

# **DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY**

## **DANCE IN THE FAITH LIFE OF THE CONTEMPORARY FILIPINO CATHOLIC**

**A DISSERTATION**

**Presented to**

**the Faculty of the Graduate School**

**DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY**

**College of Education**

**in partial fulfillment of the requirements**

**for the degree of**

**Doctor of Education**

**Major in**

**Religious Education and Values Education**

**by**

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**14 May 1994**



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## ABSTRACT

### Dance in the Faith Life of the Contemporary Filipino Catholic

This is a descriptive phenomenological study that endeavored to situate dance in the faith life of the contemporary Filipino Catholic. It also attempted at documentation of selected dance-laced religious celebrations among lowland Filipino Christians vis-a-vis some danced ethnic non-Christian religious rituals.

In her study, the researcher relied heavily on the following: ethnographic exposures; indigenous documentary and library research; the people's experience of religious dance in the selected places noted for dance-laced religious celebrations; various interviews and interactions with dance exponents and enthusiasts; some persons involved in dance research, culture, arts and related sciences; church liturgists and leaders; her personal experience on dance.

The universe of the study covered a wide range of Philippine dances. However, only the religious dances which constitute the research population were studied in depth. From among the data collected, the researcher classified the Dances of Homo Religiosus according to Guzie's level of religion/religious development: systemic control, idealization, personal process. Representative danced religious rituals were annotated according to Francisca Reyes Aquino's classic/standard format in dance notation.

Forty-two (42) Philippine traditional dances and eight (8) danced religious celebrations were considered Dances of Homo Religiosus. Findings show that by their features and mode of expression, Dances of Homo Religiosus were primarily idealization dances (48) with traces of the systemic control characteristics and touches of the personal process elements. Two (2) dances have remained on the systemic control level. This phenomenon is on account of the Filipino historical-cultural and religious foundations.

While a combination of folk religiosity and formalized/official Catholicism subsist in the Dances of Homo Religiosus, Filipino religiosity is the result of



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a merging of two faith expressions - Eastern and Western. This fusion of seemingly disparate strains brought about a rich array of religious ritual dances that are considerably Filipino, but no less Christian. Viewed as such Philippine religious dances are three phases in one process of religious development moving towards integration, appearing like a triptych or three movements in a musical composition. Whether fast-paced or in slow motion, the gradual metamorphosis of Philippine religious dances proceed interminably in-step with the growth process of the contemporary Filipino Catholic. Indeed, Christianity played a vital role in situating dance in the faith life of the contemporary Filipino Catholic.

In light of the above, an invitation or challenge to facilitate the advance toward the personal process level of religious development was considered apropos. As gleaned from the study, it is at this level that the dance becomes a potent instrument of evangelization and social transformation. At whatever level, however, the Dances of Homo Religiosus powerfully speak as symbols of faith.

Having found a new dimension in the dance, the researcher proposed eight (8) recommendations regarding the use of dance primarily in the area of inculturation, whether this be in worship, evangelization, or religious education/catechesis, in line with the PCP II call for renewed, integral evangelization towards social transformation.



# DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

PAGE

### I. THE PROBLEM AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction 1

Review of Related Literature 8

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework 49

Statement of the Problem 59

Basic Assumptions 60

Significance of the Study 61

Scope and Limitation of the Study 65

Definition/Description of Terms 68

Division of the Study 75

### II. THE METHOD

Research Design 76

Population of the Study 79

Sources of Data 81

Conduct of the Study and Data Treatment 82



# DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER	PAGE
III. PRESENTATION OF DATA	87
Traditional Dances Among Lowland Filipino Christians	87
Summary of Dance Classifications by Linguistic/Geographical Groups	89
Festival/Ceremonial/Ritual Dances (Religious/Semi-Religious)	90
Religious/Semi-Religious Dances: Origin and Description	91
Dance-laced Religious Celebrations	108
Ati-Ati of Ibaday, Aklan	111
Ati-Atihan of Kalibo, Aklan	124
The Religious Sinulog of Cebu	134
Kasilonawan of Obando, Bulacan	150
Tatarin of Paco, Manila	156
Religious Celebrations of Angono, Rizal	162
Dances of Homo Religiosus	187
Dance Classifications According to Levels of Religion/Religious Development (Table 15)	190
Dance Classification According to Levels of Religion/Religious Development (Table 16)	192
Summary	193





# DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER	PAGE
IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA	195
Philippine Traditional Dances	196
Dance-laced Religious Celebrations	204
Provenance/Origins	205
The Ritual Dimension	207
The Dance Constructs	214
Dances of Homo Religiosus	218
Historico-Cultural Foundations in the Philippine Setting	241
Dance in the Biblical and Christian Context	257
Reflection-Synthesis/Recapitulation	285
V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	301
Conclusion	301
Recommendation	309
BIBLIOGRAPHY	316
APPENDIX	332
SUPPLEMENTARY DANCE FOLIO	

