

Research fellow Unathi Ndlelantle Ngada

PhD: Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty in Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*, *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*

The Ghent Centre for Afrikaans and the Study of South Africa is collaborating with UNISA (Department of Afrikaans and Theory of Literature) and will soon welcome Ms. **Unathi Ndlelantle Ngada** (UNISA). The research project is funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF) South Africa through the Black Academics Advancement Programme (NRF-BAAP) and the Women in Research (WiR) programme. The supervisors of the PhD project are Prof. Alwyn Roux (UNISA), Dr. Andile Xaba (UNISA), and Prof. Yves T'Sjoen (Ghent University/Stellenbosch University/UNISA).

Abstract PhD (UNISA-UGent)

While In-Yer-Face Theatre dominated Britain in the 1990s, investigations into this theatrical style suggest that these plays go beyond the study of this theatrical style and its contribution to contemporary theatre studies, as they are analysed within new theoretical contexts. Consequently, much of the existing literature has not explored these plays within the theoretical framework of Theatre of Cruelty, which raises an important question in this study: what is the connection between IYFT (hereon IYFT) plays and the Theatre of Cruelty? If such a relationship exists, how does it influence the (re)interpretation of plays originally classified as IYFT? To address this, this study selects prominent IYFT playwright Sarah Kane's *Cleansed* (1998), *Crave* (1998) and *4.48 Psychosis* (1999. Staged 2000) to argue how a play, originally classified as an IYFT play, is in fact a representation of Artaud's cruelty in theatre which illustrates his theatrical ideology that theatre should disrupt the spectator's senses and emotions. Furthermore, this study will showcase how current studies into IYFT suggest that Kanes' plays are situated in various theoretical frameworks for close reading, yet few studies have been conducted to situate these very same plays within the theoretical framework of Theatre of Cruelty. To validate the relevance of this study in contemporary theatre studies, as well as the ongoing debates such as the subjective nature of defining "performance" and "theatre", scenes in the chosen plays will be analysed to account for Kane's use of avant-garde theatrical techniques such as Artaud's concept cruelty in theatre. In doing so, this study will showcase how the selected plays, as representations of Theatre of Cruelty, will contribute to the various theoretical frameworks of her plays situated within a broader context of IYFT and how these texts promote new analytical frameworks in contemporary theatre studies.

Keywords: Sarah Kane, Theatre of Cruelty, Antonin Artaud, Avant-garde