

# CHAPTER 8. ANTJIE KROG'S EXPLORATION OF UBUNTU



Jacomien Van Niekerk

## INTRODUCTION

Antjie Krog is one of the voices currently contributing to the discourse on Ubuntu in South Africa. Her work is accessible yet thought-provoking. Krog bridges the divide between popular or general conceptions of Ubuntu and rigorous philosophical analyses. This chapter specifically traces Krog's exploration of Ubuntu in her non-fiction trilogy. However, the study could also potentially be broadened to include Krog's poetry (spanning four decades), her translation of other poets, her academic articles and pieces in newspapers, public lectures, among others. Krog has emerged as an increasingly visible public intellectual (Garman 2015) whose views are not only shaped by discourses around her but who also shapes those discourses. The latter can be seen in the contribution made to the Ubuntu discourse by Krog in coining the phrase "interconnectedness-towards-wholeness". As the debate rages on the existence and nature of Ubuntu, I believe much is to be learned from Krog's work. Though her exploration of Ubuntu is unsystematic, the overview I provide in this chapter highlights the important insights to be gleaned from Krog.

Krog first gained international recognition when she published her first non-fiction book in English, *Country of My Skull*, which was

the result of her work as a journalist during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings which took place from 1996 to 1998. *Country of My Skull* has been translated into several languages, has received multiple awards, and has given Krog access to a global community of readers. Krog continues to write poetry in Afrikaans, and her poetry has been translated into English.<sup>1</sup> She has also donned the hat of an academic: she was appointed as Extraordinary Professor in the Faculty of Arts at the University of the Western Cape, and she spent nine months at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin in 2007/2008 on a research fellowship and again in 2013.

Two further English works of 'literary non-fiction' have followed the first: *A Change of Tongue* (2003) and *Begging to Be Black* (2009). These three books have come to be regarded as a trilogy; I use the term 'transformation trilogy' in acknowledgement of the centrality of the theme of personal and collective transformation in all three texts. In this article the three texts will be read in conjunction with each other. I argue that several common themes run through all three texts, even though they differ from each other regarding form and content. Each text is characterized by a hybrid juxtaposition of genres (including history, journalism, autobiography and poetic techniques), a multiplicity of voices complementing that of the narrator, and chronological leaps. I believe the intensely creative, varied and ultimately inconclusive nature of the trilogy to be central to the interpretation of the three texts. However, in this article I won't be able to comment extensively on these textual features. My aim is to provide an overview of the ways in which Antjie Krog engages with the concept of Ubuntu in her trilogy.

Krog has been actively involved in the public discourse on Ubuntu, giving public lectures in which she explores the concept, and participating in academic conferences held around the subject. She has also published two academic articles (Krog 2008a and 2008b) that arguably entail a more 'academic', philosophical approach to the concept than in her trilogy. In this article, however, I concentrate mainly on the trilogy, since in these texts 'Krog, the academic'

---

1 Two anthologies exist to date of Krog's poetry in English: *Down to my last skin* (2000) and *Skinned* (2013). Her volumes *Verweerskrif* (2006) and *Mede-wete* (2014) were simultaneously published in English as *Body bereft* and *Synapse*.

intersects with 'Krog, the poet' and 'Krog, the prose writer'. In the trilogy, Krog contributes to the Ubuntu discourse in direct (academic) and indirect ('literary') ways.

Antjie Krog has not been trained as a philosopher. Neither have I: I originally came to the trilogy as an Afrikaans literary scholar well acquainted with Krog's poetry. Consequently, Krog's incorporation of African philosophy should be read with the understanding that she is an amateur philosopher. I analyse the way in which Krog incorporates African philosophy and ponders the implications of an 'African world view' in her trilogy as part of a broader effort in her trilogy to understand and engage with post-1994 South Africa. Garman (2015) argues that Krog's power in the public sphere lies precisely in her utilisation of the literary or the aesthetic; this is an important insight to keep in mind even as I explore Krog's attempts at 'doing philosophy'.

### **UBUNTU AND 'INTERCONNECTEDNESS-TOWARDS-WHOLENESS'**

During or closely following the nine months spent as a research fellow in Berlin in 2008, Krog published two academic articles on interconnectedness: "...if it means he gets his humanity back...": The Worldview Underpinning the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission" and "This thing called reconciliation...": forgiveness as part of an interconnectedness-towards-wholeness". It is in these articles that she coins the term 'interconnectedness-towards-wholeness'. It is clear that Krog uses the term as a synonym for Ubuntu, for she frequently follows its use with the phrase "or ubuntu". However, Krog consistently prefers her own term, because she believes "the over-use and exploitation of the word ubuntu makes it nearly unusable" (Krog 2008b, 355).

She then goes on to place interconnectedness-towards-wholeness "firmly within the well defined and formulated broader African communitarianism as well as the more Southern African localized term of ubuntu". She continues:

Interconnectedness-towards-wholeness [...] is more than just a theoretical knowledge that all things in the world are linked, it means both a mental and physical awareness that one can only 'become' who one is, or could be, through the fullness of that which is around one—both physical and metaphysical [...]

Wholeness is thus not a passive state of nirvana, but a process of becoming in which everybody and everything is moving towards its fullest self, building itself; one can only reach that fullest self [...] through and with others which include ancestors and universe (Krog 2008, 355).

This chapter will illustrate how Krog writes about ‘becoming (whole)’ “through and with others” in many varied ways in the trilogy. The term ‘interconnectedness-towards-wholeness’ is not used in the trilogy; instead, the word “interconnectedness” occurs frequently in *Begging to Be Black*, and throughout the trilogy Krog sometimes utilises the term Ubuntu. At other times she refers to an ‘African world view’ or completely refrains from naming the phenomenon she is describing.

All three texts of the transformation trilogy contain the word Ubuntu in their glossaries. The differing definitions of the term reflect the developing interpretation of the concept over the past two decades in the discourse on Ubuntu in South Africa. In *Country of My Skull* the definition of Ubuntu is “philosophy of humanism, emphasizing the link between the individual and the collective”. In *A Change of Tongue* Ubuntu is defined as “spirit of fellowship and compassion in African society” and in *Begging to Be Black* as “world view based on the idiom *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*—a person is a person through other persons”.<sup>2</sup>

In the texts of the trilogy themselves Krog refers to Ubuntu a number of times. Sometimes this is done by quoting her ‘black’ interlocutors, for example someone who states, “Whites [...] have no *ubuntu*... they choke on all their rights, but they have no human compassion” (Krog 2000, 59). Krog quotes the ‘black’ psychologist Nomfundo Walaza who defines Ubuntu as the ability to share with others that was to the detriment of ‘black’ people during colonisation (Krog 2000, 213). In writing about Desmond Tutu, she quotes Michael Battle’s description of Tutu’s “ubuntu theology” and she provides Battle’s reference to John Mbiti’s well-known aphorism “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am (Krog 2000,

---

2 Gade (2011) has shown that the proverb, “Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu” has only become a veritable ‘definition’ of Ubuntu since 199?

143). The latter is similar to Krog's own formulation when she writes about Nelson Mandela and collectivism: "I am because I am with you" (Krog 2003, 259). The two aspects of Ubuntu that speak to Krog are the features of a communitarian society (which I will return to later) and the link between forgiveness and reconciliation and ubuntu.

In *A Change of Tongue*, Deborah Matshoba, a victim who testified at the TRC, states that "forgiveness is creating a culture of ubuntu, humaneness [...]" (Krog 2003, 157). After their conversation, Krog writes the following: "We make tea on the stove. Ubuntu. The most profound opposite of Apartheid. More than forgiveness or reconciliation. More than 'turn the other cheek'. It is what humanity has lost" (Krog 2003, 159). Years later, during her fellowship in Berlin, Krog attends a conference in Turkey where she presents an academic paper. She confronts her audience with the quote by Cynthia Ngewu (made famous by Krog's *Country of My Skull*) about what should happen to perpetrators of apartheid crimes: "We want to demonstrate a humanness [ubuntu] towards them, so that [it] in turn may restore their own humanity" (Krog 2009, 211). The international audience at the conference is fairly uncomprehending of the framework Krog is positing, leading her to conclude sadly that as Sandile Dikeni said, "The world will never learn anything from Africa" (2009, 212).

Krog's academic articles (2008a and 2008b) both centre on interconnectedness-towards-wholeness as something which makes a radical kind of forgiveness as well as restoration of the perpetrator possible. Krog is critical of "the usurpation of the TRC process by Christianity and human rights" which "obscures how [...] a radically new way [of dealing with injustice], imbedded in an indigenous view of the world, had been put on the table by black people at the end of the twentieth century" (2009, 206).

In addition, perhaps controversially, Krog attempts to explain the phenomenon of 'black' South African xenophobia (particularly following the attacks on foreigners in 2008) by way of Ubuntu. She sees the urban centres of South Africans consisting of an "influx of rural people from tight interconnected groups" who have lost their interconnectedness "with their community, with its spiritual presence of ancestors, nature, etc." (2009, 235-236). When confronted with uprooted people from other African countries, South Africans want to distance themselves from the failure they associate with the rest of

Africa. Krog concludes, “it is not a case of ubuntu is dead, as I originally thought, killed by black people; it is the opposite: ubuntu is so very much alive that people do not survive these brutalizing-into-being-an-individual surroundings” (2009, 236). This interpretation builds on an earlier reference by Krog to A.C. Jordan’s reading of the works of Tiyo Soga.<sup>3</sup> In the nineteenth century Soga remarked that the arrival of Christianity destroyed “wholeness”, because Christians suddenly did not want to welcome non-Christians into their homes. “[Soga] said that interconnectedness is what takes place between the community and the stranger [...] and it is the specific task of the intellectual to be an advocate for the stranger—to insist on responsibility for the stranger as constitutive of collectivity itself” (Krog 2009, 185-186).

It is clear that Krog is extremely aware of the discourse on Ubuntu in South Africa, and it is one of the concepts (like ‘transformation’ and ‘truth’) that she seeks to unpack and understand in her trilogy (and elsewhere). Specifically, she feels that she needs to understand Ubuntu as part of her larger desire to understand ‘black’ people in South Africa in her quest for belonging to that country.

It is notable that Krog never engages with ‘ubuntu philosophers’ who attempt to articulate or apply the concept of Ubuntu. Arguably this would have fallen outside the scope and nature of her trilogy, but Krog *does* engage with a selection of African philosophers as I show below. The unfortunate result is that Krog seems to assume that the meaning of Ubuntu is self-evident in the South African context (or that the definitions given in the glossaries of her texts are sufficient). While Krog can assume knowledge of Ubuntu on the part of her audience in the academic articles, the same is not necessarily true of her trilogy. Despite the problematic nature of Krog’s endeavours, I wish to turn to her *procédé* in her trilogy because I believe that large parts of it *are* helpful for our understanding of Ubuntu.

---

3 Krog is, in turn, paraphrasing Mark Sanders (2002: 124-126, and elsewhere).

## TRACING THE EDGES OF UBUNTU IN THE TRANSFORMATION TRILOGY

A series of conversations<sup>4</sup> that took place between Krog and the Australian philosopher Paul Patton in Berlin contribute to the more 'academic' slant of *Begging to Be Black* as compared to the other two texts in the trilogy. However, the questions that can be abstracted from these conversations occur, in my opinion, throughout the transformation trilogy. They centre on the legacy of colonialism in Africa and South Africa, the place of 'white' people in South Africa, and what constitutes truly ethical conduct in the post-colonial context of a South Africa governed by the 'black' majority. It is beyond the scope of this article to explore each of these questions, but I believe that Krog's engagement with Ubuntu stems from the latter issue. She repeatedly states in *Begging to Be Black* and elsewhere that after 1994 the "Western or European frameworks" that had guided her in the past have become "useless and redundant" (Krog 2009, 93). She believes that there is something intrinsically different about a 'black' or 'African' world view, and she endeavours throughout her trilogy to pinpoint what that different world view entails.

During the second conversation with Patton, which she titles "Petrus's story", the fictional character Petrus from J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (to whom *Begging to Be Black* is dedicated) becomes emblematic of the misunderstood 'black' Other. Krog ascribes a monologue to Petrus in which he states, "I function within an ethic that is communal to the core. The benefit to the community, whether they are the living, the living-dead or the still-to-come, is what determines whether something is good or bad. [...] But I, Petrus, am being held captive within an ethic that is individual and Christian-based to the core [...]" (Krog 2009, 102). In this quote, Krog is captivated by the implications of a communitarian culture.

Communitarianism is described as follows by Es'kia Mphahlele in an essay on African humanism: "The African begins with the

---

4 The conversations are as follows: "Lines of Flight" (Krog 2009: 92-93), "Petrus's Story" (2009: 99-102), "Imagining Black" (2009: 122-123), "Been There Done That" (2009: 155-156), "Interconnected With Whom?" (2009: 184-186), a number of informal conversation on the way to and in Turkey (2009: 203-206, 208-212), "Xenophobia" (2009: 235-239), and "Formation of the Self" (2009: 266-269).

community and then determines what the individual's place and role should be in relation to the community. These are features of African humanism. It is a communal concept, and there are no individual heroes within the world it encompasses. Man finds fulfilment not as a separate individual but within family and community" (Mphahlele 2002, 147).

Krog's efforts to understand the "communal concept" of African humanism has not been the subject of existing studies. I therefore briefly examine the different ways in which she does this: firstly, by incorporating African orality in her trilogy: "Our oral poetry is our way of communicating with the divine forces, for poetry is a way of perceiving, a way of seeking to touch the Highest Reality beneath the surface of things" (Mphahlele 2002, 139). Secondly, I touch on Krog's analysis of cultural practices, and thirdly on her focus on three symbolic 'black' leaders: Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela and King Moshoeshoe I.

### **AFRICAN ORAL LITERATURE<sup>5</sup> IN THE TRILOGY**

Quantitatively speaking, instances of African orality make up a small part of the transformation trilogy. Still, these parts of the trilogy belong to the various techniques through which Krog emphasises non-western phenomena as part of a broader argument in which she chooses 'Africa' over 'Europe'. It can also be argued that the examples of African orality are a way for Krog to explore African philosophy. The oral forms that feature in the trilogy are praise poetry, praise names, and folktales.

Praise poems (*izibongo* in Zulu and Xhosa) usually contain the lineage of the person being praised. In *Country of My Skull* Chief Anderson Joyi, a Xhosa chief of the Thembu group, appears in front of the TRC. Krog chooses to not provide his testimony in itself, but she records the genealogy with which the chief introduces his testimony. She interviews the chief afterwards and asks him why he chose to begin his testimony in this way. He answers: "Their names organise the flow of time [...] Their names put what has happened to me in perspective. Their names say I am a chief with many colours.

---

5 Krog has translated African oral literature as well as published poetry in the African languages into Afrikaans in an anthology titled *Met woorde soos met kerse* [*With words like with candles*] published in 2002.

Their names say we have the ability to endure the past... and the present” (2000, 181-182).

When one examines the genealogy, it becomes clear that only the last five generations mentioned by Chief Joyi reigned during and after colonialism; in other words, the pre-colonial period is more significant in a quantitative sense. This indeed places the chief's suffering under apartheid in some perspective, since it also suggests that his lineage will continue into the future. This significant passage possibly further suggests that Chief Joyi's lineage and testimony is emblematic of the other victims of apartheid: they, too, have a lineage and a context that might help them “to endure the past... and the present” (Krog 2000, 181-182). This is not done to undermine the testimonies recorded by Krog, but it does subtly open the possibility that ‘black’ people do not simply possess a narrative of victimhood under apartheid. Their life narrative involves being interconnected with the living and the dead, and that can be seen as empowering.

In *A Change of Tongue*, physical descriptions of Nelson Mandela echo a praise poem in Afrikaans that Krog wrote for Mandela in 1995 (Krog 1995a, 8-9), in which she transposed the prominent Southern African oral tradition of *izibongo* into Afrikaans (cf. Van Niekerk 2007). Krog also translated the praise poems by two Xhosa *iimbongi* with the help of Xhosa experts, and she replicates parts of the research she did on *iimbongi* (Krog 1994) in *A Change of Tongue* (2003, 206-207). Apart from composing a praise poem for Mandela, Krog allows herself to be so deeply influenced by this oral tradition that she composes a praise poem of sorts for her dead father at the end of *A Change of Tongue* (Krog 2003, 365).

In *Begging to Be Black* Krog analyses the different significant names that were given to King Moshoeshe I. At birth his name was “*Lepogo* (Dispute)” (2009, 22), and as he became older, the following names were given to him: “*Tlaputle* (Energetic-One)”, “*Lekbema* (Hasty-One)” and then “*Letlama* (Together-Binder)”: “the name given to him in his initiation praises” (Krog 2009, 23). Krog sees an important progression in these names, finally culminating in the praise name “Moshoeshe” which was the result of a successful cattle raid. The *sh*-sounds in the praise poem that was created on the spot (*Ke'na Moshoeshe Moshoashoaila oa ba Kali*) refer to “the fast,

swishing, snappy, snipping way in which the raid had been carried out” (Krog 2009, 23).

A few pages later, Krog refers to other praise poems created for Moshoeshoe in which his ability to convince others to reform are at the forefront.<sup>6</sup> In other words, Krog supplements her extensive descriptions of Moshoeshoe’s leadership and characteristics (which I will further explore below) with references to praise names and praise poems, similar to her incorporation of praise poems for Mandela.

Praise poems and praise names establish meaningful connections between the person they are centred on and the persons reciting them. The characteristics and achievements of the person being praised are recalled every time the praise poem is recited. The same applies to the connotations evoked every time a person’s praise name is used. It is significant that *only* Moshoeshoe’s final praise name survives in the public imagination.

In contrast to these examples of connectedness between humans, the folktale recorded in *A Change of Tongue* describes a deep connectedness between humans and nature. This well-known Fulani folktale involves a pair of twins, one of which was a boy and the other a snake. The human brother takes care of the various physical needs of his snake brother, and the snake brother educates the human brother on nature. One day, the human brother returns ill from the desert, unable to breathe. He suddenly coughs up seven wet, slimy lumps: a mist of sky, a word of giraffe, a burning moon, a weeping tree, a clump of water, a railroad track and a feathered wing. The human brother does not know what these things mean, but the snake brother says, “I will teach you to become them, to see what they mean,” explained the snake-brother, ‘and live with grace on the earth” (Krog 2003, 321, abridged by me).

It is significant that Krog does not pedantically explain the folktale but rather engages it deeply yet subtly on a textual level by turning the ‘seven lumps’ into seven interludes. These seven interludes are central to the themes of transformation (Burger 2011, 33), of becoming (Polatinsky 2009, 86), the relationship between the

---

6 Krog quotes Daniel Kunene on the praises for Moshoeshoe: “the words *ho thapisa* mean ‘to charm, to tame the wild nature of [...] The word *charm*, with its meanings of attracting and winning over, sums up the technique Moshoeshoe used: no force or violence, but convincing people with gentle but firm domestication” (Krog 2009: 28).

self and the other and a moral way of living in South Africa, issues I believe to be key to the entire trilogy.

In summary, by placing examples of oral traditions in her trilogy, Krog is highlighting the fact that these forms are African and not western. She is educating her readers about literary forms that 'white' readers are generally unfamiliar with, thereby suggesting that there is something enriching about these indigenous traditions and the people who hold them. Moreover, the content of genealogies, praise poems and praise names illustrate, for Krog, a communitarian way of living, and the folktale she cites demonstrates the interconnectedness of all things in creation, something which I will show below is part of Krog's understanding of Ubuntu.

### **KROG'S ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN CULTURAL PRACTICES**

In the very first chapter of *Country of My Skull*, Krog writes about the cattle raid that gave Moshoeshoe his name: "He who can steal as swiftly and silently as cutting someone's beard" (also see the section on praise names above). She asks a 'black' colleague, Mondli, "How can the deftness of stealing be a mark of honor? Why did Dingane ask Retief to steal back the cattle stolen by Sekonyela? Why would Mandela write in his biography about the cattle he and his cousin stole from his uncle? Do we understand the same thing when we talk about stealing?" (Krog 2000, 18).

Mondli answers that he was raised with the belief that stealing from 'white' people was not really stealing and that for Africans, stealing meant "taking cattle as a means of contesting power". However, 'white' people accused 'black' people of theft, "while at that very same minute you were stealing everything from us!" (Krog 2000, 18). This example is one of the instances where Krog explores moral issues in her trilogy. Are there universal principles about what is right and wrong, or can different cultures have different conceptions about this? Mondli's oblique reference to colonialism and apartheid already suggests that morality is not universally definable. Krog pursues this question with regard to different contexts in the three texts of the trilogy. The above quote about cattle raiding as ritual is one of several 'cultural practices' (for want of a better term) that are analysed by Krog in the trilogy, especially in *Begging to Be Black*.

Krog is struck by the way the missionaries (Eugène Casalis and Thomas Arbousset) that lived at Thaba Bosiu with King Moshoeshoe I insisted on interpreting morality in a singularly Christian context. However, in the Basotho they were confronted with a morality that depended completely on the social order, “a moral framework rooted in communal life which questions the idea of individual responsibility and conversion” (Krog 2009, 82-83).

An example of this communally-rooted morality can be found in the Basotho understanding of work. Krog writes about Moshoeshoe’s request that the Basotho not be compensated for the work they did for the missionaries. Casalis and Arbousset interpreted this as exploitation, and were probably also irritated, according to Krog, by the fact that their own sacrifices seemed less impressive “if this very pagan community already had a notion of ‘building’ oneself through voluntary labour” (Krog 2009, 106).

Without being specific, Krog refers to “African philosophers” who define personhood within a “communitarian African world view”: “Who you are, what and how you are, is built by you over the years of your life through caring interconnectedness” (Krog 2009, 106). Krog then proceeds to show that ‘work’ and ‘personhood’ were intricately linked for the Basotho. She draws partly on the work of the Comaroffs, whose research on the Tswana of the nineteenth century can be safely held as applicable to the neighbouring Basotho in the same time period. The Comaroffs explain the concept of *tiro*, work, as follows:

[...] *tiro* was not an abstract quality, a commodity to be bought or sold. It could not exist as alienable labour power [...] Work, in short, was the positive, relational aspect of human social activity; of the making of self and others in the course of everyday life. Not only were social beings made and remade by *tiro*, but the product—namely, personhood—was inseparable from the process of production itself (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, 274).

The above approach to work played out, among other things, as the phenomenon of communal farming among the Basotho. Whenever someone needed help with building a hut, planting or harvesting, he could call on the assistance of the community, and would in future assist his neighbours in a similar way. The missionaries were disdainful of this practice, since they saw no

possibility for industry or trade in it (Krog 2009, 106-107). Krog repeatedly shows how unreceptive the missionaries were to practices or beliefs that deviated from their Christian-western framework. Eventually Krog avers that the interaction between the Basotho and the missionaries amounted to a clash of world views.

Again drawing on the Comaroffs, Krog defines this clash between “two distinct world views” as rooted in the fact that “Western culture saw matter as neutral and man as the prime mover in his interaction with his surroundings, while the Basotho [spoke] openly of a world, ‘connected and continuous’, in which the inert has the ability to affect the lives of the living (Krog 2009, 113). She further states that the Basotho were not used to being confronted with a group of people who insisted that there was only one correct way to know and interpret the world, and who believed, “Those outside this ‘true’ way were inferior. They *could* enter the privileged way through conversion, but black people quickly realised that conversion made them ‘like whites’ but never equal to whites” (2009, 114).

This discovery that the world view of the Basotho was inclusive and therefore the direct opposite of that of the Christian missionaries, is an extremely important one for Krog. According to Mphahlele, this is one of the characteristics of what he calls African humanism: “our traditional humanism [...] is never exclusive, i.e. never shuts other people out [...]” (Mphahlele 2004, 285). In other parts of the trilogy Krog returns to this central aspect of the clash between colonialists and indigenous people, and between ‘white’ and ‘black’ people during and after apartheid. ‘White’ people continue to act from the assumption that their world view is the superior interpretation of ‘reality’, and this confrontation has an ethical dimension in that ‘white’ people see their practices and beliefs as morally correct and those of ‘black’ people as morally wrong.

### **SYMBOLIC LEADERS: TUTU, MANDELA, MOSHOESHOE**

In *Country of My Skull*, Krog expresses her disappointment with Afrikaner leaders who refuse to take responsibility for apartheid and who fail to “[establish] a space within which we can confront ourselves and our past” (Krog 2000, 125). The absence of this kind of Afrikaner leader is juxtaposed with three symbolic ‘black’ leaders that Krog highlights in the three parts of the trilogy.

Desmond Tutu, the chairperson of the TRC, is portrayed by Krog as a charismatic figure with great persuasive powers (Krog 2000, 22) and an influential rhetoric (2000, 61). Tutu comes to the TRC with already-established notions about forgiveness and reconciliation (2000, 23), which, according to academics, entails an Africanisation of reconciliation: “The Church says: ‘You must forgive, because God has forgiven you for killing His Son’. Tutu says: ‘You can only be human in a humane society. If you live with hatred and revenge in your heart, you dehumanize not only yourself, but your community’” (Krog 2000, 143). Krog also quotes Tutu’s use of the term “African *Weltanschauung*” in which he defines personhood as something that depends on the community and involvement in the life of the community (2000, 143).

In the course of *Country of My Skull*, Krog writes about Tutu in a consistently emotional way. She finds the entire TRC process “unthinkable” without Tutu, because “[i]t is he who finds the language for what is happening” (Krog 2000, 201). Tutu is “[t]his wonderful man in whose presence I always experience humanity at its fullest—humanity as it was meant to be” (Krog 2000, 203). Not only does Tutu *define* personhood and reconciliation within an African world view, for Krog, he is the embodiment of a superior kind of humanity. His inclusivity knows no bounds, as he weeps for both F.W. de Klerk and Winnie Madikizela Mandela (Krog 2000, 210; 338). This inclusive approach to ‘white’ and ‘black’ perpetrators enables Krog to feel a sense, however brief, of belonging to Africa (Krog 2000, 338).

In *A Change of Tongue*, Krog identifies the western, individualistic approach to leaders as problematic for Nelson Mandela’s presidency. Right through to the end of his term, according to a friend of Mandela,<sup>7</sup> “[...] ‘whites constantly sing the praises of Mandela, while continuing to treat black people as they did before’” (Krog 2003: 259). This same friend explains to Krog that collectivism is not empty rhetoric for Mandela, but a central part of him (Krog 2003: 257). The ANC could have chosen anyone to be its figurehead and Mandela was to an extent an arbitrary choice. Krog quotes Mandela as he emphasises that “[...] he is what he is because of others, black

---

7 Due to the fluid relationship between ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ in Krog’s trilogy, it is possible that this good friend of Mandela is an invention by Krog, a contraction of various conversations.

and white” (Krog 2003, 220) and “[...] ‘I am the product of the people of South Africa’” (Krog 2003, 220).

Mandela’s collectivism is properly underlined by Krog, who sees Mandela as transforming the Cartesian “I think therefore I am” into “I am because I am with you”—however, she has to add that what Mandela has accomplished far surpasses this simplistic opposition (Krog 2003, 259). Krog sees the essence of Mandela’s autobiography as “The fact that you are interwoven with your community, and not your lonely singularity, finally determines your greatness” (Krog 2003, 275) and, “Mandela provides a totally new account of leadership within the nation [...]” (Krog 2003, 276).

Krog, however, struggles to relinquish her own individualistic perspective on Mandela. Like Tony Leon who compares Mandela with Gandhi and the Dalai Lama in Parliament (Krog 2003, 221), Krog writes about Mandela in an admiring, near-reverent way: “[...] he is teaching us a way of regarding the world, this miracle of a man, of being at grace with people, of being human in benign spaces, of preferring the skein of humanity to the fanatic purity of principle” (Krog 2003, 259).

The way Krog writes about Mandela is reminiscent of what Rob Nixon calls the “near-Messianic dimensions” of Mandela’s reputation (1990, 43). During the 27 years of his imprisonment, Mandela was held up as a figure of salvation. Immediately on his release, Mandela started undermining this view by subordinating himself to the ANC (Nixon 1990, 43). However, Krog continues to portray Mandela as a saviour: not only of ‘black’ people, but also one who teaches ‘white’ people what true humanity is and teaches them about the superiority of collectivism to western individualism. This extraordinary “way of looking at the world” resides in “blackness” for Krog (2003, 259); nothing in her past could teach her this; she seems to find it only when sitting “opposite a black face” (Krog 2003, 259).

While holding up King Moshoeshoe I of Basotholand as an extraordinary leader like Tutu and Mandela, Krog does not withhold unattractive facts about Moshoeshoe in *Begging to Be Black*.<sup>8</sup> She asks how we can reconcile these facts (if they are indeed true) with an

---

8 There is a strong suggestion that Moshoeshoe murdered five boys when he himself was young, because they were disobedient (Krog 2009: 21-22) and that later in life he was responsible for the death of his first wife, Mamohato, (2009: 115-117).

otherwise remarkable human being. Krog partly leaves us with her own unresolved discomfort, but she also describes how, under the mentorship of Mohlomi, Moshoeshoe underwent a significant personal transformation and developed a comprehensive moral philosophy (2009, 23-24).

This philosophy is firstly illustrated by Krog by referring to the incident where a group of cannibals ate Moshoeshoe's own grandfather, Peete. Instead of condemning them to death, Moshoeshoe showed mercy to them and initiated them into his followers: "Through rituals, cattle and a safeguarded home, the cannibals could change their habits and earn their place back in the realm of humanity from which their behaviour of devouring fellow humans had expelled them" (2009, 26). This contra-intuitive behaviour of Moshoeshoe is appraised by Krog as follows: "he was not kind and caring out of weakness, but out of a strengthening belief that safety, care and trust unlocked powerful energies to the benefit of a community" (2009, 26).

Krog portrays the interaction of the missionaries Casalis and Arbousset with Moshoeshoe as emblematic of that of 'white' missionaries in Southern Africa, and, on a larger scale, of 'white' colonizers. Moshoeshoe was confronted with westerners who had admiration for him, but also saw him as inferior, and desired to appropriate him (Krog 2009, 19). Up until his death, Moshoeshoe remained the ultimate prize for the missionary who could convert him (Krog 2009, 21). Yet Moshoeshoe rejected the efforts at evangelising him; he believed that the Biblical morality taught by the missionaries was already familiar to the Basotho (Krog 2009, 78) and he openly questioned Christian morality. He did not believe in capital punishment (2009, 80) and failed to accept the justifications for war that the Christian missionaries tried to put forth (2009, 82).

Furthermore, Krog refers to several conversations and arguments between Moshoeshoe and the missionaries in which he tries to no avail to prove the equal value of Basotho beliefs and western beliefs. The image of Moshoeshoe that emerges in *Begging to Be Black* is that of a leader with a very thorough understanding of the philosophy that underlies the way of living of the Basotho. He is able to 'see through' the motivations and restricted world view of the missionaries and colonizers, but this only means that he has to endeavour to defend himself against their views for the rest of his life. Krog compares Nelson Mandela and Moshoeshoe and finds that

both leaders were “exceptionalized” by westerners who in their “culture of individuality” could not conceive of a leader who is closely connected to his people (Krog 2009, 228).

## THE ORIGINS OF UBUNTU

In *Begging to Be Black* Krog speculates that the interconnectedness she observes in ‘black’ people was inherited by them from the Khoisan, since the world view of the Khoisan is one which implies a cosmological dimension, “a human and non-human world that encapsulates plants, animals, a spiritual god and ancestors” (2009, 184). In the same way that the click sounds of the Khoisan survives in the Bantu languages, Krog argues, their world view significantly influenced the speakers of the Bantu languages. As attractive as this theory might seem, Michael Wessels (2012) has convincingly argued that there are in fact intrinsic differences between Khoisan spirituality and that of Bantu language speakers. He is also sceptical of the possible motivating factors guiding Krog’s hypothesis (2012, 187) on which I cannot, in the interest of space, expand here.

A valid question that can be asked regarding Krog and Ubuntu, is the role of the spiritual for her. Based on her repeated criticism of Christianity, Krog does not appear to want to place her observations within a Christian framework. At the same time, she does appear to support an interpretation of Ubuntu in which spirituality is not absent. Notably, in *Begging to Be Black*, Krog is struck by an old man in Lesotho who explains his connectedness with all of the earth, and who speaks to “somebody or something that is near. Here. With us” (2009, 253)

I believe this issue of spirituality and Ubuntu requires further inquiry. Mphahlele easily states, that “African humanism [...] could never be a godless way of life. The African is a believer in the Supreme Being” (Mphahlele 2002, 151). Is Krog however correct in seeing this Supreme Being as reconcilable with the Christian God, as argued by Wessels (2012, 189)? Her references in *Begging to Be Black* include the work of the theologian Gerrit Brand on “African Christian Theology” (who quotes the theologian Manas Buthelezi) and works by Gabriel Setiloane, including the unpublished *How the Traditional World-View persists in the Christianity of the Sotho-Tswana* (Krog 2009, 291). What are the implications if Krog purports to be

exploring an ethic which is rooted in an ‘African worldview’, but her ethics are revealed to be essentially Christian in nature?

## **KROG AND AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY**

As stated earlier, Antjie Krog is not a philosopher. However, in her quest to understand ‘blackness’ or an ‘African world view’, Krog interacts with African philosophy in a limited way in her trilogy. She does not restrict herself to a specific trend, to use Oruka’s terminology, but explores the work of a number of different African philosophers and pseudo-philosophers. Her own contribution also spans many different approaches to African philosophy. In all this, she has in part been influenced very specifically by the American philosopher Richard H. Bell as I shall demonstrate below.

Using Oruka’s categories, the following brief remarks can be made. In her trilogy and her two academic articles, Krog briefly quotes or refers to: ethnophilesophers like John Mbiti, professional philosophers like Paulin Hountondji and Tsenay Serequeberhan, creative writer-philosophers like Wole Soyinka (Krog 2008a and 2008b) and philosophers who do linguistic analysis like Kwame Gyekye. One could even possibly argue that Krog does a kind of sage philosophy in the many conversations she has with ‘black’ people in the course of the trilogy, in an effort to understand certain phenomena and practices. With the help of certain interlocutors, Krog also attempts linguistic analysis. Though in the interest of space I cannot further expand on my contention regarding sage philosophy, this article does contain various examples of Krog’s conversations with ‘black’ South Africans that at least partly illustrate my argument. I will only briefly go into Krog’s linguistic analysis here before touching on the remaining aspects of her engagement with African philosophy.

In short, Krog’s ‘linguistic analysis’ consists of an analysis of words in African languages for ‘white’ people. Krog herself does not speak an African language fluently, though she knows some Sesotho because of growing up on a farm in the Free State. In her translations of indigenous African poetry in *Met woorde soos met kerse* (2002),<sup>9</sup> Krog was aided by various ‘black’ and ‘white’ experts in the various South African languages. In the trilogy, Krog also relies on the

---

9 See note 7.

interpretations of mother tongue speakers of African languages as well as other experts (or purported experts).

The word for 'white' person in Sesotho is *lekgoa* (in the South African orthography) or *lekhoa* (the spelling used in Lesotho). The plural is *makgoa* or *makhoa*. In the related language Sepedi (or Northern Sotho) the spelling is *lekgowa* and *makgowa*. In *A Change of Tongue*, a group of 'black' children on Krog's childhood farm tell her that *makgoa* means 'baboons'. They provide the following justification for this: "Because baboons always look over their shoulders, because they look one way but walk the other way, because they do nothing—they just check out, check out, check out—the whole day" (Krog 2003, 85-86).<sup>10</sup> The domestic worker on the farm, Eveline, adds to this that in Northern Sotho *makgowa* means "those on whom we spit when we see them".

Although one does not want to doubt Krog's recollection of these childhood conversations, no Sesotho experts I consulted had ever heard of *lekgoa* meaning 'baboon'. Furthermore, the definition of the Northern Sotho form could not be confirmed by Sepedi experts, but seemed highly unlikely to them.

In *Begging to Be Black*, Krog further attempts to further investigate the word *lekhoa*. However, this is done in a wholly inaccurate and ineffective way. Firstly, she states that it is a class 7 Sesotho noun, and that nouns in this class are reserved for debased people, for instance the word for thief, *legodu* (Krog 2009, 59). This is incorrect as *lekgoa/lekhoa* falls in class 5, and the plural in class 6. Though it is true that South African Bantu languages have a so-called 'person class', classes 1 and 2 and 1a and 2a, many other words for people occur in other classes. It can be argued that both classes 5/6 and 9/10 have a higher frequency of loan words, for instance *lenyesemane* (Englishman) in class 5, and *tjibere* (teacher) in class 9. On this basis *lekhoa* falls in class 5 because it describes foreigners, but the fact that the word for 'thief' also falls in class 5, does not mean that further negative

---

10 West finds the reason for this definition very convincing: the fact that baboons look over their shoulders all day relates to the "surveillance and 'baasskap' assumed by the settler, always 'checking out,' which, in an ironic reversal is interpreted by the black farm labourers as inherent laziness, and in another twist, the reversal of the zoological terms reserved by the settler to mark the condition of the native" (2009: 81).

connotations can be given to class 5 nouns. After all, the class contains words like *lese*a (baby) and *lesole* (soldier).

Secondly, Krog reproduces the work of Tony Harding, author of *Lekgowa* (2009), who stated in a newspaper article (Harding 2007) and a related Wikipedia entry, that “[t]he word *keboa* as a noun refers to a kind of lice found on the hindquarters of domestic animals”, and that “as a verb it could mean ‘to fight’ or ‘to shout’, or ‘to lack decorum, to be rude, to cause embarrassment, to be disrespectful, to have no regard for other people’” (Krog 2009, 59). Again, Sesotho experts I consulted never heard of the definition of a kind of lice. The verb stem *-kegoa* does mean ‘scream or shout’, but dictionaries do not list the noun *lekegoa/lekheboa/lekgowa* as a deverbative of *-kegoa/-keboa/-kgowa*.

On the basis of Harding’s faulty ‘research’, Krog concludes that *lekheboa* “indicates a disrespectful person, someone who is part of a class of people who lack respect for other human beings” (Krog 2009: 59). Using Said’s term “the Other”, Krog further speculates that the word *lekheboa* does not exactly ‘other’ ‘white people’, but rather “indicates a group that regards the rest of humanity as ‘The Other’” (Krog 2009: 59).

The only part of Krog’s argument that can be said to have some validity is her use of a Sesotho idiom: “When a white person behaves humanely and contrary to the stereotype, it would be said that ‘*Ga se lekegoa, ke motbo*’ (‘He/she is not white, he/she is a human being’ (Krog 2009, 59). I believe Krog would have been wiser to use the research of scholars like Wim van Binsbergen (2001) who convincingly argue that the category of ‘human’, indicated by the root *-ntu*, is a closed-off category for ‘black Africans and that it has been and still is virtually impossible for ‘white’ outsiders to belong to the *-ntu* category, i.e. to be a *muntu* (Nguni languages) or *motbo* (Sotho languages). This avenue of inquiry links with the larger body of research into African personhood on which Krog touches.

Elsewhere in *A Change of Tongue*, Krog consults a certain professor of Xhosa, Prof. Mayekiso. He explains the importance of naming in traditional South African communities (Krog 2003, 184), and then proceeds to state that the speakers of African languages found creative ways of assessing ‘white’ people by means of language. “Xhosa and Zulu were the first black languages that named whites in South Africa. The first thing that struck them about whites was their blue eyes and their hair. Therefore some of the earliest names for

whites are 'They-through-whose-eyes-the-wind-blows', 'They whose hair washes down from their heads' (Krog 2003, 184).

The list of names provided by the professor, reproduced in English translation,<sup>11</sup> takes up almost an entire page. Eventually, according to the professor, "the original inhabitants of Southern Africa started gauging the nature of white people" and gave them names like, "They-who-talk-to-others-as-if-they-are-bundles-of-washing", "A-language-spoken-with-a-sewn-mouth" [...] "They-who-just-speak-their-own-language" [...] "Latecomers-who-soil-the-water-as-they-grab-everything-for-themselves" (Krog 2003, 184).

Both Krog's analysis of the word *lekgoa/lekhoa* and the above list of names for 'white' people put forth the argument that 'black' people in South Africa, who had been negatively stereotyped for centuries by 'white' colonizers, had all the while been turning the tables on 'white' people. They captured the *true* nature of 'white' people in language in a way that should lead to intense self-examination on the part of 'white' people.

Despite its obvious shortcomings, the value of Krog's attempt at linguistic analysis lies in her efforts to understand aspects of languages she does not speak and to be humbled and show a willingness to learn from those languages. Throughout her trilogy, Krog in turn aims to 'turn the tables' on 'white' people by deliberately reversing colonial and racist assessments of 'black' people, by valorising 'blackness' and devalorising 'whiteness'. She exposes 'white' colonizers as supremely individualistic, greedy and opportunistic, and implies these features persist amongst 'white' South Africans today, who need to learn from 'black' people the superior values related to interconnectedness.

## RICHARD BELL AND ANTJIE KROG

In *Begging to Be Black* Krog mentions in a diary entry that during her stay in Berlin she reads African philosophy for two hours every night (2009, 91). As mentioned above, two of the scholarly articles Krog produced in 2008 are relevant when writing about Krog and Ubuntu.

---

11 Some examples are in the original language as well as English translation, but the specific language is not identified. Other examples are only given in English.

In both articles, concepts like forgiveness and reconciliation play an important part in Krog's articulation of "interconnectedness-towards-wholeness". I believe this connection can be traced to a large extent to the book *Understanding African Philosophy: A Cross-cultural Approach* (2002) by Richard Bell.

Bell's book was a significant starting point of Krog's more academic exploration of African philosophy. The authors and works she quotes in her articles and in *Begging to Be Black* are often identical to Bell's bibliography— Hountondji (1996) and Serequeberhan (1994), or very similar, as in the case of Gyekye.

What is even more significant, though, is the similarity between Bell and Krog's approaches. Krog's quest for understanding has been referred to numerous times in this article. This intersects meaningfully with Bell's emphasis on "[u]nderstanding another culture" (the title of his introductory chapter). The target audience of Bell's book are privileged American students who must first be encouraged to care about the suffering of many Africans before they can attempt to engage with and understand African philosophy (cf. Presbey 2003). Both Krog and Bell in other words have a great yearning to truly understand Africa.

It appears to be thanks to Bell (2002, 66 and elsewhere) that Krog cites Kwame Gyekye when she places emphasis on the communitarian nature of African society (Krog 2009, 185). A further intersection between Bell and Krog is the way in which aspects like morality, justice, truth and forgiveness are seen as a natural extension of African humanism (Bell 2002, 40), and their interrogation of western individualism versus African communitarianism (Bell 2002, 67). Bell also explicitly writes about the South African context and finds a link between Ubuntu and restorative justice (2002, 89-90) in reference to the TRC (Bell 2002, 94). When writing on the TRC, Bell quotes several times from *Country of My Skull*.

Even though I aver that Krog owes a number of key insights, for instance into the TRC (to which she returns in *Begging to Be Black*), and especially around African philosophy, to Richard Bell, the fact is that Krog only read Bell *after* the publication of the first two texts of the trilogy. Therefore it is more apt to concentrate on the broad overlap that exists between the two writers, which, as I have already pointed out, centres on their shared desire to understand Africa, and their shared identification of ethics or morality as a key concept when engaging with African philosophy.

As this section shows, Krog does not attempt to make a contribution to African philosophy, but whether intentional or not, a “general ethnophilosophical desire” (Praeg 2000, 65 and elsewhere) underlies her trilogy. She is not only eager to probe the existence and nature of a uniquely African world view—she also desires for her readers to grasp the injustices done to Africa through colonisation and to recuperate the image they might have of Africa.

In *Begging to Be Black*, Antjie Krog says at one point in her conversations with the philosopher Paul Patton, “I am not necessarily interested in African philosophy versus Western philosophy, but rather in what kind of self I should grow into in order to live a caring, useful and informed life—a ‘good life’—within my country in southern Africa” (2009, 95). This statement highlights the focus of Krog’s efforts to understand an African world view, namely, her desire to transform herself, if necessary, in order to adapt to the ‘black’ majority in South Africa.

## CONCLUSION

For centuries, as Krog demonstrates, ‘black’ people in South Africa were subjected to western frameworks and it was impressed on them that those perspectives were superior to their own. In an attempt to invert this, Krog explores Ubuntu (which she sees as a communitarian world view aimed at interconnectedness) with the goal of valorising African approaches. The variety of ways in which she does this—employing examples of African orality, engaging with symbolic ‘black’ leaders, analysing language and reading African philosophy—are part of the rich fabric of the transformation trilogy and cannot be separated from the many other threads and themes the trilogy contains. This chapter, however, concentrated mainly on the specific ways in which Krog has written a trilogy very firmly rooted in Africa.

In asking what the usefulness of Krog’s nonfiction trilogy is for the study of Ubuntu, I believe that there are various possibilities that necessitate further research. Firstly, Mahmood Mamdani is possibly suggesting something akin to Ubuntu when he imagines a different sort of justice which can establish a “common political community between yesterday’s colonizers and colonized”—“it needs to be seen more as the practical embodiment of empathy than as the settling of a historical score” (Mamdani 1998, 14). Krog’s interest in the concept

of Ubuntu definitely lies in part with this “practical embodiment of empathy” that can shape “interconnectedness-towards-wholeness”.

Secondly, in *Begging to Be Black* Krog states that she does not want to live in a country that “only” protects the human rights of its citizens (2009, 248). The link between Ubuntu and human rights should be further explored in conjunction with contemporary theorising about the conceptualisation of human rights. Richard Bell, for instance, quotes at some length his research on Simone Weil, who in the early 1940s stated that there is mention in older Egyptian, Middle-Eastern and Eastern texts of “an earlier sense of morality that was not ‘rights-based’ and that had its roots in much more communitarian-based traditions” (Bell 2002, 67). Krog’s ideas in her trilogy around reconciliation and restitution could be further studied in a global perspective shaped by “critical race studies” and communitarian theory: “While maintaining a principled support for individual rights (including voluntarism), it emphasizes social and cultural identity as comparable ‘rights’” (Barkan 2000, 312).

Thirdly, this chapter could not truly explore the relationship between African spirituality and Ubuntu, a topic that requires further clarification. This includes a more rigorous study of spirituality in the transformation trilogy, including a spirituality that transcends human relationships and includes nature. For instance, in *A Change of Tongue* Krog writes about humans and cattle (2003, 88-89), and the seven interludes of this text suggest that ‘becoming the other’, for Krog, is not restricted to ‘becoming black’.

In summary: Antjie Krog, as a ‘white’ creative writer and public intellectual in South Africa, has written an influential nonfiction trilogy in which the state of South African society after 1994 is probed and the focus is in particular on the coexistence of ‘black’ and ‘white’ people in the aftermath of apartheid. In examining the relationships between ‘black’ and ‘white’ and asking what the future holds, Krog deliberately refers to Ubuntu numerous times and in varied ways. She posits Ubuntu as the opposite of western individualism and states that the values of communitarianism and interconnectedness it entails are superior to those of western and Christian notions around personhood and ethics. Black leaders like Tutu, Mandela and Moshoeshe all embody Ubuntu in her opinion. Growing out of her work on the TRC in *Country of My Skull*, Krog is captivated by the implications of Ubuntu for forgiveness and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa, a field of enquiry in

which she has not been alone. However, this chapter placed her exploration of Ubuntu in a much broader post-colonial perspective.

Krog seems to be suggesting that the 'white' minority needs to learn to understand Ubuntu if it has a desire to understand the 'black' majority in South Africa. Krog does not pretend to be an expert on Ubuntu or to have the thoroughgoing understanding she is looking for, but her trilogy represents a worthy effort in exploring what Ubuntu means for 'black' people but also finally for all South Africans. Her contribution to the discourse on Ubuntu is of such a nature that it deserves serious attention by Ubuntu scholars.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barkan, Elazar. 2000. *The Guilt of Nations. Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Bell, Richard H. 2002. *Understanding African Philosophy: A Cross-cultural Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues*. London: Routledge.
- Burger, Willie. 2011. "'n Verandering van vorm as die vorm van verandering: Antjie Krog se 'n Ander tongval". *Stilet*, 23(1): 18-35.
- Comaroff, John L. and Jean Comaroff. 2001. "On Personhood: an Anthropological Perspective from Africa". *Social Identities*, 7(2): 267-283.
- Gade, Christian B.N. 2011. "The Historical Development of the Written Discourses on Ubuntu". *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 30(3): 303-329.
- Garman, Anthea. 2015. *Antjie Krog and the post-apartheid public sphere: speaking poetry to power*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Gyekye, Kwame. 1987. *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harding, Tony. 2007. "As divisions blur, we will find new meanings for old words". *Sunday Times*, July 1, 2007.
- Krog, Antjie. 1994. "Focus of the imbongi". *Die Suid-Afrikaan*, 49: 12-15.
- Krog, Antjie. 1995. *Gedigte 1989-1995*. Groenkloof: Hond.

- Krog, Antjie. 2000 [USA edition]. *Country of My Skull: guilt, sorrow, and the limits of forgiveness in the new South Africa*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Krog, Antjie. 2003. *A Change of Tongue*. Johannesburg: Random House.
- Krog, Antjie. 2008a. "...if it means he gets his humanity back...": The Worldview Underpinning the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission". *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 3(3): 204-220.
- Krog, Antjie. 2008b. "This thing called reconciliation...": forgiveness as part of an interconnectedness-towards-wholeness". *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 27(4): 353-366.
- Krog, Antjie. 2009. *Begging to Be Black*. Johannesburg: Random House Struik.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. 1998. When does a Settler become a Native? Reflections of the Colonial Roots of Citizenship in Equatorial and South Africa. Inaugural lecture: AC Jordan Professor of African Studies, 13 May 1998. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Department of Communication.
- Mphahlele, Es'kia. 2002. *Es'kia: Education, African Humanism & Culture, Social Consciousness, Literary Appreciation*. Cape Town: Kwela.
- Mphahlele, Es'kia. 2004. *Es'kia Continued: Literary Appreciation, Education, African Humanism & Culture, Social Consciousness*. Cape Town: Kwela.
- Nixon, Rob. 1990. "Mandela, Messianism, and the Media". *Transition*, 51: 42-55.
- Polatinsky, Ashley. 2009. "Living with grace on the earth: the poetic voice in Antjie Krog's A Change of tongue". *Literator*, 30(2): 69-88.
- Praeg, Leonhard. 2000. *African Philosophy and the Quest for Autonomy*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Presbey, Gail. 2003. "Review of Understanding African Philosophy: A Cross-Cultural Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues by Richard H. Bell". *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, 37(1): 138-140.
- Sanders, Mark. 2002. *Complicities: The intellectual and Apartheid*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Templeton, Alan R. 1998. "Human Races: A Genetic and Evolutionary Perspective". *American Anthropologist*, 100(3): 632-650.
- Van Binsbergen, Wim. 2001. "Ubuntu and the globalisation of Southern African thought and society". *Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy*, 15(1-2): 53-89.
- Van Niekerk, Jacomien. 2007. "Biografie in die pryslied: Die bydrae van Antjie Krog naas twee Xhosa-pryssangers". *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*, 44(2): 29-45.
- Wessels, Michael. 2012. "The Khoisan Origins of the Interconnected World View in Antjie Krog's Begging to be Black". *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa*, 24(2): 186-197.
- West, Mary. 2009. *White women writing white: identity and representation in (post-) apartheid literatures of South Africa*. Claremont: New Africa Books [David Philip].