

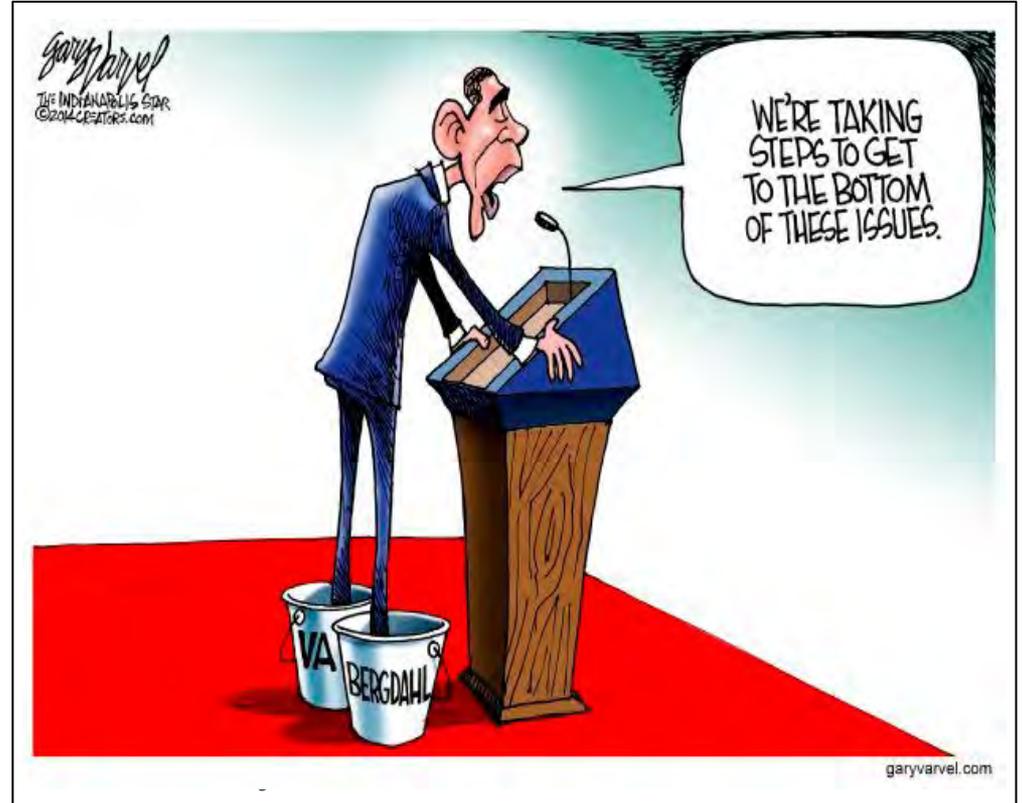
Analyzing Political Cartoons



gary varvel
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Steps in Analyzing a Political Cartoon:

1. Acquire Knowledge
2. Identify the Issue
3. Analyze the Devices
4. Identify Bias of the Cartoonist
5. Interpret the Cartoon



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2. Identify the Issue

- Is it Political?
- Social?
- Economic?

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3. Analyze the Device

- Caricature
- Analogy
- Words
- Signs, Symbols, Stereotypes, Size, & Shading

MORE DETAILS...

Devices: Caricature

Purpose: to be able to clearly identify the person, place, or event.

Exaggerates one or more features of a person or thing.

It attempts to say something about the person/thing's character, beliefs, actions or significance. Makes them easily recognizable.



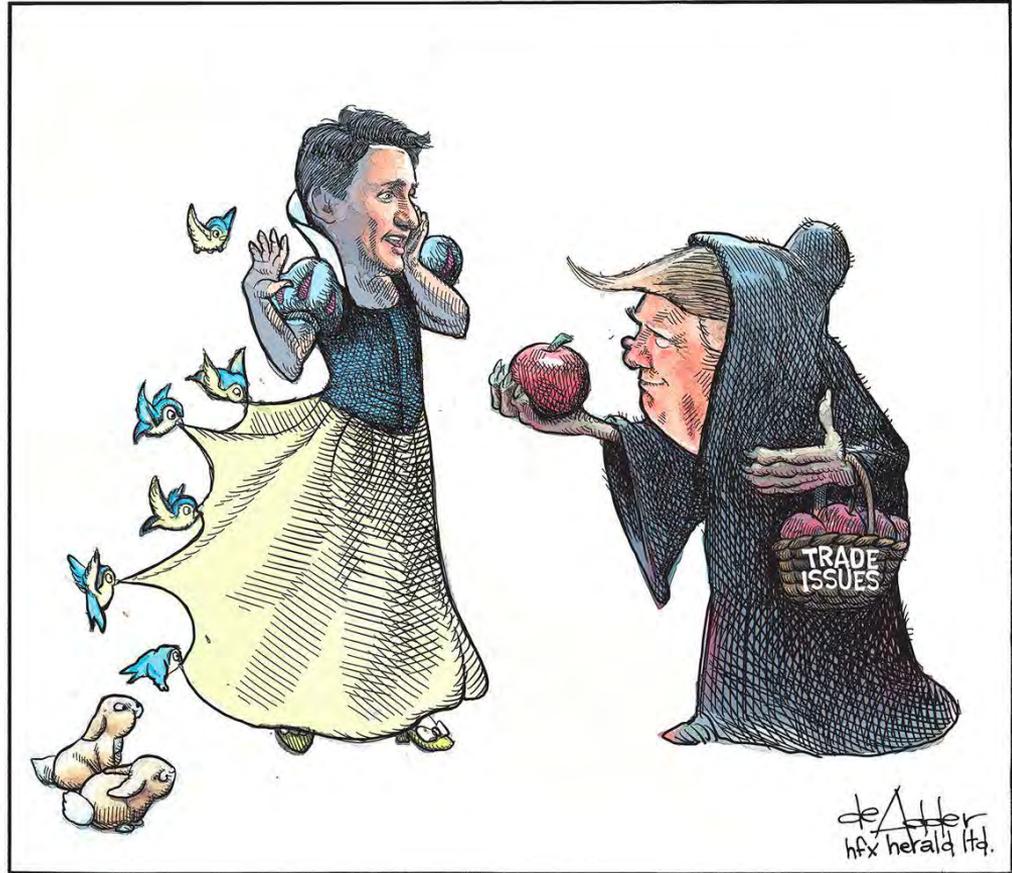
SHENEMAN THE STAR-LEADER



Devices: **Analogy**

Analogy draws on a rich pool of **historical, literary, and cultural references** to create a fantasy setting or situation which relates in some way to reality.

The similarity forces the viewer to think about the situation in a new way.



Devices: **Words**

Cartoonists sometimes use words (titles, captions, name tags, balloon comments or dialogue) to help the viewer.



Devices: Signs

- Road signs, warning signs, informational signs. Abstract +
= ÷ × ≠ ®™
- Facial expressions, gestures, attitude and position of body, also used to convey messages.
- They all emphasize ideas and convey emotions.



Devices: Symbols

Represents something else. It is a often a material object that represents something abstract or invisible. For example:

Canada:

Maple Leaf

Beaver

USA:

Uncle Sam

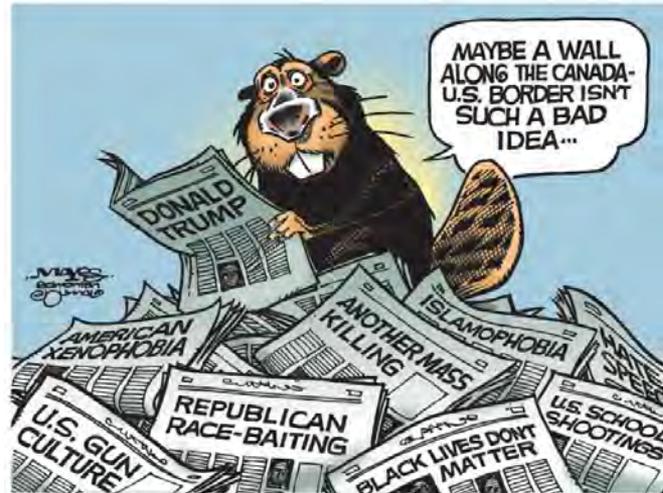
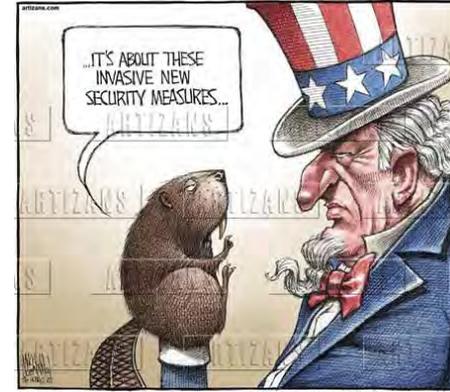
Stars and Stripes

Eagle

Britain:

A Lion

Union Jack



Devices: Stereotypes

- A stereotype is an oversimplified mental picture of characteristics supposedly shared by many people in a group.
- Stereotypes may be unfair and insulting to the group they represent!



Devices: **Size**

Size is frequently used by cartoonists to draw attention to a particular figure in the cartoon or to emphasize status or power.



Devices: Shading

Another visual device used by cartoonists is shading. The dark figures represent the 'bad' guys, and the light figures the 'good' guys.

How is shading used here?



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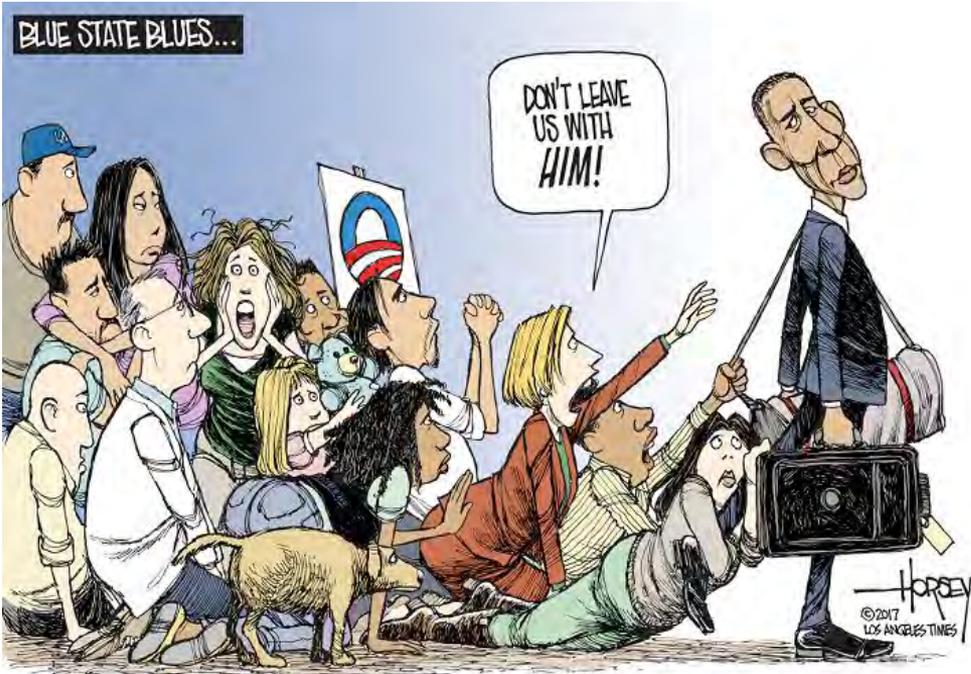
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4. Identify Bias

*A particular feeling, tendency, or opinion (prejudice) towards or against something. The opinion of the artist.
For example:*

- National or Regional
- Political
- Religious
- Racial or Ethnic
- Vocational
- Economic
- Gender
- Historical Influences
- Personal Values
- Marital Status

Identifying Bias



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5. Interpret the Cartoon

- Must understand the historical context of the cartoon and identify the issue under consideration. Consider relationship between verbal and visual elements of the image.
- At this stage you should be able to make a clear statement summarizing the cartoonist's main message, with specific references to the clues found in the cartoon.

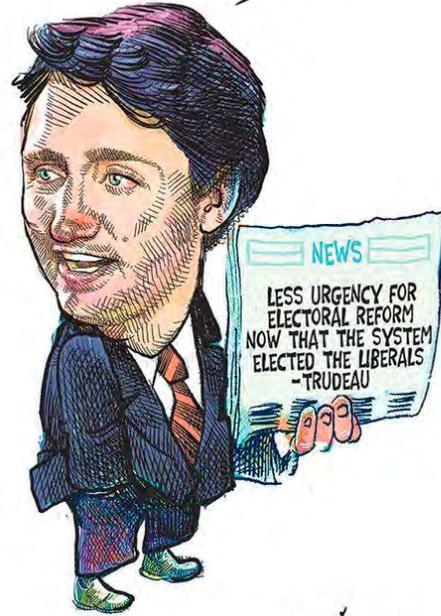
Mike Kofe THE DENVER POST 4.24.10



THE ELECTORAL
SYSTEM IS NOT
RIGGED IF
I WIN.



I AGREE.



deAtter
hfx herald ltd.



"TEMPERAMENT!
ME GOOD,
HER BAD!"

"WAAAAAH!
SHE'S NOT
NICE!"

"OBAMA'S BIRTH
CERTIFICATE!
I MADE HIM
SHOW IT!"

"I'M SMART!
I DON'T PAY
TAXES!"

"MY MIC IS
DEFECTIVE!
THIS DEBATE
IS RIGGED!"

GOOD LORD.
PEOPLE MUST
REALLY DESPISE
ME IF THEY'RE
WILLING TO VOTE
FOR THAT
BLOATED, ORANGE
MESS.

KRIEGER ©
The Tyee 2017



Best government
money can buy!





I SAY:
GIVE HIM
A CHANCE



Glen Perley

MONEY IS
FLOWING IN AND
THERE'S GONNA
BE A RECORD
SURPLUS!

IT'S NICE
TO HEAR THE
PROVINCE'S
FINANCES ARE
IN SUCH GREAT
SHAPE.

SHE'S
TALKING
ABOUT HER
PERSONAL
BANK
ACCOUNT.

CLARK'S
SALARY
TOPPED
UP BY
DONATIONS
TO BC
LIBERAL PARTY





Giving credit where credit is due:

- This PowerPoint has been adapted by and D. Pereira and A. Andrews from the fabulous booklet:
- Charles and Cynthia Hou. *The Art of Decoding Political Cartoons, A Teacher's Guide*, (Vancouver, Moody's Lookout Press), 1998.