

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BOOK AWARD

Mr Chancellor, I have the honour of presenting to you

Anthea Corinne Garman,

Associate Professor and Deputy Head
of the School of Journalism and Media Studies,

for the **Vice-Chancellor's Book Award.**

One of the core purposes of a University is to produce new knowledge that enhances humanity's understanding of the natural and social worlds.

The Vice-Chancellor's Book Award seeks to recognize a recent book published by a current staff member, that advances knowledge and understanding, and brings undoubted credit to the University by virtue of the contribution it makes to scholarly literature, or the discipline within which it is authored.

Professor Garman's research spans the areas of media and citizenship, identity issues in the Global South, and the role of media in culture and social change in post-apartheid South Africa. She leads a research project under the title *Media and citizenship: between marginalisation and participation*, and collaborates internationally. Professor Garman teaches writing and editing, and media studies. She is the editor of *Rhodes Journalism Review*, and has guest edited the Journal *Ecquid Novi - African Journalism Studies*. She co-ordinates the annual *Think!Fest* public lecture series of the National Arts Festival, and she authors a popular blog *Writing Across Genres*.

In 2009 Professor Garman was awarded her PhD degree by the University of the Witwatersrand for a thesis entitled *Antjie Krog: Self and Society, the Making and Mediation of a Public Intellectual in South Africa*. In subsequent years she has re-working and expanded this study to produce the book that we celebrate today, *Antjie Krog and the Post-apartheid Public Sphere: Speaking Poetry to Power*, a 220 page monograph of original research, published by UKZN Press.

In this book, the author presents an analysis of the forces in play around who populates the public intellectual sphere and what ideas gain currency. She argues that the oft featured public language of "crisis" points, not to the overt dangers being espoused, but to a crisis of what constitutes the authority to speak in public, and to be a proxy for those who cannot or do not speak. To give substance to her argument that debates are evidence of a deep anxiety about authority and legitimacy, Garman has chosen to focus on one particular public figure in South Africa, Antjie Krog, the poet, journalist and author, who for four decades has elicited a public hearing for her ideas. The book investigates and puts forward an understanding of how Krog as a white Afrikaner comes to have a platform in public, despite dramatically shifting social and political circumstances.

The book takes Edward Said's ideas about public intellectual representation, and his much repeated phrase "speaking truth to power", as an important starting point for

analysing Krog's role, and playfully, but significantly, evolves it into "speaking poetry to power".

It usually requires a year or two for a book to have sufficient impact to attract the attention of the Vice-Chancellor's Book Award committee, but this book has done so within a relatively short time since its first publication.

One review refers to the book as "extremely insightful."

Another as "a timely examination of her (Krog's) contribution to transformation and reconciliation".

A third notes that "(Garman's) book looks not only at the political context of Krog's writing, but also at how she fulfils the requirements for powerful witness, with reference to public intellectual Pierre Bourdieu and others. ... Better than just clear, it is often really elegant."

For her outstanding writing and intellectual contribution, Professor Garman is a worthy recipient of this award.

So, Mr Chancellor, I request you to award the **2015 Vice-Chancellor's Book Award** to **Professor Anthea Garman**.