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Hate speech or legitimate satire? Drawing the line in cartoons

Abstract

Controversial cartoons appearing in contemporary news and social media are periodically denounced by consumers for hate speech, and argued over in blogs, reader comments and news articles. Visual and verbal discourse analysts could contribute useful insights to such debates and to awareness raising programmes for addressing hate speech issues in cartoons, but to date have produced little work on the topic. This paper addresses the difficult question of how we distinguish between legitimate satire and hate speech in controversial cartoons about real events featuring public figures belonging to groups with a history of discrimination. The paper proposes that key considerations in this endeavour are the distinction between conceptual and narrative representations and the relevant participant role(s) assigned to the public figure in question (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The latter's construal as being, doing or undergoing in the visual structure constrains the options for their evaluation. The evaluations are analysed using visual analogues of the verbal appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005; Economou, 2009; Swain 2012; White, 2014). It is argued that negative evaluations based on representations of the public figure's real-life behaviour may more plausibly pass for legitimate satire, whereas those based on the public figure's appearance alone may be more susceptible to a hate speech interpretation.

Keywords

1. Introduction

Given momentum by the 2005 Danish cartoons affair, the freedom of speech vs censorship debate concerning cartoons has been carried on mainly by scholars of law (Bleich, 2012; Cox, 2016; Evans, 2010; Keane, 2008; Noorlander, 2015), but also journalists (e.g. Young, 2020) and academics from other fields (e.g. Manning & Phiddian, 2004). This paper is concerned with that normative debate rather indirectly. It is inspired by the controversies arising when consumers of mainstream news or social media flag cartoons featuring public figures as 'hate speech' because the public figure, who might be the legitimate target of antipathy or criticism, also belongs to a group often targeted by hate speech, and the negative evaluation of this identity feature is felt to be salient in the image. In the ensuing online discussions around such cartoons, the reliance on 'gut reaction' and the lack of a framework of reference for analysing the cartoons themselves is striking.

Work within other disciplines which applies an analytical framework to contemporary cartoons flagged for hate speech has focused on the representation of specific groups. Raspal (2014) applies qualitative thematic analysis and social representations theory to cartoons submitted to Iran's 2006 Holocaust cartoon contest, to show how the cartoons – which are all anti-Zionist if not overtly antisemitic - shape negative views of Jews and Israel. Chatterjee (2014) applies critical race theory and frame analysis to selected controversial cartoons of President Obama, focused on his Black and allegedly Muslim identity, arguing the need for critical awareness of how freedom of speech can undermine democracy. Gottschalk and Greenberg (2018) explore Islamophobic tropes in US cartoons and other visual media. Although the two latter studies acknowledge the fine line between hate speech and satire in a society that protects freedom of speech, they do not attempt to define it.

In a legal perspective, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) gives much weight to contextual factors in deciding on cases of hate speech generally (Weber, 2014), but far less to actual

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analysis of the implicated texts. This paper offers some considerations to bear in mind when evaluating the candidacy of such cartoons for the hate speech label, whether in popular discussions or in educational programmes designed to raise awareness of hate speech issues. A chief consideration will be Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) distinction between conceptual and narrative structures in visual representation; the assignment of participant roles within the representational structure, and the different focus of evaluation which these participant roles enable. Negative evaluation is key to hate speech, and to capture the visual attitudinal meanings deployed in the cartoon examples below, the paper uses the attitude category of the appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005; White, 2014).

2. Hate speech in cartoons

It could be argued - allowing for differing hate speech laws in different jurisdictions - that nothing can be called hate speech unless it has been judged as such by a court of law. At the same time however, the term is more widely and generally used in society to flag forms of communication considered unacceptable, because seen to negatively evaluate minority or vulnerable groups, or individuals belonging to those groups, purely on the grounds of membership. Acknowledging the scale of the problem and the need for a shared, universal understanding of hate speech, the United Nations in its *Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech* (2019:2) defines it as

> any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor. This is often rooted in and generates intolerance and hatred and, in certain contexts, can be demeaning and divisive.
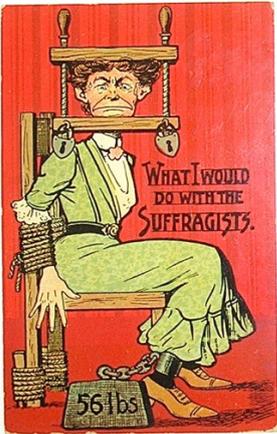
For Brown (2017a, 2017b), referring to the 2010 UK Equality Act, the targets of hate speech are, or belong to, 'groups with protected characteristics'. Groups typically targeted might be Blacks, Asians, Jews, the disabled, women, migrants from poor or war-stricken countries, or LGBTQ, with a history of discrimination and persecution, entitling them to protection. The element of vulnerability and consequent need for protection is an important factor. A far-right culture of white victimhood exists, but while white, heterosexual men might be seen as targets of defamation, they are unlikely to be seen as victims of hate speech, because they lack a history of persecution.

The UN definition does not explicitly mention images. Cartoons however, though generally associated with humour and with political and social satire, have a history of use to denigrate and to incite or spread hatred against vulnerable groups, notoriously in Nazi Germany (Bytwerk, 2012), but also in Rwanda to foment hatred of the Tutsis (Chrétien, 1995). The cartoon in figure 3 below, appeared in 1927 in the tabloid *Der Stürmer* (1923-1945)*,* whose editor, Julius Streicher, was hanged at Nuremberg for his role in the holocaust. It shows a Nazi pumping poison gas into a cavity at the base of a tree: on the ground lie three dead rats labelled "stock exchanges," "the press," and "trusts", representing Jews and their control over these institutions. The trunk of the rat-infested tree bears the label "Germany"; its branches are labelled "industry", "agriculture", "commerce", "the arts", "business", "the sciences", "social welfare", "civil service", and "workers"[1].

Anti-feminist cartoonists targeted the suffragette movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with vilifying cartoons and postcards as in figure 1 below, showing a defiant, angry suffragette tied to a ducking chair, the medieval punishment reserved for scolds. Less well-known perhaps are the anti-Japanese cartoons by Theodor Seuss Geisel ('Dr Seuss') during WW2, aligned with the US government's post Pearl Harbour policy of interning US citizens of Japanese ancestry

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[1] According to Randall Bytwerk, the curator of the German Propaganda Archive at Calvin University (https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive) hosting this cartoon, this is the earliest Nazi image suggesting poison gas as a way of killing Jews, although Hitler makes a reference to that possibility in *Mein Kampf.*

(Minear, 1999) on mere suspicion of collaboration with the enemy[2]. The cartoon in figure 2 shows a long column of smiling male Japanese or Japanese American civilians marching from Washington State to a hut labelled "Honorable 5th Column" on the California coast, where they collect packages of TNT to wage war on the USA from within. On the roof, one looks across the Pacific for 'the signal from home'.

Figure 1: "What I would do with the suffragists" Cartoonist unknown. Can be viewed at https://www.theusconstitution.org /blog/the-art-of-suffrage-cartoons-reflect-americas-struggle-for-equal-voting-rights/	Figure 2: "The Honorable 5th Column: Waiting for the signal from home". Published in the New York newspaper *PM* in February 1942 (Wikimedia Commons; cited in Minear & Deb, 2017:1)	Figure 3: "Wenn das Ungeziefer tot is, grünt die deutsche Eiche wieder!" [When the vermin are dead, the German oak will flourish once more]. Published in *Der Stürmer*, December 1927 Retrieved from Calvin University's online German Propaganda Archive: https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/sturmer.htm

These historical cartoons portray stereotypes of the targeted groups and are egregious examples of visual hate speech. They also illustrate the two structures of visual representation and three participant roles on which I wish to focus in relation to the deployment of visual appraisal resources. These are discussed in 5. below.

Authors of cartoons flagged for hate speech in mainstream Western media, even if most countries have hate speech laws, are rarely formally charged, and if they are, are rarely convicted. One reason is that such cartoons may claim a satirical purpose, which is protected under freedom of speech laws. In a ruling on a hate speech case involving a painting, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) notes that satire is 'a form of social commentary that, by means of exaggeration and distortion of reality, naturally aims to provoke and agitate. Accordingly, any interference with an artist's right to such expression must be examined with particular care' (cited in ECtHR Research Division, 2017:9)[3]. If an offensive cartoon can be seen to have a satirical purpose in provoking meaningful social debate, then it is unlikely to be judged as hate speech by the ECtHR (Weber, 2017). Both social and political satire may be seen to have a constructive purpose in drawing attention to, and provoking discussion around, problems that need to be addressed. By contrast, hate speech has no constructive

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[2] Over 127,000 US citizens of Japanese ancestry were interned in concentration camps in the USA during the war: https://www.ushistory.org/us/51e.asp#:~:text=Many%20Americans%20worried%20that%20citizens,imprisoned%20duri ng%20World%20War%20II.
[3] The case is *Vereinigung Bildender Künstler v. Austria*, No. 68354/01, para. 33, 25 January 2007.

purpose; it targets whole communities of vulnerable people with criticism, blame and antagonistic feelings merely for belonging to a particular group.

Problems of interpretation may arise when vulnerable communities are implicated in purportedly satirical cartoons. Cartoons critiquing social issues of the day – crime, drug addiction, alcoholism, anti-social behaviour – when appearing to blame vulnerable communities or individuals from those communities, risk being called out for perpetuating the stereotypes of hate speech. Political satire, often cruel in its caricatures, tends to ridicule and criticise the perceived faults (ineptitude, dishonesty, hypocrisy, depravity) of powerful individuals, not of whole communities of vulnerable people. If, however, the targeted powerful individuals belong to such communities, there is a risk that the cartoon may be seen as a comment on those communities and flagged for hate speech. This study is concerned with the latter kinds of controversial cartoons, featuring powerful individuals. Demeaning vulnerable groups is unacceptable, but if a cartoon is called out for hate speech, then there needs to be a plausible justification.

3. Rationale for the choice of cartoons in this study

A basic premise of the paper is that participant roles assigned to humans within a visual representational structure enable and give prominence to certain types of visual appraisal. In discussions over the evaluative meanings of controversial cartoons flagged for hate speech, therefore, representational structure and participant roles can be important considerations. In this paper I show how participant roles of Carrier, Actor and Goal respectively in conceptual and narrative representations constrain both the kinds of visual appraisal that can be deployed and its relative salience in cartoons flagged for hate speech.

The study examines two sets of three cartoons, one historical (figures 1-3 above and below) and one contemporary (figures 5-7 in section 6 below), which mirror one another in three respects. Firstly, they all have as their thematic content people from social groups with a history of persecution - women, Blacks, Jews, Asians (hereafter 'vulnerable groups' or VGs). Secondly, they all make, or position the viewer to infer, negative evaluations of the depicted VG member(s) (VGM). Thirdly, each set comprises one cartoon deploying a conceptual representational structure, assigning the participant role of Carrier to the VGM, and two others deploying narrative representational structures respectively assigning the participant roles of Actor and Goal to the VGM. The choice of participant role assigned to the VGM in the visual representational structure is, I argue below, central to the type of visual appraisal being deployed, and to its relative salience in the image.

The two sets of cartoons also differ however, in one key respect. The historical cartoons 1-3 all feature generic types, or stereotypes, in fictional settings, and the various negative evaluations of them are egregious cases of hate speech (misogyny, anti-Japanese sentiment and antisemitism), regardless of participant roles of the VGM. I use these cartoons in section 5 below to show how choices of representational structure and assignment of participant roles enable an emphasis on particular types of visual appraisal.

The contemporary cartoons seen in section 6 instead feature real, internationally known people, who also happen to be VGMs: the wives of two US presidents; a Black female tennis star, and (according to detractors' interpretations) a Black US president. The cartoons refer moreover to current, real-life events and situations in which these VGMs played a role. These reality features lend the contemporary cartoons a degree of ambiguity which the historical cartoons lack. Their flagging for hate speech led to debates, rather than criminal charges, over their meaning and acceptability. The accusers claimed the cartoons focused on the depicted (or assumed depicted) person's VG membership, while the cartoonists claimed their work expressed, in the context of a newsworthy event, legitimate criticism quite unrelated to issues of race or gender. I use these contemporary cartoons in section 6 below to argue that in such charged debates over hate speech status, the type of visual representational structure and participant role assigned to the VGM can be useful

considerations, because of the role they play in the type of evaluative meanings being made and their relative prominence in the image.

4. Hate speech and the law: the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)

When deciding on appeals of hate speech verdicts reached in the courts of member countries, the ECtHR tends to privilege contextual factors (Weber, 2014), over the alleged hate speech acts themselves. The Court pays attention to the geographical, social and historical context of production; to the constraints and potentialities offered by the medium – audio, visual, verbal - and to the likely extent of consumption. It attends to whether the text communicates something in the public interest, or instead threatens the peace, and to the text's relation to prior or contemporary texts. It also ponders authorial intentionality, including whether the act was spontaneous or the result of lucid deliberation, and whether the author has a history of targeting vulnerable groups. Cartoons appear more rarely before the Court on charges of hate speech than of defamation (see Godioli, 2020).

Sociolinguists could only applaud the Court's attention to context, though they might note the lack of a framework for analysing the alleged hate speech texts themselves, whether verbal, visual, aural or gestural. Based on the premises that negative evaluation is a key aspect of hate speech, and that visual structure and the assignment of participant roles constrain evaluative choices, in the next section I outline tools for the analysis of visual structure and visual evaluation that could be helpful particularly in the assessment of contemporary cartoons featuring prominent individuals, at the centre of hate speech controversies.

5. Visual structure and evaluation: tools for analysis

Common to all hate speech, in whatever form, is a negative evaluation of the targeted vulnerable group (VG). In hate speech cartoons, the potential for negative evaluation of the VG depends on the participant role it is assigned in the visual structure. To explore this idea further, I draw on Kress and van Leeuwen's account of visual representation (2006: 45-113), and on the attitude category of the appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005: 42-91), adapted for the analysis of visual evaluation. Both are grounded in Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics or SFL (Halliday, 1979). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) adapt the SFL model of transitivity and the experiential linguistic metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 211-358) for the analysis of visual representation. The appraisal framework, an elaboration of the tenor variable of Halliday's model of social context (Halliday & Hasan, 1985), was first adapted to visual analysis by Economou (2009) for news photographs; Swain (2012) offered some further insights on visual attitude for cartoon analysis, and White (2014) provided some deeper and broader theoretical reflections on visual analogues of verbal appraisal based on both news photos and cartoons. The visual attitude category enables a specific focus on emotions and attitudinal dispositions, on moral assessments of behaviour and on aesthetic evaluations which are key to the argument I am making here, and which Kress and van Leeuwen's model of visual interaction does not provide.

Kress and van Leeuwen note that "visual structures do not simply reproduce the structures of 'reality' [..]: they produce images of reality [which] have an ideological dimension" (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006:47). They distinguish in visual representations between narrative structures and conceptual structures (see figure 4):
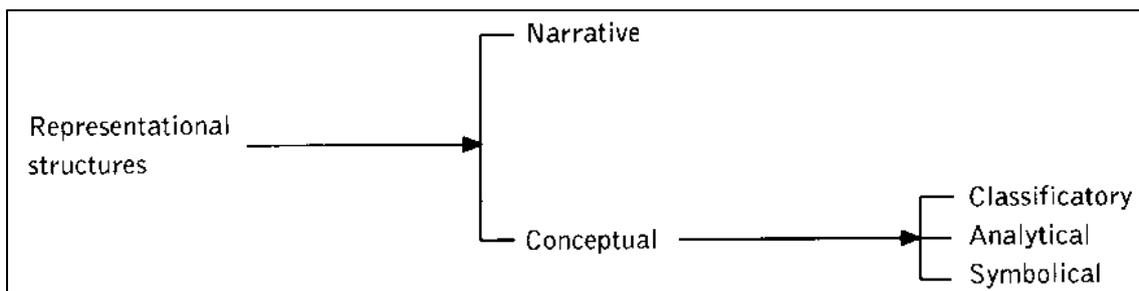
Figure 4: Visual representational structures (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 59)

That ideological dimension is expressed also through the different deployments of, and emphasis on, visual attitude which the choice of narrative or conceptual structures and assignment of participant roles enable. It is a basic tenet of Halliday's systemic functional grammar, that all three linguistic metafunctions – experiential-ideational, interpersonal, textual – are simultaneously mapped onto any verbal clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). However, evaluations, which belong to the interpersonal domain, are always of something, suggesting the primacy of representation. Narrative structures in which the VG is cast as the agent of some action enable a focus on the evaluation of that behaviour. Conceptual structures casting the VG as Carrier, the bearer of a set of physical and emotional qualities (fig 1 above), and narrative structures casting the VG as Goal, the target of some action (fig 3 above), constrain a focus instead on the evaluation of the VG's appearance. The choice of representational structure can thus give salience to certain configurations of attitudinal meaning.

The attitude category of the appraisal framework provides useful tools for capturing the role of evaluation in expressing the ideological dimension. It has the following three sub-categories: affect (for the expression of emotions), judgement (for moral and ethical evaluations of behaviour) and appreciation (for aesthetic evaluations of things). These appear in table 1 below. All these categories have a negative and a positive dimension and can be expressed explicitly ('inscribed'), or implicitly ('invoked') in various ways.

AFFECT
dis/inclination (hopes, fears, desires)
in/security (anxiety, surprise, confidence …)
un/happiness (cheer, affection, misery, antipathy, sadness, hate, laughter, love …)
dis/satisfaction (boredom, anger, curiosity, pride..)

JUDGEMENT
social esteem (admiring, criticising):
normality (luck, charm, charisma ..)
capacity (power, vigour, intelligence ..)
tenacity (courage, resolution, perseverance ..)
social sanction (praising and condemning):
veracity (honesty, straightforwardness, frankness)
propriety (legality, ethics, sensitivity, morality)

APPRECIATION
reaction: impact (fascinating, boring) and quality (beautiful, ugly)
composition: balance (proportion, symmetry, harmony) and complexity (intricacy, detail, precision)
valuation (significance, profundity, originality)

Table 1: Appraisal for verbal analysis: the three attitude categories and their subcategories, based on Martin & White (2005:45-57)

Clearly, the visual mode is unable to realize all the fine distinctions possible in the verbal mode. Addressing the issue of visual analogues for verbal appraisal, White (2014:8) concludes that

> category membership [of visually activated attitude in the various sub-types] can be determined by reference to factors relating to the salience or detectability of the author as attitudinal agent, the stability of the current expression in conveying a positive or negative viewpoint across different contexts of use, and the degree to which the reader is involved in supplying attitudinal conclusions derived from the material provided. It is by reference to such factors that a given visual formulation can plausibly be proposed as the attitudinal analogue of a given verbal formulation.

The scope for inscribed attitude is also more limited in the visual mode. However, the cartoon genre is generally concerned with social and political *commentary*, not documentation, and being unconstrained by naturalism, in a cartoon the artist's subjectivity is usually very tangible. The use of symbols, stereotypes, caricatures, and highly contrived arrangements of visual items in the cartoon, together with its bimodal option, give the cartoon a much greater potential than news photography, say, for the expression of attitudinal analogues to verbal formulations, and for explicitness.

Most of the forms of verbal text available to cartoons are present in our examples: captions inside or outside of the image; speech bubbles and ideational labels applied to visual items. Visual-verbal interaction can be analysed in terms of how verbal meanings support the visual (Marsh and Domas White, 2003, provide a typology), and, in a systemic functional linguistic perspective, for ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings (see Martinec & Salway, 2005). In bimodal, satirical cartoons, verbal meanings often clash unexpectedly with visual meanings for humorous effect. In the cartoons examined here, however, the verbal text mostly accords with visual attitude and / or positions the viewer-reader to align with the criticisms and recommendations which the cartoons express. Interpersonally speaking, apart from the negative and positive appreciation realised by 'vermin' and 'flourish' in the caption of fig 3, the verbal texts in the cartoons do not *inscribe* attitudinal meanings; this work is done by the images. However, some of the verbal ideational texts do *invoke* attitudinal meanings, when read in relation to the visually (pre-)inscribed attitude.

In the next paragraphs I outline the representational structure and participant roles assigned to the VGs in each historical cartoon, and how these enable appraisal of the VGs, from the attitude categories of affect (emotions), appreciation (aesthetic considerations) and judgement (behaviour). The analysis for visual representational structure and visual and verbal appraisal in each cartoon is then summarised in table form.

The suffragette cartoon in figure 1 is a conceptual structure in which the VG – a stereotypical image of a suffragette – is assigned the passive participant role of Carrier of numerous Possessive Attributes in an analytical process (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 87-104). I have analysed it thus, because although as the caption "What I would do with the suffragists" explains, the woman's state is the result of a recommended action, the action itself is not represented. (If the action was depicted, the process would be a transactional one, and the woman would be assigned the participant role of Goal.) The image instead presents only the outcome of the recommended action, and it is focused on the woman's face, body and clothing and on the confining objects - the clamp, the shackles and ropes - which symbolise her prescribed status in society. These Attributes also work cumulatively and collectively to express explicit and implicit attitude from the categories of affect (emotions and dispositions expressed through facial expressions and bodily gestures of the depicted participants), appreciation (aesthetic evaluations of the physical appearance of depicted participants) and judgement (the confining instruments also invoke negative appraisal of the suffragette's rebellious attitude).

The anti-Japanese cartoon and the antisemitic cartoon in figures 2 and 3 by contrast are both narrative structures, in which the VG – stereotypes of Japanese men in 2, and zoomorphic metaphors

for Jews in 3 – is respectively assigned an active and a passive role. In figure 2, the VG is Actor in transactional (giving) and non-transactional (walking) processes, and Reacter (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 67-75) in a non-transactional process (looking). In this narrative structure, action dominates: the VG's behaviour is appraised with the attitude category of judgement: social sanction (negative propriety and veracity). This is not to say there is no appraisal of the stereotypical appearance of the VG, drawing on the categories of affect and appreciation. The assignment of participant role of Carrier however can be seen in the context of a minor process which might be transcoded thus in italics: "the leader of the Honourable 5th Column gives each of the Japanese, *who all have hairy faces, buck teeth and a goofy grin*, a packet of TNT" or "the Japanese male civilians, *who all have hairy faces, buck teeth and a goofy grin,* march from Oregon to the 5th Column headquarters in California" (on major and minor processes in the visual structure see Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 49, 65, 107-109). In figure 3, the VG is Goal, the target of the action performed by the Actor, the Nazi with the gas pump, in a transactional process. The vectors linking the Actor and the Goal are the Nazi's left arm on the pump and gaze directed towards the Jew-rats he is killing. The reader is positioned to positively evaluate the Nazi's behaviour, because of the negatively evaluated Goal: the Jews, dehumanized and demonized as harmful vermin. The narrative structure, participant roles and attitudinal meanings they enable carry an implicit causality and moral justification: the inscribed negative appreciation of the VG legitimate the action the VG is undergoing. The analyses of visual and verbal appraisal of the VG for attitude in the historical cartoons 1-3 are summarised in tables 1, 2 and 3 below.

In the conceptual representation of fig 1 the suffragette or VG is Carrier (as in a verbal relational attributive clause) of numerous Possessive Attributes. The negative evaluations are based not on any action in which she is shown to be participating, but predominantly on her appearance. In appraisal terms of attitude, we have negative affect (dissatisfaction and unhappiness) inscribed in her scowling, defiant facial expression, and negative appreciation inscribed in her bony, sharp, angular, taut body, her pointy fingers and feet echoed by the rectangular clamp and straight-backed chair. This is the antithesis of the full, curvy, 'hourglass' female shape valued in the era and carries inscribed negative appreciation: valuation. At the same time, the suffragette-scold comes pre-inscribed, as a known stereotype, with judgement too: negative propriety. Her purpose is to subvert the social and political order by demanding equal voting rights for women, through sometimes radical actions such as chaining herself to railings in public spaces, a practice intertextually referred to by the ropes binding the woman's hands to the chair. The behavioural component and moral condemnation thereof might be glossed as the italicised relative clause in 'this suffragette, *who causes trouble by chaining herself to railings and holding noisy public rallies*, is a horrible, aggressive, tiresome, ugly woman'. The caption is a recommendation, aligning the reader of the cartoon with the cartoonist's view of how things should be, and 'rewarding' reader compliance with the purportedly humorous intertextual reference of the ropes. In the cartoon, the suffragettes' practice of binding themselves to railings in public spaces to draw attention to their demand for the right to vote, becomes a denial of freedom.
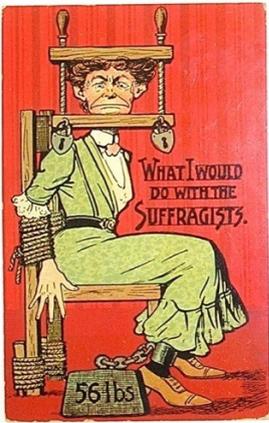
Visual structure: conceptual. Process: analytical. Participant role of VG: Carrier. Possessive Attributes: frowning; glaring; pointy ears; ugly; masculine; angry; aggressive; thin; angular; hard, taut, bony body; large, long, pointed feet; pointy fingers on tense hand with spread fingers; shackles; head clamp; ropes

	Visual appraisal of VG for attitude
	Affect: (inscribed in scowling, defiant expression and tense body) Inscribed unhappiness: hate (of men and patriarchy) Inscribed dissatisfaction: anger (pre-inscribed) desire: equal voting rights with men **Appreciation** (inscribed in face, body and clothing as objects) Inscribed negative reaction Inscribed negative composition Inscribed negative valuation **Judgement** (pre-inscribed, based on assumed behaviour of suffragette stereotype): (pre-inscribed) negative normality: social misfit, outcast (pre-inscribed) positive tenacity: determined, defiant (pre-inscribed) positive capacity: capable (but must be contained) (invoked by the instruments of punishment) negative propriety: troublemaker, disturber of the peace **Verbal appraisal for attitude**: The recommendation in the caption 'what I would do with suffragists' solicits endorsement of the cartoonist's position on women's place in society, symbolized in the image, also by giving an opposite, purportedly humorous meaning to the suffragettes' practice of chaining themselves to railings.

Table 2: Summary of analysis of suffragette cartoon fig 1 for visual structure, visual appraisal of VG for attitude, and verbal appraisal for attitude

Figure 2 by contrast is a narrative representation with several processes. The Japanese man at the front desk in the centre left foreground is Actor in the main, transactional process of giving out packages of explosives, and the recipient of the TNT in the centre of the cartoon is Goal. The long line of men behind him is Actor in the non-transactional process of walking towards the Honourable 5th Column's meeting point to receive those explosives. The Japanese on the roof looking out over the Pacific Ocean with a telescope is Reacter in a non-transactional reaction. These depicted actions of subterfuge and treachery inscribe negative judgement of the social sanction type: propriety and veracity. The minor clause 'waiting for the signal from home' both confirms the purpose, and invokes negative judgement of, the depicted Japanese actions. There are also minor analytical embedded processes at work here, in which the visible Japanese men are Carriers of Possessive Attributes (glasses; buck teeth; hairy faces, goofy smiles) associated with contemporary stereotypes, primed for negative appreciation: valuation, with a dehumanising effect (they are all the same).

Visual structure: narrative. Main process: transactional (giving). Participant roles of VG: Actor (handing out TNT) and Goal (receiving TNT) with respective gaze as vectors. Other processes: non-transactional (walking), participant role of VG: Actor; non-transactional reaction (looking through a telescope), participant role of VG: Reacter. Minor analytical processes. Participant role of VG as Carrier; Possessive Attributes (clothes, bearing, facial and body features)

Visual appraisal of VG for attitude

Judgement:
Inscribed negative capacity (non-military bearing, civilian clothes and goofy expression belie would-be warriors)
Inscribed negative veracity (innocuous appearance of polite simpletons masks treacherous behaviour) and negative propriety (ingratitude to host country)

Affect:
Inscribed happiness (smiling faces)

Appreciation:
Inscribed negative reaction (unprepossessing appearance: buck teeth, hairy face, goofy grin, squinty eyes)
Inscribed negative valuation (dehumanisation: all look the same)

Verbal appraisal of VG for attitude: the caption 'Waiting for the signal from home' invokes negative judgement supporting the inscribed negative judgement in the cartoon image

Table 3: Summary of analysis of Honorable 5th Column cartoon for visual structure, visual appraisal of VG for attitude, and verbal appraisal

In figure 3, the VG Jews, cast as Goal in a transactional process, is dehumanized in the symbolic, zoomorphic representation as dead rats, and evaluated for appearance in embedded analytical processes. The salient appraisal here of the VG is inscribed appreciation: negative reaction (disgust) and negative valuation (not human, vermin). This appraisal positions the cartoon viewer to endorse the gassing action. The clause complex of the English translation from German 'When the vermin are dead, the oak tree will flourish' explains, also recommends, and seeks an endorsement of the depicted action. As in fig 1, the characteristic behaviours attributed here to the stereotypically represented Jews can be recovered from the intertextual environment, from the verbal labels of institutions on the bodies of the rats (Jews control financial institutions and the press) and on the branches of the rat-infested oak tree (Jews destroy Germany's institutions and economy), and from the figurative language of the caption. However, negative appreciation dominates, firstly because the Jews are Goal and passive, not active, and secondly because they are not represented as humans in this image, but as rats. Any invoked or pre-inscribed negative judgement for behaviour (venality, greed, malevolence etc) is less salient in the image than negative appreciation.

Visual structure: narrative. Process: transactional. Participant role of VG: Goal (passive)	
	Visual appraisal of VG for attitude: **Appreciation:** Inscribed negative reaction (disgust at rats) Inscribed negative valuation (harmful pests, not human) **Verbal appraisal of VG for attitude in the caption** "When the vermin are dead, the German oak will flourish once more": Inscribed negative appreciation: reaction and valuation (vermin) The caption endorses the depicted action and like the image, aligns viewer to endorse it.

Table 4: Summary of analysis of antisemitic *Der Stürmer* cartoon for visual structure and visual appraisal of VG for attitude

In cartoons 1-3 above, entire groups of people – feminists, Japanese, Jews - are being targeted with negative, stereotypical evaluations, carrying potentially harmful social repercussions for those groups in the historical social contexts. Similarly egregious hate speech cartoons still circulate today in the shadowy online communities uniting around Alt-right websites and chans, which researchers investigate at some personal risk (Colley & Moore, 2020; Cramer, 2017; Lavin, 2020). The depictions of the VGs are stereotypes known to the cartoon consumers and come pre-inscribed with negative evaluations of physical appearance (suggestive also of character traits) and of assumed characteristic behaviours. That said, I propose that the assignment of passive or active participant roles to the VG in the visual structure affects the potential for their evaluation in the cartoon, by enabling greater focus on appearance or on behaviour as the target of appraisal. In conceptual structures in which the VG is Carrier of Attributes (fig 1), or narrative structures in which the VG is Goal of a transactional process (fig 3), the VG is assigned a passive participant role. Visual appraisal of the VG in the image is constrained by this passivity to choices from the attitude categories of affect (emotions communicated by facial expression, bodily gesture) and appreciation (reaction to, and valuation of clothes, body, face). This does not exclude pre-inscribed judgement of behaviour characteristically associated with the group stereotypes and intertextually recoverable, but evaluations of such unrepresented behaviour are not salient in the image.

Narrative structures instead, in which the VG is Actor in some transactional or non-transactional process constrain choices from the attitude category of judgement (social esteem or social sanction). In a narrative representation as in fig 2, where the VG is assigned the active participant role of Actor, appraisal of the VG's appearance, based on face, body, and clothes, is less salient than appraisal of the action they are shown to be performing. The implications for appraisal of this distinction between narrative and conceptual images, and between active and passive roles of the VG, are particularly significant, in discussion of the more ambiguous cartoons which appear today in the mainstream press, featuring famous individuals who also happen to be members of vulnerable groups. We turn now to these.

6. Hate speech controversies over more ambiguous contemporary cartoons involving public figures

The three cartoons in figs 5-7 below all refer to real events and situations in the USA: the 2016 election campaign; the 2019 US Open Tennis championship, and the 2009 Stimulus Bill. All three cartoons were flagged for hate speech. In all cases, the defence was that they are legitimate satirical social or political commentary (see reporting and discussion of individual cartoons in Burkeman, 2009; Page, 2017; Phiddian 2018; Fine, 2018). The individuals targeted are Michelle Obama (and

indirectly, it could be argued, also Melania Trump) in fig 5; Serena Williams in fig 6, and – according to detractors of the cartoon - Barack Obama in fig 7. Regrettably, I was unable to get permission from the *Herald Sun* to reproduce the cartoon of Serena Williams by Mark Knight: a prose description and a link are provided instead. The Delonas cartoon in fig 7 refers to a news story about 'Travis', a pet chimp turned aggressive, shot by police in Connecticut on 16.02.09, and to US President Obama's signing into law the next day of a contested economic stimulus package proposed by the Democrats[4]. Detractors of the cartoon interpreted the shot chimp to represent President Obama, who signed, though did not write, the Stimulus Bill. In its defence, an editorial in the *New York Post* argued the cartoon meant the Bill was so bad that a chimp could have written it (Apel, 2009).

It will be noted that the three contemporary cartoons in figures 5, 6 and 7 mirror the structure of figs 1-3 above, respectively adopting a conceptual structure, in which the VG's participant role is Carrier; a narrative structure in which the VG is Actor, and a narrative structure in which the VG is Goal.

	"Can you just let her win?" says the umpire in the background, to Naomi Osaka during her 2018 US Open match against Serena Williams. In the left foreground is a caricature of Williams, captured in mid-air as she angrily jumps on her smashed racket below[5]. A baby's dummy can be seen just right of centre, on the ground in front of her.	
Fig 5: "Make the first lady great again!" published on Ben Garrison's Twitter account 13.05.2016. Permission to use granted.	Fig 6: Cartoon by Mark Knight, published in the *Herald Sun* 10.09.2018. Permission to use not granted. The cartoon can be seen here in this editorial defending it: https://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/opinion/editorial-mark-knights-cartoon-rightly-mocks-serena-williams-us-open-finals-dummyspit/news-story/bff3c329c6c706b966636620bcb21be7	Fig 7: "They'll have to find someone else to write the next stimulus bill" Cartoon by Sean Delonas in the *New York Post* 18.02.2009. Permission to use granted.

The difference in evaluative emphasis enabled by visual structure and participant role assignment argued for in section 5 above is particularly significant, I suggest, in hate speech controversies like these, where cartoons depict known public figures and refer to real events and situations. Such cartoons can be more feasibly defended than the egregious examples in figs 1-3 above, with the claim that the real events and public figures referred to, regardless of the latter's membership of any vulnerable group, are legitimate targets of satirical commentary. In these more controversial cases, I propose that where the VG is Carrier (in conceptual structures as in fig 5) or Goal (in narrative structures as in fig. 7), the cartoons are more susceptible to the hate speech accusation than narrative structures representing the VG as Actor, enacting some action that s/he has performed in life.

Celebrating the 'trophy wife' as a persuasive strategy to garner support for male candidates in or seeking political office may pass unchallenged. However, drawing unfavourable comparisons between wives is less likely to pass, particularly if one is white and the other is black. The cartoon in fig. 5 which Garrison posted on his Twitter account in 2016 prompted public criticism for denigrating

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[4] The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), 2009
[5] In fact, Williams broke her racket by throwing it to the ground.

Michelle Obama, as a black woman, and transgender people. Its underlying rationale in celebrating Melania Trump and demeaning Michelle Obama may read as unwittingly offensive to women generally (see below). Caricatures of the then outgoing first lady, Michelle Obama, and Melania Trump, wife of the then presidential candidate Donald Trump, are displayed on a neutral background (there is just a hint at a setting in the shadows below their feet), rather like pinned butterflies in separate compartments of a museum display cabinet. The space to the right of the vertical line splitting the image space into two parts is slightly wider, to accommodate the accompanying verbal texts - an electoral campaign placard held by Melania Trump, and a caption playing on the Trump campaign's MAGA slogan.

The First Lady cartoon combines the classification, analytical and symbolic types of conceptual representation postulated by Kress & van Leeuwen in fig 4 above. As classification, both women are assigned the participant roles of Subordinate in a covert taxonomy (the Superordinate, 'women', is implied, not represented). They also belong respectively to the sub-groups 'black women'; 'black transgender women', and 'white women', the former two being at greater risk from hate speech. Part of the cartoon's presumed humorous purpose lies in the apparent subversion of the classification. The then First Lady's muscular physique and the conspicuous bulge in her groin - an intertextual reference perhaps to conspiracy theories then circulating within online Alt-right communities, that Michelle Obama was a secret transgender woman or man (Page, 2017; Farland, 2018) - suggest that she does not really belong in the class 'women'. Embedded within this overarching classification structure we have analytical processes at work. These analyse the two women, each in their participant role as Carrier, in terms of Possessive Attributes: the clothes they are wearing, their hairstyles, their body shapes, posture, and so forth. These analytical processes in the cartoon have a more interactional and emotive function than an ideational one, however, much as advertisements using these kinds of conceptual visual structures do (K&VL, 2006:89): they express culturally mediated values concerning the meanings of female and femininity. The function of this structure is not to inform, but to repel and appeal to the viewer, rather in the form of a 'before and after' advertisement for a product. The depiction of Melania holding high the campaign placard with Trump's name on it realises a symbolic attributive process, too: Melania is a Symbolic Attribute of her husband. We could analyse the cartoon as having also narrative structures embedded within the conceptual representation. Michelle is scowling and Melania is smiling: each is assigned the participant role of Reacter in a non-transactional reaction (akin to behavioural processes, in systemic functional grammar). If we read Michelle's gaze as directed towards Melania (but this is unclear), forming a vector linking the two women across the divide within the image, Michelle is Reacter in a transactional reaction with Melania as Phenomenon. Within the whole, these would be minor processes (we might alternatively analyze the smile and the scowl as Possessive Attributes: 'Michelle has a scowling expression'; 'Melania has a broad smile on her face').

The women are appraised for their bodies, faces and clothes, and the Possessive Attributes here cumulatively inscribe negative and positive appreciation, also through intertextual linking of the two participants to the stereotypes of the muscular, angry black woman and the female beauty pageant contestant. We might gloss the contrastive relation being drawn here between the two as 'Melania is more beautiful / desirable than Michelle' (realis) or – verbally supported by the variation on the MAGA slogan - 'Melania will be the great first lady that Michelle has not been' (irrealis). The angular, frowning face, the bulge in the groin, the stiff, muscular frame and the awkward, graceless posture of the depicted Michelle, complemented by her crumpled, ill-fitting dress with its uneven hemline, and unalleviated by the tokens of feminine adornment (the large hoop earrings, necklace and belt), inscribe negative appreciation: valuation, and tokenize perhaps negative judgement: capacity (Michelle lacks finesse and has poor dress sense). By contrast, the soft, curvy, relaxed and graceful depiction of Melania in her figure-hugging gown slashed to the hip and displaying her long, slender legs, inscribes positive appreciation (beautiful, feminine, sexy) and may tokenize positive

judgement: capacity (she knows how to present herself and how to be a 'real' woman). The election placard also tokenizes positive judgement: propriety (Melania is patriotic and supportive of her husband). Michelle's scowl and Melania's smile respectively inscribe negative and positive affect – dissatisfaction and satisfaction - and tokenize judgement: propriety, insofar as these emotions are 'immortalised' in the image to suggest personality traits. Melania is docile, compliant and sweet-tempered (positive propriety), and Michelle is bad-tempered and overbearing (negative propriety). Also noteworthy is how the aesthetics of the different fonts used for the name labels appearing over the women's heads amplify and consolidate these meanings through visual rhyming. Jerky, jaunty block green capitals, some tilting to the right, and others to the left (and is the 'H' perhaps slightly larger, to encourage the reading of the word 'HELL' in MicHELLe?) match the angular, stiff Michelle in the green dress. Conversely, right-tilting, regular, flowing, joined pink handwriting with a star on the 'i' matches the smooth, mellifluous name and image of its pink-gowned bearer, Melania.

The cartoon evaluates the two women for their physical appearance. The viewer is positioned to read the image in superlative Trumpian discourse terms of winners and losers, of white supremacy, of antifeminism. Compliance hangs on where the viewer stands vis a vis this world view, or, in the absence of any strongly held convictions, on their susceptibility to the cartoon's rhetorical power. This cartoon is also to be read as a hortatory image in the context of an election campaign, instantiating a proposal: "vote for Trump". Support for Donald Trump's candidacy is its overarching purpose. The Obamas were in any case leaving the White House, so the targeting of Michelle Obama seems gratuitous from a campaign strategy viewpoint and designed rather to appeal to a highly conservative mindset concerning the place of women (and implicitly, transgender people) in (or out of) society, and to stereotypical notions of 'the angry black woman', with which some Trump voters might be expected to align. Non-compliant viewers with this world view are likely to and did evaluate this cartoon as hate speech towards Michelle Obama, black women, transgender, and women in general. The choice of this conceptual structure focused on being makes the defence argument that the cartoon is satirical rather hard to sustain.

Mark Knight's cartoon in the Australian *Herald Sun* was denounced as a racist depiction of Serena Williams and defended as a denouncement of her unsporting behaviour at a US Open tennis match, a position accepted by the Australian Press Council (see discussion in Fine, 2018; Phiddian, 2018). This polarisation of views underscores the tension between representations of being and doing. Those who saw the cartoon as racist focused particularly on the caricature of Serena Williams' facial lineaments (thick lips and a broad, flat nose) and of her pose, echoing historical Jim Crow images[6], rather than on her action. There are analytical processes in the image, assigning Serena the participant role Carrier of Possessive Attributes, which include the above-mentioned facial and physical features. There is also a Symbolic Attribute – the dummy in the foreground, conspicuous for its light colour against the blue of the tennis court - symbolizing infantilism, which is not part of any racial stereotype. Yet these are minor processes embedded in a narrative structure in which Serena is assigned the participant role of Actor in a non-transactional process. She is captured suspended in mid-air, in the process of jumping on the tennis racket beneath her feet, and although this is not exactly what she did at the US Open (she threw her racket onto the ground), it is not so far off. This narrative structure enables a focus on the action and criticism of it (negative judgement: propriety, in appraisal terms). The weary umpire's request to Naomi Osaka in the background "Can you just let her win?" invokes negative appraisal, namely his dissatisfaction with and condemnation of Serena Williams' behaviour, with which the cartoon viewer is positioned to agree. The narrative structure and the verbal text lend support to the argument that the cartoon legitimately criticises Serena for how she behaved, rather than targeting her for membership of a group with protected characteristics.

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[6] https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/cartoons/homepage.htm

Delonas' cartoon was condemned as a racist attack on America's first Afro-American president by those who saw in it a comparison between Barack Obama and a rabid chimp (see Stein, 2009). The newspaper editor defended it as legitimate mockery of the Stimulus Bill: the Bill was so bad, it could have been written by a monkey. The owner Rupert Murdoch published a rare apology for the offence caused. Overtly comparing Obama to a rabid chimp would be egregiously racist, whatever the participant role, and an analysis of representational structure cannot resolve the ambiguity here over the cartoonist's intentions. Conversely, the *Der Stürmer* cartoon in fig.3, which has the same narrative structure, makes verbally explicit in the caption the identity of the exterminated rats. If a chimp had been assigned the active role in the Delonas cartoon, say, of signing the Stimulus Bill, the comparison with Obama would have been incontestable. Instead, the chimp has a passive participant role. The role could be analysed either as Goal in a transactional process in which the Actor is the policeman in the foreground captured in the act of shooting (the gun is the vector), or, if scene depicts the immediate aftermath (the gun is smoking), the chimp is Phenomenon in a reactional process where the policemen are Reacter, and their gaze at the dead chimp is the vector. This passive role means the immediate appraisal focus for the chimp is not its behaviour but its appearance. If we take up the hate speech interpretation, recourse to stereotypical associations of black people with monkeys means the image comes pre-inscribed with negative appreciation (valuation) of the dehumanised president-monkey. It is not the action of whoever authored the Bill, or the chimp's aggressive behaviour which is the primary focus of appraisal in the image: either action must be intertextually recovered. The focus of appraisal is the corpse of the chimp: inscribed negative appreciation of the rabid monkey, which can be read as a zoomorphic visual metaphor either of the author(s) of the Bill, or of the US President who signed it. As in the *Der Stürmer* cartoon, the narrative structure, participant roles and attitudinal meanings they enable here carry an implicit causality and moral justification for the depicted actions of gassing and shooting.

7. Conclusion

I have attempted to contribute through visual analysis some insights to the debate over the at times fine line between satire and hate speech in cartoons, combining Kress and van Leeuwen's visual representational structure and visual analogues of the attitude category of appraisal. I first applied this framework to historical unambiguous hate speech cartoons, showing how active and passive participant roles in the representational structure influence the potential for certain types of visual attitude over others. Passive participant roles promote appearance-based appraisal for affect and appreciation, whereas active participant roles promote behaviour-based appraisal for judgement. In cartoons featuring generic types of VGs in fictional settings, whether the negative appraisal is of being or of doing may be of little relevance: the reference in either case may be to stereotyped appearances and behaviours. I then applied the same tools to three contemporary cartoons flagged for hate speech, with the same representational structures as the historical cartoons, but which instead of generic types and fictional situations, feature real, newsworthy events involving famous people who happen to belong to vulnerable groups. I argued that the ambiguity of such cartoons concerning the target of the negative appraisal – membership of the VG or something else - might be resolved by attending to whether the appraisal for attitude is focused on representations of being or of doing, mirroring some real-life behaviour.

Further work on the satire / hate speech distinction might look at cartoons which assign the active participant roles of Reacter, Sayer, and Senser to a newsworthy and negatively evaluated VGM. With Sayer and Senser roles particularly, verbal text is likely to play a more incisive role in evaluating the VGM than it does in the cartoons analysed here. Further research might also consider cartoons attributing fictional, symbolic behaviours to caricatures of newsworthy VGMs in imaginary settings, for which the satirical claim may be harder to sustain. Such research could explore issues of intertextuality and viewer responses, given that understanding whether the behaviour refers

intextextually to some denigratory stereotype of the VG depends on knowledge of the intertextual environment.

Other research might also look at other factors affecting how the *salience* of evaluative meanings is achieved, and how viewers are positioned to share them. Such work might use visual analogues of the graduation category of appraisal, which adjusts the force and focus of ideational meanings, and / or Kress and van Leeuwen's modelling of visual composition and of visual interaction. These tools might be particularly adept also in cartoons purporting to be social satire, featuring generic types for example of migrants, Aborigines or Muslims, and drawing on clichés of appearance and behaviour, where flagging for hate speech may hinge more on the source of the negative appraisal of the VGM (is the cartoonist perhaps commenting on views s/he does not share?) than on the type and target.

The unambiguous visual or visual-verbal arguments expressed in the egregious types of cartoons shown here are also worth investigating: such research could help expose the flawed reasoning behind hate speech generally. Lastly, racist, antisemitic, misogynistic and homophobic cartoons and memes circulating today on Alt-right online platforms are often characterised by a jokey tone, designed to foster bonding and affiliation within the communities that frequent them. Research into the use of humour to spread hate speech in this way could also be timely.

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