

Cartoons as Illustration: Political Process in Nigeria

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Abstract

Perhaps one of the sternest yet satirical forms of communicating in modern times is cartoon. The term cartoon refers first to metaphorical codification, and second to a satirical or humorous genre through which an artist subtly informs, educates and entertains his viewers. Whereas before the imposition of colonial rule in Africa, traditional African societies possessed their peculiar means of criticizing, satirizing and depicting the socio-economic and political phenomena through songs, poems and drama. Despite the introduction of printing press in 1846 and newspapers in 1859 in Nigeria, the use of cartoon as a means of portraying social realism did not gain currency until 1930s when the *West African Pilot* newspaper blazed the trail. Since then, cartoon has become pungent instrument of communication and illustration in Nigeria. This study critically analyzed selected political cartoons from few national dailies in Nigeria.

Introduction

Pictorial form of communication can be said to have existed as long as man himself. In Africa, proof of drawings, paintings and engravings- rock art which is precursor of the cartoon- is available in a variety of sources and oddly enough was discovered earlier than the European ones. Dating these have been rather difficult for several reasons, but the exciting Namibian discovery has been radiocarbon-dated to about 27,000 years ago (Willett 1993)¹. Willett even posits that, since humankind appears to have originated in Africa, it may well be said art, in this instance the cartoon, originated here.

Man being perhaps the highest social creature is known to devise clear means and processes of organizing and controlling its teeming populace wherever they commune for development. These processes are known as political systems known by various names and characteristics in the various countries of the world. Both the European and American systems of government have been used in Nigeria, interspersed with forceful impositions of military regimes.

Visual image, known to be a medium of communication- conveying message quickly and clearly- is one critical component of the development of political processes. Of the various visual forms and illustration genres in modern times, the cartoon is perhaps one of the most usual. It is said to be a visual metaphor or metaphorical codification through which an artist (a functional member of the polity and keen societal gauge trained in close observation), informs, educates or entertains his viewers. Furthermore, it has been classified as a form of cool media². Nelson argues that cartoon is a screaming medium that cannot be denied attention.³ The pedagogical function of the cartoon has proven a valuable instrument and avenue to educate the readers in any publication where it appears. Cartoons are sometimes satirical and humorous in subject and inevitably elicit readers' participation.

Illustrating Political Process in Nigeria

With regards to Nigeria, the cartoon as a visual communication genre is noted to have gained prominence with the political struggle against colonialism in the early part of the 20th century. It received a weighty mandate within the nationalist media of the day espousing anti-colonial interests and sentiments. Through Akin Lasekan, famed as the first cartoonist in Nigeria and the West African Pilot newspaper for which he worked, cartoon was established as a vital force within the political struggle to liberate Nigeria from British colonization.

According to Lent (2000), in some cartoons, the message is so subtle that readers debate among themselves who is being attacked.⁴ The process of unveiling serious ideas through cartoon may involve the use of satire, humour, contrast, surprise and even nonsense.⁵ Two types of cartoons have been generally identified, viz: cartoons of opinion and cartoons of jokes. While cartoons of opinion focus on domestic politics, social themes and foreign affairs and cartoons of jokes are designed to communicate humor,⁶ there is a thin line differentiating these two. According to Kemnitz, 'Often the distinction between the two is almost as easy to make in practice as it is in theory... Thus in modern American newspapers the cartoon of opinion is often on the editorial page, but the joke cartoons appear on other pages'⁶. Khan has classified political cartoon as opinion cartoon with two basic types: caricature, which parodies the individual and allusion, and that which creates the situation or context into which the individual is placed.⁷ But it is significant to note that cartoon- except for propaganda, editorial or opinion cartoon- does not attempt direct attack on individuals 'but rather as representative of an institution, moral or religious dogma, or of things that were considered too 'serious'...'⁸ Yet cartoon is an intellectual tool that can be subtly used to throw a severe blow at powerful tyrants.⁹ This example was amply applied in the early cartoons of Akin Lasekan in the *West African Pilot* newspaper. They are said to be provocative, simple with symbolic meanings easy for the average reader to understand. An example of this is portrayed in the single panel titled *Poor Africa* (Plate 1a) aptly analyzed within the context of the colonial era of its creation. (Kojo Fosu, 1986.p8).

The concern of this paper is to utilize few selected political cartoons from Nigerian dailies to analyze some socio-political and economic issues vital to the political process in Nigeria. The first known indigenous political cartoonist in Nigeria Akinola Lasekan (1916-1974), a political cartoonist who began with the *West African Pilot (WAP)*, although he had a stint as designer in the textile industry in 1935 and later became book illustrator with the CMS bookstore in Lagos.¹⁰ In addition to the general pungent and radical mood of that era, the agitation against colonial rule by the burgeoning Nigerian elite population aided the growth and effectiveness of newspaper cartooning and the philosophy of the *WAP*. From the colonial period therefore, the use of cartoon as an instrument of informing, educating and entertaining has remained popular.

The cartoons randomly selected for analysis in this study are drawn from popular newspapers in Nigeria that express strong political opinions of the target audience. The selection could be categorized, from earlier reasons adduced, as editorial cartoons. Phrases such as political cartoon, editorial cartoon or opinion cartoon shall be used interchangeably as they hold the same contextual meaning. Most political cartoons used in this study are of single panel form as they are the most common type of illustration in Nigerian newspapers.

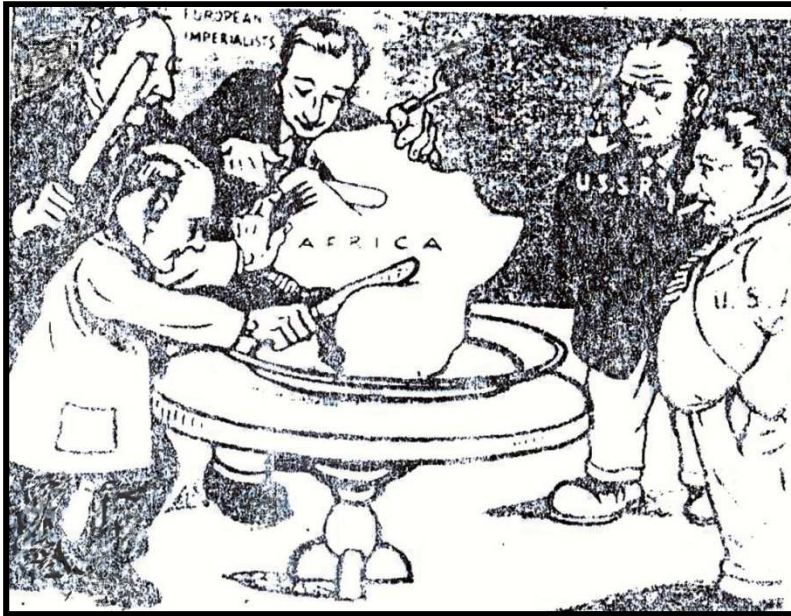


Figure 1a (Akinola Lasekan, 'Poor Africa' *West African Pilot*) Figure 1b.

This is a gag but editorial cartoon. The size is small but the message direct. The cartoon depicts two figures belonging to different classes of the society. The rotund man, obviously representing the bourgeoisie, in the panel carries a case with inscription “TYCOON”. This is perhaps to emphasize his wealthy and well-fed look. He is elaborately dressed in *agbada* and cap. He is contrasted with his counterpart in the scene portrayed as gaunt and shabbily dressed. It is significant to note that the use of exaggeration, one distinguishing factor that sets cartoon apart from other art forms is deftly handled here. The artist by this means portrays the wide gap between the affluent and the poor, to reflect the gross inequality in the country during the period. Above the characters is the breaking news in which a University don (Prof. Adaralegbe) proposes the socialist system of government for Nigeria. The question ‘WHAT DO YOU FEEL SIR’ definitely provokes anxiety in the TYCOON who probably assumes that his business and economy are in danger. This feeling is emphasized with the astonished look on his face, head thrown back with eyes looking heavenward in deep contemplation. The word TYCOON on the case held by the well-fed man is written in block letters to further emphasize the arrogance of this class.

The Artist in this instance is Braun Bullet, known to employ the technique of varying thickness of drawing pens and in this instance, the flat calligraphy-type pen strokes, in conveying his messages. Thick pen strokes portray characters in the foreground or closest to the observation point, while thinner nib strokes portray characters further away thereby establishing his typical depth of field. His mastery of this style makes his non treatment of backgrounds permissible. The artist Braun Bullet adopts the rhetorical style of conversation in which readers are left to complete the story. Significantly, although the cartoon is featured on the editorial page, it does not bear the same message with the editorial comment titled ‘DISBAND THE LOT’ (this comment is about the misbehaving soldiers in town). The grammatical error in the caption ‘Prof Adaralegbe *suggest* socialism for Nigeria’, is an indicator that the cartoon section of the newspaper is subjected to very little editing. The contrast between the editorial and the cartoon, it would appear, is deliberately to express multiple opinions on the same page. It also provides the added impetus of amplifying the pervading mood of that time for social change.

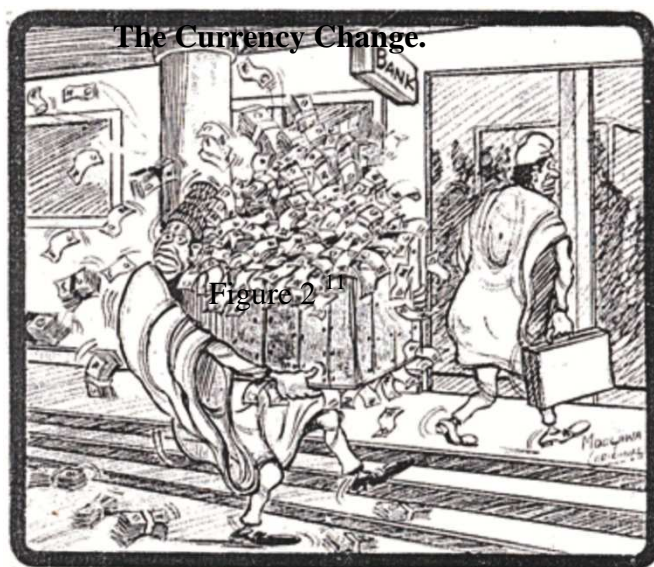


Figure 2

That much money in your house? Alhaji... too bad!



Honesty, Officer, the money is part of my make-ups

Figure 3

These cartoons possess qualities most apt in the type categorized as political cartoon. They convey the immediacy of the topic illustrated, the currency change in Nigeria. This all important project of the Central Bank of Nigeria (the Financial sector's supervisory agent of the Federal Government), was unilaterally and sloppily carried out by the military dictatorial regime headed by General Buhari who seized power in April 1984. The purpose of the move was to counter the problem of the illegal currency trafficking by unpatriotic citizens and to arrest the problem of inflation that became endemic in the country. It was believed that changing the old currency to new ones would be hitch-free with the instrumentality of WAI (War Against Indiscipline). WAI was a program introduced by the Buhari regime in 1984 to curb the problem of corruption and indiscipline in Nigeria. Both panels illustrate different and contrasting sides of the exercise.

The scene in figure 2 is set in front of a bank as lucidly illustrated by the proficient cartoon artist. According to Hassan (2010) Muyiwa Adetula who signs his cartoons as *Mooyiwa Original*, 'is one of the greatest and most famous cartoonists in Nigeria'. He exhibits a high level of illustrative proficiency ascribable to his years of experience (spanning over three decades). As a professional cartoonist in the Nigerian Newspaper industry, his typical detailed/ illustrative style effectively achieves the objective of most political cartoons which hinges upon immediacy of topic and aptness of message. Within the two figures, 2 and 3, an opinion is expressed and iconic elements are deployed.

Mooyiwa's inking pen nibs in Fig.2 are of the round type and in widely varied sizes to create depth of field. Some of the iconic elements used are- the elaborately garmented individuals in depiction of apparent wealth. There is also the rendering of the building's front elevation using a thick concrete column and wide entrance door, typical of bank buildings of that era. Further in the scene is the detailed rendition of the background reflecting the crowded inner part of the bank. The first character in the cartoon is depicted struggling under the weight of a box full of local currency, naira notes, flying around. He is dressed in *agbada* and *tajah* cap. The artist uses the cap as a pointer to the region and ethnic group where the character hails from, in this case the north and probably Hausa/ Fulani. The second conspicuous character in the illustration is identifiable by the mode of dressing *agbada* and *etu* cap, as a Yoruba man from the Southwestern part of the country. The cartoon is an illustration of the financial indiscipline pervading the wealthy upper class of the Nigerian society of the time. The sudden announcement of the government's move to change Nigerian currency caught many selfish opulent Nigerians who had stashed cash away at home unawares. The overwhelmed posture of the Alhaji under the weight of currency notes which he had to hurriedly convey to the bank, vividly shows the pressure being exerted on the well-to-do in the society by the mandatory currency change policy.

It also portrays the profligacy of this class particularly as the volume of cash appropriated and kept in private coffers far exceeds what is legally exchangeable within the deadline provided for the exercise. The cartoon caption reads 'That much money in your house? Alhaji...too bad!' The cartoon is signed by the distinguished *Muyiwa Original*. Elements of his formal training in painting easily come into play in the detailing of his cartoon illustrations. There is the consistency of style and expression of near-naturalism characterized by a circular hand and pen movement in the treatment of his characters making the *Muyiwa Original* cartoons easily recognizable. These in a way subtly influence cartoon fans and teeming readers of the Nigerian newspapers towards higher political awareness.

Though the theme of figure 3 is strikingly similar to that of figure 2., both plates depict the greediness and sense of indiscipline of some unpatriotic citizens who took pleasure in hiding and hoarding the Nigerian currency in their chambers. This cartoon depicts a scene of the pervading lewd corruption and illegal currency trafficking rampant in the society. Captured probably at an arrival point of an airport where curiously two male officers are searching female travelers on an all female queue. The character being searched is depicted with an exaggerated curvature to reaffirm the gender angle and probably accentuate the joke of such a lady being stuffed with or over laden with naira notes in an attempt to smuggle them back into the system for the currency exchange exercise. The lady in question is obviously weeping having been caught with bales of currency brought in from abroad for changing in Nigeria before the deadline. The proportion and shape of her body, bosom, head, hips and all are accentuated having already been striped half naked with just bra and pants on. The heads of the identifiable characters in the cartoon yet carry features which would have made them pass for male. Brush strokes are noticeable in this particular panel of illustration unlike the panel of figure 2. The tilting of the head, with the eyes shut, tears rolling and spattering all around depict the desperation of the apprehended. The typical circular and twirling movement of the pen strokes coupled with the two to three layered hair line/bracket strokes for depicting movement and energy further emphasize the artist's early influence in sculpture and it also depicts action and frenzy in that scene. This may be particularly effective in emphasizing the stiff repercussion or penalty attached to this offence just committed under a ruthless military administration. The ladies remaining on the queue, shown in the background are dressed in the same manner to depict the comprehensiveness of the exercise. From their looks, one gleans the expression of fear and trepidation. For instance the wavy fickle lines around the chest of the waiting lady indicate the rapid beating of her chest, an expression of fear. The two officers in the cartoon, one kneeling the other standing, are portrayed by the artist as surprised at the discovery of such large volume of money with the lady.

The artist effectively utilizes visual contrast in differentiating his characters as visible in this cartoon panel. While the one kneeling is dressed in black jacket, white shirt, striped tie and white trousers, the one standing dresses in striped jacket, black shirt and striped tie. The information, “Women caught with bales of Naira Notes”, at the top of the cartoon is presented as a news extract. The caption at the bottom of the cartoon reads: “*Honesty*, Officer, the money is part of my make-ups”. The typographical error noted here in the first word probably should have been ‘Honestly’, may be a proof of not being subjected to proper editorial check. It may also be that the typographical error is not unintentional. The cartoonist probably used this to elicit joke or portray the woman as semi-literate person.

The two captions are concise and an apt explanation of the scene in the cartoon. Inherent in both cartoons however are a style of drawing in the round, composition detailing and portraiture of props which are probably resultant of the artist’s western formal training in art. A clear similarity in both compositions is the expression with action strokes, the flurry of activity and energy in the scenes. These are also well contrasted against the detailed architectural background and set. One is an exterior scene while the other is an interior scene. The materials used are also instructive of this contrast as figure 2 is executed in varying pen sizes for business, while plate 3 is rendered in pen, brush and ink evoking greater contrast and strength.

Partisan and Ethnic Politics

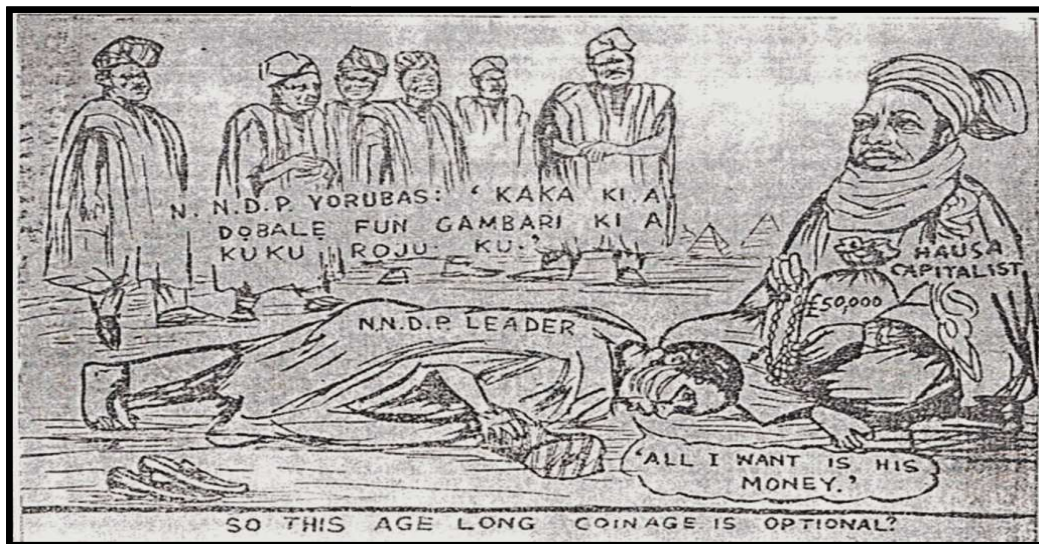


Figure 4a.¹²

This single-panel cartoon depicts the first republic party-politics of Nigeria. There are a total of eight characters in the illustration, seven of which are dressed in *agbada* and caps while the remaining one wears *babanriga* (Hausa word for *agbada*) and turban. The characterization immediately places this cartoon panel within the class of political cartoon like some of the earlier ones in this article. The textual theme of the panel is that of vertical drapery of the *agbada* over all the characters. The entire cartoon panel is permeated with this while the seated character is differentiated by his northern costume in a regal pose. This cartoon evinces characteristics of artworks type/ style which Okediji (2002.pgxxiii) describes as of the opposition period. In this case the opposition is of the internal type, Yoruba politics and creativity pitched as a weapon against Northern subjugation and domination.¹³ The prominence of the head of the seated character when considered along with the part-captioning of the illustration in Yoruba dialect, is safely enough an indicator of the identity of the artist being of Yoruba extract. The iconographic habit of rendering the head as about a third of the body is a characteristic of traditional Yoruba wood carving. The era immediately after Nigerian independence had the post-colonial artists/sculptors like Onabolu, Lasekan and others after them sometimes borrow from these traditions.

The seven men in *agbada* and caps are portrayed as of the Yoruba stock of Southwestern Nigeria. The elements employed in depicting the above characteristics are, the cap (*gobi*), typical of the Yoruba and the facial marks on the cheeks of some of the grouped characters. The caption overlaying the illustration in Yoruba language (indicating the thought of the group), is also an added signification of origin of the characters. The expressed thought of the group of six in lucid Yoruba helps the translation of the illustration which comes across as that of perplexed resignation. The visual texture of this cartoon panel of scratchy, deep etching type coupled with the pointed and straight ends of the strokes suggest that the tool used by the artist are dip pen and inkpot. The probable time of production going by the publication in 1965, maybe around early 1960s further supports this probability.

The planning of the cartoon frame is given a strong character of order, balance and evenness in weight distribution within the image area. This is attributable to the prominence given by the British Art School- influenced artists of the post colonial era to order and placement of design elements within art compositions. The rectangular frame of the image area is effectively filled. The achievement of a balance in that image area offers you at a cursory glance an image such as illustrated below in Figure 4b.

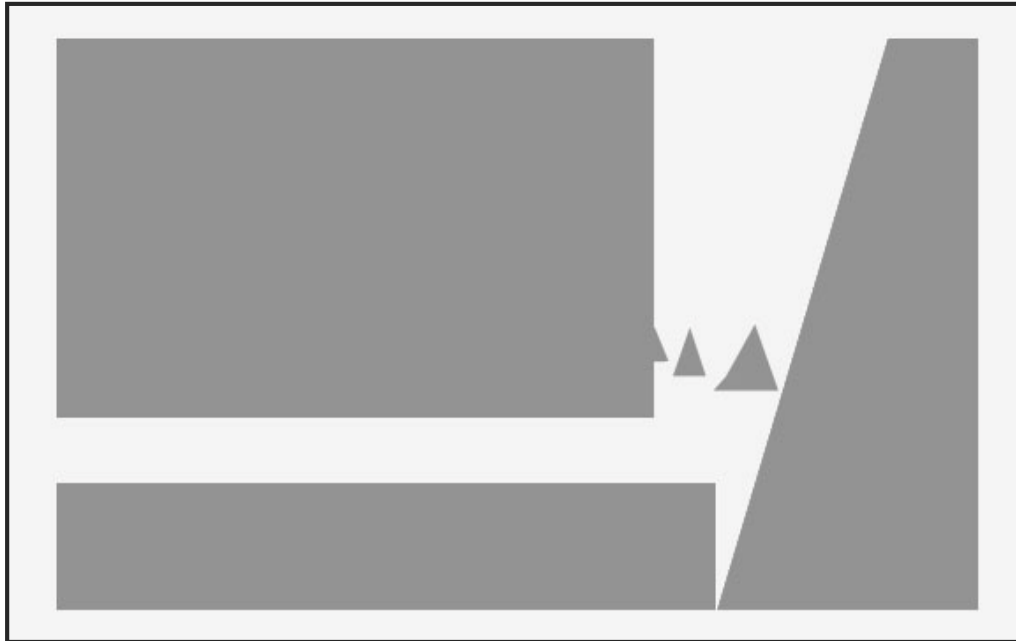


Figure 4b.

The deft and ingenious way that a slightest hint of pyramidal shapes are placed in the available space for a background in the panel, locates the scene of the cartoon in a northern city of maybe Kano or Sokoto. This is despite the pretty little attention given the treatment of background in the cartoon. Prominence is conferred on the major actors in the foreground and perfect compensation on space is achieved by the positioning of the six characters further into the scene. Again, with the vertical, drooping strokes on the *agbada* of the group, other gestures on their pose, the resignation, surrender and bewilderment they evince at the prostrating action of their compatriot, the captioned disdain is effectively portrayed. The rigidity and statue-like form of the prostrating character, his expression in thought (signifying insincerity and hypocrisy) and the general textural effect in this cartoon, all produce an interesting denouement.

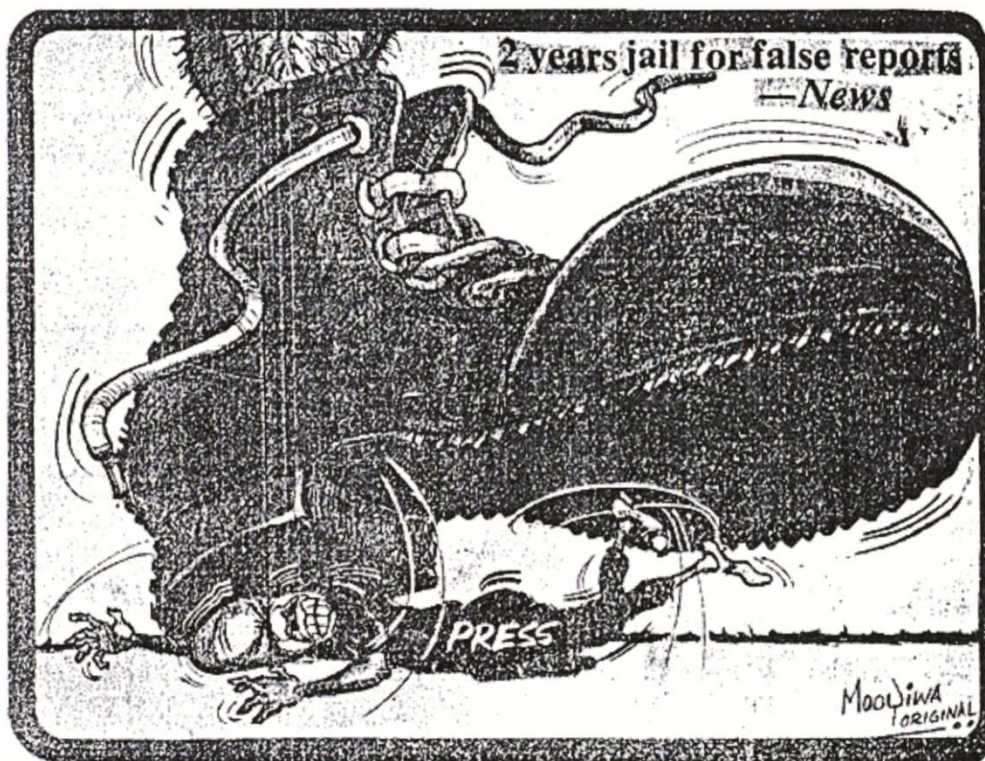
In history, the cartoon is a caricature of Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, former Premier of Western Nigeria and leader of the Nigerian National Democratic Party portrayed as prostrating for an Hausa bourgeoisie, possibly the Sardauna of Sokoto. The prostration is metaphorically set in contrast and propped by the age- long Yoruba adage: KAKA KI A DOBALE FUN GAMBARI KI A KUKU ROJU KU (It is more honorable to commit suicide than prostrating for a Hausa man). This propaganda cartoon published in the *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper of sometime in October 1965 derives its origin from the intra-party crisis that rocked the Action Group (AG) starting from May 1962.¹⁴ Different reasons have served as catalysts of this crisis. First, the crisis emerged as a result of personal feuds between Chief Awolowo, the Chairman of AG, and Chief Akintola, the premier of the region, on whether the AG should closely ally with the ruling party, the Northern Peoples Congress, or continue to remain as opposition. While Chief Awolowo opposed coalition government, Chief Akintola supported it.

Following the free for all fight on the floor of the Western Assembly was the closure of the House and declaration of a state of emergency.¹⁵ The founding of the NNDP by the disgruntled members that splintered off the AG strengthened the NPC at the centre as there was no longer coordinated opposition front. Thus, when the Akintola-led NNDP coalesced with the NPC to form Nigerian National Alliance (NNA), the rump of the AG allied with the NCNC to form United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA).

Significantly, the above cartoon is a propaganda tool by the UPGA using the *Nigerian Tribune* whose sympathy laid with the AG, against the NNDP led by Chief Akintola. The Hausa man in the illustration is portrayed as a capitalist who uses his financial means to secure loyalty of the NNDP leader. Another significant thing to note in the illustration is the portrayal of the tribal conflict between the Yoruba and the Hausa. While the adage in the panel portrays the Yoruba as culturally arrogant, the prostration of Chief Akintola while seeking the material benefits from the capitalist, contrasts this saying. Owing to improper archival storage which has adversely affected the available hard copy of this publication among other reasons, the artist of this cartoon is unknown.

UNDER THE JACKBOOT

Plate 5¹⁶



This opinion cartoon is a gag-panel metaphorically depicting the Nigerian press under the jackboot of the military regime. The illustration was drawn in 1984 to protest the promulgation of the notorious Public Officer (Protection Against False Accusation) Decree No. 4 (DN4) of 1984 during the Buhari fascist regime. The decree states:

Any person who publishes in any form, whether written or otherwise, any message, rumour, statement or report which is false in any material particular or which brings or is calculated to bring the Federal Military Government or the Government of a State or a public officer to ridicule or disrepute, shall be guilty of an offence under this decree.¹⁷

The decree represents an attempt by the military regime to gag the press. Section seven of the decree awards a maximum term of two years in prison for anybody found guilty of the offense without the option of fine. With a cursory glance one is wont to say there are basically two elements in the cartoon, however there are three; a hairy leg, a giant boot and a puny little human being. This cartoon is another vintage *Mooyiwa Original* in that it drips of high level action and exaggeration which are essential elements in achieving effective communication in a cartoon. The hairy and monstrous leg depicts the actor and connotes his desired ferocity. The huge boot occupying most of the image area leaves no doubt anyone about the immediacy and urgency of the subject matter while the loosened lace of the boot goes further to emphasize that there is no room for proper conduct in this matter. The boot is symbolically used to represent oppressive military decree while the agonized man being crushed by the boot depicts the press. The clenching of the teeth and closing of the eyes by the object under the boot portrays the pain and agony suffered by the press under the DN4. While the wavy fickle lines about the boot portrays the heaviness of the boot (i.e. DN4), the fickle lines about the crushing object represents the gravity of the pain. The scissors-like flapping of legs under the boot shows that despite the monstrosity of the decree, the press still struggles to escape. The close- up view of the scene amplifies the elements in order of weightiness of elements for achievement of emphasis. The form of the cartoon is simple and the message coded obviously to avoid the ire of the oppressive regime. The cartoon is signed under the hand of *Mooyiwa Original*.

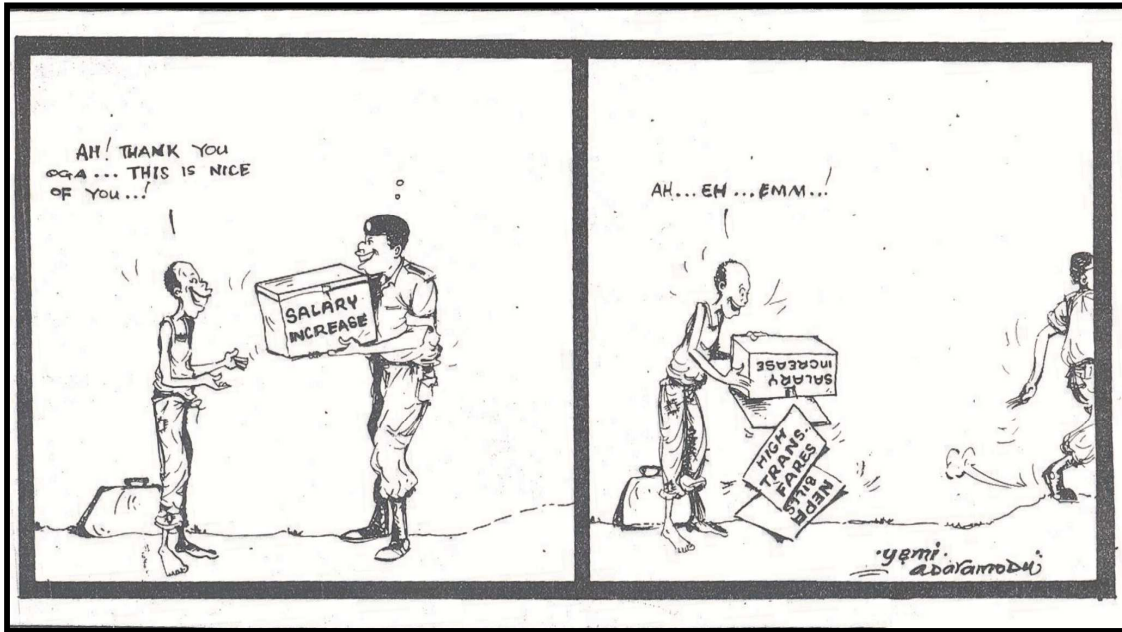


Figure 6¹⁸

This cartoon is a departure from the earlier ones in this article for being of double-panel. Double and multi double-panelled cartoons grant the artist the essential opportunity to converse in a manner eliminating overcrowding of scenes and over labouring the cartoon with speech/comment captions and balloons. It probably also is the precursor of the cartoon strip. This cartoon portrays the economic situation in Nigeria during the Military regime of President, Ibrahim Babangida. There are two characters in the frame, one a poorly fed and shabbily dressed man and the other a well kitted military officer, portrayed in the typical war fatigue uniform and smart, crested beret of president Babangida. In the first panel, the poor man is depicted in high excitement receiving a gift of salary increase box delivered by the officer. The second panel depicts a scene of disappointment and anguished expression on the poor man while the officer takes to his heel or takes his exit in a flurry. In the second panel, the salary increase box turns out to be the box of disappointment as its contents are shown to be high transport fare, NEPA bills etc. The artist achieves communication fidelity with this simple cartoon by adopting conversational approach. The cartoon is signed under the name of Yemi Adaramodu.

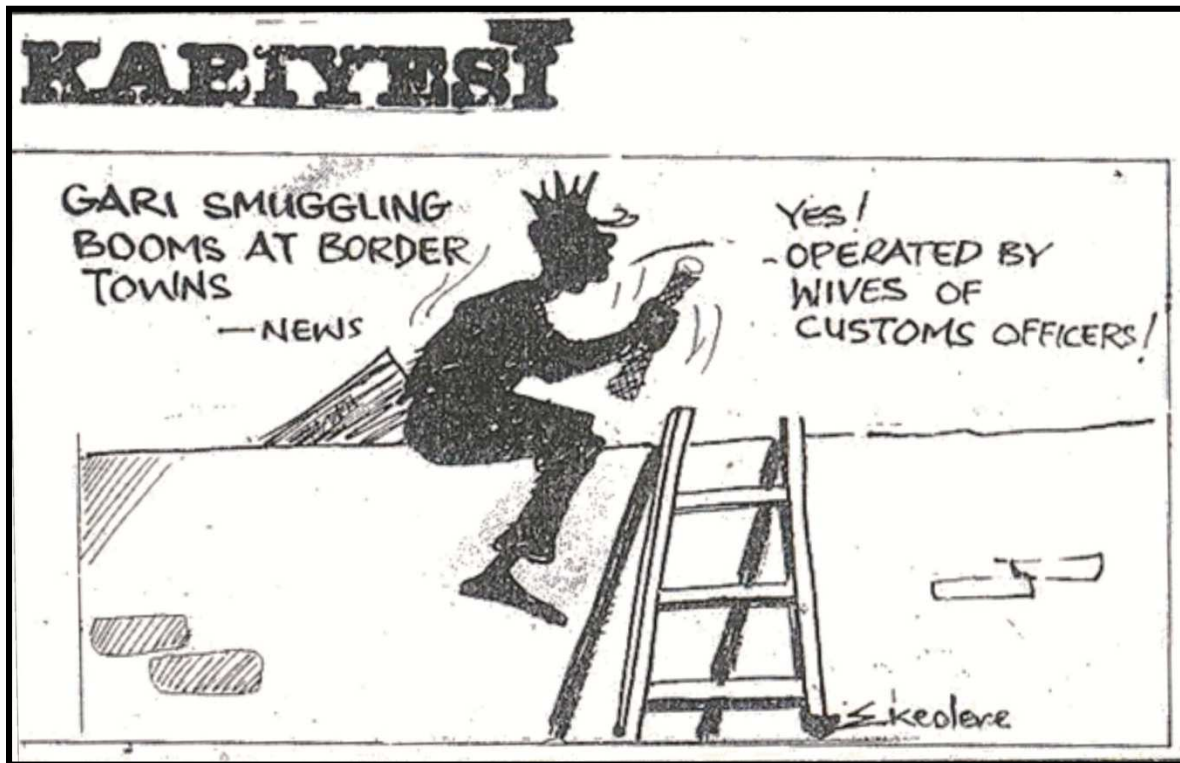


Figure 7¹⁹

This gag-panel cartoon is a popular serial with a regular and mostly sole character/ actor called KABIYESI (a Yoruba descriptive for king). He is represented in silhouette and to really achieve the essence of the name in the character, a crown is placed on his head. Significantly, the sitting of the character on the fence indicates non-partiality or objectivity. One of the texts in the panel reads “GARI SMUGGLING AT BORDER TOWNS”. The response of Kabiyesi “yes! Operated by the wives of custom officers” exposes the hypocrisy in the Nigerian Customs Service. The silhouette used to portray the character in no way reduces the correctness of the proportions and human anatomy of the cartoon character. The rendering in black affords the cartoon the needed contrast against background and for its page effect. *Ekeolere*’s cartoons speak for him through Kabiyesi and mostly depict the character offering pointed comments on societal ills as reported in the news. This cartoon portrays the act of smuggling with the actor dragging materials over the fence with a ladder in tow to assist safe landing. There is the placement of action strokes around the Kabiyesi character depicting the tension and action accompanying the activity. The name *Ekeolere*, under which the artist signs the cartoon illustration, is also metaphorical and satirical. *Ekeolere* literary means “hypocrisy is not profitable”.



Figure 8²⁰

Figure 8 is another double paneled cartoon. It is a regular rectangular format serial which models as a political commentator. The drawing style is after the order of the earlier reviewed Adaramodu series which mainly feature in the *Nigerian Tribune* newspapers. This cartoon panel directs and jarring chastisement of poor level of government of the day. The government of General Muhamadu Buhari seized power in a military coup promising to sanitize the government. One of the major ways planned for achieving the much desired sanity was the War Against Indiscipline (WAI). A major component of this involved controlling the importation and distribution of essential commodities to dissuade the general lust for imported goods and save on government's hard currency expenditure. This however ended up in untold hardship and abhorrent living standard for the people.

This cartoon is a capture of one scene of the failures of the system in that it shows what citizens were going through within the highly spontaneous government of the military. The composition is apparently done in the even nibs of the rapidographic pen. The artist achieves his aim of portraying the totality of the nation Nigeria, by representing all the major tribes of Nigeria by their traditional attire captured with the caps worn. He distinguishes the spokesperson of the commentary by simple contrast of the garment right from the onset.



Figure 9²¹

This single-panel opinion cartoon by Aliu Eroje clearly distinguishes the artist as a matter of the sketch stroke. The realistic style employed in depicting facial expressions in the composition coupled with sophistication of the rendering in cross-edged or calligraphic drawing pen constitutes an intrinsic appeal of a powerful artist which draws readers to the message. The contrast and balance in this cartoon panel is well stuck with the black tunic of the police officer and the light and shadow so deftly cast. The calligraphic quality of the captions / conversation balloons even go a long way to enhance the composition. The scene sarcastically depicts the social malady of corruption predominant in Nigeria, particularly among the uniformed officers.

There are two characters in this illustration. One is a trader while the other is a policeman. The trader kneels carrying a sack full of money (apparently, the fruit of his labor) in front of an intimidating police officer. The officer, holding a gun, is well kitted in black uniform. On the shoulder of the trader is a bag with the inscription "TRADER", while an object decked with pointed nails is placed atop an empty drum. The head of the trader thrown backward with face gazing upward at the gangling slender policeman in a plea and supplication for mercy. This is further emphasized by mouth shapes drawn back and eyes vertically stretched. The policeman is portrayed at his bullying best. The look on the officer's face, his wagging whiskers, and spittle flying all over the place while he barks at the poor trader depicts the seriousness of the matter. The drama in the cartoon is made more lucid by the dialogue technique adopted by the cartoonist. Claiming the ownership of the money, the trader states: "O. C. THE **MONEY IS MINE!**" The officer retorts: "AND SO WHAT? **SETTLE OR THERE WILL BE ACCIDENTAL DISCHARGE!**"

The accentuated words in the conversation between the duo are coded message from the cartoonist. First, the cartoonist has pointed our attention to the shocking level of corruption of Nigerian police officer. The word **SETTLE** being a slang used in place of demand for bribe. Refusal of the victim to pay bribe to a policeman could lead to **ACCIDENTAL DISCHARGE** (release of a bullet the policeman's gun in calculated error). This illustration portrays Nigerian police, poorly paid and poorly equipped, as angry and irresponsible. The wonderful piece is signed under the hand of Aliu Eroje.



**“Haaaa God ! all animals are equal,
but some are equal than the others.’**

Figure 10²²

This is a double-panel cartoon portraying the phenomenon of gross inequality between the rich and the poor in Nigeria coupled with a high presence of wastage. While the first panel satirically depicts the Government Reserved Area (GRA Phase I) such as Ikoyi, and Victoria Island, the second panel is an example of the ghetto and slum, such as Mafoluku and Oworonsoki, where the poor reside. The cartoonist appropriately tagged the second panel “Government Rejected Area” (GRA Phase II). GRA phase 1 shows a water faucet from which water gushes freely and is wastes away without being fetched. The second panel in contrast, shows a scene where several traditionally clad and elderly folks are portrayed on a queue by a public water dispensing faucet without enough water. In real terms what they are left with is one dispenser tediously struggling to supply little droplets of water. This cartoon depicts the socio-economic inequality in Nigeria. The cartoonist, Mooyiwa Original achieves clarity of purpose and communication fidelity by adopting sculptural style in depicting the characters in the two panels.

Conclusion

In conclusion the various works in this paper are presented as clear and insightful details which constitute essential images towards balancing the complex equation called Nigeria. It endeavoured to present important facets of the political process as illustrated by some Nigerian artists and it is hoped that it urges further and deeper peeps into the process as illuminated by cartoon illustrations.

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 2. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, paperback edition, 1964).
 3. R. Nelson, *Cartooning* (Chicago: Henry Regenery Company, 1975) p. 11
 4. John Lent, 'Cartooning and democratization world-wide', *Keynote address presented at the International Workshop on Cartoon Journalism and Democratization in Southern Africa*, (University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana, 8-10 November 2000).
 5. The Cartoon as an Instrument of Political Education, p.6.
 6. Thomas Milton Kemnitz, *Cartoon as a Historical Source in Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 4 No. 1. (The Historian and the Arts, 1973) p.82.
 7. Sharier Khan, *Cartoons as a Medium to Create Public Opinion* (TIB, 2007)
 8. Lent, *Cartooning and Democratization Worldwide*, p.5
 9. Khan, *Cartoons as a Medium to Create Public Opinion*, p.1.
 10. Taiwo Hussein Hassan, *Cartooning as a Means of Social Expression: A Case Study of Muyiwa Adetula's Cartoons* (Unpublished B. A. Essay, Obafemi Awolowo University, 2010) p.17.
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