

Elements of Political Cartoons - CATS ➡⬅ ECIM

Current Events: _____

Allusions to Literature, History: _____



Text - Labels, Captions, etc.: _____

Symbols: _____



Exaggeration/Distortion: _____

Caricature/Stereotypes: _____

Irony / Sarcasm: _____

Message / Point: _____



C: This cartoon was published in 1949. The Soviets had expanded their control to most of Eastern Europe and China looked likely to fall to Communism soon as well. The 'Red Scare' at home was infringing on individual liberties as well – HUAC, 'The Hollywood Ten', etc. McCarthyism was just around the corner.

A: The arm & torch are from the Statue of Liberty (see Symbols). The famous poem on its base welcomes the exact sort of immigrants most under suspicion for Communist sympathies, so maybe there's an additional layer of irony in that?

T: "Fire" (title and being shouted), "Hysteria" (label of yelling man). Fire is traditionally yelled as a warning of danger, not excitement or joy. The man is labeled so we'll understand he represents a movement or mindset rather than an individual.

S: The arm and torch are clearly the Statue of Liberty. The flame traditionally represents both liberty (hence the name) and the Enlightenment – also used ironically.

E: It would take a pretty tall ladder to reach the top of the Statue of Liberty, and the real statue doesn't have a live flame. This is not a realistic action – it would be impossible.

C: The guy doesn't seem to represent an individual or a demographic so much as a mindset, so I don't think there are Caricatures or Stereotypes used here.

I: Major irony here – 'Hysteria' is about to douse the Flame of Liberty/Enlightenment, presumably to 'protect' the country. The cry of 'Fire!' indicates fear of this flame and suggests it's perceived as dangerous. This is, of course ridiculous and misguided.

M: The current (in 1949) hysteria over Communism is not only misguided, but dangerous. Our fundamental values are being threatened by the ways we're responding to perceived dangers. To use a different metaphor, the cure is far worse than the supposed disease.