



Athol Fugard

Athol Fugard, a South African play writer, novelist, actor and director, was born on June 11th, 1932 in Middelburg, Eastern Cape. He became internationally known for his works that focused on the injustices perpetuated by South Africa's apartheid system.

Fugard credits his mother with teaching him to view South African society with a critical eye. As a white child growing up in a segregated society, Fugard resisted his racist upbringing, but could not escape apartheid's influence that offered him a privileged life.

Fugard's interest in drama took him to the township of Sophiatown, Johannesburg where he worked with black writers and actors. Fugard also worked briefly in the Native Commissioner's Court, which tried cases against non-whites arrested for failing to carry identification. This opened his eyes to the evil effects of apartheid, and inspired his writings.

TSOTSI

Fugard returned from England when he realized he needed to work in the context of his home country for his work to gain recognition. On his return, he completed his only novel, *Tsotsi* which he started at 26 years old. He tried to destroy the novel, but one copy survived and was published in 1980.

Fugard, through his writings, comments on the effects oppression had on the black society in South Africa during apartheid. The biographies of his characters are a reflection of the people's struggles under the burden of white supremacy. *Tsotsi* and his gang are healthy young men who should have jobs, but because of apartheid they are without work; this forces them into a life of crime to survive.

The film adaptation of *Tsotsi*, written and directed by Gavin Hood, won the 2005 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.



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Athol Fugard's motivation to write comes from:

- his passion to write for SA.
- his political and social awareness from living in Sophiatown.
- his belief in humanity's capacity for redemption.
- to inform the world about the struggles of apartheid in South Africa.

Adapted from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athol_Fugard

<https://www.grin.com/document/166556>

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/athol>