

# The Dramatic Genius of Charles Fuller; An African American Playwright

Molefi Kete Asante



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The Dramatic Genius of Charles Fuller; An African American Playwright Molefi Kete Asante BOOK OVERVIEW Charles Fuller is a pre-eminent American dramatist. The Dramatic Genius of Charles Fuller is an accessible and appropriate introduction to the mind of Fuller for those who know his work and those who do not. For an author who did not set out to be a Pulitzer Prize winner but rather one who would use every dimension of his multifaceted life to dramatize the narratives of African American people he has succeeded in being an influential voice in the dramatic arena. Few critics have examined Fuller seriously and in some ways his work, like that of other black writers, has fallen outside the gaze of contemporary literary and dramatic writers even though he has received some of the highest awards in the nation. Part of this is because few African American dramatists have been looked at critically or studied in classrooms or spoken of in terms of their philosophy, style, originality, and brilliance. This book brings a critical reading and sympathetic location of Fuller's drama in the center of African American dramatic and social history Anyone who teaches drama or who performs or produces African American drama should use this book as a supplemental reading for theater and literary classes at the undergraduate level. Serious scholars of the philosophy of African American drama can use the book at the graduate level. In Theater, English or African American Studies the book is sure to be used in the classes on African American Drama or Theater, Black Writers, and The History of American Drama. Charles H. Fuller, Jr., was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on March 5, 1939. He was educated at Roman Catholic High School and Villanova University. In 1959 he joined the United States Army and served in Japan and Korea. When he completed his service in the army he went to LaSalle University in 1965-1967 where he received a DFA. During 1967 he co-founded the Afro-American Arts Theatre in Philadelphia. In the late 1960s he teamed with Larry Neal as Philadelphia's dynamic duo in the arts. No one was more intellectually involved with the early thinking and writing of Larry Neal than Charles Fuller. Their interactive relationship from the time that stole away as teenagers to hear Ralph Ellison to the death of Neal was the foundation for much of what Fuller developed as his thesis about human beings. Although he found many of his characters on Broad Street in Philadelphia he was already a mature revolutionary thinker when he moved to New York, Los Angeles, and Toronto. Fuller's travels, including his major tour of the Soviet Union, must be seen as a part of his aesthetic, ethical, social, and literary influences. In the strictest sense of the word Charles Fuller is an intellectual, not merely someone who writes, but someone who reflects on the entire process of bringing into existence new ideas. Thinking outside of the box could have been invented by him because his parents taught him that things are not always as they seem. He knew this from his early childhood and became involved in the drama of ordinary lives from listening to the provocative conversations that took place in his house when he was still a young man. This book is an attempt to understand how this prize-winning writer articulates what he sees in human nature.

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