

## Editorial note, part 1

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There is a comfortable familiarity to an issue dedicated to Antjie Krog; A quick scan through past issues of *Stilet* brings up a total of 25 articles that directly reference Krog in their title, with a further 37 in which Krog is mentioned, implied, quoted, or referenced. Add to this no less than three themed issues and, since 2000, two ALV conferences dedicated in part to the author, poet, public intellectual and academic-activist.

Despite this breadth (and a prolific and expansive and genre-crossing Krog oeuvre), scholarly attention – at least in the *Stilet* archive – seem unable to avoid the mesmerizing pull of three seminal texts: a supermajority of contributions tend to focus on *Kleur kom nooit alleen nie* and *Lady Anne*, while 2002's searing *Country of my skull* is an unavoidable presence in almost all articles that focus on Krog's non-poetic output.

Indeed, academic interest closely follows public temporal-affective engagement with Krog, which also seem to convalesce around a handful of texts and a handful of acts: Who hasn't signed on to the (seemingly perennial) petition to the Nobel nomination committee; who hasn't intoned "Ma, ek skryf vir jou 'n gedig [...] 'n kaalvoet gedig" at a kunswedstryd?

But overfamiliarity can run the risk of easing sharper edges; scant mention was made in *Stilet* of the plagiarism row, for example. For that, the reader has to look outward, to Katie Highman or Anthea Garman. One also has to ask: How do we stay comfortably familiar with work that, at times, highlights brutal injustice, or is intricately built around the urgent, urgent need for grazing discussions? And what to make of the tendency in many articles to fiercely focus on a single, decontextualised, de-oeuvre'd text, at the cost of exploring Krog's creative-collaborative personae? (Despite her own insistence on the importance of literary collaboration, there is, for example, little on collaborative work such as 2009's *There was this goat*, co-written with Nosisi Mpolweni and Kopano Ratele.)



It might be of value then to intentionally read Krog-in-*Stilet* in wider context: When Krog is (as she often is) used as counterfigure, or even foil, in discussions of other female poets, then read this alongside Carlijn Cober's discussion of *topopoetics of displacement in Ingrid Jonker*; or, when Krog is (in a derivative senses, sometimes) typified as 'daughter-figure' of male poets of a certain age, read along with Yianna Liatsos' work on the autobiographical paradoxes of 'writing a new *bloodline*'. Along contributions that focus on single texts, productively read them next to non-*Stilet* work on extra-single-textual concepts such as *the syncretic communal, the accumulation of media meta-capital, self-othering and second-person performance and translator's habitus*.

In terms of system thinking, such a reading-with and in-wider-context can be especially beneficial to get a fuller understanding of what Krog has come to mean for Afrikaans literature. (Even when it is still unclear to what extent Afrikaans scholarship on Krog intersects with – and is read alongside – English scholarship on Krog. 'Who quotes Viljoen, or Van Niekerk, and who quotes Garman?' seem to be handy shorthand here.) Still, she looms large in work on translation (even more so with the publication of novels resulting from the translation project of the Centre of Multilingualism and Diversity Research, and in work done on Krog by Jerzey Koch), and in work that centres on one of the central questions arising in the late 2000s, and gathering urgent ethical immediacy in 2020: Who speaks on whose behalf? (see *Stilet issue 27(2)*).

In putting together this issue, we've therefore striven to stay true to the idea of a kongresuitgawe – the stated and focused dedication to a singular (in many senses of the word) concept, across discourse, *stilus*, and revisit sections – while at the same time offering space for more faceted views of the 'Krog-as' figure, so to hopefully facilitate a wider reading of both Krog and Krog-as.

## part 2

This is, we'd like to state again, very much a kongresuitgawe, i.e. a conference issue. As such, it is a timecapsule, a snapshot, of scholarship-discourse-engagement with Krog *at this moment*.

The eighteenth bi-annual conference of the Afrikaanse Letterkundevereniging was dedicated to the work of Antjie Krog and the many literary-theoretical frames utilized in Afrikaans literary scholarship, and hosted by Stellenbosch University's Wallenberg Research Centre of STIAS from 12 to 14 September 2018.



The conference served as a space for academic discourse about the literary contribution of one of the most important living authors in Afrikaans. Aside from the announcement of a series of translations of seminal South African novels into English, a project Krog was intimately part of, two creative pieces by Krog appear in *stilet.stilus*: a poem entitled “Die durf van liedere” (The wager of song) written for the musician Mantombi Matotiyana, as well as a gripping report on the reciprocal relational of Krog’s friendship with fellow Afrikaans poet Johann de Lange.

The first four research papers in *stilet.diskoers* are revisions of work presented at the ALV conference. In a paper entitled “‘Die stil gebied van die liedere wat ek liefhet’ – Antjie Krog’s affective experience of German music”, Marius Crous presents research on the intertextual references to German music made in two texts by Krog. Referencing affect theory, Crous analyses the poetic subject’s somatic response to German music, as well as the resulting self-analysis and self-consciousness.

In the next paper, Carel van Rooyen compares the stirring (in many ways!) volume *Lady Anne* (1989) with Alfred Schaffer’s *Mens Dier Ding* (2014), with reference to the literary lens of meta-modernism. Comparison is made between the two volumes in, for instance the *durchkomponierte* use of a well-known historical figure (Anne Barnard and Shaka Zulu, respectively) as motif, the exploration of the personal and socio-political, and the a-chronological placement of historical figures in new contexts.

As a point of departure for the article entitled “Ruimtelike, epistemologiese en ontologiese (on) geregtigheid as temas in die werk van Antjie Krog”, Karin van Marle explores the interdependence of epistemology, ontology and place in selected poems and non-fiction texts in the Krog oeuvre. Van Marle draws on the writing of, amongst others, André van der Walt and Paul Patton to make the argument that theoretical and epistemological ways of dealing with/in land in South Africa plays a key role in the processes of restitution and reformation.

Likewise, in “Op soek na Krog in die gereg: ’n relaas”, Isolde de Villiers investigates the collaborative contribution potential of Krog’s debut novella, *Relaas van ’n moord*, for students of jurisprudence and law studies. With reference to official records of the court case on which the novella is based, De Villiers explores what a recalculation of the relationship between the law and literature *could* mean, while making a clear distinction between the law *in* literature and the law *as* literature, but against a functionalist instrumentalisation of literature in service of the law.

In the inaugural *stilet.argief* section, we present two translated and reprinted articles from the *Stilet* archive: Bernard Odendaal and H.P. van Coller’s “Poetic plot in Antjie Krog’s *Lady Anne* (1989)”



from 2010 and Marthinus Beukes' "The iconisation of physical deterioration with specific reference to Antjie Krog's poetry volume *Verweerskrif*" from 2011. It is the aim with the inclusion of these two articles, each framed by a newly-commissioned contextualization, to open discussion on their continued relevance and insights, locally as well as transnationally, and we invite feedback and comment both on the two reprinted articles and on the process of bringing to light work from the deep archive.

The idea of a contextualised revisit – and a retrospective orientation from the *now* – echoes on in the five pieces collected in the stilet.revisit section, with each speaking to the way Krog has framed (and reframed) notions around the diversity of the South African lived experience, linguistic innovation as a form of creating space for identity, imagination of femininity and masculinity, and the ways in which the Krog oeuvre engages with the climate crisis as *the* existential issue of our time.

In the first piece, Remona Voges re-reads Krog's autofictional text *Begging to be Black* (2009) as a triptych in which a world is imagined where characters of diverse backgrounds and from differing historical periods can productively be placed in conversant, shared narrative space. An account of Krog's experiences and impressions while living in Berlin, this paper – with its focus on the challenges to living together in (South) Africa – makes the argument that a firmer grasp of interconnection and interpretation (through the lens of an 'African worldview') offers the possibility for a new type of coherence in South African society.

Geroda McCharlie's contribution offers an account of how this interconnection explicitly takes form *through* and *with* language. McCharlie makes much of Krog's "continued ruminations on the ethical and the aesthetic" as it lets her activism loose on language, with such linguistic development possibly acting as textual witness of a new way of writing for Krog.

With reference to Uys Krige's stirring (in more than one way) translations of Shakespeare into Afrikaans, Jean Meiring writes on the translation strategies Antjie Krog employs with her transposition of Tom Lanoy's *Koningin Lear* in his piece, "In die oog van die storm – 'n Afrikaanse Lear vir nou".

The last two revisit pieces consider gendered visibility tropes, through the 2020-specific revisit of a Krog text. In "Die mineurburger en sy imposante stem, maar ook sy verbleikte kraag", Wemar Strydom sketches the figure of Terre'Blanche as a gendered cypher of wilting political power – one that is on unsparing display in the opening three paragraphs of *Country of my skull*; and in "Antjie Krog as trendsetter and boundary pusher: Representations of feminine third age in Afrikaans



(popular) culture”, Martina Vitackova considers shifts in representation and visibility of feminine third age in the covers of selected Afrikaans popular texts.

It is the editors’ hope that this issue of *Stilet* be conducive to further discussion and (re)vision – akin to the work of Antjie Krog itself – and to add to the sometimes quite comfortable familiarity of an indomitable force in Afrikaans letters.