary Digest election poll in predicting a landslide win for Alf Landon over Roosevelt in 1936. The Digest relied on mailing lists drawn from telephone directories and lists of automobile owners, and Roosevelt's strength lay with people who owned neither. A man called George Gallup was ready to step into the breach.

The future of polling belonged not to this old style of sample voting but to the new breed of pollsters who based their predictions on smaller numbers derived from more representative samples. George Gallup, the apostle of the new method, followed his success in 1936 with an accurate call of both the 1938 congressional elections and the 1940 presidential race. (28)

Since these times polls have been the subject of an ongoing debate; concern surrounds the idea, on the one hand,
that the polls might themselves be making a political contribution which affects the integrity of the democratic process, particularly when they are wrong or misleading, and on the other that these sophisticated information-gathering techniques, which include focus groups intended to identify new fashion trends, enable politicians to pander to the polls, to blow with the wind, in short, to provide no leadership. Consequently, the argument is heard that polls present a threat to the survival of democracy since they render the political process inauthentic in western-style consumer democracies -- concerns discussed by the theorists mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis.

In 1932 the polls of the day all predicted a landslide Roosevelt victory. These opinion polls were then seen by some as a major contributor to the decline of party loyalty and an indication of the growing importance of media in shaping voter behaviour, but as this thesis has argued in the first two chapters of this project, and illustrates further in the case study, many things have contributed to the decline of the party in American politics during the 20th century.

Schoenherr's account of Roosevelt's offer to Early of a position as his "advance man" in the campaign that followed his nomination for vice-president by the San Francisco Democratic convention in 1920 illustrates that Roosevelt had
his eye on public opinion early on in his political life, and shows again that playing to the audience is nothing new and an old concern of the political leader. Schoenherr claims that Roosevelt entered the 1920 race not because he believed he and Cox could win, but because he wanted to build a network of contacts during the nationwide campaign that would prove useful to him later on in his political life. (29)

Early's advance work was important for the campaign, says Schoenherr, for it enabled Roosevelt to abandon plans to emphasise the League of Nations issue which arose after World War I -- a plan tied to outgoing president Woodrow Wilson's vision of a leading role for the U.S. in world affairs. Early's messages to Roosevelt from the field indicated a lack of voter interest in this issue. Schoenherr describes Early's advice:

Rather, he advised Roosevelt to speak on important local issues, such as natural resources, women voters, cost of living and labor conditions. Roosevelt followed this advice, using Early's messages to write his speeches on the train. In state after state, Early proved himself an accurate observer ... Roosevelt generally confined his remarks on the League to upper class or professional audiences. (30)

This quotation on the 1920 promotional strategy, especially in regard to what can be seen as the recognition of market segmentation in, for example, the new importance
of the woman voter, shows that a central idea in later promotional practices had been recognised early by Roosevelt and his advisors, many of whom later become known as the Brain Trust.

The appointment of a woman, Frances Perkins, the first to hold a cabinet post, can be seen in terms of the above argument and also as another of Roosevelt’s breaks with tradition, of which there were a number in his administration, according to Paul F. Boller Jr. in his book *Presidential Anecdotes*. (31) Perkins was a key figure in drafting some of the New Deal’s most important labour legislation and a number of historians note her effectiveness in the New Deal era and attribute this to the support Perkins received from Roosevelt. (Another break with tradition, and one which aroused some controversy, was Roosevelt’s decision to accept his party’s nomination for a first-ever third-term presidency).

This progressive gesture of appointing the first woman to cabinet along with a number of other firsts for women under the New Deal -- the appointment of diplomatic representatives in foreign countries, heads of New Deal agencies and as political advisors -- was, presumably, a recognition of the importance of this sector of the voting market, and was in line with the developing ideology of the marketplace. The increasing significance of women as a force
in the 1930s and 1940s was something to which the campaign poster which appears below seems to testify. It was issued in New York in 1944 by the Women’s Division of the Democratic National Committee.

This poster, headed by the emphatic "Women Get Your Man!", reflects the reality not only of the increasing importance of female voters since their 1920 enfranchisement but also of their wartime enfranchisement in economic terms, since many had entered the workplace to replace the men who were away fighting the war. This was a process actively encouraged by Roosevelt’s government in, for example, its World War II poster of Rosie the Riveter, which showed a woman baring her arm and rolling up her sleeves while preparing for work and saying: "We can do it!"

The "Women Get Your Man!" poster has four different representations of a woman and her children, none of which question the prevailing norms of family, status and social authority, allowing a clear link with the themes laid out for the second cultural frame by LKJ (Figure 11.1, p. 279). The metaphoric emotive themes in advertisements marked out in the second cultural frame are status, family, health, white magic and social authority. The first depiction on the poster shows a woman with a broom marshalling her uniformly dressed children while in an insert a male head issues the command, "Take my Place Dear." The message is that the
absent father is still the head of the household; the woman takes over at his insistence and she is only "General for a Day." The association of family and the democratic nation is stressed in the second formulation, where the woman stands with children to one side and personified ballot papers to the other. Notwithstanding the fact that the female vote is
being courted, the third frame again stresses patriarchal values; it warns, "You Can’t Vote Unless You Register," and shows a bride with a groom in tow above a caption which reads, "It’s Like a Marriage License." Continuing the theme, the last picture shows women, brooms over their shoulders, about to "Sweep the Right Man Into Office."

The connections with the themes of the frame of iconology could not be more obvious. Given this illustration, it is not surprising that this format, with its dominant values, came to be deemed too overpowering in the developing consumer society and was pushed aside by the third cultural frame, narcissism. LKJ explain the process thus:

Iconology was a system of meanings, not a representation of feelings. Its inherent limitation was that the reigning social values that were supposed to link the attributes of things (freshness, goodness) with the interests of persons as consumers were too domineering and overwhelmed all other elements in the message format, causing both products and persons to appear "frozen" in space and time. The advertisement’s communicative power was checked and held in equilibrium, hovering uncertainly between the poles of person and product. (p. 284)

Roosevelt’s presidency is significant for another reason, again associated with the new role women were playing in American society. His wife Eleanor was the first first lady to play an active role in the political process,
a role which was again evident in the ensuing cultural frames but which evolved and was associated with a different representation in each. So Eleanor Roosevelt’s role varies from the one played by Jacqueline Kennedy which in turn is different from that played by Nancy Reagan.

Franklin Roosevelt married distant relative Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, daughter of Elliot, the younger son of former president Theodore Roosevelt, whom Franklin Roosevelt greatly admired and in many ways was seen to emulate in his early political career. He held two positions, assistant secretary of the navy and governor of New York, which had been held by Theodore Roosevelt previously, with the difference that the elder Roosevelt was a Republican and the younger a Democrat.

Franklin judged his namesake’s political moves en route to the White House to have been astute and worthy of imitation, and knew, as marketers know the importance of brand recognition in selling a product, that his surname brought him a residual benefit. Both Roosevelt and Kennedy enjoyed this advantage of having a famous surname; on several occasions in his political career Roosevelt had the additional advantage of the fact that he was the incumbent and had been in the public eye consistently. So the benefits of marrying Theodore’s niece in 1905 could not have been lost on Franklin, and were supplemented by the presence of
Theodore, then president, at the wedding, where he gave the bride away.

Until Roosevelt's polio attack in 1921, Eleanor played the role of mother (of six children born between 1906 and 1916) and social matron, but thereafter she embarked on a life of political and social reform activities. As historians point out, Eleanor, on arriving in the White House in 1933, saw her primary role as that of an auxiliary to her husband, and of course being the wife of the president gave her a clout she would not have had on her own.

Perhaps, then, the notion of the ensemble, an idea associated with the analysis of advertising which originated in the 1920s, could be useful in the political context. The ensemble was devised by marketers seeking new ways to sell the vast and growing numbers of goods which the new industrial society was manufacturing, and one solution was to promote the idea that certain small sets or collections of goods belonged and should be purchased together. These associations of a supporting cast; a group, set or assemblage linked by matching aspects between objects, were on the rise in marketplace discourse and, given the time with its styles, concerns, limitations and constraints, Franklin and Eleanor as a public enterprise, with their
status and large family, were a perfect match; an appropriate fit.

New York Daily News cartoonist Batchelor, in a Sept. 27, 1944 cartoon titled "Democratic Ticket: All This and Truman Too" shows a large image of FDR and Eleanor together and a much smaller image of Roosevelt's vice-presidential running mate, Harry Truman, below them. The cartoon conveys the image of the political good as ensemble; one which, at a time when the commercial ensemble was established in marketplace discourse, even manages to squeeze out the traditional pairing of president and vice-president in this instance.

Threading this idea of the political ensemble forward through the project, glamourous Jacqueline was the becoming match for John F. Kennedy in the significantly different context of the early 1960s, and their two children Caroline and John later completed the romantic Camelot-style set. The slim, well-kept and well-dressed Nancy was right for the 1980s and for Ronald Reagan, who presented himself as the well-preserved, rugged Californian easily able to do most things in his 70s, especially handle a horse, one of the favourite American icons.

As most successful political leaders are aware, however, change needs to be carefully handled, and Roosevelt, with his eye always on opportunity, be it to

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bolster his public image or to exploit the media of his time, knew that this complex process of political promotion had to be meticulously planned and executed. It is for this reason that he surrounded himself with astute advisors, institutionalized many of the practices prevalent in the contemporary political process and standardised procedures where he could -- all things that fit easily into the privileged commercial discourse of market society.

FDR, while he broke with certain traditions, was careful to link into others so as to exploit the meaning embedded in them. The 1930s launched the advertising and design industry and saw the era of marketing guru Raymond Lowey, famous still for his Shell campaign, who coined the phrase "most advanced, yet acceptable." So political leaders like the two Roosevelts, Kennedy and Reagan tapped into myths of the past while they sought to make myths about the future, making sure they were photographed with people and objects with a respected tradition as well as with people and objects at the leading edge of technology, this being but one example. Both Roosevelts associated themselves with the most modern mode of transport, air travel, as has been discussed above. In consumer society, the idea of the icon with its symbolic message, stable and immediately recognisable, is fused with the notion of progress and change embedded in modern society.
Notes


2. For purposes of brevity, it shall be assumed from this point onwards in the text that references to the authorship of actions of image management by a president are understood to embrace contributions from both the president himself and his various assistants.


8. Hugh Gregory Gallagher, FDR's Splendid Deception (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1985), p. xiii. Subsequent references to this work will be made in the text.


18. Becker and Lower, p. 34.
22. Barber, p. 263.
25. Becker and Lower, p. 34.
26. Becker and Lower, p. 34.
29. Schoenherr, p. 34.
30. Schoenherr, p. 34.
Biographical outline: John F. Kennedy

1917: Born in Brookline, Massachusetts (a Boston suburb); the second of nine children

1935: Graduates from Choate school in Wallingford, Connecticut; enters London School of Economics; falls ill within weeks and leaves.

1936: Enters Princeton University but again is forced out by illness; recovers and enters Harvard.

1937: Hurts his back playing football; would be plagued by this injury all his life.

1938: Father appointed ambassador to Britain during Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration.

1939: Tours Europe and Middle East for 7 months, sending political reports to father; war breaks out; helps American survivors of torpedoed Athenia in Scotland; flies home on a Pan Am clipper.

1940: Graduates from Harvard in political science cum laude; with help from father’s friends, especially Henry Luce, thesis published in a book, called Why England Slept; enrolls at Stanford; father resigns ambassadorial post and returns home.

1941: Applies for and receives a commission in the navy -- without training. Assigned to naval intelligence.

1942: Transferred after involvement with woman under FBI surveillance; later undergoes officer training to prepare for sea duty.

1943: With father’s political help, assigned to combat duty; assumes command of motor torpedo boat PT-109 in Solomon Islands; his boat rammed and sunk by a Japanese destroyer, Kennedy tows injured sailor with his teeth while leading 10 remaining crew to safety on an island.

1944: Recuperates from malaria and aggravated back injuries.

1945: Hearst newspapers special correspondent in Europe.

1946: Elected to Congress in 11th district, Boston.

1952: Elected U.S. senator for Massachusetts.

1953: Marries Jacqueline Bouvier at Newport, Rhode Island.

1954: Undergoes back surgery; and again the next year.


1957: Appears on Time magazine’s front cover as front-running Democrat for the 1960 presidential nomination.

1958: Campaigning on crutches, Kennedy re-elected senator with biggest majority in Massachusetts history.

1960: Wins Democratic nomination and presidency with narrowest margin of all presidential elections.
1961: Peace Corps launched; Kennedy accepts "sole responsibility" for Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba; meets with Kruschev.
1962: John Glenn orbits earth; Cuban missile crisis.
1963: Proposes civil rights legislation; makes Berlin Wall speech; assassinated Nov. 22 in Dallas.
The third cultural frame (1945-1965) / John F. Kennedy

Younger than Nixon
(Tune: Younger than Springtime)

Younger than Nixon was I
Covered with makeup was he
Pancake and light can make you a fright
In TV screenings
Better than Nixon looked I
All his statistics went by
Images flew
So nobody knew
He outaged me
For when the camera panned
I looked sun-tanned
And he looked prematurely gray
So younger than Nixon I’ll stay
Let him say "naivetee" --
He can be toothsome
But I’ll stay youthsome
Come what may

-- 1960 Kennedy campaign song (1)

The first of the U.S. presidents to be born in the 20th century, John F. Kennedy captured the imagination of the nation, the youth in particular, with his urbane persona and stylish presidential marketing campaign, a campaign which reflected an acute awareness of the importance of the visual image and its relationship to the dominant medium of the time, television. The tone of vanity in the campaign song (above) with its conceited ending, "But I’ll stay youthsome, Come what may" is an attitude appropriate for the third cultural frame, narcissism, with its themes of glamour and romance as described by LKJ. These were attributes that had long been associated with the powerful and affluent Kennedy family of New England and they were easily tapped and

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capitalized on in the presentation, marketing and design of Kennedy; in addition, they were characteristics eminently suited to the visual medium of television, which was in the ascendancy in the media hierarchy of the time. Again, as with the two presidents dealt with previously in this project, the representation of Kennedy was right for the medium that dominated the time, and the medium that dominated was right for the image portrayed by Kennedy.

The third cultural frame was characterised by a process of personalisation in advertising with the predominant representations being ones in which the face presides over the scene, gazing out at the consumers of the image. LKJ describe the look thus:

... there is enough emotional force in the gaze to create a bond of identification between the viewer and the ad-persona. (2)

Kennedy, suave, boyish and youthful, gazes out in precisely this way from many of the photographs taken of him during his political career. LKJ argue that it is in the representations of this cultural frame that "... the focal point shifted closer to the person, it brought emotion, which had been absent earlier, clearly into view." (p. 289)

It is not surprising then, given JFK’s situation in the cultural milieu of the time, that Roland Barthes should select the Kennedy persona in his consideration of election
photography, describing a press photograph widely distributed at the time of the 1960 election as connoting "youthfulness, spirituality, purity" in his essay "The Photographic Message" in the work *Image Music Text*. (3)

In a related essay, "Photography and Electoral Appeal," which appears in an earlier collection, *Mythologies*, Barthes calls for the scrutiny of the photographic images of politicians, stressing the power of the personal link between candidate and voter. This emphasis, which is in line with the concerns of the third cultural frame, narcissism, is apparent in the two quotations below.

To start with, the effigy of a candidate establishes a personal link between him and the voters: the candidate does not only offer a programme for judgement, he suggests a physical climate, a set of daily choices expressed in a morphology, a way of dressing, a posture. (4)

Needless to say the use of electoral photography presupposes a kind of complicity: a photograph is a mirror, what we are asked to read is the familiar, the known; it offers to the voter his own likeness, but clarified, exalted, superbly elevated into a type. This glorification is in fact the very definition of the photogenic: the voter is at once expressed and heroized, he is invited to elect himself, to weigh the mandate which he is about to give with a veritable physical transference: he is delegating his "race." (5)
FROM:
THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE
1001 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

TO:

SUBJECT: Correction, Please!

Issue Number 20 November 9, 1960

PHOTOCOPIED FROM THE HOLDINGS OF THE JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY
The in-house promotional campaign leaflet which appears overleaf, put out by the Democratic National Committee and photocopied from the holdings of the John F. Kennedy library, provides evidence of the stress placed on Kennedy's visual image during the presidential campaign.

LJK's narcissistic phase (1945 to 1965) encompasses the Kennedy era, one framed as an era of promise, expectation, and challenge. Kennedy's "New Frontier" pledged a glorious America; a glory and splendour that would reflect on all its inhabitants.

Products seemed to bask in the glow of interpersonal attachments, as it were, showing for the first time in a market-oriented system that objects not only carried cues for public behavior, but also were fitting and proper as guides in the interior regions of individual psychology. (p. 289)

Henry Fairlie, in his book The Kennedy Promise, assesses the time of the Kennedy administration in similar terms with a description that stresses the self-admiration of the era:

For three years after 20 January 1961, the American people were persuaded that, metaphorically as well as literally, they could shoot for the moon. The language in which John Kennedy put forward his space programme was designed to excite a national will to conquer. "I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth," he said on 25 May 1961. "No
single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind ... In a very real sense, it will not be one man going to the moon; if we make this judgment affirmatively, it will be an entire nation. For all of us must work to put him there." (6)

With his illustrious programme, the celebrated Kennedy would aggrandize, elevate and ennable all. This was the discourse of Kennedy's time. Fairlie, discussing the perceived enhanced status associated with this era, says:

The people had been taught to expect too much: above all, that their traditional political processes could be transcended by the exercise of a spectacular personal leadership which manufactured, so that it might be sustained by, an elevated sense of national purpose. (7)

LKJ argue that it is during this format that the questions asked by the consumer are:

Who is the person I become in the process of consumption? Who are the consumers like me? What does the product mean in terms of the type of person I am and how I relate to others? (p. 234)

The glamorous Kennedy provided answers that would appeal to the electorate's vanities. Depiction after depiction chronicles the romance of the Kennedy years. One of the more pronounced examples of this mythical representation is found in Time Inc.'s recent publication on America's 35th president entitled *Life in Camelot: The Kennedy Years* which on its cover has Kennedy, photographed
in halo effect, portrayed as holy visionary with his wife Jackie in white, seated to one side, basking in his light, looking up at him, as are the other people below. The cover picture is repeated in the book with a caption describing it as a photograph taken after Kennedy took over from former president Dwight Eisenhower. The picture's caption expresses a sentiment closely related to narcissism, described in the Collins English Dictionary as "an exceptional interest in or admiration for oneself, esp. one’s physical appearance." (8)

It reads:

... his young successor savored the moment even as he relished the challenge of the future. Hours before, he had said, "I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people of any other generation." (9)

The term narcissism derives its meaning from the Greek myth of a beautiful youth who fell in love with his reflection in a pool and pined away, becoming the flower that bears his name.

Life in Camelot: The Kennedy Years is described as a photo-essay of Kennedy’s times, and is referred to frequently in this project because of the vast assortment of visual images associated with Kennedy which it offers. Covering events in JFK’s life between 1948 and 1963, the book draws on pictures taken in 433 journalistic assignments. Reinforcing the assertion posed in this thesis
that it was Kennedy’s recognition of the importance of the positive visual image that largely contributed to his being a successful candidate, and strengthening the link between JFK’s presentation and the advertising strategy of personalization of the third cultural frame, the first chapter, entitled "The Making of a Legend," reads in part:

John F. Kennedy was the first President to realize what powerful allies photographs could be, especially ones showing his working style and his private family life. Before Kennedy, photographers covering the White House were limited to official functions -- greeting visiting dignitaries, banquets, speeches, document signings, presidential comings and goings. The private living room, the nursery, the vacation retreat, parties, intimate conferences and the process of decision making were all off limits. (p. 4)

Noting the symbiotic relationship between the media of the time and Kennedy, Philip B. Kunhardt Jr., writing in the Life work, says that, in terms of size and prestige, Life was the picture magazine that reigned supreme throughout JFK’s political career, and that it was thus neither surprising that he was at pains to appear within its pages, nor, given Kennedy’s eager co-operation, that the magazine took advantage of this access to Kennedy and his private family life as often as possible.

Like Roosevelt, Kennedy recognised the importance of the media and set up a sophisticated organisation to deal
with this function. His press secretary, Pierre Salinger, was always ready to help the media, for example by supplying instant transcripts of Kennedy's speeches; and Kennedy, like Roosevelt before him, was surrounded by an able team of media advisors and speech writers.

The legendary and romantic nature of the Kennedy years is the aspect that Kunhardt stresses. He describes JFK's career as "the paramount saga of our times," (p. 5) a discourse at the same time fitting for the format of narcissism with its glamour, romance, sensuality, black magic and self-transformation. Mapping the evolution of the cultural frames for goods diagrammatically, LKJ say that it is in this format that "products are personalized, satisfaction is judged in interpersonal terms." (p. 279)

And personalization of the highest U.S. public office is indeed what Kennedy achieved while president. During his political career both his public and private life were presented as an extravagant spectacle, with similar pomp and ceremony being attached to each, making the line between the two spheres increasingly blurred; the public arena was personalized as the nation, through the media, became the almost ever-present beholder of the magnificent Kennedy legend. And the medium of television, with its close-up shots, was ideal for a strategy of personalization.
Metaphorically, the captivated audience saw themselves in the representation and, as is evident in a photograph in *Life in Camelot: The Kennedy Years*, even took on the Kennedy persona literally. The photograph shows a number of people wearing plastic masks of JFK and Jackie Kennedy lying on a beach. It is headlined and captioned thus:

> The Kennedy image was everywhere, from sea to shining sea -- Wherever one looked in the U.S., there were Jack and/or Jackie on every hand. Or, sometimes, on every face. The latest technology in beauty products, plastic masks of a material that screened out harmful ultraviolet rays and admitted those that tanned, caused beaches to bloom with their likenesses. They came in eight different colors -- the deeper the shade the lighter the tan. (p. 210)

In addition, Kennedy impersonators appeared on television and in entertainment venues, in much the same way as today’s carbon-copy Elvis Presleys vie for public attention on television channels and at night spots all over the United States. Vaughn Meader was the most convincing of the Kennedy look-alikes, according to the writers of *Life in Camelot*. Shop-window mannequins resembling JFK and Jackie also sprang up, a phenomenon which confirms the argument relating the representation of Kennedy not only to the format of narcissism, but also to the notion of political ensemble discussed earlier in this project and dealt with later in this section.
Life’s pictorial section on JFK’s political career notes that his powerful and ambitious father, Joseph Kennedy, was determined that a son of his should become America’s first Irish-Catholic president. When the eldest son, Joe Jr., was killed during the war, JFK was next in line to take up the exalted enterprise, and is presented in most cases as having done so with effortless ease; even in the early days, he was often surrounded by appreciative women. A caption to a photograph of JFK addressing a room full of women in 1952, entitled "Wooing and Winning the Votes," reads:

Jack was already using his boyish appeal, his genuine warmth and his quick wit to charm the lady voters at living room teas like this. (p. 34)

Later on in his career, admiring women, who became known as jumpers, would wait for him, jumping up and down in anticipation of his arrival, in much the same way as some women waiting for celebrities like the Beatles would do during the same time period.

In Kennedy’s well-financed challenge to Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge II in 1952, in which he defeated the incumbent, Kennedy and his advisors staged 33 magnificently orchestrated formal receptions at the most prestigious of Massachusetts hotels, a strategy that greatly contributed to a Kennedy victory, according to Kunhardt and
This account can be seen as reinforcing the assertion of the political leader as the ultimate commodity in the first two chapters of the thesis on the basis of the money associated with the launching of Kennedy as well as the early recognition of the time, money and planning which would be necessary if these ambitions were to be realised.

This argument is again bolstered by former Kennedy advisor David F. Powers, now curator of the John F. Kennedy library in Boston, who recalls that Kennedy's preparation for the presidential race in 1960 started as early as 1956. In a telephone interview on March 1, 1990 from Vancouver, Powers stressed the importance to the success of the Kennedy campaign of such factors as its long preparation; the strategy of using the primaries to circumvent the party bosses and establish the candidate's popular support; the importance of public opinion polls, noting that the Kennedy campaign was the first to use a private pollster, Lou Harris; as well as the importance of the medium of television for favourable exposure, especially given that Kennedy's opponent, Richard Nixon, had had the advantage of being vice-president in the popular Eisenhower administration.

The strategy of using the primaries to win popular support, thereby subverting the established party hierarchy,
was a strategy employed by the two earlier leaders analysed in this thesis. As discussed earlier, Theodore Roosevelt was the first president to recognize and exploit the strategic importance of the primary, a tradition taken up by the next Roosevelt as well as by Kennedy, who used the political mechanism so successfully that he was able to establish over the heads of the party bosses that the public could vote into power a young, Catholic president.

Explaining the intricacies of Kennedy's campaign strategy, Fairlie, whose concern in this regard centres more on the financing than on the primaries, and who argues that the strategy was heavily dependent on almost endless funding, and thus only conceivable because of the wealth of the Kennedy family, says:

"This (wealth) was of vital importance in a campaign which was, from the beginning, based on the strategy of entering all the primaries, winning each of them, and so going on to Los Angeles to be nominated on the first ballot. Only a very wealthy candidate can adopt such a strategy as early as did John Kennedy, and then take the measures to make it succeed." (10)

In the telephone interview, former Kennedy aide Powers noted that it was only after the first television debate that it was fully realised by the campaign team just how important the medium would be to Kennedy, and thereafter all efforts of "getting the message across" were directed
towards television. Powers, in a discourse not that
different from that of a proud product manager, spoke of
Kennedy in glowing terms, seeing JFK as having been "tested
so many times" -- whether in connection with his religion,
his age, or his wealth -- and each time responding well
under tough conditions.

Kennedy's appeal extended far beyond any relationship
of candidate to woman voter, and after he met Jacqueline
Bouvier in 1951 at a Washington dinner party, they married
in 1953 in opulent style. Co-authors Kunhardt and Kappler
repeat the New York Times description of the grand Newport
wedding and the public reaction to it, which conjure up
associations with royalty and media celebrities rather than
those appropriate to a young senator, which is what Kennedy
was at the time. It reads:

A crowd of 3,000 people broke through
police lines and nearly crushed the
bride ... The ceremony far surpassed the
Astor-French wedding of 1943 ... (p. 49)

The Kennedy wedding proceedings were no private family
matter. They began with a five-day party at the Kennedy home
at Hyannis Port, at which there were 10 bridal attendants
and 14 ushers, according to Kunhardt and Kappler. Much of
the grandiose affair was recorded by the ever-attentive
media -- as were many aspects of Kennedy's personal life
during his political career, which is littered with famous
celebrities, from the poet Robert Frost to Princess Grace of Monaco -- and distributed for public consumption.

Confirming the argument of the political ensemble put forward in the preceding section, that spouses of candidates selected for this project played an important part in campaign strategy from the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt onwards, Powers says Jackie’s fashionable presence was important to her husband’s success. A Kennedy quotation from the compilation *The Kennedy Wit*, edited by Bill Adler, acts as further corroboration of the proposition.

I do not think it altogether inappropriate to introduce myself to this audience. I am the man who accompanied Jacqueline Kennedy to Paris, and I have enjoyed it.

-- Kennedy on a visit to France in June 1961 with his wife Jackie, who was reported as being very well received by the French population. (11)

John F. Kennedy appears to have put together one of the most stylish political ensembles possible, right down to an attractive wife and matching children, one boy, one girl, something aspired to by many Americans of the affluent 1960s, where having two children to exactly replace one was seen as the way to go. Discussing the conceited style of the Kennedy family that dominated American life of the times, Fairlie says:
They would rule its arts, they would rule its science, they would rule its letters, they would rule its fashion, they would rule its taste; and all to create in the society an elevated sense of national purpose. The one required the other. The style was needed to create the sense of purpose, the sense of purpose was needed to justify the style. If the zeal and intelligence of the Kennedys were not to appear to be harnessed to the personal ambition alone, they must be seen to be consecrated to a loftier and more strenuous ideal; and the nation, ennobled by their example, must consecrate itself in turn. (12)

Kennedy throughout his presidency surrounded himself with eminent personalities, a practice launched at his inauguration when poet Robert Frost participated in the presidential ceremony. Ernest Hemingway, whose private papers are kept along with Kennedy’s at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, would have attended but was too ill to perform the function. The next year the sensual and glamorous Marilyn Monroe was the celebrity present to sing happy birthday at a fund-raiser and celebration at Madison Square Garden, where a decorative and grandiose 45-candle cake was presented to the president.

Kennedy’s reign coincided with the surge to mass status of television, the medium that attends the third cultural frame. Although television technology had been in existence for more than 30 years before Kennedy was elected president, there was a lengthy delay before it was brought into
people's homes on a significant scale, as Raymond Williams explains in *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*:

The transition to television broadcasting would have occurred quite generally in the late 1930s and early 1940s, if the war had not intervened. Public television services had begun in Britain in 1936 and in the United States in 1939, but still with very expensive receivers. The full investment in transmission and reception facilities did not occur until the 1940s and early 1950s, but the growth thereafter was very rapid. (13)

The following table, compiled from various sources, indicates the speed of this process. (14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of all households with TV:</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The attractive Kennedy's win over Vice-President Richard Nixon in 1960 was hailed as a triumph of the use of television: the Democrat had overshadowed his Republican rival in a series of television debates leading up to the election and overcome the fact that Nixon was by far the better-known candidate. It was the first time the population had both seen the political image and heard the political pitch in their own homes at the same time and the close-up shot made possible by television further personalized the process. Sidney Kraus, in *Televised Presidential Debates and Public Policy*, details the magical procedure.
Television brought the long shot and the close-up (the devices of film and moving pictures) into voters' homes. The former provided a moving visual panorama of political events; the latter supplied vivid, intimate sketches of candidates as they campaigned. Presidential election activities were no longer remote events that voters read and heard about. Voters became part of the events. Political events were staged for television coverage. Candidates performed for voters who, in turn, observed and formed impressions about them. Researchers and reporters gathered those impressions immediately after voters watched a specific event on television. Never before had the presidential candidates been so closely "monitored" by voters. The stuff of image had arrived in the home. (15)

Kathleen Hall Jamieson and David S. Birdsell, assessing the impact of presidential debates on the political process in their book *Presidential Debates: The Challenge of Creating an Informed Electorate*, see the first Kennedy/Nixon debate as significantly changing the way in which debates are conducted. They argue thus:

The recollection of the shadowy, shifty-eyed Nixon projected in the first debate of 1960 has forced the attention of consultants on appearance in debates. Before deciding to issue the challenge to debate in 1976, Ford's advisers asked themselves how he'd look on a debate stage. "We also considered the experience of Kennedy and Nixon in the 1960 debates," recalls Ford aide Dick Cheney. "To the extent that physical and stylistic factors were important in public perceptions of who would 'win' or 'lose' the debates, we believed our candidate would come off well. The President's physical size and presence
presented none of the negatively perceived characteristics which had supposedly caused Nixon to lose the first debate to Kennedy in 1960." (16)

Confirming the assertion that Kennedy’s success was in large part due to his being right for the dominant medium of the time, television, and listing changes to the political process which were under way, they point out that:

Editing clips from debates to reinforce key ideas or remind voters of a candidate’s performance also became standard political practice. In 1960 Kennedy used televised clips from the first debate; Nixon used radio -- each reinforcing the perceptions created by the medium on which he had "won." (17)

Hall Jamieson and Birdsell note that it is Kennedy’s presidency that gives rise to the personal press conference called "A Conversation with the President"; an innovation that is appropriate to the personalized format of the third cultural frame, that of narcissism, in which television is dominant. (18)

The importance of the use of this medium in political campaigning is confirmed by Elihu Katz and Jacob Feldman in The Great Debates. They say that the television debates:

... were introduced into a campaign which was attracting unusually high interest and were presented via a medium which had emerged as the predominant source of campaign information. (19)
This medium gave the Kennedy style the prominence that it received; a style informed by an ambition which James David Barber, discussing Kennedy’s campaign and presidential style, saw as a grand striving.

He undertook no less a task than the redefinition of the nation’s climate of expectations, he did not chart a path, he advertised a mythic landscape, a New Frontier. (20)

Contrasting Kennedy with Theodore Roosevelt, Barber comments, and, in effect, albeit unknowingly, compares the themes of the first and third cultural frames:

... in his (Roosevelt’s) day the fighting story took concreter forms, got its language from the book of muscle and steel. By 1960, the essential arena of political combat had shifted over into a spiritual spacescape: politics had become a game for sophisticated preachers. (21)

Time magazine, illustrating the persuasive and pervasive influence of Kennedy’s presidency, ran a cover story in its issue of July 27, 1962, in which was described the Kennedy years in what it called the "New Society:

It is an open-ended one, energetic, and international-minded. Its members jet to Gstaad for skiing, Venice for the film festival, Paris for the spring collections ... a different and more stimulating social stream of people with more education and more to talk about, who want their friends to be active, intelligent, and amusing (one of their favourite words) ... It is a society to which the Kennedys have given considerable impetus. (22)
In its issue of June 7, 1963, it wrote:

In today's Washington, no one really attacks President Kennedy personally. Respect plays a large part in this reticence. So does fear. The word is around that the Kennedys will exert their vast influence against all those who buck them ... hat sales have fallen ... button-down shirts (are avoided) ... His ideas about physical fitness have put all Washington into sweat socks. (23)

Even Kennedy's assassination, not by any means the first in American history, was responded to by the public in a very personal way. Analysing the effect of the assassination on the population, Fairlie says:

... one must still say that the popular reaction was unhealthy: that the office had been exalted, and the man in it, to a degree which had distorted the people's attitudes to politics... (24)

This public response to Kennedy's death follows the patterns set during the 35th president's life; a pattern of intense personalization of the figure in public office, and it is through this personalisation that the voter appears to have received satisfaction from having the glamorous Kennedy as leader rather than from the actual level of JFK's political performance.
Notes

1. From a sheet titled "Songs of the Press Gang on Kennedy’s Ship" in the holdings of the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, Mass.


5. Ibid.


10. Fairlie, p. 44


22. Quoted in Fairlie, p. 231.

23. Quoted in Fairlie, p. 231. Another influential magazine, *Newsweek*, said in its issue of May 22 1961 in an article called Royalty USA: "These attractive Kennedys ... enlist our empathy. We want them to be all that they seem to be." (p. 209)

Biographical outline: Ronald Reagan

1911: Born Tampico, Illinois, younger of two sons of a Protestant mother Nelle and Catholic father Jack, an alcoholic shoe clerk. Neither had education above the elementary level.


1932: Graduates from Eureka with a major in economics; starts work as a sports commentator for radio station WOC in Davenport, Iowa.

1933: Moves to radio station WHO in Des Moines, Iowa.

1937: On a trip with the Chicago Cubs to California, undergoes screen test for Warner Brothers and gets contract.

1940: Marries actor Jane Wyman; plays George Gipp in Knute Rockne -- All-American, the role he would later often refer to with the line, "One more for the Gipper."

1942: Acts in King's Row, which he regarded as the highlight of his acting career; joins U.S. Army Air Corps, in which he would serve for three years, however, never leaving the U.S. or engaging in active service.

1947: Elected president of Screen Actors Guild; would be re-elected five times.

1948: Divorced by Wyman; campaigns on radio for Democrat Harry Truman.

1951: Acts in Bedtime for Bonzo, comedy in which chimpanzee steals the scenes from actors. It became the staple of opposition political gags and in the late 1960s enjoyed a television revival.

1952: Marries Nancy Davis.

1954: Hired by General Electric to host and act in weekly television shows and also make company speech tours, a job he would hold for eight years.

1957: Acts in Hellcats of the Navy, the last of his 52 films (in 1964 there was a delayed release of a 53rd, The Killers, Reagan's only villainous role).

1960: Speaks on behalf of Richard Nixon in presidential election while still registered as a Democrat.

1962: Registers as a Republican; concerned at his developing political profile, General Electric cancels Reagan's television show.

1964: Gains national attention in television speech A Time to Choose for Republican Barry Goldwater’s campaign; Republicans begin to throw their weight behind Reagan after Goldwater's defeat.


1966: Elected governor of California.

1968: Makes last-minute run for Republican presidential nomination but is defeated by Richard Nixon.

1970: Re-elected governor of California.

1980: Defeats incumbent Jimmy Carter to become president at age 69, the oldest man to be elected president.

1981: Wounded in attempted assassination; fires 13,000 striking air traffic controllers; appoints Sandra Day O'Connor first woman justice of the Supreme Court; first launch of space shuttle, the Columbia.

1983: Granada invaded; troops sent to Lebanon.

1984: Re-elected president, defeating Walter Mondale.

1985: Controversial visit to Bitburg cemetery in West Germany to honor war dead; Iran-Contra scandal begins.

1986: Challenger space shuttle disaster; meets Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Rejkjavik.

1988: State visit to Moscow; retires from politics to California but takes up a lucrative career as a speaker on the international lecture circuit, estimated to bring Reagan in around $1,000 a talking minute.
My first thrill tonight was to find myself, for the first time in a long time, in a movie in prime time.

-- Ronald Reagan just before giving his acceptance address at the Republican convention in 1980. (1)

Someone once said, on one of those television talk shows, that "Mike Deaver changed the perception of how public relations fits into politics."

I am unsure if that was intended as a compliment. But you have to inspire support for the president if you are going to rally support for his policies. This is basic. This is the essence of good P.R. This is politics.

-- Reagan public relations and media aide Michael Deaver in his book Behind the Scenes. (2)

Ronald Reagan is the first modern President whose contempt for the facts is treated as a charming idiosyncrasy ... David Gergen, Mr. Reagan's communications man ... (said) ... "Over the years, he's come out with many facts and figures and far more often than not, he was right." Anyway, "these stories have a parable-like quality to them," Mr Gergen says. "He's trying to tell us how society works."

-- James David Barber in an article "The Oval Office Aesop" in the New York Times. (3)

He's an orator, a standard-bearer, a performer ...

-- Hedrick Smith in Mr. Reagan Goes to Washington. (4)
The quintessential television candidate, Ronald Reagan, in large part owes his political success to a set of communication skills which was perfectly suited to the demands of television, the medium that dominates in the fourth cultural frame. Reagan took what was perhaps a natural talent for acting and built on, refined and honed it during the more than three decades he worked in media and show business. He first brought this ability to public life when he became governor of California in 1966, the decade in which television politics really took off in the United States.

This was not done single-handedly. As accomplished as he was as a communicator, Reagan, like the other presidents considered in this project, relied heavily on an able team of media and marketing advisors and managers. This masterly troupe, which included pollster Richard Wirthlin, public and media relations person Michael Deaver, campaign strategist Stuart Spencer, and others such as Lyn Nofziger, Ed Meese and William Casey, became known as the brain trust, as had Franklin Roosevelt's team before them. This strategy of surrounding oneself with experts -- not one totally unfamiliar to Theodore Roosevelt, and one certainly embraced by John F. Kennedy -- who would handle much of the work load in policy formulation, media and public relations and, in many cases, speech writing, was nothing new. The difference
in Ronald Reagan’s election campaigns, however, was the level of expertise and technological sophistication that he and his handlers could draw on. Recognition of this is demonstrated in the fact that British and Canadian political parties specifically followed American campaign methods during this period, as discussed earlier.

Many of these techniques came to hand in the 1970s when newly developed product marketing practices seeped from the commercial sphere into public life as they were either picked up by political campaigners to sell their candidates, or as politicians increasingly hired those competent in the selling of the commonplace commodity to sell them as candidates. So, while Theodore Roosevelt can perhaps be considered the founder of the pseudo-event, there were technical limitations on the extent to which this manipulative technique could be used to market the candidate. In contemporary politics, however, technological advances make this visual representation increasingly more prevalent.

By now the evidence for the assertion of the political leader as ultimate commodity becomes most obvious and convincing, and the concerns voiced about politics and democratic participation in the television age, with its polling, simulations, focus groups and tracking techniques, appear to be most justified.
The quotations at the start of this section illuminate the significant elements of the Reagan years viewed through the fourth cultural frame: the preoccupation with the television image; the fixation on the right persuasive marketing performance; the way in which the grammar of television changes the political narrative and the demands made of it by its audience.

Reagan’s period in office just fits into the fourth cultural frame, and then only his first term, which LKJ outline as the period between 1965 and 1985. The boundaries, however, are not rigid and Reagan, this thesis argues, seems to mark a transition, perhaps straddling the division between the fourth and an as yet unspecified fifth cultural frame.

Drawing on the ideas expressed by Dean MacCannell in his book The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class, (5) the fifth cultural frame could be defined as tourism, suggesting that the discourse of the current era is one marked by characteristics associated with the tourist, although a full exploration of this idea is beyond the scope of this study.

This section will confine itself to highlighting similarities between the marketing of goods in the fourth cultural frame and methods employed in the selling of the
political leader Reagan, detailing the pervasiveness of sophisticated product-selling techniques in the political process, while at the same time discussing a form of politics in which the main protagonist is a former actor, taking direction from an advisory team in a production which is played out on television screens; elements which fit well with this project’s theoretical inspiration of viewing the political leader as the ultimate commodity.

Again, the symbiotic relationship between the leader and the dominant medium of the time is present. Reagan, the former actor, is labelled the Great Communicator and, as such, is spot-on for television, and the medium in turn is the right one for Reagan’s television appearances. Reagan’s analogic, visual delivery is superb. But he often experienced problems with the verbal, digital delivery as it was not always possible to have a pre-written script at hand put together by a talented aide, such as Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan. With television, which uses the method of analogy and juxtaposition, the visual image is paramount; the medium is non-discursive and encourages a discourse of association. Television’s forte is not that of logical, linear, diachronic, explicit, discursive discourse, and when attempts are made to use the medium for this type of presentation, for example in long discussions with talking heads, the results are not good. Because of the nature of
the medium, then, it is the one that least requires rigorous factual information.

This section draws on Neil Postman’s discussion of the different epistemology associated with television, and on Kathleen Hall Jamieson’s arguments about the different grammar that accompanies television. Their ideas are assessed in terms of the implications for the political process of the television discourse (the one which clearly dominates in the fourth cultural frame).

LKJ, writing in 1986, describe the fourth cultural frame, totemism:

During the present totemistic phase the identifying features of the three preceding periods are recalled and synthesized. The producted-related images are gradually freed from serving only the narrowly utilitarian qualities of the thing itself (idolatry), abstract and authoritative symbols (iconology), or a too restrictive array of interpersonal relations (narcissism). Here utility, symbolism and personalization are mixed and remixed under the sign of the group. Consumption is meant to be a spectacle, a public enterprise. (6)

Reagan was the synthesizer par excellence. The former left-liberal union leader campaigned for Democrats Truman and Humphrey in 1948, praised Democrat John F. Kennedy, memorised parts of the inaugural speech of another Democrat, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and then became the country’s most
right-wing Republican president since William McKinley.

Ronnie Dugger writes:

His second career flowed easily out of his first one because in its pretense politics is like show business and the politician is an actor. (7)

Dugger says that when Reagan and his wife moved into the White House the picture of Harry Truman, a Democrat, was taken down off the wall in the cabinet room and one of Republican Calvin Coolidge put up in his place.

With a description that could easily match with the marketing principles of some consumer goods in the fourth cultural frame, Dugger says:

Most remarkably, across the years (Reagan) is a dogged right-wing ideologue at the same time that he is a compromiser and a politician with many faces. (8)

This is one of the strengths of contemporary marketing; its claims are made by analogy and association with the distinct advantage of never burdening marketers with the task of having to justify themselves in the face of an accusation that false promises were made when the product fails to live up to advertising commitments. Interpretation is open-ended. Candidates are learning what product managers know, and Franklin D. Roosevelt learnt earlier; direct promises can get a candidate into trouble. Positive themes associated with products and candidates are far safer than
solid commitments. Television, with its analogic bias, is the medium that facilitates this ambiguous, subjective process of association. Through this ambiguity, it is argued, Reagan was able to construct messages that would say different things to different groups of people, in effect targeting different sectors of the voting public, and accounts of the election indicate that people who have not traditionally been supporters of Republican candidates nevertheless voted for Reagan. It was this skill in spanning market segments, prevalent in the strategies of the fourth cultural frame, which not only got the vote of the undecided but also won over enough Democrats to make a Reagan victory possible.

Jamieson, in the television programme mentioned earlier in this thesis, explained how television, with its different grammar, allowed Reagan and his handlers to make a statement that was at odds with the reality of his record. The example is cited where a visual showing Reagan waving is juxtaposed with another of a black woman silently mouthing the words "Thank you" to infer that Reagan would be a friend to people of that group. This method, which relies heavily on iconic representation and visual juxtaposition, as the language of television does, is, as opposed to the discourse of print, tacit and non-discursive and therefore difficult to argue with.
Postman, in his book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, is far more categorical about the effects of television on the political process. He talks about the epistemology of television and, taking a strong McLuhanesque stance, sees the medium as fundamentally affecting the message, and, in the case of television, detrimentally so, as far as public discourse is concerned:

My argument is limited to saying that a major new medium changes the structure of discourse: it does so by encouraging certain uses of the intellect, by favouring certain definitions of intelligence and wisdom, and by demanding new forms of truth telling. I will say once again that I am a relativist in this matter, and that I believe the epistemology created by television not only is inferior to a print-based epistemology but is dangerous and absurdist. (9)

He goes on to claim:

... I am arguing that a television-based epistemology pollutes public communication and its surrounding landscape ... (10)

The positions of both Jamieson and Postman point to the relationship between the medium and the message, an aspect explored throughout this project but one which takes on added significance in the fourth cultural frame. This is so because, although television was also dominant in the preceding cultural frame, its power and pervasiveness
reached new heights as people, having begun to understand how the medium could serve their ends, began to develop ever more sophisticated uses for the new technology.

Iconic representations which are visual tend to rely on analogic rather than digital coding methods which are processed by the right rather than the left side of the brain, the side of the brain more concerned with connotation than denotation, emotion rather than logic, association rather than transformation. The work of theorists in this relatively new area seems to indicate that the critical faculties of receivers of a message are drawn on less in decoding analogic messages than digital messages, as discussed in Anthony Wilden’s *The Rules Are No Game*. (11) The print medium, with its discrete, logical sequential demands, requires and enhances a different set of skills from that necessitated by the iconic, continuous, and non-rational medium of television, which offers greater opportunities through the flexibility made available to those who use the medium. It is this malleability, of which full advantage is being taken by the hordes of advisors employed by political leaders, that concerns theorists like Postman and Hall Jamieson.

Advertising guru Tony Schwartz, whose use of what he labels resonance -- the connection made between the product and what people feel "inside" of themselves -- informs much
of successful contemporary advertising, stresses the importance of having the emotional element at the forefront of an advert, something that the medium of television does best. Asked by David Chagall in the October of the 1980 election campaign to compare Reagan’s well-strategized and executed Campaign ’80 with incumbent Jimmy Carter’s campaign, Schwartz argues thus:

Rafshoon (Carter’s adviser) doesn’t understand resonance. He tries to sell things rather than connect with what’s inside people. It’s like trying to plant seeds on a wooden floor -- there’s no soil for them to grow. ... He doesn’t understand research or how to convince people. The writing on Carter’s commercials is excellent. So is the production. But the thinking is not.

This passage reinforces the importance of media handlers to the marketing of a candidate; it has an accord with the assertion on which this thesis is based and shows a well-placed person’s recognition that the codes of television are suited to the thinking and practices of the leading edge of contemporary advertising, whether for goods or politicians.

Schwartz, who has worked for other political candidates, believes the Reagan advertisements were far better than those done for Carter. As evidence, he points to a series put out by the Republican National Committee that he considered to be the best advertisements of the election.
The advertisements featured a truck driver beside his truck and a man outside his television repair shop (very fitting given the importance of the medium of television to the campaign) saying they had always voted Democrat but that this time they were going to vote Republican for a change.

Those ads speak directly to what people feel in terms of the economy. They are so convincing that even though they're done by actors, they come across as real. (13)

Schwartz's analysis illustrates the importance of market segmentation and shows two things -- how the skill with which Reagan's handlers targeted lifestyle messages to certain sectors of the voting public contributed to his victory at the polls, and the ways in which television can be used to convey information not accurately in accord with reality, in this case offering actors as real-life voters, in the campaign of persuasion. This tendency in political campaigns is becoming all too prevalent, argue those who see contemporary politics as inauthentic and a threat to "democracy."

Chagall's description -- yet another which reinforces the notion of political leader as commodity -- of the political process in the television age of the 1980s can be seen as one that elicits concern:

It's not what you say but how you say it. It's not what it is but how it looks. In the new politics, appearance
is reality. No serious political
candidate can hope to win high office
today without his own campaign
consultant calling the shots. These
consultants are high-powered
professionals versed in the skills of
polling, communications, and computer
planning. They plot the strategies, set
the stage, choose the themes, and
mastermind the interplay of candidate
and media in the klieg lights of today’s
electioneering carnivals. Reagan was
right. Modern politics is indeed like
show business. (14)

Chagall is referring to a comment made by Reagan to his
political consultant Stuart Spencer. Coming fresh from show
business to politics and running against incumbent Pat Brown
for the office of governor of California, he remarked that
politics is just like show business. Asked to explain by
Spencer, he said:

Well, you begin with a hell of an
opening, you coast for a while, and you
end with a hell of a closing. (15)

Chagall notes that in 1970 Reagan’s political
consultant Spencer introduced tracking research to political
campaigning, something that had never been done in the
political sphere before. The technique of tracking allows
marketers to measure the effects of advertising and
promotional practices, usually on product sales, and in the
political marketing arena takes on the form of the
continuous compilation of polls to measure the success of
campaign events. Spencer worked with Reagan in his campaign
for governor of California and was an important advisor in the 1980 campaign for president in which tracking and polling were significant elements in the success of the campaign. A Spencer protege who had worked with Spencer and Reagan during Reagan's first term as governor, pollster Richard Wirthlin of Decision Making Information, has the industry distinction of being advertising man of the year, an award given by the well-respected industry publication Ad Age. Wirthlin was another important person on the 1980 Reagan presidential election team and his input of information systematization to finely target potential voters was crucial to the Reagan victory. The collated and computerised data were also used to run simulations, another sophisticated marketing technique, in the 1980 election campaign. Data showed the vote of senior citizens to be important, both because they voted Republican and because as a group they turned out to vote in higher percentages than the rest of the population. Accordingly, Reagan targeted this section of the population. (16) Women were also targeted after research indicated that many women were not positive about Reagan and some of his perceived warmongering, bellicose positions which had been highlighted by the opposition.

Joyce Nelson, in an article in Fuse magazine called "Packaging the Populace: Polling in the Age of Image
Politics," notes that polling was a military inspiration of the late 1950s, and says that Wirthlin was quick to recognise that the business techniques of polling and simulation made possible by computer technology could be adopted by political handlers in their marketing of candidates. She describes Wirthlin's association with Reagan and details his contribution to his campaigns.

By the time he joined Reagan's team of political advisers during the 1970 California gubernatorial race, Wirthlin was perfecting his "Political Information System" (PINS) -- a complex mass of psychographic data on specific target groups across the country. PINS is based on five key elements: up-to-the-minute attitudinal survey work, fixed demographic information, historical voting patterns for every county in the U.S., ongoing assessment of political party strength in each state and subjective analysis by Wirthlin's team.

In 1970, this computer targeting was a pioneering strategy in political campaigning, and was used by Reagan's team to tailor ads, speeches and direct-mail for specific audiences. By the time of Reagan's first presidential race, targeting had become so refined that it could pinpoint the prevailing psychographics of individual city neighborhoods. (17)

These strategies and techniques are now found in most modern political campaigns and were again evident in the most recent U.S. elections. That the American population is segmented into different groups and lifestyles was shown in a breakdown offered by The Globe and Mail (Jan. 2 1988) in
an analysis of the presidential race that year. The article identifies 11 distinct segments: 1960s-style Democrats, Moralists, New Deal-Democrats, Enterprizers, Bystanders, Passive Poor, Partisan Poor, Upbeats, Seculars, Followers and the Disaffected.

Spencer calls Reagan the greatest television candidate in American history (18) but notes that he is not a good print candidate (19) and explains why he was such a good product to sell:

Because of his movie training, he knew how to take direction. Once you decided on a direction and spelled out the program, Ron never asked any questions. You did your end, he implemented it, and it all worked beautifully. (20)

Kennedy’s advisor Joe Napolitan, in Chagall’s opinion the acknowledged dean of modern consultants whose effective strategy in the primaries brought JFK to power, has, during his years as an international political consultant, distilled the essence of this activity into the following success formula, which echoes much of Schwartz’s thinking on the matter and would add, in all likelihood, to the disquiet felt about the American political process: (21)

1) Decide how you want the voter to feel or react.
2) Decide what to do to make him react that way.
3) Do it.
Chagall notes Napolitan's success with the formula, saying that of the more than 200 campaigns that Napolitan had handled thus far, he had won 170 of them. (22) Given the influence of political handlers, it can be argued that they now have the instrumental role once held by political party bosses.

Paul D. Erickson believes Reagan spoke more powerfully and persuasively than any president since Franklin D. Roosevelt. His book, which explores the devices used by Reagan to persuade, shows not only how skilled he was at communication but also that, from early on, he felt that a factual discourse was not one he needed to stick to. Erickson recounts how Reagan, when he was a sports commentator, sat in a studio using a news agency telex feed to fabricate a "live" transmission from a ball game. Suddenly Reagan was left with no information when "the wire went dead." Undeterred, he dreamt up a dramatic scenario for his listeners, and enjoyed joking about it later. Erickson observes that "it shows just how comfortable he can be with illusion". (23)

Erickson asks, but for very different reasons, the kind of questions Schwartz asks when formulating an advertising campaign:

And so, what kind of people are we, who have elected The Great Communicator to the White House twice? What does the
rhetoric of 1984 and of Mr Reagan's two and a half decades of political life tell us about ourselves? First, the symbols, stories and heroes that Reagan uses to connect so deeply with us reveal our wish to be, as he has said, "a giant on the scene." The people of America in the first half of the 1980s gazed approvingly at his depiction of us as a pious, strong, aggressively competitive, winning society basking in the grace of a beneficient God. Reagan's speeches resemble the paintings of Norman Rockwell in their portrayal of simple, cleanly drawn, and unconfused men and women. (24)

He believes:

... the reaction to the rhetoric that Reagan uses reveals our great frustration in life. This stems from our very inability to comprehend the world and to act cleanly in our lives. Acting as intellectual, moral and psychological surrogates, our leaders allegorically act to resolve for us this frustration. (25)

These quotations suggest a coincidence with notions expressed in earlier discussions in this project in which the idea of the political leader in modern mass media society as the ultimate commodity, filling a myriad of complex needs, was put forward. They link, too, with the ideas and strategies of advertising guru Raymond Lowey, also discussed earlier, of combining the familiar with the progressive. Reagan and his "superteam" plucked, among other things, the theme of the family from the umbrella of traditional values for use in his campaigns, even though the
This feeling of alienation and fragmentation that has come with modern society can perhaps even be seen in Reagan's own life story. Interestingly, he named his autobiography *Where's the Rest of Me?* using a line from a film in which he had starred and, as with his political speeches, needed the help of a ghost writer, Richard G. Hubler, to put it together.

Ironically, but in line with the postulates of the fourth cultural frame, this new reality comes through by virtue of Reagan's very own family situation which is in stark contrast to the families presented by the other presidents covered in this project. Here the themes are different. The Reagan ensemble, as viewed through the fourth cultural frame, stresses the lifestyle of health and leisure as evidenced in the visual representations of Reagan on horseback, or playing golf, or running on the beach, or with Nancy relaxing outdoors on the ranch. The image of Reagan is not tied to family as were those of both Roosevelts and Kennedy, where the family links were strong.

The image of Reagan on horseback, like the image of Theodore Roosevelt on horseback, has its links with
individualism and thus the philosophy of liberal pluralism and America’s frontier past, an image used again and again in American advertising as the traditional lone individualist is seen to evoke strong emotions which resonate for the American public.
Notes


15. Chagall, p. 3.


20. Chagall, p. 68.


25. Erickson, p. 117.
CONCLUSION

This thesis has demonstrated a converging relationship between the persuasive discourses of marketers of goods and political leaders during this century, culminating in recent times in a situation where the marketers of goods and the marketers of candidates are often the same people or organisations. It is this convergence that makes possible the description of the political leader as the ultimate commodity.

Examples -- ranging from Theodore Roosevelt's intrinsically utilitarian and rational image-making, to the developing symbolism of Franklin D. Roosevelt's impression management, to the increasing personalisation of the Kennedy era, to the intentional ambiguity of Ronald Reagan's pitch to the segmented voting market -- when viewed through the cultural frames, show how the discourse of American politics over the last century has displayed a consistently close correlation with the discourse emanating from the marketplace for goods. At the same time, it was observed that the dominant mass medium in each period played a significant role in shaping the discourse of the day, and in fact, along with other technological advances, promoted the convergence referred to.
These findings were arrived at by exploring the process of image construction by the four American presidents and their handlers in a similar fashion to that employed by LKJ in their examination of advertising methods, themes and styles for goods and the mass media through which these messages were communicated.

In broad terms it is possible to conclude that the marketplace in 20th century industrial democracies has consolidated its position as the privileged institution in society. While it was beyond the scope of this thesis to explore fully the implications of this development, the work of theorists in this area and the concerns of others troubled by the type of communication witnessed in today's political arena as a result of this consolidation were noted.

The evidence also suggests that in the area of 20th century American political representation the arguments of cultural theorists such as Neil Postman -- who blame television for what they call image politics -- are far too simple. The careful construction and cultivation of a winning political image stretches back at least as far as ancient Greece, and the technological grandeur of political image-making in the television age should not blind analysts to the long history of this practice. It is certainly not a
phenomenon whose influence on political discourse makes its entry only in the television age, as Postman would have us believe.

While acknowledging the significance of the ways in which the medium changes the message, and indeed that the dominant medium of the time favors some messengers above others, this thesis argued that the changes to the political process were more broadly based; the reasons for the shift more complex and the transformation institutional rather than merely technological.

The influence of the marketplace discourse has been felt increasingly in western industrial societies during the course of this century and in consumer society it becomes dominant. Those who shape and reproduce this discourse from day to day are able to draw on increasingly sophisticated media techniques, often inventing them anew. It is the penetration of the political arena by this discourse which has greatly changed the nature of representation and the political process. The technology of television is but one part of this commercial environment and to focus on it in the way that Postman does is to deny the other institutional changes taking place in society.

It was for this reason that the concept of cultural frames was used through which to view contemporary political
representation. By bringing to the inquiry the notion that each period in time has its predominant images, values and forms of communication, a more broadly based analysis is allowed than is possible for those who see a technology as the determinant. The focus possible through the instrument of the cultural frames sheds light on the relationship linking these aspects as well as those linking the marketing and advertising strategies of political leaders, the mass media and the themes and practices prevalent in society.

The marketing and advertising strategies that attend each period are also identified by the cultural frames, and the extension of this analytical perspective in particular into the context of political representation highlights the process of commodification of the political leader and the mediation of public discourse through these marketing institutions as the marketplace discourse encroaches further on the political terrain.

Theodore Roosevelt, whose presidency is examined in the first section of chapter 4, was skilled and actively involved in the practices of image construction and projection; tasks which have now largely been taken over by the vendors and advertisers of consumer goods, who have brought their skills from the privileged institution of the marketplace to the political arena. And as these political handlers and speech writers take over more and more of the
political functions of the leaders, be it by weighing the popularity of certain political options or articulating policy ideas polled and found to enjoy favour, it is likely that their impact will be increasingly felt in the public arena. In addition, the increasingly sophisticated techniques used to sell political candidates, and the influence on these persuasive practices of modern advertising discourse with its language of association and analogy, are likely to make it ever easier and more tempting for campaigning leaders not to make direct claims or promises, as discussed in chapter 1.
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