



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE



PROJECT within the  
Tri-Continental (3C) Partnership  
between the University of Missouri, the University of the Western Cape, and Ghent University

## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:

### Knowledge Production and Creative Procedures in University Teaching and Research

#### INTRO:

Performance has an ambivalent status in the academic world. On the one hand, performance is often reduced to achievement. On the other hand, it is widely acknowledged that innovation and critical/divergent thinking are important for research, while at the same time the attention for active learning is growing, pointing to the more creative aspects of academic trajectories.

This project seeks to explore the role that ‘performance’ can potentially play in academic research and education, through six activities in the realm of story-telling and theatrical procedures.

#### PROJECT PARTICIPANTS:

- Inge Brinkman (Ghent University)
- Christel Stalpaert (Ghent University)
- Jane Taylor (University of the Western Cape)
- Suzanne Burgoyne (University of Missouri)

#### PROGRAMME:

##### ACTIVITY I:

*Date:* Tue 23 February 2021, time: 19:00 (Ghent), 20:00 (Cape Town), 12:00 (Missouri).

*Format:* ONLINE TEACHING

*Target Audience:* Undergraduate and graduate students

*Organising Partner:* African Studies, Ghent University

**Inge Brinkman (with James Wachira, James Mūriūki & Jacintha Wanjirū), ‘Gikuyu ogre narratives: monsters as a way to queer and posthuman analysis’**

Monsters challenge all categorisation, as their point is precisely to not fit. They may be highly sexualised, but often also show queer attributes that do not clearly place them in any gender category. They straddle the boundaries between human culture and the wilderness. Based on video recordings of a story-telling performance by members of the Mount Kenya Cultural Dancers in Central Kenya, this research-related course module explores queer and posthuman analysis through Gikuyu ogre narratives.

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##### ACTIVITY 2:

*Date:* Tue 2 March 2021, time: 19:00 (Ghent), 20:00 (Cape Town), 12:00 (Missouri).

*Format:* WEBINAR

*Target Audience:* University staff and interested graduate students

*Organising Partner:* Studies in Performing Arts & Media, Ghent University

**Christel Stalpaert, ‘Tentacular Thinking-With-Things in Storied Places. Parliament of Things (2019) by Peter Aers and Building Conversation’**

In this webinar Christel Stalpaert observes how different conversational practices/performances in general, and in the *Parliament of Things* in particular, function as “art-science-activist worldings” that offer an interesting alternative to the usual production of knowledge in university contexts. She will thereby relate postcolonial thinking with a posthuman perspective.

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### **ACTIVITY 3:**

*Date:* Tue 9 March 2021, time: 19:00 (Ghent), 20:00 (Cape Town), 12:00 (Missouri).

*Format:* ZOOM-ARTS PRODUCTION and Q&A SESSION

*Target Audience:* University staff and interested graduate students

*Organising Partner:* Centre for Humanities Research, University of Western Cape

**Jane Taylor with Aja Marneweck, William Ellis & Marcus Neustetter, 'Remembering plants through puppets'**

This activity focuses on puppetry and memories and experiences of plants in the region around the rural village of Barrydale, an area where intensive agriculture has had a significant impact on the lives and livelihoods of the indigenous inhabitants of the area, who in the pre-colonial era lived in a distinctly different relationship to their environment.

The team involved in the puppetry workshops and the plant-oriented photo-voice activities will use a digital platform to explore the meanings generated through enactments of the human/plant/animal complex. as we consider how the arts can predispose us all to a more responsible and sustainable mode of being.

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### **ACTIVITY 4:**

*Date:* Tue 16 March 2021, time: 19:00 (Ghent), 20:00 (Cape Town), 13:00-15:00 (Missouri).

*Format:* DEMONSTRATION, EXERCISES & DISCUSSION

*Target Audience:* University faculty (teachers)

*Organising Partner:* Center for Applied Theatre and Drama Research, University of Missouri

**Suzanne Burgoyne, Josh Saboorizadeh & team, 'Teaching creativity'**

Active teaching and active learning receive growing attention in higher education, also in the universities involved in this project. Yet, in practice most university teachers continue to offer lectures with students passively listening and regurgitating the information they heard. Based on methods of 'Theatre of the Oppressed' and creativity research, this demonstration will show how to use techniques that put students in the centre of the process for learning creativity. The aim is to shift the learning process to the engagement of the student, focusing on *how* to think instead of teaching *what* to think. We will discuss the exercises with the online audience.

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### **ACTIVITY 5:**

*Date:* We 24 and Thu 25 March 2021, time: 19:00 (Ghent), 20:00 (Cape Town), 13:00 (Missouri).

*Format:* DANCE PERFORMANCE/DANCE FILM + Q&A-SESSION

*Target Audience:* Master students and general public

*Organising Partner:* African Studies, Ghent University

**Inge Brinkman, Harold George & AfriKera Trust, 'Making Men'**

This activity combines an in vivo performance in Ghent (24 March) with online screening of the award-winning dance film 'Making Men' (available for 1 week), by Harold George (Sierra Leonean choreographer) and AfriKera Trust (Dance group from Harare, Zimbabwe). The performance and the film will be followed the next day (25 March) by a Q&A session with the choreographer to discuss ideas about (black) masculinity, bodily movement, stereotypes and choice. The links will be open to the general public, but especially master students are targeted.

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### **ACTIVITY 6:**

*Date:* Tue 20 April 2021, time: 19:00 (Ghent) + video-link for Cape Town and Missouri audiences.

*Format:* LITERARY DUET

*Target Audience:* Students and general public

*Organising Partner:* African Studies, Ghent University

**Michael Meeuwis & Inge Brinkman, 'Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness & Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart: Imagining and (de)coloniality in dialogue'**

Instead of the classic university lecture, this duet addresses the representation of Africa in these two novels through a dialogue with shifting characters. The performance will be organised in vivo in Ghent as well as video-recorded for audiences in Missouri and Cape Town.

\*\*\*\* THE LINK for each activity will be announced a month in advance \*\*\*\*