Journal of Humanities, Music and Dance
ISSN: 2799-1180
Vol : 04, No. 01, Dec 2023-Jan 2024
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JHMD
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jhmd.41.7.20

Towards Designing Choreography Curriculum Template for African Contemporary Dance Using Dayo Liadi's Olori-Oko Dance Performance

Yeside Dosumu-Lawal*

**PhD, Department of theatre arts and music Lagos state university Lagos state, Nigeria.*

*Corresponding Email: *yesidedosumulawal@gmail.com*

Received: 10 August 2023 **Accepted:** 29 October 2023 **Published:** 13 December 2023

Abstract: ***Modern dance techniques such as choreography gives the genre a unique language that can be used to expand the dance technique and dance composition as used by choreographers. Dayo Liadi as a choreographer and study in this article has used contemporary dance genre of body gestures to communicate his message through signs and cultural symbols, towards the appreciation from the audience. However, there are many thematic areas including space, shapes, images, body movement, and other paraphernalia employed in the style called contemporary dance type of choreography. Thus, all of these must be preserved and replicated as unique dance techniques. Therefore, the need to study and propose an indigenous choreography curriculum that emanates from Dayo Liadi's creative work i.e. Olori Oko performance. The study is anchored on Michael Forkine's Perspective of Adorno Theodor's Philosophical Aesthetic theory. This is with the view to incorporate home-grown curriculum contents into dance studies in theatre schools in Nigeria and in Africa. The study adopted quantitative research method, involving participants' observation, transcription and content analysis of lyrics and video using a checklist to conduct thorough video pre-view and review of the choreographic work. Major findings revealed a need for collaboration and performances to sharpen and widen the horizon of the artistic and creativity appreciation, with the view to incorporate new dance techniques into the Nigerian and African dance techniques such as incorporated in Dayo Liadi's creative work. The study recommend direct implementation or adoption of the proposed curriculum template as part of choreography dance studies in theatre curriculum among departments in higher institutions Nigeria and Africa.***

Keywords: ***Design, Choreography, Curriculum Template, African Contemporary Dance, Dance Performances, Adorno Theodor's Philosophical Aesthetic Theory.***

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1. INTRODUCTION

Modern dance techniques have revolutionized the seemingly rigid convention of ballet dance form; even though modern dance evolved from classical dance genre. The modern dance choreography with its techniques gives the genre a unique language that can be used to expand the dance technique and dance composition as used by choreographers. Thus, principles or conventions which provoke the audience to react or meditate on the philosophy and message of the dance performances are emphasised with modern dance techniques Therefore, modern African choreographer becomes a user and portrayer of some traditional musical instruments to communicate using traditional materials, sometimes reflecting gods and goddesses to suit the modern belief system and thematic intent of dance composition.

It is obvious in contemporary times that modern dance is a departure from the element of belief, which is distorted in form or shapes, and has become the language of images, dances of motif, and songs have been reduced to sound to accompany the briskness of the new innovative movements. So, one cannot rule out the elements of shock and non-conformity which constitutes what modern dance philosophy represents and communicates (en.m.wikipedia.org).The philosophy it represents includes meditations or provocations which are not common or usually non-existent during the traditional dance performance era because the audience could easily associate them with what they see, which is an embodiment of their African culture.

Conversely, the essence of a modern choreography, in terms of communication, is how well the dancer can communicate the dance steps which are now in new language of shapes, symbols and images to the new dance audience, thus, breaking the barrier of culture and traditional location of the original dance (www.researchgate.net). Adornment such as gesture and major technical elements in dance such as light helps to highlight the gesture and give more meaning to the production. The technical approach in the aspect of dance presentation of modern and contemporary dance styles falls within the same revolution against what could be typified as “anti- traditional, anti-conventional and anti-ornamental” (Oni, 2004; 108)

Williams (1997; 3) also states that “today, stage lighting design is recognized as a field merging science with art”. This is also corroborated by Pilbrow (1999; 34) that ‘‘the challenge of the future must match technical development with a creativity that is always sensitive to the theatres essentially human needs’’. For instance, while darkness repels and often creates fear of the unseen and the unknown, the contemporary dancer/ choreographer dwells more on the use of unusual colours and designs, sometimes to compliment the back drop (set), costume, or the lighting of their performances. The technique enables the creation of moods that most times tilt towards the traditional manner of lighting strategies in dim shadowy lights; thus, disregarding the primary aim of stage lighting which is to provide illumination for visibility, and a qualitative distribution of the light, which is required for a moment of recognition deemed appropriate in a dramatic presentation, Oni (2004’ 46) infers that, there is need for new concepts, such that the new revolutionary approaches should sought to conceive of art beyond its ornamental attributes.

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The new concepts which Oni (2004) speaks about in the lighting genre can be attributed to dance when it includes the idea of plasticity, in relationship between part of an artistically successful practical production, creativity, and human progress. As such, there has been constant development in the art of dance and stage lighting, emphasizing the theatrical value to the scenic form. Oni (2004; 46) further posits that "for the composition of stage picture reinforces the theme and evokes the mood for the psychological reaction of the audience".

However, in the late 19thand early 20th centuries, there was a change in perception, especially as regards dance study. Thus, a new vocabulary according to Unruh (2004; 46) is the entry of visual and movement expressions into the theatrical acts and performance. Of course, such movements may not necessarily be physical movement, but a setting that is dynamic, capable of expressing changing relationships, feelings, moods ... during the course of the action (Unruh, 2004). The author further believes that the static stage sets do not aid the actualization of the new perception and there is need for change. Thereafter, it has become most apparent in musical and dance productions, that contemporary dance gesture on stage and light will be more dependent in the creation of the new performance environment.

Dayo Liadi as a choreographer has proofed that has used contemporary dance genre of body gestures to communicate through signs and cultural symbols, as (illustrated in figure 1,2,3 and 4 as part of this study) with a view to ensure the appreciation of the audience. Also, the dance performance used the cultural element engaged in form of proverbs, chants and traditional drums, (illustrated in tables; 1, 2, 3 and 4) as part of the entire musical dance composition. The signs and symbols employed cut across the aforementioned in the dance movement, music, space, costumes and properties. Dayo Liadi in an interview conducted by Edozie Udeze (Nation newspaper of February, 2013) disclosed how he became popular through the dance concept of Olori Oko. According to him, the success was a joint effort with the Infinity Music Group and what made the production popular and a master piece was the display of the unique technique of Ijodee, the positive effect of the dance technique and especially, it's impact on the young minds.

Thus, Olori Oko musical dance (on YouTube) was an opportunity to showcase a synergy of how dance could be infused into music to make statement not exhibition. Dance is not about display of nudity in musical videos in order to be appreciated, even though the concept was a shared idea with the Infinity Music Group. The choreography, the stage settings with the drums and the lighting was designed by Dayo Liadi (dancefame.tv). Upon the success of Olori Oko, many were inspired through the concept, how African dance and movement could be expanded and relevant to the contemporary audience with better understanding.

Today, many are encouraged to become professional dancers, thereby developing the profession, by so doing Nigeria is blessed with different patterns of dance genre that can be transformed into tourist attraction. The dance concept has re-enforced the mood and highlighted the thematic preoccupation of the song. Invariably, most people easily remember Dayo Liadi and refer to him as "Olori Oko due to his appearance in the musical video by the Infinity music group. As a dance artiste, he, like the music group, was particular about his

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image due to his exposure internationally. The music group members, like him, were also keen about their music and what they represented. So, Olori Oko became Dayo Liadi's stage name among the populace and this gave him recognition in Nigeria. More importantly, that Dayo Liadi's choreography derived its motives from worship, daily human movement, spirituality, animals, the environment and from some basic cultural elements.

Furthermore, Dayo Liadi noted that it was the dance piece 'Ori' after winning the first prize in Madagascar that established him as an international dancer, and more so, that signs and symbols are used by his choreographic crew in communicating their message(s) to the designated audience. Again, as the tradition of modern dance project, it's past and current practitioners should recognize the need to create a more substantial context for contemporary work, which is dictated by the demand and needs of time and development.

This can be achieved by bringing historical precedents into present repertory using the instruments of communication that emerged from the both modern and traditional choreographic instruments of proxemics, kinesics, adornment and technical elements. However, Dayo Liadi has forged his own distinctive and highly technical vocabulary, this is because, modern and traditional instruments of communication that emerged from the technique of dance choreography are proxemics, kinesics, adornment and technical elements. Therefore, Dayo Liadi's works are notable for the use of signs and symbols to evoke and explore a variety of human emotions and relationships, as illustrated in tables and figures, later in this paper.

Statement of the Problem

Even though modern dance evolved from classical dance genre, however, modern dance techniques have revolutionized the seemingly rigid convention of ballet dance form. However, the audience hardly respond appropriately to the techniques employed by contemporary dances due to their lack of knowledge of the dance codes, which are in form of signs and symbols which are divided into movement, space, costume, props and music.

In most instances, such elements are also misunderstood by the audience, in which they only respond to and regarded as entertainment in the performances, as such; the actual essence of the message in the dance presentation is lost. Hence, there is need to propose an indigenous choreography curriculum that emanating from Dayo Liadi's creative works i.e. Olori Oko dance performance. This is with the view to incorporate home-grown curriculum contents into dance studies in institutes, centres and departments in Nigeria and in Africa. More so, it helps in translating and clarifying dance relevant academic thematic areas, space, shapes, images, body movements, and other paraphernalia employed in the style called contemporary dance type of choreography, also there is the need to preserve and replicate such unique techniques.

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2. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted textual content analysis research design of the qualitative research approach, through participant's observation and of critical study of the selected choreographic creative work through video preview of Olori-Oko (on YouTube) dance performance. A lyrics and video content analysis checklist for lyrics, space, costumes, properties, body movement and lyrics interpretations was developed and used to analyse the primary sources of data in Dayo Liadi's choreographic creative work. Thus, thorough pre-view for the purpose of identifying the outlined variables in the selected choreographic creative work including capturing of screen shots for illustrations.

3. ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Analysis of lyrics and video contents of Dayo Liadi's selected choreographic creative work i.e. Olori-Oko, is presented under the sub-headings of musical lyrics and tabulation alongside relevant screen shots captured as Figures and as illustrated in tables.

Music Lyrics of the Song 'Olori Oko' and the English Interpretations and Vice Versa
The lyrics of the song are the propelling force and determinant that accentuate every movement, gestures, use of space and other technical facilities in agreement and according to the lyrics in the composition with English interpretations:

Hmm!	
I have seen the future!	
Though I am not a prophet, Hnhnn!	
In the book of revelation	
There is warning for the nation	
He that has ears let him hear	
What the spirit is saying	
Eh'!	
Ai sinle Ologbo	(in the absence of the cat)
Loun mu Eku sako	(the mouse takes change)
Yiyo t'Ekunnyo	(the leopard's stalk for his prey)
Ki ma nse to jo	(should not be mistaken for fear/ cowardice)
Agba ki nwa loja kori Omo tuntun wo	(a child's head should not be badly moulded while there are elders in the market place)
Fitilayi to tan	(before the oil lamp burns act)
Imole wo le wa	(let the light come in)
Imole tide	(light has come!)
Eh!!	
Olori Oko shi nbowa	(The Almighty is still coming back) 3x
On bowa	
On bo w'aye	(Still coming back to this world) 3 times
A fo pin Ina	(The moth)
To'lounopa Fitila	(That vows to eliminate the light)

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Ara re nio pa (will only kill itself)
Se bi aro to bagbon, eh (It is the wise lame)
Logun asotele kin pa, aye egbo (That escaped the predicted war)
Afoju di Omo Eniyan (The carelessness of human)
Olorun Oba (Lack of respect for God)
Iku lo mu dani (attracts death)
Iye iye
Aisinle Ologbo (In the absence of the cat)
Loun mu Ekusako (The mouse takes charge)
Yiyo t'Ekunnyo (The leopard stalk for his prey
Ki ma nsetojo (should not be mistaken for fear/ cowardice)
Agba kin wal'Oja (A child's head should not be badly moulded,)
Kori Omo tuntun wo (where there are elders in the market)
Fitilayi to tan (Before the lamp burns out)
Imole wo le de (let the light come in)
Imole ti de (light has come)
Aye ile, Aye Ile (This world)
Edumare Baba (God almighty father)
Edumare Baba (God almighty father)
EmuraEmura (Be prepared)
EmuraEmura (Be prepared)
Olori Oko nbo o (The Great Lord)
Jagunmolunbo o (The generalissimo)
Papa nlatinjotohuntohun (The consumable fire)
Efufuti mi le titi (The wild wind that shakes the entire world)
Eeh
Olori Oko nbo o, Emura (The great king is coming, be prepared)
Oba a saya (The great shield)
Oba Aidigbolu (The king that must not be confronted)
Eni odigbolua o si mu wo muwomu (Any confronter would diminished completely).

Space, Costumes, Properties, Body Movement and Lyrics Interpretations in 'Olori Oko' Musical Performance

The Yoruba kind of religious ritual performance, that involves invocations and possession, led by the chief priest and his accolades, who communes on their behalf while they pay obeisance. A spiritual encounter, which could be likened to the second coming of Christ, is considered in the creation of the unforeseen forces, in a trance-like performance. Though a studio, it symbolized an altar of religious worship which was aided by media technology to bring different effects of light, animals, smoke and dual scene changes within the set space.

Again, contemporary costumes and traditional attires signify two cultures; the English suit and the traditional attire of dancers. The traditional instrument as set props establishes the traditional Nigerian setting and comprises of different musical instruments not peculiar to one tribe. This is a sign of oneness, communication irrespective of tribe, race, age or group. The

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baggy worn by Dayo Liadi, being the lead dancer, could be gotten from the northern or western regions of Nigeria. The choice of costumes unites with movement, in accordance with the rhythm, making the body gesture more visual and more pronounced.

Furthermore, Olori Oko musical video showcased the clarion call to action using the animal motif through body movements, signs and symbols peculiar to the selected cultures in Nigeria to communicate. The interpretations of the lyrics implies 'Man`s struggle amidst numerous challenges requires a spiritual intervention as the case may be. Thus, Olori Oko song acknowledged the supremacy and the existence of the Almighty God, whose arrival is unpredictable. This call embraced two cultures; using symbolic objects and body movements as well as through musical instruments and technology, placing the music and dance presentation within the contemporary dance style or genre of choreography.



Fig. 1: Dayo Liadi projecting into the Future and Establishing the Cultural Setting using Musical Instruments in Olori Oko Music Performance

The body alignment of Dayo Liadi staring into the sky symbolizes projection into the future, which also expresses the Lyrics of the song'; I have seen the future", then the facial expression. The beating of the drum and soaring hands in the air is a sign of connectivity with the supernatural being. It makes it look like a worship or ritual, while well-coordinated movements of dancers form the background for his solo skit. The acrobatic display of jumps enhance the movement in another level and planes, full possession as a priest with lots of

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emotions and invocative movement, all selected according to the characters mentioned in the lyrics.(Video, YouTube)

While rendering 'Aro to ba gbon ni ogun aisotele kin pa'; the body alignment changed to a distorted kind of body gestured to showcase a deformed man with a walking stick. This is to illustrate the interpretation; meaning 'a wise disabled will definitely escape predicted war' to communicate the same message. The mentioning of the cat (Ai sin le Ologbo) is seen through the facial expression that enhances the graceful exaggerated movement of the body (See figure 2)



Fig. 2: Dayo Liadi Display of a Stick Motif in Olori Oko Musical Song

Again, 'Agba kin wa l'Oja kori Omo titun woo' (is demonstrated with a sharp gesture of the hand, pulling the head down sideways. The movement vocabulary is divided into smooth, graceful and sharp moves giving it variety. The celebration of the coming of Olori Oko (God) is a mixture of daily movements, acrobatics and animal motif, to the core African dance vocabulary of wriggling of the waist, the hand gesture welcoming Eledumare (God) and other gestures that are cultural and peculiar to the Yoruba setting, with the percussion projecting the African music, bringing percussive body movements to play.

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Fig. 3: Dayo Liadi's Acknowledgment and Total Submission to God, through worship



Fig.4: Dayo Liadi's Suspended Swing of the Hand symbolises an Appeal to commune with God

The choreographic concept is very relevant to the lyrics; explaining so much about the concept and aiding the understanding of the audience. The symbolic images created by the use of the body in response to the music are presentational behaviours that are embedded in the official lyrics of the song 'Olori Oko' by the Infinity music group. These behavioural patterns were both verbal and non-verbal. Verbal means is equivalent to speech (song) and non-verbal, by means of body movements.

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Fig. 5: Dayo Liadi Calling on God and Awaiting His coming with Open Hand Movement

The proposed curriculum design or template is derived from the two creative choreographic works of Dayo Liadi, i.e. Olori Oko and Freedom dance performances especially. The proposed curriculum template is projected with the view to incorporate it into dance studies in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria by theatre institutes, centres and departments in Nigeria universities and indeed in Africa at large

Proposed Choreography Curriculum Templates for Themes in Contemporary Dance Genre in Nigeria

The proposed curriculum is presented in Table 3 as follows:

Table 1: Proposed Curriculum Template for Themes in Dance Movement of Dayo Liadi's Choreography

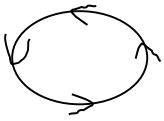
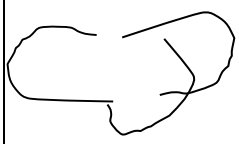
S/N	Themes	Sub-Themes	Specific Objectives	Application	Study of Dayo Liadi's Dance Piece
1	Movement of the whole body		To create hyper action, To create impression of restlessness possession and spirituality	Restlessness, possession or spirituality and trance.	Olori Oko. Figure 2,3,4
2	Percussive movement of	Facial expression	To create impression of	Crisis, chaos, climax, loss	Olori Oko. Figure 2 and 3

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jhmd.41.7.20

	the entire body in a sweep	needed for clarity	possession and confusion To create crisis, chaos, climax, loss of strength or end of show	of strength or end of show	
3	Percussive movement of the back	Scanty costume required	To create strength, body control and manipulation To communicate high sense of control of the body	physically and spiritually	Olori- Oko, Figure 1, and 3
4	Suspended swing movement of the hand	Sometimes hands props is required to expatiate on the essence of gesture	To create sense of appeal that commune with the super natural being, To appeal to God or spiritual world.	conjuring spirit beings, appeasement propitiation, homage atonement	Olori Oko. Figure 1,2 and 3 Freedom.(video)
5	Mid-level swing of the hand		To create balance of the body	Aid the distribution of energy or force in the body	Olori Oko.Figure 3and 4 Freedom (video)

Table 2: Proposed Curriculum Template for Themes in Design of Dayo Liadi's Choreography

S/N	**Themes / Sub-themes**	**Sub-Themes**	**Specific Objectives**	**Application**	**Study of Dayo Liadi's Dance Piece**
1	 Kinesics' circle	Establishing a setting, local community	To create impression of unity	Togetherness	Olori oko. Figure 1 and 4
2		Suppleness	To express beauty		

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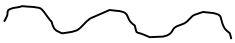
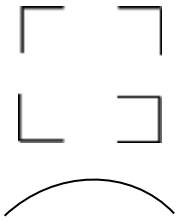
	Kinesics' curve				
3	Kinesics serpentine 		To express exoticness		Olori-Oko. Figure 2 and 3
5	Angle 	Viciousness	To create Aesthetic effect To create impression of aggressiveness		
6	Arc	Incompleteness	To create impression of uncertainty	Indecision	Olori Oko,

Table 3: Proposed Curriculum Template for Themes in Dayo Liadi's Choreography

S/N	Themes	Sub-Themes	Specific Objectives	Application	Themes / Sub-themes
1	Facial expression	True to life represent life	To express an inner feeling in relation to character played. To enhance and Aesthetic relevance		Olori-Oko.
2	Gestures	Body gestures as main tool of communication, Different gestures according to thematic preoccupation of the each piece	To create impression of explicit content To express detailed expression	Abstracted from real life situation but structured to suit the contemporary style, in an exaggerated, but not too far from the real gesture	Olori-Oko,

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3	Sticks	Symbol of Authority	To create rhythm To arrange musical pattern	Sign of identity, being in control, in charge For signification	Olori Oko,
4	Drum	Symbol communication	To summon, to worship, symbol of royalty, authority and identity	Cultural identity, symbol of communication.	Olori Oko
5	Flags	Symbol of identity	To represent unity in diversity in Africa	Symbols of identity	
6	Cyclist	Symbol of new generation	To bring in new innovations in terms of technology and communication	Technology	

Summary of Findings

Summary of findings arising from thus study are as follows:

- The two case study of dance techniques and creative works of Olori Oko and Freedom dance performances have established Dayo Liadi as a formidable dance artiste and choreographer in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large.
- Modern/Contemporary dance techniques need to be incorporated into the dance curriculum in Nigerian and African such as in Dayo Liadi's dance techniques of the creative works of Olori Oko and Freedom song performances.
- The collaborative approach adopted by Dayo Liadi in his Olori Oko and Freedom song performances has widen the horizon and the artistic creativity of the dance industry in Nigeria.

4. CONCLUSION

A critical analysis of the choreographic work of Olori Oko song performance by Dayo Liadi who is widely recognized as a formidable dance artiste and choreographer, infers that no modern art can exist without a strong link to traditional dance art. This is an indication for the need to reform and restructure dance techniques in line with the Michael Forkine's Perspective of Adorno Theodor's Philosophical Aesthetic theory. Thus, there is need for collaboration and performances among choreographer to sharpen and widen their horizon and artistic creativity and appreciation, with the view to incorporate new dance techniques into

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the Nigerian and African dance curriculum among higher institutions of learning, such as Olori Oko dance performance by Dayo Liadi's creative work. Therefore, the need for the integration of the proposed curriculum template for adoption and adaptation.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings from this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

- Direct implementation of the proposed curriculum template as part of choreography dance studies in institutes, centres and departments in higher institutions in Nigeria and Africa at large.
- Adoption of the proposed template as part of choreography / composition of dance/ studies by dance practitioners, scholars and choreographers and stakeholders in the dance industry in Nigeria.
- Adaptation of the template as a guide in modern and contemporary dance choreography and evaluation.

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