

GHISTERIA!



2023

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Editorial Preface

Ngā mihi matakuikui and welcome to the 2023 edition of *Histeria!*

The cover of this year's edition of *Histeria!* confronts the colonial overtakings of space and place, and reckons with the fires, both literal and figurative, that have erased so much of the past. The flames depicted here were once very real, clearing native bush to make way for the milling and farming industries that built my hometown of Te Awaroa, Helensville - named originally for the river valley it sits in, and then renamed for the villa that graces our cover. If the reader may indulge me, I believe it serves as an apt metaphor for the historical project more broadly. Our authors this year are, on a variety of levels, engaging with history as a narrative; a narrative that is both as ephemeral and as seemingly permanent as a landscape or a colonial outpost. Like these heritage buildings, history is something constructed out of the ashes; like these heritage buildings, our historical narratives have often been built atop a burned out landscape, painted in white and presented as something shiny and comfortable. I am by no means reinventing the wheel by pointing this out, but it directs us to what ultimately makes these essays worthy entries to an edition of *Histeria!* Whilst all arguments included here are careful and richly evidenced, whilst they defer to the historiography and remain faithful to their sources, these authors have ultimately stood out by confronting the past not as fact, but as speculative fiction. They have approached history not just as students but as navigators. They have stood out by understanding that history is a story, and that how we tell that story matters - because with each retelling, it is also rewritten.

In our first essay, Miles Davies elegantly tackles the unwieldy concept of American freedom. Davies carefully surveys the evolution of ‘freedom’ from the birth of the Union to the present, and whilst he frames this evolution within a general arch of ‘negative’ to ‘positive’, his essay excels in arguing for the true characteristic of freedom to be its constant state of flux. Within the scope of his assigned readings, Davies manages to craft a nuanced historical narrative of freedom as something that is foundational and yet mercurial, nation- defining and yet personally determined, and inherently contradictory.

In our second essay, Elijah Kasmara retains our setting of the North American continent but narrows in scope to examine a singular event: The Paterson Silk Strike of 1913. Decrying notions of Paterson as anomalous, Kasmara skilfully situates the strike within the broader Progressive Era and the development of industrial capitalism as whole, and contextualises it as part of a larger struggle to broaden the boundaries of citizenship to encompass the economic and social as well as the personal and political. Examining the aftershocks of the strike’s failure, Kasmara further encourages us to view the strike as less of a narrative end point to this struggle and more as part of the larger story of progressivism, attributing its true decline to the state machinery of World War One.

We then turn our gaze across time and space to the 16th century Northern Netherlands, where Lara Albert lays out a careful assessment of the characteristics of Dutch society as they relate to the Dutch Revolt of 1556. By exploring key aspects of Dutch society before and after the revolt, Albert paints a picture of the event as less a transformative revolution than a natural continuation of the economic development of the Dutch state - whilst still having significant impact culturally and socially. Her argument is a classic one, questioning the well-trod narrative

of revolutions to create a complex picture of interlocking causes and consequences that defy concrete distinction.

In our fourth entry, Marilyn Dale deftly navigates the *Historikerstreit 2.0*, a contentious historiographical debate concerning Germany's national remembrance of the Holocaust. By expertly exploring the variety of arguments put forth by scholars during this period, Dale proves the ultimate significance of these debates in expanding the parameters of this discussion at every angle, opening up to frame the Holocaust within the broader contexts of colonialism, post-colonialism, the West, and the history of slavery, as well as critiquing Germany's own national narratives and ongoing relationship with the state of Israel. Her essay is particularly insightful in drawing attention to the process of constructing national memory and the historical narratives of nation-states, and the ultimate power they can have in justifying the continuation of settler-colonial violence.

Drawing our attention forward and to our own national narratives, Anna McCardle's excellent essay examines the political activism surrounding Te Tiriti O Waitangi during the 1970s and 1980s in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her focus is chiefly the complex relationship between Māori and Pākehā women activists, one that she argues is primarily characterised by conflict. McCardle argues against the idealisation of women's political history in Aotearoa, disavowing any notion of a harmonious historical picture and arguing for the importance of assessing the divisions that arose out of intersections between Māori and Pākehā women. Such a narrative may feel less comfortable, but as McCardle aptly attests, it is also the more authentic.

Ella Schenkel then takes us across the Tasman to examine the variety of Australian colonial state institutions of convict population control, assessing their efficacy on a scale of the state's aims and the moral sensibilities of broader society. Exploring institutions such as

transportation, religious education, and work assignments, Schenkel identifies economic development as the core aim of the colonial state, and compellingly argues that the most effective institutions paired economic and penal aims to shape convicts into ‘tools’ for settlement growth. In doing so, Schenkel unveils a picture of Australian colonial convict control based on the physical assertion of power.

We are drawn back once more to America’s Golden Age and Progressive Era with our seventh entry in this year’s issue from Samuel Turner-O’Keeffe. Turner-O’Keeffe, tasked with the classic endeavour of summarising a historical period with a single pithy phrase, carves his own path in asserting the GAPE as fundamentally an era of ‘readjustment’. Centralising the impact of the rise of industrial and financial capitalism, Turner-O’Keeffe characterises the numerous developments of this chaotic era as reactionary adjustments to a complete economic upheaval. In doing so, he constructs his own compelling historical narrative of this period - not a consistent march towards reform, nor apocalypse, but rather an infinitely varied series of reactions and readjustments to seismic shifts in economic circumstances.

Finally, Catriona McCullum sees out our journal this year with an honours-level essay that is primarily concerned with the *how* of doing history. Whilst most of our essays here work with sources and periods that are relatively recent, McCullum draws our eye back across multiple millennia to 5th century B.C Athens, and her essay attests to the increased difficulty of such a temporal gap. Examining the usefulness of Quentin Skinner’s historical methods as applied to the father of history himself, McCullum expertly demonstrates the advantages and difficulties of attempting to interrogate authorial intention and establish linguistic context when divided from your sources by thousands of years. She ultimately argues for Skinner’s approach as facilitating perhaps the most important characteristics for historical practice: an openness and humility in the

face of the past, and an acceptance of the unfamiliarity and inherent strangeness of it. Whilst such an approach may not allow us to truly enter the past, it can still encourage us to try to leave our contemporary referential frameworks at the door.

Overall, these essays exemplify undergraduate excellence in the study of history. Not only are they intelligently and compellingly written, not only do they craft careful and convincing arguments that are richly based in evidence, and not only do they push the bounds of their essay prompts and demonstrate their own historical thinking, they approach the past not just as spectators but as careful surveyors. By acknowledging that histories are merely constructs atop a burned out landscape, that historians are often sifting through the ashes for chunks of bone and signs of life, if not the ones setting the fires, they are both more bold and more careful with their claims. And by understanding that histories are always rewritten with each retelling, they thus contribute their own unique stories to the broader tapestries of their respective eras.

I would like to express my utmost gratitude to each student who contributed to this year's edition of *Histeria!* - it has been a great honour and pleasure to read and compile their work. My thanks also to the wonderful academics within the History Disciplinary Area, for all they do. My deepest thanks to artist Sean Thompson, who provided the beautiful cover art for the issue.

Hei konā mai.

- *Holly Bennett, Editor in Chief, 2024.*

Note on the Essays

All essays included have been edited for grammar and clarity in concert with the author, and published with the consent of the author. Referencing and bibliographies have been standardised across the journal in accordance with The University of Auckland History coursework guidelines; however, please refer to your syllabus for course specific requirements. Language and spelling has been standardised to British English across the issue, except in instances of American source material, or where the author has expressed preference. All copyright belongs to the individual authors.

HIST 108 - THE RISE AND FALL OF THE USA

For Thine Is the Kingdom, the Freedom and the Glory

Drawing on and referring to course tutorial readings, assess the changing meanings and boundaries of American freedom from the American Revolution to the present.

Miles Davies

“Thus in the beginning all the world was America...”¹

– **John Locke.**

“They lived on their terms, they died on their terms, they obtained their freedom on their terms.”²

– **Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism*.**

“We will defend our freedom. We will bring freedom to others, and we will prevail.”³

– **President Bush, *announcing the invasion of Iraq*.**

“This is the way the world ends This
is the way the world ends This is
the way the world ends Not with a
bang but a whimper.”⁴

– **T. S. Eliot, *The Hollow Men*.**

¹ John Locke, *The Two Treatises of Civil Government*, London: A. Millar et al., 1689, §49.

² Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000, p. 170.

³ “President Bush Addresses the Nation”, The White House Archive, accessed October 26, 2023, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/iraq/news/20030319-17.html>.

⁴ T. S. (Thomas Stearns) Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909-1962*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1963, p. 82.

Cast an eye across the ebb of United States history, and you will be hard-pressed to deny the centrality of freedom – “no idea is more fundamental to Americans’ sense of themselves”, as the historian Eric Foner writes.⁵ To study American freedom is to recognise that its most consistent feature has been its continual change. The American Revolution sparked a long 19th century with a ‘negative’ conception of freedom that was challenged and transformed into a long 20th century of ‘positive’ freedom; in the 21st century, no hegemonic understanding currently prevails. The other constant of American freedom has been its predication on the unfreedom of others – freedom as defined by its opposite: an identity forged against the ‘other’, the ‘alien’, the ‘lesser’. However, the historian must also recognise that to reduce this contradiction purely to these terms is to strip those relegated outside of freedom’s boundaries of their historical agency. It is to ignore the fact that excluded groups fighting for a better life and freer society have always shaped the contours of history – “the fruit”, as Samuel DuBois Cook put it, “of struggles, tragic failures, tears, sacrifices, and sorrow”.⁶

When colonists poured onto the North American continent, they immediately built a sense of themselves by appropriating the hierarchies of the old world, defining their identities in opposition to a North American ‘other’. Nevertheless, freedom existed in layers within colonial society – even the most privileged, landed colonist felt himself unfree when subjected to the absolute rule of the Crown and restrictions on his economic and civil freedoms through dictates such as the Stamp Act (1765) and the Proclamation Line (1763). The American Revolution of 1776 was fought using the language of freedom against the perceived hierarchical values of the Crown, against a society that expected every tradesman to go with “his heart...in his mouth” to

⁵ Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1999, p. xiii.

⁶ Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, p. xxi.

pay deference to his local aristocrat.⁷ However, these egalitarian considerations were narrowly restricted; the Revolution guaranteed the further dispossession of Native American land, precipitated the expansion of slavery, and dismissed women's calls for recognition as the "despotism of the Peticoat [sic.]"⁸ Indeed, the Revolution was paramount to the crystallisation of what it meant to be 'an American', but in the very act of defining and hardening the edges of this identity, it served to decidedly separate the 'other' who were to be excluded from its newly won freedoms and citizenship. The Revolution cast a long shadow across U.S. history; it hailed the birth of Classical Liberalism, defining freedom as the mere absence of external interference, and stoked a fundamental fear of governmental power. Classical Liberalism would dominate the nation's 'negative' understanding of freedom for the century to come, whilst the shadow of governmental power continues to haunt Americans down to the present day.

With the proliferation of steam travel in the antebellum 19th century, white Americans began pushing out from the Eastern seaboard, adding a spatial dimension to their understanding of freedom. This dimension was enabled by and served as a response to the Liberalism fostered by the Revolution. It emphasised the ideal of the 'self-made man', a figure who could freely pull himself up by his bootstraps without help or hindrance from any external authority – all at the devastating expense of the indigenous peoples living in the territories into which he expanded. At the same time, for white Southerners, freedom became directly predicated on the institution of slavery – on the "cart-whip, starvation, and nakedness", on "soul drivers" and the "slaughter" of Louisiana.⁹ Despite equally benefitting from the institution, Northern abolitionists – motivated by the advocacy of freedmen such as Frederick Douglass and cajoled by the social consciousness

⁷ Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *The Way We Lived: Essays and Documents in American Social History*, 4th ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000, p. 114.

⁸ Binder and Reimers, *The Way We Lived*, 4th ed., p. 125.

⁹ Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *The Way We Lived: Essays and Documents in American Social History*, 7th ed., Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012, pp. 250 - 255.

of the Second Great Awakening – came to understand slavery as being fundamentally contradictory to American freedom. Synchronous to this re-evaluation was the rise of the Republican movement. Republicans eased the Northern reinterpretation of freedom by grounding economic and civil freedoms in a notion of ‘free labour’ – the right to own oneself and enjoy the fruits of one’s labour – of which the Southern “Slave Power” was the ultimate antithesis.¹⁰ Both the South and the North understood their freedom in ‘negative’ terms upon which the other side was infringing, and both used the Classical Liberalism spawned from the Revolution to justify their beliefs. These differing interpretations were brought to a head by the election of ‘free-soil’ Republican Abraham Lincoln, triggering the South’s secession and the Union’s collapse.

As the year turned from 1860 to 1861, the United States failed. The rebellious states fought under a banner of freedom; as put by one Confederate soldier, this was a “struggle between Liberty on one side, and Tyranny on the other”.¹¹ The North also fought for freedom, believing that only the preservation of the Union could meaningfully guarantee the liberty borne upon the nation by the Founding Fathers. Forced by a series of successful slave rebellions, Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation inextricably tied the destruction of slavery to the future of American freedom; the period of Reconstruction after the Confederacy’s defeat determined how far this freedom was to extend. Many freedmen incorporated the ethos of the Republican ‘free labour’ movement into calls for a guarantee of economic freedom for formerly enslaved individuals. However, the ‘moderate reconstruction’ offered by Andrew Johnson following his assumption of the Presidency – including amnesty for former Confederate leaders and issuing the ‘Black Codes’ – tempered both the expectations and realities of African Americans’ newfound freedoms. Whilst subsequent ‘radical reconstruction’ saw the passing of the 14th Amendment,

¹⁰ Binder and Reimers, *The Way We Lived*, 7th ed., p. 252

¹¹ James M. McPherson, *What They Fought For, 1861-1865*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994, p. 11.

granting citizenship to African Americans, it was not until the 15th Amendment in 1870 that the law guaranteed freedmen any political freedom. These amendments stoked massive backlash from Southerners, who felt their freedom to enforce the South's white supremacist hierarchy constricted by the physical and legal extension of federal power. The War of the Rebellion and Reconstruction offered a national redefinition of citizenship and freedom, but as the Ku Klux Klan ravaged across the South and elected Republican legislatures were violently overthrown by white mobs, it became markedly clear that freedom in law did not mean freedom in practice.

In the late 19th century, the U.S. rapidly evolved into an industrialised manufacturing economy, precipitating vast changes to American life. To the average worker, 'freedom' appeared to collapse into something unrecognisable, as they faced terrible working conditions, monopolistic markets, spiralling inequality, and the disappearance of upward economic mobility. The original Republican promise of 'free labour' lay dead in the water, replaced by its zombified relative in 'freedom of contract' – a consensus amongst the political class that so long as workers were not forced into an employment contract, their freedom was guaranteed. Growing working-class dissent seemed symptomatic of a nation beginning to crack, as “municipal politicians proved corrupt”, tensions across society rose, and all corners of American social, economic, and civic life seemed to struggle under the smothering weight of the laissez-faire creature set loose by Liberalism's extremes.¹² In response to these crises, a generation of Progressive reformers endeavoured to use investigation, organisation, and management to resolve the issues plaguing the nation. The Progressives ascertained that Classical Liberalism was no longer suitable for their complex, interconnected society. To solve the issues of society, Progressivism argued that there needed to be a fundamental redrawing of the boundaries between public and private life, as – in an interconnected society – private decisions necessarily rippled

¹² Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Who Were the Progressives?*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002, p. 3.

out and affected the public sphere.¹³ The freedom championed by the Progressives meant an individual's active and actualised ability to act and achieve, a freedom to be ensured by an interventionist and socially conscious state. This new understanding marked a crucial pivot point in the nation's understanding of freedom, as in redefining the role of government in Americans' lives, the Progressives synthesised a 'New Liberalism' that would dictate the direction of national politics for most of the 20th century.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Progressivism continued to flourish. World War One provided the impetus for the rapid acceleration of federal expansion and catapulted Americans' relatively insular understanding of freedom into a global context. With his 'Liberal internationalism', Woodrow Wilson globalised American freedom, arguing that through foreign investment, the nation could further the freedom of those in and outside the United States. However, Wilson's Progressivism also tied an inseparable link between American identity and supporting U.S. war aims. Furthermore, throughout the Red Summer of 1919, Wilson wielded the might of the federal government, not in the name of progress, but as a reactionary force to crush growing working-class protests. As post-war fundamentalism and disillusionment swept across the nation, the dream of an active, progress-driven government appeared dead in its cradle. In its place emerged a string of pro-business, low-tax Republican governments and a torpified freedom grounded in entertainment, advertising, and mass consumption. However, even this business-backing, materialistic, money-grubbing freedom quickly collapsed following the onset of the Great Depression. Emerging from this crisis in democracy, capitalism, and freedom itself, Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal adapted the virility and methodology of the Progressive Era to meet the challenges of the Depression. Roosevelt's 'Growth Liberalism' used government power to improve individual finances, enabling the public to spend more, thereby improving the

¹³ Gilmore, *Who Were the Progressives?*, p. 12.

overall national economic condition. In using expanded federal power and Keynesian economics to attack the structural issues precipitating the Depression, Roosevelt completed what Progressivism had started by redefining freedom in exclusively ‘positive’ terms and crystallising its link with an expanded, socially conscious state. Nevertheless, to many conservatives, the New Deal embodied the very opposite of American liberty, signifying little but an “attack upon [America’s] free institutions”.¹⁴

Roosevelt continued to build a ‘positive’ state based on the tenets of New Liberalism throughout the 1930s and the Second World War. In the abstract, the President’s ‘four freedoms’ – freedom of speech and worship, freedom from want and fear – defined the ideals of America’s post-war world order. In practice, the government’s expanded powers orchestrated large-scale defence spending, mobilisation, and progressive taxation – leading to economic growth, near 100% employment, and a ‘Great Compression’ of wealth inequality. However, Roosevelt’s wartime freedom was reminiscent of Wilson’s – an inseparable unification between American identity and the country’s military action, drawing a distinct line between Allied and Axis, good and evil, freedom and unfreedom. Such a clear-cut ideology enabled freedom-restricting acts to be justified in the name of freedom itself; it rationalised the mass internment of Japanese Americans purely based on their perceived ‘un-Americanism’. Such ‘othering’ continued to define the nation’s identity as Americans found themselves in a dichotomous Cold War world order pitted against the communist Soviet Union. Domestically, Harry Truman’s ‘Fair Deal’ continued to bolster the ‘positive’ state, as a wealthier, more consumerist society transformed Roosevelt’s ‘freedom from want’ into a ‘freedom to choose’. Richer families began moving into suburbs – ostensibly beacons of American freedom – in reality, often monotonous wildernesses

¹⁴ Colin Gordon, *Major problems in American history, 1920-1945: documents and essays*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999, p. 380.

breeding “dissatisfaction” and despondency for the housewives they entrapped.¹⁵ Even then, this caveated freedom did not exist for all, with African Americans subject to legal segregation in the South and developers “refus[ing] to sell to blacks” in the North.¹⁶ However, following the war, America’s racial order began to destabilise, setting in motion an explosion of civil rights activism that would permanently reshape American freedom over the decade to come.

Whilst the early 1950s had seen a string of landmark civil rights achievements, white backlash quickly suffocated any further progress. Grounded in the language of freedom, this backlash frequently manifested in outright violence, such as in Little Rock, where a “white mob” attempted to harass, hinder, and lynch a group of black schoolchildren.¹⁷ However – beginning with the sit-in movement – the early sixties saw a kind of civil rights activism that vigorously reinjected the national consciousness with its demands for racial equality. The Birmingham Campaign led by Martin Luther King Jr. forced President Kennedy – already calling for a ‘New Frontier’ – to apply his visionary politics to the issue of racial equality. The subsequent martyrdom of Kennedy’s assassination aided Lyndon B. Johnson in passing the Civil Rights Bill (1964), which, with the Voting Rights Act (1965), gave tangible force to the racial equality promised by the 14th and 15th amendments – characterising the sixties as a ‘Second Reconstruction’. Such action sat within LBJ’s vision of a ‘Great Society’ – the zenith of the American ‘positive’ state actively seeking to ensure freedom by eliminating poverty and improving quality of life. This was a freedom tailor-made for the sixties - it synthesised the long Progressive tradition with the anti-hierarchical spirit of the age, manifesting in an explosion of rights movements that endeavoured to perfect society by reinterpreting and reclaiming its freedoms. When America intervened in Vietnam, it killed the ‘positive’ state just as it reached its

¹⁵ Binder and Reimers, *The Way We Lived*, 4th ed., p. 230.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 224.

¹⁷ Binder and Reimers, *The Way We Lived*, 7th ed., p. 221.

most dazzling heights. The war split America's Liberal consensus, helping to push the public into a genuine crisis of identity that destroyed its faith in governmental power. The country spiralled into a 'come down' of national proportions, leaving it battered, disoriented, and lurching forward towards the end of the millennia.

The political distrust germinated by Vietnam only grew under Nixon's cynical realpolitik – reaching full bloom with the Watergate scandal. As a result, most Americans became convinced that their belief in a responsible, interventionist state was not only misguided but wholly untenable. Moreover, Nixon's administration had worked hard to gain political support from the "silent majority" – the disaffected, alienated white middle-class who considered their freedoms impeded by the sixties' rights movements. This appeal worked alongside an economic downturn and the dog-whistling 'Southern strategy' to enable the rise of Ronald Reagan and the New Right. Drawing on anti-New Deal Republicanism, the fundamentalist revival, Milton Friedman's Monetarism, and the anxieties of the era, Regan promoted a Libertarian vision of freedom that appealed to a broad swath of society.

However, freedom in Reagan's America continued to be built on opposition; how could American identity continue to define itself following the defeat of the 'positive' state and the Soviet Union's collapse? The hyper-globalised, heady nineties understood American freedom as an easily exportable, universal condition unnecessary to define. By contrast, the shock of 9/11 sent America scrambling to identify an enemy against which it could construct and posture its ideals; the ill-defined Islamic authoritarianism that it settled on proved inadequate and catastrophic, as Americans fought a War on Terror against an enemy they could not describe, for a freedom they did not understand. Today, still lacking a dominant conception of freedom, the political consensus has split between the nationalistic, increasingly undemocratic MAGA

movement – descendants of ‘negative’ New Republicanism – and a progressively torpified and disjointed Democratic party reflecting the ‘positive’ freedom of the New Deal state. Neither side believes that freedom currently exists in America, and both believe that the other is responsible as to why.

American freedom has continuously transformed over the past three hundred years. Freedom in the U.S. has been political, civil, and economic – it has served as a rallying cry for the oppressed and a pretence for the oppressor. The dominance of one interpretation of freedom has defined most of U.S. history – from a 19th century ‘negative’ understanding to a 20th century ‘positive’ understanding. Today, the descendants of these two interpretations represent a fundamental divide in American society. Which will triumph – and how – remains to be seen. Whilst the United States has previously pulled itself back from similar moments of division, the Union has already failed once in the name of freedom; nothing exists to say it cannot do the same again.

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Solidarity Forever: The Paterson Silk Strike, Industrial Capitalism and the Progressive Movement

Place the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 in the larger historical context of the GAPE. Consider the key historical developments of the era connected with industrial-capitalism, wage labour, technology, urbanisation, immigration, and consumer society, as well as social-political movements connected with labour unions, progressivism, and socialism.

Elijah Kasmara

The Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 grew out of working-class frustration with industrial capitalism and, especially, the prevailing doctrine of freedom of contract. Paterson was not a singular or anomalous event but part of a continuous struggle to redefine citizenship to encompass economic and social rights in addition to personal and political liberties. As well as arising out of these conditions, the Paterson strike was emblematic of the changing nature of American society and reflected the societal changes of the period. Its eventual failure crippled the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the American left. However, we should not regard it as the fatal blow — that was struck in the cataclysm of the First World War.

The Paterson Silk Strike was a response to the conditions created by pre-eminence of industrial capitalism, particularly its doctrine of freedom of contract. The scope of the American struggle for personal liberty was defined in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, with corporate interests protected and positive economic and social rights remaining excluded. In the 1873

Slaughterhouse Cases, the Supreme Court extended the 14th Amendment's protections of American citizenship to corporations.¹⁸ Both workers and employers were protected from state intervention that threatened property in labour, barring the state from interfering in negotiations over wages, hours, and working conditions.¹⁹ Economic life was, therefore, held to be of an exclusively private character, notwithstanding the strikingly unequal bargaining power between workers and employers. This legal consensus emphasising individual and political liberties, but not economic rights, prevailed, making for labour relations where workers reliant on wages for subsistence had no choice but to enter private relationships that did not protect against inadequate compensation, unsafe working conditions and arduous hours.

The very makeup of Paterson exemplified the trends of industrial capitalist development. Paterson's silk textile manufacturing industry was powered largely by immigrant workers who sought prosperity in the New World, reflecting widespread demographic shifts to industrial cities that occurred as small-scale agriculture lost viability.²⁰ In America's free labour economy, the abundant supply of immigrant labour contributed to continuing downward pressure on wages, forcing workers into a race to the bottom in competition for jobs.²¹ Paterson thereby serves as a paradigm example of the process of industrialisation and urbanisation — as industrial capitalism drove immigration, it served to compound inequalities created within the labour market, where the prevailing legal and political definition of citizenship curtailed any attempts at order and justice through state intervention in the labour contract. The doctrine of freedom of contract also justified child labour in Paterson and elsewhere, with immigrant families sending their children

¹⁸ Maureen Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s–1920s*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 59.

¹⁹ Flanagan, *America Reformed*, p. 59.

²⁰ Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (abridged edition), Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000, pp. 152–3.

²¹ Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, p. 153.

to work to supplement the family income.²² Even with entire families working in the mills, this “relentless downward pressure” on wages caused by the free labour market forced families into the “margin[s] of economic security”.²³ In the words of Rabbi Leo Mannheimer, the conditions of living for urbanised workers were “distinctly bad”, and the “[s]anitary conditions [were] evil”.²⁴

Industrialisation in the textile industry made for compounding competition, with cheaper manufactures produced by mechanised industry spurring even greater demand. Industrialisation, therefore, meant a constant strive for efficiency by cutting costs and maximising production. Labour, as a variable cost, was the central target. Maintaining profit margins meant compensating labour for much less than its value. This process destroyed existing labour patterns in industries, causing the decline of many skilled occupations, replaced by unskilled machine attendants who each became “a mere machine”.²⁵ In Paterson, this trait of industrial capitalism manifested in the abandonment of high-quality silk made by skilled weavers on Jacquard looms.²⁶ Replacing them were cheaper unskilled workers — mainly immigrant women and children — who could produce higher quantities of lower quality goods utilising new technological innovations. This process of industrial capitalism ultimately led to the immediate cause of the strike: the “stretch out” by Doherty Mill, the city’s largest silk manufacturer, in January 1913.²⁷ The mill doubled the number of looms for which an individual worker was responsible, and frustrations that had festered for years erupted.²⁸ Weavers protested immediately

²² Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, p.153.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ Rabbi Leo Mannheimer, ‘Darkest New Jersey. How the Paterson Strike Looks to One in the Thick of the Conflict’, in *The Independent*, Vol. 74, No. 3365, 29 May, 1913.

²⁵ James J. Lorence, ed., *Enduring Voices*, Vol. 2, 2nd ed, Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1993, pp. 47-48.

²⁶ Dubofsky, p. 154.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 155.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 155.

and eventually walked out later that month.²⁹ Paterson did not become a flashpoint because its working conditions were anomalous. Paterson's mills conformed to national trends, and workers even benefitted from above-average wages and state regulations that limited hours to 55 per week.³⁰ The strike in Paterson mirrored those that had taken place throughout the "labour wars" of the early twentieth century, such as the successful Lawrence strike of 1912.³¹ Therefore, we must understand the Paterson Silk Strike not as a singular event, but a manifestation of that particular phase in industrial capitalist development.

The predominance of the 19th century doctrine of free labour had already led to broad progressive attempts to redefine economic relations. While the methods of the Paterson Strike differed sharply from mainstream progressive reform, the constant objective was a desire for a fundamental redefinition of citizenship to recognise substantive rights to economic and social liberties. Progressives envisioned active state intervention to ensure the health of the society.³² Central to this vision was an attack on the freedom of contract doctrine, and progressives were united in recognising that this legal theory had to change to "end worker exploitation."³³ Progressive trade unions supported legal challenges that incrementally shifted what could be a legitimate target of state regulation. This first occurred for dangerous occupations like mining in *Lochner v New York*, and then for certain groups of workers, like women in *Muller v Oregon*. However, this incrementalist approach lays bare the inadequacies of mainstream progressive reform. *Muller's* protection of women was premised on shockingly patriarchal reasoning that embedded inequality and sexism further into constitutional law.³⁴ In a way, the mainstream

²⁹ Dubofsky, p. 155.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 154.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 152.

³² Flanagan, p. 60.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 62.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 64.

progressive attack on freedom of contract demonstrated the need for a more radical alternative that would seek categorical rather than incremental emancipation from the inequalities perpetuated by the free labour doctrine, and it was this the IWW provided. The IWW provided a radical counterpoint to mainstream progressive ideals by emphasising revolutionary unionism instead of the ‘slowcialism’ of reform through the state. Rather than the political and legal action taken by mainstream progressives, the IWW emphasised the need for direct action through the primary instruments of strike and sabotage.

The methods of the strike also illustrated a striking, yet ultimately fleeting, shift in the approach of the American left. This came in the form of a short-lived bridge between the intellectual and artistic left and the working class. Travelling IWW activists facilitated the strike, bringing revolutionary notions that extended beyond Paterson. To activists like Elizabeth Gurely Flynn, the central objective was not simply material gains for workers but the gaining of a “revolutionary spirit”, one that would see them return with a “determined attitude” toward continued economic gains.³⁵ Aid to support striking workers was necessary for any victory, so the IWW-sympathising intellectual John Reed organised a pageant at Madison Square Garden that aimed to foster national attention and support. While it was a stunning artistic success, the pageant was a financial failure and provided no material aid for workers. The central tension between the intellectual left (and the revolutionary labour movement) and the working class was exposed. While a minority of workers genuinely sought revolutionary change, the majority were largely interested in the immediate, material gains they could achieve — “a few cents more and ... a few minutes less”.³⁶ When the artistic endeavours of the intellectual left leaders failed to

³⁵ Elizabeth Gurely Flynn, ‘The Truth about the Paterson Strike’, *New York Civic Club Forum*, January 31, 1914, in Joyce L. Kornbluh, ed., *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1964, p. 215.

³⁶ *ibid.*

make these, they looked for alternatives. For the majority of strikers, the goals of the IWW were “never a true belief” but had simply provided hope in securing material improvement.³⁷ The IWW had delivered only “revolutionary spirit but no bread”, and in so doing, the brief joining of art and politics sundered.³⁸ The failure of the Paterson strike, blamed on the pageant, marked the demise of the IWW as a vehicle for radical change in Eastern industry.³⁹ Even a disillusioned John Reed journeyed away from the artistic and intellectual left and toward politics, helping to found the American Communist Party.

However, while the failure of the strike crippled the IWW, it did not crush the progressive spirit. The war saw progressives make gains in redefining industrial citizenship, but it also exposed a central contradiction in progressivism. While the boundaries of citizenship were redefined to include greater intervention in citizens’ economic lives, the coercive means by which this was accomplished stifled any significant change. In many respects, the war marked the apotheosis of progressivism. The workplace was no longer seen as an exclusively private sphere because “[w]ar work was the people’s work”.⁴⁰ The conflation of private industry and the public interest allowed workers to make demands based on good citizenship rather than simply self-interest in private contracts. Over the course of the war, the public began to see unionisation and industrial action as acts of good citizenship.⁴¹ Under Wilson’s policies, union membership soared and exerted direct pressure on labour relations. The wartime support of the state ultimately accomplished the industrial democracy and unionisation that Paterson strikers had unsuccessfully sought through direct action.

³⁷ Dubofsky, p. 165.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 164.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 166.

⁴⁰ Joseph A. McCartin, *Labor's Great War: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy and the Origins of Modern American Labor Relations, 1912-1921*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997, p. 105.

⁴¹ McCartin, *Labor's Great War*, p. 105.

Ultimately, these gains through state mechanisms failed to shift the fundamental boundaries of citizenship. The revolutionary spirit manifested in direct action in strikes like Paterson became subsumed into state machinery, and state coercion led to the progressive movement's downfall. The implication of the progressive movement's demand for regulation — a more active state — allowed for coercive measures that restricted Americans, rather than liberating them. As well as the workplace becoming a public sphere, public opinion became a legitimate target for government intervention through the use of propaganda and legislation like the Sedition Act of 1918 and the Espionage Act of 1917.⁴² These interventions led to growing antiradicalism and public opposition to strikes in 1919.⁴³ The wartime gains, as opposed to the direct action illustrated in Paterson, were predicated on a compromise — that unionisation would only aid efficiency and ameliorate labour strife.⁴⁴

The Paterson Silk Strike was part of continual processes that shaped the entire Gilded Age and Progressive Era. At the heart of the conflict, and the broader movement of the Progressive Era as a whole, was a demand for a redefined citizenship that saw a more active role for regulation to protect economic and social rights as well as personal and political ones. The Paterson Silk Strike marked a failed attempt to bridge the gap between the intellectual and the working class left, with the strike's failure contributing to a long-lasting divide between them. The failure of the strike ultimately crippled the efforts of the IWW as a force for radical industrial change in the East, but the progressive spirit continued into the war, where wartime compromises provided for both its apotheosis and undoing.

⁴² 'George Creel on the Selling of the War', 1920, in Leon Fink, ed., *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1993, pp. 532–3.

⁴³ Barry D. Karl, 'Managing War', in Fink, p. 551.

⁴⁴ McCartin, p. 118.

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HIST 271 - ATLANTIC REVOLUTIONS

The Dutch Revolt: Catalysts of Change, Echoes of Triumph

'Visitors continually marvelled at the prodigious extent of Dutch shipping and commerce, the technical sophistication of industry and finance, the beauty and orderliness...of the cities, the degree of intellectual toleration...the excellence of the orphanages and hospitals...the subordination of military to civilian authority, and the remarkable achievements of Dutch art, philosophy, and science.'

[Jonathan Israel, 'Introduction', p. 1]

Were these features of seventeenth century Dutch society primarily causes or consequences of the Dutch Revolt?

Lara Albert

Even before the Dutch Revolt of 1556, the Northern Netherlands was a dynamic region engaged in a process of intense change. In many aspects, it was unlike its European counterparts; a sense of freedom and progress underscored this uniqueness within Dutch society. The Jonathan Israel quote describes the nature of Dutch society after the revolt. The full manifestation of these features described by Israel can be attributed to the success of the Dutch revolt. However, whilst we can view some of these features as consequences of the revolt, others must be regarded as causes of the revolt. The 'extent of Dutch shipping and commerce,' the 'technical sophistication of industry and finance' and the 'degree of intellectual toleration,' whilst amplified after the revolt, should primarily be seen as causes of the revolt. These features were present before the revolt and contributed significantly to the Dutch desire and capacity for independence, serving as

driving forces behind the revolt's inception. On the other hand, the 'beauty and orderliness of the cities,' 'the excellence of orphanages and hospitals,' the 'subordination of military to civilian authority,' and 'the remarkable achievements of Dutch art, philosophy, and science' are factors that emerged as outcomes of the revolt and did not contribute, primarily, to its initiation. Collectively, these features define the Dutch Empire in its golden age, but the features that represent a solidification of Dutch ambition before the revolt warrant particular focus. These features (the causes) are the most significant because they suggest that the Dutch Revolt should not be interpreted as a revolutionary drive to transform Dutch society, but rather as an endeavour by the Dutch to continue the developments they had set in motion and chart a course of progress according to their own terms.

Before the revolt, the provinces of the Northern Netherlands were already untraditional, characterised by a trajectory of change and development. The region's geographical flatness and proximity to inland water bodies and the sea made it prone to becoming waterlogged.⁴⁵ The land's predisposition to flooding meant it was difficult to cultivate, prompting a movement to free the peasantry of feudal obligations.⁴⁶ This free status encouraged peasants to cultivate the land, but it had the run-on effect of weakening seigneurial influence within the Netherlands. The lack of seigneurial influence in the Netherlands represents a move toward individualism and diversification in Dutch society. This geographical issue also led to several developments that progressed the region towards a state of industrial modernity. To protect their lands from inundation, the Dutch developed new technology and management systems to respond to the water issue by the start of the 16th century.⁴⁷ The Dutch invented drainage techniques, including

⁴⁵ Prof Jonathan Scott, "Lecture 3: The Netherlands within The Habsburg Empire," University of Auckland, 23rd July 2023.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its rise, greatness, and fall, 1477-1806*, Oxford, 1995, p. 111.

pumps, windmills and polders, to accommodate the reactionary nature of their territory.⁴⁸ These techniques allowed the Dutch to artificially control the water so the land could be reclaimed and repurposed for agricultural use.

The provinces of the northern Netherlands were also uniquely marked by a high degree of urbanisation. By 1600, over 25% of Northern Dutchmen resided in cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants, in contrast to England, where only 10% fell into this category.⁴⁹ Maritime development facilitated the urbanisation of the northern provinces by leveraging the seaboard territory, which was better equipped to facilitate “fowlers and fishermen” than agriculture.⁵⁰ A fishing industry flourished using the towns’ available labour supply. The equipment and boats were refined to suit different forms of fishing.⁵¹ The herring fishery was suitable for international commerce because herring could be caught on the open sea at an industrial scale.⁵² The Dutch developed the herring buss, a “veritable factory ship” that enabled herring to be caught in great numbers and processed on board.⁵³ Ownership of these herring busses initially comprised of partnerships that included skippers and fishermen; however, these arrangements transformed into comprehensive investment schemes, opening a new field of economic development.⁵⁴ By the middle of the sixteenth century, the Herring buss fleet in Holland alone was 400 vessels strong.⁵⁵ Further, the herring industry itself was used to break into the Hanseatic League. The Dutch offered herring and salt to Hanseatic merchants at competitive prices thanks to their low-cost boats (off-season Herring boats) and imported cheap grain from the Baltic.⁵⁶ Shipbuilders further

⁴⁸ Jan De Vries and A.M Van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815*, Cambridge, 1997, p. 18.

⁴⁹ Israel, p. 115.

⁵⁰ De Vries and Van der Woude, p. 19.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 236.

⁵² *ibid.*, p. 243.

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 244.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 352.

refined the industry of Baltic trade, developing the *'fluitschip'* designed to increase cargo capacity whilst minimising Danish toll fees, making it incredibly cost-effective.⁵⁷ This commercial development enabled Amsterdam to establish itself as the key commercial centre of the northern Netherlands. Ultimately, the urbanisation of the Northern Netherlands and the development of the maritime industry played a significant role in shaping the region's economic landscape and success.

As outlined, the sophistication and vastness of Dutch industry, finances, shipping and commerce prior to the Dutch revolt is evident. These features collectively contributed to the economic prosperity of the Netherlands (pre-revolt), giving the country immense political significance. The Netherlands had become part of the far-flung Hapsburg empire in the 15th century through a series of political marriages and inheritances. The economic prosperity of the Netherlands, combined with its efficient and universally distributed forms of taxation (like the tithe) and comprehensive lending schemes, caused it to become the "cash cow" of its Hapsburg rulers.⁵⁸ In the 16th century, the financial expectations of the Hapsburg empire increased progressively to support Spain's war against France.⁵⁹ These rising demands were exacerbated by the changes in Hapsburg leadership from Charles V to his son Phillip II of Spain in 1555. Unlike his father, Phillip II was profoundly disconnected from Dutch culture.⁶⁰ Due to their economic prosperity and past freedoms, the Netherlands were already difficult to govern; Maarten Prak suggests that successful governance of the low countries required winning "the confidence of the urban patriciate and [persuading] them to open their purse strings."⁶¹ The comprehensive nature of the Dutch state clashed with Phillip II's cultural detachment and persisting fiscal demands,

⁵⁷ De Vries and Van der Woude, p. 357.

⁵⁸ Prof Jonathan Scott, "Lecture 4: The Dutch Revolt, 1566-1648," University of Auckland, 28th July 2023.

⁵⁹ Maarten Prak and Dianne Webb, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge, 2005, p. 15.

⁶⁰ Anton van der Lem and Andy Brown, *Revolt in the Netherlands: The eighty years war, 1568-1648*, London, 2018, p. 36.

⁶¹ Prak and Webb, p. 10.

causing the Dutch to revolt to gain independence from Spain and achieve financial self-determination.

Mixed into this was an issue of freedom on another front: religion. Forms of Protestantism had gradually gained popularity in the Netherlands. The humanist movement introduced ideas that challenged traditional religious authority; it paved the way for the arrival of Lutheranism and Calvinism. Calvinism attracted many followers in the lower and middle classes of the Netherlands, and the outbreak of The Wars of Religion (1562-1598) in France caused many Calvinists to seek refuge in the Low Countries.⁶² Historians Anton van der Lem and Andy Brown illustrate the catch of Calvinism with the example of Bartel Jacobs, a Catholic priest in Oostzan who, alongside his parishioners, converted to the reformed church in the 1550s.⁶³ Phillip II adamantly opposed the spread of ‘heretical’ beliefs in his Dutch territories and sent the Inquisition to quash Protestant influences. However, the Dutch sympathised with the Protestant plight; there was “admiration of [Protestant] zeal and compassion of their sufferings.”⁶⁴ In 1564, Dutch leader and nobleman William the Silent reportedly told the Council of State in Brussels that despite his Catholic faith, he could not support rulers trying to dictate their subjects’ consciences.⁶⁵ Additionally, in 1566, 200 Dutch nobles petitioned against the Spanish Inquisition.⁶⁶ A protest of the masses followed this, the iconoclasm of 1566, which saw Catholic churches in the Netherlands vandalised by protestant mobs, catapulting the Netherlands into eighty years of war with Spain. The right to religious determination became a poster child of the revolt. For example, at the battle of Heiligerlee (1568), men were recruited by William the Silent in the name of ‘liberty of religion and conscience.’⁶⁷ Freedom from religious persecution was

⁶² Prof Jonathan Scott, Lecture 4.

⁶³ Van der Lem and Brown, p. 47.

⁶⁴ Prof Jonathan Scott, Lecture 4, citing William Temple at 17:06.

⁶⁵ Van der Lem and Brown, p. 11.

⁶⁶ Israel, pp. 145–6.

⁶⁷ Van der Lem and Brown, p. 11.

also included as a provision in the 1579 Union of Utrecht that unified the northern provinces.⁶⁸ Ultimately, liberty of conscience is an outcome of the revolt because it served as its political and religious foundation from the outset. This is significant because it demonstrates that the causes of the revolt shaped the identity of the Dutch Republic.

The features of industry, commerce and intellectual toleration described above have been primarily identified as causes of the Dutch Revolt; however, the other features mentioned by Israel are primarily identified as consequences of the Dutch Revolt. The seven united provinces of the Northern Netherlands, known as the Dutch Republic, emerged independent out of 80 years of conflict between the Netherlands and Spain. The new state faced the challenge of reconciling discord and facilitating cooperation. The Dutch Republic became what it had always aspired to be: a league of autonomous cities loosely united by common interests. Despite the unconventional nature of its political arrangement, the Dutch Republic expanded its economic and international interests, especially militarily. The Dutch revolt also caused a military revolution, improving military tactics, discipline and orderliness.⁶⁹ Throughout the revolt, large numbers of soldiers were stationed amongst the civilian populations of the low countries, necessitating strong civilian authority to control and direct the military.⁷⁰ Thus, Dutch authorities implemented specific reforms to safeguard civilian populations against military disruption, subordinating the military to civilian interests. In 1590, the States General printed the first Dutch military code of conduct, outlining the standards of misconduct and its consequences.⁷¹ Moreover, whilst the States of Holland took steps to gather information on initiatives for the poor in 1527, no significant initiatives were implemented in the Northern Netherlands until the

⁶⁸ Van der Lem and Brown, p. 11.

⁶⁹ Israel, p. 3.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 267.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 268.

Revolt.⁷² The revolt brought with it a new sense of civic welfare because the changing socio-political landscape necessitated a re-evaluation of how to address the needs of its citizens, resulting in the development of hospitals, orphanages and other social institutions.⁷³

The cities also changed in appearance; a new form of Dutch architecture materialised in the 1640s, resulting from the autonomy of the Dutch states' and their ever-increasing economic prosperity.⁷⁴ The Dutch embarked upon large-scale urban planning projects. New canals were built, old canals were refurbished, and key cities like Amsterdam "rapidly became lined with Handsome residences."⁷⁵ Further, the revolt's motivating concept, 'freedom of conscience,' manifested a society "well suited to assist intellect, imagination, and talent."⁷⁶ The arts, sciences and philosophy flourished. Artistic production in the Netherlands escalated dramatically, and amongst artists, there was an "unheard of degree of specialisation".⁷⁷ Philosophical trends like Cartesianism were developed and spread.⁷⁸ Similarly, profound scientific breakthroughs, like the invention of the thermometer, were made.⁷⁹ The social and cultural dynamic was similarly vibrant. Whilst the Calvinist reformed church occupied a favoured position, religious tolerance continued to prevail in the cities, which sported a melting pot of cultures. Thus, Johnathan Israel's quote aptly describes features occurring as consequences of the revolt, which is significant as these demonstrate the achievement and evolution of Dutch society following the revolt.

This essay has dissected Jonathan Israel's depiction of Dutch society after the revolt, identifying that whilst some features were primarily consequences of the revolt, others were

⁷² Israel, pp. 123-124.

⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 355.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 863.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 865.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 556.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 902.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 905.

primarily causes. It has focused on the significance of understanding the features of innovation, commercial enterprise, and tolerance as dynamics of a shift toward modernity that was already in action prior to the revolt. The process of this change occurring in the Netherlands was instrumental to the outbreak of the revolt. This focus is significant because it highlights that the Dutch will to preserve these unique features led to the revolt and to resisting forces that created a threat to Dutch society as it evolved. However, the noted features are also consequences of the revolt since its success guaranteed their existence and expansion. On the other hand, the features identified as 'primarily consequences' are significant in their own right as they demonstrate the success and continued uniqueness of the Dutch state.

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HIST 317 - NAZI GERMANY AND ITS LEGACIES

Why is The Historikerstreit 2.0 Debate Historically and Historiographically Important?

Explain the contours of the *Historikerstreit 2.0* that erupted in 2020. Why is the debate historically and historiographically important?

Marilyn Dale

Intended as a small academic discussion to mark the 35th anniversary of the *Historikerstreit* debate, the '*Historiker straiten*' ('Historians Argue') event held in Potsdam in October 2021, helped to reignite public conversation in Germany over political and public memory of the Holocaust.⁸⁰ The ongoing scholarly debate of the same topics was re-energised a year earlier in 2020, after a regional politician from the Freie Demokratische Partei challenged Achille Mbembe's invitation to deliver a key-note address at a cultural festival in Germany on the basis of his perceived antisemitism.⁸¹ Mbembe, from Cameroon, was known to dispute the predominant Holocaust memory culture established by the *Historikerstreit* debates of the 1980s, and to critique Germany's support for Israel and Israel's policies regarding Palestine.⁸²

The debates of *Historikerstreit 2.0*, as they were dubbed, are historically and historiographically important because they extended the conversation about the meaning of

⁸⁰ Michael Rothberg, 'Lived multidirectionality: "*Historikerstreit 2.0*" and the politics of Holocaust memory', *Memory Studies*, 15, 6, 2022, pp. 1316-7.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 1319.

⁸² Susan Urban, 'The Shoah, Postcolonialism, and *Historikerstreit 2.0*: Germany's Past and Present', *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 16, 01, 2022, p. 84.

Holocaust memory beyond Europe, beyond academia, and across generations. By arguing to situate the Holocaust in a colonialist context, the voices and traumas of migrant communities could now be included. The economic and cultural iniquities resulting from racist European colonialist legacies could be laid bare and addressed. The historiography of *Historikerstreit 2.0* has called attention to post-colonialist struggles that have remained largely ignored in the West.⁸³ In so doing, these historians have challenged German political and public memory of the Holocaust, including conceptions of racism, antisemitism, and anti-Zionism.

In the 1986 *Historikerstreit* debates, philosopher Jürgen Habermas was instrumental in moving political memory from relativist explanations of the National Socialist regime's actions during the Second World War to a progressive understanding of the Holocaust as unique and uniquely German.⁸⁴ This shift was both scholarly and grassroots and became a largely incontestable tenet of a unified Germany, informing personal and political identity. It has remained so over the decades since.⁸⁵

The *Historikerstreit 2.0* debates contested Habermas's singularity thesis. A central question was whether or not the dominant political memory culture of Holocaust singularity remained appropriate in Germany's post-migrant society.⁸⁶ No longer the position of progressive scholars, the uniqueness thesis for the Holocaust is now attached to conservative political and cultural identity.⁸⁷ In 2021, Michael Rothberg's recently translated book on memory studies was drawn into the debates. Rather than singular, Rothberg argued that collective memory was "multidirectional".⁸⁸ Part of a 'third wave' of memory studies scholarship, Rothberg's

⁸³ Matt Fitzpatrick, 'On the German Catechism', *The New Fascism Syllabus* website, 2021, p. 5; Rothberg, 'Lived multidirectionality', pp. 1317-8.

⁸⁴ Rothberg, p. 1317.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*; A. Dirk Moses, 'The German Catechism', *Geschichte der Gegenwart* website, 2020, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Rothberg, pp. 1317-8.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 1318.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 1319.

multidirectional approach was understood as a dialogue between strands of collective memory.⁸⁹ The Holocaust could therefore be located in dialogue with colonialism and slavery.⁹⁰ Defending the notion of the Holocaust as unique, as a *Zivilisationsbruch* – a ‘civilisational rupture’ that stands separate from historical context, ignores the multidirectionality of memory. It ignores the violence and harm associated with the colonialist projects of European powers over the past five hundred years.⁹¹ Instead, conceptualising the Holocaust as a ‘civilisational rupture’ can be a means of mitigating collective guilt by attributing blame to unnatural, aberrant forces.

With a less homogeneous population than in the 1980s, there is a high level of political and racial awareness that has been amplified by social media and taken to a broader, younger, more interconnected and activist audience willing to respond to political amnesia regarding colonialist harm.⁹² In that way, *Historikerstreit 2.0* mirrors the earlier debates as a grassroots movement. Within that context, Holocaust memorials like the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, whilst rightly honouring and remembering Jewish victims of the National Socialists, are a reminder of political disconnection from genocides outside Europe.⁹³ Steffen Klävers suggested that the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe now serves a function more aligned with a self-perception of transformation and redemption for Germans rather than for the Jewish people.⁹⁴ Noting that the civic monument is solely to one group of victims, it is worth considering whether there is a racist undertone to the memorialisation: other victims of the Holocaust, including the Sinti and Roma, the ‘a-socials’, and the Russian Prisoners of War

⁸⁹ Rothberg, p. 1319.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ Fitzpatrick, p. 3.

⁹² Moses, p. 5.

⁹³ Rothberg, p. 1318.

⁹⁴ Steffen Klävers, ‘Paradigm Shifts – Critical Reflections on the Historikerstreit 2.0, the Catechism-Debate, and their Precursors’, *Society*, 59, 2022, p. 22.

are not included.⁹⁵ The victims who are memorialised and venerated are European; they have been brought into the fold of Whiteness.

As with Rothberg, in 2021, Jürgen Zimmerer's work arguing for continuity between National Socialism and German colonialism was caught up in the discussion. In 2004, long before the *Historikerstreit 2.0* debates, Zimmerer argued that Holocaust-uniqueness rendered other genocidal events invisible.⁹⁶ Zimmerer made a compelling case for understanding the National Socialist war in Eastern Europe as a colonial war, the motivation for which, as with other colonial wars, was "space and race".⁹⁷ Quoting Adolf Hitler, Zimmerer demonstrated that the National Socialist elite clearly understood the war in Russia in colonising terms. He contended that the different forms of mass murder perpetrated by the Nazis needed to be seen in that context and the associated context of racial purity.⁹⁸ Zimmerer argued that colonial rule of German Southwest Africa during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided a template for the National Socialists for rule based on racial privilege and racial separatism.⁹⁹

Although less overt than the racial hierarchies that informed European colonialism, racism continues to inform political actions to the detriment of indigenous populations in former European colonies.¹⁰⁰ The most egregious example in relation to German colonialism was the awarding of reparations to Holocaust victims whilst finding the Herero-Nama genocide unworthy of restitution.¹⁰¹ Zimmerer offered other examples of colonial racist violence, particularly against Native Americans and Aboriginal Australians, where state acknowledgement

⁹⁵ Jürgen Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust: Towards an Archeology of Genocide', trans. Andrew H. Beattie in A. Dirk Moses, ed., *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, Berghahn Books, 2004, p. 59.

⁹⁶ Zimmerer, p. 51.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 49-53.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 53.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 56-7.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p. 51.

¹⁰¹ Klävers, p. 22.

to the victims has been resisted.¹⁰² Australian historians Dirk Moses and Matt Fitzpatrick also used the debate to speak against colonial violence inflicted on Australia's Indigenous peoples and of white resistance to acknowledging that past. The vocal faction supporting the 'No' vote in the forthcoming referendum to decide whether or not Indigenous Australians should have a Constitutional 'Voice', and rowdy opposition to co-governance between Māori and Pākehā in Aotearoa New Zealand are immediate examples of racism that link to the colonial past of both nations. As well as racism, the debate has also contested understandings of antisemitism.

Despite historical evidence to the contrary, the uniqueness of antisemitism as distinct from racism had become entrenched in the dominant memory culture.¹⁰³ The debates have challenged that understanding and have questioned the political conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism. Seemingly intended to curtail critique of Israel, accusations of antisemitism were raised in connection to the debate that began with Mbembe.¹⁰⁴ Writing in 2022 for the *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, Susanne Urban levelled a similar charge of antisemitism against Moses's 'The German Catechism' essay. In a particularly harsh comment, Urban stated that Moses's intention with the 'Catechism' essay was to "deconstruct Holocaust memory and defame the State of Israel", and that the truth or otherwise of his statements was of little concern to him.¹⁰⁵ Urban's position in support of Holocaust uniqueness may be understood against her background with the antisemitism reporting office of the German Federal State of Hesse.¹⁰⁶

Moses's provocative 2021 essay 'The German Catechism' was another 'trigger' text in the debates. It was less the content of the debates that was new for Moses; rather, it was the

¹⁰² Zimmerer, pp. 62-3.

¹⁰³ Moses, p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ Urban, p. 84.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 83.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

emotions and the passions aroused in the engagement.¹⁰⁷ In five points, Moses summarised what he identified as the code by which Germans understood themselves in relation to the Holocaust, the Jewish people, Israel, and the international community.¹⁰⁸ Using the language of Christianity to challenge what he described as the “Christologically-informed redemptive narrative” of conservative scholars, the Holocaust is framed as “a sacred trauma” with a “sacrificial function”. Moses suggested that the Federal Republic of Germany had adopted an authoritarian stance in policing anti-Israel attitudes, and with a strong pro-Israel stance and a Federal Commissioner tasked with fighting antisemitism, the difference between antisemitism and anti-Zionism would be indistinct.¹⁰⁹ Moses argued, though, that a tidal change was taking place as Germany’s population became younger and more diverse, with greater numbers of immigrants who have their own ‘multidirectional’ histories and memories.¹¹⁰ Moses concluded by seeking justice for victims of German state policies.¹¹¹

Published in February 2022, Steffen Klävers’ online article responded to Moses’ ‘German Catechism’ essay. Klävers, a scholar of Antisemitism Studies, declared his affiliation with the Jewish Forum for Democracy and Against Antisemitism.¹¹² In opposition to Moses’ position, Klävers concurred with Point 1 of ‘The Catechism’: the Holocaust was unique.¹¹³ Klävers’ opposition to the arguments put forward by Moses is based on his analysis of Moses’ earlier work in addition to the ‘Catechism’ text. Considering the influence of Eurocentrism in the ‘uniqueness’ argument, Klävers acknowledged the disproportionate levels of research applied to National Socialism studies compared to colonial studies and the possible application of a

¹⁰⁷ Moses, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 5.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 9.

¹¹² Klävers, p. 24.

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p. 22.

“moral hierarchy”.¹¹⁴ Klävers questioned the way the debates considered the relationship between antisemitism and racism and argued against Zimmerer and Moses’ framing.¹¹⁵ Although Klävers disagreed with Moses, he offered a considered and reasoned assessment. He agreed on three points, each of which pertained to Germany and Germans rather than the uniqueness-antisemitism debate. Memory culture had been used to the benefit of Germans rather than Jewish people; a sense of national purification had been achieved through supporting Jewish wellbeing in Germany; education about German colonial history was lacking.¹¹⁶

Professor of International History at Flinders University, South Australia, Matt Fitzpatrick’s online response to the *Historikerstreit 2.0* debates, and in particular to Moses’ ‘Catechism’ essay, covered a wide geographic range. Fitzpatrick was strongly supportive of Moses’ position.¹¹⁷ Written in May 2021, his article questioned the academic and social consequences of not being able to study the Holocaust in comparison to other events of mass murder.¹¹⁸ Noting that the Holocaust is the “glue” that sticks Germany and Israel together, Fitzpatrick understands the Israeli occupation of Palestine as a settler colonialist endeavour.¹¹⁹ He brings that understanding to the issue of Australian colonialism and unresolved trauma, noting especially that he lives in South Australia on land that the Kaurna people never relinquished.¹²⁰ Although he does not use the term, Fitzpatrick noted the multidirectionality, or intersections, of history and other historical experiences that have shaped and continue to shape lives.¹²¹

¹¹⁴ Klävers, p. 19.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Fitzpatrick, p. 5.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.* p. 5.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

¹²¹ *ibid.*

Germany continues to strongly support Israel despite that State's ongoing colonisation of Palestinian lands and genocidal policies against the Palestinian State.¹²² A policy of welcome and protection for Jewish immigrants followed the collapse of the Soviet Union post-1989 and, with broad support for Israel generally, has been understood within the dominant political memory culture to be the appropriate consequence of German culpability for the Holocaust.¹²³ As has been pointed out in the historiography, though, the position of Jews in Germany remains separate, visiting, not belonging.¹²⁴ The historiography gives voice to young Israelis and Palestinians who choose to live in Germany because life under the German-supported Zionist government in Israel and Palestine is insupportable.¹²⁵ There is a certain irony that in acting to honour the victims of the Holocaust, both the German and Israeli governments are wedded to repressive, and in the case of Israel, colonialist and genocidal ideologies that are justified by Holocaust singularity.¹²⁶

The historiographies considered here trace the trajectory of contestation as both historians and the broader public challenged the dominant memory culture of Germany to reimagine both its past and its future. They give voice to a young generation of Germans and migrants living in Germany who challenge antisemitism and structural racism, even when it takes the form of a pseudo-religious icon. Likewise, the historiography makes visible the consequences of colonialism on Aboriginal Australians, Native Americans, and Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand. The importance of these historiographies in setting out the arguments for and against recontextualising the Holocaust, whilst honouring its victims and understanding it in relationship

¹²² Fitzpatrick, p. 5.

¹²³ Moses, p. 4.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 5.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 4.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

to other colonialist genocides, is demonstrated by the white privilege and racism that manifests, for example, in acrimonious disputes over Indigenous rights in former imperial colonies.

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HIST 327 - WAITANGI: TREATY TO TRIBUNAL

'A Harmonious and Ascendant Historical Picture'? Conflict in Māori and Pākehā Women's Treaty Activism, 1970-1990

Assess the intersections between Māori resistance and protest movements and debates about the Treaty. What have been the key concerns of such movements? How have those concerns been expressed? In what ways did Māori protest and resistance influence public discussion about the Treaty?

Anna McCardle

From the 1970s, Aotearoa New Zealand saw an upsurge of activism concerning a myriad of causes, including the Treaty of Waitangi. Activists rallied to raise public consciousness and push the Government to take stronger action to redress the Crown's breaching of the Treaty. Treaty breaches were framed as an important component of the damaging consequences of British colonisation and Government and Pākehā oppression of Māori. If the Crown and Government had been proper Treaty partners to Māori, they would have protected and respected their tino rangatiratanga, mana whenua, language and overall culture and well-being, rather than actively seeking to diminish them. Māori resistance led and drove Treaty activism, inspiring many Pākehā to ally with the cause and engage in protest actions. A complex dimension of Treaty activism was the role of Māori and Pākehā women.

Conflict was a prominent feature of Māori and Pākehā women's Treaty activism in the 1970s-1990s. To unpack this assertion, disunity amongst both Māori women and Pākehā women must be examined. However, greater attention will be given to the significant divisions between

Pākehā and Māori women, which arose in their intersection within Treaty activism. Although Pākehā women were influenced by and inspired to ally with Māori women activists, this did not guarantee unity between them. Primary sources authored by Māori and Pākehā women in the 1970s-1990s show evidence of their divergent and clashing viewpoints about how Treaty activism should take shape, what its key concerns were, and the nature of their roles and collaboration within it.

Māori women were significant drivers of 1970s-1990s Treaty activism. Ripeka Evans described how, although Māori women had already played a powerful role within resistance movements for generations, the rise of second-wave feminism within Aotearoa in the 1970s brought a surge of empowerment. Many Māori women felt compelled to ensure their perspectives and aims were represented within the “revitalisation of Māori protest on the Treaty of Waitangi” and other issues stemming from Treaty breaches, like the loss of Māori whenua or the decline of te reo Māori.¹²⁷

One example of a resistance action out of many that Māori women led was Donna Awatere’s writing of the *Māori Sovereignty* articles published in the feminist magazine *Broadsheet* from 1982 to 1983. Awatere set out a definition of Māori sovereignty which encompassed both the rights Māori had been promised under the Treaty, and the autonomy they had always possessed as tangata whenua prior to colonisation.¹²⁸ Reclaiming Māori sovereignty, she felt, would restore the high levels of status, health and vitality Māori had possessed before the detrimental effects of Treaty breaches and colonisation.¹²⁹ Merata Mita praised *Māori*

¹²⁷ Ripeka Evans, ‘The Negation of Powerlessness: Māori Feminism, a Perspective’, *Hecate*, 20, 2, 1994.

¹²⁸ Donna Awatere, *Māori Sovereignty*, Auckland, 1984, p. 10.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, p.11.

Sovereignty as having “outdone the Bible in this country” with regard to shifting the discourse around Treaty activism to focus on the key concern of Māori rights and empowerment.¹³⁰

Moreover, activists like Awatere and Evans also ensured that their primary concern for the rights and empowerment of Māori women was represented within their Treaty activism. For example, Awatere, Evans, and former presidents of the Māori Women’s Welfare League (MWWL), among other claimants, lodged Wai 381, the Māori Women’s claim, in 1993.¹³¹ They framed protecting the mana and well-being of Māori women as an inextricable duty encompassed within the Treaty. Former MWWL president Georgina Kirby described Wai 381 as alleging that the Crown had breached the Treaty and shown prejudice through not “actively promoting the value, status and position of Māori women and their contribution to families, sub-tribes and tribes”, “never consulting” with Māori women when “setting up agencies and mechanisms”, and the Government overall “denying Māori women a part in the Treaty partnership.”¹³² Through lodging Wai 381, the claimants emphasised that seeking redress for Treaty breaches and reclaiming Māori sovereignty intersected crucially with seeking justice for prejudiced treatment of Māori women and reasserting Māori women’s mana and rights.

It is important, however, to recognise that the key concerns of Māori women in 1970s-1990s Treaty activism were not uniform, and should not be generalised as such. Doing so would tie in with a broader harmful tendency for the diverse perspectives and experiences of Māori iwi and hapū to be overlooked by the assumption that Māori can be amalgamated as a single, unanimous people. Awatere used the expression “clash of the Titans” to summarise the

¹³⁰ Debbie Rewhiti, ‘The Impact of *Māori Sovereignty*: An Interview with Donna Awatere and Merata Mita’, *Broadsheet*, 124, November 1984, p.13.

¹³¹ Liam Rātana, ‘The Mana Wāhine Inquiry isn’t over yet’, *Spinoff*: <https://thespinoff.co.nz/atea/02-08-2021/the-mana-wahine-inquiry-isnt-over-yet>, August 2nd 2021.

¹³² Hineani Melbourne, *Māori Sovereignty: the Māori Perspective*, Auckland, 1995, p.73.

disunity she experienced with other Māori women activists.¹³³ An example of such disunity was evident in the MWWL facing criticism.

In 1995, Areta Kupu, President of the MWWL, described its role as implementing Māori women's tino rangatiratanga, which was enshrined in the Treaty, through ensuring their concerns regarding health, education and the community in Aotearoa were expressed in the changes they advocated to policymakers for. Kupu contended that Treaty activism should not be marked by “aggression and fear”, which she perceived as apparent in Māori protest actions like the 1995 Moutoa Gardens occupation by Te Rūnanga Pākaitore, and leave more room for open dialogue with the Government and Pākehā.¹³⁴

In contrast to Kupu's envisagement, there were Māori women activists who viewed the MWWL as too moderate. Hana Jackson reflected on MWWL refusing to back the 1972 Māori Language Petition, seeming to regard “passing remits every year since 1952” for teaching te reo Māori in schools as “enough”.¹³⁵ Jackson also recalled writing a paper on Māori women that the MWWL regarded as “so radical that they wanted to take me to court over it”.¹³⁶ Her view represented the 1970s-1990s increase in favour for bold protest actions. The MWWL's approach to implementing Māori women's tino rangatiratanga through meetings and advocacy to policymakers, was contrasted by more pronounced activism in occupations, hīkoi, national petitions, or publishing ‘radical’ and strongly opinionated pieces as Jackson and Awatere did. Whilst the MWWL had involvement in some of these actions, like its support for the 1984 Waitangi hīkoi, there was clearly a perception that it distanced itself from them.¹³⁷ This

¹³³ Donna Awatere, ‘Korerotia Wahine Ma: Interviews with Three Māori Women by Donna Awatere’, *Broadsheet*, 101, July/August 1982, p. 23.

¹³⁴ *Māori Sovereignty: the Māori Perspective*, pp. 93-95.

¹³⁵ Awatere, Interviews with Three Māori Women, p. 24.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 25.

¹³⁷ Basil Keane, 'Kotahitanga – unity movements - Kotahitanga movements in the 20th and 21st centuries', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, June 20 2012: www.teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/33600/hikoi-to-waitangi

perception came not only from critics, but from within the League, as evident in Kupu's caution over bolder forms of activism being excessively 'aggressive.'

Division was also driven by varying preferences for 'collaborating' with the Government. Historian Richard Hill tracked how the MWWL was founded in connection with the Department of Māori Affairs and grew as an "independent body" with "official support", representing Māori concerns to the Government.¹³⁸ This originating link with the Government aligned with Kupu's emphasis on advocating to policymakers and having 'open dialogue' with officials. Eva Rickard felt that the MWWL had a disappointing trajectory from when she originally joined in 1955, becoming a "sell out".¹³⁹ Whilst Hill contended the MWWL "re-appropriated" state backing by using it to advocate for Māori women's issues, Rickard's criticism implied a wariness of the League being structured as a vessel for the Government's intrusion into and appropriation of Māori organisational structures.¹⁴⁰ Given Māori historical grievances with the Crown's breaching of the Treaty, it was unlikely that all Māori women activists shared Kupu's desire for open dialogue with the Government: for what if dialogue just became a means for the Government's voice to dominate and drown Māori out?

Despite their internal divisions, 1970s-1990s Māori women activists inspired many Pākehā women to engage in Treaty activism. Mita recalled how the 1981 Springbok tour awakened numerous Pākehā to domestic racism. Awatere's 1982 *Māori Sovereignty* articles raised their consciousness further; this was a component of what drove Mita to claim that the articles "outdid the Bible".¹⁴¹ Second-wave feminist *Broadsheet* readers became one of the main demographics of Pākehā women who participated in Treaty activism. A specific example of

¹³⁸ Richard Hill, 'Māori and State Policy', in Giselle Byrnes, ed., *New Oxford History of New Zealand*, South Melbourne, Victoria, 2009, pp. 530-531.

¹³⁹ Awatere, Interviews with Three Māori Women, p. 26.

¹⁴⁰ Hill, pp. 530-531.

¹⁴¹ An Interview with Donna Awatere and Merata Mita, p. 13.

Awatere's influence is Women for Aotearoa (WFA). This group of Pākehā feminists wrote a collective response piece to *Māori Sovereignty*, crediting Awatere with bringing them together over their shared interest in discussing her articles and inspiring them to participate in Waitangi protest actions.¹⁴² Their foremost concern was the clear intersection between Māori women activists' "call for Māori sovereignty" and feminism's core mission of "women getting power over their own lives".¹⁴³

However, the concerns of Pākehā women in 1970s-1990s Treaty activism were not uniform either. For example, Mitizi Nairn, influential in leading church involvement with Treaty activism, had trepidation towards "radical constitutional change" based on Treaty principles and centring Māori sovereignty. As a 1970s Treaty activist, her view was more moderate than the younger generation of 1980s Pākehā feminists. Whilst the WFA called for rapid and "revolutionary" change, Nairn felt progress should occur gradually to preserve financial stability and the continuation of Aotearoa's state.¹⁴⁴

Furthermore, despite many Pākehā women's intentions to ally with Treaty activism, their intersection with Māori women activists was characterised by significant divisions. There were numerous clashing viewpoints between Māori and Pākehā women about how Treaty activism should take shape, what its key concerns were, and the nature of their roles and collaboration within it. Compelling examples of this comprise Pākehā and Māori women's contesting perspectives on how 'radical' Māori activists were, and whether 'Pākehā guilt' should be relinquished, as well as their feelings of caution towards each other. Pākehā women were often conservative about how much they thought Māori leadership and sovereignty should be

¹⁴² Women for Aotearoa, 'Pākehā Women Respond to *Māori Sovereignty*', *Broadsheet*, 110, June 1983, p. 16.

¹⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁴⁴ Pākehā Women Respond to *Māori Sovereignty*; p.17; Carol Archie, *Māori Sovereignty: the Pākehā Perspective*, Auckland, 1995, p. 46.

emboldened by Treaty activism, whilst some Māori women activists expressed wariness towards collaborating with Pākehā in Treaty activism.

Pākehā women's crediting of radical Māori women for influencing them to take up Treaty activism drew criticism from Māori who felt 'radical' was an inaccurate label that had been imposed on them. The WFA praised "radical Māori women" activists and Awatere's *Māori Sovereignty* articles as providing a "radical analysis".¹⁴⁵ However, in those very articles, Awatere argued that people who used the descriptor 'radical' were ignorant of how contemporary Māori activists were consciously "carrying on the kaupapa of their tūpuna".¹⁴⁶ Indeed, 'radical' implied that Māori had, without precedent, abruptly and rapidly rallied from the 1970s. This understanding dismissed the longevity of intergenerational Māori resistance and the entrenched grievances it had continuously fought to see addressed. As Hilda Halkyard summarised, late 20th-century Māori activists were only "saying what every other Māori had been saying since 1840."¹⁴⁷ Halkyard defined the single distinction between the resistance of older versus younger generations of Māori, as the latter were simply seeking to "make a louder bang" in an attempt to finally be heard by deliberately deaf Pākehā.¹⁴⁸ Whilst Pākehā women perceived activists like Halkyard and Awatere as trailblazers, those same activists felt that Pākehā were unable to understand that just because recent 'loud' protest methods, like the 1975 Land March or 1977-1978 Bastion Point Occupation, had grabbed their attention, this did not mean that Māori resistance had not existed before then.

Another contested dimension of Pākehā women framing Māori women activists as 'radical' was their perception that they were defying restrictions placed on their gender by Māori

¹⁴⁵ Archie, *Māori Sovereignty*, pp. 17 & 38.

¹⁴⁶ Donna Awatere, *Māori Sovereignty*, pp. 52-54.

¹⁴⁷ Interviews with Three Māori Women, p. 29.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

culture. The WFA contended that “Māori women radicals” were not only crucially challenging Pākehā ignorance about the Treaty and Māori sovereignty but also admirably subverting cultural tradition in daring “to speak”.¹⁴⁹ They were likely alluding to Māori women not being allowed to speak on marae, a custom which Pākehā second-wave feminists tended to construe as Māori women’s iwi expecting them to be demure and subservient. Similarly, in *Māori Sovereignty: the Pākehā Perspective*, Sue Culling expressed that within her ideal vision for Aotearoa’s future and the reformation of institutions to comply with Māori sovereignty and the Treaty, Māori culture would “evolve” to allow the voices of “all Māoridom”, including Māori women, to be properly heard.¹⁵⁰

There was some reality in Māori women challenging expectations in their Treaty activism. For example, Evans and Awatere sang at a Pakuranga Rotary Club event, interweaving resistance by singing “how much longer must we wait for the rights that we should have guaranteed us to Waitangi” [sic— rights guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi].¹⁵¹ Evans recalled this as a charged action, in light of the notion that “protest wasn’t a real song and that karanga was the only legitimate form of Māori women’s expression”, with the marae ātea, a space where debates are held, “belonging only to men”.¹⁵² She “debated for many years” about women speaking on the marae with Māori men and women alike.¹⁵³

However, the Pākehā image of a Māori woman radically and valiantly defying traditions did not empathise with the sacredness of such traditions, nor the emotional toll that subverting them took. Halkyard was initially wary of feminism and Treaty activism because “it meant challenging Māori institutions” and “tapu”.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, whilst Evans expressed a desire for a

¹⁴⁹ Pākehā Women Respond to *Māori Sovereignty*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁰ *Māori Sovereignty: the Pākehā Perspective*, p. 92.

¹⁵¹ Evans, ‘The Negation of Powerlessness’.

¹⁵² *ibid.*

¹⁵³ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Interviews with Three Māori Women, p. 30.

change in speaking rights on the marae, she may have also felt conflicted by the paramount significance of marae customs within iwi and te ao Māori. Moreover, Māori women activists tended not to regard Māori cultural precedent in line with the Pākehā assertion of it being completely restricting of their gender. They framed previous generations of Māori women as traditionally able to possess significant mana and agency. Georgina Kirby emphasised the high status of Māori women who signed the Treaty.¹⁵⁵ There was a pervasive notion that Māori women's oppression originated with and was inflicted most strongly by Pākehā's role in colonisation and Treaty breaches. As Kirby described, the Wai 381 Māori Women's Claim argued that the Crown was culpable for infringing the Treaty by "giving away the mana of Māori women".¹⁵⁶ Ella Henry's 1990s Master's thesis researched the high standing Māori women traditionally possessed before colonisation's influence eroded it, contending that fewer leadership positions were given to them in the 20th century by comparison. Henry interviewed some Wai 381 claimants for input on this argument.¹⁵⁷ This framing contrasted significantly with the Pākehā view that undermining Māori women's mana was intrinsic and traditional to te ao Māori.

Another key facet of how Pākehā women's Treaty activism came under Māori criticism centred around the idea of Pākehā guilt. In a 1994 article for the Marxist feminist journal *Hecate*, Gay Simpkin cited the opposition that she and fellow members of the WFA faced for their view that Pakeha should relinquish their guilt as a significant issue during the 1980s. As Marxist feminists, the group drew inspiration from Marx's conceptualisation of the oppressive nature of a capitalist society not being driven by one people subjugating another, but rather, the "impersonal

¹⁵⁵ *Māori Sovereignty: the Māori Perspective*, p. 72.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁵⁷ 'The Mana Wāhine Inquiry isn't over yet', *Spinoff*.

economic mechanism of capital, driven by its own momentum and out of our control”.¹⁵⁸ They transplanted Marx’s argument to frame grievances Māori had endured – not driven by Pākehā, but by colonisation as an ‘impersonal’ system out of anyone’s control. The WFA regarded this framing as a basis for effective activism, for if Pākehā activists were too paralysed by their guilt, they would be unable to move forward and achieve productive protest actions that could dismantle colonisation and Treaty breaches’ harmful effects.¹⁵⁹ Simpkin described their stance on Pākehā guilt as a defining feature that set the WFA’s “approach to anti-racism” apart “from many other feminist groups”.¹⁶⁰

Simpkin reflected with frustration on the criticism the WFA drew from within the *People Opposed to Waitangi* (POW), a coalition of activist groups allied in 1983 to protest at Waitangi Day celebrations.¹⁶¹ She recalled how ‘the churches’ and other Pākehā activists perceived the group as “refusing to atone for past [Pākehā] guilt”.¹⁶² In particular, Simpkin emphasised how the WFA were stung by the “real dressing-down” they received from Māori activists within the POW. She claimed that they preferred Pākehā who were “prepared to be penitent about racism” and “cannon fodder”.¹⁶³ Whilst the WFA sought to ally with Māori activists, they faced significant opposition to their argument for shedding Pākehā guilt. They felt unfairly dismissed and relegated for their standpoint, and expected by Māori to needlessly throw themselves in front of the ‘cannon’ of guilt instead of effectively fighting in the war against racism.

The Māori critics of WFA likely felt that they were questionable allies. Letting go of guilt may have appeared as a strategy to give Pākehā Treaty activists a more favourable appearance by erasing their culpability for the Treaty breaches and Māori grievances they were protesting. In

¹⁵⁸ Gay Simpkin, ‘Women for Aotearoa: Feminism and Maori Sovereignty’, *Hecate*, 20, 2, 1994.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

¹⁶² *ibid.*

¹⁶³ *ibid.*

her *Māori Sovereignty* articles, Awatere condemned “amnesia” as a tactic of Pākehā to “deny responsibility” for their historical misactions.¹⁶⁴ . Simpkin drew a connection between the WFA and Awatere because Awatere’s articles had influenced them to form in the first place, and Awatere had expressed interest in Marxism in the early 1970s.¹⁶⁵ However, despite such intersections between them, the way the WFA utilised Marx’s argument about the impersonal mechanism of capital was a marked contrast to Awatere’s position on Pākehā taking responsibility.

Moreover, Pākehā women were frequently conservative about the extent to which they thought Māori leadership and sovereignty should be emboldened by Treaty activism. The WFA urged that “feminism should not be left behind on the way to Māori sovereignty” and asked if “accepting” Māori activists as leaders entailed having to follow all their orders.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, Culling asserted that centring Māori sovereignty in reforming Aotearoa should not translate to Māori having total control, for this was not what the Treaty envisaged.¹⁶⁷ Despite desiring to ally with Māori women in Treaty activism, many Pākehā women still could only tolerate empowering Māori leaders or Māori sovereignty to a limited extent. Awatere observed this conservatism, contending that Pākehā second-wave feminists tended to use their “power, status and privilege to ensure their definition of ‘feminism’ superseded that of Māori women”.¹⁶⁸

Māori women activists often possessed similar caution, but towards the extent to which they desired to collaborate with Pākehā activists. Sharon Hawke, an activist involved in the Bastion Point occupation, was ‘wary’ of Pākehā women involved in Māori resistance. She “respected the role they play” but tried not to “get too close to them”.¹⁶⁹ Halkyard reflected on

¹⁶⁴ Awatere, *Māori Sovereignty*, pp. 56-91.

¹⁶⁵ Simpkin, ‘Women for Aotearoa’.

¹⁶⁶ Pākehā Women Respond to *Māori Sovereignty*, p. 39.

¹⁶⁷ Māori sovereignty: the Pākehā perspective, p. 86.

¹⁶⁸ Awatere, *Māori Sovereignty*, pp. 41-45.

¹⁶⁹ Hilda Halkyard, ‘Women of the Land: Sharon and Reni Hawke’, *Broadsheet*, 101, July/August 1982, p. 33.

how even in Pākehā who proclaimed to be anti-racist, she sensed they held the kind of “definition of Māori” that “turned me against myself and our people as a child”.¹⁷⁰ Just as some Pākehā women could not completely embrace the centring of Māori sovereignty and empowerment in Treaty activism, Māori women activists frequently could not fully accept them as allies due to Pākehā’s role in colonisation, Treaty breaches, and disempowering Māori.

Overall, conflict was a prominent feature of Māori and Pākehā women’s Treaty activism in the 1970s-1990s. Most significantly, there was division in their intersection. Questions arose –should Pākehā activists feel guilty for colonisation and Treaty breaches? Were Māori women activists ‘radical’ and ‘defying tradition’ for showing their power, as Pākehā often described? To what extent should Māori women be emboldened and Māori sovereignty centred through Treaty activism? Could Pākehā women be trusted as allies to Māori? All these questions generated divergent answers from Māori and Pākehā women, and not only saw them clash on how they viewed Treaty activism, but more broadly, on how they viewed themselves, each other, and their ability or lack thereof to come together.

There has been a tendency towards the idealisation of women’s history and Aotearoa New Zealand history, with events like women campaigning for and winning the right to vote in 1893 perceived as purely optimistic and ascendant. However, idealising Kate Sheppard and the women’s suffrage movement can overlook significant tensions like Ngā Komiti Wāhine having to refrain from tā moko in order to ally with the Women’s Christian Temperance Union.¹⁷¹ Similarly, depicting the intersection between Māori and Pākehā women within Treaty activism

¹⁷⁰ Interviews with Three Māori Women, p. 29.

¹⁷¹ Leonie Hayden, ‘Let’s not forget that Māori women had the vote long before Europeans arrived’, *Spinoff*, September 19 2018:

www.thespinnoff.co.nz/atea/19-09-2018/lets-not-forget-that-maori-women-had-the-vote-long-before-europeans-arrive

as harmonious would be a misleading simplification. Whilst Māori and Pākehā women's significant and empowered role in Treaty activism should be acknowledged, we must also examine their divisions if we are to gain a more authentic and nuanced historical picture.

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Colonial Convict Control: The Institutional Means and Efficacy of Managing Australian Convict Populations

Discuss the aims and efficacy of institutions developed by the colonial state to control the convict population.

Ella Schenkel

The Australian colonial state prescribed its convict institutions with set aims and desired outcomes. Convict institutions were not only systems of penal punishment but powerful engines for fulfilling the objectives of colonial society. By design, these convict institutions provided the foundations for the success of a new colony. Clearly, the institutions that the colonial state designed to fulfil its aims were multifaceted. Each carried political, economic, or moral salience in addition to an underlying purpose of controlling the convict population. However, when assessed individually, early convict institutions varied in efficacy. We can assess this efficacy by the extent to which each institution fulfilled the colonial state's aims. The colonial state prioritised some aims over others. Economic development was a principal aim, ranking above penal punishment and dominating moral or nationalist interests.¹⁷² As such, an institution must also be evaluated based on the significance to the colonial state of the aim, or aims, that it fulfils. With this approach, we can assess the institutions of transportation, the state's restrictive policies towards marriage, religious instruction, labour gangs, and work assignment. Each institution

¹⁷² Ian Duffield and James Bradley, *Representing Convicts*, New York, 1997, p. 144.

served one or more purposes of the colonial state but achieved them to comparably variable extents.

As a primary aim of the state, economic development was central to the colony's administration of convict institutions. Administrators founded the colony in Port Jackson, where the state could profit from a "healthy climate and fertile land".¹⁷³ The administration used this base to construct Australian society with the twin purposes of productivity and development.¹⁷⁴ The state aimed to use convicts to grow Australia's economy and "offset ... the costs of British penal policy".¹⁷⁵ Within prescribed institutions, employers could use convicts for their labour in building infrastructure or as private workers. In the early years of settlement, convicts would construct roads, fell timber, and generate a modest agricultural industry.¹⁷⁶ The use of convicts in private labour could also reduce government spending, further aiding the economic aims of the state.¹⁷⁷ Through economic pursuits, the colonial state strove to grow a distant colony into a developing site of industry.

Institutions involving convict labour also served a secondary aim of penal reformation. As documented by the philosopher Michel Foucault, the eighteenth-century Western world moved away from execution and towards punishments of a "less immediately physical kind".¹⁷⁸ This movement influenced penal punishment in Australia. Colonial administrators directed their efforts towards deterrence and reformation rather than retributive punishment.¹⁷⁹ The aspect of

¹⁷³ Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus, and Marcus Rediker, *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World*, Berkeley, 2006, p. 96.

¹⁷⁴ Duffield and Bradley, p. 144.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Richard Whately, William Molesworth, Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons., and Select Committee on Transportation, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on transportation: together with a letter from the Archbishop of Dublin on the same subject: and notes by Sir William Molesworth*, London, 1838, p. 13; Duffield and Bradley, p.149; J.B. Hirst, *Convict Society and its Enemies*, Sydney, 1983, p. 92.

¹⁷⁷ Kirsty Reid, *Gender, Crime and Empire; Convicts, Settlers and the State in Early Colonial Australia*, Manchester, 2007, p. 123.

¹⁷⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York, 1979, p. 14.

¹⁷⁹ Reid, p. 124.

deterrence within institutions served to discourage prospective criminals, whilst reform was meant to heal the ‘criminal mindset’. One method of deterrence was hard labour, which could foster a sense of “dread” in the minds of British men.¹⁸⁰ Physical work could also encourage existing convicts towards better behaviour and eventual escape. However, many convict institutions serving penal purposes were designed primarily to fulfil economic objectives. The colonial state instructed its administrators to prioritise economic development over penal punishment.¹⁸¹ By way of example, work assignment served “aims of punishment, deterrence and reformation”, but mainly supplied profitable labour for Australia’s economy.¹⁸² The most effective convict institutions by the colonial state’s standards were those wherein penal objectives served higher economic aims. Such was the colony’s method in pursuing its aim of penal reform.

Moral rehabilitation was an additional objective to the economic and penal aims of the colonial state. The colonial state aimed efforts for moral reform toward further reshaping the convict psyche. A morally reformed convict would embody the “core value system” of the British state and preserve British nationalism.¹⁸³ Whilst the colonial administration did facilitate moral rehabilitation, it was mainly guided by religious groups and individuals. From William Ullathorne’s Catholic perspective, convicts were “fallen souls” in need of pious reformation.¹⁸⁴ Judge Burton, an Evangelical, supported a similarly active role of the Church in providing religious teaching, but as a more active “terror to evil doers”.¹⁸⁵ These religious figures agreed, however, that one purpose of the religious and moral instruction was to “patch up the

¹⁸⁰ Reid, p. 123.

¹⁸¹ Hirst, p. 83.

¹⁸² Reid, p. 124.

¹⁸³ Hilary M. Carey, *Empire of Hell: Religion and the Campaign to End Convict Transportation in the British Empire*, Cambridge, 2019, p. 29.

¹⁸⁴ Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore: History of the Transportation of Convicts to Australia, 1787-1868*, London, 1995, p. 265.

¹⁸⁵ Carey, p. 146.

deficiencies of the ramshackle penal system”.¹⁸⁶ They saw penal institutions as insufficient to impose moral obligation.¹⁸⁷ Where these institutions failed, ethical rehabilitation could provide an alternative remedy. According to Governor John Franklin, an individual settler’s home could be a civilising place where convicts took on moral character from their surroundings.¹⁸⁸ Under some contemporary beliefs, aiming for moral rehabilitation supported the penal disciplinary system by providing alternate avenues for reform.

The final principal aim of the administration was to maintain the nationalist values of British society. The British state aimed to create a colony separated from itself but mimicking its laws and “national morality”.¹⁸⁹ However, it also sought to cleanse the British state of its criminal blight.¹⁹⁰ British society believed at the time that convicts had a genetic predisposition to crime and belonged to a separate class of society.¹⁹¹ This idea fuelled a desire to rid Britain of criminals. The British state looked to its colonies for support whilst its jails reached a dire, overflowing state.¹⁹² However, the recent American Revolution had barred the usual transportation route for convicts.¹⁹³ Australia served as a new destination for transported convicts. The institutions established there could serve nationalist British aims by providing space for convicts and proudly replicating Britain’s own laws and values.

As noted, the efficacy of an institution can be evaluated on the basis of the extent to which it achieved the aims of the colonial state. One less effective institution used to control convicts was that of transportation itself. The colonial state sent convicts on long journeys to a

¹⁸⁶ Carey, p. 42.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 130.

¹⁸⁸ Reid, pp. 125-126.

¹⁸⁹ Carey, p. 29.

¹⁹⁰ Deborah Oxley, *Convict Maids: The Forced Migration of Women to Australia*, Cambridge, 1996, p. 98.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁹² Christopher, Pybus, and Rediker, p. 93.

¹⁹³ *ibid.*

destination of which they knew little, risking death and disease aboard overcrowded ships.¹⁹⁴ Such conditions are comparable to any torturous penal punishment. However, as a penalty, transportation was not greatly effective in fulfilling the aims of penal and moral reform. According to the Molesworth Report, transportation was an inefficient deterrent.¹⁹⁵ It further corrupted, instead of reforming, “those who [underwent] the punishment.”¹⁹⁶ Whilst historians have criticised the Report for its manipulation of sources, this particular assessment remains largely undisputed. Mutiny aboard some vessels signified a lack of reform in convicts’ predisposition towards crime.¹⁹⁷ Upon reaching New South Wales, convicts that met with settlers onshore “undermined transportation’s psychological effects”, allowing them to develop strategies to bypass state assignment systems.¹⁹⁸ Deterrence was an implausible prospect. A positive view of Australian exile extended far into British culture. Even Charles Dickens voiced his concerns of Australia’s warm and sunny climate undermining “the potency of this ... punishment as a deterrent”.¹⁹⁹ Despite state-issued pamphlets depicting the horrors of transportation, most convicts saw Australia as a desirable destination: an economically prosperous colony.²⁰⁰ This economic prosperity was one way transportation fulfilled the aims of the colonial state. Transportation supplied Australia with a permanent workforce, reducing the “costs of British penal policy”.²⁰¹ By relocating convicts from Britain, transportation also served aims of preserving British nationalism. It removed convicts from a British state that believed in a “hereditary” disposition towards crime.²⁰² Thus, transportation did fulfil economic and

¹⁹⁴ Christopher, Pybus, and Rediker, p. 99.

¹⁹⁵ Whately, Molesworth, Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons., and Select Committee on Transportation, p. xii.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Hughes, p. 155.

¹⁹⁸ Reid. p. 142.

¹⁹⁹ Oxley, pp. 104-5.

²⁰⁰ Carey, p. 148; Oxley, p. 104.

²⁰¹ Duffield and Bradley, p. 144.

²⁰² Carey, p. 29.

nationalist pursuits. Whilst transportation did not instantly achieve penal and moral aims, convicts relocated to Australia had opportunities for a “fresh start”.²⁰³ Further institutions, only possible because of transportation, could be instated to better serve objectives for reform.

One such institution was the colonial state’s policies to restrict marriage among convicts. Early colonial Australia fostered a system of “freedom in sexual relationships”.²⁰⁴ Marriage was initially allowed as a way to improve societal morality, as understood under British convention.²⁰⁵ However, in the 1810s and 1820s, a new wave of political change limited convicts’ access to marriage.²⁰⁶ One reason for the change was the Australian administration’s concerns about female convicts’ use of marriage as an “escape route” from labour.²⁰⁷ Another purpose was to use the reward of marriage as an incentive for good conduct.²⁰⁸ Thus, the restrictions served economic, penal, and, by association, moral aims, including changing behaviour and promoting efficient labour. Whilst in practice convicts could create spaces to engage in illicit relationships, lessening their motivation to work towards marriage, this was a minor factor.²⁰⁹ The broadly positive effect on the colony offset any small acts of rebellion. In practice, convict workers strove to represent themselves as “reformed individuals and good colonial workers”.²¹⁰ The proportion of women in service rose over time.²¹¹ Whilst the number of incarcerated women also increased, this could be attributed to a tightening of the criminal justice system.²¹² Marriage restriction not only increased participation in labour, aiding the economy, but

²⁰³ L. L. Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia: An Enquiry into the Origin and Character of the Convicts Transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land 1787-1852*, Melbourne, 1965, p. 157.

²⁰⁴ Hirst, p. 79.

²⁰⁵ *ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Reid, p. 133.

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 132.

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p. 148.

²⁰⁹ Duffield and Bradley, p. 115.

²¹⁰ Reid, p. 147.

²¹¹ Reid, p. 134.

²¹² *ibid.*

had a tangible, positive effect on convict behaviour. It intertwined aims of economic, penal, and even moral reform. Increased workforce participation and output certainly had a positive impact on the colony's economy. However, a change of behaviour is not a proven change of the psyche. Evidence of marriages sought only for freedom and problematic marriages between ex-convicts indicate the state's shortcomings in reforming convict mindsets.²¹³

However, relative to restrictive marriage policies, religious instruction had much less success in achieving moral aims. Upon Judge Burton's suggestion, the colonial state appointed clergy and police magistrates to promote the spread of "public worship and religious instruction".²¹⁴ Independent figures such as Ullathorne travelled between convict settlements, spreading religious teachings and aiming to restore convicts' moral dignity.²¹⁵ In some contexts, such as in penal settlements on Norfolk Island, religious instructors ceased making efforts to reform criminals.²¹⁶ It was thought that they were beyond help.²¹⁷ Alternatively, in the Female Factory, convicts were responsive to religious reformers.²¹⁸ However, the fact that one-third of these women were already Catholic most likely aided in this success.²¹⁹ In evaluating this institution's efficacy, it is important to note that sources describing religious instruction have the propensity to be exaggerated. Many, such as Ullathorne's, were produced to advocate for Church funding.²²⁰ Of significance is the conflict between religious groups for the colonial state's support.²²¹ It is also arguable whether moral reform could even occur. Many convicts were transported for petty crimes, such as theft or vagrancy, or for crimes committed deliberately in an

²¹³ Whately, Molesworth, Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons., and Select Committee on Transportation, p. 12; Reid, p. 140.

²¹⁴ Carey, p. 133.

²¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 153.

²¹⁶ Hughes, p. 483.

²¹⁷ *ibid.*

²¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 262.

²¹⁹ *ibid.*

²²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 263.

²²¹ Carey, p. 123.

effort to be transported.²²² It is arguable whether these convicts possessed a so-called ‘criminal mindset’. Whilst religious instruction could help in spreading British religious ideologies within the colony, it could not alter convicts’ moral characters to any great extent. The relative inefficacy of religious instruction is clear in its role as an aid to other institutions and not an institution in itself.²²³ Efforts for religious education were reserved primarily to arranged meetings between convicts and religious figures, or the mandating of church attendance.²²⁴

A more effective institution was that of labour gangs. This institution served highly prioritised aims of economic development and penal reformation. Importantly, labour gangs played a significant role in deterrence. Workers wore heavy irons, performed repetitive tasks, and, according to one report, lived in “virtual slavery”.²²⁵ In the hierarchy of punishment, within which convicts could be promoted or demoted, labour gangs occupied lower rungs.²²⁶ Therefore, the prospect of being demoted to serve in gang labour incentivised convicts in other institutions toward better behaviour. Whilst labour gangs stole food at night and were “miserably unproductive” by day, their predicament was a deterrent to convicts occupying upper spaces in the hierarchy.²²⁷ Therefore, the institution of gang labour helped fulfil penal reform on a broader level, discouraging criminal behaviour on a society-wide scale. Again, it is clear that this form of penal reformation resulted in more behavioural than psychological change. Regardless, despite slim rations and criminal tendencies making gang labourers less efficient, the institution significantly reduced government spending.²²⁸ The colonial state opposed the disbandment of

²²² Robson, pp. 70-72; Reid, p. 140.

²²³ Carey, p. 145.

²²⁴ Reid, p. 127; Hughes, p. 262.

²²⁵ Hirst, p. 94; Duffield and Bradley, p. 144; Robson, p. 129.

²²⁶ Reid, p. 130.

²²⁷ Hughes, pp. 431-432.

²²⁸ Christopher, Pybus, and Rediker, p. 105.

road gangs, with General Bourke claiming their importance in road construction.²²⁹ Labour gangs also helped mine coal, farm, and produce timber.²³⁰ Thus, benefits to the colony's economy and the broader hierarchy of convict discipline made labour gangs an effective institution in colonial Australia. Economic aims were certainly achieved to a more significant extent than penal ones. However, whilst it is without doubt that gang labourers commonly misbehaved, they made invaluable contributions to the settlement at large.

The institution of work assignment provided similar economic benefits but also faltered in the fulfilment of penal and moral aims. The colonial state engineered the assignment of convicts to settlers with the principal aim of developing the economy. Unpaid convicts made appealing alternatives to free men.²³¹ They could assist settlers as servants and maids, with many using existing skills to assimilate with colonial needs.²³² Whilst the deliberate limitation of output, or even absenteeism, was common, these small rebellions were non-fatal to the economy.²³³ Worker rebellion usually manifested only on an individual level.²³⁴ On the whole, convicts were effectively exploited for their skills and labour.²³⁵ Penal and moral aims clearly ranked below economic motivations. The settler's home could act as a prison house where the "untamed" convict was civilised during assignment.²³⁶ However, rehabilitation came second to the "profit and convenience" of "private masters".²³⁷ "Day-to-day forms of [convict] resistance", whilst inconsequential in economic terms, indicated a lack of penal and moral reform.²³⁸ Women

²²⁹ Whately, Molesworth, Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons., and Select Committee on Transportation, p. 14.

²³⁰ Duffield and Bradley, pp. 144-149; Hughes, p. 442.

²³¹ Hirst, p. 89.

²³² Oxley, p. 106.

²³³ Duffield and Bradley, p. 114.

²³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 110.

²³⁵ Reid, p. 102.

²³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 125.

²³⁷ Hirst, p. 95.

²³⁸ Duffield and Bradley, p. 110.

were considered more troublesome than their male counterparts.²³⁹ They could exhibit aggression towards their masters, showing a lack of the restraint indicative of a change in character.²⁴⁰ In evaluation, assignment was an effective way to fulfil economic aims, but was counterproductive to penal and moral objectives. Economic interests ranked above incentives for convict reform and were therefore achieved to a greater standard. However, this was acceptable to a colonial state which, in its early years, prioritised industrial pursuits.²⁴¹ Penal punishment was of lower concern, executed in parallel to the building of an economically viable colony.²⁴²

Australia's convict institutions fulfilled the aims of the colonial state to various extents. Their success, however, was not dictated by the efforts of the administration. Convict institutions relied heavily upon the convict psyche. The most successful institutions took control of convicts and repurposed them into tools for settlement growth. This repurposing significantly contributed to the success of institutions that paired economic and penal aims. In most cases, nationalist aims of the British state were also effectively upheld when integrated into institutions. The very nature of convict relocation and assignment conformed to British ideals. Institutions wherein moral reform was a prioritised aim were comparably less effective. Similarly, penal reform commonly only occurred as an improvement in behaviour. It is clear that the convict psyche was resistant to change. Whilst convicts could be inspired toward good conduct, individual character was a more fixed aspect of convict identity. As such, the efficacy of Australian convict institutions in achieving colonial aims followed an ironic pattern. Despite a movement towards psychological punishment, as Foucault described, the colonial state exerted more power through its physical control over convicts.

²³⁹ Oxley, p. 232.

²⁴⁰ Duffield and Bradley, p. 112.

²⁴¹ Hirst, p. 83.

²⁴² *ibid.*

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HIST 357 - MAKING MODERN AMERICA, 1865 - 1919

The GAPE: An Age of Readjustment

Historian Richard Hofstadter described the period of United States history from 1877 to 1919 as an “age of reform.” Robert Wiebe saw the defining feature of this period as Americans’ “search for order.” Nell Painter saw Americans “standing at Armageddon” during these years. And Jon Grinspan sees these years as an “age of acrimony.” Which phrase best captures the history of the “Gilded Age and Progressive Era”?

Samuel Turner-O’ Keeffe

Between 1877 and 1919, the United States witnessed an enormous amount of change. Over the subsequent century, historians have attempted to explain that change, partly by describing the Gilded Age and Progressive Era (or GAPE) as an “age of reform”, “search for order”, “age of acrimony”, or a period in which Americans were “standing at Armageddon”.²⁴³ Such phrases each cast the GAPE as a period dominated by events of a shared character – reformist, orderly, doomsday or acrimonious. However, given that the GAPE was, by most accounts, “chaos”, this characterisation seems inaccurate.²⁴⁴ Instead, the GAPE is probably best understood as a period of infinite variety, but predominantly formed by Americans’ reactions to the same event: the complete upheaval of their nation’s economy. The rise of industrial and financial capitalism was indeed central to practically every decision made by Americans during

²⁴³ Robert D. Johnston, ‘Influential Works about the Gilded Age and Progressive Era’, in Christopher McKnight Nichols and Nancy C. Unger, eds, *A Companion to the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, West Sussex, 2017, p. 438.

²⁴⁴ Heather Cox Richardson, ‘Reconstructing the Gilded Age and Progressive Era’, in Christopher McKnight Nichols and Nancy C. Unger, eds, *A Companion to the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, West Sussex, 2017, p. 7.

the GAPE, influencing everything from the rise of wage labour, Progressivism and mass migration, to increased turbulence in race relations and the shift in the nation's sociocultural landscape. Thus, whilst some Americans certainly developed reforms, sought "order" and engaged acrimoniously with each other during the GAPE, these were merely different examples of reactions to an economic revolution.²⁴⁵ As such, the GAPE was fundamentally an "age of readjustment". Scrambling to take advantage of new opportunities or simply to survive, Americans acclimatised to their new economic environment in ways that would eventually fashion both the contemporary United States, and the natures, views and freedoms of the modern-day Americans that populate it.

If the GAPE was a manifestation of Americans' immediate responses to a seismic economic revolution, then those economic changes must be explained. The start of the GAPE, 1877, marked the end of Reconstruction, a period in which the United States grappled with the outcome of the American Civil War.²⁴⁶ In particular, during Reconstruction the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were passed, abolishing slavery and (at least theoretically) giving African-American men full civil rights.²⁴⁷ This spelled disaster for the United States economy. During the antebellum years, the United States relied heavily on Southern plantations and their slave labour.²⁴⁸ Those plantations produced raw materials, such as tobacco and cotton, that were transported to the North, refined, and sold by merchants into European markets.²⁴⁹ Reconstruction forced Northern businessmen to abandon this trade and look for promising ventures elsewhere.²⁵⁰ Many found domestic industries which they considered

²⁴⁵ Johnston, p. 43

²⁴⁶ Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!* New York, 2010, p. 586.

²⁴⁷ *ibid.*

²⁴⁸ Noam Maggor, 'American Capitalism: From the Atlantic Economy to Domestic Industrialization', in Christopher McKnight Nichols and Nancy C. Unger, eds, *A Companion to the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, West Sussex, 2017, p. 207.

²⁴⁹ Maggor, 'American Capitalism', pp. 206-207.

²⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 207.

“undercapitalized”, such as the steel, railroad, oil and meatpacking industries, and sunk considerable capital into them, often by purchasing stocks in businesses that had incorporated (corporations).²⁵¹ The result was the instigation of a Second Industrial Revolution – suddenly, domestic businesses had the capital required to drastically increase production and undertake risky ventures they previously would not have dared to attempt.²⁵² It would be Americans’ ways of readjusting to this economic revolution – both those of businesspeople, and of others – that would shape the GAPE in practically every manner imaginable, and thus act as its true “unifying theme”.²⁵³

Firstly, the economic revolution prompted many Americans to focus heavily on maximising efficiency during the GAPE – a concept still dominating the contemporary United States.²⁵⁴ This began in the business world. Rapid postbellum increases in production and exposure to “plentiful... cheap credit” from Northern businessmen made investment in expensive, highly-efficient methods of production feasible for businesses and corporations, and many promptly took the opportunity to maximise efficiency.²⁵⁵ For example, Andrew Carnegie’s businesses invested heavily in high-efficiency steel production technology such as the Bessemer process, and also established sweeping management bureaucracies – a practice undertaken by many corporations too.²⁵⁶ Yet these business tactics for improving efficiency were quickly imported into other fields as the GAPE wore on. Progressives, for instance, introduced the ‘city manager’ role into small locality governments, and politicians like Theodore Roosevelt and Governor of Wisconsin Robert M. La Follette hired experts (such as university academics) to

²⁵¹ Maggor, ‘American Capitalism’, p. 208.

²⁵² *ibid.*; Foner, p. 633.

²⁵³ Richardson, p. 7.

²⁵⁴ Maggor, p. 208; Michael Kazin, ‘Why the Gilded Age and Progressive Era Still Matter’, in Christopher McKnight Nichols and Nancy C. Unger, eds, *A Companion to the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, West Sussex, 2017, p. 451.

²⁵⁵ Kazin, p. 451; Maggor, p. 208.

²⁵⁶ Foner, pp. 638-639; Maggor, p. 205.

help run their administrations.²⁵⁷ These measures were justified, Progressives argued, because they would “bring efficiency to conserving the government’s resources in the public interest”.²⁵⁸ Labour unions such as the AFL also began to practise “business unionism”, embracing the businesslike pursuit of efficiency in order to improve their organisational structures and avoid the fates of their predecessors, such as the Knights of Labor, which had been poorly organised (although, interestingly, some of those groups had too attempted to imitate corporate structures).²⁵⁹ Of course, these developments could be viewed as examples of Americans’ “search for order” throughout the GAPE. Yet the similarity that they have to other GAPE events that were not orderly – such as widespread labour strikes – is that GAPE Americans sought efficiency with greater zeal because they took advantage of new circumstances created by the Second Industrial Revolution. This clearly demonstrates how the GAPE was fundamentally an “age of readjustment” to changing economic conditions, building the foundation for contemporary organisational practices.

Secondly, economic upheaval also forced GAPE Americans to readjust their views of the relationship between freedom and work – a shift which shaped modern labour relations in the United States. Before the Civil War, the United States was home to many self-employed producers or artisans.²⁶⁰ However, the postbellum explosion of industrial production created large businesses and corporations boasting high productivity, advanced technology and low costs per unit.²⁶¹ This made it difficult for artisans to compete in various industries, pushing many out of

²⁵⁷ Foner, pp. 750-751, 761; Maureen A. Flanagan, ‘Decades of Upheaval and Reform’, in Christopher McKnight Nichols and Nancy C. Unger, eds, *A Companion to the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, West Sussex, 2017, p. 432.

²⁵⁸ Flanagan, *Decades of Upheaval*, p. 432.

²⁵⁹ Foner, pp. 672, 701; Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*, New York, 2011, pp. 331-345.

²⁶⁰ Rosanne Currarino, *The Labor Question in America: Economic Democracy in the Gilded Age*, Urbana, 2011, p. 3; Rebecca Edwards, *New Spirits: Americans in the Gilded Age*, New York, 2006, p. 61; Leon Fink, *Workingmen’s Democracy: The Knights of Labor and American Politics*, Urbana, 1983, p. 4.

²⁶¹ Edwards, p. 69; Maggor, p. 205; Fink, p. 4; Kazin, p. 451.

the market.²⁶² Consequently, swathes of jobless former artisans had to readjust, forced to work as lesser-skilled wage labourers for those same businesses and corporations.²⁶³ Wage labour was punishing. Workers were often underpaid, overworked, forced to endure terrible working conditions and generally completely subject to the mercy of their employers, who had few financial incentives to improve workers' circumstances.²⁶⁴ Some labour organisations, like the Knights of Labor, resisted the new wage labour system and called for its abolition, as did later revolutionary organisations such as the Industrial Workers of the World.²⁶⁵ Yet that was not to be. By 1900, the wage labour system had consolidated itself, forcing many Americans to readjust not only their careers but also their understandings of the relationship between work and American freedom. Put simply, older antebellum ideas of American freedom predicated on self-employment and economic independence were dead.²⁶⁶ Instead, the GAPE produced a sobering readjustment very familiar to modern Americans; hopeless, endless wage work, constituting complete "dependence on the will of another for... survival", now became enough to set an American free.²⁶⁷

Thirdly, whilst the economic revolution forced many GAPE Americans to readjust to an unpromising life of "wage labor... permanency", the harms wage labour created also prompted some to recalibrate their views on the role of the state – particularly in steering the relationship between employer and employee.²⁶⁸ This recalibration sparked the incessant debate between positive and negative statism that still dominates American politics.²⁶⁹ After the economic

²⁶² Currarino, p. 3.

²⁶³ Kazin, p. 451.

²⁶⁴ Currarino, p. 1; Edwards, pp. 60-70; Fink, p. 7.

²⁶⁵ Fink, p. 6; Melvyn Dubovsky and Joseph Anthony McCartin, *We Shall Be All; A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*, Urbana, 2000, p. 152.

²⁶⁶ Currarino, p. 3; Fink, p. 4.

²⁶⁷ Currarino, p. 3.

²⁶⁸ Fink, p. 4; Richardson, pp. 10-11; Foner, p. 749.

²⁶⁹ Richardson, pp. 10-11; Foner, p. 749; Glen Gendzel, 'What the Progressives Had in Common', *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 10, 3, 2011, p. 333.

revolution created the wage labour system, Gilded Age labour groups such as the aforementioned Knights of Labor campaigned vociferously for reforms to alleviate its harms, sometimes through orchestrating labour strikes against particularly oppressive employers.²⁷⁰ Yet although their reform proposals included establishing the eight-hour working day, for instance, members of the late-nineteenth-century labour movement generally viewed state intervention in employer-employee relations with suspicion.²⁷¹ This changed during the Progressive Era. After 1890, Progressives began arguing that citizens should have responsibilities to one another – a monumental deviation from the traditional American principle of individualism.²⁷² That birthed “effective freedom”, or the idea that to best secure freedom and reduce social harms, the government needed to actively enforce citizens’ mutual responsibilities, rather than practise negative statism.²⁷³ Through these ideas, Progressives promoted government intervention in employer-employee relations to protect vulnerable wage labourers from exploitation. For instance, disasters like the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire resulted in Progressive state governments establishing new factory inspection laws, forcing employers to uphold their societal obligations to their workers rather than hide behind the dictates of private property rights.²⁷⁴ Similarly, the Wilson administration created war labour agencies during World War I, which allowed workers to unionise and formalised the worker complaints process.²⁷⁵ Calling the GAPE an “age of reform” for labour relations, however, would not be entirely accurate. Child labour persisted until the federal government abolished it in the 1930s, and some Progressive presidents,

²⁷⁰ White, pp. 332-343.

²⁷¹ Fink, pp. 6-7.

²⁷² Flanagan, *Decades of Upheaval*, p. 427; Maureen A. Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s-1920s*, New York, 2007, p. 71.

²⁷³ Foner, p. 749; Flanagan, *America Reformed*, p. 71; Gendzel, pp. 333-334.

²⁷⁴ Foner, p. 724; Flanagan, *America Reformed*, p. 70; Peter Dreier and Donal Cohen, ‘The Fire Last Time’, in *The New Republic*, March 12, 2011, <https://newrepublic.com/article/85134/wisconsin-unions-walker-triangle-shirtwaist-fire>, accessed November 8, 2023.

²⁷⁵ Joseph Anthony McCartin, *Labor’s Great War; The Struggle for Industrial Democracy and the Origins of Modern American Labor Relations, 1912-1921*, Chapel Hill, 1997, pp. 95-98.

especially President Taft, often ceded to corporate interests at the expense of workers.²⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the seismic economic shift during the GAPE certainly ushered in an “age of readjustment”, in which many Americans began questioning the predominance of freedom of contract and gradually readjusted to the position that the government should intervene in employer-employee affairs.

Alongside this, economic upheaval created other social ills that also drove many GAPE Americans to recalibrate their ideological views and push for positive statism more generally. For instance, growing industrial capitalism produced large monopolies that habitually employed questionable tactics (like horizontal and vertical integration) to undermine competition, and charged consumers exorbitant prices for their goods.²⁷⁷ An increasing number of Americans responded to this by supporting government regulation of these monopolies during the GAPE. For instance, in 1892, the Populist Party – an unusually popular third party – campaigned for public ownership of railroads to prevent railroad corporations from charging eye-watering freight rates: a clear example of positive statism.²⁷⁸ Eventually, the Roosevelt and Taft administrations used antitrust laws to break up some monopolies directly, like John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil.²⁷⁹ Further, after 1890, many Americans supported positive statism to remedy the harms big business caused to children. These included children being left at home alone whilst their parents worked, and commercialised school systems charging high prices for textbooks and materials.²⁸⁰ Progressives responded by facilitating state construction of parks and playgrounds across American cities to encourage supervised children’s play and by forming groups like the Texas Congress of Mothers, which lobbied for increasing school taxes so vigorously that the Texas

²⁷⁶ Dreier and Cohen, ‘The Fire Last Time’; Foner, p. 759.

²⁷⁷ Foner, pp. 639-640, 680.

²⁷⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 680, 682.

²⁷⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 757, 759.

²⁸⁰ Flanagan, *America Reformed*, pp. 66, 68.

state legislature eventually complied.²⁸¹ Once more, the GAPE did not witness a true “age of reform” towards positive statism. Most corporate figures opposed positive statism (except when it suited them), and racial biases prompted advocates of positive statism to ignore harms that economic changes caused to minorities.²⁸² Nevertheless, this ideological recalibration that many Americans underwent, as the new economic climate encouraged them to embrace positive statism, certainly supports the view that the GAPE was an “age of readjustment”. This particular readjustment eventually laid the foundations for the 1930s New Deal era and, more generally, the persistent modern-day debate over the appropriate role of government in Americans’ lives.²⁸³

Fourthly, the economic revolution in the United States prompted some Americans to readjust their attitudes towards race, partly contributing to worsening race relations during the GAPE and afterwards. Indeed, many Americans began treating marginalised ethnic groups with more cruelty than ever. For example, during the GAPE, white settlers often invaded Native American lands in the Plains and West, seeking to mine, farm or purchase it.²⁸⁴ In response, the federal government promptly began confiscating tribal land and handing it to capitalist investors to drive economic expansion.²⁸⁵ The Lakota’s Black Hills, for example, were confiscated by the government in the late 1870s to facilitate gold mining, despite the government agreeing to permanently reserve that region for the Lakota only eight years previously in the Treaty of Fort Laramie.²⁸⁶ Similarly, the new economic climate influenced the Republican Party’s decision to reduce its support for African-Americans in the South. The rise of big-business Liberal Republicans during the Gilded Age prompted the Republicans’ shift back to prioritising limited

²⁸¹ Flanagan, *America Reformed*, pp. 65-68.

²⁸² Gendzel, pp. 333-334; Foner, p. 751.

²⁸³ Richardson, pp. 10-11.

²⁸⁴ Foner, p. 652; Edwards, p. 79.

²⁸⁵ Edwards, p. 79; Alexandra Harmon, ‘From Dispossessed Wards to Citizen Activists: American Indians Survive the Assimilation Policy Era’, in Christopher McKnight Nichols and Nancy C. Unger, eds, *A Companion to the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, West Sussex, 2017, p. 126; Foner, p. 652.

²⁸⁶ Foner, p. 652.

government and rapid economic growth, whilst ignoring racist lynchings and the creation of Jim Crow laws in the South.²⁸⁷ Further, even Republican Progressives generally viewed African-American issues with “remarkable indifference”.²⁸⁸ Some Progressive intellectuals argued that positive statism should only resolve harms produced by economic conditions – like the perils of wage labour – completely disregarding the plight of African-Americans living under Southern oppression.²⁸⁹ In fact, many Republican Progressives (like Theodore Roosevelt) started supporting suppression of black suffrage, arguing that as African-Americans were “unfit” to vote, black suffrage would inhibit Progressive attempts to resolve harms created by rising industrial capitalism.²⁹⁰ Thus, the GAPE was an “age of readjustment” also in a particularly cruel sense. Many Americans responded to economic upheaval by developing more callous views on racial issues, which produced very dire consequences for American race relations over the following decades.

Finally, changing economic circumstances – and Americans’ consequent readjustments to them – completely revolutionised the social and cultural landscape of the United States, producing the modern American nation. The explosion of big business drove enormous domestic migration and immigration, as new and existing Americans responded to the transformed economic order by trying to maximise their financial prospects. Growth of the railroad industry into the West prompted domestic migration to newly accessible rural areas, as did the government’s Homestead Acts, which granted American citizens free farmland west of the Mississippi to encourage agricultural development.²⁹¹ Yet urban migration also blossomed from economic upheaval. Immigrants, mostly of Irish, Italian, German and Eastern European origin,

²⁸⁷ Foner, pp. 618-619, 662.

²⁸⁸ Foner, p. 795; Johnston, p. 439; Richardson, p. 18.

²⁸⁹ Foner, p. 795.

²⁹⁰ Foner, pp. 795-796, 751; Richardson, p. 14.

²⁹¹ Maggor, p. 211.

flocked to Northern and Midwestern urban areas like New York and Chicago because booming industrial capitalism had generated plentiful and highly-paid (in comparison to Europe) wage labour.²⁹² Work and better pay also enticed poor rural whites to Northern cities, alongside many African-Americans who already wished to escape systematic racism in the South.²⁹³ These developments drove mass multiculturalism in urban America, handing the nation its famous “melting-pot” tag but also creating nativist and racist backlash.²⁹⁴ Urban migration also caused various other issues. Urbanisation resulted in overcrowding, the creation of urban ghettos and the spread of disease, the latter exacerbated by large industrialists maximising profit through dumping waste into public waterways.²⁹⁵ Rising urban wage labour also completely changed the way Americans enjoyed themselves. Adjusting to exhausting, monotonous work that rendered many “incapable of doing anything requiring thought” in their free time, urban Americans increasingly began to indulge in simple “amusements”, such as theatre, “trashy novels”, and amusement parks.²⁹⁶ Coney Island provides the best example of this, as it offered exhilarating, cheap and easy entertainment for workers seeking an escape from their new realities. Consequently, the emergence of an urban, consumerist and diverse United States commenced during the GAPE, and this was largely caused by Americans’ attempts to readjust to seismic economic transformation: uprooting their lives to find financial respite, and indulging in pleasure to distract from everyday exhaustion and pain.

Overall, the GAPE should probably be viewed as a series of divergent consequences – the

²⁹² John Bodnar, Roger Simon and Michael P. Weber, ‘Immigrant Newcomers in Turn-of-the-Century Pittsburgh’, in Howard P. Chudacoff and Peter C. Baldwin, eds, *Major Problems in American Urban and Suburban History: Documents and Essays*, Boston, 2005, pp. 242-250; Foner, p. 641.

²⁹³ James R. Grossman, ‘Southern Blacks’ Migration to Chicago in the Early Twentieth Century’, in Howard P. Chudacoff and Peter C. Baldwin, eds, *Major Problems in American Urban and Suburban History: Documents and Essays*, Boston, 2005, p. 253; Foner, pp. 798-799.

²⁹⁴ White, p. 288; John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century*, New York, 1978, pp. 97-98; Grossman, p. 253.

²⁹⁵ Grossman, p. 253; Flanagan, *America Reformed*, pp. 71-73.

²⁹⁶ Fink, p. 10.

product of an event, rather than an era characterised by consistent direction. To be sure, the views of Hofstadter, Wiebe, Painter and Grinspan can be supported by historical evidence. Reformists, such as the Progressives and Populists, did play a prominent role during the GAPE, and some Americans (especially businesspeople) did relentlessly pursue order. Of course, the GAPE often flirted with acrimony and sometimes pushed the nation to the edge of “Armageddon”. Yet the argument that the entire GAPE could be characterised by any of those things seems unconvincing. Some social harms were not reformed at all. Some aspects of the era were inherently chaotic, not orderly. Whilst occasionally acrimonious and disastrous, too, the bright lights of Coney Island, increasing numbers of women frequenting polling booths, and the smiles of many immigrants passing through Ellis Island and admiring the Statue of Liberty would suggest that not all was awry during the GAPE. Instead, the GAPE seems best characterised as a chaotic, complicated “age of readjustment”. Scrambling to respond to perhaps the most consequential event in United States history – the seismic revolution of the nation’s economy – Americans completely changed the fabric of their country. Indeed, those readjustments were so dramatic that in the GAPE, one can identify many similarities with modern times: an urban, consumerist and multicultural United States, dominated by big business and efficiency, locked in furious debate over the role of the state, and marred by volatile and bloody racial conflict.

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HIST 711 - TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

Applying Quentin Skinner's Historical Method to Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War

What are the advantages and the limitations of applying Quentin Skinner's approach to understanding historical texts to Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*?

Catriona McCallum

Perhaps the greatest task of the historian in attempting to interpret the past is to reach a plausible understanding of why people acted the way they did. Yet to reach such an understanding of past actions requires entering into the mentalities of the agents who performed them – a seemingly impossible task. For how can we avoid imposing our own assumptions, beliefs and prejudices on interpreting evidence of past thought? Furthermore, how can we access the assumptions, beliefs and prejudices of the author of the historical text we seek to understand? This is a particular challenge if that text was written in a time separated from one's own by two and a half thousand years. R. G. Collingwood called this the historian's paradox. Considering historiography as a form of question and answer, he posited that each generation cannot help but reflect on history in terms of their own concerns and preconceptions.²⁹⁷ Certainly, many studies of Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian war have taken his claim "that human nature being what it is will, at some time or other, and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future" as an

²⁹⁷ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History. Revised Edition with Lectures 1926-1928*, ed. Jan van der Dussen. Oxford: OUP, 1994.

adequate reason for applying his assessment of his own experience to their present-day concerns.²⁹⁸

For Thomas Hobbes, Thucydides' account of war assumed a crucial relevance to seventeenth-century England in the lead up to the English Civil War.²⁹⁹ Two centuries later, scholars lauded Thucydides' reliability and critical analysis of sources, calling him "a modern historian before modernity."³⁰⁰ More recently, his work was perceived as having an immediate applicability to the Cold War.³⁰¹ John Finley contended that Thucydides was "realistically concerned" with a "harsh and shattering present" which he made sense of in an "exemplary way," whilst John Burrows speaks of Thucydides' "lucid, unillusioned intelligence"³⁰². However, to consider Thucydides' *History* historically, it is necessary to isolate the text from the assumption that Thucydides was somehow concerned with similar questions to our own. Quentin Skinner's approach offers such a way by asking what an author of a text was doing by writing and making available their text. This essay will consider what Skinner's historically aware approach may add to existing scholarship, as well as any potential limitations. As any discussion of Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian war means confronting a vast and varied body of scholarship, my analysis will account for other interpretations of Thucydides' *History* which have sought to define genres, test models of inference and explanation, and devise codes for analysing oral and literary traditions in varied ways. It is by harnessing these different methods and holding them up against Skinner's approach that I intend to test the latter's usefulness in reaching a historically sensitive understanding of Thucydides' *History* and whether there are aspects of the text which defy such interpretative methodology.

²⁹⁸ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans Rex Warner (ed.), M.I. Finlay, Penguin 1995, 1.22., p. 48.

²⁹⁹ Thomas Hobbes, Preface to the First English Translation of Thucydides: Message to the Reader, 1629, pp. 6-27, in Richard Schlatter, ed. *Hobbes' Thucydides*, New Brunswick, 1975.

³⁰⁰ Neville Morley, *Thucydides and the Idea of History*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2014, p. 25.

³⁰¹ Walter Robert Connor, *Thucydides*. 7th ed., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, p. 3.

³⁰² John Huston Finley, *Thucydides*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1942. P. 7; John Wyon Burrows, *A History of Histories: Epics, Chronicles, Romances and Inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the Twentieth Century*, 1st U.S. ed. New York: A.A. Knopf, 2008, p. 50

Thucydides wrote his contemporary account of the Peloponnesian war more than two and a half thousand years ago. He begins at “the very outbreak of the war, in the belief it was going to be a great war and more worth writing about than those that had taken place in the past.”³⁰³ But this war was to be the greatest not for its heroic deeds but for its “disturbance” and “unprecedented suffering.”³⁰⁴ Furthermore, it is an account “not designed to meet the taste of an immediate public” but to be “judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future.”³⁰⁵ Thus, Thucydides’ intention in writing has been interpreted as having the character of a timeless warning of the destructive force of human nature’s drives for power, self-protection and self-interest.³⁰⁶ Yet whilst he claims to have looked at sources critically, “to have reached conclusions that are reasonably accurate”, Thucydides leaves the interpretation of what to take away from his account to the reader.³⁰⁷ This has led scholars to bring their own interpretations to what Thucydides saw as the “violent teachings” of civil war and the enduring qualities of humanity in the struggle to acquire and maintain power.³⁰⁸ Thomas Hobbes called Thucydides “the most politic historiographer that ever writ” and called upon his contemporaries to read the *History* as a universal warning against popular political debate.³⁰⁹ Others have lauded Thucydides for his unique truthfulness and modernity whilst drawing their own conclusions about whether his aim was to offer models of political leadership, or simply draw attention to the unpredictability and devastation of war.

In isolating these seemingly timeless concerns, scholars cannot help but reflect on Thucydides’ text in terms of their own assumptions, beliefs and prejudices. Skinner contends that

³⁰³ Thucydides, *History*, 1.1, p. 35.

³⁰⁴ Thucydides, *History*, 1.1, p. 35; *ibid.* 1.23, p. 48.

³⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 1.22, p. 48.

³⁰⁶ Connor, *Thucydides*, pp. 26, 250.

³⁰⁷ Thucydides, *History*, 1.21, p. 47.

³⁰⁸ Thucydides, *History*, 3.82, p. 242; and Morley, *Thucydides and the Idea of History*.

³⁰⁹ Hobbes, *Message to the Reader*, p. 7; Jonathan Scott, ‘The Peace of Silence: Thucydides and The English Civil War,’ in Jeffrey Rusten (ed.) *Thucydides*, Oxford 2009; and Hobbes, *Preface*.

this is a mistake. He argues that as long as we ignore the logical impossibility of describing an author's intentions in ways he could not "at least in principle" have accepted, we cannot properly interpret what he was trying to say.³¹⁰ A sharp critic of the universalism of ideas, Skinner perceives history as "a sequence of episodes" in which people's concerns and how they responded to them frequently changed.³¹¹ Thus, to properly interpret the concerns of another age, it is necessary to return the relevant text to its original setting in a way that thwarts our presentist inclination to impose our own values on it. To do this, Skinner turned to linguistic theory. Drawing on Wittgenstein's stress on language as use combined with J. L. Austin's focus on its performative dimension, Skinner posits that writing, like speaking, seeks to communicate. Furthermore, this communication may only take place if such utterances recognise the prevailing norms and conventions of the society in which they are uttered.³¹²

Skinner's focus on communication led him to approach texts as an accumulation of "linguistic actions" that intended to provoke a particular response from a contemporary audience.³¹³ By situating the text in a "convention-governed linguistic context", it was then possible to identify how an author was adapting prevailing norms and conventions to their own purposes.³¹⁴ Only then was it feasible for a historian to comprehend what the author of that text had intended it to do in producing it.³¹⁵ In this way, Skinner argues, it becomes possible to construct a historical perspective that appreciates the text's historical identity within the social conventions that pervaded the world in which it was created.³¹⁶ Furthermore, by setting the text back into the environment in which it was conceived and making space for the author's intention

³¹⁰ Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,' 8 *History and Theory* 3 (1969), reprinted in James Tully, *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, Cambridge, U.K: Polity Press, 1988, pp. 32-5.

³¹¹ Skinner, 'A Reply to my Critics,' in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 234.

³¹² Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding,' in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 61.

³¹³ *ibid.*, p. 56

³¹⁴ Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 4.

³¹⁵ Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding,' in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, pp. 61-3.

³¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 29-67.

in writing it, Skinner's approach sees the text as performing an action with possibly different qualities than those most relevant to the historian.³¹⁷ This challenged historians to think beyond their time-based priorities, deepening their capacity for methodological self-consciousness.

Applying Skinner's approach to Thucydides' *History* appears at the outset to be an easy endeavour since Thucydides clearly sets out his intentions at the beginning of his text. However, Skinner eschews a simple textual reading in favour of a more nuanced one. Positing that decoding the author's original intent is the task of the historian, Skinner suggests that it may be "appropriate" to discount the author's statements since the author might have "misstated" or "understated" them.³¹⁸ The complexity of authorial intention in explaining what Thucydides was attempting to do with his text means that it requires more than reliance on a simple statement. Indeed, using Skinner's approach to identify the nature of Thucydides' intervention could bring to light differences between his explicitly stated intentions and his subsequent execution, such as Thucydides' reliance on rhetoric and use of dramatic techniques when he wanted truth. Yet, on closer reading, these might not turn out to be differences at all, but rather allow us a subtler and richer understanding of what Thucydides was doing in writing his account of the war.

In applying his approach to his study of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Skinner begins by showing the extent to which the text was characteristic of its genre before seeking to understand its originality.³¹⁹ Thucydides' genre is war, the prevailing conventions of which are grounded in Homeric epic, as seen through the celebration of heroic deeds in texts like *The Iliad* and Herodotus's account of the Persian wars.³²⁰ However, Thucydides' introduction calls for an unsentimental approach to events, an approach that he actively differentiates from myths, celebratory oratory, and popular chroniclers' entertainment that came before him.³²¹ Yet despite

³¹⁷ Tully, *Meaning and Context*, pp. 8-9

³¹⁸ Skinner, 'Motives, Intentions and Interpretation,' in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 77.

³¹⁹ *ibid.*

³²⁰ Simon Hornblower, 'Intellectual Affinities' in Rusten, Jeffrey S. *Thucydides*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2009, p. 69.

³²¹ Thucydides, *History*, 1.21 p. 47

this disassociation from conventional norms, Simon Hornblower argues that Thucydides shared their serious subject matter and profound awareness of suffering.³²² He also shared their tragic patterning.³²³ John Moles speaks of the strong influence of drama and tragedy on Thucydides' "unparalleled vividness".³²⁴ The influence of theatre is also visible in the similarity of plot patterns like repetition with ironic and unexpected reversals - Nicias' last speech to his defeated army holds echoes of the Melian dialogue - and the use of analytical parallelism through paired speeches found in the sophist prose of Antiphon and tragedians Euripides and Socrates.³²⁵ John Finley's comprehensive study of Euripides attests to close resemblances between the ideas expressed in Euripides' plays and those expressed by Thucydides in Pericles' defence of democracy, Cleon and Diodotus' respective positions regarding the Melian debate, and the theory of oligarchy credited to Archidamus. This has led him to posit that the views expressed in Thucydides' text reflect a contemporary mindset that was already showing impatience with clichés of public oratory and self-justification of belligerents.³²⁶ Furthermore, the way in which Thucydides' protagonists are characterised by their ideas rather than their style shows a uniformity with how oratory was practised during the period.³²⁷

Such was the influence of contemporary tragedy on the structuring of Thucydides' *History* that F.M. Cornford argued that the text was a drama, not a history. Oratory was its driving force, and it followed the traditional tragic arc of triumph, hubris and defeat found in contemporary tragedies like the *Medea*.³²⁸ Skinner's historically sensitive approach, which

³²² Colin Macleod, 'Thucydides and Tragedy,' in *Collected Essays*, O.P. Taplin ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983, pp. 157-58.

³²³ Roberto Nicolai, 'Ktema es aei: Aspects of the Reception of Thucydides in the Ancient World,' in *Thucydides*, Rusten (ed.), pp. 587-604.

³²⁴ John Moles, 'A False Dilemma: Thucydides' History and Historicism,' in S. J. Harrison, *Texts, Ideas, and the Classics: Scholarship, Theory, and Classical Literature*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 212.

³²⁵ John Marincola, 'Speeches in Classical Historiography', in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp.102-108; Thucydides, *History*, 7.77, p. 529; John Finley, *Three Essays on Thucydides*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1967.

³²⁶ Finley, *Three Essays*, pp. 4-5, 44.

³²⁷ *ibid.*, p.116; Simon Hornblower, 'Intellectual Affinities' in *Thucydides*, Rusten (ed.).

³²⁸ F. M. Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus*, 1907, p. ix; and Finley, *Three Essays*, pp. 56, 74-83.

regards texts as “responses to relevant characteristics” of each author’s society, enables us to perceive Cornford’s analysis not as criticism but as providing insight into the cultural norms of Thucydides’ world, where dramatic techniques were the best means available to him to structure his account.³²⁹ In this way, rather than compromising Thucydides’ contribution, Cornford’s assertion better situates it within a milieu where theatre was a common bond of social reference, and thus, tragedy was effectively a socio-political, cultural and religious institution.³³⁰

So, if Thucydides’ structure and use of speeches in his account of the war was not unique and his readership - a necessarily smaller, wealthier and better-educated group than audiences for more popular forms of entertainment - were already showing a distrust of the populist strain in contemporary democracy, in what way was the text original?³³¹ Emily Greenwood argues that Thucydides’ counter-cultural approach to history is what makes his text so strikingly unconventional.³³² She points to how he invites his readers to read the *History* as a timeless piece that essentially transcends its historical situation, and offers a response to the war informed by a belief that the values of his contemporaries were of little worth.³³³ This bold claim places a lot of the evidential load on Thucydides’ introductory comments concerning his methodology and the nature of his work. It is backed up to an extent by W.R. Connor’s conclusion that Thucydides’ management of every major figure appears designed to provoke.³³⁴ But as we have discussed above, these provocations were already being explored through conventional dramatical techniques. Besides, as Skinner states, the idiosyncrasies of Thucydides’ text of necessity have to sit within culturally defined bounds for them to be understood by his audience.³³⁵ Thus, whilst Thucydides’ methodology was rigorous, his views of Athenian democracy critical, and his

³²⁹ Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 10.

³³⁰ Finley, *Three Essays*, pp. 56, 74-83; Macleod, *Collected Essays*; and Emily Greenwood, *Thucydides and the Shaping of History*, 7th ed., Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015, p. 14

³³¹ For arguments on who constituted Thucydides’ audience see Connor, *Thucydides*, pp. 14-17.

³³² Greenwood, *Thucydides and the Shaping of History*, p. 1.

³³³ *ibid.*, p. 2-3

³³⁴ Connor, *Thucydides*, p. 233.

³³⁵ Skinner, ‘A Reply to My Critics,’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 274.

determination of events, details and characterisation designed to elicit an evaluative response, he would have reproduced these elements within the conventions of his audience.

Yet Thucydides' text owes much of its continued popularity to those aspects of his account which offer a departure from the norm – in effect, what he saw as the nature of his intervention. His historical methodology was unusually critical. He wanted to “record...with un-Herodotean precision”.³³⁶ He distanced himself from poets who “exaggerated the importance of their themes” and prose chroniclers who were “less interested in the truth” than the attention of their audience.³³⁷ His exile enabled him to “see what was being done on both sides”, which gave him “rather exceptional facilities for looking into things”.³³⁸ By approaching the recording of the past differently, Thucydides shifted the conversation towards a deeper understanding of historic events, which would have a continuing utility for people “wanting to understand clearly the events that happened”.³³⁹

But it was not just that Thucydides wanted people to clearly understand the events of war. The nature of his intervention was to invite his readers to challenge and reassess it. Connor argues that Thucydides achieves this by drawing readers in to experience the war, to live through it and see it fully so that their “critical and evaluative faculties” might be awakened.³⁴⁰ This echoes Plutarch’s statement that Thucydides “maketh his auditor a spectator” and Hobbes’ conviction that Thucydides’ used his oratorical expertise to create speeches that placed the reader at the debate and in so doing cast his reader into the “same passions as if they were in that who were beholders”.³⁴¹ It is through this drawing in of his reader that Thucydides’ strongest intention is found, albeit through inference, since Thucydides rarely enters a judgement. He speaks of the

³³⁶ Simon Hornblower, ‘Introduction: Summary of the Papers; The Story of Greek Historiography, Intertextuality and the Greek Historians,’ in Simon Hornblower ed. *Greek Historiography*, Oxford 1994, p. 25.

³³⁷ Thucydides, *History*, 1.21, p. 47.

³³⁸ *ibid.*, 5.26 p. 364.

³³⁹ *ibid.*, 1.22, p. 48.

³⁴⁰ Connor, *Thucydides*, pp. 17, 232.

³⁴¹ Hobbes, *Message to the Reader*, pp. 7, 18.

human condition being what it is and will continue to be, and through the structure of his narrative, encourages the reader to reflect on the complexities and unpredictability of war, the limitations of democratic deliberation and the power of political rhetoric.³⁴² It is the latter Hobbes takes to be Thucydides' greatest lesson. Thucydides could have become a 'great demagogue', yet the structure and character of Athenian democracy prevented civic-minded citizens from offering 'good and profitable counsel' in the public interest. Athenian pride and military success had led to such self-confidence that only "wicked men and flatterers" who "put them upon the most dangerous and desperate enterprises" swayed the assemblies.³⁴³

In using Skinner's interpretative approach, we become aware of the need to be careful of putting too much weight on Hobbes' analysis of Thucydides' intention. Living during the uncertain times just before the English Civil War, Hobbes published Thucydides' *History* in translation to have an "admonitory effect" on his English readers.³⁴⁴ But whilst the prominence of speeches in Thucydides' text, and the way they allow the reader to experience first-hand the moral chaos, abuse of political language, and collapse of the proper legal process, indicate Thucydides' intention of highlighting the role of rhetoric in the self-destructive course that ended Athens' autonomy, it is not necessarily so. By placing the text back into its historical context, it becomes apparent that Thucydides' vision of democracy was very different from that operating within the monarchical system of Hobbes' England.

However, to dismiss all of what Hobbes has to say would be wrong. Any search for authorial intention implicit in a text is going to be difficult, particularly in a text divorced from us by so much time. Addressing how people before us have used the text in their own context, like Hobbes, offers a new perspective that prompts us to ask different questions that may serve to clarify what is otherwise vague. Whilst Hobbes tends to regard the concepts he extracted from

³⁴² Thucydides, *History*, 1.22, p. 48.

³⁴³ Hobbes, *Message to the Reader*, pp. 12-13.

³⁴⁴ Scott, 'The Peace of Silence,' in Rusten (ed.), p. 417.

Thucydides' text as universal propositions about political reality that can apply directly to seventeenth-century England (and he does make some rather bold statements about Thucydides rating monarchy more highly than democracy), his thoughts about oratory and rhetoric are still valuable in our search for Thucydides' intent.³⁴⁵

By relocating Thucydides' text in his time, the prominence of speeches in it may be understood as a reflection of the extent to which his contemporaries were submersed in a culture of rhetoric, making them sensitive to current cliches of public oratory and prone to reassessing traditional morality. Moreover, this sensitivity would have allowed Thucydides' contemporaries to implicitly understand the part oratory played in the war.³⁴⁶ Indeed, it is significant how often Thucydides' reported speeches, whilst well-argued, failed to convince their audience - as if to expose the power of the limits of rational debate. Thucydides appears to offer hope when he introduces the concept of 'moderation' into Diodotus' response to Cleon.³⁴⁷ In Diodotus' judgement of Cleon we hear echoes of Pericles' great democracy and good citizenship, which saved the Mytilenians.³⁴⁸ The Melians were not so fortunate. They were put to death, an act which would have solidified in the minds of Thucydides' contemporaries the tragic arc of hubris followed by nemesis. Through his recurring theme of placing the terrible within a framework of observation and analysis, Thucydides appears to use rhetoric to say something about the use of rhetoric itself.

Aiming to recover what Thucydides intended by his text helps us understand that he used whatever was available to him as a framework to communicate his intention, so that he might be understood by his contemporaries. It means understanding that the various genres of drama, rhetoric, tragedy and Homeric epic found in his *History* were reflections of Thucydides' time and

³⁴⁵ Hobbes, *Message to the Reader*.

³⁴⁶ Connor, *Thucydides*, p. 13.

³⁴⁷ Thucydides, *History*, 3.46-9, pp. 221-223.

³⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 3.42-48, pp. 217-222.

not a particular choice. It means understanding that the *History* was meant to be practical and ‘useful’, not theoretical. Understanding this removes the artificial demarcations of genre that have caused people to label him a dramatist,³⁴⁹ a scientist,³⁵⁰ “the father of psychological history”,³⁵¹ or a political theorist.³⁵² It removes the need to enter into interdisciplinary debates which alternatively categorise his text as a political treatise, rational historical study or a creative literary work. It makes any assessment of the reliability of his judgement or rationality of his content secondary to what he was saying through the text.³⁵³ By construing Thucydides’ words within their own time and Thucydides’ intentions on his own terms, we can make sense of his use of a narrative framework that employed dramatical techniques and political speeches. Knowing that Thucydides’ education was along sophist lines which blurred categories of rhetorician, physician and philosopher (shown in his frequent borrowing, criticising and improving on ideas that were in circulation at the time) makes it easier for us to identify what he was attempting to do in writing as he did.³⁵⁴ Our focus is only on his text, its surrounding context and the response it elicited. By turning away from worries about accuracy and genre, Skinner’s approach enables the originality of Thucydides’ historical method and his messages about the dangers of rhetoric and the unpredictability of war to come shining through.

However, Skinner’s methodology has been subjected to criticism, much of which has focussed on two issues: scholars’ access to the past and their ability to reflect on the evidence that exists in the present, and the accessibility of authorial intention.³⁵⁵ In effect, this has to do with how contexts can be determined if what we know of them also resides in texts to be

³⁴⁹ Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus*.

³⁵⁰ Finley, *Thucydides*, p. 109.

³⁵¹ Neville Morley, ‘Contextualism and Universalism in Thucydidean Thought,’ in *Thucydides and Political Order*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016, 23–40, p. 24.

³⁵² Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, p. 30.

³⁵³ Skinner, ‘A Reply to my Critics,’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 241.

³⁵⁴ Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*, 7th ed., Cambridge University Press, 2010.

³⁵⁵ Tully, *Meaning and Context*, pp. 16-25.

interpreted;³⁵⁶ how to decide which contexts give us plausible explanations for what the author is doing in writing;³⁵⁷ how to mediate between incompatible contexts;³⁵⁸ how to be aware of the claimed ‘dialogical’ nature of the contexts which have a bearing on the text;³⁵⁹ how to balance a belief that we can understand the assumptions, values and prejudices of people in the past with our fears that we will impose our own upon them in the present;³⁶⁰ and how to identify authorial intention with any degree of certainty.³⁶¹ Skinner has responded to many of these fears by stating that however complex the notion of a context might be, “we can readily single out the most crucial element in it. This is the fact that all serious utterances are characteristically intended as acts of communication.”³⁶² Furthermore, Skinner contends that identifying authorial intention means finding what is ‘publicly legible’ in acts of communication for a particular place and time – not what is in the author’s mental world, but what he does within the conventional constraints of his time to convey his meaning publicly.³⁶³

To Kenneth Minogue, who sees Skinner’s use of speech-act theory as unnecessarily constrictive and incompatible with learning anything from the past,³⁶⁴ Skinner responds by confirming that for him, language “constitutes a resource as well as a constraint”.³⁶⁵ It is by placing speech-acts within the context of linguistic and social convention that allows us to recover the force of those acts, and since it is entirely in the public arena, it can be recovered

³⁵⁶ See for example Dominick LaCapra, ‘Rethinking Intellectual History and Reading Texts,’ *History and theory: Studies in the philosophy of history*, 19.3, 1980, pp. 245–276.

³⁵⁷ John Keane, ‘More Theses on the Philosophy of History,’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, pp. 204-217.

³⁵⁸ See for example Nathan Tarcov, ‘Quentin Skinner’s Method and Machiavelli’s Prince,’ *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, Ethics 92.4, 1982, pp. 692–709.

³⁵⁹ See for example LaCapra, ‘Rethinking Intellectual History;’ and Kenneth Minogue in ‘Method in Intellectual History: Skinner’s *Foundations*,’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 189.

³⁶⁰ See for example Charles Taylor, ‘The Hermeneutics of Conflict’ and Martin Hollis, ‘Say it with Flowers’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, pp. 135-146, 218-230.

³⁶¹ See for example Joseph Femia, ‘An Historicist Critique of ‘Revisionist’ Methods for Studying the History of Ideas,’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, pp. 156-175; Keane, ‘More Theses’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*; and Hollis, ‘Say it with Flowers,’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*.

³⁶² Skinner, ‘A Reply to My Critics’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 274.

³⁶³ Skinner, ‘Social Meaning and Social Action,’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 87.

³⁶⁴ Minogue, ‘Method in Intellectual History,’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*.

³⁶⁵ Skinner, ‘A Reply to my Critics’, in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 276.

through drawing inferences from inter-contextual comparisons. And to those, like Dominick LaCapra and John Keane, who accuse his approach of being based on “the reproductive fallacy of the unvarnished recovery of meaning”, which ignores the postmodernist idea of a dialogue of negotiation and fusion of horizons between interpreter and author,³⁶⁶ Skinner readily admits that a text may bear meanings other than those intended by its author but that it is only authorial intent gathered from an utterance’s illocutionary force that interests us.³⁶⁷ Anything else would assume a Derridean aspect, which, if taken to extremes, could render any kind of historical understanding impossible.³⁶⁸ Since many of these arguments questioning Skinner’s approach are philosophical ones rather than a critique of its use on historical grounds, I shall accept Skinner’s refutations and move to discussing those limitations that have a more direct bearing on interpreting Thucydides’ text.³⁶⁹

Skinner’s approach considers the text as a proposition in relation to some pre-existing conversation, essentially as a “move in an argument”.³⁷⁰ Yet the density of Thucydides’ *History* and his deliberate effort to respect and represent the war and politics of war as multifaceted and complex make isolating any foundational proposition difficult. Tim Rood sees the text as deliberately complicated by Thucydides in an attempt to convey essential truths about human nature and, above all, the cognitive and emotional constraints on action.³⁷¹ This argument is an echo of Connor’s assertion that the text respects the complexity of events rather than reducing them so as to invite, rather than dictate, the reader’s reaction.³⁷² Stressing that different sections of Thucydides’ work convey different attitudes, Connor shows how stylistically the text moves

³⁶⁶ Keane, ‘More Theses,’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*; and LaCapra, ‘Rethinking Intellectual History.’

³⁶⁷ Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics: Volume 1, Regarding Method*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 10.

³⁶⁸ Skinner, ‘A Reply to my critics’ in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 280-1.

³⁶⁹ Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 4.

³⁷⁰ Skinner *Visions of Politics*, p. 125.

³⁷¹ Tim Rood, *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation*, Oxford Classical Monographs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 296.

³⁷² Connor, *Thucydides*, p. 236.

from formulaic (almost Homeric) narrative to densely analytical passages to speeches to contend that Thucydides worked hard to present many, rather than a single, viewpoint.³⁷³ It is thus left to the reader to evaluate, to draw conclusions. Thucydides is merely their guide who provides the evidence.

Certainly, it is suggestive that Thucydides' significance - which has been recognised alternatively as an exercise in the art of historiography, a contribution to literature, a political realist account of power, and a psychological study of suffering - implies a complexity that is not easily reduced to a 'move in an argument.' In his review of Skinner's work, *Liberty before Liberalism*, Blair Worden expresses much the same concern when he posits that Skinner's extraction of the "core of what is distinctive about [authorial] thought" was the result of him having deliberately looked for it.³⁷⁴ If this is the case, the span of Thucydides' text, its multivocality, its digressions into descriptions of the plague and other natural disasters, and its inclusion of varied cultures, peoples and customs appear to make many 'cores' possible.

Skinner recognises the difficulty of applying the act of authorial intention to something of this scale when he states, "any text of any complexity will contain a myriad of illocutionary acts".³⁷⁵ Thus, there are always several 'plausible solutions' to understanding the author's intentions. However, they can be 'solved' by establishing the context in which such choices have meaning for the author, their contemporary audience and us.³⁷⁶ Furthermore, there will always be room for "legitimate and fruitful" debate of how the author meant their work to be understood.³⁷⁷ Yet Skinner's argument has been informed by his work on Renaissance and early modern texts, which, whilst complex and containing theoretical depth, tend to develop their contentions from foundational theses based on concepts rather than events. Finding such singular aims through

³⁷³ Connor, *Thucydides*, pp. 11-13.

³⁷⁴ Blair Worden, 'Factory of the Revolution,' *London Review of Books*, Vol. 20 No. 3.

³⁷⁵ Skinner, 'Interpretation and the Understanding of Speech Acts,' in *Visions of Politics*; pp. 122-5

³⁷⁶ *ibid.*, pp.122-5; also, Skinner 'Meaning and Understanding,' in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p.64; and Skinner, 'Motives, Intentions, and Interpretation of Texts,' in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 77.

³⁷⁷ Skinner, 'Interpretation and the Understanding of Speech Acts,' in *Visions of Politics*, p. 124.

authorial intention in Thucydides' *History*, a text that reaches across countries, cultures and happenings, is a much harder proposition.

We are further constrained by the fact that so few Attic prose texts have survived. From the extant sources, we know that the most striking phenomenon of this period is the interaction and flow of ideas, methods and theories among thinkers and writers.³⁷⁸ This suggests a more varied and complex reality, making it a problem for contextualising, especially since possible alternative or dissenting views have certainly been lost.³⁷⁹ Much of Thucydides' *History* relies on speeches, and our knowledge of public oratory in the Periclean age is slight. Virtually no speeches have been preserved from earlier than the very last years of the fifth century BCE.³⁸⁰ Hornblower cautions that intellectual influences on an author of Thucydides' "linguistic richness" are easy to postulate but difficult to detect with any certainty.³⁸¹ All that can be established is "a similarity of position".³⁸² In doing so, he argues that one cannot rule out the possibility of this similarity of position being brought about by a third unknown author or having been reached independently by either party.³⁸³ Since Skinner's approach hinges on the interpretative sufficiency of conventions for recovery of authorial intention, the lack of a rich source of contemporary evidence dealing with similar themes makes applying it problematic.

Thucydides' tendency to invent his own terms exacerbates this situation.³⁸⁴ As Skinner's approach is "essentially linguistic", which dictates that the contextualisation of social mores must be located within the "linguistic enterprise" of interpretation, this could present a problem.³⁸⁵ One such deviation occurs in Thucydides' recounting of the extremism in defence of

³⁷⁸ Rosalind Thomas, 'Thucydides and His Intellectual Milieu,' in Sara Forsdyke, Edith Foster, and Ryan K. Balot, (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Thucydides*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 567-586.

³⁷⁹ Roberto Nicolai, 'The Place of History in the Ancient World' in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, Marincola, John (ed.) Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2010, p. 7.

³⁸⁰ Finley, *Three Essays*, p.3 and Hornblower 'Intellectual Affinities' in Rusten (ed.), *Thucydides*, p. 65.

³⁸¹ Hornblower, 'Intellectual Affinities,' pp. 60-88.

³⁸² *ibid.*, p. 87.

³⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 65.

³⁸⁴ Greenwood, *Thucydides and the Shaping of History*, p. 4.

³⁸⁵ Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding,' in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 63-64.

faction that led to the Corcyraean unravelling of social consensus and civil war. Here he states “words had to change their ordinary meanings and to take those which were now given to them” as the language of justice was subverted by the needs of convenience.³⁸⁶ The same breakdown of language in the face of political expediency is apparent in episodes like the Melian dialogue and Syracuse debate.³⁸⁷ Thus, just as the Athenian world takes on new meaning to cope with changing circumstances, so does Thucydides’ language. Yet it is not totally new. Referencing Dionysius Halicarnassius’ review of Thucydides’ idiosyncratic style, Hornblower notes that whilst the Thucydides’ language in part diverged from the norm, it also reflected the new severe style being adopted by sophist writers like Pindar.³⁸⁸ Whilst this serves to alleviate some of the complications in contextualising Thucydides’ *History*, scholars like Greenwood have pointed to the high number of neologisms in his text as an indication that Thucydides was consciously writing outside his contemporary world.³⁸⁹ However, the validity of such an argument necessarily fails if we adopt Skinner’s approach, as people are of their time and unable to transcend it. Thus, Thucydides’ style, whilst ‘idiosyncratic,’ ‘complex,’ and ‘twisted’, can be contextualised, since it was necessarily of Thucydides’ time and, in all probability, evolved from the extreme situation in which people found themselves.³⁹⁰

More problematic is the way Skinner’s linguistic approach to political texts focuses on the extraction of general principles. Thucydides is a political writer in the sense that he writes with the knowledge needed to be a politician – rhetoric was integral to convincing assemblies of the validity of one’s proposals – and to be ‘useful’, but it does not mean that he writes as a political scientist or a philosopher of politics. Roberto Nicolai argues that whilst Thucydides intended for his text to inform a governing class of what they needed to know in confronting

³⁸⁶ Thucydides, *History*, 3.70-84, pp. 236-245.

³⁸⁷ *ibid.*, pp.400-408, 430-437.

³⁸⁸ Hornblower, ‘Intellectual Affinities’ in Rusten, *Thucydides*, pp. 60-88.

³⁸⁹ Greenwood, *Thucydides and the Shaping of History*, p. 5 and also Hobbes, *Message to the Reader*, re Dionysius Halicarnassius, p. 19.

³⁹⁰ Greenwood, *Thucydides and the Shaping of History*, p. 5.

similar events in the future, and how to persuade their fellow citizens to make better choices, for the most part, Thucydides presented his analysis implicitly, not explicitly.³⁹¹ Unlike Herodotus, Thucydides is an unintrusive narrator.³⁹² Burrows points to Thucydides' impatience with moralising rhetoric and how, when he narrates, his "overt moral judgements are few and terse".³⁹³ As Hobbes stated to his reader, Thucydides "never digresse to reade a lecture, morall or politicall, upon his owne text...he maketh his auditor a spectator."³⁹⁴ Thus, it is structure, as opposed to opinion, that marks Thucydides' method. It is through his speeches, which, like speeches in a drama, lay bare the anxieties, motives, evaluations, and even guiding principles of the protagonists, that Thucydides reveals his purpose. Thus, whilst the text has a normative value, it is quite unlike the Renaissance and early modern treatises of Machiavelli and Hobbes that form Skinner's own studies. Rather than offering general principles to be applied, Thucydides offers dramatic scenes on which to reflect.

Perhaps this is the result of the fact that performance and orality were such a large part of Thucydides' world. For whilst Thucydides actively disclaims having written his text to court popular appeal, the practice of public reading was widespread for the whole of antiquity, strongly suggesting that his text would also have been read aloud.³⁹⁵ Indeed, Moles argues that Thucydides' disclaimer did not exclude aural delivery. Rather, it was to accentuate the permanence and, therefore, superiority of words that remain in writing, as Hobbes reiterated, for "the reader to meditate on".³⁹⁶ The density of Thucydides' text would not have precluded it from being read aloud, particularly as sophists valued performance.³⁹⁷ Connor persuasively argues that keeping Thucydides' audience in view shifts perspective on the use of the work as historical

³⁹¹ Nicolai, 'Aspects of the Reception of Thucydides' in Rusten, *Thucydides*, pp. 382-4.

³⁹² Hornblower, 'Intellectual Affinities' in Rusten, *Thucydides*, pp. 60-88.

³⁹³ Burrows, *A History of Histories*, p. 39.

³⁹⁴ Hobbes, *Preface*, p. 7.

³⁹⁵ Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*.

³⁹⁶ Moles, 'A False Dilemma', p. 207; and Hobbes, *Message to the Reader*, p. 26.

³⁹⁷ Hornblower, 'Intellectual Affinities' in Rusten, *Thucydides*.

evidence.³⁹⁸ Skinner's approach does not explicitly recognise orality or performance but neither does it expressly exclude it. As the argument above suggests, it could well be enriched by a consideration of what Thucydides was doing in creating his 'unparalleled vividness.'³⁹⁹

Perhaps one of the most obvious limitations is the apparent incompatibility between Skinner's time bound approach and Thucydides' stated intention that his work was "done to last forever", as "human nature, being what it is" will be bound to repeat itself in the future.⁴⁰⁰ However, Thucydides writing with posterity in mind is not necessarily a problem because one of the great strengths of Skinner's approach is that it frees us from the idea of historical texts having a universality that transcends time. By employing Skinner's methodology, we can place Thucydides' intention back into his own time and see that Herodotus had similar intentions for his works and that this was very much in the Homeric epic tradition of recalling great deeds.⁴⁰¹ Thucydides' *History* has survived not through Thucydides' intent but because others have found value in it for their own concerns. By fixing Thucydides back in his own time, we circumvent assumptions of his inherent relevance and concentrate on the historical and contextual dimensions of his ideas. That way, we can grasp a *clearer understanding* of what he meant to do with his text. After all, that was what Thucydides intended.⁴⁰²

Skinner holds that his approach will produce good history. His historical works are exemplary of his method. However, as we have seen with Worden's critique of *Liberty before Liberalism*, the identification of authorial intention is not an exact science and is still shaped by the interpreter. It is clear that more concrete strategies for detecting utterances, choosing between plausible contexts and isolating authorial intention would be helpful in practice. Yet whilst Skinner's approach may not provide certainty, it does provide a means of looking at texts in

³⁹⁸ Connor, *Thucydides*, pp. 232-33.

³⁹⁹ Moles, 'A False Dilemma,' p. 212.

⁴⁰⁰ Thucydides, *History*, 1.22, p. 48.

⁴⁰¹ Thomas, 'Oral Poetry' in *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*, pp. 29-51.

⁴⁰² Thucydides, *History*, 1.22, p. 48.

methodical ways through social and linguistic contextualisation, authorial intention, and contemporary reception, reminding us of the gulf between Thucydides' time and our own and facilitating openness and humility about the past. It enables us to accept from the outset that the text may tell us something unfamiliar and unexpected.

Thus, looking at Thucydides' *History* through a contextual lens that employs authorial intention means we can judge it on its own terms, in its own milieu and, in so far as possible, recover Thucydides' own perspective on what he was doing. In this way, Thucydides' text becomes a living document testifying to its time and place. It considers a specificity of purpose, situation and concern in a way that would be "naïve to try to transcend".⁴⁰³ The presence of limitations to this approach does not nullify the value of adopting it. Through identifying them, we are in a better position to address the issues they draw to our attention. As historians, we are interested in Thucydides' text as evidence of Thucydides' world. We examine it for clues to that world. In this respect, its density is not a drawback. Skinner's focus on intentions operates as a separation between past and present, which allows us to enter Thucydides' world as a foreigner. This, combined with other approaches like Connor's study of audience reception, Hobbes of rhetoric and Hornblower's contextualism, gives us a better understanding of how Thucydides and his contemporaries lived in it. In this way, Skinner's approach becomes one tool among many. It does not limit our study of historical meaning, as Minogue has argued.⁴⁰⁴ Nor does it ask us to do the impossible, as LaCapra has contended.⁴⁰⁵ Indeed, Skinner states that intentions are "not equivalent" with the total "meaning a text might contain or acquire".⁴⁰⁶

Skinner's historical approach may not solve Collingwood's paradox. We may never actually enter the mentalities of people in the past. But it does give us a method for

⁴⁰³ Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding', in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 65.

⁴⁰⁴ Minogue, 'Method in Intellectual History,' p.178; and Skinner, 'A Reply to My Critics,' in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 234.

⁴⁰⁵ LaCapra, 'Rethinking Intellectual History'.

⁴⁰⁶ Skinner, 'Some Problems in the Analysis', p. 102; Skinner, 'Motives, Intentions and Interpretations,' in Tully, *Meaning and Context*, p. 70.

self-consciously seeking to distance our assumptions, beliefs and prejudices from our interpretation of evidence of the past. By enabling us to better comprehend how past texts relate to the context of their origin and the separation between past and present, which the focus on intention reflects, it provides the key to understanding that what is contingent and necessary in our present has no bearing on the past. So whilst Skinner's approach may not solve the historians' paradox, it does provide us with a more tolerant, broader, and hopefully more objective and self-critical perspective on our understanding of historical texts.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁷ Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding' p. 67 and 'A reply to My Critics,' p. 287 in Tully, *Meaning and Context*.

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