

AUTUMN 2010

Faculty of Humanities, Development
& Social Sciences



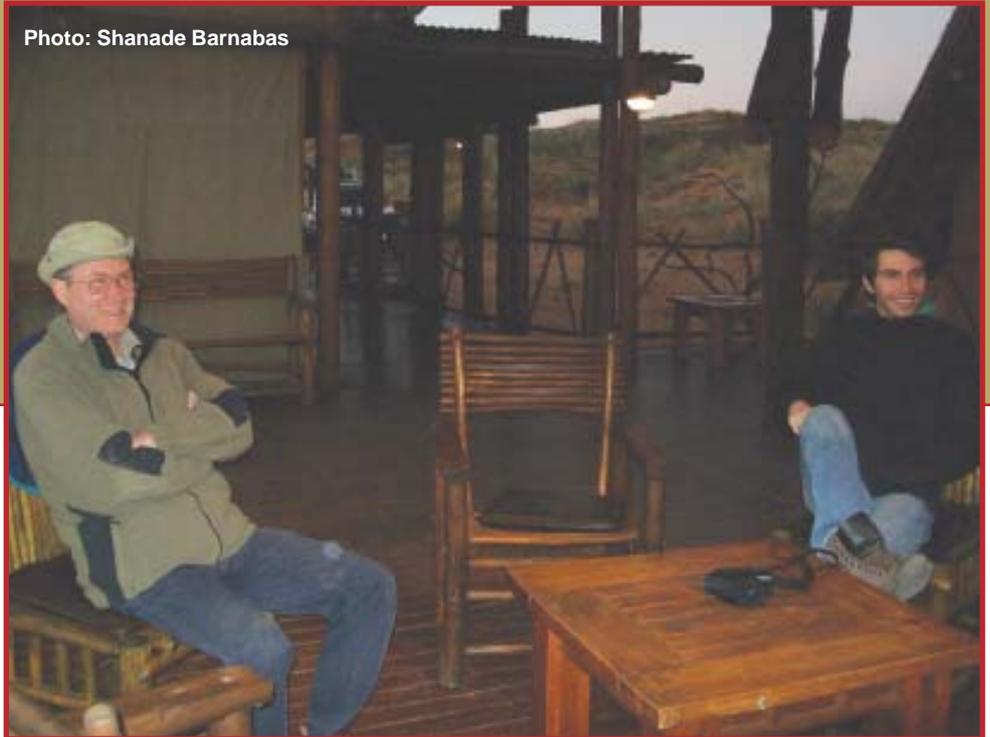
WEBSITE: <http://ccms.ukzn.ac.za>

Produced by students and
staff of the Centre for
Communication, Media &
Society, University of
KwaZulu-Natal, Durban,
South Africa

text

CCMS, with its many research strands, offers students diverse opportunities for academic research in the fields of Culture, Media Studies and Development in Africa

Photo: Shanade Barnabas



Professor Keyan Tomaselli relaxes with Jonathan Dockney on a field trip to the Kalahari

Launching in new directions

CMS HAS HAD a long and illustrious history and has evolved over the years. Starting in 1985 the Contemporary Cultural Studies Unit was modelled on the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies which had established cultural studies as an international field.

Where under apartheid our courses were critical in nature but practical as far as anti-apartheid social movements were concerned, after 1990 we recognised the need to move into policy research, developmental issues, and a greater professionalisation of our course offerings. Jobs, strategic business skills, and new approaches to assist South Africa's reintegration into the global information economy were now needed. To this end we established the MA Course in Media Studies in 1994, which we then followed with the integration of the MA with the Honours level into a two-year postgraduate programme.

By Professor Keyan Tomaselli

There were many changes of name as the Centre evolved, reflecting resistance; cultural and media policy/regulatory issues; development communication; public health communication and other pertinent issues. The Unit became the Centre for Culture, Communication and Media Studies and is currently the Centre for Communication, Media and Society. The changes in nomenclature have kept the focus on current areas of research and relevant scholarship.

Our students, notably Warren Parker and Lynn Dalrymple – via their work in the public health sector – pushed us in these directions. They were the ones who introduced us to Johns Hopkins University in the early 1990s. Never underestimate the significance of alumni in building an institution.

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CCMS has developed ways of meshing theory with practice such that students obtain real world experience. We do not teach solely from textbooks. Rather, we use textbooks as benchmarks against which our researchers rewrite and re-evaluate accepted assumptions about research, theory and the world. Our students and staff re-conceptualise the theory, the methods and the explanations. The support received from USAID via JHHESA recognises this achievement. How do we do this? By:

- 1) **embedding CCMS** students into funded projects, often linked to grant-holder bursaries, thus securing the financial stability of both the students and the projects;
- 2) **connecting** students with international research collaborators, and global research networks;
- 3) **building** research capacity between student cohorts and retaining their

research interest and collaboration after they have graduated;

- 4) **locating** students in our affiliate research sites, such as Drama in AIDS Education, to undertake structured Honours projects where they are offered additional resources and supervision;
- 5) **facilitating** publication of students' work either solely, or in co-authorship, thus encouraging them to engage with academia globally and giving them the confidence to do so;
- 6) creating a **critical mass** of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, and strategic research partners. Amongst these are:
DramAidE: Drama in AIDS Education
ARROW: Art: a Resource for Reconciliation Over the World
CAP: Community Arts Project
all of which are engaged in interventions nationally and are projects through and on which our students conduct their research.

While much of the purist literature excludes transdisciplinarity, early cultural studies attempted to chart a third, amalgamated way, based on Marx's dictum that men shape the world but in terms of structures that precede them.

CCMS positions itself within the conceptual interstices in which structure, human agency (the popular) and research subjectivity can be combined into a more holistic analysis. Much current cultural studies emphasises the one over the other: Rarely are they described as inter-related, constantly shifting sites of social practice.

Our aim, during the current five year project, is to make a difference: to strengthen democracy, to support social interventions and to produce the next generation of cultural and media studies researchers.

Ultimately it is the impact of academia on the real world that lets us know whether the research and intervention is worthwhile. From all the feedback we've had at CCMS we know we're on the right track.

Not a step but a leap forward

I WOULD LIKE to thank CCMS for the honour of saying a few words at the start of this launch of the new proto centre funded by USAID/PEPFAR through Johns Hopkins Health and Education in South Africa (JHHESA).

When Professor Keyan Tomaselli told me that I would be delivering this opening address I told him I may be used to talking to two million people but I'm not staring into a sea of faces but a camera lens, so he assured me that there was a camera here today I could focus on, but unfortunately no autocue, hence I'm reverting to hardcopy here.

CCMS claims to equip the postgraduate student for the working world and you're looking at the proof in front of you today. When etv called me seven years ago, it was July and I was halfway through my honours degree.

I had applied for a job at etv and at the SABC six months prior to that with just a BA degree under my belt and heard nothing from them so I realised that my best option was a postgraduate degree. When etv called I knew I couldn't let the opportunity pass me by. I also knew it would mean I would have to put my Honours degree on the backburner but I knew the importance of a postgraduate degree after having worked the previous year for Channel Five TV in London so I was adamant I would complete my Honours degree. Professor Ruth Teer-Tomaselli was disappointed because she knew many a student had made that very same promise to her. After a year of an arduous internship at etv Cape Town only three of the twelve interns were employed.

I was one of them. The other two had completed postgraduate degrees. Just as when I worked as Ruth's assistant, I had proved myself through hard work, perseverance and analytical thinking. I asked to be deployed to etv's Durban bureau where I would work with another reporter

by Sherazade Safla, CCMS graduate and etv news anchor

there. My reason for this was two-fold: I had achieved part of my life goal but I had some unfinished business to take care of. I came back here to complete my degree.

And I'm glad I did. My postgraduate degree from CCMS has given me an advantage over my peers. My courses like Media Ethics for example equipped me to foresee when certain scripts or visuals would have meant legal implications for the company.

The other two interns with postgraduate degrees, that I mentioned earlier, have moved on to other companies, I have moved up to the position of a news anchor at etv. A company that has flourished despite the economic recession and has not made any employee cuts. The eNews channel is expanding almost on a daily basis.

The other day one of my news editors told me she thought a postgraduate degree was overrated. In my almost ten years in the industry I can tell you I have seen a lot of editors and journalists come and go. The ones with postgraduate qualifications have stayed. The ones with postgraduate qualifications who have left, only left for better opportunities in the industry.

I see this development of the Centre as not a step but a leap forward, because, as a former CCMS student and current role player in the broadcast industry, I know the importance of successfully equipping the postgraduate student for the real world. But also the need for graduates to make an impact and a difference in their fields of specialisation. There is definitely a lack of skilled professionals in health and development communication so graduates in this field will be sought after in the industry and I have no doubt that this Centre, just like any graduate of CCMS, has a long and productive future ahead.

Cheek Touches, Speed Dating, Body mapping... CCMS takes on Paulo Freire

Photo by Sarah Strauss

AS AN INTRODUCTION for new students to the world of CCMS, the Centre hosted a Freirean Workshop. This was designed to assist students to adjust to postgraduate studies and get to know their fellow students.

By Phumelele Mavaneni and Sarah Strauss

It started off with a few ice-breakers such as 'uncomfortable' first greetings and human knots. Initially, students were asked to manoeuvre quickly around the large empty room, greeting one another with brief handshakes. Soon after, academic masks were pulled off at the command of a slightly more personal greeting — cheek touches — resulting in unending stitches of giggles. This so called 'ice-breaker' was quite an intimate first introduction, if you ask us.

The group was then split into two. Students got elbow-close and had to close their eyes. Another command and hands reached out into surrounding darkness, quickly grasping another human hand. Eyes now open, and both groups found themselves in a tangled-up human knot. In attempts to 'unknot' themselves, both successful and not so successful, students re-discovered the keys to good and bad communication amongst group members.

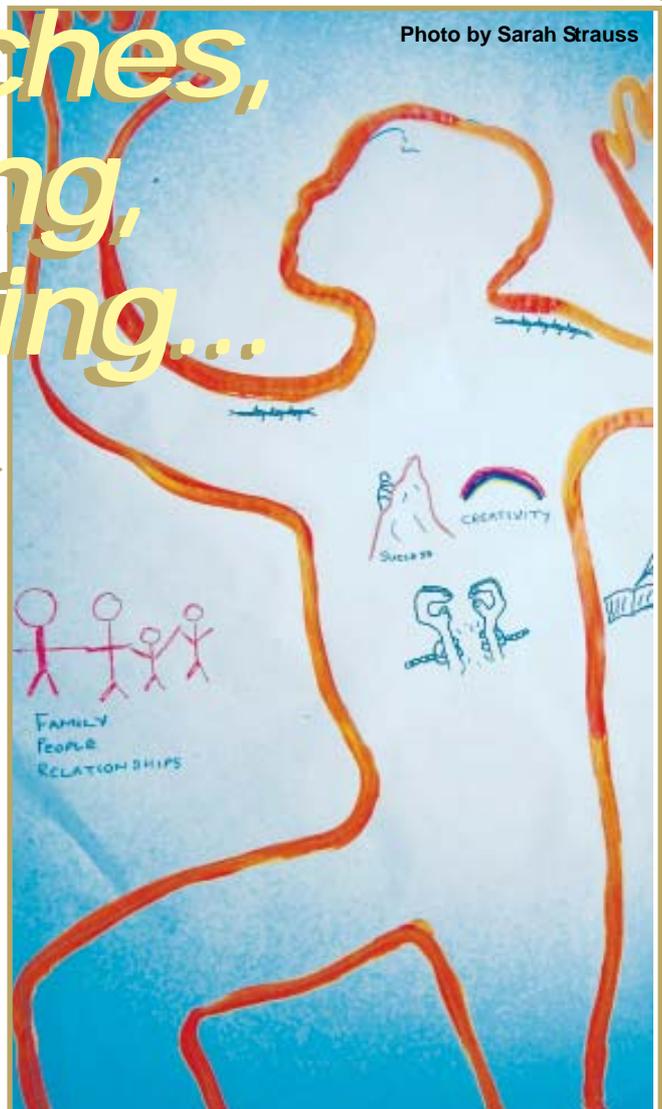
A rather unorthodox 'speed dating' session followed, where students spoke about their expectations for the academic year ahead. This was an

exercise that aimed to allow the students to get to know more about all of their fellow students' aspirations for the year.

The new CCMS postgraduate students then got a dose of Reflexive Journalism, a useful research method for students preparing their research projects during the semester. It involves four parts: situation; affect; interpretation and decisions analysis. Students were given the opportunity to implement their new knowledge by interviewing others near the drama huts around them, and reporting back on their experience. This activity helped to familiarise students with research practices that they can apply to all parts of their studies.

The group then made a five year life plan where some of them realized, for the first time, how necessary it is to plan for their lives on a yearly basis. The little secret book which students constructed, detailing their own personalised five-year life plans, impressed on them the importance of goal setting, and the need to focus their academic efforts. Students all became conscious of how short life can be when summarised in this way.

The last activity of the day was body mapping which revealed to the group how to incorporate their inner passions into their research projects.



A body map reveals how to get yourself into your research

Body mapping was an opportunity for students to be very 'un-academic' for the first time.

Each student was required to trace life-size outlines of themselves and an exercise that involved some skills, perhaps obtained through their pre-school days, allowed them to creatively decorate their 'bodies'. The purpose of this exercise was to enable students to take an emotional journey that allowed some extensive soul searching, ultimately identifying their passions in life.

As the workshop progressed, the students learnt from one another, practised memory techniques and opened up to the possibilities of their research project topics.

Overall, the workshop was a success and as it evolved, students not only got to know each other but also got to know some of the CCMS staff, especially Ausie Luthuli, the Postgraduate student administrator who participated every step of the way.

Reflections on completion of a dissertation



Working in the field

I HAVE SPENT the better part of two years reading on the Bushmen and their art, and travelling the 800 km journey to and fro between Durban and Platfontein, a !Xun and Khwe Bushmen settlement just outside the quaint Afrikaans town of Kimberley. I have spent long and sometimes isolating hours in front of the computer writing and rewriting what has been (for the past two years) my life's work. I have now completed my Masters. This was the journey:

The aim of the dissertation was to ascertain whether modern Bushman art may be validated as a valuable area of contemporary art, contrary to the mid-nineteenth century perception that it was child-like, and the present-day argument that it belongs to the past. I analysed two works by !Xun artists Freciano Ndala and Tuoi Samcuia using recognizable aesthetic principles to prove that creative individuals among the !Xun community may be viewed not as relics of a past people but as legitimate contemporary artists.

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The !Xun and the Khwe have had a difficult past. A past which has left the community of Platfontein straining to find

By Shanade Barnabas

their place in the present. Working in the community one can't help but feel the sting of unsettledness as the wind whips up the dry, red sand, blowing everyone into their small tin-roofed houses.

And now I've received my mark – the university has bestowed on me a number to validate my work; something to say "Yes, this is the value of all those hours, all that hard work, all the travelling and frustrations and emotions and persistent SASI employees and jaded respondents. This is the value of your passion" And while it is a satisfying number, I find myself asking: What now?

One of the artists I interviewed, Flai Shipipa, arguably the most technically accomplished of the four, is dead. On my first visit, he willingly took time out of his carpentry to talk with us, asking for nothing in return. He, and the other artists I spoke to, gave a face to my work. Those faces came to mind when I stood on the precipice of academic mystification, and when my own misconceptions nearly led to ethnocentrism under the delusion of enlightenment.



Lions in the Kalahari: animals formed a major inspiration for Flai's art

I was supposed to make a difference in Flai's life. The last time I saw Flai I took the artists each a box of pastels, since the ownership of art supplies is a major factor in the exploitation of these artists. The art dealer usually supplies the materials which means that the work – being painted on *his* canvas and with *his* paints – effectively belongs to him (the dealer). The dealer sets the price; the artist has little, if any, say in the matter.

For one, the artist has to sell the painting because he needs the money, and an unspoken rule is that the painting cannot be sold to anyone other than the dealer who provided the materials lest he come back to find the painting sold to another and claim the price of the materials from the artist. I have wanted to help create a framework to stop the exploitation of these artists. For a while now I have felt jaded by Flai's death, because I didn't make a difference in his life. After some time in hospital he was sent home and died shortly after. I wonder if his death was untimely.

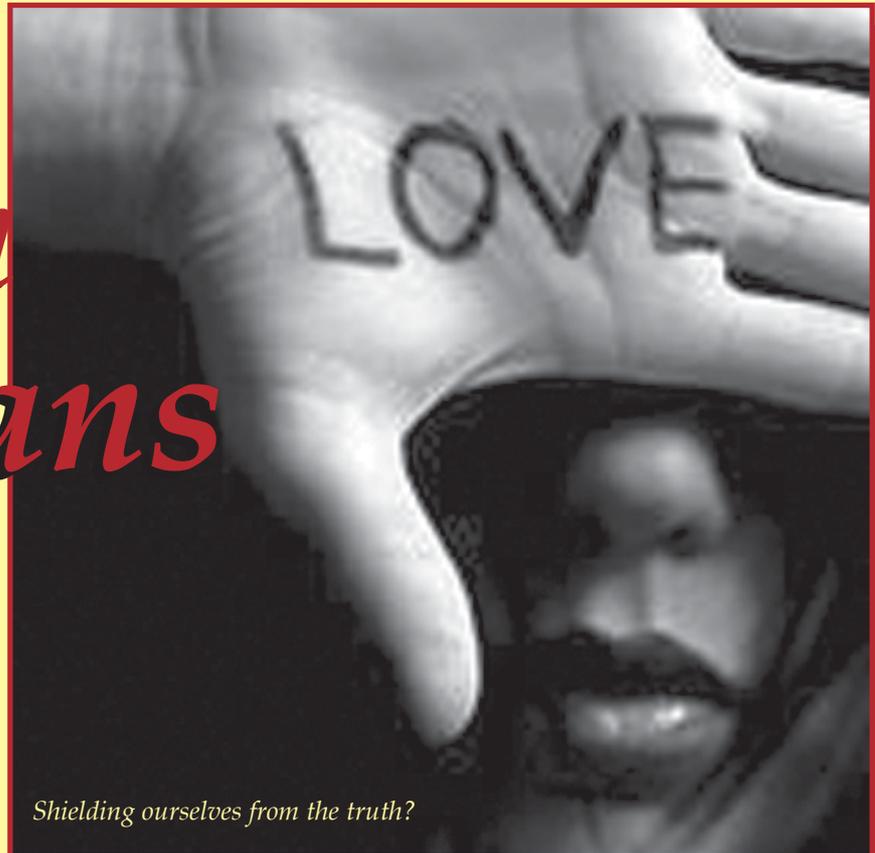
Could it have been avoided? Perhaps by better health care? Certainly for superior service one needs 'superior' amounts of money. Just the other day I re-

visited the online gallery on which many of Flai's paintings are sold. The prices range from R28 000. I wondered if he had had some of that money, would it have saved him? And what is my role in all of this? I suddenly felt very, very small.

I recently attended a CCMS research seminar (a requirement for all postgraduates at the Centre) and one of the speakers reminded me that passion is important. What drove me to complete my Masters dissertation was not the mountains of books I had to read, nor the hope of academic success, but rather the conviction that my research could make a valuable difference to peoples' lives in this community. Sitting at that seminar and being reminded of all the reasons I began the research helped to stoke the embers of a passion nearly overwhelmed by its own ambitions.

What we do here at CCMS can actually make a difference to people's lives. Our research can actually *mean* something. Even if I don't see change now, there will be other CCMS researchers who will come after me and continue this work. This gives me hope for the reason for academia. It gives me hope for the artists of Platfontein.

Do South Africans Love Life?



Shielding ourselves from the truth?

THE PROBLEM OF HIV/AIDS in South Africa is internationally recognised. There have been many local communication efforts launched to curb the ever rising tide of this resilient virus. A major player in many of the various social-media initiatives regarding HIV/AIDS is the 'loveLife' campaign. However, the question remains: is any of this actually working?

By Wesley Mathew

The recently released (2009) National Communications Survey on HIV/AIDS (sponsored by JHHESA and USAID) examines 11 South African communications programmes, including that of 'loveLife', and assesses whether these strategies are making any impact in changing some of the risky sexual behaviour practiced by South Africans. The survey recorded 9,728 respondents between the ages of 16 and 55, spread over all nine provinces.

One of the key findings of the survey was that 90% of South Africans have been reached by at least one or more communication campaigns, with a demographic weighting towards youth. The survey also showed that whilst the explosion of 'new media' has presented many opportunities, the traditional media, radio and TV were shown to be the most commonly accessed means of receiving the message of HIV prevention. This is no doubt

attributable significantly to the large digital divide in South Africa.

As far as actual results go, the survey indicated that HIV prevention knowledge is high – 87% of people are aware that using a condom will help protect them from contracting HIV. The survey further showed that communication programmes also contributed to the fact that 61% of all sexually active people had been tested for HIV, the majority of whom were women, as routine HIV tests are conducted during pregnancy.

Other interesting findings included the low percentage of people in stable relationships, with only 3% of men and 15% of women between the ages of 20 to 24 claiming to be in a stable relationship.

This 12% discrepancy between the genders leads me to conclude that some South African women may be in denial about their partner's infidelity. Despite this, the survey shows positive improvements in overall condom usage, with the most impressive statistic being men aged between 16 and 19, where 79% said they used condoms. In contrast women between 20 and 24 reported that 51% of them used condoms in their sexual encounters.

This may be attributed to the high frequency of intergenerational relationships of younger women with older men. These older men as well as those who were not reached by communication campaigns were

the least likely to use condoms. It seems that the saying, "you can't teach an old dog new tricks", may apply in this situation. Another vital area of concern is that of multiple concurrent partners.

The research showed that multiple partner relationships are perceived by many South Africans to be a social norm: 86% to 95% of men and 90% to 95% of women believe these to be common and frequent. However, the survey contradicts these perceptions. It indicates that only 20% of men and as few as 3% of women acknowledged having multiple partners. So it seems South Africans do in fact love life.

The younger generation seems to be absorbing the messages these social-media campaigns proliferate. The results showed that young people have been significantly influenced by these communication campaigns. The area of multiple partners still needs more attention. But, overall it is a positive measure of how media can really stimulate change. This is a pertinent example of how necessary Development Communication is and, how many of the skills being taught in the Centre for Communication, Media and Society benefit society

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Upgrade Yourself

The *African Film in the Digital Era* conference in London

LINJE MANYOZO, AN esteemed CCMS graduate and academic at the London School of Economics, once gave me some sound advice – when you've got to make a point quickly and effectively, start with the conclusions. So, I hereby conclude that...

Part and parcel of being a university student is not only learning new information and ways of thinking, but also gaining new life lessons in the learning process. On the much anticipated day, the 29th of November 2009, I was fortunate enough to attend the *African Film in the Digital Era* conference, at the University of Westminster in London. It was a fantastic opportunity for me to meet other people outside of a South African context and to present and discuss various issues about the digitising of African filmmaking.

Conferences are a great opportunity for any student to enhance the learning process. Contacts, new information and opportunities to gain experience in academic debates are all aspects of the conference experience. And if you don't want to be an academic: conferences offer an amazing opportunity to get a foot in the industry doorway.

Not only did the *African Film in the Digital Era* conference equip me with knowledge about academic issues and practical/industry advice on surviving in the African film industry but all my other passions were invigorated with rocket-fuel. My interest in media, music, culture etc have all been informed, revitalised and energised through this one conference. Not only that, but my confidence and professionalism have all been upped a notch too. Therefore, I propose a new mantra for any post-graduate student: Attend conferences. They're healthy for you.

...And with that in mind, I begin...

The scene was set: I was on London's central street, Oxford Street, at the crack of dawn with my presentation in tow. The street, which is usually bustling with armies of dutiful shoppers, was dead silent – a welcome relief for a nervous disposition. In my search for that all important academic drug (caffeine) I found myself in the second largest gathering place of dedicated students (first being the library), Mac Donalds. There I sat whispering my words, with cappuccino in one hand and notes in the other, brimming with a confidence that would have made Obama seem a shy lass. My audience? A group of nonplussed, hung-over teens who seemed to have not one jot as to where the hell they were.

And it was here, in this stalwart of consumption, that it suddenly dawned on me that the most valuable lesson I was going to learn at this conference was that if I made it through, I would know whether I could stand on my own two feet against industry experts and defend my point of view right down to the last agreeable huff. Indeed, it is this character building experience that I would recommend to any student. It toughens you up for the real world. Having tutored for nearly two years *and* worked in industry, I can honestly say that I don't believe that many students are ready for it.

by Jonathan Dockney

Eventually, the conference was under way, and I spent most of my time trying to listen to the other speakers and not be distracted by the clock on the wall, ticking away to my presentation. These speakers were all academics and industry practitioners and experts. Professor Mbye Cham, (Howard University, USA) gave an interesting keynote address which marked out the issues and challenges that Africa faces in carrying film into the digital age. Numerous issues emerged, such as distribution problems, non-traditional (read non-Western) consumption patterns, piracy, autonomy and the real world inhibitors to autonomy, privatisation and the African film industry, and South-South co-productions in building African capacity.

However, one of the most interesting points he made, was perhaps one of his lesser points – that African film is not a genre. On a continent, where African identities are being asserted (whether for good or bad), this was a point that follows in a growing trend of asserting the plurality and legitimacy of, well, African ways of doing things. This comment certainly made me rethink my own take on African film.

The rest of the conference was supposed to be a dialogue between industry and academics. However, even though the conversation was fantastically interesting, perhaps it was a little too populated by industry experts. To my knowledge, there were only four academics (including myself) who presented. One point, which came up time and time again was, the effect Nollywood (the Nigerian film industry) was having in African and global markets and its potential as an exportable model for the African film industry.

However, the onward march of time knows no rest or diversion...and it was soon time for me to present. I was placed in the "New Perspectives" panel, where I spoke about mobile telephony's impact on the film industry in Africa and how these technologies can be leveraged to address two key issues: representation and citizen engagement. Although, on the whole, my presentation generated interest and re-energised a few glazed-over eyes, I felt that many of the older, more experienced members of the audience didn't quite take me seriously enough.

One audience member in particular asked if my presentation was not too futuristic for rural Africa – a point which I'd temper by arguing that firstly, this is a phenomenon still in its infancy and secondly, various examples are emerging in urban hubs and spreading. This is also not a totalising approach to filmmaking methods; this is but one approach in many others.

Before I knew it, it was over and done with, and that tightening knot in my stomach became butterflies released into open air! But what quickly became apparent was that 'African film' is somewhat of a misnomer; I noted a multitude of different nationalities – African and non-African – who all came together, united by their common interest, 'African film'.

Technology in search of a purpose: The quest of the e-book

E-BOOK READERS have made portable, digital books a tangible reality, *writes Adam Meikle*. We are now able to access books online, download them and read them through a handheld device. An e-book reader is a digital device that displays a downloaded digital e-book, from an online bookstore, in a readable text.

There are a number of variations on the e-book reader front, but the two major offerings come from Amazon and Apple. The first is the Amazon *Kindle*, the original commercial e-book reader. The Kindle supports an array of formats, displaying PDF files and even its own Digital Text Platform. Its display is easy on the eyes, similar to reading a real book. This technology could prove useful for students and academics who have to read copious amounts of literature. It also obviously cuts down on storage space and therefore reduces the potential load on bookshelves.

The second product is not truly an e-book reader. Rather, it is a tablet computer from Apple, named the *iPad*. The iPad has recently been released and it is being vigorously promoted. It not only displays e-books but can also play HD video, and music. It even has the capacity to surf the internet. Although its user interface, a touch screen which covers the whole display, makes it easily accessible, its lack of a USB port drastically diminishes its compatibility with other devices.

The iPad's projected price of about R 3700 makes it expensive, and far out of the range of many people's budgets, especially students. Although the Kindle approaches the same price range, it offers a better reading experience. In contrast to the Kindle, the iPad's display can make reading a strenuous exercise.

Until prices drop, e-book readers will remain expensive alternatives to printed literature. The other downside is the limited availability of titles, and the pricing of the downloads. Until sufficient titles are digitised and the relative cost of accessing the digital library is reduced, the notional usefulness of all this technology is likely to remain limited. So book lovers need not begin mourning the death of that "new-book smell", it is predicted that printed books will continue to be the format of choice for some time to come.

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A short history of CCMS

CCMS IS SOUTHERN AFRICA'S premier graduate research centre in cultural and media studies. The launch in November 2009 formally established CCMS as a Centre with graduate programmes that advance African scholarship in the field of communication for participatory development with special reference to health and development communication.

CCMS (Centre for Communication, Media and Society) is recognised for its excellence in communication and cultural and media studies, nationally and internationally. The Centre's other research strands include political economy, issues of Indigeneity and Media Studies.

In the field of HIV/AIDS CCMS works with other initiatives at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), and is directly linked to DramAidE (Drama and AIDS Education, administered by The University of Zululand) and

By Eliza Govender

CADRE (the Centre for AIDS, Development, Research and Evaluation, Johannesburg) as research partners. The field of cultural and media studies offers an integration of theory in practice relevant to the world of work (media and creative industries, NGO sector, state).

These professional skills enable our graduates in the workplace to explore and critique contemporary social issues, and discern how people make meaning within their specific cultural contexts.

Since 1996, for example, many CCMS staff and students have focused on South Africa's burgeoning HIV epidemic, providing unique analytic insights into factors that have constrained effective response. A great many of our graduates have gone on to apply their theoretical frameworks and findings in subsequent projects in the field, through working for health non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

