

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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IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, which clearly describes the cartoon name you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Interpreting Editorial Cartoons

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Thomas Nast's portrayal of Irish-Americans vs African-Americans
by [Alli Crank](#) - Monday, January 28, 2019, 11:09 AM

Sitting on the right there is a darker colored woman who I think we can assume to be African American and she is dressed well and has pretty features. Sitting on the left there is a woman who has lighter skin and she is not dressed as nice, has much more aggressive features and is holding a basket in which there are two bottles that look like alcohol. From these features I am going to assume she is Irish because that is who alcohol is often associated with during that time. Clearly from this cartoon we see that Nast portrays the African woman as more civilized and more "normal looking than the Irish woman.

The cartoon is captioned "Holy Horror of Mrs. McCaffraty in a Washington Street Passenger Car. [Mrs. McCaffraty voted against Negro Suffrage.]". From this caption and the way the Irish woman is looking at the African woman, it can be assumed the Irish woman is Mrs. McCaffraty. I think the point of this cartoon was to show what type of person votes against "negro suffrage" and through this it shows Nast's opinion on the Irish and African American's. In that time I'm sure this cartoon was very effective in grabbing the attention of its viewers and swaying them to dislike Irish American's. But now it seems like portraying the Irish woman that way is offensive and rude, If Nast believes in equal rights for the African American woman, why shouldn't there be eval rights for the Irish American woman?

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Re: The Holy Horror Response
by [Letitia Hadix](#) - Thursday, January 31, 2019, 6:39 PM

Hi Alli!

When I first saw Holy Terror I wasn’t sure what to think. After I read your interpretation things seemed to make more sense and I was able to think over the drawing more when I went back to it. I was thinking that maybe Holy Horror could have taken place during the Temperance period. After reviewing Holy Horror I was thinking this image could be a portrayal of the drinking habits of the Irish and African American communities. That the Blacks were probably as divided as the Whites in drinking alcohol while the Irish immigrants “...reaffirmed their love of whiskey...” (Murrin pg. 415) so the Blacks were considered to be more “civilized” in comparison. While the early Americans were struggling with the prohibition, the Irish immigrants were continuing to stay true their roots. Since Whiskey was the ‘national drink’ they were probably seen as an unwelcome temptation towards the people by the politicians against alcohol.

Much thanks,
Letitia Hadix

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Who's promised land?

by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 12:09 AM

I believe the main supporters of this cartoon would have been the protestants. When the Irish and Germans started to migrate to America in large numbers there were concerns about the growing amount of Catholic’s in the country. According to the video No Irish need apply by 1870 Irish catholic alone accounted for 1 in 5 of the voters in New York City. Many saw this as the Catholics overrunning the country and trying to push their catholic agenda on the whole of America. This cartoon helps us as students to see the way that many Americans viewed the new catholic immigrants not as people trying to come to the country in search of a new life and opportunities, but as catholic crusaders sent by the pope to take over the United States.

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Re: Thomas Nast's portrayal of Irish-Americans vs African-Americans

by [Vince Shumway](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 11:35 PM

Hi Alli,

I really liked your point of view and thoughts on the cartoon. I wasn’t positive what the point the artist was aiming for, but I liked our interpretation. I would agree with some of the other interpretation on here about this being maybe part of a temperance message against alcohol. I would maybe even add on that more and say that religion is a big point to the message possibly. It could show how vile the Irish Catholics were portrayed and thought of with their beliefs and use of alcohol. To compare the blacks could be seen as much more civil when compared to the Irish.

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Re: Interpreting The Slave

by [Taylor Dotson](#) - Tuesday, January 29, 2019, 9:09 PM

The Scale depicts the north and south, whites and blacks as equals. I believe the cartoonist is in favor of the quality between race. The white man was depicted with a somber look, while the black man is drawn as happy and delighted. They have the blacks on the south side where all the slave states were. This leads me to believe this cartoon was done around the campaigns for abolishing slavery. They are physically not the same because the white man clothes are more professional and put together where the black man is in a straw type hat with untailored clothes and he is wearing no shoes. The main clue is in the title and the image of the scale. It is not only depicting white and blacks balancing, but it is the north and south balancing. One example can be from when Taylor proposed California and New Mexico as states instead of territories. Through this proposal it would even out the south and North with both 15 free states and 15 slave states. The second example I can think of is modeled after the Missouri Compromise. Northerners feared a up rise in senate votes for the south with the election of Missouri. The north retaliated by offering Maine as a free state which was trying to keep north and south the same.

-Taylor Dotson

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Is the white man on the scale Irish?

by [Brianna Caridio](#) - Thursday, January 31, 2019, 11:34 PM

Taylor,

I interpreted some of the same things in this editorial cartoon as you did, and a few that were different. I think the details in this cartoon that were most apparent to you, I and other classmates who wrote about the scale, would be the black vs white and north vs south on the scale. In your interpretation of these comparisons, you brought up great points about current events at the time that may have influenced this cartoonist to make this image such as the Missouri Compromise and the annexation of Oregon, Texas, California and New Mexico. During this time period no slave state would be admitted without a free state added as well. It makes sense to me now, but I didn't see that when I initially studied the image.

I think that the white, Northern man in the image is meant to be Irish. In Part 2 of the Nativism mini-lecture posted this week, Mr. Escobar explains the idea of "scientific racism" in the way that different people are portrayed in illustrations from the time. The Irish are commonly depicted more similarly to African Americans than to the "Anglo-Teutonics" (Escobar 0:23). Another image, used to show the anti-Catholic sentiment, depicts the Irish men as being Simian or ape-like (Escobar 1:09). The man in The Scale looks quite similar to the Irish that were in the images that Mr. Escobar used as examples in the video, he appears to be "Simian" in shape of his face.

I appreciate that you brought up the expressions on their faces, this was something that I had noticed, yet I didn't make a connection until I read what you had written about it. If the white man is in fact Irish, then I might conclude that he is somber or has a look of disdain because he is looked at as equal to a slave. In the northern states Catholics were generally despised, treated poorly and paid less, yet they comprised a high proportion of the labor force. I think that the Irish man is upset because while he is not a slave, he is not necessarily treated much better. The Irish were not only disliked because they were poor and Catholic, in fact, like African Americans they were also perceived as being a different "race" (Escobar Pt. 1 9:37).

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Re: Interpreting The Slave
by [Vince Shumway](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 12:01 AM

Taylor you made some points that made me think twice about this image given your different point of view. Which I appreciate by the way. When I first saw it, I thought of political power and how the north and south where somewhat balanced for power. Especially for the fact that when a slave state was admitted a free state was also admitted to "balance" the power. That also explained to me the fact that the white man looked not so happy was because the northerners and anti slave groups were unhappy as for every free state admitted there seem to be a slave state admitted. Which would not make the northerners happy. Which visa versa that would also make the southern slave state happy.

Brianna also made some good points to bringing up the possibility that the white man could be an Irish Catholic. Which also made me think of the possible similarities they had in treatment and even political influence. If the Irish were of different beliefs and had less economic influence that makes a lot of sense for a free white man to be upset that he is on the same level as a oppressed black man.

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Holy Horror
by [Katie Lauck](#) - Tuesday, January 29, 2019, 10:31 PM

The cartoon called "Holy Horror" depicts two women, one Irish and one black sitting side by side on a passenger car. The African American woman seems to be drawn with an ethereal look about her, has soft features and is wearing nicer clothes than the Irish woman. The Irish woman also carries a basket on her lap filled with alcohol and food, urging me to believe that she is a common housewife for her working husband. The Irish woman named Mrs. McCaffraty is looking at the black woman in a ghastly way, with big eyes and a repulsed look on her face. The reason that we know this woman is Irish is because of the ape-like features of her facial structure--big protruding mouth, large nose and expressive eyes. In part 2 of our Nativism mini lecture, Joe Escobar tells us that many Irishmen and women were drawn in a simian manner, similar to how many blacks were drawn, persuading viewers to think that both races should be extinct (Nativism pt 2, 0:24). On the bottom of the photo there is a sentence in brackets that says "Mr. McCaffraty Voted against Negro Suffrage". This just cements the idea that although she can't vote, Mrs. McCaffraty and her family are racist people that believe that the black woman should not have the same rights, and maybe even not be allowed to ride on the same passenger car with those who have lighter skin.

While all this may be true, the artist also portrays their feelings on the subject. The fact that the black women is seen as beautiful and the Irish woman is not makes me wonder if the cartoonist is showing his support for anti-slavery and the equality for black men and women.

I think the artist is portraying a general scene of what life was like for African American women (and men) in the 1800's and beyond. Getting nasty looks and slander yelled at them were just a fraction of what I think they went through. No matter if the individual was free or if they were a slave, they were put on the bottom of the food chain, significantly below the whites. Scientists in the mid 1800's actually theorized that African Americans were a separate species. "Among most scientists, biological determinism replaced historical and environmental explanations of racial differences; many argued that whites and blacks were separate species." (Chap. 12, pg 417) This tells me that the white community was so disturbed by the presence of black people that they came up with the idea that they were a complete separate species, incapable of carrying out the exact tasks and activities that white people do. In reality, black people are just as American as white people, but are unfairly judged based solely on the color of their skin.

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Interpreting Editorial Cartoons, The Scale
by [Isaiah Smith](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 1:18 PM

As I view these images I can say that they all have a huge impact on me. The use of cartoons in the 19th century to portray deep issues isn't comical and almost adds a sort of eeriness to these comics. As I said, all of these comics are impactful, however I found The Scale image to be most and here's why.

Assuming from the image, I can only imagine the artists position is equal rights amongst blacks and whites. Viewing this image, you see a scale with the engraving on the left arm being the south and on the right arm being the north. Hanging from these scale arms are two trays both belonging a man, on the left side a black man and on the right side a white man. Both of these trays have the words black and white engraved on them, with the left tray saying black and the right tray saying white. As I'm studying this image I also get the impression of the predominant race in these north, south areas are being portrayed. With the south being pre-dominantly black and the north being predominantly white.

There could be rising issues amongst this image and plenty of opposing views. For those who are racist who disagree in equal rights, or also those who believe that neither the north or south were predominant go any specific race. I believe that no specific man was supporting this message in the 19th century, however the 13th amendment had a great deal involving what I can only assume what this is image is portraying.

As a student in todays society, learning about this time-period is crucial. I believe every student needs a position within a political aspect. To learn and grasp the knowledge of our world before and to see so much change or none at all, it provides me and I'm sure plenty of other students the ability to understand the importance of critical changes in OUR own society. Looking at this image in 2019 is still bothersome. Why? This is something people of color and or all kind of races still struggle with on a daily basis. Its so crucial to fight for rights, equality amongst the races. No scale should be tipping more to one side than the other.

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The Scale
by [Taylor Reid](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 3:14 PM

I chose to evaluate The Scale. This political cartoon is showing how the Blacks from the North and the Whites from the South are equal. It looks as if the Whites aren't happy with this fact and the Blacks seem to be smirking. I interpret that as the Blacks are kind of rubbing it in their faces that finally the two races are equal. To me, I don't see an overpowering view that the author has. They look equally drawn and there doesn't seem to be any underlying messages. I came to this conclusion based on the whole picture is a scale that has an equally distributed weight between the North and South and the Blacks and Whites. The opposing view would be the Whites viewing themselves as better than the Blacks. I find this confusing because I don't feel as if the two races were equal and seeing this picture seems to be misleading. In 2019, all races are treated equally for the most part and I think that this time period is when that movement started.

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Re: The Scale
by [Katie Lauck](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 3:48 PM

I believe you make some good points, but I think we must look at the meaning behind the balanced scale and exactly what the facial expressions between the two men might mean. To me, the white mans face represents his disapproval of the black man's impending equality to his. This may have been the time when abolitionists were starting to band together, in favor of the freedom of enslaved blacks. "Garrison condemned slavery not simply as a social problem or a bad idea but as America’s great national sin. He demanded immediate emancipation and equal citizenship for African Americans." (Chapter 12, pg 419). This angered white men because it would mean that their property was essentially being taken away from them, hence the mad look on the white mans face. While the scale appears to be evenly distributed in this cartoon, we know that slavery wasn’t completely abolished until many many years later. Knowing this and paired with the smile on the black man’s face, it seems as though the artist is conveying his support for the equality of African Americans. As the abolitionist community kept fighting for the end of slavery, anti-abolitionists countered by saying "...antislavery agitation and the denunciation of slaveholders, they argued, would divide Christians, slow the revival movement, and thus actually delay emancipation." (Chapter 12, pg 421). In my opinion, abolitionists were focused on banding together to focus on what was most important (abolishing slavery) and not worried about the separation of Christians. I think this cartoon succeeds at giving viewers a sense of the agitation that both blacks and whites endured during this time.

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Am I not a man and a brother?
by [Vince Shumway](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 8:32 PM

Both sides of this image draw out two separate conclusions and perspectives. The image on the left depicts a man in bondage on his knees pleading and or submitting. I would conclude that he is pleading for fair and free treatment. It gives you a feeling of sympathy asking you the powerful question "Am I not a man or a brother?". It is a useful and powerful proposition humanizing the black slave, which is what the Society for the Abolition of Slavery (www.loc.gov), an anti-slavery group based in Britain, was looking to do I assume. Americans who were a part of the great awakening and looking to move into a more "Christian" society would probably support this message.

The right-hand image in contrast shows a very different image. It depicts that without the white man’s subjugation these "people" are killers, and devices of destruction. You cannot depict a much more awful image of someone then that who goes and kills woman and children. Which is probably a main point that was trying to be conveyed. That without the white mans guiding hand and ownership of these people they will turn wild. Some interesting imagery that stands out is for starters the way he is portrayed and how he looks. The eyes feel wild and out of control with nothing to keep him in check. The face and head almost seem caveman like, and with the torch that he holds only adds to my feelings of a caveman type who uses fire in a primitive and destructive manner. This image had to reinforce the idea that these people must be kept in check and under the white man’s rule. For the safety of the woman, children, and society.

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Re: Interpreting Editorial Cartoons
by [Haylee Stevens](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 10:27 PM

The cartoons shown reflect early times in America and represent many different things. From the Europeans looking across the ocean to America and seeing a promise land, to the black man and white man sitting on a scale and being equal, these cartoons all have a greater message behind them. In the picture of the mother scolding her child and telling him to be good or he’d get taken speaks loudly because in that era, if slaves weren’t good, they’d get sold off to someone else, which is something that no longer happens in today’s world. The image of the men stealing the ballot box while everyone in the back is fighting heavily relates to current times. The image shows the fighting, which would be the people fighting over who they want as president, and the two men stealing the ballot box could represent the government messing with the votes to make sure the person they want wins. Rigging elections is something that is still happening now, as it was back then in elections.

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The Rigging of Ballots
by [Letitia Hadix](#) - Thursday, January 31, 2019, 12:50 AM

Hello Haylee,

I was interested to see you bring up the thought of election rigging. I also reached a similar conclusion, but through a different thought process. Upon looking at this drawing, the first thing noticable is the two gentlemen (one implied to be German, the other Irish) sauntering away from the riot in the background with a ballot box. The “German” man is wearing a barrel labelled “Lager Bier” while the “Irish” man’s barrel label reads “Irish Whiskey” which leads me to believe this drawing was drawn during the time of Temperance (alcohol restriction). It was during this time period that “...social reformers branded alcohol as a threat to individual well-being, domestic peace, public order, and the republic itself.” (Murrin pg. 411) There was a lot of controversy over alcohol; this included the consumption, sale and purchase of alcohol regardless of race and culture. When a lot of Americans struggled over this decision and clashed with their peers over the government’s actions, the Irish and Germans pretty much just ignored it. At the time of this conflict, German and Irish immigrants “...poured into neighborhoods recently stirred by working-class revivals and temperance agitation.” (Murrin pg. 414) and showed how their cultures dealt with alcohol. The Irish thought that "If a drinker had to sit down, it was time for him to go home." (Murrin pg. 415) while the Germans had more of a casual family flair. I believe that “The Ballot Box” portrays how the German and Irish immigrants ended up throwing the vote over alcohol for a loop. The Germans “...built old-country beer halls in American cities, complete with sausage counters, oompah bands, group singing, and other family attractions.” (Murrin pg. 415) which pretty much turned their beer halls into family-style restaurants that served alcohol while still allowing fun family time. I feel that this ended up unintentionally swinging the election in favor of alcohol (or maybe it was deliberate).

Sincerely,
Letitia Hadix

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Re: Interpreting Editorial Cartoons
by [Taylor Dotson](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 4:15 PM

Haylee,

I found it interesting they chose to distinguish the two men with alcohol barrels. The Germans are known for lager bier and building old-county beer halls in American cities. They preferred to have seating for the whole family. The Irish on the other had loved whiskey and their bars provided no tables or seating. If a drinker had to sit down, they reasoned, it was time for him to go home. (Murrin P.415) In the back of the picture it looks as if you can see one of the Germans establishments. When the Irish and German immigrants arrived because it stirred among the working-class revivals and temperance agitation. (Murrin P. 414) All the drunkenness was frowned upon because at the time the temperance movement was being put into effect. In the back it looks like there is a riot going on around the polls. It reminds of the hawkers who would use bodily harm if they did not accept the proffered ballot. I think the face they took the ballot and have weapons with them symbolizes they are taking over and anyone who tries to go against them will not succeed and be harmed physically.

-Taylor Dotson

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"Am I Not A Man" Cartoon Interpretation
by [Cassidy Allen](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 10:48 PM

After closely looking over and analyzing the cartoon titled "Am I Not A Man," I felt that the illustrator was painting it out to make it look like African American slaves, and those who were against slavery, were trying to make it seem like they were innocent people, but the moment they are given their freedoms they will slay innocent white women and children. The reason I feel like this is what the author is trying to depict in the illustration is because the left picture is made to look like a cover of an article almost in a way, and then the right picture seems to me like it is a sort of answer to the left. Saying in a way "if we treat these slaves like brothers than they will turn to savages and kill our people."

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Nat Turner
by [Katie Lauck](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 2:02 PM

I had similar feelings while looking at this cartoon. Your post reminded me of the story of Nat Turner. Nat Turner was a rebel slave that started an uprising in 1831. Turner, with the help of a number of other slaves set out to kill roughly 50 slave owners and their families, men, women and children. Turner knew how to read and write and was a well-known preacher among the slave community. While many fellow slaves and African Americans were joyful that there was someone to guide them in faith, almost all southern white slave owners were appalled that he was able to do these things. Gilbert Francis says "I think he saw his mission as a religious mission, something that was bigger than life itself, something that he could accomplish, something that he had a religious duty to perform." (Nat Turner video, 2:03)

While this cartoon reminded me of the story of Nat Turner, I think the artist was trying to convey the feelings of a slave through these pictures titled "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?". To me, this title makes me think that slaves were thought of as nothing. Not a man, not a brother, maybe not even human. In chapter 12 of our textbooks, it says that "Southerners preached that the Chosen People of the Old Testament had been patriarchs and slaveholders, and that Jesus had lived in a society that sanctioned slavery and never criticized the institution." (Chap 12, pg 355). This indicates to whites that slavery is a completely moral thing to be practicing when we know it is completely immoral and unjustified. Maybe the artist is painting a picture of what goes through a slaves mind; on his knees begging for freedom in the first picture, and getting his revenge in the second picture. In all, I think this cartoon is a powerful representation of the life that slaves lived, and carries effects that can be felt today.

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Re: Nat Turner
by [Emilie Ormsby](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 3:04 PM

Cassidy and Katie,

I too was reminded of the Nat Turner video upon seeing this political cartoon. Nat Turner is a very controversial image in history, much like this cartoon. As Katie mentioned, he led a slave rebellion over a two day period resulting in the death of roughly 50 white people in 1831. He was incredibly successful at leading such rebellion due to his masters allowing him to learn to read and write, but is he considered a hero or a killer? I feel there are a few interpretations from different perspectives. For instance, this man stood up against the oppression of black people and made history in doing so; however, he also murdered men, woman, and children - many who may have been innocent. Though this was a great achievement for those literally shackled by the laws of slavery, it may have also caused more difficulty in reaching a peaceful ground with white people and/or slave masters. After the rebellion, there were many more restrictions put in place on African Americans learning to read and write.

I think the artist purposely included the contrasting images to raise the question of each side to the other, like Cassidy mentioned. "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?" asks the people reading it to open their eyes and see both perspectives. This is a very powerful picture, in my opinion, because it forces it's readers to do so. What goes through a slaves mind when seeing this cartoon? Seeing themselves chained as they are, and then pictured as a crazed killer. While maybe a fearful slave owner sees this cartoon and only has their ideas of slavery and of the black man being lesser and bad reinforced.

Emilie

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Reading The Scale
by [Letitia Hadix](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 11:26 PM

The political cartoon that spoke to me most was the one about the The Scale. On the left side of the scale is a black man wearing simple but clean trousers, coat and what looks to be a hand-knit or crocheted turtleneck. He has on a floppy brim hat and is sporting a good natured smile on his face. The way he is sitting on the scale reminds me of how a child sits on a swing during recess. In contrast, on the

opposite side of the scale we have a white man with what looks to be a unhappy look on his face. He doesn't seem to look quite as comfortable as the black man. This white man is dressed fairly well, but still in what I would consider simple clothing. Nice looking trousers with socks and short boots, a nice jacket with squared-off coat tails and perhaps a button-up white collar-esque shirt. He also has a hat on, a leaning top hat that looks like it might've seen better days. No patterns, only solid colors. On the black man's side, he is sitting on a scale thats has black engraved on the frontal side and above his head on the arm of the scale there is the word "south." On the scale the white man's side is the word "North" above his head and the word "white" engraved below him. The top connector between the two looks to be like a pointer of a compass. The two men are set at the same height at an equal weight. The scale is perfectly balanced. When I first saw the scale, a couple of thoughts ran through my head on what it could mean. North vs South, Black vs White, On equal footing, balanced scale.... Although I'm unsure of who the artist is, I would guess that this drawing could be seen in a couple of different ways.

To start, I will begin with balance. Both men are unchained and appear to be free. Both are clothed in what looks to be clean and serviceable garments and seem to be appropriate. Neither are engaged in argument and almost appear to be at peace, the gentleman on the right appears to be more in a "blah" state instead of an unhappy one while the other is sporting a broad grin. They are in an unmoving state with no borders. A sign of peace.

On a darker note, this could also be seen as battle waiting to be fought. Both should be equal and there is controversy-- one wants to be free and the other wants to oppress. A drawing meant to be a call to arms. A battle to end slavery and balance the scales so all may be equal with full rights. So that North and South could be equal in law and life.

Political cartoons have changed a bit since back then. Back then, these drawings were a show of the people's freedom of speech and pertained to real life events that were important to most of the nation. Nowadays, I feel that many political cartoons try to lessen the impact and lighten the mood about events while spreading cheer about our governmental figures. Political cartoons from that time period reflected real life and politics with the thought of spreading information throughout the populace and to sway public opinion to a cause.

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Re: Intolerance of Immigrants
by [Emilie Ormsby](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 11:40 PM

The political cartoon featuring two men running away with a ballot box, in my interpretation, symbolizes the discrimination of Irish and German immigrants coming to the United States during the 19th century. The presumably Irish man appears to be wearing a barrel of Irish Whiskey while the assumed German man is wearing a barrel of lager bier. From the illustration of the immigrant-men dressed in barrels of alcohol and running away with a ballot box, one can conclude that the cartoonist's opinion towards Irish and German immigrants is less than accepting. This cartoon could arguably have been supported by The Know Nothing Party, who were strongly against immigrants and those who followed the Catholic church, which most Irish immigrants held their religious beliefs with. The Know Nothing Party also presented their propaganda with a focus on immigrants being alcoholics and therefore not being able to adhere to society and live accordingly. Similarly, the artist seems to have made the two men look somewhat violent, aggressive, and angry which was another characterization of the Irish and German immigrants. The ballot box may represent the fear of immigrants taking over the elections and threatening democracy.

The opposing viewpoint to this issue is the one promised by the United States itself: that we are all equal and have the same rights to freedom. As many abolitionists were coming to realize, only white men had the actual rights promised to those in the new lands. I feel that it is very effective and important for students today to learn about this period of time so that we can recognize the dark parts of our history and learn from them. This time period demonstrated a terrible example of intolerance and dehumanization over groups of people working hard towards a better life, but had to face unfair effects of being unaccepted. It's important for us to understand and recognize the part of history fearing others cultures and differences so we are able to fight against intolerance today, which is, unfortunately, something that is very much still affecting us today.

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Intolerance shared by the Nativists as well
by [Brianna Caridio](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 12:59 AM

Emilie,

I think you've made a good point about the fear that Americans had about the Irish and Germans quite literally running away with the election. Not only did those in support of temperance have an issue with the immigrants, but those who were nativists and anti-Catholic did as well. The Know Nothing Party as you mentioned was definitely a group formed to support temperance and were against parochial schools, schools that were built by the Catholic Church since most of the public schools were Protestant (Murrin pg. 464).

Nativism however was more widely spread, immigration rates had been relatively low, only 1-4% in the 1820s and '30s and the immigrants during that time were primarily Protestants from Britain "Most of them were skilled workers, farmers, or members of white-collar occupations" (Murrin pg. 462). In the 1840s the Irish potato famine occurred as well as a revolution in Germany resulting in the immigration of millions of Irish and German peasants. Immigrants were 15% of the total American population in 1945, " the highest proportional volume of immigration in American history" (Murrin pg. 462). Such a massive influx of people would be a strain on society regardless, but their differences made assimilation even more difficult. They were mostly Roman Catholics who had strong drinking traditions during a time when states were adopting prohibition laws, who came in in such large numbers that as they joined political parties could make true difference in elections. Nativists were scared of all those things.

Brianna

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Re: Intolerance shared by the Nativists as well

by [Emilie Ormsby](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 2:21 PM

Brianna,

I think you've made a great point expanding upon immigration and nativism during this time period. Nativism was definitely widespread at the time, which made coming to the United States as an immigrant even more difficult. Especially for those who were Irish, or identified as followers of the Roman Catholic church. When floods of people holding their faith with the Catholic church began to rapidly increase in the 1840's, the anti-catholic fears rooted throughout American history began to show more and more. Those fearing the amount of Catholics entering the United States feared the anti republican ways of the Pope, much like the characteristics of the prior British reign over the United States that the people specifically wanted to avoid. You also brought up a good point in that many of those entering the country, mostly being Irish and German, obtained fairly strong drinking customs which clashed heavily with the prohibition movements. Which relates directly to the political cartoon in this discussion.

It's understandable that American citizens would raise questions over 3 million immigrants entering the country, especially because this not only could've caused an economic boom and extreme demand for employment (Murrin Pg. 462), but also a change in numbers in political parties. As mentioned earlier as well as in the text, Irish immigrants were particularly targeted because of their association with being rowdy and drinking heavily, and later 12 states enacted prohibition laws making the apparent clash between Irish immigrants and the citizens of America even more apparent.

Emilie

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Perceptions At the South

by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 11:45 PM

I believe the point that was trying to be made with cartoon is that abolitionists were bad and only bad slaves had anything to do with them. This was most likely done to give abolitionists a bad name throughout the south. Turn the abolitionist into the boogie man in a way. Because if they are the boogie man people will avoid them and be more likely to not support them or their cause. The same way a mother scares her child into being good as is depicted. It is a tactic used even today. Depicting abolitionists in this way was also a scare tactic to slaves as well. To make them untrusting of abolitionists to ensure they won't run away with them. A little reverse psychology so to speak.

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Re: Perceptions At the South
by [Taylor Dotson](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 4:13 PM

Kimberly,

The mother could use abolitionist as a threat to keep her child on the straight and narrow. Abolitionist crucial argument, was repeated over and over, was that slavery crushed family, and particularly the sentimental relation between mothers and small children. (Murrin P.421) One idea could be the abolitionist would take the child and use him as an example in their argument of splitting up families. In this case the mother could be scared of losing her child. I do think most feared the power of what the abolitionist could do when they banned together. The mother wanted to make sure the child was good and could fear what would happen if the child were to get wild and misbehave. I like the idea of the mother trying to use reverse psychology to straighten out her child's behavior. It is such a common tactic and is also highly effective tool for mothers to use. If you look at the mother, she has a very stern look on her face with her body rigid. She put her finger up as a hand gesture to help implement and get the child to understand what she is talking about. If you look at the child his body is not as stiff, and his face has almost a look of frightfulness on it.

-Taylor Dotson

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Re: Perceptions At the South
by [Alli Crank](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 5:40 PM

I agree with everything you just stated and wanted to add on to it. I think the term "Bobolitionist" just goes to show how out of the loop and uninformed the slaves in South were about abolitionists in the North. They had such a misconception of abolitionist because of how successfully their owners brainwashed them. The mother in the cartoon seems like she is trying to scare her son into being good through the threat of being given to the abolitionists which would actually be beneficial to him. I didn't think about how it could've been reverse psychology, my mind first went to the mother being uninformed about what an abolitionist was.

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African Americans as Man and Brother?
by [Brianna Caridio](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 11:53 PM

The juxtaposition of "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?" with "Am I a Man and a Brother?" is very striking, the editorial cartoon is mocking "...the iconic image of a male slave, kneeling and holding up his chains" (Murrin pg.422) that was used by British antislavery forces and later adopted by American abolitionists. The original image was used in antislavery campaigns to appeal to the viewer and invoke people to feel for the rights of African Americans. American abolitionists also added a similar image "Am I not a Woman and a Sister?" which underlined "...the participation of women and the emerging centrality of women's issues in the American antislavery movement" (Murrin pg. 422).

The editorial cartoon removes the "not" from the title of the image, the scene depicted shows an African American man running from a building on fire with a smoking torch in one hand and a sword in the other. There are people lying on the ground, near a fence that seems to have been broken down. If this were a pre-civil war cartoon, it could be depicting a slave running away from a house that he had set on fire, the people on the ground, one seems to be a woman and another a child, slain by the man as he attempts his escape. The crazy, almost joyful expression on his face shows no remorse. Another interpretation could be that if slaves were freed and given basic human rights, that they would act as this man did, by committing murder and arson.

The author of this editorial cartoon seems to be attempting to contradict and take power away from the image of "Am I not a Man and a Brother?" It is obvious that they want to portray the slave or free black man as immoral, someone to despise and to be scared of. If we free the slaves, will we be putting ourselves in danger? The sword is reminiscent of a pirate sword and the man has an earring, possibly to evoke thoughts of piracy and pillaging. The man himself appears animalistic in body position and face structure. The change in the wording could be to bring up the idea, can this man be a man and a brother?

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Re: African Americans as Man and Brother?
by [Taylor Dotson](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 4:14 PM

Brianna,

I found the example of switching from the campaign based on the male to female empowering. It allowed for individuals to see a commonality among the men and women slaves. One thing I noted is the male on the left is on his knees and looking up. This could symbolize him looking up to seek spiritual help. Many people would preach we are one, not only man to man but as brothers. He could be asking if this is true and you see us all as brother then why do I get treated unequally. I like the comparison of how a slave may act I they were freed. It was something I had not thought up but is a very valid idea. One example I could think of is Nat Turner. He had a vision of a battle, gathered his army and led a revolt against their masters. The cartoon pictures as a man with determination and a leader type attitude. The bodies pictured in the back can be seen as victims slayed and the gruesome battle that Turner led. The movement of his body makes me think he danced around the bodies in celebration. He was being victorious in his efforts to overcome his masters as well as the masters of his followers.

-Taylor Dotson

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"The Scale"- Overlooked piece of the cartoon.
by [Alli Crank](#) - Thursday, January 31, 2019, 8:03 PM

Many other students responded with their analysis of "The Scale", but one thing I noticed was missing was that no one has yet to acknowledge where the "South" and "North" are placed. Typically on a compass North and South are up and down. North is always "above" South. In this cartoon Nast even changes the orientation of the compass to put North and South side by side, instead North above the South. Through this he even more so accentuates the fact that white and black, North and South, are equal. I think this cartoon clearly shows where he stands on the issue because of how far he goes to show the white and black, North and South, are the "same weight". I would strongly agree with this cartoon and appreciate Nast's effort in showing that everyone is equal.

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Temperance and Immigrants
by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 3:16 AM

This cartoon depicts the way that the influx of Irish and German immigrants effected the political climate at the time. The temperance movement was under way at the time of the influx heavily supported by the Whig's. Both the German and Irish immigrants were known for their love of beer and whiskey. This would of sided the majority of them with the Democrats over the Whigs. This cartoon was most likely produced by a Whig to show that because of the German and Irish love of alcohol they would steal the election for the democrats just based on the issue of temperance.

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Interpretation of "The Promise Land"
by [Alli Crank](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 5:24 PM

In this cartoon it is clear that the issue is about religion. The man wearing the large hat with a cross on it I'm assuming is the Pope. The Pope indicates that the religion were dealing with is Catholicism. In the cartoon there are a bunch of men atop of a building that looks like a dome. The men are looking across the land specifically in the

direction of the United States. This leads me to think they are looking at the U.S. in hopes to go there and convert people to becoming Catholic. I also noticed that the men in the back were holding what looks like pitch forks and some of them had aggressive facial expressions. These feature makes me think that Nast did not want these men to come and attempt to convert people within the U.S.. He depicts the men as scary and it is effective even when looking at it now. If I were someone looking at this cartoon when it was first released, I would be worried. It is unsettling to think about people coming in and trying to change or conquer everyone.

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Re: Interpretation of "The Promise Land"

by [Letitia Hadix](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 2:41 AM

Hello Alli,

I was uncertain about what this drawing was meant to portray at first, but I had a similar thought process to your post. Looking at the image, we can see what appears to be a chapel or church with a mixed group of men on the top dome-like roof. In the back of the group, there are many pikes and halberds standing tall leading me to believe there are soldiers or guards. A large cross draws the gaze to the group, where it stands tall among them. Next to the cross appears to be a man of great importance, possibly a monarch and beside him a pope. Just in front of the "king" is a fry peering through a telescope pointed in the direction of the new United States of America. The king figure is making a gesture with his hand that shouts "beyond the sea, that all should belong to me." As though this important man believes that the colonies settled there and the land itself belongs to Great Britain. I think this image is a depiction of how the British were unable and unwilling to cut ties with the new American States. At the time, Britain was mostly Catholic and there was a portion of the populace who wanted freedom of religion to worship how they pleased. These people had sought refuge in the colonies and the monarchy wasn't going to accept this defiance. Britain wanted to control this new source of commerce and were willing to keep it at any cost, hence the soldiers with halberds in the background. I feel even to this day, there is a connection between the United States of America and Britain. Often the headlines of our tabloids will have information and gossip about our governmental powers and theirs. This goes to show that at the very least we are interested in each other's "lives" especially compared to other countries.

Much thanks,

Letitia Hadix

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Interpretation of "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?"

by [Alli Crank](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 5:59 PM

The image on the left shows a man who is a slave. He is depicted as calm, innocent, and very strong. The man in the image on the right I interpreted as the same man on the left, but freed of being a slave. Now that he is free he is depicted as "animal" like. He's shown to be wild and implied to be a killer. The caption also shifts from "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?" to "Am I a Man and a Brother". These images side by side sadden me. I was confused as to why Nast depicted the man on the right the way he did because I was under the assumption that Nast was for equality when this implies freeing slaves would be a bad idea. I understand the concept behind the picture on the right as trying to create awareness about the consequences of freeing slaves because of all the anger and hatred they had built up toward they owners, but if he wanted slaves freed, why would he portray this image this way?

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Irish and German Immigrants

by [Alli Crank](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 6:13 PM

The cartoon shows two men carrying a ballot box between them. The men both have a barrel around them with terms for alcohol written on them. Blatantly the terms are written in German, but also alcohol is a common association with the Irish and German immigrants so we can assume what these men are. In the background there is what seems to be a fight going on by a building that is advertising "Election Polls". The fight in the background implies that the immigrants did not have a good impact on the election. The way these immigrants are portrayed clearly shows that Nast is not a fan of them.

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Irish and Germans

by [Taylor Reid](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 9:48 PM

The Irish and German political cartoon shows two men dressed in whiskey and beer kegs holding a ballot box. They seem to be walking away from the polls where there is a huge fight and they are walking toward the bars. I interpret this as they are leaving to go to the bars because they think that is more important than dealing with the drama surrounding the government. I think that this political cartoon applies to a lot of people around this time. I don't think many people really liked the ban on alcohol and i assume that is why they are dressing in kegs. No one was going to not consume alcohol. Instead of worrying about all of the fuss going on at the voting booths they will go drink since the focus is on something else. There is a clear oposing view here though. The people who did think drinking was wrong would not agree with the men choosing alcohol over their future government. Relating this to nowadays, you can make the obvious distinction that the alcohol ban was not enforced for long. There still is heavy drama when voting, especially with the last election.

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Re: Irish and Germans
by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 3:48 AM

I believe that this cartoon also shows how these immigrants impacted the election by Americans response to them. Hence the crowd around the election building while they walk away. Conflicts brought on by the mass immigration and the social reforms happening at the same time further divided people. Causing many people to change their previous political leanings. Our textbook talks about this on pg. 415 saying that in response to the mass immigration of Catholics and how they felt about temperance many Baptists and Methodists switched their party allegiance from the Democrats to the Whigs.

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At the South
by [Taylor Reid](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 9:35 PM

In At The South, the picture is showing a slave diciplining her child. The punishment she is telling her child is that she will let the Abolitionists run away with him. This is a terrible thing to say because of the fact that Abolitionists believed slavery was okay. The opposing view is everyone who thought slavery wasn't okay because they would think that is not a good way to punish your child. I suppose this is how the slaves thought though because that would be a scary punishment and would most likely deter a child from misbehaving. That definitely is an eye opening cartoon because it shows how harsh life was as a slave.

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Re: A difficult path
by [Letitia Hadix](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 10:30 PM

Hi Taylor,

An interesting point of view; I was thinking that the image could be projecting something along the lines of "be good and behave or the abolitionists will take you away and you'll never see your family again?" It is indeed horrible to threaten a misbehaving child with separation, especially back then when everything was uncertain. I found this image to be very ironic, and I am assuming this could be from the South's campaign to keep slaves. The way I see it, they are trying to say "Oh the abolitionists are bad and are trying to break up families and ruin your lives." Surprisingly, I think some slaves preferred to stay with their "master's" because they were good to them. I think there was the problem of separating families on both the South side and North side of the argument which caused a lot of anxiety for parents. This is a difficult drawing to interpret because there are so many possible meanings it can convey to different peoples. It is my belief that this drawing was trying to say, "If you are in a safe situation, stay. If you are in need of help, find help. Keep to your familial bonds and try to stick together."

Sincerely,

Letitia Hadix

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