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# Review of The Dramatic Art of Athol Fugard: From South Africa to the World

Jeanne M. Colleran

*John Carroll University*, [jcolleran@jcu.edu](mailto:jcolleran@jcu.edu)

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national territory, despite the fact that other locals see such claims as insincere and showing the 'shifty' character of Gypsies.

The author emphasizes that state policies have affected Romani groups differently even within one country. This is exemplified in the Romani Theater case study, where Lemon analyses racial hierarchies and the politics of representation. Roma from the Russka group are the main performers at the Theater, while the directors are mostly Russian and very few performers come from the Vlax Roma group, who migrated to Russia later than the Russka. One of the few public places Roma have access to, the Romani Theater was founded in 1931, part of the Soviet agenda of civilizing the Roma. Lemon argues that visibility is not necessarily empowering, as the Theater has limited 'the ways Roma could represent themselves, because only those features placed on either side of the proscenium were accorded visibility, framed as authentically Gypsy' (p. 234) and anxieties about authenticity haunt Romani performers even offstage. Lemon's theoretical sophistication and political awareness, besides the obvious focus on performance, make this work appealing to performance/theatre studies readers.

Theatre Research International, 29.1 DOI:10.1017/S0307883303301270

***The Dramatic Art of Athol Fugard: From South Africa to the World.*** By **Albert Wertheim**. Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 2000. Pp. xv + 273 + illus. \$45 Hb; \$17.95 Pb.

*Reviewed by Jeanne Collieran, John Carroll University*

It is difficult to over estimate the importance of Athol Fugard's drama to South African theatre, or to over value the commitment Fugard made, in his own words, 'to bear witness as truthfully as [he] could' to the events that shaped South Africa during the past half-century. His theatre forced South Africans to confront the deforming effects of legalized racism on both victim and perpetrator; in this, it anticipated some of what has come to light in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Admiration for Fugard's theatre, however, goes beyond its social utility. Fugard is a consummate theatrical craftsman. He is also, in his own appellation, a 'storyteller', one whose point of departure may be South Africa but whose tales resonate across cultures. It is this view of Fugard and his work that Albert Wertheim takes as his subject in this meticulously documented study. Not only does Wertheim consider Fugard's work in its South African context – a context he understands and communicates thoroughly – but he also places the drama alongside the best of Greek theatre and the modern masters from O'Neill to Pinter. Accordingly, Wertheim's study is most valuable for its close reading of Fugard's plays, which detail with great sensitivity the varying structures, literary echoes, and moments when Fugard's characters are unmasked in painful self-recognition. Most impressive is Wertheim's attention to the insistent metatheatricality that runs throughout Fugard's canon, with its insights into the challenges of reading past racialized identities and rehearsing new ones, formed in empathetic exchange. Reading *The Dramatic Art of Athol Fugard*, then, is an immersion into a rich and deeply appreciative view of Fugard's theatre; it is not, as Wertheim warns from the outset, a study primarily interested in the plays' politics. Wertheim,

following Fugard's lead, sees the plays as more concerned with the larger issues of seeking emotional truth, reconciling human relationships, and maintaining creativity. For those of us who cannot separate the political implications generated by plays that rely so heavily on historical specifics, Wertheim's study may be frustrating in places. But in the end, debates over differing analytical starting points recede in light of a conversation enriched by respect and plurality. The enviable grace with which Albert Wertheim balances his high regard for Fugard with his respectful treatment of different critical perspectives makes this book a remarkable study and a rich resource.

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***Puppet Theater in Contemporary Indonesia: New Approaches to Performance***

**Events.** Edited by **Jan Mrazek**. Michigan: Centers for South and Southeast Asian, University of Michigan, 2002. Pp. vii + 376 + illus. \$70 Hb; \$35 Pb.

*Reviewed by Ian Jarvis Brown, Bandung, Indonesia*

The cover of Mrazek's book shows a photograph of an innovative leather shadow puppet character of the *wayang kulit purwa* genre in Java, in the form of American pop icon, Batwoman. Like its cover, this collection of two dozen essays resembles a *gado-gado*, juxtaposing diverse elements, and approaching its topic from a diversity of post-colonial perspectives. Almost all the writers are studied practitioners or performers of *wayang*, including music performance of the gamelan orchestra; five are Indonesian. Thus, the text refreshingly focuses on performative values rather than overly theoretical or pedagogic evaluations.

To start with, Mrazek provides some rudiments of *wayang* (pp. i–vii). He succinctly frames the scope of the work by describing 'Some Themes in the Essays', 'Time(s): Changing Performances in a Changing World', 'Performance, Language, Writing', 'Performance, Politics, the Entertainment Business', 'Performance and local Identity', 'Performance and Ritual', 'Performance and the Mass Media', and 'Ways of Watching *Wayang*'. Mrazek's own, perceptive scholarship of *wayang* secures a significant place through his introduction and two chapters.

The essays are consistently well-researched, and the copious endnotes found in most essays are exceptional, often revealing more than the essays themselves, and at times providing invaluable scholastic substance of colonial perspectives, Western and Indonesian. However, the black-and-white illustrations lack tonal clarity, and their thumbnail size often inadequately document their subjects. While farsighted Western scholars, occupy a major place in Mrazek's domain of *wayang*, too little space is proffered for the ambit of Indonesian visionaries. Western readers unfamiliar with this performance genre may find themselves at a disadvantage to those familiar with *wayang*. In his concluding chapter Mrazek says, 'if you want to know *wayang*, stop reading further... and go beyond reading to *wayang* performances as they take place in Indonesia' (p. 372). If unable to watch *wayang* in Indonesia, at least watch a video of an outdoor performance if attempting to read Mrazek's important book.