# CONFLICT AND HERITAGE

### CONFLICT, HERITAGE, AND NEW BEGINNINGS...

Throughout the world, religious and archaeological sites, nations and tribes have become stripped of their collective memory, having become objects of external influence and discord. For example, the Mostar Bridge in Sarajevo and the temple mount Haramesh-Sharif in Jerusalem are a few among many. ' Heritage' is often, as depicted by the definitions given to the term ' Conflict in Heritage' by UNESCO, a purely biological and physical concept, an ancestry that can only be traced through DNA testing, and a culture only revived through physical reconstructions of monuments. Yet, as the articles in this edition show, heritage, and the conflict that cultures have experienced throughout history, are tangible sites of memory and interpretation.

It is during conflict that we see the true power of heritage to heal; for example, after the protests in Egypt in 2011, where looters attempted to raid the National Museum, where young men formed a human chain outside the main gates of Tahrir Square to protect the collection. After days of bombing, Muslims joined hands around churches to guard them and promote a shared sense of humanity. Such historical examples are vital to our collective memory.

Post-colonial studies and the discipline of Global History have allowed historians to engage in the dynamic awareness of ' culture' and ' heritage' from a personal, political and economic lens. Moreover, as last month's Black History edition reveals, many historians from vastly different cultures have explored archives as an instrument to disclose their own identity; history can restore the need for identity that arises from an internal conflict with oneself and one's environment. Conflict, whether it is between religions, races, disciplines, or social groups, is a microcosm for a broader understanding of the search for a global, national and individual truth. As our selection of articles reveals, Conflict and Heritage are significant for historians attempting to reconcile these truths and cultural sites of memory from history.

# A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

**DEAR READER,**

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the third issue of the UCL History Society Journal. This issue, in commemoration of indigenous heritage month in November and the end of a long memorable year in December, our articles discuss the tenets of political, racial, economic and disciplinary conflict and their continuing legacies.

The first half of the journal focuses on conflict and heritage. To begin with, Jonas Lim writes about our current agricultural practices in light of the climate crisis, reviewing a talk on indigenous agroecology given by Professor Joy Porter at the UCL Institute of the Americas. Andy Liu discusses the artistic and literary heritage of the Aeneid, while Eduoard Goussot discusses the contested reception of Edmund Burke in British thinking. Lastly, Jonas Lim challenges the ideological conflict between science and religion in the early modern era.

Part 2 of the journal is about the 'New Beginnings' that arose from such an entangled history of conflict. First, we present the second volume of our 'Humans of UCL History' interview series of Dr Alessandro De Arcangelis, who writes about Georg Hegel, Giambattista Vico, and other intellectuals who imagined 'progress' through history in the face of modernity. Next, Euan Toh discusses his personal connection to his linguistic heritage with reference to his Chinese and Singaporean identity, providing a survey into the making of Chinese identity in Singapore. Lan Yao, in continuation of her previous series of chess articles, provides an overview of the confrontations between international chess prodigies during the Cold War. Lastly, Anouska Jha surveys the archival collections of the Scottish Darien Company in Africa in our regular British Archives corner.

With such an enriching take on the terms 'Conflict' and 'Heritage' and with a hopeful outlook towards 'New Beginnings', we hope this edition reveals how historical events, cultural memory, and grand ideological narratives can be deconstructed to reveal their legacies today, across a vast geographical and disciplinary expanse.

Whether you're the type to enjoy a rigorously academic analysis of Black histories of the past or whether you prefer a keener engagement with present issues through a historical lens, or whether you're just stumbling upon this issue to find what our new first-years have got to say, I'm sure that you'll find something worth your time in this issue of the History Journal.

Anouska Jha &Jonas Lim, Editorial Officers

# A HERITAGE IN CONFLICT?:
## THE DISPUTED LEGACY OF EDMUND BURKE IN BRITISH POLITICAL THOUGHT

### Eduoard Goussot (Thrid Year)



Edmund Burke (National Portrait Gallery, 1771)

At first glance, Edmund Burke's political legacy seems fairly unequivocal. Your Joe Bloggs-provided that he knows who Edmund Burke is- would systematically associate the latter with the conservative and Tory spheres of the political spectrum. Indeed, common knowledge of Burke is nowadays restricted to his Reflections on the French Revolution, of which the reactionary tinge is manifest. Over the past century, the depiction of Burke as a staunch conservative opposed to any form of change has thus acquired salience and became a historical and philosophical commonplace up to a point where no one would dare question this. But who still knows that in his time, Burke was not a Tory but a Whig? Who would still acknowledge that his works-notwithstanding the conservative turn taken with the 'Reflections'- were regarded as progressive by his contemporaries?

By delving into this historical context, one is immediately faced with a far more bewildering and disputed intellectual legacy than previously thought: Why was someone regarded as a Whig progressist eventually canonised as the father of modern conservatism in Britain? How could an advocate of the philosophical and political tenets of the American Revolution be so vehement in its criticism of the French Revolution of 1789? Finally, how could Burke's works have been referenced by both opponents and defenders of the Irish Home Rule bills of 1886 and 1893? By summarily exploring these questions, this article will set about uncovering the unknown history of the intellectual and political heritages bequeathed by Edmund Burke. Moreover, it will seek to show how the intellectual legacy of a political thinker was decontextualised and rendered consistent when it was actually far more complex and debated.

In order to grasp the trajectory of Burke's legacy and the conflicts they raised in British political and philosophical history, it is of the utmost importance to stress that Burke's identity is twofold: during his life, Edmund Burke was above all regarded by his contemporaries as a politician but was subsequently

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recognised and hailed as a major political thinker. While the former part of his identity never seemed to be associated with coherence and stability, the latter became widespread during the 19th century precisely because Burke's political thought was apprehended as a monolithic bloc. This distinction is thus paramount to understanding the journey of Burke's legacy because it accounts on itself for the transition from a disputed heritage to a seemingly straightforward one. The drivers of this transformation must therefore be explored.

As an Irish-born Member of Parliament for over thirty years in the late 18th century, Edmund Burke was both unpredictable and far from being uncontroversial. Advocate of Catholic emancipation at a time when religious toleration was a thorny issue in the United Kingdom-albeit without Ireland at the time-, supporter of grievances of the American colonies months before the British Crown embarked on an all-out war, Burke made a habit of adopting dissident stances. However, the aforementioned stances were far from being ' conservative' in their respective contexts. If anything, the relieving of the tax burden in American colonies and religious emancipation can be traced back to ' Enlightenment' strands of thought. While this could sound odd in light of current stereotypes, it is hardly surprising given that Burke was a member of the Whig party, which was more left-leaning in the 18th century's political spectrum. In the meantime, however, stances on constitutional reform and eventually on the French Revolution blurred the lines of ideological obedience. Indeed, Burke's aversion to constitutional change on the grounds that the change would threaten the current ' satisfactory' equilibrium was stricto sensu conservative. Furthermore, his Reflections of 1790 further harmed the sense of consistency in his stances. To expand on the very nature of these Reflections would be unnecessary here the reactionary aspect of the latter is widely accepted. But that a previously progressive Whig MP so passionately opposed what he regarded as the ' excesses' of the French Revolution will help the reader understand how his legacy was initially riven. By Burke's death in 1797, Whigs and Conservatives alike were so baffled by the writings on France that they suggested Burke had simply lost his mind.

By the early 19th century, Burke's heritage was thus far from clear. Loathed by the Whigs but lauded by the Tories for his final works, Burke belonged to neither. Most importantly, none of the two parties laid claim to his intellectual legacy simply because they considered that he had not bequeathed one! The 19th century was thus one of recovery for Burke's legacy. A flourishing of works on this fascinating figure contributed to canonise him as a British literary great. As the recognition of his importance in both the political and intellectual landscapes grew, neither the newly formed Liberal party nor the freshly rebranded Conservative party saw fit to monopolise Burke's legacy. However, as these two parties were newly formed by the mid-19th century, they both saw Burke's works as a source of inspiration upon which they could build a new intellectual and political platform. Undeniably, this was the first milestone in the transformation of Burke from a politician to a political thinker but further made his legacy disputed. While Liberals preferred his criticism of George III to those of the French Revolution, the opposite was true of the Conservative Party. Although his legacy remained disputed, Burke was almost suddenly accepted as a consistent political thinker. The nature of this consistency was later established over the question of Irish home Rule.

When the issue of Irish Home Rule surfaced in 1886, Burke's intellectual heritage took a decisive and conflictual turn. The decision of then Liberal prime minister William Gladstone to pursue a policy of home rule for Ireland prompted the secession of the ' Liberal Unionists'. While this was initially unrelated to Burke, debates on the matter in the House of Commons quickly placed him at the heart of discussions. Indeed, Unionists and Home Rulers alike developed their interpretations of Burke's works which were regarded as central to the Irish issue (his own Irishness making his works ever more legitimate). As Liberal Unionists drew on Burke's works in general, Liberals, foremost among which Gladstone referenced Burke's thoughts on the American colonies to justify home Rule casting other writings aside. Liberal Unionists thus came to broadly embrace Burke's legacy, while Liberals had reservations about doing the same. The subsequent alliance between Conservatives and Unionist Liberals in 1895, which was made official in 1912 with the birth of the Conservative and Unionist Party, was vital in embedding Burke in the conservative tradition. Indeed, Conservatives thus began to cite Burke systematically for political purposes and lay claim to Burke's political thought in its entirety because they enjoyed the support of Liberal Unionists who were able to fully espouse Burke's legacy. In the meantime, Liberals could not do the same, as this would mean giving in to the seditious Liberal Unionists. The former could only abandon Burke outright if their political tradition was to survive. In so doing, Liberals made the final contribution to the recognition of Burke as a consistent conservative political thinker. From this moment onwards, Burke's heritage would be indisputably conservative. He was the father of modern conservatism and nothing else.

To claim that the home rule issue was sufficient in completing the transformation of Burke's heritage would be dishonest. Ensuing academic works were key in rendering this shift permanent and still shape conceptions of Burke. Notwithstanding the undeniable conservative aspect of Burke's works, the latter were largely decontextualised and simplified so as to present Burke as having a constituent conservative body of political thought. This article thus explored the unknown history of how Burke's intellectual heritage was far more disputed than thought. As often in history, the political and intellectual heritages of an important thinker or political figure are less straightforward than one might think...

# THE WRATH OF THE QUEEN: PERSPECTIVES ON DIDO

## Andy Liu (Thrid Year)

The poignant love story of Dido and Aeneas is one of the most captivating parts of the Aeneid. It begins with a match made in heaven – the pair met in Carthage and fell for each other's virtue and beauty. But it ends with Dido's wrath; upon losing her reputation and knowing Aeneas' apparent betrayal, she becomes a creature of furore, vowing vengeance on Aeneas' descendants as she commits suicide. This article explores the modern and Roman perspectives students can take when reading Dido's story and how her emotions inspired artistic reimaginations that resonate with us today.

## A FALL FROM GRACE

Virgil's portrayal of Dido is sympathetic. Book 1 sings of praises; she treats shipwrecked Trojans with compassion and hospitality. She is resilient, driven out from home, she defies misfortune and founds Carthage in a land of hostile neighbours eyeing power covetously. She embodies pietas, fulfils her duty to citizens, and gods, and maintains loyalty to her deceased husband Sychaeus.

Characters in tragedies fall because of their hamartia, their 'fatal flaw'. Yet Dido bears little responsibility for such a downfall. Her crazed love that caused diminishments of pietas is largely a product of divine scheming; Cupid inflamed her heart with love and gradually erased memories of Sychaeus as fiery passions winded her bones:

*"When the fading moon was dimming her light... alone and wretched in her empty house she would cling to the couch Aeneas had left." (Aen. 4.81)*

Earth and Juno doomed and deluded her into believing she married Aeneas. Passion and duty are incompatible in Virgil as Dido indulged with Aeneas and completely neglected her kingdom, causing social discontent. Yet the poet's previous exploration of Dido's vulnerabilities overshadows her impiety with pity; she is widowed, childless, abandoned by gods, and her kingdom surrounded by Barbarians. For her, mighty Aeneas is the other half that warms and protects a wounded heart. Upon knowing him leaving, she cries:

*"I beg you by these tears...by our union... Because of you I have lost all conscience and have thrown away the good name I once had." (Aen. 4.316-321)*

Her desperation is foiled by Aeneas' coldness, claiming that his focus has always been benefiting Troy and following oracles to reach Italy. Whilst Virgil reminds readers that Aeneas repressed his anguish of parting, it is tempting to render him a heartless bastard who chooses fantastical visions over a sincere lover and lacks the balls to come to terms with the queen. With all the hurt and deceit, Dido's consequent wrath almost seems understandable.

## FOREIGNNESS AND UNNATURALNESS

Indeed, R.D. Williams comments that Virgil's narration of Dido's fall is so empathetic that it overshadows Aeneas' mission, the essence of Aeneid (1985: 20.). Yet contemporary Romans' sympathy towards Dido would be diluted by her ominous wrath, prophesizing disasters for Trojans and themselves:

> *"Arise from my dead bones, O my unknown avenger, and harry the race of Dardanus with fire and sword wherever they may settle…" (Aen. 4.626-627)*
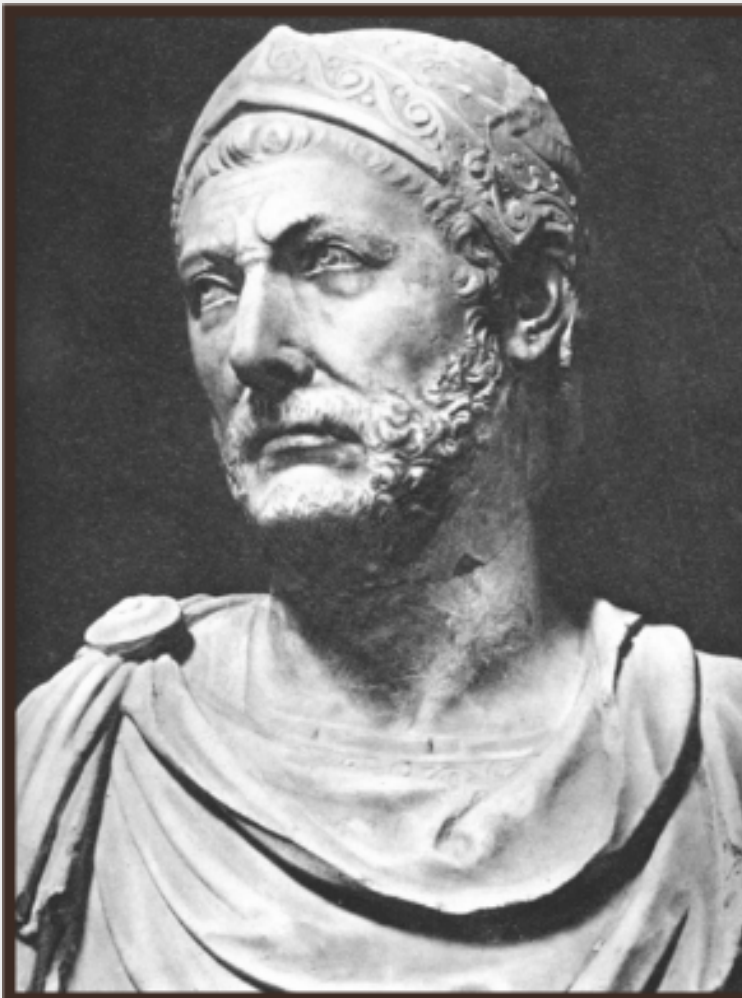


Marble bust, reputedly of Hannibal, Capua, Italy

A reference to the Punic wars, where Dido's countryman Hannibal Barca inflicted mass Roman suffering and almost assaulted the city in 216 BC. Dido's anger extends beyond laying curses; she speaks of brutalising Aeneas:

> *"Could I not have torn him limb from limb and scattered the pieces in the sea?*
> *Could I not have put his men to the sword, and Ascanius, too, and served his flesh at his father's table?" (Aen. 4.600-603)*

Educated Romans would realise these are allusions to disturbing Greek myths; Medea tore her brother Apsyrtus into pieces, and Atreus served Thyestes with fleshes of his sons at a banquet. Such cannibalism also reminds modern readers of Hannibal Lector, though it is doubtful whether Dido's feasting of men would be as elegant. Importantly, Dido's frenzy symbolises ' the foreign' to Romans, as African queens had a scandalous reputation in state literature. Poets like Propertius depict queens like Cleopatra as mad women. They are delirious and delusional; their very speech is ' confused by endless draughts of undiluted wine' (Prop. 3.11). Similar in African origins, Dido's frenzy certainly echoes that in her final moments.

Ultimately, Dido's anger is masculine and Aristotelian, opposing restraints exercised by ideal Roman matronas. Aristotle defines anger as a longing accompanied by pain for revenging a slight when it is underserved (Rhet. 1378b4). Aeneas' insistence that his mission to found Alba Longa is more sacred than Dido is a belittlement for the queen. Illustrious individuals are angry ' when the event is contrary to their expectation', and they express anger towards those from whom they deserve good treatment (1379a11, 1379b16).

Malena Ernman as Dido, Les Arts Florissants, Naxos 2022

It is plausible to legitimate Dido's anger in this respect until we realise when Aristotle philosophised on anger, he outcasted women and drew examples from the hyper-masculine Iliad. It is no coincidence that Aeneid's characters fit Aristotelian models; the Epic is Virgil's Odyssey and Iliad after all. Thus, the very heroism of Dido is outlandish to Romans, not just because it is 'archaic', but also because it violates every gender-based norm – anger is men's business as women are subservient. In such worlds of misogyny, sympathies for female anger are nonexistent.

## FROM WRATH TO LAMENT

Dido's story inspired extensive artistic reimaginations. But they generally emphasised her sorrow and downplayed anger. Henry Purcell's opera, Dido and Aeneas (1689), is widely performed till this day. Dido dies with a heart-wrenching lament in Purcell, as she sings:

*When I am laid in earth, may my wrongs create*
*No trouble in thy breast; Remember me, but ah!*
*forget my fate. (Act III, Aria)*

Why the omission of anger? Ellen Harris (1987) records that Purcell wrote the opera for Josias Priest's boarding school for gentlewomen; outbursts of rage thus seem incompatible with their status and upbringing. Indeed, sorrow is part of life, whereas wrath is an excess many frown upon. Purcell's reimagining of Dido is more relatable as the Aria is often sung on Remembrance Sundays. It became a song of solace during the Covid-19 pandemic. Musicians performed different transcriptions of 'Dido's Lament', its yearning melody evocative and cathartic, resembling a woman's cry of parting from a lover, as thousands mourned the loss of a loved one and solitude in lockdown. Dido's emotions transcend time as readers of different generations interpret her tragedy with perspectives specific to their contemporary norms. With wrath diminished, Dido's story speaks as a universal metaphor for grief and solace today.

# DID THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION EMERGE THROUGH A CONFLICT WITH RELIGION?

## Jonas Lim, Third year

Conflict' is a tricky word for intellectual historians. The word ' conflict' invokes two entities that can be fixated in a particular time and space: a conflict in society would be constituted of between different classes, genders, or races in a particular time. But what about ideas? Unlike individuals or groups of people, we tend to ascribe ideas as transcending time and space. For instance, people who describe the advent of modern science tend to frame its growth in the form of a ' conflict' with medieval religion.

Yet, what complicates historians' attempts to grapple with the Scientific Revolution is that neither ' science' nor ' religion' was understood in the same way as we do them today. As the distinguished historian Peter Harrison put it, attempting to find a conflict between ' science' and ' religion' in the early modern period is the equivalent of identifying a battle between Israel and Egypt in the seventeenth century. Both simply did not exist back than as we understand them today ( Peter Harrison, The Territories of Science and Religion, 2015).

Ideas are not disembodied entities floating throughout an abstract conceptual space; understanding the early modern discourse in its own right requires historians to examine the concrete practices through which early modern science was produced, circulated, and received. Focusing on the context independently from any modern conceptions, we see that ' science' was often practiced to complement religious understandings of the natural world rather than contrast it.
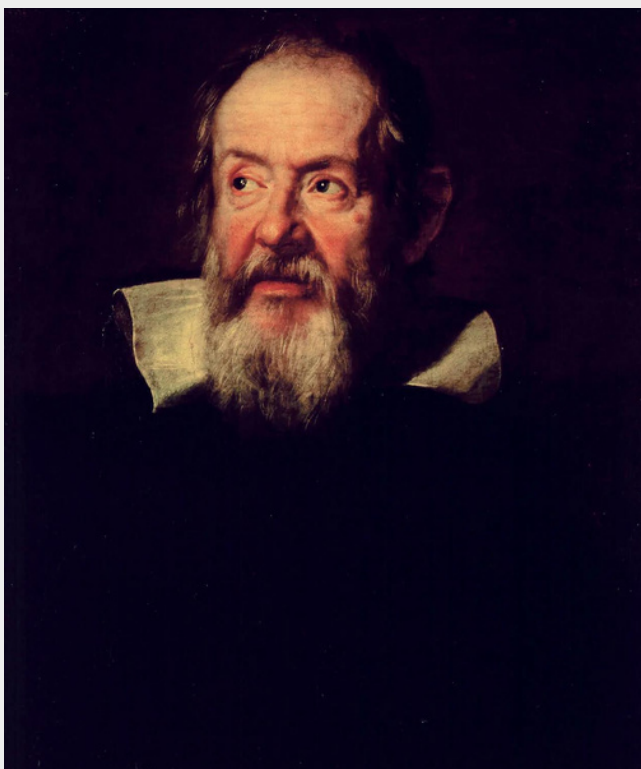


Take, for instance, Galileo's Letter to Benedetto Castelli (1613), in which he argues that neither science nor religion, when interpreted correctly, can contradict each other. For Galileo, the only thing that could possibly be wrong was the human interpretation of the allegorical language in the Bible. What Galileo was speaking against was not religion itself, but the Church's authority to interpret natural phenomena through the Holy Scriptures. Hence, the real conflict was about the role of ecclesiastical authority in religious and scientific practices. The actants of this conflict were not science and religion, but Scholastic practices of religion that heavily relied on the authority of tradition and attempts to diffuse this authority toward the individual.

Galileo ( Justus Sustermans, c. 1637; Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

## THE 'REVOLUTION' CONTEXTUALISED

The crisis of the philosophical foundations of the Catholic Church was the context in which early modern natural philosophers spoke. The dominant intellectual tradition in the Church during the years preceding the ' Scientific Revolution' was that of medieval Scholasticism, a highly Christianised form of Aristotelian philosophy that pursued a doctrinal understanding of the natural world by applying the words of the Bible and Aristotle's Physics.

In practice, Scholastics were highly dogmatic and reverential in their approach to the traditional authority of these ancient texts, including their practice of science. In its Scholastic meaning, science, or Scientia, referred to the cognition of the real essence of nature through demonstration (Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, 1485). Scientia, then, was not a body of knowledge that expanded itself through observations, but an intellectual habit that that was acquired through logical demonstrations from general premises. The strong appeal for demonstrative reasoning meant that Scholastic ' science' was a purely deductive process dictated by traditional authority; under the Church, no ' new' knowledge of the natural world could be produced, apart from demonstrating those already affirmed in the Holy Scriptures – a practice exclusively warranted to the Church.

It was in Galileo's philosophy that the role of observation came to full fruition. In Sidereus Nuncius, Galileo endorsed the Copernican model with his observations on the heavenly bodies. Unlike Aristotelian Scholastics, who used observation simply to demonstrate pre-existing knowledge, Galileo turned Scholasticism on its head by inductively reasoning his views on natural philosophy, using the telescope to observe the superlunary sphere. For instance, his observations of the sunspots or the phases of Venus contradicted the Aristotelian cosmology that everything above the moon had a fixed, incorruptible nature (Galileo, " Depiction of Sunspots" ,1613). His discovery of Jupiter's four moons also contradicted the Ptolemaic model by proposing that Earth was just one of many planets. These observations asserted a spatial uniformity of the cosmos, which enabled observation to play a central role in understanding the heavenly bodies. Such a central role of induction rested on Galileo's bold assumption that, unless scientifically observed, there was no qualitative distinction between the sublunary and superlunary sphere. In other words, there was no qualitative difference between the sphere of humans and God.

Consequently, Galileo's publication of Sidereus Nuncius resulted in a conflict with the Catholic Church. This ' conflict,' a theological one as much as a scientific one, had major implications for who should have the power to practice religion, thereby producing and assessing knowledge about the natural world. Primarily, Galileo's attitude towards reason and authority invoked an ongoing post-Reformation concern regarding scriptural interpretation. As the Church's ability as the sole interpreter of Scripture rested on its Scholastic conformity to the authority of traditional texts, Galileo's overturning of this reasoning was immensely problematic. Much like how Protestantism diffused the Church's institutional authority, Galileo's statement that scientific reasoning ' ought to begin not from the authority of scriptural passages, but sense-experiences and necessary demonstration' rendered the Church's authority insignificant in favour of that of observation (Galileo. Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina, 1615). For Galileo, it was ultimately the individual who must endeavour to discover how the Scriptures and observation were in agreement, not the institution.

## AVOIDING TELEOLOGIES IN HISTORY

In essence, simply imposing modern definitions of 'science' and 'religion to the Scientific Revolution does nothing but affirm the teleological assumptions have in the present. As the conception uncritically relies on post-factual reconstructions of the early modern discourse on religion and science, it often ends up framing an 'inherent conflict' between the two concepts.

This is not to say that post-factual categorisations are inherently ahistorical in themselves. Ideas are inseparable from their practiced contexts, and this involves our practice of writing history in the present. The fact that I chose to write about Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler when speaking of early modern science instead of Hobbes or Pico is inseparable from the context that I live in a world where the ideas of these intellectuals, however post-factually constructed, have become dogmatic features in Western scientific discourse.

No history can tell the past as it is, and it is not inherently ahistorical to conceptualise the past in hindsight. However, framing reconstructions of the past simply as 'how it happened' or imposing modern-defined categories to pre-modern contexts obscures the cultural heterogeneity of the early modern discourse. To understand the reality of this discourse, one should be acutely aware that our modern understanding of the categories 'science' and 'religion' is a product of the layering synchronicity of many concurring debates that were not perceived the same way in antiquity.

# Humans of UCL History

## #2 Alessandro De Arcangelis



My first-ever publication was on the intellectual encounter between Italy and the rest of Europe in the nineteenth century. I remember it was on the very day of the Brexit vote in 2016 when UCL hosted a conference on 'Centres and Peripheries' where I presented this work, which was later included as part of an edited collection published by UCL Press, entitled 'Re-Mapping Centre and Periphery: Asymmetrical Encounters in European and Global Contexts'. It's a concept that's very much dear to me due to personal and academic reasons.

I remember reading, some time around 2010, an article in an eminent English-speaking newspaper about Naples. And the tone of its argument was worryingly similar to what Montesquieu said in 1729 when he was travelling to the South of Italy. The negative picture of Naples painted by the article was something along the lines of " walking in Naples is like walking on a carpet made of crisps, as with every step you take, you tread on a cockroach." As a Neapolitan, I am aware that my hometown does have its own set of problems to take care of, but that is such an unfair and factually wrong caricature.

So, to me, researching and teaching the concept of ' centres and peripheries' comes with a critical, even political, set of implications on the realities that I live in today. My work on the transnational dimension of 19th-century Naples really resonates with how I see myself as a Neapolitan living abroad and how I see Naples as a European ' centre' in the Mediterranean.

Editor) I heard your upcoming book is about Hegel and Giambattista Vico. How did you come to write about this particular pair of philosophers?

When I was coming up with a topic, I felt that I needed something that was both intellectually stimulating and that I felt sufficiently passionate about on a more personal level. It took me only a few weeks into my MA degree at UCL to realise that there was actually a lot to say about the intellectual history of my hometown of Naples! Neapolitans in the nineteenth century were massive readers of German philosophy, which resulted in an especially privileged reception of Hegel. I lived in Germany before coming to London, and that got me started as a no-brainer. So naturally, I wrote about the reception of German philosophy in Naples.

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Editor) How much research would you say that you include in your own teaching?

There is a general consensus in British academia that research is unequivocally the most exciting part of our job and that teaching is somehow " less important". I strongly disagree. Teaching has always been a stimulating and creative aspect of my job, which I absolutely adore.

My teaching and research are intimately connected: first, I strongly value my ' Research-Led Teaching, in which, simply put, one's research " contaminates" and gives shape to their teaching. This has been true in some ways in my case. My ' Enlightenments and Revolutions' Thematic module, where we focus on Europe's peripheries like Scotland, Naples, or Russia, is an obvious example that ties into my research on centres and peripheries. And my Second-Year Research Seminar, ' Global Intellectual History', brings that further to challenge the very idea that there is a canon in intellectual history.

But at the same time, what I find more stimulating is what I call ' Teaching-Led Research.' I love using teaching as a sounding board to try out new ideas. I would never have been able to engage with the themes I am exploring in my current book if I hadn't substantially been expanding my range of interests in history over the last 4-5 years, thanks to teaching. For instance, I would have never had the intuition to apply perspectives gained from postcolonial studies to the Italian peninsula if my teaching had not enabled me to study them so thoroughly in the first place. So, the relationship between my teaching and research has been increasingly symbiotic, not mono-directional.

Although I tend to complain about the workload from time to time, I would never want to teach any less than I am right now.

Editor) Well, as someone who's been in both those classes I can say you're absolutely right. I think that's also due to the interactive atmosphere of your seminars.

I'm still relatively young-ish, at least I hope? And I remember how boring it feels as an undergraduate to have complicated historiographical discussions without active engagement. My priority is to show that these hundred-year-old texts are interesting and worth studying because they genuinely change your outlook on things in the present. So, presenting that to students in an engaging manner is essential to getting students to understand what exactly we're talking about.

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Editor) On that note, what is one thing that you hope your students would learn to pick up throughout the whole course of your whole? Something that you find fulfilling as a lecturer when students pick up on.

I think I'll have to talk about ' Enlightenments and Revolutions' here. I enjoy teaching all my courses, but I'm especially fond of ' Enlightenments and Revolutions' because it has the most revisionist approach of them all. It's a course I initially imagined as a generically standard exploration of the phenomenon we call " the Enlightenment", but over the years, it has evolved into a full-blown critique of the very concept of Enlightenment (especially when considered a single, unified and cohesive event). And essentially, it teaches you that you must always take history with a big grain of salt, as the academic consensus out there is always the result of particular power dynamics. Thinking critically about the existing conventions and consensus really helps you understand what history is supposed to do.

So, to put it succinctly, if there's one thing that my teaching really tries to do, it's to get students to question what people think they know about history. History is not a powerful discipline because of what it teaches you about the past, but because it makes you think critically about human activity and thought. I think that's essentially what intellectual history has to offer in higher education. Every year, students into my modules thinking they're about to find something and leave it with something that they totally didn't expect: a skill, an intuition, and, most importantly, the ability to think critically and independently.

And when that happens, I know I've done my job as a lecturer.

Humans of UCL History is a platform organised by the History Journal so that faculty, researchers, and students can tell their personal journeys that led them to UCL History.

We aim to bring lively stories behind the words and numbers on students' module selections while giving faculty the chance to promote their modules and to share their passion.

If there is a person whose story you would like to hear, please email us at historysociety.ucl@gmail.com!

Featured: Dr Alessandro De Arcangelis
Lecturer in Modern Intellectual History,
Interviewed and Edited by Jonas Lim

# MANUFACTURING A 'CHINESE' IDENTITY IN SINGAPORE

## Euan Toh (First Year)

What is the largest ethnic group in Singapore? Most Singaporeans are of Chinese descent, but to lump them all into one group as 'Chinese' significantly ignores the historical variance in heritage between the Chinese community. Yet that is precisely what has happened. To put it plainly, the Chinese of Singapore, both in people and culture, are similar, but not the same, as that of China. The majority would fall under the category Han Chinese, which is the overwhelmingly largest ethnic group in China, but when you break things down, the Han are a mix of different subgroups, and Chinese Singaporeans represent only a few of these groups.

Most Chinese Singaporeans can trace their ancestry specifically to two provinces in Southern China, Fujian and Guandong. The category used to describe the various group of migrants were 'dialect' groups, that people from a specific religion would speak a unique regional 'dialect'. A 'Chinese language' does not exist, but rather they are a collection of languages, such as Mandarin and Cantonese, that, by virtue of shared ancestry, fall under the branch called 'Sinitic'. To be clear, all these languages can still be broken down into distinct varieties. For example, 'Hokkien' is not one clear-cut language. It is instead the arbitrary combination of multiple 'dialects' that are found within the wider Fujian Province. In Singapore's context though, Hokkien is very much an accepted 'dialect' of Chinese. If you dig deeper into the origins of Hokkien, which is categorised under the Min Chinese group, one thing that strikes you is just how ancient the language is compared to other Chinese 'dialects'. The Mandarin word for chopsticks is pronounced 'kuai zi', the Cantonese word for chopsticks is pronounced 'faai zi', and in Hokkien the word for chopsticks is 'ti'. Where most modern Chinese language groups are descended from Middle Chinese around the 10th Century CE, Min languages are related by an older common ancestor, Old Chinese, dating the split to be around the 3rd Century CE!

The Hokkiens came from Fujian province with a heritage as sailors, potentially even dashing pirates many centuries ago when the province was as lawless to the empire as the wild, wild west was to the United States or Sicily was to Italy. They made up the largest Chinese subgroup in Singapore. The Teochews came from Guandong and were the second-largest Chinese group. The Cantonese, also from Guandong, whose language is employed in Hong Kong, were the third-largest group. Many Cantonese women worked in construction and wore a distinctive red headgear, they were known as 'samsui women'. The Hakka, whose language belongs to its own unique group within the Sinitic branch, were the fourth largest subgroup. The circular Chinese buildings you see in movies called 'tulou' were a product of Hakka architecture. There were also other 'dialect' groups, such as the Hainanese, famous for their cuisine, but the main 'dialects' that would become prevalent in Singapore were Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese and Hakka.

There was a time when these ' dialects', especially Hokkien, flourished in Singapore. Most immigrants sailed in from Southern China, with few native Mandarin speakers among them. Hokkien was especially widespread due to the majority of Chinese immigrants having native Hokkien fluency. It was even used as a lingua franca, not only for Chinese communities but for other minority groups as well. It was independence in 1965 when the existing order changed. As part of Singapore's new education system, the government made the arguably intelligent decision to introduce a simplified bilingual language acquisition program in schools. The logic is simple. Singapore's designated lingua franca was English, the colonial language. It paid dividends in easing the potential for global trade, the lifeblood of the island. It also was neutral among the major ethnic groups, Chinese, Malay and Indian. With this foundation, citizens of Singapore would speak both English and their ' mother tongue', the language of the ethnic group, to retain their cultural identity. In schools across Singapore, the default was Mandarin for Chinese students, once again, for pragmatic reasons, its economic potential is greater than the other ' dialects'.

The problem with the original system was that a 1978 government report found that the success of bilingual education had been underwhelming. Less than 40% of students had what it deemed competency in two languages. Students of Mandarin were struggling significantly as Mandarin came across as a foreign language to them.



I Can Speak Mandarin!
(Singapore Ministry of Culture, 1983)

There was no everyday use for it anyway, the lingua franca is English, and if you spending time with your family or close friends, you would just speak ' dialect'. To achieve the goal of fluency in Mandarin and to unite the Chinese population of Singapore, an active effort must be taken to erode the influence of the ' dialects'.

The Speak Mandarin Campaign (SMC) was first launched in 1979 and aimed to promote Standard Mandarin in place of the dialects. It was effectively an attack on the ' dialects', a punishment for their corrosive corruption of the neatly pruned bilingualism for the hearts and minds of Singapore's Chinese youth. The original SMC slogan can be literally translated as ' speak more Mandarin, speak less dialect'. Parents were encouraged to do just as such when speaking with their children. By the 1980s, all traces of dialects in everyday life were being eliminated, and media was streamlined to be Mandarin oriented. Over time and generations, the prevalence of the ' dialects' vanished, and an ageing population carried what remaining vestiges there were.

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The first complication to arise is the disconnect between younger and older generations. The discouragement of ' dialect' acquisition has led to a handicap in cross-generational communication. For the older generation whose formative years were spent in the pre-independence colony, Hokkien was the lingua franca, and maybe another ' dialect' was what was spoken at home. Imagine telling an ethnic French child to grow up speaking Portuguese while discouraging the simultaneous study of French. Then a few years later when the French grandparents, who have no grasp of Portuguese, come to visit, they struggle to communicate with the child, who has no familiarity with French. That is unless both parties have prior mastery of another language, perhaps Spanish, which is then used for communication. To those fortunate families that do get by with our own little lingua franca, good on us. Some families however are facing this very real problem of communication simply because of a short generational change in what was considered a practical language.

Another problem, arguably more sensitive, was the unintentional effect that strengthening Mandarin could have on weakening the lingua franca English. For ethnic minorities whose ' mother tongues' were not Mandarin, their dependence on English for cross-cultural communication would be challenged once the supermajority Chinese community could employ another language for everyday life. Certainly from personal experience working in a government sector that frequently interacts with the general public, many Chinese Singaporeans feel more comfortable speaking in Mandarin, which posed a challenge for my Malay and Indian colleagues. They become dependent on a colleague to assist in translation, which is both a testament to the multi-ethnic collaboration in the workplace as well as an unfortunate sign that such frequent recurrence of language barriers hindered the efficiency of our work.

Fortunately, the ' dialects', while declining in speakers, are far from dead. The SMC is not actively promoted anymore, and instead, a new wave of curiosity has emerged towards the ' dialects'. Mandarin, while important and still the standard Chinese variant spoken across the Chinese population, is viewed as a ' stepmother tongue'. The raw cultural roots lay in the ' dialects'. Many clan associations still existing in Singapore offer language classes and other heritage activities for anyone interested in reconnecting with their roots. There is nothing in place to stop a person to walk into a clan house and say ' I want to learn Hokkien/Teochew/Hakka' etc. The ' dialects' as a lingua franca still survive in some small pockets of the country after all this time. Usually, in these communities, people would converse in a ' dialect', usually Hokkien, but are fluent in English or Mandarin.

Where do I fit in all of this? I grew up completely desensitized to my family's use of Hokkien, it seems all my cousins have limited knowledge of it while our parents were always gossiping in unfamiliar tones. My own parents, brought up with Hokkien, could not even read Mandarin, a nurse had to write out my Chinese name for them when I was born. In school, we were always reminded ' Chinese is our heritage', but as you get older, you realise how reductionist that train of thought really is. We are so much more than just Mandarin, our entire background is of Southern Chinese descent. Yet we lost a defining aspect of that heritage, our language, which we failed to acquire while we were young. Nor do I bother to do as I said earlier, to walk into a clan house and ask to learn Hokkien. Indifference towards your own constructed identity can begin to creep in once you grow older. So what if I do not know the real ' mother tongue'? I was blessed with a strong upbringing using English and my knowledge of Mandarin will certainly be more applicable than any of the ' dialects'. I simply lived a life without a definitive understanding of my full

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To further confirm my cynicism, a few months ago I was eating a meal with my paternal grandparents when I decided to probe them about their ethnic heritage, I wanted to hear from them myself what other colours of Chinese are in my blood. They shocked me and flipped the whole story on my head.

*Grandmother: 'I am Hakka but my family spoke Hokkien'*

*Grandfather: 'My father is Hokkien and my mother is Hakka.*
*Since we speak Hokkien we just say we are Hokkien'*

All this time my family ' dialect' Hokkien may not have even properly reflected our full historical origins. Personal heritage is a fickle subject, twisted and warped whether consciously or subliminally to fit an ideal. As stated above, sometimes culture can cancel one out, and construct itself accordingly to pragmatic circumstances. It remains such a wonder that the diversity of a person's background can still be lumped as just a simplification of a much more complicated tapestry that spans across time and diversity.

# CONFRONTATIONS DURING THE COLD WAR

### Lan Yao (MA History Education)

## THE RISING STAR OF THE UNITED STATES

The Cold War was a fight without head-on clashes. Had there been a real war, the nuclear weapons of the two superpowers would have taken billions of lives and brought the earth endless devastating catastrophes. It had to be a contest for strength, where the United States and the Soviet Union competed for everything: spaceflight, nuclear weapons, technology... and the most popular mind game - chess.

It seems to be obvious that the Soviet Union possessed an absolute advantage against the United States when it comes to chess. After the Second World War, the Soviets began to dominate the chess world. "Inheriting" the title of world champion became a mission for Soviet chess players. When the Soviet grandmaster Spassky had taken the honour from the previous Soviet world champion Petrosian, a chess star was rising in the United States. His name was Robert James Fischer.



Robert James Fischer, also called Bobby Fischer (Britannica, 1971)

For Fischer, chess was the whole world. He began to be indulged in chess at a young age, and he even gave up middle school and devoted himself entirely to chess. At the age of 15, he won the championship of the United States and became one of the top 8 players in the world. The Americans marveled at his achievements, and he became the hope of the whole United States to take the title of the world champion away from the Soviets.

In 1962, Fischer was qualified for the Candidates' tournament to challenge the world champion. But he only finished fourth. He began a series of protests, in which he complained some Soviet players of arranging quick draws so that they could conserve their energy for games against Fischer. In addition, he accused some Soviet players of deliberately losing to their " accomplices" to ensure that Soviet players were always the winner. These accusations were thought to be correct, as the Soviet government wanted to maintain the dominant position of the Soviet players in the chess world and outmatch the United States. Within two years, Fischer's proposal was adopted by FIDE, and the previous Candidates' tournament was replaced by the format of knockout matches, where result manipulation was no longer possible for Soviet players.

This is Fischer. He had a sharp disposition and an acute insight. He also complained a lot, and sometimes even protested against issues that we usually consider as insignificant. In the 1967 Interzonal held in Tunisia, Fischer quarreled with the organizers and quit the tournament. This is because Fischer claimed himself a pious believer of Worldwide Church of God, which forbad any events on Saturday, God's seventh-day Sabbath. The organizers respected Fischer's religion and changed the schedule of the tournament, but the new schedule deprived Fischer of several rest days, which Fischer could not bear.



Bobby Fischer (Dutch National Archive)

On the other hand, Fischer was so obsessed with chess that he did not grumble anything related to his games. He was invited to participate in the Capablanca Memorial Tournament in Havana in 1965, but the government of the United States forbad him to go to Cuba. This is because Cuba was influenced by the Soviet Union and became a communist state under the regime of Fidel Castro. Like the Soviet Union, Cuba was considered as a true enemy of the United States. Therefore, Fischer agreed with the local organizers to play by telegram. It was a tough match for Fischer. Sending telegram for each move needed time, and one game usually lasted for eight hours; but Fischer never complained, because it was never tiresome for him to devote time to his true passion. Though the tournament was painstaking, Fischer still won the second place. His love in chess and his tenacity led him to go further and finally qualify as the challenger for the world champion.

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## DISPUTE AND COMPROMISE

The Candidate tournament in 1971 was the ideal tournament for Fischer. No one had thought that he would win the tournament so miraculously. He defeated Taimanov and Larsen with the identical perfect score 6-0, and defeated the previous world champion Petrosian in the final with an overwhelming advantage of 6.5-2.5. And now, the whole Soviet Union felt nervous; Fischer had become the first non-Soviet to shake the throne of the world champion.

The settlement of the match between Fischer and Spassky for the world champion was a tortuous process; it was a long debate between the United States and the Soviet Union about where the match should be held. From the eight possible venues, Spassky favored Reykjavik, the capital city of Iceland, because the cold weather there would remind him of his hometown Leningrad (today Saint Petersburg); while Fischer preferred Buenos Aires the best. Obviously, the Soviet Union could not agree on playing on the other side of the Atlantic; plus Buenos Aires could not provide enough bonuses for both players. In fact, Reykjavik was not a bad choice for Fischer, but Fischer stick to his principle of not accepting his opponent's proposal. So from the rest of the venues, Fischer chose Belgrade, Yugoslavia. This is because Belgrade was able to offer the highest prize funds for both players.

Euwe, the previous world champion and the president of FIDE, suggested dividing the match into two halves, twelve games in Reykjavik and the other twelve in Belgrade. But the Soviet Union made a sharp protest against this proposal, because the long hot summer in Belgrade was beyond Spassky's endurance. Fisher also hated this solution, for he felt like playing in two sites with the crowd moving around seemed like a " road show."

As the debate going, the match was delayed from March of 1972 to July. Finally, the United States compromised, in fear that the match would be cancelled and Americans would miss the chance to outmatch the Soviets. But Fischer was reluctant to compromise. When the opening ceremony took place in Reykjavik on July 1st, Fischer was still in New York, complaining that the prize fund was too low. It is possible that the prize fund was only an excuse, but rather, Fischer hoped to gain more time to prepare for his games, or just intended to make the Soviets annoyed and obtained psychological advantage. Again, Euwe showed up and decided to delay the first rounds for some days. The British chess sponsor Jim Slater also offered an additional 50000 pounds as prize fund and urged Fischer to show up. At last, Fischer appeared in Iceland on July 4th.

The tense atmosphere of the match had reached its peak. This was not only a match between two players, but a battle between two superpowers. Everything in the playing hall, including chairs of the players, was checked thoroughly, in order to prevent the disturbance of hidden chemicals such as spraying hypnagogue. The match itself was not stressful for Spassky, but under the pressure of the Soviet government, Spassky felt very nervous; while Fischer was concentrated and aimed at winning the world championship title, with millions of American supporters. Chess, not commonly played throughout the world before, became widely known to a lot of places, especially to the Soviets and the Americans. Listening to the broadcast about the world championship between Fischer and Spassky became a daily agenda for many people.

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## STRUGGLE TO SUBVERT THE ORDER
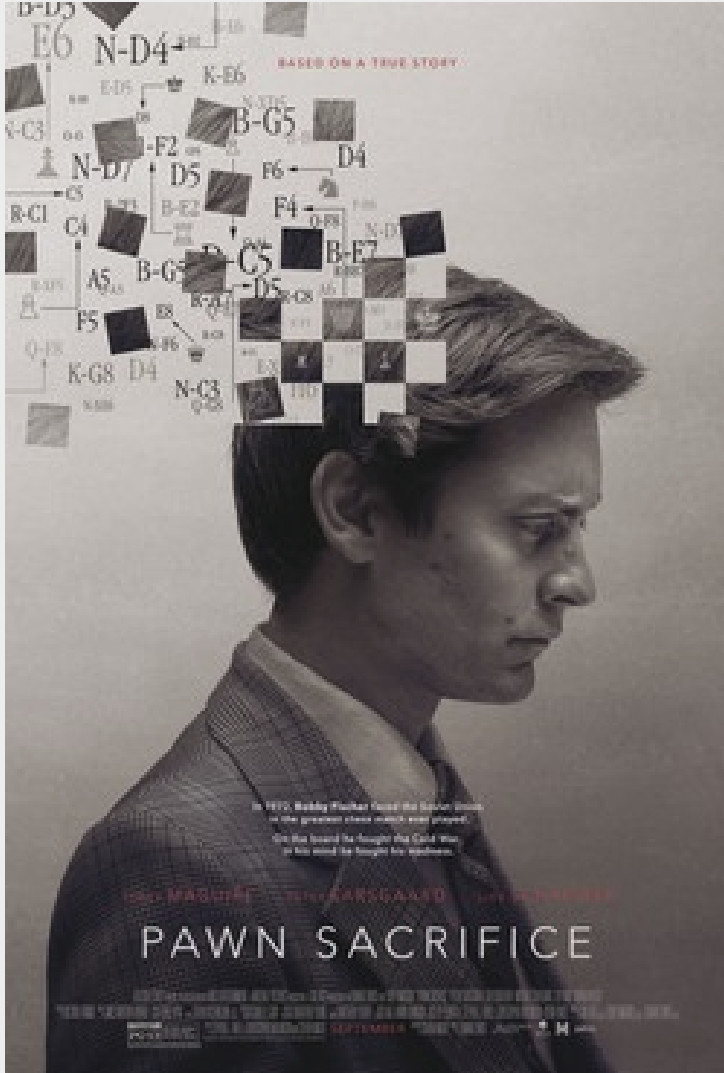


Pawn Sacrifice (2014)

Spassky won the first game. In the second round, Fischer did not come. Spassky played the first move and waited for one hour. In this weird fashion, Fischer lost another game.

Fischer protested against the disturbance of TV cameras and refused to show up. For Fischer, any noise during the game could be detrimental. He needed to be highly focused and wholly immersed in chess, and he could not bear any noise, even the stare of the cameras or the crowd.

Many Icelanders were unhappy. They gathered in front of the American embassy and threatened the United States that if Fischer did not appear, Iceland would take the U.S. military base back. The United States Secretary of State Kissinger was anxious. He begged Fischer to continue the match and fight for the benefit of the United States.

The president of FIDE Euwe was angry with Fischer for his rude behavior of disrespecting his opponent.

He told Spassky that if he wanted, the match would end and he would successfully defend his world championship title. Of course, this was also what the Soviet Union wanted Spassky to do. But Spassky agreed to continue the match. This is because Spassky liked Fischer for his frank, child-like temper and his insane behavior when it came to chess.

Fischer also liked Spassky. Just as Spassky said, Fischer was made of paradoxes. He hated the Jewish people even he was a Jew by his mother's side. He hated the Soviets but he treated Spassky warmly. Spassky once asked Fischer, " Bobby, I'm Russian - why are you friendly with me?" Fischer said nothing. It is probably because Spassky considered Fischer as a friend while other Soviets treated him as a madman and an enemy; plus, unlike many Soviet players who liked to play tricks on the games against Fischer, Spassky was candid.

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Fischer and Spassky finally reached an agreement to continue the match. TV cameras were removed; the match was moved into a backstage room, where the audience was not allowed to watch the games. This time, Fischer performed excellent. He won five games in the next eight games. He lost the 11th game, but defeated Spassky in the 13th game and was 3 points ahead. Spassky recollected that Fischer was supported by an ideologue named Lombardy, who kept Spassky under constant psychological pressure and severely hindered his performance.

In the 14th round, Spassky proved to FIDE that he was ill, and the rest of the tournament was postponed for a week. The Soviet government became anxious, and ordered Spassky to stop the match by filing a protest against Fischer's horrible behavior. But Spassky persisted. He was not afraid of losing the match. But after the match, he regretted, as he realized that the match was bigger than his individual interests.

The match continued a week later. This time, Fischer changed his style of playing aggressively for win but played quite solid, and drew the next 7 games without giving Spassky any chance. Fischer won the next game and became the 11th world champion.

This is the first time the United States defeated the Soviet Union in the combat of chess during the Cold War. Fischer became the hero of the United States. He appeared on the cover of the American magazine Sports Illustrated and TV shows. A Bobby Fischer Day was even held to celebrate his victory. Influenced by Fischer, more and more Americans began to play chess.

When it came to Spassky, he did not feel pity of losing the world champion title, but rather, he felt that he " had thrown off a very strong burden and breathed freely."  He was released of the responsibility of defending the world champion title for the Soviet Union. He was no longer the celebrity of the Soviet Union, and he could live like normal people. But the Soviet authorities were very disappointed. Not only Spassky, but a lot of chess players, were under attack of the Soviet government. Chess players no longer possessed privilege in the Soviet society, but they were forced to give part of their prizes to the state.

# DREAMS OF A HISTORY THAT IS 'TOTAL'

## Jonas Lim (Third Year)

The ' total,' it seems, is more of a myth to the historian nowadays. Although many historians have attempted to brand their work to capture the ' total' in the names of world history, global history, macro history, l'histoire total, the dream to capture the entirety of the human past seems a little far-fetched to be more than a flashy catchphrase. Quantitatively speaking, historians may never capture the total, as history is never about the entirety of past-times but about selectively categorising the past into present inquiries. Hence, the ' total' has existed in the minds of historians than anywhere in the real world among many schools of historical thought. As the idea of ' total history' has changed over time to indicate different types of histories, total history is not defined by a particular spatial or temporal range or a specific scale of analysis; rather, it exists as a heuristic value according to what historians regard as the ' total' compared to their conventional frameworks of historical analysis.

## WHAT IS 'TOTAL' HISTORY?

Total history' has changed to encompass different meanings over time. Historians, as early as in the twelfth century (Bernard Itier, Chronicle), have generally assumed their works to account for the totality of their subject matter. However, ' total history' as an outspoken historical subdiscipline began with the Annales school of French historians in the early twentieth century. Early Annales historians like Fernand Braudel distinguished their practise of the ' total external' - the deep, slowly-changing geographic and economic structures - from the ' event-based' histories of the short-term political (Mediterranean, 1949). Other historians like March Bloch or later historians of the Italian microstoria school put forth the idea of ' the total internal,' arguing that the total only existed inside people's minds and social relations. Recently, environmental historians have advocated for a total history of humankind as a geological agent, as the concept of the Anthropocene encouraged historians to consider nature as a historical protagonist. As such, the idea of ' total history' has constantly changed according to what historians have regarded as the ' total' as opposed to conventional frames of analysis used by their contemporaries. Hence, total history is a subdiscipline that aims to expand the frameworks in which historians conduct their analysis, rather than a term that denotes a particular type, scale, or spatial range of historical writing.

The term ' total' is often misunderstood. J.H. Elliott, in his review of Braudel's Mediterranean, criticised that total history is ' not dissimilar to total war' as ' in both instances, you throw in everything you've got,' implying that the ' total' did not mean anything more than a mere aggregate of different types of histories without any distinctive features of its own (1973). Moreover, certain microhistorians, especially those who embraced the postmodern ' incredulity toward master-narratives of all types' (Jean- François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition, 1979), have critiqued the very notion of a ' total' history.

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Sigurdur Magnússon commented that by focusing on the uniqueness of the individual, microhistory denied the possibility of any overarching narratives (' The Singularity of History', 2003), while Giovanni Levi critiqued that the purpose of microhistory is to reduce the scale of analysis to undermine large-scale paradigms (' Frail Frontiers?', 2019).

However, these criticisms towards total history assume the ' total' is interchangeable with the ' macro' or the ' global.' Though colloquial uses of the word ' total' may have similar meanings to the macro (macroscopic analysis conducted on large groups of individuals) or the global (an extensive spatial range across geographic ranges), total history is not necessarily associated with large scales nor wide spatial ranges. In terms of scale, the ' total' does not necessitate historians to focus on the macro. In The Cheese and the Worms (1976), Carlo Ginzburg wrote about the peasant culture during the Inquisition in sixteenth-century Italy from a microscopic scale of a single individual, a miller named Menocchio. From the fragments left by one idiosyncratic individual, Ginzburg constructed the totality of an unwritten peasant culture obscured from the view of previous historians. Moreover, total history has also been written in small spatial spheres. Take, for example, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, who wrote the total history of a single village by examining the ecological, cultural, religious, and sexual relations of its occupants (Montaillou, village occitan, 1978). Though certain total histories do cover wide spatial or temporal ranges, total history itself is not related to a particular scale nor any temporal or spatial range. These criticisms misunderstand total history as a field that quintessentially aims to establish definitive meta-narratives across wide spatial frames or macroscopic scales: neither of which concerns the aim of total history.



Fernand Braudel (1902-1985)

History does not aim to establish a definitive ' totality' of the past; rather, historians seek to expand the frameworks of historical analysis to one in which their contemporaries are not accustomed to operating. To understand what frameworks historians try to expand requires considering the historiographical context in which different types of ' total histories' were written. To historians of the ' total external' such as Braudel, the ' total' meant considering structural factors external to human relations – the geographical and economic structures that shaped human interactions in the Longue Durée.

For instance, in writing about the Battle of Lepanto in The Mediterranean, Braudel challenged the human-centricity of the Histoire événementielle (narrative-based history focused on historical events) practised before him. As he downplayed the importance of the event itself as ' surface disturbances' and ' crests of foam', Braudel emphasised the deep, underlying structures that preconditioned the battle before its occurence (1949). Moreover, in Out of Italy, Braudel opposed the historian Jacob Burckhardt in interpreting the Italian Renaissance (1974). While Burckhardt periodised the Renaissance as a two-hundred-year conjuncture characterised by unique individuals, Braudel sought to identify a deeper explanation of the Italian Renaissance as a continuity of long-term historical change. As such, the Braudelian ' total history of the external' sought to bring the historian's attention to the deep, structural factors beyond the fleeting, ' short-sighted' human relations in political and diplomatic history.

## THE TOTAL INTERNAL

This ' expansion of frameworks' stands the same for another school of total history: the ' total internal.' Historians of the French Mentalités school focused on the collective ideas that escaped individuals to form the total. Jacques Le Goff characterised this mode of total history as studying ' that which is common to Caesar and his most junior legionary... Christopher Columbus and any one of his sailors', thus constructing the ' total internal' from the collective ideas between human relations (Mentalités, 1983).
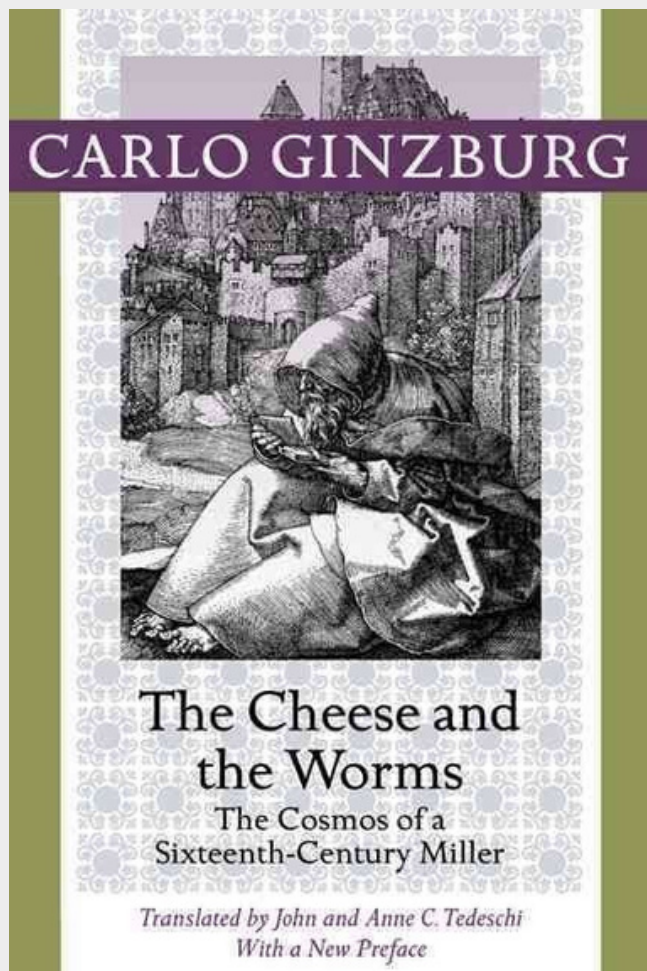


This mode of total history gained prevalence, especially after the ' Cultural Turn' of the 1970s. In this period, historians began focusing on the microscopic scale of individuals and small grassroots groups in their research. Whereas cultural historians before this period, such as Burckhardt or Johan Huizinga, tended to focus on high cultures of the elite while assuming high culture ' trickled down' to people at the grassroots level of society, microhistorians like Carlo Ginzburg established how historians could construct the entirety of the social relations within a whole peasant culture by looking at the records left by a single individual (1976). To these historians, the total could only be observed by reducing the scale of analysis to single individuals who served as ' keyholes through which to view the world in which individuals lived' (Tonio Andrade, 2010). Thus, the ' total internal' expanded the boundaries in which historians operated by incorporating these people marginalised from the top-down narratives of history before the Cultural Turn.

Carlo Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms (1976)

## TOTAL HISTORY TODAY

Likewise, environmental historians today – though the word ' total history' itself has generally fallen out of usage - have reinvented the old ambition to write a total history of humankind for the twenty-first century. Although historians practising Braudel's structural analysis of the geological and the economic and Ginzburg's small-scale archival research – both of which have generally become the norm of historical research today – claimed to be writing ' total' histories of their own, historians have only recently recognised the role of nature as an active agent in historical change. However, as the concept of the Anthropocene (the current geological age in which human activity has been the predominant influence on the environment) quickly arose along with the ongoing climate crisis (Nicola Davison, The Anthropocene epoch, 2019), historians have questioned whether the conventional boundaries in which they operated were too human-centred. In 1996, William Cronon revealed that historians tended to dichotomise the relation between human society and nature in a naïve way that underwrote human society as where the ' significant' acts occurred and portrayed the environment as a passive ' untouched nature,' underestimating the degree to which human activity affects the natural environment (' The Trouble with Wilderness'). Thus, the rise of nature as a driver of historical change challenged the portrayal of nature as a passive, theatrical background on the historian's canvas upon which humans were the sole actors.

Accordingly, ' total' historians of the environment have challenged our place as central ' human' agents of historical change. Works that focus on the history of germs, animals, or pathogens and their relations to humans have redefined the place of human agents in the historian's canvas and have expanded the boundaries of historical analysis to non-human agents. In Can the mosquito speak?, Timothy Mitchell (2019) analysed how disease and malaria shaped warfare and economic change, undermining the idea that humans were in command of the environment as fully active agents. As Bruce Campbell emphasised in ' Nature as historical protagonist' (2010), it has only been since the enlightenment era that humans saw themselves as omnipotent agents against a passive, benign natural environment. Like Campbell, many ' total historians' today aim to expand the twenty-first-century historian's scope of research to non-human actors and the environment by recognising the role of nature as a historical protagonist.

All of this is not to say history establishes a definitive ' totality' of the past. Every historian inadvertently prioritises some aspects of the past in choosing what better represents the ' total.' Historians of the ' total external' prioritise unchanging geographic and economic structures than short-term events, while historians of the ' total internal' disregard some parts of the past that are beyond the individual's cognition in pursuit of a total history of the mental world. Nevertheless, the objective of total history has always been to achieve a comparative total by expanding the frameworks upon which historians operate. This is demonstrated by an active interest in interdisciplinary approaches shared by total historians of the ' external' and the ' internal' alike (Marc Bloch; Lucien Febvre, 1929).

As total historians incorporate methods used in geography, economics, anthropology, or the natural sciences to the historian's toolbox, they challenge the conventional frameworks in which historians view the past. Thus, the aim of total history is to expand the boundaries in which historians operate, not to claim their works to be definitive ' totalities' of the past.

In 1973, Le Roy Ladurie stated, ' by the year 2000, historians will either be computer programmers or will no longer exist.' In his remark, Le Roy Ladurie assumed historians had already expanded on all possible frameworks and that the only thing left of historical research would be the job of digital computers and quantitative analysis, which operate within the frameworks established at the time (' L'historien et l'ordinateur') Living in the twenty-first century, we know this has certainly not been the case. As conventional ideas of the ' total' are challenged, historians have been confronted by the elements to which they had been turning a blind eye: first to the ' total external' that revealed factors beyond the sphere of human relations and politics; then the ' total internal' which revealed the grassroots totality that had been marginalised by the top-down narratives before the Cultural Turn; lastly, the environmental total that redefined our position as human agents in relation to the environment and non-human agents around us. Thus, the historian's work is only ' total' as they seek to expand the frameworks in which historical research is conducted.

# CELEBRATING CONFLICT AND HERITAGE AT THE BRITISH ONLINE ARCHIVES



## Anouska Jha (Third Year)

We are pleased to announce our partnership with British Online Archives, a leading academic publisher and resource provider. The site is available, free of charge, to all UCL students. The goal of the Archives is to provide university students and researchers with access to unique collections within the Humanities and Social Sciences department.

For Conflict and Heritage Month, one of the most prominent themes across all of the articles in this edition is the conscious awareness of the complex political, economic and cultural layers that undergird our social systems. Therefore, the British Archives collection entitled Scottish Trade with Africa and the West Indies in the Early 18th century, 1694-1709, is the chosen archive for this month's corner, as the documents reveal the transatlantic heritage that was necessary to the construction of the European economy. The collection traces the existence of the Darien Company, established by the Act of Scots Parliament in 1695 which entailed the creation of the Company to the Indies and Africa.

After a series of financial disappointments regarding the investment of the Company, it decided to scale down its plans, focusing its efforts on the colony of Darien in modern-day Panama. The primary aim was to benefit from transatlantic trade and the emerging opportunities in the South Sea, yet the blunders of disease in 1698, and the decision of the English King to prohibit merchants in American colonies from providing the Scots with supplies, led to the desertion of the settlement.From 1699-1700, the Scots were in conflict with Spanish ambitions to Darien, with the region finally abandoned in 1700, with few attempts by English merchants to use it to open up routes to Africa and the East.

The collection includes financial documents, subscription lists and the book of the Company's storekeeper at Leith, along with various legal documents and receipts. The significance of this archive, however, is a historian's ability to explore the relations between the Church of Scotland, the Darien Company, and the Scots' reason to invoke conflict with the Spanish who, in 1493, witnessed Pope Alexander VI, produce a ' Line of Demarcation' in the region. It reveals an understanding of the European colonisation of the Americas as a distinctly national, self-interested pursuit of an overseas colony that acted as a mechanism for the economic growth of European economies.

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# CONFLICT AND HERITAGE

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## UCL HISTORY JOURNAL

Darien Papers 2 (1699-1703) [NLS ref. Adv. Ms. 83.7.5]

This archive  at British Online Archives has  led me to ask further questions about the heritage of this colonial endeavour, and the  racial contours  of its history. For example, it has recently been discovered that African people arrived in Scotland in the early sixteenth  century  under the court of King James IV (1473-1513), intended to provide hunting and musical entertainment for the Scottish elite. Moreover, the ' Moorish lasses', as Jamess IV called African women, were converted  to Christianuty and few became one of Queen Margaret's attendants. Therefore, the Darien Company records are a leitmotif of a wider racial undercurrent pervading early modern Scottish culture. It allows us  to trace the financial manifestations of racial, colonial and global ideologies that were recorded in the Company's travel accounts. This reveals that the history of  conflict and heritage is an expansive category, allowing historians to trace the emergence and continuation of conflict across borders through interdisciplinary methods.

# Coming up for our next issue...
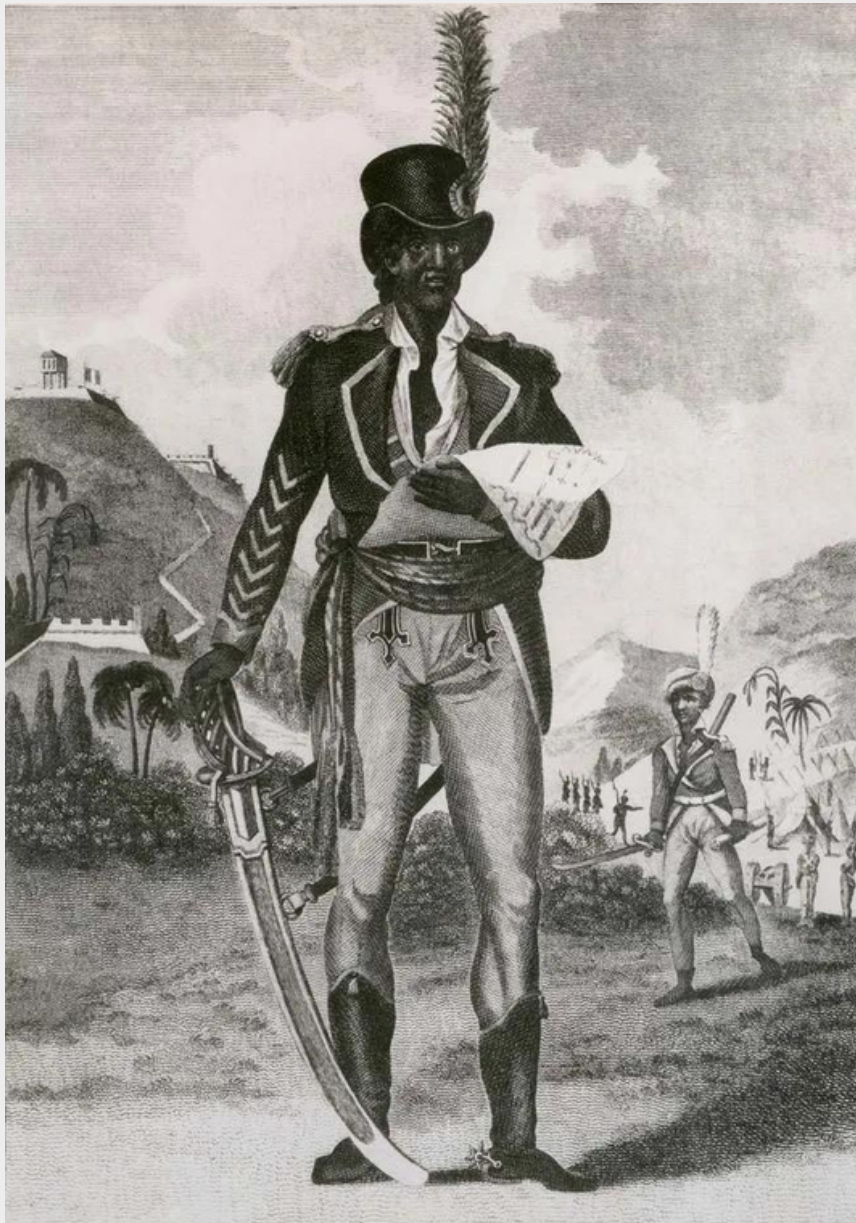


# "Empire and Race"

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