
Girl Culture, Girl Power in Fraction/Infraction of Nupe Music and Dance: A Chaotic Reading

Muhammad Alkali & Muhammad Shariff

Chaos was the law of nature; order was the dream of man.
- H.B. Adams

Abstract

This cultural study explores the structure of the male–female dance relations from the perspective of Chaos Theory, applying it to the analysis of body language/interaction in Nupe music and dance. The study uses Chaos Theory in securing the fact that the world is both disordered and ordered, and that man is both bound yet free in sexual matters, for example. The theory works in-between our world, spreading and widely utilised in variety of disciplines, including cultural, literary, and Islamic studies. Equally, Theatre de Complicité encourages fragmentation and nonlinearity for structure, and physicality and visual imagery for performance, especially as found in this study’s sexual music and sexual dance performance in Niger State. Since the theory favours extensive process of improvisation, it is not, therefore, within the compass of one philosophy or viewpoint, hence, Chaos Theory as an outgrowth from Mathematics is within the background of limitlessness as a path for eternity. Chaos Theory is deemed to be the appropriate choice for analysis that provides avenue for escape from soul-crushing mechanical view of, for example, sexual matters in critical approaches thereby furnishing an alternative language and scope for literary and religious interpretations. The hypothesis of the

study is that it is normally a girl's culture to be soft, fresh, and beautiful, which invites sexual attraction, which in turn, often results in sexual harm in societies. When she enters a dance arena, male–female interaction has capacity to be something else, religiously and socially.

Keywords: Chaos theory; strange attractors; nonlinearity and fragmentation; cultural studies; indenture; music and dance

1) **Preliminary Statements**

This cultural study uses sexual attraction approach to a theory of chaos as a social and religious survival in Niger State and by extension Nigeria and Africa. After all, Ian Stewart sees chaos as “a strange and beautiful combination of stability and unpredictability” (130) though Harriett Hawkins warns against moralists and critics who see things through the lens of virtue versus vice. The focus on music and dance and its implications for amorous possibility would be approached from cultural, literary, and religious perspectives.

The objective is to ascertain whether or not the Nupe music and dance steps are capable of causing sexual promiscuity. One of the major results of this socialisation — seen here through what may be termed ‘tempting’ music and dance — is the rise of sociocultural and religious paranoia or disorder as a rising challenge in Nupe communities of Niger State, as represented through modern or what has come to be termed “pro-Max” Nupe music. This dis/orderliness is also found in the neighbouring Kwara and Kogi States of Nigeria where Nupe speakers are indigenes of the states. Almost everywhere, orderliness has always been the dream of man, especially the Islamic man. Any chaotic environment is

consequently to be put in order. This seems to be the law of nature on man. Alternatively, Chaos Theory explains that there is always an identifiable orderliness in a seeming disorderliness but it demands some efforts from man before getting things in orderly manner.

This is in tandem with James A. Wohlpart who wittily draws attention to how man is placed on Earth, and further needs to “re/place” himself in a more beneficial way (see, Wohlpart 20). Chaotic systems are, in the end, ordered systems. Their irregular behaviours, which permeate the world as a cult make H.B. Adams to understand that though for centuries man has always been confronted with challenges of comprehension or classification of creatures in accordance with their linear, deterministic, and reductive logic (which is inherited from Aristotle and later from Newton’s assertions), they are simply dismissible as something random or disordered that can be ordered. Therefore, studies have always promoted a world ruled by response to stimuli and reject chaos as something undesirable impeding human progress (see, Michael Patrick Gillespie, *The Aesthetics of Chaos: Nonlinear Thinking and Contemporary Literary Criticism*). Pursuant to this, the deterministic and mechanistic view of the world gave a clear impression that the universe can be controlled through Stimulus-Response (S-R). The world, therefore, is predictable and in the long run controllable, ordered.

The function of music in shaping and in the formation of indenture, especially of the youth, cannot be over-emphasised since music represents an important cultural sphere where identities are affirmed, challenged, torn apart and reconstructed. Youth are known to use music and listen to musicians that appeal to them. Thus, youth’s choice of music is a significant marker of the nature and

character of identity construction. Music is fun always as it brightens life, but the expression and consequent development of musical taste can also be a serious statement about youthful indenture, especially as they have religious implications. The need for religious blend in every social life (a sort of offering innovations through reframed argument of religion) has been well stressed by Leni Franken (155–172) and Shiraz Thabane (612–625). The debate on phenomenological religious intervention has been on (e.g., see, Kevin O’ Grady 69–72) and Terence Lovat 46–51).

Therefore, what appeals to the youth, outside their religious dictates, may not necessarily appeal to the adult class. For example, pop music is a genre that has the greatest appeal and impact to the majority of the youth anywhere in the world. The influence of the medium and its artists on overall indenture can be complex and pervasive as it often than none tends towards sexual appeal. It, therefore, has cultural and religious implications for the society. Grounded in both a theoretical framework and a contemporary analysis of indenture, the study interrogates how contemporary Nupe modern music influences and shapes indenture of Nupe teeming youth.

Using contemporary Nupe music for Niger, and as also found in Kwara and Kogi States where Nupe is spoken as well, the study provides how music uses resources of language and culture in stage performance and construction of Nupe youth. To this end, the study analyses identity question of the youth and the possibility of endangerment of their sociocultural and religious behaviours. This study, like in past reviews, provides a schema into how we might “re/place” our worldviews in more significant ways – as a means of shaping the compass of the teaming youth of Niger, Kwara, and Kogi States in particular, and Nigeria and Africa in general.

2) Literature Review

Despite the fact that it is a girl's culture to be beautiful always (in body and character), her total make-up is always in fraction/infraction. Since no one is totally perfect, there would always be challenges in her life from whatever perspective we are approaching her. This is why Wvllie James Jennings observes on the significance and dangers of human five senses (of seeing, touching, smelling, hearing, and tasting) in a woman's total make up. The gap between the prophetic mode and artistic mode (in, for example, a girl's total body built) are ways of life that need to be compared and contrasted in order to ascertain a shared abundant life lived in (for example, musical) freedom. Any artistic mode of freedom needs to be checked. For this study, such an art concentrates on three senses (sound, sight, and touch) for human survival vis-à-vis the expected divine life intervention. The prophetic or religious mode of life always watches out for acceptable behaviours and rejects unacceptable mode no matter how appealing to sexual feelings, for example. The undoubtedly appealing artistic mode of life in its amorous nuances plunges into the depths of what it prepares that must be seen and probably sensationally touched which leads to yet appealing amorous wordings in a music, hence, chaotic (dis)play. These joined disordered modes of life (chaos) at this juncture are needed to be ordered for balancing of two high-level cultural modes of life that characterise contemporary lives whether in the western world or, for example, in the Nupe cultural world of Niger State, Nigeria, and Africa. The battle, therefore, according to Jennings, is between "modes of concealment and consumption" (256).

The second part of Anna Aresi's article is similarly predicated on disorderliness that glides into orderliness based on a "spiritual journey" that began with material reality and arrived,

through philosophy to the divine. Material reality is a concealment that is consumed by unsuspecting public, i.e., the youth, and, removing the chaffs from the grains, the prophetic mode sets in so as to rely on an ordered environment.

Similarly, Emly S. Hill discusses gender and sexuality through the apparent biblical allusions in Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*. It raises complex theological questions on the protagonist, Stephen Gordon, as a queer and therefore, disordered Christ figure whose suffering ushers in a fresh insight into love question. Considering the questions of queer, feminist, and Christian discourses of suffering and love, this study observes that Hill's christological narrative is an invitation to the reader that the queerness of love which may be unintelligible to realm of spirituality, to a level of theology that not only acknowledged it but also elevated it to a consideration of the divine. Hence, a viewed disordered practice is now considered divinely ordered.

In "A Taste for Otherness", Gazi Islam traces cultural studies into a metaphor for understanding unique relationship between otherness and identity. It simply combines a focus on the human body that has passion for physical desire and aggression vis-à-vis cultural debate on immorality. The notions of hybridity and mixture made it a recipe for lively debate anywhere on an ordered society from what is assumed disorderliness. Thus, the artistic versus cultural expectations have become a form of knowledge that is applied to the dynamism of the self versus otherness.

On the other hand, Michalinos Zembylas' article calls attention to the significance of religious education in affect theory which brings together affective and aesthetic proportions. This has implication for this study's girl power during music and dance among youth. It renews explanatory power for affective and aesthetic dimensions. Educators and youth can derive religious

education in musical industry as it reframes potentialities for developing new sensibilities of the ‘religious’ and the ‘secular’.

Nathan Eric Deckman’s “The Questions of Jesus and Mazu: Human or Beyond?” reveals that despite attention given to nearly every aspect of religion, there are challenges in about questions posed by religious characters. This is puzzling because philosophical hermeneutics and other post-Heideggerian philosophies emphasise the priority of questioning. Questioning, for Martin Heidegger, defines the human condition. Can these figures ask genuine questions? The task of the present study is to speculate about whether any of Jesus’ or Mazu’s questions are open-ended ones aimed at understanding what another says. I take up this task with a hermeneutic thinking where Bakari Kitwana discusses hip hop music as contemporary moral decay of societies.

Kitwana, a black American young cultural critic, discusses a thoughtful plight of youth's society of unemployment, incarceration, and the collapse of gender relations of the time. The youth, she believes, are forced into tough, slick gangsta movies, and rap music, which she calls “the black person's CNN.” The youth are the Hip Hop Generation. This generation is lost in love and sex matters. Kitwani’s work is now essential for black American studies and has high score for consciousness raising like Anne Koedt’s essay, *The Myth of Vaginal Orgasm* and Andrea Dworkin’s provocative book, *Intercourse*. These radical feminist critics have, in a sort of rhetorical question, responded to public scolding on these privacy issues, countering that, ‘Isn’t the personal political?’ see, Carol Hanisch’s 1970 essay, “Is the Personal Political?” This clash or chaos should give us a working theoretical framework.

3) **Theoretical Framework**

Last few decades have witnessed upsurge in mathematical modelling that is widely used by a range of fields. Chaos Theory, an outgrowth from Mathematics, is a mechanistic and deterministic prism which presents a universe governed by immutable laws of Stimulus-Response. Once man is stimulated, he would respond to the stimuli appropriately. William Shakespeare points out,

“If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?”

(*Merchant of Venice*, Act III, Scene I)

Predictability became the order of the day and the world simply became controlled. It permeated all aspects of life and became a cult. Sir Isaac Newton, as Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers’ *Order Out of Chaos* explains, is “the new Moses who had been shown the tables of the law” (27). At its birth, the theory, was “dismissed as pertinent only to the realm of accident, coincidence, kismet, and messy human affairs” (David Porush 382) but it waxes stronger by the day as it stands the test of time.

Chaos Theory emphasises that there is an order in a seeming disorder. Chaotic systems are rich with order. It is their irregular behaviours (disorderliness) that call attention to the need to have them well ordered. It is, therefore, such a model that simulates processes inexpensively (Haim H. Bau and Yochanan Shachmurove 2) and as such “can also furnish an alternative language and scope for literary interpretation” (Yas, Khalid Ahmad, Arbaayah Ali Termizi, Rosli Talif, and Hardev Kaur 109).

Following above, the chaos that emerges in tampering with a girl’s body during music and dance times (a wave of socialisation) was closely looked into and whether such a violation of her body

was truly a disorderliness that needs to be ordered, or whether the seeming disorder was ordered in itself and can actually be reordered.

4) Methodology

This study is not mathematical but literary, using main features of Chaos Theory as a theoretical and methodological framework to analyse the selected Nupe music and dance thematically (wordings) and structurally (dance steps). The chosen clip is “Nupe Song: Tsankan! Bashin ya #love #youtube #live #cultural #n...”, herein after “Bashin ya”. It can easily be googled for video download. The study does not suggest that Nupe music and dance should be banned, rather, it tackled the subject matter of infraction through moral and religious viewpoint. It aims at exposition of dance patterns of (dis)order, triggering the inherent chaos capacity in the fragmented structure of “Bashin ya”.

The stimulus shoots from the realisation that Nupe music and dance, affected by the Newtonian analogy has a limited capacity to absorb the nonlinear, dynamic and kaleidoscopic structure of these dramas. This narrow view of analysis that dominates most of the critical approaches to literature for centuries has aborted any attempt for diversity. As Gillespie, *The Aesthetics of Chaos: Nonlinear Thinking and Contemporary Literary Criticism* says, Chaos Theory is hinged “on a central idea, weighing the evidence, and balancing opposing views to arrive at a conclusion” (5). Therefore, it is an alternative approach to Newtonian numeric logic that has over-stayed in analyses. The work of Lilian Campos (“This Is Not a Chair: Complicite's Master and Margarita”, *New Theatre Quarterly*) also supports dynamism. Chaos Theory in literature, therefore, is welcome alternation.

The selected music and dance for discussion (i.e., the pro-Max “Bashin ya”) is not on the joy of music per say, but on how the pro-Max probably leads to amorous gratification thereby causing towering harm (a chaos) to the polity. A cursory look into quite a number of pro-Max Nupe music reveals the point of cause and effect. They are dance steps that wriggle the waist which appeals to sexual tingling. Any dynamic system, which includes human beings, reveals a sensitivity to minute signals that when put together can be something huge.

Thus, lifeless pages in a book should not be taken as unimportant in a discourse; they are there by choice, not by chance. Consequently, a seeming unimportant “splinters of memory”, “character’s stammer”, “fragments of speech”, “communication between characters becomes incomplete”, “titles of quoted passages left unnamed or forgotten”, “the slip of the tongue”, and so on are deliberately sensible. For example, all of these can demonstrate the fact of: male-domination dynamics versus female-submissiveness. therefore, a seeming insignificant or minor event may not be accidental; they are a part of the part-whole theory of reality. Thus, looking beyond music and dance could lead to other discoveries for the benefit of humanity in some aspects of chaos in a girl’s culture.

5) Some Aspects of Chaos in a Girl’s Culture

In a recent investigation, Hilary M. Lips’ *Women across Cultures*, an examination of commonality of cultural issues across nations, submits that women’s relationships, which are naturally complicated, doubly makes them to be both prisoners and keepers of cultural traditions. Impliedly, it is a girl’s culture to be imperfect in spite of opportunities/power for being womanish and faultless. Because she is soft, fresh, and beautiful, society puts a lot of responsibilities on her head as the maker of the home, and that marks

the beginning of a chaotic environment which breeds strange attractors.

Because a girl is powerfully beautiful, it marks her out for disorderliness as she would be sought after severally by the society. How she is able to respond to strange attractors (her societal challenges) roundly marks her out as a proud product of her family. The infractions are expected to be counter-challenged head-on by her.

a) Strange Attractors

A strange Attractor is seen in a system to pull or draw the system to it. Since it is a girl's culture to be unpredictable as a part of the chaos that makes her up, Ian Stewart sees chaos as "a strange and beautiful combination of stability and unpredictability" (130). It is, therefore, 'strange' if a girl does not settle for societal expectations. Charles Dickens' *Great Expectation*" had discussed societal expectations on human beings, seen here as part of a girl's culture to be pure, clean, and simple but certain influencers/strange attractors negate that achievement on certain ordered shapes, and in the process, creates its own infraction, which is called 'attractor' as it distracts attention and compels it to follow it endlessly. To Ali Bulent Cambel, this is where there is a demonstrated capacity to turn numbers and equations into virtual image; a distraction from original state, a fragmentation. Hence, the attractors demonstrate power to metamorphose into a desired stretch effortlessly and limitlessly. The strange attractors have power-gift to guide, attract, and restrict a structural given. Therefore, in order to comprehend the behaviour of a chaotic symmetry, the strange attractor(s) in asymmetry need(s) to be firstly understood.

Girlish strange attractors are, but not restricted to, forms of dreams, aspirations, desires, and emotions. They largely have to do with human behaviours that are complexly ordered. But even physical attractions (like scenography: flowers in a house, beautiful colours, especially pink colour, beautiful house, nice car, money, etc.) take a toll on a girl's culture. She can be tempted by them. It is her nature to be conditioned by the chaotic psyche and unrestricted environmental factors. E.L. Rossi saw it as a sort of obsessive thoughts, while Alex Argyros pinned it to (girlish) conceptualisation of ideas, just like Daniel Svyantek J. and R.P. DeShon take note of personality factor that sometimes operates in a manner similar to strange attractors. But M. J. Wheatley suggests attractors as expressive meaning in somebody's life. Attractor, to him therefore, means a search for meaning. Distraction is better seen in scenography.

b) Scenography Aspect of Nupe Music and Dance

Simply defined, scenography is the practice of stagecraft in our environments or atmospheres. It is any stage performance that combines material and technological stage crafting (see, John Walker, "Scenography", *Glossary of Art, Architecture & Design since 1945*). Science is a stimulus for experimenting stage performance as structural patterns, images, and metaphors interpreted clearly into both "dramaturgy and scenography" (Campos, *Science in Contemporary British Theatre: A Conceptual Approach*, 302). The representation, enactment, and production of the sense of stage performance in Nupe culture, particularly, its music and dance are the scenography aspects of Niger State Nupe speakers under study. We will take the pro-Max "Bashin ya" as our scenographic reference music.

Scenography, to Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, is both “the expressive powers of the body and the transforming capacity of inanimate objects” (202). In both, soundscapes and body language/interaction are well coordinated and transcend to naked body in the science and sense of scenography. On these body language effects, we need to bring to bare what mathematical chaos studies have done in tracking recurring symmetries to map out order in seemingly disordered asymmetry. Thus, the study focuses on these recurring images and actions in dance performance or scenography since science is not “a new language” in literature as it has been “a stimulus for formal experimentation in drama and performance” (Campos, “Scenography”, *Glossary of Art, Architecture & Design since 1945*, 302).

Thus, it is important to ask whether in Nupe culture, as in any African culture, there is no merry-making during child births, weddings, religious celebrations? Various occasions call for celebrations that warrant drumming and dancing, drinking, and general feasting. The youth particularly head most of these ceremonies.

Upon these occasions, special bands are invited to grace them. If we google pro-Max Nupe music: “Nupe Song: Tsankan! Bashin ya #love #youtube #live #cultural #n...”, which is our musical concern for analysis, the age bracket of the teens in the group dance, some of whom are only a little in their early twenties easily surreptitiously bring to mind amorous representation, enactment, and production of the sense of Nupe musicals. The titillating waist wriggling ceaselessly appeals to amorous scenography. They bring to live, any discussion of goose bump that would surround Anne Koedt’s “vaginal orgasm” and Andrea Dworkin’s “intercourse”.

By its name of “Tsankan! Bashin ya”, the ontological significance of “Tsankan” squally rests on rhythm and musicality that certainly appeals to the ears, while “Bashin ya” amorously denotes buttocks wriggling, twisting, and rolling. It sends goose bump to the body of the opposite sex and even same sex because of the tingling movements. All of these girl power create chaos to the society as the sexual acts are condemnable and apprehensible. They have been so chaotically condemned (Abubakar Aliyu Liman, 20-21, and *Fim* 11; *The Holy Qur’an*, Al-Israa: 38-39 Shua’raa: 224-226).

“Bashin ya”, our musical concentration, therefore, apparently reveals erotic projection of women’s backsides in body movements (dance) that appeal to sexual charge. The dance steps provoke sexual sensitisation that endangers the lives of the girls whose attentions must be sought after the entertainment, a stimulus-response. Financial inducement is not ruled out in circumstances like this. Consequently, someone’s daughter’s life is endangered. The apparent musical and dance steps of “Tsankan! Bashin ya” are unavoidably appealing to the ears, and irresistibly inviting to the hidden and noticeable tingling movements of the body of not only the opposite sex but also same sex who is watching/listening. This is amidst the opposing stand for its strong correctness (see, Liman 25 and other protest-songs/music like *Rabo-Rabo*, *An Cuce Mu*, *Sakare Dawo-dawo*, *Kukan Ibro*, and *Gigiza Kai*). These supporters here and more are unwavering in seeing music as credible, devoid of irreligiosity.

Usually, the “Scriptural Reasoning” movement, promoted by religious scholars in the West, has incorporated a series of crucial hermeneutical propositions. If we extend the movement to the dialogues of African literature here, this study’s hermeneutical circle can be regarded as one of profitable case studies. After all,

Bilal Philips in a social media sermon that has gone viral guides the world on the need to doubt the assumption that people derive happiness and succor in music and musicians. He cautions that people consequently fail to find real happiness as musicians themselves get involved in drugs and even its overdose (we remember Michael Jackson's drug case here) since they are unable to find true happiness.

So, the youth can choose to exercise "the fancy of freelancers", but these are likely to become a horde as spinsters have. Överlien, Caroline who sees alarming number of these young daughters, the teens and young women, whom she rhetorically asks whether they should be called innocent girls or active young women; hit clubs and bars, and get laid at will because it is, essentially, their business, not anyone else's (345).

Innocent girls or active young women syndrome is further upstaged in Sarah Gamble's *Companion to Feminism and Postfeminisms* where she subverts the mythic assumptions between passivity and beauty (commonly found and appreciated during soundscapes versus body language in social gatherings. Gamble observes that through aesthetic frame (of musical jamborees, for example), black young female bodies today opt for bodily surgeries for aesthetics since it is an active status for attending the jamborees and other social occasions. These contradict real efforts of postfeminisms on the feminine body, especially the black female body. Black young girls today prefer to surrender to surgical normalising technology on their bodies, and not considering the psychic and physical pain in order to be beautiful and fulfilled for men and young boys in their societies. All of these can be summed up.

6) **Scaling Up**

If girl power, as discussed in Alex Taylor's "Spice Girls: What happened to Girl Power?" harps on a notion that grants confidence to women and girls and consequently empowers them to make and achieve decisions, then the soundscapes and body language of Nupe music and dancers in tandem with Islamic religion successfully hold that confidence in fragmented narratives, features, and various nonlinear efforts: a chaos is created. Thus, as in Chris Roulston's "From Text to Screen: *Gentleman Jack* Then and Now", *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, he follows the conventional narrative of courtship and marriage, and uniquely subverts the form through a matchless queer content that explicitly describes sexual practices, this study equally considers the ways in which Nupe visual and performative music and dance mediates the sexual arousal understanding of contemporary audience. Scenography succeeds in integrating the complicated discourse of science into performative art and its theme. The dance crosses all borders of five human senses (of seeing, touching, smelling, hearing, and tasting) of the opposite sex in chaotic order. And we all know Newton's third law: "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction". The total society will consequently be affected by the sexual brashness of the young girls during soundscapes and body language.

Thus, the gap between the prophetic mode and artistic mode discussions of a girl's body should bring out the need to identify music and dance as strange attractor, as chaotic. While naked human body is clearly universally symbolic for causing chaos or a strange attraction, the question of soundscapes and body language will need to be humanised to demonstrate the sense of real human relations. It should be done in such a way that it accommodates all

of us with human bodies full of sensual senses that should not be tempted. The devil is always in wait for distractions.

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Muhammad Alkali
Department of English,
Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai
&
Muhammad Shariff
Department of Arabic,
Federal University, Kashere, Gombe State