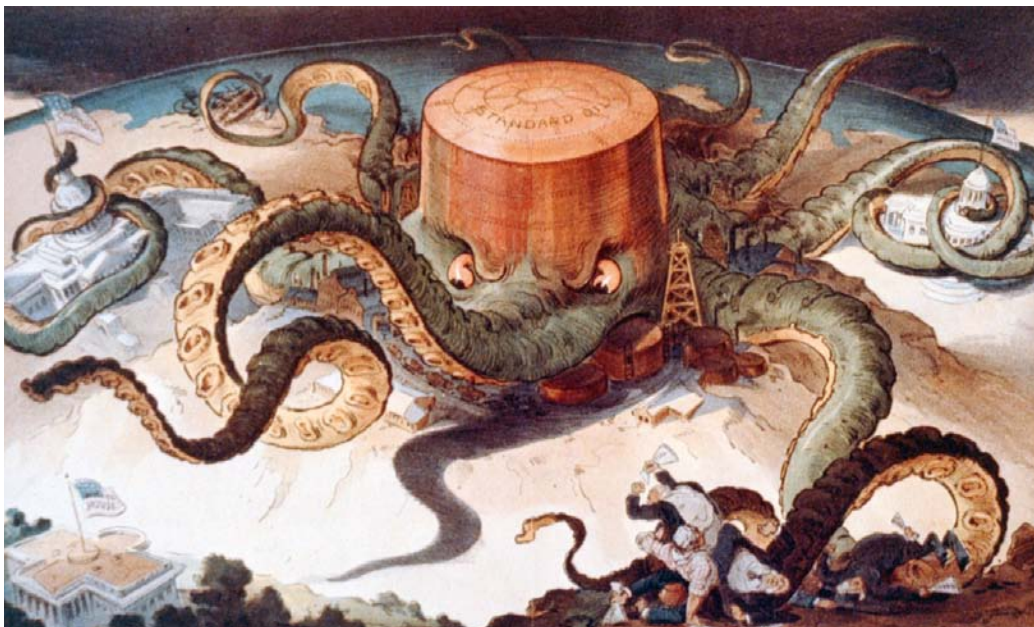


Cartoons for the Classroom

Presented by NIEonline.com and the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC)



Joseph Keppler / Puck Magazine, 1904

SOURCE: <http://vulgararmy.com/2009/06/01/standard-oil/>

Between the lines

Standard Oil was one of the world's first and largest multinational corporations until it was broken up by the Supreme Court in 1911. Today's Exxon Mobil Corporation is a direct descendant. The magazine, Puck, published this cartoon in 1904 showing an oil tank/octopus labeled "Standard Oil." Its tentacles grasp the steel, copper, and shipping industries as well as a state house and the U.S. Capitol. One tentacle reaches for the White House.

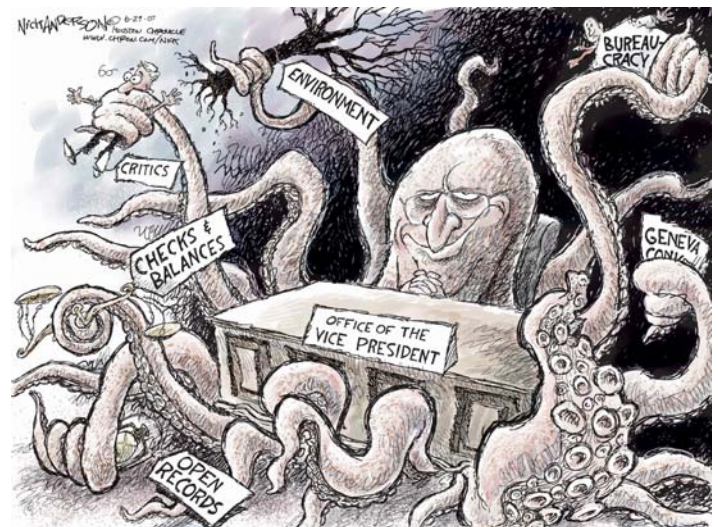
Symbolism: Octopus

Talking points

The octopus has long been a useful symbol for cartoonists. Its tentacles make a convenient metaphor for a grasping, threatening, strangling force. In Keppler's 1904 drawing, the Standard Oil monopoly ensnares other industries as well as our political leadership. Explain how the octopus symbol works in the others.



Courtesy Nate Beeler / Washington Examiner



Courtesy Nick Anderson / Houston Chronicle

Additional resources

Association of American Editorial Cartoonists
<http://editorialcartoonists.com/>

More by Nate Beeler
<http://editorialcartoonists.com/cartoon/browse.cfm/BeeleN>

More by Nick Anderson
<http://blogs.chron.com/nickanderson/>

More on octopuses in political cartoons: <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/gilded/power/text1/text1read.htm>