

Performing memory: theatricalising identity in contemporary South Africa: Sept 2009 - 2011

Research activities and current outcomes

Principal Investigator Yvette Hutchison conducted initial background research in November 2009. This led to her editing *Africa Theatre 9*, focusing on how the archive affects memory and approaches to theatre; concepts central to the project. She collated material and interviewed curators of the South Africa-Mali African Renaissance Manuscript Project in November, the basis for a chapter of the current monograph. Her article in *Theatre Journal* interrogates hegemonies of collaboration, representation and the deconstruction of mythologies predicated on cultural 'othering', suggesting how memory may be used in exploring contemporary constructions of identity in South Africa.

Dennis Walder's monograph *Postcolonial Nostalgias* (Routledge, 2010) frames important concepts for the project, specifically the various and complex relationships between nostalgia, memory and writing. His article 'Remembering the Bushmen: nostalgia and postcolonial spiritualities' introduces the issues of how identity intersects with spirituality and memory, alongside issues of hegemony and postcoloniality. It has also created an important link with Professor Duncan Brown's research project on postcolonial spiritualities and identities at the University of the Western Cape.

At the end of 2010 the special issue of *Contemporary Theatre Review: Making Theatre in Africa: Reflections and Documents* (21:1), which Dennis Walder and Yvette Hutchison guest edited, was published.

During 2011 the we have all undertaken primary research in South Africa, including theatregoing, various archives, museums and exhibitions in Pretoria, Johannesburg and the Cape; and interviewing artists, archivists theatre practitioners, critics, oral literature interpreters and historians.

Both PhD researchers have successfully upgraded from M.Phil to PhD.

Awelani Moyo (Warwick PhD student): *Migrating towards the subject: identity, landscape and memory in contemporary South African performance*.

Jenny Doubt (OU PhD student): *Making Memory Work: Performing and Inscribing HIV/AIDS in post-TRC South Africa*.

Fugard Archive: Jenny has been appointed the archivist on this project and begun working through Dennis Walder's substantial collection of published, unpublished and manuscript material based on

South African theatre amassed over the past thirty years. The long-term aim is to produce a digitized catalogue which will make this material more accessible to researchers; work has begun on a smaller, digital facsimile archive, which represents presenting a cross-section of the materials available in the wider archive.

There has been consultation with colleagues who have expertise and experience with the creation of archives and digital archives.

Dissemination of research

Publications

Yvette Hutchison

Monograph

Performance and the Archive of memory. Manchester University Press, (in preparation)

Edited book

African Theatre: Histories 1850 and 1950, James Currey/ Boydell, 2010.

Chapter in book

Post-1990s Verbatim Theatre in South Africa: Exploring an African Concept of 'Truth'. In *Dramaturgy of the Real on the World Stage*, Martin, Carol (ed). Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 61-71.

Refereed journal articles

The "Dark Continent" goes North: an exploration of intercultural theatre practice through Handspring and Sogolon Puppet companies' *The Tall Horse*. *Theatre Journal*, 62 (2010), 57–73.

Edited Journal

Hutchison, Yvette & Walder, Dennis. *Contemporary Theatre Review: Making Theatre in Africa: Reflections and Documents*, 21:1, 2011.

Dennis Walder

Book

Postcolonial Nostalgias: writing, representation and memory, London & New York: Routledge, 2010.

Book chapters

'Remembering the Bushmen: nostalgia and postcolonial spiritualities', in *Religion and Spirituality in South Africa: New Perspectives*, ed. Duncan Brown, Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009, 205-218.

'Decolonising the distance curriculum', in *Teaching Literature at a Distance*, eds. Takis Kayalis and Anastasia Natsina, London & New York: Continuum, 2010, 44-52.

Refereed journal articles

'Writing, representation and postcolonial nostalgia', *Textual Practice*, 23, 6 (2009), 935-946.

Book/Journal articles in preparation

'Hysterical Nostalgia and Re-imagining the Nation: *District 9*' (commissioned for forthcoming *Nostalgia in the 21st century* book, ed. Sarah Edwards (Strathclyde)

'Lost mothers and the trauma of the past' (on postcolonial 'life writing' for *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*)

Jenny Doubt

Book chapter

'The Race to Remember: Memory Projects and the HIV/AIDS pandemic in post-TRC South Africa', in *Evidence and Testimony in Life Story Narratives*. Rutgers University: Transaction, 2011.

Awelani Moyo

'A Quiet Horror: Reflections on performing traumatic narratives in contemporary South Africa' in *Voicing Trauma & Truth*, Oliver & Peter Bray (eds), publication of selected papers from *Trauma: Theory and Practice* conference, Interdisciplinary Press. (Submitted 2011)

Research seminars & Conference contributions

Yvette Hutchison.

Leverhulme project outlined at the *Africa@Warwick* event, hosted by the Institute of Advanced Study to showcase Africa-related research, teaching, collaboration and culture to various funders and stake-holders in Britain, USA and Africa; 15 - 16 January 2010, University of Warwick.

Implications of an African approach to 'truth' and 'reconciliation' for a post-conflict situation: the use of narrative by the state and in fictional contexts. *Early Career Summer School: Theory for a Global Age: The Place of Africa?* IAS, University of Warwick, 4-9 July 2010.

'Modernism, an engagement with apartheid, and beyond.' *IFTR 2010 Cultures of Modernity*, University of Munich, Germany, 26 – 31 July 2010.

Green Man Flashing: a theatrical exploration of the place of the individual [woman] in the newly democratic South Africa. *Women's History Conference*. University of Warwick, 10-12 September 2010.

Translating Trauma beyond the TRC, at *Translating Cultures: Circulation of Events through Performance*, Warwick University, 20-21 June 2011.

Dennis Walder

'A Grand Childhood', *Empire and Me: personal explorations of Imperialism in reality and imagination Conference*, Cumberland Lodge, Windsor, 17 June 2010.

'Researching memory in the postcolonial context', Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore, 19 May 2010.

'Postcolonial Nostalgias: the South African dimension', research seminar, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, 13 October 2010.

Convened 'Cultural Crossings' Research Workshop: 'Memory, Home Migration', at Open University on 1 June 2010. Alison Blunt (Professor of Geography, Queen Mary's, University of London) was guest speaker; Doubt and Moyo presented papers:

- Jenny Doubt. 'The Cartography of the HIV/AIDS Narrative in South Africa'.
- Awelani Moyo. 'Migrating towards the subject: how landscape informs identity construction in contemporary South Africa'.

Jenny Doubt

Chair for 'Conflicted Territories: Rural and Urban Conflict' panel at *Reading Conflict Conference*, Institute of English Studies (University of London), 19 July 2010.

'Overview: Mbongeni Ngema's *Sarafina II*, scandal and silence', English Postgraduate Research Day Conference, Open University, London Regional Centre, 19 June 2010.

'The Cartography of the HIV/AIDS Narrative in South Africa', short presentation contributed at Cultural Crossings: Home and Memory Research seminar, Open University, Milton Keynes, 1 June 2010.

'Overview: Mbongeni Ngema's *Sarafina II*, scandal and silence', English Postgraduate Research Day Conference, Open University, London Regional Centre, 19 June 2010.

Chair for 'Conflicted Territories: Rural and Urban Conflict' panel at *Reading Conflict Conference*, Institute of English Studies (University of London), 19 July 2010.

'South Africa's HIV/AIDS 'Memoirs': Exploring local and global auto/biographical expressions of the pandemic', ALA Annual Conference, Ohio, USA, 15 April 2011.

Participated in seminar 'Making Science or Making Sense: What We Can Learn from HIV/AIDS Fiction in South Africa', 15 September 2011, University of Cape Town.

Awelani Moyo

Poster – Warwick postgraduate poster competition, 18th May 2010, Wolfson Research Exchange, Warwick University Library.

'Migrating towards the subject: how landscape informs identity construction in contemporary South Africa.' *Theatre Studies* postgraduate research day 21st June 2010, Milburn House.

'Feedback' panel discussion at Infecting the City festival themed Treasure, 24th February 2011.

'A Quiet Horror: Reflections on performing traumatic narratives in contemporary South Africa.' 1st Global Conference - *Trauma: Theory and Practice*, Prague, Czech Republic, 14-16 March 2011.

'Re-membering the Landscape: Memory, Identity, and Public Performance in Cape Town.' *Performance Studies International – Camillo 2.0: Technology, Memory, Experience*, Utrecht University, Netherlands, 25-29 May 2011.

'Problematising 'indigeneity' in/for South Africa's 'rainbow nation': the role of festivals', upcoming paper for the symposium 'Building Reconciliation and Social Cohesion through Indigenous Festival Performances' 17-18 November 2011, University of London Institute, Paris.