
PLACE OF CARTOON IN REMOLDING CHARACTER FOR SUSTAINABLE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Cartoon is often seen as a humorous form of expression when compared with other genres in visual arts. It satirizes nature and depicts absurdities in human characters. Thus, cartoonists in Nigeria have used their creative skills to address serious issues in Nigeria political space. Often, they address many socio-political happenings, using satirical imagery encoded with typography and semiotic sagacity to pass important messages with positive impact on the lives of many Nigerians who pass through various challenges on a daily basis simply because of the poor management of Nigerian economy by the political elite. This research, therefore, examines the themes and composition of some of the cartoons by three selected Nigerian cartoonists: Akinwale Onipede, Jimoh Ganiyu and Mike Asukwo who have used their works to express issues on education, morality, politics and economy. The study offers a qualitative analysis of works of the selected cartoonists, the analyses centered on the pictorial and iconographic representation of the cartoons. The study adopted Charles Sanders Peirce's (1867) Social Semiotic/Semiology framework for its analyses. More so, the society largely pays more attention to the humorous and entertainment aspect of cartoons, rather than the important information the cartoonists embedded in their works. Numerous cartoonists have creatively bound the texts and images to humorously communicate serious socio-political issues in Nigeria. This study maintains that cartoons, apart from being forms of entertainment, work better in creating a better society by educating the citizens on social ills and the need for good governance.

Keywords: Art, Cartoon, Satirical, Education, Society, Economy and Development

Introduction

Cartoons are visual elements embellished with the power to communicate, inform, illustrate, entertain and educate by presenting serious societal happenings in a mirthful way. One of the powers of the cartoon, therefore, lies in 'its ability to crystallize complex issues into a simple metaphor' (Harrison 1981, p. 14). Cartoons have played very significant roles in various practices of life, ranging from education, politics, religion, history, family, dispute, corruption,

entertainment, culture, insecurity, economy, among others. These are sensitive and serious areas of human existence, yet cartoon, which is widely regarded as a witty art has been able to dabble into those areas successfully with elusive criticism skillfully glazed with humour and satire. Cartoons amuse, yet they are veritable means of exposing societal ills and strategic way of conveying messages of deep and magnitude interpretation. Bricker (2022) explains that:

Essentially the cartoon and caricature works were framed or designed in such a way that every folk irrespective of- rich or poor, literate, or illiterate, deaf or dumb—can have the taste. Even before, if cartoon and caricature is to be studied through the lens of the term ‘satire’ then very much ebullient to have some understanding of satire (Kar & Das, 2024).

Though, cartoons usually appear in an amusing way because of the humorous approaches cartoonists use in depicting their characters or scenes, they are usually more than mere witticism. The elements of arts and designs are carefully used with application of the principles of arts or design to guide the conceptualization. As humorous as any cartoon may appear, they are powerful. Thus, ‘the use of symbols and visual metaphors to simplify and communicate complicated ideas and concepts is a common phenomenon in the representation of cartoons’ (Eko, 2010).

Cartoons and illustrations have a long history in artistic expression. From the Stone Age to medieval period, till the contemporary time, cartoonists played a significant part in socio-political state of affairs in Nigeria. According to Samson and Huber (2007), ‘cartoon was posited to be, a joke told in a picture (p.1).’ Cartoons have served as one of the major artistic medium used in discussing and documenting political and historical happening in any society. The works of

Akinola Lasekan (1916-72) are still discussed and analyzed for the portrayal of activism they are known for.

Akinola Lasekan is applauded to be the first Nigerian artist (cartoonist) who worked for West African Pilot Newspapers (1948-61). He channeled his works toward activism and protest. Fosu (1986) opines that his [Lasekan’s] cartoons during the colonial rule were ‘provocative’ and ‘weapons of political propaganda against the colonialism and for promoting national consciousness’ (p. 8). It is the responsibilities of cartoonists to create satirical and humorously visual and veritable forms to communicate cognitively and aesthetically in order to ensure that we have a well-informed, educated and fearless society. Unfortunately, cartoonists are not getting the much desired accolades for their selfless artistic expressions. As Onipede (2013) has stated, ‘it is paradoxical that cartoonists make people happy but many Nigerian cartoonists are unhappy’ (p.12). Like every other socio-political activist, criticizing and lampooning the government especially in the military era, the role of cartoonists was not an easy task, Akinola Lasekan was detained for a month during the government of Aguiyi Ironsi in 1966. Another Nigerian artist and activist who has also been a victim of government pestering is Jelili Atiku. Onipede explains that:

Cartoonists make people happy with their cartoons and thus, it can be concluded that cartoonists are happy people. “YES” because they are fulfilled by the satisfaction they derive from making other

people happy and “NO”, because of the treatment meted to them in the media environment where their idiosyncrasies are not understood. (Onipede, 2007, p. 5)

The above notion avows to the fact that most cartoonists engage in art activities because of their commitment to the practice, modeling character, enthusiasm for history preservation, educating the populace, correcting societal injuries through their arts and making people happy. Mike (1980) in his fable witticism describes the life of an average cartoonist as that of:

A patient who went to see a doctor to complain about his melancholy, the medical practitioner examined him, and observed no health challenges that might lead to such complain. The doctor then stated: I can't find anything wrong with you but I have some advice. There is a circus in town; go there tonight. You will see a clown who is so funny that you won't stop laughing for a week. 'Doctor', said the patient, 'I am the clown'.

In some cases, cartoonists are like comic characters or comedians who are so familiar with different angles of the stage and screen. To them, little are funny because they draw their creativity from several serious issues in the society; they use their artistic skills to inculcate civility and model good character in the society. Cartoonists use different forms of expression in ensuring that

both the entertainment part of their art, education and information are well received by the audience. For example, the popular Nigerian comic artist, Babatunde Omidina (otherwise known as *Baba Suwe*: 22 August 1958 – 22 November 2021), who was known for his hilarious character when he was alive, and was also capable of cracking enlightening and entertaining jokes. Aside from his gaudy laughter, he also joked while appearing to be crying. Babatunde Omidina had passed several cogent messages through his witty personality. In one of his numerous scenes, where he just returned from prison, on his way home, he attempted to get some items from some street hawkers. The peak of the scene was how he exclaimed after hearing that the price of a sausage was N25. Whereas he had already bought two *sausages* and '*ice water*' (cold water) which was sold for N5, and he paid *Muri kan* (i.e. N20), requesting for N9 balance. Meanwhile, the cost of the items bought was N55. He queried the sellers about the value of dollar at the time, and if Nigeria's situation had gone so bad within the short time he was imprisoned.

Carefully looking at the scenario above and relating it to the present state of Nigeria, it is apparent that prices of goods and services changed even at the point of transaction if the buyer or negotiator does not decide on time. Babatunde Omidina added another humor to the scene by requesting for the names of the hawkers, stating that he will employ one in a ministry, and also asked if the second hawker could work in a '*capsule*' (local government council), asserting that he would arrange for their employment, since it is becoming a tradition that people come out

of prison to assume a position of authority in Nigeria. That and many others creative works of comic artistes are still relevant to date despite being old-fashioned. So also are the works of early Nigerian cartoonist like Akinola Lasekan, Dele Jegede, Josy Ajiboye, Akinwale Onipede, Cliff Ogiugo, Kenny Adamson, Dotun Gboyega, Kalu Mba and others whose works still extensively portray contemporary situations of the country, though, many of the prominent works were done during the military rule.

Cartoonists are activists and crusaders of justice in society. At a point where words or actions may seem to be too apparent to the target, satirize, caricature or cartoon are used to convey the message. Many of the Nigerian cartoonists actively use their arts to expose some vital secrets in visual form because they believe that cartoon is very easy to decode when encountered. One of the contemporary cartoonists, Jimoh Akinloye Ganiyu stated in an interview when he was asked why he chose to be a cartoonist as his means of activism out of all the visual forms of expressions, and he stated as follows:

I chose the medium of cartooning for my political activism because it is quicker, faster, louder, and easier to decipher by the public. I see cartoons as a means of taking an artistic obligation to correct my society's ills. My scholarly works on cartooning also foreground the medium as a democratic art form, handy in interrogating socio-political issues and serving as visual historical texts." (D.

Isiguzo, personal communication, August 8, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

Cartoons are known to be pictorial representation of concept to communicate ideas, the ideas are represented with various elements including dialogue (text), icons and signs. These are utilized in a cagey manner in order to communicate. This research work adopted Charles Sanders Peirce's (1867) Social Semiotic framework for its analyses, an American Philosopher (1839–1914). The application of this theory to the study is essentially to further explore the Charles Sanders Peirce's concept which has been widely recognized as one of the pioneers of the epistemology in the history semiotic. According to Zoest (1991), 'Charles Sanders Peirce is well-known as a pioneer of pragmatism doctrine who has provided the basic in the general theory of signs through his writings, and texts'.

The multidisciplinary theory of semiotic adopted in this study is to further explore the interconnectivity between signs, symbols and communication. 'Semiotic derives from the Greek semesion, meaning sign, semainon which means signifier, and semainomenon meaning signified or indication. Generally, semiotics is the study of signs or an epistemology of the existence or the actuality of sign in societal life' (Halina & Yakina, 2014). Since cartoons rendition are not necessarily detailed in some cases, the use of semiotics in cartoon or art form makes the message self-explanatory (easy to understand) to the audience, semiotic is a

form of non-verbal expression with deep interpretation and meaning. The theory has been successfully applied in diverse fields of study and disciplines including: philosophy, linguistic and literature, history, arts anthropology, psychology, archeology, architecture, mathematics and so on.

Communicating through signs and symbols

Cartoon is categorized as a branch of graphic art. While graphic is an art of communication, this genre of art meticulously deals with aesthetics and getting society informed, either as a form of announcement or advertising. Abejide (2003) describes communication as the 'art of putting in common, that is the sharing of thoughts, ideas or knowledge by two or more people' (89). Numerous graphic works have been used in diverse medium to express, impact, communicate, model character and correcting societal ills. The medium is sometimes targeted towards enlightenment, education, having a corruption-free society and economic development. The medium of communication includes cartoon and illustration, newspaper (online and print), magazine, billboard, banner, pamphlet, poster, television commercial, comic strip, gravity, mural painting among others. Communication and information have been vital aspects of human endeavor from the pre-historic age to the social-media age. A society that is lagging in information is prone to ignorance and underdevelopment. To be informed, there must be effective communication.

Humans have engaged in diverse means of communication in sending and receiving information from one point to another, and the mode of communication are prone to changes as the world is advancing and globalized. Lunenberg (2010) is in agreement that the term 'communication' has its origin in Latin from the word *communis*. However, he affirms that communication means 'common', which suggests that there must be a common understanding of the message between the source and the receiver concerning the message being communicated. Communication could also means dialoguing to or with some other party either near or far away, physical via speaking, telephone calls, text messages, body language, signs, symbols and many more. Communication transpires in both human and non-human beings. Nonetheless, it is imperative to note that non-humans do not speak but are likely to converse via gestures or symbolic behaviour. In this light, some cartoons are self-explanatory while others require dialogue in order to communicate effectively. Elesin (2013) stresses that the essence of language in a cartoon representation is of utmost significance and that there is need for comprehension of some cartoons without any form of dialogue among the characters (46). Communication with visuals is a pictorial representation of information such as topography, photography, signs, traffic codes, symbols and designs. Television and video clips are the electronic form of visual communication (Aarti, 2011).

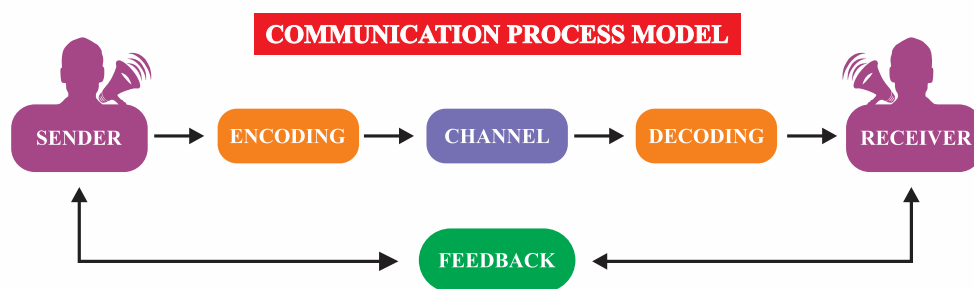


Plate 1

Communication Process Model, Source: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/>

Illustration: Kofoworola Wale Ridwan, 2024.

Daniel (2016) asserts that the communication process has gone full circle and become complete when feedback responding to the signal which involves the receiver circle of meaning exchange has been sent to the sender; communication usually comprises a sender, which is the source of the message, and the receiver. He further emphasized that: the overall perspective of effective communication is that it is a contact within a social background. It also entangles the interlocutors exchanging signs. These signs could be verbal or graphic; it could be gestural or pictorial (p 173-177). This happens mostly among Africans during interactions, and one of the interlocutors will instruct the other to speak with mouth and not eyes. Also, gesture, body movement (it could be dance) or sounds made with the voice are used to communicate. In essence, communication also involves the use of codes that are done with the eyes. Before the advent of communication technology, there were diverse means of communication in Africa, those means that were channelled towards having a habitable society, economic prosperity, creating awareness, sanity, purity

and remoulding elites and leader's characters for the societal interest. Jimoh (2010) opines that:

It would be pertinent to note that the functional concept of cartoons has been embedded in some Nigerian traditional societies which were used to satirise and correct the ills of the society. Satire in traditional societies found expressions in verbal and visual elements which include abusive and mocking songs during traditional festivals such as oke Ibadan, Gelede, Efe and Bolojo etc. and sculptural mocking images on helmet and facial masks worn by the masquerades during egungun festivals. (2010:20)

The Oxford Learner's Dictionary of Current English (n.d.) defines communication as "the activity or process of expressing ideas and feelings or of giving people information." Giffin & Patten (1976) similarly states that communication is the process of creating meaning as well as

ascribing it. It is the exchange of ideas and interaction among group members. Messages in African traditional context are not always easy for hoi polloi to decode, except the person or society which the message is directed to. According to Ifechelobi & Nwachukwu (2021), many societies have evolved systems of symbols, which at a first glance, may appear strange and odd to the outside observer owing to the irrational meanings which they seem to evoke. Upon a closer examination, however, those symbols tend to reflect a specific cultural logic. Thus, every symbol functions to communicate information between members of a specific culture in much the same way as conventional language which does so in a subtler manner. Hence, for the contemporary media to catch the attention of the public, they have to depend on the use of the verbal and non-verbal signs to convey information.

Pedagogical Value of Cartoons in Aiding Learning and National Development

In order to have a society of decent character for sustainable political and economic development, there must be artistic practices which will teach norms, history, value and character to the younger generation. It is apparent that the younger ones are the future of every society, therefore, the contents and contexts being circulated have to be the types that are of immense benefit to society in terms of conception and significance. Cartoons are great tools in teaching visual mastery, drawn by humour, cartoon holds the attention and interest of younger ones; likewise, it supports them in creative thinking and critical imitation.

Images and pictorial illustration gives a lasting memory and likewise helps students to reflect on history, and learn more about the future. Since cartoons are largely rendered in a humorous manner, either in two or three dimensional methods, they are capable of sustaining teaching and learning. Particularly for kids, cartoon has a unique way of catching childrens' attention, rendered in a graphical or pictorial composition, consisting of artistic elements, such as lines, shapes, colours and forms to form sequence of images either in single or multi-panel to depict the impression of continuous movement.

Cartoons and Comics are essential in the creative and entertainment industry for children and adults. Nonetheless, cartoon contents are not rendered in same style and motif. There are numerous categories of cartoon contents that children are exposed to, and each may have diverse impacts on them. Educational cartoons can aid children to cultivate cognitive and social skills, while violent or horror cartoons may have on children such negative effects as bullying, becoming abusive, ill-mannered attitude and violence. Cartoons have been an indispensable means of children's entertainment for many years. Also, their effects on learning has been a topic of discussion among scholars and parents. On one hand, cartoon can provide a fun and interactive way for students to acquire new skills and develop various new ideas, such as problem-solving, creativity and collaboration. It can likewise be used to inculcate significant values and lessons, such as tolerance, empathy, and critical thinking. When used in juxtaposition with

the traditional teaching methods, cartoons can be a great tool for improving children's academic improvement and general understanding of their society. However, some shows or comic books may endorse negative behaviors and attitudes in children, such as aggression or disrespect towards elders. In May 2024, a popular Nigerian comic actor and social influencer known as Adebayo Ridwan Abidemi (*Isbae U*) came under criticism for his *dark humour* during his Podcast show with a Nigerian renowned gospel singer, Yinka Ayefele. The actor was trying to sound funny by making joke on Yinka Ayefele's inability to walk, but it turned out to portray mockery of the guest artiste. For this, his followers and social media users condemned such expensive joke. In both print and screen media, it is essential for educationalists, parents, guardians and policymaker to cautiously assess the content of the cartoons and comics their children have access to and to use the media as a complement to other learning activities. By doing so, children can enjoy the cartoons and evading their possible shortcomings. (Personal Communication)

Cartoonists can simplify complex ideas and make them more accessible to young viewers by integrating educative signs, symbols and metaphors into their art. Moreover, these elements can help reinforce lessons in a way that sticks for a long time and permit children to relate them in their own lives' activities. Whether it's conceptualized

in a clever visual analogy or a repeated symbol that strengthens their message, cartoons offer a distinctive opportunity to teach children in a way that is both engaging and effective. Buckley Day Camp, (2024)

Cartoon media is growing and evolving in today's society, not only in providing entertainment for children but also in offering educational opportunities. While they can be a great source of learning, it is important to choose appropriate programs that are both developmentally and age appropriate. Cartoons should be used as an educational tool that encourages children to find new ways to learn without feeling overwhelmed. Generally, cartoons help in shaping the future of the nation by inculcating positive norms in the youth, teaching them morals and values while enhancing their creativity, skills and intellectual development which are essential in securing a promising future for the youth and nation. It is crucial for parents, guardians, policymaker and educators to judiciously monitor cartoons that are accessible to the children and its effect on their inclusive learning journey. While cartoon serves as a yardstick for modifying ill manners and correcting social injustice among adults, it also serves as a learning and character developmental tool to the young ones if optimally utilized.

The Place of Cartons in Political and Economic Development of Nigeria

Cartoons are powerful force of expression; it is a form of expression that

easily generate actions and reactions. Rendition of cartoons in a particular form or depiction of characters has led to serious protest in various countries around the world. In the art world, there are various forms of expression; these includes sculpture, painting, performance, ceramics, textile, photography among others. Out of these, performance art seems to be another form of protest art, but this entails the use of body, space and props, but cartoon can attract attention from just a panel. As Jimoh Ganiyu states:

Cartoons are one of the most popular forms of artistic expression in Nigeria and the world. The reason is that they are intentionally targeted at the masses, hence the use of the mass/social media platforms as their primary form of propagation. Paintings are regarded as “high art” that may require a higher level of visual literacy to be appreciated and digested. One may also need to visit museums and galleries to see or own a piece of painting” (D. Isiguzo, personal communication, August 8, 2022).

Whichever form in which cartoons are rendered, either in a comical, hilarious or satirical manner, which are not necessarily

funny in some cases but embedded with heavy interpretations, to the cartoonists it is a serious and tedious duty, while they appear funny, hilarious, abusive, educative and witty to the public. Cartoonists are powerful creators who use their arts to serve as a corrective measure and to educate the populace on vital societal issues. Cartoons equally serve as a tool for documentation of nation’s historical occurrences. Over the years, cartoons have influenced public opinions on collective matters that have sometimes resulted in disasters in the manner in which information is conveyed to the society. Furthermore, cartoon has salvaged Nigerians from various punitive decisions by the government, in echoing voices of the masses against decisions that could further crumble the economy and impose severe hardship on the citizens. Numerous Nigerian cartoonists have responded to various national and local issues ranging from environmental pollution in Niger Delta, increment in electricity tariff, Emirate tussle in Kano, removal of petroleum subsidy, abduction of school girls, inflation, devaluation of naira, minimum wage, telecom tax, the proposed borrowing of pension fund and cyber security bank charges among others. Some of the media houses even found some of the cartoons fascinating to the extent of putting them boldly as the main illustration on the front cover of their publications (See plate 2 and plate 3 below).



Plate 2

Business Day publication, May 5th, 2024. Cartoon by Mike Asukwo depicting challenges faced by citizens.
Image source: Business Day

The art of cartooning in Nigeria has been one of the most significant tools in publicizing and upholding the rich cultural heritage. Editorial cartooning throughout Nigerian history shows that cartoons have served as exceptional prospect useful in understanding the local and national politics. With the juxtaposition of iconography, semiotics, typography, metaphor, symbolism and other linguistic strategies, the cartoonist defines political situations and attempts to interpret them visually in a way that is both humorous and assumed provoking. Olaniyan (2002) posits that: “the exploits of Akinola Lasekan, with his editorial cartoons in the ‘West African Pilot’ in the 1940s and 50s reflect colonial life, and also depict the struggle for nationhood which later culminated in Nigeria's independence in 1960” (p.5). Onipede also gave an account on cartoon and its importance on Nigeria socio-political space that:



Plate 3

The Guardian, June 2, 2024
Environmental pollution in Niger Delta
Image source: <https://web.facebook.com/guardiannng>

“Given the importance of cartooning, it has been described as one of the most significant means of propagating, and promoting cultural heritage in Nigeria. Newspaper cartoons throughout Nigerian history reveal that they have served as unique windows useful in understanding local and national politics. Using imagery, metaphor, symbolism and other rhetorical devices, a cartoonist defines political situations, and attempts to interpret them visually in a way that is both amusing, and thought-provoking. Caricature as a form of art had existed for a very long time in Nigeria before the advent of the

colonial masters, contrary to the belief that this form of satirisation in Nigeria is a colonial innovation” (Onipede, 2007, p. 2).

Renowned Nigerian cartoonists like: Dele Jegede, Josy Ajiboye, Aliu Eroje, Adeboye Gbenro, and Akinwale Onipede among others, through their artistic expressions, have condemned the speedy deterioration of the Nigerian nation in the hands of corrupt military government and political leaders. The metaphors and other figurative devices used in the visual language of editorial cartoons are often powerful, and the key purpose is to reflect and maintain great impetus in given civility and accountability in the political structure. Furthermore, most significantly, political cartoons serve as a unique means of political propaganda and propagation of movement and interests among cartoonists and the media. The founding of *The Punch* Newspaper in Nigeria paved way for the progression of cartoon and cartoonists in Nigeria. Prince Sam Amuka Pemu is credited to have been a foremost contributor with the establishment of a new weekly newspaper. Sam Amuka is a Nigerian journalist, columnist and publisher, who founded the Vanguard, one of the Nigeria's leading newspapers and co-founder of *The Punch*, the acclaimed most widely read newspapers in Nigeria. The media house which derived its name after *the London Punch* became the private training avenue for various great cartoonists. The organization produced great cartoonists such as Boye Gbenro and Dotun Gboyega, and this, therefore, inspires many

other newspaper houses to ponder on the idea of creating regular columns for cartoons in their respective publications.

There was a widespread of establishment of new media houses in Nigeria in the 80s; these includes The Concord -1980, The Guardian - 1983, Newswatch 1985, ThisWeek 1988, Alaroye 1985, Iwe-Iroyin 1859, Nigerian Citizen 1985, Vanguard - 1984 and New Nigerian on Sunday, established in 1981 among others. This development actuated a healthy competition among the media houses, from which the cartoonists have benefitted and made the art flourished. Dotun Gboyega and Boye Gbenro left *The Punch* for the *National Concord* owned by the late Nigerian billionaire, Chief M.K.O. Abiola, where they were joined by the likes of Osazuwa Osagie and Folashade Adebare. Adebare who was the only popular female cartoonist at that moment. Meanwhile, the likes of Moses Ebong, Kenny Adamson, Leke Moses, Tayo Fatunla, and others kept *The Punch* practice of cartooning alive. As a way of sustaining cartooning impetus and promoting cartoon practice in Nigeria, *The Punch* Media Foundation in collaboration with the U.S. Consulate, Lagos organized a cartoon workshop in Lagos. The workshop was organized to commemorate 50th anniversary of *the Punch Newspaper*, a media organization which has been one of the foremost media agencies that has been publishing cartoons in their editorial for decades. The training was held both virtually and physically to train some selected media cartoonists in editorial cartooning. The workshop titled, “Sketch & Satire: The Art

and Impact of Editorial Cartooning,” held between 19th and 21st of February 2024 at the American Corner, Lekki, Lagos. The workshop was attended by prominent cartoonists within Nigeria and the diaspora, including Barbara Brandon-Croft, an award-winning American editorial cartoonist, and the primary facilitator of the workshop. Other resource persons were Tayo Fatunla, Ed Keazor, Ayodele Elegba, Abigail Ogwezzy, Akinwale Onipede, Ganiyu Akinloye Jimoh and Muiyiwa Kayode.

Analysis of Selected Cartoons by three Nigerian Cartoonists

In expounding the importance of the cartoons, works of three Nigerian cartoonists: Akin Onipede, Mike Asukwo and Jimoh

Ganiyu were examined and analyzed. The subjects and the contextual background of the works are the center of this discussion. Their works mirror different concepts built on the cartoonist’s perspective to societal issues, which are directed towards reflection of the social, economic and political situation in Nigeria during both the military regime and democratic government.

The Analysis of Cartoons by Akin Onipede

Plate 4 to 6 are works of Akin Onipede done in 1996 during the military rule of General Sani Abacha. The works are rendered with black pen on cardboard which shows the style of approaching cartoons in the 90s before cartooning switched to more sophisticated and digitized approach.

No Persecution in Nigeria

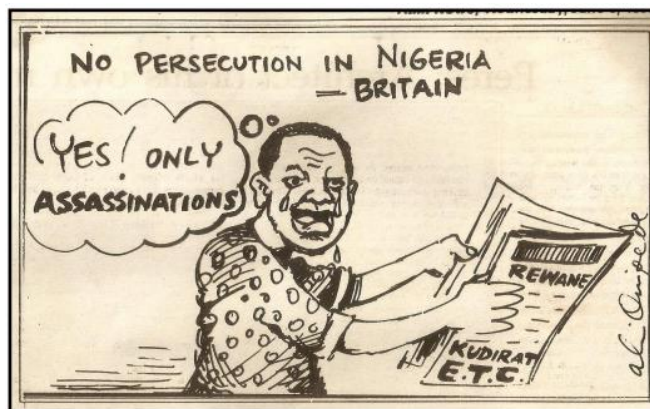


Plate 4: *No Persecution in Nigeria*, Akin Onipede, Published in A.M. News, 5 June, 1996, 10.5 x 5.5cm

Numerous members of the opposition group were assassinated during the military regime in Nigeria, including Alhaja Kudirat Abiola who was the wife of the acclaimed winner of June 12, 1993 general elections, Chief M.K.O Abiola. Alhaja Abiola was assassinated in 1997 during General Sanni

Abacha’s regime. The assassination of Alhaja Abiola sprang actions across the country, the situation that was graphically represented in Onipede’s cartoon, which shows a newspaper reader exclaims as he bemoans earlier dishonest claim of the British government that there had never been

persecution in Nigeria. During this time, numerous opposition figures across the nation, including Layi Balogun, Alfred
June 12

Rewane, Kudirat Abiola, and Suliyat Oladeji were killed.

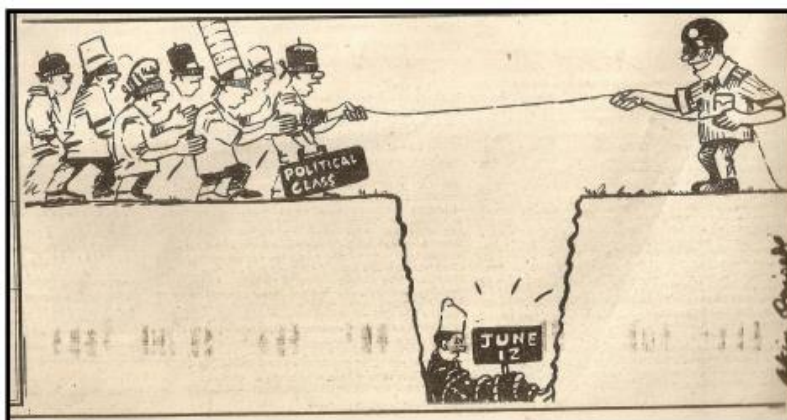


Plate 5: **June 12**, Akin Onipede, Published in A.M. News, 31 October, 1996, 10.5 x 5.5cm

This sketch presents the tense political situation in 1996 during General Sanni Abacha's administration. The cartoon portrays the acclaimed winner of the 1992 presidential election, Chief M.K.O. Abiola, tied up in a pit. This symbolizes his captivity by Abacha government. He is shown, wearing a cunning smile and pulling the other blindfolded into a pit. In other analyzed editorial cartoons, Abacha's government was

branded by political assassinations and kidnappings. Numerous opposition members were either killed or imprisoned. This cartoon served as a warning to politicians at that period about Abacha's motive, when he called for political reconciliation with politicians loyal to Chief M.K.O. Abiola. Onipede saw the gesture as a crafty invitation to incarceration.

Transition Programme

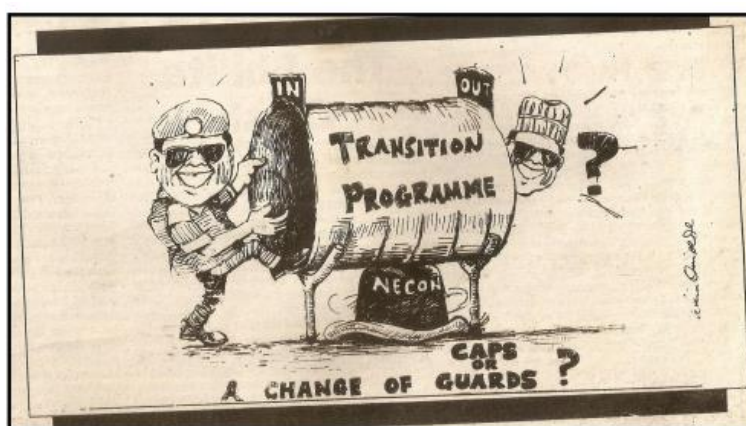


Plate 6: **Transition Programme**, Akin Onipede, Published in A.M. News, 10 October, 1996, 10.5 x 5.5cm

The ambiguous actions of General Sanni Abacha's democratization agenda in the middle of the 1990s were depicted in this cartoon. The cartoonist is known for incorporating metaphorical aspects into his cartoons. He employed symbolic coding to illuminate the transition programme in this cartoon. The then military general, Abacha, is shown in the cartoon erecting a cylindrical device marked "Transitional Programme" He was seen wearing a full military kits,

signifying his position as the head of state of the armed forces at that time. As a military leader, he goes through a steel cylinder, but as he emerges, he was depicted putting on a civilian cap. The large question mark symbol next to it emphasizes Abacha's status as a civilian president. The "Transition Programme" cylinder shows how the military switched swiftly from military to civilian in order to continue governing.

The Analysis of Cartoons by Mike Asukwo Eclipse of the Truth



Plate 7: *Eclipse of the Truth*, Mike Asukwo, <https://web.facebook.com/asukwo>, 2024.

The work depicts a dialogue between PHCN official and a customer. The federal government, through the Minister of Power, had announced increment in the electricity tariff for the 'Band A' users. According to the Minister, this set of customers are said to be using minimum of 20 hours power a day. The customer in the cartoon (Plate 7) is complaining of total darkness as a user that is supposed to have minimum of 20 hours of

power supply daily. The hilarious point is that the official blames the unavailability of power to the recent eclipse of the sun. Another official of the power company is already on the pole, which is their trademark. They are known for swift action in climbing poles for disconnection, even when they have not supplied power adequately.

The Sulejan Redemption

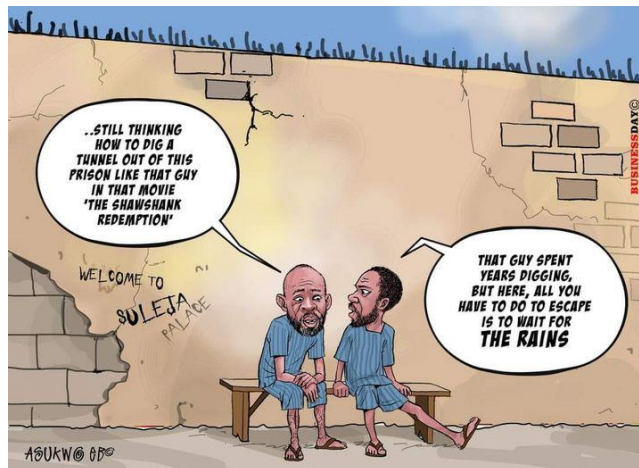


Plate 8: *The Sulejan Redemption*, Mike Asukwo, <https://web.facebook.com/asukwo>, 2024.

One hundred and nineteen inmates escaped from Suleja prison, an aftermath of heavy downpour on 24th April 2024. Minister of Interior, Dr. Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo admitted to the fact that many facilities in Suleja prison were built during the colonial era. The heavy downpour wreaked havoc on

the prison facilities which gave the prisoners the opportunity to flee the premises through the collapsed walls. The cartoon shows a conversation between two inmates, where one is thinking of how to dig an escape tunnel while the partner pointed to the dilapidated walls that only required rain to pull down.

The Pension Fund Schemers

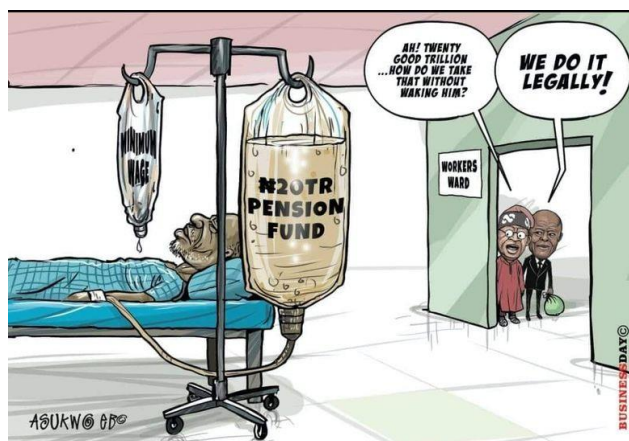


Plate 9

The Pension Fund Schemers, Mike Asukwo, <https://web.facebook.com/asukwo>, 2024.

This cartoon by Asukwo depicts an elderly patient receiving drip. The inscription on the drip is N20tr Pension Fund. It was speculated that the Federal Government was proposing

to borrow the Pension Fund. Standing by the door is the President and the Finance Minister, Wale Edun. The President was asking the finance minister “how to take the

fund without waking the man, and the minister responded by saying 'we do it legally!'

Analysis of cartoons by Jimoh Ganiyu

2 Season in my Country

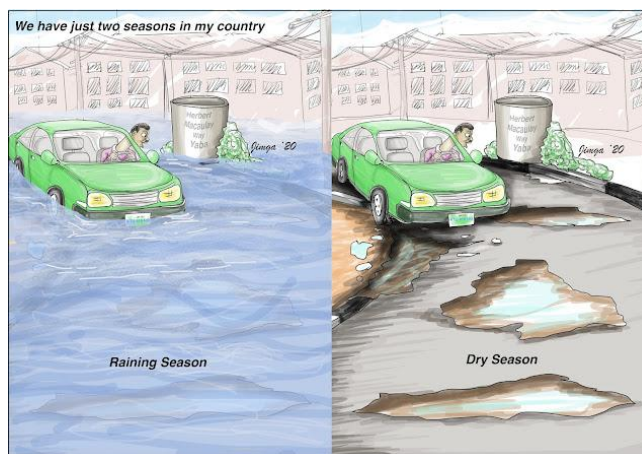


Plate 10: **2 Seasons in my Country**, Jimoh Ganiyu, www.jimgatoons.com, 2020

One scene was represented in two seasons in this cartoon. The cartoonist depicted Herbert Macaulay Way, Yaba, Lagos which is well-known for continuous over-flooding during the raining season. The road is marred by both flood and deep potholes during this season and cause havoc with the several

Shege-Pro-Max 2

potholes during the dry season. Motorists will have to avoid flood during the raining season and as well avoid potholes during the dry season. This has been the recurrent state of the road despite the fact that it is a major road that leads to several institutions and commercial centers.

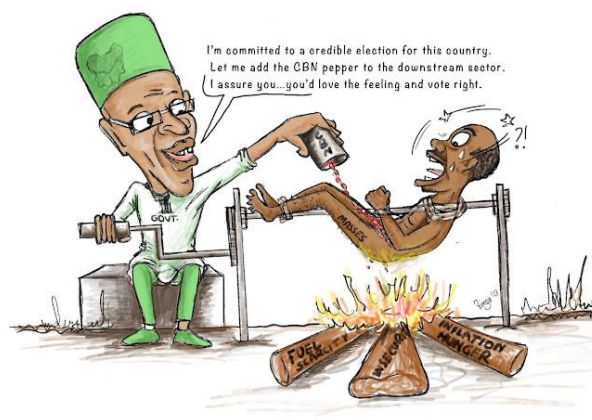


Plate 11: **Shege - Pro-Max 2**, Jimoh Ganiyu, www.jimgatoons.com, 2023

Nigerians faced a grievous hardship in preparation for the 2023 general elections. The government of the former President Buhari introduced numerous policies in order to deliver a credible election as his last legacy in office as the President. There was scarcity of naira notes due to currency redesign where banks were forced to shut down due to several attacks, fuel scarcity, inflation, hunger and insecurity. These are represented in Jimoh's illustration, depicting the **Renewed Hope**

President, adding pro-max to the already existing problem. *Shege* is a Hausa language which connotes big trouble/problem, *Shege-Pro-Max* has become a slang in Nigeria which overemphasizes the prevailing problems or bigger troubles. The Pro-Max which is an advanced terminology is the depiction of CBN added to the *Shege* which are the already existing socio-economic troubles.

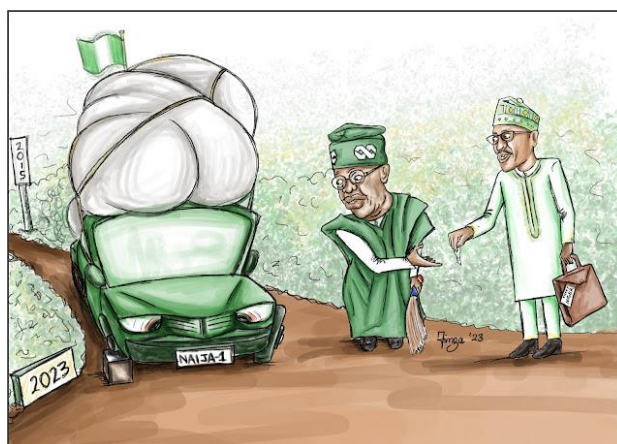


Plate 12: **Renewed Hope**, Jimoh Ganiyu, www.jimgatoons.com, 2023

May 29th, 2023 marked the completion of eight-year administration of President Buhari and the beginning of a new administration. President Tinubu's election mantra was *Renewed Hope* which got its track from Chief MKO Abiola's June 12, 1993 election slogan. The cartoon depicts the dilapidated

state of the nation that is being handed over from President Buhari to his successor. The road signs show the beginning of the Bruhari's administration (2015) and to end (2023). The vehicle (Naija-1) is already going through some 'Sege-Pro-Max' with heavy loads and bad maintenance.

evils are widely accessible in newsprints. The work covered diverse areas ranging from economic flux, electoral fraud to political instability and corruption. Akinola Lasekan's adventures, as shown in his editorial cartoons in the *West African Pilot* during the 1940s and 1950s illustrate both colonial life and the

Conclusion

In Nigeria, cartoons have been a significant component of governance; it has its great impact during the military regime and the democratic process. Numerous pictorial composition portraying the social

nationalist struggle that led to Nigeria's independence in 1960. Sanathanan and Balakrishnan (2021) describe the influence of cartoon as:

The power of Pen and sketching always holds a vested strength and impact over the masses in elevating awareness through revealing the reality and rejuvenating the suppressed morality of democracy and its notions. Newspapers and magazines with illustrations always draw the attention of every age group people with a cuddling

of amusement and mimicry that derives from reality.

The results of the investigation show that cartoons are extremely important for recording, analyzing and reflecting social and political events. There have been several decisions made by government, which were later reversed as a result of several agitations by cartoonists in particular and the populace at large. These show that cartooning is achieving its goals across the world. Cartoonists are public agitators; they have to do away with religious and tribalistic sentiments in order to keep the art flourishing.

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