

Cutting off the king's head: images and the (dis)location of power

FRANK COLSON, JEAN COLSON, ROSS PARRY,
AND ANDREW SAWYER

Imagining the Past

Today, it seems unquestionable that the privileging of text within our histories has denied us certain stories and certain views of the past. Allowing text to be the stuff of substance, and image merely that of illustration, has impoverished our models of distant historical places and moments. Culturally conditioned and technologically limited to building the past from and with words—with all the structural constraints therein—we have been limited (or so we now believe) as to the shapes and patterns we can conceive and demonstrate. It is arguable that the complexities of power in the historical contexts we are engaged in analysing cannot be fully grasped when restricted to one medium.

This is a multi-authored essay representing the work of four individuals, of different formations, but all engaged by the proximity of images and power. Moreover, the work exemplified in the case studies discussed here could not have been done without an active engagement with digital technology—they have been enabled by the use of Kleio Image Analysis System, an Open Hypermedia environment, and Computer Aided Design. But our engagement is led by our theoretical and historiographical perspective; and whilst that perspective has been broadened and developed by these technologies, it was not shaped by them. Therefore, outside the footnotes, technology as such will not be mentioned again.

Imaging Power

The emergence of the novel and puissant Dutch Republic from the medieval Low Countries in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, stands as our first example: the textualization of its political theory never achieved the impact of Machiavelli, Bodin or Hobbes—indeed its most elegant theorist, Johannes Althusius (1557–1638)—and the terms and concepts he used—is practically forgotten.¹ Yet the republic did see the outpouring of a large body of historical and political prints or cartoons, some 2000 surviving for the period 1588–1632.² Beyond the meticulous cataloguing of the early collectors these ‘diagrammatic’ prints have not been studied systematically in the way that, for instance, ‘textual’ pamphlets have been analysed.³ Intimately connected, as they are, with the political life of a novel and potent polity, they compose a significant source—a pivotal source if we agree with Moxey’s argument that ‘the social values expressed by the visual sign systems of these media cannot be distinguished from some underlying reality that they are assumed to “reflect”’, but that ‘to all intents and purposes, these systems *constituted* the society whose values they articulated’.⁴

We reach a similar conclusion when we turn our gaze to late nineteenth-century Brazil—what many, indeed, would refer to as another great early modern Republic. What we may—cautiously—call ‘A total history of Brazil’ has not yet been written because (again) historians have restricted themselves to

¹ Johannes Althusius, *Politica methodice digesta* (1603, enlarged version 1610 and 1614). A Westphalian, Althusius (1557–1638) was Syndic of Emden, a town not technically part of the Republic, but garrisoned by the Dutch, to whom his work was dedicated. The work is now most accessible to the English reader in abridged form in F. S. Carney, *The Politics of Johannes Althusius* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965). In his introduction to Carney’s work, J. Friedrich described the *Politica* as ‘a culmination of medieval social thought and a watershed of modern political ideas’ (p. xix). However, many of Althusius’ terms (such as ‘symbiosis’ and ‘consociato’) are not now part of the political lexicon.

² The period covered by our research into Dutch prints is set within the famous Eighty Years’ War of 1568–1648 in which the Dutch won their independence.

³ The catalogues of F. Muller, *De Nederlandsche Geschiedenis in platen. Bereden-eerde beschrijving van Nederlandsche historieplaten, zinneprenten en historische kaarten*, 4 vols (first published Amsterdam, 1863–82; reprint Amsterdam: N. Israel, 1970); and G. van Rijn, *Katalogus der historie- spot- en zinneprinten betrekkelijk de geschiedenis van Nederlanden, verzameld door Atlas van Stolk*, 10 vols (Amsterdam, 1895–1933) include most of the prints of the period. Recently, Horst and Tanis in *Images of Discord* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) have raised the profile of the prints.

⁴ K. Moxey, *Peasants, Warriors and Wives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 131.

textual sources. Not merely in the sense that (as in many parts of early modern Europe) to be literate was to be a tiny segment of society—adult, male, rich and white, but rather that though prolific, laws, reportage and formal debate (i.e. textual representations), simply codified one particular version of politics and culture. The privileged—in Brazil at least—the *public* rather than the *private* realm; the *public* events of legislative debate, the *public* war between stated interest, and they set aside the intense and all-pervasive *private* violence of privilege and deference—a significant strand in the configuration of power.

What is clear is that within both of these stories of ‘early modern’ polities, our enduring proclivity to text has both limited our interpretation and shaped our presentation of the past. Yet what is just as true is that those historiographical communities that are bringing images in from the margins (literally and metaphorically) are producing edifying, relevant, and credible new takes on the past. Within, for example, the studies of early seventeenth-century England, the formulaic portraits of Jacobean and Caroline culture are now emerging as embodiments and acts—rather than just ornaments and depictions—of the Jacobean and Caroline elites.⁵ Similarly, the lavish scenery designs of the opulent royal festivals of King James I of England are, today, approached as components of—rather than simply backdrops to—the ideology of absolute monarchy.⁶ Likewise, due to the widening of our, as it were, evidential franchise, the architectural façades and building styles of the English Renaissance stand, today, less as mere stages for, and more as active engagements with, the political fracture of the time.⁷ In fact, within this new multi-format—dare one say ‘multi-media’—historiography, to consider the temporary images of (for example) civic pageantry more as technologies of power, and less as insubstantial ephemera, seems not only possible but necessary.⁸

⁵ For an accomplished study of one such portrait, see Ellen Chirelstein, ‘Lady Elizabeth Pope: The Heraldic Body’, in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540–1660*, ed. by Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion, 1990), pp. 36–59. The most sensitive and informed analysis of early Stuart portraiture is John Peacock, ‘The Politics of Portraiture’, in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 199–229. For a more panoptic take on the subject, see David Howarth’s very accessible *Images of Rule: Art and Politics in the English Renaissance, 1485–1649* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).

⁶ In this respect the work of Stephen Orgel has been instructive. See his ‘The Royal Theatre and the Role of King’, in *Patronage in the Renaissance Court*, ed. by Guy Fitch Lytel and Stephen Orgel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 261–73; as well as his important earlier work, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

⁷ See Tim Mowl and Brian Earnshaw, *Architecture Without Kings: The Rise of Puritan Classicism Under Cromwell* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

⁸ For a close examination of the cultural influences within one such arch used in

But what the recent historiography of early Stuart England also demonstrates is that more than just increasing the quantity of meaningful evidence available to us, images, in fact, provide levers and conduits, glimpses and echoes of discourses that are simply not as accessible in our other documents. This argument, about theory but developed from an engagement with the remaining artefacts, or sources, of three different milieu, can be provided with a nexus by considering one particular (though, admittedly, rather complex) discourse—the discourse of ‘power’. With particular reference to those three ‘early modern’ polities already mentioned, we argue for the existence of a potent bond between the nature of power and the nature of images. And that, perhaps, the story of power is—occasionally—one best found within and told through images.

Our definition of ‘power’, here, is, of course, crucial. The ‘power’ (that we are suggesting synchronizes so adroitly to the nature of images) is that as described by Michel Foucault—specifically as laid out in his 1976 essay on the subject. Echoing (if not a confessed subscriber to) the parameters of post-structuralism, Foucauldian power is net-like and dynamic, not hierarchical and stable. Rather than centralized it is diffuse, shifting rather than static. Polysemic, polyvalent, and ubiquitous, Foucauldian power is a constant interplay of inter-relationships, a continuing struggle, an-ongoing negotiation within which every definition (by speech, by thought, by gesture, by text, and, yes, by image) is a moment of—and cause for—the reconfiguration of power itself. In this conceptualization, individuals do not ‘exercise’ power, but are themselves the points of its manifestation. Foucault, however, appends a caveat: we are not conditioned to think of power in this way. Modern political theory, he explains, has inherited and bound itself to the ‘Leviathan’ of sovereignty—and a notion of an ordered, concentric, and descending power, even if the actual figure or body of the sovereign itself is no longer there. The Foucauldian challenge, therefore, is for us to ‘Cut off the King’s Head’ within our conceptions of power—and, consequently, unfix and de-gravitate that presumed ‘centre’.⁹

James’ triumphal entry into London, see Gervase Hood, ‘A Netherlandic Triumphal Arch for James I’, in *Across the Narrow Seas: Studies in the History and Bibliography of Britain and the Low Countries Presented to Anna E. C. Simoni*, ed. by Susan Roach (London: The British Library, 1991), pp. 67–82. For the text of the procession in which the arches were used, see Thomas Dekker and Ben Jonson, *The Magnificent Entertainment Given to King James, Queen Anne his wife, and Henry Frederick the prince, upon the day of His Majesty’s triumphant passage (from the Tower) through his Honourable City (and Chamber) of London, being the 15. of March. 1603*, as reproduced in *Jacobean Civic Pageants*, ed. by Richard Dutton (Keele: Ryburn Publishing, 1995), pp. 19–115.

⁹ ‘Truth and Power: Interview with Alessandro Fontano and Pasquale Pasquino’, trans. by P. Patton and M. Morris, in M. Foucault, *Power, Truth, Strategy* (Sydney: Feral Publications, 1979), pp. 29–48 (p. 38). For Foucault’s thinking on power in the context

And this is our point: the structure of meaning (the discourse) created by this act of theoretical regicide creates a system of meaning web-like, topographic, where (freed from the chain of hierarchy) anything can connect to a plethora of others. In other words, Foucault's notions of power—notions that resist hierarchical, centralized systems of authority—would seem to be more readily and more substantively visualized, and more intuitively understood in and through images. Or (to state the corollary), text is a system whereby symbols are arranged linearly and sequentially within a (consequent) hierarchical structure; i.e., the very antithesis of Foucauldian power. Consequently, the frame of reference/referents which represents and demonstrates the complex interconnectivity—the topography—of modern theories of power, might be, we suppose, the image. (Text is but a sub-set of Image, the latter explicitly promoting and encouraging more than one view.) Or put another way: though we understand text is in itself 'power', we suspect 'power' may be *diagrammed* more readily and more effectively than it can be *textualized*.

Diagramming the Dutch Republic

Our own observations tell us that practitioners of power politics are aware of the significance of gesture, of 'power dressing', of all that is encompassed by the word image. Similarly, in the past, power was often manifested through media other than the word. Moreover, some forms of power—physical forms—simply cannot be described with words (one cannot describe the electrical system that transfers power around a car or a building: one diagrams it). And there are certainly some historical cultures that seem to expound this. For instance, John Montias has demonstrated that the Dutch Republic was saturated with images.¹⁰ That such an image-conscious society included a vigorous brand of political imagery (closely connected with its rejection of Habsburg rule and its Republic's burgeoning power) may not be unconnected. The Republic was wired for a discourse of diagrammed power in the way that today's information societies are wired for Information Technology.

of a wider debate, see S. Lukes, *Power* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), and for a context admirably free of postmodern jargon, see S. R. Clegg, *Frameworks of Power* (London: Newbury Park; New Delhi: Sage, 1989). Anybody who doubts that our conceptions of power are shaped by this 'sovereign' construct might take up Microsoft's PowerPoint software, set to diagram an organization; they will find it practically impossible to create anything but 'top down' structures, presumably because those who specified the software could conceive of nothing else.

¹⁰ J. M. Montias' major work was *Artists and Artisans in Delft* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), which demonstrated the quantities of paintings and prints, which could be found in almost all homes in Delft in the early seventeenth century.



Fig. 1. 'Penning' dated 1588: from H. E. Greve, De Tijd van den Tachtigjarigen Oorlog in Beeld (Amsterdam: Uitgevers-Maatschappij "Elsevier", 1908), p. 67

The Dutch, who had thrown out the man who would be king in the Abjuration of 1581 (their own, as it were, Foucauldian moment in the redefinition of power), established a polity defined by constant negotiation: a definition far closer to Foucault's concept than that defined by a trajectory that includes Bodin, Hobbes, and sovereign power.¹¹ And it is perhaps significant that, in the work of Johannes Althusius, we find analyses of the polity carried out in an ascending manner—as Foucault argued we should. This form-giving power of this dynamic, imbalanced state could be comprehended more clearly if we could graphically contrast a 'sovereign' view of the Dutch situation with a domestic counterpart. Fortunately, due to the involvement of the English in the developing maelstrom in the Low Countries, we have English observations from the period. A pictorial example may be seen in a coin produced by the partisans of the English Earl of Leicester, sent to aid the Dutch in 1585 (fig. 1); we see their situation depicted sovereignly, with Elizabeth of England, Leicester, an apocalyptic beast, and the provinces kneeling at the monarch's feet in supplication. The Latin text translates: 'To the best and greatest God be praise and honour forever, because . . .' and then the text ends, the rest (i.e., the reason for the praise) only being expressible in the image within.¹² In short, here it is

¹¹ The classic work is F. H. Hinsley, *Sovereignty*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). He traces the trajectory Bodin-Henry VIII-Hobbes, and regards sovereignty as he defined it as the pinnacle of political theory.

¹² The reverse shows clerical figures, seven in all, who appear to be falling. They can be distinguished by their dress as, at the lowest point, the pope (losing his grip on a



Fig. 2. C. J. Visscher, 'Afbeelding van 't Nederlandts Bestandt' [Image of the Netherlands Truce], c. 1609. FM1267. Reproduced by permission of the Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

only an image that can express the coin's message. And that message can be simply diagrammed or described in hierarchical terms.

In contrast to this hierachic image, far more complex 'diagrams' flourished among the political prints of the Republic. An example can be seen in a depiction of the truce negotiations of the early 1600s, Muller's print number S1267c (fig. 2).¹³ 'Reading' it primarily as a political diagram, we see, from the left, military forces in confusion at the end of the fighting, a great carriage representing the truce, aided by the monarchs of England and France, led by allegorical figures and the Archdukes, and carrying Peace and other virtuous characters. It is steered by Johan Ney, a Jesuit and the Habsburg negotiator of the Truce. It heads towards a sunlit region—indicated stage right, as it were, rather than illustrated—between two booths, representing the Independent Netherlands and the Habsburg Netherlands. Clearly much could be said about such an image. The point here, however, is that dynamic, shifting patterns and

monstrance and a chalice), followed by a group consisting of a cardinal, two monks, two bishops, and possibly a Jesuit. Above, the Tetragrammaton is shown in a cloud from which lightning strikes the clerics. The text reads QVEM DEVS CONFICIET SPIRITV ORIS SVI. 'Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth'. II Thess. 2. 8 The coin is attributed to the Earl of Leicester, or rather his partisans in the Netherlands, in major coin catalogues (e.g., E. Hawkins, A. W. Franks, H. A. Grueter, *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland to the Death of George II*, vol. 1 (London: British Museum, 1885), p. 139, their no. 99).

¹³ *Afbeelding van 't Nederlandts Bestandt* [Image of the Netherlands Truce], c. 1609, C. J. Visscher. FM1267. An allegorical print about the Twelve Years of Truce 1609–21.



Fig. 3. Detail, 'Afbeelding van 't Nederlandts Bestandt' [Image of the Netherlands Truce], c. 1609. FM1267. Reproduced by permission of the Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

networks of power are diagrammed. For example, in one detail (fig. 3) a cameo represents the Independent Netherlands. The intense debate within the Republic occasioned by the negotiations is graphically projected: the Netherlands maid gestures to Maurits, the Dutch commander on her left; to her right, the gestures and glances of the figures representing the States General are, likewise, there to be noted. This scene stands as a microcosm of the entire image, alive with debate, negotiation and movement. Here—in interplay, interconnectivity, diffusion—is Foucault's concept of power diagrammed.

Moreover, if we take each 'element' of Leicester's image—crown, throne, monarch, and kneeling figures, naked in supplication—and analyse a sample of

Dutch imagery for the same elements,¹⁴ it can be demonstrated that such elements were mostly portrayed in a negative fashion, rarely neutrally, and only on some occasions with any positive connotations. Thus the discourse projected by Leicester was, it seems, quite inappropriate to his circumstances as Governor General in the Netherlands from 1585 to 1588. It is in imagery, more than in major canonical texts, that the constant negotiation implicit in the 'un-centralized' and disaggregated manifestation of power that structured the nascent Dutch State is most strikingly obvious.

Picturing Brazil's República

However it is not just the non-sovereign inter-relations of power of the Dutch Republic that seem to sharpen when viewed pictorially. For when we turn to our other Republican example, we likewise find a discourse of power that was—and needs to be—recalled through images. For instance: it is hardly surprising that scholars attempting to examine the extraordinary events of the period 1868–1910 (generally regarded as the founding years of contemporary Brazil) should have wrestled with the fact that though slavery ended and the Republic emerged, the structure of social relationships inherited from the colonial era was retained. Brazil has continued as a society characterized by social apartheid. In 1883 a political slogan proclaimed 'Brazil is coffee, coffee is the "Negro", the "Negro" is Brazil'. But by 1900 the 'Negro' was forgotten, coffee was hegemonic: the 'Negro' was emphatically not Brazil? In fact, South America's premier power, centre of one of the world's most lucrative trades, a continental polity, entered into a crippled existence in the twentieth century—one from which it has not recovered. Hitherto the reasons for this have remained obscure. Until, we think about the nature of power, because scholars have failed to take on board the dynamic, net-like, diffuse nature of power in this continental polity. Indeed, however sophisticated such statements as 'the structure collapsed in May 1888' (when the Abolition Law was approved by the Legislature)¹⁵ and 'revolution of Abolition' might appear at first glance, they have become simple tributes to the

¹⁴ Kleio IAS enables each element of each image to be registered for searching and data retrieval, down to a very detailed level if required, by the use of textual image descriptions linked to digital representations of the prints themselves. Thus, for example, if during research the gesture of kneeling is found to be of significance, all the scenes showing such a pose or gesture can be called, viewed, and referenced.

¹⁵ Seymour Drescher, 'Brazilian Abolition in Comparative Perspective', *Hispanic American Historical Review* (August, 1988), 429–60 (p. 459). Drescher develops the useful notion of an hierarchical regime of notables (p. 458), 'demoralized' by the mass mobilization of the crisis of 1886–88. He notes that the transition from slavery has barely been discussed.

tactical ability of oligarchs.¹⁶ They do not examine the threat to private absolute authority explicit during the final years of the struggle to end slavery. Because—and this is the crucial point—they fail to confront the fact that power in Brazil remained neither hierarchical nor stable. Such approaches, therefore, do not enable us easily to understand either the fragility of the state in twentieth-century Brazil nor the continuation of its colonial heritage as social apartheid. In short, the intrinsic poverty of textual sources that deal with the public rather than the private limits their explanatory value in explaining change in a dynamic structure, because they do not enable scholars to cross the door from public to private. Scholars of Brazil have been aware of this, and the last decade has seen increasing recourse to the work of literary critics' expressions of 'misplaced' [*fora de lugar*]¹⁷ and to the anthropologist's sense of the public place as incessant war.¹⁸ But, exciting as these are as idealizations, they have only the most limited power as explanation, because they operate at the wrong remove. Though contextualizations, they do not enable us to describe in the most approximate fashion the extraordinary impact of 1887–89 on the future course of Brazilian history. Such models do not, for example, explain the extraordinary sense of alienation felt by army officers against the rule of merchants and lawyers—'frock coats'—nor the extraordinary influence of foreign ideas—casting a long shadow over the twentieth century. They allude to but do not elucidate the

¹⁶ Jacob Gorender's *A escravidão reabilitada* (São Paulo: Ática, 1990) discusses the recent historiography of 1887–88 as that of an 'abolitionist revolution', pp. 133–38. Gorender correctly identifies the role of slaveocrat leaders in a transition which would be 'slow, gradual and secure', p. 146, and notes scholarly attention given to the perception of the 'faithful slave' during the crisis of 1887–88; Lilia Schwarcz, *Retrato em branco e negro. Jornais, escravos e cidadãos em São Paulo no final do século XIX* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1987).

¹⁷ Roberto Schwarz, *Misplaced Ideas. Essays on Brazilian Culture* (London: Verso, 1992), especially 'Misplaced Ideas. Literature and Society in Late Nineteenth Century Brazil', pp. 19–32 (original title: 'As idéias fora de lugar' [misplaced] *Estudos Cebra* (1973), 3).

¹⁸ Roberto A. da Matta, *A Casa & a Rua. Espaço, cidadania, mulher e morte no Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora Basiliense, 1985), especially pp. 71–102. Da Matta's House [Casa] and street [Rua] are basic dynamic opposites within the web of relationships described by Foucault. The Brazilian anthropologist's essay, 'For an Anthropology of the Brazilian Tradition' or 'A Virtude esta no Meio', in *The Brazilian Puzzle. Culture on the Borderlands of the Western World*, ed. by David J. Hess and Roberto A. da Matta (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 270–93, argues (p. 276) that 'we will not advance towards significant understanding of Brazilian and Latin American reality if we do not discover the deep relations between the impersonal commands of law (conceived as a function of 'individuals') and 'friends' (a universe governed by the implicit and personalized rules of parentela (the extended family structure on which social influence is based)).

extraordinary gulf between the tenacious belief in modernity that is the public doctrine of state organizations and the brute power of private privilege that remains untouched by law. They take little account of the way in which men perceived that in 1887–88 the war between private privilege and general security that had surfaced in the 1830s had suddenly re-surfaced and the savage nature of private power again lay exposed. Most of all, they do not address the central debate of the time: the ownership of progress and science—the pervasive heritage of the French Revolution: and the acute and specific threat of ‘degeneration’ that haunted the political elite of the age. Using text we might as historians describe the words of the proclamation of abolition as a ‘tersely worded death warrant for a collapsing structure’, *but* we cannot easily understand its *aftermath*—text gives rise to the sense of political relationships which remain ill defined, hence ‘misplaced’.

Therefore, in order to understand this sense of the ‘misplaced’, other forms of expression have to be brought to the argument,¹⁹ for example images—in this case, specifically mass-produced cartoon images. For though it was only the poet and the novelist who could venture beyond the public to the livid intimacies of private power, it was only the cartoonist who had the medium through which to represent these complex discourses.²⁰ Acknowledged fictions have their uses, but even literary giants such as Machado de Assis, writer, newspaper columnist, and in 1888 a well-placed clerk in the Ministry of Agriculture could only obliquely refer to the ‘absolute oligarchy’ in a minor publication—their novels amply describing the effect of its existence. Nevertheless his column in the leading newspaper, the *Gazeta* provides the vital bridge, a sense of the ‘vie quotidienne’, which allows the historian to move towards a fuller explanation, one which includes the argument of images and their role in explaining the political

¹⁹ Pereira Barreto: ‘On the one side are the abolitionists, riding on a sentimental rhetoric and armed with a revolutionary metaphysics, on the other side are the landowners, silent and humiliated, in the attitude of those who meditate upon their guilt or meditate an impossible revenge’ (quoted from Paula Beiguelman, *Teoria Ação no Pensamento Abolicionista*, vol. 1 of *Formação Política do Brasil* [São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira, 1967], p. 159).

²⁰ Not simply because cartoons were so diffused, but because images play such a large role in the discussion of the complex grammar of encompassment and passages between ‘this world’ and the ‘other world’ [da Matta, p. 276]. The open hypermedia environment, Microcosm, allows individual links and associations to be catalogued and classified according to the various perceptions of contemporary viewers and latter-day scholars alike. The flexibility of the environment enables the identification of critical components of the various images and their referents, limiting allusion and inference while clarifying arguments. Frank Colson, ‘Case Study C. Hypermedia Database Management Systems: Microcosm as a Research Tool’, in *Databases in Historical Research*, ed. by Charles Harvey and Jon Press (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 69–71.

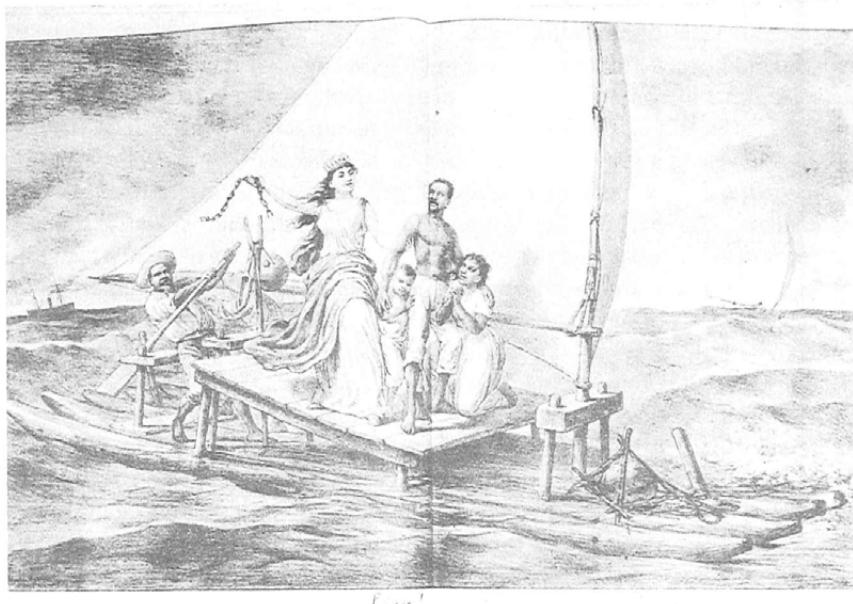


Fig. 4. 'Livre', Revista Illustrada, Rio de Janeiro, 14 October 1884

topography of everyday life.²¹

The day-to-day chronicle of official political life in late nineteenth-century Brazil was, by early modern standards, extraordinarily amply documented. Some thirty newspapers and periodicals followed and created daily life in Rio de Janeiro, capital of the Empire. Sheer plethora is daunting enough, and the study of the page is rewarding. It is however crucial to note that, thanks to French influence and the advent of a market among the urban elites, the period witnessed the remarkable flowering of the political cartoon. Systematic cataloguing of the cartoons for Rio at least is complete and some editions of the long run of the *Brasil Illustrada*, edited by Angelo Agostini, have been reproduced in facsimile. A prolific caricaturist, Agostini's understanding of the intricate topography of power has meant that his work has long been used by scholars to enliven their accounts. Evoking currents of political life, the caricatures are brilliant, strident, yet building a subtle vocabulary of power—typified by the cartoon 'free' [*livre*] published in 1883

²¹ Arguably the greatest of all Portuguese-language novelists, author of nine novels and more than two hundred short stories (1839–1908). For his political allusion, see Machado de Assis, *Bons Dias! Crônicas* (1888–89), *edição, introdução e notas de John Gledson* (São Paulo: Editora Hucitec, 1990), pp. 13–14.



Fig. 5. 'Não vos aproximeis de mim! Vossas mãos ainda tintas de sangue dos escravos manchariam as minhas vistas! Retirae-vos, tu não vos quero.' Revista Illustrada 15 June 1888 [original orthography]

(fig. 4).²² Yet they have not been 'read'—perhaps because they allude to that constant negotiation that remained a hallmark of political life under Empire and (after 1889) the Republic or, more prosaically, because historians have found it difficult to collate the visual clues projected by these images. The sense of concealed brutalities that the limits of such negotiation between had been reached in 1888 is nowhere more powerfully expressed than in another cartoon 'The Republic courted by the ex-proprietors of slaves' published only a few days after the abolition act had been signed.²³ The fact that the cartoons would be

²² 'Livre'—depicting a *jangada* [raft] commonly used as a lighter to ship goods over the reefs of Ceará to ocean-going steamships. In 1884 the *jangadeiros* [lightermen] refused to transport slaves for sale in neighbouring Maranhão or the Southeast. Agostini depicted their leader Nascimento steering a raft carrying a slave family and the figure of 'liberty'. The depiction of the family, and the figure of 'liberty' contrast richly with stereotypical views. From R. Maghalães Jr., *Deodoro. A Espada contra o Império* (São Paolo: Companhia Editora nacional, 1957), vol. 1, facing p. 192.

²³ The radical press, led by the *Cidade do Rio* on 25 May wrote that 'we have notices from the interior that various ex-slave owners have refused to obey the law and have informed their captives that they can only leave their lands or receive a salary once they have received a letter of manumission from the Regent'. The cartoon was criticized in the press on 18 June. It has been reproduced in Maghalães Jr (as in note 22), p. 348.

posted up in country Venda and city cafes, corner kiosks, or coffee-houses (available to the millions of illiterates) determined that they would inhabit a world of invocations and votives. Indeed, the appeal to 'modernity' in its French allusions, by 1888 well known to viewers, makes this image a vital evocation of the crisis which broke as slavery collapsed.

This image is part of an historical moment when sovereign power was disaggregated—when the link between the crown (supreme mediator) and its natural supporters was fractured. It depicts a procession of ex-slave-owners dressed in traditional country garb (arguably similar to slave-catchers) following a tattered banner reading 'Down with the Abolitionist Monarchy—Long Live the Republic with Compensation' (fig. 5). Here *República* unleaves the ruptured discourse of power (or, as one radical put it, the bestialization of the people) which characterized 1888–89. Published within weeks of the proclamation of abolition on 13 May, and much discussed in the Press (for Agostini had long campaigned in the abolitionist cause), the cartoon works at many levels. *República* epitomizes the civic virtues of a Robespierre, her robes, the cap and the tricolour rosette, and the stance, denoting purity, right, and reason, liberty and progress. With her foot forward on the march of Progress we are asked to wonder whether she will allow her purity to be stained by those who pursue her to other more bestial ends. Her protests are vehement and proud: 'Do not come near to me! Your hands are still red with the blood of slaves. You will stain my robes. Leave me! I do not want you!' But the ex-slaveowners remain insistent. They will choose 'revolution' (even the French Revolution's tricolour) rather than face the hierarchical polity. For the planters seek to expropriate Progress and divorce it from liberty. Their campaign flag demands 'compensation' for the slaves they have lately owned and dressed. Their eyes are avid, their intention evil. The days when the cartoon was being sold in Rio were ones in which the Press was dragging example after example of planters refusing to release their slaves, imprisoning and whipping them, to the attention of the authorities, who often looked the other way. The depiction of ex-slaveowners as harbingers of unreason and bent on the prostitution if not subversion of the Republic was a powerful one. Fear and avidity characterize the image of the planters, as they face a world in which authority does not appear to be theirs alone. For months, abolitionist agitation had begun to isolate planters from traditional support among the free poor and local propertied, as well as administrative organizations, which they had long controlled. By late 1887 slaves were not simply resisting planters, but also were running off the plantations and receiving support from clandestine and increasingly vociferous abolitionists. As early as November 1886 the Imperial government had refused to arm local militia (the National Guard) to prevent the militarization of the plantations. By October 1887 units of the army refused to return slaves to their owners. The Church, long a supporter of the status quo, finally abandoned the planters in late 1887, leaving their authority to rest on the degree to which they could informally organize local

violence. Their private 'rights' to govern their Ashantis with complete impunity seemed in 1887–88 to have been usurped, by the government they expected to own.

Their desperation and pursuit of unreason so evident in the piercing and distraught impression of the 'archetypical' planters is quite remarkably documented. Since the abolition of the lash in late 1886 they had petitioned the Crown for guarantees of their property, for protection against a population of vagrants.²⁴ In May and June 1888 the abolitionist Press reported numerous threats made by ex-proprietors to the freedmen on their plantations. Yet that unreason is evidenced not merely by the visual contrast to the secular sanctity of *República* but also by the picture of workers (blacks and whites alike) gathering in a coffee crop widely documented to be one of the largest on record. The bemused expression on the face of the overseer indicated that the procession of planters is not really concerned with the crop, still less with slaves and their families, but is concerned with the business of recovering the web of connections and patronage which were, as far as the planters were concerned, the essence of the state. The demand for immediate compensation is not merely a literal assault on the Republic of reason and purity but also a reassertion that Progress shall be impelled by savage dominion rather than law.

In effect, what these images capture and diagram is the extent of the social rupture that emerged in 1887–88, when a Crown, ruling by hereditary right and through established laws, clashed with provinces and their historic liberties, as well as proprietors who regarded themselves as having absolute dominion over their lands. Scholars have noted that the 'absolute oligarchy' immediately emerged as ally of the Republic, and many ex-slaveowners profited from the years of high prices commanded by coffee. But most have failed to appreciate the extent to which many felt that the mobilization of the free population in support of abolition that occurred in 1887 presaged a loss of control over their private local societies. The motifs of freedom characterized by the stance of the liberated slaves in Ceará in 1884 were widely diffused. By mid-1888 few would disagree that abolition had been won by the slaves themselves, with explicit support from several different segments of society and the 'golden law' of 13 May 1888 was (like so many previous reforms) a simple act of 'public security'. After the trauma of March–May 1888, planters were desperate to reconquer local hegemonies—hence the apparently irrational flight to the Federal Republic. The irony, therefore, that a regime of secular purity and order would protect the privacy of the lash was not lost to a contemporary reader of this and other images. Similarly, the depiction of the planters in the procession in traditional

²⁴ 'Fuga de escravos em Campinas': discursos pronunciados no senado pelo Exmo Sr. Barão de Cotegipe (Presidente do Conselho e Ministro de Estrangeiros) (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1887), pp. 16–19. The speeches of the Council President addressed the issues raised by these petitions, sent to Parliament from May 1887, to abolition.



Fig. 6. Inigo Jones, 'Pallas of Perfection', Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth. Reproduced by permission of the Duke of Devonshire and the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees. © Photographic Survey, Courtauld Institute of Art, London

rough country garb (compared, at least, to the overseer), is no casual act—by early 1888 some of the planters who controlled the largest and most industrialized establishments already had freed their slaves. Angelo Agostini's layered image of June 1888 has, therefore, captured the moment of disruption which brought about the invocation of Order and the Republic by those whose legitimacy was that of custom and brute force. It points to forms of power which

most regimes—including the Dutch Republic—have been unable to do little more than mitigate.

Mapping English Sovereignty

It was a similar struggle over (and appropriation of) the agents of ‘progress’ that characterizes our third and final example—the illusionary images of the English court masque. The court masques were exclusive royal entertainment performed before the king, his family, and his court as well as any (invited) visiting dignitaries. Though Elizabeth I (in the sixteenth century) and Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell (in the middle of the seventeenth century) enjoyed similar sorts of festivals, the English masque was almost entirely confined to a short history from 1605 to 1640. In content they were a combination of music, poetry, visual effect, dance, and song; ‘pictures with light and motion’ claimed the polymath Inigo Jones, designer of most of the shows.²⁵ Usually taking place on the evening of Twelfth Night or at Shrovetide (or, occasionally, at times of court wedding), these were lavish, conspicuously expensive events in the royal calendar, taking several hours to perform (sometimes, evidently, to the tedium of king and courtiers alike)²⁶ and, more times than not, staged in the royal Banqueting House at Whitehall.²⁷ The masques were a complex blend of indulgent frivolity and

²⁵ Jones offered this description in the text of the 1632 masque *Tempe Restored* (lines 49–50); reproduced in Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, 2 vols (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet; and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), vol. II, pp. 479–504.

²⁶ ‘Why don’t they dance?’ the king was reported to have called out at one eventful masque in 1618, ‘What did they bring me here for?’ See Orazio Busino’s full account in *Calendar of State Papers: Venetian, 1617–19*, 24 January 1618, ‘Anglipotrida’, pp. 110–14. The original MS is in the archive of St Mark’s, Venice (CLVII, cod. MCXXII. fols 72–75).

²⁷ In contrast to that of its successor (still standing on Whitehall today), there is little extant evidence relating to the first Jacobean Banqueting House. A sketch by Elizabethan architect Robert Smythson from c. 1609 (British Architectural Library, RIBA, London) provides an impression of the groundplot of the site. Similarly, Andrew Kerwyn’s accounts relating to royal works at the time of Banqueting House’s construction (a protracted process from 1604 to 1610) proffers valuable clues as to the building’s internal and external design; see ‘Declared Accounts of the Pipe and Audit Office, Works and Buildings’, Public Record Office, London, E 351 / 3240–43. Consequently, studies of the space have been few and far between. See: Per Palme, *The Triumph of Peace: A Study of the Whitehall Banqueting House* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1957), pp. 1–5 and 115–18; *Dramatic Records in the Declared Accounts of the Office of Works 1560–1640*, The Malone Society Collections, vol. 10, ed. by R. F. Hill and F. P. Wilson (London: Malone Society, 1977), pp. xvi–xvii; and most recently—and most usefully—*The History of the*

state solemnity, sober didactics, and cutting satire. And, invariably, they turned upon an epiphanic moment where discord and antic movement were transformed into political order, serene spiritual and intellectual harmony. Throughout, the masquing space served (in a metonymic rather than metaphoric way) as a microcosm of the kingdom—with the sovereign central, pivotal, and privileged.

An image that shows well the stylized illusionary vista that was presented before the king is Jones's preparatory sketch (fig. 6) for a scenery design from c. 1618–19. The drawing, made in pen and brown ink washed with warm grey, was used, most likely, for the performance of George Chapman's *Masque of the Twelve Months*, the last festival, in fact, to be performed in the Banqueting House before an accidental fire destroyed it in January 1619.²⁸ Reporting on the entertainment, a contemporaneous diplomatic despatch gives us an indication of how this two-dimensional image was realized—in performance—as three-dimensional scenery:

... at the foot of the room opposite his Majesty a curtain which hid all the wall at that end was let drop, revealing a perspective with very lovely ornaments which stood in the air between the ceiling of the room and the solarium. In it were seated all the lords of the masque, in the most beautiful order. By means of a hidden device it descended very, very gently down to the ground. Behind this perspective, in proportion as the lords' seat descended, and at their backs, there were seen in another perspective castles, towers, palaces, rooms and pictures in foreshortening. In truth it seemed to me that I had never seen anything that gave more cause for wonder....²⁹

The account makes clear that this image—like so many of Jones's masque designs before and after it—exploited the visual and spatial implications of

King's Works, ed. by H. M. Colvin (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1982) IV:II, pp. 322–24.

²⁸ A persuasive case was made for the connection between this drawing and Chapman's masque in a paper by Martin Butler entitled 'A re-identified Chapman masque and the Jacobean response to European crisis', delivered at *Texts and Cultural Change: History, Politics and Interpretation, 1520–1660*, The Reading Literature and History Conference, 16–19 July 1995. However, David Lindley, in his 'Select Chronology of Stuart Masques', makes no mention of the masque. Instead, the masque for 1619 is cited as Thomas Middleton, *The Masque of Heroes*; see his *Court Masques* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. xxvii–xxviii. Similarly, Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong's 'Calendar' in their *Inigo Jones* (as in note 25), vol. 1, pp. 85–87, makes no reference to Middleton or to Chapman in respect to a 1618/9 masque. Their only relevant entry is for a 'Lost Masque for Prince Charles' for 1619.

²⁹ G. B. Gabalence's diplomatic despatch of 12 February 1619 reproduced in J. Orrell, 'The London Court Stage in the Savoy Correspondence', *Theatre Research International*, 4 (1978–79), 84–85.

linear perspective to fix the king as primal spectator, as 'Britain's glorious eye'.³⁰ The geometrical construct of linear perspective, of course, privileges one eye in space—especially when that perspectival effect is the receding flats of a theatrical scene. The prospect of a street scene in perspective, for example, such as that which opened Ben Jonson's masque *The Vision of Delight* in 1617, was only aligned to the king's point of view. In contrast, a spectator positioned up in the balcony (see fig. 7, plate 26), askew to the stage, would have been presented with a very different (awry) arrangement of scenic objects—intentionally, explicitly, didactically.

But as well as underscoring the notion of the English king's unique acuity,³¹ Jones's image also connected to discourses of stoic learning and civic instruction, of 'royal education and right'.³² For this image of the 'Pallas of Perfection' (Jones usefully labelling his drawing on the far left of the paper) can also be read as a visual mnemonic of state-sanctioned discourse. Indeed, by 1618 it was something of a convention to present before the king and his court abstract themes and values rendered into (seemingly) substantive architectural form. From the 'Temple of Peace' (in 1604) to 'The Throne of Beauty' (in 1605) and from the 'House of Fame' (in 1609) to the 'House of Chivalry' (in 1610) and the 'House of Honour' (in 1614), the scenery of the English court masque repeatedly used images of buildings as analogues of complex thought. Drawing upon the medieval and early modern traditions of artificial memory, as well as the practice of contemplating and presenting conceptual space as physical space,³³ the 'Pallas of Perfection' brought (to use the words of one Elizabethan

³⁰ Thomas Campion, *Lord Hay's Masque* (1607), line 374, as reproduced in Orgel and Strong, *Inigo Jones* (as in note 25), vol. 1, p. 119.

³¹ See Ross Parry, 'The Careful Watchman: James I, didacticism and the perspectival organization of space', in *Disziplinierung im Alltag des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit 17, ed. by Gerhard Jaritz (Vienna: Der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999), pp. 275–97.

³² The line is from Ben Jonson's masque *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, performed in the Banqueting House on Twelfth Night 1618. As the young Prince Charles descends 'The hill of knowledge', a song calls for the figure of Atlas to allow men to 'read' the lines and signs of royal education, in both the spectacle itself (performed to, and centred upon King James) and the presence of Charles as one of the masques. Orgel and Strong, *Inigo Jones* (as in note 25), vol. 1, pp. 285–88.

³³ See, for instance, the four treatises written as dialogue between a master and scholar on the importance of knowledge and science (and especially astronomy and the 'spheres') that make up Robert Record's, *Castle of Knowledge* (1556). Similarly, for a later text that describes—at length—the elements of the world using the metaphors of 'a magnificent house' ('heaven is the roofer; . . . the Moone and Starres, night Lamps; several regions, severall roomes; . . . the earth, the floor, the sea a mote; the surface of the earth, an

mnemotechnician) ‘a multitude into one’.³⁴ It provided an immediate, accessible and memorable diagram of a unified and ordered realm. It mapped, in a sense, the *shape* of Jacobean power.

Therefore, though just a preliminary sketch, implicit within this image is Jacobean monarchy in all its complexities. The early seventeenth century was, after all, a moment of massive epistemic change, at which a medieval court stared steadfast into the face of modernity. In this respect the ‘Pallas of Perfection’ represents an appropriation by the monarchical culture of the resurgent visual technologies of linear perspective that were empowering the eye of the Renaissance individual. Likewise, it denotes a moment when the technologies of visual mnemonics that were empowering the mind of early-modern learners was brought, judiciously, into close association with monarchical culture, particularly James I’s cultural role as royal pedagogue, God’s proxy as the ‘sorest and sharpest schoolmaster’.³⁵ In this regard, Jones’s image is a complex, layered diagram of power, within which the agents that could have promoted the sovereignty of the individual have instead been spun to promote the individuality of the sovereign. ‘The Pallas of Perfection’ (and the other scenes like it) relates a system of power at a time of epistemic rupture—a system of power reduced to an accessible, immediate, and intuitive representation. A lasting image born from ephemera, Jones’s design can be read as a visual construction of the political reality of early Stuart England. And yet, significantly, it is also a construction (on privileged sight and mnemonic shape) that is difficult to replicate in text.

embroidered carpet’), see Samuel Purchas, *The Kings Tower and Triumphant Arch of London. A Sermon preached at Paul Crosse, 5 August 1622* (London: W. Stansby, Henry Fetherstone, 1623), pp. 25–27. Likewise for an author conceiving the act of faith as an architectural project, see Robert Barrell, *The Spiritual Architecture, or The balance of Gods Sanctuary to discerne the weight and solidity of a true and sincere, from the Leuiti, and varitie of a flase and counterfeit prefession of Christianity . . . a Sermon preached at Pauls Cross 16. November 1623* (London: Augustine Matthews and John Norton, 1624).

³⁴ See Thomas Fulwood’s *The Castel of Memorie: wherein is conteyned the restoring, augmenting and conserving of the Memoriye and Remembraunce, with the safest remedies and the best preceptes thereunto in any wise appeteyning . . .* (London: Rouland Hall, dwelling in Gutter lane, at the sign of the half eagle and the key, 1562), Chapter 6.

³⁵ James I, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies: or The Reciprock and Mutuall duetie betwixt a free King and his naturall Sujects*, as reproduced in *King James VI and I: Political Writings*, ed. by Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 62–84 (p. 83).

Conclusion

What perhaps examples such as the cartoon of Brazil's *República*, or the print of the Dutch truce negotiations, or even the design for a Jacobean masquing scene show, is that 'ruptured' discourses of power can sometimes be discerned more effectively through non-textual sources. When we are considering power (to use Bryson's phrase) 'not as a monolith, but as a swarm of points traversing social stratifications and individual persons',³⁶ it appears to be (in these three examples at least) the *image* that thrives as a representational framework. For Jacobean England it served as a cogent mnemonic; for revolutionary Brazil it served as the space of private discourse; and for the early republican Low Countries it manifested and projected a radical but workable alternative to the world of absolutist, sovereign powers envisaged by Bodin and Hobbes.

Furthermore, when we are confronted with moments when this diffuse location of power is itself dislocated—whether we call that moment epistemic change, or 'out of placeness'—it is the structure (or, indeed, the lack of structure—the 'potentiality') within the format of the image that seems to lend itself so ideally to the discourse. It is there in the polyvalency of the Dutch prints. It is there in the self-conscious fissures of the Jacobean festival designs. And it is captured in the layered networks of meaning within the cartoons carried by the Brazilian Press. In short Images would seem to convey a *structure of meaning* more applicable, and more responsive, to *structures of power*, even (or maybe *especially*) at moments of dislocation—whether that dislocation was seen as perilous, or indicative, or functionally apt in the circumstances where it was recognized.

Now that History has promoted its images from secondary illustration to primary evidence (from scenery to protagonist), it is perhaps time to explore how in this new leading role it can allow us to see very different stories of the past. And, particularly with regards to these 'Diagrams of Power'—as *Net* rather than *Hierarchy*, *Texture* rather than *Text*—it does seem that there is some evidence to suggest that there are stories that cannot be told with words alone. Through the lens of 'text'—in our sources and in our publications—the past has all too easily become an ordered, fixed, hierarchical place. With the kaleidoscope of 'image' (above all the digital image) we now look to a past of movement and interplay.

³⁶ N. Bryson, 'Semiology and Visual Interpretation', in *Visual Theory. Painting and Interpretation*, ed. by N. Bryson, M. A. Holly, and K. Moxey (Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 61–73 (p. 71).