

#flo #inclass

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## 1 | ma1

we need to include 3/5 themes?

we are writing to a knowledgeable audience

doesn't like despite and although for next class:

get to ideation! include a thesis and prelim evidence

### 1.1 | prompt

Often referred to as the era of Gilded Age & Progressive Reforms, the late 19th-early 20th century set the foundations - for better or worse - for Modern America. Now that you have done your background reading (YAWP) and we have three groups' research presented the time to come to form your own conclusions about this period and argue them in your first essay for spring.

Reminders of information covered in class:

Option 1: Thematic Essay. Take one of the three course themes and evolve it into your argument. You may not blend more than one; your thematic connection should be clearly evident in your thesis.

KBxHist11Sem2Day1#the big themes

Option 2: Historians' Synthesis. Use and cite the Historians' views that you choose to synthesize into your own, which is clearly evident in your thesis. See Synthesis Essay in Files.

Thur/Fri: Bring your ideation and preliminary evidence to class; be prepared to discuss with partners/small groups in order to both receive and provide insights, suggested evidence. By end of period, submit an outline that represents your progress to date.

For Mon/Tue Peer Review: Flesh out your outline into a rough draft, submit to canvas and bring a paper copy to the BEGINNING of class to exchange. First half of class is peer review and conversations, second half is work time on edits. \*\* You are well advised to consult Writing Tips document for this class which is found in Files, Research Folder.

For Thur/Fri: Final Draft due, discussion of essays in Thematic and Synthesis groups.

### 1.2 | advice from the vets

- just keep doing little steps? ~dante
- be honest about what you have ~rohan
  - space for honest feedback
- ask questions if you need ~campbell **trust is the key** ~barry don't forget to defang the counter argument ~barry use the writing tips. ~barry

### 1.3 | brainstorming

i want to talk about taylorism!

about how technology changed the workforce landscape

eg. connection from railroads -> specialization -> cyclic wealth and poverty

or, could argue that combustible and compatible change over time, and mark out times some type of meta argument about combustible/compatible?

capitalism and democracy co-evolve, and they do so along some trend? find the trend, and argue that.

some sin-wave-esqu nav between compatible and combustible? sort of staying within this balance? but amplitude is changing? stable equilibrium / self-correcting system

could also talk about the barrier / connection between capitalism and democracy, being media?

define what it actually means for something to be "compatible." combustible != just impacting has to destroy the tenets of democracy?

### 1.3.1 | possible flow

give example of swing and correct: assembly line working -> massive inequality (fundamentally driven by capitalism) labor unions and protests -> regulations (quite literally democracy in action)

but it got worse? look at TSF fire

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**META** as the system becomes larger, shifting becomes harder so our swings and corrections start to happen on a larger time scale, giving more chance to push to the extremes (and escape) **metaphor** : planet escaping orbit where 'escape' is falling into an extreme

- moving on these separate axis**
- have to consider: not just that capitalism can break democracy, but that democracy can break capitalism
    - this is the libertarian argument
  - :: between having capitalism dominate and democracy dominate
  - but the shifts are becoming larger on either end, eventually leading to an escape?

The relationship between capitalism and democracy is not aptly described by a simple binary; instead, out of time.

## 1.4 | Refined

Democracy and capitalism: combustible or compatible? answer: neither!

Democracy and capitalism are made compatible through the process of combustion.

- two axis:
  - [ e ] capitalism -> socialism, [ f ]
  - [ f ] democracy -> autocracy [ e ]
  - the gilded age is swinging back and forth on the diagonal between capitalistic autocracy and democratic socialism
  - four quadrants:
    - \* two of them simply sheer into the others due to fundamentally different value structures:
      - DC: democracy values fairness whereas capitalism values efficiency.
      - fundamentally, democracy will lean towards socialism, as by definition the wealthy are outnumbered.

- capitalism will funnel money into the hands of the few, generating a few wealthy and powerful elite who effectively rule (robber barons), thus moving toward autocracy
- AS: this quadrant also has incompatible values structures. navigating into this quadrant has only led to disaster (see: communism)
- \* the two quadrants left are autocratic capitalism and democratic socialism
- \* one quadrant fundamentally values fairness but is inefficient, and the other values efficiency but is unfair. balancing between these two **is** the process of combustion

### 1.4.1 | rough outline

- thesis: democracy and capitalism are made compatible through combustion
- the model
  - two dead quadrants
  - fairness vs efficiency
- democratic socialism combusting
  - massing industrialism and taylorism + railroads
  - apex is TSF fire
- autocratic capitalism combusting
  - labor unions, strikes, and regulations
- conclusion

### 1.4.2 | quote bin

#### 1. industrialism

- contemporaries regarded the city as an engine of progress in which everything seemed constantly on the move. :: klein & kantor 2

base of madcap expansion klein & kantor 2

- Such a shift would not only make workers as interchangeable as the parts they were using, it would also dramatically speed up the process of production. If managed by trained experts, specific tasks could be done quicker and more efficiently. Taylorism increased the scale and scope of manufacturing and allowed for the flowering of mass production. :: yawp
- Industrialization and mass production pushed the United States into the forefront of the world. The American economy had lagged behind Britain, Germany, and France as recently as the 1860s, but by 1900 the United States was the world's leading manufacturing nation. :: yawp
- Industrial capitalism realized the greatest advances in efficiency and productivity that the world had ever seen. :: yawp

- The great financial and industrial titans, the so-called robber barons, including railroad operators such as Cornelius Vanderbilt, oilmen such as J. D. Rockefeller, steel magnates such as Andrew Carnegie, and bankers such as J. P. Morgan, won fortunes that, adjusted for inflation, are still among the largest the nation has ever seen. According to various measurements, in 1890 the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans owned one fourth of the nation's assets; the top 10 percent owned over 70 percent. And inequality only accelerated. By 1900, the richest 10 percent controlled perhaps 90 percent of the nation's wealth.<sup>9</sup> :: yawp
- A period of great economic growth, of steadily rising per capita wealth, and new urban markets feeding an expanding industrial plant, the Gilded Age was also wracked with persisting crises. :: trachtenberh & fink 4
- In the quest for greater productivity, for more efficient machines, more output per unit of cost, calculation of several kinds played an increasingly significant role. :: trachtenberh & fink 9

## 2. labor unions

- The Great Railroad Strike of 1877... Workers struck from Baltimore to St. Louis, shutting down railroad traffic—the nation's economic lifeblood—across the country. :: yawp
- A general strike erupted in St. Louis, and strikers seized rail depots and declared for the eight-hour day and the abolition of child labor. :: yawp
- tens of thousands gathered to protest under the aegis of the Workingmen's Party :: yawp
- compelled armies of labor to organize and battle against the power of capital. :: yawp
- In the summer of 1886, the campaign for an eight-hour day, long a rallying cry that united American laborers, culminated in a national strike on May 1, 1886. Somewhere between three hundred thousand and five hundred thousand workers struck across the country. :: yawp
- "Wall Street owns the country," the Populist leader Mary Elizabeth Lease told dispossessed farmers around 1890. "It is no longer a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, but a government of Wall Street, by Wall Street, and for Wall Street." :: yawp
- In the Populists' first national election campaign in 1892, Weaver received over one million votes (and twenty-two electoral votes), a truly startling performance that signaled a bright future for the Populists. :: yawp
- Socialists argued that wealth and power were consolidated in the hands of too few individuals, that monopolies and trusts controlled too much of the economy, and that owners and investors grew rich while the workers who produced their wealth, despite massive productivity gains and rising national wealth, still suffered from low pay, long hours, and unsafe working conditions. :: yawp
- According to Eugene Debs, socialists sought "the overthrow of the capitalist system and the emancipation of the working class from wage slavery." :: yawp
- According to socialist organizer and newspaper editor Oscar Ameringer, socialists wanted "ownership of the trust by the government, and the ownership of the government by the people." :: yawp
- Widespread dissatisfaction with new trends in American society spurred the Progressive Era, named for the various progressive movements that attracted various constituencies around various reforms. :: yawp 17
- Events such as the Triangle Shirtwaist fire convinced many Americans of the need for reform, but the energies of activists were needed to spread a new commitment to political activism and government interference in the economy. :: yawp 17

- Industrial capitalism unleashed powerful forces in American life. Along with wealth, technological innovation, and rising standards of living, a host of social problems unsettled many who turned to reform politics to set the world right again. :: yawp 17

## 1.5 | writing!

**INTRO** The Gilded age, spanning from the late 1860s to the early 1900s, was fraught with tensions between capitalism and democracy. Democracy and capitalism's compatibility – or lack thereof – is not a simple binary. Instead, capitalism and democracy are made compatible through the process of combustion. through the process of combustion, capitalism and democracy are made compatible.

Instead of a simple binary, the relationship between capitalism and democracy is more aptly illustrated as a set of unstable equilibriums as shown in the following figure:

{FIGURE}

These equilibriums reside on two axes: democracy versus autocracy, and capitalism versus socialism. Each of these axes are also continuums between two values structures: efficiency and fairness. For example, in the capitalism-socialism axis, capitalism fundamentally values efficiency whereas socialism fundamentally values fairness. Thus, in the four quadrants formed by these two axes, two of them have incompatible values structures. These quadrants are not sustainable, so societies within them either veer off into neighboring quadrants or fizzle out. This behavior is inherent to each axis – as capitalism increases, the society will inherently move toward autocracy as wealth and power become consolidated into the hands of the few, colloquially referred to as "robber barons" (CITE). As democracy increases, the society will move toward socialism as the wealthy elite are by definition a minority of the population. Hence why democratic capitalism forms an unstable equilibrium, moving any societies which reside in it into neighboring quadrants. The other quadrant with incompatible value structures is autocratic socialism, which has been shown to not function numerous times throughout history, despite the argument that its true form has never been tried. Thus, societies are funneled into the two quadrants with compatible value structures: democratic socialism and autocratic capitalism, valuing fairness and efficiency respectively. As opposed to how incompatible quadrants push societies away, these quadrants with shared values structures pull societies into them. These societies sink further into these quadrants until a balancing force pushes them back toward the middle. This balancing force is combustion.

The rampant combustion throughout the gilded age is

### 1.5.1 |

**INTRO:** Scholars and historians alike have questioned for years whether democracy and capitalism were combustible or compatible. However, the relationship between capitalism and democracy is not a simple binary – the opposite of capitalism isn't democracy but rather socialism, just as the opposite of democracy is autocracy. Instead, capitalism and democracy are made compatible through a continual process of social disruption – often viewed as "combustion." When capitalism and democracy, forces that prioritize different values and push society in opposite directions, are too far out of balance, these disruptions can be violent. Within America's Gilded Age, society struggled to find a balance between these opposing forces and the values they embody. Examples include XXX. When they are more in balance the disruptions are milder, such as the healthy contention around elections. :: Democracy and capitalism are made compatible through combustion ::

Instead of a simple binary, the contention between different economic and political systems – and the values they embrace – can be represented with the diagram below.

Tensions lie along two axes, with democracy versus autocracy and capitalism versus socialism representing the extremes. Each of these axes also represents a continuum between the opposing values of efficiency and fairness. For example, in the capitalism-socialism axis, capitalism fundamentally values efficiency whereas socialism fundamentally values fairness.

Thus, in the four quadrants formed by these two axes, two of them have incompatible values structures. These quadrants are not sustainable, so societies within them either veer off into neighboring quadrants or fizzle out. This behavior is inherent to each axis – as capitalism increases, the society will inherently move toward autocracy as wealth and power become consolidated into the hands of the few, colloquially referred to as “robber barons” (CITE). As democracy increases, the society will move toward socialism as the wealthy elite are by definition a minority of the population. Democratic capitalism lies at an unstable equilibrium, moving any societies which reside in it into neighboring quadrants. The other quadrant with incompatible value structures is autocratic socialism, which has been shown to not function numerous times throughout history across a variety of failed communist societies. Thus, societies are funneled into the two quadrants with compatible value structures: democratic socialism and autocratic capitalism, valuing fairness and efficiency respectively. As opposed to how incompatible quadrants push societies away, these quadrants with shared values structures pull societies into them. These societies sink further into these quadrants until a balancing force pushes them back toward the middle. This balancing force is combustion.

The Industrial Revolution is an example of this balancing through combustion, moving society toward autocratic capitalism with efficiency as the driving value. Taking place between the mid seventeen and eighteen-hundreds, America “endured a phase of madcap expansion” during the Industrial Revolution (Klein & Kantor, 2). These massive changes – combustion – swept the nation, overhauling both infrastructure and ideals. Instead of fairness, society was now chiefly concerned with a “quest for greater productivity, for more efficient machines, [and] more output per unit of cost” (Trachtenberg & Fink, 9). And this quest was successful, as by 1900, “the United States was the world’s leading manufacturing nation” (YAWP). However, as America slid toward efficiency along the axis of capitalism, America was met with the accompanying slide toward autocracy. Taylorism created an insurmountable divide between the “workers as interchangeable as the parts they were using” and those who owned the means of production (YAWP). Thus, the rich got richer, and the poor stayed poor with virtually no hope of escape. This inequality became so extreme that by 1900, “the richest 10 percent controlled perhaps 90 percent of the nation’s wealth” (YAWP). These elite had much more power over society than the average laborer, and were only becoming more powerful. Yes, society was efficient, but it wasn’t fair – America had truly slid into the autocratic-capitalism upper quadrant, and it was time for another combustion.

Society combusted once again to form a balancing response to the Industrial Revolution and its consequences. Inequality had become too extreme, and working conditions had become too poor. Society began to shift towards valuing fairness once again: “Wall Street owns the country,” declared the popular People’s Party participant Mary Elizabeth Lease in 1890. “It is no longer a government of the people... but a government of Wall Street” (YAWP). Sold on the need for reform, workers banded together, trying to utilize their strength in numbers to create change. They formed unions such as the Knights of Labor and the AFL, going on strikes in the hundreds of thousands. Events like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire convinced American society at large “of the need for reform” (YAWP). Socialism was gaining prominence, democracy was being restored, and society was combusting; the Progressive Era had been born.

## 1.6 | hist ma1 reflection!

### PFDPE

I spent a long time thinking about this essay, as I felt like there was some type of meta-narrative. I had this vague sense of some type of self-balancing system, as well as some false dichotomies, but I couldn’t figure out how they fit together. I ended up sitting down with a pencil and paper and just thinking about it, and I think I was able to figure it out. Next time, I think I will try to front-load more thinking so I can be more efficient.

My notes worked pretty well, I felt like I had easy access to all the readings I had. Next time, I want to generate more clear summaries of what type of thing I can look for in each reading in some separate document.

I would also like to have some more peer editing next time around.

For the reading and presenting process, I think next time I’ll focus on some more organization prior. I think scaffolding the conversation a bit more will allow for better direction towards the audience.

I think this essay, all things considered, went pretty smoothly. Looking forward to the Research Project!