

HST 202: ONLINE U.S. History W19 (Escobar)

Forum 2

Interpreting Editorial Cartoons

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Interpreting Editorial Cartoons
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, January 26, 2019, 7:19 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Interpreting Editorial Cartoons topic.

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Interpreting the cartoon "At the South"
by [Morissa Parliament](#) - Tuesday, January 29, 2019, 7:30 PM



My initial thoughts that started going through my head when I first saw this cartoon was how different this era of politics and society is from today in 2019. With all the knowledge I have gained over the years about slavery and racism this specific cartoon didn't catch me off guard because I have seen this all before.

My interpretation from analyzing this cartoon is that it was showing a conversation between a mother and son and how the little boy needed to behave or there would be consequences. An observation I made from this is that the mother was very illiterate, and probably had little to no education. I think that this specific cartoon is critical to our history and important that we critically engage with it, because it is part of our past and racism is still something we struggle with today.

I believe overall, the point that is being drawn out is the reality and the struggle that blacks faced during that time period. The cartoon was also titled the south and so from my perspective this cartoon is a representation of family dynamic in the south for African Americans.

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Re: Interpreting the cartoon "At the South"

by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 11:13 AM

Hi there!

I would like to say I think you had a very interesting observation on this cartoon, and personally helped me understand what was going on a little more as well. I think you brought up a very valuable point, pointing out that the African-Americans are very illiterate and it's clear they have little to no education. The literature/english in the cartoon is very illiterate, and at first it can be confusing to understand what the mother is trying to say. The mother is giving a stern talking to the little boy, telling him that he needs to be a good boy. She goes on to say if he's not she will "call de big ole Bobolitionist and let um run away wid yer." I am understanding from this sentence that she is talking about the abolitionist, who were a group of people with the movement to end slavery. I think this threat would be frightening to the boy because the abolitionist were a radical group, and life could be dangerous for the people in the group. The mother was trying to startle the boy and ensuring him to the right thing. I also think the mother was trying to ensure her safety as well. If they are both slaves and her son acts out, I think some of the consequences would fall on the boy, but I believe a majority of the blame would fall on the woman since she is responsible for him. I believe the woman is not only looking out for the boy but also for herself. I did like your point of mentioning how the cartoon shows the hardships of life black people had to endure. They didn't have access to education, they feared for their life, and they were worked very hard no matter what age they were. In this cartoon the illiteracy really stands out though. This cartoon was very valuable to analyze. Overall, I think one of the big messages this cartoon has to share was the poor conditions black people were force to endure and the lack of education they had (they weren't aloud to receive education). Also thanks for sharing your insight!

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Re: Interpreting the cartoon "At the South"

by [Daniela Rosales Name](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 4:07 PM

I agree, in part, with what you are saying in terms of the cartoon highlighting the lack of access to education for black people. However, I think this could be seen from another perspective. I think we must also keep in mind that it is a very real possibility that this was drawn by a white person and we should think about the implications of this; I am not sure of this, but because of the time it is very likely. My first thought when I saw this is that it was trying make fun of African-Americans. In a way that it over exaggerates the lack of education. I think the reason they made it a point to make the language almost incomprehensible because it would play to the stereotype of black people being less intelligent than white people. Other clues as to why I believe this comic has this connotation is because of the use of the n-word. Also the implications of the comic is that black people should be scared of abolitionists, which I think would comfort some white people because it would steer black people away from the people who were trying to free them.

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Re: Interpreting the cartoon "At the South"

by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Friday, February 1, 2019, 12:51 PM

Hi there!

Thank you for your input! After reading your response, I definitely think this cartoon can be seen from both perspectives. I appreciate your response because I didn't see it from that point of view when I first saw the cartoon. The author very well could be making fun of African-Americans especially by highlighting the lack of education and illiteracy. I think a reader could see the cartoon through either interpretation. I do agree with you about how the cartoon is making it seem like the African-Americans should be scared of the abolitionist, and how this would help the white men especially slave holders. I mentioned a similar comment in my original post, how the black people in the cartoon seemed to be frightened by the abolitionist. Overall, I stand by my interpretation, but I also think your comment has some great points as well! Thank you!

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Re: Interpreting Editorial Cartoons

by [Miles Long](#) - Tuesday, January 29, 2019, 9:43 PM

I believe the cartoonist's opinion on the cartoon "The Scale" is that soon Blacks and Whites in the North and South were going to be equal. In this cartoon the black man of the South looks very pleased to be on the same level as the white man while the white man of the North looks distraught to be on the same level as the black man. There could be a few opposing points of view from this time. One might be that the black man and white man would not be equal at all. It could also be the point of view that for the black man to rise, the white man must fall (the south would most likely agree with this point of view.) This type of political cartoon is still very effective today. There are a lot of cartoons that have a similar parallel, where two things are on the scale, and for one to rise the other must fall.

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Interpreting "The Scale"

by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Tuesday, January 29, 2019, 9:48 PM

The cartoon I decided to analyze first is "The Scale" immediately I noticed a few things about this cartoon. The cartoon is an image of a large scale the left side labeled at the top is the south and the right side labeled at the top is the north. Sitting in the two scales are two men. There is an African-American man sitting on the left scale under the label south, and his scale is labeled black. In the right scale is a white men under the label north and his scale is labeled white. The scale is equal no man is heavier than the other, they sit equal looking at each other. I think the author of this article supports African-Americans and in the bigger picture I think the creator of this cartoon thinks white and black men are equal. I personally think the cartoon symbolizes equality. I think this because it's interesting how in the picture the white and black man are sitting in the two scales and they equal out to each other. The black man is grinning from ear to ear, and I think it shows how the African-American man is happy at this result, but I almost see it as he is mocking the white man or proving him wrong. The white man looks disappointed to see the black man at the same level as he is. I think the black man is showing happiness because he is proving the white man that he is the same, he is a man, and there are no differences between them. The man is disappointed to be facing the truth, and have the realization that they are not different. They are equal and one. I also think that this result could upset the white man because in the cartoon the white man is presentable; and the black man is in cheap clothing. To me personally I am understanding that the author is even saying that this black slave is equal to this presentable white man. Which of course would bring quite the shock to the white man. He is a black man, but he is under the south label, so I am assuming he is also a slave. I also think it is interesting how the white man is under the "north" label. I think this is a message about that, not all northern people took kindly to black people. Yes, the northern states were free states, making black people free people if they lived there, but that doesn't mean that all people in the northern states were accepting of black people. There were many white northerners that mistreated free blacks and treated them with cruelty. Overall this cartoon is very interesting and personally to me the cartoon symbolizes equality.

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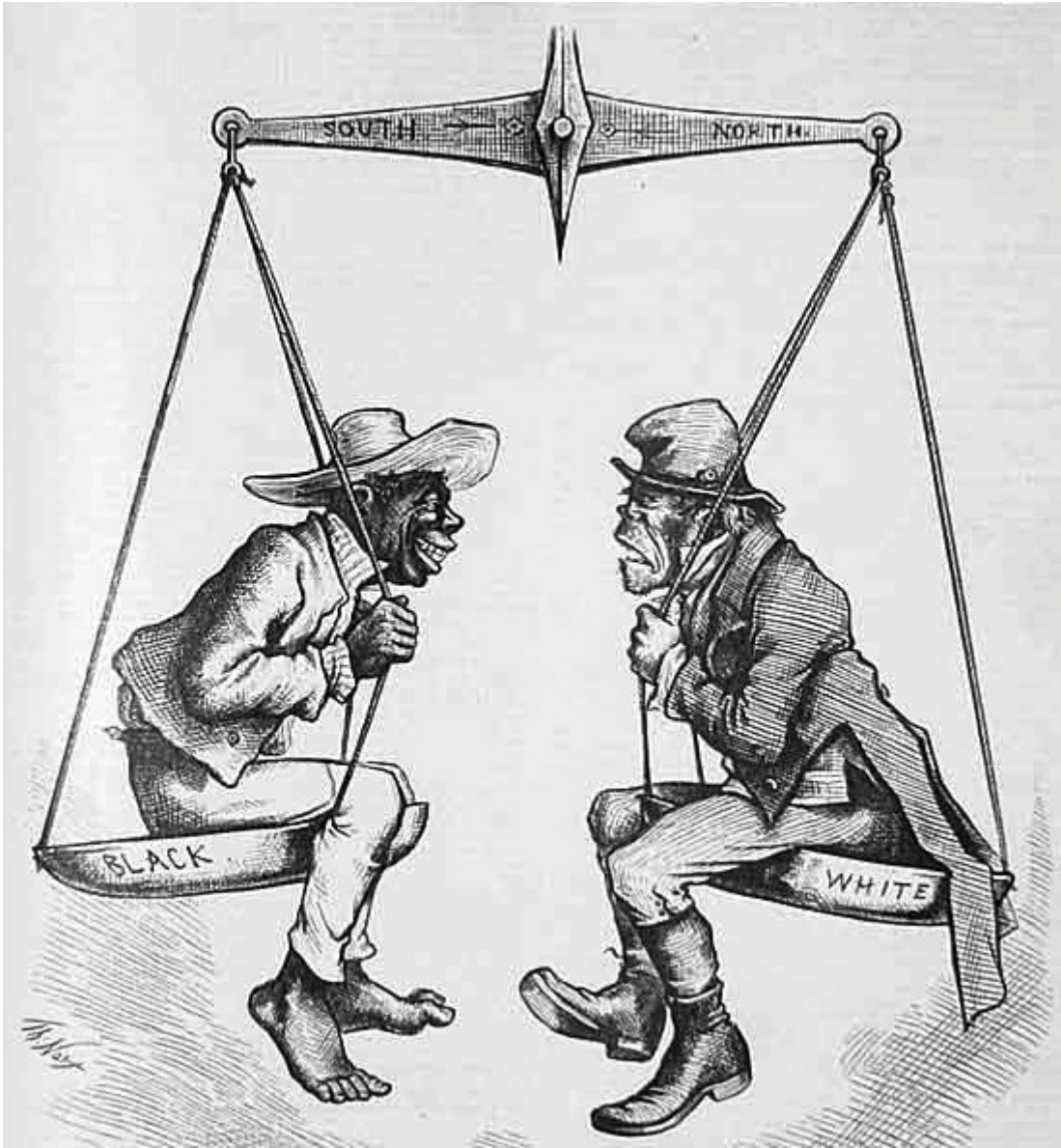
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Interpreting the cartoon "The Scale"

by [Morissa Parliament](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 12:06 PM



When I first look at this cartoon I see a scale, with two different men on it but what threw me off is that the scale is even. Initial interpretations I take from this is that these men may be equal on the scale, but appearance wise these men are very different. The African American man is wearing clothes that look old and torn and he is barefoot, yet has a smile on his face. The white man is wearing nice clothes and clean boots, yet has a mean expression and tense look on his face. This cartoon gave me the assumption that these men are categorized into race as their identity, because the seats on their scale are labeled white and black.

In my opinion, I feel like this cartoon could have been an exaggeration of how blacks and whites were "equal" as an opposing viewpoint. I believe that was the cartoonist opinion and propose through this piece. I believe this cartoon could have been effective for that time, because it was probably a way for people to feel less guilty by showing the public that everyone was equal.

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Re: Interpreting the cartoon "The Scale"
by [Jasmine Gutierrez](#) - Thursday, January 31, 2019, 3:42 PM

I agree with your observation that this could have been a political cartoon that brought the equality of the races to light. I believe it could've been from either side, for slavery or against it. The Black man's grin looks sly, almost like he's getting away with something. The White man's face looks more in anguish to me. It's like he's in disbelief that the black man's status is equal to his. The representation of each man also vividly depicts how absurd this idea was back then, then a well respected, possibly wealthy white man could be equal to a rags-wearing black man. This could've been used to show those against slavery that their efforts were working and to keep going or was used for those for slavery, showing the stark contrast to push the inferiority of blacks.

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Re: Interpreting the cartoon "The Scale"
by [Miles Long](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 8:32 PM

I think your observations are important and I agree with them. It does feel like the white man looks like he is in pain and like that he doesn't actually believe that his status should be equal to his. I would also agree that it reflects the idea that whites thought it was ludicrous that blacks and whites should be equal.

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Re: Interpreting the cartoon "The Scale"

by [Morissa Parliament](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 1:13 PM

Thank you for your interpretation and opinion on this cartoon analysis, because it gave me a fuller understanding of the cartoon as a whole. You showed me a whole new side of everything, and you did that by diving into detail about what their facial expressions were representing. I simply just made the observation that they were making different faces at each other. You focused in on how the white man had a look of defeat and anger because of his “equal” status with the black man. I think now with both pieces of information I look back at the cartoon and can make the conclusion that this cartoon was written in favor of the black man. He is almost looking at the white man in a mockingly way, like he won. I didn’t see this perspective the first time I analyzed this cartoon.

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Re: Interpreting the cartoon "The Scale"

by [Ashley Tippins](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 8:58 PM

When analyzing “The Scale” I had difficulties understanding the argument being made. The equality of the two men really threw me for a loop. However, reading your reply really helped my understanding of what argument the artist is making. I agree that there is a big difference in the facial expressions of the two men; the black man smiling the stereotypical smile of blackface performers and the white man looking dejected and unhappy. I do think this is due to the equality that they face and because of that I do think that this is an anti-slavery cartoon. The signs “North” and “South” above their heads also made me think about the Northern perspective on the political power that slaves represented. Because the south had slaves that counted as ¾ of a person, they wielded more political power than the North in key issues. Depending on the time period that this cartoon comes from, there is also a case to be made that it is discussing the impact of slaves on making the South and North equal political rivals.

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Re: Interpreting the cartoon "The Scale"

by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 11:27 PM

Hi there!

I completely agree with your observation! At first glance it is a little shocking to see the two men equal out on the scale. I think the clothes play a big part in this cartoon as well. The black man is in old run down clothing and the white man is in mostly clean well looking clothes. The white man looks distressed at the fact that he is equal with a black man. Especially a black man that is dressed in scraps and doesn't even wear shoes. I think the author also wanted to emphasize how equal they were, and I think he was trying to have the reader find humor. If a white man was reading this at the time he may be outraged that an author would compare him to a black man, or he might chuckle and find something amusing and make it comical. I think your response is great. As I keep analyzing this cartoon I find more and more interpretations and viewpoints you can see this cartoon as. I believe it could have many meanings. Thanks!

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Holy Horror

by [Anna Rodriguez](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 1:43 PM

Although I am not familiar with the specific event that this cartoon is based on, I can guess it had something to do with a black woman sitting on a passenger street car. This event is reflection of the events that happened when Rosa Parks sat on a city bus. I can imagine that a black woman sitting on a streetcar in the time period that the cartoon is from, would cause quite the scene. I can imagine that the artist was being sarcastic, when they came up with the name for this cartoon. I think they were on the side of equal rights and wanted the laws regarding black use of public services to change. I think the aura in which they drew the two characters is the most obvious proof of this. The white character is draw fat, ugly, and holding a lot of food. While the black woman is drawn as quite, polite, and pretty. He names it "Holy Horror" like the scene is extremely horrific, when it is obvious that it was not horrific, from the drawing. By doing this, I think the artist was commenting on the perspective that many white people had back then. They felt that any black person breaking the social norms and rules was extremely scary, when in fact,

people with different colored skin, doing the same things white people are doing, isn't actually that scary. When people saw this cartoon back in the day, white people were probably offended by the depiction of the white lady. Abolitionists and black people were probably supportive of the carton, because they had probably seen white people who acted and looked that way towards african-Americans. I think political cartoons are very powerful and have a strong effect on the views of the American people.

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Re: Holy Horror
by [Morissa Parliament](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 8:33 PM

Your perspective of this cartoon brought up a lot of ideas for me. I think that overall this cartoon was trying to portray the difference between whites and African Americans especially regarding public services. For this specific cartoon it is focusing on public transportation. I see a connection between this and the cartoon "The Scale" because of the portrayal of facial expressions and physical appearance of the blacks. I think what is most important about this cartoon is the facial expression of the white woman and how she looks angry, somewhat afraid and displeased with the whole situation. Mirroring all that the african american woman is sitting quietly and looks as if she isn't causing any problems. From an outside initial perspective this cartoon seems to be in favor of african americans and showing how even if they do nothing wrong then the whites are still going to be aggressively mad.

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Re: Holy Horror
by [Ashley Tippins](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 8:48 PM

I also analyzed "Holy Horror" and had a completely different take on the cartoon. I really appreciated your analysis, but I just had a few counter-arguments. The first disagreement comes from your analysis as to who the white and black women are in the cartoon. While I definitely see the coloration difference in the faces of the two women, I think that has more to do with the shading than the color of their skin. The exaggerated features of the woman on the left are indicative of 19th Century opinions about the "ape-like" features of African-Americans. The nappy hair, flared wide nostrils, and teeth are all very common cartoonish depictions of black folks during that era. Additionally, I think that the shading on the woman on the right indicates the downtrodden feelings that many white Americans opposed to integration would have had at the time. The shading doesn't reflect the actual phenotype of the woman but instead indicates the mental and emotional state of the woman.

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The Promise Land — criticism of colonialism
by [Daniela Rosales Name](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 2:15 PM

The cartoon I have chosen to focus on is The Promised Land. In my opinion what this comic was attempting to depict colonialism. In particular, this comic shows how, when the British came to America, they brought with the Christianity. I think this part is speaking to the fact that before the arrival of the European, Christianity wasn't a practice in America. In other words, although Christianity became the 'norm' in America it wasn't originally meant to be this way. Native Americans were being forced to assimilate to a culture and religion that was brought here from Europe. I also think that, going along with this, Native American practices weren't viewed as natural, which Christianity was; when, in fact, it is the opposite.

Another component that I think this comic speaks to is that although the idea people want to spread is that Europeans came to "save" Native Americans peacefully through religion, colonists were violent. They were prepared to kill this that stood in the way of their quest to assimilate them into Christianity. In the comic itself at first look, the ship is filled with crosses and religious figures. It implied that colonists only came armed with their religious texts and items. But, upon further inspection you see in the background the tops of the weapons they carry with them. It is almost like they are trying to hide their intentions from the people they encounter.

Something that caught my attention from this comic is the name "The Promised Land." The implication of this is that America is something that is owed to the European colonists. It is something that is meant for them and belongs to them over the Native Americans that were already living in this land.

I think this position might have been controversial at the time, because of the value that was put on religion. Also, in a time where the Trail of Tears and other acts against Native Americans were occurring it doesn't seem like the position of this comic would be very popular with the president, members of his cabinet and supporters.

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Re: The Promise Land — criticism of colonialism
by [Morissa Parliament](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 2:35 PM

I didn't initially analyze this cartoon and I had only glanced at it, but your perspective was very detailed and picked apart what was visually happening and also what was happening historically at that time. I think diving into religion is always a controversial topic. Relating it to this specific cartoon was easy because it put a spotlight on it and made it the main argument. I think what makes this relevant today, is that it's part of our history and religion is a topic that people talk about with a lot of passion. I think how this differs a lot from today is that there is a much wider community of types of religions today and back then Christianity was the main and almost only practiced religion at the time. I think that what is being implied with this cartoon in a roundabout way is that the British were pushing Christianity on everyone and not in a peaceful way because they came to the "promised land" armed.

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Interpreting At The South
by [Jasmine Gutierrez](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 2:47 PM

This editorial cartoon is very impressionable. The conclusion I drew from this cartoon is how the African Americans around the time of abolition felt towards how the Whites saw them. The meaning I understood from the art and the caption was that abolitionists were the Hail Mary do gooders of this time period. The blacks in the south ran away so often with abolitionists that it was an everyday happening. The way that the mother calls them Bobolitionists can also speak on how she saw them as dumb or meddlers, poking fun at them almost. Blacks in the south might have seen abolitionists as meddling in their affairs, making it seem they can't help themselves.

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Re: Interpreting Editorial Cartoons
by [Emma Mather](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 10:40 AM

This cartoonist was making a satirical point about those who voted against the suffrage of blacks. While looking at it now I think it's rather clever and ironic to what a lot of people actually thought back then. I have learned that many people would vote to help slaves and other groups of people who were not treated equally yet they didn't want those people to actually be equal or even considered better than the white people. I think that this cartoonist was clever in how they interpreted this issue that was in the US at the time, however I'm not sure how effective it would've been since the point that the cartoonist was making was an unpopular opinion at the time.

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The "Great" American Scale
by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 6:48 PM

From the cartoon "The Scale," it is clear to me that the author is trying to make the point that the Irish in the North during this time were treated just as poorly as the African Americans were in the South. The cartoon shows two men sitting on a scale, the man on the left is African American and his side of the scale is labeled "South," while he sits level with the Irish American who is on the side labeled "North." The Irish American is upset that he is on the same level as the African American, the African American appears to be happy with this result. The point of this cartoon is that while both of these groups were discriminated against, it was to very different degrees. The African American Slaves of this time period would have loved to be treated as the Irish Americans were treated, which was still quite poorly. The Irish Americans felt as though they deserved to be treated better than they were being treated (they were right) and did not relish the idea of having come to the "land of opportunity" to be treated as second-class citizens.

The sides of the scale these men are sitting on are also labeled "black" and "white" which I think is another important point. While the Irish Americans viewed themselves as white, the Nativist Americans viewed them as a different race. They were put in a similar category as African Americans, which they were not expecting when they came here. Again, the contrast between the facial expressions of the two

men is the most telling part of all for me. The African American loves having an equal of a different race, while the Irish American is almost angry at the idea. I think this cartoon is a good reflection of the different perspectives and the opinions of the Nativist Americans at the time.

As we learned from the video “No Irish Need Apply,” the Irish were depicted as less-than-human due to their poverty and their Catholicism. Nativist Americans believed that the Irish were a different race and that they could tell by looking at someone if they were Irish. I think this kind of discrimination was similar to what the African Americans would face after slavery was abolished, and certainly the free blacks faced it even before abolition. To have someone look at you and see you as a different species simply because of the color of your skin, or the accent you spoke with, or the religious beliefs that you have held your entire life was a burden that these two groups shared. While the African Americans certainly had a much harder road to equality than the Irish did, the similarities are very real.

19th century America was a place where white protestant men were kings, and everyone else fell into a certain hierarchy. And while there were various movements which started during this time to try to rectify some of the injustice, many of these issues would not be “solved” until the twentieth century. This cartoon demonstrates the very real discrimination that was felt by both the Irish Americans and the African Americans during the 19th century.

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Re: The "Great" American Scale

by [Alvin Iskender](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 11:14 PM

I think the connection you've made between the cartoon and the racial disparities happening during this time period are sound, and you provide a good amount of analysis to back this up. I came to a different conclusion, as I analyzed the cartoon assuming the author was degrading both groups depicted in the image. I feel that if the author were sympathetic to the two groups shown, they would be *depicted* more sympathetically, rather than the dimwitted grin and glazed caveman expression I interpreted the two caricatures as. I also feel that the author's message, as portrayed, wouldn't come across as being sympathetic in a time where these two groups were maligned by so much of the public. I'm not sure your average reader at the time would see this cartoon and understand the author to be on their side.

That being said, I think your explanation is well justified. The "equal suffering" standpoint was not one I considered, and I wouldn't be surprised if it turned out to be accurate.

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Holy Horror

by [Ashley Tippins](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 9:00 PM

The cartoon “Holy Horror” depicts two women on a Washington city street passenger car. From the details in the cartoon, the conclusion to be drawn from the cartoon is that white and black folks should not be integrated. There are a few reasons that I interpret this cartoon to make that argument. The first is the barbarous nature of the African-American woman: flared wide nostrils, nappy hair, and an angry expression is contrasted with the demure and resigned facial expression of Mrs. McCaffraty. The contempt in the facial expression of the black woman indicates the danger and horror of the encounter from the perspective of Mrs. McCaffraty. I believe this because 19th Century Americans were very fearful of the aggression of African-Americans. The videos from this class that discuss the impact of the Nat Turner rebellion and other anti-slavery movements abroad indicate that this fearfulness was felt by whites throughout America.

In addition to the racial distinctions made in the cartoon, the artist also depicts the class tension that is felt between the two women. The African-American woman is holding all of her shopping in one basket while the white woman is simply traveling on the street car; for those in the upper class, carrying all your wares in an open basket would be seen as uncouth and an indication of poor etiquette. Due to the sentiments toward black folks in 19th Century American, the aggressive facial expressions and lack of etiquette indicated the inferior status of African-Americans.

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Re: Holy Horror

by [Emma Mather](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 8:26 PM

When I interpreted the cartoon I thought of it quite differently but I like your point about it showing the fear of the "barbarous nature" that some people had feared at the time. I didn't notice that when I saw the cartoon at first and I think that's a very interesting piece of the cartoon that I had missed originally.

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Controlling the Ballot Box

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 2:16 PM

In the cartoon "The Ballot Box," we see two men, one presumably Irish and the other presumably German, who are walking away with a ballot box while a massive brawl is happening behind them at the polling station. The Irish American is dressed in a barrel labeled "Irish Whiskey" and the German American is dressed in a barrel labeled "Lager Bier." The Irish American is holding a stick over his head as if ready to strike something or someone, and the German American is holding a pipe that he is presumably going to smoke. The brawl is taking place behind the Irish American, and behind the German American is what appears to be a beer hall with various advertisements on it for lager bier and cigars. Between the two buildings is a flagpole flying the American flag which also splits the two men.

I think there are some pretty obvious discriminations taking place in this cartoon. The textbook tells us that "The Germans introduced lager beer to the United States, thus providing a wholesome alternative for Americans who wished to give up spirits without joining the teetotalers. The Germans also built old-country beer halls in American cities, complete with sausage counters, oompah bands, group singing, and other family attractions," (Murrin textbook pages 414-415). The text goes on to say that the Irish loved whiskey, which many Americans found appalling (Murrin textbook page 415). It is clear from the text as well as the videos that each of these groups was associated with their drink of choice and labeled drunkards and trouble makers.

In the video "No Irish Need Apply," it is stated that voting in cities with a large Irish population was decided by those who physically controlled the polls. As we can see in this cartoon, the brawl at the polling station is an attempt to do just that. The video also states that the Irish-Catholics became expert political organizers, and that by the year 1870, one-fifth of voters in New York City had been born in Ireland. I think this expert political organization coupled with the [violence](#) at the polling stations is what led to the idea of the immigrants walking away with the ballot box. As we saw in the "Nativism Part 2" video, half of the German immigrants were also Catholics, which I think contributed to the Germans being portrayed as taking the ballot box as well. While their styles may have been different—physical control of the polling stations for the Irish and simple family meeting places where politics could be discussed for the Germans—both groups were seen by most "white" Americans as a threat to their democracy.

I think that this cartoon is a very good representation of the attitudes of a lot of Americans during the 19th century, especially after the huge influx of Irish immigrants between 1844 and 1852. While we know from the "Nativism Part 2" video that most of these immigrants did not move to the South, an area that today is typically associated with racism during this period, these groups found racial problems of their own in the North. Northerners may have felt like they were more civilized and accepting than people in the South because they rejected slavery, but they demonstrated the same kind of blind hatred for people simply based on the country they were born in.

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"Am I a brother and a man?": A Mockery?

by [Alvin Iskender](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 9:47 PM

Two images are shown in the "Am I Not A Man" entry. On the left is a recognizable image- page 422 of the textbook tells us that this image was used in British antislavery efforts (the image actually shown on that page is not the same, however). Even disregarding that context, we can see that the man in the image is portrayed as kneeling, as if pleading to his kin the caption "Am I not a man and a brother?" It's a simple message, but a strong image, emphasizing the common humanity that the forcefully subservient share with everyone else.

The next image is completely different in tone and yet shares a very similar caption: "Am I a man and a brother?". How a person is drawn when it comes to cartoons like this is very important when understanding what the cartoonist's view is- but it's not always simple. Often cartoonists might still caricature figures they're sympathetic to; in this case, however, it feels safe to say that this is meant to stand in direct opposition to the prior image. The man has a manic pose and expression, is holding a sword and torch, and civilians that appear to be deceased lay behind him. The caption serves as almost a taunt by the subject and a mockery of the previous image by virtue of being nearly identical. It's hard not to think that the cartoonist believes that blacks are savages by nature, and would take advantage of any mercy extended to them. The difference in dignity between how the two characters are portrayed is so stark it's difficult to see in any other way, especially with how uncomfortable it is to see a man portrayed in such a way in the latter image. It seems almost designed to spread fear.

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The Scale- Equal in what way?
by [Alvin Iskender](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 11:00 PM

I find this cartoon pretty fascinating. As I said in my previous post on "Am I Not A Brother", how a character is depicted or how it's drawn can mean a lot as far as the cartoonist's intent. The Scale is immediately interesting because both characters- who are labeled and shown to be black and white skinned -are *both* caricatured negatively.

Based on the information we have, there are a few possible interpretations. It's easy to tell that the scale imagery is meant to show that the character on the left is equal to the character on the right in some way. At first glance, since the white skinned character is also caricatured, it may seem that the cartoonist is mocking two marginalized minorities at once- African Americans, and one of multiple possible white minorities, such as the Irish, which the textbook explains was also a maligned group in the 19th century. The deliberateness of the "BLACK" and "WHITE" labeling alone makes this seem like a stretch, and there seems to be more of a purpose to this cartoon than just mocking two minority groups.

A second interpretation could be that the cartoonist is a southerner with disdain for the north, and is making a derogatory comparison to his political adversary- 'A northerner is as dimwitted as a typical slave', the cartoon might be implying. This also seems like a stretch as the "NORTH" and "SOUTH" labeling are rather de-emphasized in the image, and it seems unlikely that such a message would be portrayed in this fashion.

While I am unaware of the context and time period of this cartoon, we do know from the material we've read that race has often been used as a sort of wedge issue to goad support from poorer whites. I suspect that the cartoon is more political in nature, perhaps implying that both characters are, for instance, unintelligent, or easily taken advantage of. Though I'm not able to ascertain the precise meaning or intent behind the cartoon, I think the artist's stance is meant to be more from a point of cynicism rather than some form of demagoguery, as it might appear to someone viewing the cartoon from a modern era.

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"Am I a brother or a man?" — a rebuttal of abolitionist art
by [Daniela Rosales Name](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 11:48 PM

The “Am I Not a Man and a Brother?” comic is an iconic image historically. It became a symbol in the fight against slavery. The second image seems to be a response to the original “Am I a Man and a Brother?” from a pro-slavery perspective.

The original, from my perspective, is meant to argue against slavery. It attempts to ignite empathy in slave owners and those who were pro-slavery. The framing is very specific it asks slave owners to look at slaves like equals instead of below them.

The second comic looks to be a rebuttal of the first one. It would seem that the creator is trying to mock the original drawing. As if to say, Black people can fool you into thinking they’re like the drawing one when they’re really like the drawing two. While I don’t know the context it seems to me like the drawing two is commenting on a rebellion of sorts.

I would also like to point out that in drawing two the man is in a very Jim Crow-esque pose. Which paired together with the animalistic quality of the face leads me to believe that the image is heavily playing into stereotypes of African-Americans.

To me when image two asks “Am I a Man and a Brother?” the question really is ‘Would you consider a murdered your brother?’ The man is portrayed as killing white women — presumably their slave owner — and the look on his face shows no remorse. It’s an omen: this is what will happen if you free slaves.



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