

# The War of Images: Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Editorial Cartoons in the Indian Nationalist Press, 1947

Sukeshi Kamra

The anti-colonial nationalist movement in India was significantly constituted by propagandizing popular art and literature at the same time as it established new and popular modes of expression. Literature proscribed by the government and newspaper culture of the decades leading to Independence (1920–1947) attest to the above as, does the fact that the editorial policy of newspapers it supported absorbed the colonial government.<sup>1</sup> The shift in the movement from mass protest to constitutional negotiations, that occurred around 1945, also saw an intriguing shift in the place of the press. From being central because of its propagandizing power, it became, seemingly, about as marginal as the people themselves, returned to a press's usual role as 'disseminator' of information. It could be argued, however, that the press occupied an even more critical place between 1945 and 1947 for in these years it was the only public forum that continued to legitimize the participation of a people aggressively lobbied previously by leaders keen first to organize and then maintain the momentum of the anti-colonial movement.<sup>2</sup> In the culminating year, 1947, editorial pages are given over to polemical debate and political problem solving—should there be one or two nations? Where should the boundaries be located and in accordance with what principles?—that parallel similar debates occurring behind closed doors at the political centre. While letters to the editor, articles, aphorisms, gossip columns are lively indeed, and obsessively political, editorial cartoons surpass these forums of opinion in their wrestling with a vexed political process by recouring to heavily inflammatory visual rhetoric.<sup>3</sup> It is, of course, in the nature of editorial cartoons to be polemical and inflammatory. What makes such rhetoric surprising in this instance is the fact that censorship and self-monitoring were never more severe than in

1947. Judging by the prolific production of such cartoons in 1947, the genre itself escaped the censor's eye but not the ever-watchful eye of the public, some of who comment on the 'injudicious' nature of cartoons on their leaders.<sup>4</sup>

In these years, the political cartoon is, literally, a radical intervention in a discursive field heavily determined and weighted by a naturalized 'consciousness' of the need to be very circumspect. Considering what kind of 'frank' social history leaks out in editorial pages in this last and exclusionary stage of the movement is a large and fascinating project. Here I attempt to unpack the editorial culture of nationalist newspapers such as the *Hindustan Times*, *Tribune*, *Pioneer*, the *National Herald*, *Janata* and *Leader* as such a culture was inscribed in the (playful) form of the political cartoon.<sup>5</sup> I do so by directing attention to the figure to appear most consistently in the nationalist press's English-language dailies and weeklies, in 1947, and to have provoked the most anxiety, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the leader of the All India Muslim League and, for the Congress, the most intractable figure of opposition to their own, and 'modern,' view of a state.<sup>6</sup> In addition to considering the discourse that builds around the figure of Jinnah as well as what authorizes it, I attempt to establish the kind of untidy intermixture and complexity, to borrow terms from Gyan Prakash, that typified the thinking and rhetorical expression of an elite anxious to be read by the world community as the generation responsible for bringing India into modernity.<sup>7</sup>

Although it is inadvisable to read texts, visual or otherwise, by a single individual or group as representative, in the instance of the cartoon, there is perhaps some ground for making qualified claims for a larger culture based on such a reading. A commonplace understanding of the genre is that it is clearly motivated to convince its readership. Given this overriding objective, to communicate, the political cartoon draws on the cultural collective for its performative, formal and thematic aspects. In other words, although cartoonists do indeed offer a point of view, making this point of view effectively requires "a tapping into familiar cultural constructs" (xiv), as Janis Edwards has most recently noted. This manifestation of a shared context in the editorial cartoon allows us to speculate about the shared culture and political and psychological

framework of the class of reader. Further, although it has proved to be near impossible to locate the cartoonists' biographies, the very choice of language—English—and political involvement they display, the texts they draw on and rhetorical sensibility they exercise suggest we are dealing with an Indian elite, the product of a colonial education. At all levels, we note a familiarity with western texts, history and ideologies, and often an internalized judgement of social formations that is traceable to a 'western' value system.<sup>8</sup>

## I

1947 stands out in memory as a liminal time, marked by unprecedented levels of tension, anxiety, uncertainty and a violence that destroyed communities across India, left around a million dead (the majority were murdered) and twelve to sixteen million dislocated.<sup>9</sup> Overwhelming anxiety, panic even, of a population bewildered by 'rumors' circulating about the political arrangements being negotiated behind closed doors is clear from letters received by political parties such as the Congress. Urvashi Butalia, for instance, notes that the All India Congress Committee ". . . received large numbers of letters from people wanting to know what was happening. What will become of us, they asked. We believe India is to be partitioned: where will we go? *How* will we go? What will happen to our jobs? If we have to move, will we get our old jobs back in the new homeland? What will happen to our homes, our lands, if we have to move?" (53). Panic is equally apparent in cartoons, as in other editorial forms of expression, where there is a narrowing of interest to the political stage, that further narrows, seemingly naturally, to a few political figures, of whom Jinnah is the most represented and overdetermined, as we have come to expect of the 'othered.'<sup>10</sup>

The manner in which Jinnah was othered in this year reveals some fancy foot-work, so to speak, on the part of cartoonists.<sup>11</sup> Powerfully suggestive analogies turned flimsy and, at best, superficial resemblance into exact, fixed and wildly inappropriate conclusions in which Jinnah was clearly the moral if not political loser. Two of the most startling comparisons to which Jinnah was subject in 1947 are with Dr. Frankenstein and Hitler. There are probably no two other figures that signal our col-

lective fears of scientific-technological discourse itself and its accomplishing the unthinkable banalizing of evil it did in Nazi Germany respectively. Questions that spring immediately to mind are: what did it mean to suggest Jinnah's 'true' (not cultural or racial but typological in this context) lineage hovers between these two figures that mark the 'gothic' limits of modernity? In other words, what kind of narrative does a choice of these texts authorize? And why does this generation of cartoonist choose these texts?

"Frankenstein" (*Hindustan Times*, 20 March) comments on a press release by Jinnah, which is substantially reproduced in the text note that reads: "Mr. Jinnah has broken his long silence on the Punjab happenings to exhort the majority community to remember their responsibilities to the minorities and offer to protect them." Far from illustrating the text note, the cartoon savagely satirizes it. Jinnah/Frankenstein, stands beside a giant-sized, empty coffin in his laboratory and is confronted by its former occupant, the enraged monster/"Communal Bestiality", who wields a spiked club. The moment in this narrative of 'horror let loose on the world' dramatized by the visual is a moment which pointedly remarks on the helplessness of the agent in the face of his creation—Jinnah gestures to the coffin, in a seemingly futile attempt to convince the monster to return to the coffin. There is a twist to the original in this domestication of Mary Shelley's novel. Apparently a more essentialist view of the horror (evil) is required: beside the open door to the laboratory stands a horned man (presumably a devil of sorts), dressed in a suit, who appears to be amused by the scene he is witnessing (see fig. 1).

Shelley's novel is employed in identical fashion in a cartoon that appeared later in the year in *Hindustan Times*. Titled "'Hey, You, Come Back!'" (3 Sept), the cartoon adopts a similar strategy of containment of a history that had, by then, resolved into a bloody civil war. The visual savages the pro-active position taken by Jinnah to control violence, which is referred to in the text note: "Mr Jinnah broadcast an appeal from Lahore to his co-religionists to stop the orgy of violence in the Punjab." Jinnah stands in the doorway of "Dr. Frankenstein's Laboratory" and beckons to a towering monster "Communal Hatred," who ignores him more clearly in this cartoon than in the previous one

Figure 1.

## FRANKENSTEIN



—Copyright  
Mr Jinnah has broken his long silence on the Punjab happenings to exhort the majority community to remember their responsibilities to the minority and offer to protect them.

(here he has turned his back on Jinnah). The monster carries a bat in one hand and flames issue from his blackened body. Given that the monster is moving away from the building and into the field, clearly he has no intention of returning to the building.

Read as visual propaganda, the two cartoons, with text notes that focus our attention on Jinnah, suggest the cartoonist intends to impress upon his readers *only* Jinnah's hypocrisy or capacity for equivocation. Jinnah/Frankenstein, the ambitious politician, creates a monster/"communal atrocities" while on the surface of it seeming to be a secular, liberal politician, working to effect a quantum change in the human-political condition. That is, a casual reading encourages one to 'recognize' the cartoons employ Mary Shelley's novel metaphorically, to locate Jinnah as a type, and to instruct us how to 'read' his role in shaping modern Indian history. Such a reading, the cartoons suggest, is a much-required corrective of the reading suggested by Jinnah's rhetorical stance, as such a stance is manifest in his statements to the press.

Interrogating the intertextual reference further, however, reveals far less stability of meaning. First of all, the intertextual reference locates Jinnah squarely in the discourse of power except that he is made to simultaneously occupy the position of powerful and powerless. He is, indeed, the spirit of the age embodied—the immensely powerful and brilliant man of science, much to be feared. The equivalence of character, that establishes him as powerful, however, militates against the textual moment from the original the cartoonist chooses to dramatize (that is, at the performative level)—the moment at which the monster speaks his defiance of his creator, after having been thwarted by him one more time in his, the monster's, attempt to establish his own family—for the latter signals Jinnah's defeat, and that too by his own creation. In the face of his creation, then, he is powerless.

Further, what appears to be the given because of the visual syntax—the bond of filiation between the doctor and the monster—is not. The cartoons are emphatic in their assertion that the monster is an embodiment of a non-community-specific violence, in which case Jinnah could hardly be considered the sole author (as author he is restricted to the League, its constituency and, if one really stretches the analogy, which this press did, the Pakistan demand),<sup>12</sup> and if he can, then all involved in the mass violence are his progeny, a conclusion that works only if one removes Partition with all its materiality to the level of allegory. In other words, while textual layering serves the purpose of locating Jinnah as the cause of the horrific slaughter, providing a rationale for the incomprehensible, the analogical inexactness that invests the central relationship both loosens the association of agent/Frankenstein/Jinnah and violence/monster and relegates the whole issue to the more comfortable level of the allegorical (where one does not bother with questions such as: “how can Congress supporters be linked genealogically with Jinnah?”) and where one continues to evade the very material nature of the violence that devastated the subcontinent, especially in 1947.

Finally, through their visual privileging of the monster—a result of perspectival distortion—and hence what he embodies, violence, (whereas the text note suggests Jinnah is the focus of the illustration), the cartoons suggest a competing interest in commenting on the historical nar-

rative to which Jinnah ‘belongs’—the struggle over collective identity. If we interrogate this evidence of a split focus in the cartoon, we are led to the conclusion that there is some uncertainty about the object of comment—is Jinnah or violence the subject? (This wavering is of course authorized, as it were, by the intertextual reference. After all, at the centre of Mary Shelley’s narrative there are two voiced and mutually constitutive narratives, Dr. Frankenstein’s and the monster’s). If it is both, then the intertextual moment and reference at once ‘acknowledges’ the moment to be horrific (violence is its own agent) and, because of the metonymic dimension to the specific textual moment that is dramatized, predicts a defeat of the threat, presumably both Frankenstein/Jinnah and monster/violence. We would also conclude that Jinnah was not the object, indeed *the* other, so much as a much-needed modality. It was the horror of mass, gratuitous violence preceding and constituting Partition that could or would not be articulated outside of a satisfying cause and hence required the presence of a constructed other. (Jinnah may have served other purposes before; this is a very specific purpose to a specific end).<sup>13</sup> There is the rare cartoon that attempts a loosening of the Jinnah-Partition association, a fact that only serves to reinforce the conclusion that other cartoons are deliberate indeed in the visual syntax with which they invest Shelley’s novel in their adaptation of the novel to their own uses. For instance, in “Frankenstein Monster” (*Pioneer*, 1 April) a charred monster, “Communal Flare-Ups,” stalks a devastated landscape, littered with uprooted road signs and skeletal shapes of former buildings. The signs read: “Bombay,” “Calcutta,” “Delhi,” “Punjab,” “N.W.F.P,” “Bihar,” “Assam” and “U.P.” and thus serve to locate the extent of the devastation. The feeling of hopelessness—the inability to prevent the further unravelling of the horrific—is evident in the fact that even the leaders, here Gandhi and Jinnah, flee the path of the approaching monster. The cartoonist appears to refrain from ‘naming’ an agent, a reading that is substantiated by the editorial, which reads: “The situation in India is fast getting out of hand even for these accredited leaders when from sporadic rioting it has turned to intermittent rioting.”

It is difficult, indeed, to definitively conclude about intent with so many instabilities in place. These instabilities are, in themselves, howev-

er, telling of the historical reality with which this press and its readership is attempting to grapple in these cartoons as much as they are of the state of the inscriber. It is not difficult to surmise that paradoxes that inform the intertextual reference are dictated by, on the one hand, a well-rehearsed public need to refrain from fuelling 'communal' sentiment, hence the non-community-specific monster (genealogically speaking), and on the other by an apparently equally urgent need to locate a rationale for the catastrophic and the incomprehensible. We note the fact that these cartoons reveal, via the intertextual reference too, the extent of the fear and anxiety Jinnah was able to instill in the nationalist press (he is powerful and powerless). We can also speculate about the potential use of Shelley's novel to provide or invest an Indian historical moment itself with the political order it lacked (conflated with moral order, also via the intertextual reference). The fictional prototype, used as it is to trace the contours of a historically, culturally and politically remote 'drama,' superimposes its conclusions: if there was a decisive victory in the original to the drama of the battle between the forces of good and evil, (surely) there would be one in its latest and contemporary equivalent.

Finally, and this conclusion identifies the 'particular' nature of the expected unintended surplus of meaning that attends the intended and textual message of the cartoons, given the likelihood that the monster would, irrespective of the lettering sprawled across the body, be received as the Muslim League by the contemporary reader of nationalist newspapers familiar both with Shelley's text and with the political situation in India, the cartoons tempt one to read against the stated objective and in so doing 'discover' or misrecognize Muslim mentality to be a volatile, violent one. So perhaps there is an allying of the anxiety that attaches to the monster/overwhelming violence after all at the same time as its articulation: the monster that stalks is 'named' without actually being named because of the choice of textual layering. The implicitly conveyed content reveals an essentialist view (communities have distinct qualities) that conflicts with a more conscious disarticulation of this same view that so emphatically occupies the textual level of the same cartoons.

Hitler, the other figure to be used repeatedly in the attempt to figure Jinnah, appears to be invoked in a similar capacity, both for the purpose



of ‘identifying’ Jinnah’s character (here fascist) and for the purpose of a seemingly analogous narrative moment. Hitler’s expansionist policy, and the enabling of it by the Allied forces, appears to have been required to provide the commensurate discursive context within which to locate Jinnah. Many cartoons in which the subject is the *amazing* power of Jinnah/Hitler to dictate to the larger force, the Congress, appear in 1947. That is, the cartoons makes a pointed reference to its illogicality. In “The Big Two Meet” (*National Herald*, 8 May), the text balloon describes Jinnah as the “Fuehrer” (“To meet Mr. Jinnah Mahatmaji had again to [go to] the League Fuehrer’s house”). As Mohammed goes to the mountain, the Allies go to Hitler and Gandhi goes to Jinnah. As in the Frankenstein cartoons, here too the extravagant location of Jinnah as powerful (in others he is both powerful and powerless) reveals a significant level of anxiety.

A more pervasive layering plays specifically on Hitler’s demand of a Polish corridor, encouraging us to misrecognize Jinnah’s demand, of a corridor connecting East and West Pakistan, as a demand of the same order as Hitler’s. For instance, an editorial article entitled “Pakistan and After: A Warning,” by Dr. Balkrishna Keskar” (*National Herald*, 29 June), describes Jinnah’s territorial demands in a subsection titled “Hitler Tactics”: “It would not be out of place to remind them that Hitler was also ridiculed in the same way at first. No one took him seriously though he was in dead earnest. Mr. Jinnah is no less serious and earnest.” The May 25th issue of *Janata* too refers to Jinnah as the “League Fuehrer” who desires “corridors to connect the various bits of Pakistan though he knows that once separation is conceded by the Congress, it will take a war to establish right of way from Karachi to Dacca.” Consider the two-frame “Pages from Modern History” (*Leader*, 29 May). In the first panel, Jinnah and Hitler do the Hitler march/salute, each with a paper in his hand with “Wanted a Corridor for Pakistan” and “Demand for a Polish Corridor” written on it respectively. In the next panel, however, Hitler sits in a bunker, looking despondent and drinking. Jinnah, who has apparently ‘caught him in the act’ so to speak, looks dismayed at this sign of defeat. A few days later, an editorial column ‘interprets’ the cartoon for the readership, almost as if there could be no end to a rehears-

ing of the analogy or as if informed by the need to prolong the life of the analogy: “Oomen’s cartoon . . . is suggestive. Mr. Jinnah’s demand for a corridor is compared to that of Hitler’s. By his disgraceful conduct for the last about 10 years Mr. Jinnah has more than amply demonstrated that there can be no end to his demands. After every act of aggression in Europe, when his armies occupied one country after another, Herr Hitler tried to declare: ‘I have no more territorial ambitions in Europe but I insist on having the German colonies.’ What was the ambitious Fuehrer’s fate? It is high time Mohamed Ali Jinnah paused to reflect over this.” Or, consider the 8 June “Cavalcade” (*Leader*) where in the first panel Jinnah, dressed in Nazi uniform, stares into a hand mirror while Liaquat Ali Khan, dressed in similar fashion, asks Jinnah: “What Shall Be Our Next Territorial Demand, Mein Fuehrer?”<sup>14</sup>

The focus of these editorial comments and cartoons on a recent example of a terrifying policy of appeasement, that is, the suggestion that a fitting analogy for the Indian political situation of 1947 is the political situation of late 1930s Europe, testifies not only to the panic of the press as does the ambivalence that surrounds the figure of Jinnah/Hitler.<sup>15</sup> It suggests the recent war quite literally haunts and, possibly, dictates the reading of the political struggle between the Muslim League and the Congress: here, as in the Frankenstein cartoons, in its metonymic dimension, the intertextual reference serves the function of narrativizing the historical moment both in terms of the moment—a struggle between the normative (here, as ever, the spatially absent Congress/Allied forces) and the deviant, aberrant other—and in terms of the trajectory of history in which the moment belongs. At this level, the cartoons predict a reassuring outcome (victory of the secular, modern forces), thereby containing the very anxiety the cartoons also express.

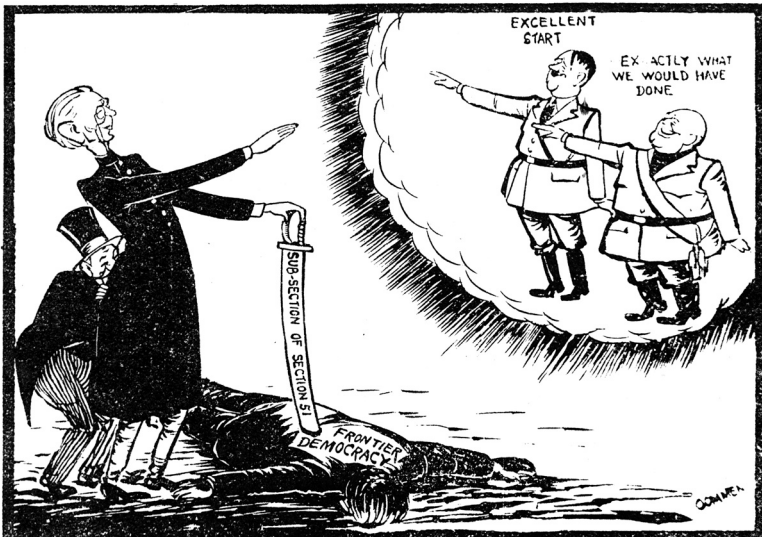
This badly needed reassurance is presumably the reason for the preponderance of the outrageous comparison of historical moments: as a type of narrative, the penultimate instance of which was the history leading to the Second World War, the outcome was tropically secured when in reality it was not. Hence the presence of cartoons locating Jinnah in fascism that appear anxious to underline and instruct on Jinnah’s ‘true’ lineage. To offer one example only, in “Heavenly Blessings” (*Leader* 25

Aug), Jinnah plants a sword /“Sub-Section of Section 51” on the prone body of “Frontier Democracy” and does the Hitler salute to Hitler and Franco, who appear in a cloud, obviously his guardian angels. Hitler says: “Excellent Start” and Franco, “Exactly What We Would Have Done” (see fig. 2).

Many other metaphors and texts are brought into play in the attempt to ‘contain’ the figure of Jinnah, and sometimes the incomprehensible via him, some clearly western and some indigenous. Curiously enough, these share with the Frankenstein and Hitler cartoons an adherence to the tradition and discursive expressions of rationalism (scientific rationalism in the instance of the Frankenstein cartoons). That is, they suggest a grounding of the inscribing culture in this tradition. There is at least one other study that arrives at a similar conclusion. Although s/he does not speculate about the reasons for the location of Jinnah in the irrational, Saumya Gupta, in a discussion of the shifting representation of Jinnah in a local daily of Kanpur (*Vartman*), states that post-1944,

Figure 2.

## HEAVENLY BLESSINGS



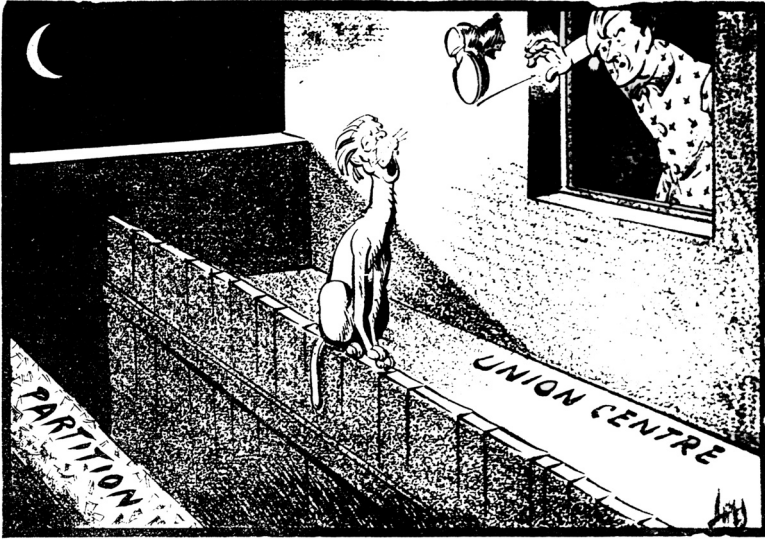
Jinnah was represented as “. . . an irrational and overbearing madman” (182). There are many other places where we sense the presence of a rationalist approach, nowhere more so than in cartoons employing the most common of philosophical dualities of this tradition, that of nature and culture, to offer derisive comment on Jinnah. We note it also in overt judgements that are informed by terms locatable in same inheritance, locating ‘communalism’ via the monster in the irrational, aberrant and gothic, for instance.

The nature-culture duality, with all its attendant bias, appears to be a favorite. In many of these cartoons Jinnah is not associated with violence, that is his presence is not required to explain away violence, and yet the positioning of Jinnah in the ‘irrational’ and ‘illogical’ appears to be important to accomplish, as does a positioning him in terms of the simultaneously powerful and powerless. Consider “Which Way Will the Cat Jump?” (*Hindustan Times*, 25 April), where he is a cat (a curious choice, given the relative unimportance of the animal in the Indian symbolic and mythic apparatuses). Given the fact that all the cat does is wail, the message appears to be that there is no purpose (it is habitual and instinctive), meaning and reason to Jinnah’s utterances and arguments. At the same time, Jinnah/cat is powerful enough to give Mountbatten sleepless nights (see fig. 3). When nature is employed clearly in terms of received symbolic associations, as in “The Sun, the Moon and the Flying Saucers,” Jinnah is accorded some power—he is a force in nature—but always significantly less than the Congress. Here he is the moon to Nehru’s sun, probably playing on the fact that the sickle moon, along with a star, is the symbol of Islam (*Hindustan Times*, 17 July), but it also brings to mind the western construction of this particular binary, in which the sun is associated with masculinity/rationality and the moon with their opposites (Hindu mythology gives far more place to the moon), and the fact that, scientifically speaking, the moon is not its own source of light as well as its association with lunacy and ‘supernatural’ phenomena (evil walks abroad at night) (see fig. 4).<sup>16</sup>

There are some cartoons that speak of Jinnah’s inability to control the history he has unleashed (the given)—as does the Frankenstein reference—that draw on the natural world too. He is often represented as an

Figure 3.

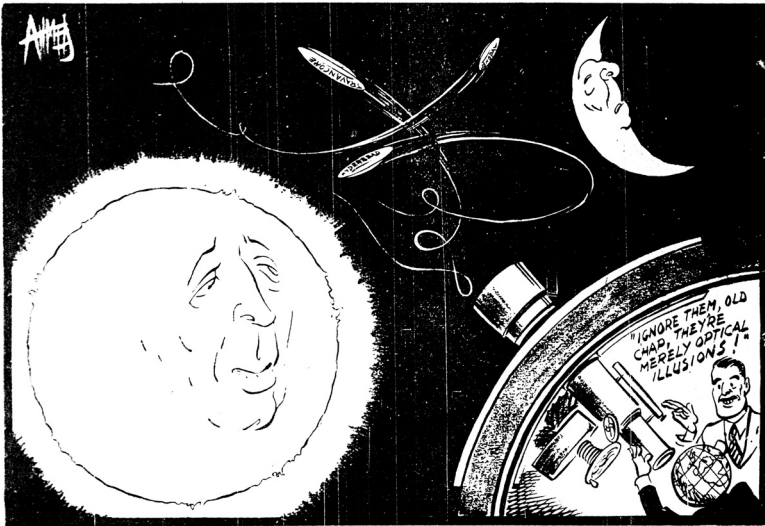
WHICH WAY WILL THE CAT JUMP?



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Figure 4.

THE SUN, THE MOON AND THE FLYING SAUCERS



—Copyright

"We do not propose to recognize the States as separate inter national entities on August 15."—Sir Hartley Shawcross.

inept, itinerant snake-charmer, unable to control the cobra once it has been released from its basket. In “Snake Charmer!” (*Hindustan Times*, 7 Sept), a giant snake/“Pakistan—Mob Rule” towers over a terrified snake-charmer/Jinnah who is unable to continue playing the flute, the crucial instrument of control. Here too one finds the odd cartoon that does not single out Jinnah, a fact that only emphasizes the deliberateness investing the insistence on the association in a majority of cartoons. For instance, in an untitled cartoon that appeared in *Janata*, 24 Nov, 1946 (a paper far more critical of the Congress than say the *Hindustan Times*) the same motif appears but here the snake charmer is problematized (he is not a political figure but “ignorance” embodied) and Jinnah, along with Congress leaders, is imagined as a perplexed and horrified spectator. A huge cobra /“Communal Violence,” fangs bared, hisses while the snake charmer, blindfolded (the blindfold reads “Ignorance”), plays the flute. The two figures are surrounded by a Muslim and a Brahmin, who cling to a tree they have climbed to avoid the cobra, while Jinnah and Patel watch the tableau.<sup>17</sup>

The other recurrent category of the nature-culture opposition to be employed in cartoons, in general concerned with ‘illustrating’ the ‘illogical’ arrangement of power, finds Jinnah being subjected to cross-dressing (signals trans-gendering), if not exactly gender-bending. For instance, in some he is a woman of ill-repute (there was probably no greater insult at the time) attempting to exercise power through the ‘illegitimate’ means of female sexuality. The *Hindustan Times*’ multipanel “Chalti Duniya” of 23 March has Jinnah playing the female to the NWFP/male. The text balloon reads “The Tough-Guy Who Won’t Be Tempted. There were cries of ‘No, No,’ When At A Meeting Dr. Khan Sahib Suggested That He Resign The Frontier Premiership.”<sup>18</sup> The male figure rests his hand on a gun and looks unmoved as Jinnah, dressed provocatively, attempts to persuade him to join. In Jinnah’s hand there is a placard that reads “We Shall Sacrifice All For Pakistan.” In “May It Please Your Highness” (*National Herald*, 13 May) Jinnah, a dancing girl, does a *kathak* dance (“Undivided Punjab” is written on the swirling skirt) for the Maharaja, who sits apparently unmoved. Behind the dancing girl/Jinnah we discover Liaquat and other Muslim League notaries who provide the music

to which Jinnah dances. The cartoon is a tongue-in-cheek comment on the following news item that appears below as a text note: “Mr. Jinnah saw the Maharajah of Patiala in the Imperial Hotel” (see fig. 5).<sup>19</sup> This repetition of a trope fundamental to colonial rule, colonizer/male and colonized/female, with all its attendant ambiguity, combines here with the ambivalent location of the feminine in a Hindu-dominated culture and the evocative turn associated with the sari (a predominantly Hindu form of dress) in this reference.

Even in cartoons offering an allegorical reading that stems from a far more literal reading, by drawing on the notion of the body politic for instance, the message informing the visual text is that Jinnah’s position borders on the illogical, irrational. Consider the following, more literal treatment of Jinnah’s demand of a corridor linking East and West Pakistan. In “The Corridor” (*National Herald*, 27 May) Jinnah forces his arm through the stomach of a Congressman/India (note the globalizing of the Congress and its position here) in order to shake hands with Suhrawardy, who stands on the other side of the man.<sup>20</sup> The

Figure 5.

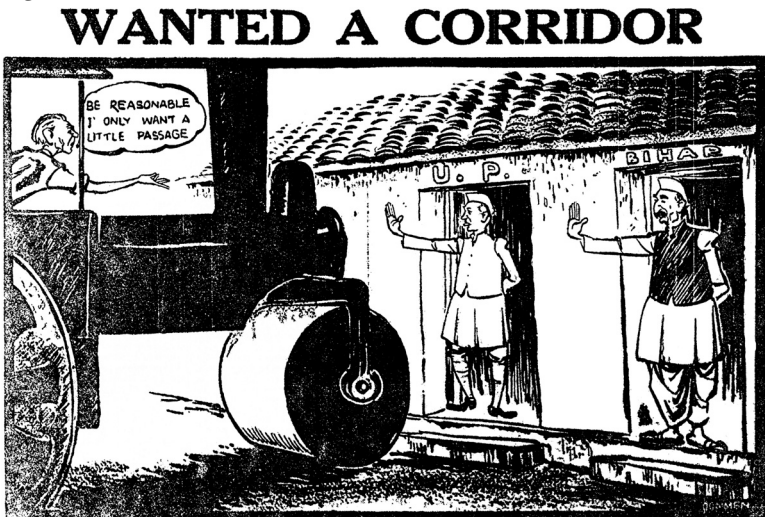
**MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HIGHNESS**



Mr. Jinnah saw the Maha raja of Patiala in the Impe rial Hotel. —News Item.

Congressman's reaction is the primary concern of the cartoon: he has his hands outstretched and is screaming in agony. Quite literally, Jinnah violates the body politic. Another interesting, literal treatment of the subject, that draws on the technology-nature, industrial-rural opposition too identifies Jinnah with the technological only to offer him and his ideological position as the by now familiar illogical one. Consider "Wanted a Corridor" (*Leader*, 27 May). Here, Jinnah is the driver of a steam-roller preparing to bulldoze a rural dwelling. In front of two open doors/"U.P."; "Bihar" to the hut stand two Congressmen, with their hands raised calmly in rejection of Jinnah, who says to them: "Be Reasonable. I only want a little passage" (see fig. 6). Jinnah, the force of the mechanical and industrial attempts an invasion of tranquil, rural, agrarian India/Congress. His decision that the reasonable and logical method of connecting a separated homeland is to bull-doze states/homes (same sense as in *heim* and here the given) is clearly offered as not only illogical but distinctly immoral. It is indeed a violation of the home/state/nation (in many more cartoons visualized as a woman subjected to vivisection or forced to take poison in which Jinnah stands accused of matricide).

Figure 6.





## II

To return to the questions, what authorizes the reading of Jinnah and what kind of narrative does such a figuring authorize? The vast and multi-cultural metaphoric matrix, I have suggested, is grounded in the (colonial inheritance of) discourse of reason. Texts and historical moments that immediately signal a stand-off between the liberal-humanist, rationalist tradition and the (excessive) scientific age, images that employ inherited dualities typical of rationalist thought, nature-culture for instance, and others that reveal an outright arbitrary use of irrelevant images to dramatize illogicality, the principle itself, naturalize, authorize and legitimize the reading offered of Jinnah. The reading, in turn, suggests the large amorphous discourse, loosely describable as rationalism, best 'explains' or 'discovers' modern Indian history: it, this history, it is suggested is replete with scenes of the gothic, scientific ambition, fascist mentality, the irrational, instinctual and the fantastic.<sup>21</sup>

Other questions spring to mind: Why invest so much in Jinnah? And why construct such a narrative? Given that in 1947 he appears to serve more as a means of dealing with the incomprehensible scale of violence that dominated much of north India (in fact, there appears to be a deliberate encouragement of 'forgetting' Jinnah's biography of involvement in the nationalist movement, encouraged, of course, by the genre itself—tending to the synchronic and static—and a filling of the historical screen with a Jinnah inextricably and indelibly associated with the violence of Partition),<sup>22</sup> his importance lies in the fact that he enabled this majority press to provide its readers a means of evading, by othering, the dominant discourse of communalism, so publicly disavowed by Congress leaders as an adequate explanation of the violence engulfing so many communities, especially in north India.<sup>23</sup> And such an evasion was important for at least two reasons: in the rhetoric emerging from the Congress leadership, 'communalism' was an embarrassing indicator of the 'backwardness' of the Indian people and of their containment in atavistic ritual practices. Gyan Pandey points out, for instance, that the reactions of Gandhi and Nehru to the violence of Partition suggest they read ". . . most kinds of mass violence, as the work of the 'backward' people who were unfortunately ill-educated and insufficiently enlight-

ened” (“Prose of Otherness” 195). In their manifest need to participate in an othering of communalism, then, what these cartoons reveal is the absolute cultural divide that existed between the urban, westernized elite and the critical mass of people involved in the many horrific forms that violence took in 1947, the damaging extent of which could hardly have been clear to the former. Many have testified they committed violence in the name of ‘honor,’ both familial and ‘religious.’ There is a critical mass of testimonials where men remember the deaths of their womenfolk, often at the hands of the men, as martyrdom too.<sup>24</sup> Others consider the violence that they and their families experienced, and presumably committed as well, as a price worth paying for its enabling of a ‘homeland.’ Ian Talbot, for instance, reproduces an interview with a Pakistani who survived Partition in which the latter remembers the violence that took many family members as a sacrifice and the family members as martyrs (“I had lost everything, forty people of our (extended) family were martyred, but the happiness I found when I saw the Pakistani flag flying at the Pakistan border, is still living in every cell of my body” (qtd. in Talbot 200)). The othering of violence is, apparently, not as global a need as it was naturalized into being in the rhetoric of the elite.

Communalism was also that against which the Congress leadership defined itself and the future state of India as secular and modern, filling these categories in an expected globalizing way. Indeed, one of the received and privileged readings of the Congress is that it posited ‘nationalism’ as the opposite of ‘communalism,’ an opposition deconstructed by Pandey in his *Construction of Communalism*. There was much riding, then, on evading the discourse of communalism for it was indeed against it that the Congress and its affiliates constructed the, even today, dominant image of their (and the nation’s) modernity. Besides, in 1947, assumptions about secularism, about secularism being the privileged other to communalism, were most likely to be threatened or seriously contested because of the increasing incidence of violence across India (identified in the popular imagination with communalism). In the rhetoric emerging from Congress and its affiliates, we witness the reification of secularism and attendant notions and the bur-

dening of one figure, Jinnah, with all that was considered retrogressive. In 1947, then, the practically quotidian appearance of Jinnah in cartoons appears to have offered the momentary satisfaction that derives from the knowledge that the collective 'we,' naturalized into a complicit, imagined community by virtue of readership, have definitively located the cause of, in this instance, the unthinkable horrific and originary moment of the birth of India, the 'modern' nation.

The presence of the stereotypical other, but, as we have noticed, a rather polyvalent one, thus reveals the instability masked by the assurance Congress and its affiliates displayed, as is typical of majority cultures. It is the underbelly, so to speak, of the confidence. If we push this consideration of the role of visual culture and discourse in determining or reinforcing identity further, we would confront yet another destabilizing function of cartoons on Jinnah associated by Homi Bhabha, most notably, with the stereotype.<sup>25</sup> More specifically, if we apply Bhabha's conclusions about what it is the stereotype signifies in the colonial construction of the indigenous other to the construction of Jinnah by the Congress-affiliated press, we would conclude that the surplus meaning (manifest in the uncertainty surrounding the figure by virtue of intertextual and metaphoric references) suggests Jinnah destabilizes the very security and identity of the dominant, inscribing culture: being identified, in cartoons or elsewhere, with communalism, Jinnah threatened the very globalizing of the Congress approach to statehood necessary for the illusion of its inevitability and its identity with the very desirable mode of modernity. In other words, Jinnah does not 'perform' in ways required—to be the 'same'—and thus threatens the very globalizing impulse typical of a majority culture or ideological position. He thus also threatens the ability to present the same position as an inevitable one. At the same time, as mentioned elsewhere in this article, Jinnah was needed as other, in order that Congress/modernity/state could gain boundaries of definition. In the very contours of the construction we trace, ironically enough, the same strategic function of the other and the same bind (a bind that manifests as the surplus meaning of the narratives implied by the metaphoric and metonymic dimensions of the cartoons) as we find in the colonial construction of the Indian Other.

What, though, of the location of Jinnah in the scientific (and Congress in the agrarian). It is a curious reversal of the general assumption—by 1947 well in place—that Congress stood for modernity and that Jinnah was trapped in feudal modes of thought. However, as we notice, Jinnah is located in the images that remind only of rationalism's excessive reach, its dismissing of moral law. Add to this the fact that he is also located in the irrational, the fantastic, and the instinctual (nature, woman) as we have seen and all we encounter is more ambiguity. The only way in which we can place non-rational and the limit of the rational under one rubric would be to consider both the 'other' side of the rational. By virtue of Jinnah's location on the 'other' side of rationalism, Congress—present even when spatially absent by virtue of the syntactical arrangement of forces in the history involving Jinnah—emerges as the rightful (by virtue of the difference established) and the only (by virtue of the tenuous need for sameness) inheritor of (Enlightenment) rationalism, safe because bound by moral law through choice.<sup>26</sup> Thus, these cartoons privilege the absent Congress without the latter actually having to be turned into a discursive reality. Given the political relations in which Jinnah belonged, the image of the Congress could not but lurk behind every image of Jinnah. Beyond the world of representation, in these cartoons the Congress occupies the place of the mysterious, powerful, and expansively metaphoric whereas Jinnah is contained by visual and linguistic borders, tending to the stereotypical.

The persistent presence of the rationalist inheritance, remarkable precisely because there were more culturally appropriate metaphors and rationale (honor and sacrifice, and these values naturalized as tradition itself, for instance), suggests a faith in what was the foundational discourse of empire. This, of course, extends the discussion to the cartoonists and their readership. We could, and in general would, attribute their employment of western texts to the embedded colonial education of the elite, which naturalized western modes of thought and perception in British India. This would explain the wide-ranging choice of texts, indigenous and western, and their manifest need to other 'uncivilized' behaviour, individually and collectively. Further, one could argue they had much invested, via the discourse of empire, in the

scientific rationalist discourse, as it signaled the much-desired mode of modernity.<sup>27</sup>

However, the employment could also be rather strategic—it could also imply a desire to sell the notion that the incomprehensible scale and nature of violence that constituted Partition was ‘appropriately’ located in more global essentials of character and philosophical developments. Susie Tharu has commented on this tendency that she finds expressed in literature on the Partition: “By representing the partition in ‘universalist’ terms as outrageous. . . these texts inaugurate a narrative and a subjectivity that translates history and politics into a failure of humanism. Further, they obscure, within their lyrical and narrative recomposing of the nation, the conflicts that led to partition as well as a range of other contradictions” (78). Eliding of the specifics, including specific, local cultural formations and inheritances, and hence eliding of the issue of responsibility, did indeed invest other attempts, in other genres, to ‘deal with’ the horrific. So why would it not manifest in the cartoon? On the other hand, perhaps it reflects the unavailability at the time of commensurate metaphors and discourses and the problems attending the genre itself, caught as the genre is in the need to reflect on a process at the very moment of its passing. If the only well established discourse, of communalism, was not to be subscribed to and legitimized, then what other discourse did make sense of the otherwise senseless? It is worth remembering that other segments of society had conceptual frameworks, a cultural logic if you like, that had explanatory power, the concept of honor, for instance.

Finally, the ubiquitous presence of rationalist thought in cartoons on Jinnah could be less a sign of colonial mimicry and evidence of a pre-occupation that had as much to do with this generation’s attempt to think through the complexity of (Indian) modernity, evidence that is, of this preoccupation’s working its way into the lexicon and grab-bag of images, notions and discourses that formed part of the archives of the press’ imagination as it had to do with a conscious attempt at theorizing Jinnah (as the other of rationalism) and constructing the history in which he figures so large at the moment of its making. That is to say, it could be part of the intermixtures and untidy complexities Prakash

speaks of in his meticulous account of the nationalist movement as a movement that did not produce a nation that was a “failed imitation” of “colonial modernity,” but “actualized India as a culturally rooted moral community with a rational will to industrialize and achieve technological mastery” (199). If we approached the cartoon culture of nationalist papers of the time with Prakash’s well-substantiated conclusion in mind, we would find a staging of Congress in the privileged terms of his formulations. That is, Congress is offered as a culturally rooted community (here the Gandhian rhetoric is very useful. Congress leaders almost always appear in cartoons garbed in the ubiquitous Gandhian cap and khadi) and technologically inclined, prepared to adopt the Nehruvian approach to modernizing India (hence cartoons that marginalize Gandhi, albeit by turning him into a deified conscience of the nation). When physically absent, as in the cartoons on Jinnah, the same reading is provided, albeit by different means: Jinnah is the irrational, immoral, excessively rational (a rationalism divorced, that is, from morality) and sometimes downright ‘evil.’ In other words, in the discourse of editorial cartoons, as in the discourse of science in colonial India, we find an anxious attempt to assert and reassert the modernity of India/Congress. Hence Congress is the Allied force to Jinnah’s fascist force, it is the supportive and moral family to Jinnah’s Frankenstein and so on. It is also the rural, Gandhian figure of a vibrant village economy, and familial as well. Hence, too, Jinnah is scientific and industrial excess embodied, the scientific principle abstracted from the moral, nature unorganized—to the Congress’ rural, agricultural principle—‘rightly’ placed in the fantastic, illogical and irrational. This very difference is simply and effectively staged in yet another Hitler cartoon, “Another Gandhi” (*Tribune*, 11 January). A large figure, who looks a lot like Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, with a bag/“Love, Tolerance, Unity of India” over his shoulder walks purposefully toward Bihar. Behind him, Jinnah and Liaquat somewhat ineffectually fling their legs in his direction, in an attempt to boot him out. Jinnah holds a paper in each hand. One reads “Gandhi’s Tour” and the other “Summon Suhrawardy; Exchange of Population; Hostages.” Liaquat address Jinnah with: “Hoshyar Fuehrer Mein I See Fresh Danger Ahead.” Clearly, “Love, Tolerance and Unity”

are so superior that they render Jinnah's evil intentions ineffectual and equally clearly Congress is the 'inheritor' of, or genealogically linked with, the liberal humanist tradition.

### III

The specific construction of Jinnah in the nationalist press will not come as a surprise to those acquainted with statist accounts of deteriorating Congress-League relations, especially in the 1940s. The view that Jinnah was the driving force behind the Muslim League and that he was, single-handedly, the architect of Pakistan remains a common perception, as does the perception of the Congress as a secular, progressive force. Such views, have of course been contested and continue to be so with more studies of regional politics of the time and of the fractures and fissures that obtained within the parties appearing.<sup>28</sup> The widening of the field of statist history to include class and gender issues also force the field open.

The value of studies of the anti-colonial movement in terms of cultural space, which remains a marginal field at best even today (with the exception of the Partition, which is beginning to attract much scholarly interest), lies in the fact that such studies reveal the mutually constitutive relationship of political and cultural narratives that were being written at a time generally accepted by everyone to be a momentous one. Political cartoons, for instance, suggest not only by what means Jinnah gained the dubious distinction of being the Other but also suggest reasons the public participated in the Othering of Jinnah encouraged by the rhetoric emerging from the Congress had little to do with political and ideological differences. If the letters written to the Congress Working Committee are any indication, the experience of marginalization was qualitatively linked with a sense of a complete loss of agency. From being a 'freedom' movement, the anti-colonial movement had turned into one where the object of attack was everyone and no one and the attackers were equally everyone and no one (theoretically one was attacker by virtue of being Muslim, Hindu or Sikh and attacked by virtue of the same mark of identity, now singled out as the primary marker of identity). For this change no one had answers, except the one

which was deligitimized precisely by its location in the atavistic and uncivilized—communalism. The confusion surrounding the actantial position acted itself out in the most horrific of ways in the months leading to partition with ever-shifting rumored boundaries in the Punjab and Bengal led to one community feeling momentarily empowered, enough to attack the other, only to In all this uncertainty there was the one constant—Jinnah.

Aside from being of value for the simple fact that it factors in what statist histories have traditionally ignored—the critical mass of people in whose name leaders made the momentous decision that the interests of the people would be best served if there were to be two nations following the end of the ‘Raj,’ not one—a study of the time in terms of its cultural spaces serves to indicate how the people were ‘reading’ the moment and, indeed, what the moment was for them.

## Notes

- 1 J. N. Sahni, a well-known journalist of the time, comments that “. . . editorials in those days interested readers more than the news” (30). Milton Israel discusses the fact that editorial policy of newspapers receiving financial assistance was monitored by the latter. He writes: “Government concentrated its advertising revenue in the major Anglo-Indian and Indian papers which would guarantee a reasonable circulation and readership. It was these papers whose editorial policies most interested the Home Department” (58). A history of the Indian press’ subjection to censorship is provided in an appendix in my book entitled *Bearing Witness: Partition, Independence, End of the Raj*, forthcoming from the University of Calgary Press.
- 2 In 1947, a number of cartoons comment on this troubling matter of exclusion, or marginalizing of the people, in the last stage of the freedom movement. The one that I found most telling is “Kia Ho Raha Hai?” (“What’s Happening?”) (*Janata*, 1 June). A peasant, whose anxiety is signalled by the sweat pouring off his face, stands outside a closed door that has a sign, “Last (?) Conference,” posted on it. Sounds of battle—“Dominion Status,” “Notional Zones,” “Division,” and so on—emerge from behind the door.
- 3 The *editorial cartoon* is defined in the *World Encyclopedia of Cartoons* as a cartoon that is “meant to illustrate or amplify a point, whether political, satirical, social or rhetorical.” The *political cartoon* is generally defined, here by David Low, as “a drawing, representational or symbolic, that makes a satirical, witty, or humorous point” (qtd. in Harrison 43). It usually comments “on public and political matters” (Rowland 11) and typically appears in editorial pages.



Jawaharlal Nehru also defined the cartoon when speaking of one of India's most famous cartoonists of the time, Shankar. He writes: "a true cartoonist is not just a maker of fun but one who sees the inner significance of an event and by a few master strokes impresses it on others" (qtd. in Shankar). I use the terms editorial cartoon and political cartoon interchangeably.

- 4 For instance, the *Evening Star* (a Calcutta daily supportive of the Muslim League) published a letter to the editor written by a "decent citizen" on 29 May 1947, in which the writer upbraids the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* for publishing an irreverent cartoon on Jinnah in its 18 May issue. In this cartoon, apparently Jinnah was depicted "as a shoe-shine boy, polishing the shoes of Mr. Winston Churchill." The writer adds the following comment: "It was an indecent cartoon. . . . Obviously it was meant only to wound the feelings of the Muslims" and warns of its effect: "naturally such provocations cannot but add to communal ill-feelings." Similarly, a daily supportive of the Congress, the *National Herald*, expressed outrage when *Qandil*, an Urdu newspaper, published an irreverent cartoon on Gandhi. The former re-published the cartoon (in its 16 September 1947 issue) along with a lengthy comment directed to ". . . all decent-minded Leaguers," part of which I reproduce here: "It is with a deep sense of humiliation and sorrow and with apologies to Gandhiji, whose Christ-like spirit no scurrility can touch, that we publish this cartoon. . . . This is the depth to which yellow journalism in Pakistan has sunk."

A comment about 'self-censorship.' In 1947, editors of Indian newspapers formed part of an ad hoc advisory committee that monitored press reports on 'communal' rioting to ensure these were not in violation of the Code (Basu 608).

- 5 The nationalist press was the dominant sector of the press. It includes papers that can be considered to have been closely aligned with the anti-colonial movement and thus become supporters of the 'mainstream' political group with which the movement itself was associated for decades, the Congress. They span the spectrum of political support for the Congress, from critical to identificatory but shared with it a preference for a 'modern,' secular, democratic state, and an undivided India. They formed a block distinct from newspapers closely affiliated with other political groups, such as the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha. This majority press occupied roughly the same position vis-à-vis the (English) reading public as did the Indian National Congress vis-à-vis the base of popular support. Press and Congress expressed, in general, the benevolence typical of a majority community, considering their political and social platform to be secular and modern but others—such as the Muslim League press—considered them to be primarily and fundamentally 'Hindu.'

The *Hindustan Times* was founded in 1923. Its initial purpose, according to Sahni, was to promote the cause of the Sikhs as well as "support the national movement" (*Truth* 3). The *Janata* was a weekly closely associated with the

Congress Socialist Party, a group within the Congress. The *Leader* was established in 1909 in Allahabad. It was often critical of Congress policy, especially of Gandhian tactics such as non-co-operation. The *National Herald* was founded in 1938 by Jawaharlal Nehru, who was a frequent contributor to the paper as well. According to Parthsarthy, this paper “was in the vanguard of the freedom struggle and became a propaganda forum for the leaders of the movement” (304) and, of all Indian papers, it “suffered most from government oppression and persecution” (152). The *Pioneer* was established in the 1870s also in Allahabad, and was the dominant Anglo-Indian paper in the north. In 1932, some princely states acquired control and they extended ownership to the land-owning class. The paper was identified as “an establishment paper” of the princely elite (Israel 213). This paper too was frequently critical of the Congress. The *Tribune* was established in Lahore in 1881. It reflected the view of the Punjabi elite. It was often critical of the Congress. The *Tribune* was not published between 16 August and 24 September, 1947, and relocated first to Simla then to Ambala because of the Partition.

- 6 This is not to deny that other segments of the press, with other political affiliations, such as the Muslim League press (*Dawn*, *Eastern Times*, the *Star*), engaged in othering and by near-identical means. However, their market share was considerably smaller and, being the ‘minority’ culture, they spent much time and energy spinning and respinning a narrative of victimization. Hence, Gandhi, the other in the League press, figures differently and for different reasons than does Jinnah in the nationalist press. Their editorial culture, in 1947, merits its own discussion.
- 7 In the popular imagination of the Congress-affiliated elite, modernity, in itself synonymous with progress, was identical with a capitalist economy, and scientific and technological advance.

Recently, Gyan Prakash has offered an interesting interpretation of the Indian narrative of modernity that evolved during the colonial era, an interpretation that challenges the by now naturalized assumption that modernity in India merely mimicked western modernity (and badly at that). In *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of India*, he cautions: “There is simply no way to tidy up this messy history of India and narrate it as the victory of capital over community, modernity over tradition, West over non-West. These neat oppositions exist side by side with the history of their untidy complexities and intermixtures. One does not negate the other—difference does not cancel identity, hybridity does not dissolve opposition, capital does not erase community—but rather, one enables the other’s reformulation” (234).

- 8 Judith Brown notes that of the 15.1 per cent of India’s literate population, in 1941, only 18.9 per cent were literate in English (260). This represents 2.8 per cent of the total literate population. The two most exhaustive discussions of colonial education and the complexity of the discourse of empire in colonial India

are Gauri Viswanathan's *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* and Gyan Prakash's *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India*.

- 9 The most infamous images of Partition are of train loads of butchered bodies arriving at railway stations, miles-long columns of refugees (it took some columns three days to go past a given point) being attacked, raped, forcibly circumcised, mutilated and murdered. Khushwant Singh's novel, *Train to Pakistan*, was the first novel in English to treat the subject. It was published in 1956. Since then there has been more by way of fictional and non-fictional testimonial. The two recent studies that both reproduce and offer discussion of testimonials by survivors of Partition are Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* and Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries*. The governments of India and Pakistan have published official accounts that provide statistical information on numbers dislocated, number of refugee camps, and provide detailed information about the impact Partition had on communities where, in many instances, classes of trades were left vacant since many trades were community specific (shoe makers for instance). Indian governmental publications include: *After Partition* (Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1948), *Millions on the Move: The Aftermath of Partition* (Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, [1949]) and *Facts About the Recovery of Abducted Persons in India and Pakistan* (Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs, 1953). The Pakistan government's *The Journey to Pakistan: A Documentation of Refugees of 1947* (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 1993) and Ian Talbot's *Freedom's Cry: The Popular Dimension in the Pakistan Movement and Partition Experience in North-West India* offer facts and figures based on Pakistani documents.
- 10 It is a fact that as much as the press reflects the mood of the nation, at least that of its readership, it reinforces the marginalization of the people and the sense of panic by its naturalizing of a narrowed political landscape.
- 11 Jinnah had been attacked before. In fact, one can trace the beginnings of a discourse we recognize as the discourse of othering to the early 1930s. Such othering was fuelled in no small part by comments such as the following made by Nehru in a chapter he added to his autobiography in 1941: "Mr. M.A. Jinnah's leadership, was aggressively *anti-nationalist* and narrow-minded . . . There was no constructive suggestion, no attempt to even meet half-way, no answers to questions as to what exactly they [the League] wanted. *It was a negative programme of hatred and violence, reminiscent of Nazi methods*" (emphasis mine 605).
- 12 Of course, the missing piece of logic, in these cartoons, is the given for this press—that Jinnah's Pakistan demand was blamed for the communal strife: Jinnah authors the Pakistan demand (according to this reading, anyway), and the demand in turn leads to Partition, a division that was responsible for devastating violence. This spelling out of the entire logic of the association is to be found in "Haunted" (*Leader*, 16 Sept), that appears to draw on *Frankenstein*

and *A Christmas Carol*. A small, well-dressed, panicky Jinnah, with monocle flying, flees from two towering hooded figures/“Ghosts of the Victims of Riots” whose skeletal fingers point accusingly at him. They ask him: “Has Pakistan Solved Any Problems” and “Or Has It Multiplied Problems?” The fact that these figures, Partition abstracted and embodied at the same time, haunt him and no one else (there is no other figure in the frame) suggests he is the cause of the catastrophe and must bear the burden of the history he has authored (not flee it). It is interesting to note, however, that the visual syntax suggests an undecidability when it comes to focus. The distortion of perspective—making the ‘ghosts’ larger than life and Jinnah a midget in the face of the dead (here too there are echoes of Frankenstein)—suggests a greater preoccupation with the horrific turn in Indian history that Partition represents and an inadequacy of even the ‘located’ agent.

- 13 It is interesting to note that Partition seems to have made even the non-verbal incommensurate with the experience. Many newspapers offer photographs rather than cartoons and, at the very least, alongside cartoons, especially post-August 13 or so and extending into September 1947. In “Photographs of Agony,” John Berger writes tellingly about what it is the choice of photography to ‘tell’ war stories suggests (his analysis, of course, predates live coverage of war like we have seen with the Iraq war and now with the war waged in Afghanistan). “We are seized by them” (38), he writes. Of the war photograph’s pointing out to readers the separation of “our time” from “its time” he writes: “We try to emerge from the moment of the photograph back into our lives. As we do so, the contrast is such that the resumption of our lives appears to be a hopelessly inadequate response to what we have just seen” (38). So, perhaps, there is a recognition that the photograph only underlines the unavailability of adequate discourse and action.
- 14 Liaquat Ali Khan served as the General Secretary of the Muslim League, became Jinnah’s Chief Lieutenant in the Central Assembly and was Pakistan’s first Prime Minister with Jinnah choosing to serve as Governor General. Liaquat was assassinated in October 1951.

The only article I have come across that attempts to do a longitudinal study of a regional newspaper—*Vartman*—suggests the choice of textual layering was shared by the local and regional levels. In “The *Vartman* and Pakistan: The ‘Daily’ Reality of Partition,” Saumya Gupta states that in the mid-1940s, “The preferred and oft-repeated analogy for Gandhi and Jinnah became that of Chamberlain and Hitler—Gandhi, like Chamberlain, bending backwards to appease the firebrand, aggressive Hitleresque Jinnah” (183).

- 15 Hitler is treated similarly in some cartoons published in British dailies in the early 1940s. See Douglas 76, 196.
- 16 Here the opposition delegitimizes the ‘Muslim’ faith along with the figure (Jinnah’s face is imposed on the sickle moon). The cartoon thus discovers a need, expressed by other political groups too at the time, to dismiss the symbolic sys-

tems of the other along with leaders (which, in turn, suggests the role played by symbology in the attempt to build credible narratives of empowerment, a fact that is pointed out by Talbot in his discussion of the “symbolic significance” of the Muslim National Guards. Their uniforms, the colours of the Muslim league flag, all worked to symbolize unity of the Muslims (71–72). A comment on the surplus meaning that attends the particular construction of natural forces in the cartoon: given the moon reflects the light of the sun, pushing the visual syntax to its semantic limit we would have to conclude that the ill-regard the cartoonists express for Jinnah extends to the Congress. After all, the sun is the source of the moon’s light!

- 17 Sardar Vallabhai Patel was one of the leaders of the nationalist movement and a prominent member of the Indian National Congress. He, along with Nehru, Gandhi and others was imprisoned many times by the colonial government. He was the home minister, minister of states and deputy minister in the first Indian government and died in 1950.
- 18 Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (born c. 1890) was a Muslim leader who opposed Partition and worked for an independent, united, secular India. Like his friend, Mahatma Gandhi, he believed in nonviolent civil disobedience.
- 19 Kathak is a form of dance typical of courtly, Muslim-influenced culture of parts of north India. This dance, performed by women, was a form of entertainment for local rulers.

As many before me have noted, the nation and the nationalist movement were gendered too. However, here the image of the female employed was typically that of mother or wife. In the categorization of the female, then, we witness the same naturalized division as we find in other expressions of Indian culture, these being mother and whore. See Partha Chatterjee’s “The Nationalist Resolution of the Women’s Question.” *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*. Eds. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, 233–53. In this definitive article, Chatterjee speaks of the co-opting of traditional Hindu texts during the anti-colonial era in the interest of conflating nation with the feminine, constructing Indian identity as one based in values of sacrifice, morality (purity) and non-violence. He writes: “. . . it is undeniable that the specific ideological form in which we know the Sati-Savitri-Sita construct in the modern literature and arts of India today is wholly a product of the development of a dominant middle class culture coeval with the era of nationalism. It served to emphasize with all the force of mythological inspiration . . . the ‘spiritual’ qualities of self-sacrifice, benevolence, religiosity, etc” (248–49). See also Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, “The Story of Draupadi’s Disrobing: Meaning for Our Times.” *Signposts: Gender Issues in Post-Independence India*, 331–58.

- 20 Husain Shaheed Suhrawardy was the leader of the Muslim League party of Bengal and the Chief Minister of the province in 1946. He moved to East Pakistan in 1948, left the Muslim League and subsequently formed his own party.

- 21 A favorite image from the discourse of the fantastic is from the quintessential oriental text, *Thousand and One Nights*. In “Letting the Genie Loose” (*Leader*, 19 March), Jinnah sits in an armchair while a towering genie in a cloud glares at him. The bottle out of which the genie has just emerged is labelled “League Ideology.” In the same paper, the 7 September “Cavalcade” devotes one frame to Jinnah which also draws on the *Thousand and One Nights*. The caption reads: “The Pen Is Mightier Than The Sword says Quaid-e-Azam.” Jinnah is imaged as a puny man with a feather in his hand while over him towers a giant with a sword in hand.
- 22 Given the fact that 1947 is the year that ‘dates’ Indian history (turning it into a ‘pre’ and a ‘post’) and that it was the culminating year of a lengthy process of anti-colonial agitation, it is also the year that provides our dominant impression of the forces at play.
- 23 In “Prose of Otherness,” Pandey comments on the by now commonly held view that Congress leaders gave in to the partitioning of India because of ‘communalism.’ He writes: “Historians have argued that it was the explosion of violence, amounting to civil war, which convinced many who were until then strongly opposed to Partition that any other course would be even more fatal: that it led not only to the Congress leadership but large numbers of ordinary ‘non-political’ Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs to accept Partition as inevitable” (206).
- As Pandey states in *The Construction of Communalism*, the term ‘communalism’ has a very specific meaning when used to describe community relations in the sub-continent: “In its common Indian usage the word ‘communalism’ refers to a condition of suspicion, fear and hostility between members of different religious communities” (6).
- 24 Butalia’s *Other Side* offers many testimonials in which men remember the deaths of their womenfolk in terms of ‘honour.’ For a discussion of such testimonials see Chapters 2 and 3 of my book, *Bearing Witness*.
- 25 See Bhabha’s “The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism.” *The Location of Culture*, 102–22.
- 26 It is interesting to note that this is precisely how Nehru liked to imagine himself. In his autobiography he writes that although he considers himself a Marxist, to some extent his “roots” are “still perhaps partly in the nineteenth century, and [he has] been too much influenced by the humanist liberal tradition to get out of it completely” (591).
- 27 Prakash writes that by “the early twentieth century . . . the authority of science had become widely dispersed. Fields ranging from social and religious reform to literary writings, and urban spaces ranging from major colonial cities to small district towns witnessed the permeation of science as a grammar of transformation” (63). He also comments on the place of the elite, “Western-educated men” (64), in the as the ideology itself gained ground: “thought limited in size and differentiated by religion, rank, and language, the class formed by these men came to represent modernity and to achieve prominence in colonial India” (64).

28 The benevolent view of the Congress has been challenged somewhat in academic circles but not in the popular view. The former has been looking critically at the Congress for at least the last thirty years, with historians such as Stanley Wolpert critiquing the Congress for its refusal to accept the reality of drift, along religious lines, between constituencies in the 1920s (30) and others such as Bimal Prasad critiquing it for its refusal to deal with communal problems, a strategy that reached “its high watermark in 1936–37” (307). Many, in fact, comment on the centrality of 1936–37 to a critique of the Congress, which refused to form a coalition ministry in U.P. Yet the popular view remains the easier, stereotypical one.

Others, such as Robert Frykenberg, critique the Congress for the blindness typical of a majority community and comment on the role played by such blindness in determining history. He writes that any group “which is dominant” enjoys “hegemonic power and authority” and “overtly” controls “the institutions which lie at the centre of a complex and pluralistic society” (14). It claims to “represent society as a whole, or at least its ‘majority,’” and “claiming to speak for the future . . . characterises itself and is described as being ‘modern’” (14). He notes that the Congress, being the dominant “minority” at the time was enabled to express what he describes as a “softer form of fundamentalism” (23) that was “covert” and “amorphous” (19). The benevolent view of Congress is matched by a number of historical analyses that offer Jinnah as a reactionary. To quote only one historian: “it is difficult even today to contest the validity of the argument of Nehru and his colleagues, that religion is not a satisfactory basis for nationality in the modern world, that multi-religious, multilingual, and even multiracial societies should seek a political solution within the framework of a federal structure” (Nanda 166).

The Pakistani view of the relations between Congress and Jinnah is well represented by M.A.H. Ispahani, I.H. Quraishi, Zahid Husain. In general, this view blames the dominant culture for manipulating religious and secular terminology to its advantage. The best-known and revisionist reading is to be found in Ayesha Jalal’s book, *The Sole Spokesman, Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* was published in 1985. She looks at the contradiction inherent between Jinnah’s actions and rhetoric to prove (what had been earlier only a suggestion made by some historians) that Pakistan was intended by Jinnah to be a bargaining chip. The strategy worked till 1946, when he signalled his acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan, which allowed for a Muslim block within the Indian state. 1947, according to her, “saw the tragic collapse of Jinnah’s strategy—tragic, because the Quaid-I-Azam had always tried to keep himself above communalism in its cruder forms and had cherished his own vision of Indian unity” (208). Others focus more on the reasons for the Pakistan movement than on Jinnah, but make the same point about the blindness of the dominant culture to the rhetoric of minoritism. Gyan Pandey, for instance, notes in “The Prose

of Otherness,” that in India “. . . the history of the movement for Pakistan gets extremely short shrift. As the Other of genuine nationalism, it is the history of a political consciousness gone wrong and is painted in entirely negative colours” (204). Ian Talbot makes the point that the desire for a separate homeland is automatically disqualified in historical evaluations of the nationalist movement (one of the contexts in which the comment is made is when he speaks about the Partition, that a comprehensive understanding of the moment must include “the enthusiasm which many shared for Pakistan, and the sense of purpose and direction given by the hope of a Muslim homeland” [143]) as did C.H. Phillips and Mary Doreen Wainwright before him in the “Introduction” to *The Partition of India* (see p. 12). Summaries of the many contestations that obtain in Indian historiography can be found in the Mushirul Hasan’s *India’s Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilization* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), his *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom* (New Delhi: Roli Press, 1995) Vol 1 and in *Bearing Witness*.

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