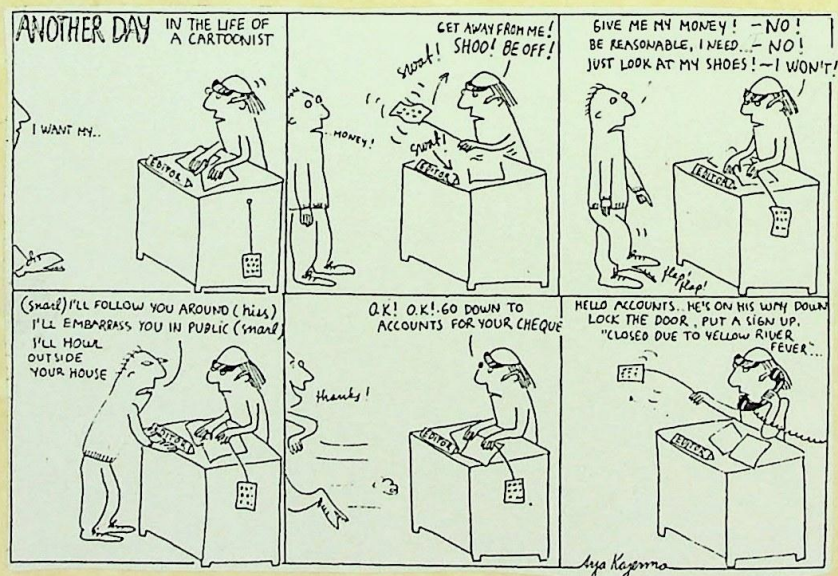


# THE CARTOON AND THE CARTOONIST IN CONTEMPORARY IRELAND: An analysis of the role of the cartoon and the cartoonist and how reflective of a society the cartoon can be, with particular reference to Irish cartoon and Irish society.





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A Thesis submitted to the faculty of History of Art and Design And  
Complementary Studies, in Candidacy for the degree in Bachelor of Design.  
Department of Visual Communications.

By Oonagh O' Toole

March 1988



INTRODUCTION

In this Thesis, I will look at the cartoon and the cartoonist and at how the cartoon is reflective of society, in this case Irish Society.

I aim to demonstrate how and why the cartoon evolved as a form of expression in society, by tracing the history of the cartoon from the days of Hogarth in the early eighteenth century to when the cartoon became popular in Ireland in mid nineteenth century comic weeklies like 'Pat' and 'Zozimus'; to the present day cartoon 'scene' in Ireland.

This historical outline of the cartoon will also serve as a background to the analysis of the work of three contemporary Irish cartoonists, one of whom is a political cartoonist, one who is a social cartoonist and another who is a pure humour cartoonist.

By looking at the work of these three cartoonists (Martyn Turner, Tom Mathews and Arja Kajermo) I will illustrate how their work reflects Irish Society - its politics, its norms and mores, its idioms and expressions and its sense of humour.

I aim to demonstrate the cartoonists role in society and to show that he shares some of the functions of the media in general, but is different by being both a member of the media and a member of the general public.

I also aim to show that this role is a unique one, by the uniqueness of the cartoonists situation of being both representative of general opinion and of being someone who influences this opinion. This situation renders the cartoon itself an excellent all round reflection of society, and an excellent reference when studying a society.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### The Origins of Cartoon



## THE ORIGINS OF CARTOON

"Graphic Satire is a complex discipline not easily dismissed as fad or trend. Its practitioners over eons have conformed to and rebelled against the artistic conventions of specific periods, often reflecting changes in the cultural fabric. We know that early caricature was practised as a means of shocking the established order."

- Rodolphe Toppfler. 1

The desire to communicate thoughts by drawing predates written language and may even lie at its origins. Every culture seems to have felt the need for such a language. In this context any drawing that encapsulates a complete thought can be called a 'cartoon'. In the book "Rules for Drawing Caricatures", (1788), Francis Grose writes, 2

"The sculptors of ancient Greece seem to have diligently observed the forms and proportions constituting the European idea of beauty ... These measures are to be met with in many drawing books; a slight deviation from them, by the predominancy of any feature, constitutes what is called 'character' - this deviation or peculiarity, aggravated, forms caricature." These exaggerated forms, already evident in Greece, flourished in Roman culture and found expression in a large number of Satirical drawings; many of which were displayed during Roman festivals.

The middle ages, despite its proclaimed piety, indulged widely in the representation of farcical or satirical themes, even in the churches (the gargoyles are the best known manifestations of this mocking spirit). The medieval figures in turn inspired the first satirical engravings of the 15th Century, particularly the remarkable drypoint etchings of the anonymous German artist known simply as "the E.S. master", 3 who works (dating from 1466) include a "grotesque alphabet" that is very modern in outlook. From there the thread leads through Durer, Bosch, Bruegel, Da Vinci (in his drawings of heads) and Callot into modern times.





William Hogarth, plate from "A Harlot's Progress," 1732.

1.

2.



Thomas Rowlandson, "The Genius's Room," 1806.



The development of modern caricature is credited to the brothers Annibale and Agostino Carracci, as is the term 'caricature'. In 1646, using Annibale Carracci's own pronouncements on the subject A. Mosini in his 'Trattato' (Treatise) established the definition of 'caricature' as the art of following nature's disfigurements in an attempt to arrive at 'La perfetta difformita' 'the perfect deformity'. 4 By the beginning of the 18th century the term as well as the practice of caricature was widespread all over Europe.

It was the universal acceptance of prints that led to the phased transition from caricature to what would later be called 'cartoons' a form no longer devoted simply to cataloguing external human idiosyncrasies, but one with an enlarged field of vision encompassing the whole political, social and cultural scene - indeed, the human condition itself. Hogarth is the first artist to whom the term cartoonist can be legitimately applied. Hogarth (1697-1764) was the first to draw humorous scenes without recourse to grossly caricatural effects or physical deformities. Background and detail were sufficient to bring out the humour of his compositions. The effects were primarily dramatic, not graphic, and his aims moral or social when they were not overtly political. He can thus be regarded as the first editorial cartoonist as well as the forerunner (in his series of narrative cartoons) of the comic strip.

The first manifestations of the cartoon in print took the form of the broadside, a single sheet with picture and caption printed together. This in turn led to more specialised prints, of which the copperplate became the most common. Hogarth worked chiefly in this medium as did most of his followers. Two other cartoonists who followed Hogarth in his copperplate satirical drawings were Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827) and James Gillray (1757-1815). Both were of the English gentry class as was Hogarth and both were considered to be disciples of Hogarth.





A magazine caricature by George Cruikshank, 1821.

3.



Gustave Doré, "Musical Evening," 1855.

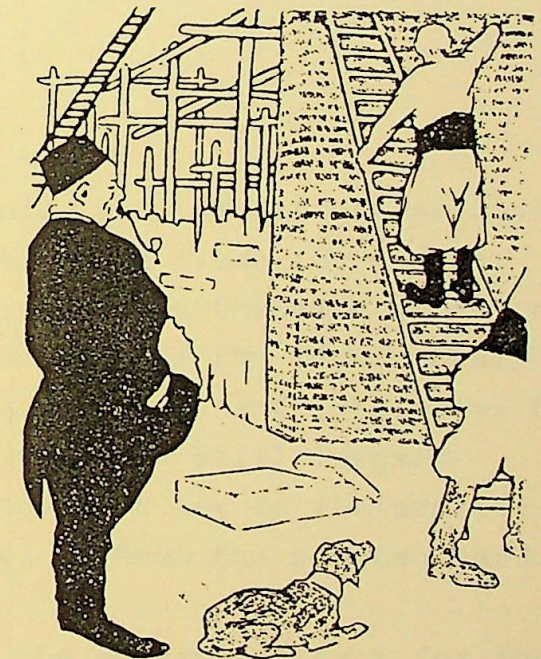
5.

5.



Honoré Daumier, "The Orchestra While Tragedy Is Being Played," 1852.

4.



Like every self-respecting country,  
Turkey will divide her people into two classes:  
those who work and those who watch others work.  
A 1908 cartoon by Juan Gris.

6.



Rowlandson enlarged the popular audience for the cartoon with his caustic and bitter criticisms of the inequities of his time, and with his satirical depictions of contemporary fads and fashions. Gillray was very much a kindred spirit of Rowlandsons, who specialised in mordant attacks on the monarchy and nobility - at least until the time of the French Revolution, when his patriotism led him away from social criticisms into denunciations of the French peril.

In the 18th century the subject of the cartoonists pen was now the whole world and especially society, whose most telling failings the cartoonists felt themselves obliged to represent. A tradition was thus born : for a longtime to come, cartooning would be a means of social protest as well as an art of political persuasion. By linking the resources of traditional art to the immediacy of popular illustration, the English cartoonists struck a responsive chord with all audiences. Soon the cartoon was one of the most potent weapons in the political battles of the 19th century.

#### THE EDITORIAL CARTOON

For a longtime political cartooning and (editorial cartooning generally) was at the very heart of the fledgling medium. The time honoured cliché "A picture is worth a thousand words" never rang so true as during the latter part of the 18th century and most of the 19th, when competing doctrines and ideologies battled fiercely for the minds of people who were still largely illiterate. The potency of the cartoon lay in its ability to make a point sharply and quickly, without the written word.

The term "Editorial cartoon" is the modern day term for the "Political Cartoon". The political cartoon is always topical and usually controversial. It usually opposes the status quo and questions the most topical political events of the time. This is why the political cartoon is associated with the editorial of a newspaper. An editorial cartoon has to complement what the editor has written. It must be topical - referring to events of that day or week; interpreting this event in a way which an ordinary journalist cannot for the benefit of the readership of that publication.



The British, who are rightly credited with inventing the social protest cartoon, did a complete about-face after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Some of the greatest English cartoonists of the 19th century (George Du Maurier, John Leech, and John Tenniel), while sniping at the more trivial aspects of the British Social and political system, expressed a broad agreement (smug satisfaction) with the established order. In current times this conservative tradition is best represented in the Soviet Union, where cartoonists are asked to uphold the existing order and content themselves with satirizing its more trivial or ridiculous aspects. The tradition of social protest inherited from Hogarth was carried on most effectively in 19th century France. Daumier towers over international cartooning in his embodiment of the cartoonist as prophet. Because of his avid support for social change, Daumier was greatly feared in French politics.

The pattern set in the 19th Century for editorial cartooning has held fast throughout the 20th Century. Editorial cartoonists can be grouped in two categories : the ideologues (whether of the right or the left) and the agnostics. The former are generally more persuasive, but the latter are usually funnier and more often tellingly accurate.

Cartoonists which belong in the 'ideologues' category are people who have very strong political persuasions. These cartoonists are often very much involved in a political situation and so may not see the situation objectively, as a person who views from outside can often view things. 'Ideologue Cartoonists' work will often be found in a political publication or a newspaper which is accepted as being politically biased.



The term 'agnostic' as applied to cartoonists means much the same as when applied to religious persuasions. Agnostic cartoonists therefore, have often despaired of a political situation in so far as they can see both sides of the story and they cannot side with either. Their view on the political situation in question is therefore, more objective and as I have said often more accurate and more humorous.

#### THE HUMOUR CARTOON

The humour or gag cartoon is a relative newcomer to the cartooning world. The drawings and scenes of the early cartoonists were often funny, but they also tried to make a social, political or moral point. Humour cartoons as a generally accepted genre originated in the 1860's. The birth and flowering of the humour cartoon can be directly traced to the growing popularity of illustrated magazines. Magazine editors discovered that entertainment was more likely to attract a readership than were polemics, at the turn of the century a new breed of cartoonist emerged, one who aimed to amuse first and foremost. This emphasis on entertainment led to a re-examination of the role of humour in the cartoon, and graphic humour came under the scrutiny of sociologists, philosophers and even a few artists. There was also a re-appearance of caricature in cartoons, a technique which had been neglected by the socially conscious cartoonists of the 19th century, who leaned heavily on realism. Simplification of the line bred increasing stylisation, just as the paring down of lengthy captions resulted in terseness.

Though the taboos and prohibitions of governments and editors alike once restricted the freedom of humour cartoonists there is now no subject they cannot deal with.



In their treatments the humour cartoonists range all the way from the gentle, harmless fun of cartoonists like Tom Mathews to the black sardonic humour of cartoonists such as Ralph Steadman, Ronald Searle and Gerald Scarfe.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### A History of Irish Cartoon



### HISTORY OF IRISH CARTOON

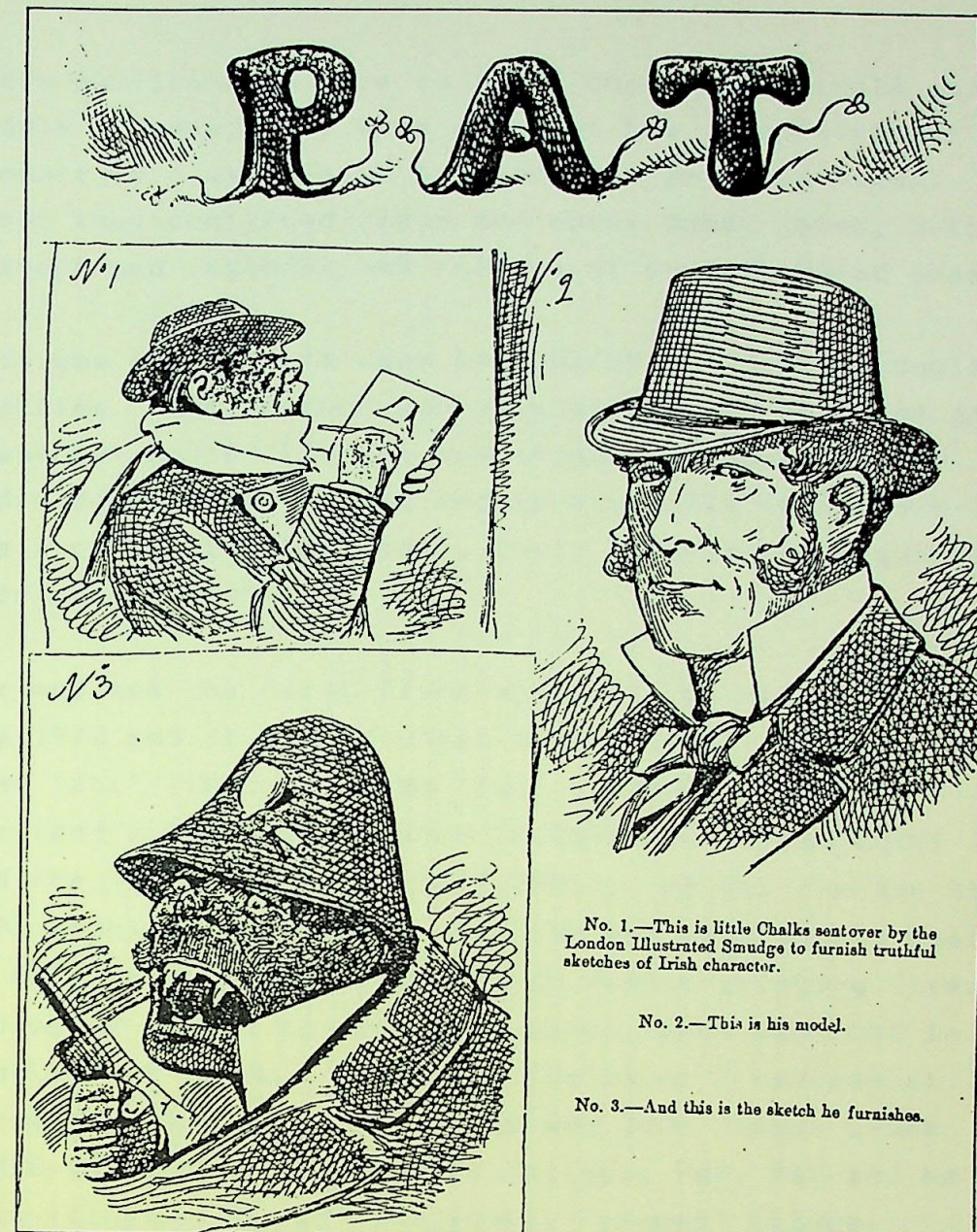
By the middle of the eighteenth century the cartoon was well established in England, by William Hogarth and its tradition was carried on by Rowlandson, Gillray and also by such cartoonists as Tenniel, who worked for Punch in the nineteenth century. In France too, the cartoon had become powerful as a tool for protest and revolution.

It wasn't until the late nineteenth century that the cartoon became common in Ireland. With the development of the comic magazines as outlets for cartoonists in England, and the success of Punch, the middle and upper-middle classes became interested in comic weeklies. Punch magazine was bought by many of the Irish gentry and also read by the not-so-wealthy, but literate Irish people. Though many of the Irish literate found nothing wrong with Punch, it became clear to others that the cartoonists and writers of Punch had a superior, colonial attitude towards the Irish. Ever since the war between James II and William IV in 1641 and especially after the 1798 Rebellion, when Cromwell 'conquered' Ireland. The images in England of the Irish were bad. The Irish were stupid, aggressive and superstitious ; but it wasn't until the mid 1800's that the English cartoonists started to represent the Irishman as simian or ape-like. The Fenians, from the English viewpoint were synonymous with simians. Along with Punch, The Illustrated London News portrayed the Irish in this light though they showed some sympathy during the Famine Years. From the mid nineteenth century until the 1920's, when the Republic was formed, the Irish were shown as 'ignorant Paddies' who couldn't possibly manage their own affairs. The period between the mid 1800's and 1900 aroused the most resentment in Irish cartoonists and it was in 1870 that the first Irish comic weekly was founded.







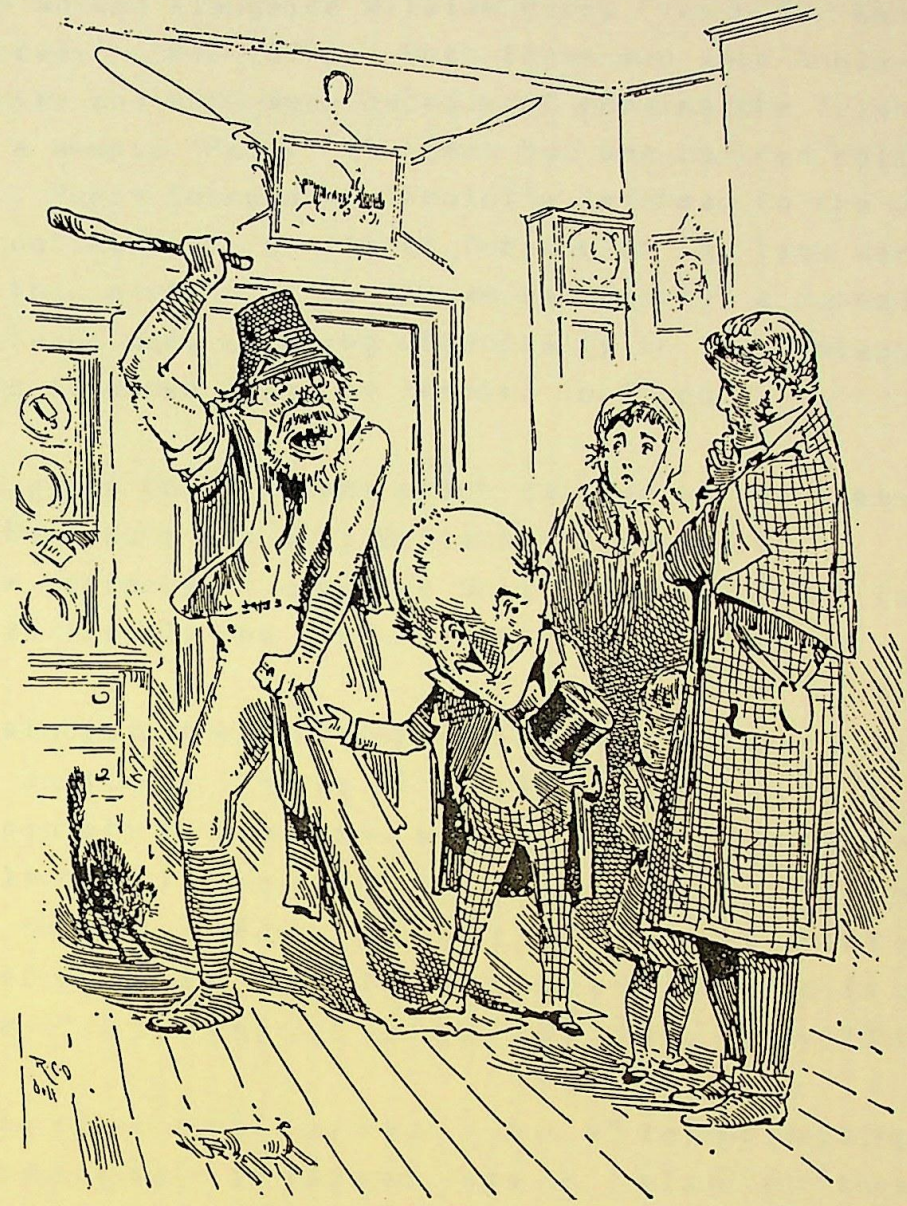




All of these weeklies were 'Home Rule' in outlook, to lesser or greater degrees. 'Zoz' which followed 'Zozimus' set out to be less political and less aggressive in its Home Rule outlook than its precursor, and consequently 'Zoz' only lasted one year. 'Pat' described itself as "An Irish Comic Weekly Periodical, Artistic, Literary, Humorous, Satirical."

In this period of Irish history, the cartoon was very important, as many Irish were still illiterate, and the cartoon was being aimed at them, communicating with them as well as with the 'landed gentry'. O'Hea's cartoons made; in retaliation to Britain, the Irish seem more like Angels than Apes and showed Britain as evil and Ireland as good. In his colour illustrations and his cartoons, O'Hea hammered home the failures of Liberal policy in Ireland and the necessity of legislative and economic independence from England. Some of his most effective cartoons contrasted handsome and reliable 'Pat' with unscrupulous English politicians. This theme was also illustrated by Thomas Fitzpatrick (1860-1912) a younger cartoonist who worked with O'Hea. His illustration from 1892 in "The Weekly Freeman and National Press" called "Tyrant and Toady" shows handsome well-built Pat as a peasant who is being advised by a member of the National Federation to stand up to the British Landlord and Bailiff who want to evict him. It is obvious in this illustration (Fig. 9) who is good and who is bad. Two of the men are fine and handsome and the other two are ugly and sneaky - looking.







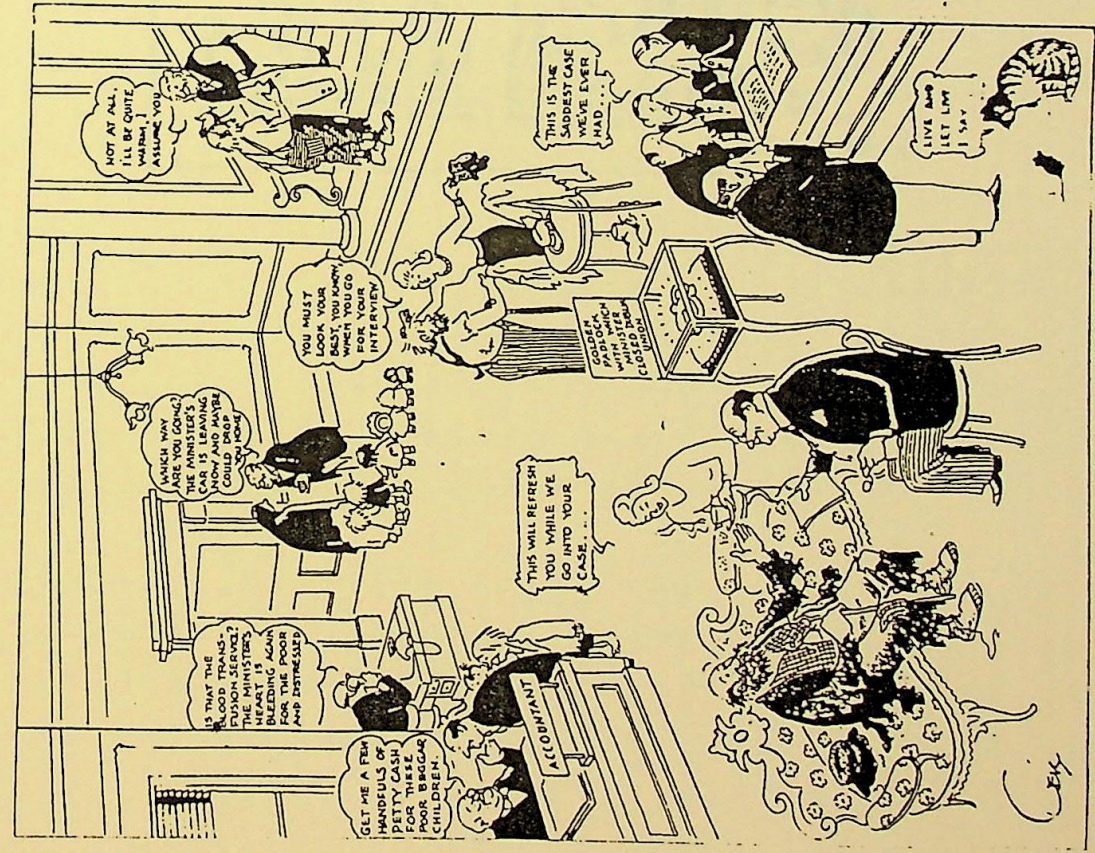
Another cartoonist of this time was Richard C. Orpen who worked alongside William Percy French for the 'Jarvey' (1884-1890). Both these men were Anglo-Irish gentry and both were capable of showing the Irishman as a stupid 'Paddy' at times but one cartoon called "Mr. Punch Introduces Tenniel's Irishman to the Jarvey", illustrates the political feeling of the time very well. In this cartoon (Fig. 10) we see Jarvey, a handsome, cultured man, reacting sceptically to the simianized wild Irishman drawn by Tenniel in Punch.

Two other publications which carried on the themes of Home Rule and anti-British feeling were "The Leprachaun" and "The Quiz", both of which lasted approximately one year, (1914;1915).

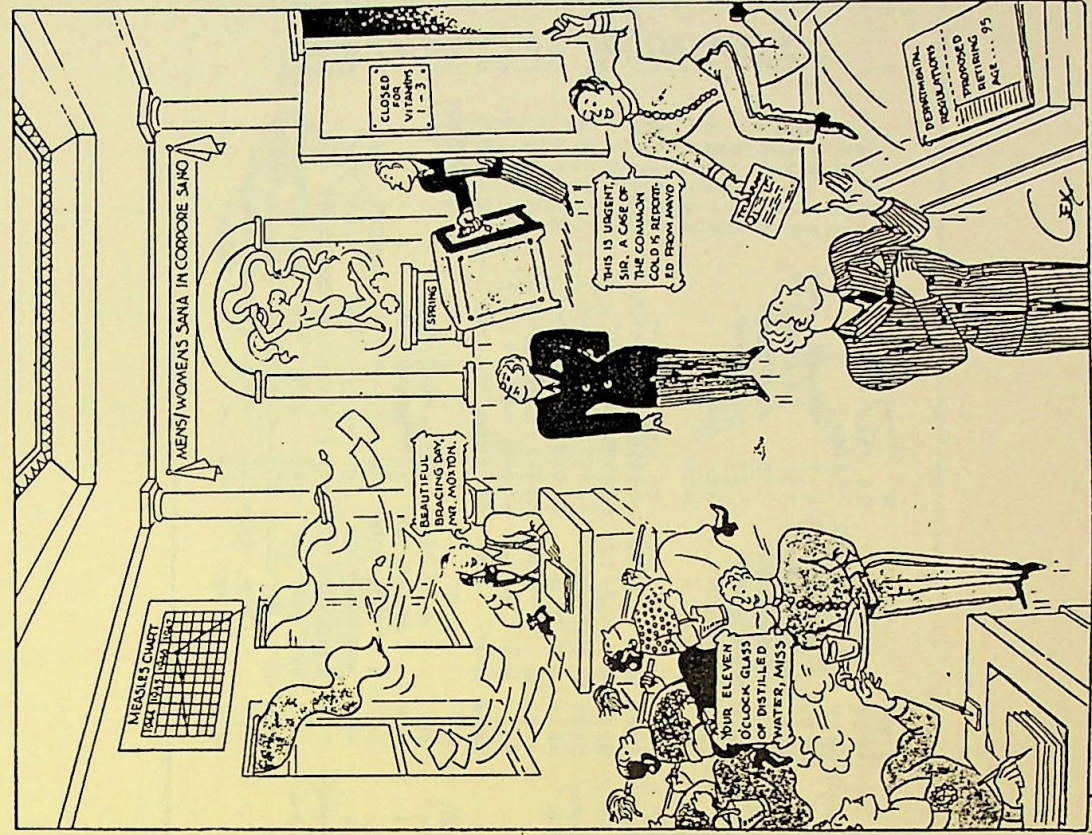
By studying these cartoons, one can find out a lot about the political feeling of people at the time. It is impossible to gauge how much cartoonists influence or reflect public opinion, but it is certain that they do. All through history, the best cartoons are those which question or put down the status-quo, and this is certainly true of Irish cartoon in the late 19th, early 20th century.

It is clear that there was a lot of talent waiting to express itself in cartoon form in Ireland and these comic weeklies provided an outlet for this talent, for political and social expression in a visual form. When the Irish Republic was formed in 1922, many things changed in Ireland. Ireland, or twenty-six of its counties anyway, were independent of Britain. A Government was set up with all its different policies and departments and the Civil Service was formed.





THE NEW MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE  
(As imagined by our Gunglgerman (correspondent))



THE NEW MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
(As imagined by our Gunglgerman (correspondent))



The humour magazine 'Dublin Opinion' was also formed at this time. A magazine with soft humour and satire, it was the longest running Irish humour magazine, produced monthly for a Dublin audience. One of 'Dublin Opinion's' cartoonists was known as 'CEK' and he contributed regularly to this publication until it folded in 1956. It has since been republished and has found an audience once more. In the 1920's CEK dealt mainly with subjects like the New Civil Service and all the New Ministers and with the new Leader, De Valera. His cartoons are very funny and very well drawn. His style of drawing is very stylized and reflects the new trend of all early 20th century cartoon towards simplification of the line and a stylisation of drawing. CEK ridicules the 'New Ministry of Social Welfare' (Fig. 11) and likewise with the New Ministry of Health (Fig. 12). In "Brighter Politics" (Fig. 13) CEK gently satirizes the Taoiseach and his Ministers making personal comments about individual Ministers; Oliver Flanagan, Deputy McGilligan and about their policies.

The satire is very gentle, however, and very humorous and though he deals with political subject matter, CEK would be considered, in my opinion, more of a humour cartoonist than a political cartoonist. His work is, however, very topical and so is not pure humour and would have been funnier at the time of publication than in retrospect. Their topical element does render CEK's cartoons very successful as a means of recording the important issues of the time and as a record of public opinion of the 1920's in the South of Ireland.

From these cartoons we can see that Irish people were watching the new Government and its departments closely and while they were watching for things to go wrong they were also enthusiastic about their new Free State.



Very few, if any cartoons of this time dealt with Foreign Affairs and Britain, which had been the main subject of cartoons until the 1920's was now only mentioned when it directly effected the New Republic.

It is also interesting to note that the North of Ireland was seldom mentioned in cartoons of the 1920's. The six counties which still belonged to Britain seemed to be of little concern or interest to the New Republic of Ireland. Not until the 1968 Peace March and the 1969 IRA bombings did the 'North' appear again as a major subject in cartoons South of the border. The North or rather the effect it could have on the Republic of Ireland became a problem and a serious matter.

By the 1970's 'Dublin Opinion' had folded, and apart from this publication, Irish Newspapers were not at all supportive of cartoonists. Of the five daily Newspapers in 1976, only one, Martyn Turner had a full time contract as a political, editorial cartoonist.

The Bombing of 1969 in the North had a major effect on Irish politics, North and South of the border, and indeed British politics. In any other country there would be a wealth of cartoons reflecting this milestone in political history to look back on. In Ireland, in 1969 however, there was no 'pool' of cartoonists available to react to this event. There were few humour magazines and few regular editorial cartoonists with daily newspapers, which could interpret immediately the events of '69.



"Cartoonists' Guiding Star through the political wasteland is not, I argue, a set of political ideas that the cartoonist holds. When the chips are down, it is rather human beings - some community that he or she treasures."

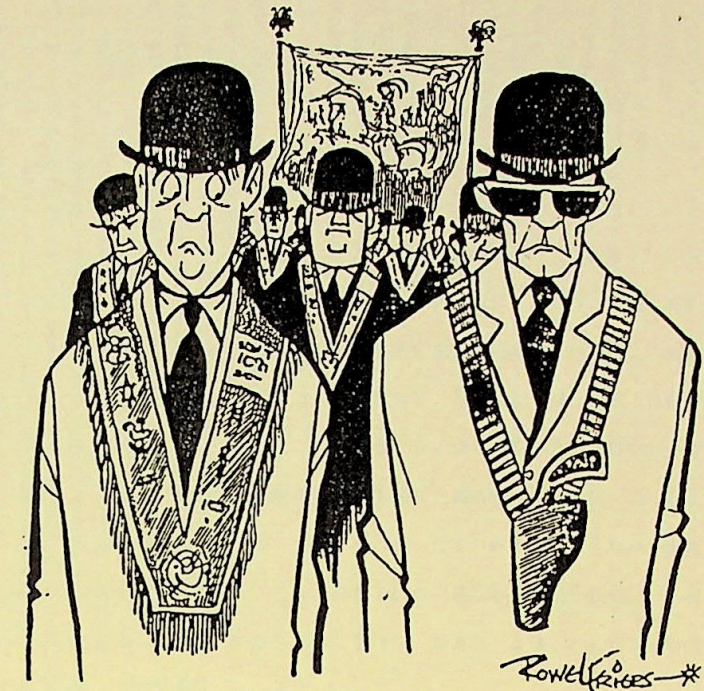
- Charles Press  
The Political Cartoonist. 5.

Many prominent Irish cartoonists emerged on the Irish Scene around this time in reaction to these historical bloody events. Up until 1969 and the appearance of IRA tactics, it was easy for cartoonists, and all Irish people to say that they supported the idea of a United Ireland ; it was easy to pay lip-service to nationalism ; to be in a sense, an "ideologue" cartoonist. When violence and bloodshed raised their ugly heads, however, matters became more complicated. The more "agnostic" cartoonists emerged ; the more intelligent of which have stayed on the cartoon scene until today ; these were people like Martyn Turner, Rowel Friers and Littleman ; people who had come from or gone to the North and seen the troubles first hand and who saw the heartbreak on either side of the conflict. These cartoonists realised that neither side was right in their violence, that, in Turner's words - "some things are worth dying for, but nothing is worth killing for."

6.

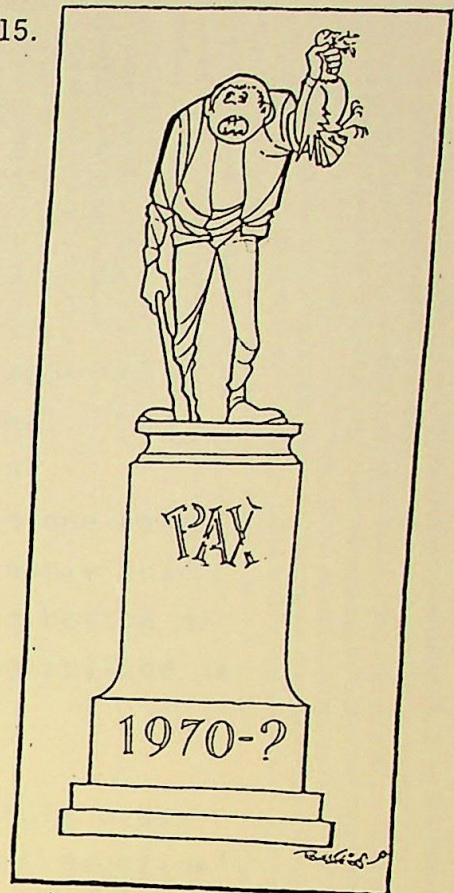
Rowel Friers had worked in the South of Ireland with 'Dublin Opinion' but, being a Northerner, when the 'troubles' began he returned to Belfast and worked with the 'Belfast Telegraph' as a weekly cartoonist. Up until the 70's, Frier's work had universal themes and he excelled in caricature but his theme changed to the Northern conflict.





14.

15.



16.



17.

18.





Being an Ulsterman he had a strong affinity with the ordinary people of Ulster and in his work, he caught the character and accent of his countrymen. He was non-sectarian, he took the same stance as the 'Belfast Telegraph' - a liberal reformist one. On the whole his cartoons were affectionate and tolerant but he made an occasional critical cartoon, which were more effective by the fact that they were occasional. For example in Fig. 15, Friers cartoon depicts an ignorant looking, ape-like man with a club in one hand and the peace dove in the other. The man proudly holds up the dove which is being strangled. At the bottom of the monument on which the man is apparently glorified is inscribed "1970 - ?".

A very well known cartoon of Friers is "we shall overcome"(Fig. 16) which was printed in 'Fortnight Magazine'. There we see the representatives of justice being trampled underfoot by a crowd of people. However, these people are not depicted as hooligans or terrorists, but, by their foot and legwear, as ordinary, respectable citizens. There is no question who Friers sides with but as with Turner, violence is never glorified in his work.

As cartoonists are renowned for siding with the under-dog or the ordinary person in the street ; the cartoons of Friers, Dobson and Turner are no exception. The work of these cartoonists, while being topical, has the timeless theme of being humane and seeing the effect of politics and violence on the ordinary individual.

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### CHAPTER THREE

#### Contemporary Irish Cartoonists

I Irish Political Cartoonist  
- Martyn Turner

II Irish Humour Cartoonist  
- Tom Mathews

III Irish Social Cartoonist  
- Arja Kajermo



# CONTEMPORARY IRISH CARTOONISTS

It is impossible to separate what is present from what is past. The past is a part of the present. Cartoonists which are now considered contemporary, were also often contemporary in the 60's and 70's ; and hopefully, in some cases, will be contemporary for a while to come. In the 60's and 70's the theme of Northern Ireland was prevalent in the work of Martyn Turner, Rowel Friers, Littleman and many others. The Northern conflict still exists but it is no longer 'news' and it isn't considered as topical as it was in 1969 and in the 70's. It is still one of the themes of Irish Cartoon ; but only one of many. Friers, Turner and Littleman are still with us ; Turner being the only 'full time' cartoonist in Ireland, so far. There is a handful of cartoonists in Ireland who make a living from their art ; the most fortunate of these is Turner who is a member of staff at 'The Irish Times', others are Tom Mathews, and Littleman (Bill Drake), whether the other cartoonists are actually making a living is difficult to say. It depends on what you would call a living ! Some, for example, Gerard Crowley, are running around trying to get their work printed, by anyone, every week and are often heard saying, "if only I could get a set up like Turner's ...". Others, like Arja Kajermo have a fortnightly, weekly or maybe monthly slot in a publication which either is their income or contributes to it.

Many cartoonists, according to Tom Mathews, do freelance work for Advertising Agencies from time to time and any other freelance work they can get. Graeme Keyes works in an Advertising Agency by day and does his cartoons after hours every evening.



Turner is the exception to the rule which governs Irish cartoonists' lifestyles. His work and lifestyle are those of a 'typical' editorial cartoonist, one you'd find in Britain, France or America. Turner has the time necessary to develop his drawing ability and to experiment with different media.

Though not on the staff of any newspaper or magazine, Tom Mathews is also one of the few who can make a living from cartooning in Ireland. He contributes to 'In Dublin' magazine : 'The Sunday Tribune' and 'The Irish Times' among many other publications. He also sometimes gets commissions from Advertising Agencies, a business which he worked in for three years before deciding to study painting at the N.C.A.D. for a further three years. Having studied painting he then decided that he "didn't have much to say", and returned to the business of cartooning. (He had done some as a teenager). Mathews is a 'spot cartoonist' ie., his work can be slotted in anywhere in a publication as it is not topical or political. He loves to use puns on words and humour is the object of all his work. As with his painting, Mathews is not trying to say anything - he just wants to make people laugh, himself included. Being 'good with words', Mathews also writes for 'In Dublin' on a regular basis.

On the whole, Irish newspapers and magazines have not been very kind to cartoonists. Many still don't consider the cartoon to be a necessary part of their publication ; necessary to break up the lines and lines of type and to add light - heartedness to serious and often depressing subjects. In Ireland it has taken a long time for editors to realise that a cartoon, or any picture, can put across an idea quicker than any amount of words.



To this day, the 'Irish Independent' a very popular newspaper, does not employ or take freelance work from any Irish cartoonist.

Despite the fact that Ireland will never be famed for their patronage of the art of cartoon, some professional cartoonists have emerged against all odds. Some have even managed to hold onto positions in the Irish media through the years.

I have discussed Martyn Turner and Tom Mathews already. Other cartoonists of merit are Arja Kajermo, Wendy Shea and Gerard Crowley. There are many more talented cartoonists on the Irish Scene, their output, however, is often irregular and their standards of cartooning often fluctuates. It is easy to be a part-time cartoonist if you've got a full-time job, but it is not easy to be a good part-time cartoonist. The best cartoons are ones produced to meet deadlines and the best cartoonists are cartoonists who are working constantly on their drawing ability and style. This is not possible for someone who has a separate 9 to 5 job. The humour in cartoons is something which no one can teach you, it is something which comes from within, as with all good art the subjects chosen, themes chosen must come from within. By this I mean that the subject must be one which the cartoonist feels strongly about and one which he or she has something to say about.

These ideal circumstances are, unfortunately, not always at hand. As I have said, the money paid for individual cartoons is not a very high sum, so a cartoonist may often have to take another job, or live on the breadline.



If one chooses to try to do cartooning full time, the first step is to adapt your cartoons to fit the market, no matter what idealistic political values you may hold. If no-one will publish, you must reassess your work and at this stage, cartoonists often decide to change from a political to a social cartoonist ; a cartoonist commenting on everyday life and widely held opinions and values. While good social cartoon can be cutting, clever and astute, bad social cartooning, like bad political cartooning can be blandly funny, relying on stereotypes to make a joke and never challenging the status quo.

So, the once political cartoonists may 'cop out' to fit the market ; but may occasionally try to slip in the odd political comment or jibe. If one succeeds in getting a regular position in a newspaper or magazine producing social cartoons and their name becomes known to the readership, the more political cartoons can be slipped in without the editor noticing at first until eventually the cartoonist is producing and having published the work which is closest to his or her heart. This is how many a famous cartoonist began. The cartoonist, having been restrained at first by economics will always be restrained to some degree by editors. No cartoonist has carte-blanche. Another limitation is public opinion. All cartoonists as all people ; have certain topics which anger them or amuse them particularly. The cartoonist however, cannot express his opinion on this topic unless as Martyn Turner put it, there is "a current hook to hang it on". The cartoonist 10 doesn't lose interest in subjects, the subjects simply become of less interest to the media. Turner takes Carnsore Point and the debate over whether or not to set up a Nuclear Power Plant there, as an example ; this was an issue of great interest to Turner at the time.



But since it is no longer in debate, he can no longer do cartoons about it and remain topical. This doesn't mean he has lost interest in the issue of Nuclear Power in Ireland. As a political cartoonist, satirising politicians and their policies is a major theme for Turner ; however if Haughey isn't in power or in the news Turner cannot continue to satirise him every day. The readers would lose interest and the editor would lose his patience !

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POLITICAL CARTOONIST : MARTYN TURNER

"Graphic Satire is variously used as a weapon against hypocrisy, as a device for describing the human condition, and a means of entertainment."

- Stephen Heller. 11

If cartoons are a good record of a time or of a society then it is obvious that common themes are going to run through the different work of contemporary cartoonists. This is true with all types of cartoonists, whether they are political, social or purely humorous. I have chosen different types of cartoonists from the contemporary Irish cartoon scene to illustrate this point. The political cartoonist I have chosen is one I have already discussed : Martyn Turner. I will look at the work of social cartoonist - Arja Kajermo and also at the work of Tom Mathews, a humour cartoonist. By looking at the work of all these cartoonists work together, we can get an overall view and impression of Ireland and Irish society, today. The cartoonists I have chosen to deal with are the ones I consider to be the best of their type in contemporary Ireland. This is not to say that there aren't other good cartoonists about.

When Martyn Turner signed his contract with the 'Irish Times' in 1976 he was leaving behind his obsession with the Northern conflict as the main theme in his work. He never left it completely, as a subject it takes its place beside Divorce, Family Planning, Southern Irish politics, politicians plus international affairs such as the E.E.C., South Africa, Sellafield and foreign politicians (Reagan, Thatcher etc).

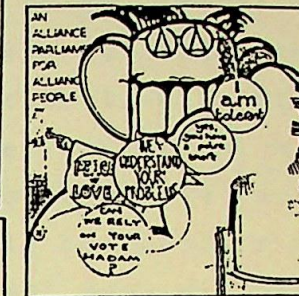
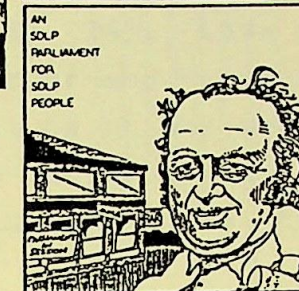
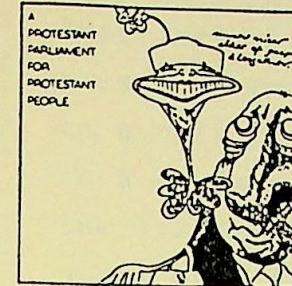


As an editorial cartoonist with a cartoon printed daily, Turners work is always topical - so much so that in retrospect you might not understand the humour in some cartoons if you don't remember certain incidents.

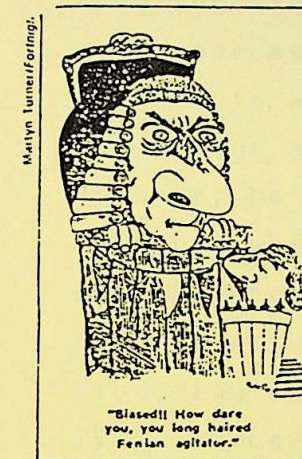
In the book "The Political Cartoon", Charles Press 12 calls political cartoonists, "intermediaries who interpret the governments actions, politics, current affairs etc - people we trust who will point the finger and in that way, maybe keep the politicians on their toes." It is difficult to ascertain how much effect, if any, political cartoons have on their victims. Cartoonists interpret events for people who perhaps don't have the time to interpret them themselves. At the same time they represent the opinions of the General Public as well as influencing these opinions.

By looking at Turners' work we can view Irish political history since the early seventies to the present day ; we are, of course, viewing an interpretation of this history. Nothing, it seems is outside the scope of Turners' satirising pen. Anything that is newsworthy is worthy as a Turner cartoon. In Figs. 19-25 we see cartoons which Turner did mainly for the Independent Review 'Fortnight' in Belfast. The overall theme is Northern politics - from all sides. In Fig. 19 Turner satirises the Protestants, the Free Presbyterians, The Liberals and the Socialists. He pokes fun at all of them. From these cartoons we can see how Turner made cuts at all the groups involved in the Northern conflict.

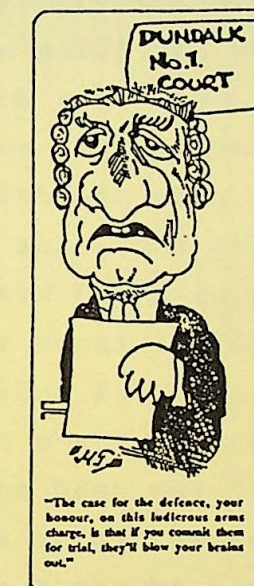




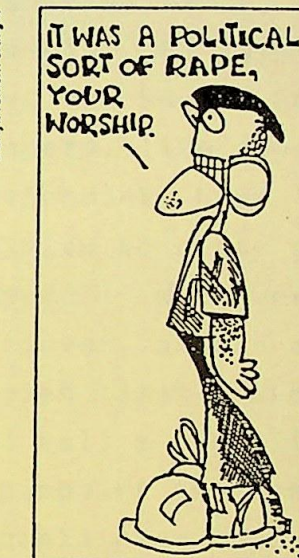
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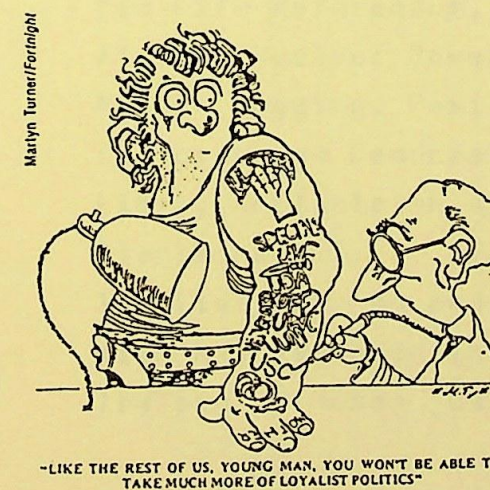
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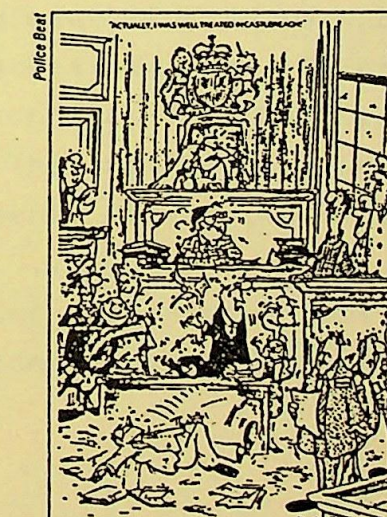
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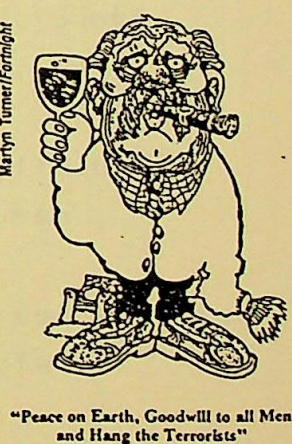
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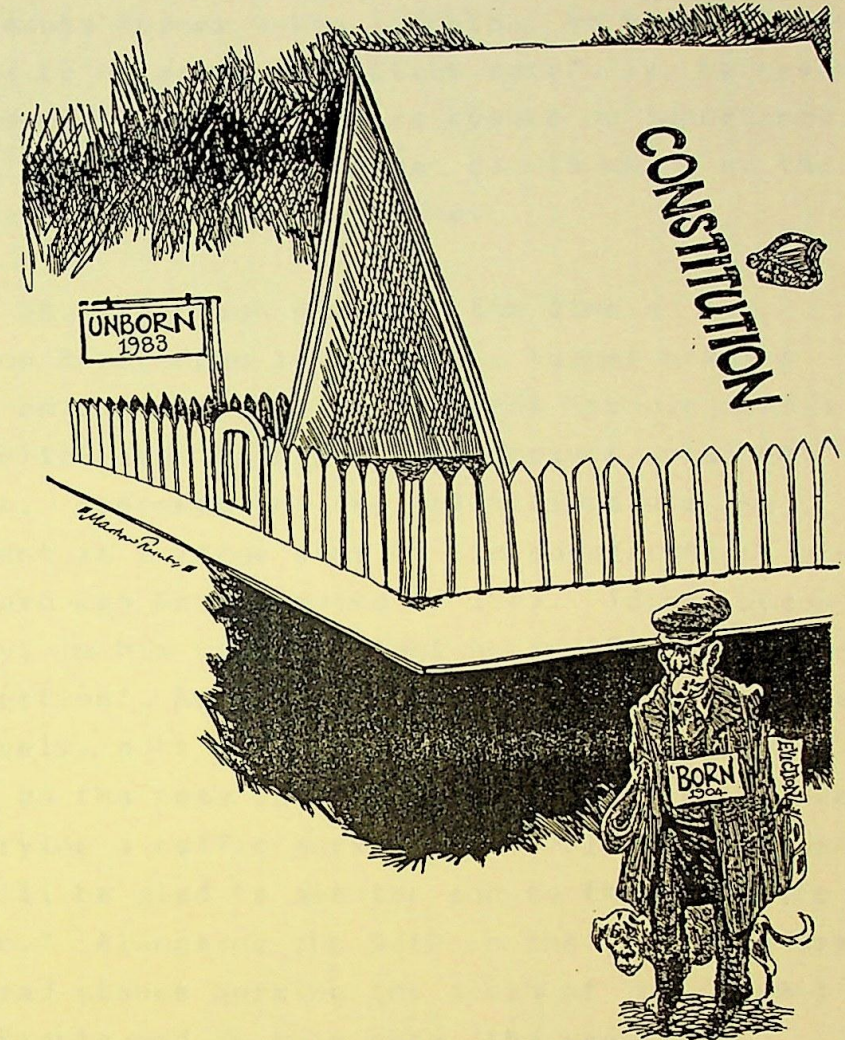
25.



Looking at all these cartoons (Figs. 19-25) we can see that Turner's drawing style was changing a lot at this time. It goes from a thick crude line in Figs. 21,22 to a thin more economical line in Fig. 23, and again to a style which is reminiscent of CEK's cartoons of the 1920's (Fig. 24). Like all cartoonists when they start out, Turner was trying out many different styles before he arrives at his own style of drawing. Turner later started to use pen and ink only in his cartoons and this is the medium he still uses.

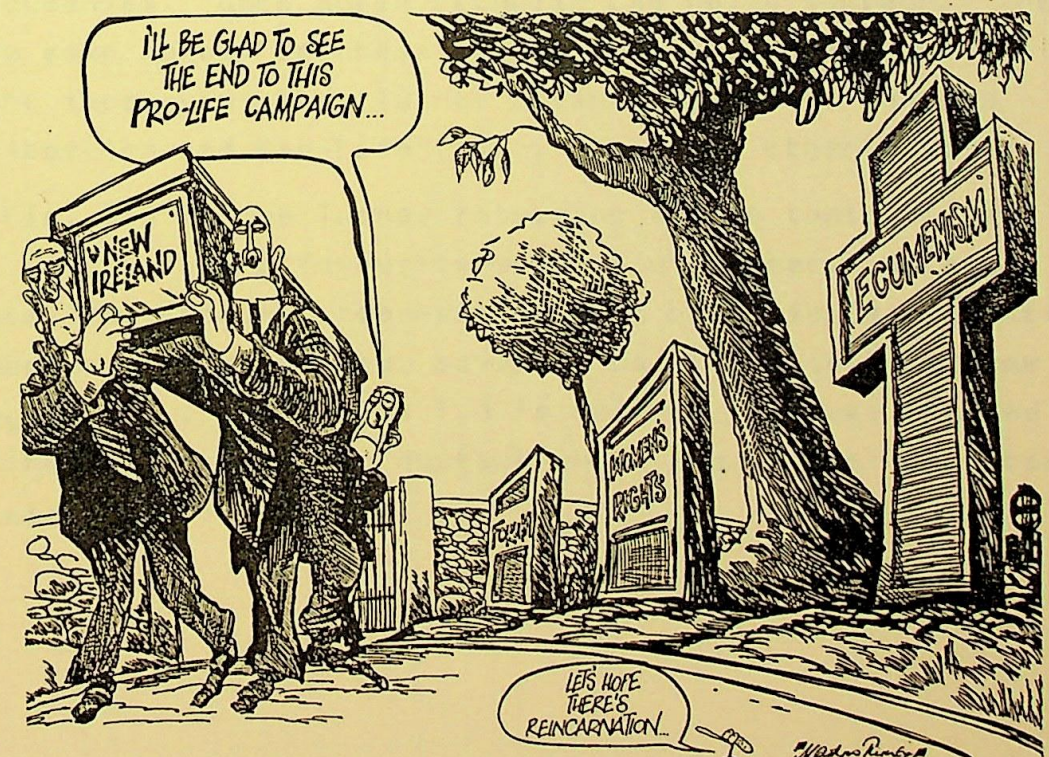
Turner says that he doesn't have a set formula for creating clever cartoons and that he isn't, as one would assume, a political know-all. He says: that all he does is watch telly and read the Sports and television pages in the Newspapers, "like everyone else"! 13. However, he maintains that cartoonists have 'built-in' antennae which make them sensitive to whats going on and even to whats going to happen ! Whatever his formula is, his work is consistently clever, astute and original. Producing cartoons for 'The Irish Times', every day since 1976, Turner is what you might call a prolific cartoonist. The best way to pinpoint the themes in his work is to look at his books containing collections of his work. In these books he himself divides his work into various categories, those that deal with The North; the Pro-Life Referendum, Annulment, The Third World, South Africa, Nuclear Power, Nuclear Weapons, Divorce, The Mallon Bugging, Family Planning, The 'Pee-Dees' (Progressive Democrats), The 'World' (Foreign Affairs), Libya, Anglo-Irish Agreement, Strikes, Unemployment, Elections ..... The list goes on and on and it contains just about anything wich has happened in Ireland or abroad which effects Ireland or human justice.



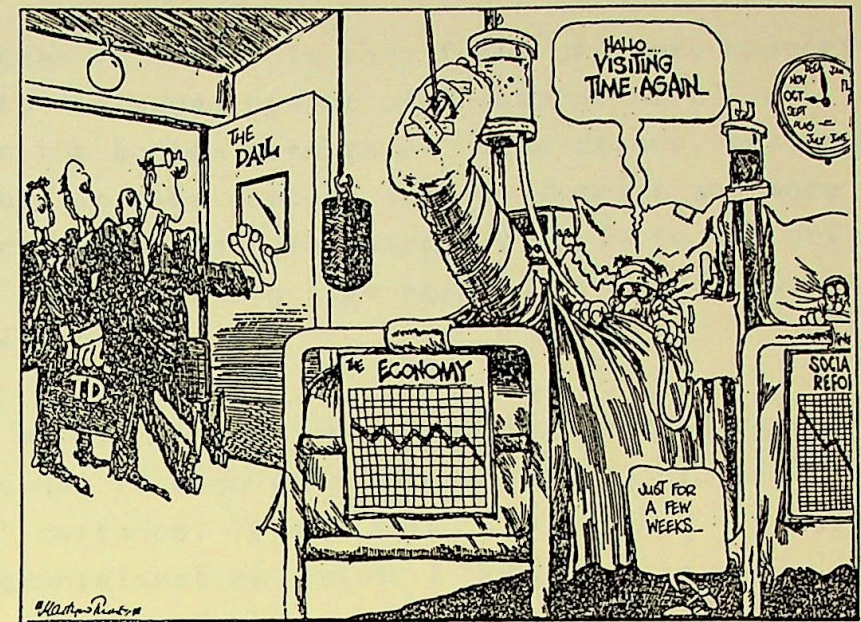


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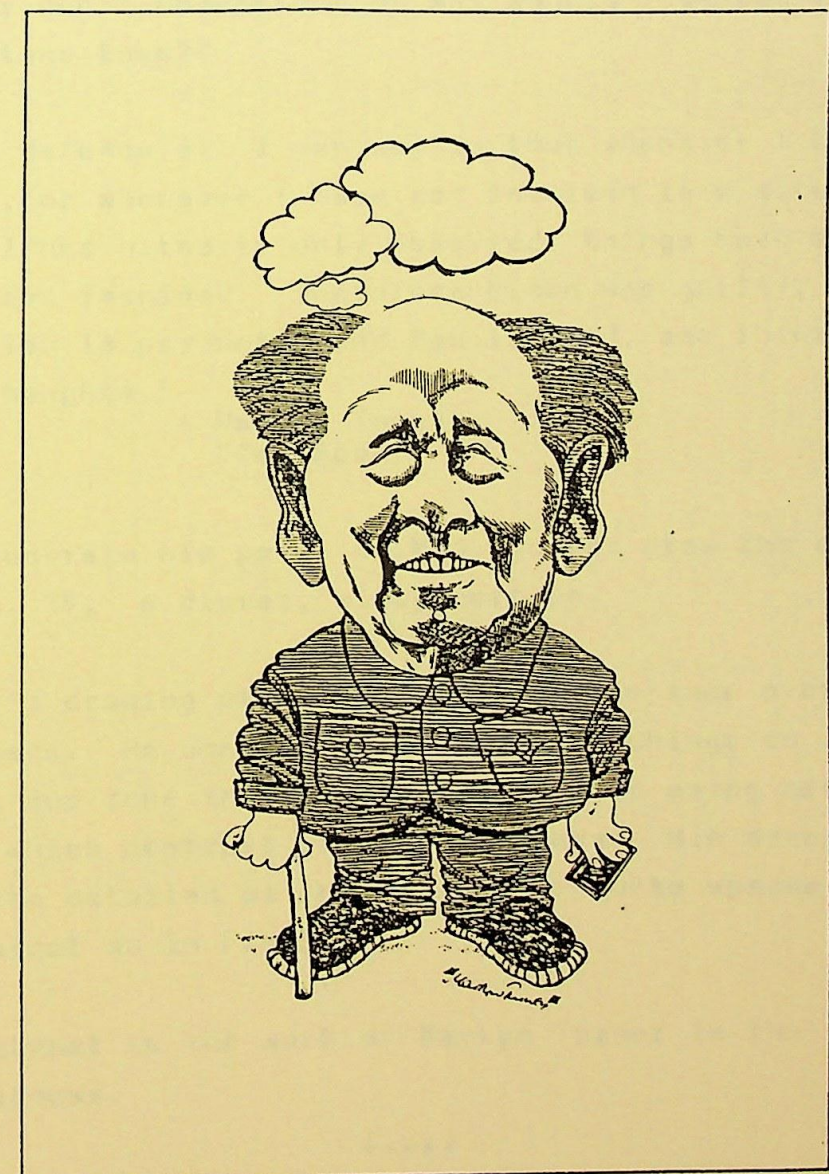






28.

29.





TOM MATHEWS

:

HUMOUR CARTOONIST

Mathews says that he is, as far as cartooning is concerned, 15.  
apolitical and he will, as most Irish cartoonists will,  
gladly sell his work to any newspaper or magazine, whether  
it is left wing, right wing, Fianna Fail or Labour, with  
the exception of An Poblacht. Most of his work, however,  
is printed in 'In Dublin' magazine, 'The Irish Times' and  
'The Sunday Tribune'. These are the publications which he  
likes to have his work printed in because he believes that  
they all 'say something' and that he doesn't have to 'talk  
down' to his audience, and also because they are not  
affiliated with any particular political party and he  
perceives them to be socially aware and liberal in their  
outlook.

Mathews admits that he did attempt to be a political  
cartoonist and that he just wasn't able for it, he admires  
the work of Martyn Turner, Littleman, Arja Kajermo and  
Gerard Crowley. He says that every cartoonist starts out 16.  
by copying the drawing styles of other cartoonists which  
they admire and he confesses that he was no exception.  
He admires good draughtmanship and believes that there are  
very few professional cartoonists in Ireland. Mathews  
doesn't consider himself to have been greatly influenced  
by any Irish cartoonists. The only Irish cartoonists of  
the past which he thinks merit mentioning are 'CEK' and  
perhaps Rowel Friers ; who as he says himself, is as  
much of the present as we all are. He names his influences  
as Gerald Scarfe, Ronald Searle and Ralph Steadman. Mathews,  
therefore is very much a 'modern' or late 20th century  
cartoonist. The style of his cartoons places him  
undoubtedly in the 1980's.

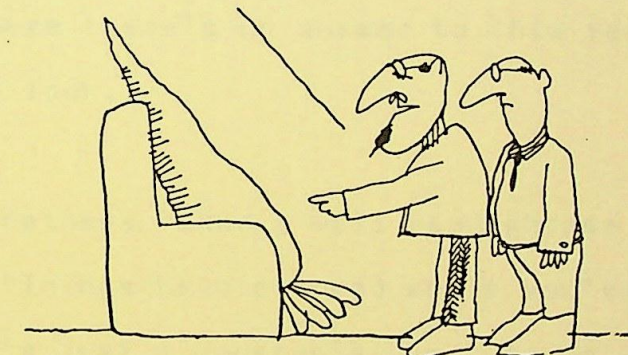




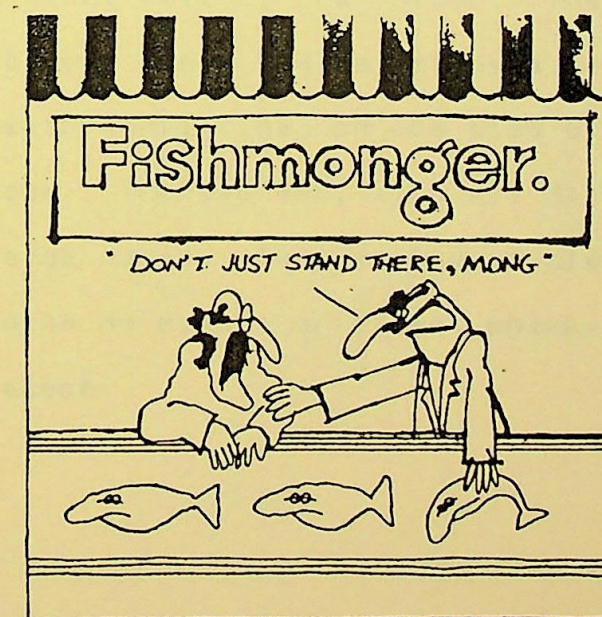
30.

31..

Things have changed while you've been away, Rupert. Dad's just a vegetable now.



32.





They have fairly expressionless faces and the second man's hands hang down drooping by his side. Again, the drawing is spontaneous and economical. The line indicating the floor runs across the lines which indicate the men's shoes, adding to the spontaneity of the drawing and the apparent lack of effort put into it.

Fig. 32, is another cartoon where Mathews makes a pun on words. Two Fish Sellers stand behind a fish counter, under a sign saying "Fishmonger", one turns to the other saying "Don't just stand there, mong". This is a simple cartoon where Mathews takes a new look at the term "Fishmonger" ; breaking it up into its components - Fish + monger and using it in a different way. It is a clever pun on words which are in our everyday language. Another such cartoon of Mathews is in Fig. 34, where we see a thin line drawing of an ugly looking creature sitting on a chair cutting bits off the corns on his feet and flicking them into a "corn flakes" box. Everyone in Ireland is familiar with the Box of Cornflakes, but this cartoon brings a whole new, if not slightly revolting meaning to it ! Fig. 34's cartoon is very loose in its drawing style, there are no dark areas of shadow or thick black lines, to contrast with the light, scratchy lines which make up the cartoon. The cartoon in Fig. 33, however, is a much more economical drawing with few unnecessary lines or dots.



This cartoon is another of Mathews' puns on a well worn Irish phrase ; it is also a humourous look at a very Irish situation - drunken talk in the pub. In the drawing we see a bottle and two men at the bar of the pub. The bottle is saying "come outside and say that you bastard," and one man says to the other "pay no attention, its just the drink talking," a line we've all heard if we've ever been in an Irish pub around closing time.

Once again, Mathews has taken the phrase literally and shown what a ridiculous phrase it is. Mathews' humour is very dry and clever and very astute. He satirizes language ; phrases and figures of speech by looking at them in a literal way which makes us wonder, on seeing his cartoons, why we didn't think of it ourselves. Because Mathews main objective is to be humourous, and not to be political or to "say something", his work is timeless, I believe his cartoons will be just as clever and funny in ten or twenty years time, as they are now.

Fig. 35, illustrates how purely humourous Mathews' cartoons can be. In this cartoon there are no references to a situation which could be considered Irish or contemporary simply an almost dead man falling in front of the counter of the complaints department, screaming, "call this a bullet proof vest ?" This is a clever humourous cartoon with nothing in its subject matter to call contemporary.



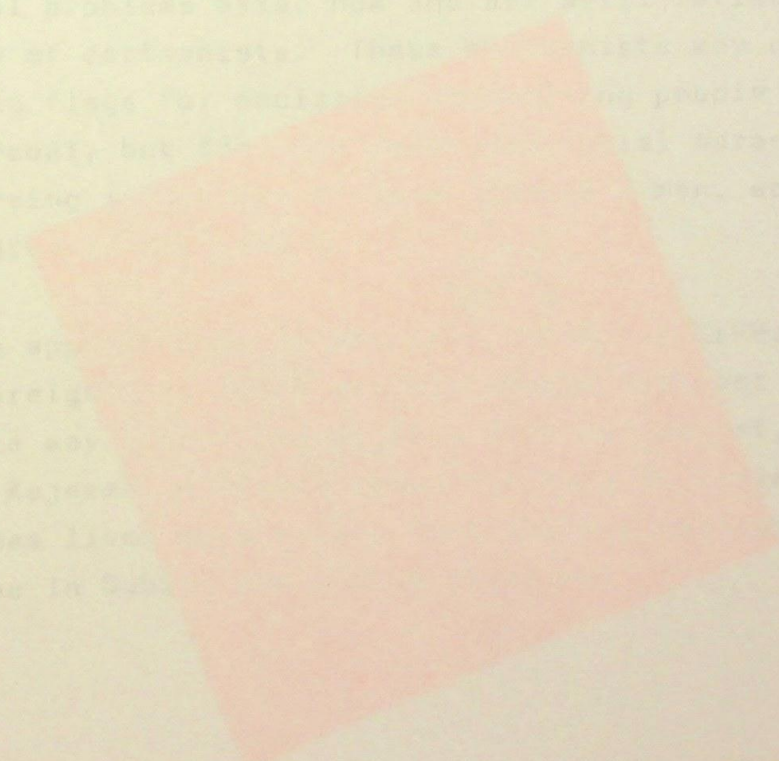
The Style of the cartoon, however, is undoubtedly contemporary. Here as in Fig. 30, we see the influence of Ralph Steadman and Scarfe, with scrawling lines and blotches and splashes of ink.

Figs 30 - 35 illustrate how Mathews can find the humorous side to various situations and various figures of speech. Mathews is a master of the pun. He seldom makes serious social or political comment and he doesn't wish to, either. He is an excellent spot cartoonist, in that his work could be placed almost anywhere in a magazine or newspaper, without being relevant to nearby text.

Having decided early on that political cartooning was not for him, Mathews capitalized on both his excellent drawing skills and his skill with words and humour.

He has since become one of Ireland's few professional cartoonists, and one of the few who can make a living from his art.

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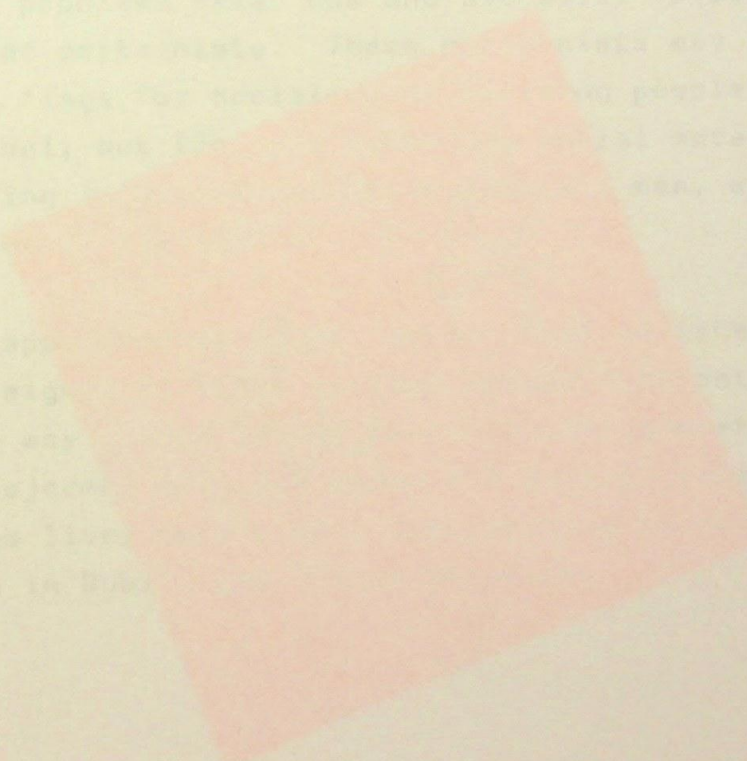
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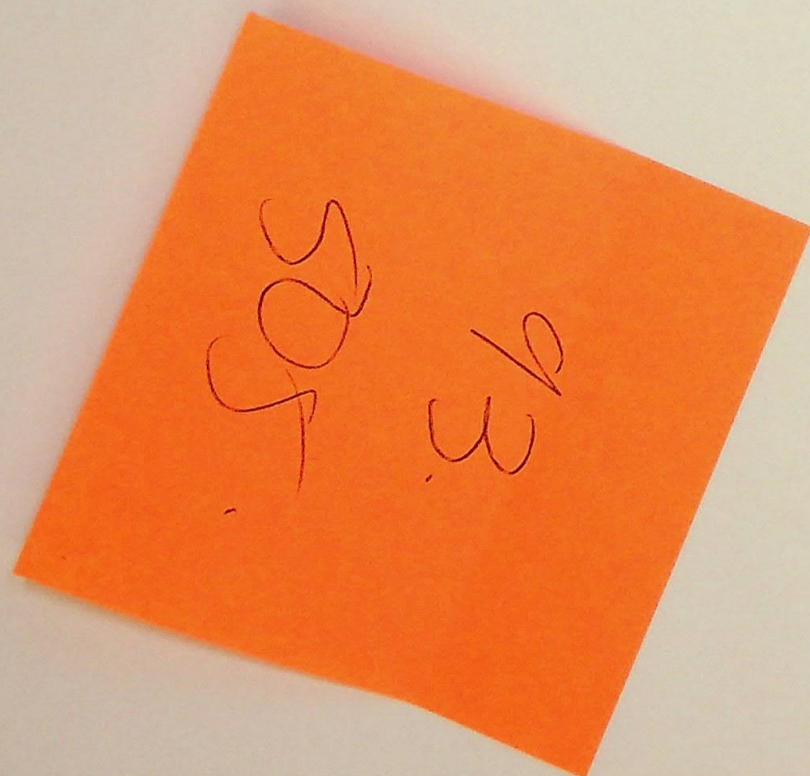
ARJA KAJERMO : SOCIAL CARTOONIST

A Social Cartoon is a cartoon which comments directly on the people of a society ; on their lifestyles, their hardships, their concerns. Social cartoon looks at a society and laughs at it and with it, but is always holding onto a strong sense of humanity towards that society.

The social cartoon is as old as the political cartoon ; social satire flourished in England with artists such as William Hogarth, Rowlandson and in France with Honore Daumier and in Spain; Francisco Goya. All fought the case of the ' lower-classes, the underdogs, the ordinary people who were victims of circumstances ; circumstances more often than not brought about by those in charge, the bourgeoisie, the upper-classes, the politicians, the governments. Their work records social change, social reform and changing of opinions. In a time when illiteracy was high, their works spoke out to all ; communicating ideas more effectively than columns of type.

Social problems will always exist and as we all know, social problems exist now and are still reflected in the works of cartoonists. These cartoonists may not be waving flags for socialism or inciting people to arise and rebel, but they are recording social mores and observing lifestyles of Irish people ; men, women and children in the 1980's.

It is appropriate, if not ironic that it takes an outsider or foreigner to see a society in the clearest and most astute way ; this is the case with cartoonist, Arja Kajermo, a Finish woman who came to Ireland in 1969 and has lived here since, contributing cartoon strips to the In Dublin and Status magazine.





Kajermo does a regular strip in 'In Dublin' ; a fortnightly magazine, which describes itself as 'Ireland's leading entertainment and current affairs Guide.' A description which is fairly accurate ; it is aimed at the 18-40 age group or anyone who is interested in the Arts. It serves the same function as 'Time Out' does in London, listing gigs, exhibitions, films etc., and interpreting current affairs in a more alternative way than mainstream newspapers do.

Kajermo's strip occupies, usually, a slot near the back of the magazine, the subject needn't be current/topical or relate to any article in the magazine. Her style of drawing is immediately recognisable ; it is almost minimalist ; it is spare and uncluttered, "conveying meaning and movement in each tiny pen stroke". In the words of Eanna Brophy, Kajermo has an "astonishing grasp of the way real (Irish) people talk," she has "an acute observation of the minutiae of Irish social mores and she can be deadly accurate about the nonsense men talk in pubs, or the way women and kids cope with life in modern suburbia, where the radio often serves as a Greek chorus to the continuing tragi-comedy which is being acted out by her characters."

19

Kajermo's strips always consist of 2 panels, with three "stills" in each panel. Her topics range from Family Planning, Politics (Irish Style), the Dole, Civil Service beauracracy to Male / Female relationships, Womens lot, the Artists' self image and absolutely anything which illustrates the stupidity of people and the trivial things they worry about ; and how helpless the individual is when caught up in a particular society when he/she happens to be at the bottom (or fairly near it).



In the strip titled "Boys will be Boys," Kajermo projects the image of the typical Irish Mother and her "molly coddled" Sons, she proudly shows off her two big useless sons, who are just on their way out to the pub, she says "go straight to the pub now and straight back home at closing time, theres my good boys"! In the last box, her friend says "theres' a lot of work with grown up boys"! and the mother replies "Ah sure ..... I have my ten little girls to help me out"! Each section of Kajermo's cartoon strips are funny and telling in themselves ; the smallest detail has a purpose, for example, in the strip entitled 'complex', we see in the first box a scene at some kind of party or wine reception : Two men holding a conversation beside a woman holding a conversation with a third man, little by little the men all start listening incredulously to what the woman is saying - she's talking about equal work opportunities for women and equal pay and the final straw, in the 4th box, is her husband washing his own socks. Then the man she was talking to roars "Watch out lads ! A Libber !!" In the final box, there are no words, but if you look at the men, their eyes have changed shape, they're all looking suspiciously at the woman with frowns on their faces - they have dropped their wine glasses and are protecting their crotches from this "Libber".

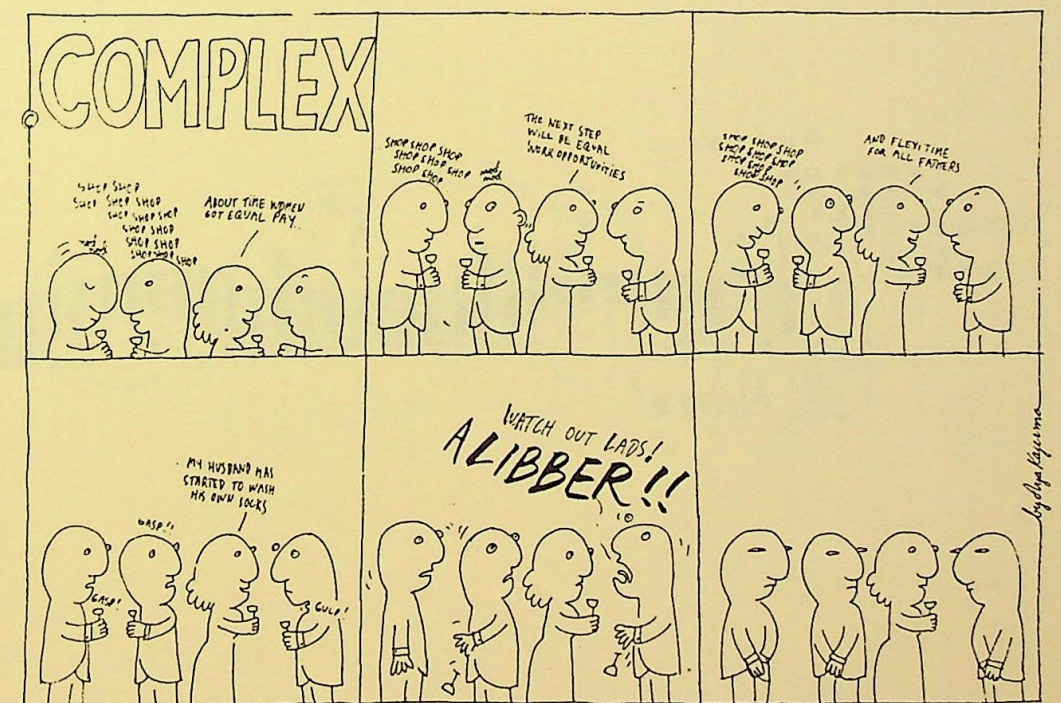
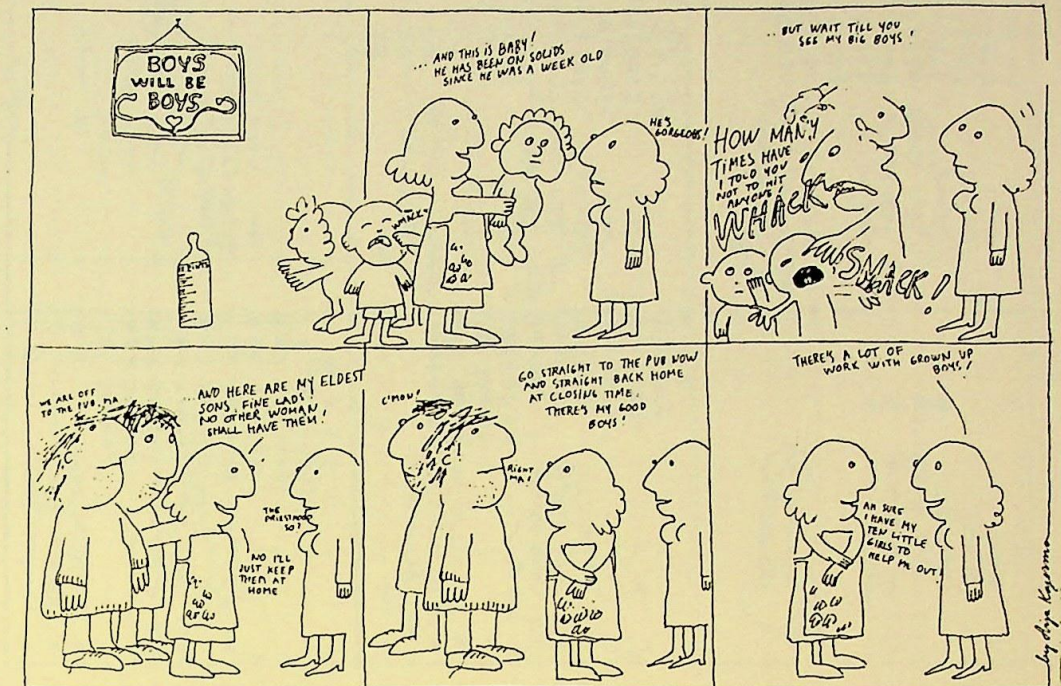
This is a very funny but very observant cartoon. It reflects men's attitudes in Ireland towards the progress of the womens' movement and it also illustrates the fact that these men are perfectly willing to accept and speak to this woman so long as she doesn't talk about women's affairs, about equal legislation and last of all about men having to do things that women are instinctively supposed to do.



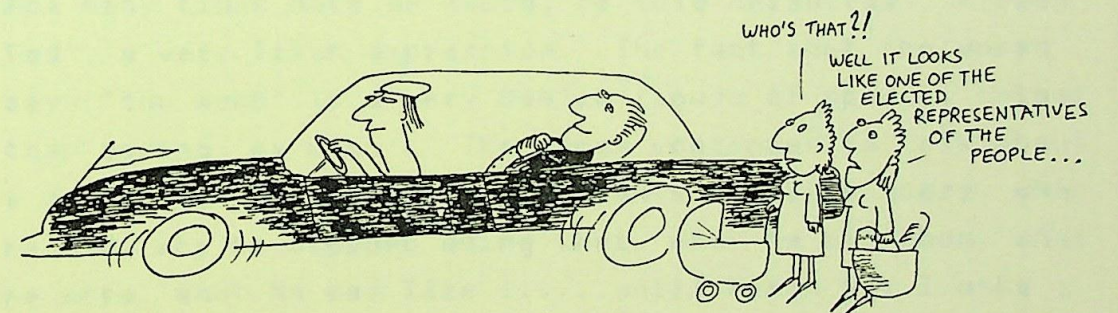
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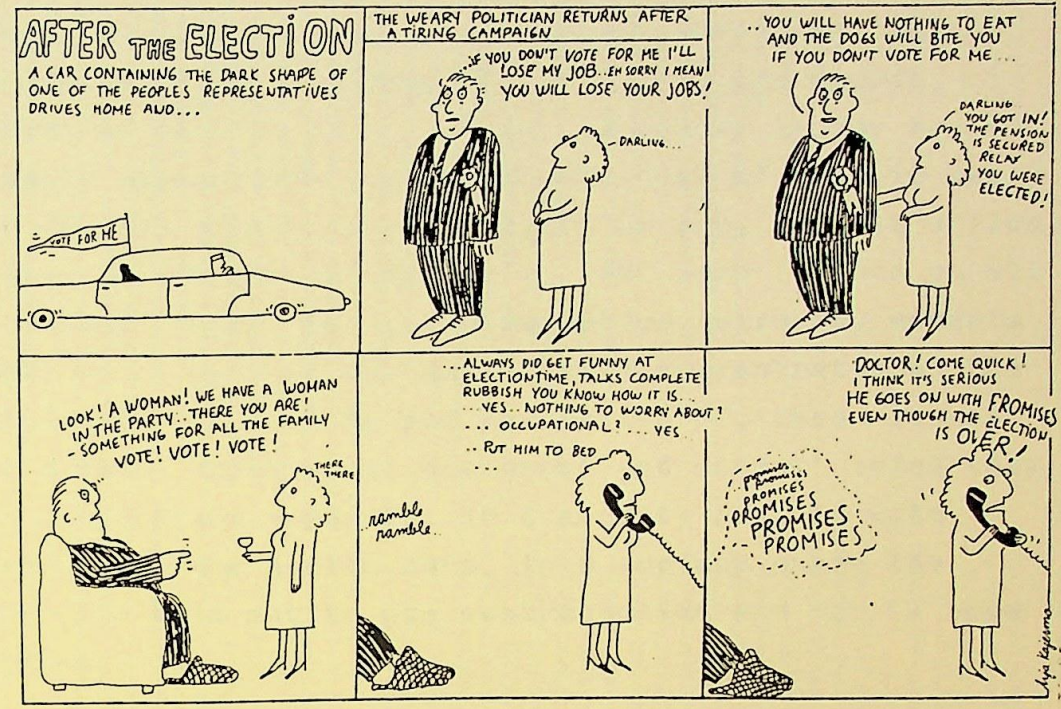


When Kajermo laughs at politicians she approaches them from the 'ordinary persons' viewpoint. In one cartoon we see two women, shopping bags and pram at hand, watching a chauffeur-driven car drive by. One says, "who's that"? and the other answers "well it looks like one of the elected representatives of the people ..."

This cartoon was done around the time when the debate on whether or not T.D.'s should have state cars. Kajermo never draws individual politicians as Turner does; she simply draws a man in an expensive-looking suit, usually with a receding hair line. In the cartoon titled "after the election" she portrays a politician and his ever supportive wife ; In "the weary politician returns after a tiring campaign ..." He is still preaching his party lines, the lines he used to get elected. He is telling people - "What will happen if they don't vote for him etc. etc. The wife phones the doctor but all is normal, until wife hears husband rambling about promises !!! The cartoon ends with "Doctor ! come quick ! I think its serious, he goes on with Promises even though the election is over !"

In this cartoon, Kajermo deals with a subject which everyone is familiar with ; the promises politicians make and then break, once they've been elected. One only has to look back at any advertising campaign used by a political party to see this fact clearly. Kajermo doesn't, however, take particular examples to illustrate a point, she presumes we all know about politicians ; that we've all heard promises etc. and she looks at it from a different angle. In this case from the politicians wife's angle. In the cases of the two women, probably housewives, watching the T.D. glide by in his limousine, Kajermo is making a very serious social comment on Ireland and the social disparities between the upper classes represented by the T.D., and the lower classes, represented by the women. This is a social cartoon dealing with a social issue ; an issue which has in many ways been brought about by politics.







It would be difficult to make social comments of any kind in Ireland without bringing politics into consideration.

Though, Kajermo's work, if viewed in retrospect, could not tell us much of particular political and social figures of the '80's or of major landmarks in our society, it would undoubtedly give us a good idea of what it was like for the person in the street, or pub, or dole office, to live in Ireland in the '80's. Her work touches on all the issues of the '80's; contraception, divorce, women's rights etc., and yet her work always concentrates on the individuals reaction to and perception of, these issues in a society which still has mens' and womens' roles very much defined and separate, in a society dealing with unemployment and health cuts, in a society where the people are told not to use contraception and not to have abortions.

Kajermo has the advantage of being a foreigner who can see our society objectively and clearly ; she also has the advantage of being acutely observant and tellingly funny. Kajermo's drawing style is perhaps what first attracts people to her cartoons; the lines are economical and minimalist, there are no 'frills' or extra shadings thrown in to clutter up the images. "Conveying meaning and movement in each tiny pen-stroke" is a very accurate description of what Kajermo's drawing does ; in one cartoon, which occupies a page in her book 'Dirty Dublin Strip', we see two ministers in dinner jackets and dickie bows, wine glasses at hand. They are mirror images of each other.

20 Randall Harrison, in his book 'The Cartoon', recounts a popular anecdote about cartoonists. It concerned a publisher who complained to a cartoonist about paying \$100 for a cartoon which consisted of only 4 lines.



Kajermo seems to go directly to the Irish people themselves for her inspiration, and deals with the social problems they have to deal with, giving a good record of what it is actually like to live in these times.

There is room for all three varieties of cartoonist. Each complements the other ; each contributes, through their interpretations, to the overall picture one gets of a society by looking at cartoons.

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He has a guaranteed spot on a set page of the Irish Times every day ; while other cartoonists, though they may contribute daily to a newspaper ; they aren't guaranteed that their cartoon will be printed or that it will occupy a space on a certain page. If there's no room on one page, the cartoon will be shifted to another and if there's no room overall, the cartoon just won't be printed.

Ireland doesn't take its cartoonists seriously enough ; the newspapers who could have full-time cartoonists on their staff don't appreciate the power that a good cartoon can have and the attraction humour has for the general public. Perhaps these newspapers don't have faith in the talent of Irish cartoonists. This produces a vicious circle ; a cartoonist who is given time to work on his skills as a draughtsman and who doesn't have work at another 9 to 5 job to support his/her cartooning ; will improve and develop to become a top-class cartoonist ; provided, of course, that the talent is there to start with.

When asked if they consider themselves to be a member of the media or of the public, most cartoonists reply that they suppose that they're a bit of both but that they'd associate themselves more with the public than with the media. This is why the cartoonist is quite unique, though he shares some of the bardic functions of the media, such as convincing their audience that their status and identity as individuals is guaranteed by the culture as a whole ; explaining and interpreting the doings of the cultures individual representatives in the world 'out there'; and transmitting a sense of cultural membership ; the cartoonist both laughs with and at this culture ; this society.



He has the unique position of a kind of middle-man who both reflects and thereby records the norms of a society and the opinion of a society, and who influences these opinions by putting his own forward.

This is why the cartoons of a particular era, when viewed in retrospect, can give the viewer a very good picture of what that era was like ; what kind of problems the people faced, what the politics of that era were and what attitudes and opinions the general public held.

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Fig. Numbers

- 14 - 18 Rowel Friers Cartoons (late '60's, early '70's)  
('Fortnight' magazine and 'Riotious Living')
- 19 - 25 Martyn Turner cartoons concerned with  
Northern Irish Politics (late '60's, early '70's)
- 26 - 29 Martyn Turner cartoons (1980's - The Irish Times)
- 30 - 35 Tom Mathews cartoons (1980's)
- 36 - 40 Arja Kajermo cartoons (1980's - 'In Dublin' magazine)

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# FOOTNOTES

## No.

- |     |         |  |
|-----|---------|--|
| 1.  | Page 2  | Cartoonists at War.  |
| 2.  | Page 2  | The World Encyclopaedia of Cartoons                              |
| 3.  | Page 2  | The World Encyclopaedia of Cartoons                              |
| 4.  | Page 3  | " " " " "  |
| 5.  | Page 21 | The Political Cartoon  |
| 6.  | Page 21 | Dressed to Kill - Cartoonists and the Northern Ireland Conflict. |
| 7.  | Page 24 | Interview with Tom Mathews                                       |
| 8.  | Page 24 | Interview with Graeme Keyes                                      |
| 9.  | Page 25 | Interview with Tom Mathews                                       |
| 10. | Page 27 | Dressed to Kill - Cartoonists and the Northern Ireland Conflict. |
| 11. | Page 29 | The Political Cartoon  |
| 12. | Page 30 | " " "  |
| 13. | Page 32 | Martyn Turner - The Book   |
| 14. | Page 36 | " " " "  |
| 15. | Page 37 | Tom Mathews Interview  |
| 16. | Page 37 | " " "  |
| 17. | Page 38 | " " "  |
| 18. | Page 38 | " " "  |
| 19. | Page 46 | Dirty Dublin Strip   |
| 20. | Page 52 | Dressed to Kill - Cartoonists and the Northern Ireland Conflict. |

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