

Black Lives Matter: Slavery Era and Contemporary Racial Experiences in African American Standup Humour

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ABSTRACT

Black Lives Matter is a significant contemporary issue, particularly in the United States. Its roots trace back to the era of slavery and continue into the present day. Black individuals have long faced systemic violence, sexual assault, racial killings, and various forms of discrimination that have historically marginalized them. These persistent struggles have contributed to the socioeconomic disenfranchisement of Black communities in the United States. The Black Lives Matter movement emerged as a response, advocating for the liberation of Black people from political, social, and economic oppression—both within the U.S. and globally. While previous studies have explored the movement through prose, poetry, drama, and journalism, few have examined its narratives through the lens of stand-up comedy. This study seeks to analyze how Black Lives Matter is represented in stand-up performances as a form of social commentary aimed at promoting the sociopolitical and economic emancipation of Black people in the United States. Recorded performances by African American comedian, Chris Rock, are examined. The analysis applies Schechner's performance theory to uncover deeper meanings within the performances. Data were interpreted using both performance and literary analysis techniques.

KEYWORDS

Black lives matter; slavery era; racial experience; humour; stand-up

INTRODUCTION

Racial discrimination and Black Power Movement are very crucial moments in the history of the Black race across the globe, especially the African Americans and the native Black South African nationals. In the case of the African Americans, their slavery struggles started from the African soil (Adekunle, 2017; Adekunle, 2021). In the throes of the sixteenth century, slaves were captured and finally carted away from Africa to the supposed New World, the United States of America. The forceful translocation of Blacks and the sordid experiences are documented in the Middle Passage and a number of slave narratives, the fictional and the non-fictional (Adekunle, 2021). Some of the narratives serve as precursor texts to the continued representation of racial struggle and Black revolutionary movements (Bell, 1987; Taber, 2005; Fafchamps, 2006; Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales's 2007b; Nunn, 2008; Bloom, Sadan, Reenen, 2008; Hoff, Kshetramade, Fehr, 2009; Nunn, Wantchekon, 2011). They were used for farming, plantations, commercial and industrial purposes (Hawthorne, 1999; Klein, 2001; Alesina, Ferrara, 2002; Dunaway, 2003; Hawthorne, 2003; Bellows, Miguel, 2008). These are carried over events of the black people's struggles and enslavement imposed by the slaveholding enterprise as depicted in the analysis of the performance below entitled About Slavery and Racism substitulos en espanol del Show Never Scared [480P] by Chris Rock. The contemporary Blacks face several challenges of racial discrimination, political struggle, and extreme poverty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stand-up comedy has emerged as a significant medium through which gender identity, sexuality, and social tensions are addressed in contemporary society. As Adekunle (2023) notes, this comedic form serves not only as a site for entertainment but also as a space where gender expressions and societal norms can be examined, especially within heterosexual contexts. Through its therapeutic use of humor, stand-up enables subtle conflict resolution, easing tensions among diverse audiences (Adekunle, 2024). This genre's artistic language often transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries, enabling performers to connect with heterogeneous groups (Adekunle, 2020, Adekunle, 2023). The performative nature of stand-up allows it to expose sociopolitical issues such as police brutality, religious duplicity, and concerns about parenting and youth behavior (Adekunle, 2017; Adekunle, 2021; Adekunle, 2022). In some cases, it even critiques non-normative sexualities, though such portrayals can be controversial (Adekunle, 2021). Scholars like Mintz (1977) and Gilbert (2004) emphasize that a comedian's charisma and delivery are critical to engaging audiences. Effective use of timing, spontaneity, and storytelling amplifies the comedic impact, while missteps in pacing or sensitivity can risk alienating the crowd (Koestler, 1964; Lockyer, 2015; Morreall, 2009). Despite its challenges, stand-up comedy remains a powerful and evolving cultural form that reflects societal realities through laughter and satire. Standup comedy is a reflection of societal actualities of apartheid struggles and xenophobic attacks on non-South African Black nationals (Adekunle, 2024; Adekunle 2025). It is a form of satire against social vices (Adekunle 2009; Adekunle, 2014; Adekunle, 2019).

Michael (2022) describes stand-up comedy as a form of leisure, emphasizing its role in creating moments of enjoyment and entertainment. Similarly, Topler (2022) highlights its significance within the tourism sector in Montenegro, noting that stand-up performances help promote the country's cultural identity and attract international visitors. According to Plattas-García, Reyes-Meza, and Castro-Manzano (2023: 19), stand-up comedy is an expressive outlet that showcases the comedian's creative and theatrical abilities, allowing them to craft humorous scenes that evoke laughter and connect with audiences.

Travlos, Akyuz, and Mert-Travlos (2022: 58) examine the historical utility of comedy as a tool of satire, noting its use in Turkish satirical magazines and the Greek newspaper *Skipri* during the Greek-Turkish War (1919–1922) as a means of critiquing wartime adversaries. Norrick (2003:1344) emphasizes that the success of a stand-up act is largely determined by its ability to elicit laughter, while Harbidge (2011: 128) stresses the mutual gratification created through the interaction between comedians and their audiences.

Schwarz (2010: 9) draws a parallel between stand-up humor and the function of pause-fillers in Medieval English drama, highlighting its role in sustaining audience engagement. Allen (1998:195) points out that performing stand-up requires boldness and confidence, as comedians must confront and entertain often unfamiliar and unpredictable crowds. Gruner (1978: 1) suggests that laughter generated by stand-up comedy serves as a coping mechanism for everyday life's stressors, proposing that without such comic relief, life would be mundane.

Nwankwo (2014: 10) supports this view by noting that comedian's foster laughter through a variety of scenarios that both amuse and strengthen the bond between performer and audience. Likewise, Ajaye (2002: 10) asserts that an effective stand-up routine relies heavily on vocal dynamics and sound effects to enhance humor and amplify audience response.

RESEARCH METHODS

Schechner Performance Theory

Performance theory centers on how human behaviors and expressions operate within the boundaries of societal norms and expectations. It interprets a wide range of activities—

including rituals, theatrical productions, cultural events, cinematic displays, and even traditional practices like hunting—as symbolic representations of everyday life. The theory investigates how these performances are continuously shaped, conveyed, and understood across various academic and cultural contexts (Schechner, 1995). Emphasizing an integrative perspective, performance theory connects disciplines such as theatre, folklore, and popular culture while also addressing human practices like music, sports, dance, scripted presentations, and games (Schechner, 1994: xiv; Adekunle, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023).

It also analyzes the broader ecosystem of performance, encompassing preparatory stages such as rehearsals, training sessions, and workshops, as well as the audience's reception and post-performance interactions. These elements are seen as crucial to understanding the social and aesthetic dimensions of a community (Schechner, 1994: xiv–xv). Schechner (2002: 146) further extends this concept into public life, identifying formal speeches and strategic appearances by politicians, business figures, and religious leaders as performative acts. Audience engagement—through attentive listening or observation—is also interpreted as a form of performance. Professional activities conducted in spaces like media outlets, courtrooms, classrooms, offices, and public venues are similarly framed as performative (Schechner, 2002: 110).

In his classification of performance spaces and roles, Schechner (2004: 70) outlines that drama belongs to creators such as playwrights, shamans, and storytellers; scripts are associated with instructional figures like teachers or gurus; theatre is linked to the performers; and performance, ultimately, belongs to the audience. He presents performance as an inclusive concept that spans creators, participants, and observers alike (Schechner, 1994). Drawing from Austin's (1962) concept of performativity—where language itself is a form of action—Schechner emphasizes that everyday life is the foundation of performance, with art serving as a reflection of that reality. He asserts that life precedes art, which merely mirrors personal and collective experiences (Schechner, 2002: 116, 143). Within this framework, drama acts as the core engine driving the entire performative experience (Schechner, 2004).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chris Rock, a hilarious stand-up comedian, is an aggrieved and social critic comedian, who passionately criticizes racial discrimination, and racial killings and the enslavement of the Blacks in the United States. He sees the Blacks as a minority that manages to survive within the socio-economic and political life of American society. These past histories and contemporary issues are brought into play by Chris Rock through empathetic narrative technique to lampoon the then White slaveholders, and the contemporary White dominated society, who see the Blacks as inferior humans to them, and, at the same time, treat them as second class citizens, by denying them certain rights and privileges.

Historical Trauma of Slavery and Its Ongoing Impact on African American Lives

Also, he satirically reveals how the White majority used the black slaves for their own socio-economic empowerment during the slavery era in the United States of America.

Now, I love America, man! I must say, I love America; I get to say America is the greatest country in the world, okay, the great country in the world. In the whole world is the best place to be ... And we are all lucky to be here. Everybody in this show is lucky to be here. Even Black people lucky to be here. If you are black, you gonna look America with a little effort. Your uncle that paid your way to college but more less studio... You gonna forgive right, you gonna forgive. What a Big issue in America right now, the most vital issue is appropriate action. A lot of people think from a version that has to do with 60s, that has to do with “bus”, that has to do with “separate lunch camp”. No, no, no, when you see version of 60s, black people gonna spread down, hustled down, thus going to sit down, little girls broke down in churches that just white people are being a nice in a world in 50s, 40s, 30s. These black people are died in authorities that was looking down in 60s,

Oh men! Who make this God a God, no, no, no, appropriate action was put into place to upset policy that United States Government implemented during slavery that affected us today. When I talk about slavery, I am talking about the Purity time that black people had no right. You talk about 1600, talk about 1964. You know, take a year depending on the descendants are crying. People say what happened during slavery that can affect us today, a lot show happened during slavery that affected us every day, for example, during slavery, they used to take biggest druggy slaves and breed them, trying their best to make big strong super slaves, okay, that is right. It is evidence of that today like the NFL for instance. NFL stands for Negroes' fucking large. They breed these slaves. This is why black people dominate every physical activity in the United States of America, okay, the only 10% of the population with the 90% of the vibrant folks. We fucking dominate all these shits, okay, BASKET BALL, BASEBALL, FOOTBALL, BOXING, TRACK, even GOLF, WE DID IT, EVEN SOON THEY MAKE A HIDDEN HOCKEY RING, WE ARE GOING TO TAKE THAT SHIT TOO... (Appendix AA5.a).

Rock sees America as a land of greener pasture that is full of milk and honey. This is a land of golden opportunities that is meant for both the white and the black folks. This is why he says: "I love America man! I must say, I love America; I get to say America is the greatest country in the world, okay; the great country in the world. In the whole world is the best place to be ...And we are all lucky to be here, even, black people lucky to be here". He is proud to be an American, as an American patriotic man. Besides, he sees every American citizen both Black and White as fortunate ones who happened to be, either by birth or by naturalization. This loyalist act of his shows that African Americans are still patriotic citizens despite the socioeconomic struggles they encounter during, and after slavery abolition. Also, Rock's opening narrative technique is literally used to arrest the attention of audience into his performance.

In the same vein, he attributes the economic growth and development of America to the sweat and labour of the Black slaves who made America to be what it is today. To prove this point, he paradoxically lays emphasis on the breeding culture of Black slaves, by the White slaveholders, whose descendants happened to be super heroes in NFL and other sports activities in the U.S. "NFL" means National Football League. NFL is the U.S organization for professional American football, with two groups of teams, the National Football Conference and the American Football Conference. In the slavery era, the Black slaves were drugged and bred for laborious task on farms or plantations. They were bred to be croppers, planters, and sometimes wage workers "for example, during slavery, they used to take biggest druggy slaves and breed them, trying their best to make big strong super slaves, okay, that is right". This carried over of slave breeding culture is brought into contemporary American society in every physical activity. The contemporary Black Americans diverted the energy of the breeding culture into sporting activities: "it is evidence of that today like the NFL for instance. NFL stands for Negroes' fucking large. They breed these slaves. This is why Black people dominate every physical activity in the United States of America, okay, the only 10% of the population with the 90% of the vibrant folks". The then evils of the White slaveholders have turned to the Blacks' positive gains of capacity and nation-building in the new American society.

Moreover, the use of "Basketball", "Baseball", "Football", "Boxing", "Track" "Golf" even trying to dominate the "Hockey Ring" in the excerpt above pragmatically shows that the contemporary Blacks are frontier participants in every physical activity in the US. Taylor (2000: 10) affirms this claim that "the history of African Americans has been a paradox of incredible triumph in the face of tremendous human tragedy. The various political, economic, social and cultural methods African-Americans have employed to survive in an overwhelmingly hostile environment and describe how the issue of the black slavery came to be central to the politics of the new nations".

Apart from this, Rock satirizes the barbaric act of the White dominated society against the minority Blacks who are seeking for total freedom. The Blacks are maltreated and

subjugated. This is the reason Taylor (2000: 8) further states that “our histories are intertwined by the blood of slavery and the spirit of freedom. Slavery and freedom have been the central points of reference in America’s history”. Also, Wright (2006: v) states that “the difficulties, the dilemmas, the possibilities, and the tragedies of the life of the American Negroes as emerge from slavery and struggles towards freedom and equality”. As revealed in the performance above, these catastrophic events took place during Purity time when the Blacks had no right, especially in the “1600” and “1964”. “Purity time” was when the Whites were in full control of socioeconomic and political power in the United States. It was the period when every right and privilege was sole property or right of the Whites. Blacks had no say in that period. They can only be seen not heard. They were enslaved both psychologically and physically. The driven action of the Whites on the Blacks or Black slaves was centered on policy put in place by the United States Government to prevent the Blacks from enjoying certain civil rights and privileges.

Chris Rock ridicules this insanity of action of the Whites in his stand-up that “appropriate action was put in place to upset policy that United States Government implemented during slavery that affected us today. When I talk about slavery, I am talking about the Purity time that black people had no right. You talk about 1600, talk about 1964”. Dunaway (2003: 4) testifies to this fact that “window of autonomy within slavery” or an “independent slave economy” seriously overstates the degree to which slaves had control over their own lives, and they trivialize the brutalities and the inequities of the enslavement”. Not only this, during this period the Black slaves were sexually exploited, physically abused, emotionally tortured, and physically separated from the rest of their family members and sold to other slaveholding enterprises in the other parts of the same country.

Religious Activities as a Therapy against the Racial Trauma

Moreover, Rock sarcastically also shows how the Black community takes refuge in religious activities as a therapy against the racial traumatic situations which they encountered daily in the 60s. They do go to church with doleful tears to pray against their undesired situations. They spread themselves on the bare floor, crying to God for their rescue. This was a period when they had separate “lunch camp”, “schools” and separate “buses”. There was no mixed communal relationship between the Blacks and the Whites. There was racial hatred toward the Black community. This tension against the Black community grew. The Blacks lived in a sore fear of death and woes. Rock reveals this above that “a lot of people think from a version that has to do with 60s, that to do with “bus”, that has to do with “separate lunch camp”. No, no, no, when you see version of 60s, black people ganna spread down, hustled down, thus going to sit down, little girls broke down in churches that just white people are being a nice in a world in 50s, 40s, 30s”. The mood and the tone employed by Chris Rock here show that the Black race was in a big state of inconspicuous dilemma. Again, the nominal elements, namely, “lunch camp”, “schools” and “separate buses” metaphorically show a deep sense of racial hatred, agonies and racial oppression faced by the Black community in the United States during 1960s.

Furthermore, the Black people lived in total abject poverty because the White folks denied them of some social benefits and educational privileges. The deniability of socio-educational rights is a factor that has greatly affected the development of the Black race in the United States of America. Because of this factor, Black parents had no money to send their children to school. In order to forget these aggrieved agony experiences, Chris Rock through an empathetic narrative technique appeals to the new generation of the Black community to forgive the Whites folks who had done them great harm in the time past “you gonna forgive right, you ganna forgive”. He uses this stand-up comedy to create a series of reconciliations between the Black and White folks. Aside this, what Rock urges his fellow Black folks to

fight for now in America is “an appropriate action”. This is why he says: “What a Big issue in America right now, the most vital issue in appropriate action”. “Appropriate action” here symbolically means the restoration of socioeconomic benefits and educational privileges to the African Americans. He wants his fellow Black folks to forget the past and focus on the future. Besides, Chris Rock wants every American citizen both the Blacks and the Whites to contribute to the growth of the nation without looking at each other’s wrongs or weaknesses.

Racial Killings and Intellectual Deprivation

Another thing in the historical memory lane of African American race is the issue of “racial killings” and “intellectual deprivation”. Chris Rock mocks the White folks who see black folks as a threat or rival to the nation’s growth. Many of the Black slaves who were smart and intelligent were being killed under the policy of the, then, American Government. They were threatened not to read or write, otherwise, they would face the penalty of death. They were taught to be obedient and submissive in all ramifications.

That is what they did to the big strong slaves. You know what they did to the smart ones, they kill them, that was what they did, right now, that was the policy of the United States Government to kill black smart people, that is right. The law of the land was if you read, you die, okay. If you read, you fucking die. You know, that means, the First Black Graduates, Vendia Drogas, they sold books [they said to Black fellows]: “yoman! Two pages, man! Two pages, yoman! Two pages, you ganna read words men. Think about the poor slaves that can read that have the hideout men, think about the poor slaves that could read but scare, if they care to read for fear the killing they kill. Think about the poor slaves that used to drive BUGGY in the town at the end of the day men! Drive the buggy men! (the sounds of the buggy): “menejaba, menejaba, menejaba”, he could read, he get to intersection, and he sees a caption and he gets a real dilemma (saying): “O Lord, what is I go do, if I go cross intersection, I may have an accident, if I stop at the side, this car going to kill me. O Lord what is I go do”. He gets to the intersection and a bigger accident winds up, almost kills somebody and the police (White policeman) comes (says): “Negro, what is wrong with you? What a fucking wrong with you? You want to kill somebody Negro! You see that subside. Negro: “I don’t know what you are talking about sir?” (Police): “Negro, you see that subside rider!” Negro: “or do you mean that octagonal” Police: “Negro, who taught you Octagonal?” (the Police is amazed to hear that the Negro can read and know what OCTAGONAL is)...Don’t get me wrong with so many versions. Don’t get me wrong men! I don’t think I should get a job over white person, if get a lot of more, I get a task. I don’t think I get into a separate school over white person, if I get, I get a task, but it is the time, fuck up! You have a 400 years stuck up by “BUGGERS” right here, is going to be all right! You know a lot of people say, a lot people say this too, a bit small into brandish you need from the version, we be able to give beautiful from the version all together, if you strive from being the smallest from the United States. They say the whole country is ONE. I was in the Black School, hair White School, so you can tell me fucking shit, okay, now, when you go to class, there are 30 kids in a class. 5 smart, 5 dumps and the rest in the Middle, that is all America is right now. A nation in the middle B and C. Let keep the fucking real okay. A Black seize to keep wrong company, A Black seize to keep a bugger fucking king. Meanwhile, THE WHITES JUST HELP US TO BE THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (Appendix AA5.a).

In the performance above, the poor slaves were intellectually deprived. They were tortured psychologically, physically, and emotionally not to read. They did read in several hideouts from the reach of the White community, for the fear of being killed: “the law of the land was if you read, you die, okay. Think about the poor slaves that can read that have the hideout men! Think about the poor slaves that could read but scare, if they care to read for fear the killing they kill”. Here, “the law of the land” connotatively means “the white supremacists” who are the racial oppressors of the Black folks, while the adverbial clause of condition “if you read” stands for “death sentence” to the Black people who violated the rules of reading culture guiding them in the United States during slavery. Also, “hideout” symbolically connotes “a refuge” for the oppressed slaves who were “literate”. In order to redeem the Black community from the fear of being killed, the first Black American

graduates, the Vendia Drogas, became booksellers. They sold books to other Black fellows and encouraged them to read those books. This “reading technique” was adopted by these first American Black elites, to propagate reading culture, and, at the same time, ransom the Black race from total ignorance. They wanted the Blacks to be knowledge seekers, and by this, they can know their rights and fight for their freedom, because readers are leaders. It is time for the Blacks to liberate themselves from the shackles of the White dominated society through education and hard work. Samuel (2013) avers that human beings today need to have a specific set of skills to survive in this competitive world as well as progress. This set of skills can be referred to as education.

Moreover, Rock also advises his fellow Black folks to desist from unhealthy rivalry that can bring racial hatred and racial killings between the Blacks and the Whites in the United States. This is why Chris Rock says in the performance above that “I don’t think I should get a job over white person, if I get a lot of more, I get a task. I don’t think I get into a separate school over white person, if I get, I get a task, but it is the time, fuck up! You have “a 400 year” stuck up by “BUGGERS””. Here, he is conscientising the Black folks to stop competing with the Whites over job opportunities, and separate schools. Rock views the competition as a tough challenge or an enormous task. He wants the Blacks to liberate themselves from psychophysical enslavement of the Whites. They had been held hostage for over four hundred years (400 year) in the “land of bondage”. This is why he encourages the Blacks to take on the challenge of improving their own potentials for the development of the Black community. Also, the word “BUGGERS” is used by Rock to relegate the Whites to the background. “BUGGERS” is a contemptuous term for the White oppressors. “BUGGERS” here shows the act of man’s inhumanity to man of the White race towards the Black race in the United States of America.

Racial Discrimination and Unhealthy Rivalry against African American folks

In addition, Rock scorns the Whites who see the Blacks as inferior humans to them. They treat the Blacks with disdain. This fact is demonstrated in the way the White policeman treats the Negro. The Negro was molested by the police when he was trying to prevent himself from crossing the intersection with his car. In trying to do this, a bigger accident wound up. The policeman challenged the Negro on this accident issue. In the cause of the Negro’s response to the police, the policeman was amazed to see that the Negro could read and know what Octagonal means: “Negro, what is wrong with you? What a fucking wrong with you? You want to kill somebody Negro! You see that subside. Negro: “I don’t know what you are talking about sir?” (Police): “Negro, you see that subside rider!” Negro: “or do you mean that octagonal” Police: “Negro, who taught you Octagonal?” These interrogative questions above posed by the policeman are metaphorically used to create “fear” and “intimidation” in the Negro.

In the above performance, the employment of some expressions by Chris Rock gives some deeper figurative meanings to the sufferings and agonies of the Black race in America. The use of “O Lord what I go do” connotatively shows how the Black society takes solace in God as refuge and consolation in the time of trials and agonies. “400 years” paradoxically depicts how the Black Americans cross the Red Sea of slavery and bondage into the land of total freedom. “Policeman” is ironically signified the agent or an instrument of oppression and brutality” of the White dominated society. “Books” symbolically represents “freedom” or “liberation” and “knowledge”. “Cross intersection” and “octagonal” means cross from ignorance to knowledge and from slavery to freedom. “A bigger accident winds up” figuratively shows the Blacks’ revolutionary change from slavery to freedom and ignorance to knowledge.

In a nutshell, Chris Rock calls for unity, love and team spirit between the Black and White

communities. He sees America as a nation that is meant for the growth and the development of both communities. This is the reason he metaphorically calls America a nation in the “Middle”, that is, a country that accommodates both the Blacks and the Whites at the level of “equilibrium”. He urges both societies to see themselves as one. He reveals that despite both communities trying to avoid each other, the White folks still help the Blacks to become the President of the United States. Chris Rock is trying to prove a point that both Black and White need each other to grow “Meanwhile, THE WHITES JUST HELP US TO BE THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA”. He largely kicks against racial discrimination and wants both societies to be one. He wants racial equality between the two societies. Magar (2012: 31) confirms that “during the 2008 US Presidential Elections, Barack Obama was elected to the Presidential Post backed by a majority of the votes from White Americans (43%). This is cited by many as a step up in race relations”. The rise of Barack Hussein Obama, the first Black President of the United States, is the greatest achievement in the history of African Americans, for equality and justice. He won the most enviable position in the world, as the 44th President of the United States of America.

In Never Scared Clip Legalizing Drugs [480P] stand-up performance of Chris Rock, he satirizes the way American Government is fond of putting the Black people into jails, because they are drug pushers. Actually, he does not condemn the action of the government on the offenders but criticizes the government for seeing the imprisonment of the Blacks as a source of revenue to the nation’s purse. The United States Government makes more money from the Blacks’ imprisonment. This is reason he says that the government cannot legalize drugs. He believes that if government could legalize “gay” or “homosexual” that is not practiced by generality of people, that government in the same vein should legalize drugs which serve as sources of income to the Black or Brown community. Besides, he also calls for self-restraining temperament of waste spending of the Black or Brown people in the United States of America. He sees the Blacks as spendthrifts that do not plan for future. They fail to plan for themselves and the future of their unborn generations. He mocks the reckless lives which they live superciliously, unlike the Whites, who make other White fellows wealthy through financial empowerment and also preserve wealth for their posterity.

They will never legalize drugs in America, okay, the first reason they will never legalize drugs is because the government is in a way makes too much money putting our brothers and sisters into fucking jail, okay, that is first of all, bull shit. The second reason the government will never legalize drugs in America is because, you know, drugs could give some brown people wealth thing. We can have that, because drugs could bring Brown one thing. We can’t have wealthy black or brown people in America, we got the rich. We don’t get no fucking wealth. What is the difference? There is the difference, Cheque is rich, the white man assigned his Cheque is wealthy thing. Go buy yourself a bouncing car; bring me I am talking about wealth. I am talking about white family and also about fucking smile lucky. Those rich men than fucking, okay, I am talking about Whites that hold the Colour Blue those rich Benzes I’m talking about Bill Gate, okay, if Bill Gates wake up tomorrow with all post money he jumps out of fucking wheel door...I am not talking about rich. I am talking about wealth. Wealth could set us fucking rich, wealth is in power reigns. Wealth could uplift communities from poverty. A Whiteman gets wealth, he built walls more and he makes other white people have other fucking money. A mother gets rich he passed to other fucking children, okay. You know what I am talking about. I talking about rich, I am talking about wealth. Wealth is passed on to generation to generation. You can get a little wealth. Rich you could lose so many crazy many drugs earn...I am not talking about rich. I am talking wealth, now, don’t get me wrong. It is not about white people folks. Black, brown people don’t have any fucking wealth. Maybe, not just being maybe? Maybe we just spend all our money on rims. We may have some...Black people we love Rims. We will put shine heads rim any piece of shit cars, in the wall. We are going to rim on toast up a little. Money eludes black people, money elude’s us. We know money wasting more than on fucking facing of the earth. We spend more like a shit is going to rise, okay, bought a Rim, a Rim is in the TV, dressing is in a car, the TV is on, nobody is in the back seat (Appendix AA5.b).

He sarcastically warns his fellow black people to desist from such act of illegal drug

peddling, but inspires them to be wealthy through hard work and resource management. He cautions them that the United States will continue to make more money from them if they do not refrain from such an act of illegal deals: “the first reason they will never legalize drug is because the government is in a way make too much money putting our brothers and sisters into fucking jail”. “Our brothers and sisters” that are referred to here are the black people, who are the African Americans serving punishment in jails.

Furthermore, Rock sees the government’s action as a racial thing. He reveals the action of the government as a purposeful action used for cutting down the economic strength of the Black people in the United States: “the second reason the government will never legalize drugs in America is because, you know, drug could give some Brown people wealthy thing”. He believes that the non-Blacks do not want the Blacks to be wealthy, but live in perpetual poverty. By this, the Whites can have total financial control over the Blacks and be able to manipulate them at will. In this case, he wants the Blacks to stand-up and acquire wealth for themselves and their posterity “wealth could set us fucking rich, wealth is in power reigns. Wealth could uplift communities from poverty. Wealth is passed on to generation to generation”. He conscientises the Blacks that drugs can only make them rich, not wealthy. He depicts that he that has wealth controls the nation. That is why he metaphorically says “wealth is in power reigns”.

In addition, he wants the Blacks to emulate the lifestyle of those wealthy White families, like Bill Gate who has made wealth for himself and his posterity. He talks about those Whites who become household names in their various professions in the United States. Those that have “Colour Blue Benzes” that pass their wealth to their children: “I am talking about Whites that hold the Colour Blue, those rich Benzes. I’m talking about Bill Gates, okay”. Not only this, he also urges the Blacks to help one another acquire wealth, that is, making other Black fellows rich through even distribution of wealth and team spirit, in the same way White people do: “A Whiteman gets wealth, he built walls more and he makes other White people have other fucking money”. Also, he satirically condemns the riotous lives which the Blacks live. They spend their money extravagantly buying luxurious things like cars, putting expensive RIMS on them. This is why he says money eludes black people, because they do not have savings and a culture of planning for the future. He sees this act of reckless spending as a global disease among the Black race across the globe: “money eludes black people, money eludes us. We know money wasting more than on fucking facing of the earth. We spend more like a shit is going to rise, okay, bought a Rim, a Rim is in the TV, dressing is in a car, the TV is on, nobody is in the back seat”. Rock also views “cheque” has as a symbol of richness and economic empowerment, but the Whiteman that assigns it is seen as a wealthy man: “cheque is rich, the Whiteman assigned his Cheque is wealthy thing.”

CONCLUSION

The standup humors of Chris Rock provides a unique perspective on the intersection of historical and contemporary issues affecting Black Americans. By leveraging humour to address racial stereotypes, violence, and systemic inequality, Rock sheds light on the complexities of the African American experiences. His comedy skillfully blends humour with poignant social commentary, offering a thought-provoking critique of racism and its ongoing impact on Blacks lives. Through his comic humour, Rock contributes to the broader conversation about racial justice and equality, resonating with the core principles of the Black Lives Matter movement.

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