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## The satirical social-media skits as template for new education: understanding the amateurish auteurism in nation building

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### Abstract

The ICT age has midwived into existence, all manners of multifaceted creativities both in written forms and in cinematheques. For theatre practitioners, for instance, these creativities have manifested in different genres, one of which the present paper has labelled “satiric social-media skit” which is defined as a short theatrical sketch or act characterized by comical embellishments often designed for spontaneous viral spread via the social media. This research proceeds out of the need to examine selected social-media skits as didactic satires intended to educate their audience on certain endemic social dysfunctions. Thus, the study considers the social media skits, as typified by some selected pieces, as veritable windows to use the cyber space as educative forum which dwells on the popular binarity involved in the coinage – *edutainment* – in which such skits have the tendency to educate and entertain their audience within the parenthesis of the global classroom and cinema world at the same time. Relying on the theoretical praxis of Paul Simpson in his model of ‘Satire as Humorous Discourse’, a theory which recognizes the presence of the indexical trio of the *satirist*, the *satiree* and the *satirized*, the study attempts an analysis of *Mock News*, and Adeola Fayehun’s comical news packages that permeate the social network. The theory offers sufficient support to this research since the selected skits are considered *amateurish* in the sense that they have been scripted and produced by auteurs who are often driven by the need to satirize in order to educate than the need to produce professionally ethical pieces that merely fulfill architectonic mandate of news peddling. Hence, there is the assumption that the underlining structures of the cinematographic pieces called satirical social-media skits are traceable to the auteur’s sub-conscious frenzy to teach a global class within a framework where he (auteur or the skit producer) is the jocular teacher, the cyber space the classroom, the cinematics the teaching aids and the audience the students. In the final analysis, the study opines that the satirists are nation builders in their own way since they attempt to curb or reduce decadence in the society in one way or the other.

**Keywords:** Satirical social-media skits as template the ICT age has midwived into existence

### Introduction

The introduction and development of different communication programmes of ICT have done a lot in the revolutionalization of the world of literaro-theatrical creativity. This is indicated in the various literary and dramatic pieces that have relied mostly on the wide coverage of such ICT media to circulate limitless drama/cinematic skits that appeal to the sensibility of the postmodern man. The internet is the most outstanding and communicatively influential discovery of the ICT era. In his popular book, *A Brief History of the Future: The Origins of the Internet*, John Naughton writes:

The Internet is one of the most remarkable things human beings have ever made. In terms of its impact on society, it ranks with print, the railways, the telegraph, the automobile, electric power and television. Some would equate it with print and television, the two earlier technologies which most transformed the communications environment in which people live. Yet it is potentially more powerful than both because it harnesses the intellectual leverage which print gave to mankind without being hobbled by the one-to-many nature of broadcast television (21-22).

To say the internet has transcended its predecessors like the radio and television in mass media genre is stating the obvious. Little wonder that such internet social media programs like the Whatsapp, Facebook, Telegram, Instagram, etc. have turned the cyber space into

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the tableau of interaction where people's creative savvy can be adequately showcased. For instance, several narratives and dramatic pieces with audio-visual imports have often been circulated in soft-copies via the social media to provide gadget-based followership. This is why Thabo Mbeki, a one-time President of South Africa, accurately notes that the internet has come to make the people of the world seize the new technology to empower themselves; to keep themselves informed about the truth of their own economic, political and cultural circumstances; and to give themselves a voice that all the world could hear (in Berners Lee, 110).

In addition to this, cinematized creativities have also utilized the cyber space in this regard and rather than get circumscribed to the televisionist mode, audience are entertained and educated by the various cinematized dramaturgical inputs that permeate the creative world through the internet.

In order not to be left out of the race, Nigerian creative writers/auteurs have joined others to short-circuit their productions through amateurizing the productions and distribution of their filmic media; they successfully accomplish this by operating through minimized cast and mono-modal projections that result into mass communication which invades the internet network. To explain the internet and its workings, David Crystal avers that:

The Internet is an association of computer networks with common standards which enable messages to be sent from any central computer (or *host*) on one network to any host on any other. It developed in the 1960s in the USA as an experimental network which quickly grew to include military, federal, regional, university, business, and personal users. It is now the world's largest computer network, with over 100 million hosts connected by the year 2000, providing an increasing range of services and enabling unprecedented numbers of people to be in touch with each other through electronic mail (*e-mail*), discussion groups, and the provision of digital 'pages' on any topic. Functional information, such as electronic shopping, business data, advertisements, and bulletins, can be found alongside creative works, such as poems and scripts, with the availability of movies, TV programmes, and other kinds of entertainment steadily growing. Some commentators have likened the Internet to an amalgam of television, telephone, and conventional publishing, and the term *cyberspace* has been coined to capture the notion of a world of information present or possible in digital form (2-3).

Crystal above captures the various trajectories of the internet's operations and it is not out of place to state that the most prominent, and perhaps the most widely followed of all the internet creative features is the comical and satirical skits. Such skits are the deliberate creations of their auteur/producers who intend to achieve the tripartite aims of amusing the audience, informing them of some current affairs and teaching them something new. In Nigeria, comical and satirical pieces include several episodes from Mark Angel's Comedy skit in which the child prodigy, often casted as Emmanuela, features prominently to educate the populace through the display of ingenuity. There are also notable skits from Femi Ajewole (Woli Agba) whose resolve it is to often satirize the fake prophets who dupe people with the name of God. This study attempts a study of selected skits from the video series labeled *Mock News*, and Adeola Fayehun's satirical pieces that build comical

templates from extant news items to provide the façade of news burlesque in which audience are thrilled, amused, educated and informed. *Mock News* is a one-man cast drama skit which adopts the news casting mode to re-broadcast an extant news item with comico-satirical tonality.

### **Theoretical conceptualization: Satire as humorous discourse**

This study has adopted the Simpsonian mode popularly labeled Satire as Humorous Discourse in which within the satiric discourse, there is the vertical relationship between three indices – satirist, satiree and satirized. Simpson's model operates from the premise that satire is a discursive practice. In other words, satire performs the function of a higher-order discourse. By 'higher order', Simpson refers to the fact that satire:

requires a *genus*, which is a derivation in a particular culture in a system of institutions and in the frameworks of belief and knowledge which envelop and embrace these institutions. It also requires an *impetus*, which emanates from a perceived disapprobation, by the satirist, of some aspect of a potential satirical target (7).

Thus for Simpson, a satirist operates from certain framework of belief and knowledge which inherently substantiate the argument that he has messages to pass across in a didactic manner, albeit in a not too fashionable way. The satirist is thus an educator. Satire as a discursive practice is configured as a triad embodying three discursive subject positions which are subsumed within the constant operational mode. Thus, as Simpson notes, there are, within his mode, "the *satirist* (the producer of the satiric text), the *satiree* (an addressee, whether reader, viewer or listener) and the *satirized* (the target attacked or critiqued in the satirical discourse) (8)". Simpson sees, from the elemental triad of satiric discourse, the entities of satirist and satiree as *ratified* within the discursive event. By this, Simpson has implied that both the satirist and the satiree operate within the same logico-semantic background where the discursive indices are given as common to both entities. Simpson labels the third entity of the triad as *ex-colluded* because it "is not normally an 'invited participant' in the discourse exchange even though it is the initial impetus for the satire" (8). We, therefore, can conclude that this model recognizes the *ratified* discourse participants (the satirist and the satiree) on one side and *non-ratified discourse participant* (*the satirized*) on the other. Simpson concludes that:

The non-ratified, ex-colluded discourse participant that constitutes a satirical target may be an individual person, an episode involving human agents, an aspect of more fixed or stable experience or existence, or even, crucially, another discursive practice (8).

The choice of this model lies in the fact of its elucidation of the working dynamics of satire in a novel way that can vividly account for *Mock New* and Adeola Fayehun which are news caricaturized to educate the audience.

### **The satirical social media skit: A modern template for education**

Satirical social media skits are cartoons, drama skits and comic news designed primarily to entertain and make viewers relax and ease their stress. It is usually well-crafted, targeted at a particular age group; fun-poking, concise and quick. Education, on the other hand, is a key ingredient in the actualization of individual and country's ideals. Modern

innovations in education consider the satirical skits as programmatically educative since it is the desire of the satirist to teach the people something allegedly new about the society. Hence, in a world inclined towards immorality and crookedness, satirical social media skits could be employed to inculcate morals and best ways of living, thereby discouraging vices and eulogizing virtues. This paper explores the positive side of satirical social comedy skits as a means of education designed for the purpose of nation building. The paper thus concludes that since all satirists are educators in their own way, all social media satires are created to educate via entertainment mode.

Therefore to appropriate Simpson’s idea within the present discourse, both Ken Nwadiogbu, aka Pararan (*Mock News*), and Adeola Fayehun are the satirists who *defamiliarize* existing news items with comical styles for the purpose of attracting in its totality the attention of their audience. The significance of attracting the attention of the audience is stressed by George when he opines that:

[t]here is a science to joke telling. You have to have the attention of the audience, you have to have the intellectual as well physical participation of the audience, and you must have an audible indication of their acceptance of you, and if you don’t hear that every ten seconds, you are dying (in Danelo, 20).

George goes further to say that comedians are like other performers in that they need affirmation and to them laughter is like applause for an actor or an ovation for a singer (20). This goes to show that a satirist/comedian needs to understand the gradual build-up of the ingredients required to cause laughter in his script. The foregoing also likens the satirist to a classroom teacher who must teach with style that enchants his students to rapt attention. It is also important to note that the satiree needs to understand the story line and nuances. This is especially so because “comedy is culture-bound and perhaps psychologically determined” (Bamidele, 2). What may elicit laughter from a Nigerian may make no meaning to an American and vice versa. Therefore, the satirist must ensure that he handles the culture coloration well to elicit laughter which is his lifeline. This is essential because satire’s affinity with culture is germane to the commonsensical nature of any successful joke. This again provides the link with the classroom notion of *previous knowledge* designed to contextualize the subject matter

This takes us to the script of the comedy/satire. As established hitherto, comedy/satire has close affinity with culture. The script may be structured in cause/effect formation or the other way round. The choice depends on the type of audience. Creating and presenting a joke is an academic exercise as it requires a good script (either written or improvised). Therefore, the script must take cognizance of the audience and the satirist must be able to read the audience if they flow with the stream of the joke or not. This is where dynamism comes in as he may have to alter the joke to elicit the expected laughter. Any rigid satirist will not be successful in joke business.

Satirical comedy is primarily for entertainment purpose but by extension it provides information about socio-political issues as well as providing the needed education for the audience. Importantly, the education deducible from this through moral suasions is unquantifiable and it is hopeful that in future engagements, satirical comedy could be used

when teaching boring subjects or courses to lighten up the mood of students.

Satire has many genres but this paper focuses on social satire. Social satire focuses on society and its cultural interactions, such as daily life idiosyncrasies while political satire consists of jokes told to deride those in authority, the rulers and can sometimes be directed towards those who are ruled (Hodgart in Danelo, 21). Satirists construct their jokes by creating a caricature of someone, and over-emphasizing certain traits to the point that the representation was almost grotesque and the isolation of these specifics elated the audiences (Petro in Danelo, 22). The butt of jokes may be directed at an individual, the government, government’s policies or at people’s attitude.

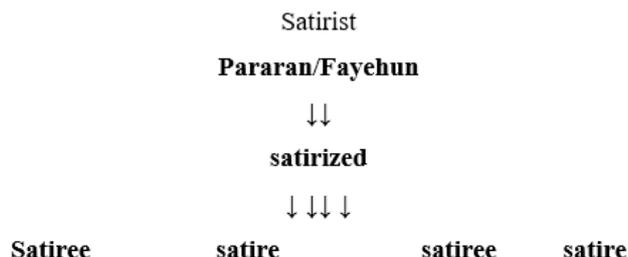
The summary of a book, *Satire and Humour in Education*, is emphatic on the relationship among satire, humour and education by stating that “perhaps educators, and others, have taken the issues and problems of education too seriously and a satirical and humorous perspective might lighten their task”. The authors added that the essays in the book aim to “deflate pompousness, among authority, shake the status quo, empower the little people, bring reality into the Ivory Tower, spur change and primarily, allow us to take ourselves less seriously” (11).

**Mock News with Pararan and Adeola Fayehun on Sahara TV as Educative Satires**

*Mock News* with Pararan is, as the name implies, a news programme on the You Tube, an internet video sharing website, which appeals to the humorous sensibility of the audience by burlesquing via humorous imitation of the real news. The main character is the caricature news caster, Ken Nwadiogbu, who simply tags himself Pararan the bringer of *ogbonge* news.

Similarly, *Adeola Fayehun on Sahara Tv* is a programme anchored by Adeola Fayehun who is by all rating a political satirist, a Nigerian journalist who specializes in discussing current geopolitical, social and economic issues that affect the lives of Africans living on the continent with satiric tone. The adopted theoretical programme perfectly fits into this study in that it is possible to view the selected skits via the satirist-satiree-satirized model suggested by Simpson (2003). Consequently, the comical news presenters – Pararan in *Mock News* and Fayehun in *Fayehun on Sahara TV* are the *satirists*, hence, the teacher. The particular news item they develop more often presents a topical character. Such a character becomes the *satirized*.

**Simson’s Satire as Humorous Discourse Model**



- The above reflects the flow of communication /education between the satirist and the satiree.

As the model reveals, the main thrust of the satire is the satirized which turns out, in the cases of the selected skits, as personalities who have deviated from certain societal norms and their acts have manifested as news items with which the selected satirists have decided to poke fun. Although, both skits selected for study are aligned with particular television stations, they are more available as social media pieces to audience. The various audiences across the globe are the *satirees*.

### Mock news with pararan

The following are some of the various episodes of Mock News as presented by Pararan.

- Snake swallow 36 million naira at Jamb office.
- Nigerian Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor asks members to pay N1.8m for a mantle.
- Cow kill people in Benue State.
- Rat pursue President from his office.
- Blaming (Queen Elizabeth for colonizing Nigeria).
- 2010 – 2016 Jamb made about 15 billion Naira.
- 2 fake soldiers robbed 2 real soldiers in Abuja, Nigeria.

For the Mock news, the medium of presentation is the Pidgin English. As far as the Nigerian Stand-Up comedy is concerned, the language of expression often adopted is the Pidgin English which is believed to house several slangy expressions that allow the comedians to emphasize their satirical elements to create fun and educate the audience simultaneously. Consider the following excerpt from “Nigerian Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor asks members to pay N1.8m for a mantle”.

Our pastor wey dem de call Pastor Ayo, for Warri. hmm... the guy don choptalize people. The guy go obodo oyibo a.k.a USA go preach. As he dey preach the Lord touch am (Pastor Ayo’s photo displays on the top left of the screen). God touch am and he say he need to bless people, ninety people with hankie, handkerchief, una know their normal thing eh? He say him need to bless people wey want to see God, people wey want make God see them. He say him need ninety people to step out. Him want give them the mantle. he say because im no want make the ninety people miss God. And the ninety people weydey come out everybody dey pay 5000 dollars. Hmm. Five thousand dollars times ninety people is about four hundred and fifty something dollars. I calculate. almost half a million dollars. this New Year, them done resume work. he dey like say God broke and He go need our money to build house for heaven.

[One of our pastors who is called Pastor Ayo in Warri. The pastor has swindled people. He went to the USA to preach. As he preached, it appears that the Lord touched him (Pastor Ayo’s photo displays on the top left of the screen). God touched him and he said he needed to bless people with handkerchief. Of course, you know that’s their usual practice. Eh? He said he needed to bless people who wanted God to see them. Ninety of them. And the ninety must be ready to step out to receive a mantle and be ready to give 5000 dollars each. Hmm if you multiply 5000 dollars by ninety, that’s about four hundred and fifty something dollars and by my calculation that’s almost half a million... this New Year, it seems these pastors have started their usual gimmick of extortion...it is just as if God has been broke and He needed our money to build more houses in heaven].

Pararan concludes this particular piece by berating pastors who perpetrate such ungodly money-raising attributes. But before he draws his conclusion, he corrects this religious ill by first educating the populace on what is bad. He follows the normal order of education which must first inform, teach and correct.

**Adeola Fayehun Sahara Tv. (Adeola Fayehun is a political satirist, a Nigerian journalist who specializes in discussing current geo-political, social and economic issues that affect the lives of Africans living on the continent).** Next is the news of Pastor Tim Omotoso accused of sex charges.

A Nigerian Pastor in South Africa, Pastor Tim Omotoso accused of sex with 30 women, faces charges. The 58 years old pastor has many branches in South Africa. He has a record company and foundation known as “Help the helpless foundation”. Omotoso had allegedly been abusing minors of his congregation as far back as 2002. Not just one or two but as many as 30 girls. Some of these girls are as young as 14 years old. Can you imagine ladies and gentlemen? A 58-year-old Omotoso founder of the Jesus Dominion International Church. We learn through the church website that he has 12 churches around South Africa with branches also in Britain, France and Israel. Apparently, this man has been a pastor in South Africa for almost 16 years. Omotoso is well known for his designer suits. When you see his pictures, you can tell everything bling, bling, expensive sunglass and luxurious cars. Apparently, he has a Lexus, he also has Porch cars. His wife drives a Jaguar. One of the women working with him said that everything from his clothing all come from a designer in England. So basically, they import everything he wears. He also has a recording company and a foundation known as “Help the Helpless Foundation”. He used to be the music director for Ebenezer Obey way back in the 80s. Music is a huge part of his ministry. Sometimes during his ministering he will sing and play instrument. Apparently, the man of God has at least 3 opulent apartments. One of his houses is valued at 2 million dollars. He also has female recruiters who look out for beautiful young girls that live with their single mom. Apparently, the man is intimidated by girls who have fathers in their lives. So, he targets girls who have single parent. It has to be a single mom. So, these recruiters will tell the young girls that if they come to live with the pastor that he will sponsor their education and give them a better life that there are so many girls that live with him that he is taking care of. So a lot of girls are attracted to this but upon arrival in the house where he keeps them, they will see other girls and relax and then one night the man of God will call the girls to massage his leg in his room and then he will tell them to perform oral sex with him. If they refuse he will say it is God’s will for them to do it, you know some people cannot just say no when they hear the man of God says it is God’s will and then in their attempt to sleep with him he tells them God wants them to sleep with him so that they can be closer to God because he is very close to God. God is merciful. There are so many people that have messed up and then they claim they are men of God. One of the victims said that what if she gets pregnant. The man of God laid his hand on her stomach and prayed to prevent her from getting pregnant. There are so many wolves in sheep clothing. So many people called men of God that are just manipulators and mind controllers and for so many years none of these

girls could talk to anybody about this. I mean they all knew among themselves that they are being molested by this man. Apparently, this has been going on since 2002 but many of them believed that because he is a respected man that no one will believe them. I saw a video where some of the male workers were complaining that how come that only the female workers were getting the preferential treatment. There was a huge bus that will take these girls to church and take them back, he was giving them preferential treatment and it looks like the guys were just invisible and when one of the male workers complained to Papa, how come you are only focusing on the female workers?. Some of the girls said that the man of God will convince them to drop out of school and he will say that they are not destined for school but that God has a plan for them to open a business and become rich. In doing this, he is trying to isolate them. Now when the story broke out, they tried to arrest this man during Easter celebration but he apparently knew about it so he escaped. Why would the man of God be running? Why would he be hiding during Easter, if he is innocent? Guess where they finally arrested him. They arrested him in the airport in South Africa. Imagine, he was hiding in a female restroom. If really he was innocent, why was he hiding in a female toilet? It took them days before they could arrest him and of course they found him in another town far from Turban to Port Elizabeth that was where they caught him and they were talking to him on phone that he needs to come in for interrogation and they knew he was going to Port Elizabeth and he told them that his flight was delayed so that they won't come to look for him when he is still there. He thought they will come some hours later but the police officer got there at the exact time he was suppose to take off because they knew he was lying. Please be careful who is called your spiritual father.

Adeola Fayehun is unequivocal in using this episode to inform and educate the populace about religion. She used the above news item to satirize the malicious, vulgar, reckless and ungodly misdemeanor of some who called themselves men and women of God. What she did in this episode brings to mind Wole Soyinka's famous play *The Trials of Brother Jero* and another work (poem) titled "Dog-godders" by Olu Obafemi. Both works centre on hypocrisy of some so-called ministers of God. Fayehun concludes that people should be careful of those they refer to as spiritual fathers. She follows the order of education which must inform, teach and correct. Kirma, in his Article titled "Using Satire to Study Current Events" sheds light on the importance of jester/comedian by writing that:

The satirist is the modern version of the court jester who made the monarch laugh. With humor, the jester had license to bring to the monarch's attention his foibles and shortcomings. In a social democracy, the people are like a monarch, and satire can bring to them, in a high-heated manner, those items that may need their attention, concern, and action. Satire is also a tool for giving people power (141).

In essence, Adeola Fayehun and Pararan are the Satirists in our study and by extension in the contemporary Nigerian society who use the satirical mode to perform the essential societal functions – inform, educate and entertain.

## Conclusion

Nation building requires that all stake holders, governments, government policy formulators, academics, entrepreneurs,

philanthropists, business tycoons, politicians, civil servants, educators, theatre artists, satirists, writers, parents, students, children, and all and sundry should assume the responsibility to contribute their quotas in nation building. This research focuses on comedy satirists as one of such nation builders who have employed satirical media skits to inform, educate, instruct and correct. The spot light in this research is on Pararan and Adeola Fayehun; the duo employs their skits which are in form of news items to educate their audience on the social media. Two of their numerous media skits are brought to the fore to underscore their importance as template for new education. It is obvious from the research that comedians play active roles, though through making fun, in nation building through their jokes by deriding society's misdemeanor not minding whose ox is gored thereby doing more for their nations, continent and the world. In fact, their services to nation building is altruistic, hence, it is commendable and appreciated. The researcher hopes that soon, comedy skits will be *extensively* used to discourage African leaders from their sit-tight mentality when elected as presidents of their countries and also use it to educate them on the meaninglessness of amassing wealth dubiously while the people they govern could barely survive.

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