

Satire in Yorùbáland as a Panacea for Corrupt Practices in the Contemporary Nigeria

Olúṣégún Peter Òkè, Ph.D.
Department of Religious Studies
University of Ibadan, Ibadan
okeolusegun25@gmail.com

Abstract

Corruption has become an enigma in Nigeria, the different strategies and programmes that have been proffered and implemented by governmental organisations to curb it over the years are all to no avail. Scholars have also considered the issue from various angles at different forums. However, an area which seems to have been largely ignored in the entire discourse is the cultural value of satire in Yorùbáland. That is, how satire can serve as a panacea to political corruption in Nigeria. There is no denying the fact that corruption has contributed in no small measure to the present level of poverty in Nigeria due to the unequal distribution of resources meant for the generality of the people. This dastardly act has accounted for the untold hardship on the masses that constitute the majority. This study therefore, makes effort to consider the importance of satire in Yorùbáland and how it can be used to address political corruption among the stakeholders in Nigerian politics.

Keywords: Satire, Yorùbáland, Corrupt Practices, Corruption

Introduction

That corruption has become a way of life in Nigeria and its effect on the nation's progress is legion is not an overstatement. It has over the years been threatening the sustainability of democratic foundation of Nigeria since independence in 1960. The different initiatives proffered and implemented by government to tame this dreaded monster have not translated to a corrupt free society. Rather, it has developed to a full blown disease ravaging every sector in the country over the years and this has really brought about a stunted growth and a developmental malnutrition to the nation since independence.

However, this was not the case in the traditional society. The people in the traditional communities had a very strong social structure whereby anyone involved in stealing or any other criminal activity was dealt with accordingly through different means, one of which was the use of satirical songs. Different communities in such traditional society, especially among the Yorùbá, had various measures that were often used to correct non-conformists in order to bring about social cohesion. Stealing and any other form of deviant behaviours attract sanctions in Yorùbá society. The sanction could be in form of payment of a heavy fine, isolation, beating, banishment and even death, depending on the gravity of the offence committed by such an individual.

It is however unfortunate to note today that the culture of satirizing those who have committed one form of anti social behaviour or the other which was held in high esteem by the communities in the past has gone into oblivion. No thank to

civilisation and modernity as the culture is now tagged barbaric and primitive. Stealing is no longer considered as corruption by those in government in Nigeria¹. Consolidating the nation's democratic structure therefore is said to be based on some essential factors, which the country must be able to achieve in order to prop the anti-corruption crusade of government, thereby making Nigeria not to be ranked among the most fantastically corrupt nations in the world.

The Concept of Corruption

Corruption in Nigeria has assumed a dangerous dimension in the recent time as both old and young engage in it with impunity.² At this juncture, we consider it expeditious to give few definitions of corruption for a better understanding. Corruption as a concept has been viewed from different perspectives. For instance, corruption is defined as a dishonest and wicked behaviour, especially from someone with power.³ It has equally been described as the misuse of power for private gains or as the behaviour of public officials who deviates from acceptable norms in order to serve private ends. Giving the various definitions as offered by scholars is a mission impossible. However, one thing that is clear is that corruption has to do with dishonesty and illegality in getting or acquiring something.

Corruption becomes endemic when the rising expectation is profound and many have become more money and materially conscious. It is blamed on the faulty socialisation processes in which individuals abandon the norms or neglect the

approved means of realising the valued societal goals, but seek other means that are easier to them⁴.

Meanwhile, the political perspective on the nature of corruption focuses on the concomitant effects of the failure of the state to fulfil the expectations and aspirations of the masses. In a situation of enduring structural inequalities in the distribution mechanism or reward system, there is the tendency for a drift to a state of normlessness and rulelessness or systematic anarchy.⁵

In Nigeria however, the character of the state and its principal actors' general belief about the use of political office as the primary means of gaining access to wealth and socio-economic status accounts for the brutal and intense struggle for the control of political power. It has therefore sustained corruption, particularly in high places. Although, corruption is embedded in Nigeria right from independence and ever since then, it has been a tale of woe for the country. It is therefore not surprising that corruption has been nurtured and elevated to state virtue permeating the entire fabric of our national life.

Brief History of Corruption in Nigeria

Nigeria is no doubt a great nation gifted with tremendous human and natural resources. She is blessed with vast arable land that stretches between the tropical rainforest of the South to the Savannah regions of the North. Nigeria could be said to have more than its fair share in every aspect of human existence and natural endowment. They include a rich deposit of high quality petroleum, a reservoir of natural gas, and an appreciable

deposit of solid minerals such as iron ore, limestone, tin, coal and many untapped resources.⁶

It is a country blessed with intellectuals in every field of human endeavour such as theology, law, medicine, natural science, engineering, etc. God endows Nigeria with enormous potentials and opportunities that could make the nation really great and offer her citizens a comfortable living.⁷ However, as she acquires more money through the sale of oil, the money goes into private accounts and she gets poorer, while very few of her citizens get richer everyday from their corrupt practices. It is in this regard that a former President of United State of America (U.S.A.) described Nigeria as “a rich nation, but her citizens are poor”.⁸ What a paradox! Poverty in the midst of abundant resources all over, the question therefore is: How have we harnessed and managed these resources to better the lots of mankind? Another issue that has generated series of crises in Nigeria in the recent time is the oil subsidy removal, which has led to the skyrocketing prices of petroleum products. And the question is: Will the government be sincere with the money realised from oil subsidy removal by providing the citizenry with basic necessities of life or it will be the same old story of missing fund from the treasury?

The underlying factor in all the vices stated above is the prevalence of corruption in the country. Every sector in the nation is riddled with corruption. This is manifested in all spheres of our national life; from the political setting, the judiciary, religious institutions, economy, and sports to academic.

The severity of the bite of corruption is evident in all our infrastructures. The dilapidation of former National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) which is now Electricity Distribution Company (EDC), has for many years become epileptic and erratic, causing serious discomfort to the economy. Successive governments have spent billions of naira on the power project, yet, with no significant result. Many have resorted to the use of generating set in recent times as alternative. The sale of the power sector has even worsened the situation as most Nigerians pay for service not rendered. Nigerian Postal Telecommunication (NIPOST) retains its age-long sluggish, unreliable and grossly inefficient delivery system. The railway and other social services have collapsed on account of official corruption.

Our defence, law and order agencies have not fared any better. Monumental corruption that has pervaded all arms of the military has shattered the myths of the barrack discipline. This made the former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, to say that if it was possible to do away with the Nigeria Customs Services (NCS), he would have gladly done so. He made this statement in reaction to the level of corruption in the service, which is the second highest revenue earner for the country after oil and gas. Civil service is not left out, executive officers of parastatals lodge money meant to pay contractors in private account for up to six months, receiving the interest and denying the contractors of the funds that are due for them. For instance, an Ex-Comptroller General of Customs-Abdullahi Diko was listed among those who bought mansions in Dubai through a corrupt

means, while Air Vice-Marshel Amosun buried 1million Euros in a soak away pit.

Besides, our ivory towers are not free from this web of corruption. We have in our institutions of learning today high level of intellectual dishonesty such as “blocking”, which is a situation whereby lecturers are gratified by students to have their examination marks inflated, forgery, certificate racketeering, writing of projects for students by lecturers after collecting gratification from them, sexual harassment, impersonation, and so on.⁹ The judiciary too cannot be said to be free of corruption. Judges bribe to pervert justice. *Vanguard* of Thursday, July 6, 2006 has the headline: “Magistrate, 2 others arraigned for receiving N45,000 bribe”.¹⁰ They demanded the sum of N125, 000 from the detainees to prevent them from being jailed until they ran out of luck.

Corruption does not only manifest in the public sector but also in humanitarian, professional, religious quarters and many others. Corruption, many contend, is endemic in Nigeria. And, this is why Charles Corey observes that “corruption is diagnosed to be the highest problem hanging over Nigeria’s future economic growth.”¹¹

The most disturbing and quite unfortunate trend today is about those who use the name of God to perpetrate evil and engage in corrupt practices. Many religious leaders are known to engage in fraud and sexual immorality. In short, religion has become a weapon for different atrocities in our society.¹² In Nigeria in particular and the world in general, “marketing God” is fast becoming a top business. Indeed, the situation we find

our men of God today is alarming. For instance, an evangelist was arrested in Oñdó State for stealing musical instruments worth N3million, which he reportedly sold at the Alaba International Market, Lagos. While begging for forgiveness, the evangelist claimed that it was the handiwork of the devil.¹³

Moreover, a visit to see a “man of God” for spiritual help has turned to money-making venture where “men of God” use oratory skills and untoward stories of miracles to raise the morale of the victim into believing that they are real men of God. They eventually trap the victim in the name of spiritual assistance.¹⁴ The former President Goodluck Jonathan’s Campaign Committee gave the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) a whopping sum of N7billion to support him for his failed second term bid. This was made known to the public by Pastor Kallama Musa Dikwa, while addressing the press in Kaduna in his capacity as the head of the Northern Christian Movement. Pastor Kallama said that CAN received the fund on the 21st day of January, 2015 and gave 3million to each state chapter. He further said that only a fraction of the money was distributed, while well over 6 billion was kept to itself.¹⁵ What a shame!

It is pertinent to state that a greater percentage of the new breed religious sects’ claim are no more than business centres where sellers and buyers of the special services bargain. There, ‘God’ is haggled and sold; His word is sold, so also is His power. Emphasis has now shifted from pursuit of God’s grace to mundane things. Preaching of all kinds has been pivoted on the basis of giving God all your belongings that you may

receive abundantly. Thus, spreading the word of God has become a multi-million naira business. This has led to the springing up of many places of worship in the modern society. The national dailies are replete with stories and news of prophets who dupe as well as pastors, imams, alfas and a host of “Holy Spirit” tricksters who prowl about in priestly cassocks to rob their victims of money and household property worth millions of naira. They often lure their victims into parting with their hard earned money or valuables or both.

Moreover, there are other cases of pilfering, looting and misappropriation of funds entrusted to the care of shepherd. A Reverend Minister was dragged to court on a twenty-count charge of forgery, stealing, looting, etc. He was alleged to have stolen property worth million of naira belonging to the church. Today, in Nigeria, there are many buoyant commercial evangelists who grew big and heavy through gross exploitation of the poor and ignorant masses.¹⁶ The present spate of corruption in religious organisations in Nigeria, and indeed the world, has continued to draw comments and reactions and commendations from both spiritual and other well meaning leaders in the society. For example, Archbishop Okogie says it is more than obvious today that carrying the Bible is one of the quickest means of getting money. Also, the former Prelate of the Methodist Church of Nigeria, his Pre-eminence Sunday Mbang, in an interview granted him sometimes ago by one of the Nigeria’s daily Newspapers said, “The church has turned to a den of robbers”. He was reported as saying that “marketing

God has led to high level of corruption, immorality and other forms of indiscipline in our society today”.¹⁷

Political corruption, which is the father of other corruptions in Nigeria, is multi-dimensional as it appears in various forms. The following sub-divisions can be identified: Political Corruption, Bureaucratic Corruption, Electoral Corruption, and Financial Corruption. We need to state categorically in this work that political corruption is the father of them all¹⁸. It comes in form of electoral fraud, nepotism, cronyism, extortion, favouritism, bribery, graft, embezzlement and double standard. Despite incessant domestic and international pressures to fight corruption, corruption continues to be nurtured by the Nigerian politicians whose concept of governance is typified by its-our-turn-to-eat philosophy that has little or no regard for civil needs. Corruption in Nigeria affects citizens, especially the poor, very adversely, because they so much depend on government and its institutions, and partly because much of the stolen wealth is never kept or spent in the country. It is estimated that about \$400billion Nigeria’s oil wealth has been stolen, much of it siphoned to overseas bank accounts¹⁹, while the teeming population are languishing in financial pains.

Corruption has many lieutenants. It could take the form of favouritism, which is the abuse of power to better a few that are loyal to him, or nepotism, which is the use of office to favour one’s folks and family members.²⁰ These are the banes of Nigeria political history since independence.

It is as a result of this mammoth effect of corruption on the country that the former President Olusegun Obasanjo, in an attempt to find lasting solution to this menace or at least to bring it down to a bearable level, made a profound statement during his swearing-in ceremony of May 29, 2000 that “corruption is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian society. He said categorically that the battle against graft would have no sacred cows as the days of business as usual were over”. To march his words with action and to actualise the determination to combat corruption and financial crimes, two statutory bodies were created. The Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).²¹ Despite the efforts of the two commissions at fighting corruption, little achievements have been made. This is why Omoregbe states that the political setting in Nigeria is made of many dishonest and fraudulent people whose main purpose of coming to government is to enrich themselves.²² Embezzlement of public funds by contractors handling the government projects and government officials are common features of our political life since independence. Naked greed, dishonesty and corruption have become “virtues” in our society. We have cases of our politicians both past and present, who have in one way or the other embezzled money meant for the masses and still walk about freely, on the streets.

The import of our discussion is to establish that all has not been well from the beginning. As the menace of corruption was in the beginning of the nation, so it is now, but with the

efforts of the present government, we hope it will not be so forever. Political corruption has eaten deep into the bone marrow of every sector in the nation.²³ It is worrisome that various agencies of government inaugurated by successive administrations in Nigeria have not been able to tame the monster called corruption, it is then important for Nigerians to go back to the base and see how the traditional society had addressed deviant behaviours like stealing and misappropriation of public funds, and how such could be re-invigorated, rejuvenated and re-introduced by different tribes in Nigeria to compliment government effort at fighting corruption.

Yorùbá people have great respect for their culture and they do everything at every available opportunity to guide it jealously. *Iwàlẹwà* (Character is beauty) which is a common saying among the Yorùbá underscores the value placed on good conduct. A typical Yorùbá man is respected for his hard work and his contentment with what he gains through his hard work, and not what he has acquired through stealing and embezzlement of public fund. They believe so much in hard work than cutting corners thus the saying, *iṣẹ kù pa ni, àìṣe rẹ lẹ̀bùkù* (Hard work does not kill, only laziness destroys). What we are saying here is that anyone in any position of responsibility must put on good character in every of his dealing and not see his appointment, election or selection, as the case may be, as an avenue to loot the common wealth of the nation. Yorùbá people do not give respect to those who get their wealth from questionable sources.

The Meaning of Satire

The origin of satire can be traced to the Romans who were noted for their pragmatism. The word satire was originally called *satira*. Satire has from earliest times, employed irony, derision or wit to expose human faults such as folly, wickedness or pretence. In other words, satire is a particular use of humour for overtly moral purposes. It uses laughter to expose those moral excesses of individuals in the society. It does not harm or damage, but rather seeks to create a shock of recognition, warn the deviants and serve as deterrent to others since it is the believe of Yoruba that such a punishment will discourage others from committing the same offence regardless of who is the immediate object of attack.²⁴

An individual is criticised because he has fallen short of some standard which the society desires that he should reach. There are sets of standard, in every society which member of such society must conform with and any deviation from such standard is satirised. It is a corrective purpose, which is basic and fundamental to the peaceful co-existence of members in every society. It is expressed through a critical mode which ridicules or otherwise attacks those conditions or individuals who have been done contrary to the norms and standard set by the society.²⁵

It has always been an integral aspect of Yorùbá life and thought which manifests in various forms. This can be through verbal arts (orature, poetry and song), performing arts (festivals, dance, masking and masquerade) and the visual arts like wood carving, pottery and textiles. Satire can be utilised through

conscious dissemination of visual codes and innuendos in a deliberate and intelligent manner with the intent to examine issues affecting society. For instance, political satire is used to encourage the use of praises and parody almost simultaneously to create an awareness regarding the political players and corruption in government.²⁶

Method of Social Control in Yorùbáland

In this section of the work, it is important to examine how the Yorùbá people of South western part of the country handled those who engaged in corrupt activities which invariably helped to bring about peaceful co-existence among the people. For example, in Orígbó Méje communities of Òşun State, as we have it in other parts of Yorùbáland, we have the practice of blocking in which anyone who is involved in financial mess is dealt with through *Edi* festival song. People would gather round his/her house and sing various satirical songs. In traditional Yorùbá society, strong emphasis is laid on good character and people are constantly reminded of the need to refrain from bad deed, which can bring shame and ridicule to a culprit and his entire family. People are constantly warned to be good ambassadors to their family and not allow their personal interest to override the overall interest of the people or the community they represent.

The Yorùbá society is one with rich proverbs, wise sayings and songs that are employed at different times and occasions to drive home their point. They believe that *olè jìjà* (stealing) is caused by *ojúkòkòrò*, which literally means

covetousness. This word is a derivative of the original word *Ojú-kò-kú-rò*, that is, covetousness. Yorùbá people are therefore of the opinion that lack of satisfaction or contentment in one's possession often leads one to desire more. *Ojúkòkòrò* (covetousness) is the foundational habit that graduates into the anti-social behaviour of embezzlement of public fund that has become a habit among political office holders and politicians in Nigeria. Hence, the Yorùbá will say, *ojú kòkòrò ní siwájú olè*; literally meaning covetousness is the underlying reason for theft. This is why the people in *Orígbò Méje* sing song like this:

È rójú olè, ẹ ò mu x2
Ọmọ yìn kò ẹ̀gbàfọ́ ó n káşọ wálé
È rójú olè ẹ ò mu

You have all seen the face of a thief x2
Your child is not a drycleaner
But comes home with fine attires
You have seen the face of a thief
But failed to arrest him ²⁷

The song above talks about the resultant effect of anybody that steals or embezzles money meant for public use. Anybody that steals must face the consequence of his action. To this end, Yorùbá often prescribe contentment, which is the father of good character, *Ìtẹ̀lórùn ni baba iwà*, to erring agent. Today, those at the helm of affairs do not see contentment as a virtue; rather, they want to grab anything available to them. This action of few individuals has led the country to the present economic comatose called recession which is biting hard on all and sundry.

Yorùbá people lay strong emphasis on the need to be disciplined in every undertaking (*Kíkó ara ẹni ní ijánu*). This is why they say, *Èmi kò ní ba ẹbí lójú jé*. Meaning, I will not do things that will bring shame to my family. This is because the people accord much respect and dignity to their names and make every effort to protect it. Anybody appointed to serve at any level of government would be strongly warned: *Rántí omọ ẹni tí iwọ ẹ, remember the son of whom you are*. But the situation is different today, when a man, especially in political class, is caught stealing, instead of people condemning his action, they will say, it is smartness and that they too will do more if they have the opportunity to get to such position of responsibility. In traditional communities, the people did not spear any act of stealing or embezzlement of public money. Thus, songs were used to expose such thieves. A good example of such song is:

<i>Ẹ pa oko dilé olè</i>	Gather rubbish to block the house of a thief
<i>Òkè yí nilé olé</i>	The thief lives not far from here.
<i>Kòkó ló diyàn nílésà</i>	Cocoa led to disagreement at Ilesà

The song above condemns any act of stealing by any man. The person in question in the song embezzled money meant for the construction of bridge, the *Edi* choral group and members of the community who were aware of his action composed the song to condemn his attitude, and not only this, the song further sent signal to others that anybody who commits such criminal offence of stealing will not be spared. The man,

because of shame, fled the town and never returned. But this is no longer the situation, as someone who embezzles money is given heroic reception by his community through the conferment of chieftaincy title or by organising thanksgiving service for the unmeritorious looting of the treasure of his fatherland.²⁸

Relevance of Political Satire in Yorùbá Society

Satire, a property of the Yorùbá traditional society, is often used as an instrument to correct non-conformists in order to bring about social cohesion for the purpose of peace, growth and development of such society. The use of satirical songs in rituals and festivals rest on the belief that if the aberrant are exposed, the gods and the goddesses will be pleased with the land.²⁹ This is because, in the traditional Yorùbá society, the gods hate evil and extol transparency (*Ìwà àkóyawó*) and good moral behaviour (*Ìwà rere*). This is apposite with the Yorùbá wise saying that *Ìwà rere lẹ̀şó ènìyàn*. That is, good character is the right adornment of the body. Therefore, deviant behaviours always attract sanctions and punishment through public ridicule.³⁰

In traditional Yòrùba society, morality does not suddenly appear from nowhere. It is already embedded in the way of life an individual is born into, its attitudes, values and practices. It is simply regarded as that which is officially or outwardly declared in a particular society to be right or just, and people must adhere strictly to it³¹. This is why anybody could be ridiculed no matter the status of such an individual in the

community as long as he has violated the social ethos. Both the ruled and the ruler can be subjected to public ridicule as long as their behaviours contradict the norms and values of the society. The situation is not the same again today where the highly placed people in the society who embezzle money are considered as sacred cows that must not be touched.

We have cases of those who had held one political post or the other in the country in the past like Chief Bode George,³² Stella Oduah,³³ James Ibori, Tafa Balogun³⁴ who used their positions to embezzle and mis-manage money meant for the generality of Nigerians. It is quite unfortunate that instead of these people being satirised by their communities to serve as lesson to other members of their communities, they organised thanks giving services for them while others were given chieftaincy titles. For instance, Stella Oduah, who was alledged to have embezzled money with her two bulletproof BMW cars, is now a senator representing one of the zones in Anambra State, and also one of the gubernatorial aspirants under the platform of Peoples Democratic Party in Anambra State for the November 2017 gubernatorial elections. In the traditional society, such people would not be allowed to contest as various satirical songs would be sung to expose their past deeds. Also, in the traditional Yoruba society, people who became rich overnight as a result of being appointed, selected or elected, as the case may be, to hold a political post were not spared as people would dissociate themselves from such irresponsible people.

Every society in Africa and Yoruba society in particular bore the dos and don'ts in mind in their day to day activities,

which, to a great extent, helped them to maintain law and order in the society. Instant and measured punishment of such groups serves as basis for enforcing deterrence.³⁵ They served as watchdogs of the society; they were called moral policemen spread across the Yorùbá society of South-western part. We have the *Edì* festival songs in Ile-Ife and Origbo Meje, *Èrùngbè* among the Ikorodu³⁶ people, *Sẹmùrègbè* festival in Òde Èkìtì³⁷ and *Eégún Aláré*³⁸ by Bárùwá group in Ìbàdàn. These are women and youth who sing abusive songs to overtly influence people's character in their society especially the politicians and political office holders.

Among the Yorùbá, the virtues of truthfulness, honesty, love, transparency and accountability are paramount and this must be put into practice by all politicians in Nigeria. This is relevant to a verse on truthfulness in *Odù Ògúndáméjì*³⁹, which says:

*Òdàlẹ̀ máa kú, Ó kú sínú
àmù òòrùn*

When the covenant breaker was
about to die, he died in hot
burning sun;

Onínúure máa kú, Ó kú sínú odó idẹ

When the kind-hearted was
about to die, he died in the
midst of brass

Ó fẹ̀yìn tà̀mù ilẹ̀kẹ̀

He leaned against a pot of beads

*Àwọn ló d'ífá f'Òrúnmilà
Nígbà tí ó ń sawo lọ sílùú òtító*

Prognosticated for Òrúnmilà
when he was going to the town
of Truth

*Àwọn babaláwo rẹ̀ ní kí ó ma lọ
Nítòrí àwọn tí ó lọ sílùú òtító*

His priests told him not to go
because those who went to the
town of Truth

Kìí dé, wọn kii bọ̀

did not come back

Òrúnmìlà ní òun yóò lẹ sílùú òtító Orunmila said he would go to
the town of Truth
Ó lẹ, Ó ẹe òtító, Ó sì di ọlọlà He went; he was truthful; he
became prosperous
Òrúnmìlà sì bọ and *Òrúnmìlà* returned⁴⁰

The story above emphasises the importance and the benefit of exhibiting moral values in all our dealings. Most, if not all, the political office holders and politicians alike have failed to exhibit these moral values and the result of their failure is evidently seen in the country. Corruption is a monster that has taken the centre stage of our national life. Among the Yorùbá people, any act of embezzlement of public fund is equated to stealing in the market. There is a story of an Oṅdó politician who embezzled money meant for the use of the community. He was caught and prosecuted. Later, after serving his jail term, he came home, to Oṅdó and was interested in taking a chieftaincy title. The following song was rendered to satirise him during *Ora* festival.

Me ti gbo i o e e e I have never heard it before
Ke ti mole noja How can a thief be caught at the
market place and
De denghae He wants to become a high chief
Me ti gbo i o e e e I have never heard it before⁴¹

The man was denied the chieftaincy title at the long run despite the money he spent to vie for the post. This in no doubt sent signal to others with dubious character to change and turn a new leaf, otherwise, their own time to be ridiculed is around the corner.

It is quite unfortunate today that the virtues of good character and culture of transparency and accountability are gradually going into extinction particularly among the political leaders in Nigeria. A prominent politician in Nigeria was jailed for embezzling money at the Nigeria Ports Authority. Having been released, he still wanted to vie for the post of the National Chairman of a political party in Nigeria. Many of the political office holders have lost their sense of integrity. Good character to Yorùbá's belief is like a priceless ornament. Someone with a good character is called *Ọmọ́lúàbí*. It is a norm in Yorùbá society to be of impeccable character. However, anybody that lacks good character is considered a worthless person regardless of his wealth and influence in the society.⁴²

There are different ways and methods by which Yorùbá people condemn any act that is against the norm of the society. For instance, the waxed works of late Fẹ́lá Aníkúlápó Kúti played a great role in criticising the government in power. His song was full of satirical songs. An instance is his song, "Yellow Fever" where he criticised the government in power for different types of inflation and corruption. The lyrics of the song are as follows:

Different different fever	Na in dey
Yellow fever n ko?	He dey
Malaria fever n ko?	He dey
Jaundice fever n ko?	He dey
Inflation fever n ko?	He dey
Corruption fever n ko	He dey ⁴³

The above song is a call on government in power that the level of corruption and inflation in the country was becoming unbearable for the people.⁴⁴ In order to inculcate morality into the lives of the people in Yorùbá society therefore, *Orígbó Méje* communities use satirical song to correct the actions of certain individuals who have gone against the norm of the society. They do this in order to sustain the virtue of *Ọmọ́lúàbí*. An example of such songs is:

<i>E i i e o</i>	E i i e o
<i>E i i e o</i>	E i i e o
<i>Ọmọ́ Sọ̀dẹ̀ké ẹ̀sáǵẹ̀dẹ̀ lóko</i>	The son of Sọ̀dẹ̀ké stole plantain
<i>Ọmọ́ Sọ̀dẹ̀ké sáǵẹ̀dẹ̀ lóko</i>	The son of Sọ̀dẹ̀ké stole plantain
<i>Ọmọ́ Sọ̀dẹ̀ké fẹ̀wọ̀n jura</i>	The son of Sọ̀dẹ̀ké was imprisoned
<i>Ọmọ́ Sọ̀dẹ̀ké fẹ̀wọ̀n jura</i>	The son of Sọ̀dẹ̀ké was imprisoned

Another related one is:

<i>E i i e o</i>	E i i e o
<i>E i i e o</i>	E i i e o
<i>Ojú olórò pọ̀n kankan</i>	His eyes are red like an ember
<i>Ojú olórò pọ̀n kankan</i>	His eyes are red like an ember
<i>Bó bá ti jẹ̀ lẹ̀mi ó sọ</i>	I say exactly what happened
<i>Bó bá ti jẹ̀ lẹ̀mi ó sọ</i>	I say exactly what happened
<i>Ọmọ́ Olóbìrì hùwà ìbàjẹ̀ láwùjọ</i>	Olobiri son has done something bad in the society

Ọmọ Olóbìrì hùwà ìbàjé láwùjọ Olobiri son has done
something bad in the society
Ọmọ Olóbìrì fẹwọ̀n jura Olobiri's son is jailed⁴⁵

Stealing is the act of taking something from a person's shop or store without permission or intention of returning it or paying for it. Acts of stealing and embezzlement of public fund are frowned at in Yorùbá society. They are vices that must not be mentioned among people who have names to protect. For example, in the *Edi* satirical song above, the *Edi* choral group sang against the action of the son of Olóbìrì who stole iron rods and embezzled money in his custody. Stealing and other forms of corrupt practices are products of lack of satisfaction in what one owns and this is aptly explained in a line of *Odù Ọ̀sá Ọ̀fún*, which says:

<i>À n sá fún ohun olóhún</i>	We avoid other
<i>Kí á má baà di olè</i>	people's property
<i>Nijọ kan àìròtẹ̀lẹ̀</i>	so that we might not
<i>Kí á maà pariwo lẹ̀ni</i>	become thieves
	and so that one day
	people without
	warning
	will not yell at us ⁴⁶

Indeed, with all this analysis, it is convincing that this paper has been able to establish the importance of satire among the Yoruba people. There is no gainsaying that songs were used to inculcate the virtue of morality into the lives of the people in various communities in Yorùbáland and this has helped

immensely in the drastic reduction of vices that are detrimental to the corporate existence of the society.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Having examined how satire was used to right the wrongs in the society, we therefore recommend a total re-juvenation and re-invigoration of satire and other relevant songs in other parts of the country so as to curb the menace of political corruption in Nigeria.

Satirical songs in various communities should be brought back to live. This can be done through the engagement of surviving members of these different traditional choral groups, for the purpose of documenting their songs and lyrics for the teeming youths.

To deal with the problem of political corruption adequately, there is the need for the traditional institutions to collaborate with government agencies like, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC), Anti-Corruption Academy (ACA) and so on, in order to keep political office holders under a close watch. Since these political office holders belong to one cultural society or the other where these songs are rampant.

Besides, there should be no sacred cow in the efforts of government in taming the dreaded cancer of corruption. This will make the citizens to see the government as being serious in their fight against corruption and this will invariably lead to a relatively corrupt free society.

More support should be given to the National Orientation Agency (NOA) by government and private organisations to sensitise the members of the public on ethical values that must be imbibed by all politicians and everybody at large. Collaborative effort between National Orientation Agency and the media houses will help a lot in this direction.

Most importantly, integrity must not be sacrificed on the altar of materialism. Though, this has been the bane of our politicians. But, this should not be allowed to continue, if we really want a change in the country.

The values of honesty, hard work, selfless service, patriotism and so on should be introduced at the early stage of development of a child. This can be done at the Nursery and Primary school levels.

Moonlight stories that extol virtues should be re-introduced in all Nursery, Primary and Secondary schools across the nations. These stories teach moral lesson that will help a lot when they become adult.

The traditional rulers should also be in the vanguard of protecting the cultural heritage of the communities they reign over and stop mingling with political office holders for contract and “brown envelopes.”

Also, Nigerians, and more importantly, our political leaders, should be more patriotic and be committed to the development of the nation. If they are committed, they will have the love of their country at heart. The religious leaders also have a lot to do in this regard; they must be alive to their responsibilities by extolling virtues that will bring about total

commitment on the part of the leaders. Integrity must not be sacrificed on the altar of materialism and filthy lucre. The judiciary should wake up from their slumber. That is, they should shun all attempts public office holders may make at buying them over with their ill-gotten wealth. Exposing corrupt people and making them to face the consequence of their actions will send signals to others to desist from their nefarious activities. The judiciary should be more empowered to deal with corrupt officers as there should be no sacred cows. Culprits should be given the desired punishment they deserve. Any corrupt judge should be made to face the music. This is in line with the maxim that says he who comes to equity must come with a clean hand.

Anybody caught in any act that is against the norms of the society especially stealing should be taken to his or her community before being prosecuted. This will serve as deterrent to others who may likely have such attitude in mind.

If both the rulers and the ruled, politicians and masses alike follow recommendations as offered above, the high level of corrupt practices that have become a common cold ravaging every sector of the country will be highly reduced and the country will be better for it.

References

- Abogunrin, S.O. (1986). "Religion and Ethics" in Abogunrin, S.O (Ed.) *Religion and Ethics in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Daystar Press.

- Adejumo, Arinpe (2007). "Satire as a Form of Social Control: Its Manifestations in Yoruba Rituals and Festival Song". *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. University of Ibadan, Vol. xxxix, No. 1.
- Aderibigbe, Martina Moronmubo (2006) "Ora: A Satirical Festival in Oñdó". M.A. Project, Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Ibadan.
- Adisa, H. (2003). "Corruption and Government in Nigeria". *Online Nigeria Daily News* Retrieved from www.onlinenigeria.com on 17/4/2016.
- Akinnaso, A. "Political Corruption and Its Consequences". *The Punch Newspaper*, 20th July, 2011.
- Amina, Tukur O. (2007). *Know about Corruption*. Kaduna: Amanat Printing and Publishing Limited.
- Ayantayo, E. F. (2006). "Sexual Satire in Ewe Suku: A Female Dominated Festival in Òra-Ìgbómìnà, Òşun State". M. A. Project, Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Ibadan.
- Dike, V. E. (2005). "Corruption in Nigeria: A Paradigm for Effective Control." *African Economic Analysis*.
- Elebuibon, Y. (2000). *The Healing Power of Sacrifice*. New York: Athelia Henrieta Press.
- Mbiti, J. S. (1982). *African Religion and Philosophy*. Loñdón: Heinemann
- Ogunranti, Julius Ipadeola (1987). "Satire in Yoruba Society". M. A. Project, Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Ibadan.
- Omonu, Y. N. (2008). *Taming the Tide of Corruption in Nigeria*. Saki: Real Success Consult.

Vanguard Newspaper, Thursday, July 6, 2006.

Watchdog, No. 1 August, (2006). Newsletter of Political Finance Project of Social-Economic Right Initiative (SERI).

www.africaeconomicanalysis.org/article. Retrieved on 9th April, 2016.

Reporterstv.com/buhari-if-we-don't-corruption-corruption-will-kill-us-as-a-nation. Accessed on 4th July, 2016.

serialsjournal.com/./1390385477. Retrieved on 2nd February, 2016.

Wikipedia. 2009. "Political Corruption in Nigeria". Wikipedia Foundation Inc. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/political_corruption_in_Nigeria on 12/2/2016.

www.idersciencesonline.com./dol/abs/. Retrieved on 12th April, 2016

www.iproject.com.ng/.../project.topics. Retrieved 4th February, 2016.

www.liste.org/--/8494. Retrieved on 10th March, 2016.

www.naialand.com/2599474/12.12 most popular cases under President Jonathan. Accessed on 12th June, 2016.

www.nigerianeye.com/2011/02/go-and-sin-no-more-priest-tells-bode.html?m=1. Accessed on 5th July, 2016.

www.premiuntimesng.com/news/158357-election-brought-yaradua-power-huge-embarrassment. Accessed on 23rd May, 2016.

www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2016/06/05/keeping-his-promises-buhari-announces-recovery-of-3.4-Trillions. Accessed on 3rd July, 2016.

ideas.repec.org/a/ids/ijcrac/v5y201. Retrieved on 16th February, 2016.

End Notes

- ¹ Statement credited to the Former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan on 12/02/2015. www.informationng.com.
- ² H. Adisa (2003). "Corruption and Government in Nigeria". *Online Nigeria Daily News* Retrieved from www.onlinenigeria.com on 17/4/2016.
- ³ *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Special Price Edition.4.
- ⁴ K. Familoni. (2005). "Political Economy of Corruption and Good Governance". In L. Olurode and R. Anifowose (ed.) *Rich But Poor: Corruption and Good Governance in Nigeria*. Lagos: Faculty of Social Science, University of Lagos.16.
- ⁵ R. K. Merton (1968). *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press. 23.
- ⁶ Y. B. Usman (2001). "Some Observations on the Problems of Corruption in Nigeria from Historical Perspectives. A Contribution to the National Conference on the problem of corruption in Nigeria". *The Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies*. 105-108.
- ⁷ K. Familoni. (2005). "Political Economy of Corruption and Good Governance.6.
- ⁸ K. Familoni. (2005). "Political Economy of Corruption and Good Governance.7.
- ⁹ J. K. Ayantayo.(2003)"Ethical Appraisal of Admission Forgery and Racketeering in Higher Institutions in Nigeria." In *Ethics in Higher Education in Nigeria: Proceedings of the 13th General Assembly of the Social Science Academy of Nigeria*. July 23-25 2003. Abuja: Published by Social Sciences Academy of Nigeria.p111.
- ¹⁰ *Vanguard Newspaper*, Thursday, July 6, 2006 has the headline: "Magistrate, 2 others arraigned for receiving N45,000 Bribe".
- ¹¹ Y. B. Usman (2001). "Some Observations on the Problems of Corruption in Nigeria from Historical Perspectives. A Contribution to the National Conference on the Problem of Corruption in Nigeria". 106

- ¹² Oke, O.P. (2016) Plea Bargaining and the Religious cum Socio- Cultural Concept of Yoruba Omoluabi in the Nigeria Political Landscape. Ilorin. *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies (IJOURELS)*. Vol 6No1.pp.31-43.
- ¹³ J. K. Obiora (1998). *The Divine Deceit, Business in Religion*. Enugu: Optimal Publishers.18.
- ¹⁴ J. K. Obiora (1998). *The Divine Deceit, Business in Religion*. Enugu: Optimal Publishers.18.
- ¹⁵ How President Jonathan Gave 7 Billion to Christian Association of Nigeria. Saharareporters.com. Assessed on the 7th July, 2016.
- ¹⁶ J. K. Obiora (1998). *The Divine Deceit, Business in Religion*.17.
- ¹⁷ Oke, O.P. (2012). Curbing the menace of Corruption for Good Governance: The Role of Religious Leaders. “In Ayantayo, J.K., Dada, O.A. and Labeodan, H.A. (Eds.) *Religion and Governance in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Samprints & Graphic Co.
- ¹⁸ *Wikipedia* (2009). “Political Corruption in Nigeria”. Wikipedia Foundation Inc. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/political_corruption_in_Nigeria on 12/2/2016.
- ¹⁹ A. Akinnaso. “Political Corruption and Its Consequences”. *The Punch Newspaper*, 20th July, 2011. 4.
- ²⁰ V. E. Dike (2005). “Corruption in Nigeria: A Paradigm for Effective Control.” *African Economic Analysis*.
- ²¹ This DayNewspaper, March 27,2006.p.57.
- ²² J.I. Omoregbe (1993). *Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Approach*. Lagos, Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited.xi.
- ²³ www.idersciencesonline.com/dol/abs/. Retrieved on 12th April, 2016
- ²⁴ Arinpe Adejumo (2007). “Satire as a Form of Social Control: Its Manifestations in Yoruba Rituals and Festival Song”. *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. University of Ibadan, Vol. xxxix, No. 1.p.3.
- ²⁵ T.O. Abioye (2009). *The Power and Politics of Satirical Discourse in some Nigerian Newspaper*. A Ph.D Thesis Submitted at the Department of English and Literary Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria.Lasu: Journal of Humanities, Vol 6.
- ²⁶ M.O. Fajuyigbe (2017).” Satire of Power in Yoruba Visual Culture”. In *African: The Journal of the international African Institute*, Vol.87,Number 87.<http://jhu.edu/article/648544>. Assessed on 27th July, 2017.
- ²⁷ Interview with Mrs. Abimbola Adijat. Head of *Edi`Choral Group*. Ipetumodu Osun State.On the 17th of September, 2016. Aged 80 years.

- ²⁸ www.nigerianeye.com/2011/02/go-and-sin-no-more-priest-tells-bode.html?m=1. Accessed on 5th July, 2016.
- ²⁹ Arinpe Adejumo (2007). "Satire as a Form of Social Control: Its Manifestations in Yoruba Rituals and Festival Song". *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. University of Ibadan, Vol. xxxix, No. 1. Pp. 23-40.
- ³⁰ Fadipe, N.A (1970). *Sociology of the Yoruba*. University Press, Ibadan.p.101
- ³¹ Monye M.A. (2010). *Saint Paul's Moral Thought: A challenge to moral dilemmas in the contemporary African Church*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers.
- ³² www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/152325. Accessed on July 19,2017.
- ³³ www.amouredvehicles.ng. Accessed on August 13, 2017.
- ³⁴ www.nigeriaamuse.com. Accessed on August 3rd 2017.
- ³⁵ A.Adepoju and A. Emmanuel Oluwasegun (2016). "Socio-Cultural Implications of westernization on Indigenous Cultural Values among the Yoruba people". In *Journal of Religion and African Culture (JORAC)*. Nigeria, Jonny Jes Limited.
- ³⁶ This is the core of a thesis titled Idowu –Osho, O.O." *The Èrùngbè Tradition of Òra Poetry in Ìkòròdú, Southwestern Nigeria*". Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis , University of Ibadan.
- ³⁷ Aribilola, G. (2005). "Sẹ̀múrègbè: A Traditional Festival in Ode Ekiti". An Unpublished M.A. Project, Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Ibadan.
- ³⁸ Ogundeji, P.A. (2000). *Ritual as Theatre, Theatre as Ritual: The Nigerian Example*. Isẹ̀se Monograph series. Vol1.
- ³⁹ S. A. Adewale (1986). "Ethics in *Ifá*" in Abogunrin, S.O. (Ed.) *Religion and Ethics in Nigeria*.Ibadan.Daystar Press.
- ⁴⁰ Elebuibon Y. (2000) *The Healing Power of Sacrifice*. (New York), Athelia-Henrieta Press. p. 56.
- ⁴¹ Ojo O.G. (2016) *Satire in Sobowale Sowande and Bunmi Ayelaagbe Poems*. M.A. Project Submitted to the Department of Linguistics and African Languages. Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- ⁴² Martina Moronmubo Aderibigbe (2006). "Ora: A Satirical Festival in Oñdó".An M.A. Project Submitted to the Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Ibadan. 26.
- ⁴³ A song released by a popular Afro Beat singer Fela Anikulapo Kuti on corruption in Nigeria titled *Yellow Fever* in 1975. <https://last.fm/music/fela+kuti/yellow+fever>.Assessed on 22nd August, 2017.

- ⁴⁴ Julius Ipadeola Ogunranti (1987). “Satire in Yoruba Society”. M. A. Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Ibadan. 53.
- ⁴⁵ One of the songs by the Edi choral group against a thief caught in 1980 at Akinlalu. Information by Chief Ganiyu Oyekanmi of Oyekanmi Compound. On the 23rd August, 2016. Aged 85 years
- ⁴⁶ Babalola J.O. and Sunday L.B. (2013). Ole Jija: Re-thinking theft in the Yoruba ethical System. *Inkanyso, Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. Vol. 5, 1. p. 37.*