

Dr Jenny Bożena du Preez

Postdoctoral Fellow

Jenny Bożena du Preez is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation ([CriSHET](#)) at Nelson Mandela University. She holds a PhD in Literary Studies in English.

Her research interests include the discipline of Literary Studies, its critical and transformative potential, and the university. She is also interested in the representation of gender and sexuality, literature from Africa and the diaspora, women's writing, and the erotic.

Her current research project, funded by the National Research Foundation, asks how Literary Studies in English might contribute to Critical University Studies in Africa. This is an exploratory project that takes as its premise that many of the questions around Critical University Studies as a field of study in South Africa are similar to those that surround Literary Studies in English because of their origins in the West. The project aims to explore the ways in which literature, writers and literary scholars have (or have not) contributed to the critical project in South Africa, and to examine whether the discipline might offer resources for enriching the field of Critical University Studies in Africa.

Her doctoral thesis is entitled *Intersectionality and Complexity in the Representation of Queer Sexualities and Genders in African Women's Short Fiction*. Based on the argument that, post-2000, the short story form has become the primary vehicle for queer representations by African women writers, and is thus an important development in the burgeoning body of queer literature by African writers, the thesis set out to examine four significant strands in the political work with which these stories engage. The chapters are structured around four main points of contention that have particular significance at the intersection of 'queer', 'women' and 'Africa': history, family, religion, and the erotic. The thesis argues that this literary formation is marked by a feminist and anti-homophobic reparative political pragmatism.

Jenny has published two articles, "Liminality and Alternative Femininity in Sol T. Plaatje's *Mhudi*" in *English in Africa* and "'Rediscovering the Erotic as Ordinary' in South African Women's Short Fiction" in the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, and an interview with South African poet and writer, Makhosazana Xaba, in *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*. She has taught a range of courses in Literary Studies in English and Media, Communications and Culture at Nelson Mandela University.