

Corporate Heads: Phrenology, Physiognomy, and the Character of Big Business, 1895-1914

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Abstract

In this thesis I argue that practical phrenology—a loose set of practices for reading character in heads, faces, and bodies—played an important and underappreciated role in the popular coverage of the large new corporations that emerged from the “Great Merger Movement” around the turn of the twentieth century. I suggest that the scope and pace of the transition from proprietor to corporate ownership created a crisis of economic representation, defined by a lack of stable, mature conventions for describing and illustrating the actual activities of the new consolidated firms. In this context, journalists and cartoonists borrowed from the wildly-popular practical phrenology and personalized the corporations, describing the firms as if they were the straightforward extensions of famous individual owners. Through a close, comparative reading of biographical profiles published in Fowler and Wells’ *Phrenological Journal*, *McClure’s Magazine*, and the muckraking cartoons of *Puck*, I document the trespass of phrenological methods, language, and assumptions into popular contexts and publications. This phrenological personalization allowed public commentators to publish powerful polemics focused on the character of the new firms, but obscured and distorted their true forms.

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INTRODUCTION

*Who are you indeed who would talk or sing to America?
Have you studied out the land, its idioms and men?
Have you learn'd the physiology, phrenology...of the land?*
Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1855)

The cabman is a phrenologist so far—he looks in your face to see if his shilling is sure.
Ralph Waldo Emerson (quoted in the *Phrenological Journal*, 1874)

Human nature is composed of elements that are unchangeable in their nature and the same the world over. At least forty-two of these elements are now known. Individual character is a particular combination of these elements in which some lead or predominate.

To read character, then, is to understand these elements and determine their individual and relative strength in men, women and children. This can be done. Heads, faces and bodies tell the story.

L.A. Vaught, *Vaught's Practical Character Reader* (1902)

For the single-volume release of her best-selling serialized treatment of Standard Oil, the muckraking journalist Ida B. Tarbell chose for her epigraph a passage from Emerson's "Self-Reliance." It read: "An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man."¹ Her study, marketed as the political and business history of the great oil monopoly, was apparently also then a history of a shadow, of the one man who gave the institution its shape—John D. Rockefeller. To understand Standard Oil, by this logic, one needed to understand Rockefeller.

Almost two decades later, the passage appeared again, this time in an advertisement in the *Saturday Evening Post* for Walk-Over Shoes, a luxury brand based in Brockton, Massachusetts.² The quotation was here scrawled beneath the bust of Walk-Over's founder, George E. Keith, who's shadow stretched literally over the company's factories, and accompanied a short corporate

¹ Ida M. Tarbell, *The History of the Standard Oil Company* (New York: McClure, Phillips and Co., 1904).

² "Quality for Half A Century," *Saturday Evening Post* (New York, NY), June 28, 1924, p 123. Reproduced at: Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business*, electronic resource (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), p. 32.

history: “Half a century ago a man of high ideals, far-seeing vision, and rare courage dedicated his life to the work of making shoes fit better. That man was George E. Keith, and his life work became an American institution, for George E. Keith created Walk-Over” [see *Figure 1*].³ Like Rockefeller and Standard Oil, the company was the extension of its founder’s character. The lines that follow the quotation in Emerson’s essay make the point further:

An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; as, Monachism, of the Hermit Antony; the Reformation, of Luther; Quakerism, of Fox; Methodism, of Wesley; Abolition, of Clarkson. Scipio, Milton called ‘the height of Rome’; and *all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons*.⁴ (emphasis added)

The passage is a powerful statement of the nineteenth-century’s Great Man theory of historical process, but it was a poor descriptor of the actual operations and ownership of the period’s new consolidated corporations, defined by their decentralized ownership, operation by a large new managerial class, and employment of thousands of laborers. Indeed, while for Walk-Over the invocation of Keith’s character in its public advertising worked to build consumer trust, for Tarbell’s journalistic project the focus on the Great Man obscured more than it revealed.⁵ And yet, this model of “personalization,” in which the figure of the individual businessman stands in place of the complex whole of the corporation, recurred throughout the popular coverage of the period, with journalists and cartoonists alike creating corporate persons to serve their explanatory and polemical needs. Why did this pattern of representation persist despite such a tectonic

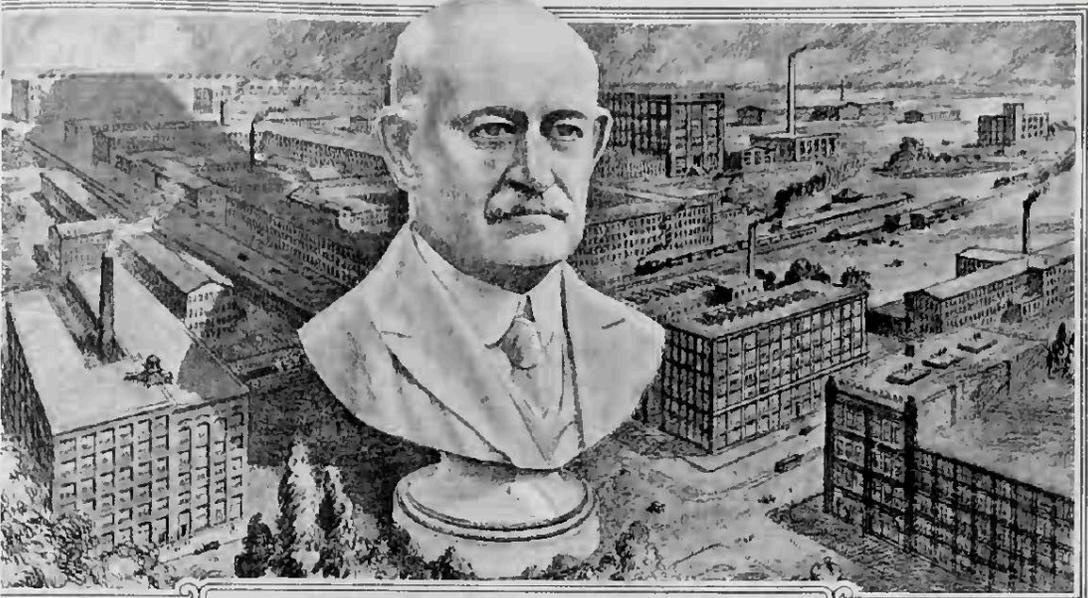
³ Ibid.

⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance,” in *The Complete Essays and other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 154.

⁵ Journalists were of course not blind to these changes. Earl Mayo, for instance, in a 1901 feature in *Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly* emphasized in reference to Standard Oil the importance of managers in commercial operation: “The whole system of trust organization depends upon making each man responsible for the work which he directs.” And yet, in the same article, Mayo likewise declared simply that “the trust idea...must be assigned to one man, Mr. John D. Rockefeller, who is still the president and the animating spirit of the organization. The development of the plan for the control of the oil business was the *natural outgrowth of Mr. Rockefeller’s mind*.” Earl Mayo, “The Trust Builders,” *Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly (1876-1904)* (New York, United States: Frank Leslie, May 1901).

transformation in corporate structure and operation, and after it no longer described the operations of the most famous and consequential American businesses?

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST 123



"An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man"

QUALITY for Half a Century

HALF A CENTURY ago a man of high ideals, far-seeing vision, and rare courage dedicated his life to the work of making shoes fit better. That man was George E. Keith, and his life work became an American institution, for George E. Keith created Walk-Over.

He surrounded himself with men who believed in him and who shared his high ideals. Together they worked, and together they succeeded. Today, wherever shoes are worn, in



The first Walk-Over shoe plant, where George E. Keith founded Walk-Over

workers of the Walk-Over family will join with hundreds of Walk-Over dealers from all over the world in a glorious memorial pageant.

In the pageant will be a special group of 160 men who worked with George E. Keith from twenty-five to fifty years. Leading the pageant will be Harold C. Keith, who, surrounded by able men of long experience, with the high ideals set before him by his father, is successfully carrying on

Figure 1: 1924 advertisement for Walk-Over Shoes in the Saturday Evening Post. The bust of the founder, George E. Keith, coupled with the quotation from Emerson's "Self Reliance" are intended to convey the company's trustworthiness. The illustration of the company's present-day factory and humble origins were also common visual strategies deployed by early Public Relations firms.⁶

⁶ Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 21.

To understand this tension I make use of Leo Marx's concept of the "semantic void." Marx's focus is technological development, but he argues generally that such a semantic void is produced when technologically-driven changes in society and culture create a "set of social circumstances for which no adequate concept [is] yet available."⁷ The world historical transformation in American industry, finance, and corporate structure after the Civil War was of such disorienting scale, and proceeded at such breakneck pace, that it created a semantic void in which the new corporations, trusts, and financial concerns were stuck, without a stable set of representational technologies through which to be understood.⁸

Recently, several historians have directed their attention toward this problem of economic representation. In a review essay describing the New History of American Capitalism, the historian Jeffrey Sklansky outlined a growing body of work organized around four central lines of inquiry: ways of being (capitalism's capacity to shape identity), ways of believing (the significance of trust and reputation in the formation of markets), ways of ruling (the role of state institutions in making and regulating markets), and, finally, *ways of seeing* (the technologies for representation, and the patterns of depiction, that "frame knowledge of capitalism").⁹ Representations of capitalism, these ways of seeing, may refer to formal intellectual systems, for instance those of disciplinary Economics, which acquired institutional form during this period, but also to the "implicit notions and norms 'through which people make rough sense of the social reality that they live and create

⁷ Leo Marx, "'Technology': The Emergence of a Hazardous Concept," *Social Research* 64, no. 3 (1997): 967.

⁸ Early Mayo, for instance, in 1901 reflected that "There is scarcely a line of commercial production that has not felt the centralizing tendency that marks the passing from the system of competition to that of combination. This movement has gone on with cumulative rapidity. It does not require a man of middle age to remember the time when the trust, as it is known to-day, was not in existence." Mayo, "The Trust Builders."

⁹ Jeffrey Sklansky, "The Elusive Sovereign: New Intellectual and Social Histories of Capitalism," *Modern Intellectual History* 9, no. 1 (2012): 235-36. For quotation on representation, see: Peter Knight, "Representations of Capitalism in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era," in *American Capitalism: New Histories*, ed. Sven Beckert and Christine Desan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 236.

from day to day.”¹⁰ Though much historical writing has focused on formal ways of knowing the American economy of the so-called Gilded Age and Progressive Era, much less attention has been paid to these informal ways by which the American public saw the complex modern corporate landscape.¹¹ This thesis contributes to the closure of that gap.

The British historian Peter Knight has provided several important exceptions through his investigation of Gilded-Age attempts to represent the complexity of new “forms” of mature financial capitalism, which resisted visual and literary representation. One of these forms, the modern corporation with its limited liability, was particularly vexing. After the “Great Merger Movement” of the period 1895-1904, corporations were sprawling, multi-state (if not multi-national) behemoths with industrial, financial and commercial interests “so varied and extensive that a clear line of demarcation could not be drawn which would absolutely distinguish the interests which are more or less dominated by them, from those which are not.”¹² Knight describes four attempts at representation that work to make manageable the awesome scale and scope of these heavyweights, but only one, a satirical cartoon treatment of the financier Jay Gould in the humor magazine *Judge*, is a non-academic attempt to represent the economy for a popular audience.¹³

¹⁰ Sklansky, “The Elusive Sovereign,” 234. Internal quotation from: Barbara Jeanne Fields, “Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America,” *New Left Review* 181 (May–June 1990): 110.

¹¹ The term “Gilded Age” as a label for the period roughly from the 1870s to the turn of the century is imperfect, retrospective, and political. The term was not in contemporary use, except for direct references to Mark Twain’s satirical novel *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* (1873). For further discussion of the term, its origins, and issues, please see: Richard R. John, “Who Were the Gilders? And Other Seldom-Asked Questions about Business, Technology, and Political Economy in the United States, 1877-1900,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 8, no. 4 (2009): 474–80.

¹² During the “Great Merger Movement,” 1,800 major industrial firms consolidated into just 170 giants, and nearly half of these consolidated corporations enjoyed market shares of more than 70 percent. Naomi R. Lamoreaux, *The Great Merger Movement in American Business, 1895-1904* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 1-2. The quotation is from the financial analyst John Moody (founder of the namesake bond rating agency), and refers to the Morgan-Rockefeller interests, which he was attempting to map and diagram. Knight, “Representations of Capitalism in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era,” 251.

¹³ The other representational attempts Knight describes are Roger Babson’s Babsonchart (a graphical visualization of patterns emergent from securities price fluctuations), Irving Fisher’s hydraulic machine (to show the mechanical operations of the economy as a whole), and the diagram produced by the Pujo Committee during its investigations of the so-called Money Trust in 1912. Each of these are elite, professional attempts at representation, making use of sophisticated, and especially mathematical, ways of seeing. Knight, “Representations of Capitalism in the Gilded

Knight notes that cartoons typically “humanized” abstract financial activities, either personalizing a corporation through its equation with an individual capitalist (a “Robber Baron” like Gould), or, nearly as common, representing its character through the use of animal imagery (most famously the figure of the octopus).¹⁴

Though Knight does not provide a complete study of these practices, two parallel bodies of literature help shed light on the strategies, discourses, and technologies that enabled the representation of these capitalists, and, in turn, of their corporations. First, recent work in media and communications history has documented the emergence of the figure of the celebrity from the economic and political landscape of the Gilded Age. The communications historian Charles Ponce de Leon has argued that technological developments in publishing, as well as the growth of industrial urban centers after the Civil War, produced a culture in which it was newly possible for individuals to attain national visibility. With access to fast, cheap, high-volume printing and distribution, and with an eager public, newspaper and magazine publishers filled their pages with accounts of the private lives of celebrities, spawning new genres including the gossip column, the

Age and Progressive Era,” 237.

¹⁴ Knight, “Representations of Capitalism in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era,” 239. Several studies of these political cartoons are important secondary sources for this project, but very little attention has been paid to these cartoons in the twentieth century. For a discussion of *Puck* and *Judge* cartoons as important public-sphere texts in the antimonopoly tradition, see: Richard R. John, “Robber Barons Redux: Antimonopoly Reconsidered,” *Enterprise & Society* 13, no. 1 (2012): 1-38. Richard R. John, “Proprietary Interest: Merchants, Journalists, and Antimonopoly in the 1880s,” in *Media Nation: The Political History of News in Modern America*, ed. Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 10–35; Richard R. John, “Markets, Morality, and the Media: The Election of 1884 and the Iconography of Progressivism,” in *America at the Ballot Box: Elections and Political History*, ed. Gareth Davies and Julian E. Zelizer (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 75–97. Analysis of cartoon literature’s anti-Catholic bias, which is relevant for establishing the socio-cultural positionality of the cartoonists, is provided by: Samuel J. Thomas, “Holding the Tiger: Mugwump Cartoonists and Tammany Hall in Gilded Age New York,” *New York History* 82, no. 2 (2001): 155–82. For discussion of the use of animal imagery in these cartoons, especially in financial contexts, see: Sarah Burns, “Party Animals: Thomas Nast, William Holbrook Beard, and the Bears of Wall Street,” *American Art Journal* 30, no. 1/2 (1999): 9–35. Robert Fredona and Sophus A. Reinert, “Leviathan and Kraken: States, Corporations, and Political Economy,” *History and Theory* 59, no. 2 (2020): 167–87. For a general history of *Puck*, including its cultural origins, and relationship to Progressive politics, as well as reproductions of full-color lithographs, see: Richard Samuel West, *Satire on Stone: The Political Cartoons of Joseph Keppler* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

character sketch, and, most impactful of all, the biographical profile.¹⁵ For reporters, the private sphere was a place to discover, and a place from which to expose, the subject's "real self." The private life was capable of explaining professional achievement, and the character revealed in private cast its shadow on those achievements.¹⁶

These celebrity profiles included narrative histories bursting with detail, but they were increasingly defined by images—photographs and portraits of subjects and their ancestors, and detailed drawings of homes and offices. As Ponce de Leon describes, the celebrity profile was a moralizing genre, and so to decode the profile's moral significance, it was essential that audiences were capable of reading these images. But how were these pictures understood by the public?

The media theorist Cara Finnegan argues that these portraits were not mere illustrations, but instead understood as a category of visual evidence in themselves, offering insight to the "real," moral self of the subject.¹⁷ She continues: the popular decoding of such images was possible thanks to widespread access to a Gilded Age "image vernacular"—a specific, but implicit, cultural method for interpreting images.¹⁸ In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, Americans' visual hermeneutics were informed almost-entirely by the wide cultural impact of the so-called "moral

¹⁵ Charles L. Ponce de Leon, *Self-Exposure: Human-Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1940*, electronic resource (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 33.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 40. Ponce de Leon describes this process as a "paradox of publicity," wherein celebrities learned to control and manipulate the contents of their public coverage to reflect positively on both their status as virtuous citizens and the beneficence and honesty of their corporate activities. This development is described in two leading studies of the emergence of corporate public relations, although in this thesis I focus generally on those representations produced by analysts, journalists, and commentators, not by the corporations themselves: Pamela Walker Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998). Studies of the public relations practices of specific firms are included in the bibliography below.

¹⁷ Finnegan builds this characterization of a generic interpretative practice through a study of letters-to-the-editor solicited in response to the publication of a new photograph of Lincoln in *McClure's Magazine* in 1895 (the earliest known photograph of the president). Cara A. Finnegan, "Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 8, no. 1 (2005): 39-42.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 34. More precisely, Finnegan describes interpretation by image vernacular as a kind of enthymematic argumentation, wherein a premise is left assumed or suppressed. A classic example is: "Socrates is a man; Socrates is mortal," the unstated premise being "all men are mortal." Thomas O. Sloane, ed., "Enthymeme," in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

sciences,” and most of all by the entangled practices of phrenology, physiognomy, and physiology.¹⁹ As Finnegan describes, “throughout the nineteenth century, ‘the practice of reading faces’ [and bodies] was part of everyday life and remained so into the early twentieth century... Americans were accustomed not only to reading the faces in [portraits], but to making judgments about the moral character of their subjects.”²⁰ Finnegan’s argument here, buttressed by recent literature describing the role of commercial and practical variants of phrenology in Gilded Age popular culture, helps to explain the recurrent appearance of phrenological, physiognomic, and craniological language in otherwise-sober profiles of business celebrities.²¹

Indeed, far from remaining cloistered in the pages of its academic journals in the decades on either side of the turn of the twentieth century, phrenological and physiognomic ideas appeared in a surprising array of popular publications across the country. Both local and national papers ran extended studies of figures in the news, as well as retrospective, historical analyses, that were explicitly phrenological or physiognomic—extracting character insights from the shape of the head

¹⁹ Finnegan, “Recognizing Lincoln,” 44. Samuel R. Wells, the publisher, along with the Fowler family, of the *American Phrenological Journal* (later the *Phrenological Journal and Science of Health*), believed that these three practices constituted a “tripartite science of man.”

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

²¹ Ida M. Tarbell, “John D. Rockefeller: A Character Study [Part Two],” *McClure’s Magazine* XXV, no. 4 (August 1905): 1. Much of the recent literature on American phrenology focuses on elite, professional, and academic phrenologists’ association with racial sciences and the eugenics movement. For an overview of this relationship, see: Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1988). The emergent social sciences, including disciplinary economics, were deeply involved in these movements, and much of the economic thought of the period cannot be disentangled from racial theorizing and racist assumptions: Thomas C. Leonard, *Illiberal Reformers: Race, Eugenics, and American Economics in the Progressive Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). While the sources considered in this thesis are at times wrapped-up in these movements (especially those discussed in Chapter Three, on physiognomy), they are focused more explicitly on a variety of “practical phrenology” which, by the 1890s, had expanded away from the limited, scientific phrenology of the 1840s to include diverse practices of interpreting character from external appearance. Much of this work, especially the commercial service of “reading heads,” was related more closely to practices like career and professional counseling, palm reading, or fortune telling, and emphasized the radical ability of the individual to actualize inner potential, in clear contrast to the eugenicists’ insistence on the biological determinism of physiology on character. For an overview of this practical phrenology, see: Erica Lilleleht, “‘Assuming the Privilege’ of Bridging Divides: Abigail Fowler-Chumos, Practical Phrenology, and America’s Gilded Age.,” *History of Psychology* 18, no. 4 (2015): 414–32. David Bakan, “The Influence of Phrenology on American Psychology,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 2, no. 3 (1966): 200–220. Timothy Walch, “Having Your Head Examined,” *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* 92, no. 3/4 (2011): 110–19.

and the appearance of the face. The *Boston Daily Globe*, for instance, profiled William Jennings Bryan during the peak of his national star in 1896, with the *Globe*'s expert, in his "impartial study," reporting that "Bryan's head and face stamps him at a glance as an enthusiast, as a radical, as a man of sentiment and emotion," before continuing on to survey each of his faculties from the relative size of his cranial regions and the shape of the bones in his face.²² In a similar exercise, the *Austin Statesman* claimed that the shape and lines of Roosevelt's mouth and eyes revealed "calculation of the mind," "courage," and "obstinacy" in a profile of 1903,²³ and in 1907 *McClure's Magazine* published a richly-detailed illustrated spread of portraits, sculptures, and moldings of Lincoln's face and body, concluding that the former president's features were ultimately "in accordance with the beauty and character of Lincoln's mind."²⁴

Even *Popular Science*, one of the period's bestselling monthlies devoted to scientific issues, published reports on recent studies that claimed to have found methods for selecting professions based on the observed clustering of head-types within trades.²⁵ The popular demand for phrenological and physiognomic materials apparently remained so great that the *Reno Evening Gazette* even ran a story in 1912 reporting on a Washington photographer who, hoping to publish a "pictorial pamphlet of congressmen," met resistance from Ohio's John J. Whitacre, who feared that if his picture was included, "the next step would be for it to get into the newspapers, and it

²² J. A. Denkinger, "Mental Portrait of William J. Bryan: Physiognomical Delineation by a Boston Expert Who Makes an Impartial Study of the Face of the Democratic Leader," *Boston Daily Globe (1872-1922)*, July 26, 1896.

²³ "An Interesting Study of the Chief Executive According to the Scientific Phenomena of Lavater," *The Austin Statesman (1902-1915)*, June 11, 1903.

²⁴ Truman H. Bartlett, "The Physiognomy of Lincoln," *McClure's Magazine (1893-1926)* (New York, United States: S. S. McClure, August 1907).

²⁵ Louis Robinson, "Trades and Faces," *The Popular Science Monthly (1872-1895)* (New York, United States: Center for Research Libraries, September 1, 1895). The monthly also published reports claiming to have observed the effect of profession on the facial features: "The Physiognomy of the Mouth," *The Popular Science Monthly (1872-1895)* (New York, United States: Center for Research Libraries, March 1, 1890). In 1895, *Popular Science* could boast of a massive monthly circulation of over 110,000. *N.W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory: A Catalogue of American Newspapers* (Philadelphia, PA: Ayer Press, 1895), p. 1103.

wouldn't be any time at all until his physiognomical chart would be as common as breakfast foods."²⁶ Indeed, as late as 1915, in a devastating review of a new volume of practical phrenology, one critic bemoaned that "A large proportion of American people have apparently not yet grown out of their superstitious feeling about the reading of character."²⁷

Reflecting on this popularity, in this thesis I argue that the two concepts here introduced—the semantic void in which the new corporations were stuck, and the popular image vernacular of reading character in faces and bodies—together explain the persistence of personalized corporate representation after the transformation of the American economy from proprietor to corporate ownership. This personalized coverage was easily legible to mass audiences thanks to the saturation of the period's intellectual and popular culture with the assumptions, language, and imagery of the moral sciences, and allowed polemical commentators to author forceful statements of the spiritual consequences of economic transformation. But by focusing on individual character over the complexity of actual corporate ownership and operation, this personalized coverage systematically distorted the true shape of the new corporations, misleading public opinion toward erroneous political objects. Ultimately, the moral sciences are reflexive disciplines: as connections between physical structure and internal character are generally baseless, phrenological thinking reveals more about the assumptions, prejudices, and priorities of the phrenologist than his subject. To understand the polemicists of the Progressive Era here considered, then, their phrenology is a wonderfully rich place to begin.

²⁶ "Statesmen, Real and Near," *Reno Evening Gazette (1876-1983)*, March 11, 1912. The language of these sciences was also well-suited to comedic and satirical writing. *The Nashville American*, for instance, in 1902 wrote of the "physiognomical landscape" of Massachusetts governor Winthrop Crane that "there is a saying that large ears are a sign of honesty. If this be true, then [Crane] is the very incarnation of that noble quality. His auricles stand out from the side of his head like spinnakers." "Personalities," *The Nashville American (1894-1910)*, November 15, 1902.

²⁷ M. V. O'Shea, "Character-Reading Through the Features," *The Dial*, March 4, 1915.

I have structured this thesis as a close, comparative analysis of the period's two most popular genres of economic coverage—the biographical profile and the muckraking cartoon. To demonstrate the influence of the moral sciences on these genres, in the first chapter I provide a close reading of the phrenological “characters” of famous businessmen published in the Fowler family's *Phrenological Journal*. Next, to relate the practice of phrenological character analysis to the move toward corporate personalization, I trace the language of the *Phrenological Journal* into the biographical profiles of leading corporate moguls in the magazine press, and especially in *McClure's Magazine*. In the final chapter, I re-evaluate *Puck's* ultra-popular cartoons through the lens of physiognomy to argue that cartooning's internal conventions worked to ensure that complex economic constructs continued to be represented through the persons of individual moguls long after the rise of the corporation.

CHAPTER ONE

Ecce Homo! Character Analysis in the Phrenological Journal and Beyond

In this chapter I argue that practical phrenology, a loose, applied, and immensely-popular outgrowth of disciplinary phrenology, served for the American public of the period as an accessible and familiar example of what the theorist Cara Finnegan has termed an “image vernacular”—a specific, but implicit, cultural method for interpreting images.²⁸ Looking at the image of the celebrity capitalist, and armed with the hermeneutic tools of the moral sciences, Americans could make sense of the true and hidden character of the celebrity, and, by extension and substitution, that of the corporations and enterprises they controlled.

This chapter is structured as follows: first, I provide an overview of phrenology’s arrival and popular reception in the United States to establish the body of thought’s continued relevancy in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Second, I pay special attention to the first family of American phrenology, the Fowlers, and to their long-running *Phrenological Journal* to sketch an outline of the phrenological ideas in circulation. Third, I focus on the *Phrenological Journal*’s profiles of business celebrities to reveal the patterns by which the discipline understood, and the language with which it described, character in business.

My purpose in this chapter is not to trace with absolute precision every appearance of phrenological ideas and terms, but rather, as the Historian of Science Denise Philips has described,

²⁸ Finnegan argues that “throughout the nineteenth century, ‘the practice of reading faces’ [and bodies] was part of everyday life and remained so into the early twentieth century... Americans were accustomed not only to reading the faces in [portraits], but to making judgments about the moral character of their subjects.” Cara A. Finnegan, “Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 8, no. 1 (2005): 43.

to track the “cruder and more general history of collective linguistic usage,” to focus “on the common reference points of large groups, not the carefully delineated ideas of individual thinkers,” and to chart the “gradual process through which the fundamental collective categories used to define authoritative knowledge develop.”²⁹

The United States of Phrenology

Like so many of the great European philosophies of mind, Phrenology has its origins in Vienna, where Dr. Franz Joseph Gall (1757-1828) formalized the practice through his observations of the correlations “between character and the shape of the head.” The premise of the theory was rather simple: like the nose was the organ of smell or the eye the organ of sight, the brain was the organ of the mind. It wasn’t a single organ though, but in the phrenologists’ terms, a “congeries of organs,” each corresponding to a mental capacity, the power of which was indicated by its size and development, and which the skilled phrenologist could identify. As with muscles, exercise could strengthen the brain’s constituent organs, and so from its inception phrenology was a discipline of self-improvement, wherein deliberate action could transform character.³⁰

Gall found an enthusiastic disciple in the German physician Johann Gaspar Spurzheim, who proselytized the system across the continent, and in the summer of 1832 travelled to the United States, bringing the new science of “knowing thyself” to the new world. He lectured to captivated audiences across the northeast, and here the science seemed to have found a special home.³¹ The phrenologists’ extensive taxonomies of temperamental “types,” reproducible charts

²⁹ Denise Phillips, *Acolytes of Nature: Defining Natural Science in Germany, 1770-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 9.

³⁰ Madeleine B. Stern, ed., *A Phrenological Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Americans* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. ix-x.

³¹ The historiography of the American reception of phrenology is rather limited. The standard study is still John Davies, *Phrenology, Fad and Science: A 19th-Century American Crusade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955). Madeleine B. Stern has devoted the most considerable attention to the publications of the phrenologists: Stern, *A Phrenological Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Americans*; Madeleine B. Stern, *Heads & Headlines: The Phrenological Fowlers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971). Other earlier studies relate phrenology to

and diagrams, and reams of “facts” all appealed to nineteenth-century American sensibilities, and phrenology’s promise of self-understanding and self-actualization drew independent, optimistic Americans to the phrenologists’ lectures and publications.³² Consistent with this impulse, the theologian James Freeman Clarke reflected that “One of the real benefits of this study was that it inspired courage and hope in those who were depressed by the consciousness of some inability.”³³ By appraising the scalp and the lines of the face, measuring and weighing the skull, and evaluating bone structure and posture, the phrenologist could describe a subject’s character, identify its aptitudes and frailties, and put the subject on the path to the fulfilment of his potential.³⁴ Character was, as the *Phrenological Journal* put it in 1905, “the essential thing.”³⁵ Character defined the trajectory of a life, enabled success in business and marriage, and framed moral identity, and so

the development of disciplinary psychology: David Bakan, “The Influence of Phrenology on American Psychology,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 2, no. 3 (1966): 200–220; Michael M. Sokal, “The Origins of the New Psychology in the United States,” *Physis* 43, no. 1/2 (July 2006): 273–300. Profiles of notable individual phrenologists include, in addition to Stern’s work, Anthony A. Walsh, “George Combe: A Portrait of a Heretofore Generally Unknown Behaviorist,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 7, no. 3 (1971): 269–78. Recently, scholarly attention has shifted generally toward a focus on the connections between phrenology and eugenics, especially in its academic origins: Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1988); Thomas C. Leonard, *Illiberal Reformers: Race, Eugenics, and American Economics in the Progressive Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); James Poskett, *Materials of the Mind: Phrenology, Race, and the Global History of Science, 1815-1920* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2019). There is now a small body of recent literature focused on the practical phrenology, which is most relevant to this project: Erica Lilleleht, “‘Assuming the Privilege’ of Bridging Divides: Abigail Fowler-Chumos, Practical Phrenology, and America’s Gilded Age.,” *History of Psychology* 18, no. 4 (2015): 414–32; Michelle G. Gibbons, “‘Voices from the People’: Letters to the American Phrenological Journal, 1854-64,” *Journalism History* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 72–81.

³² Stern, *A Phrenological Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Americans*, p. x. L.A. Broc, “Phrenology,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the History of American Science, Medicine, and Technology*, ed. Hugh Richard Slotten (London: Oxford University Press, 2014).

³³ James Freeman Clarke, *James Freeman Clarke: Autobiography, Diary and Correspondence*, ed. Edward Everett Hale, 4th ed (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1892), p. 49.

³⁴ Clarke’s Christianity ought not be separated from his phrenological interests, as, like many of the practice’s early theorists, he wrote explicitly of the religious importance of this kind of character analysis. Pioneering physiognomists including Charles Le Brun and Johann Kaspar Lavater understood the face as the index of the soul. Since the soul bore the mark of God, reading the face (for the subject’s potential) was essential toward the discovery of the subject’s God-directed purpose. Further discussion of physiognomy, Le Brun, and Lavater is provided in Chapter 3. Lucy Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth-Century Culture*, Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture 29 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 22. Alexander B. Todorov, *Face Value: The Irresistible Influence of First Impressions* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017): 19-20.

³⁵ “Character the Essential Thing,” *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health (1870-1911)* 118, no. 2 (February 1905): 59.

this new discipline, promising both self-knowledge and self-improvement, inspired a proper phrenological frenzy in the 1830s and 1840s—opportunistic manufacturers produced and sold thousands of plaster heads, itinerant lecturers and examiners traipsed across the country, and employers even began to require phrenological recommendations before hiring assistants.³⁶

Since its arrival, indeed since its inception, the “science of bumpology” faced mockery and ridicule, and by the 1860s, the theory was generally dismissed from consideration as a serious, academic model of brain function. But at the same time, it had gone viral beyond the still-permeable academy walls; phrenology had “permeated the life of the times and became part of the *Zeitgeist*.” If the notion that the quality and influence of particular brain organs could be perceived externally was now largely risible, nonetheless “by the mid-1860s, phrenology had filtered deeply...into the common life of the country. Its vocabulary was used by journalists, speakers, everyman.” Indeed, Harriet Beecher Stowe observed that “its terminology was as convenient in treating human nature ‘as the algebraic signs in numbers,’” and scions of American literature including Whitman, Emerson, Twain, and Melville were all deeply curious about, and influenced by, the science.³⁷ Phrenology was sufficiently rooted across domains of nineteenth-century American life that by 1868 the *Annual of Phrenology* could boast that:

One of the most certain indications of the advancing influence of Phrenology is the adoption by writers and speakers of the phrenological terms and nomenclature relative to character. This is observed in the courthouse in the trial of cases—in the selection of juries—in the estimate placed upon witnesses, or of persons accused of crime; we observe it in the pulpit...In the lecture-room, the lyceum, and the debating club, character is analyzed and referred to in a manner indicating that Phrenology is made, consciously or unconsciously, the basis of the analysis...it is respectfully and kindly regarded by clergymen, statesmen, and even by many physicians, and by the great majority of literary men.³⁸

³⁶ Stern, *A Phrenological Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Americans*, p. x.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. xii-xiii.

³⁸ *Annual of Phrenology* (1868), qtd. at: Stern, *A Phrenological Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Americans*, p. xiii.

So while phrenology's arcane project of cranial measurement and character analysis proved misguided, the *language* it provided, for *reading* faces, heads, bodies, movements, and dispositions for insights to peoples' "true" character became second-nature to many Americans in the nineteenth-century, with introductory guides and pocket manuals for judging at a glance circulating in large numbers.³⁹ How did this science—today's pseudoscience *par excellence*—become such a cultural mainstay, and how did its influence persist beyond its academic lifespan? The popularization and longevity of the discipline owes much to one extraordinary family.

Merchants of the Mind: The Phrenological Fowlers and the Practical Phrenology

The history of American phrenology is in many ways the history of the Fowler family's public activities, and so discussion of these activities is essential toward understanding the public status of phrenology in the United States of the late-nineteenth century. Orson Squire Fowler (1809-1887) first encountered Gall and Spurzheim's phrenology while a student at Amherst College, and, excited by its possibilities and popularity, quickly retained his younger brother Lorenzo Niles Fowler (1811-1896) as a co-conspirator.⁴⁰ From the 1830s, first in Philadelphia and then in New York City, the Fowlers became the leading figures in American phrenology: they authored and published bestselling phrenological journals and volumes, collected significant fees lecturing

³⁹ One of the most popular of these guides was: L. A. Vaught, *Vaught's Practical Character Reader* (Chicago: L. A. Vaught, 1902). On "reading" faces, see: Nelson Sizer, "Mr. John Wanamaker," *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health (1870-1911)* 103, no. 2 (February 1897). More generally, see: Finnegan, "Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture."

⁴⁰ Over the decades, the House of Fowler expanded to include notable women, including Charlotte, younger sister of the Fowler brothers, Abigail Fowler-Chumos, Orson Squire's third wife, and Lorenzo's daughter Jessie Allen; each of these women was a notable practitioner and commercial actor in her own right. Charlotte's husband, the publisher Samuel Roberts Wells, also was critical to the family business, joining with the brothers to establish the Fowler and Wells Company, the corporation that organized the family's publishing, educational, and research activities. For histories of the Fowlers, see: Madeleine B. Stern, *Heads & Headlines: The Phrenological Fowlers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971). Marilyn Ogilvie and Joy Harvey, "Wells, Charlotte Fowler (1814-1901)," in *The Biographical Dictionary of Women in Science: Pioneering Lives From Ancient Times to the Mid-20th Century* (Routledge, December 16, 2003); C. R. Jones, "Orson Squire Fowler, Practical Phrenologist," *Old-Time New England* 57, no. 4 (December 1967): 103–10; Lilleleht, "'Assuming the Privilege' of Bridging Divides: Abigail Fowler-Chumos, Practical Phrenology, and America's Gilded Age."

nationwide, and performed thousands of phrenological examinations from their Phrenological Institute and Phrenological Cabinet on 21st St.⁴¹ As phrenology lost its academic credibility in the 1860s, *practical phrenology*—applications of the science toward employment, education, marriage, and a host of other domains—exploded in popularity. Having already won national fame through their itinerant lecturing, and with their expertise in publishing and marketing, the House of Fowler was ideally positioned to capitalize on this increased interest, and to shape public phrenology into the early-twentieth century.⁴²

Perhaps the Fowlers' greatest influence, and certainly the most complete articulation of their practical phrenology, came through their popular publications, which continued to circulate well into the twentieth century. In addition to one-off volumes on a host of phrenological topics, the Fowler brothers, along with Samuel Roberts Wells, began to publish their monthly *Phrenological Journal* in 1838, which ran until 1911.⁴³ As late as 1880 (20 years after Phrenology's general academic dismemberment), the *Journal* could still boast of a monthly circulation of 8,250, and was even included in *Ayer & Son's Annual Directory's* list of the twenty-five magazines recommended especially to advertisers, alongside such cultural lights as

⁴¹ It is impossible to conclude with certainty how many of these examinations were ever performed, but Madeleine Stern records that by the mid-1890s, one Fowler examiner alone could credibly claim to have performed upwards of 300,000 examinations over the course of his career. Stern, *Phrenological Dictionary*, p. xiv. These consultations, like later psychological counseling, could be quite impactful for their subjects. In her autobiography, Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross, described her childhood examination by Lorenzo Niles Fowler as a turning point in her life, even writing that his suggestion that young Clara should have “responsibility thrown upon her” was foundational to her decision to enter public life. Likewise, Walt Whitman was the subject of a Fowler examination in July 1849 in New York City, and he was forever quite proud of its conclusions. He published his phrenological chart at least three times over the course of his life, and attributed to it an increased confidence to pursue poetry. For more on these charts, see: Fenneke Sysling, “Science and Self-Assessment: Phrenological Charts 1840-1940,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 51, no. 2 (June 2018): 261–80.

⁴² Lilleleht, “Assuming the Privilege,” p. 416. The rise of practical phrenology may have had something to do with the waning star of academic phrenology, as “fortune tellers” seeking to “capitalize the new science and make it pay dividends” increasingly joined the scene.

⁴³ Wells was also the husband of Charlotte Fowler. Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1930*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), vol. 1, p. 447.

Scribner's, *The Atlantic*, and *Lippincott's Magazine*.⁴⁴ Of these magazines the directory gushed: "They are taken by the most cultivated, liberal, and enterprising class of people...They are thoroughly read, and usually carefully preserved...The number of readers is not limited to the members of one family, but frequently includes a whole neighborhood."⁴⁵ Even twenty-five years later, in 1905, the *Phrenological Journal* held strong with a circulation of 8,000, and ranked fifth of 82 surveyed scientific periodicals.⁴⁶

The *Journal* included phrenological tracts and miscellany, but it was best known for its illustrated analyses of the mental characteristics of famous persons in the news. These profiles were often written in the style of the phrenological consultation, featuring detailed descriptions of subjects' heads, faces, and bodies, richly illustrated by portraits and labeled diagrams, and providing readers with advice for the imitation of subjects' character traits in addition to biographical information. While rich detail about contemporary celebrities certainly attracted readers to the *Journal*, its popularity, much like that of the discipline as a whole, was thanks principally to its lofty promise of self-improvement. In the "age of reform" surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, the phrenologists' core claim of the plasticity of character appealed to progressive interests in social rehabilitation and improvement.⁴⁷ The Fowler Brothers served the interest ably, offering volumes applying phrenological insights to mnemonics,⁴⁸ temperance,⁴⁹

⁴⁴ *N.W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory: A Catalogue of American Newspapers* (Philadelphia, PA: Ayer Press, 1880), pp. 55, 518.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 518.

⁴⁶ Among scientific publications, the *Phrenological Journal* trailed only behind only *Birds and Nature*, *American Ornithology*, *Popular Science Monthly*, and *Scientific American*. *N.W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory: A Catalogue of American Newspapers* (Philadelphia, PA: Ayer Press, 1905), p. 1087.

⁴⁷ This possibility of "rehabilitation" is a key distinction between the practical phrenology and those practices now typically labeled racial sciences, and associated with the contemporary eugenics movement. Since the Fowlers' phrenology did not focus on the shape of the skull alone, but on a much broader constellation of facial, bodily, and behavioral clues, changes in behavior (sometimes as subtle as changes in gait, for instance) were understood as constituting phrenological transformation (changes in the mental congeries).

⁴⁸ O. S. Fowler, *Fowler on Memory, or, Phrenology Applied to the Cultivation of Memory* (New York, Philadelphia: Fowler & Well's Phrenological Cabinet, 1842).

⁴⁹ O. S. Fowler, *Temperance, Founded on Phrenology and Physiology*, twenty-fourth edition, enlarged and

education,⁵⁰ occupational guidance,⁵¹ criminology and penology, insanity and its treatments,⁵² and marriage and sexual education.⁵³ Indeed, these writings defined Fowler activities enough for Frank Luther Mott, the historian of American newspapers and periodicals, to label the *Journal* “as near to being a multiple crusader [advocating for multiple causes] as any earlier periodical,” positioning the *Journal* in a tradition that would later include the explosive publications of the muckrakers.⁵⁴

The practical phrenology’s promise of rehabilitation meant that the iconic characters of the Victorian world—criminals, drunkards, vagrants, the insane, but also, and especially in the United States, stock manipulators and malicious businessmen—could all be remade through the rebalancing of congeries, tempering overactive faculties and developing those that fledged. Most crucially, phrenological diagnostics meant that structural problems, even economic problems like trade imbalances or bank crises, were caused “not by the Democrats or the Whigs or the Bank of the United States, but by the excessive exercise of the faculty of Acquisitiveness on the part of the people.”⁵⁵ In this way, social, economic, and political problems could be boiled down to character

improved (New York: Fowler & Well’s Phrenological Cabinet, 1846).

⁵⁰ O. S. Fowler, *Phrenology and Physiology Explained and Applied to Education*, 2d ed., enlarged and improved (New York: Fowler & Well’s Phrenological Cabinet, 1843).

⁵¹ Nelson Sizer, *My Right Place in Life, and How To Find It* (New York: Fowler & Wells Co, 1888).

⁵² George Combe, “Capital Punishment,” in *Moral and Intellectual Science: Applied to the Elevation of Society*, ed. George Combe and R Cox (New York, NY, US: Fowler & Wells Co, 1848), 203–24.

⁵³ Matrimony and sexual life comprised the largest subfield of the practical phrenology, and the Fowlers were responsible for much of this literature. O. S. Fowler, *Fowler on Matrimony: Or, Phrenology and Physiology, Applied to the Selection of Suitable Companions for Life* (Philadelphia, 1841). L. N. Fowler, *Marriage: Its History and Ceremonies; With a Phrenological and Physiological Exposition of the Functions and Qualifications for Happy Marriages* (New York: Fowler & Wells Co, 1853); L.N. Fowler, *Should Woman Obey? A Protest Against Improper Matrimonial and Prenatal Conditions* (Chicago: E. Loomis and Co., 1900). The role and status of gender in phrenological thought is beyond the scope of this project, but Stern argues that since the Fowlers viewed men and women as equal in their developmental capacities and their organic plasticity, phrenology provided a language and system useful to many early (proto-)feminists. Phrenologists also described sexuality as an organic, rather than moral, concern, and so are sometimes remembered as “pioneer sex educators”: Stern, *A Phrenological Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Americans*, pp. x-xi. Fowler women also lectured, toured, examined, and were heavily involved in the Fowler and Wells publishing concern; for further discussion, see: Erica Lilleleht, “‘Assuming the Privilege’ of Bridging Divides: Abigail Fowler-Chumos, Practical Phrenology, and America’s Gilded Age.,” *History of Psychology* 18, no. 4 (2015): 414–32.

⁵⁴ Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1930*, vol. IV, p. 410.

⁵⁵ Stern, *Phrenological Dictionary*, p. xii.

problems (indeed, phrenology was incapable of dealing with any other sort of problem), and resolved through the discipline's internal methods and logic; if a problem could be "phrenologized"—parsed into its constituent elements and described according to the congeries responsible, it could be reformed.⁵⁶

Phrenological Characters: Business Celebrities in the Phrenological Journal

In 1901, at the midpoint of the "Great Merger Movement," Frank Mayo declared in *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* that "This is the era of trusts. Almost everything that we use, from the tin dinner-pail carried by the laboring man to the palace car in which the multi-millionaire travels, is made by a trust. Industrial consolidation is the order of the time."⁵⁷ The *Phrenological Journal* had since its inception provided phrenological commentary to ongoing political and economic events, and so around the turn of the twentieth century it focused increasingly on the trust question, the defining issue of the day. Indeed, the frantic and technical new world of speculative finance and concentrated industry was apparently in urgent need of the moral clarity and restorative focus phrenology provided, as the *Journal* editorialized: "At this period of frenzied finance and high speculation, we all need the knowledge Phrenology can give us as to how to use our abilities in the best possible way."⁵⁸ Consistent with its method of personalizing problems of this kind—

⁵⁶ Ibid. If phrenology and progressive reform now appear as strange bedfellows, it is worth noting the centrality of several branches of what are now derided as "pseudosciences" to progressive thought and action: "Progressivism's braiding together of the admirable and the reprehensible, starts with its veneration of science... We must be careful to avoid the condescension of posterity. Historians of science remind us that the history of bad ideas is as interesting, and as important, as the history of good ones. This is true because *any bad idea of historical importance is, almost by definition, an idea that many people thought to be a good idea at the time.* Histories of bad ideas show us something about how science works and what happens when it is harnessed to political and economic purposes... the temptation to dismiss eugenics and race science as inconsequential pseudosciences is ever present. *But eugenics and race science were not pseudosciences in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. They were sciences...*" [emphasis added]. Leonard, *Illiberal Reformers: Race, Eugenics, and American Economics in the Progressive Era*, pp. 189-90. Phrenology was related closely to the race and racial sciences that are here Leonard's focus. The reading of faces, heads, and bodies is of course a practice that packages and reifies prevailing prejudices and biases, and which are typically unchallenged by the methods of phrenology. The loading of pre-held beliefs and biases onto phrenological profiles is the focus of the following sections.

⁵⁷ Mayo, "The Trust Builders."

⁵⁸ "A Suggestion," *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health (1870-1911)* 121, no. 2 (February 1908): 61.

explaining social and economic ills by reference to imbalances in character make-up—the *Journal* increasingly published phrenological profiles of leading industrialists and financiers, explaining impact in business and finance through the panacea of exceptional mental development.

This section provides an overview of these profiles to introduce the language by which the practical phrenologists made sense of the complex new economy. The *Journal* is not internally consistent, and seldom articulated stable, explicit positions of policy, but close analysis of business profiles reveals that the discipline provided an established, ready-made language for translating complex events into the familiar terms of personal morality—ideal for the period’s polemicists.

The phrenological profile shared much with the popular genres of the celebrity character study, the biographical sketch, or the magazine profile of the leading man of business. But the phrenological profile was motivated differently, not only telling of the subject’s private life and personal history, but seeking to explicitly establish the laws connecting appearance to character. This disciplinary imperative makes the phrenological character study—the “phrenobiography,” “phrenograph,” or “phrenotype”—slightly unique. Since the purpose of the exercise is to “help us read character from the face,” in all cases profiles were accompanied by at least one portrait of the subject, essential since it provides the principle interpretive source for the phrenologist.⁵⁹ Since photographs could often not be found, many profiles were instead accompanied by drawings or engravings, and authors often self-consciously disclosed that the images were far from faithful representations of their subjects, before going on to assure their audiences that the quality and

The *Journal* registered its approval in 1905 that a recent series of public addresses focused on the importance of character before the blind pursuit of fortune, claiming that “The strenuous efforts after wealth and the amassing of the almighty dollar are causing us to lose sight of ‘the basic principles of morality.’ Phrenology was suited perfectly to a world defined in this way, since its method has always been to “show the necessity of first understanding the elements of character and then of applying the mind to cultivate them.” “Character the Essential Thing.”

⁵⁹ Stern, *Phrenological Dictionary*, p. xiv. The remote examination of a subject typically required two images (one in profile and the other frontal), and with the hair smoothed so that the phrenologist could accurately gauge the size, shape, and curvature of the skull and spot any anomalies. Celebrity profiles were often carried-out with much less than this standard, however.

objectivity of the examination would prove unaffected by this minor setback. Following the portrait, profiles are typically divided into two sections. First, the phrenologist provided a close reading of the accompanying portrait in phrenological terms, often including a survey of the visible “Parts” of the body, which correspond to mental organs (congeries) like Acquisitiveness, Secretiveness, Benevolence, Destructiveness and so on. Following this phrenological reading, the profile recounts a straight telling of the subject’s biography, often with a particular emphasis on childhood, and on any episodes or influences capable of producing the character visible in the portrait. The line of interpretation in these profiles is thus bi-directional: the biography produces the face in the portrait, but the face in the portrait guides the telling of the biography.

Since these phrenobiographies are motivated by the collection of phrenological facts (about the relationship between appearance and character), they are usually typological, casting their subjects as ideal-types of particular attributes or social roles. Andrew Carnegie, for instance, is cast in the role of “The Successful Manufacturer,” while Jay Gould is “the Eminent Financier.”⁶⁰ In genre terms, then, rather than simply phrenological versions of contemporary biographical profiles, these studies share more with the earlier, seventeenth-century genre of “character writing,” in which the author imposes his concept of a character onto the set of biographical and bodily facts at his disposal to create a unified impression of a person.⁶¹ It is this feature of phrenological character writing, the imposition of an imagined character onto the subject of the profile, and the illustration of that character by the phrenological analysis of the included portrait, that makes the genre so useful for the study of economic representation. In these profiles, the face,

⁶⁰ “Andrew Carnegie: The Successful Manufacturer,” *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health (1870-1911)* 89, no. 4 (April 1890). “Jay Gould: The Eminent Financier,” *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health (1870-1911)* 73, no. 2 (August 1881).

⁶¹ “Phrenological Character: Sir Richard Cartwright,” *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health (1870-1911)* 82, no. 6 (June 1886). Further discussion of the genre is provided by: James Engell, ed., *Johnson and His Age*, Harvard English Studies 12 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 41-42.

skull, and body of the subject are a floating signifier onto which the phrenologist can project his judgments about the individual and his business.

First, consider the language of interpretation at work in these profiles. In a rather late profile of the merchant and former Postmaster General John Wanamaker, Nelson Sizer, a longtime member of staff at Fowlers' Phrenological Cabinet and Phrenological Institute, uses explicitly the language of reading—the nose, cheek-bones, crown of the head, gaze, and width of the ears are all texts that can be read [see *Figure 2*]:

Looking into this face and studying the strength of the nose, the build of the cheek-bones, the elevation of the crown of the head, the decided width above and about the ears and the steady gaze of the eye, *we read this element of authority* [...] *We see* smoothness, kindness, and gentleness in that face and temperament, and yet another look *reveals* the authority and force of character that gives effect to his thoughts and his purposes. His perceptive organs are largely developed, and hence he acquires a clear sense of the things which surround him; and has excellent practical judgment.⁶² [emphasis added]

If the face could indeed be read as straightforward text, there ought to exist first-order consensus about the meaning conveyed. But here Sizer simply loads a subjective, culturally-specific interpretation of Wanamaker's character onto his portrait, using the repetition of “we read,” “we see” to project interpretive authority. This then is an example of positive interpretation, where from the available source the phrenologist induces the beneficent character of the subject.

⁶² Sizer, “Mr. John Wanamaker.”



Figure 2: The only portrait accompanying the 1897 character of merchant and Postmaster General John Wanamaker (1838-1922)

But what about an instance in which conclusions are not so rosy? The *Phrenological Journal's* profile of James Fisk, Jr., the financier who became infamous after the events of September 1869, in which, along with his partner Jay Gould, Fisk attempted to corner the New York gold market, triggering a financial panic, are sharply critical, despite few obvious differences in the profiles' data [see Figure 3]. The author clearly disapproves of Fisk's business activities, commenting that he had "sought out methods and spheres of action so much at variance with honesty and virtue," and was a man "to accept the responsibility of carrying into effect the adroit plans of duplicitous [sic] officials; and while they might remain in the background, he found enjoyment in the conspicuity which operations startling in extent and doubtful in moral tone gave him."⁶³ And yet in the phrenological description of the portrait, Fisk shares much in common with Wanamaker: "The organization of his brain...showed a predominant development of the basilar region...it was large in the perceptive range of intellectual organs; relatively well developed in the

⁶³ "James Fisk, Jr.," *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health* (1870-1911) 54, no. 3 (March 1872): 206.

mechanical and imaginative organs; strongly marked in the organs which contribute to firmness, independence, and aspiration.”⁶⁴ Something in Fisk’s development, in his biography, is all that is then left to explain why one turned conspiratorial while the other was gentle.



Figure 3: Portrait of James Fisk, Jr. accompanying his phrenological character of 1872. Fisk was a close associate of Jay Gould for many years, and he rose to prominence for his involvement in the “Erie War” against Cornelius Vanderbilt for control of the Erie Railroad. Fisk and Gould became infamous after their attempts to bully the New York gold market concluded in the ruinous Black Friday of September 24, 1869, from which Fisk and Gould escaped largely unscathed. This was not to last; Fisk was assassinated in January 1872.

In 1904, Jessie Allen Fowler, the daughter of Lorenzo Niles, and by this point the publisher of the *Phrenological Journal*, published an article that serves as a disciplinary statement of the genre, and of the reading of the nature of the professional career from the image of the face. She claimed that:

Undoubtedly, *work stamps itself on the face of an individual* whether he cares to admit it or not [...] The face of Lincoln changed its expression from that of irresolution to that of dignity, criticism, energy, and benignity when he took up the study of law and entered politics. Benjamin Franklin showed a remarkable change in his expression and the development of his forehead when he changed his work from that of a printer to a statesman, philosopher, and writer.⁶⁵ [emphasis added]

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ J.A. Fowler, “How a Man’s Career Shows Itself in His Face,” *The Phrenological Journal and the Science of*

Here the language of phrenology meets the language of social research and criticism: thanks to the apparently epigenetic properties of the face and skull, to understand the nature of a career, one simply needed to become learned in the art of reading faces, heads, and bodies. With fluency in these texts, the social critic acquires a lodestar with which to guide criticism, and a language through which to express it [see *Figure 4*].

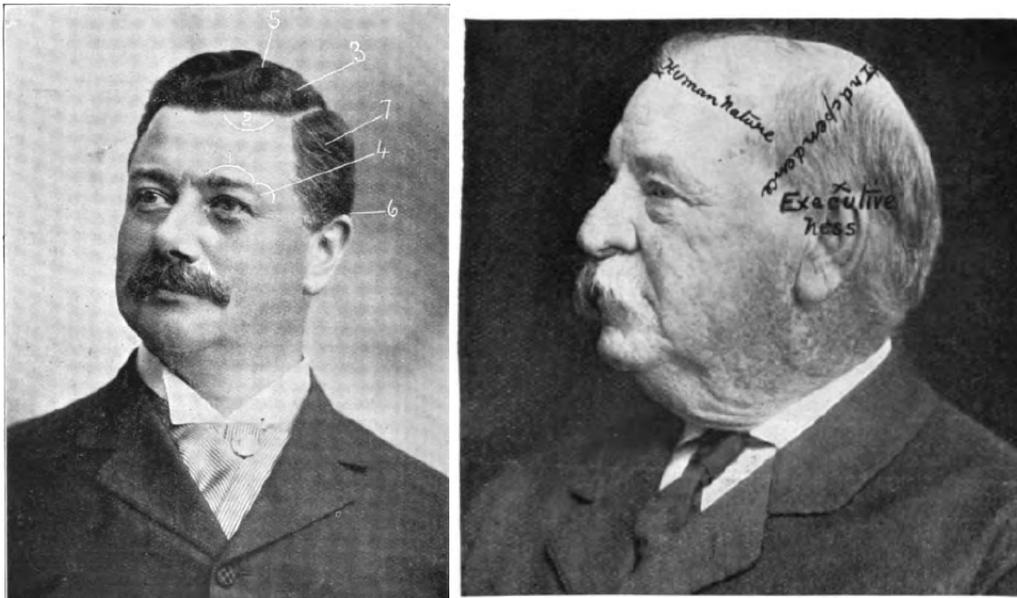


Figure 4: Labeled photographs of Messrs. Seth Low (of Columbia fame) and Grover Cleveland accompanying Jessie Allen Fowler's "How a Man's Career Shows in His Face." Seven regions are highlighted on Low, while the three labeled regions on Cleveland are Human Nature, Independence, and Executiveness.

Critically, the Fowlers' phrenologists were not so naïve or doctrinaire as to suggest that all of the great men of business shared a particular faculty that explained their status as a silver bullet.

Indeed, a 1902 profile of John W. Mackay, an industrialist and mining magnate, reflected that:

It will be readily seen that there is a vast difference in the direction of the mind of our wealthy men. Look for a moment into the faces and compare the heads of [Carnegie, Morgan, Rockefeller, Stewart, Gould, Vanderbilt, Rothschild, Peabody, and Hirsch]...and we shall find as great a variation of character as is to be found in any group of business men on the Stock Exchange to-day.⁶⁶

Health 117 (July 1904): 206.

⁶⁶ "How to Study the Mind: Through the Brain and Skull," *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health* (1870-1911) 114, no. 3 (September 1902).

While all of the so-called “Robber Barons” exhibited exceptional development of the faculty of Acquisitiveness, and industrialists typically illustrated Constructiveness and Executiveness, important, defining differences in industry and expertise, ancestry and upbringing, and social interest and habits were all explained through subtle reference to the relative balance of the strength and size of the various congeries.⁶⁷ This subtlety, and the constant insistence on the importance of the gestalt effect created by the body as a whole, allowed authors to differentiate a moral exemplar like Wanamaker from a market reprobate like Fisk, packaging moral judgments in technical and physiological language. In all cases, though, the phrenologists personalized the business interests they described, collapsing massive, complex, and decentralized corporations into the individual characters of their famous representatives. John D. Rockefeller, one 1901 profile boldly claimed, “In building up the Standard Oil Company’s immense power and wealth...has been the head and others have been the hands; he is the man who makes out the plans, and his associates carry them out.”⁶⁸ Like in each of the reform causes the House of Fowler pursued, the trusts, once phrenologized—reduced to their essential elements and described in the language of the mental organs—could be understood, and their ills redressed.

The Fowlers’ *Phrenological Journal* gave practical phrenology its most precise disciplinary articulation, but its promises of effective character analysis at a glance and self and social improvement provided Americans of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era with a valuable set of tools with which to confront the newly urban, anonymous, and corporate world of the United States after the Civil War and Reconstruction. Though the phrenologists took a keen interest in the day’s leading capitalists, their object of research was not the corporations, but rather the men who

⁶⁷ Examples of these subtle differences can be found at: “Profiles: Andrew Carnegie: The Famous Ironmaster; John D. Rockefeller; Henry Clay Frick; J. Pierpont Morgan; Charles M. Schwab; John W. Gates,” *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health (1870-1911)* 3, no. 5 (May 1901).

⁶⁸ “John D. Rockefeller,” in “Profiles: Andrew Carnegie: The Famous Ironmaster.”

had made them. They sorted the “merchants and millionaires” into typological categories, searched their portraits for clues to the faculties and temperaments that had enabled their success, and offered suggestions for how defining characteristics could be imitated, but ultimately said little specific about the corporations. But what about genres of corporate coverage that combined this focus on the celebrity capitalist with the study of economic questions, and the investigation of corporate behavior? The new genre of the biographical profile, which exploded in popularity around the turn of the twentieth century, shared many features with the phrenological character, but in these magazine articles, the object of research was often blurred, as journalists pursued the study of both the capitalist and his corporation in the same story. These profiles are the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

“Personalizing the News”: The Character of Business Revealed in Celebrity Biography

To establish that practical phrenology served around the turn of the twentieth century as an “image vernacular,” and was not simply the eccentric ramblings of the marginal and misguided, it is essential to demonstrate the trespass of phrenological ideas, methods, and languages beyond the pages of explicitly phrenological publications—to trace the appearances of the practical phrenology in mainstream circulation. In this section I follow the coverage of the business celebrities to their biographical profiles published in popular magazines, and argue that the moral sciences of phrenology and physiognomy provided a language available to diverse contemporary critics, even those explicitly hostile to the disciplines, and through which social, political, economic, and moral analysts could articulate evaluations of character.

This chapter focuses primarily on three of these biographical profiles, each of which was published in *McClure's Magazine* by one of the leading journalists of the publication and period. These studies—Ida Tarbell's treatment of John D. Rockefeller, Ray Stannard Baker's of J.P. Morgan, and Hendrick Burton's of E.H. Harriman—attempt to explain the commercial success of their subjects by reference to their moral character, revealed through the close study of their private lives. These profiles reveal the persistent use of character analysis—inflected with the methods and language of the moral sciences—to understand the character of the businesses with which the moguls are associated. This move toward personalization, even toward the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, suggests that these popular heuristics for the analysis of character allowed the individual figure of the proprietor to remain an attractive and functional representational heuristic well after the rise of the new corporations.

The Profile of the Business Celebrity as a New Genre

Over the period 1880-1920, technological developments in publishing, as well as the growth of industrial urban centers after the Civil War, produced a culture in which it was newly possible for individuals to attain national visibility. With access to fast, cheap, high-volume printing and distribution, and with an eager public, newspaper and magazine publishers filled their pages with accounts of the private lives of these new celebrities, spawning new genres including the gossip column, the character sketch, and, most impactful of all, the biographical profile.⁶⁹ The media historian Charles L. Ponce de Leon, surveying this landscape, argues that reputational and social demands of the Gilded Age economy meant that people assumed public personas to be performative, and that the “real self” was observable only in the private sphere—in the home and with the family.⁷⁰ For reporters, this private sphere became a place to discover, and a place from which to expose, the subject’s “real self.” In the profiles of leading businessmen, the private life was capable of explaining professional achievement, and the character revealed in private cast its shadow on those achievements.⁷¹

De Leon argues further that to generate urgent interest in their profiles, journalists worked to relate their subjects to the news of the day, with S.S. McClure even directing his writers that all pieces ought to include “realistic [portraits] of the human personalities involved”⁷²:

As the spread of the market economy, industrialization, and new modes of transportation and communication created vast new social and economic networks extending throughout Europe, the United States, and beyond, *the mass-circulation press played a vital role in enabling ordinary people to apprehend this new world, mitigating its bewildering*

⁶⁹ Of these technological and industry developments, de Leon highlights the importance of wire services, feature syndicates, newspaper chains, and mass-circulation magazines. Charles L. Ponce de Leon, *Self-Exposure: Human-Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1940*, electronic resource (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 33.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 55.

*complexity and impersonality by offering stories that stressed the continued importance of individual agency.*⁷³ [emphasis added]

This narrative, of a genre of media coverage (personalization) emerging to resolve the challenges of conceptualizing almost-incomprehensible developments in economic and social life, suggests that these profiles were an attempt to fill the semantic void in which new corporate activities existed.

What was it about these profiles that made them legible to the public in a way that impersonal descriptions of economic affairs would not have been? De Leon argues that despite the novel inclusion of intimate accounts of home lives, the most innovative feature of the celebrity profiles was their use of visual materials.⁷⁴ They included portraits of family members and of the subject, but also reproductions of paintings of childhood homes and current residences, communicating with greater texture the private sphere that the journalist hoped to expose. Seen through the lens of the moral sciences, though, these portraits are of especial importance, as depictions of subjects could themselves be mined for indications of character. Indeed, *McClure's* began a series of such profiles in 1893, anthologized in 1895, titled "Human Documents," which was notable for each story's inclusion of portraits of its subject at various points in his or her life. In the introduction to the series, the novelist Sarah Orne Jewett was unsubtle in her explanation of the importance of these portraits: "Who can not read faces?" she asked. "The merest savage, who comprehends no written language, glances at you to know if he may expect friendliness or enmity, with a quicker intelligence than your own":⁷⁵

You may read all these [biographical facts] in any Human Document—the look of race, the look of family, the look that is set like a seal by a man's occupation, the look of the spirit's free or hindered life, and success or failure in the pursuit of goodness—they are

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 81-2.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁷⁵ Sarah Orne Jewett, "Human Documents: Introduction," *McClure's Magazine (1893-1926)* (New York, United States: S. S. McClure, June 1893).

all plain to see. If we could read one human face alright, the history not only of the man, but of humanity itself, is written there.⁷⁶

Much like the phrenologists and physiognomists writing in the Fowlers' *Journal*, Jewett proposed that the face (seen in the portrait and explained through its accompanying biography) was a plain text, legible in consistent and standard ways to its viewer.⁷⁷ In her sweeping, moralizing language, Jewett offers a strong expression of the importance of these moral sciences to the contemporary image vernacular. Celebrity profiles, and the personalized news they contained, are here comprehensible because they borrow on the intuitive tradition of character analysis that saturated the American culture of the nineteenth century.

The Personalization of Business in the Profile Genre

Unlike profiles of entertainment celebrities, profiles of business celebrities were understood as important and informative not just because of their “human interest,” but for what they revealed about the character of power. *The Cosmopolitan* magazine, for instance, in 1902 observed of the recent economic transformation that “The industrial changes which have of late been occurring with such rapidity have the widest possible interest for all classes.” The magazine’s response was to publish a series of several dozen biographical profiles of “Captains of Industry” in the following two years. To understand these industrial changes, “A knowledge of these men, their derivation, their leading characteristics, weaknesses and abilities” was essential. If the *Cosmopolitan* reader could read of the family histories of the new moguls, and understand their traits and attributes, she could apparently grasp the shape of ongoing industrial change. The magazine took the project quite

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Certainly though, this universalizing impulse was not universal among those interested in studying faces. Francis Grose, a notable early figure in the study of the visual depiction of character and of the impressions it provoked, delivered to the British Royal Society a lecture which noted the wide cultural divergence in values like beauty, dignity, and morality. Francis Grose, *Rules for Drawing Caricaturas: With an Essay on Comic Painting* (London: A. Grant (Printer), 1788).

seriously, claiming that “We believe it will be found that no more interesting series has ever been presented in the pages of this magazine.”⁷⁸

This balance, of studying individual “Captains” with the aim of explaining the entire economic situation, resulted in a series of profiles that frequently personalized complex, distributed corporations. In the study of James Stillman, for instance, long-time director of National City Bank, *Cosmopolitan*’s Edwin Lefèvre, the Panamanian author who would become famous for his Wall Street stories, first set out the barriers to understanding the actual operations of modern financial capitalism: “The machinery of commerce is huge, because the world has grown complex, because modern civilization is not simple.” To break through this complexity, and to understand this world, the knowledge necessary was that of Stillman himself: “for the illumination of Wall Street...it is well all should know...the shrewd, audacious, calculating banker, the cold, reserved man.” Indeed, Lefèvre completed the substitution of Stillman for National City through the straight equation of the two: “Stillman is the City Bank. He is the mind and the soul of it.” Finally, and consistent with the genre, to understand Stillman it was necessary to see beyond his public person to reveal the true character hidden in his private life, for, in Lefèvre’s eyes, “The two most dissimilar men in the world are James Stillman as the world thinks him and James Stillman as he is.” Even Stillman’s body mirrored his steady stewardship of the National City, as Lefèvre made careful note of his “resolute chin, well-shaped head” and “light-brown eyes...full of fearlessness and intelligence.”⁷⁹ At the time of publication, in 1903, Stillman’s day-to-day involvement in the bank was winding down, and yet the profile still, in its attempt at analytical

⁷⁸ “Captains of Industry: Part IV,” *The Cosmopolitan*, August 1902. This introduction was repeated with an updated list of “Captains” in the preface to each instalment.

⁷⁹ Quotations from: Edwin Lefevre, “James Stillman,” *The Cosmopolitan*, July 1903.

simplification, collapsed the complex, diverse, and international actions of the bank into the unified person of Stillman the man.⁸⁰

The importance of “seeing the man” was given further methodological justification in the *Cosmopolitan* profile of Joseph Pulitzer by Arthur Brisbane, who would later become one of the world’s most widely read newspaper columnists.⁸¹ Brisbane opened his profile through a recapitulation of Thomas Carlyle’s complaint that in medieval annals “no man who saw the king had thought of actually describing him. What did he look like? What did he wear?” The reflection quickly turned prescriptive, as Brisbane wrote: “He who would describe a human being to-day should begin first of all by doing the work of the eyes. He should give a picture of the man that he who reads may know what he is reading about.” In his treatment of Pulitzer, Brisbane did not disappoint, producing a profile that included the developmental portraits familiar from *McClure’s* “Human Documents” series, complete with rich detail of Pulitzer’s bodily development. Arriving in New York from Hungary by way of Boston, Pulitzer was a young man with a “smooth face, long upper lip, long, strong chin, very high top-head, clear gray eyes,” but would eventually grow into a “very tall man” with “teeth turned inward,” the kind of physical transformation and tangential detail that was fodder for the practical phrenologists.⁸²

The stock-promoter-turned-Wall-Street-muckraker Thomas Lawson neatly combined this pattern of acknowledging barriers to easy comprehension, the personalization of the complex corporation, and the focus on the body of the representative person in his *Frenzied Finance*, which chronicled the formation of the Amalgamated Copper Mining Company in 1899. Lawson was

⁸⁰ Stillman was, at this point in his life, spending a significant amount of his time in Paris, not at the National City’s New York headquarters. Anna Robeson Burr, *The Portrait of a Banker: James Stillman* (New York: Duffield and Company, 1927).

⁸¹ Brisbane’s *New York Times* obituary noted that Brisbane was, at the point of his death, William Randolph Hearst’s longest-serving employee, and that his columns “Today” and “This Week” were read by millions across the country. “Arthur Brisbane, Editor, Dies at 72,” *New York Times*, December 26, 1936.

⁸² Arthur Brisbane, “Joseph Pulitzer,” *The Cosmopolitan*, May 1902.

himself involved in “the Crime of Amalgamated,” making the text a unique example of autobiographical muckraking, but despite this inside view he still resorted to literary allusion in his efforts to describe the holdings and interests of his co-conspirators: the Standard Oil group, consisting of William Rockefeller and Henry H. Rogers from the Standard, and James Stillman of National City Bank. He referred to the group as a “magic circle,” and of their business as a “giant, indefinite system” and “giant creature,” with “countless miles of railroad [zigzagging] in and out of every state and city in America...never-ending twistings of snaky pipe lines [burrowing] into all parts of the North American continent...mines in the West...manufactories in the East... colleges in the South, and...churches in the North.”⁸³ The language of a twisting, snaking, giant creature evokes the image of the octopus or hydra that would be used so often to represent Standard and other economic, social, and political bogeys in the cartoon literature of the period. But still, directly after this monstrous description of fantastical complexity, Lawson fulfills the muckraking imperative of “piercing the corporate veil” to identify the one person who, at the end of it all, controls the behemoth—Rogers: “John D. Rockefeller may have more money, more actual dollars, than Henry H. Rogers...but none of these things alters the fact that the big brain, the big body, the big head of ‘Standard Oil,’ is Henry H. Rogers.”⁸⁴ And what a head it is! “When at rest or in action [Rogers’] square jaw tells of fighting power, bulldog, hold-on, never-let-go fighting power, and his high, full forehead, of intellectual, mightily intellectual power; and they are reinforced with cheekbones and nose which suggest that this fighting power has in it something of the grim ruthlessness of the North American Indian.”⁸⁵ Lawson’s analytical trajectory, from the

⁸³ Lawson’s report was originally serialized in *Everybody’s Magazine* in 1904, and was published as a book the following year. Thomas W. Lawson, *Frenzied Finance: The Crime of Amalgamated*, vol. 1 (New York: Ridgway-Thayer Co., 1905), 5.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸⁵ Thomas Lawson, *Frenzied Finance* in Arthur Weinberg and Lila Weinberg, eds., *The Muckrakers: The Era in Journalism That Moved America to Reform—the Most Significant Magazine Articles of 1902-1912* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961) p. 275-6. The invocation of national characteristics was also endogenous to the

incomprehensible, imperial corporation, to the individual in true control, as if the Standard were still run by a single proprietor, ends here, with well-worn phrenological ideas, complete with ethnic typology and the relation of intellectual capacity to the loft of the forehead.⁸⁶

With this survey of the genre of the personalizing celebrity profile, the following short case studies reveal these methods even within the profiles authored by the period's most famous journalists, studying the period's most famous moguls in its most august periodicals.

Secular Phrenology in the Treatment of John D. Rockefeller

Spurred-on by the mercurial S.S. McClure, a year after the publication of her bestselling *History of the Standard Oil Company*, Ida Tarbell reluctantly agreed to author a two-part "Character Study" of Rockefeller for *McClure's*—a no-holds-barred treatment of Rockefeller the man.⁸⁷ What emerged in the two-part study over the summer of 1905 ultimately shared much with the Phrenological characters regularly published by the Fowlers, combining analysis of Rockefeller's biography with interpretation of his body to produce a profile so scathing the *New York Times* published a letter to the editor begging for "fair play."⁸⁸

phrenological literature and its secular analogs. John Foster Carr, for instance, in a 1907 profile of J.J. Hill wrote that "The Scotch-Irish thrift in [Hill's] blood made economy the thing of most importance," and that his head "bore the mold of compulsive character." John Foster Carr, "Creative Americans: A Great Railway Builder," *Outlook (1893-1924)* (New York, United States: Outlook Pub. Co., October 26, 1907).

⁸⁶ *The Washington Post*, for instance, published an article syndicated from *The New York World* in 1911 claiming to document a relationship between the squareness of jaw and the force of will: "Square Jaw Sign of Power," *The Washington Post*, September 10, 1911, sec. Miscellany. The relationship between the forehead and the power of intellect was one of the oldest phrenological and physiognomic assumptions. In classical physiognomy, Le Brun and Lavater claimed that the "forehead and eyebrows epitomized intellectual life." Lucy Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth-Century Culture*, Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture 29 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 34. The idea was also reproduced in the popular American pocket manuals. See, for instance: L. A. Vaught, *Vaught's Practical Character Reader* (Chicago: L. A. Vaught, 1902): 55-6.

⁸⁷ Tarbell was famous for her biographical work before she directed her focus to business and tariff issues. Her biographies of Lincoln and Napoleon, each serialized in *McClure's*, were fantastically popular.

⁸⁸ "Plea for Fair Play: Attacks Based on Mr. Rockefeller's Personal Appearance Resented," *The New York Times*, August 23, 1905.

Tarbell is a rather interesting site for phrenological thinking, since she elsewhere mocked the discipline.⁸⁹ But for the composition of her Character Study, she traveled to Rockefeller's Euclid Avenue Baptist Church in Cleveland, and, without any revelatory empirical data, chose to base her character analysis, or at least presented her analysis as principally based on, her experience watching Rockefeller through a Sunday service. Consistent with the genre's conventions, Tarbell began her treatment with Rockefeller's ancestors, and, in addition to portraits of family and John D. at various ages, included reproductions of paintings of his childhood homes in Tioga county, NY, and of his current residences [see *Figure 5*].⁹⁰ Her descriptions of his body are rich and vivid, but it is first important to briefly note the history of Tarbell's coverage of The Standard. Her criticisms of the refinery empire in her *History* were rather dry, centered on its anticompetitive practices relating to the setting of reduced railroad rates for large carriers, and the payment of kickbacks by railroad companies to large refineries for *any* petroleum that traveled on their lines. In her "Character Study" she recapitulates these claims: "He must have seen clearly by [the early 1870s] that nothing but some advantage not given by nature or recognized by the laws of fair play in business could ever make him a dictator in the industry to which he was giving his attention."⁹¹ This allegation, that Rockefeller's domination of the oil industry was only possible through the violation of "fair play," is the centerpiece of Tarbell's antimonopoly critique, and it is related essentially to her observations of Rockefeller's body.⁹² Tarbell proposes that:

⁸⁹ Tarbell wrote about psychological testing "that either to reject or accept a man on their showing is almost as foolish as rejecting or accepting him on the shape of his head... The human being is too wonderful a creation, he has too many possibilities hidden from himself and all men to reveal his powers at one or many sittings to the cleverest devices of any psychological wizard." Ida M. Tarbell, *New Ideals in Business: An Account of Their Practice and Their Effects Upon Men and Profits* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), p. 320.

⁹⁰ Tarbell justified this method, writing, "It is fair to judge something of a man's character from his homes—particularly when the man is one who is freed from the necessity of considering cost in building.

⁹¹ Ida M. Tarbell, "John D. Rockefeller: A Character Study [Part One]," *McClure's Magazine* XXV, no. 3 (July 1905). Specifically, Tarbell focuses on Rockefeller's involvement in the South Improvement Company, a refinery and transport cartel established in 1871.

⁹² Tarbell's antimonopoly is defined not by opposition to (even ruthless) capitalist competition, but to unfairness

To succeed at business “He must be prepared to conceal, to spy, to threaten, to bribe, to perjure himself, and he must be prepared to harden his heart to the sufferings of those who fall in his path. *This is what it has always cost to do a thing of which the moral sense of the world disapproves. This is what it always will cost. There is no evidence whatever that Mr. Rockefeller has ever hesitated once, in thirty-two years, at the price demanded. He has faced the need with unwavering courage. He has paid,* like a man who has weighed the price of wrong-doing and decided to pay it.”⁹³ [emphasis added]

There is no possibility here that Standard Oil’s success is thanks to anything but conspiratorial scheming that violates the norms of business comportment, let alone that Rockefeller be only peripherally in command of the trust’s operation. Instead, the immoral action demands moral payment. And how does Tarbell *know*? Rockefeller’s body provides the proof: “Mr. Rockefeller may have made himself the richest man in the world, but he has paid. Nothing but paying ever ploughs such lines in a man’s face, ever sets his lips to such a melancholy angle.”⁹⁴ Indeed, Tarbell goes on to sketch a full phrenological image of the aged Rockefeller, complete with references to cranial bumps and a sense of awe inspired by his tremendous head. These startling passages are worth quoting at length:

Brought face to face with Mr. Rockefeller unexpectedly, and not knowing him, the writer’s immediate thought was, ‘This is the oldest man in the world — a living mummy.’ But there is no sense of feebleness with the sense of age; indeed there is one of terrific power. The disease [generalized alopecia] which in the last three or four years has swept Mr. Rockefeller’s head bare of hair, stripped away even eyelashes and eyebrows, has revealed all the strength of his great head. Mr. Rockefeller is a big man, not over tall but large with powerful shoulders and a neck like that of a bull. *The head is wide and deep and disproportionately high, with curious bumps made more conspicuous by the tightly drawn, dry, naked skin. The interest of the big face lies in the eyes and mouth. Eyes more useful for a man of Mr. Rockefeller’s practices could hardly be conceived. They are small and intent and steady, and they are as expressionless as a wall.* They see everything and reveal nothing. [emphasis added]

And:

within such competition. Hers was a kind of “open-access antimonopolism,” where corporate largess was not harmful *per se*, but seen often as the result of unfair awards of privilege to politically-proximate special interests. John, “Proprietary Interest,” p. 19.

⁹³ Ida M. Tarbell, “John D. Rockefeller: A Character Study [Part One],” *McClure’s Magazine* XXV, no. 3 (July 1905).

⁹⁴ Tarbell, “John D. Rockefeller: A Character Study [Part Two].”

The greatest loss Mr. Rockefeller sustained when his hair went was that it revealed his mouth. It is only a slit – the lips are quite lost, as if by eternal grinding together of the teeth...It is at once the cruelest feature of his face — this mouth — the cruelest and most pathetic, for the hard, close-set line slants downward at the corners, giving a look of age and sadness.⁹⁵

This description of Rockefeller's mouth as a cruel slit comes with significant physiognomic baggage. Indeed, a practical phrenologist writing in the *Boston Daily Globe* wrote that "all good physiognomists from time immemorial have shown a dislike for this type of mouth, composed of thin lips, resembling a single, straight line...They have credited this type of mouth with such harsh characteristics as coldness, craftiness, cynicism, ungovernable temper, selfishness and cruelty."⁹⁶ Indeed, the reference is here to *the* physiognomist, Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801), the eighteenth-century Swiss author of the German-language *Essays on Physiognomy* (1789-98), the physiognomic textbook and manual that remained canonical for several decades. Lavater wrote that "A lipless mouth, resembling a single line, denotes coldness, industry, a lover of order, precision."⁹⁷ Rockefeller, as Tarbell knew better than almost anyone, was famous for his ruthlessness in the pursuit of operational efficiency and economy; searching for a language to inscribe these traits on his body, Tarbell borrowed from the now-mainstream language of physiognomy.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Denkinger, "Mental Portrait of William J. Bryan."

⁹⁷ Johann Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, ed. G Gessner, trans. Thomas Holcroft, 3rd ed., 4 vols. (London, 1840), 394.



Figure 5: The lumpy-headed drawing of Rockefeller in 1903 that was one of many images accompanying Tarbell's 1905 "Character Study" in McClure's Magazine. The hat is a reference to Rockefeller's devout baptism, and he is often identifiable by it in illustrations and cartoons. It is worth noting that this illustration is a particularly poor likeness, as Rockefeller was famous for his chronic dyspepsia, and accompanying lightness of physique, around this time. The baldness was caused by generalized alopecia, which progressed at a remarkable pace in Rockefeller's case, and which was likewise the subject of much coverage.

Tarbell's methodology in the "Character Study," that the moral cost of Rockefeller's business career can be read from his face, head, and body is entirely consistent with the statement of disciplinary method Jessie Allen Fowler provided in her 1904 *Phrenological Journal* article "How a Man's Career Shows in his Face," which preceded the publication of Tarbell's "Character Study" by just one year. My emphasis on the similarities between the documents is not to suggest the direct influence of Fowlerian phrenological thinking on Tarbell's writing or analysis, but merely to illustrate the wide cultural adoption of the language and disciplinary assumptions of the practice. And this pattern of analysis was not constrained to Tarbell. Her longtime colleague at *McClure's* and *The American Magazine* Lincoln Steffens, the famous radical journalist and

muckraker, offered a similar verdict on Rockefeller's countenance after confronting a new bust of Rockefeller made by Jo Davidson [see *Figure 6*]. The bust emphasized Rockefeller's frailty and age, and Steffens noticed the skeletal, even reptilian aspects of Rockefeller's head and face. He excitedly wrote to a friend, referring to the bust as an "exposure, a caricature, a fearful insight into Man," and concluded that "it gives away more than Miss Tarbell did in her whole book"—the head and face, not a detailed writing of business history, revealed a man's character.⁹⁸

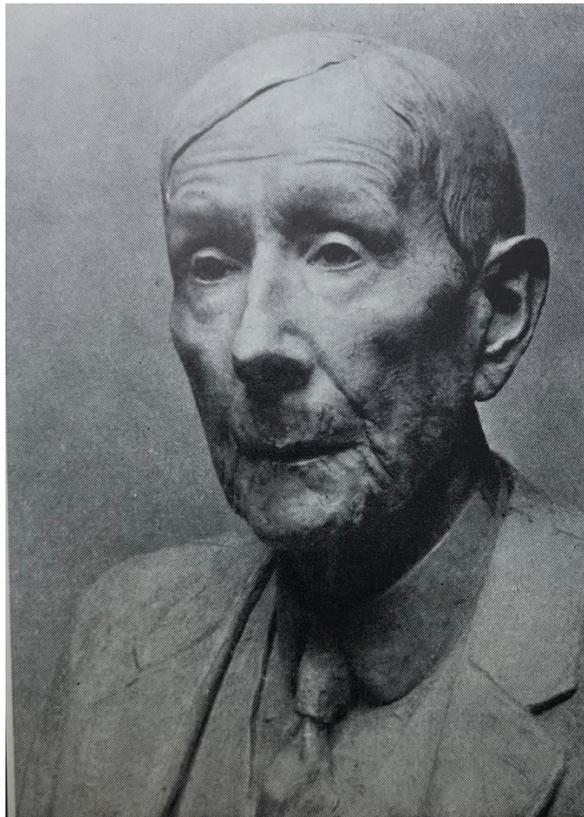


Figure 6: Jo Davidson's bust of John D. Rockefeller, ca. 1924. Lincoln Steffens wrote frantically to a friend of it: "[Jo Davidson] has done his head of John D. Rockefeller and it is frightening: a terrible face. It is Jo's masterpiece in portraiture, I guess, and the Rockefellers liked it!!! When you see it, you will understand my amazement. It's an exposure, a caricature, a fearful insight into Man. It gives away more than Miss Tarbell did in her whole book."

Rockefeller, with his many well-publicized ailments, including dyspepsia and the rather spectacular generalized alopecia, and his attempts at new-aged treatments, from walking barefoot across his dewy Pocantico lawns to wearing European wigs and eating bird-like meals, attracted

⁹⁸ Lincoln Steffens, "Steffens to Laura, 4 August 1924," in *The Letters of Lincoln Steffens*, ed. Ella Winter and Granville Hicks, vol. ii (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1974), p. 652.

considerable phrenological attention.⁹⁹ And in his full character in the *Phrenological Journal*, the phrenologist makes many of the same observations as does Tarbell—the thin lips and slit-like mouth, the small dark eyes, and the high-crowned skull—but comes to opposite conclusions; to the *Journal*, Rockefeller’s traits are praiseworthy and admirable—reflections of a devout and abstemious life lived on the grandest stages of American industry: “There is a look in his eyes that seems to denote the desire to be kind, thoughtful, and generous,” and: “[the lips] show quality, refinement, reserve, tenacity and strength of mind.”¹⁰⁰

Tarbell and the *Phrenological Journal* see the same man, but they read very different characters. To both, though, the language of the moral sciences provides a paradigmatic scaffolding through which to level judgments of character—made specific by the author’s particular polemical project.

Business Character Reflected in Personal Character: J.P. Morgan

Like his close colleague Tarbell, Ray Stannard Baker, the second of *McClure’s* muckraking triumvirate along with Lincoln Steffens, was directed by the magazine’s publisher to author a profile of another of the period’s defining business celebrities—John Pierpont Morgan. While the intricacies of Rockefeller’s business dealings were already well known to *McClure’s* audience thanks to the magazine’s serialization of Tarbell’s *History*, Morgan had not received a similar comprehensive treatment. So in his celebrity profile of Morgan, Baker set out to describe not just Morgan’s family history and private interests, but also to lay out for readers “what Mr. Morgan

⁹⁹ “Health Advice from a Billionaire,” *The Phrenological Journal and the Science of Health* 117 (September 1904): 288. J.A. Fowler, “The Science of Piedology, and How Character Is Manifested in the Walk,” *The Journal of Phrenology and Science of Health* 121, no. 10 (October 1908): 307–18. “John D. Rockefeller,” *The Phrenological Journal and the Science of Health*, May 1901. “Benevolence,” *The Phrenological Journal and the Science of Health* 123–124 (1911 1910): 211–12.

¹⁰⁰ “In The Public Eye. A Few Points on the Richest Man in the World and What His Head and Face Reveal,” *The Phrenological Journal and the Science of Health*, December 1909, 16–19.

has actually done to make him a great figure in finance.”¹⁰¹ This task complicates the purpose of the profile, as Baker investigates not just Morgan the man, but also the institutions and combinations supposedly stamped with his image. With this dual-focus, Baker blurs the distinction between the person of Morgan and the massive, diverse, and managerial enterprises under his directorship, personalizing those enterprises in the process, and suggesting that Morgan’s personal character reflects directly the character of his business.

Baker begins his profile with awe, impressing upon the reader the unimaginable scope of Morgan’s financial involvements, and the scale of his power. Morgan had just financed the merger of Carnegie Steel with Elbert Gary’s Federal Steel Company and William Henry Moore’s National Steel Company to create United States Steel, “the most powerful industrial and financial institution the world has ever known.” Within this massive new concern, though, Baker confessed that there existed real epistemic barriers to the public comprehension of Morgan’s role and activities: “It is impossible, of course, for any outsider to know Mr. Morgan’s exact influence in any one of these vast business concerns.” And yet, Baker swept this uncertainty aside, instead comparing Morgan to Bismarck, writing that “*as [U.S. Steel’s] recognized and actual dictator...[Morgan] controlled a yearly income and expenditure nearly as great as that of imperial Germany*” [emphasis added]. Baker continued along this line, claiming that “Morgan, no doubt, controls and influences more money and money interests to-day than any other man in the world. Perhaps no one, not even Mr. Morgan himself, fully realizes the responsibility and gravity of that power.”¹⁰² Indeed, according to Baker’s analysis, Morgan was personally the lynchpin of global finance, acting “as a sort of

¹⁰¹ Ray Stannard Baker, “J. Pierpont Morgan,” *McClure’s Magazine (1893-1926)* (New York, United States: S. S. McClure, October 1901).

¹⁰² Emphasizing this power, Baker wrote of Morgan’s recent trip to London, even relaying anecdotes of brokers taking-out life insurance policies against Morgan’s death at Lloyd’s, in case the trip turned fatal, for some reason or another.

balance-wheel to the country's finance" and "wielding his immense power and credit so as to steady the market when panic threatened."¹⁰³ Here Baker at once acknowledged the limits of his knowledge of the actual operations of Morgan's enterprises, but expressed with total confidence that Morgan operated them with absolute power and control.

So, if these businesses could be explained only by reference to Morgan's personal decision-making, Baker suggested that to understand their character (and to predict their activities) one needed simply to understand *Morgan's* character. The biographical profile, like the phrenological character, was well-suited to the task. According to its conventions, Baker began the profile with description of Morgan's ancestry, upbringing, and his education in finance, and *McClure's* accompanied the piece (like it had with Tarbell's) with sketches of Morgan's boyhood homestead in Hartford, his Madison Avenue residence, a reproduction of a painting of his Manhattan office building, sketches of philanthropic institutions established, a map of U.S. railroads under his partial or entire control, and portraits of Morgan at various ages [see *Figure 7*].

¹⁰³ Ibid.



Front and rear views of the Old Morgan Homestead in Hartford, where J. Pierpont Morgan lived as a boy. Drawn from photographs copyrighted by F. U. Adams.

other class. Twenty-
Morgan was practically
Wall Street, and he coi

Figure 7: Ray Stannard Baker's McClure's profile of J.P. Morgan featured these images, drawn from photographs, of Morgan's childhood home. Depictions of the childhood home were a staple of the genre, and in addition to these drawings the profile included portraits, images of Morgan's current New York residence, his office, commercial enterprises that he had financed, and a map of his railroad interests.

The survey yields a portrait of a man whose dominant traits, explicitly marked, are stoic independence, reserve, and legendary calculation. Though he emphasizes the variety of Morgan's commercial and financial activities, Baker does characterize his business generally, emphasizing Morgan's gift for reorganizing—or, as the Street apparently calls it, "Morganizing"—corporations across industries to maximize efficiency and economy: "Most of his achievements have had for their object the saving of money waste. Economy in production, economy in management, economy in interest charges are what he has always sought." The reader, now having progressed

beyond several pages of detailed biographical and character description, cannot help but note the parallel between the character of these business dealings and Morgan's personal deportment in public life, which Baker has characterized as defined by economy in speech and socialization. Indeed, Baker emphasizes Morgan's preferred negotiation tactic—Olympian silence: "The man who sits in his office, a citadel of silence and reserve force, and makes his visitor uncover his batteries is impregnable. That is Mr. Morgan's way." It is not until a rather breathless final few paragraphs that Baker familiarizes his reader with Morgan's private interests, which are substantial, and not totally consistent with the portrait of the economizing Morgan—yachting, art collecting, sampling fine wines, and so on. But even in these descriptions Morgan's dominant characteristics remain his reserve, distance, and focus, even apparently retreating beneath the decks of his steam yacht "Corsair" to pore over tables and figures, "oblivious to his surroundings," or needing to be "warmed into talkativeness" at the quiet parties he occasionally attends. As Baker tells it, Morgan's life is one dominated by the craft of banking, and fixated on efficiency in operation.

Finally, and characteristically, Baker followed Arthur Brisbane's directive to "do the work of the eyes," providing a sketch of the man as he is now: "a large man, thick of chest, with a big head set close down on burly shoulders, features large, an extraordinarily prominent nose [caused by Morgan's famous rhinophyma, which made his inflamed nose look like a "purple cauliflower"], keen gray eyes, deep set under heavy brows, a high, fine forehead, a square, bulldog chin."¹⁰⁴ Beginning with a survey of Morgan's worldwide financial empire, Baker concluded with close descriptions of Morgan's personal life and body, echoing, like Tarbell, the physiognomic language that was so well-suited to the description of aptitude and character. While for Tarbell that language

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

was ideal for emphasizing Rockefeller's personal cruelty, for Baker it allowed for the coherent, textured expression of his positive feelings toward Morgan's pursuit of economic efficiency.¹⁰⁵

The Name of the Industrial Organization: E. Henry Harriman

After stints at *The New York Evening Post* and *The New York Sun*, Burton J. Hendrick joined *McClure's*, and won notoriety for his "muckraking" treatment of the life insurance industry, which the magazine serialized in 1906.¹⁰⁶ Hendrick also maintained an active interest in the contemporary phrenology, reporting for *McClure's* on "scientific management's" occupational guides based on the science of body analysis,¹⁰⁷ and on Franz Boas' studies of immigrant skulls in New York City.¹⁰⁸ Hendrick was also a productive author of biographical and historical profiles of leading capitalists, publishing studies that would later be expanded into his single-volume *The Age of Big Business: A Chronicle of the Captains of Industry* (1919).¹⁰⁹ In 1909 Hendrick authored a profile of the railroad magnate Edward Henry Harriman, which, in its recognizably-modern approach to the Harriman "system," obscured the distinction between the person of Harriman and the real, complex operation of his railroads.¹¹⁰ While Hendrick recognized, indeed discovered, that

¹⁰⁵ Baker is positively awe-struck by what he sees as Morgan's single-handed power in the financial markets, but he also offers generally positive reflections on Morgan's interventions in various industries. Referring to his reorganization of the West Shore Railroad in 1885 and oversight of its sale to the New York Central, Baker writes that Morgan succeeded in "stopping the fierce competition which was injuring both roads." Baker was famous for his muckraking treatment of the western roads, but here his antimonopoly appears to be of a "anti-waste collaborationist" vein, recognizing the value of collaboration, but resenting the concentration of political power among the owners of the new organized corporations. For discussion of these strains of antimonopoly in journalism, see: John, "Proprietary Interest."

¹⁰⁶ Burton J. Hendrick, "The Story of Life Insurance I," *McClure's Magazine (1893-1926)* (New York, United States: S. S. McClure, May 1906).

¹⁰⁷ Burton J. Hendrick, "Fitting the Man to His Job: A New Experiment in Scientific Management," *McClure's Magazine (1893-1926)* (New York, United States: S. S. McClure, June 1913).

¹⁰⁸ Burton J. Hendrick, "The Skulls of Our Immigrants: How the New York Environment Is Bringing About Fundamental Changes in Physical Type--Shortheaded Jews Becoming Long-Headed and Long-Headed Sicilians Short-Headed," *McClure's Magazine (1893-1926)*, May 1910.

¹⁰⁹ Burton J. Hendrick, *The Age of Big Business: A Chronicle of the Captains of Industry* (New Haven: Yale university press, 1921).

¹¹⁰ Hendrick's slight emphasis on tables and maps, rather than on portraits of individuals or paintings of homes and offices, represents a subtle shift in the "ways of seeing" this sort of capitalism. For discussion of the position of these quantitative and geographic genres of economic coverage, see: Knight, "Representations of Capitalism in the

Harriman possessed only partial control of the “system’s” interests, he nonetheless described the actions and deliberations of the decentralized trust *as if it were a proprietorship*, illustrating the rhetorical and analytical necessity of corporate personalization even in modern coverage.

Like those of Rockefeller and Morgan, Hendrick’s profile included portraits of Harriman and fellow railroad moguls, but eschewed some of the generic features of the celebrity biography, such as the sketches of the subject’s childhood home or current residence. Instead, the profile made use of modern visual devices for the illustration of corporate power and ownership. *McClure’s* included three national maps illustrating the paths of the Harriman roads and their ownership structure. The article was also accompanied by eight tables, displaying mileage under Harriman’s control, the increase in freight rates for commodities transported on his lines, and the personal stock ownership of members of “the Harriman syndicate” in each of the roads [see *Figures 8.1 and 8.2*].¹¹¹ Indeed, on this syndicated ownership, Hendrick even noted that a profile limited to discussion of E.H. Harriman the man would be insufficient toward understanding the operations of the entities with which he was associated, explaining that:

When we seek to discover what this Harriman power in American railroads is, we find that it consists of more than Harriman himself. *The name ceases to stand for that of a mere personality, and signifies a comprehensive force.* This force is composed of many people and of many things. It includes railroad men, financiers, banks, trust companies, speculative cliques, insurance companies, and other corporations—a mighty congregation, which, combined in a working and harmonious whole, has made the Harriman railroads the most effective combination of industrial and financial strength the world has ever known.¹¹² [emphasis added]

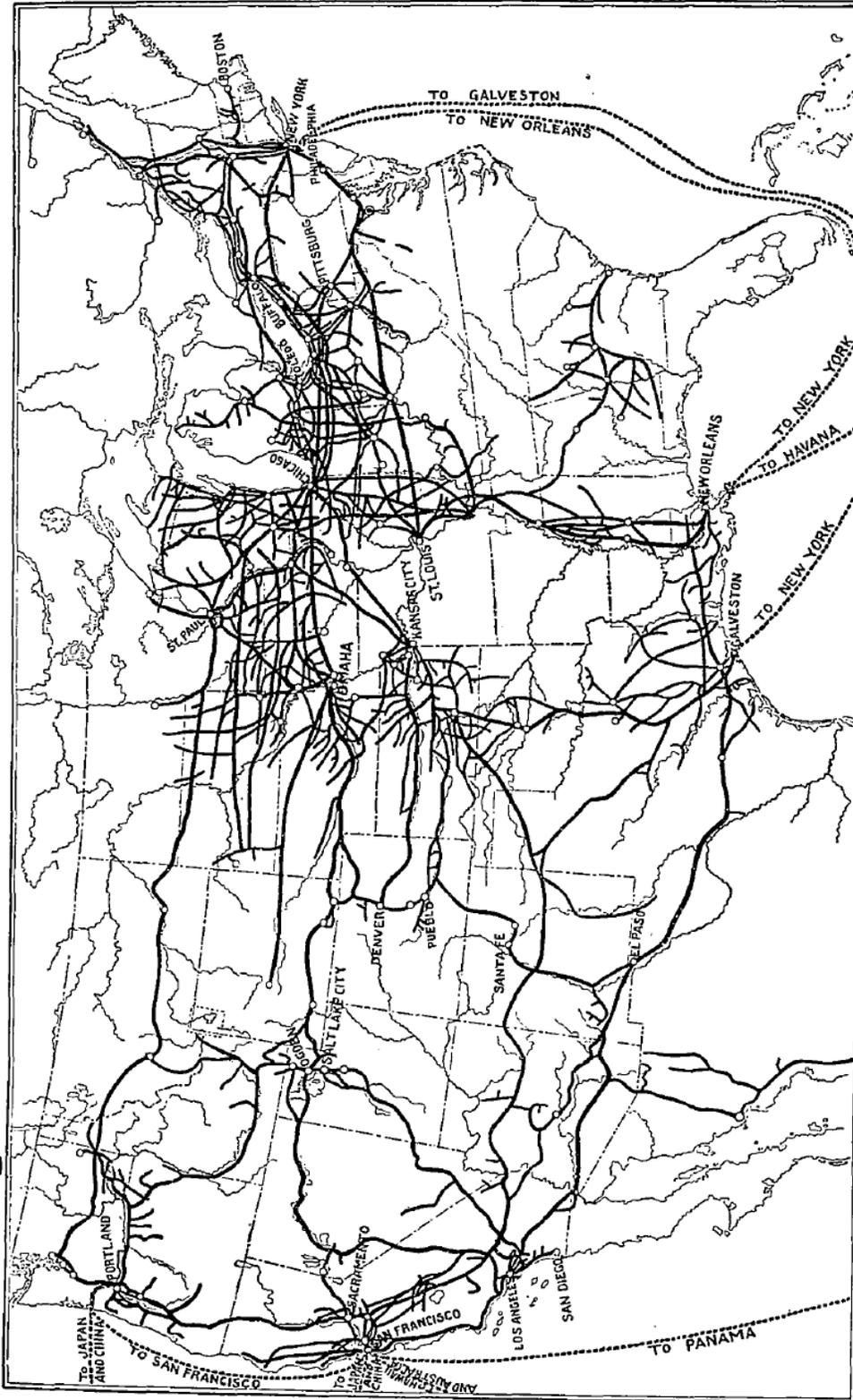
Gilded Age and Progressive Era.” For more general discussion of these genres, see: Peter Knight, *Reading the Market: Genres of Financial Capitalism in Gilded Age America*, New Studies in American Intellectual and Cultural History (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 102-116.

¹¹¹ Burton J. Hendrick, “The Most Powerful Man in America,” *McClure’s Magazine (1893-1926)* (New York, United States: S. S. McClure, October 1909).

¹¹² *Ibid.*

Through this framing, Hendrick conveys that “the most powerful man in America” is not really a man at all, but rather a “comprehensive force...composed of many people and of many things.” And yet, throughout the profile, the actions taken by this force—which Hendrick later more precisely describes as the Standard Oil-National City Bank “system” (made up of James Stillman, Henry H. Rogers, and William Rockefeller, in addition to Harriman)—are described as the actions of Harriman personally. In his analysis of the tables describing corporate stock ownership, for instance, Hendrick observes that in many cases Harrison’s personal ownership of several of “his” lines is actually rather limited, as he is for instance only a minority owner of the New York Central, Northwestern, and St. Paul lines. But significant aligned Rockefeller ownership of these lines (or ownership by other of Harriman’s collaborators, in the case of the western lines), “practically make the Harriman power supreme,” and so even in those cases where Harriman’s material interest is limited, and only possible through collaboration and coordination with other financial interests, he is still awarded supreme power, and is still, in Hendrick’s telling, suited to give his name to these rail lines.¹¹³ The dynamic, personalized phrase “Harriman control” stands in for the more complex story of collaboration, politics, and negotiation that the tables and maps suggest, allowing Hendrick to tell the stories of the American railways with “Harriman” acting as a single, composite character.

¹¹³ The “syndicate” included Harriman, Henry C. Frick, William Rockefeller, Henry H. Rogers, Otto Kahn, Jacob Schiff, James Stillman, and the investment bank Kuhn, Loeb & Co.



THIS MAP SHOWS THE RAILROADS IN WHICH THE HARRIMAN-STANDARD-OIL POWER IS THE PREDOMINATING INFLUENCE. IT INCLUDES 76,000 MILES OF RAILWAY AND 50,000 MILES OF STEAMSHIP LINES. IT REPRESENTS THE GREATEST CONCENTRATION OF INDUSTRIAL AND FINANCIAL POWER THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN

Figure 8.1: Hendrick's profile of E.H. Harriman, rather uniquely for the genre, included three national maps of the railroads under the partial or exclusive control of "The Harriman Syndicate." Their inclusion illustrates the profile's dual focus on Harriman's private person, and on his business activities.

RATES FROM NEW YORK TO PACIFIC POINTS
1897 TO DATE
(CENTS PER 100 POUNDS)

Date	Dry-goods in Cases	Cotton Piece Goods	Cast-iron Cook-stoves	Canned Goods	Glassware (except cut)	Starch	Drugs	Crockery	Nails	Agricultural Implements
Dec. 15, 1897	150	100	110	85	85	100	100	95	75	115
June 25, 1898	260	150	125	100	100	100	125	85	75	105
Jan. 18, 1904	300	100	135	90	110	100	140	95	80	125
Jan. 1, 1909	300	110	130	100	120	100	150	95	85	135

Figure 8.2: Again rare in the celebrity profile genre, Hendrick included this table as supporting evidence of his description of Harriman's having raised commodity transport rates on the railroads under his supervision. Other tables demonstrated the stock ownership of the Harriman lines, revealing that the kind of dictatorial directorship Hendrick awards Harriman would only have been possible through careful coordination and collaboration with other larger stock-holders.

Hendrick's profile of Harriman is exemplary of the genre. He recognizes the complexity of actual operations, but rushes passed them, resolving epistemic blockages through the creation of a new character, named after the imagined celebrity proprietor, and capable of acting as a single person in the economic world. These periodical journalists, grappling in their research with the unwieldy expanses of the period's giant new corporations, were not naïve about the possibility of their being directed by, or simply representing, the character of a single mogul. But because of the need to "personalize the news," to make it comprehensible and intriguing to vast audiences—indeed, to fill the semantic void in which the corporations still existed—these writers repeatedly authored stories featuring such gestalt persons, amenable to character and bodily analysis. Like in the Fowlers' *Phrenological Journal*, corporate complexity in these periodicals is impregnable when left in the languages of business and finance. Instead it must be phrenologized—compressed into its constituent elements, with protagonists identified, and mined for moral content. If corporate ills stem from features of character like in Tarbell's portrait of Rockefeller's serpentine greed, then they can only be redressed through the phrenological promise of individual redemption.

CHAPTER THREE

The Octopus and the Colossus: Physiognomy and Persistent Personalization in *Puck* Cartoons

Thanks to developments in chromolithography in the second half of the nineteenth century, publishers could now print large runs of vibrant, multi-color prints, rapidly expanding the reach of the American cartoonist. Indeed, the United States' most popular humor magazines, *Puck* and *Judge*, attracted huge audiences with their lively broadsheet cartoons and caricatures, each capturing quarterly circulations in excess of 200,000 readers.¹¹⁴ With this reach came the capacity to shape and mobilize public opinion, with cartoons, densely packed with visual meaning and iconography, becoming primary sources of political news, gossip, and polemic, especially among urban publics. This reach, combined with the semantic density of the cartoons, led one historian to conclude that *Puck* and *Judge* alone likely “exerted...an influence on the ‘politics of the country’ that was ‘probably greater than that of all the daily press combined.’”¹¹⁵ Richard Samuel West, who has devoted particular attention to *Puck*, reflected that by 1884 the magazine had become a “national power”—“read religiously by tens of thousands, feared and denigrated by those who felt its wrath.”¹¹⁶ The magazines “appealed to an upscale audience of worldly New Yorkers who reveled in their inside-dopester political satire,” which “pierced the corporate veil” to reveal the shadowy and conspiratorial characters shaping American life.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ *N.W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory: A Catalogue of American Newspapers* (Philadelphia, PA: Ayer Press, 1895), p. 1101, 1103.

¹¹⁵ Richard R. John, “Robber Barons Redux: Antimonopoly Reconsidered,” *Enterprise & Society* 13, no. 1 (2012): 8.

¹¹⁶ Richard Samuel West, *Satire on Stone: The Political Cartoons of Joseph Keppler* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 1.

¹¹⁷ The quotation is from: Richard John, “Proprietary Interest,” p. 27. For discussion of the conspiratorial imagination of the cartoons, and their classification as “muckraking” publications, see: Peter Knight, *Reading the Market*, pp. 113-115.

The magazines pilloried the issues of the day, and so much of their coverage around the turn of the twentieth century focused on the process of corporate consolidation and, especially, its political causes and consequences.¹¹⁸ Exploring the problem, the cartoonists experimented with methods for representing the new corporations. In a world of proprietor ownership and operation, the image of the proprietor could represent the business directly, but with new, distributed corporate ownership and managerial operation, this figure no longer existed. To resolve this deficit, cartoonists transmogrified corporations into animals or monsters, figures borrowed from European literature, as a device to represent their supra-human, even tentacular qualities.¹¹⁹ But alongside these images, *Puck* continued to publish cartoons of the period's leading moguls as representative of those businesses with which they were most closely associated, or indeed of entire industries, well into the first decade of the twentieth century.

This chapter focuses on the influence of the moral sciences on both the iconography and reception of the *Puck* cartoons that personalize the corporations in this way. Viewing the problem of corporate representation through the disciplinary lens, I argue that personalization persisted as a representational strategy because of its foundational status in both the craft and semiotic language of cartooning. Though these long-established methods made the polemical and satirical content of the cartoons legible at a glance, personalization focused causal agency for economic conditions onto famous individual businessmen, systematically obscuring the vexed complexity of the process of corporate consolidation.

Puck and the Phrenological Journal: A Shared Mission?

¹¹⁸ One general survey of the period's cartooning notes that the cartoonists "aimed their attacks on the all-pervasive power of the trusts, monopolies, and big business." Stephen Hess and Sandy Northrop, *American Political Cartoons: The Evolution of a National Identity, 1754-2010*, 1st Transaction ed (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2011), p. 67.

¹¹⁹ John, "Proprietary Interest," p. 27.

The staff of *Puck* was familiar with the contemporary moral sciences, and *Puck* and the *Phrenological Journal* even advertised each-other in joint-subscription promotions throughout the period.¹²⁰ Even more substantively, *Puck* in 1881 published a satirical version of the *Journal's* recent phrenological character of Jay Gould, the speculator *par excellence*, with Frederick Burr Opper, “*Puck's* greatest comic artist,” illustrating the profile’s character findings through images of the conspiracies and hijinks with which Gould was so closely linked.¹²¹ One caption from the *Journal*, for instance, read that Gould “shows a good degree of Wiry Toughness,” above which Opper drew a limber Gould, with exaggeratedly Semitic features, grasping two sets of bundled wires, labeled “Wall St. Wires” and “Speculation Wires” [see *Figure 9*].¹²² *Puck* also published several cartoons that used the familiar template of the phrenological chart to caricature subjects, such as one “Physiognomical Study” of Pope Leo XIII, which included labels including “benediction” and “immaculate infallibility” on the cognitive regions [see *Figure 10*]. The chart, with its various regions dedicated to each of the phrenological congeries, was ripe for satire, as the cartoonist could simply fill-in the regions with mocking images or phrases.

¹²⁰ “Advertisement 23,” *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health (1870-1911)* 109, no. 1 (January 1900).

¹²¹ The quote on Opper is from West, *Satire on Stone*, p. 132. For the original profile, see: “Jay Gould: The Eminent Financier.” For the Opper illustrated version, see: “The Phrenology of Jay Gould,” *Puck (1877-1918)* (New York, United States: Keppler & Schwarzmann, September 21, 1881).

¹²² “The Phrenology of Jay Gould,” *Puck (1877-1918)* (New York, United States: Keppler & Schwarzmann, September 21, 1881). For discussion of the anti-Semitic vernacular in the period’s cartoons, see: John J. Appel, “Jews in American Caricature: 1820-1914,” *American Jewish History* 71, no. 1 (September 1, 1981): 103–33.

THE PHRENOLOGY OF JAY GOULD.

From the Phrenological Journal.



"He shows a good degree of Wiry Toughness."



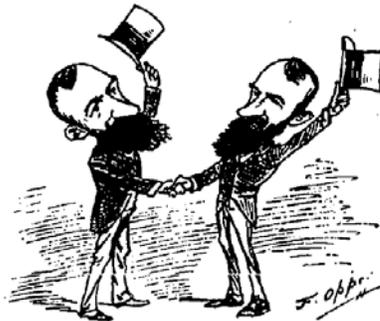
"We judge this Brain to be decidedly large for the size of the man."



"He looks through men, and is likely to know them far better than they know him."



"There would be a tenacious attachment between him and those whom he selects as friends, and those who are in his confidence will prize his friendship highly."



"He believes thoroughly in himself, and relies upon his own judgement."



"His regard for property is strongly indicated."

Figure 9: This panel, which appeared in Puck in 1881, provided cartoon illustrations by Frederick Burr Opper as accompaniment to direct quotations from the Phrenological Journal's profile of Gould from the same year. Gould's depiction with the stereotypical features of the financially-active Jew, such as the exaggerated, pointed nose, dark beard, slender frame, and depictions of greed and physical money, are here on display.

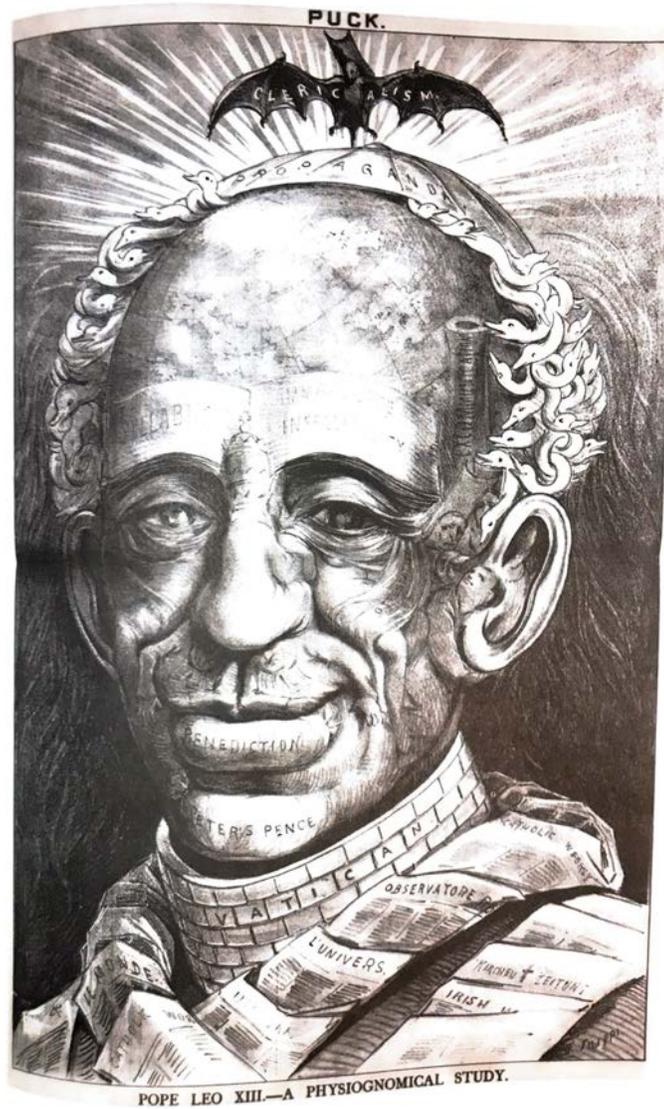


Figure 10: "Pope Leo XIII—A Physiognomical Study," Puck, April 24, 1878. The reproduction is rather poor, but the faint lines on the subject's skull make up the familiar phrenological regions, while imitating the latitudinal lines on a globe. The Pope's lip, chin, and brow also are each labeled according to the conventions of the physiognomic and phrenological chart makers, such as the Fowlers. The papacy provided a recurring subject for Keppler.

From the other side, the *Phrenological Journal* saw Puck as an ally in its progressive mission of instructing Americans to recognize the body's indications of character. In 1901, the *Journal* published an article responding to phrenology's "objectors," arguing that the face "is an open book to all, but may be read only by those who have mastered the alphabet, and have advanced in a knowledge of the language by which the unseen soul traces with accurate and delicate pencil the thoughts and emotions within, upon the constantly transforming pages of the

human countenance without.” Apparently *Puck*’s cartoonists had mastered this occult alphabet, for the editorial went on to claim that:

*Our comic papers would lose their pith and power without the knowledge of how to exhibit the ludicrous by distorting the natural. But, if there be no meaning in the natural contour of the head and outline of the face, how comes in the force in their extravagant uses? There must be accuracy in caricature to make it acceptable to the critical and educative to the less observant. The best comic papers in the world are ‘Puck,’ ‘Punch,’ and ‘Judge.’ And the best phrenological illustrations may be found in them and in the drawings of Thomas Nast.*¹²³ [emphasis added]

This contemporary analysis of the comic papers, that they contained the world’s “best phrenological illustrations,” points to the deep and entangled history of the moral sciences and cartooning.

“Character the Essential Thing”: Physiognomy as Interpretive and Artistic Guide

The history of physiognomy, the art of deriving character and moral insights from the study of the face, stretches back to the classical period, and the pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomonica*, an analogic text that compared human and animal features—faces with similar features were thought to indicate analogous characteristics.¹²⁴ During the Renaissance, the Italian polymath Giovanni della Porta picked up the study, working to replace astrological methods of face-reading with an approach based on physiological observation. Della Porta’s *De humana physiognomia* (1586) preserved the Aristotelian analogies between people and animals, and included rich, detailed engravings illustrating the possibility of gaining insights about character through these comparisons [see *Figure 11*].¹²⁵ Along this line, the seventeenth century’s manuals for painters, many of which derived from Charles Le Brun’s famous lectures to the *Académie de peinture* in

¹²³J. H. Keeley, “Phrenology Among Its Objectors,” *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health (1870-1911)* 3, no. 5 (May 1901): 146.

¹²⁴ Terry Landau, *About Faces: The Evolution of the Human Face* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), p. 114. For another useful general introduction to physiognomy, please see: “Chapter 1: ‘The Physiognomists’ Promise,” in Todorov, *Face Value*.

¹²⁵ Landau, *About Faces*, p. 116.

1698 are likewise invested in this project, but in the opposite direction, instructing artists in the depiction of emotion, rather than readers in its interpretation.¹²⁶ Popular interest in physiognomy was dramatically accelerated in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries through the Swiss pastor and teacher Johann Caspar Lavater, whose illustrated four-volume *Essays on physiognomy* (1775-78) provided troves of descriptive data, and organized facial features into recognizable taxonomies, arguing that the shape and proportion of the parts of the face revealed systematically a subject's character, while maintaining the tradition of "animal-human parallels as a basis for moral interpretation" [see *Figure 12*].¹²⁷

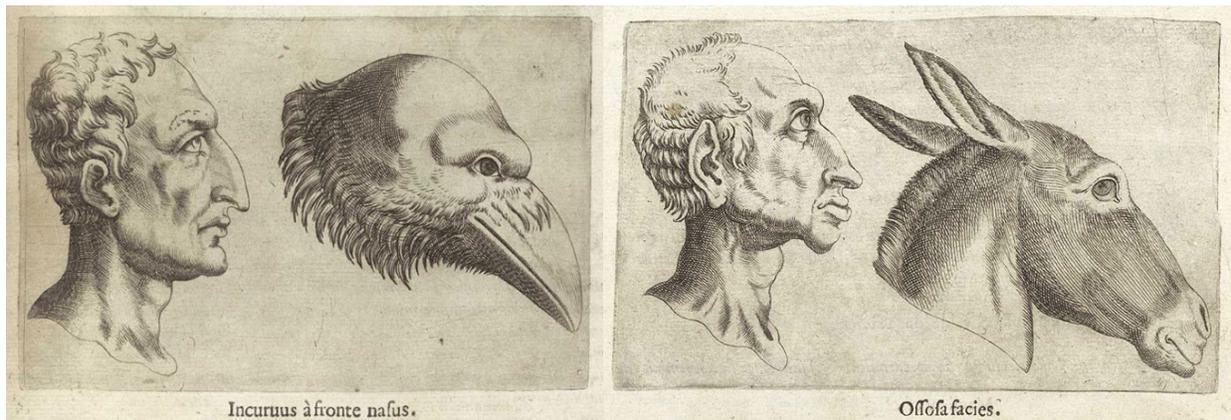


Figure 11: Two illustrations from della Porta's *De humana physiognomia* (1586). Della Porta's work, following that of the classical physiognomists, contended that insights about human character could be revealed by the comparison of human and animal features.

¹²⁶ Le Brun directed the Académie, and was named First Painter of the King by Louis XIV. Judith Wechsler, *A Human Comedy: Physiognomy and Caricature in 19th Century Paris* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 16. Lucy Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth-Century Culture*, *Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture* 29 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 19. For complete discussion of the later influence of Le Brun's one surviving lecture from the 1698 series, see: Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's "Conférence Sur l'expression Générale et Particulière"* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).

¹²⁷ Wechsler, *A Human Comedy*, 24. Landau, *About Faces*, p. 117.



Figure 12: In addition to human-animal comparisons, Lavater in his *Essays* provided studies of “national physiognomy.” Of the figure labeled 6, for instance, he wrote that “This is visibly an Italian countenance. The nose is entirely national.” National phrenology was also pathological to the profiles of business celebrities. In *Cosmopolitan’s* “*Captains of Industry*” profile of the financier William Collins Whitney, the author wrote that “He looks so like a typical stalwart Scot that one feels like calling him ‘Sandy.’ His head in particular has that long ‘upward and backward’ build which characterizes the heads which have enabled Scotland to outwit the rest of the world.”¹²⁸

The visual iconography of American cartooning was linked directly with this tradition, as cartoonists borrowed from, or were even educated in, European representational traditions [see *Figure 13*].

¹²⁸ Charles S. Glead, “William Collins Whitney,” *The Cosmopolitan*, August 1902.

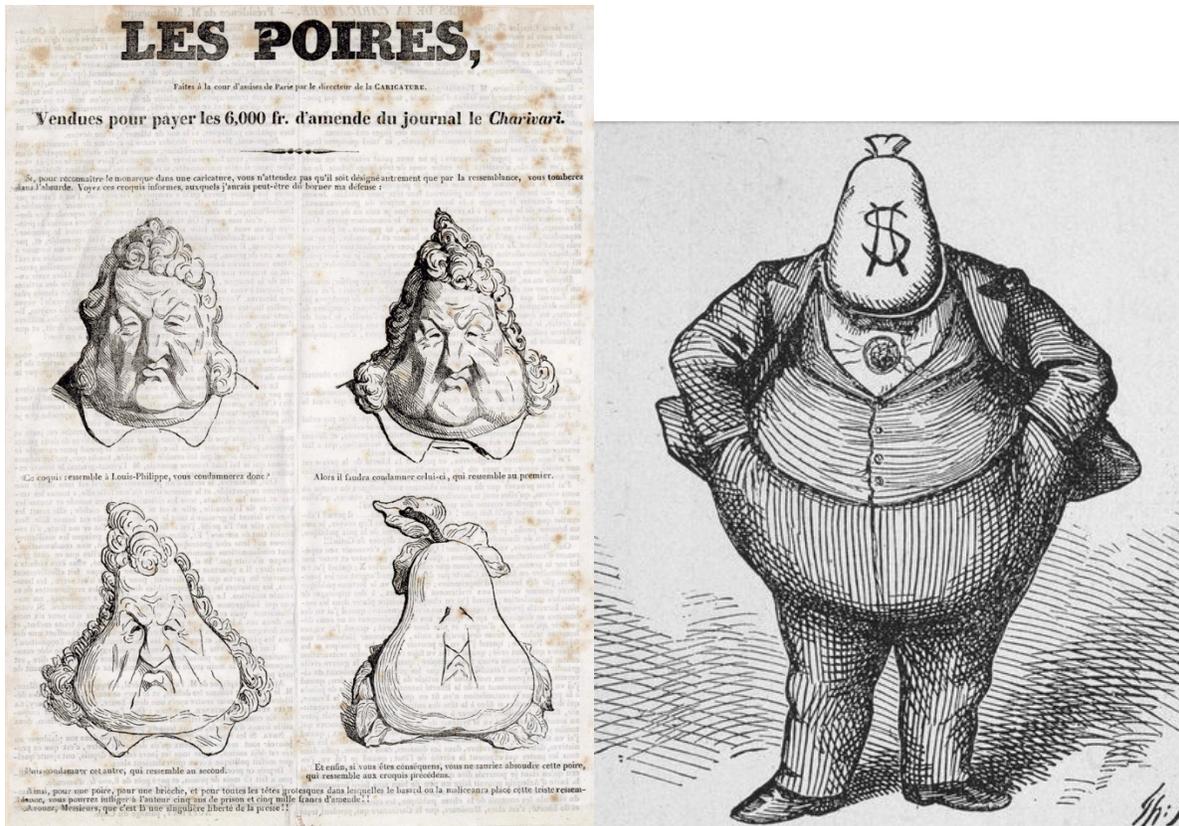


Figure 13: A speculative suggestion of European influence: Left: Honoré Daumier's famous cartoon treatment of Louis Philippe as "the pear." Daumier invented the iconography to avoid strict nineteenth century censors. "Les poires" is also a pun, sounding much like "poire," meaning literally "fat-head." Right: Thomas Nast's "The Brains," from Harper's Weekly in October 1871. Nast's treatment of Tammany Hall's William "Boss" Tweed was so legendary that it provoked Tweed's famous (likely apocryphal) outburst: "I don't care so much what the papers write about me. My constituents can't read. But, damn it, they can see pictures."¹²⁹

Joseph Keppler, for instance, *Puck's* founder and the United States' premier cartoonist, was born in Vienna in 1838 and trained at the Viennese Academy of Fine Arts, which likely employed manuals similar to, or based on, those of Le Brun well into the nineteenth century. At the very least, in a 1892 interview he gave to a *New York Herald* journalist, Keppler described his approach to caricature in a way that was wholly consistent with that proposed by Lavater and Le Brun. Though Keppler was noted for the relative accuracy of his cartoon portraits, he was often faced with the challenge of drawing a face of which he had not seen a reliable likeness.¹³⁰ Keppler

¹²⁹ Stephen Hess and Sandy Northrop, *American Political Cartoons: The Evolution of a National Identity, 1754-2010*, 1st Transaction ed (New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Publishers, 2011), p. 8.

¹³⁰ Richard Samuel West summarized Keppler's style as follows: "careful composition, an eye for detail, a preference for accurate portraiture over exaggerated caricature, and the predilection to employ analogous historical

recalled that in these cases, with little upon which to base the cartoon, he relied on a catalogue of canonical faces and types, and on animal-human comparisons:

Of course, I was familiar with hundreds of faces of historic men, and soon found that almost every man I met looked somewhat like one or another of these. So I began to form a plan of noting in my mind how these men differed from the historically familiar faces. One man, for instance, would look like Napoleon, only his nose would not be quite so long. So, you see, I did not have to remember [the subject's] whole face, but only the difference between it and Napoleon's... *Then, too, almost every man looks like or rather suggests to me some animal or bird or some inanimate thing. One man looks like a fish in the face, another like a bull, another like a frog, an owl, an eagle.*¹³¹ [emphasis added]

Nineteenth century periodicals like the *Phrenological Journal* meant that reproductions of historical portraits were difficult to avoid, but this comparison, in Keppler's own voice, between human and animal facial types is a direct reference to the physiognomic tradition [see *Figure 14*]. Indeed Le Brun, in his *Conférence sur l'expression*, recounted that his study was informed by three categories of evidence: the heads of ancient rulers and philosophers, specific studies of living subjects, and a comparison of the heads of men and animals.¹³²

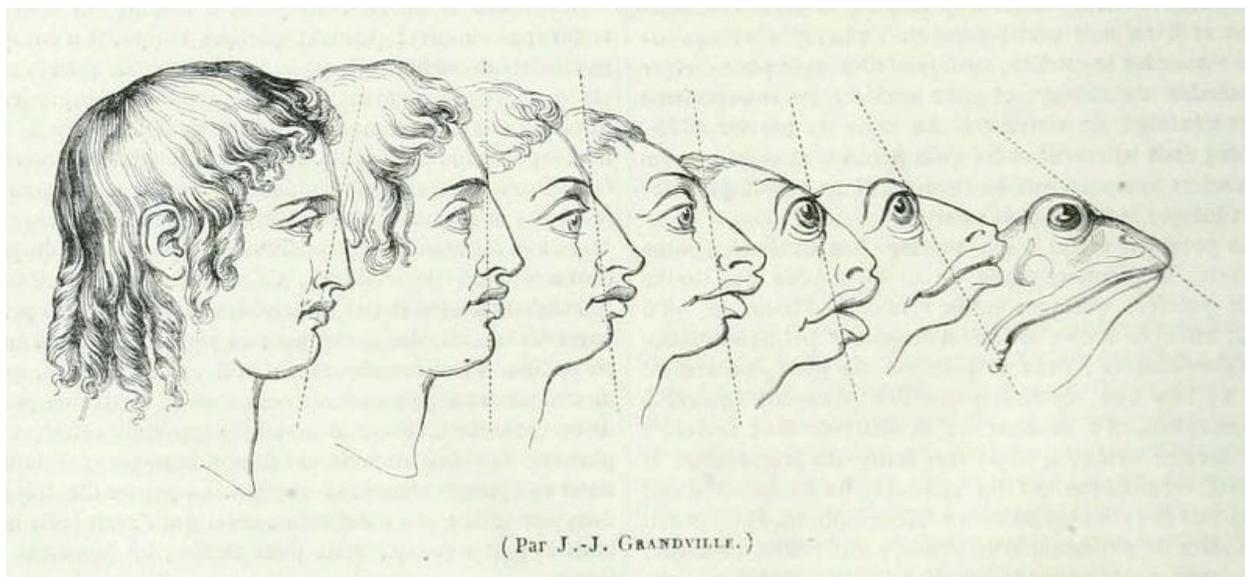


Figure 14: Jean Isidore Gérard Grandville (1803-46), a highly imaginative artist with interests in physiognomy, published a series of drawings in *Le Magasin pittoresque* which aimed to show the derivation of men from 'Brutes.' In this image, Apollo (at left) is shown as different by degree from the frog. The facial angles, mapped by the dotted lines, were important to the

dramas to make a point." West, *Satire on Stone*, p. 5.

¹³¹ West, *Satire on Stone*, p. 129. "Keppler Tells How to Make Cartoons," *New York Herald*, September 18, 1892.

¹³² Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth-Century Culture*, 22.

*physiognomists and phrenologists, as they indicated both intellect and character. This use of facial angle was preserved in the American pocket manuals, with Vaught's Practical Character Reader instructing casual physiognomists to ask "where does it touch the line?" Contact at the forehead indicated an intellectual type, contact at the nose a "moral" type, and at the chin an animal type. Grandville's Apollo is perfectly balanced between the three regions.*¹³³

Along with these animal references, exaggeration provided caricature with its satirical thrust. In the same 1892 interview, Keppler shared that "first we have to determine what feature is to be exaggerated. If a man has an extraordinarily prominent nose, we must make it more prominent, but we must preserve its character." Like for the phrenologists, for Keppler "character was the essential thing."¹³⁴ But character was not just a defining physical trait (like J.P. Morgan's extraordinarily prominent nose, for instance), but rather the essence of the subject: "if a man is notoriously stingy, that stinginess must be pictured in his caricature, and pictured extravagantly, so that it will stand out as the most prominent feature of the portrait...this trait of character must be told in the expression of his body as well as his face," Keppler instructed.¹³⁵ Like for the phrenologists, the exaggerated aspect (the subject's character) was not strictly physical, but a gestalt depiction of his essence—a task for which cartooning, with its inheritance from the moral sciences, was ideally suited. How to depict Rockefeller's stinginess? Lavater, Le Brun, and Fowler could, feature by feature, point the way.

Character Types and the Stubborn Persistence of the Personalized Enterprise

If physiognomy provided a set of recognizable visual codes through which to depict and analyze individuals, the question remained as to what these individuals would represent—their own private persons, or the companies, industries, or activities with which they were associated. As the biographical profiles studied in the previous chapter reveal, the line between these two

¹³³ This model of linear, scalar connectivity between divine and low forms of creation is consistent with the longstanding European cosmological notion of the "Great Chain of Being." Arthur Lovejoy, in his classic study in the History of Ideas, describes the lineage of the Platonic notion of the Great Chain down into the eighteenth century, and roughly contemporary with Grandville. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960).

¹³⁴ "Character the Essential Thing."

¹³⁵ West, *Satire on Stone*, p. 130.

representational categories was often blurred, with journalists concluding that the character of the corporation reflected the character of the individual businessman. Indeed, much like E.H. Harriman was able to give his name to an entire “comprehensive financial force,” in many of *Puck*’s cartoons the famous moguls represent their corporate enterprises, or even entire industries, while still exhibiting recognizable individual features. By illustrating the large corporations as “extensions of the sinister will of individual owners” Keppler and his staff made them legible within the period’s physiognomic image vernacular, enabling their polemical and satirical effects, but failing to depict their genuine structure or operation.¹³⁶

This outcome may have stemmed, at least in part, from Keppler’s diagnosis of, and prescription for, the social pathologies toward which he directed his chalk. West, in his biographical treatment of Keppler, argues that his antimonopoly impulse was rooted in an objection to the methods and behaviors of the monopolists, not in a more sophisticated political economy that apportioned blame to environmental forces: “Keppler was opposed to corruption and inequity, but these were ills, he believed, that were brought about by bad men—unscrupulous politicians and avaricious businessmen—not ills inherent in the system.”¹³⁷ Keppler saw the moguls as the ultimate agents of consolidation, and felt that if there were simply upstanding citizens acting in their stead, the country would be free from the consequent harms of corporate largess.¹³⁸ In other words, Keppler, like the Fowlers, Phrenologized the problem, collapsing expansive economic events into character dramas, and holding up moral improvement as the necessary solution.

¹³⁶ Knight, *Reading the Market*, pp. 113-115.

¹³⁷ West, *Satire on Stone*, p. 318. Richard John has described this position as “open-access antimonopolism.” John, “Proprietary Interest,” p. 14.

¹³⁸ Richard John has described this position as “open-access antimonopolism.” John, “Proprietary Interest,” p. 14.

A closer analysis of several of these cartoons, though, suggests that while cartoon subjects often corresponded to specific individuals, *Puck's* cartoonists deployed physiognomic and phrenological conventions to cast well-known figures as economic and social *types*. For example, in 1902 Udo Keppler (the son of Joseph Keppler, and who changed his name to honor his father after his death in 1894) published a cartoon of J.P. Morgan cast in the role of the Pied Piper, blowing a pipe labeled “Merger,” and leading a crowd of diminutive investors including bank presidents, corporate lawyers, Wall Street brokers and operators, journalists, and the general public in his wake [see *Figure 15*].¹³⁹ Keppler labeled Morgan’s cap, but he is easily identifiable thanks to the slight exaggeration of certain of his defining attributes, and especially of his rhinophymaic nose. This image of the financier has a long iconographic history. Inspired by Lavater in 1835 Honoré Daumier published a caricature of “The Banker,” to whom he referred as a “coffer exclusively fit for finances.”¹⁴⁰ The Lavater passage from which Daumier drew included an extended description of a “type to avoid.” The type was recognizable as a “Large bulky person, with small eyes, round full hanging cheeks, puffed lips, and a chin resembling a purse or bag.”¹⁴¹ Indeed, returning to *Following the Piper*, Keppler clearly emphasizes, through both scale and the contrast of color, the protrusion of Morgan’s belly, and the elaborate folds of his cheeks. Even Morgan’s bright, boxy chin, with Lavater’s description fresh, appears to sit on his face as a kind of chin-strap, attached by deeply-trenched dimples that almost resemble straps—like those of a swinging purse. Further, Morgan is drawn similarly to certain of the anonymous figures who follow in his wake, sharing the sagging cheeks, bulging paunch, and piercing eyes with the Bank

¹³⁹ *Following the Piper*, September 17, 1902, Chromolithograph, September 17, 1902, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.25672/>.

¹⁴⁰ Wechsler, *A Human Comedy*, p. 94. Daumier, “The Banker: Called financial capacity, because he is nothing but a recipient, a coffer exclusively fit for finances,” *French Types*, 1835.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, p. 380.

President, Railroad Magnate, and Wall St. Operator, but clearly differentiated from the chic image of the broker. Though Keppler almost certainly did not have Lavater's passage or Daumier's caricature in mind while illustrating Morgan as the Piper, here the influence of physiognomy on the development of the iconography of capitalist representation is particularly clear. The cartoon's focus is explicitly the ongoing "Great Merger Movement," but, rather than depicting the wide cast of characters, and complex web of forces, that drive enterprises toward consolidation, Keppler instead illustrates Morgan in the familiar image of the Banker—highlighting Morgan's individual agency in the process, and that of the category he represents.

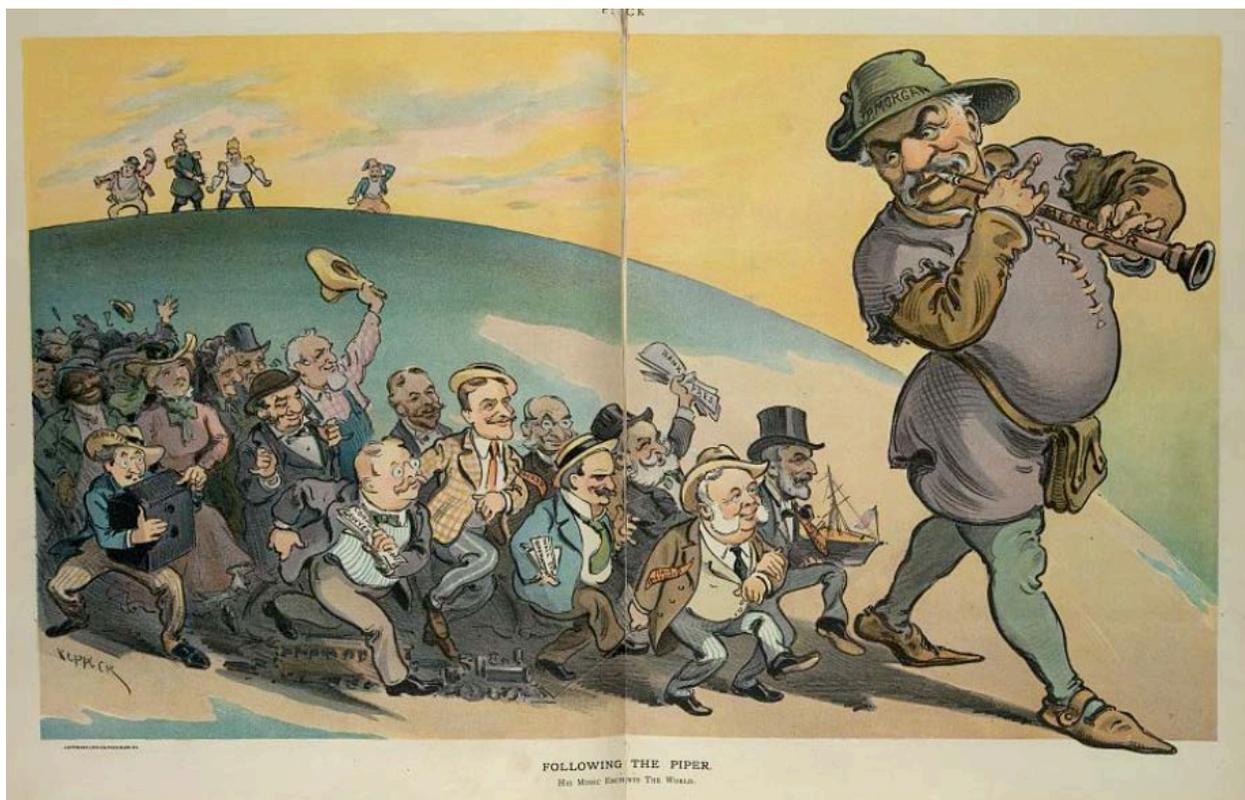


Figure 15: Keppler cast Morgan in the role of the Pied Piper, leading a crowd of brokers, speculators, builders, and the public in his wake. Keppler here exaggerates certain of Morgan's recognizable features—the stricken nose, the bulging paunch, the sagging cheeks, and the button chin. Comparison to earlier caricature, and to the literature of the phrenologists, suggests that these features are consistent with the type of the "Banker." Morgan's right middle finger is also raised, interestingly.

Another Keppler cartoon of this kind depicted Morgan, Harriman, and Rockefeller together, seated around a circular table, and watching a dreidel-like toy Theodore Roosevelt

rocking and swiveling back and forth between them [see *Figure 16*].¹⁴² The moguls were left unnamed, but were immediately recognizable to *Puck*'s readers as recurring subjects with identifiable traits: Morgan's nose, paunch, firm chin, and sagging cheeks; Rockefeller's gaunt frame, long, bird-like nose, lack of any hair on the face, just a line for a mouth; Harriman's spectacles, full, fleshy face, bushy mustache, and comb-over.

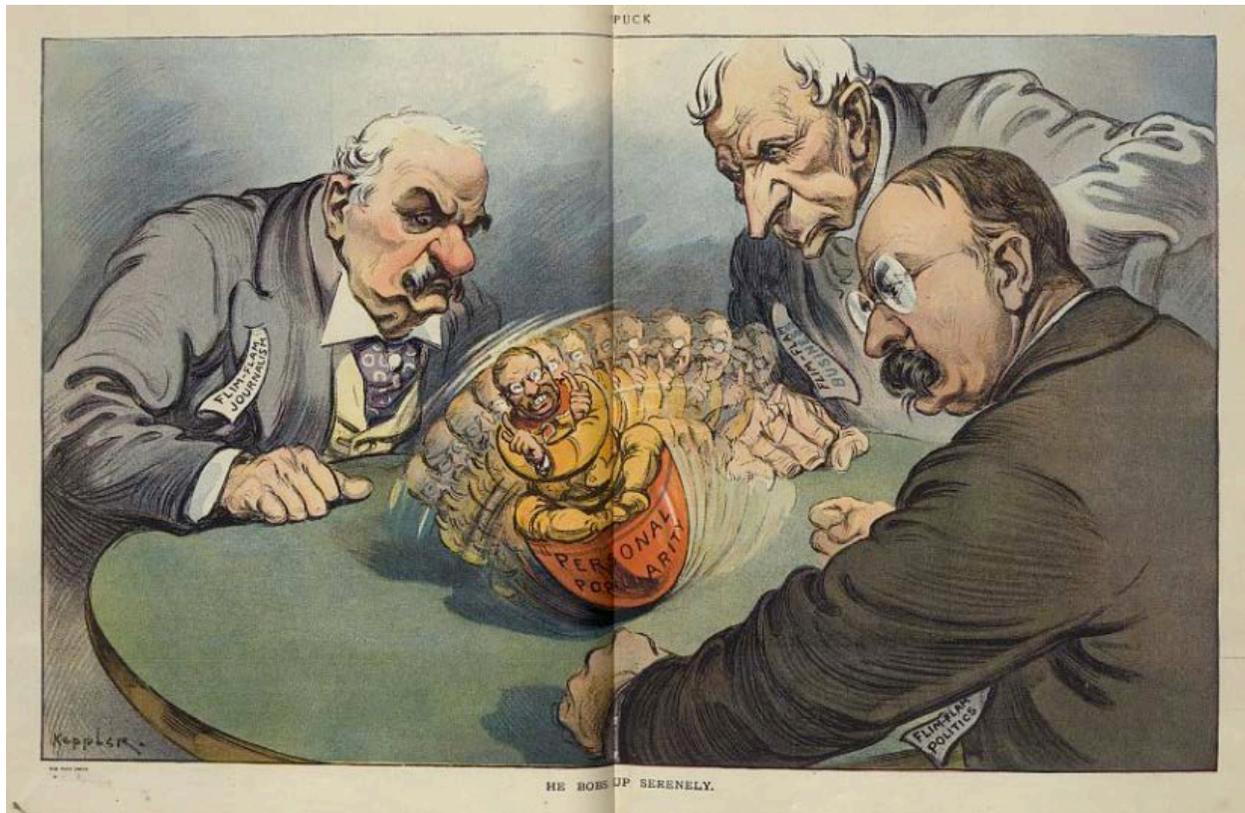


Figure 16: Udo Keppler's He Bobs Up Serenely in Puck's October 9, 1907 edition. The lapel-tags were a typical Puck naming device. Morgan is here labeled "Flim-flam Journalism", Rockefeller "flim-flam business", and Harriman "flim-flam politics." Theodore Roosevelt is perched on the spinning toy labeled "Personal Popularity."

To ensure subjects were not misidentified, *Puck* cartoons often featured name tags affixed to characters' lapels. But in this cartoon, the nametags label the moguls as images representative of three categories of "flim-flam"—journalism, politics, and business—rather than as either private persons or corporate composites. Here, the recognizable businessman stands-in not just for the

¹⁴² Udo J. Keppler, *He Bobs Up Serenely*, October 9, 1907, Photomechanical Print, October 9, 1907, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.26209/>.

corporation, but for a whole category of morally-dubious interventions in the public sphere. As in the case of Morgan as the Pied Piper, the physiognomy of the characters, in addition to the cartoon's content, fixes the moral valence of the figures, both biographical and representative, that Keppler depicts. The fleshy, bulbous, sagging features of the financiers, coupled with the obscured, beady eyes of Morgan and Rockefeller mark the trio as icons of “flim-flam”—greedy, self-interested, anti-democratic swindlers.

But if these cartoons were able to represent industries and economic types through the persons of the famous businessmen, it was essential that the celebrity caricatures remained an accurate depiction of the celebrity as he existed in the imagination of the contemporary public. Consistent with this need, the depiction of John D. Rockefeller underwent a rather radical transformation over a short period. As late as 1900 and 1901, *Puck's* John S. Pughe depicted Rockefeller as a firm, forceful, sturdy, respectable businessman. In *The King of the Combinations* (1901), Rockefeller, dressed in a royal robe lined with dollar signs, poses atop a Standard Oil storage tank, and stares directly at the viewer, wearing a crown adorned with his varied and immense railroad and refinery holdings [see *Figure 17.1*].¹⁴³ Rockefeller's face is youthful (at the time he would have been 62), angular, and powerful, with skin untarnished by either age or guilt. His glare is fixed and intense, and he appears a man with a unified character: ruthlessness. And in a cartoon of 1900, Pughe drew Rockefeller as a stolid, unremarkable businessman, identifiable only by the nametag pinned to his lapel. In this image, Rockefeller stands amid a small group of Robber-Barons-turned-philanthropists, receiving a Christmas Sermon from *Puck*, the Shakespearean sprite that was the paper's mascot. In this group, Rockefeller lacks give-away

¹⁴³ John S. Pughe, *The King of the Combinations*, February 27, 1901, Chromolithograph, February 27, 1901.

characteristics, and is drawn with the silver hair, bushy mustache, and healthy figure that represent the middle-of-the-road businessman [see *Figure 17.2*].¹⁴⁴



Figures 17.1-17.2: Left: Pughe's *King of the Combinations* (1901), showing Rockefeller in royal garb standing atop a refinery oil storage tanker, and with crown adorned with railroads under Standard control. Right: detail from Pughe's *A Christmas Sermon* (1900), showing Rockefeller as an unremarkable, rather anonymous businessman among a crowd of contemporaries.

The next four years were clearly unkind to Rockefeller, for when he reappears in *Puck's* pages in 1905 he is a man transformed, indeed deformed, by age. In addition to the increase in the frequency of his depiction, Rockefeller's image morphed over this interval to become one of the

¹⁴⁴ John S. Pughe, *A Christmas Sermon*, December 26, 1900, Photomechanical Print, December 26, 1900, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.25485/>.

most unique and recognizable characters in the paper's pantheon. Multiple of *Puck's* cartoonists now drew Rockefeller as a scheming, expressive, bizarrely-headed ancient, totally devoid of hair on the scalp and face, with sagging and curling folds of skin, and with gaunt physique, emphasized by the recurring focus on his long, slender fingers, which seem to have grown by several inches since 1900 [see *Figures 18.1-18.4*].¹⁴⁵ From the perspective of the disciplinary physiognomy, and to the practical phrenologists, Rockefeller as figured in these 1905-1906 cartoons was an intriguing figure indeed. His beady gaze, beaked nose, bulging, massive, pointed forehead, and elongated fingers all suggested the intelligence, craftiness, deliberativeness, and deviousness in keeping with the popular understanding of his business genius—the character of the business was reflected, through the exaggeration of features and the evocation of a dominant essence, in Rockefeller's face, head, and body.



Figures 18.1-18.4: from left: detail from “At the Keyboard” (15 March 1905); detail from “A Kansas David in the Field” (22 March 1905), the black cap is a reference to Rockefeller’s public persona as a devout Baptist, and was often the primary identifying feature in cartoon treatments; Rockefeller’s club is labeled ‘Standard Oil’; detail from “Uncle John” (14 March 1906), the vulture perched on the oil can bears the face of Nelson W. Aldrich, the Senator from Rhode Island with whom Rockefeller was widely associated; detail from “As Seen From the Boxes” (31 January 1906).

¹⁴⁵ Udo J. Keppler, *At the Keyboard*, March 15, 1905, Photomechanical Print, March 15, 1905; John S. Pughe, *A Kansas David in the Field*, March 22, 1905, Photomechanical Print, March 22, 1905, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011645685/>; Frank A. Nankivell, *Uncle John*, March 14, 1906, Photomechanical Print, March 14, 1906, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011645823/>; Udo J. Keppler, *As Seen From the Boxes*, January 31, 1906, Photomechanical Print, January 31, 1906.

What triggered this shift in representation over these five years? In the first few years of the twentieth century, newspapers eagerly ran stories, syndicated across the country, reporting on Rockefeller's various physical ailments. Most spectacular of these was his generalized alopecia, which caused him to lose all of the hair on his body over the course of just a few short weeks. In response, Rockefeller roguishly ordered several European wigs (such extravagances were of additional public interest given the Rockefellers' famous Baptist abstemiousness), and experimented in public with different hairstyles.¹⁴⁶ Also well-covered was Rockefeller's dyspepsia, which caused significant weight-loss, and inspired him to eat tiny, birdlike meals at a snail's pace.¹⁴⁷ There was thus a great deal of public knowledge about some facts of Rockefeller's appearance, even despite his best efforts at privacy: he was slight, frail, and totally hairless. Indeed, this awareness was only exaggerated by Ida Tarbell's 1905 *McClure's* "Character Study" which, in its bodily analysis of Rockefeller, interpreted these ailments in explicitly moral terms, as evidence of the Faustian bargain he had made in pursuit of the Standard monopoly.¹⁴⁸

This study of Rockefeller indicates first the suitability of the cartoon genre for the moralizing interpretations of the body associated with the moral sciences—by exaggerating the well-known features of celebrity subjects, *Puck's* cartoonists could clearly communicate their moral implications. But even in these prints, focused as they were on the intimate, tabloid details of Rockefeller's health, he still nonetheless represented the entirety of the oil and financial power

¹⁴⁶ A survey of this coverage includes: "Alopecia A Nervous Disorder Leaves Rockefeller Without Hair," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 13, 1902; "Rockefeller Loses His Hair: Richest Man In The World Said To Be Totally Bald," *The Baltimore Sun*, March 24, 1902; "Saves Money But Not Hair," *The Atlanta Constitution*, March 25, 1902; "What! Ho! Wig of Rockefeller to Fill Church," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 10, 1905; "Rockefeller's New Wig Made From Women's Hair," *The Atlanta Constitution*, February 24, 1907.

¹⁴⁷ "Just Dyspepsia Cure. May Sue Rockefeller.," *New-York Tribune*, October 17, 1905.

¹⁴⁸ Tarbell, "John D. Rockefeller: A Character Study [Part Two]."

he had founded decades before, and the daily operations of which he was no longer directly in control [see *Figure 18.2*].

Animals, Monsters, and Hybrid Creatures: Physiognomy's Legacy?

In the historical literature, the most famous of the period's cartoons of the corporations are not those featuring recognizable capitalists, but rather those representing them as animals and monsters. The most famous of these was the octopus, which was well-suited to describing those enterprises that crept and extended tentacularly into diverse areas of American life—everything from the tariff to Mormonism received the octopus treatment.¹⁴⁹ The corporate octopus first appeared in the cartoon literature in 1873, well before the beginning of the “Great Merger Movement” of the 1890s, and predating the representational crisis it provoked [see *Figure 19*]. But as a generic device for treating corporate complexity, though, the octopus was available to the cartoonists of the 1890s and 1900s for their treatments of the new consolidated firms, and its frequency and prominence in the literature increased during these years. Indeed, the most famous example of *Puck's* treatments of Standard Oil is Keppler's *Next!* (1904), which pictured the Standard Oil octopus, the body of which was made-up of a gargantuan oil tank, stretching across the country. Already in its grasp was the State House and the U.S. Congress, and its leading tentacle is in the process of reaching out to seize Theodore Roosevelt's White House [see *Figure 20*]. The association between the Standard and the octopus became so deeply-rooted that it even bled into popular coverage of Rockefeller as an individual, private person. In a 1908 article, *The Baltimore Sun* mockingly envisioned the coat of arms that Rockefeller ought to design given his status as a kind of American aristocrat. The coat might:

represent an octopus rampant with an oil-can clasped in one tentacle and a gold coin in another, and with other feelers curled around railroads, mines, mills, cities and States. The

¹⁴⁹ The origins of the octopus are in the European literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For discussion of these literary roots, see: John, “Proprietary Interest.”

crest might be the old American eagle, flapping his wings and screaming for help. The shield would, of course, be of gold and silver, under a shower of greenbacks and banknotes. The motto might be ‘My Country—no trespassing—it belongs to me!’¹⁵⁰

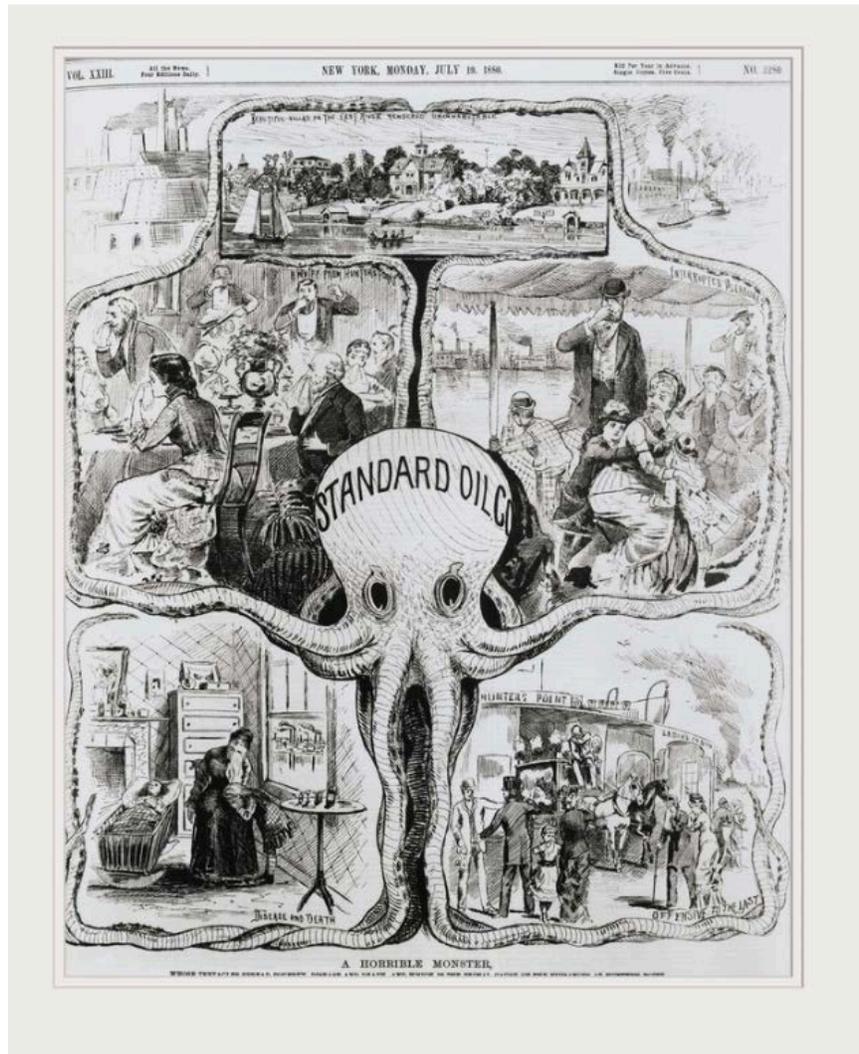


Figure 19: This early depiction of the Standard Oil octopus focused not on the corporation's grasp on government, but on its environmental impact, detailing the ruinous consequences of its New York area refineries on the quality of the air. "A Horrible Monster," *Daily Graphic*, July 19, 1880.

¹⁵⁰ "Sir John Rockefeller, Chief of the Barons," *The Baltimore Sun*, September 5, 1908.

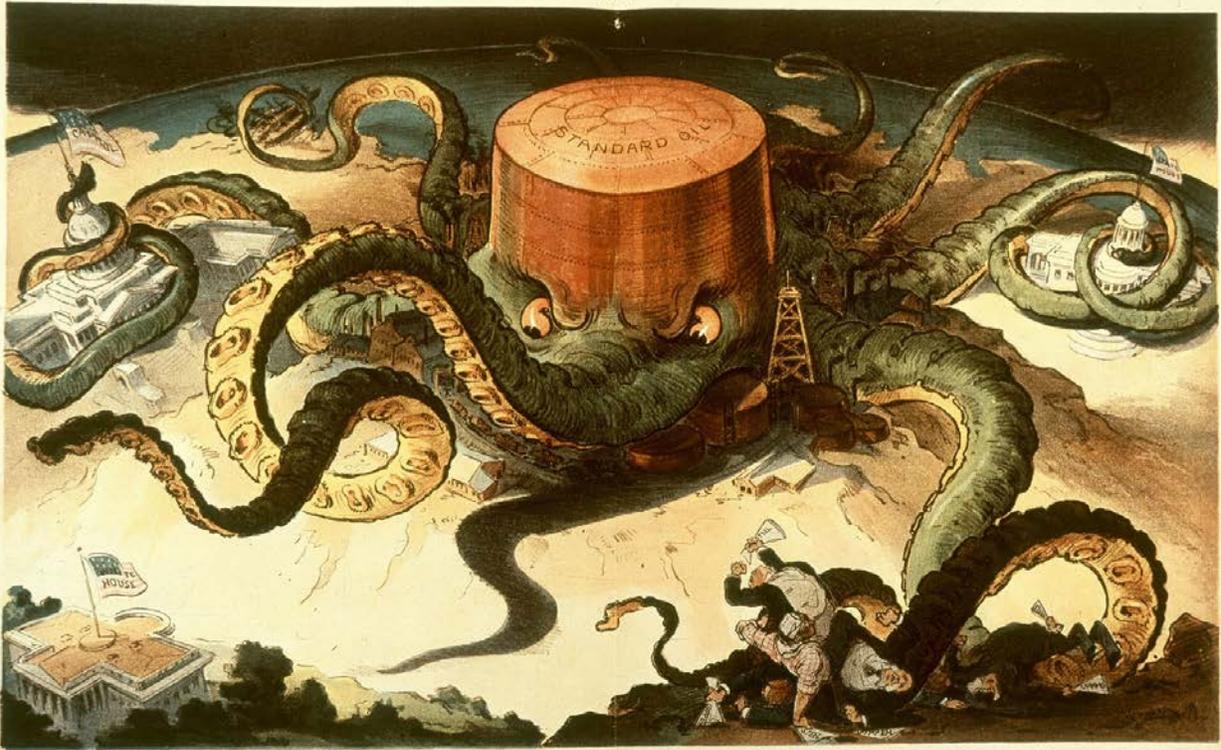


Figure 20: Udo Keppler's Next! (7 September 1904), which showed the tentacles of the Standard Oil octopus with the State House and Congress already in its grasp, and reaching out toward the Theodore Roosevelt White House, is perhaps the best and most enduring example of the octopus as a representational device.

Though the cartoonists drew monstrous animals independent of their associated corporate celebrities, this device, of casting the characteristics of the visually-representative animal back onto the person of the famous businessman, was likewise deployed to great effect, mixing animal and human elements to create new hybrid forms. In some cases, the industry of the subject corporation implied the animal elements. A 1909 *Puck* cover feature, for instance, showed William Howard Taft carrying Roosevelt's "big stick," and striding confidently into a mire of hybrid corporate monsters [see *Figure 21*]. The heads of Rockefeller and Harriman, both so closely identified with railroading, are affixed to snaking bodies of petroleum and cargo carriages, respectively. The "Beef Trust" similarly draws on its product to form a new body, with a link of sausages rising into the form of another crouching snake. Around these recognizable figures are a collection of lizards and toads, figuring generally the sleaziness of those individuals and forces

lurking around the so-called special interests—Senator Nelson Aldrich of Rhode Island, with whom Rockefeller was so often paired, Joseph Gurney Cannon, the dominant Republican Speaker of the House from 1903-1911, and the anonymized “Land Grafter,” “Ship Subsidy,” and “Preserved Food.”¹⁵¹

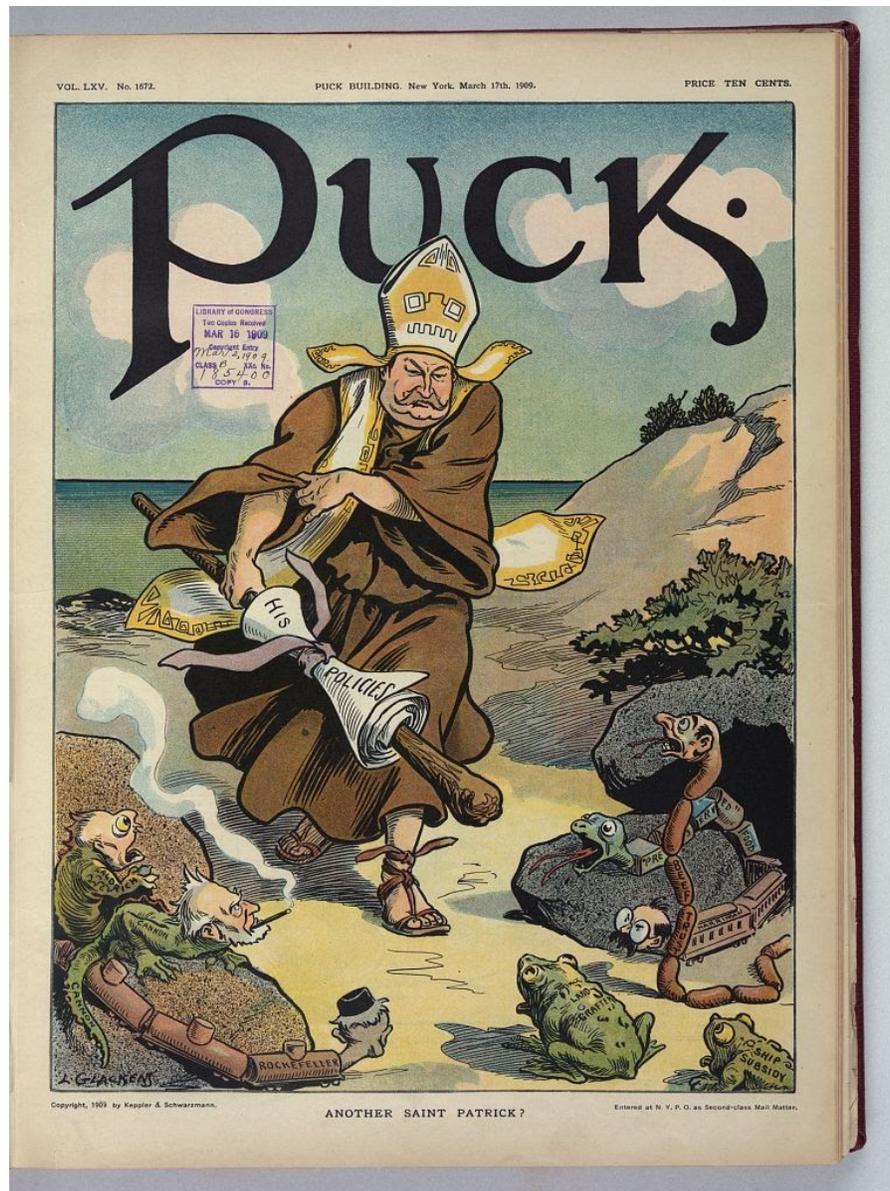


Figure 21: Puck’s “Another Saint Patrick?” of 1909 showed William Howard Taft carrying the deacon of Roosevelt’s “Big Stick” labeled with “His Policies” toward the hybrid, serpentine, and reptilian figures of the trusts. Rockefeller is identifiable

¹⁵¹ Louis M. Glackens, *Another Saint Patrick?*, March 17, 1909, Photomechanical Print, March 17, 1909, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.26358/>.

also by his ever-present Baptist, refinery-tank-evoking cap, while Harriman's bushy eyebrows and large spectacles are likewise featured as attributes.

By combining the recognizable, attributable heads of corporate celebrities with animal bodies composed of their industry's defining infrastructure, cartoonists were able to indicate and exaggerate the gestalt character of the industry, which Keppler had laid-out as the imperative work of the cartoonist. In another cartoon illustrative of this combination, here drawing on classical mythology, *Puck's* Frank Nankivell drew the heads of Rockefeller and Aldrich seamlessly affixed to long, swirling, and powerful serpentine bodies, while the "infant Hercules," clearly Roosevelt, grasps them determinately, and apparently does just enough to keep them at bay [see *Figure 22*].¹⁵² In this image, the head of Rockefeller is illustrated similarly to those depictions *Puck* published during these years [see *Figures 18.1-18.4*], but his other-worldly, non-human, and monstrous features—hairlessness, sagging skin, the slit-like mouth, the bulbous forehead, and so on—are exaggerated further still. Most notably, Nankivell printed both Rockefeller and Aldrich's eyes in bright red, which, combined with their serpentine bodies, made the pair positively devilish. Importantly, this depiction of the hybrid Rockefeller-as-devil differed only in degree, but not in kind, from the traditional, "straight" caricature the paper typically used during these years—while the eyes were red, the head is generally unchanged [see *Figures 23.1-2*]. Much like the readers of the nineteenth century physiognomists studying the graded illustrations of facial and skeletal forms descending from the human ideal to the lowest "brutes" [see *Figure 14*], *Puck's* readership during the years 1905-6 was likewise confronted with representations of recognizable figures fixed clearly along this gradient. Rockefeller, when approvingly understood as the uncompromised, respectable, devout businessman and civic-minded philanthropist, was pictured as such, with a sturdy, healthy build and a decent, even handsome expression. But as his character was reinscribed as devious,

¹⁵² Frank A. Nankivell, *The Infant Hercules and the Standard Oil Serpents*, May 23, 1906, Photomechanical Print, May 23, 1906, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011645893/>.

avaricious, and money-mad, conspiring to corrupt local and national politics, illustration followed public opinion, and Rockefeller was booted down the human-animal scale to the image of the beast—wielding the awesome power of the divine, but without any of its goodness.

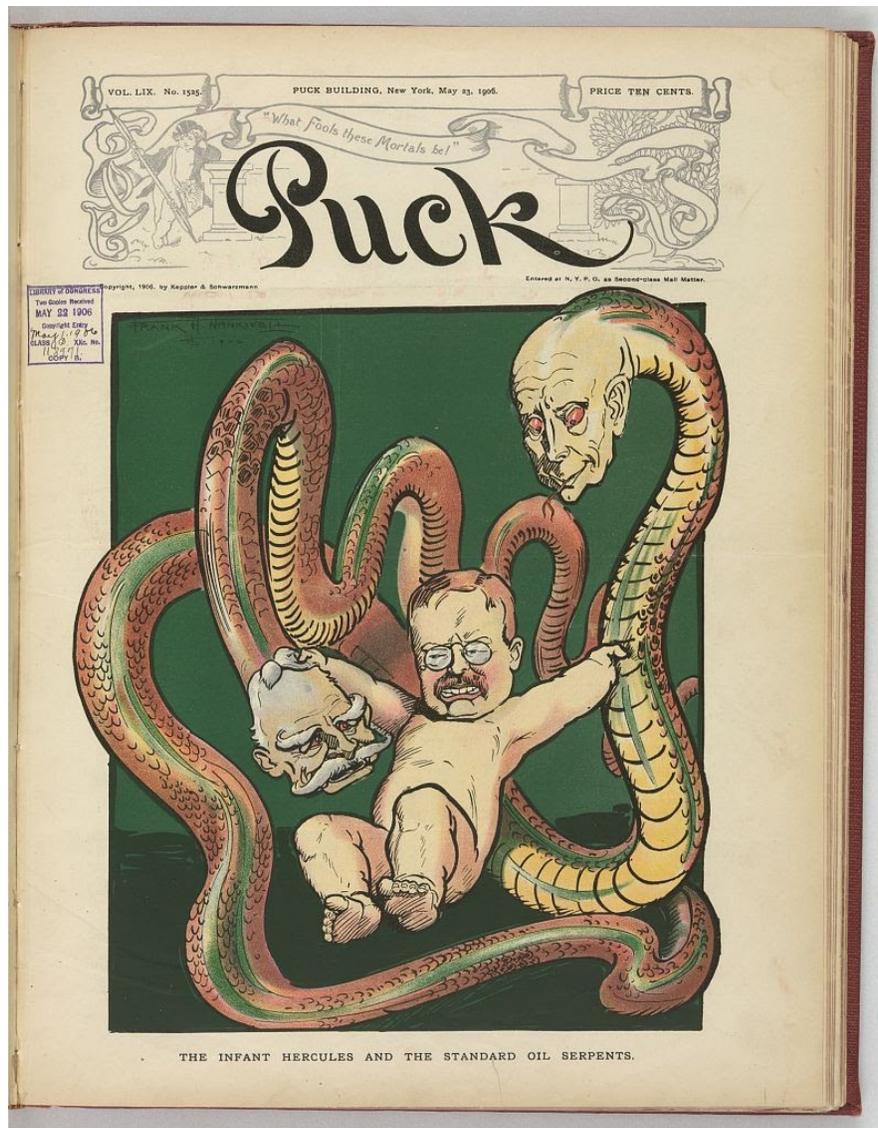
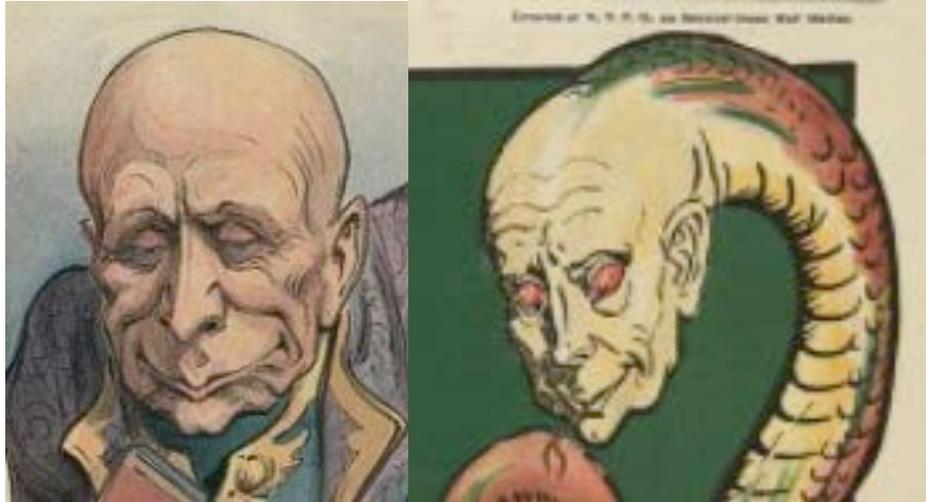


Figure 22: Puck's "The Infant Hercules and the Standard Oil Serpents" (1906) showed the serpentine Rockefeller and Aldrich just barely restrained by the infant Roosevelt.



Figures 23.1-23.2: Details of Rockefeller from (from left): "Gulliver Cleveland and the Wall Street Brobdingnagians" (January 1906) and "The Infant Hercules and the Standard Oil Serpents" (May 1906) show the similarity of representation in the "straight" and "hybrid" contexts.

Finally, and in line with the familiarity of these animal-human gradients, *Puck's* cartoonists even depicted Rockefeller in purely animal form, without human features, but nonetheless recognizable through the inclusion of select attributes. In John Pughe's "The National Bird of Prey," a "Corporate Vulture" perches above its nest of paper money, feeding a bursting bag of "Dough" to its three chicks, labeled "Our Senators," "Our Legislatures," and "Our Judges" [see *Figure 24*].¹⁵³ The vulture could presumably represent any number of pernicious corporate or special interests engaged in some variety of federal and state clientelism, and the bird is not labeled. However, perched jauntily atop its white head is the small, angular, black Baptist cap that was almost-always featured in Rockefeller's cartoon treatments, and which made the vulture immediately identifiable to *Puck's* in-the-know readership. Seen through the lens of the physiognomists' interest in animal-human comparison toward the revelation of character, the vulture is here the perfect distillation of Rockefeller's animal type, analogous to his appearance

¹⁵³ John S. Pughe, *The National Bird of Prey*, September 6, 1905, September 6, 1905, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011645733/>.

(with beaky nose, slit-like mouth, large, high forehead, and wide-set eyes), and characteristic of his business practices and social impact.

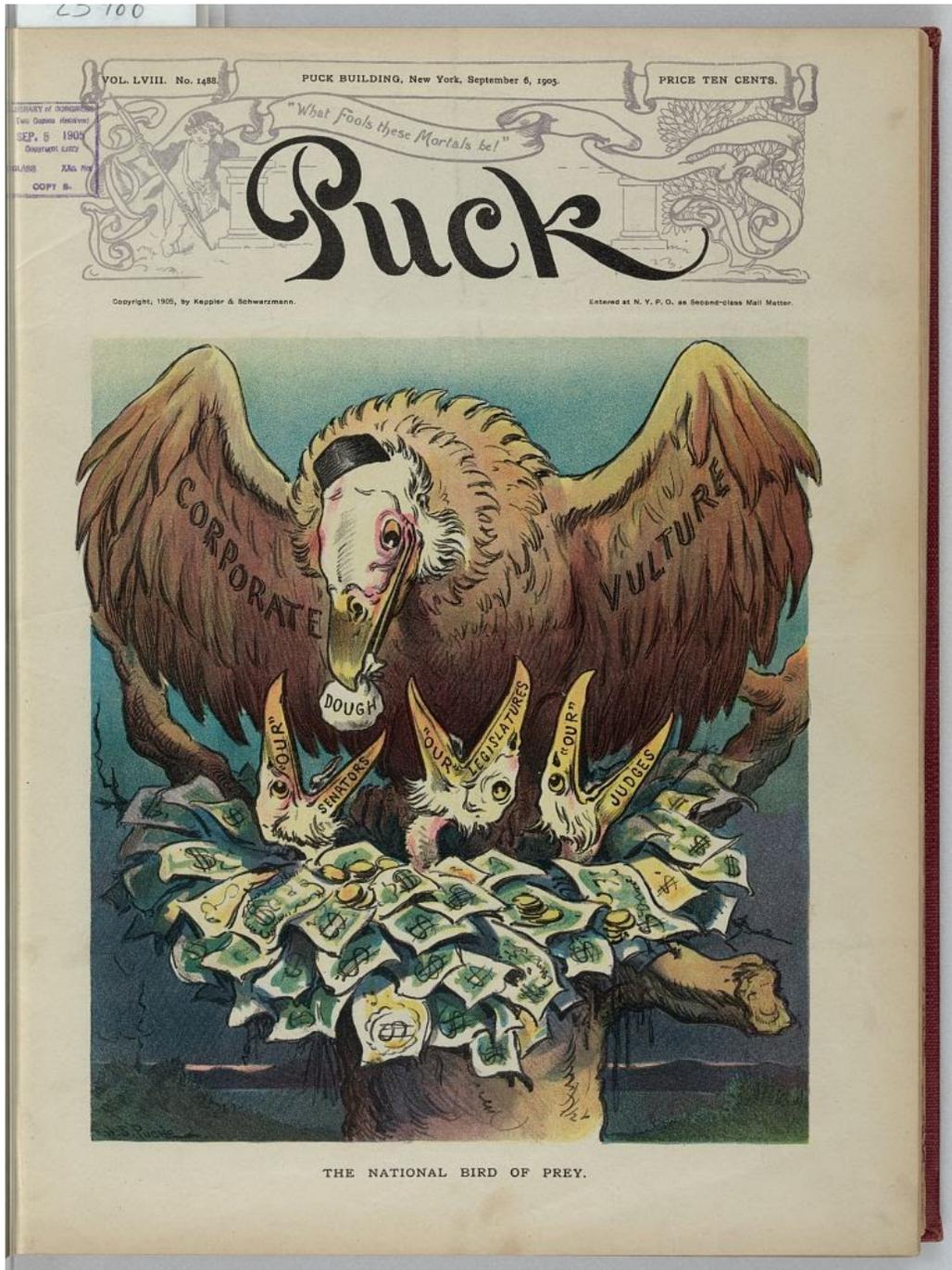


Figure 24: John S. Pughe's "The National Bird of Prey" (September 6, 1905), is recognizable as Rockefeller through the inclusion of the black Baptist cap with which he is so often pictured.

These direct analogies between the recognizable attributes of the period's moguls to the familiar forms of animals and monsters illustrate the centrality of physiognomy's methods and assumptions to the practice of satirical cartooning into the twentieth century. If *Puck*'s cartoonists were to resolve the crisis of representation created by the rapid development of new complex forms of consolidated corporate ownership, their cartoons would need to make legible that complexity. But by repeatedly collapsing corporate life into a conspiratorial drama unfolding between recognizable gestalt corporate persons, *Puck* insisted that character, not complexity, was still "the essential thing."¹⁵⁴ A focus on the moral sciences helps explain this persistent emphasis on character: cartooning as a discipline, craft, and practice was designed to reveal character through facial analysis, attribute exaggeration, and animal comparison. So when confronted with new corporations, that were frustratingly complicated but obviously of world-historical importance, the cartoonists relied on the disciplinary convention of personalization to communicate their moral status and effects. If these cartoons left on-the-ground commercial operations unclear, they powerfully illustrate polemical readings of the *character* of big business, and were capable of transforming public opinion and inspiring political action.

¹⁵⁴ "Character the Essential Thing," *Phrenological Journal*, 1905.

Conclusion

It is difficult to overstate the scale and magnitude of the transformations that occurred during the decades on either side of the turn of the twentieth century in just about every dimension of American life, and perhaps none exerted a greater distributed impact than the transformation from proprietor to corporate ownership. Journalists, editors, publishers, social researchers, artists, and cartoonists alike confronted this brave new world, and experimented with new techniques for writing about and representing modern political and economic life. But in this thesis I have instead focused on an intellectual artefact of the nineteenth century—the moral sciences that revealed the subject’s character through the study of their body—and the secular packaging of its methods and assumptions. By surveying three genres of public-facing coverage of the new corporations, I have argued that these earlier analytical techniques, especially the substitution of the individual businessman for the complex whole of the consolidated corporation, were brought forward into modern economic coverage. The wide-spread availability of the moral sciences, especially phrenology and physiognomy, provided both a written and visual language for analyzing these substitute and composite persons, and for revealing their *character*. With an understanding of *character*, even in the absence of accurate, coherent knowledge of *operation*, authors and cartoonists could polemicize about these new powerful social forces, and participate in the period’s most explosive political debates and controversies.

In this thesis I have posed the question: when researchers of the period claimed to represent and analyze the corporations, what were they, in fact, researching? Through this parallel reading of genres of corporate coverage I have argued that they were, in fact, representing and analyzing people—the famous and recognizable business moguls. The personalization of the corporation

allowed these participants to deploy the familiar and long-standing heuristics provided by the moral sciences, and to make far-reaching conclusions about the shape and distribution of the new economy.

It is a time-honored cliché to cast around breathlessly in the conclusion for the relevance of historical interests to the events of today, and as an undergraduate historian I am unwilling and unable to resist it. Over the past decade, physiognomy and phrenology have experienced a renaissance in popular media amid controversy over facial recognition technologies and the racial biases and social assumptions implicit in unsupervised algorithms. With applications for policing and surveillance in development and in use, these technologies are indeed in some sense the fulfillment of certain on the nineteenth-century’s phrenologists’ fantasies.¹⁵⁵

But the consolidated corporations of the Great Merger Movement have also been recentered because of resurgent anxieties over corporate largess, with those figures associated with the largest technology companies—Bezos, Zuckerberg, Musk, Gates—held up as the Robber Barons of a “Second Gilded Age.”¹⁵⁶ But rather than focusing on the extent of industrial consolidation alone, it is worth noting just how closely certain of this contemporary literature reflects the phrenological coverage that has been the focus of this thesis. In a 2019 profile for *The*

¹⁵⁵ A Japanese startup, just as one example, developed a product called the AI Guardman, which monitors CCTV footage for “suspicious behavior” to alert authorities before shoplifting occurs. Police in 2019 even made a preemptive arrest based on its alert. Lisa Du and Ayaka Maki, “‘Minority Report’ gets real as Japan startup develops AI cameras to spot shoplifters before they steal,” *The Japan Times*, March 5, 2019. Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), the Italian criminologist who produced famous and influential phrenological studies of criminals, advocated for predictive phrenological applications, suggesting that children might be separated based on body and head measurements. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-1799), the German polymath and early critic of physiognomy, anticipated this possibility, writing that “If physiognomy becomes what Lavater expects of it, then one will hang children before they have done the deeds that merit the gallows.” Alexander B. Todorov, *Face Value: The Irresistible Influence of First Impressions* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017): 27.

¹⁵⁶ Examples of this historical focus stemming from concerns over current corporate size include, among others: Matt Stoller, *Goliath: The 100-Year War Between Monopoly Power and Democracy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019). Tim Wu, *The Curse of Bigness: Antitrust in the New Gilded Age* (New York: Columbia Global Reports, 2018).

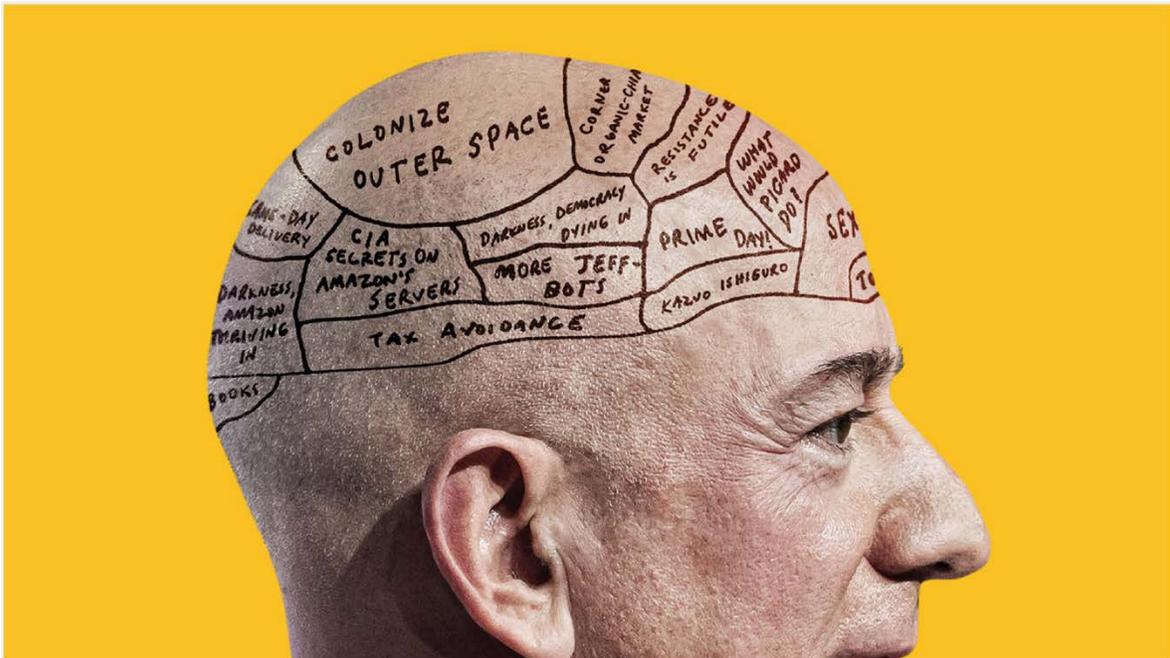
Atlantic, Franklin Foer studied Jeff Bezos and Amazon, searching for a coherent notion of the company's true nature, and for Bezos' true intentions. And yet, the complexity of the corporation made his object elusive—like Rockefeller's Standard Oil, Amazon is too various and distributed to comprehend. Foer wondered, "What is Amazon, aside from a listing on Nasdaq? This is a flummoxing question," and conceded: "Bezos's ventures are by now so large and varied that it is difficult to truly comprehend the nature of his empire"¹⁵⁷ Foer recognized, like *McClure's* Burton J. Hendrick, that Amazon was vast and highly-populated, also using the language of "systems": "Bezos' creation is less a company than an encompassing system." And, yet, the system can be collapsed easily into Bezos' person, described as "the extension of one brilliant, willful man with an incredible knack for bending the world to his values."¹⁵⁸ As a final flourish, *The Atlantic* headed the article with a satirical, phrenological diagram of Bezos, penciling in his "true," "hidden" desires onto the locations of the mental congeries, just like *Puck* had done so ably more than a century before [see *Figure 25*].

¹⁵⁷ Franklin Foer, "Jeff Bezos's Master Plan," *The Atlantic*, November 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/11/what-jeff-bezos-wants/598363/>.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Jeff Bezos's Master Plan

What the Amazon founder and CEO wants for his empire and himself, and what that means for the rest of us.



Rendering by Patrick White; Andrew Harrer / Bloomberg / Getty

FRANKLIN FOER

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Figure 25: Much like Puck's satirical invocation of the phrenological chart to skewer Pope Leo XIX [see Figure 10], the visual language of phrenology remains an effective medium for the highly-legible illustration of something "true" and "hidden" about a subject. This image headed Franklin Foer's 2019 profile of Jeff Bezos and Amazon's corporate history and future in The Atlantic.

Phrenology, then, does not seem likely to disappear from economic coverage anytime soon.

Ultimately, the practical phrenologists of the turn of the twentieth century, whether self-conscious of the science's influence or not, invoked its methods and language to resolve tremendous complexity, and to make sense of the diverse constellation of forces that shaped their world. It is a technical language for an old and resilient kind of history writing, in which Great Men move history forward, while contingency and structure are relegated to the background. In his 2019 profile Foer said of Amazon's corporate culture: "Bezos' managerial style, which had been highly personal, was codified in systems and procedures. These allowed him to scale his presence so that

even if he wasn't sitting in a meeting, his gestalt would be there."¹⁵⁹ He might as well have stuck with Emerson's original, for in the twenty-first century still the institution is simply the "lengthened shadow of one man."

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

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