

10



Vol. 3, 2016

ISSN 2315-6317

DANCE JOURNAL OF NIGERIA



A publication of the

Association of Dance Scholars and Practitioners of Nigeria

June, 2016

DANCE JOURNAL OF NIGERIA (DJN) Volume 3, JUNE 2016

Printed in Nigeria by Amifitop

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 9. Mixing Fun with Serious Business towards a Democratic Society in Femi Osofisan's <i>Yungba-Yungba and the Dance Contest</i>
- Tayo Simeon ARINDE & Felix A. AKINSIPE | 74-80 |
| 10. Music and Dance as Culprit and Catalyst for Change in Democratic Nigerian Society
- Taiye Shola ADEOLA | 81-89 |
| 11. The Art of Composing Contemporary Dance
- Rudolph KANSESE | 90-96 |
| ✓ 12. The Interrelationship between Dance and Religion in Democratic Nigeria: A Study of Qadriyyah Islamic Organisation
- Oludolapo OJEDIRAN & Lanre Qasim ADENEKAN | 97-106 |
| 13. Towards Standardization of Theatrical Dance in Nigeria
- Chris NWARU | 107-114 |

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the articles contained in this Journal are those of the author(s) and does not necessarily reflect that of the Association.

Dancing naked in the village square to changed music

Dance Journal of Nigeria (DANJON)
Vol. 3: pp 1-3, 2016.
A Publication of
Association of Dance Scholars and
Practitioners of Nigeria (ADSPON)

Peter BADEJO, OBE

Being Lead Paper 1 of the
3rd Conference of ADSPON,
University of Ilorin, Nigeria.
28th - 31st Oct, 2015.

Peter Badajo (b. 1970) is a choreographer, dancer, teacher, academic, African performance specialist and storyteller of over 44 years. He is a graduate of University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) where he obtained his Master degree. He specialty is Bata Dance for which he has developed a notation termed 'Batabade dance technique'. He is the Artistic Director of Badejo Arts, a dance Company that he founded in 1990. He has been and remains in high demand by professional dance companies in Africa, Europe, and America because of his expertise in African Dance. In addition to his own countless productions of allegorical contemporary African dance, including Elemental Passion, he has appeared in major dramas such as Cambridge University's Eshu's Faust. He has conducted research in the University of London and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He is a Research fellow at Department of Dance in the University of Surrey where he also teaches African Dance. He is also a Visiting Lecturer at Richmond University. He has received numerous awards, among which are: Recognition Citation from the City of Los Angeles, Fellow, Dance Guild of Nigeria, The Nigerian Achievers Merit Award, London (2002), Life Changers, Arts and Culture Champion Award, London (2011); Association of Dance of the African Diaspora, (ADAD) LifeTime Achievement Award - London (2012). Since 1990 he has had tremendous impact on British Arts for which the Queen awarded him the order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2001. He has been involved in several dance events including Artistic Director/Choreographer Lagos Black Heritage Festival (-2012), Co-ordinator Nigerian House Presentation for the London Olympics (2010), Artistic Director of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Nigerian National Sports Festival, Lagos (2012).

It is a popular African aphorism that when the music changes, the dance must change with it. This is as a result of the intertwined relationship between dance and music in Africa. Refusal to change means dancing out of tune and the joke is on the dancer who is the principal instrument of the dance art. The Theme of ADSPON's conference this year - *Dance and Change in Democratic Society* - is not only apt, it is philosophically deep in the avowed role of dance in society.

The metaphorical adoption of the "Village Square" here in this paper is in reference to the world having become a global village and the fact that the relational rules have changed. For years, Nigeria was not only dancing to a changed music in the village square, it was indeed, dancing naked! This is a double whammy, a double dose of disgrace! Overtimes our dances have remained virtually the same.

Broaching the subject with a politician friend when I first learnt I was to deliver this paper, he quipped what is dance and what has dance got to do with change and indeed, democracy?" Without belabouring anyone with the generally accepted notion that there is no universally accepted definition of Dance, I will be satisfied with the fact that it is usually seen as a medium through which information, messages and ideas are communicated by the dancer's body to onlookers. Research also suggests that approximately 60-65% of social meaning is derived from non-verbal behaviours; (The

dance, the choreographer composing the dance should be able to assess it in order to have a composite picture of the entire dance work, just as other artistes can evaluate the structure of their artworks. In this regard, the contemporary choreographer would be seen to be in charge of his/her creative ingenuity and not be lost to uncertainty.

One cannot categorically state that the composition of contemporary dance has a definite format. Its individualistic nature or identity has made the dance genre to be constructed from different technical point of views. I have discussed my approach above and wish it can be considered by dance enthusiasts and choreographers alike. The bottom-line is that choreographers in the process of composing contemporary dance should avoid opacity or steer clear of ideas and materials that will make their artworks difficult to understand or appreciate. Audiences have often complained about the impenetrable nature of a number of contemporary dance pieces because of the way they are composed. Audiences should not actually be sidelined in the course of creation; rather they should be seen as valuable contributors to the success of the dance particularly at the point of consumption. Furthermore, the choreographer should know that his artwork is created for the purpose of achieving popular appreciation. Except the choreographer or dance group is on a revolutionary campaign to promote a certain notion or interest, just like what the Judson Dance Theatre of the 1960s in America did when they boldly went against artistry and audience satisfaction. The Judson Dance Theatre and other similar obscure approaches are obviously abnormal and so cannot be accepted as ideal for composing contemporary dance meant for the consumption, satisfaction and entertainment of an inquisitive audience.

Works Cited

- Bakare, Ojo-Rasaki. *Rudiments of Choreography*. Samaru: Space 2000 Pace Publishers Limited, 1994. Print.
- Bhargav, Aranyani. 'What is contemporary dance?' *The Hindu*. 2013. Retrieved from <<http://www.thehindu.com/features/Friday-review/>> on January 2, 2014
- Horton, Robin. 'Ikaki – the tortoise masquerade'. *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book* Ed. Y. Ogunbiyi. Lagos: Pitman Press, 1981. 481-494. Print.
- Pather, Jay. "Response: African contemporary dance. Questioning issues of a performance aesthetic for a developing continent". *Critical Arts*. 2007, 9-15
- Yerima, Ahmed. "Nigerian Traditional Dancers: History and Practice". *Critical Perspectives on Dance in Nigeria*. Ed. A. Yerima, O. Bakare & A. Udoka. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited. 2006, 17 – 44. Print.

The interrelationship between dance and religion in democratic Nigeria: A study of Qadriyyah Islamic organisation

Oludolapo OJEDIRAN

Department of the Performing Arts,
University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.
Tel.: +234-818-598-0827
E-mail: ojedirano@yahoo.co.uk

O. Ojediran is a Lecturer at the Department of the Performing Arts, University of Ilorin where she teaches dramatic theory and criticism. She is a graduate of the University of Ilorin and Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.

L. Q. Adenekan holds B.A. (2012) and M.A (2015) Performing arts from University of Ilorin. He specialises in the area of theatre and Film directing. However, his research interest cut across other aspect of theatre like dramatic theory and criticism, theatre administration, and dance and technical theatre. He has contributed in International and National publications such as "Multi-dramatic aesthetics in Bakare Ojo Rasaki Rogbodiyan and The gods & the Scavenger". (2015) In: Uncommon Artistry, Understanding Bakare Ojo Rasaki's Drama and theatre. Pp. 657-669 London: SPM. "Social Dysfunctionality and Sarical Reflections in Ahmed Yerima's selected plays" co-authored with Ojediran Oludolapo, PhD. (2016). MAJAC, vol. 13, pp.71-86, Markurdi. He has participated in several theatrical and Film productions with some renowned scholars like Prof. Ayo Akiwale, Prof. AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye, Dr. Jeelal Ojuade, Dr. Segun Oyewo in personal and commissioned productions. He also featured in some Nollywood (Yoruba) movies like Ajeigbe (2015) and Awawu (2015) both Directed by Adebayo Tijani. Adenekan in 2015 researched on Film directing in Yoruba video Film for his Master degree dissertation.

Abstract

In any democratic society, change is the most constant thing. Although, dance is forbidden in Islamic religion, some synchronized steps and movements which could be termed as dance is being used as an act of worship among the Qadriyyah Islamic organization. While the functionality of dance transcends beyond mere entertainment, critical scholarly observations and deductions have validated dance as a means of communication which could help in fostering peaceful coexistence in the society. With the changes expected in the Nigerian democratic society through dance, the paper brings us to the ritualistic nature of dance as used in different acts of worship which is common in Nigeria. However, this paper explores the bodily expression in time and space of the Qadriyyah Islamic organisation that shows the employment of dance as communications in their devotional act of worship also known as Dhikr. Therefore, through participant-observation and descriptive methods of research, this paper explores the bodily movement aesthetics in the devotional group worship of the Qadriyyah. It concludes that their devotional act of worship known as Dhikr Al-Faasi of the Qadriyyah could be categorized under ritual dance owing to the fact that it is intended to purify the soul as well as to communicate with the Supreme Being which in return may serve as a gateway to peaceful coexistence, unity and foster behavioural change as needed in democratic Nigeria.

Key words: Religion, dance, Qadriyyah, change, non-verbal language.

Dance Journal of Nigeria (DANJON)
Vol. 3: pp 97-106, 2016.
A Publication of
Association of Dance Scholars and
Practitioners of Nigeria (ADSPON)

Lanre Qasim ADENKAN

Department of Performing Arts,
University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.
E-mail: toyinqasim@gmail.com

Since the creation of earth and man, dance and religion are inseparable. This is based on the employment of dance as a form of rituals in religious activities. Their clear interrelationship is conspicuous in mode of worship of different religions. Religion according to the official website of the British Broadcasting Cooperation, "is a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies usually involving devotional and ritual observation". However, the purpose of any dance is the motivation and intention behind it. Dance can be expressed through expression, symbol and non-verbal communication. Dance itself is a language that communicates with or without any form of verbal interpretation. Nigeria is made up of many tribes having different cultural heritages and religious backgrounds. Such religions and cultures have their own mode of display, ideologies, convictions, languages and doctrines which allows them to gain more converts or lose some of their followers.

While dance is a form of theatrical engagement with cultural displays and heritages that involves the movement of the body, dance is also an avenue through which contemporary religions as well as traditional beliefs are celebrated amongst the people. Dance analyses, expresses, reflects and communicates with people and the Supreme Being consciously or unconsciously. However, Islam is a religion that premises its concept of dance on entertainment thus negates any form of public dance. In other words, it is forbidden for a Muslim to dance especially in public glare. Though not called or accepted as dance, the Qadriyyah Islamic organisation employs varieties of synchronized body movement in their special devotional act of worship. This within the confines of academic scrutiny could be regarded as ritual dance. The ritual dances are located in different religious practices as an act of worship especially during festivity. This can take different forms like interpersonal communication which may be between individuals and a person or group of persons to a divine being which may be gods, goddesses or the supreme being –God.

Dance is the rhythmic movement of the body in time and space to communicate feelings, thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. Ufford-Azorbo and Ufford (2014, p.484) assert that dance happens with the human body on display. This shows that dance involves the use of body parts such as head, neck, hand, leg, waist, buttocks amongst others. However, the synchronized movements involved in this study use mostly every part of the upper and lower limbs of human body. Umukoro (2002, p.72) observes that

dance and music are twin arts of the theatre . . . although it is generally claimed that dance is the oldest art of the theatre, it is inconceivable that it could have developed entirely independent on some form of rudimentary music, if only by way of rhythmic pattern of feet, the clapping of hands . . . in all probability, dance and music evolved simultaneously as complementary arts. Dance is the visual translation of music, while music is the aural translation of dance . . . both are transient and ephemeral; but while music exists only in time, dance exists in both time and space.

Dosumu-Lawal (2014, p.539) asserts that dance is a natural expression of united feeling and action, expresses the geographical location, religious belief, political and historical experience, biological,

social practice and economic peculiarities in a simple language . . . dance is a vital tool of communication, used extensively by people to pass a message across. This shows dance could be used socially, religiously, historically, culturally and academically.

Bello (2015, p. 550) is of the opinion that the essence of choreography is to create visual aesthetic appeal with the arrangement of the dancers whose calculated movements portrays chains of motives in a sequence to make a complete non verbal statement. Therefore, every given choreographic process starts by conceiving or imagining an idea which is further developed into a picture. However, this paper explores dance from the Islamic view which is often seen as a taboo, but considering the Qadriyyah Islamic group, they see dance as a way of worshipping God, purifying themselves and self-articulation. While this paper uses the observer-participant method to carry out the study, it also uses its historical view to buttress the point.

Background and Historical Study of Qadriyyah

Qadriyyah is a *Sufi* order named after its founder, Syed Abdul Qader Gilani Al-Amoli (1077-1166 CE). He Persian by birth but migrated to Baghdad at the age of eighteen in search of knowledge. Eventually, he settled in an Islamic school popularly called Madrasa founded by Abu Said Al-Mubarak where he was however enthroned as the Sheyk after Abu Said's demise. Abdul Qader Gilani believed in purification of the soul and an ascetic life style thus he followed the Sufi path of the Islamic faith.

The word *Sufi* was derived from the word Sufism which according to Classical Sufi scholars means a science whose objective is the reparation of the heart from worldly acts and turning it away from all else but God. However, a Sufi teacher, Ahmad ibn Ajiba, posits that it is a science through which one can know how to travel into the presence of the Divine, purify one's inner self from filth, and beautify it with a variety of praiseworthy traits. *Qadriyyah* however flourished after the death of Abdul Qader Gilani through the efforts of his son Abdul Al-Razzaq who published several works to legitimize his father's legacy thereby tracing Shey Qader's connection to the holy prophet Muhammed (S.A.W.). As a result, the legitimacy of *Qadriyyah* as firmly established by Abdul Al-Razzaq gave it popularity thus began to spread throughout the Muslim world. It therefore proliferated across different continents such as Africa, Europe and Asia. Among the countries where *Qadriyyah* exist are Afghanistan, Morocco, Spain, Turkey, India, Ethiopia, Somalia, Mali, Senegal, Sudan, China and Nigeria.

Consequently, *Qadriyyah* was promoted in Nigeria by Sheikh Nasir Muhammad Umar Kabara, a notable Islamic scholar and philosopher, born in 1912 in Guringuwa village outside Kano, Nigeria. Although, *Qadriyyah* had been in existence in Northern Nigeria city of Kano and being practiced by traditional *Qadriyyah* mallams such as Ibrahim Nakabara (1867-1941) who was the dominant figure linking nineteenth and twentieth-century *Qadriyyah*, Sheik Nasir Kabara established direct contact with the primary sources of *Qadriyyah* authority in Khartoum, Timbuktu and Baghdad. As a result, *Qadriyyah* in Nigeria was recognised and endorsed by the *Qadriyyah* authority. This giant stride afforded him the opportunity to learn classical and modern aspects of *Qadriyyah* which made his knowledge of the Sufi order dwarfs that of the traditional *Qadriyyah* Mallams in Kano. As a result of his independence, around 1956 he opened a *Qadriyyah* mosque thus expand the *Qadriyyah* authority in Nigeria especially in Northern Nigeria. At present, *Qadriyyah* is practiced in territories Muslims reside

in the country. This is made possible by building mosques where the Sufi order can be practiced and the appointment of a *Muqadam*, who is the leader in worship.

Meanwhile, Sheik al-Qadir never established a set way for religious ceremonies to be conducted. To this end, local religious leaders are allowed to adopt different approaches to religious ceremonies but should not transcend the practice of Sufi order. However, Qadriyyah devotees worldwide are identified with their use of white and green clothing (white gown for male and female; green cap; green hijab or veil; green coat for male etc.). According to Qadriyya's belief, the symbol of white and green was deduced from the costume of the angels during their intervention in one of the wars fought by prophet Muhammed (S.A.W.). Another symbol is the *Bandir* (a popular drum in the Arab world) used for devotional worship of the Qadriyyah. The adoption of the *Bandir* is premised on its use to welcome the holy prophet Muhammed to Medina. Therefore in Nigeria, *Qadriyyah* has seven distinctive features albeit some are related, they still have distinctive functions. They are as follows:

Wuridi is a total submission to the Sufi order also known as *Tariqqa*. It is compulsory for anybody that intends to be an initiate to totally submit himself to his leader in the Sufi order. Also, he must accept that all his activities will not negate the laws guiding the Sufi path.

Lazimi is a compulsory morning and evening special prayer session for *Muqadams* (leaders) of Qadriyyah which will therefore bring them closer to Allah. It is usually performed after morning (Subhi) and evening (Ishai) prayers respectively.

Wazifa is a congregational prayer session where initiates maintain a sitting posture and continuously chant the name of Allah.

Kubrah is a special congregational prayer for initiates. The prayer is conducted either after Zuhr (afternoon) or Asr (evening) prayers on Fridays. The initiates, led by the *Muqadam*, sit in a circular or arc formation on the population at the session and chanting the names of Allah.

Izibih is also a Sunday or Thursday prayer session for soul purification. The session can be performed by an individual or a congregation.

Babandir is a special gathering session for all initiates usually at a designated place by the Sheik (the overall head of all *Muqadams*). All the *Muqadams* are expected to lead members of their section to the gathering. The time for the gathering varies from one Resident Sheik to another. For instance, in Ilorin *Banbandir* is performed six times in a year while it is done once in a year in Abeokuta.

Dhikr means the remembrance of Allah through chanting of his names and supplications extracted from the holy Quran. Apart from its adoption by Qadriyyah, all Muslims are expected to invoke the divine presence and awareness of Allah as stipulated in the holy Quran and the teachings of the prophet Muhammed known as Hadith. The practice of *Dhikr* by Qadriyyah takes different forms such as recitation, chanting, singing and body movements.

It is however important to note that the aforementioned features are interrelated but their functions are distinctive in nature. Although, they are meant for supplications and chants to invoke divine love and presence for soul purification, the approaches to the chants and supplications are unique from one another.

The Use of Gestures, Mimes and Pantomimes as Movement Aesthetics in Qadriyyah Worship

Dance is a non-verbal expressive form of communication that can be identified with human beings and even animals. It is in this regard that Abbe (2007, p.137) states that 'dance has always been with man. It has always been part of religion, ritual, drama, education and recreation. As an expression of the doings of man and his society, it documents man's tradition and the changes that occur in a society'. Also, Bakare (1998, p.2) views dance as a rhythmical movement of human body in time and space to make statement. This view shows that dance does not exist in a vacuum. Dance involves factors that make it exist and be called dance. Such factors include; rhythm, space, body, intention, effective communication. While Islam does not permit the use of dance in their mode of worship, it is unconsciously being introduced by the form of synchronised steps and movements practiced by Qadriyyah Islamic group worldwide. Bakare (2002, pp. 185-186) observes that the human body is:

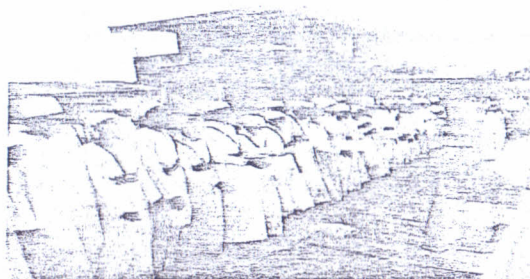
... the outer frame that houses the internal organs of human. It consists of the upper level of the head and the neck, the lower upper level of the shoulder blade, the arm and the torso, the middle of the waist, solar plexus and the entire pelvic region, the upper lower level of the thigh and the knee and the lower level of the foot.

In Bakare's view, dance is a product of kinesthetic stimuli that explores a wide range of movements. Considering Bakare's division of the outer part of the body when it comes to dance, one cannot but imagine how all these function together to make up any dance movement. This explanation reveals that there is no part of the outer body that cannot be used to dance. However, it is a common trait of the *Qadriyyah*, as part of their devotional act of worship to employ body movements in performing *Dhikr*. This approach according to the initiates is deduced from the practice of some angels having being ordered by Allah to worship him through varieties of postures and gestures such as bending, bowing, standing and others as they engage their body parts in the worship. Therefore, *Qadriyyah* adopts the practice with the ultimate goal of ensuring total inner and outer commitment of initiates for the purification of their souls as a means of bringing them closer to Allah. However, the body movements are expressed in two forms namely *Dhikr al-Faasi* and *Dhikr al-Bandir*.

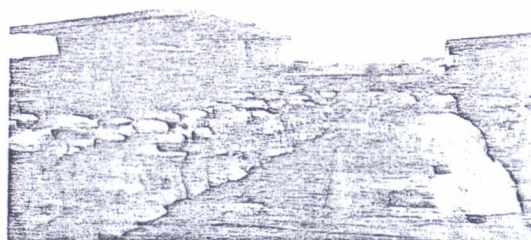
Dhikr al-Faasi is a congregational worship session through which body movement are used while supplicating and chanting of names of Allah. The session is led by a *Muqadam* who assembles the initiates to invoke the names of Allah for soul purification as part of the devotional act of worship. Before the body movement, chanting and supplication begin, the *Muqadam* must ensure that the congregation is well arranged. The arrangement is meant to form a circle, arc or rectangular shape depending on the population and the available space for the activity. Based on the tradition of *Qadriyyah*, any initiate irrespective of the gender that wants to partake in *Dhikr al-Faasi* must conform to certain requirements especially those interested in the first row (which is however exclusive for male initiates) of the congregation called *Safuul*. Firstly, the initiate must be costumed in a white cloth

(Jalamia known as gown) and green robe and cap. In some cases, the initiates also wear a green coat to complete the dressing. Secondly, the initiates in the first row must be versed in the supplications, chants and ultimately possess a good knowledge of the body movement.

During the Dhkir al-Faasi of Quadriyyah worship, the body movements take two major forms namely. This includes the vertical and horizontal body movements. It is however germane to note that the body movements are not performed in isolation. They are preceded by some recitations and supplications usually performed by the *Muqadam* or a selected person with the approval of the *Muqadam*. Before the commencement of the body movements, the initiates are well arranged maintaining a standing posture in a row hence the recitations and supplications start which usually lasted for a couple of minutes. Usually, a vertical body movement is employed to start Dhkir al-Faasi. To begin with, "bowing and bending" movements are used. With this, the initiates in their standing posture, place their hands sideways just like obeying the military command of "attention" then gradually bend their knees following the timing of the chants. For example, when *Lahi la ha illalahu* is chanted to commence the body movements, the performers bow their upper limbs with the right hands stretched downward and the left hands remain glued to the body. Afterwards, they gradually come up with the knees bending, while the right hands are thrust upward almost touching the right ear with the palm folded. The pace of the movements gradually increases when the initiates have totally absorbed themselves to the devotional activity. The pace of the chant determines the number of times the upward and downward movements of the body occur. This means the faster the chant, the faster the bowing and bending and vice versa.



Pic. 1: Straightening or descending posture of the vertical movement.

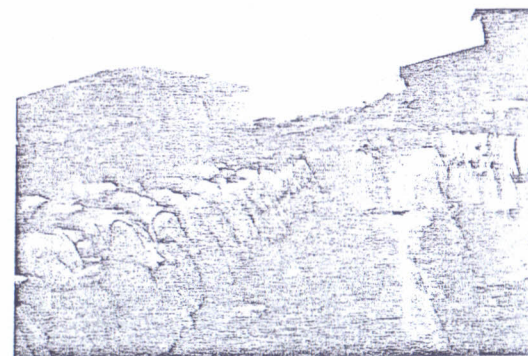


Pic. 2: Bowing/bending or ascending posture of the vertical movement.

Without intermission, but with the direction of *Muqadam* the movement transits to another. The movement can change from vertical to horizontal movements. There are no laid down rules of transition hence the *Muqadam* uses his discretion to effect the transition. However, another vertical movement expressed by the initiate is the "energetic jumping". This jumping is done in time and space. The initiates, in unison, stand on their toes with their hands firmly beside their bodies and jump intermittently while reciting and chanting the names of Allah. The timing of the jump is determined by the chant. Just like the bowing and bending, the pace of energetic jumping is determined by the pace of the chants.

The horizontal movement of the body during Dhkir al-Faasi is divided into two. The right hand movement to the chest and lateral turning of the body. The right hand movement to the chest is a slow body movement which is usually practiced to begin another dimension of the devotional worship. To begin the movement, one of the initiates with the approval of the *Muqadam* recites some Arabic words designed for the worship, after which the *Muqadam* leads the congregation in performing the movement. With the chant of *Lahi la ha* the right hand slowly pans right in a slant form with the upper limb moving in same direction and the left hand remains beside the body while the chant of *illalahu* motivates the slow return of the right hand to the left part of the chest in a frontal view. The form of the movement is that upper limb is bent at the chant of half of the divine name as italicized above while it is straightened to complete the chant *Lahi la ha illalahu*. This is done for several minutes till the *Muqadam* decides to change the movement to lateral turning of the body without any intermission.

The lateral turning of the body is a right and left movement of the body but the two legs are not turned at a time. When the body is turned to the right, the left leg equally moves in similar direction with the heel lifted while the left leg remains in a frontal position unturned. The congregation moves at the same time and speed with the chant inclusive. From the start, the movement is slow before accelerating and become fast in tandem with the tempo of the chant as moderated by the *Muqadam*. In this movement, there is change in the different names of Allah without disrupting the performance of the movement.



Pic. 3: Right lateral turning of the body in horizontal movement.



Pic. 4: Left lateral turning of the body in horizontal movement.

Dhikr al-Bandir is a recitation, singing, drumming and dancing session of Qadriyyah. The initiates are engaged in a call and response music performance to compliment the drumming on the *Bandir*, a drum used to compliment songs and recitations in devotional worship. In this session, there is no designated body movement to the drum beats which sound is believed to pronounce the names of Allah therefore initiates employ different body movements used in *Dhikr al-Faasi*. New body movements are also created by the initiates in response to the drum beats. The invented body movements are similar to the conventional horizontal and vertical body movements of Qadriyyah's worship. For example, movement of the body such as upward and downward movements of hands, nodding of head, right and left movement of the legs as well as employment of different body movements. Meanwhile, initiates always ensure that the invented body movements always conform to the tempo of the drumming. This means the faster the tempo of the drum, the faster the pace of the dances.



Pic.5: Free pattern movement in *dhikr al-faasi* performance.

Religion as a Form of Change in a Democratic Society: Qadriyyah Example

The standpoint of Islam on the purpose of dance is sheer entertainment. The other purposes of dance such as communication, education among others are overlooked. However, the acceptable form of dance in the religion is the one performed by a wife to her husband in their closet devoid of a third party. This means that the wife can dance for her husband even in nude as a form of romance between them. Though men are not permitted to dance, women are allowed to dance with a bride in a secluded place on the day of *Nikkah* also known as wedding. However, as stated earlier, our observation from the devotional act of worship of Qadriyyah has instigated the standpoint that the performance of the body movements is dance which could be categorised under ritual dance. This is based on the claim that the body movements were adopted to ensure purification of soul and negligence for worldly materials as a means of connecting them to the Supreme Being. Going by the major motif of the synchronized body movements of Qadriyyah as expatiated above, it would clear the log in the discerning eyes that the practice of such body movement vis-à-vis the objective of soul purification and neglect of worldly materials, could bring about behavioural change, peaceful co-existence and unity in the Nigerian society.

It is no news that Nigeria is rated as one of the most corrupt nations in the world therefore it is undeniable by any Nigerian citizen as a result of different cases of gross embezzlement of public funds by the public office holders. The corrupt practices of these individuals have seriously increased the gap between the rich and the poor; making the rich richer while the poor contend with abject poverty. In this regard, many of the citizens both youth and adult irrespective of their status either employed or unemployed, schooling or working have subscribed to various detrimental behaviours such as robbery, kidnapping, ritual killings internet fraud amongst others. With the current trend of behavioural maladies in Nigeria, the tenet and performance practice of Qadriyyah if adopted by the citizenry could serve as an antidote to salvage the nation from behavioural deficiencies.

The employment of Qadriyyah performance practice and ideology can also foster unity among the citizens of any country. Apparently, Nigeria is not a nation state rather it is a country heterogeneous nationalities. Therefore, the ideological, political and cultural differences of the nationalities have been a great source of strife in the country especially with the agitations for secession by some groups in Nigeria. Among the reasons for the advocacy for secession, according to media reports, is that the groups believed that their region is being marginalized by the current administration in the country. In a situation whereby all citizens imbibe activities that purify the soul as well as total neglect to material things, no citizen will be aware of any cultural, political and ideological differences. The resultant effect of soul purification is that all citizens will see one another as brothers therefore disregard any room for disunity.

On a similar note, the teachings of the Qadriyyah worship can serve as a pilot to peaceful coexistence in the country. A performance practice that is anchored by purification of soul and absolute neglect of irrational wealth accumulation may be very vital to establish and maintain peaceful coexistence in the Nigeria society. This is very crucial especially now that the peace of the country is threatened by socio-political militants and terrorist such as Boko Haram. In a society where the souls of the citizens are purified, their attention is concentrated God through activities connecting them to him, it will be difficult to witness any form of unrest or violence in such society.

Conclusion

If dance is referred to as the rhythmic movement of the body in time and space, then the expression of synchronized body movements in time and space to a rhythmic recitations and chants project *Dhikr* al-Faasi and *Dhikr* al-Bandir as dance performances. Firstly, the initiates perform the movements in conformity to the chants which therefore dictate the pace of the movements. Secondly, *Dhikr* al-Faasi cannot be performed anywhere venues except designated by the *Muqadam* usually in a mosque or an open prayer field. As submitted through this research, body movements are performed by a congregation of initiates well costumed in white gowns and caps while females costumed similarly with a green *Hijabs* or veils with the utopian objective of purifying their souls and getting closer to Allah. Also, the employment of the body movements allows the initiates use the inner and outer parts of their bodies in the devotional act.

According to the doctrine of the Sufi order, the use of the entire body for the *Dhikr* is to ensure a total commitment of the initiates in the devotional worship which in return purifies their souls, minds and bodies from devilish manipulations and activities. Through the use of the body movements and continuous chanting, it is believed that the initiates are transported to the divine world as a result of subjecting their inner and outer selves to movements for worshipping. Although the initiates never called nor accepted that the body movements could be regarded as dance, we are compelled by observation to conclude that the vigorous use of the body movements in the devotional worship is a ritual dance performance aimed at purifying the soul and communicating to the Supreme being therefore bringing about behavioural change which could help in fostering peaceful coexistence and orderliness in the society.

References

- Abbe, J. (2007). 'The dance art in Nigeria.' In: *Perspectives in Nigerian dance studies*. Ugolo, C. (Ed) Ibadan: Caltop Publication (Nigeria) Limited. Pp.137- 149.
- Adamu, U. A. (n.d). Maulana Sheikh Muhammad al-Nasir Kabara (RA) life and times. Kano: Qadriyyah Resources.
- Bakare, O. (1994). *Rudiments of Choreography*. (Part 1). Zaria: Space 2000 publishers.
- Bakare, Ojo Rasaki (1998) *Rudiments of Choreography* (Part 2). Zaria: Space200 Publishers.
- Bakare, O. (2002). 'The deformed can also dance: Democratizing the dance practice in a democratized Nigeria'. In: *Theatre and democracy in Nigeria*. Yerima A. and Akinwale A. (Eds). Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd. Pp.182-189.
- Bello, A. P. (2015). 'Dance practice and the choreographer's creativity through the lens of Bakare, Ojo Rasaki'. In: *Uncommon artistry: understanding Bakara, Ojo Rasaki's dance, drama and theatre*. Adeoye, A. A et al (Eds). London: SPM publications. Pp. 548-557.
- Definition of religion. Retrieved from <http://www.BBC.com/definition-of-religion>. 18th October, 2015.
- Dosumu-Lawal, Y. (2006) 'Masquerade dancing in south-western Nigeria'. In Yerima, A., Bakare, O. R., Arnold U. (eds) *Critical Perspectives on dance in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Kraft Books.
- Uford-Azorbo, I. and Ufford, I. I. (2014). 'Body Rhythmicity and Bakare, Ojo Rasaki's the deformed can also dance: democratizing dance practice in a democratized Nigeria'. In: *Uncommon artistry: understanding Bakara, Ojo Rasaki's dance, drama and theatre*. Adeoye, A.A et al (Eds). London: SPM publications. Pp. 478-487.
- Umokoro, M. (2002). *The performing artist in academia*. Ibadan: Evans Brothers Ltd.

Towards standardization of theatrical dance in Nigeria

Dance Journal of Nigeria (DANJON)
Vol. 3: pp 107-114, 2016.
A Publication of
Association of Dance Scholars and Practitioners of
Nigeria (ADSPON)

Chris NWARU

Department of Theatre Arts,
Imo State University,
Owerri,
Imo State, Nigeria.
Tel.: +234-803-672-0975
E-mail: chrisnwaru@yahoo.com

Christian Ikechukwu Nwaru started his theatre career with the Imo State Council for Arts and Culture Owerri, Nigeria (1989-2006) and worked as a dancer, actor, choreographer and director for more than twenty years. He has also worked with the National Troupe of Nigeria as a Principal Artist (2001-2003). He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre Arts at the University of Calabar (2000), Master of Arts degree in Dance and Choreography at the University of Ibadan (2005), and Ph.D. in African Dance and Choreography at the University of Northampton, England, United Kingdom (2015). He has published works in both national and international journals. He has also written some books such as Nature of Dance: A Study of Omenimoet cetera. He is currently working on a dance notation called 'Igbo Descriptive Notation'. He has been Lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, Imo State University, Owerri since 2006.

Abstract

Dance has been a medium of expression for man since prehistoric times. In Africa, it is a way of living and is seen in the unfolding of day to day activities. In the olden times, the art of dancing was not restricted to the people; it was only the cult dance that was restricted to specific groups of people in the African traditional setting. Today, anybody can learn and teach dance or stage performance in Nigeria. This freedom has led to the commonisation and disorderliness of the dance arts and practices in the recent times. A case in hand is the confusion associated with some of the 'contemporary dancers' in Nigeria. Also the idea of allowing people who are not grounded in dance to teach dance in higher institutions of learning is not a good development for the dance art in Nigeria. This paper argues that this practice is negatively affecting the positive development of dance profession in Nigeria. The writer suggests that for us to effectively bring about change in our society, we must change and standardise dance practices in Nigeria.

Key words: Towards, Standardisation, Theatrical Dance, Nigeria.

In this paper, the writer explores the themes generated in the ADSPON conference 2015 titled "Dance and Change in Democratic Nigerian Society". The conference theme highlights the euphoria of "change" that has saturated the air especially in the political space of Nigeria. The conference emphasised that dance is not only a cultural form of representation but also a way to capture the exciting changes that occur in society. In support of the conference theme, the writer takes a look at some vital issues that have the potential to prepare and equip the dance artists in their contribution towards the effective actualisation of 'change' in the Nigerian society.

I would like to begin by explaining some terms and their meaning as used in this paper such as 'standardisation' and 'Theatrical Dance', for better understanding of the reader. Standardisation implies making a standard and according to the Hornby (2010) standard means "a level of quality especially one that people think is acceptable or a level of quality that is normal or that is acceptable