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Critical Review of Illingworth's Cartoon on Indian Freedom Struggle

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ABSTRACT

The cartoons are one of the primary sources of information which offer interesting insight into the minds of the readers with deep rooted impression. The political cartoons offer critical review of the key events of that particular period. The images of political cartoons can cast a powerful interpretation on the day's news. A good political cartoon makes you to contemplate about contemporary events, but it also tries to influence your opinion towards the cartoonist's point of view. A political cartoon is a creative vehicle characterized by both figurative and satirical language. Leslie Gilbert Illingworth made many political cartoons related to Second World War, Famine and Indian Independence Movement that changed the views of the readers. Leslie Gilbert Illingworth was a Welsh political cartoonist known for his work for the English Newspaper Daily Mail and he becomes chief cartoonist at the British satirical periodical Punch. He started working in Western Mail at young age, while working at the Western Mail. He was a chief political cartoonist for the Mail throughout the Second World War, and although the War brought plenty of material to draw from, Illingworth's detailed style made producing daily work for the Mail and Punch. This paper provides a fresh perspective into the caricature made by Illingworth on Indian Freedom Struggle. Descriptive and Deductive research methodology is adopted in this study.

Keywords: political cartoons; Illingworth; Indian Independence Movement; symbolism; denotation; connotation

INTRODUCTION

Political cartoon is an important part of journalism. It's a drawing or illustration that readers encounter in most of the newspapers. These cartoons address up to date public problems, personalities, events, political, social, economic or cultural trends in an exceedingly satiric approach. A cartoonist picks the foremost vital issue happening in the country as a topic matter and tries to provide a practical attractiveness concerning it through their work. Political cartoons will sensitize the readers against political and social injustices. Cartoons not solely inform the readers concerning the political, social and economic state of affairs of the society, however conjointly facilitate them in understanding the problems or events even higher. Besides providing the readers amusement, humor and data, the foremost vital side concerning the political cartoon is that it seeks its readers to form comments on the addressed matter.

In 1754, Benjamin Franklin printed one among the most important celebrated cartoons in history: Join or Die woodcut. Franklin's art carried important meaning at the time and is considered an early masterpiece of political messaging. Cartoon features a severed snake that representing the seven colonies – Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. Benjamin Franklin called all the colonies to join hands to deal with a combined threat to the British colonies from French and Indian forces. Franklin's caricature created a colossal impact among Americans when the cartoon and article began to appear in other colonial newspapers.

A cartoon has the potential to impact the minds of the common readers with the assistance of representation like sketches or caricatures, generally assisted or sometimes not aided by texts. Political cartoons have the flexibility to achieve across numerous segments of readers - educated to uneducated, youngsters to older, urban to rural dwellers then on. On the opposite hand, compared to editorials or articles etc., in step with Lawrence H. Streicher "For the person in an exceedingly rush or the reader of solely the headlines or lead paragraphs the caricature may be a approach of catching at a look the that means of a happening, an individual within the news, or a pictorial outline of a current power constellation." so, despite of its smaller dimension compared to alternative newspaper things, political cartoons are often extremely effective.

Leslie Gilbert Illingworth was born in Barry on 1902. He took course in Cardiff conservatory and so took a job within the Western Mail. He was then awarded a scholarship to Slade faculty of Art, and when finishing his studies, came back to Cardiff to join the Western Mail as a Political Cartoonist. In 1920 Illingworth got a scholarship to study in the Royal College of Art in London. He moved to the capital, but after just a few months he received news that Staniforth had died and he was offered the post of a political cartoonist on the Western Mail, and he went back to Wales as an official political cartoonist. In 1927 Illingworth work was published in the satirical magazine Punch for the first time. Illingworth went to the United States to pursue art training, living in the latter for a while where he studied at the Academie Julian. In 1938 Percy Fearon retired as cartoonist of the Daily Mail, and Illingworth applied for the vacancy, though under a pen name as he correctly believed that members of the Mail staff were opinionated against his work. Regardless of his straightforward work, he was accepted and joined the Daily Mail in November 1939. Illingworth created cartoons in order to elevate Britain's morale values throughout the Second war by commenting on Churchill's leadership and Allied military victories. Once the war ended, Illingworth was finally ready to concentrate further on domestic problems in his cartoons, however kept a dedicated eye on foreign affairs, primarily when they are related to Britain.

The earliest things within the collection are mainly concerned with the conduct of the Second World War, battle gains and losses, and the state of the Government in Britain. It takes each attainable chance to mock Hitler, Mussolini and their allies. Stalin, Roosevelt, Field Marshal Montgomery and Hideki Tojo are featured at length. The cartoons from this era allow us to follow the events of the war as they happened. In the post war period, with Illingworth concentrating additional on domestic politics, it's the freshly elected Labor Government that bears the force of the caustic remark, as he comments on the institution of the National Health Service (NHS), developments in post war Europe was quite deliberate however slow.

The aim of my study is to analyze Illingworth's political cartoon in order to perceive and deduce about how the British viewed our struggle for freedom and it provides fresh perspective into the caricature pertaining to Indian independence movement. There are major limitations in this study that could be addressed in future research. The study focused only on Illingworth's political cartoons which were published in Daily Mail, with special focus on Cartoons on Indian freedom struggle.

POLITICAL CARTOONS AND INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Political cartoons began as a street-level phenomenon. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they were often posted on walls or passed from person to person as pamphlets, as well as being published in newspapers. By the end of the nineteenth century, they were an important part of the rising popularity of newspapers and magazines, and the passionate competition for readership made confrontational cartoons a valuable selling point. Analyzing a political cartoon can lead to a deeper perceptive of the issues addressed by the cartoon, as well as the historical context from which the issues arose. It can also raise remarkable questions about the point of view of the cartoonist and shed light on the methods different cartoonists use to influence their audience.

The anti-colonial nationalist movement in India has taken on many forms to reach India's independence. Indian political cartoons began to take up the attention both in English and the vernacular languages. One of the first cartoons by an Indian to make a political impact was published in the Bengali newspaper Sulav Samachar in the 1870s, highlighting a conspicuous prejudice. Poorer Indians were assaulted by Europeans, leading to their death were not occasional. In this case even court fails to give them justice, often victim's 'enlarged spleen' was blamed for his death. The cartoon shows a dead coolie with his wife crying next to him. A European doctor conducts a perfunctory post-mortem while the offender stands casually smoking a cigar. The cartoon, with its suggestion of collusion between European authorities and the offenders, was one of the rebellious pieces that aggravated the British Government into imposing vernacular press censorship in 1878. Indian cartoonists had to be precautious to use their brushes as they toed the line between expressing their creativity and getting censored by the colonial government. Although caricature have occasionally been encountered in Indian arts since the ancient period.

Modern caricature as a form of journalism was introduced by the British expatriates in India. Their comic drawings were inspired by Rowlandson. However no single witty publication made a deeper impression in India than the English comic magazine, Punch. A mutinous procession of its offspring greets us in magazines published in India during freedom movement: Delhi Sketch Book, The Delhi Punch, Momus, The Indian Charivari, The Oudh Punch, The Punjab Punch, The Indian Punch, Urdu Punch, Gujarati Punch, Hindi Punch, Parsi Punch and Purneah Punch from a remote town in Bengal. Punch, which had given the word 'cartoon' to the English language, stood for Victorian decency, respectability eagerly emulated by the British-owned comic magazines in India. Indeed, the comic magazines, whether in Britain or in India, were an index of imperial mentality. Although artists like Sir Charles D'Oyly initially poked gentle fun at the Anglo-Indian lifestyle in the early nineteenth century. He started injecting humor by creating laughable caricatures in his series Tom Raw, the Griffin (1828) that captured the amusing behaviour of an East India Company novice struggling to settle in. they soon turned to the Indians as an object of hilarity. The considerable difference was that while British cartoonists in India viewed the Indians from the superior heights of moral certainty, Indian cartoonists generally engaged in penetrating self-parody and social comment rather than using the newfound weapon against the British Government.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Leslie Gilbert Illingworth created many hilarious yet meaningful cartoons about Indian Independence and published it in Daily mail.

Figure 1: Three innocents in the jungle of India/Pakistan

Contextual background: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was introduced in India in December, 1945 when there is a chaos between Congress and Muslims. At the same time India was affected by Famine due to uneven rainfall and British economic and administrative policies.

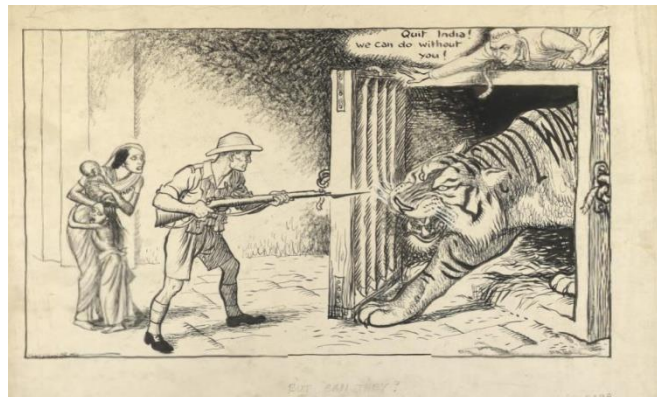


The denoted message (literal): An elephant marked "Congress" is facing a snake marked "Moslem league". Underneath the snake is a tiger marked "Famine". In the distance, Sir Stafford Cripps and Hugh Dalton are leading a small sailor marked "IMF" towards them.

The connoted message (symbolic): Indian National Congress was terrified of the rise of Muslim League political part where in the other hand famine prevailing India. Stafford Cripps and Hugh Dalton are introducing the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in India.

Figure 2: But can they?

Contextual background: The All India Congress Committee by Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhidemanding an end to British rule in India during Civil War.



The linguistic message (text): "Quit India! We can do without you!"

The denoted message (literal): A British soldier confronts a tiger labelled 'Civil War'. 'Nehru' is above the tiger's cage urging him to Quit India.

The connoted message (symbolic): Illingworth questions the capability of Indian leaders to rule India. This cartoon shows that Quit India Movement is unreasonable when it is British who is saving the nation.

Figure 3: Civil war and famine threaten India

Contextual background: On May 16 1946, Attlee announced plans for an independent united India. Indian Political leaders prepared themselves to rule independent India.

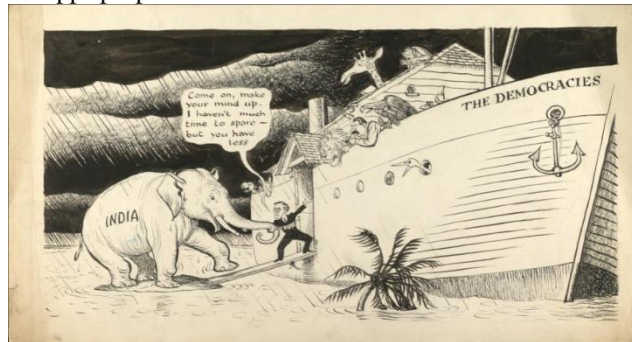


The denoted message (literal): Stafford Cripps, Gandhi and Mahomed Ali Jinnah are up a tree discussing the Indian constitution in safety, as a woman marked "India" with a child is clinging to the base of the tree fleeing from a tiger marked "Civil war" and a wolf marked "Famine".

The connoted message (symbolic): Important leaders like Stafford Cripps, Gandhi and Mahomed Ali Jinnah neglecting the people who are in need of protection from War and Famine while they are planning to rule independent India from a safer distance.

Figure 4: Democratic decision

Contextual background: Sir Stafford Cripps proposed an offer of Dominion Status to India after the war when India is in Crisis.



The linguistic message (text): "come on, make your mind up. I haven't much time to spare- but you have less"

The denoted message (literal): Cartoon shows Stafford Cripps encouraging an elephant marked "India" onto an ark marked "The democracies" as flood waters rise around them.

The connoted message (symbolic): Stafford Cripps leading India to attain democracies but making fake promises about dominion status.

Figure 5: Civil war and famine are heading towards India

Contextual background: Victor Alexander Bruce was a right-wing British Liberal politician who served as Viceroy of India from 1894 to 1899. Sir Richard Stafford Cripps, he headed the Cripps Mission which was a failed attempt in late March 1942 by the British government to secure full Indian cooperation and support for their efforts in World War II. From 1945 to 1947, Frederick Pethick-Lawrence was Secretary of State for India and Burma, with a seat in the cabinet, and was involved in the negotiations that led to India's independence in 1947.



The denoted message (literal): Two lines of travelers are waiting at an airport. One line is marked "INDIA" and contains people representing world famine and world war. The other line is marked "PASSENGERS FOR INDIA" and contains Victor Alexander, Stafford Cripps and Frederick Pethick-Lawrence.

The connoted message (symbolic): Illingworth states that famine and war was waiting in a line with British officials to visit India.

Figure 6: Free India

Contextual background: On May 23 1947, the British cabinet took the step of agreeing to Lord Louis Mountbatten's proposal for the partition of India into two states, one Moslem and the other Hindu.



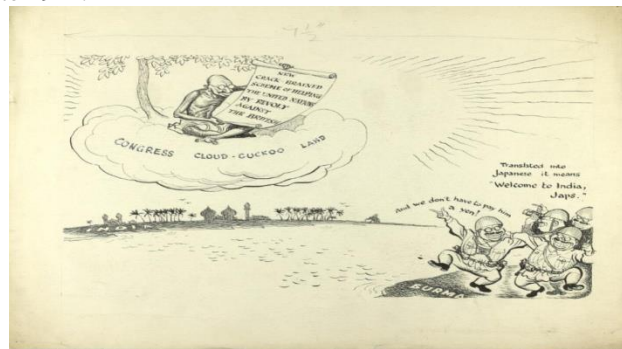
The linguistic message (text): "come on, make your mind up. I haven't much time to spare- but you have less"

The denoted message (literal): Gandhi and a group of protesters including a US sympathizer are holding placards demanding that the British get out of India. All around them are the bodies of those who have died of hunger or civil war.

The connoted message (symbolic): while Gandhi and others are concentrating on protesting against British Government people of India were dying out of hunger and war effect.

Figure 7: Congress cloud cuckoo land

Contextual background: Gandhi, who in 1934 had resigned as leader and member of the Indian National Congress, becomes politically active again early in World War II, demanding immediate independence as India's price for aiding Britain in the war. He is imprisoned again, from 1942 to 1944.



The linguistic message (text): "New Crack-brained scheme of helping the United Nations by revolt against the British" in Scroll

"Translated into Japanese it means "Welcome to India, Japs."

The denoted message (literal): Gandhi is sitting on a cloud named 'Congress cloud cuckoo land'. He is holding a scroll which states 'New Crack-brained scheme of helping the United Nations by revolt against the British'. Japanese soldiers standing on Burma are looking up at him and dancing around jubilantly shouting "Translated into Japanese it means "Welcome to India, Japs."".

The connoted message (symbolic): Gandhi planning to help United Nation by revolting against the British while floating in fantasy world which actually leads to opening the gates for Japanese troops to prevail in India who already settled in Burma

Figure 8: What about getting rid of your load and coming on a tiger shoot?

Contextual background: Sympathetic to the Indian Independence Struggle, Lord Wavell convened the Shimla Conference and the Wavell Plan to bring the various factions together in order to set the tone for the future government of independent India. Both failed as the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League could not come to an agreement.



The linguistic message (text): "What about getting rid of your load and coming on a tiger shoot?"

The denoted message (literal): Archibald Wavell whispers "What about getting rid of your load and coming on a tiger shoot?" to an elephant marked "India", which is carrying a large cabin on its back marked "Top heavy politics". In the background is a tiger marked "Japan".

The connoted message (symbolic): Archibald Wavell proposing Wavell plan in Simla Conference to Plan the Administration of Independent India which utterly failed.

Figure 9: Indian politics

Contextual background: India's Constituent Assembly, which was due to hold its first meeting on December 9, was attacked by both Hindus and Moslems today. Mr Jinnah, the Moslem League leader, said he would boycott the Assembly and described it as "one more blunder". "It is quite obvious", he said "that the Viceroy is blind to the present serious situation and is playing into the hands of Congress". At the same time the Congress leader, Pandit Nehru, was telling his followers that the only good thing about the Assembly was that "Britain will not be directly represented on it"

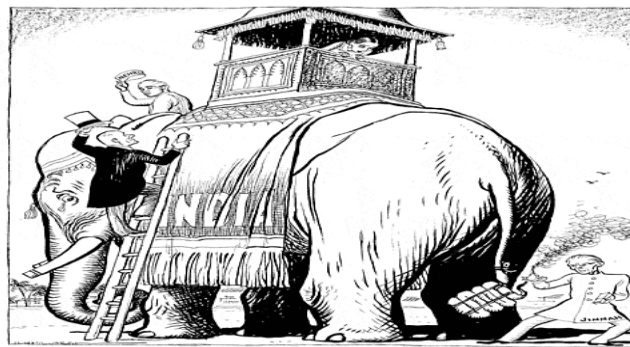


The denoted message (literal): Jinnah as a cricketer defending a tiger labelled 'Pakistan'. A cow labelled 'Hindu Intransigence' is crushing a man labelled 'Untouchables', and 'Nehru' and others are arguing in the background.

The connoted message (symbolic): While Jinnah defending Pakistan, Nehru and other Indian political leaders are busy arguing among themselves and neglecting the fact that Hindu Intransigence is unjust towards untouchables when Gandhi is floating in his own fantasy world.

Figure 10: Nehru rides the Indian elephant

Contextual background: Cabinet mission formulated at the initiative of Clement Attlee. Jinnah as advocated for the creation of Pakistan.



The denoted message (literal): Archibald Wavell waves off Nehru, as he prepares to drive the elephant, marked "India". A woman is sitting in a Howdah on the elephant's back, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah is tying explosives to the elephant's tail.

The connoted message (symbolic): Archibald Wavell hand over independent India to Jawaharlal Nehru, when Nehru thinks he can rule the India in peace Muhammad Ali Jinnah brings a proposal for Partition of the India.

Figure 11: New Indian policy

Contextual background: On March 29 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps, special envoy from the Cabinet, unfolded British plans for full independence for India when he met Mr Gandhi in New Delhi. He produced a draft declaration which, if accepted by an Indian constituent assembly, would mean Indian self-government after the war. The sub-continent could be either one Dominion, or two, if the Moslems preferred that. There would be special arrangements for territories ruled by the Indian princes.

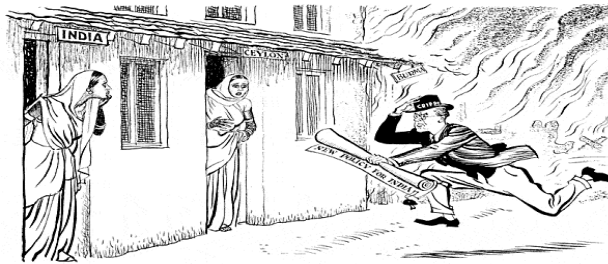


The denoted message (literal): Three hunters, riding on elephants marked "Congress", "Moslems" and "Princes" are hunting a tiger marked "Indian disunity". Sir Stafford Cripps is waving a flag marked "New Indian policy", and is shouting "Now's your chance".

The connoted message (symbolic): Congress, Muslim League and princes trying to eradicate Indian disunity with Sir Stafford Cripps's New Indian policy.

Figure 12: New policy for India

Contextual background: Cripps worked to keep India loyal to the British war effort in exchange for a promise of elections and full self-government (Dominion status) once the war was over. Cripps discussed the proposals, which he had drafted himself with the Indian leaders, and published them.



The denoted message (literal): Women are standing in doorways of a row of houses marked "Ceylon" and "India". The row is on fire, and the fire has reached the house marked "Burma". A man marked "Cripps" is running along the street holding a document marked "New policy for India".

The connoted message (symbolic): when war spreading Burma and reaching for Ceylon and India Sir Stafford Cripps trying to keep India loyal to the British war effort in exchange for a promise of elections and full self-government (Dominion status) once the war was over.

Figure 13: Race hatred

Contextual background: During August 1947 10,000 are believed to have died in border clashes in the Punjab in India.

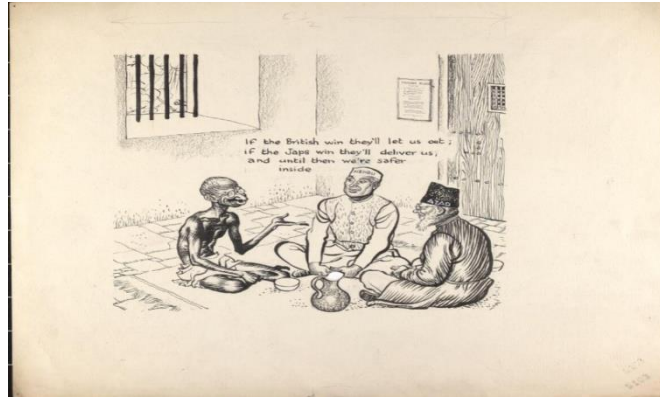


The denoted message (literal): Man, marked "Race hatred" with a sword has caught hold of a woman, marked "Minorities" who has run away from the riots in the streets to an office where there is a paper marked "Renunciation of British sovereignty".

The connoted message (symbolic): British abandoned the minorities while they were slaughtered by Race hatred.

Figure 14: If the British win they'll let us out; if the Japs win they'll deliver us; and until then we're safer inside

Contextual background: Gandhi was imprisoned from 1942 to 1944 for demanding immediate independence as India's price for aiding Britain in the war.



The linguistic message (text): "If the British win they'll let us out; if the Japs win they'll deliver us; and until then we're safer inside"

The denoted message (literal): Gandhi, Nehru and Azad are sitting in a prison cell. Through the cell window we can see a riot in progress. Gandhi is saying to his cellmates "If the British win they'll let us out; if the Japs win they'll deliver us; and until then we're safer inside".

The connoted message (symbolic): Gandhi, Nehru and Azad waiting in a prison cell for the war to be over while thinking it's safer inside.

Figure 15: Partition plan

Contextual background: The 1947 Partition of the Indian subcontinent into the independent nations of Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan.



The denoted message (literal): Muhammad Ali Jinnah is fanning the flames of a fire. The black smoke marked "Race riots" is reaching up into the sky as Earl Mountbatten attempts to extinguish the fire with an extinguisher marked "Partition plan".

The connoted message (symbolic): Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Nehru and other political leaders causing Hindu Muslim problem by Partitioning India.

CONCLUSION

The analysis revealed the fact that Illingworth left his roots on the political cartoons. His cartoons transmitted a sense of awareness, salvation, achievement, victory, freedom, dignity and democracy to the people of both Britain and India. The cartoons of Illingworth were noticed by political leaders and helped them with new perspective on Indian Independence movement. The indelible mark left by his cartoons created a deep rooted impact in the society. The elucidations created a niche and kindled the patriotic spirit with multidimensional interpretation. The opinion of the most of the cartoons were expressed by an Indian artist but this provides an outsider's set of eyes on how the colonizer perceived Indian struggle for freedom.

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