The Traditions of CAR-TOON-ING in Nigeria

Cartoon Punch

BUDGET ESTIMATES MAY BE DOWN BY ₦2 BILLION
— NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS

BUDGET 1986

TAYO FATUNLA

Start with Defence! Yes, Defence

Tejumola
Olaniyan

THE creative flowering of cartooning in Nigeria is still in a state of flux, which makes it really presumptuous to want to speak of some supposedly rock-solid traditions that are 'paradigmatic.' But I will do some labelling and categorisation nonetheless, for there is no such thing as a flux without form or pattern, if only we look with care. The challenge here is not to invest emerging patterns and practices with the solidity and finality they obviously do not possess.

From a list of several possible areas of examination and comparison, I have chosen four from which to study the cartoons: the *degree of iconicity*, *combination of words and pictures*, the *use of perspectives* and finally the *use of panels*. These four areas would form the basis from which I will make some clear distinctions and outline apparent traditions.

Scale of Iconicity

The scale of iconicity measures the degree of likeness or non-likeness of a cartoonist's images to actuality. Although cartooning is defined precisely by some distance to actuality, which is achieved mostly by amplification through simplification, cartooning cannot disregard actuality entirely because it is highly dependent on viewer identification, more so than the other graphic arts. Embodied in cartooning is thus simultaneously a prescriptive and proscriptive challenge in which to be more iconic, i.e. 'realistic,' is to lose its cartoonish, i.e. caricaturist, essence, while to turn the other way round and be less iconic, i.e 'abstract,' is to lose its referential power and thus its audience and function. A cartoon, strictly speaking, cannot exist at either end of the spectrum. This sounds quite circumscriptive but cartoonists have created virtually endless and exciting possibilities inbetween the two poles. This is why it is possible to construct a scale, not between the absolutes of iconic and indexical or abstract, but of degrees of iconicity inbetween the two.

Nigerian cartoonists operate mainly within one of three levels of iconicity, expressed comparatively (or in relative terms) as iconic, less iconic, and least iconic.

The iconic cartoons privilege a resemblance to reality — as far as cartoons can do that and still be cartoons and not photographs—and are usually marked by a wealth

Plate 2

"Chell To kill foreign enemies or Nigerians?"

Plate 3

of visual details. Most often, the human subjects of the cartoons are easily recognisable public officials or stereotypes (the poor 'common' man or woman, the super-rich man or 'cash-madam,' the farmer, the army officer, etc). Because the cartoons grant the viewer such an express visual access without much intellectual challenge, the iconic cartoons are generally the most viewer-friendly and, given the cartoonist's artistry, generally the most popular.

A majority of Nigerian cartoonists operate at the iconic level. This group includes such notable figures as pioneer Akinola Lasekan, Josy Ajiboye, Ade Ogundero, Bayoor Odulana, Mooyiwa Original, cartoonists from *National Concord* news-papers, and practically all the cartoonists that have ever published in *The Punch* newspapers. *The Punch* cartoonists, which include such popular figures as Kenny Adamson, Mooyiwa Collins, Chris Nworjih, Sanmi Abejide, Femi Jolaoso, Tayo Fatunla, Leke Moses, and others, so consistently and with great artistic refinement deployed the visual possibilities of this level of iconicity that they best define it. If there is ever such a designation as a *Punch* 'school' or 'tradition' of cartooning in Nigeria—

which is one of my propositions here—the cartoonists' comparatively more iconic images would be one of its foremost distinguishing features. [plates 1,2,3]

The cartoons of the second, less iconic, level care little for the canon of resemblance to reality. They are generally stingy in providing visual details, at least of the type that would make their human subjects recognisable. On the contrary, most of the cartoonists in this group deal with conceptual stock characters etched out in plain lines with very little adornment. Cliff Ogiugo's 'little joe' series published in *Sunday Times* in the early 1970s, is one of the earliest examples [plates 4,5]. dele jegede's 'Kole the Menace' series, published in the same

newspaper in the second half of the 1970s, appears stylistically and conceptually similar to Ogiugo's [6]. If this is a case of artistic influence, then it is certainly a productive one, for jegede's bare lines are infinitely more self-assured, and his cartoon panels more sparkling clean than Ogiugo's often needlessly cluttered spaces and images. One could often see a vacillation in Ogiugo between the iconic and the less iconic even in the same cartoon, but jegede seems the more confident craftsman, certain about his aesthetic preferences.

Jegede's iconic frugality is matched only by the perpetu-ally pint-sized children that populate the world of the rascally little boy, Kole [plates 8,9]. More than we can say of Ogiugo, there seems to be quite close connections among jegede's iconic miserliness, the small size of his characters, and the general economic austerity that began to grip the country during the last half of the 1970s—the period the series was created—a beginning austere period deeply inscribed in popular conscious-ness by the Head of State General Olusegun Obasanjo's famous visually resonant call for 'belt-tightening'; 'visually resonant' because of the General's own generously endowed stomach which often protrudes out of his military uniform.

Apart from Ogiugo and jegede, other cartoonists operat-ing at the second, less iconic level include Ronke Adesanya [10], and most of the cartoonists of *The Guardian* newspapers. In fact, the *Guardian* cartoonists so decisively and brilliantly continue to exploit the resources of this iconic level that if we could talk of a *Guardian* 'school' or 'tradition' of cartooning—which is one of my propositions here—the cartoonists' comparatively meagre iconic images would be one of its foremost distinguishing features. Such cartoonists include Ebun Aleshinloye, Obi Azuru, Bassey Nnimo, Cheche Egbune, Sidenee Boe, Ake Didi Onu, Obe Ess, and Bisi Ogunbadejo. Their cartoons are characterised by thin angular lines deployed to support a spartan economy of

little joe-cliff ogiugo
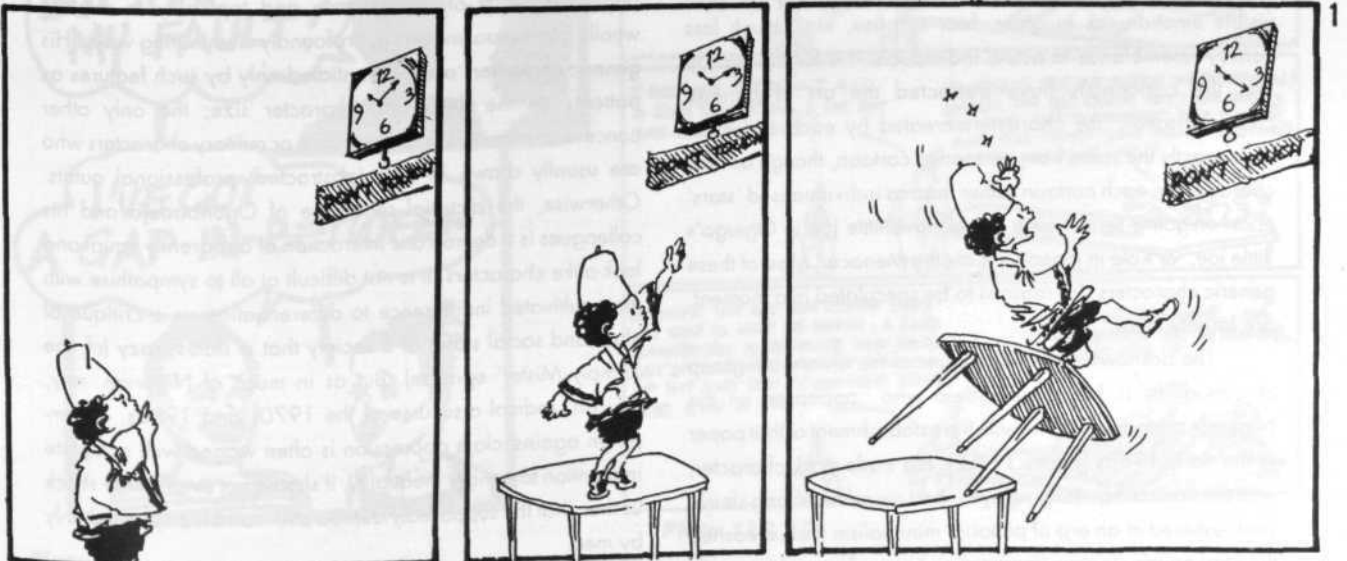

Plate4

little joe - Cliff Ogiugo

Plate5

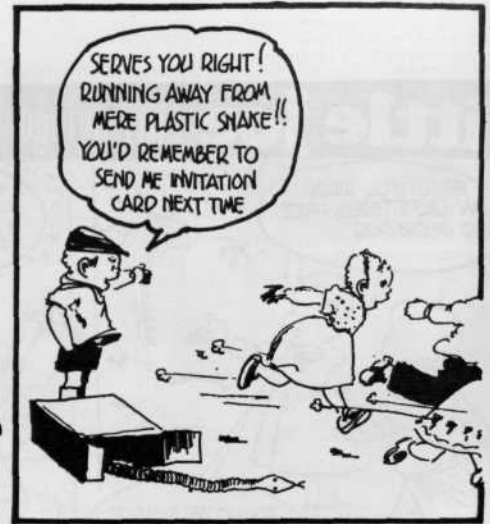**Plate6**

visual expressivity, an economy that could barely support such visible emotions as laughter, fear surprise, etc, much less convey resemblance to actual individuals. It is for this reason that the cartoonists have perfected the art of generic characterisation: the characters created by each cartoonist look exactly the same from cartoon to cartoon, though as new characters in each cartoon rather than as individualised 'stars' in an on-going series, such as we have little joe in Ogiugo's 'little joe,' or Kole in jegede's 'Kole the Menace.' Most of these generic characters, for reasons to be speculated in a moment, are largely male.

The acknowledged flag-bearer of the *Guardian* group of cartoonists is Bisi Ogunbadejo who appeared on the Nigerian cartooning scene with the establishment of that paper in the early 1980s [plates 11,12]. His trade-mark character, with the conical hat, bulging eyes, and round-neck long-sleeve shirt, ushered in an era of pictorial minimalism that unleashed the cartoonist's creative imagination to soar beyond the earth-bound demands of resemblance and topicality to explore wholly conceptual matters in profoundly illuminating ways. His generic characters are differentiated only by such features as patterns on the dress and character size; the only other concession he makes is for the police or military characters who are usually drawn in their (abstracted) professional outfits. Otherwise, the pictorial repertoire of Ogunbadejo and his colleagues is a democratic interaction of apparently equal and look-alike characters. It is not difficult at all to sympathise with their cultivated indifference to differentiation as a critique of class and social status in a society that is status-crazy (cf. the 'Simply Mister' episode). But as in much of Nigerian, nay, African, radical discourse of the 1970s and 1980s, a campaign against class oppression is often waged with complete inattention to gender inequality. It should not even mildly shock us then that the supposedly democratic world is populated only by men.

The least iconic is our third and final stop on the scale of

YOU DON'T LIKE ME AT ALL, DO YOU?

OF COURSE I DO! BUT...

SO THERE'S A SNAG EH?

YES.

WHAT'S THAT?

'YOU CAN LIE THROUGH YOUR TEETH'

HUH! BUT THAT'S NOT MY FAULT!

I'VE GOT A GAP IN-BETWEEN

Plate 10

WHY SOME NIGERIANS DON'T GO TO THE POLICE. (8)

YOU TAKE MY LAND, AND YOU DE HARASS ME. I'LL GO TO THE POLICE FOR PROTECTION!

YOU WILL FIND ME THERE!

YES, I GO FIND YOU THERE, INSIDE POLICE CELL!

ME?... WE'LL SEE...

NO BE YOU SAY YOU WANT PROTECTION?

CELL

BISI OGUNBADEJO '91

WHY SOME NIGERIANS DON'T GO TO THE POLICE; (9)

I SAY, IGBOBI HOSPITAL WANTS A POLICE REPORT BEFORE THEY CAN TREAT THIS HIT AND RUN VICTIM. I HOPE I MAY NOT HAVE TO REPEAT MYSELF THE FOURTH TIME... I HAVE THINGS TO DO!

SEE ME, SEE TROUBLE! HIT AND RUN DRIVER SEF DE BRAGADO FOR POLICE!...OH, NIGERIA!

I BEG YOUR PARDON—I AM A GOOD SAMARITAN..I AM NOT THE GUILTY DRIVER!

NO NEED TO BEG FOR PARDON, MR SAMARITAN! NOBODY SAY YOU GUILTY YET! OUR JOB IS TO TAKE YOUR STATEMENT, LOCK YOU UP AND THE COURT WILL DECIDE WHETHER YOU'RE GUILTY OR NOT!

OFFICER, HIT AND RUN DRIVER DOES NOT STOP TO HELP HIS VICTIM, A GOOD SAMARITAN IS SOMEONE WHO STOPS, OUT OF KINDNESS TO HELP A VICTIM OF HIT AND RUN. I NEITHER DRIVE NOR OWN A CAR!

THAT NA GRAMMAR... NA MAGISTRATE YOU GO LAWYER ...LOCK HIM UP!

BISI OGUNBADEJO '91

Plate 11 & 12

iconicity. As far as I know, there is only one Nigerian cartoonist that has set up shop at this extreme. He is Sanya Ojikutu who, most ironically, first published his works—before collecting them in two volumes—in a popular low—brow magazine called *Fame*, the kind of photo-filled, 'fashionable society' magazine whose readership is generally thought to be able to digest little outside of mainstream realism or the hyperrealism of pop culture. Like those of the *Guardian* cartoonists, Ojikutu's characters are also generic and unnamed, though he has sometimes responded to the needs of referentiality often demanded by political cartooning by distilling resemblances into one or two features such as General Ibrahim Babangida's famous gap in his teeth [plate 13], and General Sani Abacha's equally notorious dark sunglasses [plate 14]. However, the thin

as a result, are extremely stressed, unstable and unpredictable. You could literally see the lines twist and turn as if just passed through a kiln at a monstrous temperature. Although the panels of his cartoons are filled with images to be seen, what really defines his style is a withdrawal of visual access, a disavowal of visual opulence. The characters many times look freakish and sometimes downright macabre.

If the *Guardian* cartoonists—with their economical iconicity though vigorous lines indicative of some reserve of energy and self-confidence—symbolise a buffeted but still resilient preWorld Bank-sponsored heinous SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme) Nigeria, Ojikutu—with his thoroughly decrepit and weather-beaten characters drawn with strained, brittle lines indicative of both physical disintegration and psychological trauma—is the
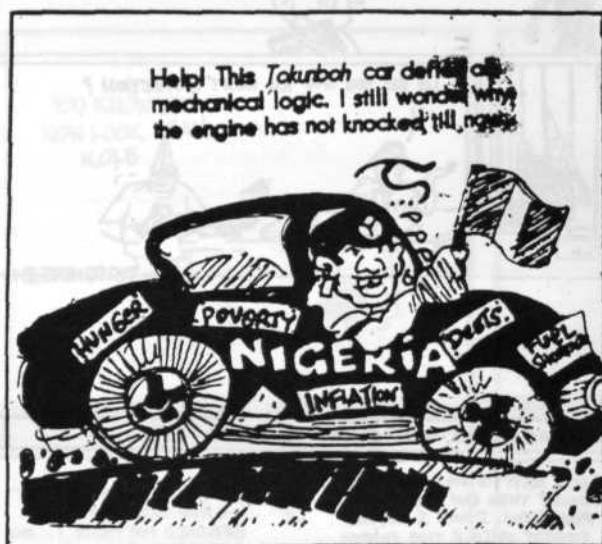

Plate 13

Plate 14

but very solid and dynamic lines of Ogunbadejo and the other *Guardian* cartoonists become extremely flimsy, curvy and fragile in the hands of Ojikutu. If the lines of the *Guardian* cartoonists shun expressivity, those of Ojikutu all but into the expressionistic. [plate 15] In place of the proportionate build of the characters of the *Guardian* cartoonists, we now have with Ojikutu asymmetrically and fragmentarily drawn characters, with one hand or leg smaller or bigger than the other, or even a heavy upper arm or thigh resting on a disproportionately puny lower arm or leg, respectively.

To enter the world of Ojikutu's characters is to experience a slight disorientation and crave futilely for balance or equilibrium, that most important psychological as well as physical influence on human perception (Dondis 22). The characters always seem to be cracking or falling apart or dissolving into the background. Ojikutu's lines seem to be in perpetual motion and
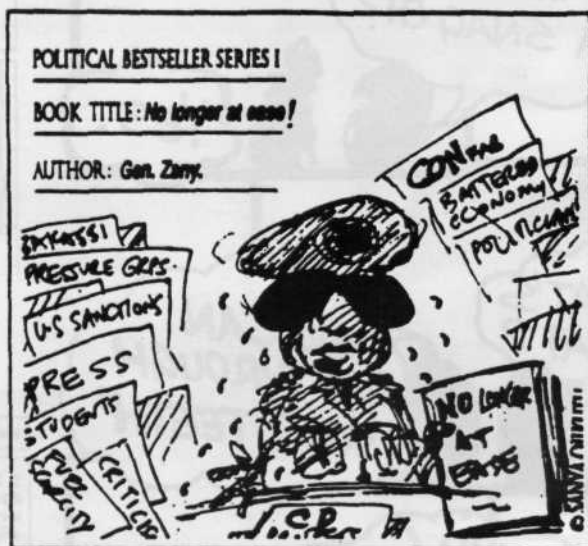
post-SAP Nigerian cartoonist par excellence.

Combination of Words and Pictures

I have been talking so far exclusively of drawing styles, but most cartoons are a combination of pictorial images and words, and an examination of the specific ways in which the two languages are combined by cartoonists could yield instructive insights about aesthetic preferences and often their ideological underpinnings.

There are cartoonists who use less words, like dele jegede, Tayo Fatunla, Kenny Adamson, Bayoor Odulana, Mooyiwa Collins, and Mooyiwa Original. In general, most of the cartoonists of The *Punch*, *National Concord*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *The Vanguard* newspapers belong to this group. Their cartoons are largely picture-driven, that is, they depend on the picture to convey most of the message, and so words are used only sparingly. Words here 'do little more than add a

soundtrack to a visually told sequence' (McCloud 153). Sometimes, many of the cartoons do not contain any words at all. Almost always, these picture-driven cartoons are also 'action cartoons,' that is, the images suggest, and are in, some degree of motion or drama [plates 1,2,16,17]. The less emphasis on words frees the picture to be more daring and exploratory in especially one major way: to aim for completeness and independence from words, which is always a great technical challenge. Also, virtually all the humour or wit—an important though by no means essential component of cartoons—flows from the pictures.

Picture-driven cartoons are fully keeping in line with the popular conception of the cartoon as primarily a visual art; and to give primacy to the visual over the verbal is to privilege the more mass-oriented and easily accessible of the two languages. There is a clear ideological implication here, though it need not be consciously chosen; but it is always there, embedded in the aesthetic choices.

On the other hand, there are those cartoonists who privilege words over pictures. This is a distinctive feature of the works of Cliff Ogiugo and the Guardian cartoonists led by Bisi Ogunbadejo. Their cartoons are largely word-driven, that is, they depend on words to convey most of the message. In other words, in these word-driven cartoons, 'pictures illustrate, but don't significantly add to a largely complete text' (McCloud 153). What I discuss earlier as the iconic conservativism—meaning less emphasis on pictures—of the Guardian cartoonists frees them to be more discursive, exploring complicated
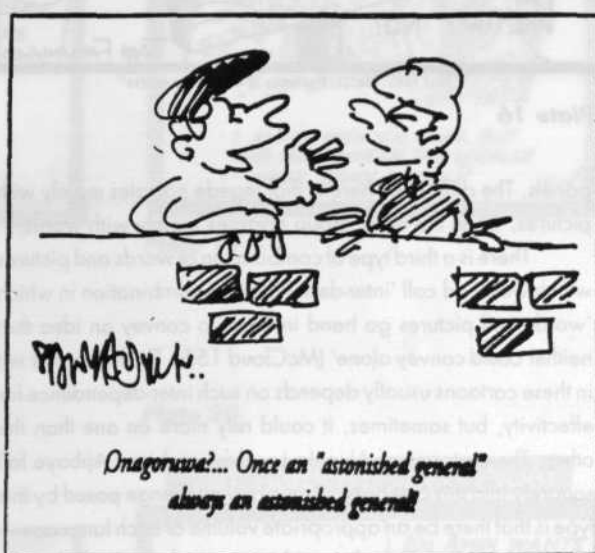

Plate 15a

Come and see the latest box office hit - playing hero
by General Abacha

Plate 15b

Onagoruwa?... Once an "astonished general"
always an astonished general!

Abeg, I no touch your fuel a. I jus'dey look whether na full s sank
or half tank dey for your car, dat's all.

Plate 15c

ideas such as only words can do. The source of the wit or humour is almost exclusively the words, since the pictures are more often than not, generic. The cartoons are generally more contemplative, more dialectical, more narrative, than action-oriented. It is for this reason that most of the cartoonists often need more than one panel for a cartoon session. In other words, they need a sequence of cartoons to tell a story picture-driven cartoonists might tell in a single panel. Word-driven cartoonists violate the common idea of visuality as the essence of cartoons; their privileging of words over pictures often makes their works overly cerebral, high-brow and elitist. It is not a coincidence at all that the newspaper where this form of cartooning was sown and nurtured to an established tradition, is the Guardian, the most high-brow of Nigerian newspapers.

As a coda here, dele jegede's work retains the distinction of being picture-driven and at the same time being narrative like the word-driven cartoonists, in his resort to the use of multi-

"He! He!! He!!!, Patience is one of my assets"

Plate 16

"Don't worry, we'll get them... INVESTIGATION CONTINUES!"

Plate 17

panels. The difference here is that jegede narrates mainly with pictures, while the other group narrates mainly with words.

There is a third type of combination of words and pictures which we could call 'inter-dependent,' a combination in which 'words and pictures go hand in hand to convey an idea that neither could convey alone' (McCloud 155). The humour or wit in these cartoons usually depends on such inter-dependence for effectivity, but sometimes, it could rely more on one than the other. The cartoons of Akinola Lasekan and Josy Ajiboye fall squarely into this category. One major challenge posed by this type is that there be an appropriate volume of each language—words and pictures—in the combination, otherwise we have a shortage or superfluity of either. The cartoons of Lasekan and Ajiboye do not always achieve the necessary balance; very often, there is a superfluity of words [18,19].Some commentators have criticised the works of the two as more of illustrations than cartoons, though without advancing convincing explanation of the basis for the judgement (Udechukwu, Nnimo). I suspect the reason is the often superfluous relationship of the words to the pictures in their cartoons.

The final category of word-picture union I found in Nigerian cartoons is the 'parallel' combination (McCloud 154), which is about the exact opposite of the 'inter-dependent.' In the parallel word-picture combination cartoons, the words and pictures appear to be mutually independent, following different paths with very little intersection. The words are often firmly separated from and placed above or below the pictures, unlike the practice with other cartoonists in which the placement of the words, whether to the side, slightly above or even occasionally below the pictures, always suggests an

intimacy between the two. But the mutual independence is not to be mistaken for a superfluous relationship, because the integrity of each language—words and pictures—is maintained and the one does not necessarily pretend to directly complement the other, though the reader's mind often makes such a connection. As with the least iconic example, the chief practitioner here also is Sanya Ojikutu.

Ojikutu does not use word-balloons—in this, he is like most Nigerian cartoonists, who do not use them but simply write into a boundless space within the panel, with a short line linking the words with the speaker; only Ogiugo and jegede use word-balloons more regularly. However Ojikutu is unlike any other Nigerian cartoonist in his use of typefaces, regular or italic, for his words, rather than hand-lettering. What this does is to further reinforce the observed parallelism, to further set up a disjunction, a sort of 'alienation effect,' between the hand-drawn pictures and the typewritten words. Like the word-driven cartoonists however, the source of wit or humour in Ojikutu's cartoons are the words because, of course, the pictures do not 'show' much. The serious demands Ojikutu's pictorial style places on the viewer is complemented by his equally challenging word-picture combination. But there is a small and delicious contradiction here: the implacable process of decay and decomposition suggested by Ojikutu's fragile characters and flimsy pictorial lines is opposed—in fact, subverted—by his typeface lettering style, which, like every typeface, gives the impressions of hardiness, resilience and solidity.

Use of Perspective

Virtually all Nigerian cartoonists have been quite conser-

Plate 18b

JOSY AJIBOYE ON SUNDAY

THE BAN ON IMPORTED CARPETS AND RUGS IS A BLESSING

I AGREE WITH YOU CHIEF...BUT HAS THE PRICE OF THE LOCALLY MADE GONE DOWN?

Plate 19

Plate 20

JOSY AJIBOYE ON SUNDAY

IDI AMIN WANTS TO COME HOME

BELIEVE ME, THIS TIME, I TRULY WANT TO HELP UGANDA

RIO EARTH SUMMIT TOWARDS A CLEANER ENVIRONMEN[T]

THE WEST MESSED THE REST!

PLEASE WIPE YOUR FEET

SOUTH

EBUNALEGH 1992

JULY 1992

vative in experimentation with perspective. Perspective, which indicates the presence of a point of view from a distinctive location, and refers 'specifically to the *distance* taken by the perceiver in relation to [an] object' (Saint-Martin 109), has enormous resources and possibilities in manipulating the reader's orientation and involvement. The established perspective with the cartoonists seem to be the conventional flat eye-level, even with the quite experimental Ojikutu. From time to time, however, some of the cartoonists do tap into more striking perspectives such as bird's eye view or worm's eye view. This cartoon by Jose Ajiboye deploys the worm's eye view to quite dramatic effect [plate 20]. The perspective makes the subject tower menacingly over the reader, a technique particularly appropriate both to the physical build as well as the public image of Idi Amin as a bulky bully and tyrant. Another fine example is this cartoon by Ebun Aleshinloye [plate 21], which beautifully sums up the hypocrisy and injustice of the giant, imperialist West in intimidating and preaching cleaner earth to nations of the south, though it had been, and still is, the prime destroyer of the global environment.
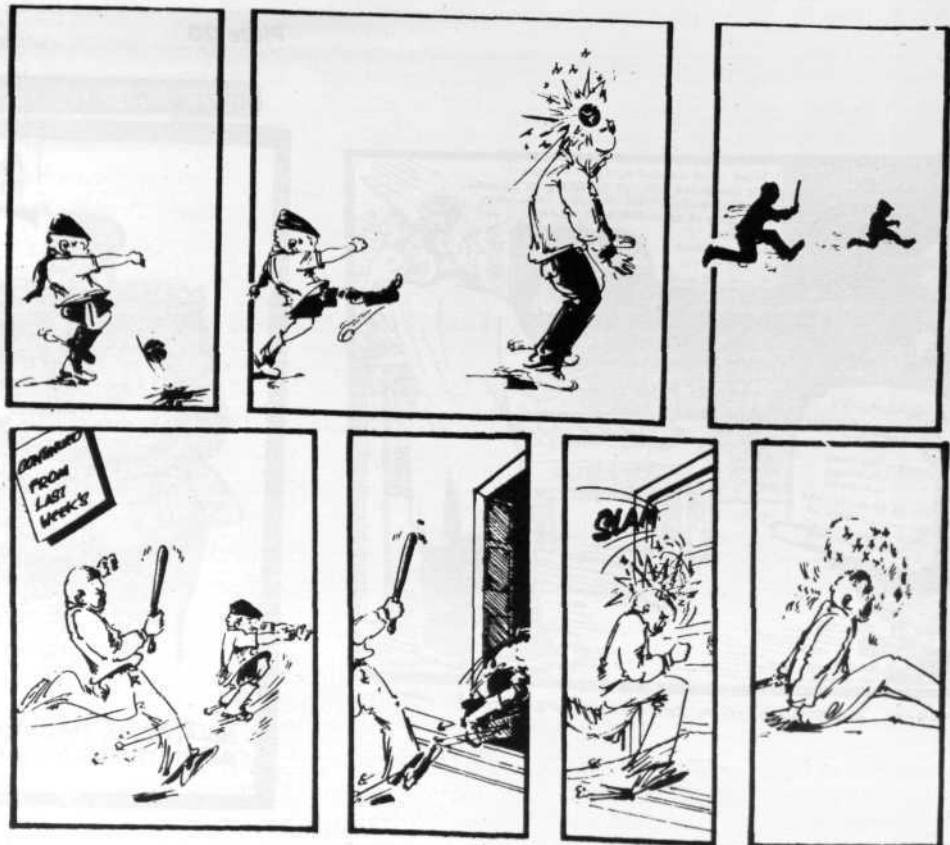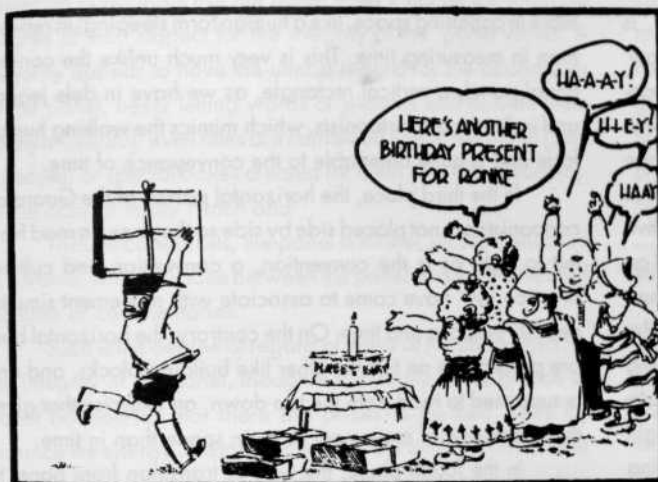
Plate 21

Plate 22 & 23

Plate 24

The Use of Panels

Finally, we should consider that very important though often overlooked aspect of cartoons: the cartoon panel. The panel, which frame the images and words, usually seems so naturally a part of the landscape of cartooning that it is rarely considered as a technical device in the hands of the cartoonist, much as literary critics rarely consider the size or shape of the page in their interpretations. The number, shape, size, and integrity of cartoon panels often affect the message in significant ways.

This is why the panel is, properly speaking, a disciplinary device, a medium of control [Eisner 38].

The majority of Nigerian cartoonists use the single panel. This means that the action, event, or individual cartooned must be arrested in a moment and frozen in time and space, for the single panel can only represent one moment and one space. Any other time or space can be represented in the single panel only as, and through the, thoughts or dreams of the character(s) in the cartoon. Thus the conception of time and space that

Plate 25

governs the single panel cartoon is essentially presentational and static. Please note that this is not the same as saying that motion is absent in the single panel cartoon. Indeed, cartoonists have perfected many techniques of depicting motion, such as streaking, blurring, or use of multiple images, within the single panel. In fact, most drawings of action—although the action had to be frozen to be drawn—often give the illusion of motion

[plate 17, 21].

Like the photograph, the single panel cartoon simply slices a moment for our viewing, and depends a lot on the viewer to transform that dead static moment into a living, dynamic one by constructing a story around it, that is, by interpreting it. It demands that the cartoonist be accomplished in such techniques—applicable both to words and pictures—as

Multi-panel cartooning, which Americans call 'comics,' is not yet a widespread practice in Nigeria outside of 'low-brow' imports and fitful local imitations, and outside of comics magazines like *Ikebe* and its clones. The two first significant practitioners are Ogiugo and jegede in the 1970s. After that, the form next appeared in the early 1980s in *The Guardian*. This newspaper made multi-panel cartooning one of its distinctive hallmarks, as virtually all the cartoonists that have published on its pages worked mainly in that form. Although this, more than a decade later, has become an entrenched tradition with the newspaper, generally speaking, the practice is still an emerging one, as very few cartoonists in other newspaper houses have been eager to follow suit. With multi-panels, the cartoons begin to tell 'stories,' conventionally conceived as narratives, moving from one scene or segment of the story to another, unlike the single panel cartoon that must present everything it has to say in one panel.

As I said earlier, the cartoon panel is a demarcator of time and space; in multi-panel cartoons, the panel is the most significant way of representing the movement and passage of time. The number and size of panels affect the rhythm of the story; the larger and fewer the panels, the slower the tempo, while the smaller and more numerous the panels, the faster the beat (Eisner 30) [plate 22, 23]. However, the panels of the Nigerian practitioners of the form are only occasionally more than three, probably due to space limitations, and so rhythm and its artistic and symbolic resources are not often deployed with much dramatic intentions or results. This is a general observation which dele jegede's cartoon sometimes deny in managing to call attention to the speed of time even with the limited number of panels [plate 22, 23]. An additional way he does this is to vary the size of the panels in order to indicate what action or segment lasts how long [plate 22, 23].

The *Guardian* cartoonists appear to be interested in the multi-panel form not so much for its potential in enabling dramatic uses of time and space as for its inherent narrative and discursive possibilities. Here are my reasons for advancing this point: in the first place, their cartoons are word-driven, meaning that time passage could be conveyed easily by words without the need of a succession of panels, which is exactly what the picture-driven cartoonist would have to do. In this cartoon by Bisi Ogunbadejo [plate 12] it is in the very first panel that a character very easily gives the impression of much passage of time simply by saying 'I hope I may not have to repeat myself for the fourth time... I have things to do.' Thus, the panels in this cartoon serve not so much to indicate time passage as provide spatial moments to dialectically exhibit the vulgar illiteracy of the Nigerian police, which may soon cost the life of a citizen.

In the second place, the rectangular panels of the Guardian cartoonists are long, horizontal bars that seem to give a panoramic view, an arrangement that seems to be interested more in capturing space, like a human form sleeping, in repose, than in measuring time. This is very much unlike the conventional panel, a vertical rectangle, as we have in dele jegede and indeed most cartoonists, which mimics the walking human form and is quite amenable to the conveyance of time.

In the third place, the horizontal panels of the Guardian cartoonists are not placed side by side so they can be read from left to right as is the convention, a convention and cultural practice 'we' have come to associate with movement simultaneously in space and time. On the contrary, the horizontal bars are placed one on top the other like building blocks, and one is supposed to read from the top down, an exercise that gives the impression of movement more in space than in time.

In the fourth place, the type of transition from panel to panel employed by the Guardian cartoonists is the moment-to-moment, a type of transition that requires only very minimal action out of our sight inbetween panels (McCloud 70). Because of the minimal action, time slows down considerably and space practically stands still so it can be scrutinized [plate 12]. This is unlike, for instance, the practice of dele jegede in which the action-to-action type of transition predominates. This type emphasises distinct progressions in action, and therefore, as a consequence, time passage is underscored.

What these four instances point to is the comparative emphasis of the Guardian cartoonists—in their resort to the use of multi-panels—on the need more for space, than time, to narrate a story. In other words, they are interested more in the spatialisation rather than then temporalisation of narrative.

A narrative could only occur in both space and time, as I said, so, what does the privileging of one over the other, (space over time, in this case), mean in a narrative enterprise? To emphasise space is to arrest time for a while to focus attention on space and what occupies it—its composition, structure, meaning, relations. This appears well-suited to the word-driven discursive and dialectical style of the Guardian cartoonists in picking an idea and subjecting it to scrutiny from various logical positions. What is important in this act is not how slow or fast time passes but well a particular entity or idea has been explained and understood. And in so far as the main focus of our cartoonists is our failings as a social entity, the Guardian cartoonists appear to be engaged in a foundationalist project, that is, to explain, through focusing on key ideas, the foundations of social relations, how society works, more than to exhibit several societal traits for criticism or praise, as is the ruling norm with other cartoonists.

Spatialisation of narrative thus becomes a potent pedagogical tool. Ogunbadejo's 'Why Some Nigerians don't go to the Police' ran up to twelve discontinuous episodes, with the focus on the police as the main link.

It must be said, after all this disquisition on panels, that a cartoon need not have a panel, and that although all

Nigerian cartoonists use the panel even if not all the time, the degree of their respect for the integrity of the panel varies. A majority appear to have the utmost regard for the boundaries of the panel, never letting words or pictures spill outside them [Sanya Ojikutu]; even titles are contained within the panel [Josy Ajiboye], or special boxes created for them [Bisi Ogunbadejo]. In the case of many *Punch* and
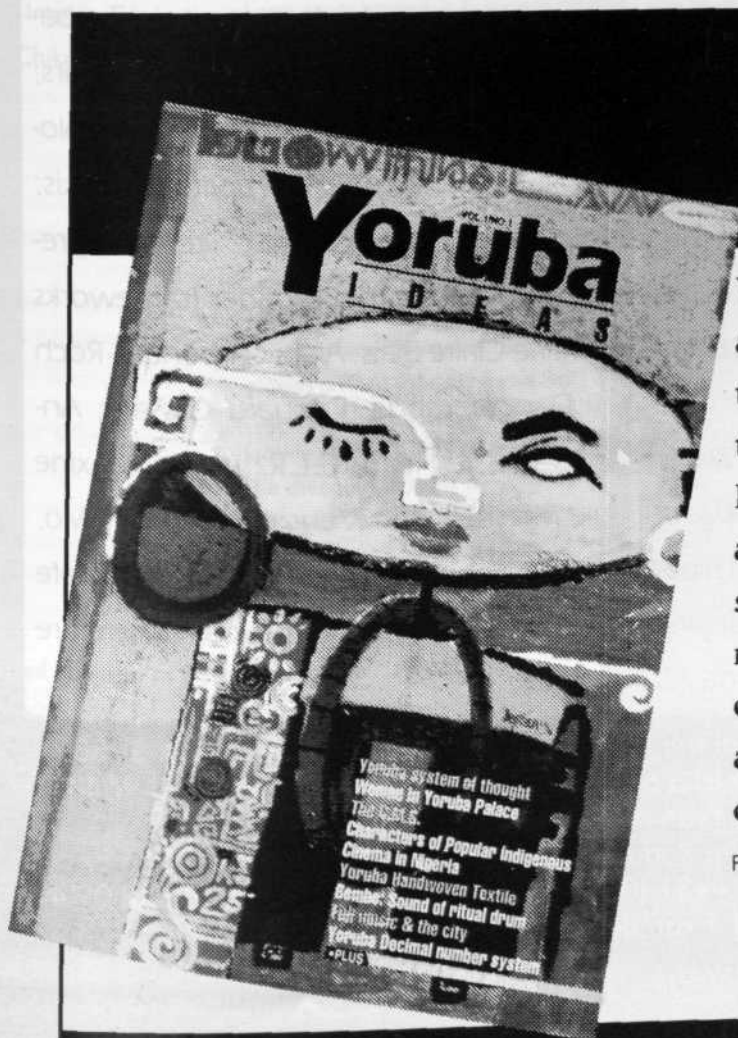
Tribune cartoonists, the panel is further securely encased in a frame, with the space between the panel and the frame used for titles or commentaries.

Such is the degree of regard of many of the cartoonists for the integrity of the panel, though it is actually in the breach of panel boundaries that there are prizes to be had. Take for instance the energy, drama and excitement added to these dele jegede pieces simply by the bursting of panel boundaries [plate 22, 24]. Sometimes, Ade Ogundero dispenses with panels entirely, renouncing their circumscriptive and disciplinary function to convey a boundless space and a limitless time or perpetual present. One of his most famous of such cartoons is this one on implacable class hierarchy and insensitive leadership published in the front page of the now defunct *Sunday Renaissance* on January 19, 1975 [plate 25]. The cartoon

caused so much discomfort in official circles that the paper had to issue an equally front-page apology two weeks later on February 5. Although the pictures and words of the cartoon are graphic enough and alone to warrant official displeasure, it is not impossible at all that the cartoon's unpaneled, unbounded presentation, simply drawn there as if it were part of the news, contributed to its effect. **GR**

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