Monopoly Men: Political Cartoonists and Antitrust in the Gilded Age

Monopoly Men: Political Cartoonists and Antitrust in the Gilded Age

Caitlin Laughlin

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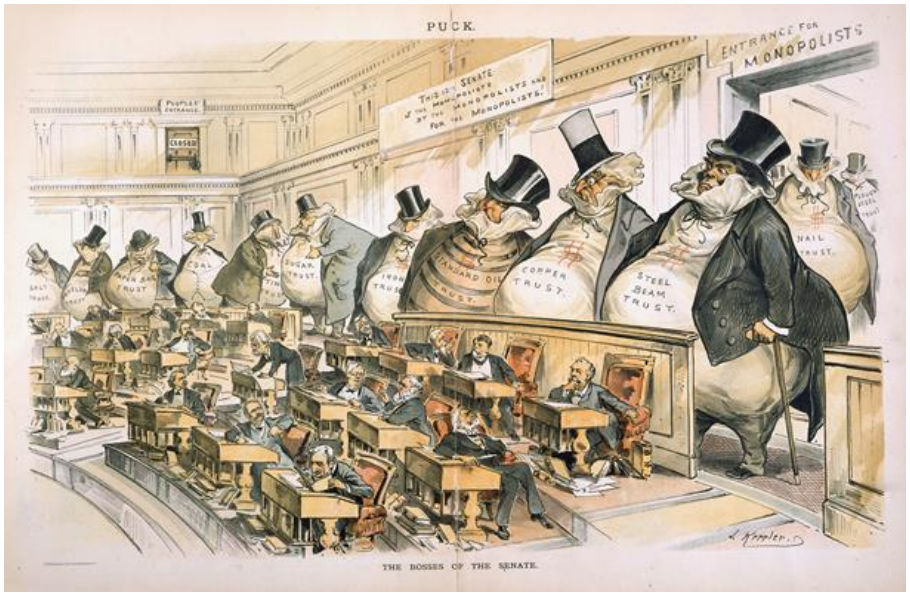
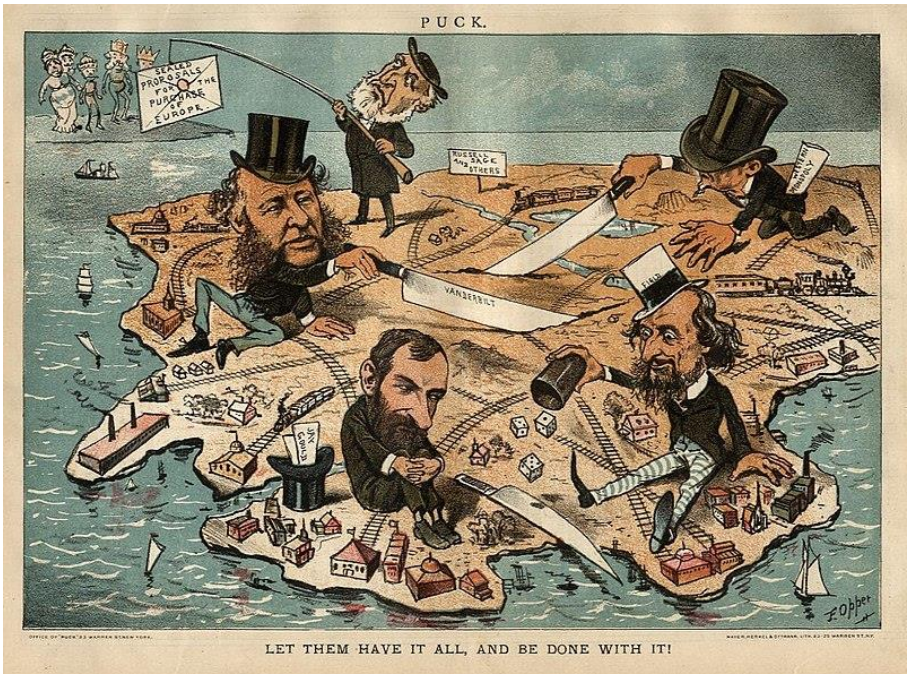
Abstract

Most American children are familiar with the monocled and mustachioed man who graces the front of the Monopoly box. He has become instantly recognizable as the game has been marketed by Parker Brothers and Hasbro since the mid-1930s. But the root of the character goes back even further, to the wealthy American businessmen who came to prominence during the economic revolution of the Gilded Age. These men employed trusts to manage commercial interests and companies which effectively monopolized key industries and garnered them extreme fortunes. In turn, the dynamics of Gilded Age America brought these "robber barons" into the spotlight of the growing editorial media, particularly the emerging cadre of cartoonists. These men represented both sides of the political spectrum and dedicated their professional lives to commenting on the major issues of the day. Beginning with Thomas Nast and Joseph Keppler, two of the artform's most famous practitioners, cartooning paid particular attention to the development of trusts and monopolies. Building on the foundation laid by their forebearers, the artists publishing from the 1890s to 1910s developed the motifs that would eventually inspire the "Monopoly Man." Their work stoked and encouraged burgeoning opposition to the trusts, which coalesced into a semi-formal anti-trust movement and inspired the rash of government prosecutions, most famously the breakup of the Standard Oil Company in 1911.

Frontispiece



"Bosses of the Senate," Joseph Keppler, *Puck*, January 1889



"Let Them Have It All, and Be Done With It!" – Frederick Opper, *Puck,* February 1882

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Chapter I. Introduction

The enduring image of the Monopoly Man, with his cane and top hat, is a familiar one to many Americans. From family game nights to more recent appearances in the audience of Senate committee hearings, it is an image still evoked today, often in commentary about money and power.[1] But how did this character become such a quintessential facet of the American cultural experience? The answer may come from looking to the previous century. American business during the Gilded Age was distinguished by the concentration of corporate interests into trusts and monopolies that gave significant control to the businessmen who ran them. These men, often derided as "Robber Barons" by contemporary press, became common targets of the popular media, including its resident cartoonists.

In 1890 the first federal antitrust law—the Sherman Antitrust Act—was passed by Congress, only eight years after the Standard Oil Company and its affiliates were organized into the first trust. What had started as a tool of corporate efficiency and economic profit had become a notorious symbol of corruption and greed in less than a decade.[2] How did cartoonists address or shape this shift and the burgeoning antitrust movement in the American Gilded Age? How did their work reflect the cultural environment as attitudes shifted against the new industrial order and the prominent men leading it?

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[1] Vanessa Romo, "How Monopoly Man Won The Internet," *NPR*, October 6, 2017, sec. Politics, https://www.npr.org/2017/10/06/555979792/how-monopoly-man-won-the-internet.
[2] "Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890)," National Archives, September 9, 2021, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/sherman-anti-trust-act; H. D. Lloyd, "The Story of a Great Monopoly," The Atlantic, March 1, 1881, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1881/03/the-story-of-a-great-monopoly/306019/.

Discussions of monopolies and anti-trust laws in American society have experienced a resurgence in recent years as companies like Amazon, Microsoft, and Facebook extend their reach into multiple areas of economic life. As these moves have garnered both praise and condemnation alike, they have reinvigorated some of the political trends seen during the Gilded Age period as well, including the rise of populist rhetoric and progressive political movements. In Senate hearings around the alleged misdeeds of bankers we still see caricatures of a mustached man in a top hat and monocle sitting in the audience.[3] The enduring image of the "monopoly men" in popular culture today indicate a level of cultural infiltration not shared by other images from the same period. This project seeks to emphasize the importance of visual elements in the art of persuasion and the distillation of important arguments into impactful images surrounding the development of anti-trust sentiment in the United States. Given the apparent longevity of representations of the Robber Barons and monopolies, and new discussions of anti-trust today, the long-term impacts of their origins have gained renewed relevance.

Research on political cartoons in the Gilded Age has been far more limited than examinations of other common topics of the era such as immigration, political corruption, or religion. Work in this area, however, provides a perspective on the moral leanings of publications employing artists and to an extent the artists themselves. Historian Samuel Thomas principally focuses on the "mugwump" [politically independent] cartoonists of *Puck* and their opposition to the corruption of machine politics and tensions with New York's Catholic population. He argues, "The magazine's talented artistic staff spared no

[3] Romo, "How Monopoly Man Won The Internet."

one it deemed in contravention to its moralistic, elitist definition of the public good."[4] More current research into Gilded Age cartooning, more broadly focused than solely on the economic and social trends of the period, has emphasized the importance of cartoons in the general cultural atmosphere. In a 2020 article for "Social Education," Jen Reidel identified editorial cartoons as "important features within magazines and newspapers," which helped increase their circulation in a highly competitive publication environment.[5] The piece focuses on a singular cartoonist, Frederick Opper working for *Puck* from 1881 to 1899, and how his work "focused on the tension between the political corruption and greed of robber barons and the existence of the common man in the early twentieth century."[6]

Similarly, a 2008 article by Tom Culbertson in the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* called "The Golden Age of American Political Cartoons" provides a brief overview on the backgrounds and influences of some of the major cartoonists of the period. Intended as a sort of learning tool for viewers of cartoons who "often know little about the context in which a cartoon appeared," the piece sought to clarify the cultural and societal contexts in which a particular piece was created or a particular artist worked.[7] On a broad level Culbertson identifies the general political alignment of major cartoonists, such as Joseph Keppler and the Democratic Party or Thomas Nast's work

[4] Samuel J. Thomas, "Mugwump Cartoonists, the Papacy, and Tammany Hall in America's Gilded Age," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 14, no. 2 (2004): 213, https://doi.org/10.1525/rac.2004.14.2.213.
[5] Jen Reidel, "Discovering Economic Concepts and Criticism in Progressive Era Cartoons," *Social Education* 84, no. 2 (April 2020): 89, https://www-ingentaconnect-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/content/ncss/se/2020/00000084/00000002/art00004.
[6] Reidel, 89.
[7] Tom Culbertson, "The Golden Age of American Political Cartoons," *Journal of the Gilded Age & Progressive Era* 7, no. 3 (July 2008): 277, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537781400000724.

with the Republican aligned *Harper's Weekly*.[8] While the piece provides a good overview of the major publications associated with Gilded Age cartooning, the descriptions of each are brief and covers only a very surface level view of any positions.

In addition to coverage of cartooning more specifically, contemporary research into the history of antitrust sentiment and resulting legislation in the United States has also touched on the influence or impact of political cartooning as part of popular culture in the period. For example, in a 2018 article Christopher Harding argues that "popular justice," which included political cartoons as well as other elements, was one of the "more informal strategies of censure and sanctioning" employed against figures who had drawn public ire.[9] With increasing opposition to consolidating economic forces like trusts and monopolies, the targets of this form of justice were often the entrepreneurial figures associated with the trend. In fact, Harding asserts that in the absence of overt governmental intervention, cartooning became part of the "shadowland of social regulation of the market."[10] In this system, cartoonists and their work became a mechanism of influence on public opinion as well as an expression of it. Within the broader history of U.S antitrust policy, which has its roots in the Gilded Age with the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, editorial cartoons provide a window into the political atmosphere which drove opposition.

As the concept of "trusts" in business, and the extreme concentration of wealth they instigated, did not arise until the end of the nineteenth century the opposition is

[8] Culbertson, 278–79.
[9] Christopher Harding, "Popular Justice and the Regulation of Trade: Muckraking, Rough Music, Political Cartoons and the Vilification of Entrepreneurial Heroes," *Law and Humanities* 12, no. 2 (July 3, 2018): 205, https://doi.org/10.1080/17521483.2018.1514950.
[10] Harding, 205.

unsurprising. In her article titled "US Antitrust Law and Policy in Historical Perspective," Laura Philips Sawyer makes the observation that antitrust policy arose "to counterbalance concentrated economic power, which reformers feared might be wielded to influence political outcomes" or suppress competition.[11] Much of this scholarship focuses on the more legalistic and policy oriented history of antitrust with only brief references to popular opposition and antitrust acting as "a lightning rod for popular protest," but it is useful for tracing the ebbing and resurgence of sentiment as popular and political attitudes shift.[12] The current body of research relating to these topics heavily focuses on the development of monopolies and corresponding opposition, with some reference to the associated political ideologies. While the political ideologies of significant publications are mentioned in some instances, this project seeks to further explore how personal ideologies of cartoonists influenced the images they created of trusts and prominent industrialists. Additionally, it seeks to further explore how these images impacted public sentiments around socioeconomic power and influence.

The evidence for this thesis largely consists of collections of political cartoons and other illustrations from significant magazines and newspapers which were influential at the time, including *Harper's Weekly* and *Puck,* two of the most significant weekly periodicals of the period. These periodicals and other historical newspapers also provide articles and other news coverage focused on the artists themselves, from details of their lives and work, to interviews with some of the most prominent artists. Because most of these examples focus on the most prominent names, this project has focused on the more

[11] Laura Philips Sawyer, "US Antitrust Law and Policy in Historical Perspective," *Business, Government, and International Economy Unit, Harvard Business School*, December 2019, 1, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.013.623.
[12] Sawyer, 2.

significant individuals, Thomas Nast, Joseph Keppler, and their most prominent successors. In stories such as "The Making of Cartoons: Rapid Development of the Art in Recent Years," published by the *New York Times* in 1890, contemporary newspapers both published the works of cartoonists but also examined those works and often the men who created them.[13] In some instances the artists themselves provided interviews or comments to the newspapers, and even published autobiographical or memoir works later in their lives, such as "A World Worth While" by W. A. Rogers.[14] These sources have provided both insight into how the artists in question were regarded within their contemporary society as well as how some of the most prominent artists viewed their own work.

In addition, these sources have been supplemented with articles and books published by intellectual contemporaries of the prominent cartoonists, such as Henry Demarest Lloyd's "The Story of a Great Monopoly" from 1881. I have also examined the recirculation and republication of images through other regions, as most major illustrated publications were located in New York, to see the extent of image's reach. Circulation trends for both *Harper's Weekly* and *Puck* provides context for the expansion of the associated artists' reach, was well as increasing popular demand for their contents. To augment these primary sources, this project also draws on more recent biographies and secondary sources on the prominent businessmen commonly labeled as "Robber Barons," such as Jay Gould and John D. Rockefeller.

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[13] "The Making of Cartoons: Rapid Development of the Art in Recent Years. Its Great Influence in Politics -- Keppler's Work and Its Effect -- Other Successful Caricaturists.," *New York Times (1857-1922)*, July 20, 1890, https://www.proquest.com/docview/94759119/abstract/290898DBD06449EPQ/138.

[14] "W.A. ROGERS, CARTOONIST, GIVES HIS REMINISCENCES OF NOTABLE AMERICANS: A WORLD WORTH WHILE, a Record of 'Auld Acquaintance,' by W.A. Rogers, with Illustrations by the Author (Harper & Brothers, New York).," *The Washington Post (1923-1954)*, May 3, 1925, sec. Society, http://www.proquest.com/docview/149582166/abstract/71F06C4FD3E5459BPQ/1.

Historiography

The depiction of American businessmen as hulking figures, clothed in waistcoats and top hats, dominating the working classes in pursuit of personal wealth was a common idea in the later decades of the nineteenth century. It was circulated by contemporary writers, such as Henry Demarest Lloyd, who declared that civilization would end at the hands of "the great money-makers" exercising "power kings do not know."[15] Despite the work that has been done on the history of anti-trust in the United States, there has been a dearth of focus on the cross-section between the world of influential political cartoonists of the time and the intellectual movement behind the developing anti-trust movement. These artists created images which came to visually define the opposition to monopolizing economic forces which had gained such notoriety over the course of the Gilded Age. The study of American political cartoonists to date has not yet tackled the portrayal of monopolies and the prominent capitalists associated with them in-depth. These sources provide information on the political leanings of certain cartoonists and clues to the influence their work had on the public atmosphere. They do not, however, deal directly with cartoonists' depictions of trusts or "Robber Barons," or artists' participation in the broader antitrust movement. This thesis endeavors to fill this gap, as these were significant cultural voices speaking on a topic with continued relevance today.

Historians of the era largely categorize the latter half of the nineteenth century as a period of rampant change in the United States, both socially and politically, with cartoons gaining popularity and significance with an increase in circulating publications.

[15] Hal Bridges, "The Robber Baron Concept in American History," *The Business History Review* 32, no. 1 (1958): 2, https://doi.org/10.2307/3111897.

Although printed lithograph images had existed prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, an influx of European-born cartoonists in the post-war period brought with them a more editorial style of caricature which developed into what Ulrich Keller characterized as a "new style of partisan pictorial debate."[16] Combined with the rapid growth in the popularity of printed press, cartoon images became an important part of the political environment and popular culture.[17] As an increasingly influential element of political and social discourse, political cartoonists had no shortage of potential topics for their work. Thomas described the Gilded Age period as consisting of a "rich range of colorful personalities, controversial issues, and emotional stirring events that […] made it a political cartoonist's paradise."[18]

In her 2020 article on the work of cartoonist Frederick Opper, Jen Reidel notes that both editorial and comic cartoons became important elements for publications fighting over subscribers and trying to increase their circulation numbers.[19] Having a prominent and popular political cartoonist providing illustrations on what they deemed the important issues was one way to achieve those ends. In Reidel's example, Opper worked for *Puck* magazine between 1881 and 1899, and produced work primarily focused on the greed and corruption of Robber Barons compared to the "homespun values" and "plight of ordinary people."[20] Similarly, Tom Culbertson provides a general summary of the period's prominent artists backgrounds and influences for context in

[16] Ulrich Keller, "The Iconic Turn in American Political Culture: Speech Performance for the Gilded-Age Picture Press," *Word & Image (London. 1985)* 29, no. 1 (2013): 2–3, https://doi.org/10.1080/02666286.2012.729794.
[17] Keller, 3.
[18] Thomas, "Mugwump Cartoonists, the Papacy, and Tammany Hall in America's Gilded Age," 213.
[19] Reidel, "Discovering Economic Concepts and Criticism in Progressive Era Cartoons," 89.
[20] Reidel, 89.

which their images were produced.[21] He included cartoon images as part of his concept of "popular justice" which he described as "more informal strategies of censure and sanctioning" of prominent cultural figures.[22] As opposed to formal legal consequences, this more informal route became a "shadowland of social regulation of the market" encompassing "strategies of caricatures and parody employed for critical effect and the intended elimination of the censured conduct."[23]

Outside of research into political cartoons and prominent figures of economic influence alone, current research on the history of antitrust in the United States has also touched on the impact of political cartoons within that movement. With the increased accessibility of print journalism and periodicals throughout the Gilded Age, cartoonists filled a natural position in the growing public consciousness around anti-competitive business practices. Harding notes that American culture may have been particularly conducive to this type of criticism as, "there emerged a vigorous 'Jeffersonian' distrust of the accumulation of economic power and political dominance" as well as "a commitment to protect individualism and the autonomy of the pioneer-settler trader."[24] This sentiment, coupled with the rise of muckraking journalism, fomented public discourse and kept the topic of antitrust sentiment in the political and cultural conversations. Most notable are the stated political alignments of some artists, such as Joseph Keppler and the Democratic Party. A highly influential cartoonist, Keppler founded one of the most prominent satire publications of the time, *Puck* magazine, partially to promote Democratic candidates and

[21] Tom Culbertson, "Illustrated Essay: The Golden Age of American Political Cartoons," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 7, no. 3 (2008): 277, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25144529.
[22] Harding, "Popular Justice and the Regulation of Trade," 205.
[23] Harding, 205.
[24] Harding, 206.

issues.[25] Although useful for identifying some of the major players and noting how political allegiances influenced certain publications, Culberton's work also reflects the relatively limited look into the context in which cartoons were created.

In her article on the artistic antecedents and descendants of Gilded Age political cartoons, Julia diLiberti emphasizes not only the significance of cartoons providing a form of visual record for American political life, but also the perspective from which cartoonists provided their commentary. Beginning a new period of newspaper editorializing, diLiberti asserts that the images highlighted "the boldness of those cartoonists who brooked no casualties and believed in their capacity to change the world."[26] With increasingly partisan politics, rapid industrialization, and a plethora of social issues, political cartoonists provided what diLiberti calls "an image starved public" with ways to directly visualize issues outside of printed reproductions of speeches.[27] This positions cartoonists as significant actors in the development of public discourse on often controversial issues and figures. In an environment where most political speech took the form of the aforementioned speeches published in papers or pamphlets, the draw of striking editorial images is understandable. Cartoons offered an easy way for the public to understand sometimes complicated issues and current events, which had a profound impact on a cultural environment "often conducted without the scrutiny of a visual record."[28] diLiberti also highlights the emotion and provocation which accompanied them, quoting modern cartoonist Jeff MacNelly's assessment that "many cartoonists

[25] Culbertson, "Illustrated Essay," 278.
[26] Julia diLiberti, "Gilded Age Cartoons: Artistic Antecedents and Descendants," *Inks: The Journal of the Comics Studies Society* 1, no. 2 (2017): 126, https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/30/article/668111.
[27] diLiberti, 126.
[28] diLiberti, 126.

would be hired assassins if they couldn't draw" and compatriot Chip Bok's assertion that editorial cartoons are designed to provoke debate rather than promote a specific opinion.[29] This highlights how cartoonists situated themselves in both an influential and controversial position. When Thomas Nast turned his attention to Boss Tweed and the political machine of New York's Tammany Hall, Tweed purportedly declared "Stop them damn pictures. I don't care so much what the papers say about me. My constituents can't read. But, damn it, they can see pictures."[30] Wielding sharp opinions, a sense of righteousness, and an easily accessible medium made cartoonists a formidable force in Gilded culture and politics.

Research on political cartoons in the Gilded Age is more limited than topics like immigration, political corruption, or industrialization in the same period, but does provide some insight into the motivations of both publications and some artists. Samuel Thomas focuses his research on "mugwump" cartoonists in New York, who he asserts saw themselves as thought leaders on issues such as corrupt political machines and religion. In fact, he highlights how *Puck* magazine combined their opposition to the Tammany Hall political machine and the Catholic Church into a single campaign. Co-founded by Joseph Keppler, a "disillusioned, nonpracticing Catholic" who viewed the Catholic church as a serious threat to constitutional politics, *Puck* reflected that "secular and rationalistic orientation." In fact, Thomas categorizes the attitude as a "moralistic, elitist definition of the public good" and describes *Puck* as "boldly proclaim[ing] a nonpartisan crusade for good government" and against what they considered political interference

[29] diLiberti, 126.
[30] Tweed quoted in diLiberti, 129.

from the Catholic clergy.[31] In doing so, the artists positioned themselves as voices of judgement on an American society experiencing both social and political upheaval.

Thomas reinforce this self-aggrandizing point of view, noting that "[*Puck*] saw itself as a righteous gadfly in the face of corrupt special interests and as a representative of the last best hope for the survival of Constitutional principles and republican virtue."[32] He also indicates that the magazine and its cartoonists might not have been overly presumptuous given that there was a "growing and increasingly sophisticated use of 'visual ridicule' […] that informed, aroused, and pronounced on myriad contemporary issues."[33] Primarily an article on cartoons about political corruption, Thomas provides an intriguing argument on how cartoonists viewed themselves as leaders of public thought. This moralistic attitude positioned cartoonists and their publications as judges on the standards of American society during a period of intense social and economic transition. While Thomas' work does an excellent job exploring the personal views of cartoonists at *Puck* on issues of religion and machine politics, he does not discuss how these views impacted their work relating to monopolies or the antitrust movement.

Baird Jarman takes a different approach by focusing on work produced by prominent cartoonist Thomas Nast. Jarman traces the course of Nast's career in the two decades immediately following the conclusion of the Civil War and the contentious atmosphere surrounding his work at *Harper's Weekly* during that period. He objects to the traditional view that Nast's struggles came from political differences with management, asserting instead that they stemmed "from differing approaches to the

[31] Thomas, "Mugwump Cartoonists, the Papacy, and Tammany Hall in America's Gilded Age," 213–14.
[32] Thomas, "Holding the Tiger: Mugwump Cartoonists and Tammany Hall in Gilded Age New York," 163.
[33] Thomas, "Holding the Tiger: Mugwump Cartoonists and Tammany Hall in Gilded Age New York," 155.

niceties of political debate."[34] Jarman argues that Nast's distinct style of portraying violence in his cartoons clashed with a society more intent on reinstating decorum and civility in the Postbellum period. This article concentrates on Nast's more purely political work but provides background on his popularity and national impact in the early decades of the Gilded Age when *Harper's Weekly* had one of the country's largest circulations. Jarman's work also provides evidence for the influence of an artist's individual opinions on their work, declaring that "Nast honed an ever-expanding emblematic language with which he famously and forcefully advanced his political views."[35] As with many of his fellow artists, these views tended to oppose corruption and political patronage, themes that feature heavily in much of Nast's work. Thomas refers to Nast as the "Father of American Political Cartooning," and with a wide circulation and significant national profile Nast helped set the standard of behavior for later cartoonists.[36]

Symbolic imagery is an important aspect of culture and politics that can be greatly influenced by both the personal beliefs of a creator and the environment in which the image is created. Walter Lippmann observed that "no successful leader has ever been too busy to cultivate the symbols which organize his following" as "only when symbols have done their work is there a handle he can use to move a crowd."[37] Having positioned themselves as intellectual leaders and protectors of the people, cartoonists created an emotionally charged image that remains identifiable today and colored views of American business for at least a half century. Political cartooning as an artform in the

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[34] Baird Jarman, "The Graphic Art of Thomas Nast: Politics and Propriety in Postbellum Publishing," *American Periodicals* 20, no. 2 (2010): 156, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23025187.
[35] Jarman, "The Graphic Art of Thomas Nast: Politics and Propriety in Postbellum Publishing," 167.
[36] Jarman, The Graphic Art of Thomas Nast: Politics and Propriety in Postbellum Publishing," 156-57; Thomas, "Holding the Tiger: Mugwump Cartoonists and Tammany Hall in Gilded Age New York," 156.
[37] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (Harcourt, Brace, 1922), 234, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hl56e8&seq=7.

United States is rooted in the foundations of Thomas Nast and Joseph Keppler, who established cartoonists as active participants in political and social dialogue. These two men also began the development of key visual elements and motifs, such as images of moneybags, well-dressed men, and hulking figures, which eventually featured prominently in works created by their successors. As the discussion around the monopolies and anti-trust sentiments became a larger focus of conversation, these elements made political cartoonists key players and contributors to the development of a burgeoning movement. With anti-trust becoming a more significant part of political conversations over the last several years, some of the motifs can still be found in editorial cartoons on the topic and still serve to persuade and shape public sentiment on the issue.

Chapter II.

Robber Barons and American Gilded Age

To the young American, here and elsewhere, the paths to fortune are innumerable and all open; There is invitation in the air and success in all his wide horizon.

—Mark Twain[38]

The Gilded Age in America encompassed the later decades of the nineteenth century and featured a significant amount of both social and political upheaval. As industrialization continued to advance and expand in the United States, new modes of economic organization also developed through which prominent businessmen and industrialists attempted to exert their control and maximize their own financial benefits. Historian Richard A. Sauers delineates the Gilded Age as the period of transition between a primarily agrarian and mercantile economy to the industrialization of the twentieth century.[39] As long-seated economic tradition and ways of life, particularly in urban areas where industrialization was most prevalent, the period became a hotbed for conflict and corruption. The introduction of radically new methods for conducting an economy provided new opportunity for a certain class of American businessmen to shape the new

[38] Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of To-Day* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1874), 114, https://books.google.com/books?id=qo1I1MQvW64C&pg=PA88&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=twopage&q&f=false.

[39] Richard A. Sauers, "Wall Street's Gilded Age: Nicknames of Her Capitalists and Robber Barons," *Names* 54, no. 2 (2006): 147–72, https://doi.org/10.1179/nam.2006.54.2.147.

economic world to their liking and advantage. These are the men now recognized by many as the "robber barons," a term Sauers credits to *Nation* editor Edwin Lawrence Godkin and most popularized by Matthew Josephson when he published *The Robber Barons* in 1934.[40] The Robber Barons, with their prominence in American culture, became a major focus of ire for those who opposed the centralization of economic power and influence. As cartoonists contributed to the development of an anti-trust movement, they added caricatures of these men to their work and made them recognizable characters for the public.

These men bore the often still well-known names of Rockefeller, Carnegie, Morgan, Gould, and Vanderbilt, and managed to amass great personal fortunes through their corporate activities. When Cornelius Vanderbilt died in 1877, he left behind a $100 million estate which would be worth almost $3 billion today.[41] This immense wealth represented one half of the equation which made up the Gilded Age in America. The other half was the vast gulf between those of the elite upper echelon and the working poor. Historian Nell Irvin Painter has made the point that "gilded" does not really mean "golden," but rather "has the sense of a patina covering something else…the shiny exterior and the rot underneath."[42] There was a vast ocean between the fabulously wealthy in places like New York City, who flaunted what they had as was the style of the time, and the working poor who occupied the rundown slums of many American urban centers. Although difficult to quantify given the many economic and tax changes since, it has been estimated that less than one percent of the U.S. population (about 4,000

[40] Sauers, 149.
[41] Sauers, 153.
[42] "How American Inequality in the Gilded Age Compares to Today," *Time*, February 5, 2018, https://time.com/5122375/american-inequality-gilded-age/.

families) possessed the same amount of wealth as the remaining 11.6 million families combined.[43] This is a dynamic not dissimilar to modern discussions of income inequality and the one percent in the United States today. And as with those current discussions, they can lead to strong responses resulting in social and political upheaval. For some, this manifested as opposition to the formation of monopolies and the concentration of wealth they represented to the public. As the anti-trust movement gained traction and became a point of public discussion, the country's editorial periodicals took up the mantle of depicting the issue for their readers. Many of these depictions fed into the colloquial image of the "Robber Baron" in Gilded Age society.

Development of the American Robber Baron

The idea of the "Robber Baron" has been an intriguing one to historians for some time. There are much more established schools of thought in the body of work dedicated to the more general idea of the "Robber Baron" in American economic history, including how the image became such a potent element of American popular culture. Academics began their analysis of the phenomenon almost immediately following the conclusion of the Gilded Age, which is unsurprising given the popular notoriety of characters like John D. Rockefeller and Jay Gould. The earliest school of thought focused heavily on the perspective of the American businessman as a negative social force pursuing their own interests to the detriment of others. Progressive historian Vernon Louis Parrington falls very clearly into this camp, heavily influenced by the negative images of American businessmen espoused by Lloyd and fellow journalist Ida Tarbell. His use of piratical

[43] "How American Inequality in the Gilded Age Compares to Today."

metaphors such as "Captain Kidd" and "the black flag" to examine prominent industrial figures he regards as "blackguards […] railway wreckers, cheaters and swindlers, but picturesque in their audacity," was a much more colorful analysis than those of later historians and demonstrates Parrington's background in literature.[44] These colorful and dramatic descriptions were fairly representative of the Progressive era, spurred on by the excesses of the 1920s and the financial collapse that followed.

As the middle of the century began, a revisionist school of thought emerged to re-examine the historical treatment of big businessmen. Maury Klein takes a revisionist look at businessman Jay Gould, who publisher Joseph Pulitzer described as "one of the most sinister figures that have ever flitted bat-like across the vision of the American people," and comes to the conclusion that "scholars have neglected virtually everything about Gould except his business career."[45] While Parrington drew heavily from contemporary intellectuals and muckraking journalists, and his work reflects the black and white image of the businessman as a malicious social force popular in writings by those populations, Klein's more complete source background provides nuance to his argument. Using accounts of friends, family, and acquaintances, as well as news coverage, Klein builds a compelling profile of Gould as a conscientious family man with a passion for books and flowers, not the calculating and ruthless businessman contemporary critics described.[46] These nuances provide a much more complete picture of the "Robber Baron" as an actual

[44] Vernon Parrington, *The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America: Main Currents in American Thought* (Taylor and Francis, 1927), 12.
[45] Maury Klein, "In Search of Jay Gould," *The Business History Review* 52, no. 2 (1978): 170, https://doi.org/10.2307/3113034.
[46] Klein, 170.

person rather than the black and white lines drawn by Parrington and others in the earlier Progressive school.

Amidst the boom of revisionist writing on this topic in the 1950s and 60s, John Tipple published an interesting examination of the contemporary critics who launched the "Robber Baron" image into the popular consciousness. While Tipple appears to agree generally with the revisionist school of thought, he takes issue with the social theories some revisionist historians espoused, which focused on personal grudges or loss of status as businessmen became significant social players.[47] His analysis of a representative sample of contemporary critics, including publishers, authors, and reporters, reveals a relatively homogenous group with little personal incentive to criticize the "Robber Baron" class. Instead, Tipple makes a compelling argument that the stressed economic environment and popular disillusionment with the "American dream" at the end of the nineteenth century were the critical factors in creating and sustaining the caricature.[48] This theory is engaging as it accounts for the widespread popularity of the image in a variety of media formats, which could not have been achieved by a single class of disenchanted intellectuals. Tipple's study offers important consideration into how economic and social tensions contributed to the "Robber Baron" caricature's development within the class of intellectuals who formed the base of the antitrust movement.

Writing contemporaneously with Tipple, Hal Bridges offers his own take on the development of the "Robber Baron" image. He opens with a refence to E.L. Godkin's

[47] John Tipple, "The Anatomy of Prejudice: Origins of the Robber Baron Legend," *The Business History Review* 33, no. 4 (1959): 512–14, https://doi.org/10.2307/3111612.
[48] Tipple, 516–17.

1869 assertion that Cornelius Vanderbilt was "a lineal successor of the mediaeval baron that we read about" before further detailing the term's evolution in following decades.[49] Primarily, Bridges credits Henry Demarest Lloyd's 1894 book titled *Wealth Against Commonwealth* with reigniting the discussion of robber barons amongst the intellectual class. He argues that Lloyd's tone and "impassioned rhetoric" targeted the broader influence of capitalism and business interests beyond just the question monopolies like Standard Oil.[50] This provides some context for how contemporary intellectuals were discussing the idea of robber barons at the time cartoonists were creating their images. Bridges also provides a useful summary of how academic thought on the topic evolved in the first half of the twentieth century from the solidification of the robber baron image in the Progressive Era to the more reflective work on prominent businessmen that followed in the 1940s and 1950s.[51] Although not incredibly in-depth, his work serves as a starting point for further investigation into how the idea of the robber baron was developed and then expanded.

In a bit of a crossover, Richard A. Sauers' 2006 article in *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* specifically addressing the imagery of Wall Street and its prominent players during the Gilded Age. Focusing on seven prominent individuals and two major companies, the article explores how nicknames for these individuals developed and were then used to portray then in editorial commentary.[52] In the case of the New York and Erie Railroad Company, it became known as the "Scarlet Woman of Wall Street" due to shady

[49] Bridges, "The Robber Baron Concept in American History," 1–2.
[50] Bridges, 2.
[51] Bridges, 10.
[52] Sauers, "Wall Street's Gilded Age," 149.

business practices before succumbing to bankruptcy and reorganization.[53] Even more prominent was the "Erie War" which followed, as Jay Gould and James Fisk Jr. combatted Cornelius Vanderbilt's attempts to buy out the Erie company using "unauthorized stock issues, political chicanery, and incessant litigation."[54] The etymology Sauer's highlights existed in parallel with the visual caricatures being created by the country's cartoonists. To some extent, the two worlds fed off each other to create an overall concept of these men in the American cultural mind, which has continued to evolve even beyond the Gilded Age period.

As the use of trusts to consolidate economic control, spearheaded by prominent industrialists like John D. Rockefeller of Standard Oil, increased throughout the later decades of the Gilded Age period, formal opposition also came into play in the form of state and federal antitrust laws seeking to regulate economic competition. These policies attempted to counter concentrated economic power as reformers worried it could be used to influence political decisions or crush independent businesses.[55] The most significant of these, the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, promised to "rein in the trusts" with the threat of federal prosecution.[56] In reality, the Sherman Act suffered from a lack of clarity in the scope of its enforcement. Laura Philips Sawyer notes that this confusion arose from Congress simply codifying existing common law prohibitions on anti-competitive practices without clearly stating how courts should apply the resulting law.[57] Leaving that intent open to interpretation allowed both courts and academics to apply their own

[53] Sauers, 150–51.
[54] Sauers, 151.
[55] Sawyer, "US Antitrust Law and Policy in Historical Perspective," 1.
[56] Sawyer, 2.
[57] Sawyer, 4.

understandings of how the Sherman Act should be enforced. Although not central to the theme, there are periodic references to popular opposition to monopolistic concentration, such as Sawyer's reference to antitrust sentiment serving as a "lightning rod for popular protest."[58] With the legal interpretation of existing anti-trust legislation relatively open to interpretation, and not stringently enforced in the early years of its existence, the developing anti-trust movement was driven by increasing public interest on the topic. It was in this sphere that the country's political cartoonists made significant contributions to shaping the opposition.

Periodicals and Cartoons

Simultaneously with these economic changes, the United States in the mid- to late-nineteenth century also saw the rapid expansion of printed periodicals and newspapers as printing technology also advanced. Many of these became forums for the spread of particular political viewpoints with varying levels of influence on issues of the day. Historian Baird Jarman categorized the roles played by the different types of publications with "Newspapers operat[ing] within the unruly public sphere with its raw market forces and partisan politics, whereas books accessed more polite realms of history and literature […] newspapers were often viewed either as prejudiced political organs or as salacious 'retailers of filth.'"[59] Magazines filled the space between these two extremes, and quickly became a significant influence on the development of public opinion on a variety of issues.

[58] Sawyer, 2.
[59] Baird Jarman, "The Graphic Art of Thomas Nast: Politics and Propriety in Postbellum Publishing," *American Periodicals* 20, no. 2 (2010): 156, https://doi.org/10.1353/amp.2010.0007.

With these significant developments in printing and periodicals, came the addition of illustrations alongside other reporting. Images provided a new form of information transfer to impart details about the state of the world to readers. Additionally, this new format added another group of people with influence on the development of general thought and public opinion by expression through their artform: the editorial cartoonist. These men were charged with translating elements of social and political life in the United States into punchy visuals that could be easily digested by readers. In an 1886 article titled "The Men Who Lead the Pictorial Journalism of the Country," the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* described this new class of artists as "among the men who mould [sic] thought through a medium that is swifter than type while its influence comes near being as permanent and perfect as the clearest and most convincing written speech […]."[60] Many have remarked on the potential influence provided by this class of artists as their art form became more widespread throughout American periodicals. A reader of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News,* one of the earliest American periodicals to take advantage of adding illustrations to their news reporting, remarked that "the illustrated papers of the country supply us with a response to our curiosity, and so thoroughly that the great men and great places of the world are almost as familiar to us today as our own home and neighbors."[61]

In addition to providing visual depictions of the printed news for readers eager to see the world being written about in newspapers and magazines, illustrators also spread

[60] "Three Cartoon-Makers: The Men Who Lead the Pictorial Journalism of the Country," *St. Louis Post - Dispatch (1879-1922)*, April 21, 1886, https://www.proquest.com/docview/578759807/abstract/AAF607640FC4CBFPQ/95.
[61] Stephen Hess and Sandy Northrop, "The Rise of the American Cartoon: 1865-1896," in *American Political Cartoons: The Evolution of a National Identity, 1745-2010*, 1st ed., 2011, 52.

their skills into the political sphere and to issues being debated at the time. The same reader from *Leslie's* went on to state that "the influence of the newspapers in politics is nowadays so well acknowledged that every party much have its organs, or it is impossible for it to hope for success."[62] This party power was then augmented by the addition of editorial images created by artists affiliated with each individual publication. These men included the likes of Thomas Nast and Joseph Keppler, who helped establish the art of cartooning in America as a whole, in addition to their individual contributions. In fact, the very idea of cartoons as an art form was still in development throughout the period in question. An 1890 article on Keppler and the development of cartoons pointed out that "the word cartoon, as applied to full-page or double-page political caricature, is of comparatively recent origin [even] Webster does not give this definition of the word, but it has been used in this sense over twenty years."[63]

As the topic of monopolies and the industrialists associated with them gained traction in the world of Gilded Age political rhetoric, they were often topics of choice for some of the country's most influential cartoonists. The images frequently played on and emphasized humorous elements to maximize their impact and influence, which necessitated a certain skill by the creators. A contemporary analysis of the medium asserted that "Literary humor cannot be acquired; it must be inborn, and it is exactly the same with regard to pictorial humor."[64] This ability was not widely present in large numbers of individuals and required certain personal qualities to be particularly effective. In the words of Lewis Rosenthal, "These cartoonists do our complex society many a

[62] Hess and Northrop, 52.
[63] "The Making of Cartoons."
[64] "The Making of Cartoons."

service. Who more effectually than they lashes vice? Who more ruthlessly tears the mask from the face of pretense? Who more gracefully puts cap and bells on the head of folly?"[65] The artists used both their humor skills and personal opinions to create specific visual representations of trusts and monopolies over the course of the American Gilded Age. These portrayals shared many visual elements and often crossed party lines, creating a common issue across the contemporary political spectrum. Their creation helped stir and shore up public support for legal and political action against the formation of economic monopolies, which both motivated and protected the political will to take those steps.

[65] Lewis Rosenthal, "Cartoonists of New-York.," *New York Times (1857-1922)*, October 31, 1886, https://www.proquest.com/docview/94432051/abstract/6B8028925A504C48PQ/209.

Chapter III.

The Godfather of American Cartooning

Stop them damn pictures. I don't care so much what the papers say about me. My constituents can't read. But, damn it, they can see pictures.

—William "Boss" Tweed[66]

As technological advances in printing further developed in the mid-nineteenth century, *Harper's Weekly* emerged into the landscape of circulating periodicals and began establishing itself as an influential source of editorial thought. From the periodical's establishment in January of 1857, the circulation climbed from 60,000 in May of that year to 75,000 in November 1858, and then 90,000 by October of 1859.[67] In his *History of American Magazines* published in 1938, Frank Luther Mott describes *Harper's* as "a vital illustrated history of the years from 1857 to 1916," highlighting specifically the periodical's format combining images with political commentary, editorials, and fiction.[68] By the mid-nineteenth century, publications spanned the gamut from highbrow literature to newspapers, which at the time were seen as largely biased political entities or "retailers of filth."[69] Magazine's like *Harper's* occupied a somewhat

[66] Tweed quoted in diLiberti, "Gilded Age Cartoons," 129.
[67] Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1930, Vol. 2*, vol. 2 (Belknap Press Imprint, 1938), 473, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb00678.0002.001.
[68] Mott, 2:469.
[69] Jarman, "The Graphic Art of Thomas Nast," 156.

middle ground between the two spheres of printed thought, bridging the two halves of nineteenth-century publishing. *Harper Weekly's* eventually expansive circulation and early entry into the field made it an extremely influential publication in shaping the growth of American editorial thought. And with that significant position, helped bring the name Thomas Nast and a new art form into the public sphere. Nast's biographer acknowledged that *Harper's* "was the medium through which a great weapon was given to a great people who stood in sore need of it – a weapon for assault and for defence [sic], developed by fierce conditions and the reign of organized evil – the American Political Cartoon."[70]

Nast had an outsized influence on public opinion in his time and helped establish key ideas about monopolists and the trusts they controlled, as well as the dangers posed by their influence, which would eventually be expanded on by future artists. He laid the foundation for political cartooning to play an influential role in American cultural life in the Gilded Age.[71] Nast's famous campaign against William "Boss" Tweed and the Tammany Hall political machine in New York City demonstrated the power and influence that could be exerted by a cartoonist.[72] Through his work, he introduced motifs like the moneybag and hulking, portly figures, which were eventually adopted by later artists in their pieces on anti-trust and monopolies. Nast played a key role in developing

[70] Albert Bigelow Paine, "'Harper's Weekly' and Thomas Nast: The Record of a Series of Historic Political Victories," *Harper's Weekly*, January 5, 1907, https://harp-alexanderstreet-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/article/text/310197/17468.
[71] "Thomas Nast.," *The Youth's Companion (1827-1929)* (Boston, United States: American Periodicals Series II, December 14, 1871), https://www.proquest.com/docview/127039907/citation/5E994E516DB048F8PQ/9.
[72] Hess and Northrop, "The Rise of the American Cartoon," 55.

the American political cartoon into a tool in the editorial arsenal for his successors to implement and build on in the future.

Harper Weekly's Star

Thomas Nast joined *Harper's Weekly* in 1862, and eventually became one of the names most closely associated with the periodical and its contemporary cultural influence. He arrived at *Harper's* at the young age of twenty-two-years-old already having begun his career in illustration and visual media working for periodicals like *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and the *Illustrated News*.[73] Nast was described in the *American Phrenological Journal* as a "well proportioned and symmetrically built" man of medium height, and possessing eyes which were "dark and bright, indicative of quick mental perception." The artist purportedly possessed a face "artistic in expression" and a "broad expansive forehead […] overshadowed with a dark mass of straight-black hair" complete with moustache and goatee.[74] In conversation his remarks sparkle with wit and good-humor. […] his face is, as a critic said of his picture, 'fresh and graphic, warm, and glowing with life – that would light up an Esquimaux [Eskimo] snow-hut with streaks of summery sunshine."[75] Historian Baird Jarman described Nast's personality as "feisty, pugilistic, and [caring] very little for tactful negotiation."[76]

Little did he or anyone else know how his profile and influence would grow on a national scale across his almost twenty five-year tenure with *Harper's*. Representing the

[73] Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1930, Vol. 2*, 2:474.
[74] "Thomas Nast.: Phrenological Character. Biography.," *American Phrenological Journal (1838-1869)* (Philadelphia, United States: American Periodicals Series II, October 1867), https://www.proquest.com/americanperiodicals/docview/137927914/abstract/A73D50C08F1C407DPQ/14.
[75] "Thomas Nast."
[76] Jarman, "The Graphic Art of Thomas Nast," 161.

bulk of his career, as well as the height of his fame and professional success, the association between Thomas Nast's name and *Harper's* is strong. A 1909 advertising offer, in fact, offered magazine subscribers a special discounted price on an upcoming biography of the artist under the heading "The Great Cartoonist's Biography offered to readers on very special terms."[77] Such an advertising campaign indicates an attempt to employ Nast's name recognition with the readers of *Harper's Weekly* as a means of selling more books given their historic association. In a profile of major caricaturists subtitled as, "The Men Who Lead the Pictorial Journalism of the Country," Nast was heralded as the "genius of Harpers' pictorial page."[78] These contributions began with the outbreak of war between the North and South in 1861. The environment provided by the on-going American Civil War provided a fruitful environment for the rise of illustrated press and particularly a launch pad for Nast's own profile. As stories of war and conflict, with their accompanying images, still draw great public and media interest today, the contemporary American public appeared to be hungry for visual representations of the ongoing conflict. With photography still very much in its infancy, particularly in environments outside of controlled studio settings such as battlefields, illustrations like those found in periodicals like *Harper's* and *The Illustrated News* provided the materials for public consumption. The general contemporary consensus on the quality and style of Nast's work is that it would not be described as highly refined, or as the *New York Times* described it, "may not be acceptable to sticklers for the grammar of art" as it were. However, the paper went on to declare that "it is his own, and he has made it popular

[77] Albert Bigelow Paine, "Nast and Harper's Weekly," *Harper's Weekly*, October 2, 1909, https://harp-alexanderstreet-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/article/text/326251/17469.
[78] "THREE CARTOON-MAKERS."

with the crowd."[79] Nast created several of the most recognizable cartoon motifs still found in today's popular American culture, from Santa Claus with his white beard and rosy cheeks, to the donkey and elephant still used to represent the two ends of the modern political spectrum.

Civil War Reporting

Nast, a key founding voice in the development of cartooning in America, established his significance to both the artform and as an influential figure in American social and political thought while working for *Harper's,* both during and following the Civil War. His work depicting the Civil War conflict to those still at home through illustrations made Nast a basically household name in the post-bellum world. An 1888 newspaper profile of several prominent illustrators noted that "Nast became one of the most important contributors to the paper and his war pictures were powerful factors in upholding and strengthening northern sentiment during the great struggle."[80] With its extensive readership growing, circulation eventually reached all the way to the West Coast and would become arguably, "the greatest political power in postbellum publishing."[81] The partnership between Nast's images and the written editorial team, led primarily by editor George William Curtis, has a lot to do with the successful growth of the magazine and it's readership. In fact, an 1871 article asserted that "the increase of the sale of *Harper's Weekly* from 130,000 to 300,000, on account of these pictures, shows [Nast's] influence" on the public.[82]

[79] Rosenthal, "Cartoonists of New-York."
[80] "THREE CARTOON-MAKERS."
[81] Hess and Northrop, "The Rise of the American Cartoon," 52.
[82] "Thomas Nast.," December 14, 1871.

The work Nast produced during the war years significantly raised his profile nationally, and also helped sow the seeds of his influence over the burgeoning field of American caricature as an artform. He had become strongly aligned with the Union cause over the course of the war and was widely known to be a staunch Republican, and his national reputation at the close of the war reflected that fact.[83] An 1894 profile in *Current Literature* declared that "During the closing year of the [Civil] war he [Nast] was more detested in the South than the most rabid abolitionist in Boston, and in the same measure he was idolized in the North."[84] The content of Nast's work and the political perspective from which he undertook this work appears to have had a profound enough impact and influence as to arouse the above mentioned response by the war's conclusion. This position, however, was not always assured as another profile from 1867 notes that "some of his very best pictures, those which have called forth the warmest commendations from the press and the people, have been repeatedly declined by publishers."[85] Given Nast's youthful age and relatively young career in the early 1860s, it is unsurprising that he was required to establish himself and earn a position as a prominent cultural voice, which his work during the war years accomplished. Continuing into the post-bellum period, the artist turned his focus to other social or political topics where an 1883 newspaper profile noted that "…often the revelations made by his pictures created extraordinary sensations."[86]

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[83] "History on Canvas.," *American Phrenological Journal (1838-1869)* (Philadelphia, United States: American Periodicals Series II, February 1868), https://www.proquest.com/americanperiodicals/docview/137932855/abstract/5CBB145A8F824FF8PQ/1.
[84] "Thomas Nast's Work," *Current Literature (1888-1912)* (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series III, July 1894), https://www.proquest.com/docview/124817409/abstract/137891D9FD6F4002PQ/8.
[85] "Thomas Nast.," October 1867.
[86] "THREE CARTOON-MAKERS."

Nast's coverage of the Civil War ran the gamut from fairly realistic illustrations of battlefields to more metaphorical or editorial representations. The transition from the real to the representative seems to have begun around the Christmas and New Year's season at the end of 1862 with the publication of two cartoons titled "Santa Claus in Camp" and "Christmas Eve, 1862" (figures 1 and 2 respectively).[87] The first was the cover image for the Christmas issue of *Harper's Weekly* in 1862 and depicts Saint Nick, complete with sleigh and reindeer, in a Union army camp handing out supplies and gifts to gathered soldiers.[88] Nast's German heritage contributed to what most modern observers would consider the "traditional" image of Santa Claus and the image possesses a hopeful atmosphere of celebration and encouragement in the background. "Christmas Eve, 1862" was published in the same issue and depicts the split reality of family in the midst of an ongoing war, with a soldier sitting in camp looking at images of his family contrasted with a wife and children at home.[89] Rather than the more comic and caricatured portrayals of Nast's later work, these images used metaphorical imagery to evoke emotion from readers of his work. Thomas Nast's hallmark after his style turned toward these metaphorical images was an undercurrent of pro-Union and pro-Republican sentiment in the subject matter. These subjects mirrored Nast's own personal political alignment and opinions, which would become a significant hallmark in the forthcoming history of American caricature artists. The expression of an individual artist's personal

[87] "Thomas Nast.," October 1867.
[88] "Thomas Nast | Santa Claus in Camp (from 'Harper's Weekly,' Vol. 7, p. 1)," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed June 5, 2023, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/429261.
[89] "Thomas Nast | Christmas Eve, 1862 (from 'Harper's Weekly,' Vol. 7, Pp. 8-9)," accessed June 5, 2023, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/429263.

political and social views featured prominently in their work regarding specific topics, including the development of monopolies and the associated economic policies.

Figure 1. Santa Claus in Camp[90]

[90] Thomas Nast, *Santa Claus in Camp*, January 3, 1863, January 3, 1863, https://harp-alexanderstreet-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/issue/image/1863/0103/1.

Figure 2. Christmas Eve, 1862[91]

The image which many have highlighted as a significant source of Nast's cultural and political influence is his illustration titled "Compromise with the South," which was published in September of 1864 (figure 3).[92] The illustration depicts a triumphant Jefferson Davis clasping hands with a defeated and wounded Union soldier bowing his head in sorrow over a gravestone bearing the words, "In memory of our Union heroes who fell in a useless war," and a Black Union veteran is forced back into slavery with his

[91] Thomas Nast, *Christmas Eve, 1862*, January 3, 1863, January 3, 1863, https://harp-alexanderstreet-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/issue/image/1863/0103/8.
[92] Thomas Nast, *Compromise with the South*, September 3, 1864, Wood Engraving, September 3, 1864, HarpWeek, https://www.harpweek.com/09cartoon/BrowseByDateCartoon.asp?Month=September&Date=3.

family in the background. Davis stands atop a fresh grave, smashing a sword inscribed as "Northern Power" while Columbia weeps into her hands and the Union flag flies upside down and tattered in the corner.[93] With a caption that read "Dedicated to the Chicago Convention," the piece reflected the artist's dissatisfaction with the Democratic National Convention which had occurred in the previous month.

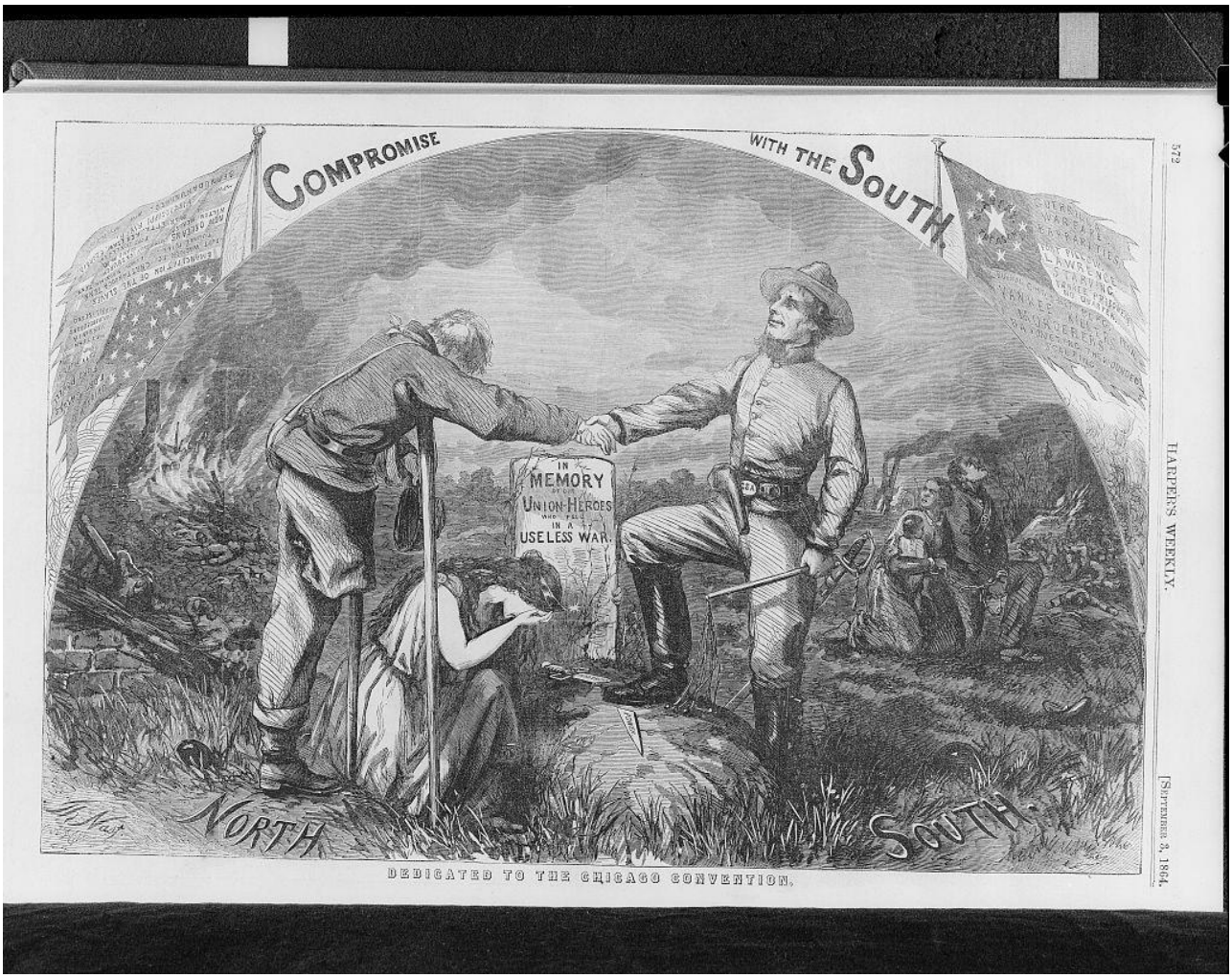

Figure 3. Compromise with the South: Dedicated to the Chicago Convention[94]

[93] Nast.
[94] Nast.

As the war had waged on for years at this point, a subsection of Democrats began arguing to resolve the conflict between North and South through compromise and negotiation rather than any definitive military victory. Referred to as the "Peace Democrats" or "Copperheads," they advocated for a proposed cease-fire and negotiations with the Confederacy in order to settle the conflict. This plank was ultimately ratified and included as party of the party platform for the 1864 presidential election.[95] A profile of Nast in the *American Phrenological Journal* three years later, recalled the sentiment in the convention's aftermath was that the Democratic party "in a series of resolutions had virtually declared for peace at any price."[96] For a Republican with radical and outspoken views, a compromise position like this after years of bloody conflict would not have sat well and called for a specific response. This is a theme which would repeat throughout Nast's career on issues he found significant, as well as by artists who followed in his footsteps.

In response to that sentiment, the image proved to be massively popular amongst supporters of the Union cause. In fact, it was reported that "All the papers in which the cartoon appeared were immediately bought up by the Unionists, and so effective was it that the Union National Committee purchased the plate and circulated them by the hundred thousand."[97] One such example of a circulated broadside is depicted in figure 4. With the world of American political cartooning very much still in its infancy, Nast's work was already demonstrating the potential impact of artists' opinions on issues of

[95] Robert C. Kennedy, "Cartoon of the Day: Compromise with the South," HarpWeek, accessed May 21, 2023, https://www.harpweek.com/09cartoon/BrowseByDateCartoon.asp?Month=September&Date=3.
[96] "Thomas Nast.," October 1867.
[97] "Thomas Nast."

national interest. This is a trend which would ultimately be mirrored in the artistic conversation around the issues of monopolies and anti-trust only a few decades later.

Figure 4. A Traitor's Peace That the Northern Copperhead Leaders Would Force Upon the Country[98]

[98] Union Congressional Committee, "A Traitor's Peace That the Northern Copperhead Leaders Would Force Upon the Country | Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History" (McGill & Witherrow, 1864), https://www.gilderlehrman.org/collection/glc05986.

Nast had created an illustration which proved very salient to a certain segment of the population in a very contentious political environment, and which was then put to use persuading people toward a particular cause. A couple of years after the war concluded, the *American Phrenological Society's* profile commented on the influence of this image declaring "the good it accomplished was incalculable." In a country divided between ending a bloody internal conflict and exacting revenge on the aggressor parties, "Nast's sketch was one of those agencies which quickly brought a healthy reaction" from both soldiers and citizens.[99] For Nast himself, the point of view found in his cartoons was heavily influenced by his own political positions and preferences. Often described as a firebrand and a passionate advocate for his causes, Nast's work during the Civil War and immediate post-bellum period "his work was animated by an unwavering confidence in the success of the Union cause and was prosecuted with increasing skill."[100] With increasing skill depicting ideas through visual metaphor and references, rather than faithful reproductions of battlefield scenes in illustration, simply increased the artist's influence on the public.

Political Firebrand

It was this firebrand nature which both helped and hindered Nast in the development of his public profile and then set him apart from the tone of artists who followed him. Even within the Harper's organization, he was often considered a controversial figure, not necessarily for political views that differed from the norm, but

[99] "Thomas Nast.," October 1867.
[100] W. C. Ewing, "Thomas Nast: His Period and His Pictures," *Current Literature (1888-1912)* (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series III, February 1905), https://www.proquest.com/docview/124798035/abstract/AE2534F05E3D4C4EPQ/1.

rather the tone he used to present them.[101] The subtlety and nuance found in editorial images created by others was very often lacking as Nast's style was much more black and white, both in illustration and commentary. Baird Jarman, an historian who has examined Nast's work, remarked that his "brutal style of caricature appeared out of step with an increasingly popular new school of illustrators [that] sought a return to genteel discourse" after years of heated argument during the war years.[102] This style both drew attention and notoriety for his work, but also often cast Nast at odds with even members of his own party like *Harper's* editor George William Curtis. Jarman recounts Nast's grandson's position that after the death of Fletcher Harper in 1876, the artist lost his greatest defender, which allowed Curtis' more conservative editorial board to "stifle his free expression and thereby diminish the force and effectiveness of his political caricatures."[103] Whether or not that reflected the contemporary reality, it does shed light on the level of Nast's perceived influence on the public consciousness.

In January of 1863, *Harper's* published Nast's image entitled "Emancipation of the Negroes – The Past and the Future," shown in figure 5, after President Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. In the illustration, Nast imagines a hopeful future for the formerly enslaved population contrasted with the horrors of the immediate past surrounding a central scene of peaceful family life.[104]

[101] Jarman, "The Graphic Art of Thomas Nast," 157.
[102] Jarman, 157.
[103] Jarman, 158.
[104] "Thomas Nast | Emancipation of the Negroes – The Past and the Future (from 'Harper's Weekly')," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed June 3, 2023, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/429270.

Figure 5. The Emancipation of the Negroes, January 1863 – The Past and the Future[105]

Nast's 1867 profile in the *American Phrenological Journal* asserts that the artist had tried to have the image published twice before without success and that it was only after the Proclamation was issued that he was successful. The journal credits this to Nast's prescience and foresight, which fell in line with their view of the theory of phrenology which was popular at the time.[106] Nast reportedly began working on his initial sketches for the piece in September 1862, after President Lincoln's announcement, but had to contend with a pro-slavery editor at *Harper's* and was unsuccessful at getting the

[105] "Thomas Nast | Emancipation of the Negroes – The Past and the Future (from 'Harper's Weekly')."
[106] "Thomas Nast.," October 1867.

illustration published. Whether or not the image was created before or after the Proclamation's publication, it became another highly popular and influential depiction created by Nast after it was finally published under a new and more receptive editorial board.[107]

Both "Compromise with the South" and "The Emancipation of the Negroes – The Past and the Future" are emblematic of the style Nast used in his early professional years. Heavily influenced by his start with illustrated newspapers, where artists used illustrations to provide more faithful and accurate depictions of news stories for readers. Although not depicting specific events or identifiable individuals, both images use symbolic representations to describe important or significant events or ideas that may not have had any easily depicted visual reality. Nast's position within *Harper's* allowed the artist an enormous amount of liberty and freedom in creating his cartoons. In turn the popularity of his work fed into that influence as "almost from the first Nast was allowed to follow his own ideas – to make pictures rather than illustrations – and these, purely imaginative and even crude as many of them were, did not fail to arouse the thousands who each week scanned the pages of the *Harper* periodical."[108] The Emancipation Proclamation, for example, was in reality a signed document with a profound impact on the lives of real individual people. Nast's illustration focuses on the visual depictions of these realities, or at least the most hopeful imaginings, by contrasting the future with the past. Similarly, "Compromise with the South" draws upon underlying fears, perhaps of the illustrator himself, to present an imagined version of the future should the Union

[107] "The Emancipation of the Negroes, January, 1863 Past & Future," *ThomasNast.Com* (blog), accessed November 18, 2023, https://thomasnast.com/cartoons/the-emancipation-of-the-negroes-january-1863-the-past-and-the-future-2/.
[108] Ewing, "Thomas Nast: His Period and His Pictures."

capitulate and negotiate an end to the conflict. The reality of conflict resolution and negotiation is complex, especially in the context of a civil war, so Nast chose to provide his viewers with a snapshot of the aftermath.

Even very early in his career, Nast was demonstrating his capacity for influence on a grand scale when commenting on issues of significance to the American public. One of his biographers, Albert Bigelow Paine, only a few years after the cartoonist's death, described the American political cartoon as "the medium through which a great weapon was given to a great people who stood in need of it."[109] Even the *New York Times*, in a review of Paine's book acknowledged that "whether or not Nast's influence upon the history of the country was quite as large as Mr. Paine things, it was certainly not small."[110] His work during the Civil War period really cemented this position and served as the launchpad for the development of the remainder of his career and a shaping influence on the evolution of American political cartooning. As the country exited the wartime period and American society began encountering new issues in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Nast and his fellow cartoonists found new fodder for their artistic talents. These new targets frequently involved questions of morality and anti-corruption in the public sphere.

Themes of morality and righteousness were common elements in much of Nast's work, which coupled with the clear expression of his political opinions produced a powerful element of persuasion for a broad audience. An article published in 1871 noted

[109] Paine, "'Harper's Weekly' and Thomas Nast: The Record of a Series of Historic Political Victories.," https://harp-alexanderstreet-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/article/text/310197/17468.
[110] "Thomas Nast.: Th. Nast.," *New York Times (1857-1922)*, December 24, 1904, sec. SATURDAY REVIEW OF BOOKS, https://www.proquest.com/docview/96403081/abstract/4F59B9DFB16A4C45PQ/1.

this influence by declaring that "he [Nast] uses art only to strengthen the right, and make the wrong ridiculous and hateful."[111] Such sentiment draws the conclusion that the artist was working from a position of trustworthiness and moral righteousness when characterizing his subjects. This sentiment also appeared to be corroborated by the *American Phrenological Journal,* which noted that "Mr. Nast caricatures everything and everybody, save sacred subjects" which he would not because "he is himself a man of high moral principle."[112] These characterizations then went on to influence and shape public opinion on the topics. In the estimation of his biographer, Nast's reach was extensive, spanning into even "the most isolated farmhouse of the West, in the woodman's hut and in the miner's cabin." Speaking specifically of the Tweed campaign of the 1870s, Paine declared that even in these spaces "cartoons of Tweed and his fellows decorated the walls, and the men and women who put them there knew that they were drawn by Thomas Nast."[113]

Tammany Hall & "The Brains"

Following the immediate post-war years, Nast entered his period of greatest relevance with his crusade against Boss Tweed and the Tammany Hall political machine in 1870s New York. His caricatures of prominent political figures and issues of corruption within New York City politics became a significant aspect, if not the most important aspect, of Nast's profile. One writer reviewing Nast's biography in 1905 declared that "Nast

[111] "Thomas Nast.," December 14, 1871.
[112] "History on Canvas."
[113] "Among the September Magazines: Thomas Nast's "Ring " Cartoons," *Current Literature (1888-1912)* (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series III, September 1904), 286, https://www.proquest.com/docview/124797042/abstract/FD6797AB856E463BPQ/2.

developed his highest talent and won his greatest triumph in the fight that resulted in its [the Tweed Ring] overthrow."[114] It was in this campaign that Nast started working with some of the visual motifs that would come to define anti-trust and anti-monopoly in American political cartoons in the final decades of the century. By this time, he had also established himself as a recognizable figure in his own right, sometimes adding his own self-portrait in to his cartoons. In one image from November 1871, Nast sits on top of a giant printing press crushing several figures and captioned as "The Power of the Press," shown in figure 6. The fact that there are no identifying features other than his own self portrait and a sketchpad emphasized Nast's position in the public consciousness, as a reader was assumed to not need any other identifying features or notes to recognize the artist.[115]

[114] Ewing, "Thomas Nast: His Period and His Pictures."
[115] Hess and Northrop, "The Rise of the American Cartoon," 55.

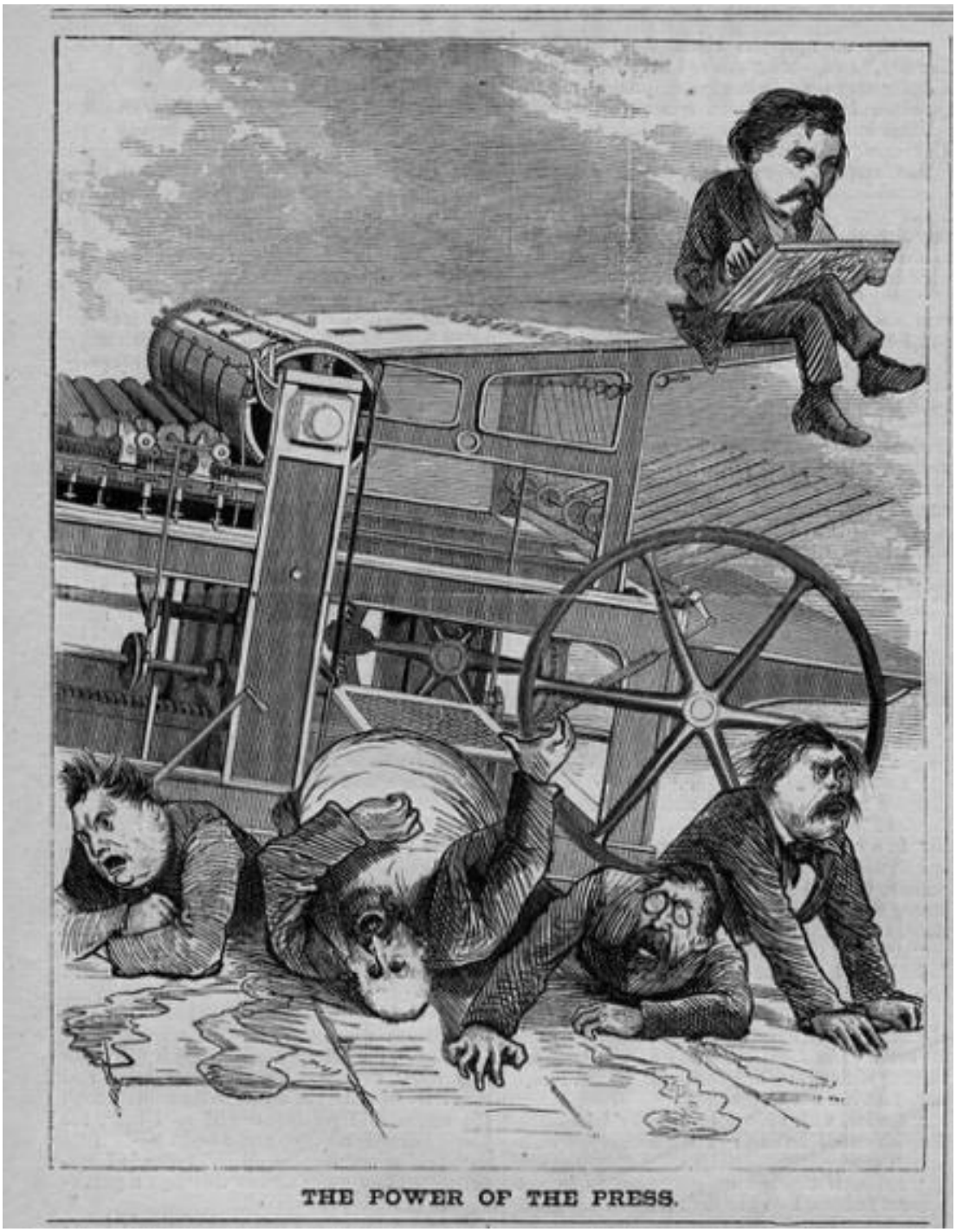

Figure 6. The Power of the Press[116]

[116] *The Power of the Press*, November 25, 1871, November 25, 1871, https://harp-alexanderstreet-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/issue/image/1871/1125/1120.

In a time when expanding voter franchise, increasing voter turnout, and increasingly organized political parties had created the idea of "political capital," Tammany Hall established itself as the Democratic political force in New York City. Mass party mobilization efforts since the middle of the nineteenth century had established a wealth of political influence which could be "reinvested" in building the party or rewarding supporters and political allies.[117] These rewards often took the form of auctioned political offices for the party's benefit, or for its power apparatus at least. In a New York City political environment which featured what some historians have estimated as up to ninety percent voter turnout, the tide of public opinion and voter mobilization were significant forces for someone like William Tweed to exploit.[118] Coincidentally Nast had spent some portion of his childhood in New York living in the vicinity of Frankfort and William Streets where the future "Boss Tweed" operated the "Big Six" fire company before his days as the commander of a political machine.[119] The "Big Six's" emblem of a tiger would play a significant role in Nast's future campaign against Tweed and his cronies. It also gave the artist a personal connection to the issue in addition to the pertinence of the issue for crusaders against corruption and immorality.

With the elevated profile he had established with *Harper's Weekly*, Nast's opinions and views had an outsized impact on public opinion regarding the key and controversial issues of his day. Thomas Leonard, a journalism scholar, notes that Nast's image campaign "transformed Tweed into a menace," a feat other artists of the period

[117] Jeffrey D. Broxmeyer, "The Boss's 'Brains': Political Capital, Democratic Commerce and the New York Tweed Ring, 1868–1871," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 28, no. 3 (2015): 381, https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12062.
[118] Broxmeyer, 381–82.
[119] "Thomas Nast.," December 24, 1904.

had not yet developed.[120] Even during the war and his early career, when his focus was largely more literal in nature, Nast utilized some visual metaphor while drawing inspiration from the realities of life on the frontlines.[121] Perhaps the best example of this balance between reality and fiction comes from the illustration he created depicting Christmas from both the perspective of the front and the home front. In contrast, the cartoons Nast put together for the Tweed campaign and to depict the corrupt impact the circle had on New York were much less tethered to reality and relied on dramatic and humorous visual motifs to make an impact. In Leonard's estimation, "he created ways to picture a corrupt city, [which was] a far cry from anything that had been accomplished by journalists before him."[122] To a population that consisted heavily of working-class people with often limited literacy skills, cartoons depicting the news had more impact than articles writing about the state of current events.

With New York Times providing reporting on the reality of Tammany Hall's fraud and corruption, *Harper's Weekly* and Thomas Nast supplemented with various illustrations and pictorial representations of the parties involved.[123] While the *Times* provided direct reporting on the methods and facts of the nature of the political corruption and fraud occurring within Tammany Hall, Nast's images played what some may consider an even more important role. While the major demise of Tweed's ring occurred in the early 1870s, Nast had begun his work on the ring several years prior by going after various aspects of the municipal government apparatus and continuing to escalate the

[120] Hess and Northrop, "The Rise of the American Cartoon," 55.
[121] Ewing, "Thomas Nast: His Period and His Pictures."
[122] Hess and Northrop, "The Rise of the American Cartoon," 55.
[123] Ewing, "Thomas Nast: His Period and His Pictures."

pressure.[124] In the three months between the *New York Times* initial reporting on the fraud and corruption of the Tweed ring in August of 1871 and November of that year, Nast put out an extraordinary number of cartoons on the topic, totaling the number he had produced in the three years previous. His images were highly circulated and each new edition of *Harper's Weekly* reportedly drew great interest, so much so that 125,000 readers were added in a single two-week period. [125]

Historian Roger Fischer noted that "whatever transgression the real Tweed did or did not commit, it was Nast's Tweed the American public came to loathe."[126] The artist's influence on public perception was so great that he created the portrait of a villain in the form of "Boss Tweed" which appealed to the masses on an emotional level. Reflecting on the artist's role in bringing down the ring, a January 1895 article in *McClure's Magazine,* noted that Nast "represented in the concrete, and by the weapon of satire, the public opinion."[127] In this manner, Nast both produced illustrations influenced by existing public opinion, but also played a pivotal role in shaping the development of that opinion. In the words of his biographer, "with his marvelous pencil and his unfaltering courage, [Nast] had triumphed over these men who had brought a great city to the verge of ruin, and who, but for him, might have destroyed the Nation."[128] Although possibly hyperbolic given Paine's position, his assertion does note the tone of moral superiority and righteousness

[124] Ewing.
[125] Hess and Northrop, "The Rise of the American Cartoon," 55.
[126] Hess and Northrop, 55.
[127] "Thomas Nast's Share in the Overthrow of the Tweed Ring in 1872.," *McClure's Magazine (1893-1926)* (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series III, January 1895), https://www.proquest.com/docview/135646602/abstract/19D63C57BA964ACAPQ/1.
[128] "Among the September Magazines."

against those perceived to wield great power or influence over politics and the public, a common theme in discussion of trusts and the industrialists who controlled them as well.

Nast's work on Boss Tweed and the Tammany Ring also marked the artist's transition into what today would be recognized as a more traditional political cartoon format. Where most earlier cartoon images featured recognizable portraits of their subjects, Nast began implementing caricatures of the men he depicted to emphasize his cartoon's impacts.[129] Simultaneously, readers were treated to the beginnings of imagery that would become common with criticism of monopolies and trusts in the coming decades. The most prominent and significant example comes from Nast's depiction of William "Boss" Tweed as a man with a large bag of money for a head, shown in figure 7. Titled simply as "The Brains," the image shows Tweed standing proudly with hands in pockets and a caption that declares him "The Brains that achieved the Tammany victory at the Rochester Democratic Convention."[130] A rotund figure decked out in a waistcoat and tie, while a echoing Tweed's own physical characteristics, Nast's image also shows the beginnings of stylistic and thematic trends which would come to define much of anti-trust and anti-monopoly cartooning in the coming decades. The motif of the moneybag in this particular image served to highlight the wealth Tweed had accumulated for himself to the detriment of the public.[131] This motif would carry forward in work of other artists to depict other significant financial figures and structures like trusts which often drew criticism on moral grounds.

[129] Hess and Northrop, "The Rise of the American Cartoon," 55.
[130] Thomas Nast, *The "BRAINS" That Achieved the Tammany Victory at the Rochester Democratic Convention*, 1871, 1871, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002723257/.
[131] "Thomas Nast's Share in the Overthrow of the Tweed Ring in 1872."

Figure 7. The "Brains" That Achieved the Tammany Victory at The Rochester Democratic Convention[132]

[132] Nast, *The "BRAINS" That Achieved the Tammany Victory at the Rochester Democratic Convention*.

Nast's campaign against the Tweed apparatus also served as one of the, if not the most, significant testing ground for the potential influence of political cartoonists as the artform further developed and gained traction. Boss Tweed himself lamented the influence Nast appeared to wield through his illustrations, having been said to remark that "I don't care what they write about me, but I wish they would stop those infernal pictures they print."[133] In a society with low levels of literacy amongst the broad population, the ability to distill an idea or opinion into an easily digestible image was powerful. Tweed expressing fear or concern over the influence the images had on the public's opinion of him shows this. Nast's biographer described Nast's impact as an ability to create images "which even the most illiterate could read at a glance" and asserted that they "had been the most powerful of all the engines directed against the stronghold of civic shame" which was the Tammany Hall machine.[134] In *Harper Weekly's* own reporting on the subject, the magazine declared that Tweed's concern focused on the cartoons because "the great majority of his constituency being unable to read, these illustrations, the meaning of which every one can take in at a glance, play the mischief with his feelings." The magazine praised the sharpness of Nast's critiques, proclaiming that "every stroke of his pencil cuts like a cimeter [sic]" and created caricatures that "can never be lived down."[135]

This influence was also recognized by external sources, particularly in the aftermath of Tweed's downfall, as McClure's emphasized in an 1895 article reflecting on Nast's role in the downfall. The magazine described Nast as possessing an ability "to

[133] Rosenthal, "Cartoonists of New-York."
[134] "Among the September Magazines."
[135] "Thomas Nast.," December 14, 1871.

catch the spirit of the public opposition, and so suggest it by his pencil as to show the public by cartoon what it was thinking about."[136] Even early in his professional climb, both Presidents Lincoln and Grant credited Nast specifically with assisting their successful election campaigns. In Grant's words, "two things elected me, the sword of Sheridan and pencil of Thomas Nast" and his campaign even published a periodical called *The Mirror* which often consisted largely of cartoons created by Nast.[137] Nast's faith in and prosecution of the Republican cause had extended beyond the close of the Civil War and into Ulysses S. Grant's successful campaign for the presidency in 1868. In the words of his biographer, "naturally it was just the sort of campaign to suit Thomas Nast [as] the issues were fierce and bitter, [and] the war was to be fought all over again."[138] He had proven to thrive most in contentious periods where emotions were running high, and conflict was frequent. In accordance with Nast's usual straightforward style, his biographer characterized his work for the Grant campaign as "flinging thunderbolts into the enemy's ranks" which "roused [voters] to the point of declaring that they would 'vote the way they shot.'"[139] Being able to draw this much response and drive influence in a specific direction demonstrated the influential position political cartoonists had come to occupy by the end of the nineteenth century. In the words of *Harper's Weekly*, "if future ages know anything" about prominent players of the age, "it will be owing to their merciless caricaturist" as "doubtless they would rather court oblivion than endure [an] immortality of infamy." [140]

[136] "Thomas Nast's Share in the Overthrow of the Tweed Ring in 1872."
[137] Ewing, "Thomas Nast: His Period and His Pictures."
[138] Ewing.
[139] Ewing.
[140] "Thomas Nast.," December 14, 1871.

When Nast attempted to break back into the industry after a period of brief retirement, he found himself seemingly left behind by an advancing industry. Where Nast's style had always been rather straightforward and basic woodblock printing in black and white, "it was evident that in every field he had been distanced by those who had the artistic faculty supplemented by artistic training," which he had never possessed.[141] Artists like Joseph Keppler of *Puck* magazine and James A. Wales with *Judge* had taken the foundation laid by Nast in his time with *Harper's Weekly* and built upon it further. With new technologies like color printing on a mass scale and subtler jabs/motifs, these were the artists who truly mounted the attack on prominent industrialists and monopolies in the later decades of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth.

While Thomas Nast made a name for himself in the field of American political cartooning prior to the development of significant anti-trust sentiment in the public consciousness, he paved the way in establishing the artform for other artists. His development of the cartoon as an effective tool in the editorial arsenal allowed both his competitors and successors to build upon the foundation. Nast had "proved that an artist's pencil [was] more than a match for wealth and political power" and "made the leading rogues in the [Tweed] ring notorious, and turned even a portion of the lowest classes against them at the polls."[142] His outsized influence on public opinion through his illustrations made Nast a primary figure in the development of the art of cartooning in America, as well as setting some of the primary motifs which are seen repeated by others.

[141] "Thomas Nast's Work."
[142] "Thomas Nast.," December 14, 1871.

The motifs first implemented in Nast's caricature of Boss Tweed, such as his rotund shape and prominent diamond tie pin, would eventually be used by successive artists to depict the idea of monopolies and trusts in their own work. Additionally, his criticism of railroad magnate Jay Gould in the 1870s heralded the growing anti-trust sentiment other artists would tap into as the era progressed.

Chapter IV.

Building on the Foundation

Lord, what fools these mortals be!

—William Shakespeare[143]

On the other side of the ideological aisle from Thomas Nast, stood Joseph Keppler, the co-founder and cartoonist for *Puck* magazine. Another foreign-born illustrator who also did work for Frank Leslie and his *Illustrated News,* Keppler was often mentioned alongside Nast and considered a rival.[144] It is widely understood that Keppler and Nast, both German immigrants, provided crucial foundation to the creation and development of cartooning in America.[145] Keppler built upon the foundation laid by Thomas Nast to solidify the power and influence of cartooning in American society, as well as provided some of the most iconic visual motifs which came to define much of anti-trust cartooning and caricature. As anti-trust sentiment grew toward the end of the Gilded Age period, future artists drew on Keppler's inspiration and the influence of cartoonists he helped establish to further their interests. While not a significant producer of images directly addressing the topic of anti-trust, Keppler's work exemplifies the

[143] William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Barbara Mowat et al. (Washington, D.C.: Folger Shakespeare Library, n.d.), https://folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/a-midsummer-nights-dream/.
[144] "Joseph Keppler, the Cartoonist," *Current Literature (1888-1912)* (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series III, April 1894), https://www.proquest.com/docview/124824158/abstract/AAF607640FC4CBFPQ/99.
[145] Hess and Northrop, "The Rise of the American Cartoon," 52.

moralizing tone common to the work of following artists on the topic, with a clear opposition to instances of nefarious financial dealings and general corruption. Keppler's skill for portraiture also expanded the realm of visual elements for other artists to adapt, which made America's foremost industrialists recognizable characters for the public.

Early Life

Keppler was a native Austrian, born in Vienna in 1838.[146] His father, originally a confectioner by trade, had been driven from Europe as a revolutionary during the upheaval of 1848 and eventually established himself in the United States.[147] Much of the artist's later cartoon work echoed themes that some historians, such as Samuel Thomas, tie back to influence from his father's own political ideals. Thomas attributes Keppler's "political liberalism" to his father's revolutionary influence and the environment of "postrevolutionary Vienna" during his childhood.[148] The elder Keppler eventually found himself in New Frankfort, Missouri which possessed a large population of German immigrants.[149] The younger Keppler worked through a variety of jobs intersecting with artistic pursuits, including painting and theatre work in traveling theatre troupes throughout the Austro-Hungarian empire.[150] Most relevant to his future career pursuits, Keppler attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna for an education in the German-style of cartooning and spent a period of time employed by *Kikeriki,* a Viennese humor magazine of the time.[151] An April 1894 obituary of the artist in *Current Literature,*

[146] "Joseph Keppler, the Cartoonist."
[147] "THREE CARTOON-MAKERS."
[148] Thomas, "Mugwump Cartoonists, the Papacy, and Tammany Hall in America's Gilded Age," 213.
[149] Elsa A. Nystrom, "Keppler, Joseph" (Oxford University Press, 2000), https://doi.org/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.article.1600902.
[150] "Joseph Keppler, the Cartoonist."
[151] Nystrom, "Keppler, Joseph," 1.

described Keppler as having "led a varied career and was carried through various failures and disappointments by the force of a genial, jovial, nervously elastic disposition, which never failed to rise again after the worst failure."[152] He was capable of adapting his work and perspective to a wide array of topics, which allowed him a great flexibility in potential issues to address. By nature of his foreign birth, "nothing human was alien to his genius" as he "gained his greatest renown in portraying the public characters of a people not his own by birth" as credited in his obituary.[153]

This varied upbringing and early career path primed Keppler for the track his life would take once he arrived in the United States as a young adult. He got his American start in St. Louis, Missouri, where his father had found himself settled, in 1867 and again found employment in theater.[154] It was in St. Louis that Keppler planted the roots of what would eventually become *Puck*, one of the most influential satire magazines to comment on society and politics in the Gilded Age. While working on *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News,* Keppler met a fellow German and colleague, Adolf Schwartzman.[155] The two eventually teamed up to establish an illustrated periodical based on the image of *Punch* magazine in England, which had been publishing since 1841, for the German-speaking population. Keppler oversaw creating the illustrations while Schwartzman headed up the business management and printing process.[156] An 1880 retrospective article on the

[152] "Joseph Keppler, the Cartoonist."
[153] "Death of Joseph Keppler: Sudden End of the Cartoonist and Founder of 'Peck'--a Sketch of His Career," *New - York Tribune (1866-1899),* February 20, 1894, https://www.proquest.com/docview/573884059/abstract/B3870EA12CC343EDPQ/106.
[154] Nystrom, "Keppler, Joseph," 1.
[155] "PUCK'S FUNNY MEN.: Sketeches of the Artists and Writers Who Work on the Paper.," *The Washington Post (1877-1922),* August 15, 1880, https://www.proquest.com/docview/137804237/abstract/AAF607640FC4CBFPQ/86.
[156] "PUCK'S FUNNY MEN."

periodical's founding described its original content as "broad" but with pictures that were "striking" and three relatively unknown writers of German origin.[157] Schwartzman himself had been a print shop foreman for Frank Leslie, the prolific publisher of illustrated news where many artists also gained a foothold.[158] Keppler had also spent a period of time under the wings of Frank Leslie's operation and had reportedly developed a "reputation [which] was considered the rival of Nast's" before him.[159] Although the St. Louis outing of *Puck* folded within a year, it had brought enough attention to the young Austrian that the publisher of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, made an offer which brought Keppler to New York and kicked off the next chapter of his professional story in 1872. While a part of the *Illustrated News*, Keppler continued to develop and gained enough traction to produce most of the periodical's cover cartoons within three years.[160] It was during this period that Keppler also began to really flex his political commentary muscles, particularly in relating to then President Ulysses S. Grant and the topic of political graft and corruption, which were hot button issues in the Gilded Age years.[161] These were the ideas that would eventually drive *Puck* to a point of great influence over public opinion following its founding in 1877.

Puck Magazine

Thomas asserts that *Puck* occupied a role as the "nation's premier journal of political satire and humor" in the Gilded Age period and possessed "a unique means of

[157] "PUCK'S FUNNY MEN."
[158] Patricia Marks, "An Iconic Image: Henry Ward Beecher in Puck Magazine," *Christianity & Literature* 67, no. 4 (2018): 630, https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/1/article/735679.
[159] "Joseph Keppler, the Cartoonist."
[160] Nystrom, "Keppler, Joseph," 1.
[161] Nystrom, 1.

distilling the nuances of mugwump reformism to a broad audience."[162] Given Keppler's founding role with the periodical, the magazine's stance and political and social points of view were heavily influenced by his own opinions. Patricia Marks, an English professor who examined *Puck's* portrayal of New York pastor Henry Ward Beecher, described the publication as having "a crusade against dishonesty and [an] attempt to safeguard public morals."[163] The magazine's cover featured an image of its mascot and namesake, Puck, named for the mischievous character from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which seems to allude to how Keppler envisioned the magazine's role in society. Puck, depicted as a child in a jacket and top hat, carrying a newspaper bag and holding a "spear-like pen," declared in an early edition of the English that "I have not come merely as a flippant plaything to amuse you in your idle moments, but rather as a pleasant confidential companion."[164] And Keppler's periodical proceeded to fill that role by "exercis[ing] its proclivity to satirize high-profile figures, especially those who failed to live up to ethical standards."[165] This positioned both *Puck* and Keppler, as its creator and major creative driver, as forces of moral certainty in a world rife with corruption, class divides, and greedy industrialists.

Having come to build enough of a profile to be considered one of Nast's competitors, comparisons were often drawn between the two artists, particularly in the style of their artwork. In one analysis of the development of cartooning in America, Keppler's work is described as "less cumbersome than Nast's, gayer and more graceful; hardly likely to incite riot, though still capable of drawing blood." The author likened

[162] Thomas, "Mugwump Cartoonists, the Papacy, and Tammany Hall in America's Gilded Age," 213.
[163] Marks, "An Iconic Image," 629.
[164] Marks, 630.
[165] Marks, 630.

Keppler's subtler style to a "rapier" in comparison to Nast's firebrand "broadsword."[166] Where Nast tended to bludgeon his subjects with a cudgel, Keppler's criticism was more pointed and incisive, which may have helped with the development and sustaining of his career, as well as the longevity of his publication. He was remembered for "his ready comprehension of political situations, his keen satire and his artistic power and originality of treatment" with a special knack for "adapting the subjects of mythology to modern themes and ideas."[167] In addition to the use of mythological motifs, Keppler was also particularly well known for the use of recognizable portraits for the individuals he depicted. Even from his early days in St. Louis, contemporaries recognized that the young artist held a particular talent for portraiture, where Keppler utilized "lightning sketches" as a popular part of his stage performances.[168] This skill would later be depicted in Keppler's use of recognizable figures of prominent individuals in his published caricatures, and eventually the highly recognizable faces of the country's leading monopolists by his successors.

Following a disastrous first attempt at getting Puck off the ground while in St. Louis, Keppler took a second, much more successful, stab in New York in 1877 with Adolph Schwartzman as his partner. Originally published only in German, the magazine's popularity grew so quickly that an English-language version came after only 26 of the German editions were published and "immediately sprung into popularity."[169]

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[166] Hess and Northrop, "The Rise of the American Cartoon," 58.
[167] "Joseph Keppler, the Cartoonist."
[168] "KEPPLER IS DEAD.: The Great Cartoonist Passes Away in New York. SKETCH OF HIS EARLY HISTORY IN ST. LOUIS AND LATER CAREER. How He First Discovered His Talent for Portrait Work--His Illustrated Paper Ventures in This City--Some of His Early Cartoons--Louis Willech's Reminiscences.," *St. Louis Post - Dispatch (1879-1922)*, February 20, 1894, https://www.proquest.com/docview/579148499/abstract/AAF607640FC4CBFPQ/88.
[169] "THREE CARTOON-MAKERS."

According to an article published on *Puck's* cartoonists asserted that the interest was attributable to Keppler's skill as "every few weeks Keppler would present a most powerful cartoon, till people began to say, 'What a pity such work is done for a German paper! Why can't we have something like it in English?'"[170] The English language edition, featuring the same cartoons but different letterpress from a group of four writers, started publishing March 4, 1879, and was considered a success from the very beginning.[171] With a circulation which had passed the original German readership by 1880, *Puck's* English edition became a significant force in the editorial sphere in the last decades of the Gilded Age.

Historian Richard Samuel West described the new iteration of *Puck* as defined by Keppler's "fearless outspokenness against such incendiary topics as the 'flawed jury system…life insurance fraud…conditions in the city schools, the psychic sham'" just to name a few.[172] In a period plagued by many controversial issues and hyper-partisan political divides, Keppler's *Puck* attempted to position itself as a force of moral guidance and middle-of-the-road rhetoric. Thomas described the attitude as "moralistically and boldly proclaim[ing] a nonpartisan crusade for good government and the defense of American constitutional ideals against machine politicians." He went on to characterize the magazine's tone as a "moralistic, elitist definition of the public good."[173] To a great extent, this tone and approach is a direct reflection of Keppler's influence and direction. In addition to the opposition of machine politics and the Catholic Church's influence in New York, similar to Nast before him, *Puck* took a stance against the socially and

[170] "PUCK'S FUNNY MEN."
[171] "PUCK'S FUNNY MEN."
[172] Marks, "An Iconic Image," 630.
[173] Thomas, "Mugwump Cartoonists, the Papacy, and Tammany Hall in America's Gilded Age," 214.

politically corrupting influences of money on American society. This was a position which mimicked the moralizing tone found in much of Nast's work, and would also feature heavily in criticism of monopolies, including anti-trust cartoons produced by other artists.

Election of 1880

This moralizing attitude was also expressed with the coverage of the 1880 Presidential election featuring James A. Garfield on the Republican ticket and Winfield Scott Hancock representing the Democratic Party. Keppler continued to solidify his and *Puck's* position as an influential cultural and political force, and the artist produced one of his most popular cartoons to that point. "Forbidding the Banns," shown in figure 8, was published in August 1880 and showed a wedding scene featuring the familiar figure of Uncle Sam and James Garfield standing in for the bride before a ballot box in the form of a minister. Rushing in to stop the ceremony is chairman of the Democratic National Committee W.H. Barnum holding a baby labeled as "Credit Mobilier" and "$329."[174] The image alludes to the part played by James A. Garfield in the Credit Mobilier scandal which had come to light in the early 1870s with the caption indicating his declaration that "but it was such a little one!" in response.[175] Although not a direct commentary on the topic of trusts or monopolies, the image does show Keppler's general position on questions of potentially nefarious or corrupting financial situations. It is also an excellent

[174] Joseph Keppler, *Forbidding the Banns*, August 25, 1880, Puck Magazine Centerfold, 18" w x 12.5" h, August 25, 1880, http://greatcaricatures.com/keppler/1880_0825_banns.shtml.
[175] Keppler.

example of Keppler's skill for individualized portraiture in his caricaturing illustrations, as each individual character is clearly distinguishable as their inspiring figure.

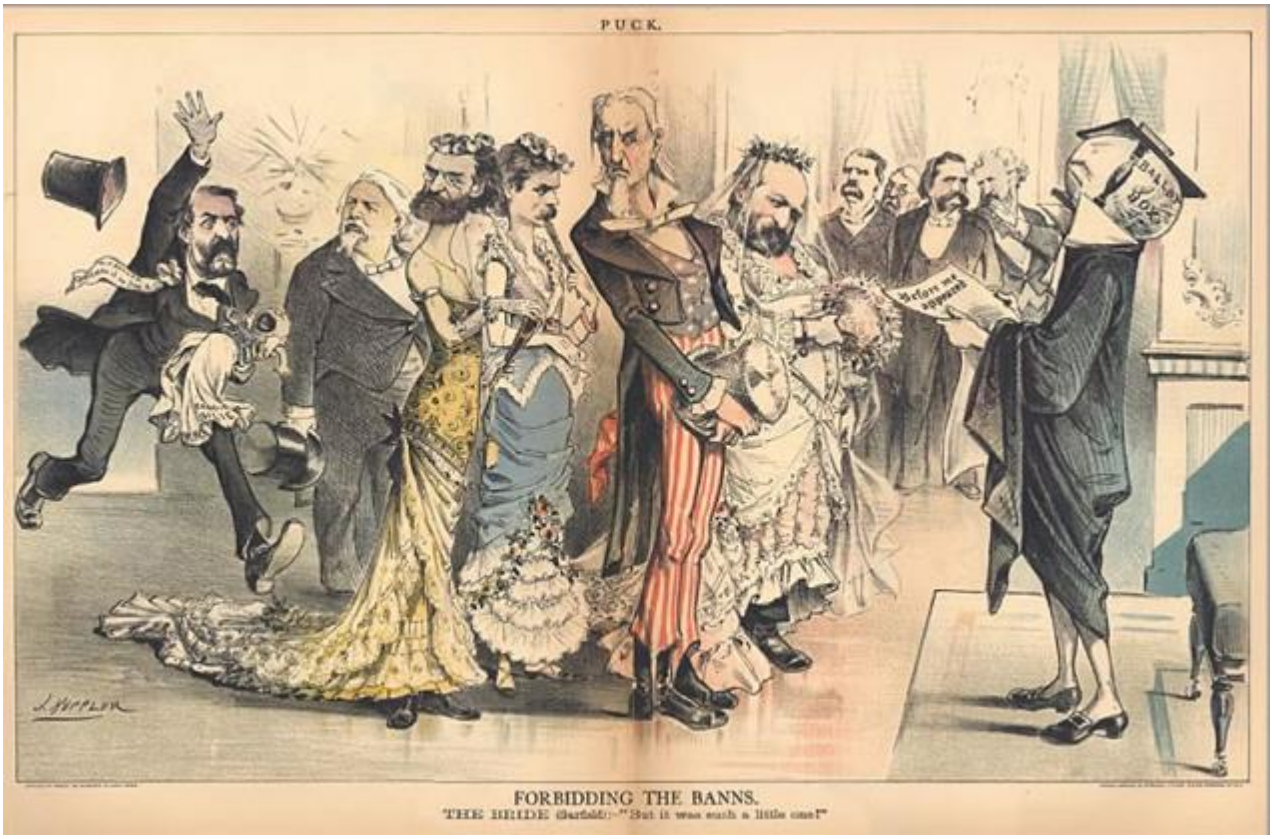

Figure 8. Forbidding the Banns[176]

It was also during this election that *Puck* began exhibiting the power of their growing circulation on the political environment. Like Lincoln and Grant, President Grover Cleveland eventually credited *Puck* with at least some of his political success with circulation climbing up to 10,000 copies a week during his presidential campaign which

[176] Keppler.

followed in 1884.[177] Paralleling Nast, Keppler had firmly established himself as an influential player with apparent sway over the general voting public.

It should not be underestimated the impact *Puck* would have on the general public thought during its heyday. In one of Keppler's obituaries, *Puck* was described as "the paper which made him famous in two continents" and earned him a fortune of $600,000 by 1883.[178] That same year, an article in a Philadelphia paper described the artist's humble beginnings less than a decade previous, declaring, "it is very well known that when [Keppler] entered upon this venture he was so very poor that those with whom he talked concerning his scheme to establish a funny-paper laughed at him and predicted nothing but failure."[179] To have achieved such a level of fame and fortune in a scant six years seems a testament to both Keppler's artistic skill and strategic thinking. The same article credits *Puck* and Keppler as a key founding element of political satire publication in America as "humorous journalism in the United States had presented some queer phases" prior to the magazine's establishment.[180]

In Stephen Hess' analysis of American political cartoons in the nineteenth century, he emphasizes what he viewed as *Puck's* relatively unique position in the landscape of editorial periodicals of the time. Where Thomas Nast and *Harper's Weekly* had established themselves on the more serious and intellectual side of things, Keppler and *Puck* took a much more humorous approach. And even in comparison to existing

[177] "Keppler, Joseph (1838-1894), Political Cartoonist," American National Biography, accessed September 28, 2023, https://www.anb.org/display/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.001.0001/anb-9780198606697-e-1600902.
[178] "Joseph Keppler, the Cartoonist."
[179] "KEPPLER: The Man Who Has Made Over Half a [New York Correspondence of the Philadelphia Press," *Daily American (1875-1894)*, May 18, 1883, http://www.proquest.com/docview/940636400/abstract/EF09E490C8624D4CPQ/1.
[180] "KEPPLER."

humor publications, Hess asserts that "*Puck* was different [because] all previous American humor magazines had been modeled on London's *Punch,* [and] Keppler brought a totally new perspective to his journal of fun and satire."[181] The magazine was entirely composed of satirical writings in addition to its illustrations, while still tackling some of the most significant issues of the time. To convey these messages, *Puck* utilized eye-catching elements in the magazine's printing including a new cover illustration from Keppler each week and a two-page centerfold cartoon all printed in color. [182] These elements combined with Keppler's influence, as a founder and lead illustrator, to elevate the magazine to a prominent place in the world of Gilded Age periodicals. In the analysis of Patricia Marks, the uniqueness of *Puck* in the landscape can be credited to the role played by Keppler as he "produced nearly all of the early graphic art in *Puck*, thereby endowing the magazine with 'a noticeably foreign tone…a spirit, with a somewhat Gallic freedom of expression, born of his Viennese origin.'"[183] Part of the star factor of Keppler's *Puck* was the magazine's use of color lithography to produce eye-catching images.

In another comparison to the great icon of American cartooning Thomas Nast, Keppler and *Puck's* introduced new technology to periodical illustrations, which further helped capture the American public's imaginations: color printing on a mass scale. Where Nast's illustrations had always been done in black and white woodblock, *Puck* featured full color images printed using lithograph. One of Keppler's obituaries following his death in 1894 recounted what may have been an apocryphal story of how the artist

[181] Hess and Northrop, "The Rise of the American Cartoon," 59.
[182] Hess and Northrop, 59.
[183] Marks, "An Iconic Image," 630.

came up with the idea. According to the tale, Keppler, Schwartzman, and another friend were enjoying cigars one evening when Keppler demonstrated a trick using a glass of cigar smoke and a sketched sailboat. Covering the sails of the boat, Keppler overturned the glass, and the smoke left to deposit its nicotine content onto the paper below. The obituary declared that when the smoke cleared and the glass was removed, "lo! and behold, there was a picture of a dull, yellow sea, a yellow ship with beautiful white sails and slender rigging [and] this was the moment when Keppler conceived the determination to have colored cartoons in his new paper."[184] Whether that scene occurred as described or not, Keppler's decision to use color in his illustrations proved to be a prescient one.

Keppler soon established *Puck* as a weekly magazine with arguably more influence in its sphere when compared to Nast at *Harper's Weekly.* This influence can be credited both to the dynamic color illustrations used by Keppler and other artists under his employ, as well as the dedicated humor and satire used to impart its messages and opinions to their readers. Reflecting this, one of Keppler's obituaries in the *New York Tribune* following the artist's death in 1894 stated that he "may be called the father of the genuine American comic weekly."[185] With Nast often attributed as the "Father of American Political Cartoons," Keppler and *Puck* built on his foundation and further expanded on the relevant political and social topics of the day. Historian Samuel Thomas acknowledges this transition with his argument that *Puck's* "powerful cartoons, like those of Thomas Nast before it, advanced 'at both the surface and deeper mythic

[184] "Joseph Keppler, the Cartoonist."
[185] "Death of Joseph Keppler."

levels…pervasive prejudices and majority values.'"[186] With Keppler as the primary producer of most of the magazine's early illustrations, his voice was a primary influence on the point of view and topics covered. An 1883 profile of Keppler attributed the art as the primary and driving force behind the periodical's success, stating that "it has been entirely the skill of the artists, and not the brains of the writers, that has pulled his enterprise [*Puck*] through."[187] As Keppler founded and shaped the direction of the work done even by other artists, he played a key role in both developing that success and the overall stances taken in the cartoons. A profile of Keppler, along with two other artists, asserted that it was his "bold originality and grotesque grimness [which] furnished the foundation of *Puck's* great success."[188]

[186] Thomas, "Mugwump Cartoonists, the Papacy, and Tammany Hall in America's Gilded Age," 215.
[187] "KEPPLER."
[188] "THREE CARTOON-MAKERS."

"Modern Colossus of (Rail) Roads"

Figure 9. The Modern Colossus of (Rail) Roads[189]

[189] *The Modern Colossus of (Rail) Roads / J. Keppler.*, accessed January 6, 2024, https://www.loc.gov/item/2014645351/.

Keppler's frequent use of ancient stories, either mythological or biblical in nature, comes to the forefront when considering the publication of the "Modern Colossus of (Rail) Roads" in 1879, as seen in figure 9. Playing on the idea of the ancient Colossus of Rhodes, the image featured caricatures of William Henry Vanderbilt, Cyrus West Field, and Jay Gould, the presidents of three major railroad companies respectively, holding the reigns of their rail lines.[190] Signs scattered throughout the image state that "all freight seeking the seaboard **must** pass here an pay any tolls we demand" and "a five cent ride for ten cents," indicating the control exerted over rail travel for both persons and shipping.[191] Rail was one of the many industries which employed the trust model and effectively monopolized the service in coordination with each other. This was one of the hotly contested issues on the subject of growing anti-trust sentiment. The cartoon itself is an excellent example of Keppler's play with classical elements and use of portraiture in his caricatures. Not only is the central theme clear in the "colossus" motif, but each of the three figures are readily recognizable as their real-life counterparts for anyone monitoring the media of the time. As the subject of trusts and monopolies became a point of increased discussion toward the close of the nineteenth century, the faces of the associated industrialists would only become increasingly recognizable.

[190] *The Modern Colossus of (Rail) Roads / J. Keppler.*
[191] *The Modern Colossus of (Rail) Roads / J. Keppler.*

"Bosses of the Senate"

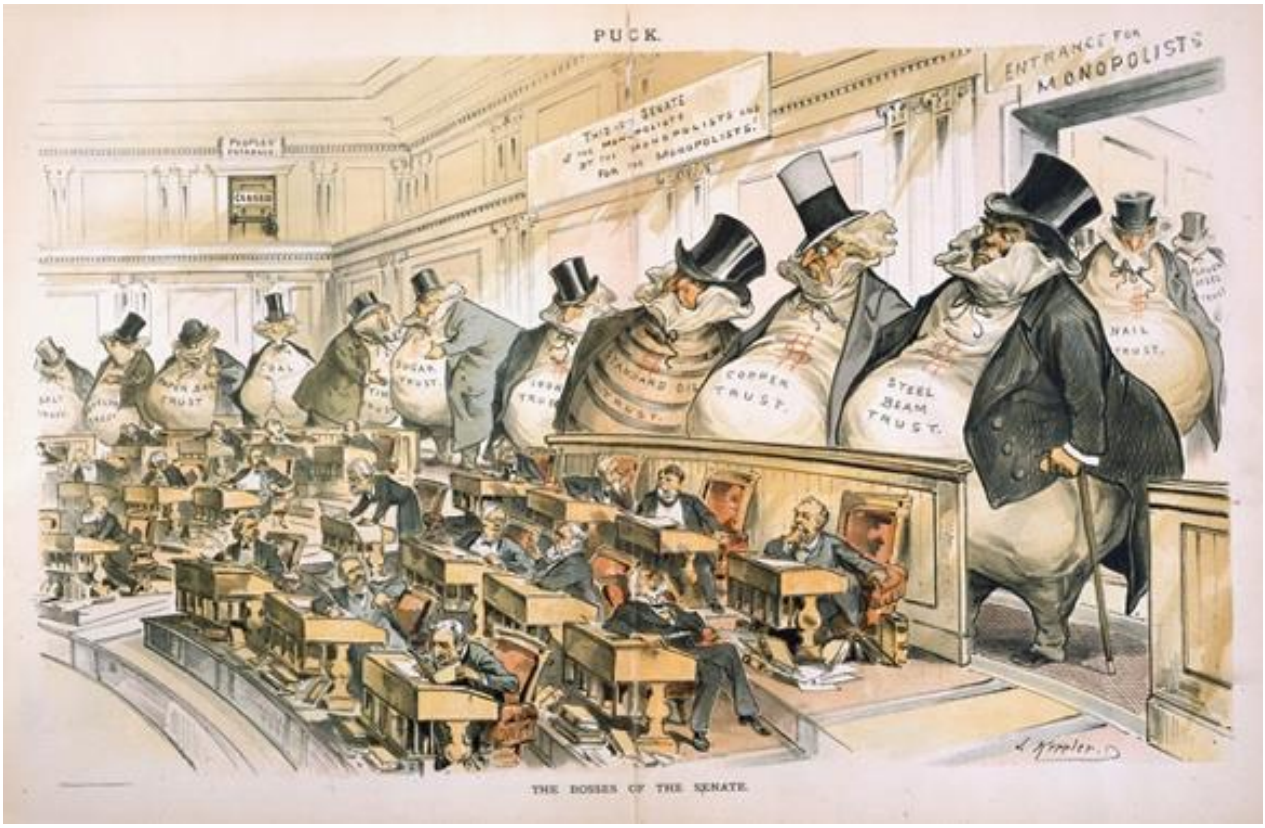

Figure 10. Bosses of the Senate[192]

In January of 1889, Keppler produced what has become one of the most quintessential and recognizable cartoons associated with trusts and monopolies in American politics, shown in figure 10. Although a contrast to his "Modern Colossus" piece from a decade previous, containing no specifically identifiable subjects, it is an excellent example of the visual themes and motifs developing around monopolies and trusts in the media. The image consisted of the United States congress chamber pictured with giant figures representing a variety of "trusts" in prominent industries, including

[192] Joseph Keppler, *The Bosses of the Senate.*, January 23, 1889, Lithograph, colored, January 23, 1889, https://www.senate.gov/art-artifacts/historical-images/political-cartoons-caricatures/38_00392.htm.

coal, sugar, and the Standard Oil company.[193] Each figure features a bulbous shape with a dollar sign emblazoned on their chest, indicating they are in fact made up of money bags, referencing back to Thomas Nast's iconic image of Boss Tweed. Additionally, the congress chamber features a closed and locked door labeled as the "People's Entrance" to the chamber gallery and a separate "Entrance for Monopolists" to the main floor where they loom threateningly over lawmakers.[194] The implication of these elements is that the trust industries are flexing their intimidation and influence over the nation's lawmakers while the general population is blocked from observing their government in action.

[193] "U.S. Senate: The Bosses of the Senate.," accessed January 6, 2024, https://www.senate.gov/art-artifacts/historical-images/political-cartoons-caricatures/38_00392.htm.
[194] "U.S. Senate: The Bosses of the Senate."

"Puck's Review of the Past Year"

Figure 11. Puck's Review of the Past Year[195]

A similar motif could be found in the year-in-review cartoon *Puck* published in December 1884, figure 11, which highlighted what the publisher's believed to be the most salient events and themes from the past year. Toward the bottom of the ribbon, Keppler placed a man in the image of William H. Vanderbilt making off with a large bag of money while *Puck's* mascot attempts to waylay him by hanging off his jacket tails.[196] While the figure clearly has Vanderbilt's face, the figure's clothing is a more generic

[195] "Puck's Review of the Past Year / J. Keppler.," image, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA, accessed January 6, 2024, https://www.loc.gov/item/2012645159/.
[196] "Puck's Review of the Past Year / J. Keppler."

representation of an upper-class individual in white-tie dress with a silk top hat.[197] This was a common way to depict the prominent men who were often associated with the creation and management of trusts. The carrying of a large bag of money had also developed into a key cartoon motif representing corruption and undue influence in many areas of Gilded Age life. The figure of Puck hanging on Vanderbilt's tailcoat indicated the interest Keppler had in restraining and impeding actions he viewed as immoral or unjust. While Thomas had described this stance as an "elitist definition of the public good," the magazine's point of view remained consistent and continued to take a position Keppler interpreted as middle of the road.[198]

As American politics had entered a period of even greater upheaval in the 1880s, Keppler and his magazine found themselves helping take up the new "mugwump" cause, which took a firm stance in opposition to the increasing influence of trusts and monopolies. The name originated during the election of 1884, derived from a Native American term for "chief," as a derogatory reference for Republicans who switched their allegiance to support Cleveland in his candidacy for the presidency.[199] Following the election, the term was expanded to include a growing cross-section of what could be considered political "independents" in a time of hyper-partisan polarization. This class included the largely middle-class reformers who pursued reform in the civil service and sought to eliminate the corruption of machine politics in urban areas.[200] While both Nast and Keppler found themselves at least nominally encompassed within this ideological group, Keppler and *Puck* readily accepted the mantle. In Thomas' analysis, *Puck* was

[197] "Puck's Review of the Past Year / J. Keppler."
[198] Thomas, "Mugwump Cartoonists, the Papacy, and Tammany Hall in America's Gilded Age," 213–14.
[199] Thomas, 238.
[200] Thomas, 238.

"the nation's premier journal of political satire and humor" at the time and had "a unique means of distilling the nuances of mugwump reformism to a broad audience, especially the growing middle class."[201] This made the magazine, and Keppler by extension, a significant force in influencing the development of public opinion on a wide variety of topics.

This became particularly salient during the Presidential election of 1884, with Democrat Grover Cleveland going up against Republican James G. Blaine. Also in the race was an explicitly anti-monopoly candidate by the name of Benjamin F. Butler, which brought the issue to the campaign's forefront for all candidates.[202] In a particularly salient incident, Blaine attended a fundraising dinner at Delmonico's in New York which featured "bankers and brokers, officials of the Vanderbilt and Gould railroads, [and] Standard Oil magnates" but excluded any reporters.[203] In an election featuring a specifically anti-monopoly candidate and at a point where both Jay Gould and rail monopolies had factored into the political debate, the dinner was largely considered a blunder by the Blaine campaign. In a retrospective on late nineteenth century political development, *McClure's Magazine* urged its readers to "Think then of Blaine going to a monopoly banquet in the closing days of an anti-monopoly campaign!"[204] The magazine also noted the public backlash was swift and national in scale, with "the statement that Blaine was Gould's man, and that Gould had given a banquet with the purpose to raise

[201] Thomas, 213.
[202] "The Strategy of National Campaigns.: Reminiscences of the Political Warfare of the Last Twentyfive Years, by One Who Has Been in the Thick of It.," *McClure's Magazine (1893-1926)* (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series III, October 1900), https://www.proquest.com/americanperiodicals/docview/135662395/abstract/D4575FCE728D4931PQ/2.
[203] "The Strategy of National Campaigns."
[204] "The Strategy of National Campaigns."

money with which to purchase Blaine's election."[205] The impact this event had demonstrated the impact discussions of monopolies and trusts in the editorial press, and served to increase continued coverage in periodicals like *Puck.*

Indeed, several artists took up the issue and created cartoons directly addressing the issue for the public. *The New York World* ran their image on the front page and the headline "The Royal Feast of Belshazzar Blaine and the Money Kings," with subheadings that included "Blaine Hobnobbing With the Mighty Money Kings" and "Millionaires and Monopolists Seal Their Allegiance." The article, shown in figure 12, was accompanied by a large cartoon drawn by Walter McDougall, which featured a table of labeled caricatures of the dinner's prominent attendees, including Vanderbilt wearing a crown, almost reminiscent of Da Vinci's "Last Supper."[206] On the table before them are a wide variety of dishes labeled as "lobby pudding," "monopoly soup," and "Gould pie."[207] Each industrialist wears a large diamond tie pin, paralleling Nast's depiction of Boss Tweed, but McDougall seems to draw even greater inspiration by one of Keppler's past works, "The Writing On The Wall."

[205] "The Strategy of National Campaigns."
[206] "The Royal Feast of Belshazzar Blaine and the Money Kings," *The World*, October 30, 1884, https://elections.harpweek.com/1884/cartoon-1884-medium.asp?UniqueID=30&Year=1884.
[207] "The Royal Feast of Belshazzar Blaine and the Money Kings."

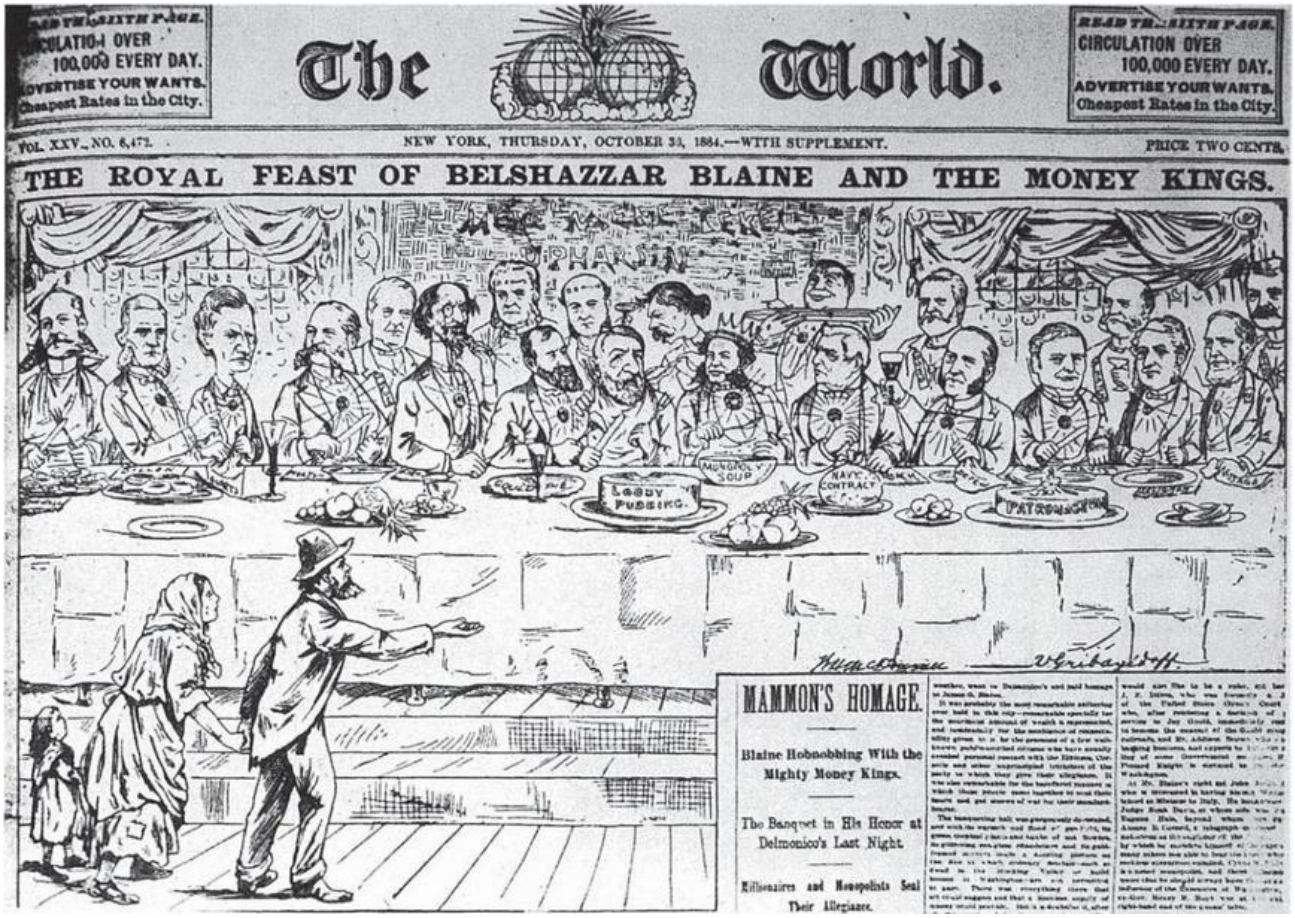

Figure 12. The Royal Feast of Belshazzar Blaine and the Money Kings[208]

Published a full six months prior to the infamous dinner incident, in June of 1884, Keppler's cartoon depicts Blaine as the "tattooed man" at a dinner party covering himself with newsprint in the face of a light shining on the phrase "Republican Revolt" emblazoned on the wall.[209] Depicted in figure 13, the dinner's attendees include many of the same characters as McDougall's version, including Jay Gould and William H.

[208] "The Royal Feast of Belshazzar Blaine and the Money Kings."
[209] Joseph Keppler, *The Writing on the Wall / J. Keppler.*, June 18, 1884, June 18, 1884, https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.28329/.

Vanderbilt, who are seated at a table with dishes labeled as “Pension Pie,” “Monopoly Stew,” and “Star Route Shortcake.”[210]

Figure 13. Writing on the Wall[211]

During his tenure at the head of *Puck* and position as the second leading American political cartoonist of the period, Joseph Keppler contributed important elements to the development of anti-trust cartooning. His approach of moralizing on issues of corruption and greed became a common theme in the creation of anti-trust cartoons as the topic became more common. Keppler’s skill for portraiture also impacted the development of American cartooning, as the faces of the country’s prominent

[210] Keppler.
[211] Keppler.

industrialists became distinguishable characters. As Nast and Keppler gave way to the growing class of other political cartoonists, these elements became common across the genre of anti-trust cartooning.

Chapter V.

Moneybags and the Monopoly Man

The American Beauty Rose can be produced in its splendor and fragrance only by sacrificing the early buds which grow up around it.

—J.D. Rockefeller, Jr. [212]

While the artform of editorial cartooning in America had established itself on Nast and Keppler's shoulders, their fellow artists were the ones who really took the ideas and nascent images of portly men in waistcoats and bags of money and ran with them, as anti-trust sentiment grew in political influence at the close of the nineteenth and opening of the twentieth centuries. Famous names like Bernhard Gillam, W.A. Rogers, Frederick Opper, and even Keppler's own son Udo, established firmly the image of the Monopoly Man in American culture. The increasing prevalence of discourse surrounding trusts and anti-monopoly organizing which occurred as the century drew to a close, provided a near perfect environment for these artists to exert their influence. In prior decades, the likes of Nast and Keppler had done the same with the major contemporary issues, and now anti-trust represented a new great issue for the new class of artists to moralize about. Following the rather sudden and unexpected death of Joseph Keppler in 1894, *Puck* lost its most significant editorial driving force, and the world of American cartooning lost its second giant in a decade following Nast's professional decline. In the wake of these two

[212] Ida M. (Ida Minerva) Tarbell, *The History of the Standard Oil Company*, Harvard Social History/Business Preservation Microfilm Project. Project 2a ; 22323 (New York: McClure, Phillips, 1905).

significant legacies, periodicals saw the rise of several artistic successors as monopolies became an even hotter topic of discussion.

Although discussion around the consolidation of commercial power in the hands of a few select men had been occurring as early as Cornelius Vanderbilt's consolidation of the railways in the 1870s, a somewhat formalized "anti-trust" movement did not take shape until the last decade of the century. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act, passed and signed by President Benjamin Harrison in 1890, represented the first instance in which the federal government took steps to address the existence of commercial trusts. Having passed the House unanimously and sailed through the Senate with only a singular opposition, the issue appeared to be generally popular across the country.[213] The act provided the government with a mechanism to pursue proceedings in order to break up any combination which was restraining trade between states in an effort to restore competition within the industry in question.[214] Although the bill was passed in 1890, prosecutions under its tenets did not become a major point of contention until close to and after the turn of the century. The pursuit of such prosecutions required not just the legal authority, but also the political will.[215] That political will depended both on the administration in control of the federal government at any given time and the general popularity of the action in the minds of the voting public. [216] It was here that the country's major political cartoonists exerted their most influence over public opinion.

[213] "Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890)."
[214] "Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890)."
[215] Charles Johnston, "The Attorney-General and the Trusts: A Talk with Mr. Wickersham on a Subject of Pressing Interest," *Harper's Weekly*, April 22, 1911, https://harp-alexanderstreet-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/article/text/335405/17473.
[216] Johnston.

As the issue gained salience in the 1890s, the topic of trusts and monopolies became a common topic of conversation both in the contemporary press and with the cartoonists publishing in the weekly periodicals. Together, the editorial and picture press created a clear image/picture/idea of the Robber Barons in control of the trusts, as well as the trusts themselves, in the minds of the common people. This idea both influenced the development of public opinion around the issue of anti-trust and created a more concrete image for the anti-trust or anti-monopoly advocates to argue against. It is through the images created by these men, and their common elements, that the image of the modern-day Monopoly Man became a recognizable image. Drawing from motifs which originated from Thomas Nast and Joseph Keppler, the likes of Frederick Opper, Bernhard Gillam, and W.A. Rogers created indelible images and helped shape the development of anti-trust sentiment in the United States.

The Successors

Frederick Opper, Bernhard Gillam, and Udo Keppler took the burden of producing many of the relevant images for *Puck,* while W.A. Rogers contributed for the likes of *The New York Herald* and the old standby, *Harper's Weekly*.[217] These major cartoonists, along with others, built further on the foundation laid by Nast and Keppler, and solidified the motifs associated with monopolies and anti-trust sentiment originated by their predecessors. The bulk of the work was produced under the auspices of *Puck* as Keppler's son Udo and a stable of other artists continued in its' founder's image. Udo, who eventually changed his name to Joseph Keppler Jr., had been employed as a

[217] "The Making of Cartoons."

cartoonist at his father's magazine prior to the senior's death and continued to produce illustrations critical to the continued success of *Puck* as well as contributing a body of work with greater emphasis on the issue of trusts and monopolies.[218]

Dating from as early as 1873, editorial writers were expressing concerns about the developing combinations which were consolidating great wealth in the hands of a select few. *Harper's Weekly* published a piece entitled "The Vanderbilt Monopoly" which called into question the recent acquisition of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway by Cornelius Vanderbilt. The author highlights that this most recent acquisition meant that 2150 miles of rail were under Vanderbilt's control, constituting "a large degree [of] control of the internal trade of the States of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and New York."[219] This type of centralization eventually occurred in several other major industries, with trusts headed and controlled by many famous names of American industry. The likes of Rockefeller, Gould, Morgan, and Carnegie employed the trust structure to consolidate their economic power and maximize profits, thus increasing their own personal wealth. With this increase of personal wealth and economic power came the ability to exert influence in the political sphere as well. Here lay a significant area of concern within the anti-trust movement. The *Harper's Weekly* piece asserts this point with the author's declaration that "it is one thing to pass laws, and quite another to execute them against a man fertile in resources…and inexhaustible in purse."[220] In the

[218] "Will of Joseph Keppler.," *New York Times (1857-1922)*, February 25, 1894, https://www.proquest.com/americanperiodicals/docview/95247642/abstract/61AFA03DDFD04EF1PQ/13; "Death of Joseph Keppler."
[219] "The Vanderbilt Monopoly," *Harper's Weekly*, July 26, 1873, https://harp-alexanderstreet-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/article/text/105085/17467.
[220] "The Vanderbilt Monopoly."

highly political and polarized environment of the Gilded Age, highlighting these issues was a task many of the political cartoonists happily took up.

As more images were produced over time, common elements were established which were used by different cartoonists, which created common motifs which could be easily recognized by the target audience in order to communicate the intended message. To create these motifs, artists drew on many of the elements and themes established by the work of Thomas Nast and Joseph Keppler, who both laid so much of the foundation for the artform. One of the most prolific artists in question was Frederick Burr Opper, who was part of the great stable of cartoonists created by Joseph Keppler at *Puck,* and who continued the periodical's work for almost twenty-five years after its founder's passing. Even Nast's biographer Albert Paine writing in *Harper's Weekly* credited Opper with helping establish the genre stating, "Mr. Opper…[has] given us figures of the trusts." Although Paine goes on to say that "these are usually regarded as individual rather than common properties, and have not been much appropriated by other men," the image of the "monopoly man" or its elements are found across the work of several artists.[221] With *Puck* accounting for a large portion of cartoons containing elements of anti-trust sentiment, Opper made a significant contribution to the genre over the course of his career.

Frederick Opper

Unlike the foreign-born Nast and Keppler, Opper was "the first great American-born cartoonist," who began his career with *Puck* and eventually moved to the *New York*

[221] Albert Bigelow Paine, "The Origin of American Cartoon Symbols," *Harper's Weekly*, September 19, 1908, https://harp-alexanderstreet-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/article/text/319189/17468.

Journal under the auspices of William Randolph Hearst.[222] Originally from Ohio, Opper eventually made his way to New York and was hired by *Puck* in 1880 at the age of only twenty-three-years old and where he would remain for the next nineteen years.[223] His work with *Puck* frequently addressed economic and political issues of the day, as well as their overlap. In a general analysis of Opper's work, historian Jen Reidel describes his focus as "on the tension between the political corruption and greed of robber barons and the existence of the common man."[224] The dynamic of the Gilded Age certainly provided enough fodder for Opper and his compatriots to take advantage of, with some of the highest levels of wealth disparity the United States had ever seen.[225] Using a style Reidel classifies as part of the "Midwestern School of Editorial Cartooning" characterized by "emphasizing homespun values through the plight of ordinary people," Opper's work featured many of the tropes and motifs associated with the visual representation of trusts.[226]

Even in the early years of his employment with *Puck*, Opper was contributing illustrations like "The Good Monopoly Missionaries and the Wicked Island" in 1883 in figure 14, which centered the issues of trusts and monopolizing businessmen to the forefront of discussion. This particular image contained caricatures of William Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, and Cyrus Field, all wealthy businessmen associated with railroads and depicted with easily recognizable faces in the style of his boss at the time, Joseph Keppler. The three men were depicted rowing away from a tropical island

[222] "Biography of Opper," *History Teaching Institute - The Ohio State University* (blog), accessed October 16, 2022, https://hti.osu.edu/opper/biography-opper.
[223] "Biography of Opper."
[224] Reidel, "Discovering Economic Concepts and Criticism in Progressive Era Cartoons," 89.
[225] "How American Inequality in the Gilded Age Compares to Today."
[226] Reidel, "Discovering Economic Concepts and Criticism in Progressive Era Cartoons," 89.

containing both a railroad and several angry figures protesting for "5-cent fares."[227] The three men are depicted weeping as they flee and the cartoon bears a caption declaring "after all we have done for them, Brothers, they insist on having 5-cent fares. Let us leave the Cannibals to their fate!"[228]

[227] Frederick Burr Opper, *The Good Monopoly Missionaries and the Wicked Island / F. Opper.*, February 28, 1883, February 28, 1883, https://www.loc.gov/item/2012645451/.
[228] Opper.

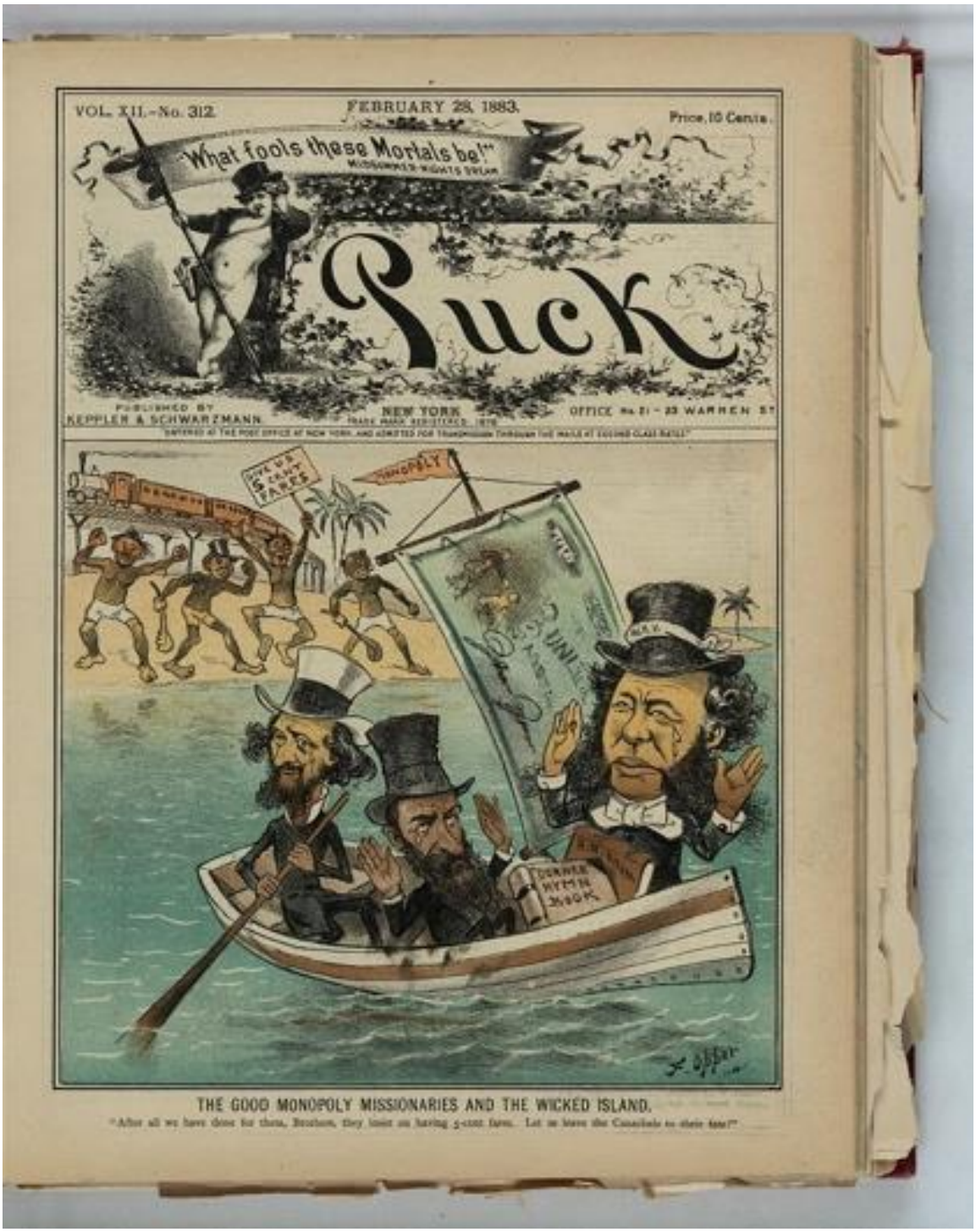

Figure 14. The Good Monopoly Missionaries and the Wicked Island[229]

[229] Opper.

The reference to "5-cent fares" came from the ongoing, and often spirited debate over the pricing of rail fares in an economic environment becoming increasingly more consolidated by corporate combinations.

Anti-trust feelings in this area dated back even to the 1870s, before monopolies and trusts became a major target of cartoonist ire. An 1873 piece in *Harper's Weekly* titled "The Vanderbilt Monopoly" summarized this concern quite well. The author's main focus was the recent election of "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt as president of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway, which he describes as "another step in the gradual consolidation of our great railroad and financial enterprises."[230] This consolidation would continue to progress over the next two decades, and with it came even greater sentiment in this vein of thought as money in politics became a greater topic of conversation. *Harper's* reported that with the most recent acquisition, Vanderbilt was in control of 2,150 miles of railway and thus exerted "a large degree" of control over the internal trade of several states.[231] With this volume of wealth and economic control, amounting to a yearly income of $45,000,000 in 1872 (over a billion dollars in today's terms), it is not surprising that concerns over political influence followed. For the writer for *Harper's,* and many of the country's political cartoonists, there existed great concern over the power and influence exerted by the nation's elite which he stated quite frankly in the piece: "It was said that the late James Fisk, Jun., who controlled a paltry 450 miles of Erie, running through a half-settled country, could on an emergency bring 25,000 votes into the field. At how many votes, then, must we reckon the master of 2150 miles of

[230] "The Vanderbilt Monopoly."
[231] "The Vanderbilt Monopoly."

railway through a thickly settled country, and 70,000 miles of telegraphs!"[232] In addition to being able to exert influence or manipulate votes in elections, the trust system also posed a threat to the ability of legislatures and other government bodies to reign in runaway monopolies, as "it is […] one thing to pass laws, and quite another to execute them against a man fertile in resource, energetic in action, obstinate in combat, and inexhaustible in purse."[233]

Opper's Colleagues

Opper's colleagues also furthered the image through their work for the publication. The magazine had always had a strong political point of view, whether aligned with a political party or mugwump independence, so the repetition of both the topic and the artists' points of view is not surprising. In an 1897 cartoon titled "He's Back Again!," figure 15, artist J.S. Pughe drew a massive figure with the head of a pig and dressed in the often seen uniform of comically depicted rich industrialist, complete with waistcoat, top hat, cane, and spats, marching through the Congressional floor. The figure is labeled as a "protection glutton" and carries a document reading "we demand a prohibitory tariff on all importations, in the interest of the suffering laborer, the down-trodden farmer and, the struggling infant industries of the country."[234]

[232] "The Vanderbilt Monopoly."
[233] "The Vanderbilt Monopoly."
[234] J. S. (John S.) Pughe, *He's Back Again! / J.S. Pughe. - Drawing. Public Domain Image.*, January 1, 1897, January 1, 1897, https://loc.getarchive.net/media/hes-back-again-js-pughe.

Figure 15. He's Back Again![235]

The areas of monopoly and protectionist economic policies such as tariffs was common for the period, as it was an additional route to secure and maximize profits from potential foreign competition. Pughe imparts a sense of irony with this illustration as the phrase "infant industries" is underlined in red, compared to green for the two other listed groups, and companies such as Standard Oil could hardly be considered "infant" by the late 1980s.[236]

[235] Pughe.
[236] Pughe.

Fellow *Puck* artist C.J. Taylor followed very similar themes in his March 1897 piece captioned "In the Hands of His Philanthropic Friends," as seen in figure 16. The piece shows the classic figure of Uncle Sam flanked by two rotund figures dressed as well-to-do businessmen and wearing hats labeled "monopolies" and "trusts" respectively. The man labeled as "monopolies" appears to be slipping something out of Uncle Sam's waistcoat pocket while the" trusts" digs through his coat pocket on the other side.[237]

[237] C.J. Taylor, *In the Hands of His Philanthropic Friends / C.J. Taylor.*, March 10, 1897, March 10, 1897, https://www.loc.gov/item/2012647652/.

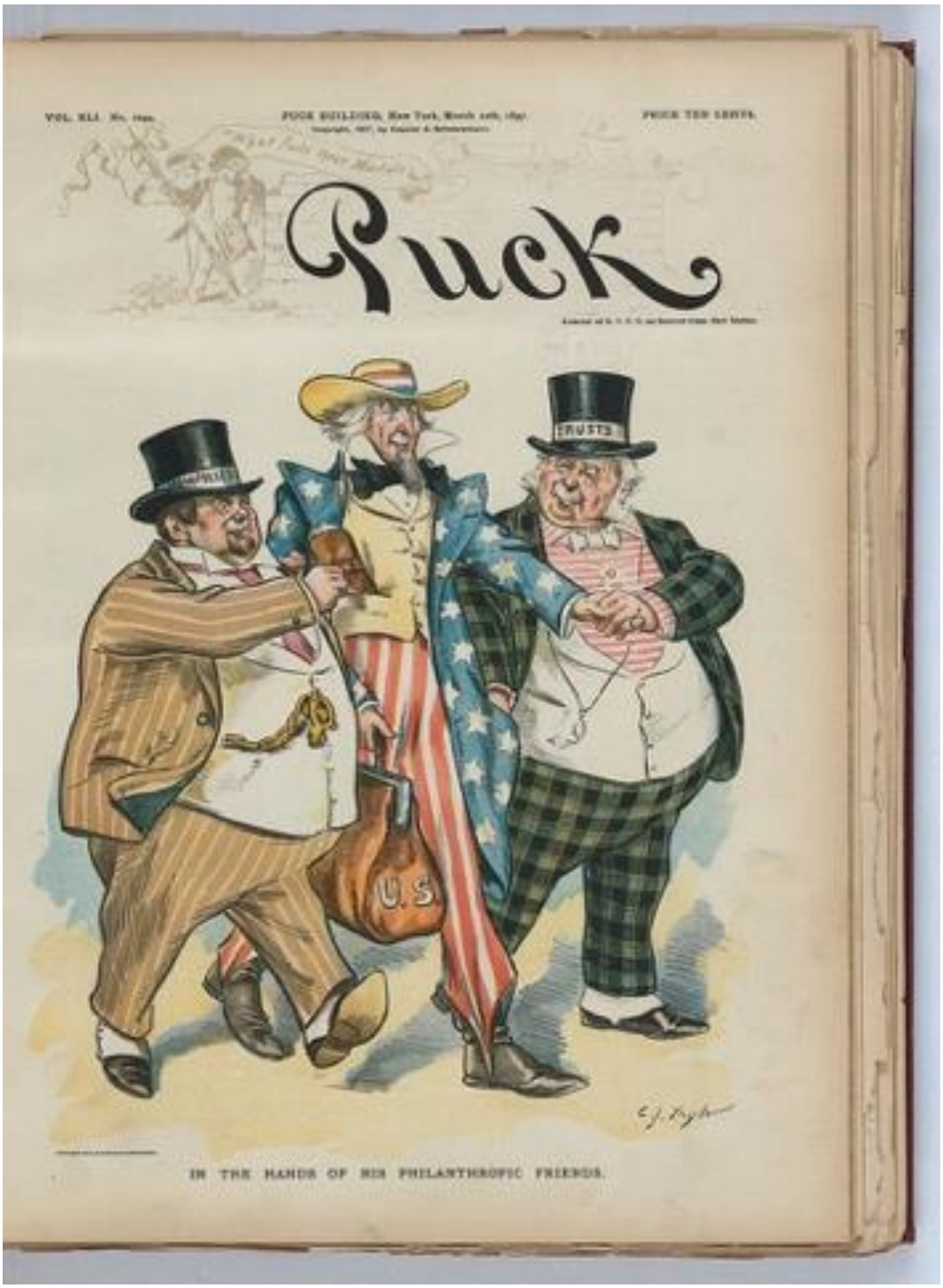

Figure 16. In the Hands of His Philanthropic Friends[238]

[238] Taylor.

Taylor pokes fun at the philanthropic role many prominent industrialists, and trust benefactors, played in society. Men like Rockefeller and Carnegie used their massive wealth to fund a wide variety of philanthropic endeavors, some of which keep their names prominent to this day. A 1903 illustration in *Harper's Weekly* illustrated this idea quite comically as a small child stacking blocks on the floor, shown in figure 17. He is stacking blocks into a tower to spell out the word "library," but the stabilizing blocks supporting the tower bear images of railroads and factories.[239] The juxtaposition emphasizes the hypocrisy of funding projects for public benefit with wealth generated through exploitive methods.

[239] Peter Newell, *Andrew Carnegie*, April 11, 1903, April 11, 1903, https://harp-alexanderstreet-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/article/text/291147/17482.

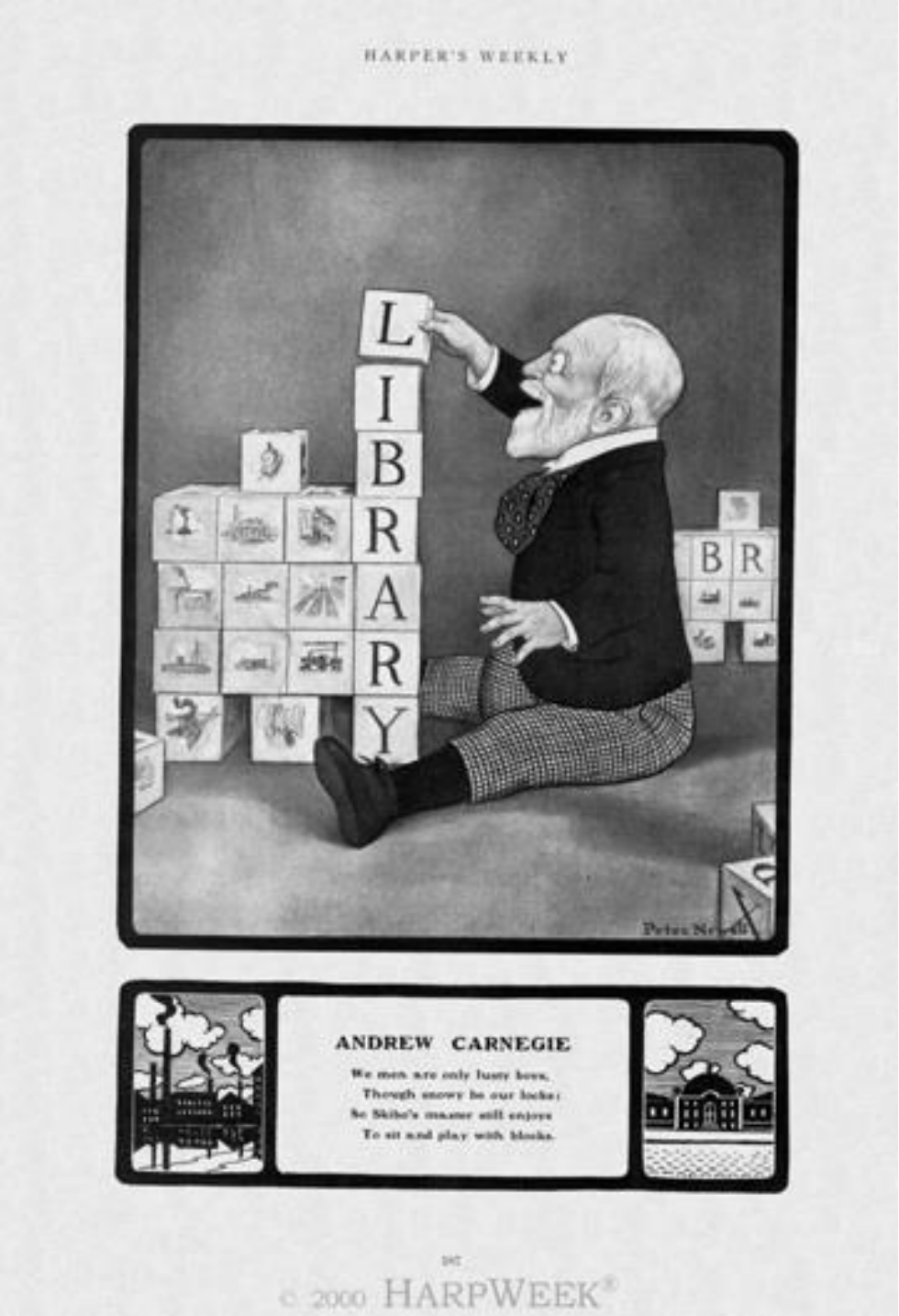

Figure 17. Andrew Carnegie[240]

[240] Newell.

The *Harper's* artist drives home his point even further by including a brief poem in the caption: "We men are only lusty boys, Though snowy be our locks; So Skibo's master still enjoys To sit a play with blocks"[241] Similarly, the irony of Taylor's illustration comes from juxtaposing these "philanthropic friends" with their apparent swindling and theft from Uncle Sam, who potentially stands in for the American citizen.

Private Taxation

The concern with trusts and monopolies effectively stealing from American citizens was a common one among anti-trust discourse at the time. In an 1882 piece entitled "The Return of Tweed," the writer despairs over a recent legislative move in favor of a large railway corporation that they argues would do harm to New York City and its residents. They draw a direct comparison between how Boss Tweed had run the city with "flower beds in the Park, and the better order of the Battery, and Tweeds gift of coal to the poor" while simultaneously "plundering the city Treasury."[242] The author asserts that this parallels with "the perfection of railroad management, the rapid transit of the elevated roads, the convenience of combinations of great resources" which "incline the public mind to look upon the perils of vast corporate power as it looked at Tweed over the flower beds."[243] Large corporate combinations like trusts possessed the ability to exert influence at all levels of government which, much like corporate lobbying and tax cuts today, tends to draw out strong emotion. The *Harper's* piece remarks that "public sentiment in the city is practically unanimous against the scheme of erecting the elevated

[241] Newell.
[242] "The Return of Tweed," *Harper's Weekly*, June 10, 1882, https://harp-alexanderstreet-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/article/text/161570/17477.
[243] "The Return of Tweed."

railroad corporation into a favored class at the expense of the other tax-paying interests of the city."[244] The *New York Times* assessed the tax disadvantage of the new reality which reduced 1882 taxes from the rail company from over $600,000 to $240,000, reduction of more than $7 million in modern terms, apparently without any consult from city authorities.[245] Such a disparity, in combination with the great wealth of the men associated with them, is not a good recipe for popular support with the average American. This dynamic represents one of the ways the cross-over of monopolies and politics concerned those in the anti-trust movement.

Opper created at least one cartoon along similar lines, with the publication of "Congressional Contempt" in 1883, depicted in figure 18. The cover image for the January 31st edition of *Puck*, the drawing depicted three figures skating along the "Capitol Skating Pond" with the Capitol dome in the backdrop. One man carries the label of "Democracy" while the adjoining pair are labeled as "Republican" and "Monopolist" respectively, and holding a stick called "Money Interests."[246] With the "Monopolist" depicted as a rotund man with a top hat and spats, and accompanied by a high-priced fur coat, Opper once again implements elements originating with Nast and Keppler.

[244] "The Return of Tweed."
[245] "The Return of Tweed."
[246] Frederick Burr Opper, *Congressional Contempt / F. Opper.*, January 31, 1883, January 31, 1883, https://www.loc.gov/item/2012645443/.

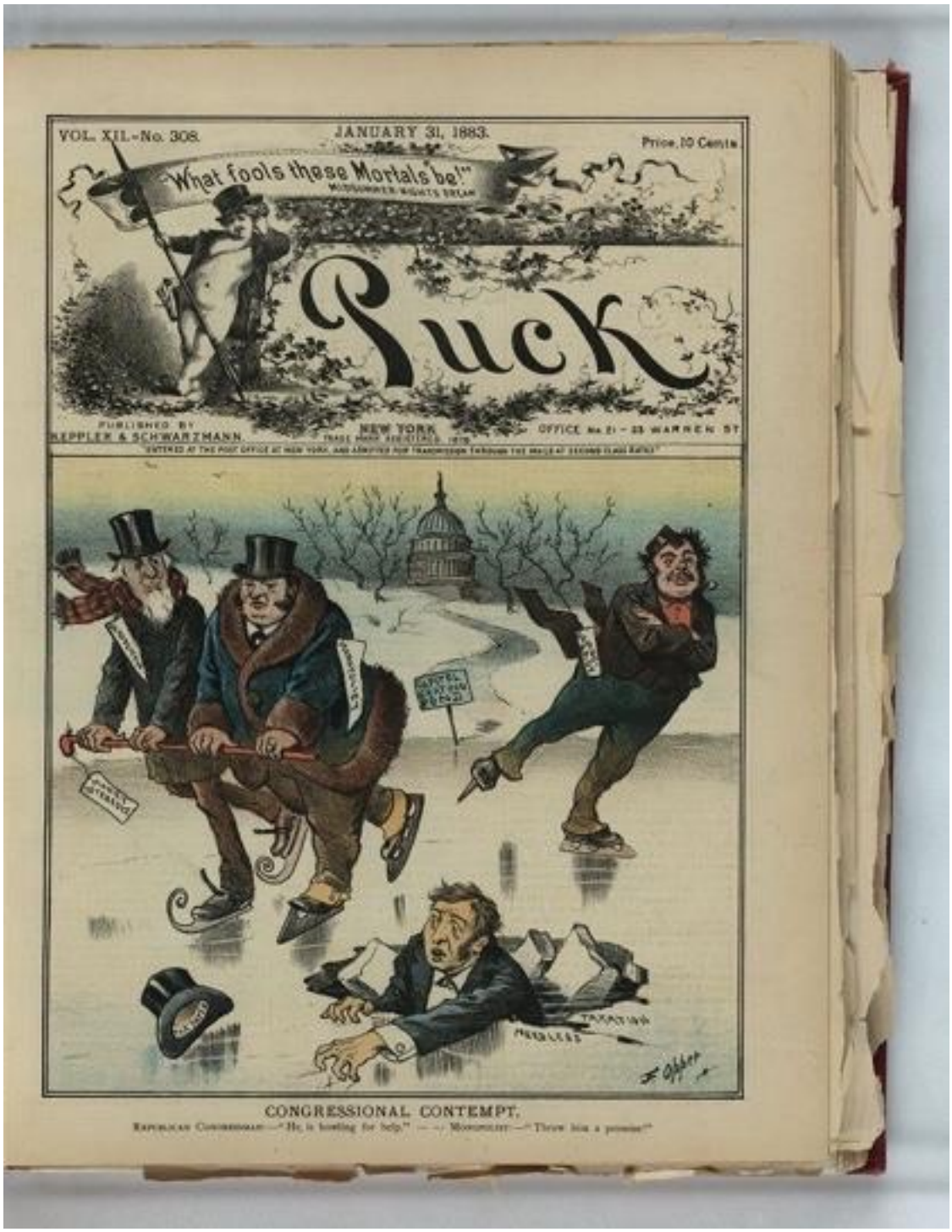

Figure 18. Congressional Contempt[247]

[247] Opper.

For Opper's personal message, the viewer must look to the figure in the very foreground who is clawing at the ice after falling through a hole labeled as "Needless Taxation." Based on the discarded hat laying nearby, this individual is intended to represent the taxpayers of the United States.[248] These were the people bearing the burden of the manipulation and influence of rich industrialists in American political life, and fitting for the theme of the average man versus wealthy that was frequently employed by Opper and other artists. On a very simplified level, the growing anti-trust sentiment could be considered simply another aspect of the tried and true conflict between the "haves" and the "have-nots." This is ultimately a simple message that can be readily adopted to a wide variety of issues, which makes a cartoon image easily digestible to the public at large, and a thus a vehicle for influence and persuasion.

In some of Opper's later productions, he has successfully distilled down the essential elements of the overbearing businessman so often associated with monopolies. While working for William Randolph Hearst's publishing around the turn of the twentieth century, the artist produced two key images. The first in 1902, in figure 19, captioned as "Nursery rhymes for infant industries. An alphabet of joyous trusts," shows a large well-dressed man pressing a button on some sort of device to deliver a shock to "the common people," causing money to fall out of his pocket and into a collection can.[249] The hulking figure is labeled as "Electric Trust" which aligns with the alphabet entry for E and the commentary that "E's for the Electric Trust. Quick as a flash he turns on his current and shocks out your cash!"[250]

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[248] Opper.
[249] Frederick Burr Opper, *Nursery Rhymes for Infant Industries. An Alphabet of Joyous Trusts--No. 5 / F. Opper.*, 1902, 1902, https://www.loc.gov/item/90707598/.
[250] Opper.

Figure 19. Nursery Rhymes for Infant Industries[251]

[251] Opper.

Along with the well-dressed appearance, the man labeled as "electric trust" also appears to have a diamond or other fine stone resting above his waistcoat, possibly serving as a tie pin. This is an interesting parallel with Thomas Nast's original depictions of Boss Tweed over thirty years previously, as Tweed wore a signature diamond tie pin which was often used in his caricatures to emphasize his corruption and personal pursuit of wealth. A similar sort of pin also appears in generic "monopoly man" depictions created by other artists as well, almost as a subconscious association with greed and corruption.

In some of his images which do not employ any of the "monopoly man" motifs, it is easy to see Opper's general opposition to monopoly economics. Perhaps most stark was an image captioned "Monopoly in Hades" containing a depiction of Jay Gould as the Devil lording over a literal hellscape occupied by a variety of other symbolic figures, shown in figure 20. The sub-caption proclaims that the cartoon shows "how the place will be run, two years after Jay Gould's arrival."[252]

[252] Frederick Burr Opper, *Monopoly in Hades--How the Place Will Be Run, Two Years after Jay Gould's Arrival / F. Opper.*, September 19, 1883, September 19, 1883, https://www.loc.gov/item/96500423/.

Figure 20. Monopoly in Hades[253]

[253] Opper.

Holding a sheaf of papers labeled as "majority of stock" and standing outside an office labeled "Jay Gould, Successor to Satan," Gould looks out over a landscape containing a railcar with "Only Anti-Monopolists Carried" written on the side. Additionally, there is a "Bottomless Pit Roasting Co. – Jay Gould, Pres." that contains figures of an "anti-monopolist editor" and *Puck's* mascot are seen being stabbed by devils holding pitchforks.[254] Opper's opinions on both Gould and the machinations of the corporate trust structures he employed for management of his vast railroad and telegraph holdings is made clear by the framing of the illustration. Depicting the suffering and torture of anti-monopolists and his employer's mascot shows the artist's approval of their stance and cause in comparison to the central wrongdoer.

Political Overlap

Anti-trust sentiment and negative feelings toward the businessmen associated with them occupied a somewhat unique position for artists in the hyper-partisan world of nineteenth-century magazine publications. Opposition to the wealth accumulation of the elite and suppression of competition for small independent companies drew the ire of contributors on both sides of the aisle. An interesting example of this comes from an illustration by an artist only identified by the initials "D.K." in the corner, captioned "Puck's Perplexing Position—Between Two Evils," depicted in figure 21. The image depicts Keppler's *Puck* mascot positioned at a crossroads with signs pointing in opposing directions to "Monopolyville" and Anti-Monopolyville" respectively. On one side stood

[254] Opper.

the figures of William Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, and Cyrus W. Field, each depicted as an anthropomorphized bag of money with arms outstretched.[255]

Figure 21. Puck's Perplexing Position – Between Two Evils[256]

[255] D.K., *Puck's Perplexing Position - between Two Evils / D.K.*, October 12, 1881, October 12, 1881, https://www.loc.gov/item/2012647291/.
[256] D.K.

On the opposite side in "Anti-Monopolyville" stands the current head of the Tammany Hall political machine, Boss Kelly, holding a flag which proclaims "Down with the Bloated Monopolists!"[257] The irony of the mascot's position between the two factions is highlighted by the cartoon's sub-caption, in which the character of Puck declares, "Well, I want to be an Anti-Monopolist, but not if *that* is one!" in refence to Kelly and Tammany Hall.[258]

The position Tammany Hall occupied in the anti-trust space was an interesting one, as they were not truly associated with either side. Publicly, the political machine aligned themselves on the anti-monopolist side of the fence, as depicted by Kelly's depiction in the illustration. In private however, that opposition was not nearly so strong-willed. The next year, in 1882, a *Harper Weekly* article called out several New York state senators "who are called 'Anti-monopoly' or Tammany Senators" who voted in line with their "Regular" Democratic colleagues to pass "one of the most barefaced swindles on the people of New York which have been attempted since the days of Tweed."[259] Tammany Hall's alignment with the "regular" Democrats on this issue did provide a partisan opening for the Republicans in New York, a point highlighted by the Republican-aligned *Harper's Weekly* writer. In their estimation, opposition to corporate trusts would provide "a very much more valid claim to the title of Anti-monopoly than the Democratic party can establish by the harangues of Mr. Kelly against monopoly and the votes of his Senators for it."[260] Although the cartoon does not directly bear Joseph Keppler's signature, he shaped the publication's opinions in his own image and had final

[257] D.K.
[258] D.K.
[259] "The Return of Tweed."
[260] "The Return of Tweed."

approval over all included images. With a publication date in 1881, it can be reasonably inferred the content met his approval.

The cross-party nature of anti-trust and anti-monopoly sentiment can also be observed in the alignment of artists and magazines from opposing sides of the aisle, namely *Harper's Weekly* and *Puck.* With *Harper's* occupying role of staunch Republican outlet and *Puck* taking the other side, corresponding to each publication's most famous cartoonist, their coverage of monopolies in their cartoons bear striking resemblance to each other. With the *Puck* contingent represented by Opper, Keppler the Younger, and others, *Harper's* called upon the talents of artists like W.A. (William Allen) Rogers. Originally from Ohio, like his counterpart Frederick Opper, Rogers eventually made his way to New York City and worked for a variety of publications before finally joining *Harper's Weekly* in 1877 and was charged with taking over the cover illustration after Thomas Nast left.[261] Over a twenty-five-year career with the periodical, he created many of the most influential images published by the magazine. Following his tenure with *Harper's* Rogers went to work for the *New York Herald* newspaper and even submitted one-off contributions for other publications, including *Puck*, before retiring as a cartoonist for the *Washington Post* in 1926.[262]

W.A. Rogers

With roughly half his career spanning the Gilded Age period, Rogers had ample opportunity to react to and comment on the period's major themes, of which the anti-trust

[261] "William Allen Rogers Caricature Biography," accessed January 31, 2024, https://www.sil.si.edu/ondisplay/caricatures/bio_rogers.htm.
[262] "William Allen Rogers Caricature Biography."

movement was one. At *Harper's Weekly*, he produced at least two images addressing the issue of trusts and their impact on the political and economic environment. In an 1888 cover captioned "The Consumer Consumed," Rogers drew a man carrying a basket labeled "consumer" caught between Uncle Sam and a large imposing man, both with their hands outstretched, as depicted in figure 22. Behind Uncle Sam is a stall with the heading "Imported Goods" and a sign notifying buyers that "if you buy here you must pay war duties," while the other stands before a stall labeled "Domestic Goods" with the notice that "if you buy here you must pay blood-money to a 'trust.'"[263] Faced with additional charges either way, the average consumer is depicted as stuck in the middle with no good option available.

[263] W.A. (William Allen) Rogers, *The Consumer Consumed / W.A. Rogers.*, 1888, 1888, https://www.loc.gov/item/90707105/.

Figure 22. The Consumer Consumed[264]

[264] Rogers.

Even while seemingly criticizing both sides of this economic issue, Rogers still makes the decision to draw the trusts in a more negative light than Uncle Sam. The use of "blood money" as opposed to "war duties" draws a much more emotional response from the public. In addition, the Domestic Goods booth sports a flag carrying a skull and cross bones emblem, often associated with pirates or poison, and an octopus, another symbol some artists employed to depict the far-reaching influence of trusts and monopolistic corporations.[265] These are vastly more negative in comparison to the counterpart flag based on elements of the national flag, with stars, stripes, and an eagle. The artist's message seeks to feed on public anger and frustration with the added cost of goods created by monopolistic manipulation in pricing and layering on a moralistic element. This calls back to the anti-trust position that corporate trusts resulted in additional taxation upon the average American.

President Taft's Attorney General George Wickersham explained the idea in an interview he did with Charles Johnston for *Harper's Weekly* in 1909. The article uses recent cases prosecuted by the Department of Justice against the "window-glass and bath-tub trusts," which were considered nationwide combinations responsible for "furnish[ing] necessaries of life."[266] Following the combinations, both organizations "raised the prices of their wares fifty or sixty per cent., representing no increase in cost, but simply a levy made on the consumer, because the trusts 'needed the money.'"[267] Johnston refers to this as "private taxation" which he asserts is the "palpable evil of monopoly" and "only another name for organized extortion from the citizens and inhabitants of the United

[265] Rogers.
[266] Johnston, "The Attorney-General and the Trusts: A Talk with Mr. Wickersham on a Subject of Pressing Interest."
[267] Johnston.

States."[268] These were the monopolies pursued by Wickersham's Department of Justice. The biggest name on the list was the Standard Oil Company, put together and overseen by John D. Rockefeller beginning in 1870, which gained growing notoriety throughout the Gilded Age. In Wickersham's estimation, the Standard's power and influence came from the fact that "the power and influence of the chief owners of the Standard in financial circles makes every railroad management cautious about giving them offense."[269] Even though growing industrial monopolization had been a point of discussion throughout the Gilded Age, the pace of prosecutions did not pick up speed until the close of the period and the beginning of the Progressive Era. Johnston credited this change to the changing political environment around the issue, commenting that the Sherman Antitrust Act was almost twenty years old with "almost everything depend[ing] on the administration."[270] Growing public sentiment in favor of action provided the necessary motivation for administrations like Taft's to make anti-trust prosecutions a part of their agendas to "protect [the] citizens from immediate robbery."[271]

The Teddy Roosevelt Years

As the century turned, the topic of anti-trust cartooning received a new influx of interest as Theodore Roosevelt assumed the presidency following President McKinley's assassination in 1901. The following year, Rogers contributed a cartoon captioned "Daren't Let Go" depicting now President Roosevelt riding a GOP elephant with the phrase "Curb the Trusts" emblazoned on the side making his way through the "Monopoly

[268] Johnston.
[269] Johnston.
[270] Johnston.
[271] Johnston.

Wilderness." Behind him the elephant drags a series of Republican congressmen with him following Uncle Sam holding a sign saying "This way out," as seen in figure 23.[272]

Figure 23. Daren't Let Go[273]

The Roosevelt administration became well known for its "trust-busting" activities, which aligned well with his domestic policy eventually known as the "Square Deal." To the president's view, his administration believed in "a square deal all around" and "if there is

[272] W.A. (William Allen) Rogers, *Daren't Let Go*, December 3, 1902, December 3, 1902, https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o274708.
[273] Rogers.

one thing that I do desire to stand for it is for a square deal, […] without regard to what any man's creed or birthplace or social position may be."[274]

Rogers seems to depict Roosevelt's desire for this balanced approach in a piece titled "The peacemaker at work" in 1905, shown in figure 24, which placed the president between two figures, Uncle Sam and a figure designed in the image of a "monopoly man" but with features composed of rail parts. Emblazoned with the label "The Railroads" and carrying a club called "Rebates," this figure appears at odds with Uncle Sam who is representing the federal legislature. Between the two, Roosevelt stands in his signature hat and holding an olive branch and dove, under a sign reading "No Extra Session, Peace."[275]

[274] *Square Deal*, accessed January 31, 2024, https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Learn-About-TR/TR-Encyclopedia/Politics%20and%20Government/The%20Square%20Deal.
[275] W.A. (William Allen) Rogers, *The Peacemaker at Work*, c 1905, c 1905, https://www.loc.gov/item/2010717668/.

Figure 24. The peacemaker at work[276]

The artist uses many of the tropes associated with the depiction of trusts in his work, such as the round body, fancy clothes, and spats, while also putting his own spin on the idea. He turns a top hat into a locomotive's smokestack and fashions shoes out of railroad ties, while still keeping a recognizable character.

[276] Rogers.

This motif repeats in other of Rogers' works was well. In "The Great American Durbar," published in *Harper's Weekly* in 1905, President Roosevelt is again depicted atop the GOP elephant in a grand parade through the streets of Washington D.C in figure 25. He is followed by representatives of the Supreme Court, armed forces, and his Rough Riders presumably celebrating his success around the creating of the Panama Canal with the figure leading the group carrying a shovel labeled "Panama." Flanking the parade on either side are two groups manacled at the hands and wrists, representing the "Railroads" and the "Trusts."[277]

[277] W.A. (William Allen) Rogers, *The Great American Durbar*, c 1905, c 1905, https://www.loc.gov/item/2010717665/.

Figure 25. The Great American Durbar[278]

The railroads are recognizable from the steam engines replacing the figures' heads and wear black overcoats, which appear similar to clothing worn by the wealthy. More interesting in this piece, is the appearance of the trusts, who are quickly recognizable from their round bodies and uniform clothing. Rather than other depictions, where they are shown as overbearing or nefarious through various means, Rogers outfits his characters in tattered clothing, downtrodden expressions, and the leader is walking with his hat in hand.[279] They have been brought low and controlled by the Roosevelt

[278] Rogers.
[279] Rogers.

administration, an element Rogers presents in a celebratory manner. The breakup or regulation of large corporate trusts was the goal ultimately sought by anti-trust advocates, which aligned with this point of view.

While Rogers' depictions of Roosevelt and his trust-busting activities were widely positive, he also poked some fun at the ferocity with which the president pursued his agenda. Roosevelt became widely associated with the phrase "Walk softly and carry a big stick," which many artists included in their depictions of him as a signature element. In one cartoon from May 1905, shown in figure 26, Rogers combines the "big stick" motif with the traditional trust depiction. The president sits whittling clubs labeled "Standard Oil Investigation," "Beef Trust Investigation," "Tobacco Trust Investigation," and "R.R. Rate Regulation" respectively, all tools his administration used to go after corporate combinations. To the other side of the drawing, Uncle Sam offers an additional "big stick" labeled as the "Enforcement of Existing Laws" and asks the question "did you overlook this one, Theodore?"[280] In the background a round figure wearing a top hat labeled as "the trusts" and a waistcoat with bowtie looks on with a concerned expression, worried for the future of his industry.[281]

[280] W.A. (William Allen) Rogers, *Uncle Sam--Did You Overlook This One, Theodore?*, May 8, 1905, May 8, 1905, https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o301127.
[281] Rogers.

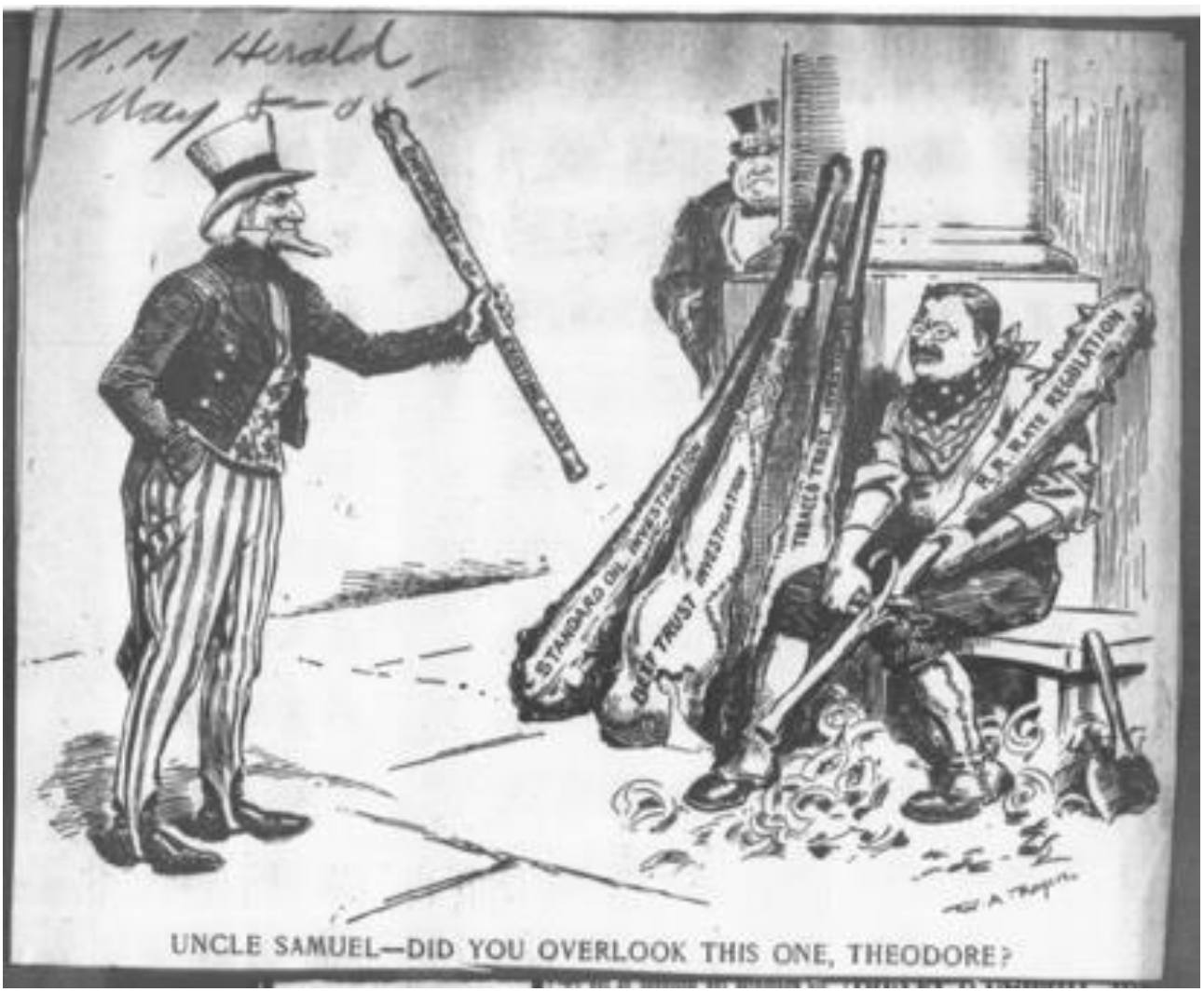

Figure 26. Uncle Samuel – Did You Overlook This One, Theodore?[282]

The club of "existing laws" being offered by Uncle Sam refers to prosecutions under the Sherman Antitrust Act, something which was highly dependent on the political will of the administration pursuing enforcement. And that political will often relied on how much public support would fall behind the actions, which meant increasing anti-trust sentiment among the public helped facilitate concrete action against the trusts by the

[282] Rogers.

government. Over the course of the first ten years of the twentieth century, with anti-trust sentiment having become more organized and gained popularity amongst the public, prosecutions of trust cases picked up speed. A 1908 article around anti-trust enforcement in the Southwest bore an editorial note stating that "for years certain of the trusts and great corporations have acted on a public-be-damned policy" and that in response "the people of the Southwest are up in arms."[283] The article's author, Herbert Casson, described the motivating factor as partially influenced by "a tidal wave of anti-trust sentiment."[284] The Sherman Anti-Trust Act, through which these prosecutions were undertaken, was a fairly blunt instrument with ambiguous aspects which were open to interpretation. As popular support grew, the Sherman Act became the stick of choice for attorneys general across the country looking to take a whack at corporate trusts. The motivation for the surge could be summed up by *The New Broadway Magazine* editorial board as "the great power of public opinion, long dormant… aroused against the commercial giants."[285]

Even those working on the side of trusts in the legal fight were conscious of the relatively tenuous position their clients occupied in the social and political hierarchy. Edgar Bancroft, an attorney representing one of the companies being pursued, acknowledged that "I don't want to see the Sherman law repealed, but it ought to be amended."[286] As the anti-trust movement gained steam, some states began to pursue their own state-level legislation aimed at breaking up corporations, ranging from moderate to

[283] Herbert N. Casson, "In the Thick of the Anti-Trust Fight," *The New Broadway Magazine*, April 1, 1908, https://www.proquest.com/docview/128442181/abstract/F30ADEE1B6DB49FAPQ/1.
[284] Casson.
[285] Casson.
[286] Casson.

extreme. In fact, Casson reported that most state attorneys general he spoke with opposed the Roosevelt administration's position that seeks to "weed out the trusts that defy and injure the public […] then put the beneficial trusts under Federal control."[287] Opponents advocated for the elimination for all combinations of any kind and considered the federal position as too conservative for their tastes. In the words of Texas Attorney-General Davidson, "all combinations look alike to me, a white horse is the same as a black horse; they both kick."[288] Greater public support for actions against trusts created room for more severe forms of response, and for people working on the side of trusts like Bancroft, "he knows…too, that the United States is ruled by public opinion, and that in the long run it pays to treat public officials with deference and politeness."[289]

Joseph Keppler Jr.

Here was where the nation's political cartoonists entered the equation, as their influence on public opinion fueled the progression of the growing tide of anti-trust. The work of Joseph Keppler's son Udo, who took over his father's position within *Puck* and worked alongside Frederick Opper, offers key examples of the imagery used to portray trusts and monopolies. In "The Keepers at the Gate," which Keppler produced in 1897, the artist shows farmers taking their goods up "Prosperity Road" and arriving at a gate blocking their path labeled as the "Dingley Tariff." As depicted in figure 27, the first in line is handing over a large bag, reminiscent of the common moneybag motif, of "Toll"

[287] Casson.
[288] Casson.
[289] Casson.

to an intimidating, well-dressed man labeled as "monopoly."[290] The man is seated upon a large pile of similar bags all labeled as "trust profits," with the implication that the monopoly's wealth had been accumulated by preying on the common man.

Figure 27. The Keepers at the Gate[291]

Based on the height of bags in the next wagon in line, the toll required has severely depleted the farmer's stock and had a negative impact on his earning potential. To the left of the cartoon, President William McKinley is drawn casually observing the interaction

[290] Udo J. Keppler, *The Keepers at the Gate*, accessed March 24, 2024, https://www.loc.gov/item/2012647618/.
[291] Keppler.

from a porch, seemingly with approval.[292] With a similar dynamic of the wealthy versus the common man that was so common with his colleague Opper, Keppler took a stance in opposition to the economic machinations of monopolists and trusts.

Building on Keppler's apparent dislike for the McKinley administration's agenda on the issue of anti-trust, he also created an 1897 cover for *Puck* captioned "McKinleyism," shown in figure 28. A cigar smoking businessman in tails and a top hat is seen being welcomed into the United States Senate with a deep bow from the door attendant. The figure carries a folder of papers marked as "monopolist."[293] From an opposing door a giant booted foot labeled as "tariff legislation" is seen forcibly ejecting another man who is labeled as "taxpayer." The man being kicked out the door also bears a passing resemblance to the character of Uncle Sam, which was often used to represent the American people.

[292] Keppler.
[293] Udo J. Keppler, *McKinleyism*, accessed January 29, 2024, https://www.loc.gov/item/2012647692/.

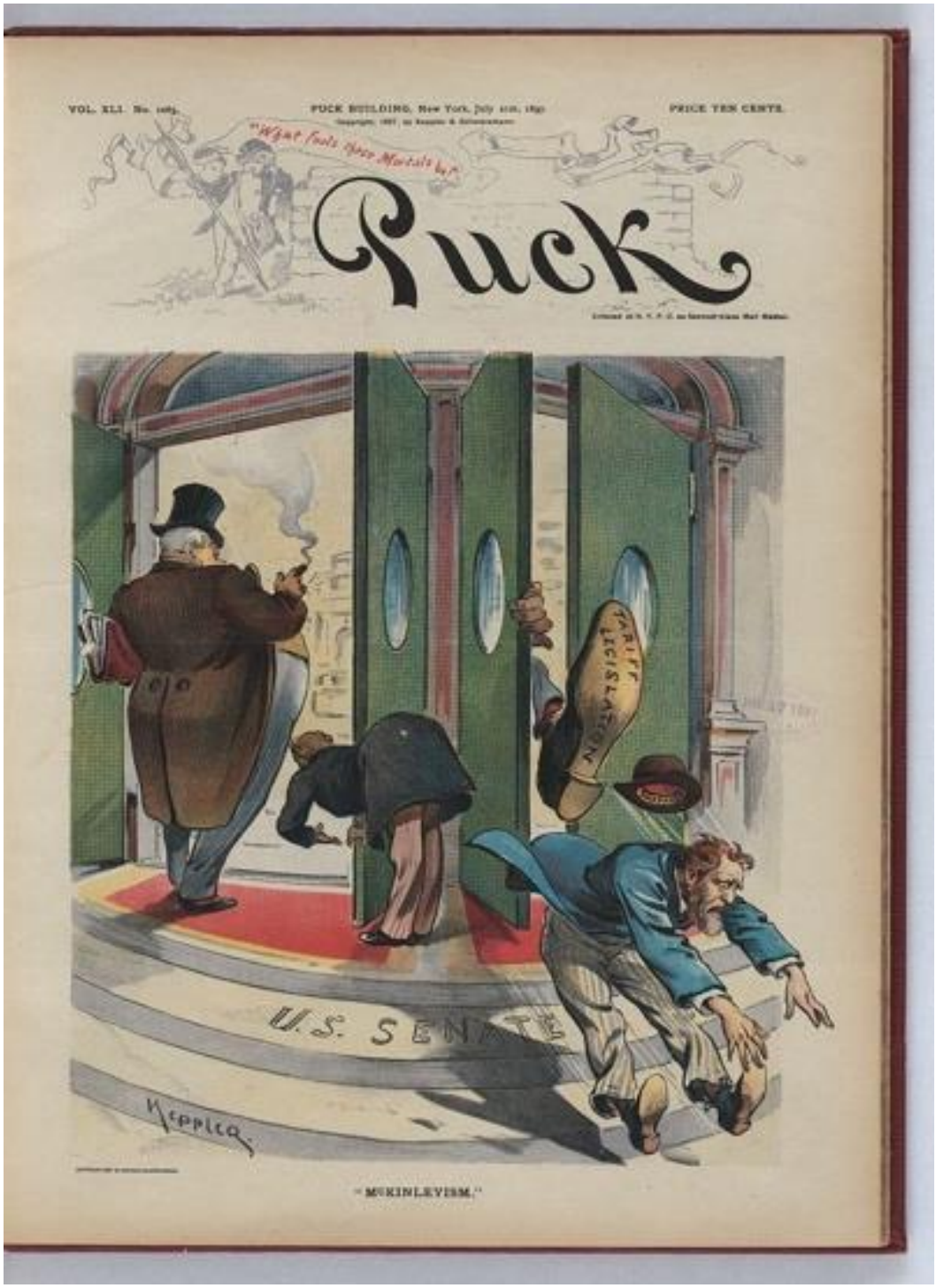

Figure 28. “McKinleyism”[294]

[294] Keppler.

Keppler drew the two opposing figures and scenarios to emphasize the difference in treatment of wealthy business interests and the average taxpayer by the economic policies of the McKinley administration. It is also noteworthy that the themes he used match closely to his father's 1889 piece, "The Bosses of the Senate." The large and round businessman matching with the bags of money from the first cartoon, as well as the welcoming attitude when admitting trusts on to the Congressional floor. Additionally, Joseph Keppler placed a padlock on the door leading to the Senate's public gallery, keeping the average citizen out, while his son shows the taxpayer being thrown out in favor of the monopolist. These themes of secrecy and manipulation were powerful to an audience struggling to make ends meet, providing support and motivation for the political institutions to take action.

Keppler also created powerful images when politicians like President Roosevelt and President Taft's Department of Justice began taking more strident action in the early years of the twentieth century, as seen in figure 29. The November 2, 1904, cover of *Puck* bore an illustration of Roosevelt looking out approvingly at his Secretary of Commerce and Labor, George B. Cortelyou, wringing money out of a bloated figure labeled as "The Trusts."[295]

[295] Udo J. Keppler, *Putting the Screws on Him*, November 2, 1902, November 2, 1902, https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.25899/.

Figure 29. Putting the Screws on Him[296]

[296] Keppler.

The caption of the image reads “Putting the Screws on Him,” and was published only days before the 1904 Presidential election, in which Theodore Roosevelt emerged victorious. Keppler’s implication, as an artist for Democratically aligned *Puck,* seems to be that Roosevelt’s pursuit of the trusts was more financially motivated than morally driven as he pursued re-election. Although Keppler did not approve of the monopolizing trusts by any means, he was also able to use the issue as a political cudgel against an opponent without much exposition. This speaks to how powerful the image and associated ideas had become amongst the public by the turn of the century.

Keppler’s disdain for the ultra-wealthy businessmen commonly associated with trusts comes across especially clear in his 1907 illustration captioned “Conservatism,” included as figure 30. Here, a “monopoly man” in a top hat sits atop a large pile of books and bags all labeled with various nefarious details. One book title reads “How to Evade the Law” while another bag reads “Other People’s Money,” and the whole pile is tagged as “Destroy if Investigated.”[297]

[297] Udo J. Keppler, *Conservatism*, November 20, 1907, November 20, 1907, https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.26220/.

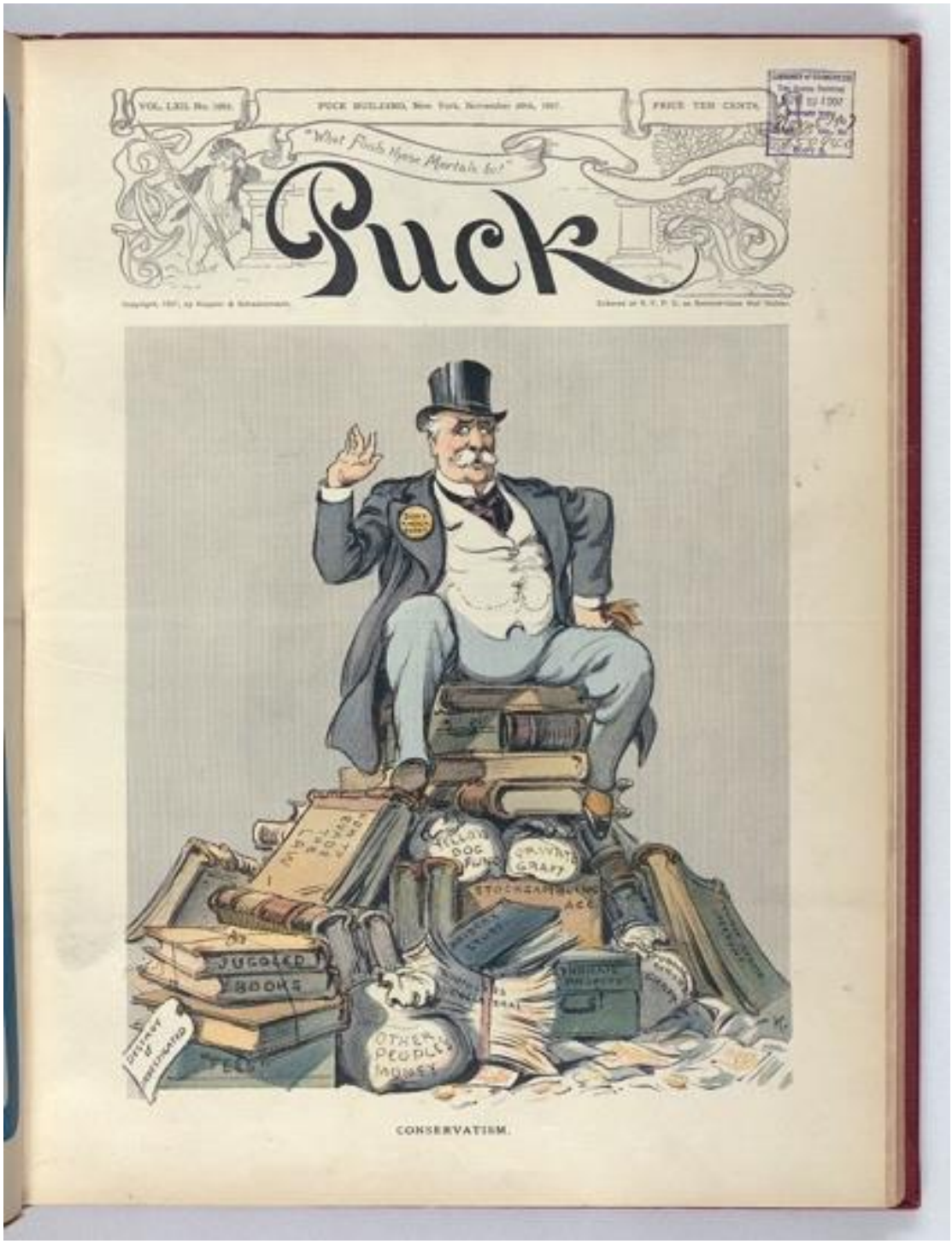

Figure 30. Conservatism[298]

[298] Keppler.

The character seated on top of the pile bears a striking resemblance to J.P. Morgan, which is not likely to be a coincidence. Just as his father prided himself on the use of accurate caricatures when portraying specific industrialists, Udo and other artists sometimes applied known faces to more generic figures to produce an emotional response from their audiences. With the spread of photographic technology and its integration into the news media taking the place of hand-drawn illustrations, the faces of many prominent men had become familiar to the American people. The mustachioed man in Keppler's cartoon certainly seems to align with photographs of J.P. Morgan, like the one in figure 31 where he appears to be going after the photographer with his cane.

Figure 31. J.P. Morgan striking photographer with cane[299]

[299] *J.P. Morgan Striking Photographer with Cane*, May 11, 1910, photographic print, May 11, 1910, https://www.loc.gov/item/99400614/.

With growing negative public sentiment festering against both the idea of trusts and the ultra-wealthy men commonly associated with them, using a familiar face like Morgan's serves as another way for an artist like Keppler to influence the emotional response of the audience to their piece.

As anti-trust sentiment gained greater traction through the 1890s and early 1900s, the prolific political cartoonists of the nation's illustrated magazines followed the footsteps of the likes of Nast and Keppler to influence the public. Using what has now become the quintessential image of the "monopoly man," artists like Frederick Opper, W.A. Rogers, and Udo Keppler expressed opposition to the idea of wealth concentration and economic concentration. The overall tone of the depictions indicated support of anti-trust sentiment from both sides of the political aisle, coming from both traditionally Democratic and traditionally Republican aligned media sources. Using a variety of themes in their work, from Hell to pirates to feudal lords, these artists used their own political and social views to drive public sentiment in the topic area. And with the nature of political cartoons in the Gilded Age as highly influential on the public, as established by their forebearers in the artform, these artists helped shape and drive a growing wave of an anti-trust movement driving greater political action against the perpetrators.

Chapter VI.

Conclusion

It is perfectly clear to any thoughtful person that it is inimical to the continuance of free institutions that the great industries of the country should be controlled by a small body of individuals.

—George W. Wickersham, Attorney General[300]

Using elements and themes that originated with Thomas Nast and Joseph Keppler, the realm of American political cartoonists expanded on and solidified the visual idea of wealthy businessmen who would eventually come to epitomize what we now recognize as the "monopoly man." Multiple artists employed similar elements, such as large round bodies clothed in similar wealthy fashions, and a repeating motif of moneybags to evoke certain emotions from an audience. In the highly partisan and frequently corrupt environment of the American Gilded Age, cartoonists often viewed themselves as voices of morality. Historian Samuel Thomas categorized this attitude as working for a "moralistic, elitist definition of the public good."[301] He uses the specific example of *Puck* magazine "boldly proclaim[ing] a nonpartisan crusade for good government," but the

[300] Johnston, "The Attorney-General and the Trusts: A Talk with Mr. Wickersham on a Subject of Pressing Interest."
[301] Thomas, "Mugwump Cartoonists, the Papacy, and Tammany Hall in America's Gilded Age," 213–14.

attitude also applied to a wide variety of political issues associated with the growing middle class and sometimes even crossed political lines.[302]

In Thomas Keppler's moralistic campaign against Boss Tweed, he started a chain of visual motifs which came to embody a physical representation of monopoly opposition as the anti-trust movement developed. His iconic depiction of Tweed as a round bag of money dressed in a tuxedo with a large diamond tie pin caused a significant stir with its original publication.[303] More than two decades later, rotund figures, bags of money, and well-dressed characters were all commonplace in the cartoons being produced by artists for a variety of publications. Nast was a widely influential figure who has been considered the "father of American cartooning," with a significant reach from his position at the widely read *Harper's Weekly.* Joseph Keppler, from *Harper's* political opponent *Puck,* also exerted his considerable influence in the development of the common visual tropes. His "Bosses of the Senate" piece published in 1889 represents one of the clearest examples of contemporary money bag figures and expresses clear displeasure with the political influence exerted by corporate entities.[304] Keppler's natural skill of portraiture and use of it in most of his illustrations, fundamentally shifted how individuals were caricatured and familiarized the American public with the faces of the major players.

On the foundation of these two major pillars of political cartooning in the United States, many successive artists took up the mantle of criticism against the domination and influence of corporate trusts. The likes of Frederick Opper, Udo Keppler, and J.A. Wales,

[302] Thomas, 213–14.
[303] Nast, *The "BRAINS" That Achieved the Tammany Victory at the Rochester Democratic Convention*.
[304] Keppler, *The Bosses of the Senate.*

along with others, all contributed to the creation of a cohesive image of the "monopoly man" using common elements from both Nast and Keppler. In combination, the editorial world generated a character with a large, rotund, and well-dressed figure often pictured in positions of control and influence over the common man. Artists from both Democratic and Republican associated periodicals went up against the growing issue of corporate combinations and the development of monopolies in certain industries. Armed with the power of their artform, cartoonists served as a significant force in nurturing and motivating the development of anti-trust sentiment in the United States. William "Boss" Tweed accurately summed up the power wielded by this group when he lamented the "infernal pictures" being circulated by Thomas Nast of *Harper's Weekly*. By distilling often complicated issues down to striking images, artists possessed a persuasive power greater than even their editorial counterparts.

As printing technology improved, and *Puck* introduced the use of color lithography to grab viewers' attention, those "infernal pictures" only became more influential on a wide variety of issues. Cartoons created by New York-based artists found their way into newspapers across the Midwest and West as circulation increased, and the prominent magazines saw record increases in circulation. On occasion, certain illustrations were picked up by political parties themselves and circulated as flyers to their members, as seen in the example from figure 32 below.

Figure 32. A Traitor's Peace[305]

This choice clearly demonstrated the value party officials saw in the selected works and what would be viewed as persuasive power for voters. Sentiment in opposition to corporate trusts built slowly over the course of the Gilded Age and did not reach a high point until the first decade of the twentieth century. This trend aligns with the rate of legal actions taken to break up combinations, which had accelerated over the same period. In the words of President Taft's own Attorney General, George Wickersham, "almost everything depends on the administration, and that a really active and aggressive campaign against the trusts is a very recent thing."[306] With the persistent negative

[305] Union Congressional Committee, "A Traitor's Peace That the Northern Copperhead Leaders Would Force Upon the Country | Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History."
[306] Johnston, "The Attorney-General and the Trusts: A Talk with Mr. Wickersham on a Subject of Pressing Interest."

portrayal of trusts and the men associated with them in the editorial press, political cartoonists helped motivate and shape the public's sentiment on the topic.

The solidification and repetition of so many common visual elements established a clear symbol for corporate greed and economic manipulation: a man in a waistcoat and top hat, sometimes with a prominent mustache (not unlike financier J.P. Morgan), and often rotund in nature. Consistently depicting figures and characters associated with monopolies in a negative light, from Jay Gould lording over Hell to "Monopoly" strolling casually into the White House (as in figure 33), makes clear their artists' personal perspectives in the matter.

Figure 33. When McKinley is President[307]

[307] J.S. Pugh, *When McKinley Is President / J.S. Pughe.*, accessed March 31, 2024, https://www.loc.gov/item/2012648521/.

With its increased use over the years alongside increasing public support for political and legal action against combinations, political cartoonists played a significant role in influencing those demands. The images and the issue of monopolies and corporate trusts were salient enough to help inspire a woman in 1903 to create what would eventually become known as the board game Monopoly. Elizabeth Magie called her version the "Landlord's Game" and explained it as "a practical demonstration of the present system of land-grabbing with all its usual outcomes and consequences."[308] Figure 34 shows the game's intended layout at the time of Magie's patent application in 1924.

[308] Mary Pilon, "The Secret History of Monopoly: The Capitalist Board Game's Leftwing Origins," *The Guardian*, April 11, 2015, sec. Life and style, https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/apr/11/secret-history-monopoly-capitalist-game-leftwing-origins.

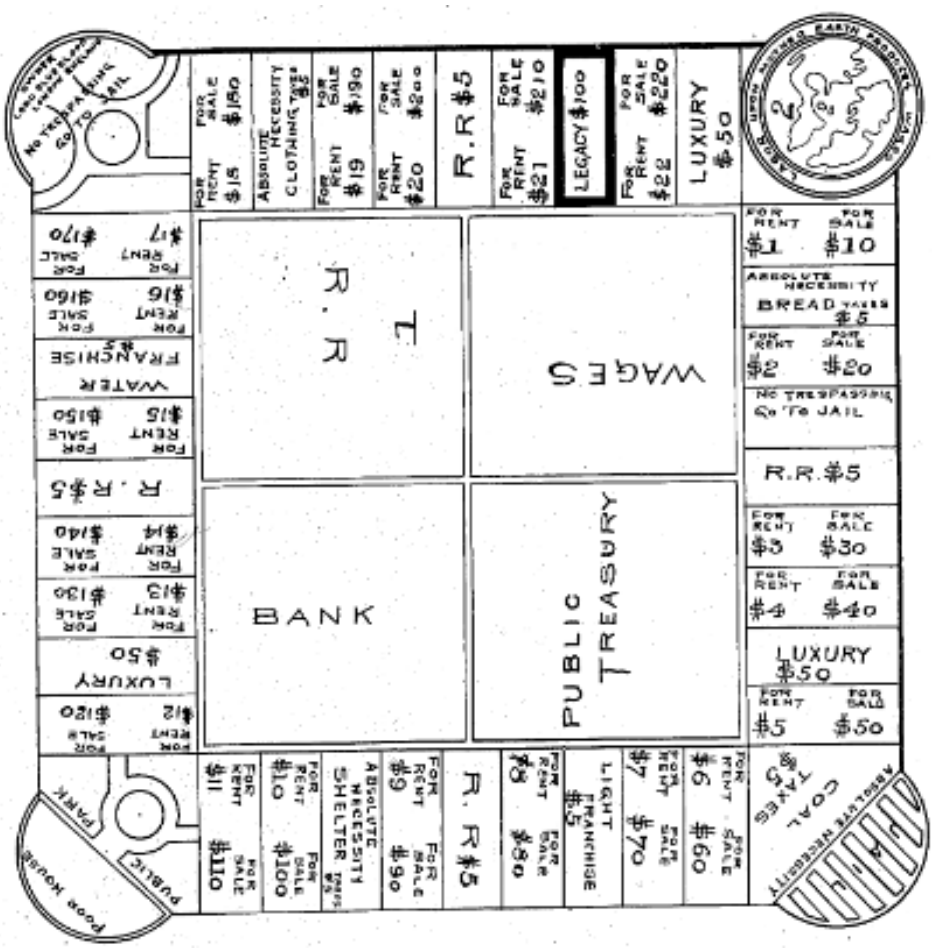

Figure 34. Board layout of the "Landlord's Game" submitted with 1924 patent application.[309]

This comment seems to echo at least one of the Gilded Age cartoonists' thoughts on the topic more than twenty years previous. In 1882, Frederick Opper created an image for *Puck* which featured several of the most prominent figures seated on a land mass

[309] Steven Campion, "Lizzie Magie and the History of Monopoly," *British Library: Innovative and Enterprise Blog* (blog), March 6, 2023, https://blogs.bl.uk/business/2023/03/lizzie-magie-and-the-history-of-monopoly-1.html.

carving it up with knives, including the familiar faces of Jay Gould and William H. Vanderbilt (depicted in figure 35).[310]

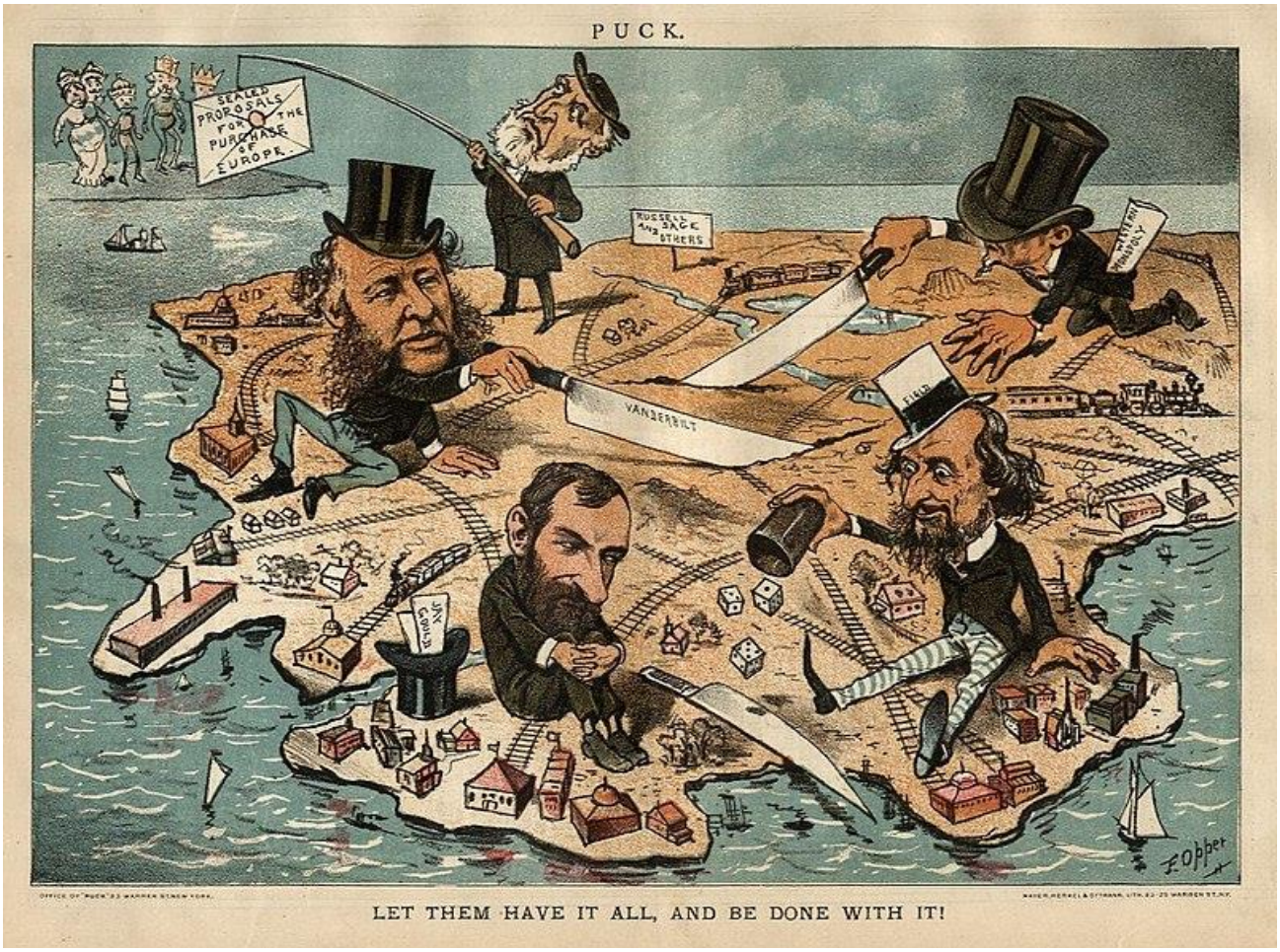

Figure 35. "Let Them Have It All, and Be Done With It!"

The cartoon's caption reads "Let them have it all, and be done with it!," and appeared in both the English and German language editions of the magazine, although it has also been discussed under the title "Monopoly Millionaires Carving Up the Country."[311] One

[310] Frederick Burr Opper, *Let Them Have It All, And Be Done With It!*, February 8, 1882, Lithograph, colored, February 8, 1882, https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:3293889.
[311] Opper.

cannot help but note the similarities between Opper's piece and a modern Monopoly game board, complete with railroads, tiny buildings, and even some dice being rolled. When the game was eventually acquired by Parker Brothers in the 1930s, it is unsurprising that the familiar "monopoly man" created by the Gilded Age's cartoonists was adopted for the game's mascot. In fact, Charles Darrow, the man who eventually sold the idea to Parkers, had requested his friend Franklin "F.O." Alexander provide illustrations for his design.[312] Alexander was a political cartoonist by trade and the main character he created, "Rich Uncle Pennybags," reflects the motifs created by his predecessors. In 1935 the game sold 278,000 units and increased to 1,751,000 in 1936, having clearly struck a chord with the public, and still may be the most popular board game in the world today.[313]

Even cursory searches of modern editorial cartoons on the topics of financial matters, including Wall Street, corporations, and new anti-trust discussions turn up images still using the "monopoly man" image. One such example comes from the *New York Daily News*, published in July of 2020 and depicted in figure 36, which shows a Harvard College student seated in bed and the figure of Mr. Monopoly standing in the doorframe. Published in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when students had been sent home from campuses across the country, the images caption reads "classes are online and I still pay full price endowment bribes?"[314]

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[312] Campion, "Lizzie Magie and the History of Monopoly."
[313] Campion; Ellen Terrell, "This Month in Business History: The Game of Monopoly Is Patented," research guide, accessed March 31, 2024, https://guides.loc.gov/this-month-in-business-history/december/game-of-monopoly-patent.
[314] Bill Bramhall, *Classes Are Online and I Still Pay Full Price Endowment Bribes?*, July 8, 2020, July 8, 2020, https://www.nydailynews.com/2020/07/06/bramhall-cartoons-for-2020-2/.

Figure 36. Classes are online and I still pay full price endowment bribes?[315]

In another example from the *Wisconsin State Journal* in figure 37, depicted significant American political donors, Charles and David Koch, as a "monopoly man" with two heads and holding two large bags of money labeled as "State Govts" and "Federal Govt."[316] The Koch brothers have often drawn criticism for their large-scale political donations and perceived interreference and influence over political and economic matters.

[315] Bramhall.
[316] Bill Day, *Koch Brothers*, n.d., n.d., https://madison.com/news/opinion/koch-brothers-in-cartoons/collection_8b3bd4a8-7d92-52b1-8159-cadba2719054.html#3.

Figure 37. Koch Brothers[317]

In a 2023 piece by cartoonist Phil Hands, as seen in figure 38, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is drawn as Mr. Monopoly holding a bag of money and running along a game board depicting various Amazon services while declaring "How dare they say we have a monopoly."[318] Amazon has become one of the main players in modern conversations around anti-trust and breaking up potentially monopolizing businesses.

[317] Day.
[318] Phil Hands Journal Wisconsin State, "Phil Hands: Monopoly," Arizona Daily Star, October 1, 2023, https://tucson.com/opinion/cartoon/phil-hands-monopoly/image_691eeba6-5ece-11ee-9b00-cf7a9b35ed2f.html.

Figure 38. How dare they say we have a monopoly[319]

The images created by modern cartoonists have carried over the negative connotations of the motif which originated in the Gilded Age. From political contributions to financial interference and continued discussion of anti-trust matters, the repeated image has survived throughout the twentieth century and can still draw a public reaction on modern issues. It still lives on today in thousands of household game closets, television commercials for the video game edition, and occasionally shows up in Senate hearings on banking.

[319] Phil Hands, *How Dare They Say We Have a Monopoly*, September 28, 2023, September 28, 2023, https://tribunecontentagency.com/article/20230928edphc-a/.

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