

Social Factors in Cartoon Analysis through French Specialists

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Abstract

Since their appearance, cartoons and their creators took interest in social and political facts and figures. Often a more direct witness than a text, cartoons were quickly transformed from their initial entertaining role, to a tool to attack oppressors and reveal social injustices. To easily communicate with their public, they had to share the same codes and experiences that lived their audience in the society. Various social factors were sometimes unconsciously transmitted in the drawing through the psyche of the cartoon creator, which was formed during his life, and sometimes consciously applied in the cartoon decoration, appearance or the movement of the characters in order to further elucidate the message. Therefore, cartoon analysis must take account of all social elements at the time of cartoons production and reception. In this area, French specialists, especially Roland Barthes are among the leading figures who have worked on the role of social factors in image analysis. In this article, their opinions are applied to cartoon analysis in order to better understand the way a cartoon is intended to send a message to its public.

Keywords: caricature, drawing, morphology, newspaper cartoon, physiognomy, society, socio-cultural codes.

1. Introduction

Under a motionless appearance, the image invites the observer to explore a vast universe; it stimulates, it suggests, it expresses an idea and makes people speak. It is able to summarize at a single glance what a linear text tries to make us understand. Sometimes the meaning of a text cannot be fully understood without the supporting image and is not effective enough to describe certain concepts. ~~Fast~~ to grasp, more emotional and more memorable than a text, free from the language barriers, released by the dematerialization of media, driven by the antenna and the space relay, it floods the planet day and night, makes people shout for joy and clench one's fists ¹ (Debray, 1992: 139).

The Christian Church was well aware of this magical power of image: Christians had acknowledged the emotional impact and commitment that the image aroused fifteen centuries before advertising it publicly, according to Debray (1992). Sometimes it was deemed harmful², going as far as rejecting all images and excluding their creators, as it excluded the prostitute, the brothel owner and idol makers; sometimes on the contrary, the Church sought to benefit from it to combat paganism and awaken minds. The image colored by satire and mockery even became a tool to fight against the certain extremisms of the Church and the monarchy in eighteenth century in France. The sharing of power between the king, parliamentarians and States-General in 1788 created a great interest in politics among the people. Alongside the drafting of the Cahiers de Doléances (the lists of grievances), many caricatures denounced inequalities and treated topics related to peasant misery, the burden of taxes, etc. Denouncing the abuses of the nobility and the clergy, some images

1. The text between brackets is a translation from French made by the author of this article.

2. Especially during the two iconoclast periods: first between 730-787 and between 813-843 for the second.

encouraged the demand for freedom among the people (Forcadell, 1989: 24).

Disturbed situations around the Revolution of 1789 gave birth to purely qualified satirical newspapers who spread prints or engravings. In the post-revolutionary situation in the early nineteenth century, alongside the political subjects, the social problems and the middle class provided caricaturists with numerous topics for their caricatures. During their life, full of adventures, sometimes censored and rejected by governments, sometimes published freely and with large circulation, caricatures tried to find their way to communicate with their audience. The important point was that they never forgot the keys of this exchange: the social factors.

In this article after a brief etymology of the word caricature (French designation of cartoon), first the social concepts according to Duvignaud, common in all work of art will be examined. We will then discuss the social contexts of caricatures at the time of their production and reception; finally, the socio-cultural codes in linguistic codes, facial expressions and body movements of characters in the cartoons will be developed and explained. Editorial limitations of this publication prevent the author to further develop some items proposed in this article; therefore, the reader is invited to do further research in this area.

2. Etymology of the word *caricature*

This convenient weapon, serving politics and society, emerged in the sixteenth century through the work of Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer. Leonardo was always attracted by the contrast between the Sublime and Deformity, and based on observation, he drew grotesque figures and showed that Ugliness was as worthy of being represented in art as was Fairness (Le Feudo, 2009: 24). His grotesque heads drawn in

the sixteenth century and Albrecht Dürer's (1471-1528) bodies deformed by arithmetic average inspired the future disfigurements of characters in eighteenth century French drawings, seeking to establish links between social status, physical appearance, character and nature of emotions in different types of individuals (Baridon & Martial, 2009: 67). In the 1580s in Bologna, other Italian painters Annibale Carracci, his brother Agostino and his cousin Ludovico, the drawing masters of their time, established the *Accademia degli Incamminati*, a professional and artistic institute where they practiced graphic presentations. Carracci loved depicting his entourage and placing big heads on small bodies. They also tried to turn their characters' heads into animals or objects.

The word *caricatura* appeared for the first time in A. Mosini's 1646 preface to a collection of 80 engravings made from Annibale Carracci's drawings, the *Cries of Bologna*. This word, derives from popular Latin *caricare* - load and thus giving weight, or relief, to stress, emphasize or exaggerate (Melot, 2002: 150). Linguists know that in the seventeenth century, *caricare* also meant to load a gun. Applied to the caricature and considered as a weapon to affect and hurt, this meaning however came much later- it only appeared with the intrusion of mockery and satire in the cartoon imagery. In 1681- almost 50 years after Carracci's discovery - in his *Vocabolario Toscano e dell'Arte del Disegno* [The artistic terms dictionary], the painter Filippo Baldinucci stated: For painters and sculptors, caricature corresponds to depicting as accurately and faithfully as possible; but also to exaggeratedly increasing and accentuating defects of the traits they copy. Thus, the portrait as a whole perfectly conforms to the model, while the traits that compose it are changed (Gombrich, 1971: 425).

Carton as the English call caricature, comes from the Italian word *cartone*, which means a large sheet of paper or

cardboard intended to implement a design on a tapestry, a mural or mosaic. Mark Bryant, in the introduction to his work entitled *World War II in cartoons* explains the use of this word in the English language: its modern meaning in English is derived from a parody published in *Punch* by Leech about a competition soliciting pictorial ideas to decorate the walls of the new Houses of the British Parliament in 1843. From then on, the main page of this weekly magazine, previously called Mr Punch Sketches will be called The Cartoon and this word will soon come to describe any humoristic drawing (Bryant, 2009: 7).

In France, the wide diffusion of caricature in the mid nineteenth century, spread since the French Revolution of 1789 in the form of posters, prints, caricatures, etc., resulted in the emergence of critics and historians working on this kind of drawing. Baudelaire, in his article *The essence of laughter and usually comic in the visual arts*¹, dating to 1855 and published in *Curiosités Esthétiques*, defined cartoon as a singular genre, which is no longer a reversal of beauty but a new aesthetic. Champfleury (1865: X), a historian and art critic, a theorist of realism and popular art amateur, recognized cartoon as crude and cynical art, an art without art... He considered the cartoon as an image difficult to read due to its references and allusions high on contextuality. On the other hand, according to him, when studying a period of time, a historian cannot be content with official documents, but must peruse figurative monuments including caricatures that exalt the powerful role that they were responsible to play any time. Cited by Tillier (2005: 11-12).

Simultaneously with the development of the illustrated press in the 1920s, the worldwide power of image started to play a key role both in major events and for trade and industry. Drawings, through the transmission and the rapid understanding of the

1. De l'essence du rire et généralement du comique dans les arts plastiques.

ideas and message they formulate, can have an impact on the mentality and the opinion of general public even though they are aware of the exaggeration of the drawing. Different from posters or postcards, newspaper cartoons, due to the nature of their support, are divided into three kinds: political, propagandist and social genres. Nevertheless, there are other genres such as entertainment that will be used when censorship banned drawings or limited the subjects, as well as graphic humor that feeds nonsense, black humor or surrealism.

What all these drawing genres have in common is the existence of a production background in which the drawing is bathed at the time of its creation, and the context in which the picture is broadcasted. Since the study of the image has been integrated into criticism as a discipline, the number of books devoted to this kind of analysis has increased rapidly: many specialists annually publish books, each one giving a different look on the analysis of the image, trying to grasp what is apparent or hidden. In this article, we will focus more on the sociological aspect of newspaper cartoons, that is, the social conditions at the time of their production and reception.

3. Sociological concepts in the analysis of a work of art

Placed in the category of visual arts, drawing and its components (such as the sculptor drawing, architectural drawing, fashion design, newspaper cartoons and caricatures, comics, animated cartoons) stand at the third level of the popular classification of the arts, at the same rank as paintings. Cartoon therefore, considered as a work of art, has its characteristics and welcomes its criticism. Georges Friedmann has an assessment on works of art that can extend well on the satirical drawing; according to him, a work of art, once produced, is primarily a technical result, then the result of individual and collective psychology, and finally a sociological testimony (cited by

Francastel, 1965: 40). If we put aside the analysis of the technical aspects of production and entrust the analysis of the psychological aspect of the work of art to another research, we will have a production that reflects, more or less, signs and criteria constructed according to the standards or attitudes of societies.

This sociological approach in analyzing the image has been seriously monitored since 1960s. Barthes (1960: 224) noted in The First International Conference on Visual Information in 1961 that the image fatally vehicles something other than itself and that something else cannot be unrelated to the society which produces and consumes. He offered thus a sociological orientation in the analysis of the image and invited his readers to see what lies behind and in front of the work: the creator and the receiver.

In the process of serving the sociological analysis of a work of art, Duvignaud (1972: 41-57) specifies certain operational tools used to examine the directions in which sociological analysis should go. These concepts make sense in a vibrant society that serves as a backdrop to interpretation. These operational concepts are as follow:

- The drama. It includes the behaviors, emotions, attitudes, ideologies and actions of the creator, which are in him the crystallization of a whole society, and engages the genesis of the work in the articulation of contradictory forms that make collective life.
- The polemic sign. The work of art always shows the will to overcome obstacles. The sign then conveys the artist's double activity: first the presupposition of a hurdle (participation or expression), then the real or imaginary attempt to

overcome this obstacle. In addition, this gives the imagination, in all its creative forms, the character of an activity oriented to communicate remotely with others, to make them foresee that obstacle and the desire to overcome it.

- The merging of the systems. The coincidence of two sets of signs, one universal, original, mythological or even natural order, and the other a social one. Imaginary symbolizations appear as the result of the convergence of different elements.
- Anomie. All the disruption facts resulting from the change of social structure - as a result of a war, peaceful confrontation with another group or internal dynamism of society- continues in the same period. While man, detached from standards, who, hitherto controlled and ordered their desires, are faced with endless aspirations. [...] and this individual or collective psychic life, which can no longer finds its expression and its fulfillment in the frames of a society in dissolution, finds its way towards the imagination and invention of the style .
- The atypical nature. It concerns the homogeneous societies in which there is only one system of values such as primitive societies or modern technological civilization in the United States. Art, then, is not the product of a collective life but "requires a questioning of human relations through an individuality that became, because of its isolation, generator of unprecedented relations and unrealized reunification (Quvignaud, 1972: 57).

Therefore, the result of a sociological analysis of works of art may deal with the behavior, attitudes, etc. of society, the attempt to overcome an obstacle, the convergence of universal and social order signs, the invention of a new society imaginary, or even a generator of unprecedented human relations. Analysis of a work of art or a cartoon may still concern other sociological factors such as the context of its creator, the events at the time of its creation, the host society, and/or the socio-cultural codes of the represented characters.

4. The context of the creator

In his work at the interface of art history and sociology, Pierre Francastel considers essential the study of the environment of a piece of artwork producer and that of its recipients. According to him, it is important to define the artist's position in society at different periods of history. The nature and location of the group producer in society and the individual situation of the artist within this group may vary indefinitely because the conditions of life, inspiration and training of men are constantly changing. On the other hand, it will be interesting to consider the reception conditions in the concerned society because an artistic production can represent, directly or indirectly, an entire society.

Francastel (1965: 29-34) also considers the situation in which the work of art has been commissioned: in this circumstance, the social environment of the patron-politicians, businessmen, great lords, clerk, etc. is not necessarily that of the artist. The work may reflect patron world more than that of the artist. In this case, the work of art will be influenced by several social backgrounds. For a newspaper cartoon, the order may come from the newspaper publishers for some commercial reasons but also from those who control the press, especially in times of crisis and conflicts such as war, which requires a kind of unification and harmonization for the general public. The work

released under such circumstances takes on the color of propaganda and the cartoonist will only be a simple graphical director of this dictated idea.

Studying the work of art from a sociological perspective helps to understand how creative societies can be, how they can generate innovative individuals or invent new forms. The sociology of art is trying to find the roots of the creative experience and the forms of imagination in our collective existence. The artistic work may even fight against codifications imposed by a society different from the one the artist had envisaged, especially when one lives under a dictatorship. If it is opposed to the codifications of a society or complies with them, this type of work also falls within the social status of the artist. Thus, a correlation between artistic creation and collective life can be established: the creation expresses how the artist psychically perceives his time. According to Duvignaud (1972: 40), the sociology of creation must take into account not only the "archaeological" aspect of a work (forms) but also its actual aspects (content), that is to say what it wants to achieve and what the public perception extends.

5. The socio-historical context at the time of creation

Some images speak in generalities and universal notions, understood by almost everyone and in all civilizations; concepts such as life and death have always existed in the works of the artists and the reader does not always need to know the social or historical context in order to understand the image. However, if concepts such as freedom, peace, etc. multiply simultaneously in a specific period through the works of artists, it is then necessary to look to the context. Some images speak specifically of something that happened at a specific moment or a specific period; in such cases, the observer better understands the work if he knows the represented event, as well as event that the image

refers to. Often, ignoring the context makes it impossible to read and understand the image.

Sometimes a cartoon is a mixture of two or more events between which the author establishes links of convergence or divergence. The cartoon can then be the product of a mixture of synchronic and diachronic events. This combination of events is a common procedure among cartoonists who sometimes try to bring together, in one person, two individuals from different backgrounds, which can for example be used to further humiliate the subject and thereby increase the strength of the attack.

6. The context of the reception

Cartoon, because of its transgressive character, which goes against the norms of a society, will have its maximum impact on its audience once it settles in a favorable socio-historical context. Nevertheless, other characteristics influence the reception of a cartoon, such as professional, family-related, or geographical factors regarding its readership's level of training, origin, race, or economic situation. In the case of a newspaper, its orientation, its frequency of publication, its circulation, its mode of distribution, etc. modify the number of readers. The cartoonist therefore chooses his subject and then depicts it according to the editorial line that caters to an audience who must use his ability of the visual system and refer to the iconic data already archived in his mind.

Elements such as age can also partly change the image's reception. It is not a general rule but we can say that a young audience, because of the activities of its brain, can gain relatively quickly the links offered by the association of ideas in the picture and an old public, taking advantage of its experience and its contextual knowledge, captures the sense more globally. Recent studies have mostly rejected the cliché that claimed that

the act of perception differs by gender. In fact, what really sets the way of perception are the various brain operations resulting from variability of internal components such as genetic, diet, diseases contracted, external elements such as the effect of the environment, learning, experiences, feelings, etc., or beliefs and values formed by the society and the culture in which one has grown up, lives now or will expect for his future.

The perception of a work will be different according to the collective psychological factor influenced by the culture and the social environment of the observer as well as his/her individual psyche and his/her horizon of expectation corresponding to his/her interests, desires, needs and experiences. At the meeting of the work and the observer, Jauss (1990: 259) talks about establishing links between two horizons or their combination. A link that raises on the side of the work, that is, its current events and its historicity, and that raised on the receiver's side: his expectations and his subjective experiences.

In order for a message to be communicated effectively, it must be carefully designed, developed and transmitted to its readers. However, are there any real criteria for judging the true reception of the message? This message, if it is explicitly released by artists, or reconstructed by the observer himself - from a decomposition in the case of a surrealist work, for example - is dependent on various factors. Not only does it depend on the receiver's psyche and socio-cultural elements of his environmental conditions at the time of the perception, but it is also influenced by the psychological action of the formal aspect of the same image. The image's elements (colors, shapes, support, etc.) are subject to potential effects which can affect the subconscious of the observer. However, the elements and deliberate strokes that the author chooses to compose his image can carry a meaning that is not necessarily the one he envisioned.

In addition, there are other elements that can measure the degree of an artwork's effectiveness, such as the nature of the signs used, or the way they are presented. The methods and techniques of the production of a work may also largely influence its reception. Moreover, the multiplication of the same image repeated several times on the same medium or broadcasted on various media can also increase the effect by touching a wider audience. In addition, choosing a theme in line with the mainstream of the host society promotes the effectiveness of the work produced. Regarding this effectiveness, Jakobson (1963: 176) in his *Essais de Linguistique Générale* adds that any message is encoded by its issuer and asks to be decoded by the recipient: the more the recipient is close to the code used by the sender, the higher is the amount of information obtained.

7. Socio-cultural codes in newspaper cartoons

The socio-cultural codes refer to the cultural and social practices, language and vocabulary, behavior, habits, manners and customs, ideological, aesthetic or spiritual values, clothing or even the places that refer to a specific social class. In this article, some of these elements will be developed and the rest will be set aside for other researches.

7.1. Linguistic codes

In a socio-functional approach, Michael Halliday talks about metafunctions that articulate speech patterns and social data. In other words, they allow us to understand the connection between language and what is outside of language (Sarfati & Paveau, 2014: 134). Discourse analysis, the way it is practiced in France, studies the verbal productions in their social conditions of production; it is worth saying that speech includes both the text and the extralinguistic conditions of its production.

This type of code varies still according to social differentiations in one society: age, sex, level of education, economic position, origin and race. In addition, multiple interpretations of the same act are due to the fact that the observers belong to different symbolic universes, although apparently they speak the same language and share the same language skills.

7.2. The codes of character

Taking the example of a sentence, the suprasegmental elements such as intonation, posture or facial expressions or physical appearance of the speaker make the framework for the lexical content of the message. Body paraverbal indications of the speaker also, alongside the content, prepare, strengthen and carry or sometimes nullify or contradict the contents of the communication (Bougnoux, 2001: 18-19). Since in a newspaper cartoon there is usually the presence of one or more characters, it is essential to pay attention to the physical appearance and attitudes and morphological expressions of the actors because the body has its own language, which, through the postures and movements, expresses the intentions and reveals the secrets of its owner.

Courtine and Haroche (2007: 36) in their *Histoire du visage*¹ (1988 for the first edition), try to present the human body as a sign of psychological identity and social belonging through the emotions expressed on faces painted between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is a link between the inner man and the outer man, appearing on the surface of the body, which consists of a set of interpretable signs to the standards and values of the time. The authors of the book equate therefore the work of physionomiste to medical semiotics who diagnoses diseases according to their symptoms. This is a systematic

1. *History of the face*

exercise of gaze (look) to notice the morphological and expressive signifiers, coming from interiority which reveal the human psychic meant features as signified (his nature, his character, his inclinations, passions, vices and virtues, emotions, etc.).

7.2.1. The physiognomy

In the analysis of drawings, checking the socio-cultural codes of characters such as the type, age, sex, clothing and accessories, hairstyles, makeup, ethnic traits, etc. is very important to understand the social status of the character. It is also important to observe the traits personifying a face, such as the following: the beard (white) evokes wisdom, good-naturedness, etc. or mustache in the style of Adolf Hitler, which in some drawings, evokes the cruelty of the enemy.

In a study on clothing through the figuresbooks of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Pastoureau (1989: 32), recognizing that we could apply this analysis to our contemporary era, discusses a cartoon characters different details: their tissues (material, texture, origin and decor), their parts and their shapes, their cutting work and assembly, their accessories, how to wear the garment, the number of colors used and how they are associated. This latest factor may be related to the place, time, social environment or the character's activities. According to him, the garment's main role is to indicate the place of the individual within a group and the place of this group within society. This group can be familial, political, domestic, institutional, military, religious, etc. The garment may also indicate the sex of the character, the age group to which he belongs, etc.

When Umberto Eco distinguishes the signs into two main parts, the natural signs and artificial signs, he also states that the garment, aside its primary function which is clothing, is used to

identify the social place the character. According to him, the natural signs are divided into two classes:

Signs that identify things or natural events: for example, the position of the sun.

Signs that are unconsciously emitted by a human agent: buttons indicating chickenpox, for example (this class has several subclasses: medical symptoms, psychological symptoms, behavior / moods, racial indices / class / regional origin, etc.).

As for artificial signs, they are:

Products that are meant to explicitly refer to certain elements, for example the barking of a dog signifying the arrival of someone.

Products that have an explicit function:

- ✓ first: a chair to signify the act of sitting.
- ✓ second: a diamond necklace to signify wealth.
- ✓ mixed: a police uniform, in both clothing and social function.

The sign produced explicitly by an issuer may be the holder of significance for the receiver only if both share the same code (Eco, 1988: 56). The sentence dear to the disciples of the School of Pablo Alto, communicate, is to enter the orchestra focuses on the fact that communication takes place always on the basis of exchanges with others using certain codes or symbols (Bougnoux, 2001: 20).

7.2.2. Morphology

Morphology refers to the paraverbal indices or non-verbal communication, involving all human behavior that carry a meaning without resorting to language. These behaviors,

according to Jinni A. Harrigan (2013), are divided into five groups: the action of face, the voice signals, the proxemics (the use and perception of space), the gaze, and the kinesthetic (head, body, arm and leg movement) (Hall & Knapp, 2013). It is interesting to know that changes in body movements, hands and face are linked to those of language. Morphological signs can be classified as follows:

- **Body position.** There are symbolic values attached to whether the body is turned to the right or to the left. The right side is the direction of action, of goodness and of God, the extremity and the end; the left is the sinister (besides the adjective *sinister* comes from the Latin *sinister*, *sinistra* which means *left*), misery and the devil, the passive waiting, the past and the origin of things. A character that is bent forward can evoke fatigue, while a figure stretched forward suggests the will of engagement. When tilted backward it is a feeling of retreat or rest.
- **State and movement of hands.** Motionless hands and crossed fingers express calmness, concentration, introversion, etc. Hands stretched forward, agitated symbolize dynamism, extraversion, volubility, the desire to convince or self-justification if this gesture is accompanied by decision words.
- **Tangible expressions.** Figurative representations related to the characters, their expressions and socio-culturally coded gestures expressing pain, joy, prayer or allegiance (clasped hands, kneeling), surrender (arms raised), rebellion (closed points), etc. The character can take postures evoking death, birth, work, food, love, politeness rules, etc. (Fozza et al., 2003: 110). The interpretation of the message also depends on the

staging¹. When the attitude of a character evokes a situation outside of the scene (eg stretch ear), we can say that it is a typical process of theater.

- **Facial expression.** Happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, contempt, surprise, etc. are expressed through facial expressions. As it is smooth, round, white, colored, contrasting, with the carved features, etc. a face changes meaning. A face can also hide the emotions and thus translate the distance of the character vis-à-vis others. Sometimes the cartoonist adds an ideogram around the character's head to accentuate the effect of facial features: it can be great drops of sweat, forms of heart, question marks or exclamations, whirlpools anger, etc. In the newspaper cartoons, mutilation or exaggeration of a member and the deformation of the main parts of the face socially and politically destabilize the target.
- ✓ **Gaze.** Cognitive psychology studies show that faces attract attention primarily, and that we first look at the eyes, which summarizes the phrase the eye catches the eye (Arabyan, 2000: 30). Looking up can mean pride or request for help from a higher power, while looking down is an index humility, regret, etc. Looking face to face with the character gives the observer the intensity that involves the observer advantage: an I addresses to a you. The profile position or three-quarters put the observer outside of the event. The shape of the eyes may also convey messages: ordinary eye shape expresses nothing in itself, but if the upper eyelid is slightly down, it suggests a feeling of discontent and if the lower lid is slightly raised, it shows the mocking spirit of the

1. In the case of a movie, the movement of the character, its entry and its exit of cadre are important. This action creates a strength report relational between inside and outside. Whoever enters destabilizes a previous order and may adopt an offensive attitude.

character. Eyes wide open mark a surprise or can give a questioning face if one eye is half closed. When the eyes are closed, they can, according to their tilt up or down, suggest various features such as a serene face, happy, crying, shouting, resigned, etc.

- ✓ **Eyebrows.** Eyebrows up show astonishment while eyebrows down show discontent. Bent, they show a more relaxed character than straight eyebrows. V shaped, they mark the anger and an inverse V shape refers to sadness.
- ✓ **Mouth.** Another essential element for the expression of emotions is the form of the mouth; a wide mouth has a direct relationship with the expression of extreme feelings; very stretched mouth shows a burst of laughter or sadness. How to draw inside the mouth - teeth and tongue - can also bring nuances: an open mouth, dark and without visible teeth, manifests a laugh or a surprise. An open mouth, all white because of the color of the teeth, but that these are accentuated, shows a weaker expression than the previous. Teeth apart from one another by vertical lines - as if the character clenched teeth - express mockery or anxiety. Zigzag tooth reflect a sadistic smile or feeling of aggression or anger. Depending on the situation, a distorted mouth can still characterize a grumpy face, stressed, applied, uncomfortable, whistling, etc. (Lubie, 2013)

7.2.3. Example

The example below is an illustration of the elements discussed above. The socio-historical context of the cartoon belongs to a week before the realization of the drawing: the Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and the USSR was signed in Moscow. This treaty, known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

was signed by the foreign ministers of Germany, Joachim von Ribbentrop, and the Soviet Union, Vyacheslav Molotov in the presence of Stalin. This pact, containing a secret protocol between the two countries, considered a certain distribution of territories such as Finland, Poland, the Baltic States, etc. It spared the interests of both sides: no longer having to fear a possible attack in the east, Germany could concentrate its troops on the western front, which would facilitate the invasion of France in May 1940. On the Russian side, the treaty provided Stalin with sufficient time to move its plants to Siberia and catching up technologically its delay before the conflict with Germany that was considered inevitable. However, this pact was unilaterally violated in June 22, 1941 by Germany against the USSR in the Operation named Barbarossa. On the other hand, from 22 May 1939 the Pact of Steel formalized the union of Italy and Germany. The conjunction of Japan to the Axis countries led to the signing of the Tripartite Pact September 27, 1940.

Joseph Stalin in military uniform sits almost in the middle of the stage, legs apart, body facing the observer but the head in profile facing left. The left hand holds the back of Hitler, wide-open right hand is extended towards Mussolini. His body gives totally a welcoming, generous and kind expression with a smiling face. There are other characters in the drawing such as General Franco of Spain standing in the background, and General Tojo of Japan at right.

The drawing suggests a sense of protection not only by its figurative aspect that features a central character, Stalin, acting as a kind grandfather takes his grandchildren in his arms, but also by the linguistic level: the title and caption emphasize and underline this protective aspect. The title consists of two parts: the first refers to the collection of poems by Victor Hugo, which was composed for his two grandchildren. He had himself taken

over after the death of their parents and had great attention and tenderness toward them. The second part goes to the other corner of the world, a name meant the Czars of the Russian Empire: the "father of the people" was also attributed to Stalin called as well the Great Peoples Guide. Inspired by this qualification, the cartoonist creates Stalin's character in the role of a grandfather who puts Hitler on his knees and wants to take Mussolini in his arms. In French the expression is sometimes wrongly translated by the little father of the people while the word "little" is only a small affectionate diminutive and the Russian phrase wants to emphasize the grandiloquence of that nickname.



Maurice Henry, August 30, 1939 published in No. 1.209 of the weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné*. Microfilm archive of the Municipal Library of Lyon. Title: The art of being grandfather of the peoples. Caption: Who comes on my knees?

The cartoonist playing on the opposition little/ grand (little father/ grandfather) in the title and the dimensions child/ adult of the plastic level creates the ironic side of the cartoon. The largest dimension of Stalin in relation to other characters, makes reference to the vast territory of the country, and insists on the

importance and effectiveness of the alliance with the Russians. The lowest part of the drawing is marked by Stalin's large boots that still insist on this geographic area. Stalin's legs apart are there to insist more on the generosity and hospitality shown towards the Axis countries: there is enough place for everyone!

Children-Heads of States located almost across the drawing allude to the world around Stalin, as around a protective center. The seating position gives him more stability than others. Germany already enjoys its alliance with the USSR and takes advantage of this stability. The position of the body and the head of General Tojo at the right of the cartoon in the background shows his dissatisfaction with the alliance nearly accomplished between the USSR and Italy, but also his desire to join this union; the body rejects but the head seeks. However, Franco, body and head in $\frac{3}{4}$ to the left, hand in pocket, passively watches the action and does not wish to be involved.

8. Conclusion

For a caricature to be understandable to the observer as its whole, it is necessary that the latter have some knowledge of the target and the theme proposed by the cartoonist. Knowing the historical, philosophical or psychological background of the object that the cartoon refers to it can also be a positive point in the perception of the image. However, the most important of such knowledge, seems to be the social experience because it largely implies the production and the reception of image. The creator's familial environment, his professional environment, his studies and training in life can affect the cartoon's message. There are almost the same criteria to the image receptor. Different interpretations of the same drawing are due to different contexts of its observers. The same observer may have different perceptions of the same image according to his feelings and circumstances at the time of the reception.

There are other social factors in the process of realization of the cartoon: the socio-cultural codes that the cartoonist chooses for the linguistic part of his/her drawing as in its title, in the caption, in dialogs, etc. or in the realization of his characters, largely transmit the message. The receiver picks non-verbal signals through the character drawn, transmitted consciously or unconsciously by the cartoonist. He establishes, maybe at first, the sympathetic relations between the subject and the author. In a second time, the receiver tries to establish links between the character and himself. In a mental, emotional and intellectual process, he assigns feelings, ideas and intentions. This process is done in two forms: the first, when the observer forgets himself and the second when it puts himself in the place the character in which he finds elements or common dreams that he shares with him.

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