

Picturing History: Editorial Cartooning in America, 1754-2011

Lesson Plan

by: Suzanne Angle, August, 2011

1. **Title of Lesson:** "Teddy Roosevelt as the Face of American Imperialism"
2. **Grade Level/Content Standard:** Grade 10, History (5)
3. **Estimated duration of lesson:** One class period (42 mins.)
4. **Learning objectives:**
 1. Students will collaboratively examine and analyze editorial cartoons focusing on Theodore Roosevelt and the subject of American Imperialism.
 2. Students will identify and explain the intended message of the cartoons and gauge the accuracy of the content.
5. **Summary:** Students will be grouped and asked to review a set of editorial cartoons that include President Theodore Roosevelt and address in varying ways acts of American imperialism during Roosevelt's administration. Students will use the cartoons to examine U.S. and foreign impressions of imperialism as well as impressions of Roosevelt as a political figure.
6. **Pre-assessment:** The topics of imperialism, the Roosevelt Corollary, and Roosevelt's presidency should have already been introduced. Teachers should use these questions to facilitate discussion and review of the topics:
 - a. What adjectives, or descriptive words, come to mind when we think of Teddy Roosevelt?
 - b. How did Roosevelt feel about U.S. expansion and the U.S. role as a power in our hemisphere?
 - c. Given what we know of American society at the time, how did Americans feel about U.S. expansion and our position in world affairs?
7. **Instructional steps:**
 1. As a whole-class activity, discuss the pre-assessment questions.
 2. Divide the class into 6 mixed-ability groups.
 3. Distribute a copy of the Editorial Cartoon Analysis Worksheet to each group, and have groups designate one member to be the scribe. Then, distribute one of the six cartoons to each of the groups
 4. Have each group complete the worksheet based upon their cartoon. Teachers should circulate around the room to answer questions and gauge the activity and engagement levels.

5. Once the activity is completed, each group will present their cartoon and analysis using either the SmartBoard or a transparency of the cartoon. They should be encouraged to identify and label the various components of the cartoon that support or explain their analysis.
6. Students should be encouraged to ask questions of their peers and to comment upon the cartoons.
8. **Post-assessment:**
Following the activity, teachers should ask questions such as the following:
 - a. Do these cartoons portray Roosevelt and imperialism in a positive or negative light?
 - b. If you were a citizen of the time, do you think you would have been influenced by these cartoons? Why or why not?
 - c. What do you think it takes for an editorial cartoon such as one of these to be persuasive?
9. **Materials** needed by **teachers**: Cartoons (attached) and Cartoon Analysis Worksheet (attached, to be copied for students), SmartBoard and accompanying software or transparencies of the cartoons (for teacher/student presentation)
10. **Materials** needed by **students**: None.
11. **Extension activities:**
Students will write an editorial to accompany any of the 6 cartoons on a fictitious publication editorial page. The editorial may be opposing the cartoon, in an effort to “balance” the editorial page, or it may be in support of the cartoon.
12. **List of cartoons and other primary sources:** (See following)



Cartoon #1:

“Big Stick in the Caribbean,” by W. A. Rogers

Publication: New York *Herald*

Publication Date: Unknown

Description: This image depicts Theodore Roosevelt pulling an armada of toy boats through the Caribbean Sea, ringed by the countries of Latin America.

Source: The Ohio State University Cartoon Research Library: *A cartoon history of Roosevelt's career* by Albert Shaw, New York: The Review of Reviews Company (1910); this particular image obtained from <http://www.corbisimages.com/stock-photo/rights-managed/PG7453/the-big-stick-in-the-caribbean-sea>



Cartoon #2:

“The News Reaches Bogota,” or “The First Spade,” by W. A. Rogers

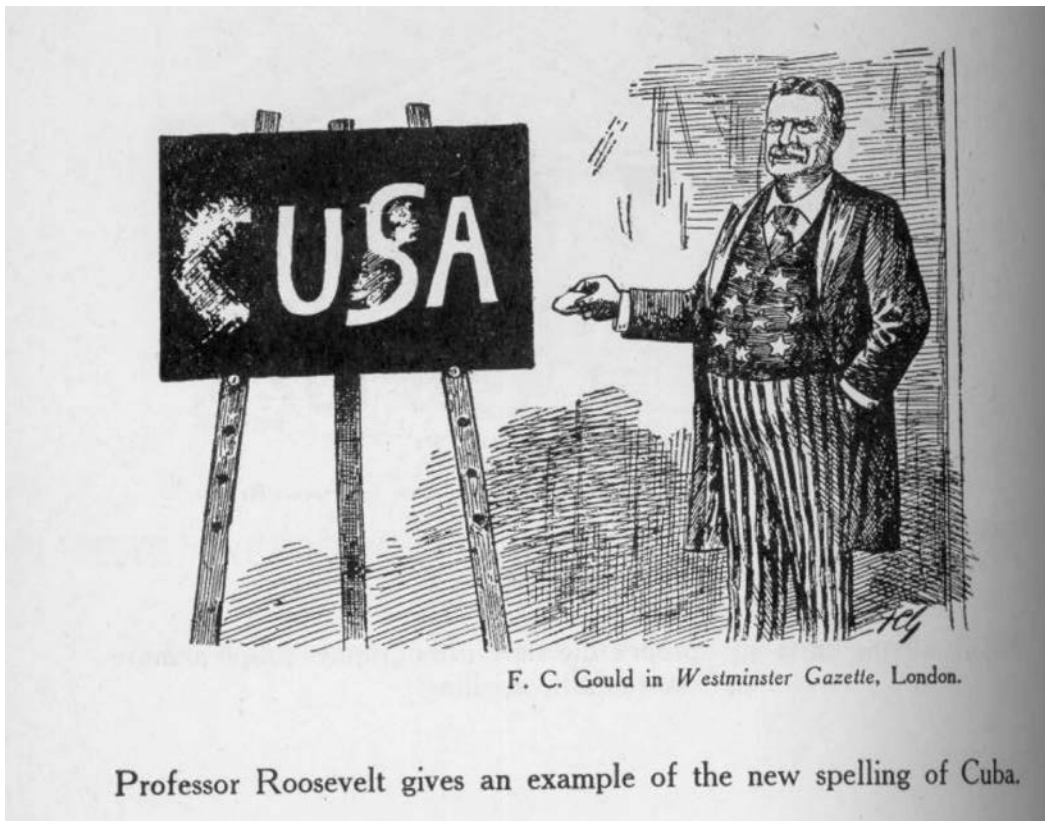
Publication: *New York Herald*

Publication Date: December, 1903 (?)

Description: This image depicts Theodore Roosevelt digging in what will become the Panama Canal. The dirt he is removing is being “dumped” on the city of Bogota, Columbia, as a reference to the way in which the Roosevelt administration acquired the rights to build the canal.

Source: The Ohio State University Cartoon Research Library: *The American Presidency in political cartoons, 1776-1976* by Thomas C. Blaisdell, Jr., Peter Selz, Berkeley: University Art Museum (1976); this particular image obtained from

[http://popartmachine.com/item/pop_art/LOC+1154789/THE-FIRST-SPADEFUL-CAI---ROGERS,-NO.-262-\(B-SIZE\)-%5BP&P%5DRESTRICTED...](http://popartmachine.com/item/pop_art/LOC+1154789/THE-FIRST-SPADEFUL-CAI---ROGERS,-NO.-262-(B-SIZE)-%5BP&P%5DRESTRICTED...)



Cartoon #3:

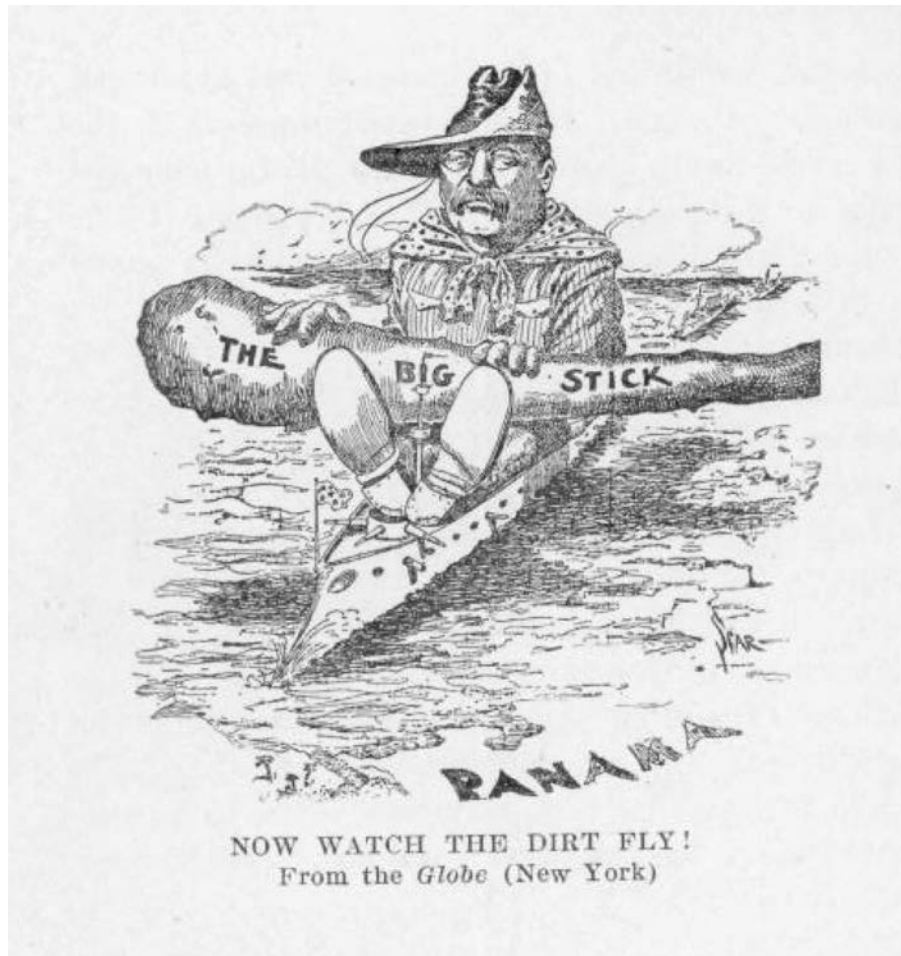
“Professor Roosevelt gives an example of the new spelling of Cuba” by F.C. Gould

Publication: *Westminster Gazette*, London, England

Publication Date: Unknown

Description: This image depicts Roosevelt combining the words “Cuba” and “USA” in an effort to indicate that TR believed Cuba to be part of, or indistinct from, the United States.

Source: The Ohio State University Cartoon Research Library: *T.R. in cartoon*, collected and ed. by Raymond Gros, New York: Saalfield (1910).



Cartoon #4:

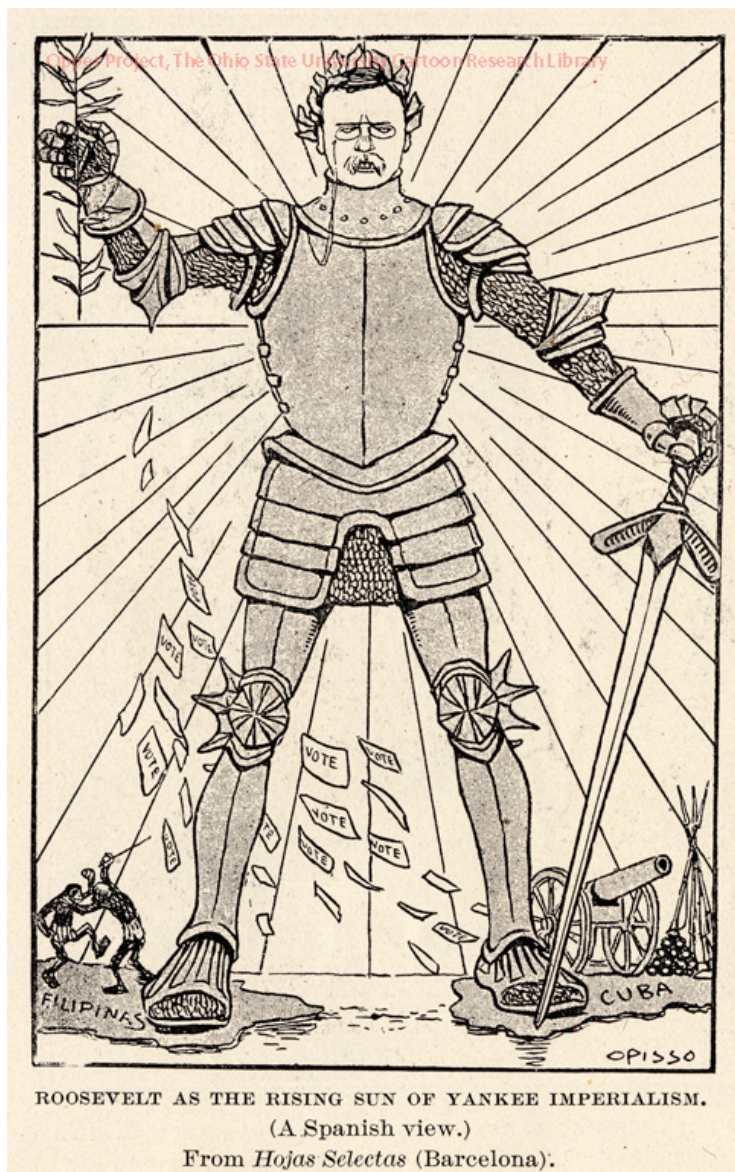
"Now Watch the Dirt Fly!" by Scar (?)

Publication: New York *Globe*

Publication Date: Unknown

Description: This image depicts Theodore Roosevelt dressed in expedition attire, aboard a navy ship, carrying his "big stick" toward the Panamanian shore.

Source: The Ohio State University Cartoon Research Library: *A cartoon history of Roosevelt's career* by Albert Shaw, New York: The Review of Reviews Company (1910).



Cartoon #5:

"Roosevelt as
of Yankee imperialism" by Opisso

Publication: Review of Reviews

Publication Date: March, 1905

Description: This image depicts Theodore Roosevelt dressed in armor, standing on the Philippines [sic] and Cuba, presenting the view of TR and the United States as crusading heroes.

Source: The Ohio State University Cartoon Research Library: Opper Project; this particular image obtained from

http://hti.osu.edu/sites/default/files/Imperialism_18.jpg

the rising sun



Cartoon #6:

“President Roosevelt’s Forthcoming Feast,” creator unknown

Publication: Reprinted in *Review of Reviews*, Vol. 31, No. 3

Publication Date: March, 1905

Description: This image depicts Theodore Roosevelt on the lawn of the White House preparing to kill his Thanksgiving Turkey. The turkey’s feathers are labeled as the countries of Latin America, and the bird is stepping onto a chopping block labeled “America for the Americans,” (translated).

Source: The Ohio State University Cartoon Research Library: Oppe Project; this particular image obtained from

http://hti.osu.edu/sites/default/files/Imperialism_19.jpg

Reading an Editorial Cartoon

What is the cartoon's title or caption?

Who drew the cartoon?

When and where was it published?

What is familiar to you in this cartoon?

What questions do you have about this cartoon?

Editorial cartoonists combine pictures and words to communicate their opinions.

What tools does the cartoonist use to make his or her point?

Humor

Labels

Caricature

Analogy to another historical or current event

Symbols

References to popular culture, art, literature, etc.

Stereotypes

Speech balloons

List the important people and objects shown in the cartoon:

Are symbols used? If so, what are they and what do they mean?

Are stereotypes used? If so, what group is represented?

Is anyone caricatured in the cartoon? If so, who?

Briefly explain the message of the cartoon:

What groups would agree /disagree with the cartoon's message? Why?

Do you think this cartoon is effective in its message?