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THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART IN EWE VODU RELIGION

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How have miseducation and Eurocentric anthropological scholarship actively deluded Africans into perceiving their religion and arts as "inferior" and "barbarous"? Drawing from years of practice-based investigation into the art of the Anlo-Ewe Vodu religion, this paper interrogates and redefines the misleading theories of "fetishism" that have obscured the appreciation of Vodu art.

Introduction

Over the last six years, I have been researching the arts of Anlo-Ewe Vodu religion in order to attain a full grasp of its fundamental philosophies. However, the actual spiritual journey began over a decade ago. My research, my subjects, and the research topic were nothing new to me. In fact, the areas where I conducted my research were very familiar terrains because they constitute my ancestral home. Some of the sites where I conducted my field interviews and participant observations were actually just a few minutes motor ride or within a walking range from our family house in Atiteti, Ghana.

During my high school days, while negotiating shortcuts and "secret" routes through town at night, I remember that my colleagues and I would cringe in "fear" and "horror" at the mere sight of Legba or other Vodu sculptures in front of people's houses and shrines.[1] In most indigenous Anlo-Ewe societies, Vodu still actively remains the "keeper of the law and order." To make matters even more difficult, superstitions, mysterious tales, and unsavoury rumours were constantly being peddled around in school about the "ghoulish" and "dangerous" tendencies of Vodu deities (particularly Anlo-Ewe Vodu) and how the "mere sight" of some Vodu sculptures may even "zap your soul into non-existence." The fabricated tales that surround the mystical aspects of Vodu arts are so because they are literally unimaginable. Some of these "accounts" have been distorted and reproduced in publications by some western researchers as though they are concrete facts:

> Imagine a place where the dead can speak to the living through mediums, dreams, and prophesy and where malicious individuals who seek to harm have the power to kill by merely staring someone in the eye … Imagine a place where your brother can be your mortal enemy and where witches brew curses into the night, meeting undetected as owls in ominously tall baobab trees interspersed throughout most villages.[2]

Strangely enough, despite all the fear and mystery that surrounded Vodu, I mustered courage and began to develop a rare kind of appreciation and raw passion for Vodu art—a mystical connection.

Figure 1. Researcher posing with a cluster of Vodu sculptures in front of Tɔgbui Dzokpoto's Brékété Shrine Woe, Keta, Volta Region, 2016, photograph by the author.

In retrospect, I came to a realisation that perhaps I was utterly fearless of the Vodu sculptures not because I was necessarily a "foolhardy" child but, rather, due to the fact that I merely perceived them as interesting artworks. I vividly recall going on unaccompanied trips to graveyards in Ŋɔlivimɛ and Whuti just to appreciate funerary sculptures, sometimes pleasantly lost in thought while in the process of admiring these remarkable artworks, thinking, "… this is authentic art, this is my culture, these are my people, this is where I come from, I'm a child of the Land, this is where I shall be buried when I join the ranks of the noble Ancestors, it would only be wise for me to begin my spiritual journey now…"

Indigenous knowledge acquisition and artistic research methods

Apart from desktop research, one of the responsibilities of my position is to conduct direct field observation, participate, and actively engage with the artists and practitioners of the Anlo-Ewe Vodu religion, respectively. This is where practical findings from the field are meant to complement the theories from authorities and critical

perspectives by experts in a given discipline. As a result, field studies granted me the opportunity to research and learn more about my identity, race, spirituality, religion, art, traditions, history, and the social anthropology of the Ewes in a much broader sense. A bulk of this information cannot merely be studied from books or academic journals alone; it is enshrined in Ewe societies. As an artist, as well as an Ewe scholar and curator, this opportunity placed me in a unique position to successfully conduct this research. As noted by Ananda Coomaraswamy with regard to Indian art, in 1908,

> The main difficulty so far seems to have been that Indian art has been studied so far only by archaeologists. It is not archaeologists, but artists who are the best qualified to judge of the significance of works of art considered as art, and unravel the influences apparent in them.[3]

Through the entire learning process, I also discovered that exposure to the religious aesthetics and ceremonies of the Anlo-Ewe people gives my life more meaning and value. This learning experience has complemented and significantly enhanced my academic career and professional artistic practice.

The research began through questioning—by questioning Anlo-Ewe elders from an artistic perspective. Simple questions emerged such as: what do you consider as art in Vodu shrines? What does this or that artistic expression imply in sacred Vodu spaces? What are the spiritual dimensions of Anlo-Ewe Vodu sculptures? What is the role of this or that Vodu artist? What is the significance of this body art or that scarification on Anlo-Ewe Vodu devotees? What is the notion of Anlo-Ewe Vodu religious aesthetics?

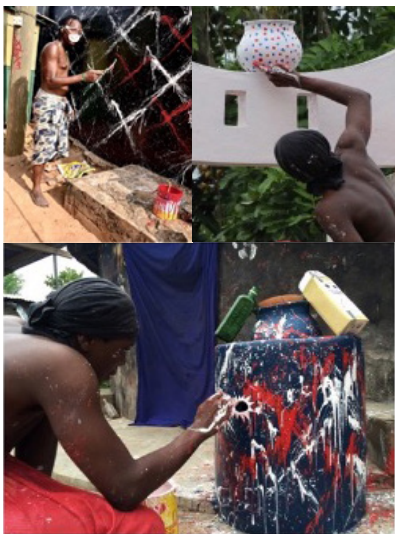

Figure 2. Researcher engaged in shrine mural/sculpture painting during experiential learning in the field. Tɔgodo, Volta Region, Ghana, 2016, photograph by the author's research assistant.

My data collection process was driven by artistic research methods. Throughout my data collection process, I didn't only engage my research associates in interviews and focus group discussions, I fully immersed myself in the creative process. Artistic research methods are slightly different from the research methods employed by social scientists. Artistic research methods require you to engage in an activity or an experience that is usually the creative process itself to gain a better understanding of the kind of art that you're researching. Practice-based learning helped me to gain more knowledge and experience for a deeper understanding of Vodu art.

Doing an ethnographic study requires the researcher to go to the field (village, market, town square, streets) or where people thrive engaging in practical fieldwork.

The participant observation I engaged began through broad descriptive observations, which later shifted to focused observation, and finally narrowed to selective observations and active participation in Vodu ceremonies, performances, rituals, and the spiritual creative process.

Figure 3. Researcher participating in the communal drinking of sacred *Aliha* at the sacred grove of Tɔgbui Adzima Shrine in Klikor, Volta Region, 2016, photograph by the author's research assistant.

Being an insider Anlo-Ewe artist, my ability to speak and effectively communicate with key research associates and research assistants proved to be my greatest advantage in conducting this research successfully. Being able to speak and understand Ewegbe was not necessarily the only thing that opened so many opportunities for me, which would otherwise be denied to an outsider anthropologist. My proficiency

can be attributed to a number of advantageous factors. Quite a few priests and spirit mediums were my relatives, and most of my key research associates were either acquaintances or good friends of my relatives who were generally supportive in my intellectual and spiritual journey. The principal locations where I conducted my main fieldwork (Klikor, Torgodo, Woe [Keta], Afiadenyigba, and Dagbamete) are neighbouring villages of where I hail (Atiteti). In such instances, the attitude of my research associates towards me was generally appreciable respect and great admiration for my rare and keen interest in Vodu arts. I also personally knew some of the oral historians, sage philosophers, and local researchers, such as the late Dale Massiasta, who was my father's classmate and research collaborator, introduced to me during my high school days. Massiasta was a leading sage philosopher and reliable researcher in Vodu matters.[4] Essentially, I had to unlearn "book knowledge" and became a new student in the field all over again in order to learn a way of life properly, into which I wanted to immerse myself—to "indigenise" or to learn what Africans refer to as "home sense."

Figure 4. Ngɔgbeda Sodolo Tekpe leading Mama Vena (Ablɔgame) fiasidiwo to trek in single file procession from the shrine to a sacred site to collect kaolin. The sacred site is about three kilometres from the shrine and is within the Klikor community. Klikor, Volta Region, 2016, photograph by the author.

Evaluating the pros and cons of conducting auto-ethnographic research

In terms of methodological approach, this research is a comprehensive auto-ethnographic study that seeks to document Anlo-Ewe religious aesthetics and material culture in the broadest sense. Being auto-ethnographic, this methodology comes with its advantages and drawbacks. Some scholars have raised arguments about the validity and authenticity of auto-ethnography. A major concern among these scholars is how the background and personal beliefs of the researcher influence the findings and judgements of the research. For instance, Robin Öberg notes that,

> Auto-ethnography aims to blur the boundary through the writing process primarily. Writing the text as a story, with different narrators, that go through various elements common in storytelling, not just to build an introduction for an eventual scientific analysis, as ethnographers can often do now after the influence of postmodernism, but as the whole product itself, is part of the current tradition in auto-ethnography. It is a conscious decision, to forego values commonly associated with the scientific method, and to instead focus solely on the final text itself. This makes it very difficult to critique auto-ethnography, as auto-ethnography does not try to adhere to the same standards as regular science. It does not perturb auto-ethnography to call it unscientific, because auto-ethnography does not try to be scientific … The only validity and reliability an auto ethnographer has to follow, is in relation to credibility of the final text, and not in relation to the how the text came to be … Scientifically speaking, that makes no sense. It is not about enforcing some kind of unattainable ideal of objectivity, it is not about avoiding beautiful literary descriptions in the text, it is about the reader being able to trace the methodological choices and antecedent justifications. Otherwise anyone could write a convincing text, call it auto-ethnography, and publish it as a paper in a scientific journal.[5]

In addressing the "validity" or "scientific quality" of auto-ethnographic research, Mike Hayler and Nadia Edmond assert that,

> It raises what Gee (2005) refers to as "the frame problem" in recognising meaning as situated and opens a further area of potential debate around issues of validity and quality within educational research methodology … to summarise, our own position is that "validity" in studies which seek to authentically represent lived experience depends upon confronting the inescapable problem of representation by recognising that the link between experience and representation are inevitably problematic … Our work contributes to the "rethinking of terms such as validity, generalizability and reliability" … which Denzin and Lincoln called for in 2005. Similarly, the "quality" of research can only be understood within the reader's framework of understanding which it may in itself change or extend. Issues of validity and quality within qualitative research are necessarily subjective, inter-subjective and determined by context.[6]

Generally, in research, no matter how hard researchers strive to remain objective in their findings, they still reveal thinly-veiled personal biases because every individual has their own bias, shaped by their experience, world-view, social psychology, and personal beliefs. A critical rhetorical question might suffice here: is there really such a "thing" as "objectivity" in research? Proposing counter-hegemonic academic perspectives on the question of "objectivity" for African scholars trained in western academies and research methodologies, Marimba Ani offers a decisive solution,

> The claim to an absolute ultimate truth is a psychological necessity for the European mentality. And since we have accepted it, it is an edict that has constrained most of us who have been trained in European academies … As African scholars, it is our responsibility to create systematic theoretical formulations which will reveal the truths that enable us to liberate and utilise the energies of our people. In this view, the self-determinist, the revolutionary, and the scholar are one, having the same objective, involved in the same truth-process.[7]

Ana Alacovska and Rosalind Gill put it much more pointedly, "Like the postcolonial critic, the ex-centric scholar might be thought of as a 'party pooper' … who will upset and destabilise the taken-for-grantedness of congealed knowledge claims."[8] Building on postcolonial theory and Ani's critical perspectives,[9] it can be deduced that, in modern ethnographic and anthropological studies, one needs not to be only objective but also some appreciable amount of subjectivity is required to level the academic field which is marred by prejudice, racism, sexism, and false philosophical assumptions. This is a permissible academic practice in auto-ethnography and revisionist ethnographic work in general.

The re-emergence of divergent views about the relevance of re-examination, academic critique, argumentative discussions, and critical subjectivity in African philosophy, auto-ethnography and auto-anthropology (or modern scholarship) makes the intellectual positions of some of its noteworthy proponents very instructive. For instance, Victor Uchendu noted in his book *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria* that the culture bearer,

> is emotionally involved in his culture, especially in regard to its "sensitive" zones. This fact has been advanced as a reason why he should be restricted to the role of an educated informant. But this emotional involvement is in itself relevant to our science: it guides the reader in his assessment of the writer, and methodologically, it can help us to determine the degree of objectivity (when we know how) with which social scientist in general approach sensitive topics in other areas of human behavior.[10]

Auto-ethnography has gained prominence as a methodological approach in conducting research for the "marginalised" by the "marginalised researcher"—often yielding fresh perspectives and new insights.

Reflective observation: challenges and brief analysis of the effects of how and what I did filtered through my own concepts

I realised very early on that the philosophy behind Vodu art is inextricably linked to the guarded esoteric secrets shared exclusively among the Vodu priests, spirit mediums, and some leading members of the various Vodu shrines. Sacred barriers and religious exclusivity posed a huge challenge in accessing not only important gnosis but also entering certain ritual domains to access information. In a typical ritual space like a Vodu shrine, artistic elements are required and employed in performing almost all religious rites and ceremonies. In a technical sense, the priests, the performers, and the devotees display a heightened awareness of the arts and apparently adhere to religio-aesthetic principles ordained by the deities. They also display creativity in diverse ways. I gained in-depth knowledge about the religious concepts and philosophies associated with Anlo-Ewe Vodu art and aesthetics.

Figure 5. Kli-Adzima devotees pulverising sacred kaolin (mixed with sacred water) into a fine paste while waiting for their turns to plaster the shrine walls, Klikor, Volta Region, 2016, photograph by the author.

Presentation of findings

In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Clifford Geertz proposes pragmatic approaches to a deep understanding of cultures in order to produce a rigorous interpretation, "thick description," and reliable documentation of cultural practices:

> In anthropology, or any social anthropology, what the practitioners do is ethnography. And it is in understanding what ethnography is, or more exactly what doing ethnography is, that a start can be made toward grasping what anthropological analysis amounts to as a form of knowledge. This, it must immediately be said, is not a matter of methods. From one point of view, that of the textbook, doing ethnography is establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on. But it is not these things, techniques and received procedures, that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, "thick description."[11]

In modern ethnographic methodologies, various researchers have advanced and developed Geertz's approach to "thick description" by employing other effective means of documentation, rigorous analysis, presentation, and communicating findings through photography, tables, visual inquiry, etc. This approach aims at broadening the understanding of researchers about the powerful roles and infinite possible uses of visuals in ethnographic research. Visual data breaks down complex ideas, theories, and concepts into smaller units to support generalisations. It breaks down field data more easily into readily discernible units, which makes information-processing simple and comprehensive. Images leave visual imprints in the long-term memory of the human brain. Visual aids serve as *aide-mémoires* in storing, processing, retrieving, and recollecting information for a better understanding of any issue being discussed. What follows is a photographic presentation of the creative and spiritual process

of creating the shrine murals during the Kli-Adzima Spiritual Renewal Festival: a creative process deeply rooted in generations of modernist artistic practices.

The kaolin (clay) is mixed with holy water to form a sticky paste used in plastering the wall. The next stage of the creative process is exclusive to a single artist (known as the Xanukplɔ) for each of the satellite Kli-Adzima Shrines. The Xanukplɔ engages her creative faculties by employing dripping, splattering, soak-staining, and splashing techniques to grace the plastered shrine walls. Prayers, chants and other supplications are made during the creative process of plastering the shrine walls. The devotees engage in meditative prayers and make their final supplications on the finished masterpiece mural before leaving the shrine. This ritual performance and creative process are strictly limited to the women devoted to Kli-Adizma and Mama Vena.

Figure 6. Kli-Adzima devotees in the process of "*bailli*" (plastering the shrine walls with sacred kaolin), Klikor, Volta Region, 2016, photograph by the author.

Figure 7. Ablɔgame Xanukplɔ engaged in the dripping, splashing, and sprinkling process of making abstract expressions on the plastered shrine wall, Klikor, Volta Region 2016, photograph by the author.

Apart from creating these impressive murals, women render many other acts of service in honour of the deities. Women are generally in charge of cooking, cleaning, sweeping, running other domestic errands, as well as ensuring hygienic and sanitary conditions within the confines and environs of the shrine.[12] Some of these modern art schools date back several centuries. Hence, the fact that these art schools have been passed down from generation to generation through indigenous pedagogies does not necessarily constrain all their essential aspects within the confines of "traditional art." African religious aesthetics is mostly employed in the ritual context or sacred space. It is also deeply grounded in the moral and the sacred. In his PhD studies on Environmental Aesthetics, Stephen Kofi Avenorgbo makes the observation that,

> In Ghanaian indigenous or cultural context, aesthetic principles are mostly related to moral and religious values, and there is usually strong emphasis on the formal aesthetic aspects of the objects (including the natural environment) and the moral and religious ideas they express.[13]

African aesthetics emphasise the tenet that different cultures have unique aesthetic values in different places in the world. African art is not necessarily reduced to "imitationalism," "art for art's sake," or merely copying what is perceived in nature or our surroundings. Kojo Fosu, Francesco Ippolito, and Jens Bertelsen also present their perspective on pre-colonial indigenous Ghanaian aesthetics,

> The creative works produced by Ghanaian traditional artists were not controlled by strict duplication of the exactness of the subject. Rather it was the idea embodied in the subject perceived, which determined the visual meaning and function of the works. Thus, a piece of art work, expressed in the abstract or in the realistic with polished or rough finish and embellished in simple or intricate decorative designs, was appraised on the basis of the communicative symbolism unified within its physical type-form. Both the functional and the esthetical values of the art were critical to its appreciation. This was the convention for the evaluation of Ghanaian classical art traditions before colonialism.[14]

Primarily, modern art is created through an array of subliminal creative processes, operating below the level of consciousness. It evokes in us primal instincts, deep

emotions, or leads us to perceive things in the spiritual world vividly that we otherwise cannot perceive in the physical world, without the impressions or expressions of a modern artist. Similarly, appreciating modern art is a highly intellectual and spiritualised activity, which arrests the human soul, engages our psyche, or evokes our extra-sensory organs to experience the divine and other profound spiritual dimensions. Other experiences may manifest in the form of ephemeral shock, grief, ecstasy, pain, love, anger, aggression, liberation, security, lust, passion, sexual arousal, or even a mystical union with the artwork itself. In the contemplative process of being engaged in a full aesthetic experience, Vodu devotees say prayers and make spiritual supplications to the deities for their divine favour, blessings, good health, prosperity, security, long life, and generally as a way to pay homage and respect. Apart from chants, mantras, and esoteric rituals, Vodu devotees use aesthetic meditation as a route to enter the vortex of Vodu psychic energy: to experience the sublime, the sacred, or forge a mystical union with the divine. Early European writers on African art mainly focused on the functional aspects merely to obscure the powerful essence and rich aesthetic qualities embedded in African creative expressions. Knowledge systems, spiritual dimensions, and deeper philosophical aspects of African art were lost to false assumptions and misrepresentation on the part of Europeans. Sónia Silva captures this phenomenon by underscoring recent attempts of western museums and galleries to "undo" the notion of the "fetish" by reconsidering renewed curatorial approaches in labelling and presenting African art.[15] Through this approach, African art has garnered a powerfully refreshing aura with long-overdue importance and the dignity that has been denied by westerners. African art can no more be classed as "inferior objects" or "primitive fetishes." In Silva's own words,

Figure 8. Vodu devotee in a contemplative pose making her final supplications on the finished "*bailli*" masterpiece mural, Klikor, Volta Region, 2016, photograph by the author.

Figure 9. A finished modernist "*bailli*" mural on Kli-Adzima Shrine wall. The spontaneous splashing, soak-staining, dripping, and sprinkling of *edza* (a millet-based solution) produces interesting accidental effects and highly sophisticated artistic results. Klikor, Volta Region, 2016, photograph by the author.

> Curators never researched in any depth the existing connections between materiality and transcendence in African religious life, as one might perhaps expect in an anthropology museum. Instead, they chose to undo the concept of the fetish by displacing the African religious objects to the European domain of modernist art. Mounted on pedestals and bathed in light, the African religious objects ascended to the realm of universal art. These objects were no longer "primitive fetishes"; they were cult objects surrounded by an aura of religious and aesthetic spirituality.[16]

In recent times, urban Ghanaian modern artists re-emphasise Ghana's culture through their creative works. First of all, there are those who have successfully repositioned Ghana's own cultural symbols as successful artistic tools, explored these, and given them personal and new modernist twists in diverse styles. Some major, early generation "formally trained" Ghanaian modern artists include Ablade Glover, El Anatsui, Grace Atta, Kofi Antubam, Kwami, among others. These artists and several others recreated Ghana's entire culture by appropriating old forms and reinventing them into refreshing cultural expressions. They are engaged in constant communion with both the past and the

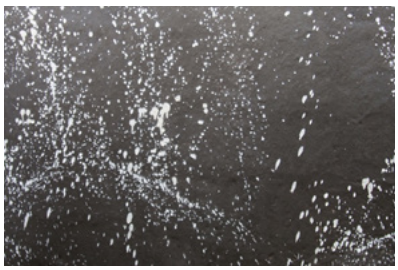

Figure 10. Close-up shot of "*bailli*" mural on Mama Vena Shrine wall, Ablɔgame, Klikor, Volta Region, 2016, photograph by the author.

present environment. According to Wiz Kudowor, one of the leading Ghanaian modernists of our times,

> I am continually redefining my perspectives on life in general, my personal experiences in particular and my interaction with various elements of my environment ... I explore elements of my cultural background using visual language inspired by African symbolic imagery, and mythology dating back to Egypt. I sometimes dwell on some of the inherent aesthetics of my immediate environment and pipe my very personal and intimate experiences into rectangles, squares, circles and colours on canvas.[17]

Schooled through a Europeanised art curriculum at the then Kumasi College of Art (now KNUST), Anatsui also had this to say about his own Sankofa paradigm shift,

> Sankofa syndrome was a reaction to a conscious and forcible attempt to denigrate a people's culture and replace it with an extraneous one ... I had taken the habit of working with adinkra symbols, and the funerary cloth and symbols were intriguing ... I studied them for about five years, right from when I left [Kumasi]. I set out to practice engraving the symbols that they print on the cloth, engraving them on trays used in the market to display tomatoes fish—anything.
>
> I would go there with chalk and spend the day drawing shapes, at times different forms from the regular round ones they normally produce ... I did this for about four to five years and got conversant with the forms and their structures. I tried my own variations of them and begun to create my own signs after.[18]

Like Kudowor, Anatsui, and other prominent precursors, several African artists are going through the Sankofa phase to realise their own personal *Natural Synthesis*. They are digging into the past archives—the esoteric vaults. They are drinking from the "well of life."

Indeed, as a professional artist myself, I'm still undergoing this spiritual phase, where I apparently no longer make any conscious effort to integrate Anlo-Ewe symbols and sacred Vodu aesthetics in my art exhibitions. It simply emerges in my creative expressions. I have become one with the inner creative spirits. As one of the shrine artists explained to me in an informal interview, "You must have been very lucky to be among the 'chosen few'. If the 'deities themselves' have 'chosen you' as a vehicle to manifest their creative power, your creative expressions will gradually assume a 'potent' spiritual aura'."

Indeed, ever since I began to experience this "spiritual paradigm shift" as an artist, I most often feel the urge of the creative spirit flowing through the inner depths of my very soul. This enlightening research has broadened my creative vision and exposed me to an endless supply of creative essence and spiritual expressions, into which I could tap and explore, and create my own unique aesthetic values in future art exhibitions.

Figure 11. Researcher posing near a variation of Modernist soak-stained mural on the mud walls of Tɔgbui Adzima Shrine in Torgodo, Volta Region, 2016, photograph by the author's research assistant.

Figure 12. Note the Vodu mural by Noble Kunyegbe as a young child poses in front of Tɔgbui Adzima Shrine wall, Klikor, Volta Region, 2016, photograph by the author.

Figure 13. A group of German academics appreciating *Shaka's Military Reforms*, as part of my exhibition in Accra, 2017, photograph by the author/artist.

Figure 14. Incorporating symbols and aspects of modernist Vodu body art into the installation performance for my exhibition *Purple Harmattan*, which opened at Alliance Française, Accra, 2017. The performer being decorated is Ghanaian choreographer, Sena Atsugah, photograph by Amenyo Awoonor.

Concluding remarks

Generally, some key issues I personally observed have to do with the fact that one of the primary goals of ethnographic fieldwork and experiential learning in artistic research is to learn from one's mistakes, uncover new information, acquire knowledge, develop creative skills and harness research skills (to hone my observation skills, information gathering ability, and analytical thinking in relation to future artistic research). I certainly think that experiential learning is a very effective way to learn because individuals learn best from experiences. It also instils confidence in the learner to learn more about what they are researching. This study has greatly expanded my personal philosophies on art, aesthetics, and spirituality. Spending extended periods in the Volta Region, meeting religious leaders, priests and spirit mediums, and observing Vodu devotees and performers was a great learning experience for me. It is my hope that this study will inform future researchers on the fundamentals of artistic research methods and practical approaches to engage research associates, observe and participate in the field activities when conducting similar studies.

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Notes

1 Especially those brought up as Christians in Accra and other cities: those who did not grow up in the villages or get the opportunity to live and share the spiritual experiences of village life.

2 Dietrich, 'Spirit Messengers, Divine Encounters', 6.

3 Quoted in Mahn, *British Women's Travel to Greece, 1840–1914*, 45.

4 Dale Massiasta, known in private life as Samson Kwaku Azameti, was the founder of the now-defunct Blakhud Research Center at Klikor, of which my father, Dr Mawuli Adjei, was a co-director.

5 Öberg, 'Autoethnography Is Nonsense'.

6 Hayler and Edmond, 'Telling Tales on Either Side of the Teacher', 4.

7 Ani, *Yurugu*, 23

8 Alacovska and Gill, 'De-Westernizing Creative Labour Studies', 197.

9 Ani, *Yurugu*.

10 Uchendu, T*he Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, 10.

11 Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 5-6.

12 Men also perform selected domestic roles in the shrines.

13 Avenorgbo, 'Aesthetic Impact of Ghanaian Socio-Cultural Practices on the Environment and Its Protection in Ghana', 94.

14 Fosu, Ippolito, and Bertelsen, *Transition*, 84; sic.

15 Silva, 'Art and Fetish in the Anthropology Museum', 85.

16 Silva, 'Art and Fetish in the Anthropology Museum', 82.

17 Kudowor, 'Some Trends in Contemporary Ghanaian Painting', 1.

18 Quoted in Vogel, *El Anatsui*, 26–27.

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