



## "We Are All in the Same Boat Now" Proverbial Rhetoric in the Churchill-Roosevelt Correspondence

WOLFGANG MIEDER\*  
*University of Vermont*

### ABSTRACT

Both Winston S. Churchill (1874-1965) and Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945) were masters of the English language and effective orators, rallying their people through word and deed to fight as allies against the dictatorial powers during the Second World War. Their public speeches and interviews are replete with proverbs, proverbial expressions, and other phraseologisms. This is also true for their private and secretive letters, messages, memoranda, and telegrams, as can be seen from the materials that Warren F. Kimball edited in the three volumes of *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). The proverbial language, especially metaphorical texts referring to the body, animals, and the military, gives their important communications a lively and humane flavor that illustrates their deep friendship, trust, and support of each other. Frequently used as metaphorical arguments, these proverbial interjections into an otherwise factual epistolary exchange from 1933 to 1945 bear witness to the determination of these two world leaders to win the struggle for a free world.

**KEYWORDS:** Winston S. Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, communication, correspondence, metaphor, politics, proverb, proverbial expression, rhetoric, World War II.

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\* *Address for correspondence:* Wolfgang Mieder, Department of German and Russian, 422 Waterman Building, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont 05405, USA. Tel. (802) 656-1475; Fax (802) 656-8028. E-mail Wolfgang.Mieder@uvm.edu

## I. INTRODUCTION

Recounting his second visit to Washington in mid-June of 1942 in his celebrated six-volume personal history of *The Second World War (1948-1954)*, Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill relates how at a meeting President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and General George C. Marshall agreed spontaneously to let the British armed forces have an urgently needed supply of Sherman tanks and guns. Still overwhelmed years later by this generous and philanthropic action, Churchill cites the proverb "A friend in need is a friend indeed" (1951: IV, 344) to underline this clear proof of the close friendship that existed between the United States and Great Britain during the war years. But this piece of traditional wisdom could on a more comprehensive level also serve as a proverbial leitmotif to characterize the remarkable friendship that tied these two remarkable world leaders together in their fight against the common enemy in Europe and Asia.

They expressed their friendship for each other during telephone calls and at several high-level meetings, but these oral exchanges were of course not recorded. But there is their extensive correspondence that bears witness to the fact that the two leaders had a special relationship during almost six years between 1939 and 1945. Hardly a day went by when not at least one telegram, memorandum or letter was exchanged, with 1161 and 788 messages sent by Churchill and Roosevelt respectively. Warren F. Kimball has edited this invaluable historical record in three massive volumes of *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence* (1984) that bring to light the communicative and rhetorical prowess of both men. Since the messages were private and secretive, shared only with very close family members and advisors, they reflect a "candid, friendly, informal atmosphere that both men worked to create and preserve" (Kimball, 1984: 1,3).<sup>1</sup> And when certain exchanges were prepared by advisors (primarily in the case of Roosevelt; see Loewenheim, Langley & Jonas, 1975: 4), casual remarks concerning private matters would be added at the end, giving the letters or at least part of them an air of refreshing informality and at times colloquial spontaneity.

Much has been said and written about this friendship, and the numerous comprehensive biographies are replete with factual accounts and at times apocryphal stories (Black, 2003; Eade, 1953; Edmonds, 1991; Freidel, 1990). But there are also several book-length studies that deal with their special relationship (Lash, 1976; Sainsbury, 1994; Stafford, 2000), with Keith Alldritt's *The Greatest of Friends: Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill* (1995) and Jon Meacham's *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship* (2003)<sup>2</sup> describing and analyzing their friendship without over-romanticizing their "love" for each other. After all, it was Churchill who depended on Roosevelt and the American forces and who had to submit to Roosevelt's idiosyncracies more often than Roosevelt had to put up with Churchill's robust nature. As the war went on and Roosevelt realized that the world

would be divided between the United States and the Soviet Union, Churchill was repeatedly made to feel like the third man out among Roosevelt, Stalin, and himself representing the waning British Empire. One is reminded of the proverb "Two is company but three's a crowd" that does not, however, appear in the correspondence. Churchill and Roosevelt did their best to keep on friendly terms, and whenever there were "lover's quarrels" in their increasingly problematic relationship, both took care to make amends as they fought their common enemies. Great orators and stylists that they were, they always found the right tone and words to heal the wounds inflicted by the game of power politics. In the long run, their friendship survived and their common goal of defeating the Axis powers was achieved. Roosevelt clearly also had his friend Winston Churchill in mind when, at the height of the Second World War, he included the following remarks in his fourth inaugural speech on January 20, 1945: "We have learned that we cannot live alone, at peace; that our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations far away. We have learned that we must live as men, not as ostriches, nor as dogs in the manger. We have learned the simple truth, as Emerson said, that 'the only way to have a friend is to be one'" (Mieder, 2003: 345). The metaphors of the proverbial expressions "to be an ostrich" and "to be a dog in the manger" added much expressiveness to Roosevelt's argument that the United States cannot be blind to world events and that it also cannot retreat into isolationism. Instead, America needs to act as a friend to all free nations, as expressed with the quotation from Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay on Friendship (1841) that has long since become a proverb (Mieder, Kingsbury & Harder, 1992: 239).

Turning from their valiant deeds as politicians to their rhetorical ability, both Churchill and Roosevelt have uttered concise statements that have become part of the sententious if not proverbial repertoire of the Anglo-American language. Two famous examples readily come to mind: Roosevelt, on March 4, 1933, began his first inaugural address with the claim that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself" (Houck, 2002; Mieder 2003: 343; Ryan, 1988: 76-78; Ryan, 2003: 32-34), thus rallying the American people to accept his New Deal that would get them out of the devastating depression. And on May 13, 1940, Churchill electrified members of the House of Commons and the entire British nation with his statement "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat" (Crum, 1947; Mieder, 1997: 53-55), getting the British people behind his vigorous struggle against Nazi Germany. Especially regarding Churchill, much has been made of his capacity as a "phrase forger" (Weidhorn, 1972) and his interest in employing the English language as an effective rhetorical weapon (Aldritt, 1992; Holley, 1987; Miller, 1942; Stewart, 1954; Underhill 1966; Weidhorn 1974 & 1987). In fact, his predisposition to proverbial rhetoric, something that Adolf Hitler matched with his manipulative use of proverbial language on the

other side (Mieder 1993: 225-255; Mieder 1997: 9-38; Mieder, 2000: 265-301), has been studied in considerable detail (Mieder & Bryan, 1996; Mieder 1997: 39-66). Roosevelt's careful attention to his oratorical skills at public speeches, press conferences, and especially during his famous "fireside chats" has also been scrutinized (Braden & Brandenburg, 1955; Daughton, 1993; Gelderman, 1997: 11-35; Houck, 2003; Ryan, 1988, 1995 & 2003; Ryfe, 1999; Winfield, 1990: 103-125), but his quite similar inclination towards the use of proverbs and proverbial expressions has hitherto gone **completely** unnoticed. **There** is merely a very short study that refers to Churchill's and Roosevelt's "use of clichés" (Miller & Villarreal, 1945), but there are no textual examples (!) and proverbial matters are not even mentioned.

To make things worse, scholars **have** paid very little attention to the style of the letters by these two linguistic giants. Letters as a textual **corpus** **have** not received enough attention by language-oriented investigators, and it is amazing that the scrupulous editor of the Churchill and Roosevelt correspondence **does** not say one word about the rhetorical nature of these important letters in his otherwise highly informative introduction (Kimball, 1984: 3-20). And yet, both men were such keen observers and practitioners of language, with Churchill receiving the Nobel prize for literature in 1953, clearly **also** a recognition of his linguistic abilities. **Despite** their superb university education and privileged family backgrounds, the two political leaders were **well** aware of the fact that they needed to find language with which to relate their ideas clearly and somewhat **plainly** to the common people. This deep interest in communicating with the masses of their two democracies caused them to craft and deliver speeches (albeit in the case of Roosevelt with the help of highly capable speechwriters) that could reach the general population.

Proverbial expressions and proverbs were most certainly part of this common linguistic ground, and this proverbial language **also** carried over into their secretive war correspondence. **While** many letters contain factual paragraphs relating to pragmatic matters of conducting the war, there is always room for personal comments to underscore emotional states, **ranging** from frustrations and disappointments to expressions of thankfulness and friendship. **It** is in such tense or **joyful** passages where the **colloquial** language of proverbs and proverbial expressions enters in, giving their letters a deeply emotional and heart-warming touch. And the two friends are an even match proverbially, with Churchill using 238 proverbial statements in his 1161 letters, messages, and telegrams (i.e., one phrase per 4.88 letters), and Roosevelt employing 206 such phrases in his 788 epistolary texts (i.e., one phrase per 4.86 letters). This might not be a very high frequency of proverbial utterances, but **it** must be remembered that **some** messages are merely a line or two long, while the longer documents are often procedural or planning documents that were composed in matter-of-fact wording. But be that as it may, a close analysis of the proverbial language of this unparalleled

correspondence by two superb politicians, admirable human beings, and special friends will show that these colorful metaphors and pieces of folk wisdom added much to their communicative process in highly troubled times.

## II. "TWO HEARTS THAT BEAT AS ONE" – PERSONAL TOUCHES

It was Roosevelt who on September 11, 1939, shortly after the beginning of World War II, contacted Churchill, thus setting the stage for several years of support and friendship between them as they built a powerful and necessary alliance against the Nazi menace:

It is because you and I occupied similar positions in the World War that I want you to know how glad I am that you are back again in the Admiralty. Your problems are, I realize, complicated by new factors but the essential is not very different. What I want you and the Prime Minister [Chamberlain] to know is that I shall at all times welcome it if you will keep me in touch personally with anything you want me to know about. You can always send sealed letters through your pouch or my pouch. (I,24)

The fact that both men had been in their respective navies helped to bond them as comrades in their struggles, and they quite obviously delighted in using nautical phrases in their letters as time went on. For now, they are content in proverbially "staying in touch," but also wishing to meet personally, as Roosevelt states on February 1, 1940: "I wish much that I could talk things over with you in person – but I am grateful to you for keeping me in touch, as you do" (I,34). Much, of course, was already at stake for Churchill in his lone fight against Nazi Germany, while the United States still pursued a somewhat isolationist course. Much hoping to draw America into the war as an ally, Churchill used indirect proverbial language (i.e., "fair play" and "to be at stake") on November 6, 1940, to hint that the newly reelected President needs to look closely at the responsibilities of his country regarding the threatened free world: "I feel that you will not mind my saying that I prayed for your success and that I am truly thankful for it. This does not mean that I seek or wish anything more than the full fair and free play of your mind upon the world issues now at stake in which our two nations have to discharge their respective duties. We are now entering upon a somber phase of what must evidently be a protracted and broadening war, and I look forward to being able to interchange any thoughts with you in all that confidence and goodwill which has grown up between us since I went to the Admiralty at the outbreak" (I,81; repeated on November 8, 1944 [III,383]). This is proverbial pleading by indirection, and Roosevelt, while staying out of the war, helped as much as he could, encouraging his troubled friend on May 1, 1941, by simply stating proverbially: "Keep up the good work" (1,180).

With the United States having entered the war, Churchill wrote a two-line birthday message to his distant friend on January 30, 1942, that shows how political and familial matters add up to a strong personal relationship: "Many happy returns of the day, and may your next birthday see us a long lap forward on our road. Please give my kindest regards to Mrs. Roosevelt" (1,335). Roosevelt responded one day later with a most touching declaration of their friendship: "Thank you ever so much for your wire. It is fun to be in the same decade with you" (1,337).<sup>3</sup> About six weeks later, on March 18, 1942, Roosevelt chose the proverbial expression "to take a leaf out of someone's book" to remind his friend in a very personal manner to take good care of himself:

I know you will keep up your optimism and your grand driving force, but I know you will not mind if I tell you that you ought to take a leaf out of my notebook. Once a month I go to Hyde Park for four days, crawl into a hole and pull the hole [sic] in after me. I am called on the telephone only if something of really great importance occurs. I wish you would try it, and I wish you would lay a few bricks or paint another picture. (1,422)

And when his wife Eleanor went on a good-will visit to Great Britain in October 1942, Franklin sent a short letter along with her that began with "I confide my Missus to take care of you and Mrs. Churchill. I know our better halves will hit it off beautifully" (October 19, 1942; 1,633). In addition to this twofold use of proverbial phrases, Roosevelt ends his short note with yet another proverbial metaphor, indicating that he and Churchill were facing similar concerns with the media: "My trip to the west coast was well worth while and the people are all right – not the newspaper owners. You have that same headache" (1,633).

Such short notes referring to their similar situations as President or Prime Minister are often couched in proverbial language, giving them a personal and emotional touch. This is certainly the case in a short personal and secret message that Churchill wrote on July 31, 1943, regarding the Anglo-American policy in the Italian campaign: "I have not had time to consult my colleagues but I have no doubt whatever that our joint draft as amended expresses in perfect harmony the minds of our 2 governments on the broad policy to be pursued [in the case of Italy's surrender]. It seems to be a case of 'Two hearts that beat as one'" (11,367). But there is also humor, as for example in the thank-you note that Churchill included with a portrait of himself for Roosevelt on May 1, 1944: "My dear Franklin, You kindly sent me recently a portrait of yourself which I like very much and have hung in my bedroom. Here is a tit for your tat. I hope you will accept it, flattering though it be to me, and like it as much as I do yours. Yours ever, Winston S. C." (111,120). Churchill also used a bit of proverbial humor in a letter of May 28, 1944, trying to convince his friend to agree to a major strategic meeting: "Doctor Churchill informs you that a sea voyage in one of your great new battleships would

do you no end of good" (111,149). Roosevelt clearly enjoyed this type of light-hearted communication to counterbalance the seriousness of the war situation, as seen from his response on the following day: "I should like very much to accept Dr. Churchill's advice to make a sea voyage in your direction and I hope to do so at a later date" (III,151).

And Churchill was persistent in his insistence on a meeting, including also their ally Joseph Stalin (called by them Uncle Joe). In his letter of July 16, 1944, he goes so far as to tell Roosevelt that proverbially speaking, he is completely in his hands, i.e., utterly dependent on Roosevelt's good will: "When are we going to meet and where? That we must meet soon is certain. It would be better that U. J. came too. I am entirely in your hands. I would brave the reporters at Washington or the mosquitos of Alaska!" (111,249). The meeting of the "big three" took place eventually at Yalta between February 4 and 11, 1945 (Edmonds, 1991; Meacham, 2003: 313-325), and it was here where Roosevelt openly snubbed Churchill while trying to build a relationship with Stalin who, admittedly, would become a more important partner in world politics after the war than Churchill's declining British Empire. But Churchill, obviously hurt, could forgive (but not forget), addressing his letter of March 17, 1945 quite formerly with "Prime Minister to President Roosevelt." And yet, at the end he signs the letter with his first name Winston, with his epistle stating one again that their friendship has been and will continue to be, proverbially expressed, a rock on which the free world could be helped back on its feet:

I hope that the numerous telegrams I have to send you on so many of our difficult and intertwined affairs are not becoming a bore to you. Our friendship is the rock on which I build for the future of the world so long as I am one of the builders. [...] I remember the part our personal relations have played in the advance of the world cause now nearing its first military goal. [...] Peace with Germany and Japan on our terms will not bring much rest to you and me (if I am still responsible). When the war of the giants is over, the wars of the pygmies will begin. There will be a torn, ragged and hungry world to help to its feet: and what will Uncle Joe or his successor say to the way we should both like to do it?" (111,574)

Always forward looking, Churchill made amends with his old friend before Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, leaving Churchill to carry on the fight for democracy as the "iron curtain" fell in Europe and the Cold War commenced (Harbutt, 1986).

### III. "THE SOONER THE BETTER" – PROVERBIAL PLANS

The friendship between Churchill and Roosevelt was in part based on the necessity of working together towards the same goal. The President certainly had it right when on December 25, 1942, he sent this short message to London: "The Roosevelts send the

Churchill's warm personal Christmas greetings. The old teamwork is grand" (II,88). And for this proverbially grand team of work horses to succeed, it was necessary "to take (keep) the same line" and "to be in step" with each other. These not particularly metaphorical phrases act as leitmotifs throughout the letters, giving the two men a colloquial way of reminding each other how important a joint approach to war strategies was: "It is important that we should take the same line although we need not necessarily adopt exactly the same wording" (Churchill, October 14, 1944; 111,356); "I have today sent the following to Stalin. You will see that we are in step" (Roosevelt, December 30, 1944; 111,482); "I am delighted with our being in such perfect step" (Churchill, April 1, 1945; 111,602); and "Please tell me how you think the matter should be handled so that we may keep in line together" (Churchill, April 11, 1945; 111,624).

The expressions "to be at stake" and "high stakes" are also repeatedly employed to tell each other in plain language how important various missions are: "Don't you think perhaps it would be beneficial to us both if this leak [to the press] could be run down and so avoid another one in the future when there is more at stake" (Roosevelt, October 4, 1943; 11,491); and "The stakes are very high on both sides and the suspense is long-drawn. I feel sure we shall win" (Churchill, March 4, 1944; III,18). For Churchill, who so very much relied on American help, the repeated use of the proverbial expression "to bridge the gap" took on a special sense of urgency as he asked or begged for support: "Immediate needs are: first of all, the loan of forty or fifty of your older destroyers to bridge the gap between what we have now and the large new construction we put in hand at the beginning of the war" (Churchill, May 15, 1940; I,37). And the understanding of the immediacy of assistance and action on both sides of the Atlantic is also well expressed in the non-metaphorical proverb "The sooner, the better" that adds a bit of persuasive power to their statements: "It seems to me in the light of your recent cable the sooner this mission [to discuss Russian supply requirements] gets to Moscow the better" (Roosevelt, September 8, 1941; 1,240); "Grand [Churchill's plan to visit the United States]. The quicker the better including the receiver's wife" (Roosevelt, June 10, 1942; 1,508); and when it was suggested later that another meeting could take place at Casablanca, Churchill responded immediately and forcefully: "Yes, certainly; the sooner the better. I am greatly relieved. It is the only thing to do" (Churchill, December 21, 1942; II,86). And Roosevelt also relied on this rather blasé proverb in the following year when Churchill agreed to come to Washington: "I am really delighted you are coming. I agree most heartily that we have some important business to settle at once; the sooner the better" (Roosevelt, May 2, 1943; 11,206).

The somewhat more metaphorical expression "to be at (break) a deadlock," conjuring up the image of locking brakes on a cart, is quite naturally called upon by the Prime Minister



and President to refer to an impasse in negotiations or to an apparently unsolvable problem. Considering the incredible challenges both men faced in executing various plans and actions, this over-used English phrase takes on a pressing significance that is anything but a cliché: "I **have been** much concerned at the **delay** in reaching an agreement in respect to the naval and air bases [in Great Britain]. Indeed, the negotiations appear to be deadlocked on a number of points of considerable importance" (Roosevelt, February 25, 1941; 1,138); "It seems to me that the situation [on the Russian front] is changing so rapidly that we **should** do well to let a week or so pass before ourselves taking steps to break the deadlock [over letting Anglo-American planes **operate** behind Russian lines]" (Churchill, December 3, 1942; II,59); and "We must **not** let this great **Italian** battle degenerate into a deadlock" (Churchill, October 26, 1943; 11,563). Churchill had even **been** reluctant to send representatives to hold discussions with the Russians: "I deprecate sending our military representatives to Moscow. It will only lead to a deadlock and queer the pitch" (Churchill, December 3, 1942; II,55). Roosevelt might well **have** had **some difficulty** understanding the **primarily** British proverbial expression "to queer the pitch" in the meaning of jeopardizing one's chances beforehand. The "pitch" signifies a place of performance and an interruption could "queer" or **spoil the entire matter** (Wilkinson, 1992: 470). In any case, it is of interest to note how Churchill very shrewdly strengthens his "deadlock" metaphor with this somewhat exotic Britishism. It must **have** struck his friend Franklin somewhat "queer" or odd, **while** enjoying Winston's proverbial *tour de force*, no doubt!

But as expected, there are also numerous instances where both Churchill and Roosevelt employ much more colorful proverbial expressions and proverbial comparisons. Of particular interest is, for example, Churchill's **reversal** of the phrase "to make mountains out of molehills" in his message of March 10, 1941, to his American friend: "I **have been** working steadily about the [American **lease of**] bases [in England] on turning the mountains back into molehills, but even so, the molehills remain to be disposed of. I hope to send you a cable on Monday leaving very **little** that is not cleared away. Please lend a hand with the shovel if you can" (1,145). Of course, Roosevelt was more than **willing** to help wherever he could, stating that "we may **still pull some** of the chestnuts out of the fire" (May 14, 1941; I,187), the perfect metaphor for performing difficult tasks for an **ally**. Referring to his commitment to increased production of planes, Roosevelt writes "we will let no grass grow under our feet" (October 19, 1942; I,633), thus underscoring his **promise** with a colorful image. The headache of finding the best relationship between the production of merchant ships and military escort vessels is also circumscribed **proverbially**, with the phrase of "having your cake and eating it too" indicating that Roosevelt was aware of the fact that he was expecting too much: "I presume that we **shall** never **satisfy** ourselves as to the **relative** need of merchant ships versus escort

vessels. In this case I believe we should try to have our cake and eat it too" (November 20, 1942; II,44). In other words, he was pushing the problem aside, something that he unfortunately also did regarding the vexing Polish problem. Churchill recognized early on that Stalin had his eye on taking control over Poland, but Roosevelt argued with two well-placed proverbial expressions against making an issue out of the matter: "I still think the future government [of Poland] and matters like boundaries can be put on ice until we know more about it. This, in line with my general thought that we ought not to cross bridges till we come to them" (March 16, 1944; III,48). Clearly the President is employing the proverbial phrases here as a convenient ready-made rationalization process of his non-action at the time. Regarding France and its future after D Day and the end of the war, Roosevelt also chose a colorful metaphor to tell Churchill that in the long run France would be his problem: "I am absolutely unwilling to police France and possibly Italy and the Balkans as well. After all, France is your baby and will take a lot of nursing in order to bring it to the point of walking alone. It would be very difficult for me to keep in France my military force or management for any length of time" (February 7, 1944; II,709).

Churchill, the masterful stylist, was perfectly able to match Roosevelt's steady use of proverbial phrases that give his messages a certain conversational tone. More than Roosevelt, he also integrates expressive proverbial comparisons into his explanatory comments, as for example: "Meanwhile all operations for ROUNDUP [code name of a plan for a major invasion of western Europe from England in 1943] should proceed at full blast, thus holding the maximum enemy forces opposite England. All this seems to me as clear as noonday" (July 14, 1942; I,529); "Have just returned from watching the assault [i.e., invasion of southern France] from considerable distance. Everything seems to be working like clockwork here and there have been few casualties so far" (August 16, 1944; III,278); and "It is as plain as a pike staff that his [Vyacheslav Molotov's] tactics are to drag the business [of dealing with Poland] out" (March 27, 1945; III,587). Referring to various other problems, Churchill had also written proverbially to his friend Franklin: "I hope however that you will chase these clouds away" (August 25, 1943; II,436), and referring to the egocentric Charles de Gaulle having become a bit more reasonable, he quite befittingly speaks of the general's former desire to run "a one-man show" of French interests: "I am satisfied that he [de Gaulle] is being increasingly caged and tamed by the Committee [of National Liberation] and that there is no longer any danger of a one-man show" (January 30, 1944; III,693). And very appropriately, Churchill relied on the expression "to be a gambler" regarding the timing of the D Day invasion, stressing the incredible risk factor involved: "I go every weekend to see the armies preparing here and I have visited some of your finest divisions. Even more striking are all the extraordinary structures and mass of craft already prepared. The weather is a great gambler but

otherwise I am full of hope" (May 25, 1944; 111,143). And the proverbial gamble worked with the massive invasion on the Normandy beaches marking the true beginning of the end of the Third Reich.

#### **IV. "THE PILOT WHO WEATHERED THE STORM" - NAVAL IDIOMS**

Both former naval administrators had no problems whatsoever understanding each other's use of maritime expressions. A number of scholars have commented on their predilection towards military metaphors in general and nautical images in particular, adding up to a pervasive war imagery in all modes of oral and written communication (Daughton, 1993: 430; Mieder & Bryan, 1995: 32-34; Ryan, 1988: 81-84 & 167). But in the case of studies on Roosevelt, it is as if their authors have never heard of proverbs or proverbial expressions. These genre designations are nowhere to be found, and with very rare exceptions only metaphors are cited as examples without even mentioning the rich proverbial language of both naval persons. They were very cognizant of their earlier employment in their respective navies, with Churchill often referring to himself as "Former Naval Person" in his letters and Roosevelt commenting once: "As Naval people you and I fully understand the vital strength of the fleet [...] and command of the seas means in the long run the saving of democracy and the recovery of those suffering temporary reverses" (June 14, 1940; 1,48). In the proverbial "long run" they did, of course, exactly that as captains of their respective "ships of state" (see McKenna, 2003; Meichsner, 1983). Addressing an envelope on January 20, 1941, to "A Certain Naval Person," Roosevelt sent this short note with a quotation from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem "Building of the Ship" to his treasured comrade:

I think this verse applies to you as it does to us:  
"Sail on, Oh Ship of State!  
Sail on, Oh Union strong and great.  
Humanity with all its fears  
With all the hope of future years  
Is hanging breathless on thy fate." (1,131)

About four weeks later Roosevelt employed the proverbial expression "to stem the tide" to tell the former naval person Churchill that the British war efforts in Greece have made a real difference. By choosing a maritime expression, he was certain to let his friend know how much his efforts in this struggle were appreciated: "I think the feeling in America is that the efforts which your country made to stem the tide in Greece was a worthy effort and the delaying action which you fought there must have greatly weakened the Axis" (May 10, 1941; 1,184). And about a week later Churchill made use of the proverbial phrase "to swim against

the stream" to reflect on the loss of ships in the Atlantic and the difficulty in building new ones: "Where **have** we got to then? Just making time and swimming **level** with the bank against the stream" (May 19, 1941; 1,190).

Roosevelt **also** relied on the proverbial expression of "to be at the helm" to draw Churchill's attention to the risk of crossing the Atlantic by ship: "My one reservation is the great personal risk to you – believe this should be given most **careful** consideration for the Empire needs you at the helm and we need you there too" (December 10, 1941; 1,286). Knowing that Roosevelt would understand his metaphor, Churchill thought it best to couch his thoughts on the final date for the Normandy invasion into naval phraseology as well: "You will see that **all** plans are related to the X date [the mid-May 1944 schedule of the landing] and if as **I** think increasingly probable the Y date [June 1944] prevails there is a lot of rope to veer and haul on" (January 8, 1944; 11,657). And Roosevelt, instead of writing that the health of his **major** advisor Harry Hopkins was getting better, turns to the naval phrase "to be on deck" as a fitting metaphor: "Harry is improving slowly following a severe attack of influenza. This however was complicated by a **recurrence** of his old digestive disturbance. **I** hope that he will be on deck again in a month's time, but it is a slow job" (January 20, 1944; 11,689). And when Roosevelt, as once **promised** to Churchill, could not be in England for the upcoming June invasion in 1944, he chose the proverbial phrase "to miss the boat" to express his disappointment: "**I** do not believe **I** can get away for over a month. Of course, I am greatly disappointed that **I** could not be in England just at this moment, but perhaps having missed the boat it will be best not to make the trip **until** the events of the near future are more **clear**" (May 20, 1944; 111,139). Among those future events was **also** Roosevelt's fourth campaign for the presidency, and it was Churchill who paid his friend in arms a touching compliment **after** his reelection, drawing very appropriately on the **maritime** phrase of "to weather the storm" to tell Roosevelt how glad he is that he will continue to be the "pilot" of the American ship of state: "I always said that a great people could be trusted to stand by the pilot who weathered the storm. **It** is an indescribable relief to me that our comradeship will continue and will help to bring the world out of misery" (November 8, 1944; 111,383).

There are many additional phraseological **references** in the letters that reflect bellicose times, as for example: "We are determined to **fight** to the last inch and ounce for Egypt" (Churchill, May 3, 1941; 1,182); "We hope soon to turn the **bombing** heat on to Italy" (Churchill, November 13, 1942; 1,670); "We **must** close our ranks on every front for the prosecution of the war" (Roosevelt, April 30, 1943; 11,204); "We **have** under development a project [flying B-29 bombers out of India and China against Japan] whereby we can strike a heavy blow at our enemy in the Pacific early next year with our new heavy bombers" (Roosevelt, November 10, 1943; 11,594); and "It may well be that the French losses will grow

heavier on and after D Day, but in the heat of battle, when British and United States troops will probably be losing at a much higher rate, a new proportion [regarding these losses] establishes itself in men's minds" (Churchill, May 7, 1944; 111,123).

Yet clearly the most important proverbial exchange between Churchill and Roosevelt took place on December 7, 1941, after the Japanese had attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor on that very day. Roosevelt called Churchill to tell him of the event and to inform him that he would ask Congress for a declaration of war against Japan on the next day, with Churchill pledging to do the same. Five years later Churchill recalled the short conversation as follows:

In two or three minutes Mr. Roosevelt came through. "Mr President, what's this about Japan?" "It's quite true," he replied. "They have attacked us at Pearl Harbor. We are all in the same boat now ...." I got on again and said, "This certainly simplifies things. God be with you," or words of that effect. (1,281)

This recollection of the use of the classical proverbial expression "to be in the same boat" is substantiated by a short exchange between the President and the Prime Minister on the two subsequent days. Having delivered his "war message" to Congress on December 8, 1941 (Stelzner, 1996), referring at the beginning to the attack as "a date which will live in infamy," Roosevelt wrote this short telegram to Churchill:

The Senate passed the all-out declaration of war eighty-two to nothing, and the House has passed it three hundred eighty-eight to one. Today all of us are in the same boat with you and the people of the Empire and it is a ship which will not and cannot be sunk. (1,283)

And Churchill telegraphed back on December 9, using the proverbial phrase once again to express their common fate and struggle in a most fitting naval metaphor:

I am grateful for your telegram of December 8. Now that we are as you say "in the same boat" would it not be wise for us to have another conference. We could review the whole war plan in the light of reality and new facts, as well as the problems of production and distribution. I feel all these matters, some of which are causing me concern, can best be settled on the highest executive level. It would also be a very great pleasure to me to meet you again, and the sooner the better. (1,282-284)

It is questionable whether Roosevelt or Churchill were aware of the fact that their "boat"-metaphor is an English translation of the classical Latin proverbial expression "in eadem es navi" that has been traced back to a letter by Cicero from 53 B.C. (Mieder, 1995: 140-159). But they most assuredly were in the same boat now, and their large and powerful vessel with its massive war machinery moved forward "full blast" (Churchill, September 6, 1942; 1,592) towards final victory. The proverbial expression "to be in the same boat", uttered at one of the

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deciding moments in world history, served Roosevelt and Churchill well as the penultimate metaphor for their joint struggle, and as such is convincing proof that proverbial language does indeed run the whole gamut from banal cliché to sublime wisdom.

## V. "WE ARE ON OUR WAY SHOULDER TO SHOULDER" – SOMATIC PHRASES

Somatic expressions are prevalent in the discourse of both Churchill and Roosevelt, with the latter being particularly conscious of body metaphors due to his own physical disability (Houck & Kiewe, 2003: 115). They use proverbial expressions to add emotional intensity to their messages, clearly showing that this colloquial language enables them to let their feelings show during extremely stressful times. These phrases also gave the leaders the opportunity to communicate complicated matters in vivid and easily recognizable imagery. It must, of course, be said that Roosevelt and Churchill were fortunate in that they were both native English speakers. These metaphors certainly created ample problems for translators, especially during the meetings with Stalin (Nikoláeva, 1999).

A good example of Churchill's use of somatic phrases appears in his letter of May 17, 1941, where he reports to Roosevelt that Rudolf Hess, Deputy Führer and a major Nazi leader, had landed by parachute in Scotland wanting to negotiate a separate British-German settlement: "But condition was attached that Hitler would not negotiate with [the] present Government in England. This is the old invitation to us to desert all our friends in order to save temporarily the greater part of our skin" (1,188). A few additional proverbial references from Churchill's letters and telegrams include the following: "I do not like these days of personal stress and I have found it difficult to keep my eye on the ball" (February 20, 1942; 1,364); "Anything like a serious difference between you and me would break my heart and surely deeply injure both our countries at the height of this terrible struggle" (April 12, 1942; 1,449); "I appeal to all patriotic men on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean to stamp their feet on mischief makers and sowers of tares, wherever they may be found, and let the great machines roll into battle under the best possible conditions for our success" (February 11, 1943; 11,145); "At this time four years ago our nation and empire stood alone against an overwhelming and implacable enemy, with our backs to the wall" (June 2, 1944; 111,158); and "Why can you and I not keep this [matters in Greece] in our own hands considering how we see eye to eye about so much of it?" (June 11, 1944; 111,180). This last statement shows how Churchill is quite willing to couple two somatic phrases to add a certain metaphorical persuasiveness to his argument.

Roosevelt proceeds on similar grounds, always ready to include a body metaphor to indicate a human element to his statements, as for example in this plain and simple sentence

of June 17, 1941, to his British friend: "I have the distinct feeling in my bones that things are looking up with you and with us" (1,210). A few additional examples show the always encouraging and optimistic Roosevelt, as he tries to help Churchill along, who also was not lacking in positive willpower to carry on the fight: "I hope you will be of good heart in these trying weeks because I am very sure that you have the great confidence of the masses of the British people" (February 18, 1942; 1,362); "What Harry [Hopkins] and [General] Geo. Marshall will tell you all about has my heart and *mind* in it" (April 3, 1942; 1,441); "Molotov's visit is, I think, a real success because we have got on a personal footing of candor and as good friendship as can be acquired through an interpreter" (May 31, 1942; 1,503); "I cannot help feeling that the past week represented a turning point in the whole war and that now we are on our way shoulder to shoulder" (July 27, 1942; 1,544; see also June 17, 1943; 11,255); "Please let me know when you send [the] message to Stalin and I will immediately send him a similar message, but I am certain both our messages should be so phrased as to leave a good taste in his mouth" (October 5, 1942; 1,617); "Best of luck in getting rid of our mutual headache [i.e., Charles de Gaulle's involvement in North Africa]" (June 4, 1943; 11,230); "I still keep my fingers crossed. I hope Uncle Joe will agree with us [concerning de Gaulle]" (June 24, 1943; 11,277); and "Over here new political situations crop up every day but so far, by constant attention, I am keeping my head above water" (June 2, 1944; 11,161).

The letters and telegrams abound with such somatic phrases, often appearing at the end of the message, thereby supplying the previously discussed military or political issues with a bit of humanity. As such, these body metaphors are not "eye wash" (Churchill, August 14, 1942; 1,563) or nonsense, but rather significant signals of two great allies, who "must stand shoulder to shoulder, identically and simultaneously through this miserable mess" (Roosevelt, June 17, 1943; 11,255).

## VI. "GIVING THE CAT ANOTHER CANARY TO SWALLOW" – ANIMAL METAPHORS

Animal expressions are not as frequent in the Churchill and Roosevelt correspondence as are somatic phrases. But when they do appear, they take on a significant communicative function, quite often with a bit of irony or humor. Churchill obviously enjoyed writing the following paragraph to Roosevelt on September 14, 1942, clearly having a bit of fun in playfully varying the proverbial phrase "to catch two birds with one stone" to sum up his argument:

Unless we can offer Stalin something definite for say December, we shall not get the full facilities we need for preparing airfields etc thereabouts. Moreover if we are able to make a firm offer, albeit contingent on favorable events in Egypt, it would be

possible at the same time to ask for some favors for the Poles. Stalin has given us sixty thousand Poles with thirty thousand dependents out of which two and a half Divisions are being made, but no provision has been made for recruitment of further Poles, Officers and men, to keep these forces going. Of these there are great numbers in various sorry plights throughout Russia. I thought we might help two birds with one piece of sugar. (1,594)

What an ingenious summation of a rather convoluted argument, driving the major point home with a colorful image in which the traditional "stone" has been replaced by a saccharine substitute of manipulative diplomacy.

Roosevelt also delighted in this type of linguistic play, as for example in the following statements based on animal phrases: "You will readily see that I do not trust the *Chicago Tribune* further than you can throw a bull by the tail but I do think we need a paper of our own for the soldiers in England" (October 6, 1942; 1,620); "I went to Hyde Park for five days; got full of health in glorious zero weather – came back here [to Washington] last week and have been feeling like a fighting cock ever since" (March 17, 1943; 11,156); "The newspapers here [...] had a field day over General Marshall's duties. The drums were beaten rather loudly by the rest of the press for a few days but it is pretty much of a dead cow now" (October 4, 1943; 11,489); "I prefer to leave things [unconditional-surrender declaration concerning Germany] as they are for the time being and we really do not know enough about opinions in Germany itself to go on any fishing expedition there at this time" (January 6, 1944; 11,652); and there is also this delightful innovation of the Bible proverb "A leopard cannot change his spots" (Jeremiah 13:23): "It seems clear that prima donnas [here Charles de Gaulle] do not change their spots" (June 12, 1944; III,181), a turn of phrase that must have met with hundred percent approval by Winston Churchill.

Charles de Gaulle proved to be a constant headache for both Roosevelt and Churchill, especially as he sought to solidify Gaullist control in Africa by pressing for the replacement of Pierre Boisson as Governor General of West Africa. When General Henri Giraud left de Gaulle behind in Algiers on a trip to Washington, Churchill rightfully wrote a deeply concerned telegram to the President on June 25, 1943:

I am somewhat concerned at Giraud leaving Algiers at this juncture on a visit to you. If both [Giraud and de Gaulle] were invited it would be all right, but I think it dangerous to leave the field open to De Gaulle, especially while the position of Boisson is so uncertain. While the mouse is away the cat will play two groups undecipherable. (11,279)

Warren Kimball as editor added the following comment to this short message: "The final phrase, 'two groups undecipherable,' appears in both the British and American source documents and would seem to be equivalent of a phrase made popular in transcripts of the



Nixon White House tapes – expletive deleted!" (11,279). It might well be that Churchill had closed his missive with something like "God dammit!", but of even greater interest is his most fitting "anti-proverb" (Mieder, 2004:150-153) "While the mouse is away the cat will play," the precise inversion of the traditional proverb "While the cat's away the mice will play" to explain that the catty de Gaulle would cause even more trouble while being left to his own devices. This is clearly one of the best examples of proverbial indirection in this fascinating correspondence replete with proverbial language.

Churchill enjoyed using proverbial metaphors to describe or relate to certain situations or persons, as for example in "Don't you think the time has very nearly come when we might let P.Q. [codeword for the joint Anglo-American appeal to the Italian people] out of the bag? Otherwise we might lose the psychological effect" (July 13, 1943; 11,322); "You will I am sure share my relief that Leros [an island off the west coast of Turkey] has so far managed to hold out. "The dogs under the table eat of the childrens [sic] crumbs" (October 23, 1943; 11,557); and the somewhat humorous but at the same time frustrated beginning of yet another letter of February 1, 1944: "The following has just arrived from U.J. and as I do not know whether you have a separate copy I repeat it to you with the following comment 'What can you expect from a bear but a growl?'" (11,694).

But there is one final play with the proverbial comparison "to look like a (the) cat ate (swallowed) a (the) canary" of 19th-century American origin with the meaning of being well-satisfied with oneself (Whiting, 1989: 101; Wilkinson, 1992: 294). To understand this metaphorical game played by the President and Prime Minister, it must be kept in mind that "cat" for them meant the press, while the "canary" stood for a German submarine. Roosevelt began the verbal game with his letter of July 15, 1943, in which he opposed making a special announcement of recent sinkings of German U-boats, lest Americans would get the unfortunate impression that victory was in sight:

The wave of optimism that has followed recent successes and our latest release on the anti-submarine situation is definitely slowing down production. We cannot afford to further inflate this costly public disregard of the realities of the situation, and therefore I doubt the wisdom at this time of giving the cat another canary to swallow. (11,327)

The linguistically adept Churchill caught on quickly to the metaphor, responding the next day with a two-line telegram that must have tickled Roosevelt: "My cat likes canaries and her appetite grows with eating. However, news is now outdated as we have altogether 18 canaries this month" (11,328). Four days later, on July 20, 1943, Roosevelt kept up the game, but this time "canary" stands for the two islands taken by the allied forces who are referred to somewhat jokingly as "pussycats". The additional use of the proverbial phrase "to fall into someone's lap" helps to underscore the obvious delight over this easy success: "By-the-way,

Martinique and Guadeloupe became ripe and fell into our laps without loss of life or any slowing up of the main war effort – another canary for us pussycats" (11,338). When Churchill writes again on July 25, 1943, the indirect reference to submarines and the media are back again: "Up to date in July, we have caught 26 canaries, which is good for 25 days. There should be quite a good meal for our cats when the time comes" (11,345). And about a week later, on July 31, 1943, he once again has a bit of fun with this proverbial game: "The July canaries to date number 35 making a total of 85 in the 91 days since May 1. Good hunting. Instead of making any announcement as agreed on August 10 let us settle together on the 12th what food our cats are to have" (11,368). Thus ends a proverbial play that at first sight appears to trivialize the dreadful submarine warfare in the Atlantic. But that was by no means the intent by Roosevelt or Churchill, who played the game merely as a bit of humorous relief in a time of terrible stress and loss of thousands of lives on both sides of the raging war.

## VII. "ALL WAR IS A STRUGGLE FOR POSITION" – PROVERBIAL WISDOM

Neither Churchill nor Roosevelt used many proverbs or quotations in their relatively short letters and telegrams. It was one thing to add some metaphorical spice to these messages in the form of proverbial phrases and proverbial comparisons, but folk wisdom or sententious remarks might have added too much of a didactic or authoritative tone to the sensitive correspondence. The Prime Minister and the President in their own way did enough explaining and at times teaching in their letters, and clearly they did not want to add fuel to the fire with ready-made bits of wisdom. And yet, in one of his longer letters to Roosevelt of November 12, 1940, Churchill included the following explanatory paragraph ending with one of Napoleon's famous maxims that clearly has a proverbial ring to it in military circles:

From this brief summary it must be apparent to you how terribly narrow is the margin upon which we are operating today. Our prospects of victory depend upon our holding all the main theatres we do today, the Atlantic, the Mediterranean including Gibraltar and Suez, the passage from the North to the South Atlantic around the Cape of Good Hope, while you hold the Pacific, till the beginning of 1942, when your great increment of armament comes in. If we give up any of these positions, or the enemy break through, then, the positions from which he can attack become immensely extended, the blockade is impaired, and totalitarian power begins to crowd in on ourselves, on South America, and on you. Never was there a clearer case of Napoleon's maxim: "All war is a struggle for position". (1,91)

And outlining Adolf Hitler's *modus operandi* in his war of aggression, Churchill makes use of the classical proverb "One thing at a time" to describe how the dictator is proceeding step by step: "Hitler has shown himself inclined to avoid the Kaiser's mistake. He does not wish to be

drawn into a war with the United States until he has gravely undermined the power of Great Britain. His maxim is "one at a time" (December 7, 1940; 1,106). Here the proverb served Churchill very well to pinpoint Hitler's method of conquest.

Roosevelt employed proverbs and quotations very much in a similar vein. In his letter of November 19, 1942, he reports to Churchill how he had used a fascinating non-English proverb during a recent press conference to explain to reporters why he was dealing both with the Vichy French Admiral Jean Darlan and National Liberation General Charels de Gaulle in North Africa, clearly a contradiction but seemingly a necessary evil: "I told the press yesterday in confidence an old orthodox church proverb used in the Balkans that appears applicable to our present Darlan-de Gaulle problem. 'My children, it is permitted you in time of grave danger to walk with the devil until you have crossed the bridge'" (II,22). This certainly was an apt use of a proverb to explain a complex strategic maneuver. But there are, of course, also very straight-forward and less serious examples of proverbs in the letters. Thus, when Roosevelt was dealing with the possible location of a meeting with Churchill somewhere in North Africa, he writes his friend somewhat humorously: "I asked General Smith, who left here four or five days ago, to check up confidentially on some possible tourist oasis as far from any city or large population as possible. One of the dictionaries says 'an oasis is never wholly dry'. Good old dictionary!" (December 14, 1942; II,74), and when the matter of Roosevelt not receiving a couple of Churchill's telegrams gets resolved, the Prime Minister writes: "Naturally I was puzzled at not receiving an answer, so rang up Harry [Hopkins]. All's well that ends well" (July 13, 1942; 1,527).

But there are a few more significant occurrences of proverbs in the letters, where the folk wisdom helps to clarify a major strategic point, as for example in the case of what to do with Mussolini and his fascist partners after their fall from power. Roosevelt once again made use of a proverb to make his point to Churchill: "It is my opinion that an effort to seize the 'head devil' in the early future would prejudice our primary objective which is to get Italy out of the war. We can endeavor to secure the person of the 'head devil' and his assistants in due time, and then to determine their individual degrees of guilt for which 'the punishment should fit the crime'" (July 30, 1943; 11,362). In other words, Roosevelt is making a promise here that the fascist leaders will be held accountable in front of a war tribunal. And Churchill also turned to a well-known proverb to argue for the announcement of what generals will be entrusted with the major D Day invasion: "I am hoping this can be settled soon. To give OVERLORD the best chance the commanders should be at it now. The eye of the master maketh the horse fat" (October 22, 1943; 11,551). This is powerful metaphorical medicine for President Roosevelt finally to announce that General Eisenhower would be the supreme commander for the invasion.

The Normandy beaches but also the future of France were always on Churchill's and Roosevelt's minds. Especially Churchill worried about a possible civil war in that country, arguing to Roosevelt that "to carry civil war into France is to lose the future of that unfortunate country and prevent the earliest expression of the will of the people as a whole, in fact, we should be lending ourselves to a process of adding to the burdens and sacrifices of our troops and of infringing our fundamental principle, 'All governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed'" (December 23, 1943; II,630). Churchill did well to quote this famous phrase from the American *Declaration of Independence* (1776), knowing only too well that this would strike a sympathetic chord in Roosevelt. Churchill was also concerned that the United States might break diplomatic relations with the military government in Argentina, thus interrupting the steady flow of supplies from that country to Great Britain. Again he employs a common folk proverb to plead his case: "Our Chiefs of Staff consider that an immediate cessation of Argentine supplies will rupture military operations on the scale planned for this year. I cannot cut the British ration lower than it is now. We really must look before we leap. We can always save up and pay them back when our hands are clear. I must enter my solemn warning of the gravity of the situation which will follow an interruption of Argentine supplies" (January 23, 1944; II,678). It is important to note how Churchill personalizes the proverb "Look before you leap" by changing it to "We must look before we leap," clearly arguing from the point of view of the Anglo-American alliance and the friendship between Roosevelt and himself.

Finally, there is also Winston Churchill's statement of December 10, 1944: "My guiding principle is 'No peace without victory'" (III,451), a maxim that most certainly expressed Franklin Roosevelt's philosophy as well, as the two world leaders and friends joined forces to defend the democracies against fascist and dictatorial powers. It has not been registered in any of the books of quotations, but President Woodrow Wilson did use a similar formulation during his address to the Senate of the United States on January 22, 1917: "It must be a peace without victory. [...] Only a peace between equals can last" (Bartlett, 1992: 572). Of course, at the end of World War I, the idealistic Wilson did not get his way of such a peace on equal footing which in the long run helped to bring about World War II. At the end of this second European catastrophe, both Churchill and Roosevelt understandably so felt that idealism once again had to give way to the reality of unconditional surrender and final victory. The crimes against humanity by the Axis powers had been too severe and the principle of "No peace without victory" had to prevail. Unfortunately, as both Churchill and Harry S. Truman<sup>4</sup> as Roosevelt's successor recognized only too quickly, the victors would very soon slither into a new type of war that became the menace for the next fifty years as the so-called Cold War.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

The friendship between the two world leaders became ever more strained during the last year before Roosevelt's death. When they met with Stalin in February of 1945 at Yalta, "it was the true twilight of Roosevelt and Churchill's friendship" (Meacham, 2003: 314), with Roosevelt pushing Churchill aside rather unfairly in favor of building a relationship with Stalin in preparation of dealing with the Soviet Union as a super power after the war. Roosevelt and Churchill also strongly disagreed over Churchill's insistence of an all-out thrust toward Berlin by General Eisenhower so that Berlin could be taken by Anglo-American forces. But the Americans were content with letting the Russian troops march into Berlin first, a situation that later resulted in the division of Germany, the dropping of the iron curtain across Europe, and the beginning of the Cold War. But even though Churchill lost his important plea with Roosevelt and Eisenhower, he chose to accept this unfortunate defeat gracefully in a letter of April 5, 1945, to his friend Roosevelt. Quoting a classical Latin proverb dating back to Terence (Stevenson, 1948: 1488) that is well-known in its English translation of "Lovers' quarrels are the renewal of love," Churchill signalled his continued willingness to maintain his friendship with Roosevelt that had weathered various storms throughout the war:

My personal relations with General Eisenhower are of the most friendly character. I regard the matter [of the delayed advance by the Allies towards Berlin] as closed and to prove my sincerity I will use one of my very few Latin quotations, "Amantium irae amoris integratio est". (III,612)

Of course, Churchill was perfectly capable of quoting Latin proverbs and sententious remarks (Mieder & Bryan, 1995: 43-46), but the fact that he did it in this letter adds a bit of irony to his statement, since it sent Roosevelt's staff scrambling to find a translation. Churchill had, so to speak, a small moment of intellectual one-upmanship, but he nevertheless meant what he said! When the deep friendship between him and Roosevelt came to an abrupt end six days later on April 12, 1945, Churchill must definitely have been glad that he had written this message of loving friendship just before the death of the President.

But it is also one last proverbial exchange between the weary warriors bound together by common goals and, despite their differences towards the very end, by their love and friendship for each other. Their correspondence shows that proverbs and proverbial expressions played a considerable role in their almost daily exchange of messages, and these ready-made phrases of folk speech did much to bring about a mutual international understanding of war strategies and world affairs (Raymond, 1981). It certainly behooves social scientists, linguists, phraseologists and paremiologists to pay much closer attention to the language of political leaders, as they make critical decisions about war and peace throughout the world (Mieder, 1982-2001; Mieder & Sobieski, 2003; Obelkevich, 1994). While many proverbial

statements not mentioned here are of no particular relevance as clichés, those contextualized references discussed take on very important communicative functions, be they emotional, manipulative, explanatory, didactic, or argumentative in nature. In the case of the unique war-time correspondence between Winston S. Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, this special proverbial language gave both great men the opportunity to build a relationship based on trust and friendship that made it possible for them and the Anglo-American alliance to be and travel "in the same boat" together.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>All references from Warren F. Kimball's *Roosevelt & Churchill: The Complete Correspondence*, 3 vols. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984) will be identified in parentheses by the volume and page numbers.

<sup>2</sup>My work-study student Erin Regan gave me Jon Meacham's book as a sign of appreciation for having been her professor and mentor for almost four years. The reading of this volume resulted in this study. It is with much gratitude and fond memories that I dedicate this essay to my very special former student Erin Regan.

<sup>3</sup>This statement is not particularly well known, but it took on a proverbial ring for me and my deceased friend Prof. George B. Bryan (1939-1996), with whom I co-authored several books on proverbs (see Mieder & Bryan, 1996), among them our volume on *The Proverbial Winston S. Churchill* (1995). Speaking of special friendships, we had stated at the end of our preface to that study: "Working on this book was so joyous that at work sessions we frequently echoed the words of Franklin Roosevelt to Winston Churchill: 'It is fun to be in the same decade with you'" (Mieder & Bryan, 1995: ix). As I worked on the present article, my thoughts were often with my dear departed friend.

<sup>4</sup>For Harry S. Truman's frequent use of proverbial language see Mieder and Bryan (1997).

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