



ANNUAL REPORT APRIL '18-APRIL '19

Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice

VISION

The vision of the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice is to promote transdisciplinary research-led community engagement that focuses on the critical intersections between Religion and Social Justice.

MISSION

The mission of the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice is to facilitate transdisciplinary research and community engagement on the critical intersections between religion and social justice through:

- *Developing resources such as research fellowships for the transdisciplinary study of Religion and Social Justice*
- *Facilitate ongoing debate and dialogue on the intersections of Religion and Social Justice through conferences, workshops, seminars and other collaborations with civil society*
- *Engender activist collaboration between academic, civil society and faith-based organisations that promote Social Justice*
- *Publish and disseminate the findings of research conducted within the Centre*

Thematic Focus Areas of the Centre

Religion and Gender

Through this thematic focus area, the Centre seeks to foster critical research and civic engagement, which actively challenge the intersecting and systemic powers that produce and maintain the marginalisation and oppression of those who identify as female and queer. Projects within this thematic focus draw on the variety of resources available within feminist, queer and masculinity studies to develop knowledge and just-action in the complex and diverse areas where religion and gender intersect. These include, but are not limited to sexual reproductive health rights, violence against women, sexuality, queer identity, women and leadership, and religious and cultural laws and traditions.

Religion and the Economy

South Africa is regarded as one of the most unequal countries in the world, with growing statistics of income inequality, and the persistence of poverty. Economic justice is linked to moral principles which support the possibilities for people to live dignified material lives rooted in creativity and productivity. This thematic focus area seeks to interrogate the ways in which religion is implicated in the institutionalisation of economic oppression and examines the resources available within religion to destabilise prevailing imbalances of economic power. Furthermore, the ways in which gender, race, and ethnicity intersect with the economy of the sacred are explored.

Religion and the Environment

This thematic focus area foregrounds the role of religion in the pursuit of 'justice for the earth'. The religion and ecology research focus area critically engages the connections between anthropocentric and androcentric discourses and practices and examines the ways in which religion and the environment are connected with culture, economy, politics, community, heritage, and indigenous knowledge systems. Research in this area explores the position of religions and cultures in determining and contesting commonly accepted norms that constitute the relationships between and among all living beings.

Religion and Politics

With this thematic area, the Centre encourages research, conversations and partnerships that challenge the taken-for-granted nature of concepts and configurations such as democracy, equality, justice, reconciliation, and human rights in the social sciences and society. In light of the role of religion in general and Christianity in particular, in both the colonial and apartheid projects, the Centre is dedicated to exploring the possibilities for social justice through scholarship that engages religion as a critical concept and as a central component of human existence. This is demonstrated through our commitment to providing teaching and research that prioritises giving voice and visibility to religious traditions and aspects of religious experiences that have hitherto been marginalised in the academy.

Religion and Education

Given the decolonial fervour sweeping through the academy, the study of religion is undergoing a paradigmatic shift that the scholarship from South Africa is poised to lead. Critically reflecting on pedagogical praxis is a key task in this context – and therefore we focus on both transforming the content and the processes required for more decolonial, feminist and queer pedagogies. Furthermore, under this theme we conceptualise the postgraduate training workshops and supervision, offered within the Centre as a step towards 'educational justice'. The postgraduate training programme is a project in the decolonisation and democratisation of education. Through focussed thematic weekend workshops, the process of academic writing is demystified, while students are given the necessary support they need to navigate the research process.

Contents

Foreword	ii
1. Seminars and Roundtables	2
1.1 Tuesday Seminar Series	2
1.1.1 Expanding Ecumenical 'Circles': Religious Pluralism and Feminist Theology in the Study of Religion and Theology.....	2
1.1.2 Remembering James Cone, in Conversation with Black Liberation Theology	2
1.1.3 Performance and Production in the Field: Examining Queer Methodology in Research with Queer Clergy	3
1.1.4 Race, Gender, and Ethics in 'Organisational (Auto)biography: Researching the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)	3
1.1.5 Minority Faith Buildings and New Framings of Heritage.....	4
1.2 Seminar: Non-Religion, Secularity and Religious Pluralism in South Africa	4
1.3 Roundtable: Contextualising Contemporary Christianities - What is the Future of Christian Theology? ..	5
1.4 Seminar: Politics of Identities, Ethics and Reconciliation (PIER).....	6
1.5 Roundtable: Religion, Sexuality, Art and Activism with Inclusive and Affirming Ministries	7
2. Public Lectures	8
2.1 #MeToo At What Cost? First Annual Women's Month Public Lecture: The Role of Culture and Religion in Policing Women's Voices and Bodies	8
2.2 First Annual 'Remembering Marikana' Lecture..	9
2.3 Reimagining Christianity, Sexuality and Social Justice in Africa	9
3. Conference Attendance	11
3.1 Gender, Religion and Sexuality Conference	11
3.2 Discernment and Radical Engagement	12
3.3 Critical Times, Critical Race Symposium	13
3.4 European Women's Theological Research Network	14
3.5 2018 World Peace Convention.....	15
3.6 American Academy of Religion	15
4. International Courses	17
4.1 Advanced Programme in Law and Religion	17
5. Community Engagement	18
5.1 Council for World Mission Workshop, Subversive bodies, Hopes and Desires: Humanness under Empire..	18
5.2 World Council of Churches: Gender Advisory Group Meeting.....	18
5.3 United Evangelical Mission	18
6. Social Activism	19
6.1 Media Engagement	19
Op-Eds.....	19
Podcast.....	19
6.2 International Earth Day Seminar	20
6.3 Masters Student Testimonial	20
6.4 Christchurch Terror Attacks Victim Commemoration	22
6.5 Israeli Apartheid Week	22
7. National and International Partnerships	24
7.1 Partnership with the Centre for Religion and Public Life, University of Leeds.....	24
7.2 Partnership with Inclusive and Affirming Ministries (IAM)	24
7.3 Partnership with the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation (DLTLF)	25
7.4 Exeter Centre for Ethics and Practical Theology (EXCEPT), University of Exeter	25
8. Research Training and Development	26
8.1 Postgraduate Cohort Supervision Workshops ..	27
8.2 PhD Student Testimonial.....	28
8.3 Student Affiliates	31
9. Networking	34
9.1 Networking meeting with Candler School of Theology, Emory University	34
9.2 The Sixth Interdisciplinary Religion and Society Research Directors Colloquium	35
10. Awards of fellowships and grants	36
10.1 Edinburgh Catalyst Fellowship	36
10.2 University Capacity Development Grant.....	36
10.3 STINT Residency	36
11. Academic service	37
12. Publications	38
12.1 Journals.....	38
12.1.1 The African Journal of Gender and Religion	38
12.1.2 Journal for the Study of Religion.....	40
12.2 The Centre, Research Affiliates, and Students ..	40
12.2.1 Journal articles	40
12.2.2 Book chapters	41
12.2.3 Conference proceedings.....	41
12.2.4 Book reviews	41
12.3 Forthcoming publications.....	41

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social



Prof Sarojini Nadar, Director of the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu

Justice, just over a year after the change of name was approved and recommended at its April 2018 board meeting. We compile this report at a time when the world is

still reeling from the shock of the violent attacks on the sacred spaces of mosques and churches in New Zealand and Sri Lanka. Closer to home, we are mindful that in 2018 alone, at least 6 mosques came under attack in South Africa, and that these attacks hardly make international news. This violence reminds us of the place of religion in a constitutionally secular, but practically religiously plural post-apartheid South Africa, which is the focus of Dr Lee Scharnick-Udemans' current research work as a Senior Researcher in the Centre.

It is not possible within the pages of this report to account fully for the work that we have done in the past year. This report provides but a snapshot of the ongoing debates and dialogues on the intersections of social justice and religion that we have hosted through conferences, public lectures, workshops, seminars and other collaborations within academic and advocacy spaces. Below, I wish to emphasize just some of the highlights of the Centre for 2018.

Appointment of Senior Researcher

So, we are delighted to formally welcome Dr Scharnick-Udemans into this permanent position, to which she was appointed in August 2018, and thank UWC and the Faculty of Arts for making this possible. An indication of the kind of talent we have acquired, is that at the time of her appointment, Lee was at Oxford University, having been chosen from over 70 applicants to be one of 15 participants in a prestigious course on religion and law.

As Dr Scharnick-Udemans reminded us in her brilliant interview, while Desmond Tutu's book

Senior Researcher – Dr Lee Scharnick-Udemans completed her doctoral studies at the University of Cape Town in 2016. Her thesis, lauded by a leading scholar of religion as “one of the most important and exciting academic works to emerge in the field of African religious studies in recent times,” offered a critical examination of the complicated relationship between religious diversity and the political economy of the media in South Africa. Her current work on religious diversity and pluralism is both timely and overdue, for both its intellectual contribution to the interdisciplinary and intersectional study of religion and for its social significance in understanding and enacting equality in a vastly inequitable world. Dr Scharnick-Udemans is also a trained filmmaker with expertise in documenting issues and phenomena related to the religious landscape in South Africa. She is also, a gifted pedagogue showing particular erudition in the area of curriculum reform and student performance enhancement. Her commitment to student development and curriculum is attested to widely, as one UWC student recently commented, “In Dr. Lee, as we grew to call her, we had a very skilful researcher who specializes in the multiple historical and contemporary intersections of religion, politics and media. She engraved in us the cognitive ability to critically engage anything we read as researchers and to never be shy to offer a critique on any academic work.”

"Rainbow People of God" inspired the term "rainbowism" as a concept to describe racial and religious reconciliation, religiously inspired tensions often surface when one deals with contentious topics – ranging from same-sex relationships to seemingly innocuous everyday religious food choices. These tensions are inflated in the context of a religiously plural context like South Africa.

National and International Partnerships

Since her appointment Dr Scharnick-Udemans, and Ms Megan Robertson, a research intern and PhD student, has worked tirelessly in setting up a number of national and international partnerships that have been most productive in furthering the vision and mission of the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice. Through these partnerships, we seek to engage and test, by way of a series of initiatives, the successes and failures, the potential and limitations, and the "taken-for-granted" status of democracy, justice, reconciliation and human rights, in a context where issues of racism, poverty, patriarchy, violence and public health and education are increasingly in need of address. Apartheid was both supported and challenged through religious means – but the role of religion in a liberal democracy remains uncertain. These partnerships with the Centre for Religion in Public Life at the University of Leeds, the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation as well as Inclusive and Affirming Ministries (IAM) were established via signed MOU's, to explore religion in public life. The partnerships are based on a common understanding of the need for research on the power of faith, religion and

cultural traditions to determine and prescribe social norms for matters relating to social justice.

SARCHI Chair in Religion and Social Justice

The Centre has always worked closely with the Desmond Tutu Research Chair, formerly known as the Desmond Tutu Chair in Ecumenical Theology and Social Transformation in Africa, funded primarily by the Lund Mission Society. Since my appointment to the position in 2016, I have reported the concern about a lack of resources for the Chair, apart from the salary which the generous endowment made provision for. The Vice-Chancellor responded to these concerns through requesting the executive for special projects in the office of the VC to broker the creation of a tri-lateral SARCHI chair (South African Research Chair Initiative) between the National Research Foundation (NRF), University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the Lund Mission Society (LMS). After the submission of a concept note and upon successful negotiations between the three parties, the position of the Desmond Tutu SARCHI Chair in Religion and Social Justice was advertised and a lengthy development of a proposal ensued. I am most pleased to report that the process which began in 2017, was completed with the award of the Chair, late 2018 and the further successful appeal for Tier 1 Status in 2019. The primary purpose of the Desmond Tutu Chair in Religion and Social Justice is **to study the ways in which religious and faith traditions challenge or hold resources for social justice imperatives that produce sustainable societies.**

Through the recruitment of graduate and postdoc students and researchers; the hosting of conferences and seminars as well as the

As a research Centre, we are also cognizant of the most recent and current debates about how knowledge is produced, by whom and for whose benefit

dissemination of knowledge through publication, the Chair shares its goals and objectives with the Centre. The resources provided through the Tier 1 Chair is already being used to provide scholarships and fellowships to students affiliated with our work and with international partners and we look forward to a long and productive partnership.

Research training & development

As a research Centre, we are also cognizant of the most recent and current debates about how knowledge is produced, by whom and for whose benefit in light of a published study regarding "'coloured' women's cognitive abilities." Within these debates, we are reminded of the vision of the Desmond Tutu Centre to facilitate transdisciplinary research and community engagement on the critical intersections between religion and social justice. We believe, that through our intellectual labour as a Research Centre, we are producing questions about power that easily get lost in the veneration of icons like Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, whose name we bear in the work of the Centre. At times like these we hold onto the Arch's words: "We want our society to be characterised by vigorous debate and dissent, where to disagree is part and parcel of

a vibrant community." These words have served us well in the past year as we have sought to go beyond simple and facile descriptions of our common humanity in the work that we do. Instead we have committed to the critical work involved in naming and interrogating the interlocking systems of power which encourage the tragic events in New Zealand and Sri Lanka, and enable the kinds of offensive scholarship that has recently emerged. In fact, the issues of power, positionality and privilege were key to our discussions, in what has become a hallmark project of the Centre in the past two years – our postgraduate cohort supervision seminars. A full description from a visiting University of Leeds PhD student, who describes the research training as a "lovingly critical" space is available in this report, but I will cite just a few of her reflections below:

*The space created for the students I would describe as 'lovingly critical': the conference asked each one of them to put themselves out there, no matter what stage they are at, and be open to the critical feedback on offer from the rest of the group... As I walked into the second day of the DTC cohort conference, I felt the familiar fear of opening myself up to a room of colleagues. However, I had seen the vulnerability displayed by students the day before; I had seen them stand in front of colleagues and peers with years more experience and discuss their work with resilience and gratitude. I knew that I needed to show the same, firstly as a guest to this space and secondly for myself – to learn to be vulnerable about my work and grow as a researcher by doing so. And I am really glad that I did. I was asked questions that are key viva fears for me; questions that I have been sweeping under a very heavy rug for the past year or so in the hope that they just won't happen. By being part of this space, I was able to reflect on these questions and think about how I would tackle them not only in my thesis but also during my viva. So, when I say 'lovingly critical' I mean it. I mean that each student was held in that space in a supportive and loving manner, whilst also offered critical engagement with their work to help them move forward, including myself. - Gowan, H (2019). **Reflections on Research***

Collaboration Trip to Cape Town. Religion in Public, 29 April.

Available:

<https://religioninpublic.wordpress.com/2019/04/29/reflecti- ons-on-a-research-collaboration-trip-to-cape-town/>

Overall, whether through our First Annual Women's Month Lecture, which was, by all accounts a resounding success; or our many roundtables and seminars, we have in the past year, sought to produce new directions of thought in the politics of identity, race, gender and reconciliation and how these intersect with religion¹. The tragic terror of the violence in New Zealand, Sri Lanka and indeed globally; and the epistemic violence which continues in spaces of academia offers us insight and inspiration to continue the work of the Centre in more committed and creative ways.

Staff Profiles



Prof Sarojini Nadar

Director, **Prof Sarojini Nadar** also holds the Desmond Tutu SARChI Research Chair in Religion and Social Justice. She obtained her PhD in 2003 from the erstwhile University of Natal (now UKZN), where she also held the position of

coordinator of the International Network in Advanced Theological Education (INATE) – from 2002 to 2005. The network was based in eight countries and spanned five continents. In 2008, she was appointed to a permanent position as the Director of the Gender and Religion programme which she co-founded. She returned to this position in 2014 after a two-year tenure as the Dean of Research in the College of Humanities at UKZN in 2012 and 2013. She was promoted to Associate Professor in 2011 and Full Professor in 2014. Nadar has graduated 16 PhD and 15 Masters students associated with this programme. Her numerous publications span diverse topics of research at the intersections of gender studies and religion, including gender-based violence, HIV, masculinity studies and most recently gender in higher education. She sits on five international journal editorial boards including the Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion, and she is also the editor-in-chief of the African Journal of Gender and Religion. Nadar is a B rated scholar by the National Research Foundation and has won numerous awards for teaching and research, among them the Department of Science and Technology Distinguished Young Woman in Science award in 2012; the Vice-Chancellors Research Award at UKZN in 2015; the Distinguished Teachers Award in 2013. As an activist-academic she is committed to intersectional socially engaged scholarship.

¹The Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice wishes to thank its donors and partners for their ongoing support in enabling the work of the Centre:

Evangelische Missionswerk (EMW), The Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, Inclusive & Affirming Ministries (IAM), and DVC Research & Innovation (UWC)



Dr Lee Scharnick-Udemans

Senior researcher,
Dr Lee Scharnick-Udemans' current
research focuses
on religious

diversity and pluralism. It is important for both its intellectual contribution to the interdisciplinary and intersectional study of religion and for its social significance for understanding and enacting equality in a vastly inequitable world. Dr Scharnick-Udemans is also a trained filmmaker with expertise in documenting issues and phenomena related to the religious landscape in South Africa. In 2019 she was awarded a prestigious catalyst fellowship by the

"We believe that through our intellectual labour...we are producing questions about power that often get lost in the veneration of icons like Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu."

University of Edinburgh. Dr Scharnick-Udemans graduated with a B. Soc Sci degree from the University of Cape Town in 2007. Her majors were in Religious Studies and Media Studies. She obtained a Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) in 2010 and obtained her Master's degree in Social Science in 2012 in the area of Religious Pluralism and Media, also at UCT. She obtained her PhD in 2016 at the age of 29 from the University of Cape Town. Trained in the study of religion and society, Dr Scharnick-Udemans

researches, teaches and supervises in the area of religious diversity, pluralism, religion education, the political economy of religion, new religious movements, and the media. She is the Managing Editor of the Journal for the Study of Religion and the African Journal of Gender and Religion.

Dr Scharnick-Udemans, and Ms Megan Robertson have worked tirelessly in setting up a number of national and international partnerships that have been most productive in furthering the vision and mission of the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice



Megan Robertson

Research intern, **Ms Megan Robertson** is a PhD candidate at the University of the Western Cape, researching in the area of queer sexuality and institutional church culture. She is driven by a commitment to social justice and has a keen interest in developing method and pedagogical practice in that area. Ms Robertson did her Honours and Master's degrees in Sociology at Stellenbosch University and explored the ways in which race and gender are implicated in the institutional

cultures of student residences and organisations at the university.



Administrator, **Ms Ferial Marlie**, has been with the Centre since late 2018. Apart from providing logistical and administrative support, she also has skills in online and print design, creating and updating social media pages, managing publication processes associated with academic journals, as well as a solid background in database administration, which makes her skills invaluable for postgraduate student administration. She also has a keen interest in pursuing research in the area of gender, Islam and the human sciences.



Research Assistant, **Ishaya Anthony**, a PhD candidate focusing on religious media and development in Nigeria.



Research Assistant, **Nobesuthu Tom**, an Honours student working in the areas of feminist theology and female fertility.



Journal Assistant, **Toby Koloti**, a Master's student researching in the areas of sexual violence and pastoral care.



Journal Assistant, **Ashleigh Petersen**, a Master's student researching in the areas of media and clergy sexual violence.

1. SEMINARS AND ROUNDTABLES

1.1 Tuesday Seminar Series

The DTCRSJ in collaboration with the Department of Religion and Theology co-hosted five joint seminars between April 2018 and April 2019 at the University of the Western Cape. These seminars aim to provide a space for critical dialogue and engagement on key topics and innovative research approaches relevant to the fields of religion and social justice.

1.1.1 Expanding Ecumenical 'Circles': Religious Pluralism and Feminist Theology in the Study of Religion and Theology

April 2018

Speaker: Prof Isabel Phiri



Prof Isabel Phiri in April 2018 led a roundtable discussion on the topic *Expanding Ecumenical 'Circles': Religious Pluralism and Feminist Theology in the Study of Religion and Theology*. Dr Teddy Sakupapa, Lecturer in Ecumenical Studies and Social Ethics, was a key respondent who engaged with Prof Phiri on the following key topics:

- The World Council of Churches and its role in social justice
- Understanding Ecumenicity in the context of religious diversity
- The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians
- The epistemological privileging of women in the study of feminist theology in Africa
- The future of "African Theology"

1.1.2 Remembering James Cone, in Conversation with Black Liberation Theology

May 2018



The collaborative team at UWC partnered with the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University, to honour the life and work of James Cone, who passed away in 2018. This was in line with the Centre's commitment to providing a space to engage in conversations about Black liberation theologies, particularly for post-Apartheid South Africa. The work of James Cone focused primarily on the experiences of African Americans, racism, and the role of the black church. Two distinguished South African liberation theologians (Prof Nico Koopman, Vice-Rector: Social Transformation and Personnel,

Stellenbosch University, and Prof Reggie Nel Dean: Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University) were invited to reflect on the impact of the life and work of James Cone on their research and teaching. This event was important in advancing the thematic area of religion and politics in the Centre.

1.1.3 Performance and Production in the Field: Examining Queer Methodology in Research with Queer Clergy

March 2019

Speaker: Megan Robertson



The Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice
In collaboration with the Department for Religion & Theology
Tuesday Seminar Series

**Performance and Production in the Field:
Examining Queer Methodology in Research
with Queer Clergy**

ABSTRACT:
Religion's history on Christianity and queer sexuality has progressed from an exclusive emphasis on queering abstract heteronormative policies and ideologies to queering the materialised experiences of queer Christians. This is in part due to the work of feminist scholars, lived experience and narrative as increasingly recognised critical sites of empirical work for developing queer theories on religion and theology. However, there has been limited discussion in scholarship which has theorised methodological frameworks in the production of queer narrative and lived experience.

In this presentation, I draw on the broader scholarship in social science which has theorised queer methodologies in order to understand what might mean to employ a queer methodology in research on religion and sexuality. By reflecting on my experience of doing long-term interviews and observations with six queer clergy in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA), I challenge how these considerations can be used to understand the queerness of my own methodology. I posit that this queer and intersectional lens of examining the faith holds the possibility of generating a nuanced understanding of the experiences and narratives of those offered by queer.

MEGAN ROBERTSON

Megan Robertson is a PhD candidate at the University of the Western Cape, researching in the area of queer sexuality and church culture. Using queer and feminist analysis, her research aims to explore the lived experiences of queer clergy in a mainline church in South Africa and how these personal narratives intersect with the institutional culture of the church. Megan works as a research intern in the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice at the University of the Western Cape.

DATE: Tuesday, 22 March 2019
TIME: 13:30 - 14:30
VENUE: OL11, O'neil Level 2, New Arts Building, University of the Western Cape
RSVP: drh@westerncape.ac.za

Megan, a PhD candidate in the Department of Religion and Theology, presented a methodological paper on her research with queer clergy in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. In her presentation she draws on the broader scholarship in social science which has theorised queer methodologies in order to theorise what it might mean to employ a queer methodology in research on religion and sexuality. Robertson analysed her own experiences in the field and explored four theoretical considerations which were important in queering the methodology in her work namely, Performativity, Co-Production, the Ethnographic Field and Activism.

1.1.4 Race, Gender, and Ethics in 'Organisational (Auto)biography: Researching the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)

April 2019

Speaker: Dr Eleanor Higgs

Dr Higgs, a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town, presented her research on the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in South Africa.

Through the methodology of organisational (auto)biography, Dr Higgs explored the narratives that the organisation produces about itself and the organisational identity this constructs. By examining institutional texts Higgs argued that she could explore the religious, colonial and racial narratives implicated in the association.



THE DESMOND TUTU CENTRE FOR RELIGION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
In collaboration with the Department of Religion and Theology (URD)
Tuesday Seminar Series

**Race, Gender, and Ethics in
Organisational (Auto)biography***

RESEARCHING THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION (YWCA)

Dr Eleanor T Higgs has been a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town, since November 2018. She is from the UK, where she completed her PhD in Gender Studies at SOAS University of London in 2015. Eleanor is currently writing her first book, *Narrative, Identity, and Ethics in Postcolonial Kenya: The Young Women's Christian Association*.

ABSTRACT

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) has received relatively little attention in the study of religion and gender, despite the fact that it is a transnational Christian women's organisation working in more than 100 countries. In my personal research with the YWCA in Kenya, and my current work on the YWCA in South Africa, I seek to understand how this organisation combines its Christian identity with its intersectional gender equality, economic, political, historical, and fieldwork research to look at race and gender in the 'organisational (auto)biographies' of these YWCAs.

In this seminar I will define organisational (auto)biography as a methodology based on narrative theories of identity construction and African feminist epistemologies. I look at two self-published books by two white former YWCA leaders as examples of organisational (auto)biography: *Backbone to Joke: A History and Disavowal of the Kenya YWCA 1912-1996*, and *The Renewal of the Blue Triangle: A History of the YWCA in South Africa*. The accounts of the YWCA's history that are included in these books are constitutive of the organisation's identity in both countries, and ethical claims regarding race and gender are central to that construction. So, I argue for two things: First, for an organisational (auto)biographical approach to the YWCA in the study of religion and gender. Second, I argue that studying Christian women's conduct through an analysis of racial and historical narratives is useful in African contexts because it reveals the operations of coloniality and ethnocentrism.

DATE: Tuesday, 23 April 2019
TIME: 13:30
VENUE: Old Arts Building, First Floor, Room 1.004, Old Arts Building, WCC
RSVP: drh@westerncape.ac.za

1.1.5 Minority Faith Buildings and New Framings of Heritage

April 2019

Speaker: Dr Caroline Starkey



Using the theoretical framework of 'memory', Dr Starkey (Associate Professor at the University of Leeds) presented her work on the religious heritages of minority faith communities in England through a detailed analysis of the buildings they inhabit. She specifically focused on empirical research she conducted on Buddhist buildings. Dr Starkey provided a visually stimulating presentation on how Buddhist communities in England engage in heritage construction and memory transmission through the built environment. Dr Starkey focused particular attention on gender and explored the under-valued role that women have played in the development of minority faith spaces.

1.2 Seminar: Non-Religion, Secularity and Religious Pluralism in South Africa

University of the Western Cape, September 2018



Dr Patrick Pillay

"What place does a conversation about non-religion and secularity have in a Centre, focussed on the role of religion in society? While Christian privilege manifests, christonormativity remains an urgent area of inquiry for those concerned with the study of religious pluralism, and the issue of non-religion reveals an area of meaningful human experience that has hitherto been ignored." Dr Scharnick-Udemans offered these opening remarks, which framed the discussion for the seminar on *Non-Religion, Secularity and Religious Pluralism in South Africa*. The seminar was chaired by Dr Scharnick-Udemans and presented by Dr Patrick Pillay with Prof Narnia Bohler-Muller, the Executive Director of the Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery research programme at the Human Sciences Research Council, as

the respondent. The purpose of the seminar was to form relationships with conversation partners about the emerging field of academic study called Non-Religion, with a commitment to continue engaging critically on the place of religion in public life. One of the outcomes of this seminar was the appointment of Dr Patrick Pillay as a postdoc researcher in the Centre in 2019. It is expected that Dr Pillay will continue the production of knowledge in this area through a series of publications.

1.3 Roundtable: Contextualising Contemporary Christianities - What is the Future of Christian Theology?

University of the Western Cape, October 2018



From right: Dr Tim Hartman, Alease Brown and Dr Teddy Sakupapa

This roundtable discussion was led by visiting scholar to the Centre, Dr Tim Hartman, Assistant Professor of Theology at Columbia Theological Seminary in the USA. The discussion was chaired by Dr Teddy Sakupapa, Lecturer in Ecumenical Studies and Social Ethics in the Department of Religion and Theology at UWC. Three respondents, Rev Canon Vicentia Kgabe, an ordained Priest in the Anglican Church of South Africa and Rector of the College of Transfiguration in Grahamstown, Ms Alease Brown, a doctoral researcher in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University, and Bishop Dr David Zac Niringiye, an Anglican Bishop from Uganda, participated in the discussion. After a presentation by Dr Hartman on his research about the interconnection between Christian theology, politics, and society, a robust and lively discussion on how power and positionality reflect in developing “contextual theologies” ensued. In a letter of thanks to the Centre, Dr Hartman reflected as follows: “These experiences in South Africa have given me increased self-understanding as a white, male theologian from the U.S. who finds himself amid the historically racially-challenged society of the south-eastern United States.” A key research outcome of this roundtable is the publication of Dr Hartman’s book “Theology after Colonisation: Bediako, Barth and the Future of Theological Reflection” due to be published in November 2019. Furthermore, Alease Brown, who graduated with a PhD in 2019, has now joined the Centre as a postdoc researcher.

1.4 Seminar: Politics of Identities, Ethics and Reconciliation (PIER)

University of the Western Cape, March 2019

The Politics of Identities, Ethics and Reconciliation (PIER) project is a South African–Swedish research cooperation initiated jointly by the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and Umeå University (UmU). Jointly led by the Head of Department of Religion and Theology at UWC, Prof. John Klaasen and Prof Karin Sporre, Professor of Ethics at the Department of Applied Educational Science, Umeå University the colloquium at UWC in March 2019 focused on Religion, Ethics and Education. As part of the Centre's thematic focus on Religion and Education, Dr Scharnick-Udemans convened a panel for the PIER colloquium around the theme, *Religion, Ethics and Education*. Along with Ms Robertson and Dr Jodamus from the Department of Religion and Theology, they presented in the panel: *Pedagogical Reflections from a New Generation of Scholars at the University of the Western Cape*. The abstract below captures the discussions held in the panel which will be submitted to the journal: *Religion Education* for publication.

Abstract

In the wake of the wave of recent student activism in South Africa, the term 'decolonial' has become a weighty conceptual tool in the academy. While the notion of decoloniality has been masqueraded as novel, it borrows heavily from earlier arguments that have been developed in intersectional feminist research. Scholars often fail to acknowledge this academic lineage to the detriment of both teaching and research in this area. As a result, issues of gender, sexuality, and sexual orientation have often and quite ironically been sidelined in the emerging oeuvre of decolonial scholarship. This has perpetuated the injustice and invisibilities in scholarship that decolonial approaches claim to be aimed at dismantling. Furthermore, it appears that the term has become a taken-for-granted add-on rather than a theoretically dense lens through which to understand teachings practices and research. This panel will explore the intersections of queer and decolonial pedagogies via a range of classroom case studies at the University of the Western Cape. In doing so it aims to describe what it means for teaching in decolonial and queer ways, explain how this appears in practice, and theorise how innovative teaching approaches can be used to engage and raze the vastly inequitable power systems that regulate teaching and research in the academy.

1.5 Roundtable: Religion, Sexuality, Art and Activism with Inclusive and Affirming Ministries

Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, April 2019



From right: Megan Robertson, Nokuthula Mjwara, Rev Michelle Boonzaaier and Rev Hanzline Davids

The Centre co-convened a panel with this faith-based organisation, as part of its thematic focus area on religion and gender. The panel discussion was held just before a public lecture by visiting scholar, Dr Adriaan van Klinken, on the same theme. The purpose of the panel discussion was to engage in a critical conversation around religion, sexuality, and activism in South Africa, with key facilitators of the programmes which IAM offers, to “support and empower the LGBTI community... to stimulate dialogue in building welcoming, affirming and inclusive faith communities.” Megan Robertson the discussion with the program facilitators who are doing research on developing resources, training, and contextual Bible readings on human sexuality. The panel included Rev Michelle Boonzaaier, who manages the programme that focusses on coordinating processes of inclusion of gender diverse people in mainline churches (Michelle is a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church in Brackenfell), Rev Hanzline Davids who coordinates processes of inclusion of gender diverse people in the Uniting Reformed and Anglican churches (Hanzline is also a PhD candidate at Stellenbosch University in Systematic Theology), and Ms Nokuthula (Thuli) Mjwara who coordinates IAM's work with civil society organisations and is a trainer and facilitator of human sexuality and diversity. They discussed why an organisation like IAM exists in South Africa, as well as some of the challenges of working in religious settings which are influenced by dynamics of race, culture, and gender.

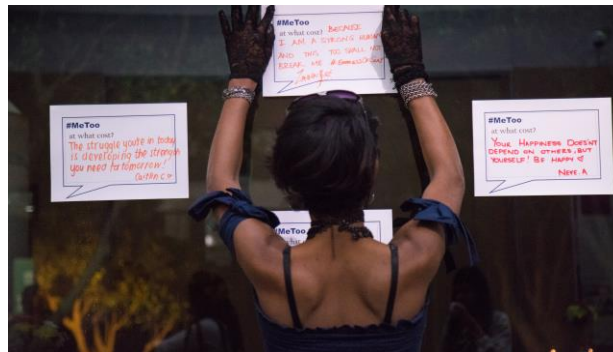


From right: Lloyd Zanna-Re Chetty, Prof Sarojini Nadar and Dean Jacobs

2. PUBLIC LECTURES

2.1 #MeToo At What Cost? First Annual Women's Month Public Lecture: The Role of Culture and Religion in Policing Women's Voices and Bodies

University of the Western Cape, August 2018



#MeToo Wall, Lloyd Zanna-Rex Chetty

I look in the room, there are different generations of women. We've been marching for years, for centuries. What is it that we need to do if my grandmother marched and my mother marched, and I'm marching, my daughter was part of the #TotalShutDown march?

Are we going to keep marching? Or is there something fundamental that we need to attack?

These were the opening words of Matshilo Motsei, keynote speaker at the *First Annual Women's Month Public Lecture* on 30 August 2018. The lecture was titled *#MeToo at what Cost: The Role of Culture and Religion in Policing Women's Voices and Bodies*. The author of *The Kanga and Kangaroo Court: Reflections on the Rape Trial of Jacob Zuma*, set the scene for what the Centre had conceptualised as the central question to be asked about the pervasive power of patriarchy and why the violence against women's bodies continues unabated. Through her personal experiences of how she healed and forgave, she emphasised the importance of power in vulnerability. This public lecture saw an unprecedented attendance of almost 300 guests.

The evening began with the singing of the struggle song, *Senzeni Na*, and ended with the song *Malibongwe*, performed by the Kensington Chorale Girls' Choir. Both these struggle songs were fitting for a lecture that was focused on women's continued struggles in the context of the #MeToo movement. Ms Diana Ferrus, a well-known South African poet and storyteller, recited her poem titled *A poem for Sarah Baartman*,



From right: Prof Sarojini Nadar, Dr Lee Scharnick-Udemans, and Matshilo Motsei

which not only changed the energy in the room but in many ways invoked the spirit of Sarah Baartman, almost bringing her to life.

A #MeToo wall was created on which those who wished to do so, wrote messages of support. This wall replicated the social media site, Twitter, where the #MeToo campaign originated.

2.2 First Annual 'Remembering Marikana' Lecture

University of the Western Cape, August 2018



Prof Tinyiko Maluleke



The first annual 'Remembering Marikana' lecture, *The Stones Will Cry Out: Towards a Socio-Theological Analysis of an Atrocity* was presented by Prof Tinyiko Maluleke. The lecture was hosted as part of the Centre's two thematic focus areas – religion and economy and religion and politics, to commemorate the days leading up to and at the bloody massacre at the Lonmin mine on 16 August 2012. Drawing on a range of classical and contemporary resources, including biblical texts, poetry, musical scores, first-person narrations, and dream interpretations, Prof Maluleke evoked the tragic memory of the massacre at Marikana and inspired a continued critical inquiry into the persistent patterns of power that seek to disguise the multiple ways in which black pain and suffering are silenced and diffused from collective memory.

2.3 Reimagining Christianity, Sexuality and Social Justice in Africa

Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, April 2019



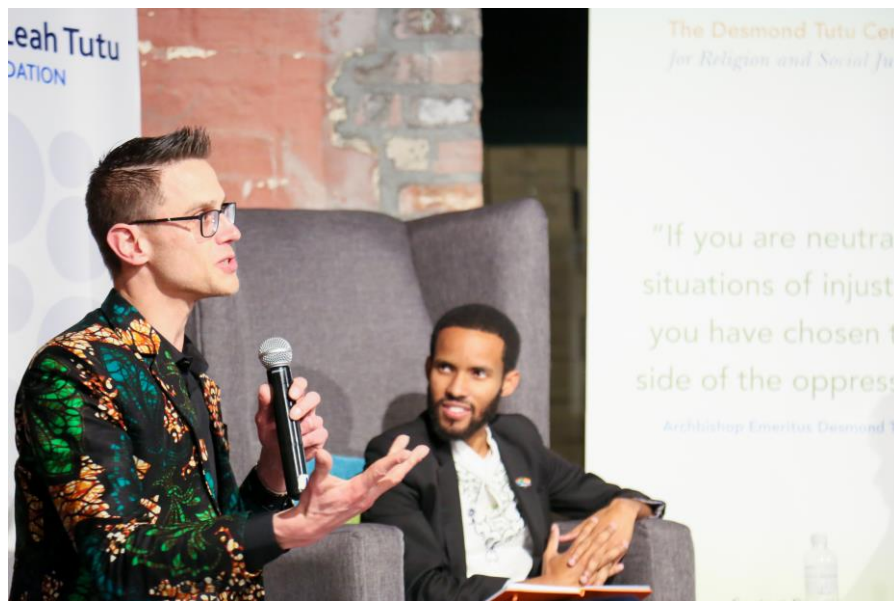
Dr Adriaan van Klinken



Ashwin Thyssen

Framed within the thematic focus area of religion and gender, and as a launch to the "Religion in Public Life" series, the Centre hosted a public lecture delivered by Dr Adriaan van Klinken, an Associate

Professor of Religion and African Studies at the University of Leeds. Dr Van Klinken aimed to challenge the dominant narrative that Christian beliefs and actors in African contexts fuel 'African Homophobia'. By drawing on his work in Kenya, Dr Van Klinken discussed how Christian-inspired groups are transforming Christian practice, and how artistic and activist texts appropriate Christian beliefs and symbols for a progressive politics of sexuality that affirms human flourishing in diversity. The lecture foregrounded Christian traditions as a major resource for a liberating imagination and politics with regard to sexuality and social justice in contemporary Africa. In this rousing lecture, Dr Van Klinken invited the audience to sing a song that narrated the issues faced by queer communities in Kenya and its creation of an aesthetics of resistance. Mx Ashwin Afrikanus Thyssen, a Master's degree student in theology at Stellenbosch University, provided an equally rousing response to the lecture. Mx Thyssen drew the audience's attention to the relevance of Dr Van Klinken's thoughtful acknowledgement of his positionality and his overall discussion in understanding the importance of intersectionality in feminist and decolonial activism and advocacy in South Africa. This public lecture, was a great start to the partnership between the Centre for Religion and Public Life at the University of Leeds, as well as the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation.



Question and Answer Session with Dr Adriaan van Klinken and Ashwin Thyssen

3. CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

3.1 Gender, Religion and Sexuality Conference

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, May 2018

This conference hosted by the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal aimed to bring together scholars and civil society, whose work touched on issues related to gender, religion, and sexuality. The conference attracted scholars in theology, social sciences, law, and those doing advocacy work, and provided a glimpse of the wide range of work being done in this area. This highlighted the fact that, although gender, religion, and sexuality are widely researched fields, these are still relevant today and especially important in the project of dismantling oppressive sources of power.

Dr Scharnick-Udemans presented a paper titled *Theorising Religion, Gender, and Media: Insights from the South African Context*.

Abstract

The 'media turn' in the study of religion has played a crucial role in reconfiguring understandings of the private/public divide, unsettling traditional sources and notions of religious authority, and shedding light on critical issues such as minority and majority rights, migration, religious violence, and other pertinent contemporary geopolitical and social issues. However, despite the expansive nature of the content, approaches, and theories employed in research on religion and media, gender, as a critical area of research and as a methodological and theoretical tool has constituted a 'blind spot' in the field and in the vision of those who have been at the helm of its development and advancement. Concomitantly, the presence of research and theories about and from Africa, the Southern African region, and the South African context in particular, have been virtually absent from the small but nonetheless definitive mainstream corpus on the topic.

In this paper I argue that, although the interdisciplinary track record of media, religion, and cultural studies is laudable, this interdisciplinary 'canon' would benefit from an intersectional turn that takes gender and socio-political contexts within Africa more seriously. Through a critical review of some of the most recent literature produced in the interdisciplinary spaces of religion, media, and cultural studies, I will, firstly, theorise the absence of gender as an analytical framework and pertinent area of research inquiry in the study of religion, media, and culture. Secondly, I will discuss a few critical intersections and relationships between religion and media as evidenced in the contemporary South African context. Finally, a few brief examples of 'religion in the media' will be presented, in order to highlight the epistemological possibilities of gender and feminist analytical perspectives for understanding the ways that religion and media are entangled within the broader socio-political milieu.

Ms Robertson presented a paper, co-authored with Prof Nadar, titled *Queering the Ecclesia: 'Institutional Culture' as a Path toward an Inclusive Church*.

Abstract

Ecclesia de Lange's unsuccessful battle with the Methodist Church of Southern Africa to have her reinstated as a minister after she was fired for declaring her intention to marry her same-sex partner, resulted in many debates in South Africa that need scrutiny, not least of all the rules and doctrines of religious institutions *vis-à-vis* the freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution. The ruling of the court stated that those 'who voluntarily commit themselves to a religious association's rules and decision-making bodies should be prepared to accept the outcome of fair hearings conducted by those bodies'. It is precisely at the level of 'rules and decision-making bodies' that an ecclesiological research on the subject of queer sexuality has restricted itself – that is, heteronormative church policies, laws, doctrines, and the implementation of those policies. Therefore, possibilities of a more inclusive church have largely been confined to the possibilities or impossibilities of transforming church laws and doctrines. A similar stagnation seems to have occurred in the discourse around the transformation in Higher Education which focuses on policy change and implementation. However, over the past decade there have been developments within Higher Education research which have shifted the methodological paradigm from 'institutional policy' research to 'institutional culture' research. This shift allows for a deeper interrogation of the social, cultural, and epistemic structures which govern institutions rather than a narrow focus on a legislative compliance with policies and laws. Institutional culture's helpfulness seems to lie in its capacity to explore different aspects of a complex system whereby an institution and individual interact in complex ways. The purpose of this paper is to propose the extension of the concept of 'institutional culture' into the context of the study of queer sexualities and the church. For this paper, we review how 'institutional culture' has been conceptualised and operationalised by South African educationalists. Drawing from feminist understandings of how the individual interrelates with broader social relations, we analyse how a conceptual understanding of 'institutional culture' may open up ways of studying the church, which brings together the lived experiences of queer Christians and a critique of the heteronormative institutional relations of the church.

3.2 Discernment and Radical Engagement

Mexico City, May 2018

Prof Nadar co-presented a paper with Dr Jodamus at the 2nd annual *Discernment and Radical Engagement* (DARE) conference in Mexico City in May 2018. The paper was presented in a stream called *Body, Normalcy and Indecency* and forms part of an international publication

DARE: "... this annual CWM [Council for World Mission] forum provides a platform for scholars to present and challenge perspectives on mainline theological and biblical scholarship that are rooted in ground-level struggles and concerns. Scholars are provided the opportunity to share personal insights, viewpoints and experiences through publications – with the end goal of growing and better equipping themselves in discernment and radical engagement with local communities."

that will be prepared for publication in 2019. The title of their paper is *Sexual Healing: Exploring 'Indecent' Sexual Imagery in Pentecostal Liturgical Practices*.

Abstract

It is well known that in Pentecostal churches praise and worship is the most important aspect of the church service, arguably even more than the Sacrament and Word, with the key focus being on the charismatic outpouring and healing of souls. In these contexts, liturgical practices are important conduits that ultimately usher in the Spirit and power, with a focus on the spirit as opposed to the body. Drawing on Foucault's theory of repressive sexuality where he proposes that the main 'appropriate' outlets for sexuality have been psychiatry and prostitution, this paper suggests a third outlet, namely Pentecostalism. This consideration not only expands the interpretive possibilities for Foucault's analysis, but allows us, in Marcella Althaus Reid's words, to take a sneak peer 'under God's skirt'. Through a feminist critical discourse analysis of the lyrics found in selected praise and worship choruses and songs, this paper explores to what extent these songs allow for the expression of repressed sexuality that is often strictly and doctrinally controlled in these churches. It calls for the consideration that these songs open up critical spaces for more embodied theologies – sexual healing that perhaps even the worshippers themselves have unconsciously ignored.

3.3 Critical Times, Critical Race Symposium

University of the KwaZulu-Natal, July 2018

Two doctoral students, Thobeka Khubisa and Nobuntu Motholeni, as well as Prof Nadar and Dr Johnathan Jodamus, were invited to participate in the third annual *Critical Times, Critical Race Symposium* at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in July 2018. The symposium, was significant for the Centre particularly for the ways in which the Centre frames its research within qualitative decolonial epistemological paradigms. The students benefited from exploring together with students from other universities, how multifaceted aspects of critical theory (such as race, gender, sexuality and class studies) come to bear on studies of religious and cultural traditions.

The symposium was also important for thinking through issues of positionality while also taking into consideration the politics of doing 'race' work in current contexts. Prof Nadar and Dr Jodamus presented a paper: "Between Rainbows and the Lynching Tree: Black Theology in South Africa and North America"

Abstract

The purpose of this paper (which is still in its thinking stages) is to ask questions about the role and place of South African Black theology in post-apartheid South Africa. Recognising that South African Black theology was essentially "protest theology" against an unjust White government, its utility in a post-apartheid context with a Black government in place, has been questioned. It seems that Black

Theology has been replaced with Rainbow Theology, the latter being proposed by Archbishop Emeritus Tutu in his book, "The Rainbow People of God." Inspired by James Cone's famous comparison between the "cross and the lynching tree" we wish to argue in this paper for the utility of black theology in a society that certainly does not espouse the ideal of a post-racial rainbowism, and to draw out the key tenets and values of a Black theology related to a seemingly foregone past to help us think through some of the present racisms which construct social relations in South Africa. We bring gender critical theory and critical race theory into dialogue in order to explore to what extent ideas of non-binary identities and perhaps even strategic essentialism are useful to the material lived experiences of a patriarchal and racist society.

3.4 European Women's Theological Research Network

Thessaloniki, Greece, September 2018



From right: Prof Sarojini Nadar and Prof Eleni Kasselouri Hatzivassiliadi of Aristotle University

Prof Nadar presented a paper to the Greek chapter of the European Women's Theological Research Network, 'Negotiating the 'F-words' '- Faith' and 'Feminism' in a post-apartheid globalized university'.

Abstract

This paper focuses on the economy of knowledge production. Knowledge is indeed a commodified product – and the knowledge which emerges from our bodies seem to have little space in the marketplace of knowledge known as the globalised university. This lecture traces my more than a decade-long journey producing "bodies of knowledge" on the subjects of faith and feminism – and explores how these "bodies of knowledge" are received, repudiated and renegotiated within a post-apartheid globalised higher

education context. I draw on Grace Kyungwon Hong's (2008) thoughts on black feminism and the politics of knowledge in the American university under globalization, and chart the similarities of her arguments for the South African university under globalization. Essentially I "illuminate the means by which epistemological considerations, as much as political and economic ones, constitute this university formation's violence toward black feminists" through a repudiation of the f words – faith and feminism. Through a case study of my own academic journey I show the importance of an embodied politics of knowledge that challenges the globalised higher education context which seeks to sanitise the study of faith and feminism, by holding it hostage to theory; while dismissing its political potential for transformation.

3.5 2018 World Peace Convention

Incheon, Korea, October/November 2018

Prof Nadar was invited to be a plenary speaker at the 2018 World Peace Convention, hosted by the National Council of YMCAs of Korea, in Incheon, Korea. The theme of the conference was: "Historic Reconciliation, Collective Healing and SangSaeng (Life Together) in the Korean Peninsula and East Asia." Scholars from around the world were invited to present papers reflecting on reconciliation processes in their own contexts. Prof Nadar presented a paper entitled "The Politics of Reconciliation: Re-inscribing the



Prof Sarojini Nadar with other delegates at the Peace March

Wounded Body through a Feminist Body Hermeneutic." The conference ended with a peace march, at which Prof Nadar was asked to speak at a press conference.

This is an extract from her greeting:

I am pleased to bring you greetings from the international participants at this 2018 World Peace Convention. As we reflect on these precious few days with you we can say the following with confidence. Firstly, it was humbling for all of us to collectively remember with you the pain and the suffering you have experienced and to connect your struggles with the struggles of our own people in the countries from which we come. Secondly it was both a challenge and privilege to collectively harness our analytical skills borne out of our struggles, and to bring these to bear on your on-going journey towards peace. Finally, it is our joy and privilege to commit as part of an international community of peace loving people, to continue to be in solidarity and walk with you on this journey towards peace. It is our hope that this peace will be characterized not just by the absence of war and conflict, but indeed by the presence of justice.

3.6 American Academy of Religion

Denver, Colorado, November 2018

Prof Nadar co-presented a paper with Dr Fatima Seedat (UCT) on Teaching About Islam, Gender, and Women AAR Panel Session, "Between Boundaries: Holding a Space between Quran and Bible in a Feminist Classroom".

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to theorise the teaching and learning of feminist approaches to Bible and Qur'an in a Masters course, with a historically Christian focus, within a South African higher education

context. The paper draws on a critical review of an assessment task of students, as well as our pedagogical experiences to consider how students made meaning of the space created for conversation on different feminist approaches to the two sacred texts. When viewed through decolonial feminist pedagogical thought, our analysis reveals that our job as teachers was to hold onto the tension in the space between the feminist approaches to the sacred texts, and not to succumb to the pressure to release, trivialise nor exacerbate that tension. The students' essays then reveal much creativity in how they engage the feminist approaches to the two texts with varying degrees of "inflation and conflation of the spaces" between them. The reflections in the paper challenge and extend the dominant literature on Christian-Muslim hermeneutics in two ways: through a focus on the pedagogical aspects of the encounter between the two sacred texts in a university feminist space; and through an emphasis on the intellectual insight drawn from the encounter as conversation and as a 'becoming', rather than the encounter providing a utilitarian response to a perceived crisis.

4. INTERNATIONAL COURSES

4.1 Advanced Programme in Law and Religion

University of Oxford, July 2018



Dr Lee Scharnick Udemans with other participants at Oxford

Dr Scharnick-Udemans was selected as one of 15 participants out of a pool of over 70 to participate as a writing fellow in the first *Advanced Programme in Law and Religion* hosted by the International Centre for Religion and Law at the Christchurch Campus, University of Oxford. She was selected on the basis of a proposal for a project on religious pluralism and privilege in the context of religious freedom and equality.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

5.1 Council for World Mission Workshop, Subversive bodies, Hopes and Desires: Humanness under Empire

Stellenbosch, December 2018

Ms Robertson attended a workshop hosted by the Council for World Mission, 3-6 December 2018. This workshop brought together international church leaders and scholars of religion with the aim of discussing and developing resources that churches could use to become more inclusive of marginalised and specifically queer bodies and voices. Ms Robertson presented a paper titled '*Uncivilising*' Queer Politics: Learning from the Struggle for Gay Rights and Queer Activism in South Africa.

5.2 World Council of Churches: Gender Advisory Group Meeting

Bossey, Switzerland, January 2019



Prof Sarojini Nadar with other delegates in Bossey, Switzerland

Prof Nadar serves as a resource person to this advisory group and attended a meeting to finalise the Gender Policy document for the WCC. She worked with two other scholars on developing the key principles for the development of this Policy and will report on this more fully once the Policy document is released.

5.3 United Evangelical Mission

University of the Western Cape, April 2018

In April 2018, the Desmond Tutu Centre hosted the UEM (United Evangelical Mission), consisting of a group of religious leaders from Africa and Europe for a seminar on religious diversity. The organisation's executive management invited Dr Scharnick-Udemans to join the steering committee and act as a resource person for the UEM's project on Global Learning. She accepted the invitation and spent four days with a group in Schwerte, Germany, in December 2018. The time was spent leading discussions, advising on best practice, and participating in workshops. This partnership is important for the thematic focus area on Religion and Education, in the work of the Centre.

6. SOCIAL ACTIVISM

6.1 Media Engagement

Op-Eds

Two op-ed pieces were written within the thematic focus area of religion and gender. Both dealt with clergy abuse. The first piece engaged with the case of Timothy Omotoso, who is on trial for sexually violating many young women in his church.

Sarojini Nadar. "Moral responsibility for Omotoso lies with the churches"

October 26, News24.com

<https://www.news24.com/Columnists/GuestColumn/moral-responsibility-for-omotoso-lies-with-the-churches-20181026>



Controversial Nigerian pastor Timothy Omotoso is seen during his rape and human trafficking trial in the Eastern Cape High Court in Port Elizabeth. (Lulama Zenzile, Gallo Images, Netwerk24, file)

The second op-ed piece was written in response to a tape containing offensive utterances of Vuyile Mehana towards women priests. Co-authored by Sarojini Nadar and Tinyiko Maluleke, the piece argued that the utterances constituted hate speech.

No holy cows in hate cases

Sarojini Nadar, Tinyiko Maluleke 11 Jan 2019 01:17



Derogatory views: Reverend Vuyile Mehana should resign from his position, the authors argue. (Felix Dlangamandla/Foto24/Gallo Images)

Sarojini Nadar and Tinyiko Maluleke. No holy cows in hate cases. 11 January 2019, Mail and Guardian

<https://mg.co.za/article/2019-01-11-00-no-holy-cows-in-hate-cases>

Podcast

Dr Scharnick-Udemans was invited to participate in a live telephonic interview, on Cape Talk radio station hosted by presenter Lester Kiewet. While the programme was interested evaluating the truth values of apparently outrageous religiously inspired actions such as the raising of the dead, Dr Scharnick-Udemans explained that this perspective was limiting and an over-simplified of a number of both interesting and urgent questions about religious freedom and religious privilege.

Dr Scharnick-Udemans. *Cape Talk*. Available at <http://www.capetalk.co.za/podcasts/269/tonight-with-lester-podcast/188358/bogus-pastors>

6.2 International Earth Day Seminar

University of the Western Cape, April 2018



Rifqah Tifloen



On 13 April 2018, the Desmond Tutu Centre hosted a *Religion and Ecology Seminar*. It was facilitated by Rifqah Tifloen, a community activist with interests in ecofeminism. It was strategically planned for 13 April 2018 as this was the day after *International Earth Day* – ‘celebrated to remind each of us that the Earth and its ecosystems provide us with life and sustenance. It also recognizes a collective responsibility to promote harmony with nature and the Earth to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations of humanity’ (<https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/international-mother-earth-day-2018>).

One of the outcomes of this seminar was Rifqah Tifloen joining the Centre as a Masters student working in the area of eco-feminism and religion.

6.3 Masters Student Testimonial

My name is Rhine Phillip Tsobotsi Koloti (Toby) and I’m currently finalizing my Masters degree in Theology at the University of the Western Cape. I’m humbly proud and grateful that last year during my Honours degree enrolment I got to do a module called **“Public Morality”** within the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice (DTCRSJ) under the teaching of Professor Sarojini Nadar and Dr Lee-Shae Scharnick-Udemans. The module specifically equipped me with the necessary

“The module specifically equipped me with the necessary skills to critically interrogate religious discourses that seek to maintain and promote heteronormative patriarchy within the church, households or workplaces”

skills to critically interrogate religious discourses that seek to maintain and promote heteronormative patriarchy within the church, households or workplaces. Under the supervision of the two aforementioned scholars, I wrote a mini-thesis for my honours degree on the ordination of queer wo/men in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA) as a heteropatriarchal religious discourse. It was from this research paper that I got to test the skills I had been taught by my lecturers.

"I can't for the life of me imagine a God that says: I will punish you because you're black, you should have been white; I will punish you because you're a woman, you should have been a man; I will punish you because you're homosexual, you should have been heterosexual. I can't for the life of me believe that, that is how God sees God's people." - Desmond Tutu

The aforementioned quotation was my opening remarks, during a debate, at the recent Synod held by the Anglican Diocese of Saldanha Bay on the 3rd -6th October 2018.

I was summoned to the Synod by the bishop, Rt. Revd Raphael Hess, in my capacity as the Anglican Society's chairperson at the University of the Western Cape and as a lay minister to students on campus. In my understanding I had no voting rights but I could participate in the discussions/motions that were tabled. In an effort to adhere to the bishop's charge which called the entire church to be more inclusive in its mission, a motion was **tabled, debated and passed**. The motion was regarding the blessing of same-sex marriages within the Diocese, a motion which was enormously rejected at the Anglican Church of Southern Africa Provincial Synod in 2017.

It is with great pleasure to announce that because of the extensive work I had covered as a student under the aforementioned module I was able to put together an argument that sought to affirm everyone's humanity as equal before God regardless of their sexual orientation. Had it not been for my arguments for the motion and my arguments against those who were against the motion, the motion would not have passed. This is because the majority of the house was lay people who did not have much insight regarding biblical interpretation and the dangers of biblical literalism. I made an example of how dangerous patriarchal religious discourses can be and what it would mean for the church if they excluded other children of God based on inadequate interpretations of the bible that seek to exclude. I have always believed that, as an aspiring theologian, the life-affirming work which I do in the lecture should be reflective in the lectern as well. The passing of the motion to bless same sex unions was indeed a moment where I saw that interactive relationship between the lecture and the lectern. None of this would have been possible, as far as I'm concerned, had I not taken the Public Morality module. Thank you to the DTC and to Prof Nadar and Dr Sharnick-Udemans for 'prepping' me well with the full academic armour necessary to interrogate asymmetrical systems of power such as patriarchy within the church, households and workplaces.

May the Centre continue in being a home for researchers whose essential goal is to contribute academically towards a more just society as envisioned by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu.

6.4 Christchurch Terror Attacks Victim Commemoration

University of the Western Cape, March 2019



Christchurch memorial wall, Nita Lawton-Misra

On 15 March 2019, following the terrorist mosque attacks in New Zealand, the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice (DTCRSJ) invited the UWC community and networks to commemorate the lives of these victims. As a Centre which studies the intersections of religion and social justice, we sought to highlight the multiple ways in which religion is implicated in social injustice through various embodied observances. Photographs of the victims were displayed around the room accompanied by their biographies, as attendees of the commemoration were invited to light candles and utter the names of the victims.

6.5 Israeli Apartheid Week

University of the Western Cape, April 2019



Members of the DTCRSJ and PSA (UWC)



The DTCRSJ held a joint event with the Palestine Solidarity Association (PSA) at the University of the Western Cape to observe the *Israeli Apartheid Week* and show solidarity with the Palestinians in their struggle against the apartheid state of Israel. This two-day event took place at the UWC premises. On the first day (10 April 2019), the Centre and the PSA showcased a painting symbolising the *Israeli Apartheid wall* in front of the main hall as a symbol of protest against the injustices in Israel – different

students came to paint the wall to create an awareness and show solidarity throughout the day. On the following day, the DTCRSJ and the PSA hosted a workshop. Toby Koloti addressed the workshop on behalf of the DTCRSJ on the indivisibility of justice and the importance of international solidarity against human rights violations. This was followed by a moving presentation by Badee Dwaik, Palestinian activist and Human Rights Defenders founder, who experienced the brutal violence by the Israeli government in his own home.

Extract from Mr Koloti's Address

Why support Israeli Apartheid Week?

As South Africans, given our struggle history, we can easily be enticed to read reconciliation and fairness as meaning parity between justice and injustice. Having achieved our own 'political' freedom, we can fall into the trap of washing our hands when referring to the difficulties and struggles that others face. Yet we would be less than human if we did so. Therefore, in our efforts to embrace our full humanity and the Centre's mission of challenging contextually, theoretically and methodologically asymmetrical systems of power, we became fully obligated to host these two events with the Palestine Solidarity Association. This obligation is envisioned in the words of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu: 'True peace must be anchored in justice and an unwavering commitment to universal rights for all humans, regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, national origin or any other identity attribute'.

7. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

7.1 Partnership with the Centre for Religion and Public Life, University of Leeds

In 2018, the Centre for Religion and Public Life at the University of Leeds signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the DTCRSJ at the University of the Western Cape. The DTCRSJ hosted colleagues from the University of Leeds (UK) during April 2019 and is committed to partner with the Centre for Religion and Public Life for the project Religion and Social Activism. Dr Caroline Starkey facilitated a seminar Minority Faith Buildings and New Framings of Heritage. Dr Van Klinken presented a public lecture titled Reimagining Christianity, Sexuality and Social Justice in Africa at the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation (DLTLF). Dr Van Klinken and Dr Starkey were accompanied by their doctoral student, Ms Hollie Gowan, during their stay in South Africa.

In June 2019, Prof Nadar, Dr Scharnick-Udemans, and Ms Robertson will be meeting with Dr Starkey and Dr Van Klinken in the UK. They will work on a joint publication focusing on religion and social activism. During this trip, Dr Scharnick-Udemans and Dr Van Klinken will be co-convening a panel at the 8th European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) in Edinburgh. The panel is titled "Religion and Progressive Activism in Africa." This panel will explore the role of religious thought, practice, language, ritual, and symbol in socio-political activism concerned with 'progressive' causes in Africa, especially as they relate to gender and sexuality. While at the University of Leeds, Dr Scharnick-Udemans and Ms Robertson will also be presenting papers at a research symposium, while Prof Nadar will be presenting a public lecture.

7.2 Partnership with Inclusive and Affirming Ministries (IAM)



In 2018, IAM signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the DTCRSJ. In this MOU, the partners have agreed to collaborate on the development of research and publication projects, the development of community engagement projects, and in leveraging joint funding from sponsors or grant authorities. As part of this partnership, IAM has offered a scholarship for a postgraduate student in the Centre.

IAM also participated in a roundtable discussion on religion, sexuality, and activism at Dr Van Klinken's public lecture, Reimagining Christianity, Sexuality and Social Justice in Africa, which took place at the DLTLF.

7.3 Partnership with the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation (DLTLF)



As part of a signed 2019 MoU, the DTCRSJ is engaged in a year-long partnership with the DLTLF, working on a series of initiatives in the area of religion in public life. Through a series of public lectures, seminars, dialogues, film screenings, art exhibitions, and publications, we will explore how faith traditions and cultural beliefs support or hinder the quest for creating and sustaining justice in the social realm. The

initiatives will combine academic pursuits concerned with social justice and public dialogue opportunities.

7.4 Exeter Centre for Ethics and Practical Theology (EXCEPT), University of Exeter

Prof Nadar is working with the Director of the EXCEPT (Exeter Centre for Ethics and Practical Theology), Dr Susannah Cornwall, to develop research collaboration across the two centres. An application for internationalization funding has enabled Prof Nadar to travel to Exeter in June where she will be giving a public lecture as well as meeting with research associates from the Exeter Centre.

8. RESEARCH TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The main teaching portfolio of the DTCRSJ is characterised by graduate training workshops and graduate supervision. The Centre also offers one postgraduate and one undergraduate course in the Department of Religion and Theology. The Centre conceives of the graduate training seminars as a project in the decolonisation and democratisation of education. Through focussed thematic weekend workshops, the process of writing a PhD is demystified and the image of the stereotypically lost, stressed, and fumbling graduate student eroded. Students are equipped with the academic skills and support systems necessary to ensure that they are able to progress at a pace that is commensurate with the particularity of their projects and their commitments outside of the academy.



Prof Asonzeh Ukah (Centre) along with other attendees at one of the graduate training workshop

The greatest strength of the DTCRSJ is the diversity of students working under its auspices. What each of these students hold in common, is their desire to 'talk back', contextually, theoretically, and methodologically, to asymmetrical systems of power and taken-for-granted assumptions about the social world and human experiences. In supporting the group dynamics of this augmented style of supervision, it is necessary to foreground that successfully completing a thesis is about more than developing proficiency on a particular topic. We believe that most students, pursuing advanced degrees, already embody the UWC graduate attributes of criticality, community engagement, and lifelong learning, and that the graduate training workshops accentuate these dispositions through both embedding and making explicit the skills and abilities necessary to ensure the kind of research excellence that inspire both social justice and a greater social compassion.

8.1 Postgraduate Cohort Supervision Workshops

The educational pedagogy of the *Postgraduate Cohort Supervision Workshop* programme is based on a 'developmental trajectory' in three phases:

1. Proposal Writing Phase
2. Data and/or Textual Production Phase
3. Data/Textual Analysis and Writing of the Thesis Report Phase



From right: Dr Fatima Seedat, Megan Robertson, Dr Lee Scharnick-Udemans, Gaboitsiwe Kgomongwe and Associate Prof Sa'diyya Shailkh

The phases are flexible, and students can proceed to the next phase if they work at an accelerated pace. For each phase, facilitators work with a group of 12-15 students. The workshops take place over six weekends, beginning on a Friday. The Friday evening is set aside to introduce the theme of the weekend. This session is presented by an invited expert on the theme. After the presentation, students break away into smaller groups and are provided with the opportunity to engage and critique the presentation. This sets the tone for the weekend.

Saturday is dedicated to student presentations, which are scheduled in advance, as students are briefed beforehand as to what the requirements for their presentations are. Time is allocated for both the presentations and intensive feedback from peers and facilitators. On Sunday, the presentations continue after the input from an expert (usually a facilitator from within the cohort) on the specific topic related to the weekend theme.

Aim of the Workshops

- Save time and fast-track the completion of proposals and theses/dissertations within the stipulated minimum completion times.
- Supplement one-on-one supervision.
- Add interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary richness.
- Share and acquire supervision skills.
- Provide collegial interaction and peer support.
- Promote student-centred learning.
- Stimulate higher order thinking and produce critical researchers.

PHASE 1: Proposal Writing Phase

Workshop 1 Research focus/Area of interest/Rationale

Workshop 2 Literature review

Workshop 3	Conceptual/Theoretical framework
Workshop 4	Research approaches/methodologies – empirical and non-empirical
Workshop 5	Data analysis strategies/Ethical considerations
Workshop 6	Presentation of full draft proposal

8.2 PhD Student Testimonial

This report by an international visiting PhD student on her experience of the cohort supervision workshops as well as the other commitments of the Centre, captures the essence of our objectives and goals as a Centre, and so we replicate it in full here:

After we experienced one of the key highlights of the Cape landscape – the top of Table Mountain on our first day, we participated in the three-day 'cohort graduate training conference' held by the DTC for their postgraduate students. I was particularly impressed by the fact that both masters and doctoral students, all at varying stages of their studies, sat side by side to present their work in this space. There might be a worry that these varying levels of 'progress' on the ladder of further education would mean that individuals would be alienated at different stages of the weekend, either feeling like a fish out of water or disengaged from discussing things that no longer seemed relevant. However, this could not be further from the truth. Throughout the entire weekend every student and staff member from both the DTC, the wider university and immediate academic community, were actively involved in the process.

The space created for the students I would describe as 'lovingly critical': the conference asked each one of them to put themselves out there, no matter what stage they are at, and be open to the critical feedback on offer from the rest of the group. I sat listening to the amazingly creative and interdisciplinary projects – ranging from how spirituality emerges and is spoken about during the trauma therapy process, to media narratives of abuse by male clergy – where each student was asked to delve deeper into the terms they were using; asked to summarise the purpose of their research into one, clear sentence and reflect on their current understanding of their methodology.

I had been asked to participate in the conference, delivering an overview of my doctoral work with a



From right: Linda Naicker, Hollie Gowan, Dr Caroline Starkey, Winnie Varghese, and Leona Morgan

specific focus on methodology and theoretical framework. I will admit now that I have spent a lot of my PhD journey avoiding spaces where I would have critical engagement with my work. This avoidance stems from the all too often felt 'imposter syndrome', which isn't alien to any of us working in academia. My avoidance had grown after a particularly bad experience in my first year of the PhD where I physically and mentally collapsed under the weight of the critique I had faced.

Three years on from this experience, I can say with strength that my project fundamentally changed course because of that feedback but I also learnt the manner in which I would make sure not to deliver feedback to my peers and future students. As I walked into the second day of the DTC cohort conference, I felt the familiar fear of opening myself up to a room of colleagues. However, I had seen the vulnerability displayed by students the day before; I had seen them stand in front of colleagues and peers with years more experience and discuss their work with resilience and gratitude. I knew that I needed to show the same, firstly as a guest to this space and secondly for myself – to learn to be vulnerable about my work and grow as a researcher by doing so. And I am really glad that I did. I was asked questions that are key viva fears for me; questions that I have been sweeping under a very heavy rug for the past year or so in the hope that they just won't happen. By being part of this space, I was able to reflect on these questions and think about how I would tackle them not only in my thesis but also during my viva. So, when I say 'lovingly critical' I mean it. I mean that each student was held in that space in a supportive and loving manner, whilst also offered critical engagement with their work to help them move forward, including myself.

As part of the cohort meeting, the DTC took all participants on a 'transcending histories' tour through Cape Town city centre. I had not known what to expect of the tour, thinking I would see key architecture and learn key parts of its history as told by our guide. This is the experience I have had in other cities that I have visited. Yet this tour was different. Our guide took us to key parts of the city directly linked with the legacy of slavery, colonialism and apartheid. Emerging from her black leather suitcase, an embodied and experiential approach to the tour came out with the burning of herbs, sharing of narratives from the collective past, as well as the personal ones of our guide. Throughout the tour we were asked to confront a history of Cape Town that is not delivered on the tour buses that drive past daily. We were asked to sit with the legacies of this history, including the displacement of communities during apartheid and the contemporary homelessness of children.



From right: Hollie Gowan and Lucelle Campbell (Transcending Histories Tour Guide) and other students on the tour

I sat with a strong uncomfortable-ness in each of the sites we visited. I forced myself not to shy away from our guide's words, even as she detailed the suffering and violence that is etched onto the architecture of Cape Town, forever there and not dealt with by those that need to the most. For the first time in my life, I really sat with my whiteness and the privilege that comes with it. I also sat with how to process my emotions not as about my upset but for those who suffered at the hands of my ancestors and what the legacy of this trauma means today. I will never forget this experience nor the profound effect it had on all of the cohort, which was shared over the course of the conference when we were offered space to reflect and express what we had felt.

The day after the conference closed, Dr Caroline Starkey presented her work to the DTC, as well as university colleagues, on 'Minority Faith Buildings and New Framings of Material Heritage'. Despite the UK-focus of her discussion, Dr Starkey raised vital questions about how, and importantly whose, memories are preserved in physical spaces and in doing so, how these spaces can act as chains of memory for the communities that inhabit and surround them. The audience reflected on how it resonated with their own work, especially as many in the room are working on minority faiths and the ways in which they navigate various spaces.

The final event of our visit was the public lecture delivered by the CRPL Director – Dr Adriaan van Klinken – on 'Re-Imagining Christianity, Sexuality and Social Justice in Africa', which was hosted by the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation in Cape Town. The lecture discussed alternative imaginations of Christianity and LGBT religiosities, and its implications for queer politics in Africa. The public lecture was unlike any other I had been to, with the speaker, the audience and respondent singing at different stages of its delivery, as well as engagement with important questions on researcher positionality and how we go beyond lip service by sharing life stories and the use of narrative theologies as part of the politics of queer storytelling. In Dr van Klinken's words, 'the autobiographical is an act of reclaiming and provides us with 'data with a soul'' (Nadar, 2014).

On our last day in Cape Town, we spent time discussing as two centres the ways in which our collaboration could move forward. I knew that the space that had been created for the DTC postgraduate students was one that held ideas for our CRPL students back in the UK, but this discussion also led to two new grant proposals being put into motion both of which tackle the themes close to the hearts of the two centres. For me, the most immediate exciting move to come out of this initial visit is the joining of the two centres through our 'Religion in Public' blog. In the coming months we will be working to collaborate on overarching research themes that will be explored through pieces on the blog written by both members of the two centres, as well as guest contributions from our partners. The blog has been my main focus since beginning work for the CRPL in 2017 and I have been delighted to see the growth in our range of pieces, as well as in the number we are now publishing. This collaboration is the next step in the blog's growth and will be the product of all the voices I had the privilege of hearing during my visit to Cape Town, as well as those that they work with.

There really isn't much else for me to say except a massive thank you to our hosts, Professor Sarojini Nadar, Dr Lee-Shae Scharnick-Udemans (director and senior researcher respectively) and Megan Robertson (research support and doctoral student). As I wrote at the beginning, your warmth and generosity was felt throughout and I can't wait to see what comes out of this collaboration in the future.

Gowan, H (2019). Reflections on Research Collaboration Trip to Cape Town. Religion in Public, 29 April. Available: <https://religioninpublic.wordpress.com/2019/04/29/reflections-on-a-research-collaboration-trip-to-cape-town/>

8.3 Student Affiliates

The Centre is pleased to work with students from a range of departments at UWC as well as the Religion Studies and Gender Studies Departments at UCT. The transdisciplinary research undertaken by these students, as well as the support from their supervisors, makes the graduate training seminars an enriching and critical space to provide support to students and supervisors.



Student: Nobesuthu Tom

Degree: Honours

Area of Research: African Feminist Theology and Fertility



Student: Claudene Sebolai

Degree: Masters candidate

Area of Research: Sexual and Reproductive Health, Biblical Studies, Rhetoric



Student: Clayton G Alexander

Degree: Masters candidate

Area of Research: Religion, Restitution, and Economic Restitution



Student: Ashleigh Petersen

Degree: Masters candidate

Area of Research: Religion, Gender, and Media



Student: Rifqah Tifloen

Degree: Masters candidate

Area of Research: Deep Ecology, Eco-feminism, and Green Religions



Student: Ariana Smit

Degree: Masters Candidate

Area of Research: Disability and Queer Identity



Student: Rhine Koloti

Degree: Masters candidate

Area of Research: Sexual Violence and Pastoral care



Student: Gaboitsiwe Kgomongwe
Degree: Masters Candidate
Area of Research: Gender, Muslim Marriage and African Traditions



Student: Dineil Jagers
Degree: Masters candidate
Area of Research: Politics of Gender, Hair and "Coloured" Identity



Student: Pralini Naidoo
Degree: PhD candidate
Area of Research: Gender and Ecology



Student: Leona Morgan
Degree: PhD candidate
Area of Research: Healing, Sexual Trauma, and Spirituality



Student: Forbes Maupa
Degree: PhD candidate
Area of Research: Gender, Sexuality and Religious Jurisprudence



Student: Ishaya Anthony
Degree: PhD candidate
Area of Research: Religion, Media, and Socio-political Development



Student: Elizabeth Petersen
Degree: PhD candidate
Area of Research: Religion and Intimate-Partner Abuse



Student: Winnie Varghese
Degree: PhD candidate
Area of Research: Gender, Goddesses and Power



Student: Linda Naicker
Degree: PhD candidate
Area of Research: Religion, Food Insecurity, and Survival Sex



Student: David Augustine Dorapalli
Degree: PhD Candidate
Area of Research: Gender, Ecology and Bible



Student: Megan Robertson
Degree: PhD candidate
Area of Research: Religion, Gender, and Sexuality



Student: Tammy Wilks
Position: PhD Candidate
Area of Research: Religious Diversity

Postdoc Researchers



Alease Brown
Area of Research: Christian Theology, Protest violence, Gender, and Race



Patrick Pillay
Area of Research: Non-Religion and Secularity

9. NETWORKING

9.1 Networking meeting with Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, January 2019



Members of UWC and Emory University



The DTCRSJ met with a visiting group of professors and students from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. This networking session, coordinated by Rev René August, the Director of the NGO, *The Warehouse*, which deals with matters of peace and justice, enabled a sharing of knowledge and experiences of teaching and researching in the areas of reconciliation and social justice. The meeting took the form of a roundtable discussion centred on decolonial pedagogical and research strategies. Prof Nadar presented on the history of the Centre and the transdisciplinary ways in which we teach, research, and engage at the intersections of religion and social justice. Dr Jodamus and Ms Robertson were also able to share some of their reflections on teaching a 3rd-year Ethics course on gender and sexuality. Scholars from both the DTC and Emory University were able to share their research interests, which sparked excitement around the common interests in ecological, gender, economic, and health justice.

This meeting took place in conjunction with a partner of the Centre, the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, who provided us with a space to gather. The acting Director, Razaan Bailey, oriented the group with the mission and work of the Foundation and allowed the group to explore the exhibition, *In His Words*, which showcases some of the writings of Desmond Tutu.

9.2 The Sixth Interdisciplinary Religion and Society Research Directors Colloquium

Uppsala University, Sweden, April 2019

Prof Nadar participated in this networking meeting with research directors from around the world. She



Prof Sarojini Nadar with other participants at the Colloquium

presented a short reflection paper on Interdisciplinarity: Gender Studies and Religion

Theme: *Innovation in Research on Religion in contemporary society: Seeking new methods, meeting new challenges.*

Aim: The aim of the colloquium is to bring together research directors of interdisciplinary research centres and programmes of excellence focusing on the study of religion and society, to provide a platform for mutual conversation on issues of common interest and create opportunities for collaboration.

10. AWARDS OF FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

10.1 Edinburgh Catalyst Fellowship

Dr Scharnick-Udemans has been offered a prestigious Edinburgh Catalyst Fellowship. This Fellowship is intended to cover the costs of her participation at ECAS (European Conference on African Studies) 2019 and to serve as a platform through which further collaboration with scholars at the University of Edinburgh can be encouraged and supported. Dr Scharnick-Udemans has already earmarked a meeting to explore collaborative opportunities with Prof Jolyon Mitchell, the Director of the Centre for Theology and Public Issue at the University of Edinburgh.

10.2 University Capacity Development Grant

Dr Scharnick-Udemans has also secured a University Capacity Development Grant in the category of Emerging Researcher: New Project Funding. She will use these funds to support the development of a special issue, co-edited with world-renowned scholar, Prof Hackett, on Religion, Gender, and Media in the *African Journal of Gender and Religion*.

10.3 STINT Residency

Doctoral student, Pralini Naidoo is a participant in a STINT Residency hosted by Central European University, Budapest. The third of a four year programme to promote transnational networks within gender and feminist studies with the aim of a collaborative book publication by 2020. Participating universities: Linköping University (Sweden), CEU (Hungary), Bergen University (Norway), UWC (South Africa). Programme included seminars, workshops and presentations. In January 2019, Pralini submitted an abstract for the STINT Volume on Transnationalism.

11. ACADEMIC SERVICE

Dr Scharnick-Udemans has rendered the following Academic Service:

- Reviewer for *Alternation*, Interdisciplinary Journal
- Media Officer and Reviewer for the *African Consortium for Law and Religion Studies*
- Managing Editor: *Journal for the Study of Religion* and *African Journal of Gender and Religion*

Editorial Work:

Sarojini Nadar and Fatima Seedat (Editors)

Bi-annual publication of the *African Journal of Gender and Religion*

Sarojini Nadar serves on the following Editorial Boards:

1. Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion
2. Feminist Studies in Religion Book Series
3. Journal of Africana Religions
4. Women Studies International Forum

Sarojini Nadar also serves in the following capacities:

Steering Committee member and peer reviewer for **African Religions Section** of the American Academy of Religion

Steering Committee member and peer reviewer for **Religion and Sexuality Unit** of the American Academy of Religion

Member of the **Executive Evaluations Committee** of the National Research Foundation

Editorial Board Member: *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, *Women Studies International Forum*, *Journal of African religions* and *Feminist Studies in Religion Book Series*

12. PUBLICATIONS

12.1 Journals

The Desmond Tutu Centre now houses and publishes two Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) accredited journals: The African Journal of Gender and Religion (AJGR) and the Journal for the Study of Religion (JSR). Since the latter journal came under the auspices of the Centre later, more progress can be seen on the AJGR.

12.1.1 The African Journal of Gender and Religion

In 2018, the Journal of Gender and Religion in Africa was renamed the African Journal of Gender and Religion (AJGR). The name change signalled the aim to internationalise the reach of the journal while ensuring its space as a premier journal of gender and religion within Africa. The rationale is to ensure a focus on Africa, while welcoming submissions from the global academic context. In collaboration with



AJGR
African Journal of
Gender and Religion

the library team at the University of the Western Cape, the AJGR is now available on the UWC Open Access platform (<http://epubs.ac.za/index.php/AJGR>) which makes use of the Open Journal System (OJS). This means that the journal is now

freely available and digitally accessible. In compliance with SciELO guidelines, the journal does not charge subscription fees. The AJGR charges a modest page fee of R200 per page. These fees assist in covering the running costs of the journal which includes copy-editing services, hosting fees, as well as selected printing and some writing development courses.

During 2018, two editions of the journal were published – in July and December. The July 2018 edition (Vol. 24 No. 1) explores the multiple and complex ways in which power operates in gendered relationships, particularly when those relationships intersect with religion and culture. This issue of the journal explores these operations of power through the agency of women and men within religious and cultural discourses. The authors in this issue challenge the ways in which power is conceived, its location, and the possibilities of discursive interventions for constructing gendered forms of agency. Amongst the questions raised in this discussion are the locations of power in a feminist analysis.

The December 2018 edition (Vol. 24 No. 2) includes six articles and three book reviews from national and international scholars. The focus of this issue is interdisciplinary, theoretical and methodological innovations in the study of gender, religion and culture.



The July and December 2018 editions of the journals are now accessible on the platform and we are working on ensuring that an archive of past issues is uploaded in the near future. A website has also been developed for the journal (<http://www.ajgr.org/>). The online platforms have increased the visibility of the AJGR and enable the journal to access a wider audience of readers and potential contributors. This is evidenced in the overwhelming response the journal has received to the Call for Papers for the July 2019 edition of the journal. The December 2019 issue will be a special issue, guest edited by Dr Scharnick-Udemans and Prof Rosalind Hackett. This issue will focus on religion, gender, and media in Africa and will be the first collection of essays on this topic. The journal is preparing for its first audit in 2020 for inclusion in the SciELO SA online collection.

Editor

Prof Sarojini Nadar, University of the Western Cape

Co-editor

Dr Fatima Seedat, University of Cape Town

Editor Emeritus

Prof Isabel Apawo Phiri, World Council of Churches

Submissions and Managing Editor

Dr Lee-Shae Salma Scharnick-Udemans

Associate Editor

Megan Robertson

Journal Administrator

Ferial Marlie

Language Editing, Layout, and Typesetting

Pralini Naidoo

Willem Oliver

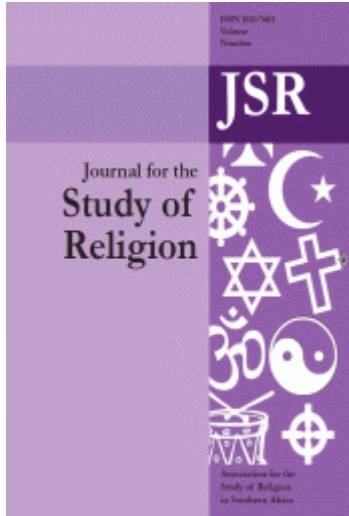
Journal Assistants

Ashleigh Petersen

Toby Koloti

12.1.2 Journal for the Study of Religion

In 2018, Dr Scharnick-Udemans, in her capacity as managing editor of the Journal for the Study of Religion, negotiated an agreement between the University of Cape Town and the Association for the Study of Religion in Southern Africa (ASRSA) to host the JSR on the UWC Open Journal System. This agreement is a significant step in how the study of religion is developing in the country as it now means



that the only two accredited journals from South Africa that are dedicated to the study of multiple religious traditions, are now housed on the same platform, which will bring about a greater visibility and accessibility.

The JSR is a publication of the Association for the study of religion in Southern Africa (ASRSA). The JSR is the primary academic journal for religious studies in Southern Africa. The current editor is Prof Johan Strijdom from the University of South Africa. In her capacity as managing editor Dr Scharnick-Udemans has facilitated the migration of the journal to the UWC OJS system and as a result the Centre works closely with the editorial team to ensure that the journal is open access and widely distributed. At the

next ASRSA conference discussions about how to develop the relationship between the Centre and the association will take place.

The Editor-in-Chief

Prof Johan Strijdom, University of South Africa

The Managing Editor

Dr Lee Scharnick-Udemans, University of the Western Cape

Finance Administrator

Beverley Vencatsamy, University of KwaZulu-Natal

12.2 The Centre, Research Affiliates, and Students

12.2.1 Journal articles

Nadar, S. and Van Klinken, A. 2018. "Queering the Curriculum": Pedagogical Explorations of Gender and Sexuality in Religion and Theological Studies." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*. Volume 34, Number 1, Spring 2018, 101-109

Naidoo, P. 2018. Deconstructing Shakti: Investigating representations of the Hindu goddess in South Africa. *African Journal of Gender and Religion*. Volume 2, Number 1, July 2018, 1-15

Robertson, M., Nadar, S., and Jodamus, J. 2018. Antagonism, Ambivalence and Affirmation: Exploring Ecclesial paradigms for queering the church in South Africa. *NCC Review*. 138 (6): 356 – 366

Scharnick-Udemans L. 2018. Biographies and the Mediatization of Religion. *Religion & Education*. Volume 45, Issue 1, 110-124

Scharnick-Udemans L. 2018. TV is the Devil, the Devil is on TV: Wild Religion and Wild Media in South Africa. *Journal for the Study of Religion*. Volume 31, Number 2, 180-197

12.2.2 Book chapters

Phiri, L. and Nadar S. 2018. "To Move or Not to Move! Queering Borders and Faith in the Context of Diverse Sexualities in Southern Africa." In *Borderland Religion: Ambiguous Practices of Difference, Hope and Beyond*, 74-86. 1st ed. Routledge.

12.2.3 Conference proceedings

Scharnick-Udemans, L. (2018). Siyakholwa – We Believe: A Case Study on the Mediatization of Religion Education and Religious Pluralism. *Changing Societies & Personalities*, 2(3), 279-284. doi:10.15826/csp.2018.2.3.046

12.2.4 Book reviews

Robertson, M. 2018. Siya Khumalo, You Have to be Gay to Know God. Cape Town: Kwela, 2018. Pages: 288. *African Journal of Gender and Religion*, 24 (2), 147.

12.3 Forthcoming publications

Nadar S and Jodamus J. 2019. "'Sanctifying Sex': Exploring 'Indecent' Sexual Imagery in Pentecostal Liturgical Practices", *Journal for the Study of Religion*, June 2019 (Accepted for publication)

Nadar S. 2019 "Sacred Sex, Sacred Text: Queering Religious Sexual Scripts in Transforming African Societies" "Oxford Handbook of Feminist Approaches to the Hebrew Bible", edited by Susanne Scholtz. Accepted for Publication

Dr Tim Hartman

"Theology after Colonisation: Bediako, Barth and the Future of Theological Reflection" due to be published in November 2019



CONTACT US

Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice
Office L160, First Floor, Old Arts Building,
University of the Western Cape,
Robert Sobukwe Road,
Bellville

dtc@uwc.ac.za

+2721 959 2383