

ABSTRACT

This study explores how contemporary performance, through a practice led process, can shift the consciousness of entrenched Ga cultural myths that silence the self. In doing so, this study attempts to reveal how cultural mythology plays an integral part in why the Ga people continue to make illness invisible even in the face of the growing crisis of HIV/Aids in Ghana. The study argues that continued silence rather worsens the condition of the victims, and posits that breaking the oppressive silence through contemporary performance's deconstruction of cultural mythology offers a chance of liberation.

This study employs qualitative research methodology within a practice as research paradigm and is achieved through a collaborative practice as research performance process. The performance process draws upon the personal experiences of the collaborators who use stories, games, dances and masks that emanate from the collaborators' respective cultures in Ghana. The research data comprises photographs, journaling and informal dialogue. It also consists of interpreting phenomena brought to bear on the process. This research places emphasis on the process of exploration as opposed to a final product.

In Chapter One the reader is introduced to the history and journey of the self. Chapter Two focuses on the theoretical underpinnings of this research while Chapter Three, an exploration of methodology, demonstrates how elements of the creative process form the base of contemporary performance. Finally, in Chapter Four the researcher draws a number of conclusions based on the outcome of the process oriented performance.

This study concludes that the contemporary performance processes offer a constructive alternative towards inciting a shift in the consciousness of Ga cultural myths, without disregarding the ingenious indigenous knowledge of the Ga community. It also shows how the process of contemporary performance can become a means of self-development and change. The study demonstrates how in the midst of the constraints and fear that cultivate silence, often promulgated by the Ga communal ideal, the individual can still discover and give expression to his/her unique voice.