

Public Abstract

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THE POWER OF CREATING PERFORMATIVE

AUTO/ETHNOGRAPHIES IN A THEATRE COMMUNITY

"Awareness should always create movement." This quote from the play cover (a play about trafficking) embodies the force behind this dissertation. Through an auto/ethnography lens of the work of The Covering House (TCH), I explore the issue of domestic trafficking in St. Louis, Missouri. This play, performed by a cast of actors, is based upon the narratives gathered from TCH staff and volunteers including my own experience of serving as their chaplain. I also explore the unique framework of creating a theatre community in the middle of a performed auto/ethnography. I unpack the DNA of the community created with the actors and the production team, as well as the audience and the staff and clients at TCH. In an effort to create a space where dialogical auto/ethnography can flourish, I will use Tessa Muncey's auto/ethnographic method of snapshots, artifacts, metaphor, and journey to share with the process of creating cover (a play about trafficking).

Identity is who we are and who we are becoming. Performance is calling upon that identity in a public setting to tell a story through our bodies, minds and voices to an audience.