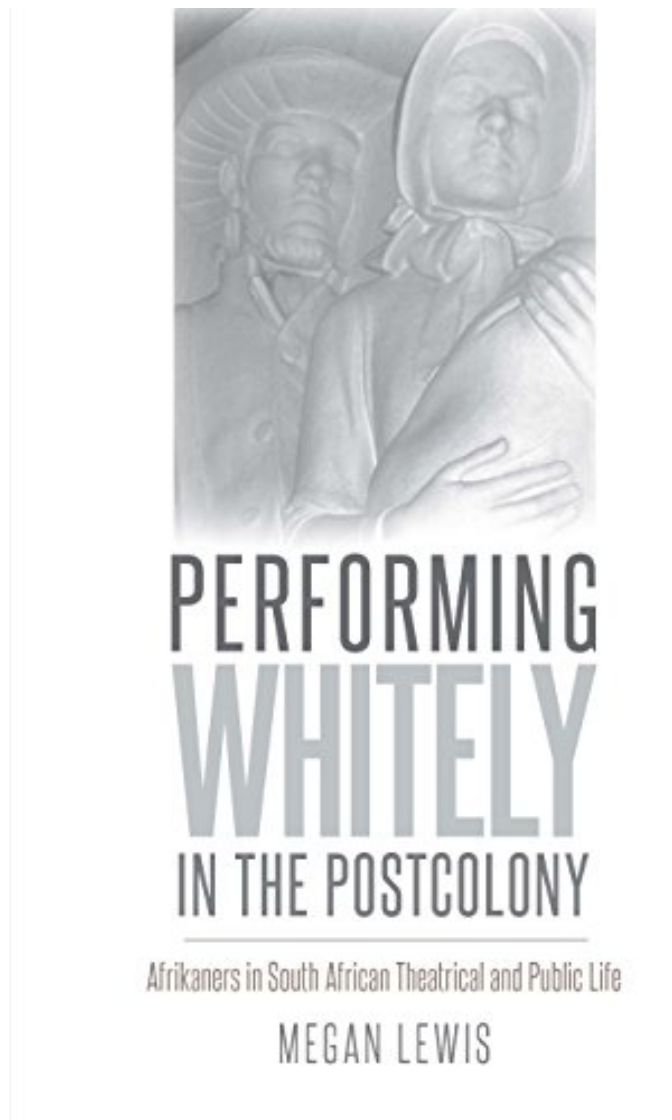


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## **Performing Whitely in the Postcolony: Afrikaners in South African Theatrical and Public Life (Studies Theatre Hist Culture)**

*Megan Lewis*

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What does it mean to perform whiteness in the postcolonial era? To answer this question—crucial for understanding the changing meanings of race in the twenty-first century—Megan Lewis examines the ways that members of South Africa's Afrikaner minority have performed themselves into, around, and out of power from the colonial period to the postcolony. The nation's first European settlers and in the twentieth century the architects of apartheid, since 1994 Afrikaners have been citizens of a multicultural, multilingual democracy. How have they enacted their whiteness in the past, and how do they do so now when their privilege has been deflated? *Performing Whiteness* examines the multiple speech acts, political acts, and theatrical acts of the Afrikaner folk or nation in theatrical and public life, including pageants, museum sites, film, and popular music as well as theatrical productions. Lewis explores the diverse ways in which Afrikaners perform whiteness, and the tactics they use, including nostalgia, melodrama, queering, abjection, and kitsch. She first investigates the way that apartheid's architects leveraged whiteness in support of their nation-building efforts in the early twentieth century. In addition to re-enacting national pilgrimages of colonial-era migrations and building massive monuments at home, Afrikaner nationalists took their show to the United States, staging critical events of the Boer War at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition. A case study of the South African experience, *Performing Whiteness* also offers parables for global whitenesses in the postcolonial era.

“This is an important book, rather overdue and commendable for its range and depth of theoretical resourcefulness. It would be a valuable teaching tool, as it aligns a range of thinkers who one would not easily find so provocatively juxtaposed. The writing is clear and strong, at times perhaps rather emphatic in its sense of urgency.”—Yvette Hutchison, author, *South African Performance and Archives of Memory*