

SONYA DONALDSON

EDUCATION

Ph.D., University of Virginia, English Language and Literature, 2012

B.A., CUNY, Brooklyn College, English Language and Literature, 2004

EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Professor of World Literature, Department of English, New Jersey City University,
2013-present

Visiting Assistant Professor of Africana Studies, Hampshire College, 2012-2013

BOOK MANUSCRIPT

Irreconcilable Differences? Memory, History, and the Echoes of Diaspora

My book project, *Irreconcilable Differences?: Memory, History, and the Echoes of Diaspora*, focuses on autobiographical narratives by Afro-European and African American writers and performers to consider how their works address the personal, cultural, and political in discourses on race, gender, and (trans)national belonging. This study examines the ways in which black artists, in engaging sites of shared memory (both real and imagined), construct diasporic spaces outside of the nation paradigm. These new spaces, developed through strategic engagements with black cultural forms, vernacular practices, music, and the construction of digital communities, I contend, resonate throughout the works by Black German, Black British, and African American artists, showing how these writers and performers articulate experiences and notions of subjectivity that complicate a narrow understanding of the black diaspora.

DIGITAL HUMANITIES PROJECT

“Singing the Nation Into Being: Anthems and the Politics of Performance” is a digital humanities project that features a collection of performances of James Weldon Johnson’s “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” With this website, I consider the ways in which Black subjectivity, nation, and diaspora are constituted and contested vis-à-vis singing of “The Black National Anthem.” I use videos found primarily on YouTube, because of the availability of videos and metadata to consider how such data affect our understanding of these performances and I provide an opportunity for the public to upload their own videos to the site.

PUBLICATIONS

“After the Berlin Wall: Hip Hop and the Politics of German Reunification,” Special Issue of *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* (Routledge), Vol. 8.No. 2, a peer-reviewed, international journal, 2015

“How I Use Pinterest: The Difficulties of Teaching About Violence Against Black Girls and Women,” *The Feminist Wire*, a peer-reviewed and peer-edited scholarly site, invited submission, January 2014

“Review of *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* by Fatima el-Tayeb, *Callaloo* 36.2 Spring 2013

“Cracking the Genomics Code,” in *Annual Editions: Race and Ethnic Relations*, 16/e John A Kromkowski, Ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 2007, pp. 118-23

AWARDS AND HONORS

Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral Fellowship for Junior Faculty. Competitive postdoctoral fellowship awarded for a one-year leave to make significant progress on my manuscript. Dr. Tina Campt, Director of the Barnard Center for Research on Women, was my mentor for the fellowship year and I worked with the Alex Gil at Columbia University’s Butler Library to further develop the digital humanities project, “Singing the Nation Into Being: Anthems and the Politics of Performance.”

Provost’s nominee for the Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program, a competitive fellowship for social sciences and humanities scholars, New Jersey City University, 2016.

Mellon Five Colleges Blended Learning Grant. Awarded to my collaborator and I. I worked with library support staff and trained Five Colleges faculty and TA in Digital Humanities methods and tool use toward the development of a blended learning course, “Black Women Writing the Diaspora,” Spring 2015

Summer Development Grant, New Jersey City University. Awarded to develop an innovative course for the General Education curriculum, Reading Hip Hop. Summer 2014

Social Science Research Council/Mellon Mays Dissertation Completion Grant, 2011

Huskey Travel and Research Award, University of Virginia, 2011

Travel and Research award for archival research, University of Virginia, 2011

Technology Tastemaker Award given by Hewlett-Packard and Black Web 2.0, for “making an impact on technology and the way we use it in the social media era.” Featured in *Digital Humanities Now* and *UVa Today*, 2010

Travel and Research award, for research in Germany, University of Virginia, 2009

Social Science Research Council/Mellon Mays Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant, 2006

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Fellowship, University of Virginia, 2004-2009

Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, 2003-2004

CUNY Pipeline Fellow (Program for Careers in College Teaching and Research), 2003

INVITED PRESENTATIONS, LECTURES and INTERVIEWS

“Identity in the African Diaspora,” As part of Jersey City Theater Center programming, I selected texts for a staged reading by actors, delivered a lecture, and conducted a talk-back session with actors and the audience. I selected readings by James Baldwin and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and worked with the actors and the program’s director to frame the texts for the audience, Jersey City, April 2016

“From Germany to Namibia: The Embodied Politics of James Weldon Johnson’s ‘Lift Every Voice and Sing,’” Mount Holyoke College, Amherst, MA, April 2016

“Singing the Nation into Being: Anthems and the Politics of Black Female Performance,” Digital Humanities Presentation, invited public talk for the college’s Race Matters Lecture Series, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA, February 2015

“Anatomy of a Syllabus,” Presentation and workshop for Mellon-Mays scholars at Brooklyn College. The workshop engages graduate-school-bound students in discussions of pedagogical practices and oriented them to curricular matters such as course creation and syllabus design. New York, Spring 2015

“Who Are You?: On Being Human in a Digital World,” and “Constructing Our Digital Selves,”
University of Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV), October, 2013

CONFERENCES AND LECTURES

“Vocalizing Difference, Vocalizing Nation: Black Women’s Performances of ‘Lift Every Voice and Sing’ Articulate a Politics of Protest and Repair. American Comparative Literature Association Annual Meeting, Utrecht, The Netherlands, July, 2017

Panel Moderator, Invited, “Old Bonds Remade,” at the symposium, The Cost of Freedom: Debt and Slavery, Brooklyn College, May 2017

“Whose Little Girl Am I?: Fantasy and the Fantastic in [Re]constructing Black German Identities,” Global History of Black Girlhood Symposium, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, March 2017

“Maternal Fantasies and Transnational Bodies: Constructing Black German Identity in Doris McMillon’s *Mixed Blessing* and Ika Hügel-Marshall’s *Invisible Woman*,” German Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Diego, September 2016

“The Ephemeral Archive: Unstable Terrain in Times and Sites of Discord,” Archives Matter Conference, Goldsmiths University, London, U.K., June 2016

“Singing the Nation into Being: Anthems and the Politics of Black Female Performance,” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada, October 2015

A Scandalous Freedom: Olivia Pope and the Choice to Be a ‘Bad’ Black Woman, American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, November 2014

“After the Berlin Wall: Hip Hop and the Politics of German Reunification,” Remapping the Black Atlantic: (Re)writings of Race and Space, Chicago, April 2013

Panel moderator, blogger, social media trainer, Media, Democracy, and Diversity Interdisciplinary Conference, Charlottesville, 2010

“‘Burn’em out by the roots’: Rage, Reproduction, and Revolution in Alice Walker’s *Meridian*,” UVA English Department Graduate Conference, Charlottesville, 2009

“Twice Written, Twice Fallen: Sex, Law, and Citizenship in Suzan-Lori Parks’s *Red Letter Plays*,” Mellon Mays Graduate Conference, New York 2007

DIGITAL HUMANITIES

American Studies Association Digital Humanities Caucus Workshop. Served as mentor to ASA attendees who are at the beginning of their DH projects. Offered advice on conceptualizing, organization, and DH tool selection. Toronto, October 2015

“Singing the Nation into Being: Anthems and the Politics of Black Female Performance” ongoing DH and archival project

Organizer, THATCampHavana, Digital Humanities un-conference, November 2013

Central Organizer, THATCampCaribe, Digital Humanities un-conference, University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez, November 2012

Sciences, Humanities & Arts Network of Technological Initiatives (SHANTI) Semester of Help—received technology aid and consultation from the University of Virginia to develop a Digital Humanities project based on the dissertation, Fall 2011

SHANTI Summer Digital Institute—studied theoretical and practical approaches to Digital Humanities, University of Virginia, Summer 2011

TEACHING & RESEARCH INTERESTS

African Diasporic Literature; African American Literature; World Literature; Digital Humanities; Film and Music

COURSES TAUGHT

New Jersey City University, Department of English

Survey of African American Literature

African American Women Writers

Modern and Contemporary American Literature

*Modern and Contemporary African Literature

*Reading Hip Hop

Multiethnic U.S. Literature

Literature and Film

**Indicates new courses I developed*

Hampshire College, School of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies

Coming to America: Migration and the African Diaspora

Tech and Sensibility: Race, Gender & Sexuality in Black Speculative Fiction

Growing Up Black: Coming-of-Age-Narratives of the African Diaspora

Re/De-Constructing Black Women (African, Caribbean, and African American feminisms)

University of Virginia, Department of English

Black Migrations (introductory seminar for majors)

Tech & Sensibility (self-designed, themed expository writing)

Technology and Identities (self-designed, themed expository writing)

History of Literatures in English II (survey for majors, 1660-1880)

History of Literatures in English III (survey for majors, 19th and 20th century)

Communicating With the Public (academic and professional writing)

Black Women and Power (The Carter G. Woodson Institute
for African American and African Studies)

JOURNALISM EXPERIENCE

Editor-at-Large, Technology, *Black Enterprise* magazine. Responsible for magazine's technology content; edited a monthly section, developed feature articles across platforms (print, online, TV), developed and moderated panels for annual conference, and appeared on segments of the *Black Enterprise Business Report* TV show. 2006-2010.

Technology Editor, *Black Enterprise* magazine. Responsible for magazine's technology content and direction. Managed a diverse pool of writers, established product review guidelines, and created the publication's in-house test lab, 2000-2004.

LANGUAGES

German, intermediate, reading and writing

Spanish, intermediate, reading and writing

French, beginner, reading and writing

REFERENCES: Available upon request