This chapter urges editors to start demanding that their reporters practice Three-Dimensional (3-D) journalism. Unlike the Two-Dimensional (2-D) reporting of the 4 W"s + H orientation, which is "cropped and partial" (Baker 1994, p.287), it asserts and proves that the 3-D method elicits the multidimensional facets of each of these five parameters.

CHAPTER

SIX

From Two - To Three Dimensional Reporting

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INTRODUCTION: THE TWO- AND THREE-DIMENSIONAL REPORTING

ews media the world over are looking for ways to excel and beat competition. This is understandable. The world is getting sophisticated by the day. Technology is advancing and media are deploying it in its fullness to satisfy an ever-demanding and sophisticated audience. It is no longer days of news for

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survival (Sing & Sharma, 2004, p.2). Audience now patronizes the media for a wide array of needs that go far beyond survival or livelihood. Media content consumers are getting tired of the What, When, Why, Who and How dimension of reporting which in many cases hardly satisfies the audience nor guarantees desired profit.

Democratically-oriented audience is constantly on the lookout for journalists who will report the news in the public interest, especially when public interest is defined in the majoritarian perspective (McQuail, 1992, p.24) or as a commonly-held value (Sorauf, 1957, pp. 619-623). The traditional or two-dimensional way of reporting only connects the journalist to the façade of what things happen, why things happen, who made things happen, when things happen and how things happen. This paper argues that until journalists move to the next level of reporting, specialized reporting may be a mirage. This next level is three-dimensional reporting. The paper asserts that specialized reporting should not be assessed only from the perspective of the ability of the journalist to report technical areas. It declares that specialized reporting should also be seen in dimensions. News reporting can be two-dimensional or three-dimensional and the dimension that a journalist attains in his reporting should be used to adjudge his or her performance.

What is a Dimension?

Dimension means a side, an aspect or a part. It can also mean a level. A dimension is not simply an aspect, a side or a part. It is the aspect that is visible to the eye , appeals to rationality and is measurable or reckonable. Therefore, one-dimension simply means one aspect that is perceivable or known to reason and it wouldn't make much of a difference whether what you perceive is tangible or intangible.

The two terms "Two-dimensional" (2-D) and "Three-dimensional" (3-D) are popular. A 2-D is when one or *at most* only two sides, parts, aspects or levels of something are perceivable, measurable or appeal to rationality. A 3-D is when *at least* three sides or aspects are visible, measurable or appeal to rationality.

For instance, a 2-D graphic will normally show one or at most two sides of an object. A 2-D image is limited in terms of the sides you see but it has some power of representation. A 2-D can somewhat represent an object. Therefore, the main idea behind 2-D images in graphic designs or animations is more of representation than demonstration of the images. If you want to represent a soccer ball with a graphic, you could simply draw a circle and insert some interspersing lines to depict the seams. When people see this, nobody will query you that what he or she is seeing is not the image of a ball.

Another example is if you want to represent a cube on a page. You simply draw a square to represent it and call it a cube. You wont be queried or challenged because what you are doing is simply *representing* an image. With this, 2-D convincingly offers an acceptable *representation* of a real world. The illustration below in Figure 1 is a square which is used to *represent* a cube. This is why the popular old cartoon *Tom and Jerry* is a 2-D animation. It is an animation that pieces together countless number of 2-D pictures that are linked together in a rapid succession; so rapid that it creates a motion of impression to the viewing eye.
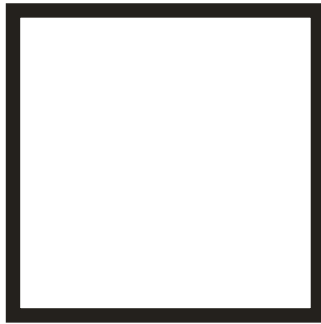
Figure 1: A cube represented as a square.

In spite of the fact that a 2-D image can be used as representation, there is a limit to this representation. This limitation becomes manifest when one needs to know what the other sides of the cube look like. While

you know that the square represents a cube, you know also that only one side of the cube it represents is visible. In order to make people appreciate what your cube looks like you have to put up something that makes other sides visible. The 3-D is your bet in this regard. With 3-D you have a full view up to at least three sides of the cube and the image you see becomes more impressive. This is clearly demonstrated in the 3-D view of the cube as shown in Figure 2.
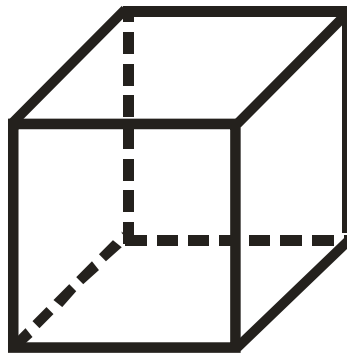
Figure 2: A cube presented in the 3-D view.

In the foregoing illustration, the cube has been presented in the 3-D format. When details need to be known and studied about an image, you would soon realize that your two -dimensional shape is grossly inadequate and that is where the 3-D option comes handy. The dotted lines (engineers and geometricians call them *hidden lines*) have been drawn to show the

areas of the cube that are hidden from view. You could see that at least three sides – top side, right side and the front side squares - are visible. If the object is disassembled, the six squares that constitute the cube become easily discernible as shown in Figure 3.
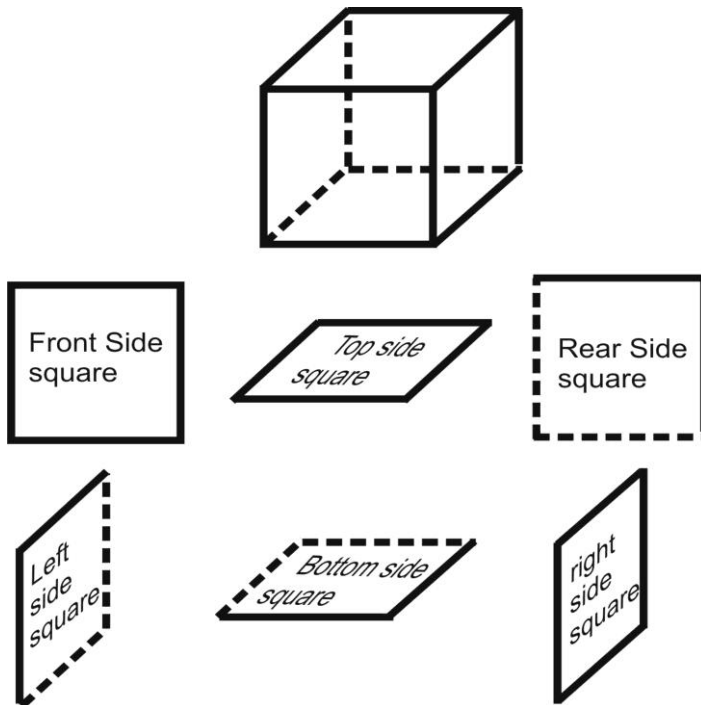
Figure 3.: A Cube and its dismembered six parts that make it a 3-D.
Source: Omojola 2011, p.38)

In many cases, 2-D are flat images that can be cut out and assembled together to form three-dimensional objects. Two-dimensional drawings are produced to show different parts of a three-dimensional object. The software applications that generate 3-Ds do so using massive computations which are far beyond what you see in 2-Ds. In a solid 3-D model, for instance, volumetric information becomes crucial to determining what is on the inside of the model as well as what is on the outside where the surface of the model represents the interface between the outside and the inside. Computer aided Drafting (or Design) (CAD) applications are able to produce 3-D images that can be translated into actual objects using the concomitant production systems.

How 2-D and 3-D Apply to Reporting

This paper asserts that investigative reporting should also be seen in dimensions. Journalists, over the years, have limited their reporting to 2-dimensional and have laid back in exploiting the possibilities that the 3-D reporting offers. The 2-D reporting limits the journalist to only the four W's +H and have used these as their standard of reporting. Each of these five parameters has a highly loaded portfolio which must be explored beyond the façade. Baker (1994, p.287) notes:

> Journalists, and their readers, deceive themselves if they
> believe journalism holds up a mirror to reality. Rather, their
> view is a snapshot: accurate (usually), but inevitably two-
> dimensional, cropped and partial**.**

In 3-D reporting, the foregoing citation is discountenanced as the reporter goes beyond the façade of the four W's + H. In 3-D reporting, there are sides after sides to a story and the reporter will need to go beyond the five popular parameters to unravel the news behind the news:

- The What behind What
- The Who behind Who
- The When behind When
- The Why behind Why and
- The How behind How.

Journalists should go beyond the "what" of a news story and gets to know "what" is driving "what". With this, a thorough understanding of what the incident is about becomes more manifest to the advantage of the audience and the glory of the medium.

If a news story is titled: "Obasanjo plots Third Term", the *what* here is the plot while the *who* is Obasanjo. Other details will be contained in the body of the story. It should be noted that a "plot" is not simply a scheme, it is a stratagem. There are so many things that are concomitant to

a plot that the journalist must reckon as part of the "what" parameter of his reporting. If Obasanjo is plotting a third term there must be some other things he is plotting which the third term is merely indexing or agglomerating. Unfortunately, most journalists are not diligent or sophisticated enough to know this.

This explanation is reminiscent of a thesis or dissertation. It is usual for a researcher to say "the principal or chief objective of this study is to…" and then he goes on to break this chief objective into fragments of objectives. By so doing, the study becomes very clear and the reader easily gets to understand what the study is all about. For instance, if a researcher wants to determine the media report profile of child abuse. In order to establish this profile correctly, he must also determine the frequency of child abuse reports in the media, the slant of these reports and the level of prominence of those reports. If he succeeds in ascertaining these sub objectives, the chief objective is easily realized. It is the responsibility of the reporter to find out these other *what*(s) of the story. By looking for other *what*(s), the reporters puts the story in a gamut or ramification that expands the understanding of the audience and gives an impression of hardworking journalist and a responsible news medium.

In terms of the *who* of the story, the reporter might discover that Obasanjo is only an arrowhead of a group that is gunning for a third term. Obasanjo will definitely have sympathizers who may primarily be

members of his family then followed by politicians, political jobbers, contractors and even ordinary citizens of the country. The journalist must appreciate the fact that Obasanjo cannot be alone in the unconstitutional quest for a third term. It may surprise the reporter to even discover that Obasanjo might not have been the originator of the idea; that some people exist behind the scene who are plotting to use Obasanjo's third term rule to achieve some clandestine objectives. By exposing the pro-third term fighters, the reporter and his audience soon realize that Obasanjo is only one *aspect*, *part*, *side* or *level* of the "who" parameter of the story. The reporter does not stop at this one level. Assuming he finds out that one of the state governors is a co-laborer in the vineyard of third tern agitation, he may go further to determine who is propelling the governor to root for Obasanjo's unconstitutional overstay. What role is the wife and family of the governor playing? Are they 'pushing' the governor to pressure Obasanjo for a third term? And such similar questions.

The tendency exists for a critic of 3-D reporting to say that the journalist is being asked to carry out some overbearing responsibilities and go for unnecessary details of a story, which waste time and are not in tandem with the deadline system of the media. This criticism is defective. If in the course of investigating the story it turns out that the wife of a governor is behind Obasanjo's quest for an illegal third term rule and it is so reported, your report will no doubt be cherished more than the other

reporter who limits his story to one dimensional level of Obasanjo's agitation.

One may look at this in another way. Assuming you are an employer, searching for "investigative reporters' to fill some vacancies in the news room. The man who stops at the level of Obasanjo presents his reports as evidence of investigative journalism while the other who dug deeper into the level of the governor's family also presents his reports and they are juxtaposed. If you, the employer, operate at the level of rationality that is driven by the law of demand and supply, you should employ the one who investigated deeper to the level of the governor's family. The implication of this is that there is sense in the multidimensional approach to reporting because it brings out the best of investigation in news writing. If a journalist is able to present a three-dimensional of the" what" and "who" of a story, the *why* of *why*, or even the *why* of *why* of *why* becomes a pastime. He simply follows up on those he has been able to identify on why they are supporting or promoting Obasanjo's third time agenda. Not only that, the *how* of the story will not be farfetched.

The Case of Photojournalism

How is the 3-D reporting applicable in photojournalism? This question is important in the sense that some journalists, including photographers, think that the scene of the actual accident or incident is enough as a story.

Assuming there is a plane crash. What most photojournalists do, from a study of several newspapers and video footages, is take a set of photographs of the scene and present it as though that all there is. By so doing, the journalist has only succeeded in presenting the 2-D of the whole incident, which is not enough. The 2-D in this case is typified by the *rapid shots* which the journalists take upon getting to the scene of the incident. Rapid shots are simply any shots that immediately show the accident especially fatalities or injuries that may have occurred and they are taken in all formats of snap – extreme long shot, long shot, medium shot and close-up shot

In order to do justice to the reporting of this crash, the 3-D reporting will have to be adopted. It will involve the following, in addition to the rapid shots which are only taken in the spur of the moment.

Psychological Shots

Psychological shots are taken to show psychological response to the incident. It should be noted that the psychological dimension has an covert dimension which is made manifest covertly. You may take the shots of people crying or looking sober over the loss of lives and property. In a psychological shot, the mood of the people who are concerned in the incident must be clearly shown. The mood capture will extend to the relatives of the victims as well as sympathizers

Economic Shots

These are the shots that show the loss incurred. The loss of the plane, the loss of the properties and personal effects of victims, the loss to buildings or any property that was affected on ground, the distraction that the crash has caused to the nation, owner of the aircraft and economy of the area where the incident occurred and so on.

Environmental Shot

In one way or the other, the environment must have been affected by the accident. The debris of the burnt fuselage, the fuel that has been spilled over the vicinity of the accident, the burnt bushes, the contaminated water and other life resources destroyed by the crash and several other things should be reckoned as environmental.

Political Shot

How aviation officials – local and international – are responding to this crash should be of concern to the photojournalist. The attempt at recovering the black box to assist in determining the cause of the crash can also be captured by the camera.

After Event Shot

The manner and feelings of the government, families of victims, survivors, inhabitants of the crash area, aviation officials and so forth should be monitored even days, months and years after the incident had occurred and captured through the lenses.

Sometimes, the journalist is not able to get the 3-D dimensional reporting completed in a single story and will have to take a series of stories to achieve that. This is acceptable provided that when the saga is examined through content analysis of the stories published, the 3-D efforts should be seen to have been demonstrated.

The Photo Story

The photo story system offers the photojournalist to determine if his photographs have achieved the 3-D. A photo story is a narrative done with a group of photographs rather than in words. Besides the caption and the headline of the story, a photo story contains only photographs. A photo story will normally have a shooting script which comprises the various types of shots that must have been taken. In each of the foregoing classification, a photojournalist can ensure that the following formats are taken to guarantee a 3-D assignment, namely:

i.   The five basic shots – extreme long shot, long shot, medium shot, close-up and force close-up.

ii. Lead photo - is the photo that sums up the story.

iii. The portrait – This shows the personality of the main character in the story.

iv. Interaction - This shows how the characters relates to another.

v.   The sequence – It shows the progression of the story.

vi. The detail shot – This gives the minute details of the story.

vii. The closer or ender – This gives the idea that the story has ended or nears the end.

Merits and Benefits of 3-D Reporting

A merit of 3-D reporting is that it is systematic, investigative reporting. It is a methodical move that takes you from one level of *what* to another level of *what*, from one level of *who* to another level *who* and so forth. When a reporter strives to go for the *what* after *what*, the result is always remarkable. In a hostile environment that has authoritarian regimes, it may be devastating for the journalist though.

While the Watergate Scandal unfolded from June 17, 1972 in the United States, President Nixon's administration and its supporters chided the media for making a mountain out of molehill when two reporters of Washington Post - Robert Woodward and Carl Bernstein - investigated the *what* after *what*, and *who* after *who* of the scandal. The scandal erupted resulting from the break-in of the Democratic National Committee

headquarters at the Watergate office complex in Washington, D.C., by five men who were connected to Nixon's administration. The attempt by Nixon's administration to cover-up its involvement backfired. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the media discovered that the burglars received money from a slush fund used by the Committee for the Re-Election of the President [Nixon].

The journalists discovered that President Nixon and a host of top government officials, including John Mitchell, the Attorney General of United States and Nixon's Chief of Staff H.R Haldeman were involved. These were the same men, among others, who had accused the media of putting too much emphasis on this story, indirectly plotting to undermine the administration of Nixon and of having a liberal bias against the administration. Most of media reports on the scandal turned out to be accurate and the audience who had spent money buying the newspapers that carried the stories and listened to broadcasts became highly impressed. Besides that, the profile of journalism changed from a mere practice to a discipline and a profession to the extent that applications to journalism schools reached an all-time high in 1974. This was contrary to the belief in the United States for decades that there was no need for standard journalism training schools (White, 1904, p.25) even as the "low status" (Austin, 1958) ones that were mushrooming lacked the background of thought regarding what course content should look like (Stratton, 1941,

p.286).   Even the little teaching the low status schools could offer was regularly being invalidated and questioned (Pollard, 1939, p. 356).

Journalists in Nigeria have not been so lucky. Nigeria has been a beehive of military dictatorship and was only free in 1999 though there had been an intermittent civilian democratic regimes from 1960 to 1999. During these military regimes, journalists had been willfully imprisoned and killed. Dele Giwa, the founding editor of Nigeria's *Newswatch* magazine was killed in a parcel bomb in 1986. The military regime of Ibrahim Babangida was fingered in the assassination. Dele Giwa was emerging as the symbol of the professional 3-D practice. His magazine would probe deeper into issues in the news and expatiate in a way many Nigerians regarded as novel. He unmasked the news behind the news and made 3-D reporting an expanding possibility. However, his life was cut short just as the light of 3-D reporting dimmed.

The 3-D reporting enables the media to expand their capacity to affect policy. Some government officials and many citizens rely on the media for their daily supply of news. The media with its supposed agenda-setting capability are able to reorient people towards taking better decisions in voting, market and even family matters. All these have a high tendency to influence policy decisions (Strömberg, 2004, p. 281) not only at government level but also at multilateral platforms. It should be noted that 3-D reporting is not simply about its power to influence policies at various

levels, it is also about its potential in educating policymakers in the process of policy-making (Zimmermann, 2004, p. 395)

Why Media Contents Lack 3-D Reporting in Nigeria

Why is 3-D reporting not common in Nigeria these days ? Many reasons can be adduced, the prominent of which is that most media stakeholders are not asking for it from their reporters. Omojola (2008) identifies no fewer than nine stakeholders in the media industry – journalists, media scholars, news makers, media content consumers, media users, government/media regulators, media owners, media NGOs and professional associations. Each of these has a clearly defined interest which helps justify its existence. Among journalists, editors and top officials of the news room should be asked why most of them in Nigeria don't demand that their reporters practice 3-D reporting. The tradition has been to ensure that they write their stories based on the five popular parameters of 2-D journalism - the 4 W's+H. The moment reporters fulfill this, they think the job is done, which is not.

Owing to the fact that journalists themselves are not asking, the push does not exist to make stakeholders outside the newsroom demand for it. Many publishers are not journalists but businessmen and women who are primarily not interested in the contents of their medium but the profits that those contents generate for them. Media scholars are carried away by

objectivity, fairness, truth and other high sounding concepts but hardly bother themselves with how "deep" these concepts can get. No better time exists for educational researchers and educators to attend closely to popular media and democratizing media production than this (Stack, M. & Kelly D.M. 2006, p.6), especially in a country such as Nigeria. Professional associations such as the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) seem to be interested in the welfare of journalists rather than the wellbeing of journalism. Until all stakeholders hold reporters to high level of performance in journalism practice, 3-D reporting will remain farfetched.

Assuming editors, publishers and other stakeholders desire 3-D reporting and are asking reporters to practice it, will reporters respond? This is a good question because there has been accusation that the diligence required of journalists to do systematic investigative reporting is missing as the will of the publisher or editors does not enjoy an automatic transmission to the reporter. Factors that can hindered journalists from responding to the call for 3-D practice include sheer laziness, poor salary or wages, poor investigation strategy and tactics and lack of expert knowledge required in systematic, investigative reporting.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Media stakeholders need to know that 3-D reporting is possible and practicable. In specialized reporting, expert analysis is a cherished virtue,

especially when it is defined as "reporting special areas or fields" (Obe, 2005, p. 45). This paper did not discountenanced this but argued that digging deeper in reporting, which is a great virtue of 3-D journalism could enliven the audience's hope to be better informed, educated and entertained. To this end, the following are recommended.

- Journalism education schools should adjust their curriculum on news reporting to reflect the reality of 3-D reporting. Nigeria has many of such schools. They should be able to impart on students the technical know-how of 3-D reporting. In addition to that, there should be periodic training sessions for students to bring in industry experience. All this will go a long way in ensuring that journalists, upon graduation from such training and workshops, are able to do their job well.

- Editors should start demanding that their reporters practice 3-D reporting. What you don't demand for or expect cannot and should not be delivered. In this paper, it was shown clearly that the reason why reporters are not living up to their responsibility with regard to systematic, investigative reporting is simply because their editors are not asking them, thereby limiting their potential to perform. That regime of not asking must change.

- Statutorily, Nigerian journalists now have the advantage of the law which they should take advantage of in order to able to report news

behind the news and make 3-D reporting a practical reality. The Freedom of Information Bill has been passed by the Senate and signed by the President. The law empowers anyone to seek information with much less obstacles compared to what obtained before the law came into operation. The benefit of this law cannot be overemphasized because the complaints before by many journalists was that they were not statutorily empowered to do their job well. But now that the law is in force, journalists have better opportunity than ever before to make the best out of their practice.

- The media house can set up a pool of specialized reporters to undertake 3-D assignments. This pool will be different from the pool of general reporters. This style is in tandem with what obtains in other professions. Take the army for instance. Each army has an elite force that commands respect of other members of the force. In Nigeria police force, there is the special anti-fraud unit, Economic and Financial Crime Commission Police, Mobile Police Unit and so forth. Similar system can be established in any media house that can afford it.

- In the era of public choice theory (where government ownership of the media undermines political and economic freedom either overtly or covertly, Djankov, S., Nenova, T., McLiesh, C., & Shleifer, A. , 2003, pp.341-342) which is applicable in many

African countries including Nigeria, private owners should reciprocate the gesture of patronage accorded them by media content consumers to invest in 3-D reporting and determine to make it work. This will involve substantial resources, but it will no doubt produce fruits that would be of benefits to both the publishers and journalists.

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