



# The Cogency of Including the Works of Athol Fugard in the Further Education and Training Phase Curriculum in the Ekurhuleni South District: Teachers' Perspectives

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore the cogency of including the works of Athol Fugard in the Further Education and Training Phase from the perspectives of teachers. It focused on selected schools in the Ekurhuleni South District. The importance of this investigation acts as a measure to determine how teaching the works of Athol Fugard enhances and influences the teaching of English literature through the Further Education and Training of teachers and creates awareness about human rights issues. This study adopted a qualitative approach. The research instrument used was semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The sample was selected purposively and comprised twelve (12) teachers from three (3) different high schools in the Ekurhuleni South District. The participants were teachers who taught grades 10, 11, and 12 and were spread across different genders, grades, and educational backgrounds. Data was coded and analysed using thematic analysis. There was the general consensus from teachers that teaching the works of Athol Fugard opened a whole new world and experience, not only to the participants but to the learners as well. The findings revealed that teachers found that teaching the works of Athol Fugard in the Further Education and Learning Phase is very useful in many facets such as conscientising them and learners on human rights issues.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education (DoE) released a Green Paper in 1998 which defines Further Education and Training (FET) as all learning and training programmes from National Qualification Framework (NQF) level 2 to level 4, or the equivalent of Grades 10 to 12 in the school system. This is reflected in the South African Qualifications Act (SAQA), 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995). Curriculum, on the other hand, is described by Van Wyk and Higgs, as a system that is designed to ensure that knowledge is conveyed in a systematic and planned way so as to impart an amalgam of knowledge and skills that are determined to be appropriate and necessary to the society and the time.<sup>1</sup> Cogency, in terms of this study, reflects the impact, power, potency, and strength that the works of Athol Fugard had on teachers'

<sup>1</sup> Berte van Wyk and Philip Higgs, "The Future of University Research in Africa," in *The Future University* (Routledge, 2012), 178–86.

perspectives whilst teaching and interacting with learners. A teacher is described as someone who assists students in acquiring knowledge, competence, and virtue.<sup>2</sup> Teachers' perspectives in the context of this study relate to how teachers view the inclusion or selection of the works of Athol Fugard in the Further Education and Training Phase curriculum; specifically, in the Ekurhuleni South District.

South African education is tainted by apartheid policies. Jibril portends that the political thought in South Africa, during the period of apartheid, was characterised by a diversity of contending ideologies and political philosophies.<sup>3</sup> The apartheid system itself was underpinned and informed by an Afrikaner nationalism that was intensely ethnocentric, racially exclusive, and authoritarian. Against the apartheid system, was a variety of opposition modes which, while united in their desire to end apartheid, were all to some extent incompatible with one another, including African Nationalism, the Black Consciousness movement, Marxism, and Liberalism.

Jibril further argues that these rival adversaries of apartheid, and liberalism, appeared to many observers to be the least likely to prevail; its proponents seemed few in numbers.<sup>4</sup> Thus, when the moment of South Africa's emancipation from apartheid finally came, the force and significance of liberal democratic ideas remained current and could readily be appreciated. Not least among such advocates of liberalism were creative writers, and especially perhaps South Africa's two foremost liberal authors, Alan Paton, and Athol Fugard. It is appropriate, therefore, at this relatively early moment in South Africa's democratic development, to consider how writers such as Fugard, by consistently maintaining and promoting in his work the fundamental liberal values of individual liberty, equality, tolerance, compassion, reason, and non-violence, helped to contribute not only to the eradication of apartheid but also to the peaceful establishment of a free and open society in South Africa.

The primary reason why the focus is on Athol Fugard is mainly because this writer stands out as undoubtedly one of the most prolific and distinguished liberal writers in both apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. The *foci* are on three literary works of Athol Fugard that form part of the Further Education and Training literature curriculum in the Ekurhuleni South District: namely, *My Children! My Africa!* (1989) *Tsotsi* (1980) and *Die Laaste Karretjiegraf* (2015). These literary works of Athol Fugard are best described by Battersby (1992) when he states that Fugard's work mirrors both the trauma and triumph of human strife in South Africa. But the universal insights into human nature that characterise his plays, particularly with reference to the works selected for this study, transcend the geographic and political context of his work. Whilst Fugard's works deal predominately with oppressive apartheid practices and their effect on people of colour, they also reflect the resilience of the human spirit.

The Department of Education Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) amended document states that writers have only texts to reveal their thoughts. Good writers are particularly sensitive to the subtlety and variety of the English language, even in its simplest forms. While it is important that literary features and their construction and impact are studied, it is more important to understand the impact of the features on the message the writer intended to convey to the audience.<sup>5</sup>

In tandem with the views expressed by the DoE, texts, especially dramatic texts, are powerful tools for addressing human rights issues.<sup>6</sup> Athiemoolam states that plays provide a lively platform for the discussion of social justice issues as plays bring human rights concerns to a more personal level through poignant depictions of realistic characters, relationships, dialogue, and situations.<sup>7</sup> Fugard's works, especially his plays, explore human rights issues with the overriding one being apartheid and its corrosion of basic human rights.

Fugard has made racism and the ravaging effects of racial tension come alive as he presents aspects of these problems in these prescribed literary works. He also sees and considers himself a spokesman for humanity. According to Van Gaan, the works of Fugard not only make powerful political

<sup>2</sup> DoE., *The National Policy on Whole School Evaluation* (Pretoria: Department of Education, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Musa Ahmed Jibril, "The Compulsion of the Apartheid Regime, Its Demise and the Advent of a New Political Dispensation in South Africa, 1948-1996" (University of Zululand, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Jibril, "The Compulsion of the Apartheid Regime, Its Demise and the Advent of a New Political Dispensation in South Africa, 1948-1996."

<sup>5</sup> DoE., *The National Policy on Whole School Evaluation*.

<sup>6</sup> DoE., *The National Policy on Whole School Evaluation*.

<sup>7</sup> Logamurthie Athiemoolam, "An Exploration of Pre-Service Student Teachers' Understanding of Social Justice Issues through Theatre-in-Education," *Educational Research for Social Change* 10, no. 2 (2021): 161-77.

statements, proving the validity of art as a social instrument, but they are also universal, transcending time and place.<sup>8</sup> This paper focuses on three literary works, namely: *My Children! My Africa!* (1989); *Tsotsi* (1980) and *Die Laaste Karretjiegraf* (2015) which serve as examples of Fugard's reflections and illustrations of how relationships between people of different races develop and how they are affected by the policies of apartheid.

This paper attempts to answer the following critical research questions:

- What are teachers' perspectives on the works of Athol Fugard being included in the Further Education and Training phase for English?
- What value or lack of value do teachers discern is posited in the works of Athol Fugard for learners in the FET phase?
- To what extent do teachers believe that teaching the works of Athol Fugard to FET learners foregrounds human rights issues?

### **A Brief Overview of the Texts by Athol Fugard Selected for this Study**

Wertheim describes Athol Fugard as one of the most brilliant, powerful, and theatrically astute modern dramatists in South Africa and that the world has ever experienced.<sup>9</sup> He further states that the poignancy of Fugard's work has its origins in the institutionalised racism of his native South Africa and more recently in the issues facing a new South Africa after apartheid. The author also points out how Fugard's plays evoke change in human relations with a strong focus on human rights.

In this study, salient issues in some of the literature of Athol Fugard that form part of the Further Education and Training curriculum were identified. These are summed up by Shihada, who explicates Athol Fugard's vision for a non-racial South Africa after the end of apartheid and the beginning of a crucial stage of reconciliation by stating that what is particularly important is that although most of Fugard's work is set in South Africa, they tackle transcendent and eternal human issues beyond the domestic sphere and envisage a society based on racial equality and reconciliation; a society that accepts the existence of others.<sup>10</sup> Gqibitole and Bello assert that Fugard crossed the racial divide line by writing about black experiences at a time when dissenting voices were silenced by the apartheid state.<sup>11</sup> In *My Children! My Africa!* Thami Mbikwana a Black student and Isabel Dyson, a White student work together in an attempt to cross the apartheid boundaries, with the hope of getting a scholarship for Thami who is a gifted student at Zolile High School and undoubtedly a favourite student of the African teacher Mr. M. As a staunch follower of the Chinese philosopher, Confucius, Mr. M has been a long-time teacher of non-violence, believing that change in racially segregated South Africa will only come about through education. To Mr. M's disappointment, Thami gets involved with underground political activists who believe that freedom must come before education. He is prepared to meet violence from the state with violence. Isabel Dyson is a gifted young white South African (Afrikaner) from Camdeboo High School, a prestigious all-white girls' school. Mr. M arranged for Isabel to be part of a debating team at Zolile High School, which results in a friendly relationship with Thami and Mr. M. This opens a whole new world to the complexities of race.

One can further equate the relationship between Thami and Isabel to one of the prescripts of the South African Human Rights of 1996, which is the freedom of association; whereby everyone has the right to associate with anyone. In *My Children! My Africa!* (1989), a salient observation is that Fugard believes that there are no better characters than Thami and Isabel to practice racial reconciliation, as members of the new generation who will likely be called upon to argue vital issues and forge a non-racial South African life after dismantling the shackles of apartheid. This work decries the liabilities of the old pedagogical order and curriculum. It tackles the dilemma of South Africa's colonised black teachers who accepted the country's racist practices and sought empowerment for black people through the so-called mastery of the white people.

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<sup>8</sup> M. Van Gaan, "For Protest Theatre to Theatre of Conformity," *South African Theatre Journal* 20, no. 1 (2006): 1–15.

<sup>9</sup> A. Wertheim, *The Dramatic Art of Athol Fugard: From South Africa to the World* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Isam M Shihada, "'My Children! My Africa!': Athol Fugard's Vision for a Non Racial South Africa," *My Africa*, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Khaya M Gqibitole and Shamsuddeen Bello, "Identity, Politics and Restriction in Athol Fugard's Art: Writing and Liberalism in Apartheid South Africa," *Literator: Journal of Literary Criticism, Comparative Linguistics and Literary Studies* 39, no. 1 (2018): 1–9.

Al-Husseini identifies an important theme in the play which revolves around the restricted social interaction permitted between whites and ‘non-whites’.<sup>12</sup> The Group Areas Act of 1950 proclaimed strict residential segregation, meaning that Thami and Mr. M were not permitted to be in Isabel’s residential area without a special permit. The Population Registration Act of 1950 stipulates that every person be assigned a racial category and that people of different races must live, learn, work, and travel separately which was in contrast with the right of equality as enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

There was also racial discrimination in the allocation of schools and teaching facilities. Readers also see how Thami, one of the characters, rebels against the old-fashioned, colonised mentality of Mr. M, who privileges the European culture over the African culture. McLeod confirms this narrative when he asserts that the teaching of literature in the colonies must be understood as part of the many ways in which Western colonial powers asserted their cultural and moral superiority, while at the same time devaluing indigenous cultural beliefs.<sup>13</sup> This is evident in Thami’s defection from the Eurocentric colonising culture of Mr. M whose teaching glorifies everything European. Another one of the works of Fugard that forms part of the Further Education and Training curriculum is *Tsotsi* (1980). This novel is a story of redemption and reconciliation, facing the past and it confronts the core elements of human nature. The character going through this journey, who the novel is named after, is a young man who is part of the lowest level of society in a poor shanty town in South Africa. Tsotsi, (His real name is David), is a thug, someone who kills for money and suffers no remorse. But he starts changing when circumstances find him in possession of a baby, which acts as a catalyst in his life. A chain of events leads him to regain memories of his childhood and discover why he is the way he is. The novel sets parameters of being “human” and brings these to the consideration of the reader. The word Tsotsi means “thug”, which is how the character is portrayed at the start of the novel. In *Tsotsi* (1980), Fugard implies that apartheid’s racist policies created a favourable climate for criminal violence. Barnard argues that the callous inhumanity of Tsotsi, the gangster of the title, is the product of years of homelessness and abandonment.<sup>14</sup> The urban removals of the 1950s and 1960s saw many black families being evicted from their homes in the townships and the social and economic consequences in such places produced slums, rife with crime. This is a direct violation of the human right to dignity, and the right to decent housing as stipulated in the Bill of Rights.

In *Tsotsi* (1980) there are several significant issues that stand out which can be attributed to the socio-political, and economic situation of South Africa under apartheid. The first, was when the gang members were walking through the township to the train station on payday. Their intentions, it seems, are very clear to other residents of the township; they are on a mission to embark on a robbery spree. This was the case because they were unemployed and were economically compromised. The mothers pull their children indoors and there are anxious stares from windows, and the street becomes silent and deserted. This being a Friday – payday – there is obvious anxiety over the safety of husbands returning home from work with their pay packets. Another salient narrative that can be deduced from this novel is the lack of education of some of the gang members. It is known that during the apartheid era, the National Party government was not keen on promoting education for the Black masses.

What also comes to light are the social inequalities in apartheid South Africa which were experienced during the tearing down of places like Sophiatown and the forced removals that accompanied those actions. Tsotsi, like so many young black men in apartheid South Africa had very little, if any opportunities for self-improvement and social mobility and he is, therefore, forced into a life of crime. Tsotsi’s background reveals that he was orphaned at an early age and was, therefore, compelled to claw his way to adulthood alone. Both of his parents were imprisoned; hence, he had no one to provide for him and/ or guide him through life. This caused Tsotsi to live a life of extreme social and psychological deprivation which is in complete violation of the basic rights of children as stipulated in the Bill of Rights. Tsotsi never enjoyed the right to family care, love, and protection as espoused by

<sup>12</sup> M Al-Husseini, “The Effect of Using Augmented Reality Technology in a Unit of the Computer Course on the Achievement and Attitude of High School Students,” *Unpublished MA Thesis, Mecca: Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah Al-Mukarramah*, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> J. McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> Rita Barnard, “Tsotsis: On Law, the Outlaw, and the Postcolonial State,” *Contemporary Literature* 49, no. 4 (2008): 541–72.

Human Rights for children. Rafudeen stresses the importance of material conditions, especially adequate dwelling places, in the shaping of subjectivity and social identity.<sup>15</sup>

In *Die Laaste Karretjiegraf* (The Last Cart Grave) (2015) there are six main characters in this dramatic work of Fugard. In equating the situation that the 'karretjie' people were living under in the apartheid era is best described by Libenberg, who describes this type of situation as an enormous web of laws and subordinate legislation that confined the lack of people to their 'homeland' and was only released in the interest of agricultural advancement of the white community.<sup>16</sup> When a black person visited a white area as a migrant labourer, the black person did so on sufferance, shackled by the chains of apartheid legislation. This is typically what befell the 'karretjie' people.

In *Die Laaste Karretjiegraf* (2015) one can best relate the sickness of ouma Mieta and the poverty of the 'karretjie' people with the inferences drawn by Straus and Horsten, whereby they have recognised that poor and vulnerable communities have a lack of adequate access to essential basic healthcare and medicine.<sup>17</sup> Poor health and illness are dynamics that contribute to poverty, while the adverse effects of illness are among the main reasons that the poor become poorer. They further argue that these human rights violations often lead to preventable deaths and human suffering. Poverty can, therefore, be seen as the state's refusal of opportunities and choices essential to human development and the right to live a long and healthy life.

In all three works, Fugard is able to demonstrate that in South Africa, under apartheid, theatre and the writing space served as a conduit for transmitting various messages to both whites and blacks. To whites, it offered some of the first glimpses of what it means to live beyond the barriers of apartheid. To the blacks, it highlighted their sufferings. Due to this, most of Fugard's work was subjected to censorship because of the arduous efforts of the actors and directors to combat apartheid in their performances.

Looking at the three works of Athol Fugard, this study argues that Fugard aspires for a non-racial South Africa for all people irrespective of their skin colour or political affiliation. From the context of these plays, it shows that they posed a serious threat to the apartheid government's belligerent political-social and economic system; a system that uses all inhumane and barbaric means to preserve the *status quo*.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study situates human rights within critical theory. As the works of Athol Fugard are mainly framed around human rights issues, it provides the perfect opportunity to determine how this impacts teachers' perspectives on teaching the works of Athol Fugard. The framework of this study is intended to investigate the importance of teaching the works of Fugard from a teacher's perspective. From the theoretical framework, one can detect a distinct connection between the works of Fugard and human rights situated within critical theory. Walters, argues that human rights appear progressively as a growing worldwide language that has developed with extraordinary dynamism in the dawn of the Second World War. Walters further contends that there are obvious theoretical and philosophical arguments regarding the existence, justification, and universality of human rights.<sup>18</sup> Fugard further proves this in some of the prescribed Further Education and Training literature which exposes the violations of human beings through the apartheid state policies of starvation. One of the fundamental and pivotal reasons for studying and teaching Human Rights was established in 1948 in the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 26.2 of this declaration accentuates that Education is to be engaged in the full development of the human personality and the reinforcement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms which will ultimately lead to the promotion of understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups. Regarding Human

<sup>15</sup> Auwais Rafudeen, "A South African Reflection on the Nature of Human Rights," *African Human Rights Law Journal* 16, no. 1 (2016): 225–46.

<sup>16</sup> S. Liebenberg, 'Social security as a Human Rights' Circle of Rights. Economic, social and cultural rights activism: A training resource international human rights internship program and Asia forum for Human Rights and Development (2000), 200 – 219

<sup>17</sup> Zannelize Strauss and Debbie Horsten, "A Human Rights-Based Approach to Poverty Reduction: The Role of the Right of Access to Medicine as an Element of the Right of Access to Health Care," *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad* 16, no. 3 (2013): 335–75.

<sup>18</sup> Glenn D Walters, "The Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles: Part I: Reliability and Preliminary Validity," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 22, no. 3 (1995): 307–25.

Rights Education, Mubangizi stresses that Human Rights Education (HRE) is crucial in ensuring that people are empowered to access the rights to which they are entitled. He further advances that there have been several programmes and plans of action aimed at Human Rights Education at the universal level, nonetheless, many years after the advent of a new democratic and constitutional dispensation in South Africa, the level of public awareness of Human Rights in the country is still, unfortunately, inadequate.<sup>19</sup>

Looking at the narrative in *My Children! My Africa! Tsotsi*, and *Die Laaste Karretjiegraf*, Sen argues that the importance of access to education as a human right is that it provides people with the capabilities for survival and individual freedom.<sup>20</sup> According to Sen, access to education is a Human Right, not only for the purpose of political literacy but endemically necessary for human development.<sup>21</sup> To prevent experiences that were illustrated in plays like *My Children! My Africa! Tsotsi*, and *die Laaste Karretjiegraf*, the new democratic government adopted the South African Schools Act of 1996 which draws on the ANC Policy Framework Document for Education and Training in South Africa which states that: the national core curriculum will promote (i) non-racial and non-sexist values, (ii) prepare individuals for the world of work and social and political participation in the context of a rapidly changing and dynamic global economy and society, (iii) develop the necessary understanding, values and skills for sustainable development and an environment that ensures healthy living (iv) promote unity in diversity through a flexible framework which allows for the accommodation of cultural, provincial and local differences and needs, (v) be learner centered and non- authoritarian and encourage the active participation of students in the learning process, (vi) stimulate critical and reflective reasoning and develop problem-solving and information processing skills, (vii) foster self-discipline (viii) problematise knowledge as provisional and contested.

Looking at the setting of *Tsotsi*, *My Children! My Africa!* and the *Die Laaste Kaaretjiegraf*, Human Rights Education is critical in societal transformation and redress, including engendering social and political change. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the primary audience targeted for Human Rights Education by the new democratic government is the place of learning and educational institutions. It has been suggested that these rights be incorporated into the curriculum as part of the learning agenda. These efforts were enhanced by the intervention of the Curriculum Review Commission (CRC) that came into being in February 2000. These interventions and initiatives resulted in the creation and establishment of the General Education and Training (GET), Curriculum Statement (CS), and the Further Education and Training Curriculum Statement (FETCS) in 2005. These interventions and initiatives ensured that all Learning Area Statements (LAS) contain values and practices of human rights, as enshrined in the constitution.

## Population and Sampling

In an attempt to gauge the cogency of teaching the works of Fugard in the FET Curriculum in the Ekurhuleni South District from the perspective of teachers, 67 secondary schools in Ekurhuleni South District were targeted, in particular the schools that are teaching the works of Athol Fugard in the FET Phase. This was to ensure that the targeted population was the entire aggregation of respondents that met the designated set of criteria as recommended by Burns and Grove. For the researcher to obtain the desired answers to the research questions, it was necessary to select a sample from the identified population.<sup>22</sup> For this research study, the researcher adopted a non-probability or non-random sampling approach. Taherdoost states that non-probability sampling or non-random sampling is often associated with qualitative research.<sup>23</sup> Non-probability sampling technique is a technique that qualitative researchers use to recruit participants who are easily accessible and convenient to the researcher. He further argues that this may include utilising geographic locations and resources that

<sup>19</sup> John Cantius Mubangizi, "An Assessment of the Constitutional, Legislative and Judicial Measures against Harmful Cultural Practices That Violate Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Women in South Africa," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 16, no. 3 (2015): 158–73.

<sup>20</sup> A. Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

<sup>22</sup> N. Burns and S. K. Grove, *The Practice of Nursing Research: Conduct, Critique, and Utilization*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> Hamed Taherdoost, "Sampling Methods in Research Methodology; How to Choose a Sampling Technique for Research," *International Journal of Academic Research in Management (IJARM)* 5 (2016).

make participant recruitment convenient. The sample consisted of educators – a total of 12 educators of English in the Further Education and Training Phase from 3 secondary schools in Ekurhuleni South District. The criterion for selecting the schools was posited on the fact that the educators at the school must be teaching Fugard’s plays to Further Education and Training learners. In addition to purposive sampling in selecting the schools – all schools must have taught Fugard’s plays in the Further Education and Training phase – convenience sampling was also used to select schools so that all 3 schools were easily accessible to the researcher in terms of their proximity. For the purpose of this research study, a sample of three high schools was selected within the Ekurhuleni South District. The three high schools were determined by ease of geographical location, accessibility, and the number of years that the plays of Athol Fugard have been in the curriculum. Taherdoost argues that to answer the research questions, it is doubtful that the researcher should be able to collect data from all cases.<sup>24</sup> Thus, there is a need to select a sample from the targeted population. He further contends that the sampling frames, which is the list of the actual cases from which the sample will be drawn must be representative of the targeted population.

It should be noted that the background of the participants selected has several obvious commonalities. They are all teachers from the FET Phase in both former Model C schools, and from traditional black township schools. Their experiences set them apart as there is a broad mixture of years of teaching experience and academic qualifications. In answering the research questions, the vast wealth of experience and the diverse qualifications provide fertile ground for qualitative analysis. These divergent attributes are important in getting different perspectives, especially in qualitative research studies. According to Grasenick and Trattig, different people have different preconceptions and experiences, and they will have different opinions and perspectives.<sup>25</sup> This makes a case for diversity in research studies in order to make new discoveries, which illustrate the importance of diversity.

**Participants**

Pseudonyms were used to name the participants in order to protect their identities. The use of pseudonyms is a requirement as per ethical standards of research which state that all participants' information should be de-identified.

**Table 1: Details of Participants**

Participants	Gender	Grade	Experience In Years Of Teaching	Qualifications
Thoko	Female	9 &12	26	Master’s Degree
Lerato	Female	10,11, &12	41	Higher Education Diploma
Moshe	Male	10,11&12	28	Bachelor of Education
Gugu	Female	10 & 12	13	Secondary Teachers Diploma
Mashudu	Female	8,9,9,11, &12	26	Bachelor of Education
Irene	Female	11 & 12	8	Bachelor of Education
Xoli	Male	11 &12	12	Bachelor of Education
Tshwarelo	Male	8,10,11 &12	4	Bachelor of Education (Hon)
Bonga	Male	10 & 11	10	Senior Teachers Diploma
Sam	Male	10,11 & 12	15	Bachelor of Education
Dingizwayo	Male	10,11 & 12	27	Senior Teachers Diploma
Hloni	Male	10,11, & 12	15	Bachelor of Education

Table 1 uses fictitious names/pseudonyms to protect the identities of the participants. The grades, years of experience, and qualifications provided are a true reflection of the individuals’ portfolios at the time of the interviews.

<sup>24</sup> Taherdoost, “Sampling Methods in Research Methodology; How to Choose a Sampling Technique for Research.”

<sup>25</sup> K. Grasenick and J. Trattig, “Diversity in Research: Why Do We Need It? ,” *Ethics Blog: Centre for Research Ethics and Bioethics.*, 2020.

The 12 participants who took part in the **semi-structured** interviews were asked the following questions:

- How do you feel about the inclusion of the works of Athol Fugard in the FET Phase curriculum?
- What are your most valuable experiences (if any) in teaching the works of Athol Fugard in the Further Education and Training Phase curriculum?
- As a teacher, how do you think the works of Athol Fugard has influenced your outlook on human rights?
- In your opinion, what is the best way of teaching and presenting the plays/works of Athol Fugard in the Further Education and Training phase?
- What are the challenges (if any) you have faced in teaching the plays/works of Athol Fugard in the Further Education and Training phase?
- In your opinion is there a relationship between teaching the works of Fugard and real-life experiences?
- From your experience what are the advantages and disadvantages of teaching the works of Athol Fugard in the Further Education and Training Phase?
- In what ways do you think (if any) the inclusion of the works of Fugard adds value to the FET curriculum?
- Are there any areas in which you believe more training and guidance should be given in teaching the plays of Athol Fugard in the Further Education and Training curriculum
- Do you feel you have opportunities to fully use your knowledge and skills to teach the plays of Athol Fugard in the Further Education and Training Phase curriculum?
- Do you believe that the works of Fugard are still relevant in the present democratic dispensation?

## PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The following table outlines the patterns that emerged from the data collected.

**Table 2: Emerging patterns from the data gathered**

1	The most common issue that keeps coming up in almost all the responses is the question of the damage caused by apartheid as depicted by Athol Fugard in most of his works.
2	What also emerges frequently in the responses is the emphasis on equality in education.
3	There is a general consensus that most teachers believe they should have been provided with preparatory training before they were assigned to teach the works of Athol Fugard.
4	It emerged that learners are eager to engage and act out some of the works of Athol Fugard.
5	To many teachers the works and plays of Athol Fugard unleash fierce debate in the classroom amongst learners.
6	Most teachers believe that the works and plays of Athol Fugard evoke a rich sense of historical awareness not only in the learners, but to a very large extent in the teachers as well.
7	Most teachers agree that Athol Fugard is able to seamlessly navigate between politics and history.
8	There is a very strong human rights message in most of Athol Fugard's works.
9	Most teachers believe that Athol Fugard dispels the history as narrated from a European perspective and gives a more accurate account of South African history.
10	There is a general belief that the works and plays of Athol Fugard be taught at lower grades as well due to their historically informative nature.
11	Some teachers suggested that Athol Fugard should start writing about the current situation in South Africa which is plagued by rampant corruption, poverty, and crime.
13	Teachers believe that Athol Fugard writes about the lived experiences of their daily lives.

From the above themes, there is a visible pattern that emerges which reveals Athol Fugard's strong focus on human rights, equality, justice, and the evils of the apartheid system. An edited transcript of the responses from the participants will be outlined.

**In response to the question: How do you feel about the inclusion of the works of Athol Fugard in the FET Phase curriculum?** The following were some of the answers given.

**Mashudu** – *I believe it is about time that our learners, and even teachers be exposed to the real history of the South African struggle. For too long we have been subjected to South African history from a one-sided perspective, which is a European perspective. The works of Athol Fugard assist the learners in appreciating the long battles and struggles that were involved in achieving some of the liberties we are enjoying today. People have lost their lives in order for us to enjoy the liberties we experience now.*

**Irene** – *The works of Athol Fugard were introduced just at the right time in our democratic dispensation. It is evident that the Department of Basic Education is attempting to inculcate an awareness of where we come from before the dawn of democracy. I believe that many learners and teachers will appreciate the sacrifices made by various individuals for us to be where we are today.*

**Xoli** – *It is a good thing that everyone is now aware of the damages that were caused by the evil system of apartheid. It was always complicated to explain to the learners the dynamics and the intricate nature of apartheid. Now that we have literature as presented by Athol Fugard, it is there for everybody to see and digest.*

**Tshwarelo** – *We have always been made to believe that apartheid was never real, but a myth that was peddled by revolutionaries and people who wanted to bring about regime change by violent means. The works of Athol Fugard lay bare the facts with supporting references and dates. It is refreshing that for the first time in the history of our education system, the truth is being revealed with no holds barred. All these past years we have been fed propagandist history which portrayed the blacks as savages and warmongers who slaughtered each other to gain absolute power.*

**As a teacher, how do you think the works of Athol Fugard have influenced your outlook on human rights?**

**Thoko** - *My understanding of human rights was limited to what I read in the newspapers and what I saw on television. Now having been fully exposed to Athol Fugard's literature as an English teacher, I have a deeper and better understanding of not only the physical effects of human rights but also the emotional and psychological effects. Having read works like *Tsotsi*, *My Children! My Africa!* and *Die Laaste Karretjiegraf* brought about a completely new understanding of the real impact of human rights on people.*

**Lerato** – *Having really not experienced any human rights issues in my adult life, I never paid any attention to what constitutes human rights. Or what effect it had on people's lives. It was only after having been asked to teach some of the works of Athol Fugard in the Further Education and Training Phase that it dawned on me what the true meaning of human rights was. The works of Athol Fugard also unveiled a deeper meaning and experience of what human rights really are. Fugard so eloquently demonstrates and depicts the human rights abuses that were meted out by the apartheid regime, especially to the people of colour.*

**Moshe** - *To me the issues of human rights were always associated with politics until I got to teach 'Tsotsi' in grade 12 as part of English literature. It was then I got a more in-depth understanding of what the real meaning what human rights was. In 'Tsotsi' the novel an extremely deep rendition of naked human rights is uncovered by Athol Fugard. It instantly provides a window into how our parents were subjected to the cruel laws of apartheid. It opened my understanding to the fact that human rights were not only political gibberish as I previously thought, but a lived reality. I can now see many human rights abuses that are even happening to this day. Thanks to the awareness brought about by the works of Athol Fugard.*

**Gugu** - Apartheid has desensitised us to such an extent that some of us no more see infringements on our daily lives as infractions of our human rights. Now having read and taught some of the work of Athol Fugard has evoked in me a strong sense of what constitutes human rights. I believe I now have a universal understanding and am more knowledgeable about the key elements that constitute human rights abuses. I am now able to transfer this vital knowledge over to the learners in my class.

**In what ways do you think (if any) the inclusion of the works of Fugard adds value to the FET curriculum?**

**Mashudu** – First and foremost, the works of Athol Fugard are a rich source of South African history. From the formation of the Nationalist Party which introduced the system of apartheid, to the dawn of the democratic dispensation.

*Fugard in his works teaches us about human rights issues, equal justice for all, and most importantly equal education for all.*

*In most of his works, Athol Fugard proves that the oppression of one group by another only breeds hatred and lawlessness. This is evidently demonstrated in works like My Children! My Africa! And the novel Tsotsi where due to the oppressive nature of apartheid, there was a lot of lawlessness in the form of riots and even murder.*

**Irene** – I can attest to the fact that before the works of Athol Fugard were introduced to the Further Education and Training curriculum, there was general ignorance of the past atrocities committed by the apartheid government. When the works of Fugard came onto the curriculum scene, all this changed as apartheid atrocities were so powerfully depicted by Fugard, providing both teachers and learners with a clear sense of what the political past in South Africa was all about.

**Xoli** – Before the inclusion of the works of Athol Fugard in the Further Education and Training curriculum, most of the literature was about how great the white minority government was to the majority black population. We were made to believe that education and knowledge in general came with the white settlers.

*The black population was indoctrinated that any black person who stood up for his/her rights was a terrorist. The works of Athol Fugard in the Further Education Curriculum dispel this myth by putting the record straight.*

**Tshwarelo** – The works of Athol Fugard introduced a strong sense of human rights and justice in the Further Education and Training curriculum. Suddenly, many of us realised that the fabricated propaganda we were fed by the white government over the years, was actually meant to divide us as a back nation.

*Fugard in his work My Children! My Africa! expressively demonstrates how the white minority government was able to fan black-on-black violence by setting up Mr. M against the protesting students as an informer. This gave the impression that blacks were fighting against each other.*

*Most of the works of Athol Fugard were banned pre-1994 because the contents of his works were regarded as anti-government and were promoting insurrection against the government of the time. We were not allowed access to Fugard's works for fear of contaminating our minds. When Fugard's works were introduced in the Further Education and Training curriculum post-1994, it brought about a completely fresh outlook on the political landscape of South Africa.*

**Do you believe that the works of Fugard are still relevant in the present democratic dispensation?**

**Mashudu** – *Yes, it is more important and relevant than before because of all the maleficence, abuse of state resources, corruption, and theft of state funds that are being experienced after having fought tirelessly to achieve our freedom.*

**Irene** – *Yes, we are now faced with another type of oppression where rich blacks are oppressing poor blacks. I do not believe the struggle for liberation was meant to translate into more suffering for the majority of the people. Only a few are enjoying the benefits of the liberation where many lives have been sacrificed.*

**Xoli** – *The works of Athol Fugard are actually more relevant than ever because there is irrefutable evidence that the democracy that we all fought so hard for, is benefiting very few individuals. To put it bluntly, it primarily benefits the few politically connected. From his writings, Athol Fugard is against the oppressive abuse of people by others, irrespective of colour or creed. This is actually what he has been writing and fighting for throughout his writing career.*

**Tshwarelo** – *I believe the works of Athol Fugard will guide the younger generation who it seems do not really understand the values of issues like human rights, equal rights, etc. It is therefore imperative that writers like Athol Fugard keep on proselytizing the importance of a democracy.*

## DISCUSSION

The findings showed that many intriguing dynamics were directly related to the understanding and teaching of the works and plays of Fugard. In responding to the most valuable experiences in teaching the works and plays of Fugard, most participants revealed that teaching the works and plays of Fugard opened a whole new world and experience not only to the participants but also to the learners. The participants also expressed the importance of knowing South African history from a different perspective, not only from a European perspective.

Another finding was that the learners, and to a larger extent the teachers, have always been subjected to historical events from a European perspective. The works and plays of Fugard revealed and exposed a part of apartheid South Africa that they never knew existed. Another participant confessed that she never paid much attention to the works and plays of Fugard because in her view Fugard has always been about protest theatre which did not fascinate or interest her. After being given the opportunity to teach the works and plays of Fugard, she realised the important role South African history played in the daily lives of the people.

The sentiments on some of the issues mentioned by Fugard and some of the respondents are supported by researchers such as Musvoto who believe that despite positive development planning policy intentions in post-apartheid South Africa, there is still glaring deprivation and spatial inequality.<sup>26</sup> This, according to Musvoto, is largely due to misplaced settlement policies and strategies, and the persistence of unsustainable settlement policies and planning.<sup>27</sup>

According to some respondents, the plays and works of Fugard afforded them the opportunity to test the creative abilities of the learners by allowing them to act out some of the scenes in the plays. It was also an opportunity to encourage them to engage in debating the merits and demerits of the works and plays of Fugard. For one respondent, it allows her to use the plays and works of Fugard both for teaching English literature and grammar.

There is a general belief that as English literature teachers, the respondents were not adequately prepared to teach literature that focuses on racial and cultural issues. It was therefore difficult to ensure that learners of other races and cultures were not prejudiced when discussing some sensitive issues during the teaching of the works and plays of Athol Fugard. This phenomenon was confirmed by Nengwekhulu, and Ramutsindela who all assert that race and ethnicity have been and still are at the

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<sup>26</sup> Godfrey G Musvoto, "The Historical Evolution of Settlement Patterns and Trends in South Africa: Unlocking the Log-Jam of the Unsustainable Settlements Impasse," *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies-Multi-, Inter-and Transdisciplinarity* 9, no. 2 (2014): 154–72.

<sup>27</sup> Musvoto, "The Historical Evolution of Settlement Patterns and Trends in South Africa: Unlocking the Log-Jam of the Unsustainable Settlements Impasse."

heart of South African history, politics, and society since the European colonisation. They also posit that South Africa remains a complex mix of different races, cultural identities, languages, and ethnic bonds.<sup>28</sup>

According to a participant, Moshe, teaching the plays of Fugard was an entirely new experience as he was used to teaching the literature of writers like William Shakespeare. In his view, the works and plays of Fugard provided the perfect conduit to dispel some of the Eurocentric-based literature that primarily provided a biased perception of the history of South Africa. He believed that Fugard's works should have been introduced earlier in the schooling curriculum. Another respondent confirmed that they were never workshopped nor trained in teaching this type of literature. Thoko, another respondent believed that the works and plays of Fugard did not resonate with most of the learners as all this happened long before their time.

In whether parallels can be drawn between teaching the works and plays of Fugard and daily experiences, many respondents made mention of the racial tensions that exist between blacks and whites which are presently being experienced in our societies. There is also mention of the unequal education which is experienced up to this day between blacks and whites. One only needs to go back to plays like *My Children! My Africa!* to realise that not much has changed in the education system. Mohamed of Amnesty International in her report sums it all up by stating:

The South African education system, characterised by crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and relatively poor educational outcomes, is perpetuating inequality and as a result failing too many of its children, with the poor being the har hit.<sup>29</sup>

With regard to how the respondents felt about the inclusion of the works and plays of Athol Fugard in the curriculum, Irene a respondent believed that the Department of Education wanted to inculcate an awareness of where Black people came from before the dawn of democracy. Xoli believed that the introduction of the works of Fugard in the schooling curriculum brought about an awareness of the damage that the evil system of apartheid caused to the black population. Tshwarelo sees the works of Fugard as revealing the truth, dispelling the propaganda the public has been fed all these years portraying black people as savages and warmongers who slaughtered each other to gain absolute power.

Some respondents believed that should they be asked to change anything in the schooling system, it would be to introduce the works and plays of Fugard to the lower grades in the schooling system. In the past, there was a belief that any person who opposed the apartheid system was branded a 'terrorist'. This myth was dispelled by Fugard in most of his works and plays. That is why most of his works were banned by the apartheid regime for fear of 'contaminating' black minds. As to why the works of Fugard should be taught in the Further Education and Training Phase, there was consensus amongst the respondents that Fugard's works and transport one through the different phases of South African history, by providing knowledge and insight into the genesis of the struggle for freedom.

## CONCLUSION

There is overwhelming evidence from the findings, that the vast majority of respondents concur that Fugard adds enormous value not only to the present educational system but, also to creating historical and political awareness amongst the teachers and foregrounding human rights issues. The findings further exposed a great degree of consciousness and cognisance of the deep scars that the system of apartheid has left on South African society. From the teachers' perspective, there is definitely a cogency in teaching the works of Fugard in the Further Education and Training Phase curriculum.

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<sup>28</sup> Ranwedzi H Nengwekhulu, "Race, Class and Ethnicity in South Africa," *African Journal of Political Economy/Revue Africaine d'Economie Politique* 1, no. 1 (1986): 29–39; M F Ramutsindela, "National Identity in South Africa: The Search for Harmony," *GeoJournal* 43 (1997): 99–110.

<sup>29</sup> S. Mohamed, South Africa: Broken and unequal education perpetuating poverty and inequality. 11 February 2020. Amnesty International South Africa.

To many teachers, the works and plays of Fugard were a new experience because most teachers were used to teaching European opinionated and authored literature, as evidenced in the data collected. This research study contends that due to the age of most of the teachers, many do not have a full understanding of the dynamics and history of apartheid that Athol Fugard so fiercely criticised in most of his works.

There was a general consensus amongst the teachers that the works and plays of Fugard should be taught at lower grades in the education system because of the richness it contributed to the South African struggle for liberation. It will, therefore, provide the perfect platform to prepare the younger learners to fully understand the history of South Africa from a non-European perspective. The works and plays of Fugard contrast with most of the literature written by white authors who portray black resistance to apartheid as terrorism and insurrection.

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