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Centre For Humanities Research



UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Report on the Activities of the Centre for Humanities Research of the University of the Western Cape, December 2010.

The Centre for Humanities Research of the University of the Western Cape is pleased to report on the successful completion of master's and doctoral students funded through the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation fellowship awards in the humanities during the 2010 academic year.

Amongst the recipients of Mellon grants for doctoral studies, Charles Mulinda Kabwete successfully completed a doctoral dissertation on narratives of escape during the Rwandan genocide based on extensive oral and archival research in two southern communes in Rwanda, Jill Weintroub completed a doctoral dissertation on the rock art archives of Dorothea Bleek, and Mduduzi Xakaza has submitted a completed draft of his dissertation on the tradition of landscape photography in South Africa for consideration to the History Department at UWC and has since been offered the directorship of the Natal Art Gallery starting in 2011. Unfortunately, Ludivine Huet-Haupt, contrary to my earlier report to the Faculty of Arts, has decided to cancel her registration at UWC once again, and Billiard Lishiko's fellowship remains incomplete. The Advisory Committee has been asked to consider mechanisms for dealing with fellowship holders who do not meet the requirements of the award.

In September 2010, Riedwaan Moosage received a Masters degree (Cum Laude) with a highly accomplished dissertation on the implications of the practice of "necklacing" [public burnings during apartheid] in the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa titled 'The impasse of violence: writing necklacing into a history of liberation struggle in South Africa'. Moosage's introductory chapter titled 'A Prose of Ambivalence: Liberation Struggle Discourse on Necklacing' was published in the December 2010 edition of the peer reviewed journal *Kronos: Southern*

African Histories. He plans to register for doctoral studies at the University of Minnesota or the University of Amsterdam. Mark Espin completed a Master's thesis on Michael Ondaatje and has since taken up an associate lectureship in the English Department at UWC where he is also registered for his doctoral studies. Finally, Zulfa Abrahams is due to submit her Master's thesis on the discourse of the empowerment of Muslim women in Cape Town for examination. This means that of the six doctoral fellowships funded by the Mellon Foundation, two have completed, one is nearing completion while all four master's students have completed their studies and three have registered for doctoral degrees.

We allocated fellowships to a new cohort of doctoral students in 2010. Vilho Shigwedha, a final year doctoral candidate in History submitted a first draft of a dissertation on the Cassinga Massacre in Namibia with the help of a grant from the CHR. Ngonidzashe Marongwe's research on gender struggles in post-independence Zimbabwe emerged as one of the most significant projects in the CHR in 2010. On the strength of his work he has been awarded a prestigious year-long Sephis fellowship for study at Bangalore University under the supervision of Professor Milind Wakankar (formerly from the University of Chicago). He will return in 2012 to complete his dissertation at the University of the Western Cape. Stanley Baluku is a product of the post-graduate diploma in Museum and Heritage Studies at UWC and has undertaken a Masters degree on the formation of the Makerere Institute for Social Research in Uganda under the supervision of Professor Andrew Bank. While Shigwedha used the fellowship support to work on his dissertation full-time, the recent fellowship recipients were supported in their efforts to complete and defend their proposals at the Arts Faculty Higher Degrees Committee.

Amongst the recipients of the Ford Foundation grant, Okechukwu Nwafor successfully defended his doctoral dissertation prospectus, and completed an article for publication in the prestigious international journal *Postcolonial Studies*. Steve Akoth completed three chapters of his doctoral dissertation on Luo conceptions of human rights in Kenya and published an article in the South African Anthropological Journal, while Memory Biwa completed the major part of her research on the consequences of the 1904-1905 genocide in German South West Africa on Southern Nama speakers. Bridgette Sass defended her prospectus with the Arts Faculty Higher Degrees Committee and is beginning her research and writing on youth violence in schools in the Western Cape for the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at UWC. Three post-doctoral awards were made respectively to Dr. Christian Williams, Dr. Christopher Lee and Dr. Giovanna Trento.

We were fortunate to host two postdoctoral fellows from Ghana and one from Nigeria through the American Council for Learned Societies African Humanities Programme. This programme is now based in the CHR and allows for considerable exchange of ideas across higher education institutions in Africa.

The quality of the research emanating from fellows who received the Mellon and Ford Foundation grants has been widely praised by both the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee and the Senate Higher Degrees Committee as a major achievement. The substantive dissertations were also commended by a group of internationally renowned scholars who were invited to serve as external examiners. A good measure of this success relates to the very substantive growth of the Centre for Humanities Research as a preferred destination for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and international scholars who have sought out the centre for seminar presentations, short-term and long-term research affiliations and conference participation. In its acknowledgement of the accomplishments of the fellows and the CHR more broadly, the University of the Western Cape through the offices of the Dean and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) opened two new senior researcher lines in the CHR. Dr Suren Pillay, a former UWC and Columbia University (USA) graduate has been appointed to one of these positions. The second post will be filled in the first semester 2011. The Centre's input has also been sought at several other institutions in South Africa, including WISER (University of Witwatersrand), STIAS (University of Stellenbosch), and Fort Hare University. The Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Professor Duncan Brown, has described the research undertaken by the CHR and its post-graduate fellows as metonymic of the general research ambitions and orientations in the Arts Faculty at UWC.

Events Hosted in the CHR in 2011

On 9 March 2010, the CHR and the UWC Robben Island Mayibuye Centre jointly hosted ex-Robben Island political prisoner, Ahmed Kathrada for a public lecture on his prison collections now held at the UWC/Robben Island-Mayibuye Centre. The lecture drew together about 150 scholars, archivists, and researchers in a discussion on the formation of the liberation archives in South and Southern Africa. The lecture was preceded by a public lecture and seminar by Professor Sandra Harding, renowned feminist scholar and member of faculty at the University of California, Los Angeles. The public lecture, titled "Can men be the subject of feminist theory?" was hosted at the District Six Museum in partnership with the Women's and Gender Studies Department at the University of the Western Cape, and was attended by about 200 participants from Universities, NGO's, Civil Society organizations and community based gender activists.

In March, we also hosted a public discussion at the Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town, in partnership with the Public Archives Project at the University of Cape Town, with Professor David William Cohen from the University of Michigan. The workshop served as an opportunity to explore the contribution of Professor Cohen to the projects in the field of public scholarship in South Africa and included contributions by Professors Cohen, Ciraj Rassool (UWC), Leslie Witz (UWC), Carolyn Hamilton (UCT), Njabulo Ndebele (UCT), Premesh Lalu (UWC) and three graduate students from UWC including Riedwaan Moosage, Bianca van Laun and Ingrid Masondo. While much of the discussion centred on Cohen's elaboration of the notion of the production of history that proved catalytic for the development of several new fields in history and anthropology in South Africa, the colloquium called for a critical reflection of the alignment between the production of history and the emergence of social movements in Africa proposed by Professor Cohen. One strand of criticism suggested that many social movements, like emergent states and political institutions, tended to detrimentally de-historicise political formations across the continent.

On 24 May 2010, Professor Mahmood Mamdani (Columbia University and Makerere Institute for Social Research in Uganda) presented a public lecture at UWC titled "From Human Rights to Human Wrongs: Beyond the example of Nuremberg." The discussion investigated the limits of the discourse of transitional justice in Southern Africa as well the limits posed by the predominating victim-perpetrator discourse of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. The lecture has resulted in an ongoing discussion with Professor Mamdani about the possibility of establishing a joint doctoral programme between the University of the Western Cape and Makerere University in Uganda. Currently, we are engaged in an exchange about the shape of a curriculum in African Studies that would allow us to build a longer term teaching and research partnership. The public lectures attract an average of about one hundred participants with the Kathrada, Mamdani and Harding lectures attracting an average of 150 participants.

The seminar series continues to draw together fifty to sixty participants on average per week. In 2010, the South African Humanities and Contemporary History Seminar hosted a total of twenty-one papers. The total number of papers presented numbers three-hundred and twenty seminar papers. Organised around a pre-circulated paper and prepared comments by a discussant, the seminar continues to attract a very high standard of interdisciplinary scholarly research from both local and international presenters. The seminar program culminated in a retrospective colloquium of its seventeen year history for which six past chairs of the series were invited to

select five of the best papers with a motivation for the specific selection [see appendix 3: Doing History Differently, *Mail and Guardian* 5 November 2010] The selection is being collated by Professor Leslie Witz and two post-doctoral fellows, Drs Annachiara Forte and Paolo Israel for publication as an edited collection titled *Out of History*.

South African Contemporary History and Humanities Seminar: 2010 Seminar Programme

- 318 Roger Field (UWC) Coming Home, Coming Out: Achmat Dangor's Journey Through Constantine Cavafy.
- 319 Sandra Harding (UCLA) Can Women Ever Become Modern? (with Women's and Gender Studies Department, UWC)
- 320 David William Cohen (University of Michigan) Memories of Things Forward: Future Effects in the Production of History.
- 321 David William Cohen (UCLA) Uncertainty.
- 322 Desiree Lewis (UWC) Writing Baartman's Agency: History, Biography and the Imbroglío's of Truth (with Women's and Gender Studies Department).
- 323 Hans Engdahl (UWC) The Theological Rationale in Afrikaner Nationalism and Black Consciousness: A Close Reading of F.J.M. Potgieter and Steve Biko.
- 324 Jane Taylor (CHR, UWC) Reform/Perform.
- 325 Francis Nyamnjoh (University of Cape Town) Cameroonian Bushfalling and Bushfallers: Negotiation and Navigation of Identity and Belonging.
- 326: Bud Duvall (University of Minnesota) Sovereignty and Sovereign Power .
- 327: Monica Patterson (University of Michigan) Talking about things that hurt us: Constructions of Childhood in the TRC.
- 328: David Theo Goldberg (University of California, Humanities Research Institute) Militarising Markets.
- 329: Saul Dubow (University of Sussex) 'Macmillan, Verwoerd, and the 1960 Wind of Change Speech' .
- 330: Jason Sumich [University of Fort Hare] Maputo and the National Imagination: Nationalism, Alienation, and Identity amongst the Mozambican Middle Class.
- 331: Christopher J. Lee [University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and CHR post-doctoral fellow] "A 'Great' Convergence: Narratives, Old and New, in Sino-African Relations".

During the 2010 second semester, the CHR hosted three major public lectures by eminent scholars and public intellectuals in South Africa. On 19 August Professor John Daniel delivered the Dulcie September Memorial lecture jointly organised by the Centre for Humanities Research

and the National Department of Arts and Culture. Fellows also participated in a lecture and workshop by Professor Isabel Hofmeyr who was invited to deliver the Faculty of Arts Dean's Distinguished Lecture on her research on South Africa's Indian Ocean, and in October, former constitutional court judge Albie Sachs revisited an earlier intervention on the arts in South Africa with a lecture titled "Spring is Still Rebellious."

As is customary in the CHR, the Andrew W. Mellon fellows participated in several colloquia and public seminars during the 2010 academic year. These include:

- African Empire Workshop (organized by Drs Giorgio Miescher, Lorena Rizzo, Dag Henrichsen, and Profs Patricia Hayes, Premesh Lalu and Ciraj Rassool),
- Public Seminar by Colin Divall on Transport Museum Methodologies (in partnership with the District Six Museum),
- Transport Museum Symposium in partnership with Heritage Disciplines Project and the HCI Foundation,
- Critical Heritage Colloquium on the Museum of Transport and Mobility in Cape Town (in partnership with the NRF funded Heritage Disciplines Project),
- 'Out of History' Colloquium (in partnership with the UWC Department of History),
- Home and Away exhibition opening and Love and Revolution conference keynote address by Professor Tony Morphet and graduate student workshop (in partnership with Iziko S.A. National Gallery and Fort Hare University)
- Bonani Festival of Photography (including conference on Documentary Photography)
- Panel discussion on the Pierneef to Gugulective exhibition (which the CHR co-hosted with IZIKO National Gallery, see appendix 4)
- Apartheid Archives Conference, Poetry Evening, District Six Museum (with Women's and Gender Studies Department)
- Doctoral Fellows Seminar Programme, 9, 16, 23 November 2010.

To mark its development as a major postgraduate research platform, the Centre for Humanities Research in partnership with the Department of History, the Interdisciplinary Centre for the Study of Global Change, ICGC at the University of Minnesota, and the SARChI chair in Social Change at Fort Hare University, hosted an international conference on the theme of Love and Revolution from 28 – 30 October 2010 (see appendix 5: Conference Programme). The conference opening co-incided with the launch of the Home and Away Exhibition (convened by the UWC Centre for Humanities Research and the Ifa Lethu Foundation) at the Old Town House IZIKO Gallery in Cape Town. The keynote speaker, Professor Tony Morphet, spoke encouragingly about the research directions on aesthetics and politics in the CHR as these related to the

conference on Love and Revolution. The official opening was preceded by a UWC/Fort Hare graduate student workshop in the broad areas of visual studies. Several international guests and colleagues from South African universities participated in the conference. These included Professors Helena Pohlandt McCormick, Fernando Arenas, Simona Sawhney (University of Minnesota), Martina Riecker (American University of Cairo), Arunima Gopinath (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi), Gary Minkley (University of Fort Hare), Drs Thembinkosi Goniwe, Jon Soske (University of Witwatersrand) and Ashraf Jamal (Rhodes University). The conference also served to consolidate our partnerships with graduate programmes in the US through the participation of Maurits van Bever Donker, Drew Thompson (University of Minnesota) and Pedro Monaville (University of Michigan). Several fellows from the CHR presented papers at what proved to be a lively and engaging conference on different ways to explore the history of liberation struggles in Southern Africa.

Finally, I am pleased to announce the long-awaited publication of postdoctoral fellow Heidi Grunebaum's *Memorialising the Past: Everyday Life in South Africa after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, 2010), and an Annette Hoffman's edited volume, *Representation Matters* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010).

Memory Biwa published an article titled "Stories of the Patchwork Quilt: an Oral History Project of the Nama-German War in Southern Namibia," in Andre du Pisani, Reinhart Koessler, William A. Lindeke (eds.), *The Long Aftermath of War – Reconciliation and Transition in Namibia*, (Freiberg: Arnold Bergstraesser Institut, 2010). She also presented a paper titled, 'Enchanting Paths of Healing' at the Volkswagen Stiftung Conference, University of Bayreuth, Germany in February 2010. Annachiara Jung Ran Forte published an article titled "Diaspora Homecoming, Vodun Ancestry, and the Ambiguities of Transnational Belongings in the Republic of Benin," in Percy C. Hintzen, Jean Muteba Rahier, and Felipe Smith (eds.), *Global Circuits of Blackness: Interrogating the African Diaspora* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

Reading Groups

The weekly reading groups were organised around two broad themes. Towards the end of 2010, we continued to read in the thematic area of aesthetics and politics. This was in preparation for a major initiative in the CHR involving Professor Jane Taylor and the Handspring Puppet

Company. We have made substantial progress in developing a proposal for the collaboration and are working on funding applications for further research and recruitment of graduate fellows in the areas of performance studies, visual cultures and aesthetics. Through the establishment of research in this area, we hope to contribute to the project of rural youth education while also seeking ways to transform spaces that apartheid created as aesthetically sterile into aesthetically meaningful spaces. The first major installment of the project was completed on 16 December 2010. The proposed project will seek to build an international graduate exchange programme involving students from UWC, the University of Fort Hare, University of Chicago, University of Minnesota and the University of California Berkeley. The focus of the graduate programme relates to a sustained study of the critical discourses that describe and elucidate the nature and artistic function of the performed object.

In 2010, the first semester was dedicated to a study of the debate on aesthetics, especially the early debates on a reorientation of the debates on aesthetics in the intellectual life of Bertolt Brecht, Theodore Adorno, Walter Benjamin and Georg Lukacs. The area of aesthetics and politics is fast becoming a leading project in the CHR and draws on the research projects of several doctoral students who are working towards a demilitarization of the discussion of war in Africa by exploring questions of subjectivity marked by war through the prism of aesthetics.

Two Senior Research Mentors in the CHR, Professors Brian Raftopolous and Michael Neocosmos convened a series of advanced reading groups involving faculty members working on doctoral dissertations and also participated in the broader reading groups in the CHR. Professor Brian Raftopolous has recently completed a paper based on the discussions of the various reading groups. Alongside the reading groups on aesthetics we undertook a focused study on the meaning of camps in Southern Africa. The latter is an ongoing inquiry connected to the research of Dr. Christian Williams, a Ford post-doctoral fellow in the CHR and several graduate students working in the area of liberation struggles in Southern Africa.

Mellon Foundation Fellowships administered by the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)

The Centre for Humanities Research benefited from a two-year postdoctoral award made to **Dr Paolo Israel's** for the 2009-2010 academic years. The fellowship award to Dr. Israel which is administered by the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) continues to set new standards for postdoctoral fellows in the Humanities. "The War of Lions: Witch-Hunts, Idiom

Occults and Post-socialism in Northern Mozambique (Muidumbe, 2002-2003)”, published in the prestigious *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 1 (March 2009), pp. 155-174 was awarded the prize for the best article published in 2009 by a new contributor. It has also been identified as one of the ten most accessed articles in African Studies published by Routledge. More recently, Israel’s article “The Formulaic Revolution: Song and the ‘popular memory’ of the Mozambican Liberation Struggle” appeared in *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, L (1), 197 (2010): 181-216.

As part of his ongoing research on the changing meanings of Makonde masquerades in northern Mozambique, Paolo Israel was commissioned by the United Nations Education and Scientific Committee to produce a DVD for distribution to schools in Mozambique based on his research. *Mapiko. Histórias de Criatividade* was produced in collaboration with leading Mozambican photographer and UWC post-graduate student, Rui Assubuji, and Atanásio Nhussi. Several conference papers were presented during the 2010 academic year. These include:

- “Mapiko! Peasant Modernism and the Arts of Masking”, *Seminar of the Anthropology Department*, Stellenbosch University, 11/11/2010.
- “Meat it Meat: Masking Modernism in the Aftermath of the Slave Trade”, *Workshop on Performance and Social Meaning*, WISER, University of the Witwatersrand, 22/10/2010.
- “Down Memory Lane” (with Jung Ran Forte), *Colloquium Out of History*, UWC, Centre for Humanities Research, 14/9/2010.

Paolo Israel was co-convenor of the *Out of History Colloquium: The South African Contemporary History and Humanities Seminar at the University of the Western Cape, 1993-2010*, in September 2010, with Jung Ran Forte and served as discussant for papers by Gary Minkley, Ciraj Rassool and Leslie Wits (*Heritage Disciplines Conference*, 9/10/2009), and Ngonidzashe Marongwe (*War and the Everyday Colloquium*, 30/10/2009). He has made substantial progress in the writing of a monograph entitled “Mapiko! Peasant Modernism and the Arts of Masking” and discussed chapters of the monograph with visiting scholars and colleagues at the CHR, including Jacques Depelchin, Ivan Carp, Corinne Kratz, Colin Darch, Brian Raftopolous, Allen Isaacman, Kelly Askew, David Coplan, and Liz Gunner. Following the completion of his fellowship in the CHR, Dr Israel’s application for the post of lecturer in History at the University of the Western Cape was successful.

Bianca van Laun was nominated as a Mellon masters fellow in the CHR through a Mellon award administered through the DVC's office. Her research centres on the Poqo rebellion in Paarl in 1960 and the historiographical approaches to the question of political and social violence in South Africa. Van Laun has made substantial progress in her archival research and her proposal to the Arts Faculty Higher Degrees Committee was approved with praise from the reviewers. On the strength of her academic record and research achievements, she will take up a three month fellowship on the UWC-University of Basel student exchange where she will work with colleagues from the Centre for African Studies and the Basler Afrika Bibliographien on her research.

Future Projects

In 2011, we will continue our work on the theme of aesthetics and politics by engaging in a sustained partnership programme with the Handspring Trust, an initiative of the Handspring Puppet Company. On 16 December 2010 the Centre for Humanities Research joined the Handspring Trust, Magpie (an arts collective in Barrydale), "Net Vir Pret" [Just For Fun: an after-school care and creative education initiative in Barrydale], Unima (the International Union of Puppetry) to launch the LoKO (Laboratory of Kinetic Objects) project. With the help of Professor Jane Taylor, a senior research fellow in the CHR, we are getting together various initiatives, academic and creative, in the region to participate in a longer term initiative towards performance studies and puppetry arts. Together with Handspring Trust we hope to explore the ways in which the processes of projective identification necessary for the productive circuit of exchange that results mysteriously in personhood, is akin to the processes through which the puppet is animated via imaginative identification and projection. Part of the purpose with LoKO is to explore the archaic psychic agencies of sympathetic imagining that allows the subject to arise, interactively, through a circuit of mimicry and individuation.

In February 2011, the CHR is due to host several leading academics in the humanities from the California University system, including David Theo Goldberg, Saree Makdisi and Ackbar Abbas. Several public events are planned to coincide with the visit. On 7 February, Saree Makdisi will present a public lecture at the District Six Museum on the debates surrounding the Museum of Tolerance in Jerusalem. This will be followed by a live musical performance by Sola Liu (perhaps the leading Chinese opera singers), and leading Cape Town artists Hilton Schilder, Kyle Shepherd, Ronan Skillan and Reza Khota.

In June 2011 the CHR will host two literary scholars from the University of Minnesota, Professors Qadri Ismail and John Mowitt as part of our continued collaboration with the ICGC. They have been invited to participate in a month-long reading programme with graduates in the CHR on the themes of postcolonial theory and deconstruction, and aesthetics and society respectively. The project will culminate in a joint graduate workshop which will be hosted jointly with the NRF Chair in Social Change at the University of Fort Hare.

The CHR has since secured a contract for an art curator to work assist with an exhibition on the Community Arts Project collection at UWC and on a separate exhibition focusing on the work of two Cape Town artists, Garth Erasmus and Lionel Davis. The exhibition is planned for the second half of 2011 at the IZIKO National Gallery and IZIKO Slave Lodge.

Our partnership with the Interdisciplinary Centre for the Study of Global Change at the University of Minnesota continues to develop in very exciting new directions. We are in discussion with the ICGC on the creation of a joint research chair in the humanities across the two institutions. We are also in the initial stages of planning a joint book series across the two institutions. The CHR continues to benefit from support for student and faculty exchanges to and from the University of Minnesota.

Finally, two further projects deserve special mention. We have joined together with the CSVr to establish a research project on Violence in Transition which will be convened by Nicky Rousseau from our Department of History. We have undertaken recruitment of graduate students and senior researchers to participate in the project which will lead to scholarly publication and graduate research. This project coheres with a second project with the Community Law Centre and the Mayibuye Centre on the Making of the South African constitution. We are in the process of finalising our project partnership with the American based South Africa Partners who are proposing to make a documentary film on the making of the South African constitution. The documentary will form part of a larger project endorsed by former constitutional court judge Albie Sachs on the process of tackling the dilemmas encountered in the making of the South Africa's first democratic constitution.

On behalf of the Advisory Committee and staff and fellows of the Centre for Humanities Research, we would like to convey our sincere gratitude to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Ford Foundation for enabling us to build graduate studies at UWC in the humanities and social sciences at UWC.

Premesh Lalu (Prof.)

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