

Anti-miscegenation and Asian Americans

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Introduction

Historians have recently directed increasing attention toward miscegenation discourse and the history of mixed race, which offers a rich field of study for understanding the social construction of race, gender, and nationality in the United States.¹⁾ In the American Historical Review (AHR) forum (2003), David A. Hollinger argued that the mixing of the world's people in the U.S. is one of the most distinctive, yet most unappreciated realities of the nation's history. He contended that through amalgamation, Americans created new and unique communities of descent. He concluded that analyzing their creation and development is critical for a full understanding of the American past, particularly one that extends beyond the fundamentally flawed ideal of the melting pot.²⁾

The number of interracial marriages is increasing and the trend appears to continue. According to the U.S. Census data of 1990, there were over 1,260,000 interracial married couples. This number is four times as many as that reported in the 1970 Census (310,000). Presently, Asian Americans in interracial relationships are also very common.³⁾ In the period between the 1960 and 1990 Censuses, the number of white-East Asian married couples increased almost tenfold, while that of black-white couples quadrupled. The popularity of "Cablinasian" Tiger Woods is evidence of the white Americans' change in attitude toward what they formerly denounced as "miscegenation."⁴⁾ This tendency resulted in heated arguments for and against the inclusion of a "multiracial" category in the 2000 U.S. Census.

However, is it appropriate to claim that the history of sexual contact and amalgamation in

¹⁾ Gary B. Nash, "The Hidden History of Mestizo America," *Journal of American History* 82, no. 3. (December, 1995), 941-964; Werner Sollors, ed., *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe, ed., *'Mixed Race' Studies* (London: Routledge, 2004); Monika Kaup and Debra J. Rosenthal, eds., *Mixing Race, Mixing Culture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

²⁾ "AHR Forum: Amalgamation and the Historical Distinctiveness of the United States," *American Historical Review* 108, Issue 5. (December, 2003).

³⁾ "Interracial Dating & Marriage" Asian-Nation: The Landscape of Asian America.
<http://www.asian-nation.org/interracial.shtml> (August 11, 2005).

⁴⁾ For an analysis of Tiger Woods as an interracial symbol, see Henry Yu's "Tiger Woods Is Not the End of History: or, Why Sex across the Color Line Won't Save Us All," in *American Historical Review* 108, Issue 5. (Dec., 2003), 1406-1414, and "How Tiger Woods Lost His Stripes: Post-Nationalist American Studies as a History of Race, Migration, and the Commodification of Culture," in *Post-Nationalist American Studies*, ed. John Carlos Rowe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

the United States is a sign of hope for a multiracial society in the 21st century? I believe that it is more important to investigate and analyze historically the myth of national integration from the perspective of racial mixing. For instance, in his famous “Letters from an American Farmer,” J. Hector St. John De Crevecoeur argued:

What then is the American, this new man?...He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He has become an American by being received in the broad lap of our great Alma Mater. Here individuals of all races are melted into a new race of man, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims. (From “Letter III,” 1782)

Although he predicted that the mixing of races would lead to the emergence of a new society that would contrast sharply with the old European society, this mixing would be limited only to the European immigrants. However, history reveals that the United States has used such rhetoric repeatedly in the past. In the discourse of national integration images on which the “frontier thesis” of F.J. Turner and the “melting pot” of Israel Zangwill insisted, the same notion of limited racial mixing has been presumed a priori. In the case of white-native American interracial marriages, the term “Pocahontas exception” is widely known, according to which persons with one sixteenth or less native American blood were classified as whites.⁵⁾ However, at the time of the enactment of the first anti-miscegenation act in Maryland, the American society—which was divided into the free and slaves, whites and non-whites—was characterized by regulations on sex and marriage across color lines.

The anti-miscegenation acts defined who could be termed “white” and who could be considered an American citizen. As Benedict Anderson suggests, a modern nation state depends on the mobilization of masses of people and the imaginative process of uniting disparate communities into a “deep, horizontal comradeship,” irrespective of the extent to which the nation is divided by “actual inequality and exploitation.”⁶⁾ In the case of the U.S., in general, the core of Americanism was derived from the civic ideals of freedom and equality that were born in the enlightenment era. It differed from Germany and Japan’s concept of ethnic nationalism, which was based on “ethnic blood.”⁷⁾ However, can the veracity of this claim be confirmed? How should we regard the naturalization act of 1790 that restricted citizenship to

⁵⁾ Rachel F. Moran, *Interracial Intimacy: The Regulation of Race and Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 49.

⁶⁾ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 7.

⁷⁾ Gary Gerstle argued that civic nationalism and racial nationalism have decisively shaped the history of the American nation in the 20th century. Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 5–13.

“free whites”? Since almost the inception of the Republic, the U.S. established a system of discrimination whereby only “free whites” were allowed to become citizens. Although this “free whites only” stipulation was revised after the Civil War to admit freedmen (African Americans) into national membership, Asians were neither “white” nor “persons of African nativity or descent.” By this ambiguous legal and social status as “inbetween” people, Asian immigrants and Asian Americans encountered harsh discrimination and exclusion movements. Thus, the United States had not only been a republic of civic ideals but also “a racially imagined community.” Socially constructed “whiteness” appeared to be another core of Americanism. Anti-miscegenation regulations were a device to maintain this purity of whiteness.

Anti-miscegenation statute was first enacted in Maryland in 1661. A year later, Virginia passed a law that denied blacks access to the economic and property privileges of the whites through intermarriage. Furthermore, the American West not only banned sexual relations between blacks and whites but also included Asian Americans among the prohibited groups. For instance, in 1880, California’s Civil Code was amended to prohibit the issuance of any marriage license to a white person and a “Negro, Mulatto, or Mongolian.” By the end of the 19th century, 38 states had adopted anti-miscegenation acts that banned black-white intimacy, while 14 states restricted white-Asian intermarriage.⁸⁾ These regulations were abolished after the California Supreme Court declared anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional in *Perez v. Sharp* (1948) and the U.S. Supreme Court overturned anti-miscegenation laws in the *Loving v. Virginia* (1967) decision.

This paper focuses on how anti-miscegenation sentiments and acts were connected with the politics of defining the boundaries of “American citizenship” and racial “whiteness” in the Civil War and Reconstruction Era. I will focus on the historical role of Chinese immigrants who arrived as the first Asian immigrants in the American West in the mid 19th century. This paper focuses on the formation of the anti-miscegenation sentiment in the 19th century and the history of white-Asian (Irish-Chinese) miscegenation in San Francisco Chinatown and the Five Points area of New York Downtown. Further, I will examine the newspapers and magazines published during the Civil War and Reconstruction Era to focus on the popular discourse, which identified Chinese women as prostitutes and the Asian bachelor community as sexual deviants. The main sources of the discourses and images used in the analysis are political illustrations that appeared in illustrated newspapers such as *Harper’s Weekly* and *Frank Leslie’s*. On their basis, I will analyze how these images of interracial sex and marriage were connected with the political questions raised by Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation and the radical reforms of the Reconstruction Era.

⁸⁾ Susan Koshy, *Sexual Naturalization: Asian Americans and Miscegenation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 3–4; Dick Megumi Ogumi, “Asians and California’s Anti-Miscegenation Laws,” in *Asian and Pacific American Experiences: Women’s Perspectives*, ed. Nobuya Tsuchida (Minneapolis: Asian/Pacific American Learning Resource Center and General College, University of Minnesota, 1982), 6. On the Pacific coast, by the 1920s, anti-miscegenation regulations forbidding marriage between “Orientals” and “whites” had been enacted in California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Montana, and Idaho.

1. Racial Anxiety in the Civil War Era

According to Elise Lemire, there were three distinctive waves of hysteria regarding interracial sex and marriage between 1776 and 1865. The first widespread discussion in American history was sparked by a report published in Richmond, Virginia, in 1802, which stated that the author of the Declaration of Independence was having sex with one of his slave women. Thomas Jefferson's political opponents, the Federalists, argued that his personal behavior was a corollary to his political beliefs. The second wave occurred in the 1830s, after the immediate abolitionists began to organize themselves widely and effectively. The third wave of concern in the North was in direct response to the urgent question raised by the Civil War and President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.⁹⁾

This paper considers the third wave. It was precisely at this time—a little before the Christmas of 1863—that the term “miscegenation” appeared in a seventy-two-page political pamphlet. It was titled “*Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro.*” Irish immigrant Democrat D.G. Croly and his coauthor George Wakeman produced this sensational pamphlet, posing as pro-Republican abolitionists, and sent copies to prominent anti-slavery leaders such as Horace Greeley and Charles Sumner. They proclaimed that “the miscegenetic or mixed races are much superior, mentally, physically, and morally to those pure or unmixed.” Furthermore, they insisted that the strength of the American nation stemmed “not from its Anglo-Saxon progenitors, but from all the different nationalities....All that is needed to make us the finest race on earth is to engraft upon our stock the negro element.” It ended by proclaiming that Lincoln should add a miscegenation plank to the Republican Party platform for the 1864 presidential election.¹⁰⁾

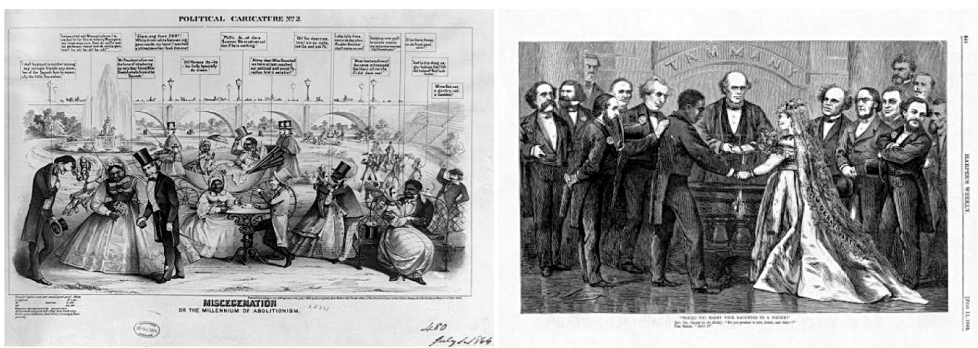
As Sidney Kaplan demonstrated, the specific relationship of the Irish working people and the Negroes formed the core of the hoax. It was designed to produce a backlash among Irish and other white workers.¹¹⁾ Another pamphlet in the New York Day Book, *Miscegenation, or the Millennium of Abolitionism*, included the same idea that emancipation would reverse racial positions and enslave poor whites.¹²⁾ Democrats hoped that these anti-miscegenation sentiments based on racial anxiety would do widespread damage to the Republican Party's plan for a postwar society. Furthermore, I would like to point out that this racial anxiety included a fear of the possibility of Asian immigrant- white interracial mixing. Croly's pamphlet argued that “the next step is to open California to the swarming millions of eastern Asia. The patience

⁹⁾ Elise Lemire, “*Miscegenation*”: *Making Race in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 1–2.

¹⁰⁾ *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro* (New York: 1863).

¹¹⁾ Sidney Kaplan, “The Miscegenation Issue in the Election of 1864,” *Journal of Negro History* 34, no. 3, (July, 1949), 274–343.

¹²⁾ Kaplan, “The Miscegenation Issue,” 275 and 316; David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991), 154–156.



[Ill-1] (Left) Political caricature no. 2. *Miscegenation, or the Millennium of Abolitionism*

[Ill-2] (Right) "Would You Marry Your Daughter to a Nigger?" *Harper's Weekly*, July 11, 1868, p. 444
Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase presides as the officiating minister at the wedding of a black man and an Irish-American woman, representing the Democratic Party supporters. He sought the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party.

and skill of the Japanese and Chinese in the mechanic arts must be blended into the composite race which will hereafter rule this continent."¹³⁾

2. The European Gaze upon Mixed Race and Degeneracy in America

We must focus attention on another impact of the European racist thinker upon the Republican administration in the Civil War and Reconstruction Era. An example is the work of French thinker Arthur de Gobineau, who is often referred to as the father of racism. His *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853–1855) was known to have a direct influence on the thoughts of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler. In America, the thoughts of Gobineau became popular among American ethnologists who were the primary spokesmen for a new polygenetic theory and supported slavery in the South.¹⁴⁾ This is the reason why J.C. Nott and Henry Hotz translated and published an American edition in 1856 with extensive notes and commentaries.¹⁵⁾ Gobineau questioned the reason for the rise and fall of civilizations. He proclaimed that race explained everything in the past, present, and future. He explained that when the conquering race begins to mix its blood with the subjugated peoples, the purity of the master race begins to be eroded, leading to a gradual process of general degeneracy.¹⁶⁾

J.C. Nott observed that even in America, the mulatto population showed signs of degeneracy. However, it is interesting to note that the editors omitted the chapter on America that predicted the decline of the Anglo-Saxon rule on America. I am unable to understand the

¹³⁾ Kaplan, "The Miscegenation Issue," 223.

¹⁴⁾ For a discussion of the American ethnologist, see Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993).

¹⁵⁾ Josiah C. Nott, appendix to Arthur de Gobineau, *The Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races* (American edition, 1856; reprint, New York: Garland, 1984).

precise reason for the omission. They might have believed that the United States must be proud of itself due to the unique communities formed by racial mixing, even though this mixing was strictly limited to the European immigrants. They never denied the national myth of racial mixing, so far as the purity of “whiteness” was maintained. However, they harbored strong anti-miscegenation sentiments against freedmen and non-European people such as the Chinese and Mexicans.

It is a fact that in the preface to the American edition, they warned that the influx of Chinese immigrants into the American West would degenerate the nation. The anti-Chinese movement in California began in the middle of the century, but it was not a nationwide movement. However, the Chinese immigrants were regarded as a dangerous group that could bring about the degeneration of the civilization.

Thus, the European race theory expressed the viewpoint that the Radical Republicans' notion regarding the emancipation of slaves and color-blindness was a dangerous experiment. J.C. Nott proclaimed the following in his essay, *The Problems of the Black Races*:

Remove your (freedmen's) bureau and the United States troops (particularly blacks) as speedily as possible from our soil, and leave the relations between the races to regulate themselves.¹⁷⁾

3. Political Agenda of the Radical Republicans—the Nation as a Family

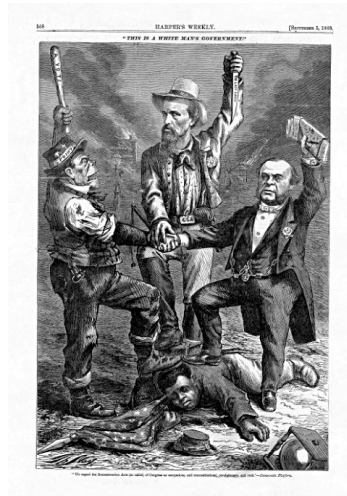
The Democratic Party's tactics involved attacking the Republican Party; these tactics appealed to the ordinary people's anti-miscegenation sentiments and such politics because the European intellectuals observed the Reconstruction Acts to be so dangerous as to lead to the degeneracy of the nation. However, as Eric Foner points out, the Civil War had the character of a social revolution since the Emancipation Proclamation abolished the boundaries of social order and the distinction between the free and slaves.¹⁸⁾

The Radical Republicans were committed to the enfranchisement of the freed blacks and pursued the idea of racial equality and the building of a color-blind nation state. In this process of nation state building, they argued who should to be considered as a national citizen. Senator John Sherman from Ohio insisted in 1863: “But sir, there is a still higher motive for the passage

¹⁶⁾ It is interesting that there was a different response to this racial theory in Japan. In 1883 Takahashi Yoshio published a book entitled *Nihon Jinshu Kairyō ron (Discourse on the Improvement of the Japanese Race)*, in which he argued that Japanese men should divorce their wives and marry foreign women in order to improve Japan's racial stock. Thus, interracial marriage in Meiji era Japan was a tool for civilizing the Japanese nationhood. It included an introduction by Fukuzawa Yukichi. But among upper-class Japanese, intermarriage remained controversial, for traditional cultural reasons rather than eugenics ones.

¹⁷⁾ Josiah Nott, “The Problem of the Black Races,” in *Race, Hybridity, and Miscegenation*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and Kristie Dotson, vol. 2 (Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005), 203.

¹⁸⁾ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).



[III-4] "This is a White Man's Government." *Harper's Weekly*, September 5, 1868.

Caption: "We regard the Reconstruction Acts (so called) of Congress as usurpations, and unconstitutional, revolutionary, and void." — Democratic Platform

equality and the Radical Republican administration, viewed the Democratic Party as against racial equality with the purpose of limiting the boundary of "whiteness" to the European immigrants. This viewpoint of Nast is demonstrated by [III-4].²¹⁾

This racialization of the postwar society accelerated the movement to enact the anti-miscegenation bills all over the country.²²⁾ There were more enactments of anti-miscegenation regulations in the latter half of the 19th century than in any other period in American history. Before independence, only five states prohibited interracial marriages. However, around the Civil War and Reconstruction Era, miscegenation laws were passed in ten states: Alabama (1865), Arizona (1865), Colorado (1864), Idaho (1864), Mississippi (1865), Nevada (1861), Ohio (1861), Oregon (1862), South Carolina (1865), and West Virginia (1870).²³⁾

The rush in law making was partially in response to the racial anxiety caused by the Emancipation Proclamation and the Reconstruction Acts. However, at the same time, it should also be noted that nine states repealed their statutes during this period. These were

²¹⁾ On caricatures of Thomas Nast, see Albert Paine, *Thomas Nast: His Period and His Pictures* (New York: Chelsea House, 1904); Morton Keller, *The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

²²⁾ On racialization, see Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987).

²³⁾ David H. Fowler, *Northern Attitudes towards Interracial Marriage: Legislation and Public Opinions in the Middle Atlantic and the States of the Old Northwest, 1780-1930* (New York: Garland, 1987), 255-265.

²⁴⁾ Harvey M. Applebaum, "Miscegenation Statutes: A Constitutional and Social Problem," *Georgetown Law Journal* 53 (Fall 1964), 50.

Massachusetts (1843), Iowa (1857), Kansas (1857), Maine (1883), Michigan (1883), New Mexico (1886), Ohio (1887), Rhode Island (1881), and Washington (1867).²⁴⁾ These repeals were in response to the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which was passed by Congress over the veto of President Andrew Johnson. The Act declared that thereafter, all persons born in the United States would be citizens, regardless of their race, color, or previous condition. As citizens, they could make and enforce contracts; sue and be sued; give evidence in court; and inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey real and personal property. The point was whether the clause that guaranteed the right to enforce “contracts” included the right to interracial marriage. Therefore, there began a spate of interracial marriages after 1866, which may reflect the increased importance of national versus state citizenship. However, the increase in the number of interracial marriages resulted in the confirmation of the superiority of the state’s sovereignty. Thus, at the turn of the century, 38 states had harsh regulations for interracial marriages. These anti-miscegenation acts created a community-based social order that defined who was white or black and who should be considered a national citizen.

Thus, the Reconstruction Era had two characteristics: one is the era of nationalization, and the other is that of racialization. In the dynamics of these two vectors, the boundaries of nation and race were defined and redefined again, and the harsh politics of inclusion and exclusion were practiced. These trends were demonstrated in the political illustrations of this period. In particular, it must be noticed that many illustrations depicted the “family” image as a symbol of the nation state comprising a new imagined community based on racial equality. I believe there are certain reasons for the overuse of these “family” images.

The main reason is that a large family is the best way to portray the ideal type of color-blind society that the Radical Republicans hoped to achieve—a society that comprises people of different skin colors. [Ill-5], entitled “Uncle Sam’s Thanksgiving Dinner,” is the best-known illustration depicting Thomas Nast’s Reconstruction-Era idealism. Uncle Sam welcomed all people in the world who were attracted to the United States by its promise of democracy and racial equality. We can see Germans, African Americans, native Americans, the French, Spaniards, and the Chinese in the family portrait. The center of the table shows a slogan of the Radical Republican faction: universal suffrage. [Ill-6] appeared in the year that the Burlingame Treaty was ratified; it depicts Miss Columbia holding a Chinese baby with unconventional features in her arms.

Secondly, it connected with the anti-miscegenation campaign and the white woman’s demand for her right to vote and other citizenship rights. In order to contest the ideal norms of morality, middle-class gender roles, and the definition of a respectable woman, the campaign against interracial marriage and the transformation of the gender balance between white men and women required a family image.

For instance, in [Ill-7], the black woman is depicted as a beauty with middle-class

²⁴⁾ Harvey M. Applebaum, “Miscegenation Statutes: A Constitutional and Social Problem,” *Georgetown Law Journal* 53 (Fall 1964), 50.



[III-5] (Left) "Uncle Sam's Thanksgiving Dinner" *Harper's Weekly*, November 20, 1869.



[III-6] (Right) "Last Addition to the Family" *Harper's Weekly*, September 25, 1869.



[III-7] "Holy Horror of Mrs. McCaffraty in a Washington City Street Passenger Car"

Harper's Weekly, February 24, 1866.

Caption: [Mr. McCaffraty Voted against Negro Suffrage.]

respectability and the Irish American woman is stereotyped as having ape-like features.²⁵⁾ The latter is carrying a basket containing two bottles of alcohol, which is frequently associated with Irish Catholics. Thus, by highlighting the contrast in the two women's sexuality, this illustration depicted the racial prejudice of Irish immigrants that underlay the rejection of black manhood suffrage.

²⁵⁾ L. Perry Curtis Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997); Mary Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist: The Representation of Type and Character in Victorian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

4. Image Analysis of the Chinese Immigrants (1)

In the following section, I will attempt a concrete analysis of the images of the Chinese immigrants. How were Chinese immigrants depicted in the politics of nationalization and racialization? How were they used politically? Did these images reflect the historical reality of the Chinese immigrants' everyday lives?

In the latter half of the 19th century, more than 360,000 Chinese emigrated from the Guangdong area of China to California and encountered the violent anti-Chinese movement. Since the first scholarly work, *Chinese Immigration* (1909) by Mary R. Coolidge, many scholars attempted to interpret the rise of Sinophobia. Coolidge argued that the Chinese exclusion movement was caused by Irish workers' "lawless and unreasonable" violence and by white Southerners, based on their labor-class racism and direct economic conflict with the Chinese laborers.²⁶⁾ In addition, the political evolution of the 1882 Act has been seen as resulting from the pressure of the California exclusionists, which is termed as the "California thesis." However, in a previous work of image analysis, Stuart Creighton Miller argued that a nationwide anti-Chinese prejudice, rather than the lobbying of a single state, provided the impetus for the Chinese exclusion.²⁷⁾

There is a controversy regarding the manner in which the anti-Chinese movement should be interpreted—the local movement in California or the nationwide one from the inception of the movement. Since the number of Chinese immigrants residing in California was small, it is difficult to understand the reason for the large number of political illustrations in that state. For example, my research of 2,188 illustrations by Thomas Nast for *Harper's Weekly* from 1859 to 1896 reveals that Nast produced 38 caricatures depicting Chinese immigrants.²⁸⁾ Yet, as we have seen, these caricatures can be understood on the basis of the Civil War and Reconstruction Era — the period of nationalization and racialization — which coincided with this period. The following are two illustrations [ill-8 and ill-9] that depict the failure of Reconstruction politics.

In [ill-8], the retreat of the formerly enslaved African American in the South and that of the Chinese immigrant in the West symbolically and visually illustrate that the Reconstruction politics ended as an "unfinished revolution." [Ill-9] illustrates that the Chinese immigrants were a touchstone to test the Radical Republicans' commitment to their promise of guaranteeing racial equality and "equal rights to all men." Thus, the fact that pro-Chinese caricatures were produced by supporters of the Radical Republicans in this period disapproves Miller's national racist consensus thesis.

In the antebellum era, "negronized Chinese" images spread in the American West.

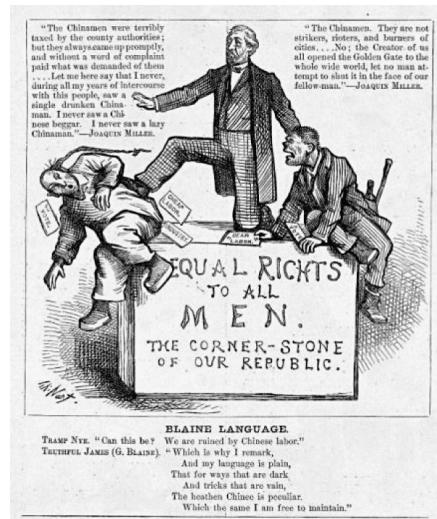
²⁶⁾ Mary Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (New York: Holt, 1909).

²⁷⁾ Stuart Creighton Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant: The American Thought of the Chinese, 1785-1882* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

²⁸⁾ Yoshiyuki Kido, "Conflicting Images about the Chinese Immigrants: The World of Thomas Nast's Cartoons," *Annual Review of Migration Studies* 3 (March 1997), 111-140.



[Ill-8] (Left) “The Nigger Must Go” and “The Chinese Must Go” *Harper’s Weekly*, September 13, 1879.
Caption: “The Poor Barbarians Can’t Understand Our Civilized Republican Form of Government.”
[Ill-9] (Right) “Blaine Language” *Harper’s Weekly*, March 15, 1879.



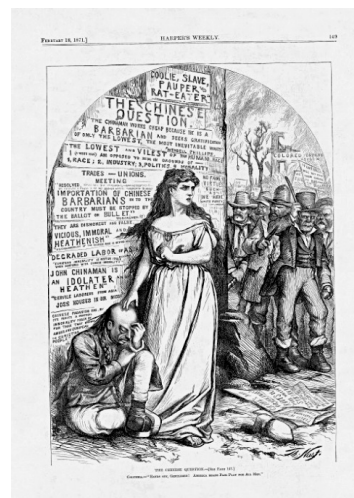
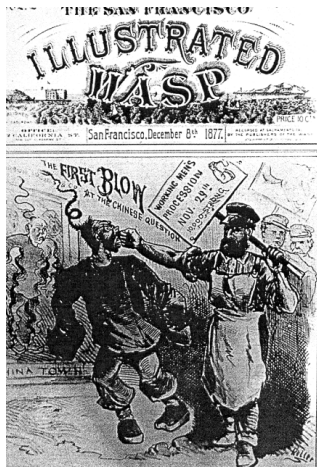
Chinese immigrants were not coolies but free immigrants under the credit-ticket system. However, the Democratic governor of California, John Bigler, called for immediate and extraordinary measures to check the tide of Asiatic immigration and “Chinese coolies.” He insisted that the unrestricted immigration of “Chinese coolies” would lead to the submergence of American civilization.²⁹⁾ In the 1854 case *People v. Hall*, the California Supreme Court stated that the testimony of Chinese witnesses should have been excluded under an 1850 statute providing that “no Black, or Mulatto person, or Indian shall be allowed to give evidence in favor of, or against a White man.”³⁰⁾

Thus, in the free state of California, the Chinese laborers were regarded as other slaves. [Ill-10], [Ill-11], and [Ill-12] are typical illustrations of negronized Chinese men and women.

However, the Civil War and the beginning of Reconstruction politics dramatically altered the status of the Chinese immigrants. Since the Emancipation Proclamation destroyed the social boundary between free people and slaves in the antebellum society, the basis of the negronization image was lost. Conversely, in the Reconstruction Era, as we have seen, pro-Chinese caricatures were popular. As [Ill-13] depicts, Miss Columbia protected the Chinese child from the Irish rioters, who are stereotyped as having ape-like features. However, the pro-Chinese illustrations disappeared in the concluding period of the Reconstruction Era.

²⁹⁾ “Governor Bigler’s Special Message in Regard to Chinese Coolie Emigration,” in *State of California, Journal of the Senate*, 3rd sess. (1852), 373.

³⁰⁾ *People v. Hall*, 4 Cal. 399 (1854); Ian F. Haney Lopez, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 51.



[III-10] (Upper left) "The First Blow at the Chinese Question" *Wasp*, December 8, 1877.

[III-11] (Upper right) "Celestial Ladies" *Harper's Weekly*, January 31, 1858.

[III-12] (Lower left) "Pacific Chivalry" *Harper's Weekly*, August 7, 1869. (pro-Chinese)

[III-13] "The Chinese Question" *Harper's Weekly*, February 18, 1871.

Caption: Columbia - "Hands off, Gentlemen! America means Fair Play for All Men"

5. Image Analysis of the Chinese Immigrants (2)

The large number of illustrations depicting Chinese immigrants in this period can primarily be explained by the nationalization politics that defined who was white and who should be an American citizen. Next, in order to investigate the anti-Chinese image and Sinophobia, we must focus on the topics of miscegenation, sexual deviation, and sexual desire. Previous works on the anti-Chinese movement focused on economic factors and labor-class

racism. Whiteness studies also emphasize the Irish-black and Irish-Chinese relations in the context of class consciousness and racial “whiteness.”³¹⁾ However, gender analysis appears to be an important perspective. The anti-miscegenation sentiment was the driving force that led to the racialization of the 19th century society.

In [ill-14], a Chinese man stands arm in arm with an Irishwoman in front of the “Church of St. Confucius.” This illustration, entitled “Pacific Railroad Complete,” celebrates the geographic consolidation of the nation between the East and the West, but implies the uncertainty of the future of the mixed race. The year in which [ill-6] was published is the same as that in which the Burlingame Treaty was signed; hence, it has the same historical background. The Californians feared the influx of the Chinese coolies and were anxious about the degeneracy of American nationhood.

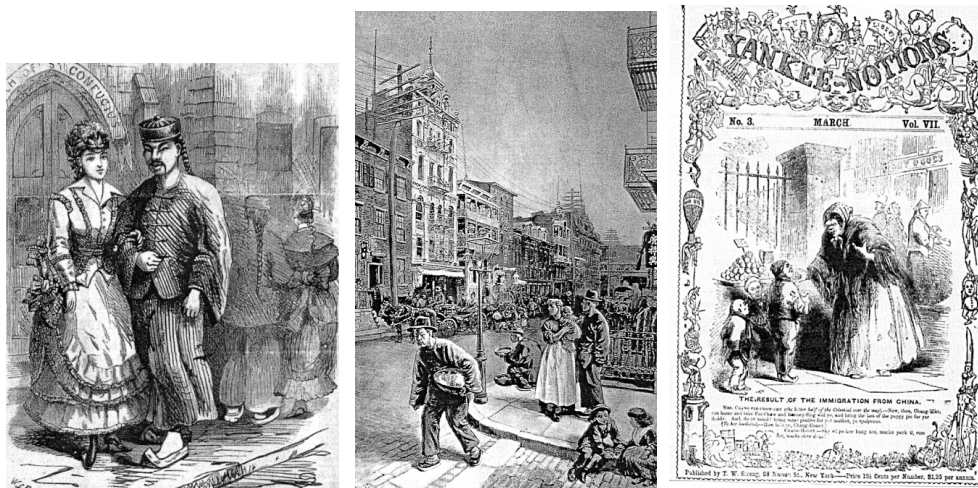
In fact, New York had a sizable number of Irishwomen-Chinese man couples. According to a study by John Kuo Wei Chen, between the 1820s and 1870s, one in four Chinese men was married to an Irishwoman, and many such couples had families. However, according to the documented figures, the Chinese settlement comprised a small population. In 1855, 1865, and 1870, only 65 Chinese were officially reported to be living in Manhattan. Nevertheless, Chinese-Irish marriages were noticeable in NYC. In 1858, *Yankee Notions* featured an Irishwoman, her Chinese husband, and their two Irish-Chinese sons. [Ill-16] In 1890, Harper’s weekly carried a caricature of a Chinese-Irish couple and their children. [Ill-15]³²⁾

Although it is probable that the phenomenon of interracial marriage was greatly exaggerated by the anti-abolitionists, the Five Points area of New York Downtown was indeed an international district in which cultures from around the world intermixed, forming a hybrid, creolized culture. In [ill-17], entitled “Along the New York Docks,” Irishwomen were catering to “Irishmen who jostled against ‘niggers,’ Chinamen, Frenchmen, and Germans, [mingling] in perfect harmony.” In “How the Chinaman Might Gain Favor” ([ill-18]), a Chinaman is shown to be dancing. Tap dancing has also been documented as emerging from the Five Points’ mix of African and Irish dance traditions.³³⁾ Thus, both the Chinese and Irish were considered as

³¹⁾ David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 153–156; Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1990); Saxton’s earlier work, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) was a challenge to white labor mythology.

³²⁾ John Kuo Wei Tchen, “Quimbo Appo’s Fear of Fenians: Chinese-Irish-Anglo Relations in New York City,” in *The New York Irish* ed. Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 128; On the Chinese in New York, see Mary Ting Yi Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery: Murder, Miscegenation, and Other Dangerous Encounters in Turn-of-the-Century New York City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); John Kuo Wei Tchen, *New York before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture 1776–1882* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

³³⁾ John Kuo Wei Tchen, “Quimbo Appo’s Fear,” 131.



[Ill-14] (Left) "Pacific Railroad Complete" *Harper's Weekly*, June 12, 1869.

[Ill-15] (Center) "A Wedding in the Chinese Quarter, Mott Street, New York" *Harper's Weekly*, November 22, 1890.

[Ill-16] (Right) "The Result of the Immigration from China" *Yankee Notions*, March 1858.

racial "others." However, this phenomenon was dramatically altered in the Civil War Era since the Emancipation Proclamation put the social and racial order in disarray. It is well known that in the draft riot of 1863, Irish rioters of Lower Manhattan attacked African American residents, Chinese brothels, and Chinese peddlers, who were "suspected of liaisons with white women."³⁴⁾ This was a starting point for the Irish uplift by insisting on their pan-Euro-American "whiteness." They managed to differentiate the Chinese and the African Americans from themselves. Thus, in order to analyze this complicated situation, it is necessary to study race and class mobility, which was emphasized in whiteness studies. In addition, the gender perspective becomes more important in this situation. The change in the trilateral relations between the Irish, Chinese, and African Americans in the Civil War and Reconstruction Era can be explained by the fear generated by the anti-miscegenation sentiment. As [ill-19] typically demonstrates, in the postbellum society, in which the middle-class heterosexual culture represented by the Victorian family flourished, the Democratic media negatively stereotyped the Chinese as a sexual threat.

On the other hand, San Francisco (SF), California, was strongly influenced by the Chinese image as a sexual threat. Since the Gold Rush, mid-19th century California was characterized

³⁴⁾ Iver Bernstein, *The New York Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 34, 299.

³⁵⁾ Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).



[Ill-17] (Left) “Along the New York Docks—An Unaristocratic International Restaurant” *Harper’s Weekly*, October 21, 1871.

[Ill-18] (Center) “How the Chinaman Might Gain Favor” *Harper’s Weekly*, April 12, 1879.

[Ill-19] (Right) “New York City — Opium Dens in Pell and Mott Streets? How the Opium Habit is Developed” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, May 19, 1883.

by its heterogeneous labor force, bachelor society, and sexual imbalance. In this male-dominated homosocial culture prevalent in the frontier, Chinese prostitutes were sensationally criticized in the local newspapers as bringing venereal disease and social decay.³⁵⁾ Table 1 indicates that the percentage of Chinese females fluctuated between 7.2 percent (in 1870) and 3.6 percent (in 1890) of the total Chinese population in the latter half of the 19th century. Table 2 shows the number of Chinese prostitutes according to the estimate of the SF police office. In 1870, there were 1,425 prostitutes in SF out of a total Chinese female population of 4,566. The statewide figures in 1870 indicate that there were 2,163 prostitutes and 405 probable prostitutes.³⁶⁾ As a result, the enactment of the Page Law of 1875 was the first step to limit Chinese immigration. This law ostensibly prohibited “Chinese, Japanese, and Mongolian women” from being brought to or entering the United States to “engage in immoral or licentious activities.”³⁷⁾ As this law stopped the entry of Chinese wives already in the United States, it delayed the formation of a “normal” family.

In addition, it should be noted that thousands of Chinese males who entered the new middle class families as household servants were characterized as sexual deviants. This entry into the domestic sphere not only upset the doctrine of true womanhood and gender roles, but “by opening up possibilities for relations of intimacy and desire across race and class, also threatened to disrupt the patriarchal hierarchy of the family.” In this aspect, Robert Lee

³⁶⁾ Suchen Chan, ed., *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882–1943* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 107.

³⁷⁾ *Ibid.*, 105–109.

Table 1: Chinese Population in the U.S. by Sex, 1860-1990

Date	Total	Male	Female (F)	F/Total
1860	34,933	33,149	1,784	5.1%
1870	63,199	58,633	4,566	7.2%
1880	105,465	100,686	4,779	4.5%
1890	107,488	103,620	3,868	3.6%
1900	89,863	85,341	4,522	5.0%
1910	71,531	66,856	4,675	6.5%
1920	61,639	53,891	7,748	12.6%
1930	74,954	59,802	15,152	20.2%
1940	77,504	57,389	20,115	26.0%
1950	117,629	77,008	40,621	34.5%
1960	237,292	135,549	101,743	42.9%
1970	431,583	226,733	204,850	47.5%
1980	806,040	407,544	398,496	49.4%
1990	1,648,696	821,542	827,154	50.2%

Table 2: Age and Place of Birth of Chinese Prostitutes in San Francisco, 1860-1880.

Age	1860		1870		1880	
	Foreign Born	U.S. Born	Foreign Born	U.S. Born	Foreign Born	U.S. Born
— 15	8	0	16	1	18	4
16 — 20	122	0	637	0	125	2
21 — 25	105	0	416	0	129	1
26 — 30	165	0	215	0	86	0
31 — 35	64	0	70	0	32	0
36 — 40	64	0	34	0	20	0
41 — 45	19	0	14	0	8	0
46 — 50	6	0	18	0	8	0
51 —	3	0	5	0	2	0
Total	556	0	1,425	1	435	7

summarized the invented Oriental sexuality as a “Third Sex”—Marjorie Garber’s term for a gender of imagined sexual possibilities. He argued that the Chinese represented a third sex—an alternative or imagined sexuality that was potentially subversive and disruptive to the emergent heterosexual orthodoxy.³⁸⁾ The fear of miscegenation and this perceived sexual disorder of third-sex Chinese immigrants was a pillar of the Chinese exclusion movement.

³⁸⁾ Robert Lee, *Oriental: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 87–89.

Conclusion

Interracial marriages among Asian Americans have shown a rapid increase in recent times. According to the 2000 Census, Asian Americans have the highest “intermarriage” rates among the racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. This multiracial tendency is in stark contrast to the 19th century, when the anti-miscegenation sentiment, including the nativism against Asian immigrants, was common.

When the term “miscegenation” was coined in 1863, the anti-Republican groups planned to destroy the Radical Republicans’ vision of a color-blind society after the Emancipation Proclamation. The main objective was to prohibit “the union of the white and black races.” However, in the Reconstruction Era, which was characterized as the period of nationalization and racialization, the Chinese question as well as the enfranchisement of freedmen became a symbolic political issue. In redefining the boundaries of “whiteness,” which had been a condition for naturalization since 1790, the Chinese attracted attention as a symbolic existence on the borders between American and alien, and between white and non-white. “Miscegenation” was a keyword in these complicated politics of redefining the boundaries. This explains the large number of political caricatures of the Chinese that were drawn in this period.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first discriminatory regulation against a specific ethnic group in American immigration history. The Act prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers, both skilled and unskilled, and denied Chinese residents in the United States the right to become American citizens; this resulted in indelibly marking the Asian immigrants as “alien ineligible for citizenship.” This Act has historically been estimated within the narrow framework of the Asian American studies and immigration history, which almost support Coolidge’s California thesis or Miller’s national racist consensus thesis. However, the process of resolving the Chinese question heavily depends on the politics of nation state building from the beginning of the Reconstruction politics to the reconciliation of the North and the South. Therefore, the historical implication of the Chinese Exclusion Act must not be underestimated.

How should we develop our historiography on this theme? First, I propose to link the histories of Asian immigrants and African Americans from the viewpoint of how both groups had a historical role in forming the “imagined political community.”³⁹⁾ Next, I will research how

³⁹⁾ This trend is in its inception. For instance, Charles McClain’s legal history, *In search of Equality* (1994), chronicles the 19th century conflicts between the Chinese and the white American officialdom. McClain concluded that the Chinese legal challenges contributed to the molding of the American constitutional jurisprudence. In addition, recent works have tendency to focus on the interracial relations between the Chinese immigrants and African Americans. Najia Aarim-Heriot, *Chinese Immigrants, African Americans, and Racial Anxiety in the United States, 1848-82* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003); Arnoldo De León, *Racial Frontiers: Africans, Chinese, and Mexicans in Western America, 1848-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002); Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

“whiteness” was socially constructed by integrating the history of Asian immigration and whiteness studies that focus on the non-WASP white such as the Irish, Jews, Italians, and Hungarians. This new research style will focus on the complicated consciousness of race, gender and nationhood; hence, the anti-miscegenation sentiment and racial anxiety must be investigated in detail.

Finally, we should remember Foucault’s indication: technologies of sex that centered on controlling the size and fitness of the population became “the anchorage points for the different varieties of racism of the nineteenth and twentieth century.”⁴⁰⁾ At the turn of the century, eugenics developed to create “a master race” and to cleanse America of its “unfit.” Therefore, hundreds of thousands of Americans were not permitted to continue their families by reproducing. Mandatory sterilization laws were enacted in 27 states, and marriage prohibition laws to prevent racial mixing proliferated throughout the country.⁴¹⁾ Hollinger emphasized the race-mixing realities as an example of American uniqueness. However, a study of 19th- and 20th-century U.S. history, when it attempted to control its population through anti-miscegenation regulations and eugenics sterilization laws, reveals an essence of modernity that is common with other European nations, including Nazi Germany.

⁴⁰⁾ Michael Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978), 139, 26, quoted in Susan Koshey, *Sexual Naturalization*, 2.

⁴¹⁾ Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race* (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2003), 66–69.; Steven Selden, *Inheriting Shame: The Story of Eugenics and Racism in America* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1999); Stefan Kuhl, *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).