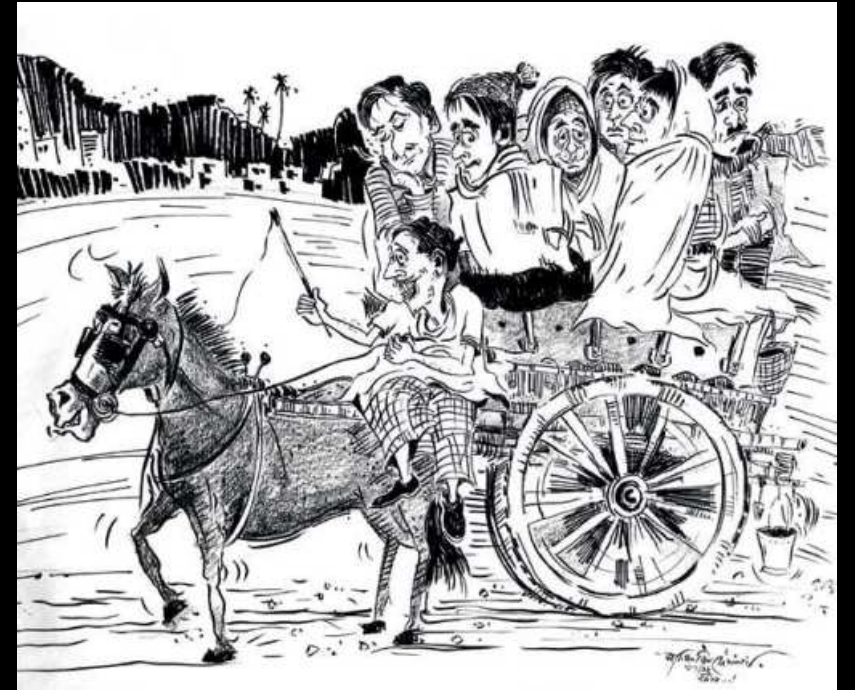
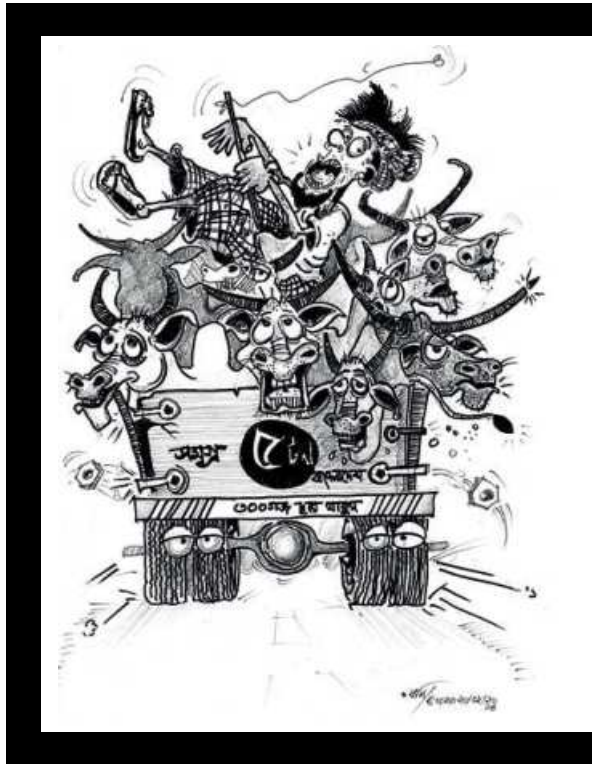




# CULTURAL CARTOONING

## A new look at our everyday life

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A new cartoon movement, known as cultural cartooning, has been gaining popularity all over the world. Cultural cartooning brings out the humorous side of our everyday life. Its protagonists are not exceptional characters; in fact, most often it doesn't have any lead character. The cartoonist chooses common men as his subject and develops his work with the idea that the funniest stuff can be things we encounter every day.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that humour is human. Scientists have observed laughter in other primates but the human seems to have the mental sophistication required for full-blown humour. Humour exists in

to have a sense of humour as they are able to be amused, smile or laugh at something funny such as a pun or a joke. However, the extent to which a person finds something humorous depends on a host of variables, including geographical location, culture, maturity, level of education, intelligence and context.

From time immemorial, humour has been used to address politics and power, inequality and class, gender and marriage as well as to entertain the audience. It used to take the form of different mediums such as books, plays, performance arts and so on. Cartoons as a form of humour have developed significantly over the past century.



verse cultures in the world. If you stop by a tea stall or any informal small gathering, you will no doubt come across humorous and satirical stories. Humour encompasses all aspects of our lives. It is unavoidable. People in this land have been fighting natural calamities, famine, and poverty for centuries but they have not lost the humorous aspect of life. They crack jokes even at the expense of their own self. It brings a smile to the hardened faces of those struggling in their lives and it keeps them alive. This spirit can be reflected in cultural cartooning which can be a source of our cultural strength as a nation.

Besides we have a rich tradition of storytelling where humour is the underlying theme. We have Birbals and Gopal Bhars who outsmart rival courtiers and sometimes even the mighty emperor, using only their intelligence and cunning, often by giving a witty and humorous spin to everyday realities. Here, storytellers put jolly tiny bird Toontooni against the mighty cruel king – blowing away the oppressive air with the fresh wind of laughter. These humorous tales depict our everyday lives.

Cartooning is one of the most popular communication mediums. There is hardly anyone who doesn't have vivid childhood memories of living the life of his or her favourite cartoon character. We can promote cultural cartooning to connect our young generation to their cultural roots and thus preserve the intangible cultural heritage of the country. These simple and funny outlines of our everyday life can rid us of the undignified presentation of Bangladesh as a land of poverty and starvation and portray us in a different light to the world.

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every known human culture. In ancient Greek, humour was considered to be body fluid which is connected with human health and emotion. Researchers have found that an average person laughs around 17 times every day.

People irrespective of their ages and culture respond to humour. When we list the traits we prize in a person we usually put "sense of humor" at or near the top. Most people are considered

In fact, a cartoon is a form of visual humour that is illustrated. Originally, the term "cartoon" referenced any type of artwork, but over time it has come to represent humorous illustrations and eventually humorous films and television programs.

Cultural cartooning can be an interesting tool for documentation of the vibrant cultural life of a community. By creating characters from common folks

and situating them in a humorous ambience, a cartoonist can weave stories around the everyday life of a group of people and bring to life the intangible cultural heritages of a nation. Indian cartoonist and illustrator Mario Miranda (1926-2011) can be considered the pioneer of cultural cartooning in the sub-continent. His early cartoons presented vignettes of Goa village life, a theme he is best known for even today. He maintained diaries from the age of 10, sketching the life around him. He would observe people everywhere (like eateries, taverns, weddings, bus stops, the post office) and document their social life. His warm-hearted comic drawings of local characters and their culture and lifestyle helped to popularise his native land Goa across the world.

In a glowing tribute to this great pioneer of cultural cartooning, another famous Indian cartoonist and illustrator Vijay N Seth wrote, "Mario created characters that gave his daily audience their quota of smiles without malice. His trips around the globe produced subtle close observations of the local musings – a fitting example of how far can one stretch the parameters of this

branch of neglected art."

Mario and his work have always been a fountain of inspiration for cultural cartoonists like us. He has taught us to look at our everyday life from a totally new perspective which is humorous as well as warm and conscientious.

Every day I come across a lot of people. Each person is unique to me. They have differences in their personality, facial expression, body language and so on. I try to explore the humorous side of their personality and to draw their unique expressions. To me cartooning is therapeutic.

Cartooning is an expression of creativity in a simple form. Being a cultural cartoonist I always try to connect my works with the social norms, culture and lifestyle of my subject. I try to create an ambience where my subjects are most candid. I never avoid complexities of their lives; rather I want to face it and I try to capture the essence of their lived experiences which, to me, can always be depicted in simple outlines.

For cultural cartoonists Bangladesh is a heaven. It is a land of humour. We have one of the most vibrant and di-