

Chapter 6 Of COVID-19 and Zimbabwean Newspaper Cartoons A Multimodal Approach

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Abstract

While it is generally accepted that newspaper cartoons are always purely humorous, it is important to note that besides, humour, ‘... cartoons are likely to educate readers, inform them, arouse their feelings and instruct them to act positively’ (Al-Kenani and Banda, 2018: 48). The majority of newspaper cartoon analyses have mainly focused on political and democratic issues, (ElFalaky , 2019; Rehman, Rahman and Ali, 2018; Shaikh, Tariq, and Najeeb-us-Saqlain, 2016) it is important to note that cartoons, being a diagrammatic or symbolic drawings, are used not only to air political issues, but also national and international events (Alimi and Kassal, 1999). The predominant use of the cartoon in the portrayal of political matters has often resulted in the genre being christened political cartoons even if the cartoons may be presenting economic, religious and social themes, some which may have nothing to do with politics. The purpose of this study was therefore to track, identify, and explain the meaning and relevance to COVID-19, on the cartoons that appeared in the Chronicle newspaper, a Zimbabwean daily newspaper, between March and May 2020. The position of this chapter is that editorial cartoons are not zombies. They play a very pivotal role in propagating a message of awareness during time of disasters. The study also seeks to assess the role played by the newspaper’s editorial cartoons in amplifying the awareness campaign against the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared pandemic, corona virus (COVID-19). It is not a secret that the virus has not only destroyed economies across the world but has also completely changed people’s way of living across all races. It has brought fear and in some societies pandemonium that will leave indelible scars on 131 people’s lives. In this wave of the virus, which has its origins in Wuhan, China (WHO, 2020), Zimbabwe has also had its fair share of destruction due to the effects of the pandemic leaving not only the economy that was already on its knees further crippled, but a new normal in terms of social relations. Given the claim that cartoons, as visual images ‘... can instantly make a point that would be difficult to articulate in written text and often leave a lasting impression on the reader’ (Wigston, needed information relating to COVID-19 in Zimbabwe. Statement of the

problem COVID-19 continues to affect and infect the Zimbabwean populace. Concerning the Ebola outbreak...

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