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(Un-)Writing masculinity : narrative, representations of masculinity, and (un-)writing the Aristotelian dramatic form

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2018

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/27200

Lotter, Matthew, (2018) (Un-)Writing masculinity: narrative, representations of masculinity, and (un-)writing the Aristotelian dramatic form, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, https://hdl.handle.net/10539/27200.

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ACT 1: SCENE 1: Part 1

BRENDA: For goodness sakes, Charlene, we aren't in 1910. Allison, please.

ALLISON: When did this become an either or question?

CHARLENE: But Milner – the Germans/ specifically said 250!

BRENDA: He's a drunk, Allison, look at yourself. I'll call him a taxi to Leyton.

ALLISON: I haven't made him my ex-husband yet, Brenda. No I'm going to him.

CHARLENE: There isn't space for more than 250. Its half four – /is that your phone?

BRENDA: And David? /You think you are going to slide in like Joan of Arc?

ALLISON: I don't know Brenda, that's the point!

BRENDA: The point is Allison you need to know when to call the end the end!

ALLISON: And when is that then Brenda? No go on, you seem to know this answer. Hands on buzzers: When is the end, the end? You know today he didn't answer - /what am I supposed to do?

BRENDA: Allison, he disappeared on you! After those elections, he wasn't a shadow to be seen. And when he did drag his bones back to yours, wasn't he out of his mind, smelling like he was re-fermenting/ beer in his pores!

ALLISON: Are you suggesting I disappear on him? You cannot argue against a thing, and use this very same thing to frame your argument. Against it. The world must be very black and white from where you're looking!

CHARLENE: Are you going to answer that?

ALLISON: Don't you get it! I know that! I know it has to end in some sense. It already has in another. But it doesn't. End. He had a banning order against him in the 80s, that's why we came. We. I can't remember who – this happened to me, he – well alcohol happened to him. Not much else. Objectively Brenda, there is still a writer somewhere in there. How did we get here? I'm here; working, loving, writing, flying to Berlin. But I'm also there. And I don't know what to do about that! You can't pull that thread out and throw it away like it never happened! Don't reduce me to some throw aside woman, hapless drink widow. I don't need a man in lycra underwear to fly me away. But don't take it from me either. It happened. The banning order, my phone tapped, leaving my family, it happened. London, the booze, but I got here. No I walked the rope between! I'm going to find David! I'm going to Berlin. After the 7th. You can reach me on my mobile, set up an appointment with Emily for Monday!

Commented [ML1]: Allison is working on a project, and drives the action, SHE goes to DAWID (Masculine)

Commented [ML2]: LOVE that she is on her own mission. But seems caught doing things for orher people???

Commented [ML3]: These characters don't reappear, is there a way of winding them back into the story, or replacing them with people we see later? Their contribution must not be scene fillers

Commented [ML4]: Indicating he is a drunk, work throughout, perhaps gossip in the beginning drives home point Dawid is a stay at home drunk husband

Commented [ML5]: Theme

Commented [ML6]: Does this emotional break challenge the masculinity of Allison? Or is this too much about Dawid??

Commented [ML7]: Agency. She is choosing. It is not done for her.

ACT 1: SCENE 1: Part 2

DAWID *is unsteady on his feet. The phone rings.* ***DAWID*** *picks it up and puts it down.*

DAWID: There is a fray in the wires. Along the wall. Something's not going the way it should to the headset. What did you want to talk about? /The phone is broken.

ALLISON: What happened here David? Who – how did you get here? What have you done?

DAWID: You know that answer. Go on. Don't cheat. Get in there, Allison. That's why you are here, get in there! It started in the Koroo. Ah that's a proper word. Something's not going the way it should to the headset. Along the Berlin wall – couldn't you feel them sinking behind. To London – Nothing London /I'm telling you I'm not a drunk.

ALLISON: What have you done? I'm the one? When I met you, you were the writer, when we first arrived here, you wrote – /it was not me!

DAWID: That's it pick it apart. I need something to put back together in the morning. Break the words. /The Berlin wall is only graffittied on the west side.

ALLISON: You haven't written – David! You forget I lived with you I know –

DAWID: I'm going to be sick - it gets all the good ones right Oupa?

ALLISON *(Overlapped)***:** What the hell – David, what? Did you –

DAWID: I wish I was drunk! Whiskey maketh poetry – the sand Allison. Karoo sand - Oupa took the words with him, buried in the sand Allison! I was – they built that wall to keep East Germans out of West Germany!

ALLISON: David, what are you saying?

DAWID: The words Allison, I can't find them. /What if I want to go to West Germany?

ALLISON: You'll write – they pulled it down – get some rest David.

DAWID: I have a big day tomorrow. The ballots.

ALLISON: Ballots?

DAWID: Absentee ballots. I have to go to South African House Allison will – it's the one good mark I can make on paper! Will the meds ware off by then?

ALLISON: David what are you saying? Do you want to /go home David?

DAWID: Die siekte innie maag gets the bad ones too right? I can't be here anymore. No words, no balls. No man!

ALLISON: You should go home David. /Go to the karoo!

DAWID: Promise me I'll find my words when I get back home Allison.

ALLISON: Go home David.

DAWID: Ok!

Commented [ML8]: Maybe more reflective, how did the play drag the characters there?

Commented [ML9]: Disputes pervious claim in scene before

Commented [ML10]: Should Allison pick on his 'drunkness' more?

Commented [ML11]: Dawid is not entirely agentic here! He must decide definitely to go home, or Allison appears like the one with masculine agency authority

ACT 1: SCENE 2: Part 2

DAWID *is steady on his feet. The phone rings.* ***DAWID*** *picks it up, puts it down again.*

ALLISON: There is a fray in the wires. Along the wall. Something's not going the way it should to the headset.

DAWID: You know what we have to talk about! When they placed the banning order, this felt right. London. This feels right. But – I felt I could be useful – even before that: the protest – /Allison, I'm not playing broken telephone.

ALLISON: What happened here David? Who – how did we get here?

DAWID: You know that answer. Go on, Allison.

ALLISON: That's what you do. I follow! I followed you – that's why you are here, why can't things be left unanswered? They didn't want you –. You wanted me. This. Something's not going the way it should to the headset. I have to go to Berlin, we can talk –I'm not talking to you, /when you're drunk.

DAWID: It's the medication Allison. The ban has been lifted, /we have to admit -

ALLISON: What have you done? I'm not admitting – I'm an academic David, just like you!

DAWID: Don't pick this apart. You know there's /little holding this together.

ALLSION: I'll get someone to put it all back together in the morning. Then I can phone you from Berlin. You need to write David, you can't – you need to stay.

DAWID: I haven't written –I'm a poet of politics. My politics. But that's not why –

ALLISON: Head sickness gets all the good ones right David Olivier?

DAWID *(Overlapped)***:** We can't keep doing this to each other –

ALLISON: I wish I was drunk! 136 people died trying to cross the wall! They shoot traitors.

DAWID: It's better than dying a coward.

ALLISON: We need to rest; you shouldn't be drinking if you're on medication.

DAWID: I wasn't at South Africa House, I just got the news. That's when I found out! I'm sorry –

ALLSION: What do you think happened after the wall came down?

DAWID: I don't know. I don't - that's what I need to find out. What happens after.

ALLISON: After those Saffa ballots?

DAWID: Absentee ballots, Allison – I didn't get to take the wall down Allison.

ALLISON: David what are you saying?

DAWID: I have cancer Allison. I can't be here anymore. I'm going home Allison. Back to the Karoo!

ALLISON: Promise me you'll come back

Commented [ML12]: It's now Allison saying Dawid's words, can the context be chanced too?

Commented [ML13]: Theme

Commented [ML14]: She still ahs agency here, rephrased to make Dawid feel like he is driving the scene

Commented [ML15]: Should Dawid be packing, make him more active driving the scene

ACT 3

THE MONOLOGUES

***ALLISON**, working on her laptop in her office as it were, begins her monologue to the audience, describing her experience as a woman working in academia. Here I am looking for the struggles, or not, of defining yourself as a woman in a position of power: the expectations, the interactions with female and male subordinates and the difference in experience of being a woman now than when she started in this industry many years prior. And the progress of gender equality in her industry. This monologue is intercut with the indication that she is still at her office, and **BRENDA** and **CHARLENE** are taking her out for a drink, these women are heard talking offstage.*

***SAREL BOSMAN** enters. He explains how he grew up in the Karoo under **DAWID**'s shadow. How he is now the mayor of the small town. He explains his experience as a gay man of colour growing up in a time when neither were accepted. He commiserates with **ALLISON**, as both have spent their time in the shadow of **DAWID**. They both look at DAWID, tired and falling asleep in his chair, with a degree of pity.*

***MARTA**, clearing cups and plates, begins her monologue explaining her experience as a single mother. Here I am looking for the experiences of a single parent fulfilling both parental roles, weather tough or not, and the experiences of a woman in a social environment like South Africa, in raising children. This scene is to intercut with the indication that **MARTA** is now the manager of 'Barends Karoo Bed and Breakfast'. She welcomes two guests; a couple **OPAL** (To be voiced by the actor playing **CHARLENE**) and **PENELOPE** (To be voiced by the actor playing **BRENDA**). **MARTA** signs the guests in, directing them to their room. She excuses herself to see to a plumbing issue, which she will correct herself. No handy man required.*

***DAWID** begins a monologue describing to the audience his experiences and pressures growing up as an Afrikaans man. While humour is not amiss here, I am looking for personal experiences on the intimate, inside life of a man growing up with white skin in South Africa, with the history that marks his Afrikaans culture, and the expectations, pains and joys which mark his life as a straight man. This monologue should be intercut with the indication that he is actually at a bar, in the middle of a sports game, and perhaps he is confessing to us, privately while using the toilets, and he periodically references the game and the people outside. We hear **GARY** and **FRANCOIS** offstage watching the game.*

THIS IS NOT DAWID OLIVIER

48. It's 1994. London. ALLISON and DAWID'S apartment.

Commented [ML16]: Move this scene to the end, to disrupt the potential 'family' reunion, and Dawid re-joining his masculinities to form one coherent masculinity

REPORTER: That way I can go away then, sit with that, all of that in my hands and see what shifts away and what stays in the shape of an article.

DAWID: Liberal thought, 'see where the sands shifts'. But passive, like a girl child waiting for a father to lift a torch and show the way through the night. Are you the girl child? /Am I the one to lift the torch?

REPORTER: Not at all, sir –

DAWID: No, neither are most girl children. Where do we account for that, in there? My wife, my Rebecca then – forgive the nonsense. Direction boy, is always inherent, thought out, hiding in your chest like a carver's tool. Take it out. Show your craft, tell the audience the route you will take in cutting back a whole life into 500 words. You sound less conceited then, when you all get there in the end.

A lights spot slowly reveals an actor as if in a documentary interview.

ACTOR 3: (Answers this question: To what extent has infidelity shaped the character of Marta? Do you see her or Allison as a victim?)

REPORTER: Is that what you fear, Mr. Olivier? The prospect of creative conceit winning out over truth?

DAWID: 'Truth'. 'Fear'. Are you not made of stuff less green, son? 'Truth'. Everything you set your hands to in the name of art is creative conceit. You can hold on to words like 'authenticity' and 'truth', but you may as well hold signs; stop, yield, bear left. They are no more the thing they indicate than man is a fish. You can write me a true man of many aspects but bury that in a frame of words it becomes another thing, or be true to part of a thing that is not true to the whole. Truth but not truth. Art's only truth is that it is that; a creative conceit. To conceal that conceit, to present the pretense of truth as truth; fool's errand.

REPORTER: What of *Sorrows and Rejoicings* and Rebecca then?

49. It's present day. Talking starts in darkness. A light spot slowly reveals the actors as if in a documentary interview. Each actor is to answer the question posed to them below.

ACTOR 2: (Answers the question: Is the victim of infidelity the same as the victim of a broken relationship?)

ACTOR 1: (Answers this question: To what extent has infidelity shaped the character of Dawid? To what extent is Dawid a victim of circumstance and a perpetrator of relationship violence?)

50. It's the present. The Karoo. The Olivier homestead. The living room.
There is a stinkwood table and chairs. DAWID is listening to the wireless. There is knocking on th door!

Commented [ML17]: Move this scene earlier, closer to the version of Oupa. This way they play off each other and resist family reunion

RADIO: - 2012 wildcat strike, also referred to as the Marikana Massacre, began as a dispute over pay increase, with miners demanding their pay increase to R12500 per month. A strike was called after 3000 miners walked off the job in August 2012, after a failure of miners owners at Lonmin to meet with disgruntled miners. Violence erupted at Lonmin when NUM officers opened fire on striking miners demonstrating outside NUM offices. Demonstrations culminated in miners taking possession of 'the hill' which resulted in a confrontation between miner and the SAPS. While initial reports are conflicting, between 12 and 14 August nine people lost their lives in violent confrontation on the hill, while the SAPS attempted to broker negotiations between the aggrieved parties On 16th August a special unit from the SAPS open fire on the striking miners resulting in the deaths of 34 miners and the wounding of 78 more. The incident, now burned into the collective minds of South Africans is the

DAWID: Marta? God – Marta! I can't - alright give it up. I hear you out there. Marta? I'm coming. / *(Exits)* Hello –

VORSTER (V/O): Mr. Olivier? Mr. – Hello?

DAWID (O/S): Please come in, please. How are you officer? *(Entering with the Kudu carrying baby DAWID)* David? Dawid? Good evening. Please get yourself on that chair. Who brings you here? Marta? Allison? Fallen asleep –

VORSTER (V/O): I don't know how to break this to you, sir. I don't know what to say – Lawrence, he's the - we send him out he's got the words – I'm sorry. I wish I could find a way of sparing you the news, but – this was all that was left behind. It took out all of the car, you should have seen it! I'm sorry – I'm messing this up. I'm Lieutenant Colonel Vorster – there has been a car accident – the driver's license, it brought me here to you! It was a kudu that did it. One large male. You should have seen it – albino; white as a church steeple. My heavens! It took them out. The whole front end! This boy – he's all that – I'm sorry sir. Mr. F.W and Ms. Marike – they – I'm sorry!

single most violent display of state force since the Sharpeville Massacre some 52 years ago…

(The kudu shoves baby DAWID into DAWID'S unexpectant arms, and exits. DAWID sits in disbelief)

DAWID: I promise you, seuna! *You're* going to grow old being so proud of your old man. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. I'm making you this promise. I know he's left you, but where was the good in staying? Bad happens even with a guard at the door. Car crash. Kudu. They can take the land right out from under your feet. An albino bull can take the word 'pa' right out of your mouth. I – what am I doing with you? I'm going to give you a world so different, boytjie, even from over here. I know you never asked for this. And there's a whole lot more of that stupid world coming for you. You perfect little mix of a boy, your mama was a Smutsie and your father was a Nat. And this is the Union. Of South Africa. And those English would try get rid of every bit and piece of Afrikaans in you! And that's a kind of life I wish you never knew. I don't want you to know it. Not if I can get in between you and it, and if I leave before - I don't want you to know it. But when the boere come back, and the boere will come back for you, for me, for us, your world is going to be so changed. And you will be so proud of your old man because some of that change will have come from him. And this will all have been worth it. I promise.

END.