

Dedication

This issue is dedicated to the memory of two South African poets who passed away during the assembling of the manuscript: Myesha Jenkins and Angifi Dladla. Myesha and Angifi, your magnificent contribution to poetry, to culture and to us will never be forgotten and will continue to inspire us all.

Editorial: Decoloniality in/and Poetry

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This themed issue of *Education as Change* responds to the “decolonial turn” in academic and public discourse. The #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall student protests at South African universities in 2015 and onwards gave public manifestation to the growing dissatisfaction with colonial models of knowledge and knowledge production. In the wake of these protests, many education activists and scholars have joined the drive to move away from such models. Nevertheless, scholarship on practical implementation of decolonisation within teaching and learning at schools and universities remains limited and requires further investigation.

This themed issue offers some ideas relating to methods of decolonising curricula and pedagogies. The focus is poetry. Although a minor, frequently marginalised component of curricula for English literature at secondary schools and the discipline of English literary studies at universities, poetry has been chosen because it offers an instructive case study of the challenges and possibilities of finding spaces for transformation within disciplines and practices. We focus on attempts to decolonise poetry from within by means of small, local interventions and reconceptualisations, which aim to re-vision poetry within and outside classrooms. These reconceptualisations are constructed variously in terms of postcoloniality, indigenisation and Africanisation, as well as poetic praxis.

Some articles identify the challenges and others the possibilities associated with attempts to decolonise poetry practices. There is a striking disparity between the lack of enthusiasm for poetry in formal classrooms and its enormous popularity in community forums. While we recognise that English remains one of the languages of settler colonialism, the discipline of English literature stubbornly occupies a major place in the curriculum and the language is widely used by poets and scholars.

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This themed issue is predicated on a vision of knowledge as inhering in scholarly writing of articles, reviews and reflective pieces, as well as creative works. For this reason, the issue encompasses poems and articles, including texts that go beyond traditional scholarly formats. The articles deal with contexts in the global South: Africa, the Caribbean, Australia and India.

The articles by Louis Botha, Phillippa Yaa de Villiers and Robert Maungedzo; Denise Newfield and Deirdre Byrne; and Adam Cooper are based on research conducted under the auspices of ZAPP (the South African Poetry Project), a group of scholars, poets and teachers that received funding from the National Research Foundation for a three-year research project within the domains of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, situated in secondary school English classrooms. The articles by Katharine Naidu and Denise Newfield, and Grace Mavhiza and Maria Prozesky, are similarly based in secondary schools. Bridget Grogan advocates a contrapuntal approach to teaching African poetry in higher education. Catherine Manathunga, Shelley Davidow, Paul Williams, Kathryn Gilbey, Tracey Bunda, Maria Raciti and Sue Stanton; Malika Ndlovu; and Vonani Bila all explore the importance of poetry as a healing and spiritual practice. Suren Naicker discusses the decolonising potentials inherent in traditional spiritual poetry. Arushani Govender focuses on poetry as articulating the cultural repertoire of a specific South African sub-culture. Gerhard Genis advocates an analytical method of exploring S.E.K. Mqhayi's poetry of the Great War. Heidi van Rooyen and Raphael d'Abdon use poetic inquiry as a form of research methodology.

The poems chosen for inclusion in this special issue were subjected to the same blind review process as the articles and were evaluated for their relevance to the theme of the issue. The poems by Flow Wellington, Kirsten Deane and Kobus Moolman speak to the issue of decolonisation in different ways: through highlighting the politics of language, gender, history and memory. Poems by Brian Walter invoke the troubled relationship between complicity and empathy within different subjectivities in a decolonial context. Mosima Kagiso Phakane and Nkwana Serutle Joshua address the lingering legacy of colonial structures of thinking and feeling. Trésor Musasa Kabamba's poem reminds us of the embodied and multimodal nature of poetry. Through the poems, decolonisation is figured as simultaneously personal, political, structural and intimate.

There are four book reviews and one reflective piece included in this themed issue. The fact that poetry collections are appearing with such regularity is a by-product of the decolonisation of the poetry publishing industry and its use by previously marginalised poets.