Rhythm and Movement in Ghana:
Healing through Dance through Generations

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Abstract

*Rhythm and Movement in Ghana. Healing through Dance through Generations* is an odyssey into the potential of dance for social healing. The motivation for this study was to explore the role of artistic expression and positive cultural revival as a force for healing collective trauma. This project was aimed at understanding, in particular, the power and potential of Ghanaian dancing and drumming tradition: the important role it has played throughout the peoples' history as a vehicle for commune with the spiritual, a medium for release and expression, a force for social solidarity, and a tool for healing; and to draw from it knowledge and power for positive transformation in today's context of modernization and rapid change. Finding focus in the city—a locus, an index, and a generative force for the change most characteristic of the transformation now taking place in Ghana—the project explores, through first-hand involvement, how two urban cultural groups use drumming and dancing as a vehicle for positive cultural expression and healing with youth in the community.

The study finds that traditional Ghanaian drumming and dance bears a message about community solidarity, about caring, healing, and sharing in the joys and sorrows of life together, and getting back into harmony with ourselves, one another, and our world. This is a message that those in the West, along with modern Africans, need to listen to as we suffer breakdowns of community, family, morality, and our ecological base on earth. African music and dance may stir in us some nascent awareness of a humane, down-to-earth solidarity that has been lost in our mechanized culture and that we need to rediscover.
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This work is dedicated to the children, the rising generation. Arise and shine.
1. Introduction

1.1 Forethoughts

I came to Ghana to study "Arts and Culture" with great expectations of the power that lurked behind those words. I came eager to discover the strength of artistic expression and cultural tradition as vehicles for healing and empowerment- and a vital medicine to overcome even the severe trauma associated with poverty, colonization, and slavery.

For all members of the human community concerned with the welfare of the so-called "Third World"- the global south nations emerging from a context of colonization into a new phase of neo-colonialism- it is imperative to pay mind to the issue of healing. The trauma undertaken by entire people's from stressors such as colonialism, slavery, war, extreme poverty, and cultural disintegration impedes efforts toward the realization of true self-determination and the evolution of society from victimhood to agency.

I have taken particular interest in the correlation between development and unhealed trauma after learning about Sousan Abadan's, a Harvard Economist, study on how trauma affects the development process for indigenous peoples on six continents. She contends that individual and collective trauma are phenomena that effect almost every cultural entity, particularly those subject to colonization. The effects of trauma are not necessarily obvious on the surface; they may manifest in cycles of family abuse, crisis of faith in individuals, and societal corruption. Traditionally, the coping mechanisms of any people are interwoven into their cultural fabric. A traumatized individual is able to return to a culturally intact community. In the cultures Sousan studied all over the world,
artistic expression, healing rituals, religious ceremony, dance, drumming, song, and rites of passage tradition were central tenants of every culture's healing framework.

I began thinking about how all around the world the disintegration of cultural fabric causes individuals trauma to perpetuate itself and infect the collectivity like a disease. A traumatized individual, affected by an external stressor can return to a culturally intact and healthy community is able to heal. However, when bonds of tradition, norms, respect, ritual, and process that make up a culture are torn apart (by cultural homogenization, neocolonization, poverty, urbanization, tourism, etc.) there occurs a disintegration in the holding environment conducive to healing. Bonds of community are weakened, confidence is lost, and traditional mechanisms of healing are devalued, impeding the ability of the individual to heal. This leads to vicious cycles of vulnerability in which injury is passed through generations, and whole collectivities of trauma are created, reproducing individual grievances, and ultimately affecting the manners in which people perceive and relate to the world around them.

Yes, we must pay mind to healing. A large part of the healing process I believe lies in reconnection to others and to community life, and a strengthening of cultural fabric conducive to reconciliation- revitalizing connections to native traditions and customs, gathering and ceremonial life, preserving the collective memory, and artistic expression.

With these thoughts laid out, I return full circle to where I began: I want to discover the role of artistic expression and cultural tradition in healing and sustaining communities-for as my friend and brother Nii Oboudai has said: "We must drink of each other's nectar, for art and expression are the medicines which will heal us and heal the world."
1.2 Objectives

The concepts of "art" and "culture", and ideas of health and healing, not to mention the infinite breadth of the traumas of poverty, colonisation, and slavery, carry with them inexhaustible associations and implications whose magnitude far exceeds the scope of any research paper, regardless of its length. It is for this reason that I found focus for my research in rhythm and movement: in the dance, which has saturated many features of Ghanaian life for generations, and is being revived for social healing from the grassroots in Accra and Cape Coast with two youth groups that use drumming and dancing as vehicles for healing, education, and cultural preservation.

The first is the Osu Klotey School of African Music and Dance, part of The Kwaabuette ("Rainbow") Village, Community Cultural Center¹, an intentionally organized community of West African artists, musicians, healers, and dancers located on the Osu-Klotey Lagoon in Accra. The vision of the Kwaabuette is "to work for the practice, preservation, and development of West African healing and wisdom traditions as revealed in art and culture" (Isreal, Java Nii Obudai, cofounder). The more specific aim of the schools to "bring art and music to children living on the streets of Accra" (Nii Adjarh Torto Mensah, leaflet for Osu Klottey School of African Music and Dance).

The second is May-diaso, a dancing and drumming group composed of 30 young people, located in Cape Coast. The cultural youth group, founded and led by Antoinette Aduo Kudoto, was created six years ago in effort to do something positive for the area children living in poverty. Her vision for the group is to teach drum and dance as a medium for positive expression among youth and as a means of imparting knowledge to the children about the richness of their culture.

The following paper is inspired by and dedicated to the efforts of Kwaabuette and May-diaso to revive and protect the valuable tradition of drumming and dancing and use its sacred

¹ From here on referred to simply as "Kwaabuette"
healing power to cope in today's rapidly changing world, to continue healing through
dance through generations.

In the pages that follow I have set out to:

• Understand the concepts of sickness and health from the traditional African perspective,
and the seamless connection between healing, art, and spirituality

• Highlight the sobering reality that faces Ghana, if not all of Africa today, which
threatens to infect the wounds of an all too recent history of colonization and slavery, and
sacrifice the very cultural fabric conducive to healing in the name of misdirected
modernization and the unfolding of another chapter of subordination

• Put forth a rallying cry for the ever-present need to fetch wisdom from the deep wells of
African ancestral heritage, to revive and uphold African traditional values, despite the
prevailing forces working to delegitimize them, to move forward into a genuine
development and the real evolution of humanity

• Understand, in particular, the power and potential of Ghanaian dancing and drumming
tradition: the important role it has played throughout the peoples' history as a vehicle for
commune with the spiritual, a medium for release and expression, a force for social
solidarity, and a tool for healing; and to draw from it knowledge and power for positive
transformation in today's context of modernization and rapid change

• Find focus in the city—a locus, an index, and a generative force for the change most
characteristic of the transformation now taking place in Ghana—to explore how two
cultural groups use drumming and dancing as a vehicle for positive cultural expression
and healing with youth in the community. Through first hand involvement with
Kwaabuette and May-diaso, who employ rhythm and movement to heal through
generations, to evaluate in practical terms, the role of artistic expression and cultural
tradition in healing and sustaining communities
2. **Methodology**

I used a myriad of sources to inform and inspire this project—from the most theoretical: reading through pages of old philosophical books about dance in the dusty corners of the School of Performing Arts library at the University of Ghana, to the most practical: shaking my hips ecstatically to kpanlogo rhythms with the Osu neighborhood children on the raised concrete stage beside the lagoon at Kwaabuette. I have attempted to guide myself with a methodological paradigm as holistic as the subject of the study, believing I could draw the most knowledge by activating all my senses all the time, and exposing them to as much stimuli as possible. For this reason, being constantly receptive, I feel it'd be only fair to cite the man sitting next to me on the tro-tro to Winneba last Sunday, and the nature of the wind by the ocean. Unless I can transcribe the sound of the waves at night or reference the patterns in the motion of people, I fear I cannot escape the charge of plagiarism.

During the three weeks of my research time, I was stationed at Kwaabuette Village Community Cultural Center. I slept on the second floor of the purple hut, constructed by the family\(^2\) with creative craftsmanship, and filled with artwork and hand-made creations. I'd spend mornings getting to know the place and the group, having informal conversations and more intentionally-geared interviews with the members, directors, and instructors, and participating in daily life activities from chores and cooking, to painting signboards and building fences. Late in the afternoons the children would often come from school eager to drum in dance on the stage outside as the sun went down and the ocean offered a cool and constant breeze to keep us energized. We'd take turns dancing for each other: the children would show me the dances they've mastered and I'd display the movements I'd been learning after-hours with Nii Adjah "Senegal". And the evenings,

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\(^2\)I will use "family" to reference the large and growing network of people involved in the Kwaabuette community, the entire alliance of artists and healers that devote their energy to its vision, who stay at the Center, live throughout Osu,
after the children were all called back home, were typically characterized by nearly eternal drum sessions inside. We'd all sit around together, coming up with as many songs as we could think of, singing out and providing layered rhythms that would never fail to lift us out of our seats to dance feel-free-style in the middle of the room.

My days in Accra also involved visits to the University of Ghana in Legon. I went to the University campus to take advantage of the International Center for African Music and Dance and Performing Arts library resources to supplement my first hand experience with a thorough literature review. I skimmed through the books in the sections for dance, music, and African history and tradition, and read a number of sources that passed through my hands by the grace of friends, professionals, informants, and definitely God. I spent further time at the University interviewing some professors whose fields overlapped dance, arts, and sociology.

I also spent many of the research days away from home base. To understand the traditional role dance in Ghanaian society, I left the city and went to Odumase and Agomenya, in Kroboland, an area rich with a proud sense of cultural identity and alive with traditional practices, to observe the dipo puberty rites - an ancient initiation tradition in which drumming and dancing play an important role. I wanted to observe dance in a traditional context to begin to understand in a more tangible way its historical function in Ghanaian life. In Kroboland, the initiation tradition revealed itself to me strongly, and proved to tie more into my project than I had expected. The relevance of the dipo tradition extended far beyond the fact that it was "traditional" or that drumming and dancing were involved, and rather brought forth salient and pervasive wisdom in regard to the theme of initiation, the importance of purpose and belonging, that marks one of the central findings of this whole exploration.
I took advantage of the time in Kroboland, to speak with a number of elders and community leaders about drumming, dance, health, and tradition. I knew that if I were to attempt to speak with any authority about tradition, I had better first consult those people whose minds had been enriched with lifetimes. For this reason I made visits and begun conversations with as many respected elders as I could. I had intentioned conversations and conducted informal interviews with Madame Solome, leader and founder of the Manya Krobo Cultural Troupe, Mr. George Adi-kerley, teacher and former culture studies student, the fetish priest, and Odumase's Queen Mother, Manye Nartiki, among others.

Another four days were dedicated to a visit to Cape Coast, to draw inspiration and knowledge from Antoinette Aduoa Kudoto and her dancing and drumming cultural group, May-Diaso. There, I attended the group's rehearsals, employed participant-observation by dancing along and starting dialogue, conducted a survey asking all of the members the simple question: "Why do you dance?", as well as had more in depth conversations with some of the youth, and underwent lengthy interviews with Madame Antoinette.

Through combining a myriad of research techniques: participant and non-participant observation (with Kwaabuette, May-diaso, the Many Krobo Cultural Troupe, and the dipo rituals), formal and informal interviews (with children as young as 4 to elders as old as 80, from professors to pedestrians), a thorough and cross-disciplinary literature review, consultation of everything from video cassette to flyer, and even wall calendar, reference of lectures at the University of Ghana, and direct first hand experience, using my own body and soul in an experiment to discover the healing power of rhythm and movement—I felt I was able to inform this study from a holistic perspective and observe the subject matter from 360 degrees.

and include people across Ghana and Africa, and even abroad.
As I mentioned before, I collected my data from the avenues of all my senses, engaged and receptive all the time. I carried a small notebook around with me everywhere I went, so I could casually jot down thoughts, observations, and quotes savored from various conversations. I integrated my research so much into my daily life activity, that those around me would be startled to remember I was conducting a study. I appreciated this research approach, in that the depth of my experience made a seamless transition into the odyssey of my investigation.

The difficulty in this approach came in analyzing all of the data, my greatest challenge becoming how to join and harmonize a myriad of diverse, and at first glance disjointed, sources. The sheer breadth of information I gathered from my "drink-it-all-in" approach, proved intimidating if not impossible to synthesize into a paper of this scope. The pages are overflowing.

I think we always wish there were more time, for another conversation with so-and-so, the opportunity to ask the question we forgot to surface last time, another day at Cape Coast, one last dance at Kwaabuette... but I feel overall the satisfied with the depth and diversity of experiences I was able to have throughout my research time. I leave with no regrets—with lessons learned from hardships encountered—but no regrets. Every step of this journey has been enriching, and I wouldn't change anything if I could go back in time. I only wish I could go forward, in time, in this place that never fails for a moment to inspire me to dance.
3. Literature Review: Why dance?

Why is dance, as according to Hanna (1987: 13), "a common attribute of transcendental behavior in the religious and secular world and why with the potential for individual and group self-assertion, education and therapy"? The possibilities inherent in dance have made it a vehicle for communicating socio-cultural patterns, an instrument of religious belief and practice, a medium of politics, and a subject and object of human life (see ibid. 231). Dance, as recurrent human thought and action performance by the human body instrument, has been part of the human species stretching back 30,000 years. Its unwavering persistence through historical time and geographical space testifies to some fundamental quality inherent in dance that is essential for our very existence. What is it about dance that accounts for its universality, that refuses to go out of style, and that leads scholars to utter such convictions as: "Dancing is a magical operation for the attainment of real and important ends of every kind" (Ellis 1923:35)?

3.1 Rhythm

The significance of dancing, in the wide sense, may lie in the fact that it is simply a concrete appeal of a general rhythm, that general rhythm which marks not life only, but the universe, the sum of the cosmic influences that reach us. In attempt to understand the human affinity with rhythm, Hart writes (1991), "One of the very few fundamental things we know about our universe is that everything is vibrating, is in motion, has a rhythm. Every molecule, every atom is dancing its own unique dance, signing its signature song." And as Diallo and Hall have poignantly and poetically expressed, "Dancing symbolizes the rhythmic, patterned movements of life itself. Music and dance
amplify and make manifest to our senses the unheard tomes and unseen waves that weave together the matter of existence" (1989:84).

Rhythm marks all physical and spiritual manifestations, from the ethereal dances of the planets and stars to the dance of the waves that beat incessantly on the shore. Everything that exists, lives and breathes rhythm. When we consider the pulse, the beat, the timing, the orchestration, the flow, the balance between action and rest that governs the dance of our universe, it is no wonder that rhythm is a powerful vehicle between material and physical worlds.

Henry Noi Omaboe, a professional drummer and instructor at Kwaabuette whose been making rhythms since infancy, said that he believed firmly in the great healing power of the drum after he told me that music was his soul and convinced me of the pure elation it brought him faithfully every time. When I asked him why he thought the drum music had such power he said, "because it comes from the earth, [physically, through the wood and skin, tree and animal, as he elaborated later], and because the rhythm exists before us, influencing everything born into the world" (25 Apr 2002).

3.2 Movement

Movement of the human body, perhaps because it is the most common of all experiences, has been taken for granted to the point where we have become unaware of the capacity of movement to convey meaning. However, as Dorris Humphrey wrote in Dance has Many Faces (cited in Lefco, 1974:3): "Nothing so clearly and inevitably reveals the inner man than movement and gesture. It is quite possible if one chooses to conceal and dissimulate behind words or painting or statues, or other forms of human expression, but the movement you move, you stand revealed for good or evil for what you are." Dance is the play of inner imitation. Through it we manifest and express the latent impulse of our own being, immediately and with no other medium than the body itself
33. Dance as human behavior.

Because dance is created and articulated human beings, it cannot but be a manifestation of human experience - of the problems and despair, the triumphs and joys, which are an integral part of living together in particular social contexts. Many scholars emphasize the powerful role dance plays in expressing and shaping people's cultural identities, communicating worldview, and ordering social relations (i.e. Frith 1989:71, Hanna 1987:3, Adinku 1994:13-16). The social significance of dance is strong enough to lead some to the conclusion that: "It is the dance that socialized man" (Ellis 1932:59), and "Dance engendered morality" (ibid. 60).

Dance is a force for revealing ideas about a people's life style and a device for maintaining social unification and group solidarity. The importance of African traditional dance as a socializing and educational activity has been stated by Hanna (1965) in her essay African Dance as Education. Hanna lays stress on the intrinsic qualities of dances and emphasizes that such expression of idea and feeling help indicate various roles of individuals and the value systems of the society: that through performance, individuals come to learn about their expected roles as well as the use of dance for the release of tension. Adinku (1984: 16) further emphasizes dance as a medium of communicating traditional norms. And Patience Kwakwa, a professor in the School of Performing Art at the University of Ghana, stressed in a lecture on dance in Ghana, the role of dance in dramatizing social values, as a means of social control, and a unifying agent that brings people together to express and communicate social values and important things about life in a society that is predominantly illiterate" (4 APR 02).
embedded in the belief system, in myths, legends, and stories, organized and held within cultural, political, and spiritual life. There are dances for sowing and harvest festivals, dances by organized occupational groups (like fishermen, hunters, farmers). People dance before war to raise spirits, and dance to find love. There are dances like fra-fra that accompany songs to point out social ills in the community, and others that use drama to bring to focus vital issues in the society and remind people of their responsibilities. There are dances for play, like fontomfrom, and others, like Afor, designed to purge people of pent up anger (Kwakwa, lecture 4 APR 02). The Krobo perform tegble play with bofo'dam- a ritual hunter's dance used in pacification and purification ceremonies necessary after the killing of a wild animal (Adi-kerley, interview 20 APR 02). The agbekor dance of the Anlo Ewes is performed during festival occasion of Hogbetsotso to commemorate the great trek from enemy territories in Notsie, Togo to their present abode in Ghana. The dipo dance of the Dangme is a social ceremony to initiate girls into womanhood and to prepare them physically and emotionally to face their feminine responsibilities with confidence. The adowa dancer in Ashanti expresses various ideas depicting his/her feelings toward neighbors and onlookers. And the Gahu dance of the Anglo-Ewe is meant for women to express charms and bodily beauty (Adinku 1994:17-19). We have the adenkum dance of the Ashanti; kpanlogo and kpashimo of the Ga; agbadza, egbanigba, and borborbor from the Ewes; and gumbe, dambi, and takai of the North, to name a few. The list of Ghanaian dances is virtually endless, and their purposes, meanings, and roles in society, inexhaustible.

So what is it about drumming and dancing that has so deeply enriched the socio-cultural fabric of Ghanaian peoples? In the section that follows I will explore the virtue of Ghanaian dance as religion, as art, and as healing.
4. African Drum and Dance- traditional roles and meanings

"In the life of traditional African peoples, nothing approaches the dance in significance. It is no mere pastime, but a very serious activity. It is not a sin, but a sacred act. It is not mere 'art' or 'display' divorced from other institutions in society; on the contrary, it is the very basis of survival of the social system in that it contributes significantly to the fulfillment of all of society's needs."

- Frances Rust, Dance in Society (1969:11)

For birth, circumcision, marriage and death, planting and harvest, the celebrations of chieftains, hunting, war and feasts, the changes of the moon and sickness- for all these happenings in Ghana, dance is needed. In traditional African society, dance is inseparable from daily life, commencing with birth and surviving through death. Yaya Diallo, of Mali, stresses the importance of the dance in Miuniaka tradition:

"Music and dance are essential to our existence. In the West, by contrast, music and dance are luxuries, entertainment. In our village music and dance are necessary for work, celebration, religious observance, initiation, funerals, and healing. Music and dance are learned in much the same way that we learn to walk or to speak our native language. The children learn to dance by participating from the earliest age in community dancing" (Diallo and Hall 1989:84).

It is not difficult to evidence the centrality of dance specific to Ghana. "Dance permeates all our life," Oh! Nii Kwei Sowah, dance instructor and performing arts professor at the University of Ghana, could not avoid citing the inevitably cliched phrase (interview 26 APR 2002). "Dance plays an important role in our lives, and in our communities, and features in every facet of human life," Patience Kwakwa echoes (lecture 4 APR 02), "We live and therefore we dance."

In Ghana, for all the solemn occasions of life, for bridals and for funerals, for seedtime and for harvest, for war and for peace, for all these things there are fitting dances. The dances' origins are
4.1 Dance as Religion

"If we are indifferent to the art of dancing we have failed to understand, not merely the supreme manifestation of physical life, but also the supreme symbol of spiritual life."

-Havelock Ellis, The Dance of Life (1932:33)

Dance in Ghana not only mediates between individual and society, as we have seen, but also between humans and their gods. "The traditional African does not preach his religion, he dances it" (Ellis 1932:35). They have no creeds to recite: their creeds are with them, in their blood and in their hearts. Their beliefs about God are expressed in concrete steps, attitudes, and acts of worship (cf. Mbiti 1990:67). To dance is to worship and to pray. And because there is no such thing as religion apart from life in the Ghanaian context, the dance comes to occupy a crucial role in existence in its entirety. As Havelock Ellis conveys, "the dance was in the beginning the expression of the whole man for the whole man was religious" (1932:45).

African dance appears to contribute to the individual and his society through the religious dance practices of worship and honor, conducting supernatural beneficence, effecting change, impersonating the supernatural in possession or masked dances, and embodying a supernatural essence or potency to gain supernatural goods and services. While many religions pass moral code through a holy book, traditional African religions impart and inherit spiritual ethos through drum, dance, song, and story. In this sense, African rhythm and movement can be seen as sacred text. Similarly, public worship does not take the form of a quiet and solemn contemplation but rather that of action - verbal action, musical action, or bodily actions (Nketia 1957:4). "The drama of worship is, in effect, an elaboration of the dramatic implications of the behavior associated with the gods. It

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3 "It would require only a very casual observation of the Akan people (to give one example) to discover their deep and continual awareness of the presence of God among them...The Ghanaian conception of God, one and great, upon whom all life ultimately depends, is completely inadmissible" (Sarapong 1974:11-13).
is an attempt to provide a convenient medium by means which men, taking the initiative, can meet their Gods" (ibid.).

To dance is to take part in the cosmic control of the world: "Every sacred Dionysian dance is an imitation of the divine dance" (Ellis 1932:37). Hanna narrates the vivid presentation of the unity of lineage through dance in Africa, explaining the emergence of the process of reproduction and recreation in the human supernatural cyclical pattern of reincarnation whereby the ancestors continue their existence in the dancers' bodies (1987:4). The dancer can further embody the supernatural through personal possession and invited spirit mediumship. Possession dance metaphorically mediates the polarities of the living and supernatural with mission to provide identity for the supernatural to resolve problems. To dance the deity is to evoke its powers.

*Kpele* worship among a section of the Ga-Dangme, for instance, is centered around the dance *kpledzoo*. There is no organized worship without the performance of the dance because the gods are dancing gods. The mediums of the *kple* mysteries are believed to be representatives on earth of these gods. So when the mediums dance, then it is in fact the gods who first started the dance in the sky. *Kpele* mediums portray the gods in their various dances when seeking answers to the various problems that have come to them and their community. Dancing as the core in *kpele* ritual portrays the relationship of gods and mediums, and it is, therefore, the mechanism through which worship is affected. (Adinku 1994:17, and Nii Adjarh, personal communication 6 MAR 02).

Among the Ga, possession dance is also a crucial element of the new year's ritual requesting supernatural help for the well being of the tribe in the coming twelve months. The Ga ask for such needs such as rain, fish, crops and health. Through mediums whose state of possession is produced through dance, the God signifies its presence by delivering messages prophesizing the coming year's events and suggesting how to cope with them (see Mbiti 1990:169). Among the Fanti, possession is an important attribute of the priesthood. Because the deities love to dance, the priests assemble drummers, become possessed, and then speak with power and authority of the deity
Similarly in Krobo tradition, a priestess or any devotee is apt to become possessed by the deity during the dancing performances of the worrya-yami and nna-yami celebrations to act as its mouth-piece (Adi-kerley, interview 20 APR 02).

4.2 Dance as art

"The dance antedates all other forms of art because it employs no instrument but the body itself which everyone always has with him and which, in the final analysis, is the most eloquent and responsive of all instruments"


"Dancing is the loftiest, most moving, the most beautiful of all the arts because it is no mere translation or abstraction of life; it is life itself" (Ellis 1932:60). With Ellis' conviction, one might assume she were referring to traditional African dance, with its manifold spiritual implications, rather than classical ballet, for example, which seems to more of an appendage to life than life itself (though the opposite is true). Traditionally in Ghana dance has been the very vehicle for communion with the cosmos that govern all the affairs of daily life. Through dance, as we have seen, benevolent spirits are pleased and hostile ones appeased; the rain is danced out of the sky and the millet out of the ground, the youth is dance into adulthood, the sick into health, the dead into quiescence, the enemy into defeat.

In the modern world—in which magic, religious and social rituals have largely disappeared into various scientific and intellectual departments of our more disparate life—art, along with religion, has been separated from daily living and deprived of its practical function. Art has become an end in itself, defined even by its lack of being anything else, but art for art's sake. Within this conceptual framework, traditional dance, utilitarian in that sense that it is married with religion, disqualifies from being "art". Dance as "art", rather, would bring to mind professional dancing,
divorced from religion, and based instead on aesthetic and rhythmic beauty and the expressiveness of the simple human personality.

I maintain, however, that the traditional dance of Ghana is art in its fullest definition. In a society where art is created and practiced by the people as a whole, rather than personal conception, art (and especially the dance) is the very voice of religion and magic that govern all the affairs of daily life. When we understand art as "a medium of communication to express and explain those things in the scheme of human experience for which words are inadequate" (Martin, 1968:16), we can view traditional Ghanaian as its supreme manifestation. Dance in Ghana appears to be part of a cultural code or logical model enabling the human being to order experience, account for its chaos, express isomorphic properties between opposing entities, and explain affective and cognitive 'realities'. Through what John Martin calls "rituals of tension" (1968:134), the second of the three types of dance he classifies, dancers personify powers that control life's mysteries (i.e. "those things in the scheme of human experience for which words are inadequate": birth, coming of age, sickness, death, growing of crops, rain, fertility).

Because of the daily, permanent, and persistent relationship between Africans and the cosmos, we must understand art in the creative context of spirituality and ritualism. With life bound to the deities, who are represented in abstract and physical manifestations, African art is inextricably linked to higher spiritual powers (Asare, lecture 6 APR 02). With such depth of commitment to the cosmic order, expression takes place within a ritual context, constantly evoking and acknowledging the spirit world.

4.3 Dance as healing

"Traditional healers played a vital role in the survival of African slaves in the Caribbean by pooling their spiritual and psychic powers together to free their people from the inhumanity of slavery. It was they who comforted the sorrowing... it was they who lead the dance."
Just as we have concluded that religion is inseparable from, likewise we cannot talk about health without first acknowledging spirituality. A person's health, and indeed very being depends on maintaining harmonious relationship between him and all the forces of the universe that surround him. The belief is that as long as the vital life force emanating from the Supreme Being is flowing throughout the universe and in equal proportions, there is ritual equilibrium, wholeness, health (Amenowode 2002:115). Healing in Africa, according Amenowode, "is not merely a case of a sick person taking medicine for cure; it is a complex process of inter-relationships of man and his environment" (ibid.). And in Boothe's words: "Healing in Africa has to do with the preservation and restoration of human vitality in the context of the community as a whole. The healing power depends on right human relationships and harmony with the whole world environment including the time transcending spirit world" (1997:8). Harmony is the central concept- the fitting combination and pleasing interaction of parts in a whole, with its visible and invisible dimensions.

Art, as a medium of communion between the natural and supernatural worlds, is an important instrument in maintaining or restoring harmony between humans, their environment, and the cosmos. Malidoma Patrice Some, from the Dagara tribe in Burkina Faso, affirms: "Artistic ability, the capacity to heal, and the vision to see into the Other World are connected for indigenous peoples. In fact, in my village there is only a thin line between artist and healer" (Somel998:96). And Amenowode contends: "The African healer does not cure. It is the psychic force released by his incantation and the spiritual presence of the Gods and ancestral spirits made manifest in art works that effect cure" (2002:115). It is clear that the medium of art is the core ingredient for maintaining health. Some affirms this conviction, and adds to it the dimension of a community, for just as the individual cannot be seen outside of the cosmic context, he cannot be separated from his social
context (whenever an individual becomes disturbed, the community itself is also (Diallo and Hall 1989:147)):

The connection between the artist as a sacred healer and the community is undeniable. To produce beauty consistently requires a healthy community. Therefore the artist is the pulse of the community; his or her creativity says something about the health of the community" (Some 1998:96).

Let us look specifically now at drumming and dancing, to understand more tangibly how art functions to heal.

In many African communities, music therapy is closely linked with their religious belief systems, which is equally connected to concept of good health and ill health. In Miuniaka tradition (Mali), for example, music serves a sacred, healing function for the individual in society. A remedy for both physical and psychological imbalances, music facilitates communication with the ancestors, the spirits, the Creator. Music harmonizes forces of the visible and invisible worlds (Diallo and Hall 1989:4). Yava Diallo testifies to the inseparability of music and healing in his birthplace: "In the Minianka villages of Fienso and Zangasso, the musicians were healers, the healers musicians. The word musician itself implies the role of healer. From the Minianka perspective, it is inconceivable that music and restoring health should be separate, as they are in the West" (79).

Music serves as a bridge between the visible and invisible realms. Music can thus be a potent force for maintaining or restoring human harmony with cosmos: to "maintain harmony with one another, the Creator, the ancestors, the spirits of the bush, and nature. .. This is the ultimate purpose" (1989:79-80). Psychological illness means being out of harmony, and healing is the means bringing the individual back into harmonious relation with the world; "because Minianka music serves to sustain or restore social and cosmic harmony, it is in essence a tonic and a remedy, one among several available in the culture for the work of healing" (ibid.).
Since psychologically disturbed individuals are rhythmically disturbed as well [cf. "When one is not in rhythm, one becomes depressed. Likewise depression, or being estranged from one's natural magic, shows in being out of rhythm." (Some 1998:270)], the use of the healing drum for sustained periods of time at a steady rhythm that suits the patient is a potent remedy for mind-body healing\(^4\). When fellow villagers make music to heal a psychologically disturbed patient, the musician enters into harmony with the patient. Through the ears, the entire nervous system is affected. Sound energy is transformed into bioelectric nervous energy. As the brainwaves and rhythms of internal organs are stabilized, the person functions as a more synchronous whole (Diallo and Hall 1989:161). The music making is a socializing initiative that overcomes alienation and is a step toward empowering the patient to enter into harmony with society (82). And finally the music serves to induce emotional release: "Music also touches the depths of human emotions in an immediate and powerful way. Thus, the Minianka musicians can facilitate emotional release for their fellows who are suffering from emotional blockage or turmoil" (83).

Apart from the healing drum—or I should say "related to" (if there is one thing we should take away from this exploration is the virtue of embracing the interconnectedness of all things in life, and not its separateness)—is the use of dancing for healing, from diagnosis to cure, in Minianka tradition. Diallo explains how sickness is diagnosed through community dancing, in which the Minianka musicians may sense disturbances as they manifest in people's movements. As the dancers relax, they let out their suppressed tendencies (150). Dance is the same tool that also frees the person from their sickness, as notifying physical, psychological, social, and spiritual renewal:

"The physical benefits include the release of tensions, lubrication of joints and muscles, and enhancement of neuromuscular coordination. Psychologically, the dancers enjoy the freedom of playfully expressing themselves, the pleasure of rhythmic movement, the release of emotional pressures, and the temporary departure from worries and hardships of survival. Socially, they are

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\(^4\) See Appendix 1, interview with Henry Noi Omaboe ("C.J.") in which he speaks about the spiritual healing power of
united with one another and their ancestors in response to the music of the drum. As its vibrations reverberate into the invisible realm, the music quickens awareness of the spiritual mystery of life, and the dancing expresses the vitality of life. That is why dance is a great preventive remedy for the Minianka" (Diallo and Hall 1989:83).

Dance as a powerful tool for healing is also gaining recognition in the West. Through what is called "creative dance" or "dance therapy" in the United States, educators and therapists argue that individuals can freely express themselves; develop a sense of identity through visual and kinetic self-discovery and acceptance of the exposed self; and experience catharsis, accomplishment, self discipline, and productive interaction with others in a situation (Hanna 1987:268). Many psychologists, psychiatrists, and dancer therapists recognize that physical movements associated with dance may stimulate or sublimate a range of feelings and may be elicited for pleasure or coping with problematic aspects of social involvement. The extraordinary potency of dance may be associated with heightened body activity and emotion, and the resulting cathartic effect, reducing anxiety or conflict through the release of energy and frustrations, and discharge of distressful emotions.

Dance, like many other forms of intensive physical activity, "often provides a healthy fatigue or distraction which may abate a temporary rage crisis and thus allow more enduring personality patterns to regain ascendancy" (Ruth Monroe 1955:630). A specialist in African psychodynamics out it this way: "The rhythm, vigorous movements, their coordination and synchronization, tend to induce some degree of catharsis... the essential psychological function of the dance, in fact is the prevention of depression and accumulation of other psychic stresses" (T. Lambo 1965:41). Benno Safier (1953:242) points out that rapid motion in dance is especially intoxicating, altering the state of consciousness, and "facilitating an orally regressive state of perception and feeling tone without attendant loss of activity in intellection...which gives the feeling of bliss and elation." The Dogon of the drum.
Mili describe the rapid gona dance movement "as relief, like vomiting" (Griaole 1965, cited in Hanna 1987:68). And Hanna affirms, "It is well known that exercise is helpful in alleviating depression... Energetic dancing may change brain wave frequencies, adrenalin, and blood sugar content inducing giddiness through high speed or sensory rhythmic stimulation in more than one sensory mode"(Hanna 1987:68-9).

Above all, dance provides an immediate and sensuous experience- a way of representing a segment of the human psyche or world to understand or cope with it. Through both physical and spiritual means, via the body and the cosmos, the dance holds great potential for healing.

5. INITIATION

"My sense is that the need for healing is rooted in crises of personal identity and purpose. Whether they are raised in an indigenous or modern culture, there are two things that people crave: the full realization of their innate gifts, and to have these gifts approved, acknowledged and confirmed. In the psyches of people who have no means to express their unique genius there is an inner power and authority that fails to shine because the world around them is blind to it."


Some's conviction implies that our own inner authority needs the fuel of external recognition to inspire us to fulfill our life's purpose, and until this happens, we wait in paralysis for the redemptive social responses that rescues us from the dungeon of anonymity. The fundamental and innate human need for community is due significantly to our need for a supportive atmosphere in which to realize our potentials and fulfill our purposes.

Rites of initiation are a central tenant of Ghanaian social life, aimed at including the young person in the community and recognizing his or her genius, moving the youth toward maturity and adult responsibility. "Through initiation, a young person gains access to dynamic and purposeful living" (Some 1998:2763. Yava Diallo explains the value of initiation in similar terms from the
Mhierka tradition: "Initiations were created in our culture expressly to help people realize new strengths within themselves by surmounting difficulties and voluntarily enduring suffering. Initiations are designed to enlarge the initiates vision of the world" (Diallo and Hall 1989:47).

Initiation focuses on some basic existential questions faced by human beings since the dawn of time. Everyone wonders: Who am I? Where do I come from? What am I here for? Where am I going? Through rituals of initiation, collective attention and care prepare the child for the delivery of his purpose and potential. The community acknowledges her maturity as awakening into one's gift and the investment of self for a good that is greater than self.

Initiation is so integral to human well-being that, according to Some, that the absence of such ritual in modern life is spiritually fatal: "A spiritual crisis can start as early as birth, when, instead of being welcomes by people, a child meets the silence of technology and cold convention. In this case, a thwarted life purpose surges up during adolescence in the form of impetus and subordination. The behavior is directly linked to the need to enter a ritual space strong enough to restore the body's alignment with the purpose of life" (1998:276).

After all, initiation is not just a ceremony; it is the definition of the relationship between self and the world. In the words of Michael Mead, in Men and the Water of Life: "Initiatory events are those that mark a man or a woman's life forever, that pull a person deeper into life than they would normally choose to go. Initiatory events are those that define who a person is, or cause some power to erupt from them, or strip everything from them until all that is left is their essential self."

5.1 The Dipo Puberty Rites Tradition in Kroboland, Ghana

Initiation, especially among girls, is of inestimable importance in Ghanaian society, and has, more than any other tradition, preserved through time despite the many changes have taken place as
In regard to traditional Ghanaian customs and institutions. Moreover, it is characteristic of Kroboland, known for its "conservatism and high fidelity to traditional life" (Huber 1963:294), that initiation is held with particular esteem unseen elsewhere in contemporary Ghana. It is for this reason that I left the city and went to Odumase and Agomenya, Kroboland, to observe the dipo puberty rites- an ancient initiation tradition in which drumming and dancing play an important role. I wanted to observe dance in a traditional context to begin to understand in a more tangible way its historical function in Ghanaian life. The relevance of the dipo tradition to this study, I came to learn, extends far beyond the fact that it was "traditional" or that drumming and dancing were involved, and rather brought forth salient and pervasive wisdom in regard to the theme of initiation, the importance of purpose and belonging, that marks one of the central findings of this whole exploration.

No other ritual in the life of the female Krobo is of greater importance than- or even equal to- the dipo. Through it, the girl officially enters adulthood and obtains full status in the tribal community. Up to the present time, these initiation rites have occupied a most cherished place in the minds and sentiments of the people. There is conviction, dating from ancient times, that no Krobo girl can ever become a mature Krobo woman unless she can show on her body and on her hand the visible marks of initiation (Huber, 1963:165). "Wane mo klo-yo peehe " (we are making you a Krobo woman) is said during the most important ceremony at the sacred stone as well as during many of the other performances. Indeed, the entire ritual marks the awakening of the girl into her very being, imbuing her existence with meaning, and honoring her purpose in life.

The following is an account of some of the ritual observances of the dipo. They are based on my first hand observations of the ceremonies, supplemented by information I gathered from people in the community, and references from the exhaustive anthropological study done by Hugo Huber in
Though I came to Kroboland with great expectations of seeing plenty dancing, I was nonetheless astounded by the degree to which dance, singing and drumming activity was central to the dipo ritual observances, less in terms of quantity as by the essential role these mediums played in the realization of the rites. The participants, for example, are throughout the days' rituals invoking blessings and protection of the gods and ancestors by singing and dancing the ha.

"The dipo ritual of our "house"
go on, perform it!
Our ladies, dance ha?
A gay and lively ha!
Daughter of our grandmothers
Do not fear!"

(transcribed and translated in Huber 1963:174)

During the climax of all the days' ritual events, the sacred stone ceremony (which I could not observe for taboo reasons), I was waiting with other participants at the tree we could not pass, anticipating their return from the stone. Wild enthusiasm filled everyone as they emerged from out of sight and returned to the houses. The girls were carried shoulder-high or on the backs of their companions who rushed forth with them toward the town. The excited crowd sang and cried behind them, or cheered them forward from the sidelines. It is a triumphant return home with firing of guns, stormy dancing, and running, in which the exhilaration of their victoriously passed test is rejoicely revealed.

Arriving in their house compound, the same exaltation and rejoicing continued. While the carriers, bathed in perspiration, placed the girls down on antelope skins, the whole women folk dance around them wild and suggestive pantomimes. Their melodious ha songs triumphantly
resounded in the coming darkness of the night, expressing their happiness over the fact that their daughters have thereby become true Krobo women in accordance with the ancient rule.

During the closing celebrations (following traditionally a one week confinement, or where omitted, after Sunday night's ritual), initiates are richly adorned with heavy, gorgeous clothes, silk handkerchiefs, beads, jewels, and red parrot feathers, and whatever ancestral treasures a "house" can put on display in the final stage of the daughter's initiation. Women tie the strings of beads around the girls' necks, wrists, arms, waists, and legs, and accompany their adoring work with lively singing and dancing to the ha-ye or sa-yo tune. At times in the suggestive mimic of the woman dancers the idea of the girls' physical maturity and fertility are expressed.

When the initiates are ready in their full attire, they are lead to the open compound where the male members of the "house" with representatives of the mother's and bridegroom's kin are assembled to watch the first dancing performance. In short steps, gracefully swaying her hands, each of them modestly and discretely moves forward, turns to the right, to the left, moves backward, shows her charm and dancing skill while the singers, male and female, in their ha-ye songs celebrate their fine appearance and the end of the initiation.

Proudly her mom spreads her cloth on the ground in front of the dancing daughter, and her father, gently embracing her, offers his knees as a seat of honor for her. In most houses the klama drums are played and the women clap their hands to the rhythm of the ha-ye dance, which, after short intervals, is resumed time and again on Saturday night and particularly during Sunday of Monday.

In testimony to the prevalence and importance of dance throughout the initiation, Hugo Huber has observed (1963:188) that even in the days after the celebration, the initiates, accompanied by some sisters, used to visit relatives and friends in order to thank them for their help and participation in the rites through dancing performance. Once more, on this occasion, the girls show their skill.
While there are many prominent features of the dipo ritual tradition—from celebrating a girls physical maturity, to putting on a display of marriageable daughters and of the family treasures, and the girls' pedagogical-technical introduction into their future lives as wives and mothers—it is Huber's contention that chief emphasis and weight ties in the ritual element and its social implications. The girl, during the critical period of her adolescence is through these ceremonies as though betrothed and dedicated to the deity (189). It is from such closeness and dedication to the supernatural beings, for blessings, protection, and fertility are expected.

Not only for the girls themselves, but also for each kin group and for the tribe as a whole, the dipo rites have their great significance. These festivities not only provide ample opportunity every year to generally revive ancient tradition, but kinship and affinity ties are likewise reaffirmed. The whole "house", both men and women in their respective way, as well as representatives of the mother's and bridegroom's groups, participate in the preparations, performances, presentations of gifts and enjoyment of hospitality. Also the dead members are officially informed of it and are believed to take, according to their ways, part in it.

The whole affair is essentially about membership and maturity, pride and belonging. According to Huber (1963: 189): "The significant feature of the whole performance which carries much weight in the minds of the people is the attainment not only of the girl's physical maturity, but also her social maturity, i.e. her initiation into full-membership within the tribal community." The ritual also instills pride in the initiates for their heritage. The whole environment of Krobo mountain, in the ancient time, with the homes of their forefathers, with their lengthy and strict isolation from anything which was regarded as foreign or inimical to Krobo tradition, such as foreign food, clothes, language or people; further their supervision by the old ladies, the female elite and the preserves of indigenous culture, and their growing familiarity with the traditional songs, dances, and rituals- all
Must have been an inspiration to the girls, apt to make them reflect on the values of their own race (~Huber 1963:189-90).

It is my hope that through this case point, I have made evidenced the importance of the ritual of initiation. It is my conviction that initiation is a life-defining, affirming, and fulfilling rite of passage supporting and celebrating the young person's membership in the community and unique gifts and potentials, powerful enough to align the individual with her dynamic purpose in the world.

I want to close this section with the same quote that commenced it, to bring the focus back into the discussion of healing. After all, what is sickness if not the suppression and retardation of our human potential? What is health, but to shine?

"My sense is that the need for healing is rooted in crises of personal identity and purpose. Whether they are raised in an indigenous or modern culture, there are two things that people crave: the full realization of their innate gifts, and to have these gifts approved, acknowledged and confirmed. In the psyches of people who have no means to express their unique genius there is an inner power and authority that fails to shine because the world around them is blind to it."


6. Modern Context

In talking of social health, we are compelled to also talk of social illness. In the following chapter, I will highlight some of the aspects of Ghanaian colonial and pre-colonial history and current situation that provide backdrop for a discussion of collective trauma, and its attendant social healing. From the forethoughts of this study, we remember the premise that the trauma undertaken by entire peoples from stressors such as colonialism, extreme poverty, slavery, war, and cultural disintegration infects entire collectivities like a disease, reproducing vicious cycles of vulnerability that manifest through subtle, and not so subtle, symptoms of social sickness.
In reflecting on the shared experience of Ghanaians over the centuries, we are sobered by to remember a long and horrific history of exploitation tracing back to the initial rendezvous of West Africa with Europe. First contact was made when Europeans came to establish trade, to drain Africa of her wealth in minerals and spices. The chapter that soon followed added to it people, ushering in the vicious enslavement of Africans to fuel development abroad and virtually glean Africa of her ripe and able-bodied offspring, not to mention the violent rupture of family, community, society and culture. And when slavery's misery was deemed immoral centuries later, it was replaced by a ferocious epoch of colonization, during which various European powers took their turns strangling their respective colonies, disrupting whatever pre-existing balances of socio-political organization in the name of foreign dominion.

Now that the age of colonization is formally over, and we have supposedly entered a new era of sovereignty, independence, and self-determination, I'm afraid today is frighteningly reminiscent of yesterday. The trend of European, and now American, domination persists with myriad injurious implications. The West claims monopoly over economic, political, and cultural power and threatens to make extinct all things "other", including all things African and all things Ghanaian.

The wounds of this traumatic history (inflicted on an entire collectivity but with very real and personal implications for the individual), are fertile breeding grounds for infection in the absence of the traditional coping mechanisms of a culture's healing framework. With the pierced shell of traditional autonomy that came with colonial penetration, and subsequent trend of cultural disintegration in the wake of modern globalization and western supremacy, we witness the unraveling of the cultural fabric necessary for healing.

This is a very scary reality when we witness the change underway now in Ghana and the rest of the developing world. "Without warning and without physical or psychological preparation, Africa has been invaded by a world revolution. Now a new and rapid rhythm is beating from the drums of science and technology, modern communication and mass media, schools and universities,
cities and towns. The man of Africa must get up and dance, for better or for worse, on the arena of world drama" (Mbiti 1990:211). With traditional coping mechanisms weakened and unhealed trauma looming in the foreground, the prospects of the "world revolution" Mbiti talks of seems violently disruptive.

Modern change has brought many individuals in Africa into situations entirely unknown in traditional life or for which that life offers no relevant preparation. "This sudden detachment from the land to which Africans are mystically bound, and the thrust into situations where corporate existence has no meaning, have produced dehumanized individuals in the mines, industries and cities" (Mbiti 1990:213). The change means individuals are severed, cut off, pulled out, and separated from morality, customs, and traditional solidarity. They have no firm roots anymore. They are simply uprooted but not necessarily transplanted. "They live as individuals, but they are dead to the corporate humanity of their forbearers. For the individual the change has come too suddenly, plunging him into a darkness for which he has not been traditionally prepared" (ibid.).

Traditional cultures are or were suited to the traditional background, which allowed little if any radical change. "Modern change tries to implant a form of culture which is shallow, at least on the African soil. It is a culture of pop music and transmitter radios, of television and magazines with pictures of semi-naked women, of industrialism and economic competition and mass production and an ever-accelerating speed of life" (215). It alienates him both from the tradition of his society and his roots. So he becomes alien both to traditional life and to the new life brought by modern change because the speed of casting off the scales of traditional life is much greater than the speed of wearing the garments of this future dimension of life.
6.1 Urbanization

Cities, as a locust, index, and generative force for change, are symptomatic of many of the problems emerging within this modernization. In a lecture of urbanization in Ghana, Dr. S.S. Quarcoo (5 Apr 02) stressed the profound change that the growth of the city has had in every realm: social, cultural, political, environmental and economic. While cities are not a Western invention and were not introduced by colonization (West African peoples have been organizing themselves as traditional states in populous centers like Legos and Kumasi, for centuries), "new ideas of cities were superimposed by Europe and without allegiance to political, traditional or cultural practices" (Quarcoo, lecture notes 5 Apr 02).

These days migration from rural areas to Accra is happening at an unprecedented rate as people come in search of employment. The services and infrastructure cannot keep pace with the influx of people, creating a situation where we see inadequate housing, medical facilities, sanitation and schools. The modern city introduces questions of slums, earning and spending money, inequality, alcoholism, prostitution, corruption, family instability, and thousands of young people roaming the streets in search of employment, as well as problems of unwanted children, orphans, criminals, delinquents, and prisoners who all need special social care to be integrated into their communities.

Many people suddenly come from the country into the city where they have no roots or tradition to help them settle down. The individualism of the modern city demands a new code of behavior. The neighbor concept is destroyed while traditional solidarity (i.e. "I am because we are and since we are therefore I am") is diminished. "We" becomes "I". Thus you can be sick hungry, crying, and alone, even if one hundred others rub shoulders with you on the tro-tro. The great masses are blind, deaf, and indifferent. What is perhaps the most worrisome is the disintegration of social mechanisms and the unraveling of a cultural fabric that hold society together in traditional
states. This results in the loss of social security, support networks, and crisis of faith and identification. "Urbanization has created profound change in the whole identities of people" (Quarcoopome, lecture 5 Apr 02).

Greater than the challenges facing of us of unemployment, housing crisis, prostitution, and the breakdown of the family, is the most harmful and persistent symptom of foreign dominion that manifests on a spiritual and psychological level: it's been termed "the colonization of the mind." As Dr. Olayemi Tinuoye has put it, Ghanaians are suffering from an "inferiority complex" (lecture 3 FEB 02). This diagnosis is the reality of a system of gross inequality between peoples, sustained for generations through colonization, slavery, and Western imperialism. Overtime the invasive notion of a Western and white supremacy has become internalized in the minds of those peoples relegated to the status of peripheral nationhood.

Indeed I have witnessed throughout my four months here, though there are multiple exceptions, a devaluation of Ghanaian culture strong enough to call my attention to this matter of the collective "inferiority complex" on a daily basis—whereby everything striven for is Western, and there is a rejection of all things African. I've heard the worry echoed several times among certain Ghanaians, that more and more society is paying little mind to the wisdom of African tradition; that Ghanaian cultural heritage is being delegitimized in favor of adopting a Western lifestyle within the framework of a Western value system. I have moreover observed a tendency to herald the United States of America as a great and flawless nation, somewhat of a yardstick to measure Ghanaian progress and a beacon of inspiration for her development. The sentiments of idealism in regards to the Western world have ranged from overzealous optimism about the development and prosperity of American society, to the belief that "white man is God" (pedestrian, Cape Coast). These expressions are all symptoms of experiencing a foreign locust of control and determination.
7. Sankofa: revival of past wisdom

It is within the modern context of sickness and disharmony that we are rapidly losing the very wisdom capable of healing and overcoming from such imbalance. As Java Isreal Nii Obudai expressed: "The keys and secrets which our great ancestors, healers, and Prophets had available to them, and which they use to decipher and reveal the great Spirit of life, are quickly being hidden away for all eternity, as concrete is poured over them, and as they are replaced with new devices using technologies that are deceiving instead of enlightening" (Project Together publication 2001).

Yava Diallo has poignantly warned: "Africa has been affected by proponents of modern Western medicine who claim to have a monopoly on scientific knowledge. For many Africans, only medical doctors with diplomas have the right to speak about healing. They have resigned any faith in their traditions and believe in white man's pills. As in other parts of the world, we may be witnessing in Africa today the disappearance of a large portion of wealth of the human heritage. The old medicinal and musical traditions are falling into disuse. The elders die, and their knowledge dies with them" (Diallo and Hall 1989:195-6).

The legacy of Western supremacy leaves a bitter taste in our mouths. "In school we learn hardly anything about our own culture; the emphasis is on the West," Professor Joe Amenowode told me (11 APR 02). And as Diallo and Hall testify: "In Africa today, youth no longer have a model to follow... the elders who stood for knowledge have been replaced by stars from outside our culture" (1989:196-7).

The urgency of reviving the wisdom of African tradition, before its relegated to extinction and falls into disuse in the forgotten corners of a homogenous global society dedicated to material progress, individualism, and short-term satisfaction, is upon us.

"I am struck with the irony of the situation that I witness in the West. People are seeking out the values of ancient traditions from many cultures because of what was lost in the materialistic advances of their secular culture. Can we in Africa not profit from this example? Do we have to
lose everything of traditional value first before we set out to rediscover it? So many Westerners are saturated with all the material goods and conveniences possible, yet they are still unhappy. In Africa, the tendency is to want these very things that have failed to satisfy the people that possess them. We Africans do not know Westerners truly. Once we have killed our entire culture, will we have to reinvent it, or will we take it from elsewhere?" (Diallo and Hall 1989:197-8)

In the postcolonial era, the chorus of voices is rising, advocating socio-cultural independence and integrity by mediating modern and traditional influences and regenerating ennobled patterns from an ancestral heritage. The need to reestablish the position of African culture by affirming its particular values was most vigorously expressed in the concepts of "negritude" and "African personality". Following independence, these concepts were transmuted from a rallying cry for African independence to be a symbol of African worth (see Herkovitz 1967:468-53). They represented positive affirmation of self-instilling pride and recognition of the value of obtaining inspiration from the past. The document drafted by the First Congress of Negro Writers and Artists in 1956 heralded the "emergence of African personality from the accretion of Western culture, which colonization has thrown into disequilibria and servitude" (in Herkovitz 1967:469). Happily, the forces threatening and degenerating indigenous cultural values are accompanied by a countermovement dedicated to defining a tomorrow for Africa that belongs to Africans, and to transform society consistent with a vision that will result in a new continent going down in history. "Yesterday is a foreign country. Tomorrow belongs to us!! !", Thabo Mbeki words shout off the face of the African Art and Culture Development Company Limited 2002 calendar.

*Sankofa* is a Ghanaian principle meaning, "Go back and take" ("Sanko"- go back, "Fa"- take), symbolizing positive reversion and revival. The proverb signifies "the importance of returning in time to bring to the present useful past cultural values, which are needed today. It is believed that progress is based on the right use of positive contribution from the past" (Agbo 1999:33. Now more than ever, we should hear the wisdom of the *Sankofa* parable, and let it inspire thought and our actions.
8. Two Cultural Youth Groups: healing through dance through generations

The principle of positive revival guides and governs the work of the following two urban youth groups that commune around culture, through drumming and dancing. It is these groups that are the inspiration of this study, as grassroots communities doing the real work of social healing guided by the principle of Sankofa The section that follows narrates the vision and practice as revealed to me in our involvement together.

8.1 Kwasbuette

The Kwaabuette ("Rainbow") Village, Community Cultural Center, as I expressed in the introduction, is an intentionally organized community of West African artists, musicians, healers, and dancers located on the Osu-Klottey Lagoon in Accra. The vision of the center is "to work for the practice, preservation, and development of West African healing and wisdom traditions as revealed in art and culture" (Israel, Java Nii Obudai, co-founder). The more specific aim of the school s to "bring art and music to children living on the streets of Accra" (Nii Adjarh Torto Mensah, leaflet for Osu Klottey School of African Music and Dance).

Kwaabuette was founded in 1997, when the land of the Osu-Klottey Lagoon was generously donated by the Chief of Osu to the Kwaabuette Cultural Troupe for them to establish a traditional arts center. The Kwaabuette Cultural Troupe, directed by Nii Adjarh Torto Mensah has been together for almost 15 years. It began when Nii Adjarh was teaching in schools around the Osu area, and organized the most talented ones to form a traditional drumming and dancing group. With the support of the brothers and sisters in the area, he invited professionals to teach these young people
traditional Ghanaian drum and dance. They trained together and would perform for funerals and social events.

It was not long after when Nii Adjarh began having prophetic dreams and visions calling for him to transform the sacred Osu-Klottey Lagoon into a community cultural center. Nii Adjarh recounted to me his vivid dreams inspiring this purpose, expressing his mission "to bring children together, bring everybody together, build a house and holy center of Osu-Klottey." At the time, the lagoon area was "all bush", uninhabited entirely and visited only to set traps and gather food, and everyone thought he was crazy. Meanwhile, Nii Adjarh was committed to bringing to fruition the "promise land around Osu."

With the strong conviction: "Drumming and dancing have a spiritual power, and that spiritual power heals the human being... We have magic drumming and spiritual dancing. The drumming can lead to the new world," Nii Adjarh made manifest his dream to spread this healing magic to the world. Now a humble and majestic hut stands firm on the land surrounding the lagoon, a center for positive cultural expression and traditional African spirituality⁵.

"The idea, the view, the mind here is purposefully for the children, to know how to respect the drum," Nii Adjarh told me. The Center is very involved with the local Osu youth. It attracts many children and offers a home where they can drum and dance daily. "Educating the local community is a major responsibility of the Center to ensure the tradition, wisdom, and experience gained from our ancestors is not lost" (Israel, Java Nii Obudai, co-founder). All the members of the community are dedicated as guardians of knowledge and experience gained from our ancestors and sacred tradition. Java Nii Obudai admits, "Reclaiming a changing heritage despite an influx of foreign cultural influence and rapid development is difficult work, but is crucial at this point in

⁵ See Appendix I for an in depth interview with Nii Adjarh "Senegal", in which he articulates the vision of the Center and the healing power of the dance and drum.
history to allow the wisdom and healing practices of West African peoples to be passed on to future generations." The Kwaabuette family vows to uphold this.

As the sun begins to set, we bring out the drums and bells onto the stage. We may start just as five dancers, warming up our bodies with the drum. More and more people gather as the rhythm picks up, calling everyone in ear-shot together for a dancing celebration, until the stage is covered with foot-steps. We dance dances from different parts of Ghana- *kpanlogo*, *fume fume*, and *torkwei*, to name a few of our favorites-making circles around the stage.

Most of the dancers are between 7 and 14, but as young as 3 and as old as me; more are girls than boys. The oldest and most skilled are in the front of the line, articulating the movement with sophisticated grace and perfect timing, while the youngest toddlers occupy the rear, hopping and clapping to their own internal rhythms. Everybody takes a turn dancing duets with a pair in the center, while the rest keep beat with subtle measured gestures. Nobody watches at Kwaabuette. Everybody must express himself or herself through the dance. "Each and every person, who ever you are, you have to respect your tradition. Express the beauty you have, give respect to your forefathers by exercising the body" Nii Adjarh told us one evening.

### 8.3 May-diaso

The May-diaso cultural group has many of the same the ingredients of Kwaabuette but with a different flavor. Both groups use drumming, dancing, song, and prayer for positive expression and cultural revival. Even the nature and location of the rehearsal grounds mirror, remarkably each other. Both are located between a seaside lagoon and the Atlantic herself, and are situated adjacent to a monument of the tragic history of the slave trade (Kwaabuette to the Christenburg Castle, and
May-diaso to the Cape Coast castle/dungeon). Despite these coincidences, the groups were very distinct, each with their own unique energies.

There was usually an average of thirty people at May-diaso rehearsals: twelve dancers, seven on percussion, four side-line singers, four toddlers who sat silently watching with eyes and mouths wide open, and the young girl who sells mangos who parks her business on the nearby bench to mimic the dance movements from a distance. The rehearsal lasts as long as three hours, with a slow start around 3:30 p.m. and winding down by 6:30 dusk. Females and males are equally represented among both the drummers and the dancers. Most of the older children and the adult directors occupy the instruments (though not exclusively) and the young people (of all ages, from 10 to 20) mostly dance, running through a total of at least a dozen dances throughout rehearsal. The dances are from all over Ghana, mostly Fanti, but with a strong representation of dances from the North, the Anlo-Ewes, the Dangme, and Ashanti, as well as a couple dances from outside Ghana, (Senegal and Mali). The dances were learned by Madame Antoinette and her colleges in travel, and taught to the youth in routines, with a particular order of steps and improvisation. The dances are well-choreographed and synchronized yet retain strong individual flavors with each dancer. Unique personality and character comes out especially through interaction between pairs, and solos, in which spirited improvisation rouse cheers and excitement.

Sometimes, mid-rehearsal, the dancers forget to smile, and move expressionlessly through the movements; but if I ever let one slip out the corner of my mouth, it spreads contagious, like wild fire in drought. There are definitely the group's hams, some very dramatic, always with wide expressions, who often keep the spirit rolling with shouts to mark the step transitions. Some have crisp, polished movements, and others are crude and causal. The dances, however refined and rehearsed, are very playful, especially during the pair interactions, which are an important dramatic
element in all the dances. They are usually highly energetic, joyous dances, that comprise a lot of leaping, hopping, arms overhead, and shaking the waist.

May-Diaso started five years ago, under the name "Djembe Group", with the sole initiative of Madame Antoinette. She was working as a drum and dance instructor at the Cultural Center in the Town Hall with Agoro, a semi-professional, or at least more formal, cultural group. Every day many children who were not members would come to their rehearsals, and sometimes follow her home and hang around her while she practiced the drum and sing with her. She noticed they were not going to school, and more and more that would come to the Town Hall and would follow the tourists, scraping for money. She was horrified that in all of Cape Coast (at that time) there was no youth group for the children. So she decided to start a drumming and dancing group open to all the children, and got support from her project advisor. They were able to use the town hall as a rehearsal space for the first two years. In 1999, with 22 members, they were told they had to leave because the Town Hall could no longer accommodate them. They rented a school premise for a year with the financial support of a friend from New York, and when that support became unavailable they began to gather at Asasape near the Fosu Lagoon. The rent is 70,000 cedis a month, and most of the money comes directly from Antoinette. A second source of income is from performances, which come five to six times a year.

Madame Antoinette has done a lot of sacrificial work: teaching for free, investing her time and income, without any financial compensation. While mentioning the financial burden, difficulty, and struggle, she thought the group was well worthwhile: "It's good for the youth. I love to do it. To impart our knowledge to children, for youth to know their culture."

Madame Antoinette expressed difficulty and many of the Cape Coast children's lives. Many of them must cater for themselves, and are troubled with basic survival needs. "If you have to think so much about what you are going to eat or where you are going to sleep, or how you are going to
get by tomorrow, you don't have time for drumming and dancing." According to Madame
Antoinette, the children also receive little support from home. Many of the parents feel
that the group is a waste of time, or having rejected their own traditions as heathenistic
with the advent of Christianity, hold that it is spiritual wrong. Musah, who is twenty, has
been in debate with his father since he joined the group four years ago: "My father says
it's against our religion to dance that way. Rather I know dancing is God's gift to me. I
love the cultural dancing. He wants me to quit and play football or do something
worthwhile with my time."

The income generated from the performances is shared among the group
members, which is a positive economic incentive for many, and help alleviate some of
the aforementioned stressors. But it has also lead to new problems. Antoinette has been
troubled as the focus of the group pivots toward money, rather than group solidarity, a
pure love for the dance and the drum, and a pride in cultural tradition. While some
members are "really committed", she reports that some will only come to rehearsal when
they know there's a performance coming. They'll show up once to perform, get their
share, and then disappear for a while until another performance comes around. "The
money is important. But the dance is our history, culture, background, Africa. We
shouldn't do it just for money; that's not what our forefather's did."
9. Findings and Conclusions

9.1 Dance as a vehicle for healing

Bridging the practice, my observations and first hand experience with Kwaabuette and May-diaso, with the theoretical foundations of this study, I have identified the following ten elements to breakdown in visible terms, how dance functions as a force for social healing.

1) Pride in tradition and cultural heritage

Foremost, the dance can serve to reverse the prevailing forces delegitimizing, devaluing, and rejecting Africanness. In the face of western homogenization, the importance of positive cultural expression in reviving and honoring one's own heritage has the potential for tremendous impact in the consciousness of the coming generation.

Yava's Diallo's transformative experience in Mali is a perfect example of this potential: "I felt ashamed of my mother until the day I took up the drums. As I played, I recognized her cultural wealth, which is my privilege to carry on. Affirming my identity and solidarity with this tradition gives me a sense of being someone. Now when I talk with my mother, I feel her strength, as I could not feel earlier in my life. I see who she really is" (Diallo and Hall 1989:194).

Madame Solome, leader and founder of the Manya Krobo Cultural Troupe, stressed the fundamental importance of embracing what is ours to sustain our very existence: "We [Krobo women] dance to exercise, to entertain ourselves, to express our feelings. Dance is part of us... The children must know their dances... they must learn their traditional music. That's why you're an African, that's why you're a Krobo. Without the dance we don't exist. This is ours, so we must learn it and know it. If we don't teach, it will go away. It will disappear. It's not good. We'll learn the foreign one. We must know ours."
And Professor Oh! Nii Kwei Sowah said with conviction: "The greatest tool for development is to help them [the children] know who they are, to impart the knowledge of where they're coming from. They need strong roots to feed take in the nutrients of life. After all, if the rain falls on the tree, it goes to the roots. So much about what is going today must be processed by the roots to feed our branches: where we're going, our development" (26 APR 2002).

2) Coping in the city

The city is a locus, an index, and a generative force for change in much of the contemporary world. In this context, traditional dances provide stability by presenting symbols of identity and vehicles for integration. Hanna has written at length about the role of dance in urban areas, stressing that in dance can provide adaptive vehicles for coping with personal and group need, generating a sense of "belonging and relief from the tensions of alien, heterogeneous, sometimes hostile urban environment" (1987:214). Dance can act to reduce the problems of disjunctive lifestyles. As a nostalgic counterforce to a rapidly changing environment, dance may be less a reactionary, than an anchoring, stabilizing phenomena. As Hanna contends, "Dance may be a vivid assertion of self for migrant, settler, and indigenous resident in a competitive plural society" (220-1).

I have witnessed the dance group help maintain the functional integrity of the extended family in Accra and Cape Coast in situations where people live in more dispersed areas, or in which the family network has broken down. The dance group creates kinship ties between members, provides a support network, and becomes a source of identity and belonging.

While being the locus of rapid change, urban areas too become the locus for the revival of dances as a symbol of national identity in the pursuit of cultural independence. Thus through dance people in the city can seek the preservation or revitalization of their own cultures, strive for security
or satisfaction in the face of disruptive forces, and discover artistic, affective counter-responses to society growing cold and materialistic by finding meaning in the experiential.

3) Social unity, group identity

The dance is an act of social unity. The dance provides group identity, reducing anxiety by communicating the acceptance and integration of an individual into a group with those whose values he wishes to identify, and creating self-esteem for the dancer and those identifying with the dancer's reference group.

4) Creating community

One of the most important aspects of the drumming and dancing groups, has less to do with the actual music and movement, and much more to do with creating community. A community grows where behavior is based on trust and where no one hides anything. There are certain human powers that cannot be unleashed without such an open and supportive atmosphere, powers such as the one that enables us to believe in ancestors and to believe in our ability to unlock potentials in ourselves and others far beyond what is commonly known.

Having just mentioned dance as a medium for social cohesion (number three), it is also important to stress the function of community as a place of self-definition. Some is wise in saying, "Without a community you cannot be yourself. The community is where we draw the strength needed to effect changes inside of us" (Some 1997:49). Rather than sacrificing individuality for the sake of collective cohesion, the community created through the groups creates an atmosphere for personal definition.6

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6 The mutually enriching coexistence of self-definition and community revealed itself symbolically as I was watching the children dancing one afternoon at Kwaabuette, their motion embodying the intricate complexity of the music. The head, upper torso, hips, hands, and feet of the dancers were moving polyrhythmically with the drum. When
5) Self-acceptance, confidence

In addition to maintaining harmonious relationships with the community and cosmos, as we discussed in an earlier chapter, "man must also have harmonious relationship with the 'self3 in order to be whole" (Amenowode 2002: 118). For this reason an important role of the dance in healing revolves around self-acceptance. "Ego building" is a positive attribute of dance with young people for Professor Sowah, "so that they can belong, and therefore contribute, lay claim to their development, and feel good about themselves" (26 APR 02).

Through kinetic self-discovery and acceptance of the exposed self through dance, the children become less shy and more confident. They can begin to identify with themselves through their own body. Most fundamentally, human movement puts individuals in closer contact with their own bodies and own experiences. The dance is an opportunity to experience something positive in direct relation to our own bodies and selves (ibid.).

6) Physical exercise, positive energy, release, play

"Dance is room for play in modern society," Sowah said (26 APR 2002). Truly, the movement of our bodies in response to rhythmic stimulation, is a positive and productive outlet for our energies through which we can enjoy the freedom of playfully expressing ourselves, the release of emotional pressures, and the temporary departure from worries and hardships of survival. Through the intensive physical activity of dance we can strengthen and coordinate our bodies, and induce giddiness and elation in our souls.

they moved into the center of the circle, a dialogue of music and movement ensued between musicians and the dancer. There was the most beautiful balance of influence and adaptation, initiation and response bouncing invisibly between them. The musicians' rhythms intentionally matched the center dancer's, and the other children on the circumference of the circle danced to any one or any combination of the rhythms being played. In that harmonious exchange, everyone was expressing their individuality at the same time they celebrated their community.
7) Reduce physiological tension in the group as a whole

The act of unification is intrinsic in group dancing, through which participants must operate in a wonderful unison of harmonious rhythmic cooperation. Through group dance, many are fused into a single being stirred by a single impulse. As a medium for people relating to each other, dance may be symbolic interaction, blending harmonious principles and mediating contradicting ones within the group itself.

Indeed, I have seen the dance, on more than one occasion, act as a medium for conflict resolution between children in the groups. Squabbles or tension that are brewing at the outset of rehearsal, subside quickly with the dancing activity, dissolved into insignificance by the overpowering carefree and harmonious nature of the dance.

8) Delivering emotions, self-expression

According to the Ghanaian Junior Secondary School Pupil's Book for cultural studies: "The basis of Ghanaian dance is to express or show how the dancer feels." (Ghana Education Service 1988:24). Because "Human feelings are energy that can turn dangerous, negative, if not honored" (Some, 1998:87), we must express in order to be healthy. Some defines healing as "Unmasking the true self":

"Healing begins when the mask is released from the self, for people can't transform when they are hiding behind them. Talking is often inadequate for helping people drop their masks, and some of the best ways to accomplish this kind of change are through nonverbal forms of ritual, such as dance, and activities that evoke strong emotions. This is what makes tribal communities rely so heavily on drumming and dance" (1998:44).

Indeed, rhythm is a powerful tool to shake off the debris of one's unnatural masks, and Nothing so clearly and inevitably reveals the inner man than movement and gesture…the
movement you move, you stand revealed for good or evil for what you are" (Humphrey 1974:3). Through dance people represent themselves to themselves and to each other.

9) **Ritual, spiritual nourishment for the soul**

Dance as ritual is fundamental, being that there are certain problems that cannot be resolved with words alone. The pain of abuse that sometimes carries within, the trauma of unfulfilled dreams, and the sorrow of loss are not the kinds of feelings that go away over time. Whether we deny them or not, they remain as part of the weight that keeps our bodies tensed and our spirits constricted. They fuel our drive for violence, and they eat at our spirit. When they are addressed in ritual, however, we get the chance to heal them. Ritual, realized through the dance and music, offers opportunity to relieve a tension from which words can no longer release us.

10) **Honoring ancestors, drawing strength from the gods**

"The dance has been a healer for our people for a long time. The ultimate is having a divine touch handed over from our forbearers. When we dance in circle, unite as a people to do what has been given to us by our ancestors, we know God." Oh! Nii Kwei Sowah (26 APR 2002)

Within the dance, the drummer calls up to supreme energy, and the dancer signs in, appealing to the forces that guide the whole world (Tinuoye 7 MAY 2002). Through the traditional drumming and dancing, the children inherit the power of rhythm and movement directly from ancestors and deities, and harness the energy to cope in today's world. The dancers are united with one another and their ancestors in response to the music of the drum. As its vibrations reverberate into the invisible realm, the music quickens awareness of the spiritual mystery of life, and the dancing expresses the vitality of life itself.
9.2 Prescriptions

"If we could get all of us Africans across the continent to come together for some
vigorou drumming and dance, most of our problems would be solved!" my project
advisor Joe Amenowode said enthusiastically as we discussed the power and potency of
African dancing in positive social transformation. Though Amenowode's suggestion is
not practical, there is much wisdom we can draw from traditional drumming and dancing
to begin to understand a path toward healing.

African music and dance bears a message about community solidarity, about
caring, healing, and sharing in the joys and sorrows of life together, and getting back into
harmony with ourselves, one another, and our world. This is a message that those in the
West, along with modern Africans, need to listen to as we suffer breakdowns of
community, family, morality, and our ecological base on earth. African music and dance,
in addition to being fun, may stir in us some nascent awareness of a humane,
down-to-earth solidarity that has been lost in our mechanized culture and that we need to
rediscover.

9.3 In Conclusion

In the end, as I reflect back on my original presumptions and perceptions coming
into this study, I realize I have come a long way. Not that I have disproved my original
hypotheses nor wavered at all from their directions; rather that I strengthened them to
such a degree that I can't claim to have not changed my mind. Rather than confirm what I
already knew, I discovered what I was just beginning to understand.

Throughout my experiences living and learning in Ghana, I deepened my
suspicions about the erroneous potency of unhealed collective trauma coupled with
cultural disintegration, and strengthened my convictions of the ever-present need to fetch
wisdom from the bottomless wells of African ancestral heritage, to reverse the trends
threatening to unravel the fabric of our very
existence. And, on a more uplifting note, my research revealed to me the expansive potential of dance as a vehicle for healing, that I, even with my visionary and idealistic spirit, could not begin to conceive of. At the same time as I have become re-sensitized to the tragedy and depth of social injustice, I have a newborn and inspired understanding of the manifold and powerful tools at our disposal with the capacity to heal the world.

I have come a long way in my thinking since first stepping foot on Ghanaian soil, yet I can conclude this chapter with the same paragraph I commenced with- the conviction that I wrote in my first days of arrival, still overwhelmed by anticipation: "Yes, we must pay mind to healing. A large part of the healing process I believe lies in reconnection to others and to community life, and a strengthening of cultural fabric conducive to reconciliation- revitalizing connections to native traditions and customs, gathering and ceremonial life, preserving the collective memory, and artist expression.”
9.4 Recommendations to the next researchers

I strongly advocate the further research of especially the more practical aspects of this study-evaluating fully the role artistic expression and positive cultural revival in community healing, in concrete terms and acts, such as the dancing and drumming youth groups. There is still a great reservoir of knowledge and understanding to be tapped in the area of social healing through dance in the specific context of contemporary urban Ghana, and I would encourage future researchers to undertake a long-term study with the groups I encountered and others.

The greatest hindrance to this project was lack of time. Because of the brevity of my time on the field, despite how deep I was able to delve into the material of study, the assumptions I drew were still based on the theoretical columns. I recommend a full project go underway, to enable the study of the long-term impact of the drumming and dancing groups on the youth, evaluating how the members' perceptions have changed since joining the group, and obtaining direct and concrete evidence about the wider repercussions of the groups on society at large.
10. REFERENCES

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10.2 Informants

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10.3 Lectures

Dr. Olayemi Tinuoye, SIT Study Abroad Academic Director lecture notes 7 February 2002

Life and Culture Skills seminar, Ghana Registered Nurses Association, Legon

Patience Kwakwa, Professor, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana lecture notes 4 April 2002 Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon

Dr. S.S. Quarcoopome, Social Studies Professor, University of Ghana lecture notes 5 April 2002

Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon

Yaw Asare, Professor, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana lecture notes 6 April 2002 Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon
APPENDIX 1: Interviews from Kwaabuette

1. Interview with Nii Adjarh Torto Mensah, alias "Senegal"

Kwaabuette Village Community Culture Center, Osu-Klotey Lagoon, Osu, Ghana

"As of now, I am the director and founder of the Kwaabuette Village Community Culture Center. Our point, our aim, our vision here is to play spiritual drumming and spiritual dancing. We play spiritual drumming here to heal people; to share our spiritual understanding to the world; to love the children, to love the handicaps, to love whoever is rejected in his family. The Kwaabuette Village Community Center is ready to take care of all those things. I say that because I know when I drum, I come into trance and I go high and I'm okay. I don't need anything apart from to drum and to dance. That is my whole life; that is what I'm doing. I have nothing to do anymore [sic. beyond that]. I love to play drum and I don't want to play it myself, I want to play it with people. I welcome any spirit that comes in, but we always respect the good spirit. We know the good spirit can heal and we can do lots of things out of it. [The good spirit] can give a good mind to create lots of things, and show us how to love the children. So we respect, and I respect, the drum. The life beat, the heart, and the heart beats the drum; and the drum sends communication to the world at large. One love, one moon, one sky, one love, one rhythm."

2. Interview with Henry Noi Omaboe, alias "C.J."

Kwaabuette Village Community Culture Center, Osu-Klotey Lagoon, Osu, Ghana

"The music is the soul for me, for everybody. I don't think it's only for me; it's for everybody. And I like it very much, this music I'm doing, this African traditional music and dancing. That's the spirit of the black power, that's the communication, healing power. Because we heal. We want God closer to us so that we heal ourselves. We share it for our friends; we share it wherever we have to go... If you can count you can drum, if you can walk you can dance. Yeah, it's all spiritual; to understand the spiritual. I don't play for fun; I play to heal people and to heal what's going on. We call God, ancestors, everybody, so the spirits will come."

Interviews by Java Isreal Nii Obudai,
in Sankofa: Keepers of a Sacred African Tradition, recorded in Ghana, Project Together 2001
APPENDIX 2: "Why do you dance?" Survey with May-diaso Youth

The following survey, conducted 1 May, 2002 at the Bakona rehearsal grounds in Cape Coast, was forced into simplicity by the lowest common denominator of vocabulary. I asked the May-diaso youth straight-forward:

**Why do you dance?**

Their answers are as follows:

Felicity Dadzie, age 11, "My mother dances, so therefore I dance. I like it because we're happy"

Perpetual Sena Kugbego, age 13, "I like to dance. When I see someone dance it makes me feel happy, so I also want to dance."

Mary Ackum, 17, "It's good for me. My sisters, father, and my whole family dances."

Priscilla Badebo, 13, "Because I love the dance. To go somewhere."

Anastasia Dadzie, 13, "I can earn small money from it."

Dorisday Abrokwah, 20, "I came hear and didn't know how to dance. Now I can so I am happy."

Mary Attah, 15, "I'm interested in dance. When I see someone dancing, I see it very nice."

Winitred Badebo, 16, "I like to dance. When I see it, I feel it. When I dance I feel it. So nice."

Jonathan Kwame Adawu, 19, "It's my talent. Some people they don't know their tradition. It's not good. Me, I want to know it. I want someone to teach me"

Musah Adama Sapiato, 20, "I like it simply because I can achieve something out of it. It is my talent from God."
Appendix 3: Photographs

Dancing at Kwaabuette,
Osu-Klotey Lagoon, Osu

Closing celebration of dipo rites, Krobo
Dancing pk at Kwaabuette, Osu-Klote Lagoon

Osu
May-diaso at Bakona, Fosu Lagoon, Cape Coast