



Satirical Representations of Poor Governance and Poverty in Nigerian Stand-up Comedy

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How to cite this paper: Idowu James Adekunle. (2026). Satirical Representations of Poor Governance and Poverty in Nigerian Stand-up Comedy. *Sociology & Social Policy*, 3(1), 14-26.
DOI: 10.26855/ssp.2026.06.003

Received: February 16, 2026

Accepted: March 25, 2026

Published: April 21, 2026

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Abstract

This study delves into the realm of Nigerian stand-up comedy, examining how prominent comedians Basketmouth, I Go Dye, and Gordons use satire to critique poor governance and poverty in Nigeria. Through the live video recordings of comedian performances, this research explores the comedians' portrayal of societal issues, highlighting the intricate relationships between leadership, corruption, and economic challenges. The analysis reveals the comedians' adept use of satire, irony, and ridicule to comment on the country's pressing issues, providing a unique lens through which to understand the Nigerian experience. By examining the comedians' performances, this study sheds light on the power of stand-up comedy as a tool for social critique, capable of inspiring reflection, sparking conversation, and influencing public discourse. The findings of this study have implications for understanding the role of humour in addressing sensitive social issues and the potential for comedy to serve as a catalyst for social change. Schechner's Performance theory and Psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung were used to analyze the videos. Data were subjected performance and psychoanalytical analyses.

Keywords

Satire; Poor Governance; Poverty; Stand-up Comedians; Humour

1. Introduction

Satire has long been recognized as a central strategy in stand-up comedy for interrogating social realities and public concerns (Gent, 2017; Obasi, 2019; Zijp, 2024). Within Nigeria, comedians have historically employed humour as a means of engaging with pressing societal challenges, including corruption, economic hardship, and ineffective leadership (Adekunle, 2014; Adeyemi, 2015; Olatunji, 2018; Lobanov, 2024). This review of literature explores scholarly discussions on satirical practices in Nigerian stand-up comedy, with particular attention to the performances of notable comedians such as Basketmouth, I Go Dye, and Gordons.

Existing studies indicate that Nigerian stand-up comedians rely heavily on satirical devices—such as irony, parody, exaggeration, and ridicule—to draw attention to the contradictions and absurdities embedded in everyday social and political life (Acharya, Blackwell & Sen, 2015; Adeyemi, 2015; Obasi, 2019; Goktas, 2023; Chagas, 2024). Olatunji (2018), for instance, observes that comedians frequently critique political leadership by exposing the disparity between governmental rhetoric and lived realities. In a similar vein, Adeyemi (2015) demonstrates how performers like Basketmouth use satire to interrogate systemic corruption and entrenched social inequalities.

Beyond critique, satire in stand-up comedy has been shown to function therapeutically, offering audiences emotional release and a means of coping with social frustration (Gent, 2017; Olatunji, 2018; Basu, 2024; Capelotti,

2024). As Gent (2017) asserts, satire enables comedians to challenge social institutions and dominant norms in a manner that is simultaneously entertaining and intellectually stimulating (p. 123).

Building on this perspective, Adekunle (2023) argues that stand-up comedy operates not merely as entertainment but as a discursive space where gender norms and social identities—particularly within heterosexual frameworks—are examined and contested. Through humour’s conciliatory function, stand-up comedy facilitates subtle forms of conflict management, helping to diffuse tension among diverse audiences (Abraham, 1992; Adekunle, 2024, Holm, 2024, Bricker Godio, 2025). Its performative language often transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries, allowing comedians to engage heterogeneous publics (Adedeji & Ekwuazi, 1998, Adekunle, 2020; Adekunle, 2023; Kuipers & Koivukosi, 2024). Furthermore, the embodied nature of stand-up performance enables sustained commentary on sociopolitical concerns such as police brutality, religious hypocrisy, parenting, and youth culture (Adekunle, 2017; 2021; 2022; Adriaenan Bricker, Godiali & Laros, 2023). In certain instances, comedians also address non-normative sexualities, although such representations frequently provoke controversy (Adedeji, 1978; Adekunle, 2021, Bricker, 2025).

Scholars including Mintz (1985) and Gilbert (2004) emphasize that audience engagement in stand-up comedy depends largely on the performer’s charisma, delivery, and stage presence. Elements such as timing, spontaneity, and narrative coherence significantly enhance comedic effectiveness, while lapses in pacing or cultural sensitivity may alienate audiences (Koestler, 1964; Adedeji, 1969; Morreall, 2009; Lockyer, 2015; Abedinifard, 2016; Laineste & Fiadotava 2024). Despite these challenges, stand-up comedy remains a dynamic cultural form that reflects and critiques social realities through laughter and satire. In African contexts, it has also been shown to mirror experiences of apartheid legacies and xenophobic violence against non-indigenous Black populations (Adedeji, 1967; Alemanno & Organ, 2021; Hoefelo, Capelott & Date, 2024; Adekunle, 2024; 2025), functioning as a satirical response to social vices and systemic injustices (Abram, 1981; Adekunle, 2009; 2014; 2026).

From a broader cultural perspective, Michael (2022) characterizes stand-up comedy as a leisure activity that foregrounds pleasure and entertainment, while Topler (2022) underscores its role in cultural tourism, particularly in Montenegro, where stand-up performances contribute to national branding and international visibility. Similarly, Plattas-García, Reyes-Meza, and Castro-Manzano (2023) describe stand-up comedy as an expressive medium that foregrounds the comedian’s creative and theatrical competencies, enabling the construction of humorous narratives that foster audience connection.

Historically, comedy has also functioned as a tool of political satire during periods of conflict. Travlos, Akyuz, and Mert-Travlos (2022) document its use in Turkish satirical magazines and the Greek newspaper *Skrip* during the Greek–Turkish War (1919–1922), where humour was deployed to ridicule opposing forces. Norrick (2003) stresses that the defining measure of a successful stand-up performance lies in its capacity to provoke laughter, while Harbidge (2011) highlights the reciprocal pleasure generated through performer–audience interaction.

Nevertheless, some scholars caution against overestimating satire’s transformative potential. Mbembe (2001) and Nwosu (2016) contend that satire may inadvertently reinforce dominant power structures rather than subvert them. Mbembe (2001), in particular, suggests that satire can operate as a form of “social anesthesia,” dulling public sensitivity to structural injustice instead of mobilizing collective action. Against this backdrop, the present study examines satirical representations of poor governance and poverty in Nigerian stand-up comedy, situating humour as both a site of critique and a complex cultural practice.

Based on the above observations, different scholars examined stand-up comedy from gender parlance, cultural practices, conflict resolution, religious intricacies and entertaining aspect without considering political undertones. The study sheds light on the power of standup comedy as a tool for social critique, capable of inspiring reflection, sparking conversation, and influencing public discourse. This study, therefore, used stand-up humour to examine the sociological realities of poor governance and poverty level that pervaded Nigerian society. This is a bid to create good thinking sensibilities in the hearts of political gladiators and top government functionaries regarding good governance and societal wellbeing of their people.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Performance Theory

Schechner’s Performance Theory provides a productive lens for understanding stand-up comedy as a form of

“restored behaviour” that is, actions that are rehearsed, repeated, and culturally encoded rather than spontaneous or purely personal (Schechner, 1985; 2003). From this perspective, Nigerian stand-up comedy can be understood as a performative enactment of collective social experiences, where comedians draw upon shared cultural knowledge and public memory to generate meaning. The stage thus becomes a liminal space in which societal tensions surrounding governance, poverty, and leadership are symbolically reenacted and interrogated.

Schechner’s notion of performance as “twice-behaved behaviour” underscores this cathartic dimension, as comedians recycle familiar social narratives in ways that allow audiences to process collective anxieties through laughter (Schechner, 1985). In this sense, satire operates not merely as commentary but as a ritualized social practice that temporarily resolves tension without fully dismantling underlying structures. Schechner’s emphasis on the interactive relationship between performers and spectators further illuminates this process, as meaning in performance emerges through audience participation, response, and shared affect (Schechner, 2003).

The embodied and improvisational nature of stand-up comedy also aligns with Schechner’s broad conception of performance as encompassing ritual, play, and social drama. Nigerian comedians frequently address issues such as police brutality, religious hypocrisy, parenting, and youth behaviour, transforming everyday social struggles into performative narratives that resonate across cultural and linguistic boundaries (Adekunle, 2017; 2021; 2022). At times, comedians also engage with non-normative sexualities, although such representations often provoke controversy and highlight the limits of social tolerance (Adekunle, 2021). These performances exemplify what Schechner describes as the “liminal” quality of performance a space where norms can be tested, inverted, or momentarily suspended (Schechner, 2003). Schechner’s performance model complements this view by stressing the importance of rehearsal, sequencing, and audience feedback in shaping performative success. Misjudgments in pacing or cultural sensitivity can disrupt the performer–audience contract, thereby undermining the intended satirical impact (Koestler, 1964; Lockyer, 2015; Morreall, 2009).

Schechner’s theory helps contextualize this limitation by framing performance as an event that creates temporary transformation rather than permanent structural change. As such, stand-up comedy may expose poor governance and poverty while simultaneously operating within the very systems it critiques.

Against this theoretical and empirical backdrop, this study examines satirical representations of poor governance and poverty in Nigerian stand-up comedy, using Schechner’s Performance Theory to analyze how comedic performances function as restored behaviour, liminal critique, and communal ritual. By situating Nigerian stand-up comedy within performance studies, the research highlights satire as both an aesthetic strategy and a performative practice that reflects, negotiates, and sometimes stabilizes social realities.

2.2 Freudian and Jungian Psychoanalytical Theories

Freudian and Jungian psychoanalytic theories provide powerful interpretive frameworks for understanding humour as a cultural and psychological phenomenon. When applied to Nigerian stand-up comedy particularly in relation to themes of poor governance and poverty—these theories illuminate how humour functions not merely as entertainment, but as a medium of critique, resistance, and collective psychological coping.

2.2.1 Freudian Psychoanalytic Theory and Humour

Sigmund Freud conceptualizes humor as a release mechanism for repressed thoughts and emotions. In *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, Freud argues that jokes allow individuals to express socially unacceptable ideas such as aggression, criticism of authority, or taboo desires in a disguised and socially permissible form (Freud, 1960; Adekunle, 2025). Humour thus becomes a “safety valve” through which psychic tension is discharged.

Freud identifies three major mechanisms in joke formation: condensation, displacement, and representation through the opposite. These processes enable latent (hidden) meanings to surface in a modified, less threatening form. In political humour, for instance, criticism of leadership may be displaced onto exaggerated caricatures or ironic narratives, allowing comedians to evade direct confrontation while still communicating dissent. Additionally, Freud’s structural model of the psyche comprising the id, ego, and superego is relevant in understanding comedic expression. Humour often reflects the tension between instinctual desires (id), moral constraints (superego), and rational mediation (ego). In contexts of poor governance and poverty, suppressed frustrations (id) are articulated through humour, while the ego shapes these expressions into socially acceptable performances.

2.2.2 Application to Nigerian Stand-up Comedy

Nigerian comedians frequently deploy satire to critique corrupt leadership, economic hardship, and social inequality. From a Freudian perspective, such humour represents a collective release of repressed anger and dissatisfaction. For example, jokes about politicians' excesses or infrastructural decay allow audiences to momentarily transcend their frustrations. The laughter generated is not merely amusement but a form of psychological relief, masking deeper anxieties about systemic failure. Moreover, ridicule and parody function as mechanisms of displacement. Rather than confronting authority figures directly which may carry social or political risks comedians encode their critiques in humorous narratives. This aligns with Freud's assertion that jokes provide a socially sanctioned outlet for otherwise censored thoughts.

2.2.3 Jungian Psychoanalytic Theory and Humour

Carl Jung's analytical psychology shifts focus from individual repression to the collective unconscious—a repository of shared human experiences expressed through archetypes (Jung, 1964). Archetypes such as the Trickster, Shadow, and Hero are particularly relevant to humour and performance. The Trickster archetype embodies mischief, subversion, and the inversion of social norms. Comedians often assume this role, using wit and irony to expose societal contradictions. The Shadow, representing the repressed or darker aspects of society, is also central to humour, as comedy frequently brings hidden truths such as corruption or moral decay into public consciousness. Jung also emphasizes individuation, the process of integrating conscious and unconscious elements of the psyche. Humour, in this sense, facilitates awareness by confronting audiences with uncomfortable realities in a palatable form.

2.2.4 Application to Nigerian Stand-up Comedy

In the Nigerian context, stand-up comedians can be seen as modern Tricksters who challenge dominant narratives about governance and economic stability. Through satire, they disrupt the façade of political competence and expose the Shadow aspects of society—corruption, mismanagement, and inequality. For instance, when comedians exaggerate the lifestyles of politicians or dramatize the struggles of ordinary citizens, they are not only entertaining but also revealing collective anxieties embedded in the national psyche. The audience's recognition and laughter signal a shared understanding of these realities, reinforcing Jung's notion of the collective unconscious. Furthermore, humour becomes a tool for social reflection and potential transformation. By repeatedly highlighting issues of poverty and governance, comedians contribute to a form of cultural consciousness that may inspire critical awareness and, ultimately, change.

2.2.5 Synthesis: Psychoanalysis and Nigerian Stand-up Comedy

Both Freudian and Jungian frameworks converge in viewing humour as a meaningful psychological and cultural practice. Freud emphasizes release and repression, while Jung highlights symbolism and collective meaning. In Nigerian stand-up comedy, Freudian analysis explains how humour provides emotional relief from the stress of poor governance and economic hardship. Jungian analysis reveals how comedians function as cultural mediators, using archetypal patterns to expose societal truths. The interplay of satire, irony, and ridicule in Nigerian comedy thus serves dual purposes. It alleviates individual and collective tension while simultaneously critiquing systemic issues. Humour becomes both a coping mechanism and a subtle form of resistance.

Freudian and Jungian psychoanalytic theories offer complementary insights into the role of humour in Nigerian stand-up comedy. By framing jokes as expressions of repressed desires (Freud) and manifestations of archetypal symbolism (Jung), these theories deepen our understanding of how comedians engage with themes of poor governance and poverty. Nigerian stand-up humour, therefore, emerges not merely as entertainment but as a complex psychological and cultural discourse that reflects and challenges societal realities.

3. Method

This study employs qualitative psychoanalytic and performance analyses of live stand-up comedy video recordings by Bright Okpocha (Basketmouth)—Nite of a Thousand Laughs (NG5b), Vol. 16 (2008) and Basketmouth Live (NG3), Vol. 1 (2009); Francis Agoda (I Go Dye)—Nite of a Thousand Laughs (NG5b), Vol. 16; and Godwin Komone (Gordons)—Gordons Hallelujah (NG1a), Vol. 1 (2009), to examine the deployment of satire in Nigerian stand-up comedy. The comedians were purposively selected based on the distinctive ways in which they portray societal issues, particularly the complex interplay between leadership, corruption, and economic challenges.

Additionally, attention is given to how these performers employ satire, irony, and ridicule to critique pressing national concerns, thereby offering a unique lens through which the Nigerian experience can be understood. The data were transcribed and subsequently subjected to psychoanalytic and performance-based analyses.

4. Results and Discussion

Stand-up humour is a veritable tool that is used to lampoon societal ills in any given society from ancient time to contemporary age, beside entertaining function that brings succour and mirth. Stand-up humour is both global and regional context that shows realities of the natural world through various circumstances. It is a celebration of cultural practices that primarily originated from ritual performances according to some school of thoughts (Dasylva, 2006; Adekunle, 2017; Adekunle, 2025). In African ancient past, it is corrective measure for sanitizing the society the society from her flaws, and at the same time, creating healthy thinking to kings when they err from the truth (Adeleke, 2001; Adekunle, 2025). In the below analysis, standup humour is used to examine satirical representations of poor governance and poverty in Nigerian standup comedy.

4.1 Poor Governance and Poverty

Nigeria is strongly known as a poverty ridden nation, with eclectic pockets of socioeconomic and political struggles. This fact is attributed to the early departure of the British colonizers by Basketmouth who mockingly reveals this in the excerpt below. Basketmouth ridiculously blames the British for leaving Nigerian soil early. He believes Nigeria, as a nation, is not mature enough to get her independence in October 1, 1960. He maintains that this singular factor has led the nation into socio-economic doom. Many developmental processes or stages left by the colonialists have been grounded and bastardized by the Nigerian neo-colonial masters.

Basketmouth:

But you know when we dey look at this country, things like, for instance, the Western world, the Oyinbo (the whites) na them messed us up. Them go leave this country too early. See South Africa. I am telling you, like feel fill them stay that kind 1980, or 1985 at least see South African now, small South Africa, the place just be better. Go Naija, na 50 (years), go Naija, na only Naija be bad be say, all the presidents wey we get senior our country. Our country na 50, Goodluck na by 50 (years) seniors the country. Why he go respect the country? Look London, London over like 800 years old, American about 300 years, Obama no even reach fifty. Why him no go fear him country? Small time them want say, sixtieth birthday. Nigeria na him younger brother. This country we are, we no get shame (Appendix NG3).

This early departure of the British has deconstructed the socioeconomic structure of this nation “the Western world, the Oyinbo (the Whites) na them messed us up. Them go leave this country too early.” Many neo-colonial masters of Nigerian society have ruined every sector of this nation. Maladministration and malpractices have characterized the lives of public civil servants. Top government functionaries have taken advantage of their positions to loot the nation’s treasury. The fact that it took a long time before the South African nation gained her independence from the European colonialists has helped the nation to develop her socio-economic and political powers: “see South African now, small South Africa the place just be better.” The economic power is left in the hands of the Whites after the nation’s independence. These are the people that have greatly helped to boost and sustain the economy of the South African nation to greater heights. This metaphorically suggests that without the help of the Western world African nations cannot develop, because African leaders lack integrity and capacity and nation building skills that will help them drive African economy forward.

Also, Basketmouth scornfully juxtaposes Nigeria with the developed nations, such as Britain and the United States of America that have been established between 300 years and 800 years “Look London, London over like 800 years old, American about 300 years”. He urges Nigeria to learn from this well-structured life of the Western world. Owolabi (2001a) supports this notion that Daniel Fagunwa maintains that “the rational nature of humans, which is universal to all cultures, has been well-developed by the Western culture and, therefore, all the non-Western societies should make a metaphorical effort to attain this “Mount of Thought”. Based on the claim of Owolabi (2001a) above, Basket Mouth makes a mockery of the Nigerian President, His Excellency Goodluck Jonathan, and other former Nigerian Presidents that, they are older than the nation itself, comparing it to the developed countries,

like the United States of America and the United Kingdom, where the nations are far older than their presidents: “go Naija, na only Naija be bad be say, all the presidents wey we get senior our country”. He maintains that this is the reason why these Nigerian leaders are not committed to nation-building. The figurative use of “senior” is ironic. It connotes that Nigerian leaders or presidents are not mature enough to take over the mantle of leadership in this nation. They are inexperienced about the tactics and leadership skills needed to run the nation successfully to her promised land. This is why he lampoons the president by saying that he is older than the nation called Nigeria “Our country na 50, Goodluck na by 50 (years) seniors the country”.

Apart from stand-up comedy being a medium of satirizing or soothing emotional feelings of the depressed people, its strategy also helps to understand human society better. This is why comedians see it as a matter of need to create something new that is highly humorous to generate laughter. To support this view, Basketmouth speaks:

Performer:

Naija eh! Na him be the best country in Africa whether we like it or not, seriously no joke, seriously check am out. Go Yankee, natural disasters every now and then. Natural disasters tornadoes, hurricane this one, hurricane that one, earthquake, all types of things, snow go come full streets. Cars no fit drive well, accidents. Come on Naija nothing, only natural disaster we get na bad government and potholes. USA there, don do new city, you know where those Dubai dem level. New city you know how much it cost people wey give as dollars to build as contract as budget 22 billion dollars to build New City. Now, no be to build them half way, now to build am all the way. Now we use 16 billion dollars use do NEPA, na him come even worst pass. NEPA no come even dey bring the light at all. I am telling you, terrible. Don turn Lagos, the whole of Nigeria to nightclub. You na dey get light for here now, for Lagos, light no dey dey. Our own no be say because of sins, na training wey them they do for their office, na him make we no dey get light sometimes (Appendix NG5.b).

Response: Haaaaaa! (Laughter)

Stand-up comedy draws its oral materials from the full range of human experiences in the society, such as corruption, poverty, family problems, and other forms of natural disasters that informed human behaviours. In the excerpt above, through ironical eulogy, Basketmouth portrays Nigeria as the best country in Africa in order to evoke laughter from his audience “Naija eh! Na him be the best country in Africa whether we like it or not, seriously no joke, seriously check am out.” Nigeria is ironically assumed be the giant of Africa in the sense of poverty and poor governance. The comparative use of Yankee (the US) and Dubai with Nigeria shows a wide gap that exists between the developed and undeveloped countries. The comedian draws comparisons between the developed countries (the US and Dubai) and Nigeria to mockingly show how Nigeria the so-called giant of Africa cannot lead other African nations in the areas of welfarism, and capacity and nation building, like the developed world. The use of “New City” shows how paradisiac, technological and developed the Western world is. The use of “seriously” by Basketmouth symbolically reveals how critical Nigerian economy is. Also, the metaphoric application of “no be to build them half-way” depicts how Nigerian political office holders embark on certain public projects, but they could not complete them, because of their acts of unscrupulousness and social malpractices.

On the other hand, the use of “now to build am all the way” symbolically represents completion of some public projects and scrupulous attitudes of the executors towards such projects. The application of “accident” for comparison in the excerpt above connotes “disaster” in the sense of retardation and pessimism of Nigerian nation.

To Basketmouth, the most popular challenges facing Nigerians are bad government and potholes. The Nigerian system of government is characterized by corruption and bad leadership “now we use 16 billion dollars use do NEPA, na him come even worst pass”. Nearly every sector of government and private organizations is corrupt. The public funds meant for national development via provision of social amenities and infrastructures are directed into the personal purses of some groups of people in the country. This has largely led to loss of lives and property in the nation due to bad construction of roads and poor standard of living. People have been forced to live in hazardous areas as a result of the socio-economic inequalities of contemporaneous existence.

Apart from this, unqualified people who are unable to put our national resources into optimal use are the ones managing them. According to Basketmouth, “now we use 16 billion dollars use do NEPA, na him come even worst pass. NEPA no com even dey bring the light at all. I am telling you, terrible. Our own no be say because of sins, na training wey them they do for their office, na him make we no dey get light sometimes”. Here, National Electric

Power Authority (NEPA) is sarcastically portrayed as an embodiment of failure. The established institutions is meant to supply light to every nook and cranny of the country, but always fails in her social responsibility to the nation. There is often an electrical power failure which always results in national blackout in the nation.

These are sociological tensions of Nigerian conditions that are unconsciously acted out by the comedian through volcanic eruption of bottled emotional feelings that lead to depressions if not expressed. Basketmouth mockingly reveals societal malpractices that occur within the system of government in Nigeria. Ironic use of natural disasters, such as “tornado” “hurricane”, “earthquakes”, “tsunamis”, etc, to compare with Nigerian situations is a form of satire that portrays the ever-present decadence that has corrupted the systems. This means that Nigerian situations are worse than these natural disasters. This is why stand-up comedy has the comic ability that is often compartmentalised knowledge in solving human problems. The eclectic nature of stand-up comedy, as portrayed above by Basketmouth, allows viewing the challenges of many other areas of human endeavours. Many nations of the world nowadays are seriously groaning and threatening with the series of war, violence, and disasters, such as tornadoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, etc. but Nigeria’s case is different.

4.2 Socioeconomic Hardship in Nigerian Society

Also, due to the socioeconomic hardship that has pervaded the society, a lot of emotional disability and depression has largely inflicted severe untold inhumane life situations on the global society, especially the Nigerian community. On this ever-increasing critical hardship, I Go Dye, a comedian says:

Performer:

Oh! I look fine! He no easy, I dey tell people say wetin you dey see before in Nite of Thousand Laughs the face that was sign of poverty. When God do something, you go see am for body. People say I Go Dye feel fine like this. Forget, your time go come na small small. I first be like you, but now the thing don change na my neck remain...I little time I don they talk about poverty. You know why? I don see am. It make you less than a human being, you cannot talk, you just quiet, you talk no go dey make sense to people. You won bath, no soap. You go dey use soap all your head go dey red. You don be like Tony Tetuila. Money is too good, when I taste some money na yin I know the value of money, it connects you with people. E dey make girls dey respect you, woman no dey jealous who you dey friend for. You give this one hundred, two hundred, three hundred. Then dey smile eh! He’s our boyfriend oooh! (Appendix NG5.b).

(Response: Hoooo! (laughter from the audience))

Here, the performer, I Go Dye, makes a caricature of himself on the stage through his appearance and mannerism that are more noticeable than he really is. He makes a silly show of himself to project how the economic situation of the nation, Nigeria, has worsened the lives of her citizenry. This is why he says “oh I look fine! He no easy, I dey tell people say wetin you dey see before in Nite of Thousand Laughs, the face, that was sign of poverty. When God do something you go see am for body”. In order to create a mutual intelligibility and likewise draw the attention of his audience to socio-economic realities, he creates a sarcastic comic relief that provokes laughter “People say I Go Dye feel fine like this. Forget, your time go come, na small small. I first be like you, but now the thing don change, na my neck remain...” Here, he publicly makes a grotesque caricature of himself by saying “na my neck remain” and to involve his audience he says: “I first be like you.” I Go Dye’s financial situation has tremendously improved. He now looks fine; unlike before when poverty was buffeting him about, making him appear haggard, gaunt and wonky. The clause “na my neck remain” refers to the time he was wretched. On this premise, Winkel observes that the response to the play has been very positive overall. It is all about helping people take a closer look at their lives, and helping to heal some of the hurt and pains. The play might not be for everyone, but for those that are able to step back and see that others are making it through the same things while still keeping their sense of humour, it can be of great value (2009, p. 1).

Riches bring fame and honour to their possessors in our society in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. It is a sign of comfort and prosperity. Riches draw the attention of people to their possessors. Riches also make women easily fall in love with men that have it. As I Go Dye puts it, “money is too good, when I taste some money na yin I know the value of money, it connects you with people. E dey make girls dey respect you, woman no dey jealous who you dey friend, for you give this one hundred, two hundred, three hundred. Then dey smile eh! He’s our boyfriend oooh!”.

If you are rich, you would be respected in the society. Everyone in the society wants to be a friend of success and an enemy to failure. Riches are a symbol of success. People always want to associate with a rich man, because he is a successful man through his wealth. Here, I Go Dye also makes fun of women who only want to take a path of pleasures and totally want to avoid a path of pains at all costs. The process of pains avoidance by the women or men is called defense mechanism in psychoanalytic theory. These are the pains prompted by a number of physiological as well as environmental factors. Defense mechanism is often employed by people to avoid anything that can bring psychological and emotional wounds or pains (Tyson, 1999, p. 18). This is the reason some people take to path of pleasure and avoid pains at all costs. Money gives comfort, fame, honour, and self-satisfaction.

Apart from this, the stand-up performance has the ability of helping the audience to make informed economic decisions which they encounter all the days of their lives. These economic decisions are the fundamental issues that are related to people's needs in the society "I little time I don they talk about poverty, you know why? I don see am". As revealed in the excerpt above, the economic hardship of the stand-up performer is revealed. He is a representation of the individual members of the society that are currently passing through this economic hardship. I Go Dye uses his comic orature to satirize the societal challenges that can lead to depression, if they are not hastily addressed (Bleuler, 1911; Deutsch 1942; Jacobson, 1986). These challenges are brought to the consciousness of the individuals who act these features without knowing, the comedians serve as therapists. The comedian, I Go Dye, here brings a beatific smile and the expressions that bring great joy and happiness to the audience as a temporary relief: "But now thing don change, your time go come, na small small". By this, the senses of knowing the people who appear to be normal but lack of sincere emotional life are revealed.

The performance of stand-up comedy is all about helping people to take a closer look at their lives and help them take a temporary relief from their hurts and pains through the oratorical therapy of the comedians (Bleuler, 1911; Deutsch 1942; Jacobson, 1986). This is why the comedian, I Go Dye, as a comic therapist, helps to develop a device or mechanism in a liveable atmosphere of optimism, affectionate outlook and admiring attitudes towards life through his comic renditions. This is what the psychologists called humanistic psychotherapy (Akinboye 1984, p. 65). It is the highlight of people's prospective for growth and self-fulfillment, instead of concentrating on their unconscious struggles and self-defeating behaviour, just like humanistic therapist helps the patients in his clinical work to develop personal consciousness, self-awareness and pragmatic appreciation of his own worth, so does comic do to his public audience in his live performance (Akinboye, 1984).

The satiric power and manipulative skill of I Go Dye has been largely used to expose all forms of socio-economic hardships that have relegated people to the level of animals. On this notion, I Go Dye states that lack of money makes one less than a human being and, likewise, makes one lose human dignity and respect in the society: "money is too good, when I taste some money na yin I know the value of money". He goes further to encourage and assure his audience that there will be a positive turn around in the poverty-stricken situation: "People say, I Go Dye feel fine like this. Forget, your time go come, na small small. I first be like you, but now the thing don change". He claims that, he has passed through this abject poverty experience before, but now his is a story of success and wealth. He uses this oral comedy as a consolatory message and arousal of hope for glorious future for those that have been emotionally wounded in heart. He temporarily proffers solutions to the irresistible disillusionment that has subtly crept into the consciousness of the emotionally depressed people. He employs this practical approach to transform the characterological aspect of individuals in the society into good and loveable personality.

Performer:

It get one day I go club, I don dey drunk, I no know, I com mistakenly carry one "Asewo" [prostitute]. Sorry e dey happen sometimes. You dey drunk you no go know, you just carry am. I no know say the Asewo tell me five thousand naira, me no know. The day don break, I com give the "Asewo" three thousand naria. I no do anything ooh! I just sleep with my mind. Day don break, I com give the Asewo three thousand. Come see shout! Meanwhile, why I get these my younger brothers, there are four of them. Them grasp these guys four of them, for you to know how dem grasp if them snore self, you know say people dey the house, aaaaah! [Making gesticulatory snoring sound of his brothers]. For night the girl first asked me, do you train lions in this house? I say no, no, no. The day don break, I give the girl three thousand naira, com see shout, "I Go Dye today, you will kill me. I com tell you five thousand naira and you are giving three thousand naira eh! God punish that oh!" Before I talk, the girl don put shirt away, before I know, pull trousers. "I no dey shame oh! I be Asewo, na you no get name abi! Na you no get name. By

the time everybody don gather, dem go know say na Asewo you carried last night. You don hear me.?’’As she dey talk one of my brothers just wake up from sleep, the one wey grasp two of this guy. In fact, the guy be like this speaker, that one just waka like this, he no dey talk, he look the Asewo, the Asewo throw face . The first thing wey it comote for him mouth be say ‘‘wetin’’[in a deep terrified tone] na yin the Asewo say eeh! ‘‘na wa oh! Na so person take dey dye oh! wey my clothes now, ooh! vensilation no good ooh! Oh God! If to say I know I for don take the three thousand naira. This one say I don give am, how I go take collect am back? Before I look again, the other one don dey waka dey come [the Asewo is afraid of the scary look] eeeh! [the guy speaks] ‘who they make noise there?’ [the Asewo is panicked again] eeeh! [responds] which kind wahala be this now! (Appendix NG5.b).
Response: Haaa! (Laughter)

In the above performance, the comedian ridicules himself and ‘‘the Asewo’’, the prostitute, to create amusement that satirizes the act of prostitution among Nigerian youths and in the nation at large. ‘‘Asewo’’ is termed to be somebody that does have sex with someone for money. This act of immorality and sexual looseness comes into being due to socio-economic hardship that has thrown young ladies and womenfolk in general into the trade of prostitution. This satiric performativity decries this ill-behaviour that has turned future wives (unmarried young ladies) and household wives into prostitutes. The scene of moral sensibility behind this satiric art is meant to create an awareness of ethical values rooted in African culture against such anomalies. The exchange of money (N3000) for prostitution is termed to be the exchange of moral quality or virtue. Virtue is one of the most respectable qualities in women in Africa. Virginity is highly respected and prostitution is an aberration. The picturesque account of this performance shows that many ladies, these days, are not ashamed of this prostitutional act. ‘‘Asewo’’ in this comic scene boldly says ‘‘I no dey shame oh! I be Asewo, na you no get name abi! Na you no get name. By the time everybody don gather, dem go know say na Asewo you carried last night. You don hear me?’’ The act of this sexual immorality has become a general lifestyle among young ladies. The lady is not ashamed to call the attention of the people around her to view her scene of sexual immorality. This metaphorically means that the lady has lost her sense of dignity and honour.

This comic performance also sarcastically lampoons and likewise shows how the constant appearance of paranoid fears comes into play in individuals. These are the pathological fears of death and hatred that people are obsessed with. They are indifferent about the sociological happenings. In the comic orature above, the paranoid act is very obvious ‘‘na yin the Asewo say eeh! ‘‘na wa oh! Na so person take dey dye oh! wey my clothes now, ooh!’’’. The said girl, Asewo (prostitute) was gripped by fear of the terrifying faces of I Go Dye’s brothers. She sees these guys as a threat to her existence in the house where she committed her whoredom. In order to get rid of the apprehended fear, she quickly gets her clothes and gets out of the room. Here, Asewo is a good example of so many Nigerians out there that are passing through the same psychological traumas. They are a set of people that are often suspicious of everything that goes around. These basic facts have made them lose contact with external reality. The fear of the socio-economic and political hardships is a significant disorder in the sense of reality in their lives. This is why Jones (quoted by Zetzel, 1945) argues that some individual personalities have a relative inability to tolerate frustration and anxiety. Besides, just like the Asewo, the prostitute, is terrified by the presence of I Go Dye’s brothers, the present Nigerian society is also threatened by the heavy presence of the bourgeoisie and corrupt political leaders who often loot her national treasury. The general populace believes that their lives are not secure in the hands of the individuals who divert the national wealth into their own purses. By this, people take alternative way of revolting against super or social structures that oppose their social welfare. Some take to arms as a defense mechanism, like Niger-Delta militants; some take to social unrest, like the Boko Haram, to fight the government; some take to drugs as an anaesthetic therapy against the socioeconomic anathema; while some take to religious as an opiate.

This study reveals that people face difficulties and afflictions in different ways, when socio-economic depression strikes. Some people will toughen up and fight back, others will try to give up, and still, others will ignore it and hope it goes away. All are individuals, reacting differently to situations. That is why this research has been carried out to examine new ways to help people overcome their socio-economic depressions. It is a new way to reach people and help them to deal with economic hardship through comedy. The response gotten from the comic play has been having positive effect on the audience. It is a way of helping people to take a closer look at their lives, and helping them to heal some of the socio-economic difficulties. This is exactly what I Go Dye is doing here. This comic act is of a great value to the audience because of therapeutic and counselling modes. The comedian’s therapeutic power

of emotional healing, here, replaces the role of drug taking with amusing power of comedy as anaesthetic satire against the socioeconomic anathema.

The stand-up comedian, I Go Dye, here, subtly uses this technique to satirize the psycho-phobia posed by sociological financial threat. In his satiric analytic treatment of his first comedy performance above, he makes it clear that, poverty makes one less than a human being. He also responds to the financial threat by giving words of consolation that things will change for better within a space of time, if only people can endure. This is what the psychologists call “behavioural therapy.” Akinboye (1984:8) proves that behavioural therapy has a propensity to concentrate on the assessment, treatment and evaluation of existing behaviour rather than research into the historical origins of such behaviours. Behavioural therapy mode of operation is known as behavioural modification. Behavioural modification is a systematic management of behaviours in a way that individuals and groups are more effective (Akinboye, 1984: 4). This is why the stand-up comedians, as satirists, serve as nowadays’ behavioural therapists who meditatively construct performances that are creative enough to ease out the audiences’ bottled up emotions. Such performances work on thinking and feelings of the depressed people or audiences through comedians’ lateral thinking. The comedians’ lateral thinking will help to solve the stinking thinking of the audiences about themselves. Lateral thinking is an unusual way or method through which the comedians codify their performances in a therapeutic way that thrills their audiences, while the sinking thinking of the audience is a negative way in which the audiences or people think about themselves. Therefore, the consolatory message of the stand-up comedian, I Go Dye above, that “things will change for better within a space of time, if only people can endure”, is a lateral thinking power that is highly therapeutic.

On this broad concept, stand-up comedians are seen as comic thrillers who excite their audience through a unique excitable action-packed technique. They are the set of people who use extraordinary wit with daring courage to make the world an excitable place for their audiences to live. They make their audience undergo psychological therapy in order to gain access to their sociological problems. These sociological problems are brought into play on stage in a lighter mode by the stand-up comedians in order to ease out their bottled-up tensions.

Also, in the performance below, Gordons mockingly lampoons the Nigerian system of government and her political leaders that rule the nation. He believes that every citizen must take part positively for the nation’s democratic system of government to thrive and be well established. By this, the country will be completely saved from those who use their political positions to foment troubles. This is why he totally condemns those political office holders who are fond of using violence or artillery to express their grievances in order to bring their political wills to pass. Gordons is of the opinion that no matter how grave the grievances are, havoc must not be wreaked on lives and property. Wise citizens speaking up in an intelligible way to the higher authorities constitute the best option he reveals below. Gordons states:

Performer:

I was with His Excellence, Dr. Goodluck Apojiobi Jonathan, recently. And I told His Excellence, I say oga I was in Abuja when they swear for you eh! Eh! (mimicking sarcastically as if it was an error of expressions). When you are being sworn-in (quickly corrected himself), you no say politics is the only job you do they swear for you before you dey enter. Them called am swearing in but actual them they swear for you. I tell am say oga I saw you when you are making an announcement and you said you were shocked to receive the news that the President was dead. Na him I tell am say oga na me and you dey here now, tell me the truth, you shock? (uttered sarcastically). You want tell me say, you no pray say God let your will be done (Appendix NG1.a).

The methodological approach applied by Gordons above to state a pressing issue to the high authority appears in a form of caricature that looks appealing, humorous and inoffensive. It is one of the sane ways in which the correction of societal wrongs is revealed. It is practically likeable to the African traditional poets who are socially licensed to reveal the foibles of the kings through their poetic orature in a mild-mannered way. He addresses His Excellence, Dr. Goodluck Apojiobi Jonathan, in a subtle manner in order to draw his attention to a pressing issue that bothers him. A piece of information got from Mr. President that he was shocked when he heard that the late President Yaradua died. He uses the medium to satirise Mr. President that Mr. President meant the opposite of what he said. It is an ironic use of language to drive home one’s points. This is why he says “you want tell me say, you no pray say God let your will be done”. “Swear” and “sworn in” are two different words that have different meanings in

different contexts. “Swear” here is sarcastically used to give another meaning that connotes “curse” while “swear-in” is a formal promise to be honest or loyal either because one is in the position of power or one is starting a new official job. In Nigeria, some public political office holders are going contrary to the promises they have made to the nation. These promises have eventually turned to curses for them because they have broken the promises they ought to fulfill for the nation. Everyone is expected to pledge allegiance to the country in every respect.

Mr President here has been given a sense of rethinking and reflection on the sociological happenings of his national life. So, rather than being restive and depressed about some societal pressing issues or protesting violently in public places, Gordons has made his audience learn the importance, the principle, and the practice of non-violent protests before those in positions of authority through constructive criticism.

5. Conclusion

The analyses highlight the importance of satire in Nigerian stand-up comedy, particularly in critiquing societal issues, such as poor governance and poverty. The use of satire in stand-up comedy has been shown to have a cathartic effect, allowing audiences to process difficult emotions related to societal issues. Satire in effecting meaningful change exposes political corrupt practices and poverty stricken society of Nigerian nation. This stand-up comedy is used to create political correctness and act of good governance in the minds of the nation’s political gladiators toward the welfare of their citizens.

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