

BEYOND CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINMENT: ANIMATION AS SOCIAL COMMENTARY

Emeka Nwosu

&

Kelechi Uzoma Agoha

<http://www.ajol.info/index.php/cajtm.v.12.2.1>

Abstract

Animation is one of the popular media of expression in contemporary society. However, the idea of using this medium as a tool for social commentary has not been fully explored in Nigeria, due to its popular categorization as children's entertainment. Therefore, this study aims at examining three short animated films from the stables of Area Production Company in order to evaluate the critical social issues inherent in the films, which reflect contemporary social problems experienced in Nigeria. This study is anchored on Auteur theory, and uses the case study and Content Analysis approaches of the qualitative method of research for data collection and analysis. The case studies are selected using purposive sampling technique to select both the Production Company and short films. The study finds that these animated films portray some social challenges in Nigeria by satirizing the structures that cause these problems. Therefore, this study concludes that the utilization of animation as a tool for social commentary will go a long way in exposing social maladies in society, as well as encourage socio-political reforms in the country. Thus, this study recommends that, animators should focus on social realistic themes in their films, as this will contribute to measures aimed at addressing contemporary challenges facing Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Animation is simply a means of giving life to lifeless objects or images using distinctive techniques different from live action films.

Fundamentally, it is an intervallic recording of objects and images to create the illusion of movement. Animation like every other art is a medium of representation that allows animators to explore and express their artistic thoughts. More often than not, these thoughts reflect happenings in society. This reflection may be objective or subjective depending on how the animator perceives the world. Brain Mckernan notes that, "throughout human history, stories have served to sustain cultures and traditions and to explain the mysteries of life and the world in which we live" (10). Hence, "people are drawn to animation not because it is technically possible, but because of the basic human need for stories (myths) and inclination towards totemism" (Pikkov 36). Therefore, issues concerning the mythology of existence, the challenges facing man and his environment, human relationships and the idea of creating a better world, are all concerns of animators, who see the society as a stream for creative interest and their art as means of communication.

As a medium of communication, animation encourages animators to express their ideologies which are aimed at encouraging or promoting ideas that will impact positively on the audience as well as improve society. This is because the urge to recreate the world is not only designed for artistic satisfaction but also, "the fantasy of creating something that has an emotive impact on the others" (Rea and Irving xvii). Hence, watching animation helps to shape the opinion and perception of the audience on issues of concern in society, and in turn, could persuade the audience to make positive decisions or engender undesirable consequences. It becomes expedient for the audience to draw meaningful lessons from animated films they see on screen because of its ability to disseminate information in an engaging and entertaining way (Dawkins 9). Before the advent of digital technology which has enhanced global viewership, as well as, the integration of different types of animation— hand drawn, puppetry, claymation, pixilation—to create new hybrid; different societies adopted the type of animation they used based on the peoples

knowledge of the techniques involved to tell stories. Therefore with the different types of animation practiced in different climes, animators explored their societies by projecting human problems, thereby making animation imperative in treating such problems and proffering solutions that contributed to the improvement of the society. For instance, puppetry, a type of traditional animation popular in Nigeria and Africa, though not peculiar to the continent was used to treat sophisticated issues. The Kwagh-hir puppet performance which is the traditional puppet animation among the Tiv ethnic group in Nigeria is meant for all audience and deals with serious political themes. One common feature of Kwagh-hir is that "it attacks societal ills, lampoons unscrupulous personalities and, in more recent times, captures contemporary happenings..." (Gowon 131). Writing on Asian animation, Yang Kim observes that South Korean animated films "paid attention to various social subjects such as political oppression, economic inequality, environmental destruction and the status quo, among others" (73), and John Lent affirms that animated films in India treated "family planning, energy, road safety, and dowry, as well as those with artistic and literary themes" (104-5). The treatment of relevant issues is also seen in the Western hemisphere, where animation is used by different governments, to disseminate cultural values and political ideologies to the larger society, thereby making animation a propaganda tool for conscientizing the populace on why they must support a particular socio-political ideology. By and large, animation is a serious art that presents limitless themes, and lessons inherent in animation are embracive and encompass all generations. It is a peculiar technique of relating issues of the world in an abstract form; in which the target audience determines the artistic condiments (Owuamala 11). However, Giannalberto Bendazzi argues that the utilization of animation in relaying important topics could be cumbersome on the audience to understand. This is because:

In animation, the public has to deal with drawn or painted images, models or digital images; in other words, things

that are not real. Emotional identification is more difficult, even though over time it has become easier because the younger generation grew up with this form of entertainment and the use of symbols in common place in everyday situation. (Bendazzi 7)

In most cases, animation is unwittingly perceived as art designed for children's viewership. Therefore, whenever animation is mentioned or appears on the screen, children first come to mind. This perception has been sustained for decades in the global film industry. The controversy on which audience animation is meant for, was ignited by the Hollywood industry. According to Joseph Boggs and Dennis Petrico, "animation films have long been seriously embraced by the world of international art. By contrast, American culture has often relegated them to the trivial category of children cinematic pleasure" (467). They went further to state that "the stereotypic modern audience for animated cartoons has been a theatre full of screaming kids, except when they have been obligated to escort their families, the theory goes, most adults have avoided the form" (466-7). Their observation presents a notion stimulated and defined by the culture of the American film society, which has transcended the boundaries of America to become a global perception. But, this misconception does not need to be so, because, prior to the concept of "modern audience" which Boggs and Petrico mentioned, animation had no pertinent class distinction. The birth of motion picture emanated from experimentations by scientists and technologists, who used still images (photography) to create the illusion of movement, and the audience who paid to see those animated feats were adults.

Peter Wollen writing on the kind of audience that saw the experimental films that pioneered cinema, of which animation was a part, observes that, "right from the start, experimental films had a limited audience, an audience of aesthetes, intellectuals and radicals, a dedicated minority who were intrigued, even moved or thrilled,

by the new, the unconventional, the difficult, the eccentric, the idiosyncratic" (148). Hence, if the audience possessed these qualities mentioned above, then it is erroneous to relegate animation as entertainment for children because, according to H. Binyon, "beyond child's play, puppetry (animation) has always employed various subjects and has been performed to all age groups, the young and the old, the rich and the poor" (qtd. in Adeyemi 3). In fact, Eva Michelson concludes in his essay *Animated Cartoons, from the Old to the New: Evolution for the Past 100 Years*; that; "cartoon animation is certainly not just for children, it is for parents and grandparents as well (13). Ultimately, animation has evolved to become an accepted and important medium of entertainment, information dissemination, social engineering and education in different countries of the world. In Nigeria, digital animation has evolved as a medium through which animators make meaning of the social and political challenges facing their artistic milieu. As such, animation becomes a means of making social criticism that arouse cognitive and critical thinking from the audience, and could, as other arts, "provide the evaluative template through which actions and reactions in the environment can be appreciated" (Owuamalam, 11). Therefore, this study is aimed at examining some selected short animated films from *Area Production Company* to appreciate the critical social issues explored in the films as the relate to contemporary realities. These animated films are *Owo Money*, *Sunsidanza* and *Last Man*.

THE ANIMATOR AS AN AUTEUR

An animator can literarily be described as the artist who creates animation. However, the production of animation goes beyond mere creation, it involves planning, organizing, managing, synthesizing and synergizing all artistic components relevant or required for a successful production of an animated film, and it is the task of the animator to see to the realization of such artistic endeavour. Hence, the features of the animator cannot be severed from that of the auteur.

The auteur theory as applied in film is founded on the argument that a film director perhaps is the most influential personality in a film production and thus the author of a film. This theory formally developed in the 1950s by François Truffaut, a film critic, and a member of Cahiers du Cinema—a body of French critics, who advocated for a film theory that drew upon the idea of aesthetic creation and a personality whose signature could be discerned by the sensitive critic who bothered to look for it (Braudy and Cohen 446). The Cahiers du Cinema critics saw the director as the entity saddled with the onus of defining "film aesthetics and mise-en-scene" (Stam 85).

In discerning or delineating the auteur's signature which basically is the director's style and structure, the film critic or viewer has to view the works of a single director because "the true marks of an auteur will appear in all of them, despite any differences in writers, cinematographers or star (Braudy and Cohen 446). In other words, auteurism avows for an "all rounder" influence from a single personality in the assemblage of all aspects of film production. Examining the worth of a director as an auteur, Thompson Bordwell posits that, the director is the direct source of meaning. According to him, "The art cinema and the 16mm 'personal' cinema celebrated the director as the creative source of meaning; it became natural to think of the director's output as an oeuvre, a repetition and enrichment of characteristics, themes and stylistic choices" (44) aimed at exploring the human condition with the view of making corrective statements for the overall good of the people. Thus, Peter Wollen affirms that auteur theory "enables us to reveal a whole complex of meaning" (465), and perceives the director as the first critic whose works must convey meaning.

The ability of the director to make positive meaning is achieved through the assessment of the director's technical competence, the director's distinguishing personality and the interior meaning arising from the tension between the director's personality and his materials. These three premises of assessment according to Andrew Sarris are the criterion of value (452). They

therefore constitute the yardstick for evaluating the qualification of a film auteur. One of the values of this theory is that it helps in deciphering the director's key motifs and nuances. In the light of this, it helps compare different films in order to determine the artistic peculiarities of different directors. Wollen observes that "this comparison does not only produce coherent message or world view but establishes the directorial structure which underlies the film and shapes it, and also gives it a certain pattern of energy catharsis" (467). Ultimately, in deciphering the director's structures, a critic has to work keenly in studying the film because by such action meaning is produced.

Animation like the live action film is organized by an animator who superintends over the overall production process. However, the task of an animator is enormous "due to the absence of actors' expressive contributions" (Gaut 84). Hence Berys Gaut argues that, "there is no doubt that animated films can be the product of a single individual" (84). Paul Wells in *Animation: Genre and Authorship* further posits that, "arguably, animation is the auteurist of film production, its very process, even when it's most collaborative, insists upon the cohesive intervention of an authorial presence" (74). Therefore, it is obvious to dictate the signage of a single director in animation productions. The authorial interference interplays in the overall production because, distinctive elements like style, structure, characterization and mise-en-scene echo the impact of the artistic director.

AN OVERVIEW OF AREA ANIMATION PRODUCTION COMPANY

"Area" is an animation production company that specializes in the production of short animated films. *Area* animated series are produced under the aegis of Drofú digital platform, an online distribution company owned by Nnamdi Nwoha. Drofú is however an offshoot of Elfwork Company that is based in Lagos which has vast interest in content development and the creation of end to end animated branded content for companies and the open market.

Area productions came into existence with the aim of

experimenting with animation in recreating daily Nigerian culture and behaviour, and with the objectives of assessing the receptiveness of local animation by the Nigerian audience, and by extension create an animation market for locally produced animated films. In October 2011, "Our Own Area", which is a website for uploading animated films from *Area Production Company*, was launched on You Tube, with the first animated short film titled *Oliver don Twist*, an adaptation of a musical video by D'banj. The animated company has since its inception produced other animated films such as: *Face Something*, *Subsidazan*, *Lagimo*, *Bling*, *Ballistic*, *Owo Money*, *Igba Nkwu*, *Last Man* and *Rush Hour*.

Nnamdi Nwoha is a self taught animator and a graduate of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Lagos. His style of animation is urban surrealism. Hence, he aims at recreating social reality associated with urbanization. He believes that animation is a process of disassembling reality into multiple images and then reassembles them to create a fantastic and uncanny dream world that captures the consciousness of mass audience.

SOCIAL COMMENTARY IN *OWO MONEY*, *SUBSIDANZA*, AND *LAST MAN*

Owo Money is a short animation that talks about the effects of illegal motor parks, greed and quest for survival among the unemployed youths. At a road side park in Lagos, a Danfo bus conductor calls on commuters heading to Yaba to enter his bus. A tout approaches him and demands for commission. The bus conductor vehemently refuses to give him money, stating that he had done so in the morning. Consequently, out of greed, the tout invites his boss Crusher to deal with the bus conductor for refusing to pay. Crusher who is diminutive in nature arrives and commands the Conductor to pay or face the consequence. Rather than take his threats seriously, both the driver and commuters laugh at his disadvantaged stature and further incite the Conductor to beat Crusher to pulp. As a fight ensues between Crusher and the Conductor, Crusher quickly grabs the testicles of the Conductor

and squeezes it. The conductor collapses and out of fright, commuters and the driver scamper for their lives. Confidently, one of the commuters returns to the scene and nudges the collapsed conductor to give him the balance of his payment. As the conductor does not reply action ends.

Owo Money mirrors the popular tout menace on illegal motor parks in Lagos and indeed the country. More worrisome is the illegal imposition of taxes on commercial drivers who make use of such parks for their daily business. Hence, these illegal tax collectors utilize this avenue to eke a living for themselves. Beyond this norm, Nnamdi Nwoha portrays the extreme case of touting, occasioned by greed and exploitation and the conscious attempt by the victims to reject oppression from such illegal authority regardless of the adverse consequences. The centre of attraction is the bus conductor who blatantly refuses to pay extra fee to the tout for loading his danfo bus, because he considers it as unnecessary extortion, having paid similar amount in the morning.

Tout: Owo mi da

Conductor: Wetin na? Every time I come this place you go dey collect money. I never pay you for this morning?

Tout: Na morning money be that, you never pay afternoon money na.

The Conductor's refusal to be exploited further receives the backing of the driver and commuters, who encourage him to fight for his right. The actions of the driver and his commuters reveal their state of awareness of the illegality that goes around the business, but rather they choose to be passive with their reactions. Hence, the tout resorts to introduce his boss Crusher, whom he believes has the power to repel the conductor's resistance. Such imposition of confidence instigates Crusher to engage in physical combat with the bus conductor, which he eventually wins, owing to his utilization of his diminutive nature to outfox his opponent. This enigmatic reality as animated by Nwoha portrays the ordeal

travellers face going about their businesses. Unfortunately, there seems to be no measures put in place by government to end this endemic problem that pose a serious threat to travellers and commercial drivers.

1



**Pix. 1 Crusher grabs Conductors testicles
the fight**



fails to withstand the fight due to presents him as the protagonist, session, and also fight for his rights. Furthermore, Nwoha creates an presenting Crusher to be a giant defeated Goliath in a combat, but and disregard for human life. This strate the ability of the powerful

minority to exert force and power on the powerless majority, to the extent of almost stifling their existence as revealed in the manner in which Crusher squelches the conductor's testicles, which is the symbol of strength and virility. Ultimately, Crushers attack shows total disregard for the right to life, which is a fundamental human right, and gross insensitive to the continuance of the human race.

Nwoha's search light shifts to the issue of petrol scarcity in *Subsidazan*. This animated film reveals the ordeal of Nigerians during the January 2012 subsidy removal crisis. The film starts by revealing President Jonathan on NTA nationwide broadcast to announce the removal of fuel subsidy. He promises to use the

money gotten from subsidy to execute all the projects that were abandoned. The broadcast proceeds with news flash on major newspaper publications, with each capturing the president's speech as major headline. Meanwhile, action shifts to Chibuzor riding with his girlfriend in his posh car. However, their journey is truncated by a barricade placed by highway robbers. Consequently, two armed men attack Chibuzor and his girlfriend. But surprisingly, the leader of the gang commands Chibuzor to open his petrol tank. Bewildered, Chibuzor confidently requests to know why he should open his petrol tank and tells the armed men to take his girlfriend instead. But when the leader of the gang threatens to shoot him again, he yields. Scorpion, the second robber brings a fifty litter gallon and saps the whole petrol in the tank and leave. Chibuzor heaves a sigh of relief because he remembers that there is still some reserve in the car engine but unfortunately, the armed men return again and command him to open the car engine. When he does, they sap the petrol in the engine and exit. In extreme agony for his loss, Chibuzor collapses.

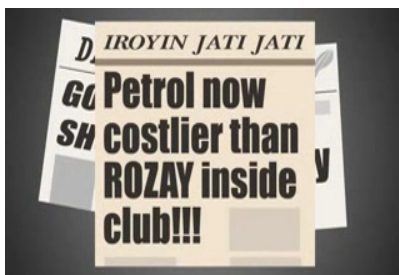
Subsidanza presents two global issues that affect the contemporary Nigerian state. First is bad governance and institutional neglect that endangers living standard in the society. This animated film ridicules this negligence by making the animated character of Jonathan; the president of Nigeria, appear forgetful and bewildered in his nationwide broadcast. Jonathan's disposition is a pointer to the dissenting nature of the political elite who are far removed from the harsh realities the masses encounter, due to their unwillingness to drive policies and reforms that better the lot of the common man. However, Jonathan's stand to correct the anomaly in the petroleum sector, by removing subsidy in the importation of petrol by powerful elites shows his capacity to make a difference.

President: My fellow Nigerians we are pleased to announce the removal of fuel subsidy and we promise that all the things we didn't do before, we will surely use this money to do it.

However, his action to change the status quo and rewrite the narrative meets serious socio-political and economic anarchy instigated by the cabals, who suborn the common resources of the people at the expense of the masses. Nwoha captures the hardship and distress witnessed in the country, as major newspaper headlines- "*Government Shocker*", "*The Cabal Strikes back!*", "*Petrol now Costlier than Rozay inside club*"- herald the tragedy of a nation state. Nonetheless, the impact of political ineptitude and rascality is directly felt by the majority who are exposed to anarchy, loss of life and property, and the unending quest for survival.



3

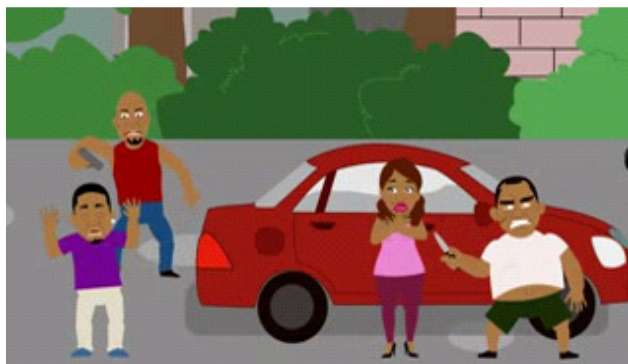


4

Pix. 3 Reveals political tension caused by

Pix. 4 Shows economic hardship in the the cabal

country



Pix. 5 Armed robbers threatening Chibuzor

The second issue *Subsidanza* raises awareness about the rate of insecurity in contemporary society. Nwoha, uses the unfortunate robbery attack on Chibuzor and his girlfriend by highway robbers to raise concern on the abrasive reality of the common man in a society, where the principle of justice and human choices are limited due to total failure in leadership. Hence, the survival of man becomes that of the fittest, with the employment of violence and other social vices as alternative to hard work and means of survival as exemplified by the high way robbers. Ironically, what these robbers dispossess Chibuzor of is petrol, which is the major economic life wire of Nigeria, hence, his willingness to trade his girlfriend for petrol. The importance of petrol to ordinary Nigerians is captured in the dialogue between Chibuzor and the leader of the armed robbers.

Armed Robber: Cooperate or I shoot
Chibuzor: Please don't shoot. I will do whatever you want. Please
Armed Robber: Oya, open your fuel tank
Chibuzor: (surprised) Eh.. You say?
Armed Robber: I say open your tank!
Chibuzor: Why? (Armed robbers show surprise)
But why na? Can't you take my girlfriend? See her there.

The abject situation and pain Chibuzor goes through over his loss reflects his total dependence on petrol as a means of mobility and comfort. Chibuzor's fate shows camaraderie to the ordeal Nigerians face in the phase of fuel scarcity. By and large, Chibuzor's absolute dependence and disregard for his girl friend points to the extreme importance of fuel to the sustenance of businesses, mobility and comfort in Nigeria. Hence, Nwoha ridicules the social quagmire that has created opportunity for man to place preference and value on material substance over human life and relationship. This precarious situation as presented in *subsidanza* creates a conflict of choice out of which Chibuzor opts for what he feels is beneficial

even though he loses it eventually.

Last man is the story of an officer of the Lagos State Traffic Management Agency (LASTMA) who stops a driver and accuses him of illegal lane change, which according to the officer contradicts the state traffic law. Consequently, the LASTMA Officers forcefully enters the car and compels the driver to drive to the LASTMA office for proper explanations and consequent prosecution. The driver discerning the Officers ulterior motive decides to zoom past the LASTMA Office. The LASTMA officer in confusion asks the driver where he is driving to but does not get any reply from him. Instead, the driver picks his mobile phone and feigns to call a native doctor, informing him that he has gotten a sacrifice for their ritual. The LASTMA Officer is petrified and pleads with the driver to let him go, because he was only doing his job and not causing trouble. In order to appeal to his conscience, he pleads with the driver to spare his life because his wife just put to bed. The driver appears indifferent to his pleas but abruptly stops the car and orders the officer out. Immediately the driver zooms off the LASTMA officer cleans his tears and begins to haul curses on the driver.

In *Last man*, Nwoha tries to look at the issue of civil disobedience. Civil disobedience as seen in the animation is one of the ways people revolt against subjugating demands that demean the human desire for freedom. It is a by product of laws or institutions that repress the freedom of ordinary citizens or individuals in a cultural and socio-political environment. It is a social protest that involves active but non violent refusal by individuals to obey certain demands or commands of an established authority, especially when such inhibitions emanate from institutions of government that are supposed to protect lives and maintain order, but instead create unnecessary hiccups to freedom. Nwoha uses the animated character of the driver to challenge the excesses of state security agents deployed to ensure safety compliance on the highway, but unfortunately turn the highway to money making factory. Thus, *Last Man* satirizes the corruption and

extortionist tendencies of such security agents in the country who use their offices to intimidate, unlawfully detain and consequently demand lofty sums from their victims.

The corruption that goes on within the uniformed job is explicated by the officer of LASTMA, who leverages on his knowledge of the state traffic law to forcefully invade his victim's car, without giving him the opportunity to defend or air his opinion as revealed in the dialogue below.

Officer: Hold it! Hold it! Hold it! Illegal lane change.
You have contravened the law

Driver: But how?

Officer: You moved before the light turned from red to green. That is an explicitly transgression of the state traffic law and there is a penalty.

Driver: I was waiting patiently, just like...

Officer: You are wasting my time. Let's go to our office

Driver: Sir, but I'm trying to explain to you.

Officer: Please, please, please. I'm not interested in that. Let us go to our office you will explain better there. Please drive, it's in front.

The officer's evasiveness and refusal to allow the driver to explain himself is aimed at subduing the driver to accept an offence he never committed in the first instance, as such, committing him to pay the "penalty" for illegal lane change. His approach is an infringement on the fundamental principle of human right and the freedom of expression. Unfortunately for the officer, the driver is not cowed by his antic. Hence, he decides not to heed to the officers instruction to stop at the office. The driver's sudden reticence and disobedience further aggravates the officer who uses the opportunity to hyperbolize the enormity of his offence.

Officer: Turn the car back and enter our office. Mr. Man, I am an officer of the law and you are obstructing justice. Do you know the penalty for that? Stop this car immediately!

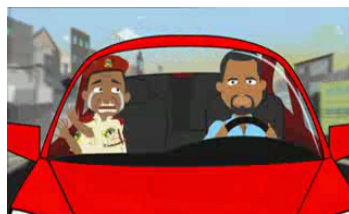
Unfazed by this situation, the driver decides to beat the officer to his game by feigning to call a native doctor, informing that he has gotten a votive offering for their ritual sacrifice. This sudden revelation changes the cause of events, as the officer turns from a prosecutor to a defendant. In other words, the mean resistance and decoy from the driver reverses the brutal approach of the officer and submits him to the awareness of his misdemeanour. This situational irony evokes laughter and pity for the officer who pleads for his life thus:

Officer: please now, please now! Am just doing my job (sobs). Please, I don't want to die. Oga please. My wife just born. I will not do it again

The officer's confessional statement reveals his status as a married man, with a newly born child. Probably in order to meet his family demands, he engages in corrupt practices just to survive. Therefore, his reference to "Am only doing my job" is subject to the number of people he supplants to do his beat. But his inability to foresee the consequences of his desperation makes him the architect of his own failure.



Pix.6 Car zooms past LASTMA office



Pix.7 LASTMA Officer pleads for his life

Inadvertently, Nwoha creates this public officer to lack foresight in discerning that he could also be a victim in the hand of the oppressed. This situational irony evokes laughter and exposes the weakness of public office holders, especially security agents,

who in their greedy pursuit for wealth lose their moral scruples and integrity.

Therefore, civil disobedience as applied in this animated film becomes a radical approach to revolt against oppressive authority and misuse of power by the LASTMA officer, and indeed, public servants in order to ridicule their anomalous behaviour, as well as correct the declining moral state of affairs in society because, a civil and democratic society is that which "creates a desirable atmosphere within the society, where the constituent parts can adequately function without encumbrances, towards the growth and development of the entire system" (Essien 255-6).

CONCLUSION

An animator is a social communicator who draws his inspirations and stories from his immediate environment. In other words, his socio-cultural environment informs the kind of information he transmits. As a social commentator, the animator tenaciously anchors his creativity on two important variables: using his art to comment or satirize the social decadence, as well as using his art to promote ideas that will enhance development and peaceful coexistence among people. Regardless of these variables, the core essence of animation, as with every creative work is to encourage positive change.

From the analysis, it is imperative to underscore the relevance of Nigerian animation in examining critical social issues that need urgent attention. Nwoha who is the animator of the three short animated films used in this study, explored the issues that mitigate human relationships, instigate misdemeanour among the younger generation, and evoke social dissonance in contemporary Nigerian society as reflected in *Owo Money*, *Subsidanza* and *Last Man*. Hence, Nwoha uses his animated characters to expose these issues in a comic but serious manner, so as to draw the attention of the audience to stop, think, and act towards reengineering the malaise that nether progress.

More so, the attitudes of these animated characters portray the Marxist interpretation of civil society which is "a masked manifestation of an underlying structure of state power, whose aim is the exploitation of the majority in the interest of enhanced profit" (Edgar and Sedgwick 45). Unfortunately, in Nigeria the foundation of institutions that aid human development and safety is faulty and hence lacks the capacity to address social issues. The implication is the abysmal and wanton behaviour of agents of government and the quest to resort to violence as means for survival. Therefore, the aim of the animator of these films is to use the follies of the rebelling characters to ridicule institutionalized corruption that has eaten the fabrics of the society and which regrettably is accentuated by state apparatus.

Finally, animation in Nigeria is still evolving and as such, could be a potent tool for social criticism, mobilization and reforms. Therefore, Nigerian animators should explore more social realistic themes in their animations as it will contribute to the fight against social injustice, crime, oppression and other contemporary challenges facing Nigeria.

Emeka Nwosu, *PhD*
Department of Theatre Arts
Imo State University, Nigeria
&

Kelechi Uzoma Agoha
Department of Theatre and Film Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

WORKS CITED

- Adeyemi, Taiwo. "Beyond Child's Play: Puppetry as a Tool for Rural Development in Nigeria." *Applause: Journal of Theatre and Media Studies*. Vol.1. No.2. Enugu: Academic Printing Press, 2006: 1-14
- Baudry, Leo and Cohen Marshall. "The Film Artist." *Film theory and criticism*. 7th ed. Ed. Leo Baudry and Marshall Cohen.

- Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009: 445-449.
- Bendazzi, Giannalberto. *Defining Animation: a Proposal*.
<https://giannalbertobendazzi.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/> Accessed 28/3/2017.
- Boggs, M. Joseph and Petrico W. Dennis. *The Art of Watching Films*. 5th ed. Mountain View: Mayfield, 2000.
- Bordwell, David. *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*. London: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Dawkins, Zoe. *Co-Animate: animation as a Communication Tool for Social Change*.
<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/555fe01fe4b0869296e90cea/t/55711228e4b03eabeef78491/1433473576817/Animation+as+a+Communication+Tool+for+Social+Change.pfd> Accessed 30/5/17.
- Edgar, Andrew and Peter Sedgwick. *Cultural Theory: The Key Concepts*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Essien, Edet. "Individuality and Reconciliation in Agu's *Symbol of a Goddess. Metaphors and Climax*. London: Adonis and Abbey, 2014. 255-264.
- Gaut, Berys. "Digital Cinema." *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film*. Ed. Paisley Livingston and Carl Plantinga. Oxon: Routledge, 2009.
- Gowon, Doki Ama. *Traditional Theatre in Perspective: Signs and Signification in Igbe, Girinya and Kwagh-hir*. Makudi: Aboki, 2006.
- Kim, Yang Joon. "Critique of the New Historical Landscape of South Korean Animation." *Animation an Interdisciplinary Journal*. Vol 1.1 (2006): 61–81 <<http://anm.sagepub.com>> Accessed 2/9/16.
- Lent, A. John. "Animation in South Asia". *Studies in South Asian Film and Media*. Vol.1(10). United Kingdom: Intellect, 2009: 101-117.
- Mckernam, Brain. *Digital Cinema*. New York: Mc Graw-Hill, 2005.

- Michelson, Rún Eva. *Animated Cartoons, from the old to the New: Evolution for the Past 100 Years*.
<[http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.461.791 &rep=rep1&type=pdf](http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.461.791&rep=rep1&type=pdf)> Accessed 7/3/17.
- Owuamalam, Owums-Emma. *Radio-TV Production*. Owerri: Image Press, 2007.
- Pikkov, Ülo. "On the Topics and Style of Soviet Animated Films". *BalticScreenMedia*. Vol.42016:17-37.
<http://publications.tlu.ee/index.php/bsmr/article/download/537/pdf>. Accessed on the 30/5/17
- Rea, W. Peter and Irving, K. David. *Producing and Directing the Short Film and Video*. Woburn: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2001.
- Sarris, Andrew. "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962." *Film theory and criticism*. 7th ed. Ed. Leo Baudry and Marshall Cohen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009: 451-454.
- Stam, Robert. *Film Theory: An Introduction*. New York: Blackwell Pub,
- Wollen, Peter. "The Auteur Theory (Howard Hawks and John Ford)." *Film Theory and Criticism*. 7th. Edition. Leo Baudry and Marshall Cohen Eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009: 455-470.
- Wells, Paul. *Animation: Genre and Authorship*. London: Wallflower, 2002.

FILMS CITED

- Owo Money. Dir. Nnamdi Nwoha. Our Own Area Productions, 2016.
- Subsidanza. Dir. Nnamdi Nwoha. Our Own Area Productions, 2015.
- Last Man. Dir. Nnamdi Nwoha. Our Own Area Productions, 2016.