

Forum 4



Chinese Then & Now

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, February 28, 2015, 10:22 AM

This forum thread is for Chinese Then & Now posts and replies.

After studying the required materials, address the various questions. To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Chinese Then & Now

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Chinese Relationship with America Then and Now: History Is Not Repeating Itself

by Hannah Donner - Sunday, March 1, 2015, 9:25 PM

The connection between America's current relationship with China and its relationship with Chinese immigrants during the late 19th century has its similarities, but I don't believe it is an example of "history repeating itself." The similarity that I mainly recognized between this commercial and America's historical attitude towards Chinese is that both are trying to incite fear in Americans. In the commercial the Chinese speaker concludes his speech with "Of course we owned most of their debt so now they work for us" and closes with a sinister laugh. The 19th century cartoons concerning the Chinese also arouse fear in the United States by claiming that these Chinese immigrants will take all the jobs in America and eventually take over.

Although fear-based propaganda was used then and is being used in the current day commercial, there are significant differences between America's relationship with the Chinese immigrants in the late 1800s and its current relationship with China. For example, when the Chinese immigrants worked on the railroads they were "under exceptionally harsh conditions, and with substantially less pay than white laborers" (Textbook pg. 613). Also, there were other discriminations towards Chinese regarding their culture and "the legislature specifically targeted Chinese immigrants" (Textbook pg. 613). Comparatively, today America has no influence on Chinese wages and cannot coerce labor rates in China. Furthermore, China is doing so well financially, as shown in the commercial, that it is in a very strong position economically. While propaganda may always exist to provoke fear, this doesn't mean that "history is repeating itself" in this connection.

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History Repeating Itself

by [Maggie Van Wey-Wells](#) - Monday, March 2, 2015, 9:29 AM

The cartoons illustrate the immigration of the Chinese to America and the racism which they faced when they transitioned here. Americans are always so afraid of jobs being taken away from them from foreigners, they're afraid of having to compete with people who either aren't "worthy" or do not "belong" here. We feel very entitled to our birth rate and we don't like anyone else who tries to have the same entitlement as us but is from a different country. I definitely think that this has always been an on going characteristic of Americans even to do this day. We are very racist towards Mexicans and we are absolutely terrified of them taking over our population and our jobs. In the cartoons you see the Chinese depicted as opium woman beating Chinese men who are taking American jobs while white men are unemployed on the streets. We call ourselves a mixing bowl and we flash the American Dream around like it's an actual thing, but we turn our backs on anyone else who wants to live here. In one of the other cartoons you see the Irish man and the Chinese devouring an American. It's actually sad how close minded we are and how racist we can be towards other races and cultures. The commercial emphasized on a level of racism that still exists today. We set stereotypes and we categorize individuals making them feel secluded and judged. In the video the Chinese had the most high tech electrics and were bragging about owning America. I understand the commercials intentions were to send a message to the public to be aware of useless government spending but like the political cartoons I don't think we were aware of how offensive it really was.

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Re: Chinese Then & Now

by [Alexander Stimson](#) - Monday, March 2, 2015, 9:24 PM

On a broad scale, the modern day commercial seems rather similar to the printed cartoons featured in the forum. The commercial talks about the U.S.'s theoretical future downfall being caused by the U.S. turning it's back on its own "principles", though it only implies and doesn't in fact explicitly state what those principles are. The commercial does say that the U.S.'s approach of overly spending and taxing, intervention in areas that perhaps it shouldn't have (health care, the private sector as a whole), and an insurmountable debt (most of which was/is owned by the Chinese) contributed to its downfall. Meanwhile, in each of the featured cartoons, we see in each one that the implication is the Chinese (and/or immigrants in general) are contributing to a downfall as well, leaving American men out of work as the immigrant population (and therefore their power/influence) continues to grow. Furthermore, in more than one cartoon, we see Uncle Sam portrayed, who represents America's "principles" perhaps more than any other figure, real or fictional. In one cartoon, we see Uncle Sam fighting with all his might against a wave a Chinese immigrants that continue to "slip through the cracks" for various reasons despite the door holding them back representing the Exclusion Acts. In the other, there's no fight from Uncle Sam at all. Rather, he's being swallowed whole by two immigrants as they both seek to gain from putting Americans out of work, and (more importantly) transforming the U.S. into a land/country that perhaps its forefathers did not intend it to be. With all that said, the commercial and the cartoons are very different from one another on a more specific scale.

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Comparison between then and now

by [Aulani Aviles](#) - Wednesday, March 4, 2015, 12:09 PM

After watching the video and analyzing the cartoons, I noticed a few connections between the two. For example, in the video the man talks about the issue that has to do with the United States being in debt and that the United States owned most of their debt so now they work for them. I believe an issue that Americans fear is that U.S. citizens are losing jobs to workers overseas. This can be comparable to history because Americans feared

that foreigners were going to take over, which is exactly what each cartoon portrays, fear. So many immigrants were working in the United States and led Americans to believe that they were going to take over all the jobs. This is what led to the Scott Exclusion Act.

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American Nativism at its finest

by [Courtney Tullock](#) - Wednesday, March 4, 2015, 12:12 PM

I think the commercial and the historical cartoons are closely connected in that they are both propaganda meant to increase American nativism. The thing about the historical cartoons to me is that they were not entirely accurate. True there was a major influx of Chinese immigrants in the 19th century and because they were willing to work for less wages as well as work longer hours as well as not complain about it they were hired for work more often than American citizens were. If the cartoons were accurate they would show the big business owners such as Leland Stanford swallowing Uncle Sam because men like him wanted the cheap labor. He didn't care about fairness or equality.

I think the commercial serves as a warning to American people that if we don't change than we will be slaves to the Chinese people. If we stay on our current path and the Chinese keep bailing us out they will own us. What is to stop them from using us as a cheap labor source? What is to stop them from letting us starve? What is to stop them from treating us as we treated them?

Either way, these depictions are meant to scare the American people and instigate nativism.

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Nativism as a result of scapegoating

by [Jenefer Heredia](#) - Thursday, March 5, 2015, 5:12 PM

I believe the connection between the commercial and cartoons was its use to gather country patriotism and ignite nativist passions. In the cartoons there is definitely a clear separation between Americans and Chinese. For example in the first cartoon there's a quote that says: "What shall we do with our boys?". The words .."our boys".. definitely would've stirred a sense of responsibility in the 19th c. reader to take care of *our* hardworking laborers, *our* own. Another connection I see is the act of scapegoating a group of people/race/religion. This pattern can be traced back in American history (Ex. "NINA", Irish racist political cartoons, arrival of catholic faith, newly freed blacks entering the urban workforce, etc).

I do feel there are some of the same American's fears related to their economic prosperity and welfare in regards to incoming immigrants. However, I feel that these fears and ignorance are less 'widespread' and non-specific to a certain ethnicity [in this case, the Chinese].

I don't believe this is history repeating itself. It is just another behavior we have seen and will most likely be seeing again of a group of people scapegoating and placing the blame on another party for their problems.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Nativism as a result of scapegoating

by [Hannah Donner](#) - Friday, March 6, 2015, 9:02 PM

I agree with you; many Chinese workers did face discrimination and terrorization from white nativists. For example, Irishman Davis Kearney, labor leader of the Workingman's Party in California, "inflamed nativist crowds of white workers with anti-Chinese rhetoric" which led to violent riots against the Chinese immigrants (Textbook

pg. 613). I think it is interesting that a lot of Irish in California showed racial nativism towards the Chinese immigrants even though they themselves had been treated poorly because of racial and anti-Catholic nativism exhibited towards them. Perhaps because of the length of time that the Irish had spent in the U.S., they took on the country's patriotism and nativist passions which you stated in your post.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Times are changing

by [Ryan Helmericks](#) - Saturday, March 7, 2015, 7:15 PM

Patriotism, Nationalism, Loyalty. The majority of people stand behind their nation. When an issue comes the natives turn and try to blame someone or something for it. The Chinese came to the United States at a poor time. With the economy in decline and jobs becoming harder and harder to get, the threat of a workforce that is willing to work for cheap was unacceptable. I see the commercial and I see nationalism. People standing together and saying their country is the best.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: Nativism as a result of scapegoating

by [Dichen Wu](#) - Saturday, March 7, 2015, 8:47 PM

I agree with you. In fact, the conservative force of native Americans since the late 19th century urgently need a scapegoat for social losers to vent discontent. Chinese labor migration, as a new and unfamiliar group in the U.S., unfortunately was chosen to become a venting port for those losers. And those Chinese laborers' hard-work, high efficiency and fast increase indeed seemed a threat to other native Americans' employment opportunity and living space. Therefore, to select Chinese as a scapegoat to calm social conflict and to ingratiate was nothing more true at that moment, though Chinese was just the minority and unable to exert social influence.

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Re: Chinese Then & Now

by [Nicklas Moyer](#) - Friday, March 6, 2015, 8:29 PM

When comparing this political advertisement to the situation with the Chinese that occurred during the late 1800's, I can see few similarities, the most prominent would probably be "native" fear of their race. In the modern commercial pertaining to government waste, it is clear that the advertisement is taking a shot at the Chinese, in a certain sense its propaganda looking to effectively strike fear in Americans. Similarly, during the 1800's Americans across the nation were afraid of the immigrant "invaders", especially the Chinese. The fear of havoc that could potentially be created by Chinese immigrant to the status of 'native' whites created a substantial amount of fear, prejudice, and racism towards Chinese immigrants. There was extreme amounts of prejudice towards immigrants, but the most predominant hate was towards Chinese, that hate and distrust is what led to the Chinese Exclusion Act which passed in 1882, this act exclusively limited Chinese laborers from immigrating to the country for potential work.

The similarities I believe end with fear however, the political moves made during the 1800's, and the feeling that most Americans had towards the Chinese is drastically different than in today's world. In the modern world most Americans don't hold racist views towards the Chinese, also of course most Americans aren't opposed to Chinese people moving here or becoming citizens. The modern advertisement, in my opinion, is making more of an attempt at sending a message to quit wasting money because of how much debt we owe to other nations including China, who we owe most of our debt too. This advertisement may strike fear of the Chinese in some Americans, but it's really nothing when in contrast to the political ads/cartoons of the 1800's in my opinion.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Chinese Then & Now

by [Alexander Stimson](#) - Friday, March 6, 2015, 9:38 PM

I'd like to follow up on my previous post. Since posting it, I've gone back and forth on how similar I really think these cartoons are to the commercial. On a broad scale, they both represent fear involving the Chinese. However, looking more closely, they certainly have their differences. Most of the cartoons seem to portray the Chinese in a rather savage or invasive way, that they themselves are should be feared or else they will overrun America(ns). Meanwhile, the video portrays the Chinese in a perfectly normal light - at least to the eye - no cartoon-ish characteristics or much emphasis of certain stereotypes. Rather, the video shows that it is our own faults and the Chinese's ability (and smarts) to capitalize on those faults that we should fear. The commercial urges action not against the Chinese, but against ourselves - our own government.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Chinese Then & Now

by [Jenefer Heredia](#) - Saturday, March 7, 2015, 12:48 PM

That's a really great observation and definitely goes along the lines of American citizens uniting against/for a cause. This commercial was funded by an organization called Citizens Against Government Waste - I guess my next question for CAG would be - why did they portray the Chinese in this commercial? Another form of government waste could be overspending in military/war "funds"... or even the lack of funds in education.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Chinese Then & Now

by [Nicklas Moyer](#) - Saturday, March 7, 2015, 10:05 PM

I do agree with you that the CAG could have targeted a different group or could have gone about their commercial in a different fashion to get their message across. However, I do believe the reason they targeted the Chinese is because we owe much of our national debt to their nation. I think the commercial was trying to garner fear in the people over how much money we waste and how other nations can capitalize on that. If it were another nation like Germany that we owed most of our debt too, then the commercial probably would have been setup in a German College with German actors and not the Chinese.

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Re: Chinese Then & Now

by [Justin Robertson](#) - Saturday, March 7, 2015, 5:58 PM

Between the modern day commercial and the cartoons from the 19th century, there are similarities in the view Americans have for the Chinese. There is still the fear of Americans losing jobs to or working for foreigners (Chinese in this case). The difference is that in modern times our country isn't as discriminating against the Chinese; The U.S. no longer labels them among the prostitutes, lepers, or morons. Also, there isn't a Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943) in place, so we are more accepting when it comes to the Chinese living and working in the U.S. Even though there is a sense of American nativism and certain similarities in both the political cartoons and the recent commercial, I don't believe that history is repeating itself. It is safe to say that there won't be another Chinese Exclusion Act or any type of severe racism that has unfair or unjust actions against the Chinese.

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Re: Chinese Then & Now

by [Sarah Wood](#) - Saturday, March 7, 2015, 11:43 PM

I agree that the fear between then and now is much different, but I disagree when you say its safe to say that there won't be any severe racism or unjust actions against the Chinese in the future. I think that while the fear is much different now because we now think of the Chinese as intelligent, but its still fear. However, I think the fear we have now would have to greatly escalate for anything like the Chinese Exclusion Act to ever come back into consideration.

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Yellow Peril

by [Dichen Wu](#) - Saturday, March 7, 2015, 8:35 PM

All the cartoons were expressing Europeans and Americans' stereotyped opinion about East Asians, particularly Chinese. It was that the huge number of Chinese labor migration would bring local American residents disasters, which was called Yellow Peril. From the late 19th century to the early 20th century, immigrants from China played a significant part of construction in American West. Their characteristics such as hard-working and efficient made themselves a labor force with the best quality. In the meanwhile, entrepreneurs and investors' growing demand for more the same good labor promoted the increase of Chinese population in American West. That Chinese labor took up a lot of underlying jobs eventually made local Americans worry whether their living space would be also taken up one day by increasing Chinese immigrants.

Compared to blacks' historical trauma, the attitude towards Chinese was another similar racial discrimination. Under the premise of white supremacy, advantages of Chinese in labor and population growth, were seen as a threat to white men's leadership and living. Exactly as current views of Chinese threat theory, a large percentage of share by Chinese in economic dividends, violated racists and the native conservative's interest and belief. Therefore, they expected to suppress American Chinese status and influence by vilifying Chinese images and exaggerating Chinese social role. However, Chinese labor migration made a huge contribution to the development of the U.S. economy since the late 19th century. And the white men were not subverted by Chinese, but gained large benefit instead.

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Then & Now: Are we repeating the past?

by [Sarah Wood](#) - Saturday, March 7, 2015, 10:35 PM

When comparing the commercial and the cartoons I would say that there are similarities, but I wouldn't go as far as to say history is repeating itself. I would say that we are using a similar tactic to get people's attention: fear. When looking at the cartoons it seemed to me that they were all showing fear of the Chinese doing something... Fear of them doing anything from taking of the country to stealing their jobs. Which then leads to the commercial. I'd say there was obvious use of fear in the commercial with the idea that China owning the US, but that was only a commercial. When those cartoons were created the treatment of the Chinese in the US was awful, but today the treatment of the Chinese is much different.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Past and present

by [Kaelen Byrum](#) - Saturday, March 7, 2015, 11:34 PM

When observing these cartoons, I feel there are multiple elements that relate to our world today. In the first picture we see a Chinese worker vigorously working. He is depicted with ten arms. With China today being the leader in production of materials, we see how this correlates with today's view on the Asian working society. I am not trying to say that this is the typical working situation for everyone, but with the large amount of productions that occurs in China the abundance of factory jobs, it takes a large portion.

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