

## Topic Page: [Fugard, Athol](#)

Definition: **Fugard, Athol** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

South African playwright, director and actor. Fugard achieved international acclaim for his plays *The Blood Knot* (1961), *Sizwe Bandi is Dead* (1972), and *My Children! My Africa* (1990). His work often explores the effects of apartheid on South Africa's black population and the country's rapidly changing modern politics. He published an autobiography, *Cousins: A Memoir*, in 1997.



Image from: [South Africa in Philip's World Factbook 2008-2009](#)

### Summary Article: **Fugard, Athol (1932-)**

From *Encyclopedia of South Africa*

A pioneer in breaking racial barriers in South African theater, Athol Fugard used theater to build bridges between blacks and whites from the 1950s to the present. Many of his plays are set in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape Province where he was raised by an English father and an Afrikaner mother. Instead of completing his studies at the University of Cape Town, Fugard hitchhiked throughout the African continent. Two years after returning home to South Africa, in 1956, Fugard married Sheila Meiring.

The pair relocated to Johannesburg in 1958 to work in theater. Fugard took a day job in the court system where he learned of the injustices of the pass law system. In his spare time, he established close ties with the black artists of Sophiatown, who worked with him on his first production, *No Good Friday*, in 1958, followed by *Nongogo* in 1959. Both plays featured black casts that depicted life in the townships. The many plays that followed addressed race relations in South Africa, including *The Blood Knot* (1961) and *Boesman & Lena* (1969).

In 1963, Fugard collaborated with a black performing arts group in Port Elizabeth called the Serpent Players. Fugard and two key members of this group, John Kani and Winston Ntshona, teamed up to write *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* (1972) and *The Island* (1973). *Bansi* portrayed the hardships of South African migrant laborers, while *The Island* explored the lives of two inmates on Robben Island. From 1958 to 2008, Fugard wrote numerous plays, a novel, and two memoirs. Although not all of his plays discuss race and politics, his drama is known for creating interracial dialogue between groups. The 2005 adaptation of his novel *Tsotsi* was the first South African film to win an Academy Award for best foreign film.

**APA**

Chicago

Harvard

MLA

---

Fugard, Athol (1932-). (2011). In K. Johnson, & S. Jacobs (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of South Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. Retrieved from [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fugard\\_athol](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fugard_athol)

---



© 2011 by Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



© 2011 by Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

## APA

Fugard, Athol (1932-). (2011). In K. Johnson, & S. Jacobs (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of South Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. Retrieved from [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fugard\\_athol](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fugard_athol)

## Chicago

"Fugard, Athol (1932-)." In *Encyclopedia of South Africa*, edited by Krista Johnson, and Sean Jacobs. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2011. [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fugard\\_athol](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fugard_athol)

## Harvard

Fugard, Athol (1932-). (2011). In K. Johnson & S. Jacobs (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of South Africa*. [Online]. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. Available from: [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fugard\\_athol](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fugard_athol) [Accessed 18 October 2019].

## MLA

"Fugard, Athol (1932-)." *Encyclopedia of South Africa*, edited by Krista Johnson, and Sean Jacobs, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1st edition, 2011. *Credo Reference*, [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fugard\\_athol](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fugard_athol). Accessed 18 Oct. 2019.