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

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# University of the Witwatersrand

# Wits School of Arts

# MA Research

## (Un-)Writing Masculinity

Narrative, Representations of Masculinity, and (Un-)Writing the Aristotelian Dramatic Form

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**Abbreviations**

| | |
|---|---|
| ADF | Aristotelian dramatic form |
| AIA | Act of icon affirmation |
| ARV | Act of revenge violence |
| CM | Complicit masculinities |
| FT | Feminist theatre |
| FTS | Feminist theatre studies |
| IAS | Ideal Aristotelian subject |
| MFT | Materialist feminist theatre |
| MMS | Men's and masculinities studies |
| OAV | Originating act of violence |
| PaR | Practice as research |
| *SaR* | *Sorrows and Rejoicings* |
| *TINDO* | *This is Not Dawid Olivier* |

## (Un-)Writing Masculinity: An Introduction

Dominant theatre narrative structures are inherently gendered[1]. Feminist theatre theory tells us that traditional 'three-act' structures centralise masculine subject arcs and marginalise the feminine[2] (McNay 2000, Page 2006). The gender relationship informing, and represented through, this 'three-act' structure has been described as sadomasochistic; a linear 'battle' between gendered positions requiring a sadist 'masculine' male to 'defeat' a masochistic 'feminine' female resulting in a 'mutually-pleasurable' resolution (Mulvey 1989: 22).

Feminist theatrical studies (FTS) have examined the extent to which the female character is 'objectified' through this 'three-act' structure to conclude in the image of the 'defeated masochist' (Diamond 1997, Aston & Harris 2006). Feminist theatre has evolved to counter the patriarchal gender ideology of dominant theatrical practice, the 'male dramatic form,'[3] by 'moving toward' a feminist poetics which explores the female subject and femininity outside patriarchal and 'sadomasochistic' binary gender stereotyping (Case 1988, Aston & Harris 2006)[4].

But what of the 'sadist' position within this narrative 'gender-relationship' which requires *violence* not only to define itself but to produce the *action* of the 'sadomasochistic narrative'? And what of the relationship between this 'identity-generative' power of *violence* 'inherent' to the 'masculine' position, and the structures which govern the production of traditional narratives?

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[1] According to Rush Rehm; "the conventions of theatrical realism, championed in the nineteenth century [are] still dominant today…" (2003: 32). Realism conventions are themselves rooted in Aristotelian three act poetics, which has been critiqued by feminist theatre theorists as phallocentric and misogynistic (Aston 1995, Case 1988, Dolan 1988).

[2] This single climax structure progresses the plot in ways which validate masculine qualities, and concludes in a resolution which reifies masculine hegemony, and validates patriarchal gender division of labour, and structural misogyny (Case 1988, Seham 2000).

[3] In *Feminism and Theatre* (1988) Sue-Ellen Case outlines how the three-act structure can be seen as 'the male dramatic form,' not only because of its exclusive male subject position, but also because of its "…replication of the male sexual experience…reflecting the nature of the male's sexual physiology" (1988: 129).

[4] In *Feminism and Theatre* Case outlines how the appearance of female characters in dominant theatre structures is based not on 'natural reality' but on cultural constructions generated from patriarchal ideology (1988:118) thus producing a 'sign of woman' which functions as a patriarchal ideal rather than a representation of the 'real woman'. The resultant aims of feminist theatre practices are the deconstruction of the dominant and culturally produced 'sign of woman', the freeing of the 'female character' and femininity from narrative marginalisation and objectification, and the creation of a theatrical space for 'female' subjectivity and story (Aston 1998: 35).

Sadly, I have found theoretical explorations of the 'male character' and masculinity's position in theatrical narrative are in short supply[5]. Moreover, matters arising from the relationship between the ideological formation of the gendered male subject and narrative structure are seldom directly explored. So, how could I begin to unpack this 'sadistic' representation of masculinity? And, how could I describe the relationship between narrative structure and what has been described as 'sadistic position' which 'demands story', the 'force' which produces 'the beginning and the end'? (Mulvey 1989: 22). And importantly as a playwright, what were the implications of these questions on the work of creating narrative theatre, and narratives which deal with gender and specifically masculinity?

The questions before me, then, were not just of rethinking the representation of masculinities and masculinity's impact on and through dominant 'three-act' structure poetics, but of practice, of rewriting or rather un-writing this representation. Since the basis of these questions circle the fields of gender and its representation through theatre, I took as a start point FTS and its strides in generating non-patriarchal gender representation techniques: to what extent could gynocentric FTS be brought to bear on the way 'masculinity' is written through and by this 'sadomasochistic' narrative structure? And, to what extent could I make use of this interrogation of the structural influence of patriarchal 'masculine' gender ideology on narrative, to gesture 'towards' the freeing of the 'male character' and masculinities from a restricted and 'sadistic' form of 'male' narrative subjectivity?

My Masters work though did not begin here, with theoretical discourses of masculinity and narrative. I am, in part, a theatre maker. When I started this Masters journey I was in the process of writing a play concerning the events of the Rand Revolt[6] and the women and men of Johannesburg who were drawn into it. I was in search of a form fitting the complexities of the content I was writing about. Though many accounts were phallocentric, and others racist, some interrogated these prejudices and others gestured at the narratives overlooked. Each account pieced together a larger picture

[5] Men's studies have influenced a limited rethinking of the Western theatrical canon, but primarily only in ways which reveal male subjects as gendered and conflicted with patriarchal definitions of masculinity (McDonough 1997, Mangan 2003).

[6] The Rand Revolt of 1922 can be described as a white miners' strike which evolved into a civil insurrection and ended in military action and mass fatalities (Krikler 2005).

of the multiplicity of oppression and resistance in 1922 Johannesburg, and more to the point of this 'thesis' revealed the ways in which issues of 'gender' operated and were manipulated in significant moments of the revolt[7]. I was drawn into thinking of theatrical narrative and 'otheredness'. To what extent could a narrative hold the complexity and multiplicity of the events I was researching? In particular I was curious of the relationship between theatrical narrative structures and non-pejorative representations of 'othered' *and* 'non-othered' characters.

The relationship between theatre and 'otheredness' is a field rich in resources; Bertolt Brecht's *Epic theatre*, Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed*, FTS, and queer theatre to name a few. Each of these texts and fields of study focus their lens on a particular 'othered' social position, and subsequently the manipulation of the systems and structures of the theatrical medium to generative non-pejorative spaces for specific marginalised voices. But I felt that applying these theatrical techniques *alone* to the writing of my Rand Revolt play could risk simplifying the complexity that attracted me to the story in the first place, by organising the story around an 'issue' focus – race, gender, economics, or its intersectionality – and then centralising the pejorative position.

While the project of giving theatrical voice to the marginalised is important work, by leaving the 'subject' position, from which the 'marginalised' draws its identity, outside the narrative, the clarity of the lines between 'other' and 'subject' can be reinforced. The conceptualisers of *The Theatre of the Oppressor*, Marc Weinblatt and Cheryl Harrison, maintain in the defence of their work on theatre and privilege, that the revolutionary thrust of such 'alternative theatre' modes is at risk of regenerating the very structures of oppression it is resisting if it ignores as rigorous an exploration of 'all roles' within a sphere of oppression, including that of the 'oppressor' (2011: 30).

Also, if, as Mulvey maintains when discussing narrative and the sphere of gender oppression, it is the 'sadistic position' of masculine oppressor which 'demands' the oppressive dichotomous 'story', and is the generative 'force' which produces the

[7]Historian Jeremy Krikler offers observations of the social use of 'gender' and the challenges to prevailing gender binaries during the industrial action of the 1922 Rand Revolt. Krikler writes of the manipulation of state-forces' perceptions of gender for tactical advantage by the men and women of the striking forces, who were reported to cross-dress as strategy to engage state forces (2005: 82-84). Krikler writes too of the wide spread use of sexual-assault perpetrated by female commandos as a means of punishing and discouraging male strike-breakers (2005: 82-84). In short Krikler points to a plurality of gendered positions within the Revolt, outside the protagonist/antagonist binary of dominant historical accounts.

structural and narrative dynamics of the sphere of narrative gender oppression (1989: 22), surely a sustainable manner of dismantling narrative gender oppression and oppressive theatrical narrative structures must include interrogations of this 'sadistic position'?

This question haunted the early days on my Masters' journey, so much so that I set down my Rand Revolt writing to give more space to its specific interrogation. A journey which lead me through rather unpopular and sometimes underexplored terrain, exploring the structural influence of white western patriarchal 'masculine' gender ideology on the 'male dramatic form' and its 'male' subject. By way of men's and masculinities studies (MMS), FTS, Aristotle's *Poetics,* Athol Fugard's *Sorrows and Rejoicings* (*SaR*), the production of a whole new play text *This is Not Dawid Olivier,* and even here with the writing of these articles, I have attempted to question the extent to which the 'male' subject is characterised as, and 'reduced' to, the 'sadistic' generator of action, an agent of force and conflict. I have attempted to question the impact of this sadistic characterisation on and through the progression of a 'three-act' structure, and explore sustainable manners of 'pulling apart' narrative gender oppression. These questions haunt me still.

But, I have slowly come to realise, *this* is perhaps the strength of these questions. Their haunting. Since the questions seek to unpack and trouble the representation of the 'sadistic' position which generates the narrative and character gender binary of the 'sadomasochistic' three-act structure, 'answering' them with any sense of 'finality' runs a real risk of, what Weinblatt and Harrison describe as, merely reconfiguring the pejorative binaries which underpin the representation and the narrative (2011: 30). To resist and truly trouble the *set* nature of the sadomasochistic narrative and free the male character from the position of sadistic generator of sadomasochistic narratives, is to resist the foreclosure of 'answering', and in a way to live inside the haunting of these questions.

Perhaps the haunting I feel is in part due to a personal knowing that part of the way I understand theatrical narrative and enjoy theatre is socialised under the same

ideologies[8] I am asking myself to dispute. Would an audience enjoy the work I created under the auspices of such a way of thinking of narrative? Would I? I take comfort only in the fact that as Brecht maintains, not all theatre is for spectacle and enjoyment, theatre is also a powerful tool for positive social upliftment and change, and plays a vital role in the struggle against oppression and challenging social ideologies which maintain and promulgate oppression (Blumberg & Walder 1999: 5).

But also, a very palpable and inescapable part of this haunting is knowing that portions of my identity are coloured with much of the privilege which characterises such the 'sadistic' position of narrative. My investigation is then also coloured with the very same privileges; here I am a white male generating a narrative – about gender power relations. Perhaps a large part of this haunting is the explicit haunting of white masculinity in South Africa; the explicit place it has occupied historically as a monolithic intersection of power and privilege, and still does occupy even after the fall of apartheid (Agenda 2013: [Sp]). I must look at myself in this context. I must look at my position within this legacy of power and privilege.

Patricia Hill Collins (2000) speaks of the unique ability of black women to bear witness to the structures and manifestations of socio-political gender power relations due to their being the symbol of 'the outsider' from which empowered white male 'subjects' draw their identity. White capitalist patriarchy, requires the disenfranchised position of black women in the formation of its systems which venerate its hierarchies and unevenly distribute its privileges. And yet this requirement is simultaneously an exclusion of disenfranchised black women from activity within these very systems and a denial of access to these very privileges. This socio-ideological position of black women allows them to speak to the socio-structural expositions of power in a unique and particular voice as an 'outside-within' (Collins 2000).

In comparison to the 'outside-within' position of black women then, I could be seen to occupy an 'insider' position 'within' these structures of gender power within a contemporary South African gender order. And so I must ask of myself: how my positionality shapes my ability to 'bear whiteness'?

[8] While this argument is too lengthy to comprehensively contend with here, in brief, seminal texts such as Mulvey's *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989) and Sue-Ellen Case's *Feminism and Theatre* (1988) describe the 'enjoyment' or catharsis experienced through dominant theatre narrative structures as a product of the ability of the symbolic order represented on stage to reify the cultural investment in patriarchal ideologies.

But first, what is this contemporary South African gender order?

According to *Who's Afraid of Feminism* – an article published by Agenda Feminist Media as an overview of the state of gender equality in South African 20 years into democracy – the period of inclusive democracy in South Africa has yielded limited, albeit important, changes in the structural and material conditions of women, particularly black women (Agenda 2013: [Sp]). By outlining the impacts of 'watered-down feminism' and political 'gender-neutrality' on matters of health, education, land, and policy, the article highlights the precarious real-life impacts of what it terms the democratic government's 'neo-liberalist' approach to the intersection of governance and gender equality (Agenda 2013: [Sp]). According to *Agenda*, by choosing to 'neutralise' gender in the policy manifestations of its structural and political ideologies, the democratic government has largely inhibited its ability to dismantle the structural and material obstacles which oppress and subjugate South African women. This 'gender neutral' focus opens opportunity to reproduce white capitalist patriarchal privileges, prejudices and hierarchies, and effectively maintains white masculinity as a privileged identity, and black femininity as an outsider identity in contemporary South Africa (Agenda 2013: [Sp]). As a white man writing this research thesis, in this South African context, I find myself in parts within this very pinnacle of empowered white male subjectivity. Indeed, as it would seem an 'insider-within'.

And yet as Ratele maintains race and gender, and its intersection are not stable identities (1998: 63). Rather these are historical constructs imbued with intense historical significations, particularly in a South African context. Though violent colonial and apartheid periods in South African history, South African white masculine identity has been 'created' through the subjugation and oppression of black, and black masculine identities (Ratele 1998: 63). However, as Ratele maintains these black, black masculine, and indeed white masculine identities are not indicators of homogenous groups and are not representative of individual lived experiences (1998: 63). Being a white South African male is then not a guarantee that I carry within my individual identity, completely the characteristics, powers and privileges of the monolithic socio-ideological construct of white masculinity which haunts the contemporary gender order. Rather, Ratele explains, these archetype identities (white

male, black female and so on) are socio-historical constructions with particular socio-political and economic privileges, constructed by and in service of context specific socio-ideological and political power systems. White men therefore do not all have the same whiteness, nor manhood (Ratele1998: 63). And as Michael Kaufman points out in *Men, Feminism, and Men's Contradictory Experience of Power,* white men do not all have the same access to, experience, or practice of the privileges and powers associated with and imbued into whiteness and masculinity and the potent intersection thereof (1994: 148). There opens then the space for men, white men, for me, to be described as 'insiders' but 'without' complete access to the powers and privileges which define the group.

As a person who does not identify with the monolithic rigidity or ideological construction of white male masculinity, and its hegemony, and as a person whose identity has in parts been negatively shaped through and negated because of such hegemonies, I have been pushed to the peripheries of the lingering South African ideal of white capitalist patriarchal masculinity. In this position, my access to the powers and privileges of this 'insiders' grouping are limited by comparison. I am an 'insider-without'. And yet in other ways, in other contexts I am still part of that larger empowered identity through my whiteness and maleness which can afford privileges to my identity.

But as Weinblatt and Harrison maintain these parts are not the whole of a complex person and reducing my identity to these factors reinforces the very narrative structures I am trying to interrogate here (2011: 23). Ignoring *this* factor in myself, or in the complexities of theatrical narrative, is in a way to give credence to the metanarratives of privilege and reinforce the binaries which keep 'others' oppressed. If it is indeed from the privileged position from which a binary is generated, herein must lie a vital position for the deconstruction of the binary and its power to facilitate social oppression.

I am an 'insider-without'. And perhaps this provides me some unique position to reflect on the structures and manifestations of contemporary South African socio-political gender power relations. I can speak to Kaufman's thesis of masculinity's contradictory experience of patriarchal power; the ability to be both empowered through social context and disenfranchised in specific setting. In fact, because of this access to gender privilege parts of my identity possess, my generating this Masters' narrative on

masculinity and narrative ‘inside’ this ‘masculinity’ privilege, with awareness of this privilege, can be seen as itself a method to attempt to understand and deconstruct ‘masculinity’, ‘maleness’ and narrative.

This ability to speak to and challenge patriarchy in its many forms and guises is pivotal to bell hook’s (2000) mantra ‘ feminism is for everyone’. This is not to say that hooks calls for feminisms to include specifically the masculine and /or male experience. Rather that the need to dismantle white capitalist patriarchy is for everyone, no matter their sex, race, or social position. And indeed in some ways men in all social-facets must join in solidarity with women of the world, in ways which acknowledge the privileges of gender, sex, race and economics, and the hierarchies which govern these social orders and give men privilege. It is perhaps then, as I read it, that men, black men, even white men, can join hook’s sisterhood in their pursuit to deconstruct and dismantle white capitalist patriarchy.

This is why I write this play and this thesis. In an attempt to put my step forward, to acknowledge from my ‘insider-without’ position, the privileges and powers afforded white men in the theatrical arts in South Africa, in theory, in practice, on the stage and off, in content and in narrative. This is my attempt to understand how white South African capitalist patriarchal power and privilege is hinged on the exclusion of not only other genders and races, and their intersections, but to the exclusion of ‘othered’ men within the empowered position of white male masculinity. In this way I hope to contribute to the ideas and practices of anti-racist and anti-sexist studies.

However, the work of writing a research report operates, largely, under the same structural configurations as dramatic narrative (McQuillan 2000, Murray 2006). While the traditional theatrical narrative is described in concepts such as moment of ‘suffering’, the climactic ‘discovery’ and the resolution of ‘reversal’ (Aristotle 2006, Belfiore 2009), the writing of a research report follows similar concepts such as ‘problem statement’ or ‘thesis’, ‘discovery’ and ‘closure’ (Murray 2006, White 2011). Education Professor Rowena Murray describes the academic thesis structure as a logically linked debate which takes it flow from a proposition or ‘thesis’ (2006: 107). The ‘thesis’ must claim a position, and ‘defend’ its theoretical assertion against other existing bodies of theory till a theoretical discovery can be made which satisfies logical

grounds for their inclusion or exclusion into the thesis. The argument is brought to a closure by reflecting on the implications of this inclusion and/or exclusion (Murray 2006: 181).

In his *Poetics,* Greek philosopher Aristotle described the 'theatrical' narrative structure as the logical and chronological unfolding of events set forth by a 'tragic' incident of 'suffering' (2006: 47). The narrative explores differing viewpoints around this incident, reaching a climatic confrontation, or battle of wills (Knutson 2000: 41) during which one 'view' triumphs. The narrative is then drawn into a resolution where ultimately the question of the hero's fate and fortune are resolved depending on the implications of the outcomes of the climax (Sachs 2006: 3).

Read alongside each other Aristotle's seminal description of the 'tragic' dramatic structure and the structure of the academic thesis described by Murray share commonalities; in structural definitions, descriptions of progression between points, as well as preferred relationships between its major structural points. Academic thesis writing can be said to follow a 'narrative' structure (Murray 2006: 181). If this is taken to be true, and read alongside the questions I have asked of dramatic narrative above, then I have presented myself with another important question: what is the impact of this line of narrative intervention questioning on this research paper? More to the point, how would I structure this written report on an academic rethink of narrative structuring, without reproducing the very facilities of 'narrative' in the report that I was critiquing within the report?

Another consideration to contend with as I worked through questions of how to write this report, is the 'gendered' way academic writing can be and has been read. According to sociologist Laurel Richardson (1997) and Hillevi Lenz-Taguchi (2010) the dominant way of understanding academic writing, along lines of rationality and neutrality rooted in objectivity, is socialised in ways which divides it within the sphere of writing into a binary opposition with writing considered subjective, emotional and personal. This binary is reliant on and validates other dominant social binaries in ways which can be seen to normalise academic writing as 'masculine'. In contradistinction, the binary also normalises subjective writing and knowledge produced from personal experience as 'feminine', excluding it from being seen as 'serious' academic writing (Lenz-Taguchi 2010: 142). The traditional academic thesis described by Murray with

its focus on objectivity and logical linear progression in argument, can then be described as a ‘masculine’ mode of writing. Not only then does an academic thesis as a piece of writing adhere to similar structural points as the three-act structure I am attempting to deconstruct but is also imbued with the valorisation of the very gender I am seeking to deconstruct. Both these points, intertwined and separately, galvanise to question the theoretical soundness of my decision to make use of a pure thesis style research report to work through and record my research into masculinity and narrative structure. In writing earlier drafts of this report, I felt like a hypocrite, and a very real part of my research began as the search for a form of academic writing which best suited the requirements of a Masters’ thesis report while remaining true to the ideological argument of its content. Writing about un-writing masculinity and narrative must be presented in a ‘narrative’ which must be ‘un-written’ itself. Indeed, at its base, this was the impetus of my research followed though to a logical ‘conclusion’. I looked once again to feminist discourse for guidance.

Arts-researcher Dr. Gail Crimmins traces the development of a ‘feminine way of communicating’ as a feminist resistance to the normalisation of ‘masculinised’ academia (2017: 19-20). In *Theatricalising Narrative Research on Women Casual Academics*, Crimmins describes the contributions of linguistic-feminists Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément in developing discourses and practices which formalised the use of subjective and personal pedagogies, and improvisational and artistic methodologies as a means of generating and recording knowledge outside ‘masculinised’ academia which ‘pacifies the feminine voice’ (2017: 19-20). Richardson herself advocated and practiced the use of drama, prose, poetry and autobiographical introspection “…in her scholarship in order to both reject and hold up for scrutiny science’s ‘omniscient voice…’” (Crimmins 2017: 21).

However, using ‘art’ as research or as generator of knowledge, does offer an apparent unique conundrum: can a largely subjective methodology produce work which satisfies the objective specificities of research? Researcher Estelle Barrett describes artistic practices as the pursuit of, or “…the production of knowledge or philosophy in action” (2007: 1) and links the work of producing art to the act of producing knowledge, by recognising both involve an interpretation through the senses of the world around (2007: 2). Barrett looks at the subjective methodological nature of the ‘art practice’

interpretation as its real benefit to research. Artistic practice has the ability to position this personal interpretation within a greater socio-cultural context and reveal the intricacies of knowledge application *and* creation, and, in this way, create alternative ways of understanding the implication of knowledge (Barrett 2007: 2).

This idea of art as a *methodology for research* was very appealing to me. Though I had chosen to research and probe the questions of masculinity and narrative within an epistemological field, I had been inspired through my work as a theatre maker to this research. That the questions could be worked inside and through the medium which had inspired them, would subsume one of the intentions for the research into the research itself, the application of the implications of the research directly into my work. In ideological terms, this notion performs another important function; by keeping the practice I am writing about at the forefront of the research, the binary of research and practice is troubled. This is especially important since as Case points out, the political thrust of such gender research must feed directly into the practice of resistance to socio-political oppression, or risk luring activism away from effecting change in a practical manner (1988: 112). It is for this reason that I began work on a new play, a narrative which would practically explore the theory I had been grappling with. This work has 'culminated' in the thesis draft of a play entitled *This is Not Dawid Olivier (TINDO)*, based off my explorations of the interdependence of patriarchal masculinity and the 'three-act' structure through the Athol Fugard play *SaR*.

Lenz-Taguchi though warns against interpretations and uses of Cixous and Clément's work as a polarised form of 'subjective' or 'artistic' writing reliant fundamentally on valorising the feminine position (2010: 143). This use of 'resistance writing' runs the real risk of reducing the complexity of its structure by becoming as monolithic in its resistance as the 'masculine' academic writing it purports to resist. In this way 'resistant writing' is at risk of regenerating the very structures of oppression it is resisting! Lenz-Taguchi advocates rather, for a hybrid use of writing, one which moves between and beyond the subjective/objective binary, through integrated interdisciplinary work (2010: 143). In this way neither of the 'gendered writing' positions are given a 'dominant' position within the work produced, rather they feed into the production and documentation of knowledge in differing and complex ways.

What I was circling then was a creative research report which would include the creation of a narrative *(TINDO)* as part of a methodology of writing through the questions of masculinity and narrative, as well as portions of the report which would rely on more traditional modes of academic writing to situate the writing within greater epistemological fields. It is for this reason that the research report that you are reading is divided into several smaller parts, both theoretical and creative namely three articles and the four acts of *TINDO.* These pieces of writing should not be viewed as separate pieces, rather as representing differing viewpoints and related topics of discourse which, woven together through your act of reading, reveal the complexities of and interrelated-ness between the theoretical and creative interrogations of masculinity and narrative structure. For this reason, you are encouraged to proceed in any manner you choose. Read *TINDO* first should you fancy, and follow it with the articles, or mix them up; the order set down here is done so purely because the act of committing my ideas to paper within this format requires an article to follow another and so on. It is not an indication of preference or of order of readability.

One final note before you move on your own; there will be no final formalised conclusion. The proceeding work is written to include my observations and theoretical engagements with narrative and masculinity, and to practically incorporate my interventions in and through a narrative. This will be done, not as an 'answer' to these questions but rather as my own personal creative way of gauging the extent to which narrative can be manipulated to render the male subject and masculinities outside patriarchal binary gender stereotyping. This will be done as my own personal way – as part theatre maker, part artist, part researcher, part man – of questioning how dominant theatrical narratives 'write' masculinity, and so incite tractable narrative explorations of the complexities of masculine gender performance. I hope to contribute to an understanding of critical and subversive interventions in existing studies, seeking to (un-)write masculinities, and make inroads towards a gendered 'poetics' inclusive of non-patriarchal defined masculine characters.

**Three Acts to Manhood:**

Aristotle and Athol make man!

## A Start That is not a Beginning

> ***B.J:*** *If I tell of this argument maybe I start it when I mentioned history being a boxing match. You might start it when you said 'Here. Here it starts B.J'. Either way there's a whole context missing. (TINDO)*

***Revolt.*** This is a loose patch-work 'play-text' in draft form; story-bits of a teenage boy living in post-WW1 Johannesburg, and images of the build-up to the Rand Revolt. Before thoughts of this series of research articles, I had been pulling these images and story-bits tenuously together into a 'narrative'. This is not a play. Yet.

Running through this 'story' are images of power and masculinity which mirror the teenager's 'coming' into manhood with the social experience of the miners' rise in trade-unionism. My desire; to explore some of the forces and expectations around which images of manhood are constructed.

In *Men Behaving Differently,* Graeme Reid and Liz Walker maintain the mining industry and the unionisation of this industry as key elements in generating images of masculinity in Johannesburg during the second decade of the twentieth century (2005: 7-8). According to Keith Breckenridge, the mines became the definitive locale for the mixing of black and white men of Johannesburg during this time. These relationships forged underground were 'explicitly racialized' (1998: 669). In the early parts of the twentieth century, poorly paid black miners were brought to work the mines making large groups of white miners redundant. To appease angered and unionised white labour, mine owners absorbed a portion of these white miners into what Breckenridge terms 'racial' oversight roles with vast social, health and economic privileges (1998:673). Effectively, this sharpened divisions amongst the men of the mines along intersecting socio-relational lines such as race, economics and culture. These divisions were maintained through violent socio-legislatively processes and characterised by increased levels of violent antagonism in almost all inter- and intra-racial dynamics (Breckenridge 1998: 669- 673). Thabo Msibi argues further that this violence, fuelled by racial and social inequalities, burgeoned through the later part of the twentieth century to become integral characteristics to both privileged white and defensive black masculinities (2009:52).

Continuing this thesis, Robert Morell writing in *Changing Men in South Africa*, maintains these very images of violent, industrialised and unionised masculinities galvanised into, amongst others, white Afrikaans nationalist and resistant black masculinities during apartheid, which largely inform our understanding of masculinity and gender hegemony today (2001: 12-13).

*Revolt* was then a dramatic attempt to explore the images of modern South African masculinities through the milieu of 1922 Johannesburg as they shaped a teenage boy's exploration and socialisation into manhood. The play has remained in draft form, put away for now, but useful in its unresolved nature. The ending. I could not write an ending which resisted blame, or resisted validating the teenager, or his father; or the mine-owners or state forces and thereby exclusively the masculinity they represented. Perhaps it was the writing. The narrative was unpicked and rethreaded, until I shifted my perspective.

Re-reading Brecht; theatrical forms must be shaped around a 'new' subject (1964: 29), I thought of the narrative itself. I had been attempting to shape my explorations of masculinity around a dominant theatrical narrative form or Aristotelian Dramatic Form (ADF)[9] – beginning/incitement, middle/climax, and end/resolution. This narrative structure has been critiqued by feminist theatre theorists as phallocentric and misogynistic (Aston 1995, Case 1988, Dolan 1988). Teresa de Lauretis maintains this narrative structure inherently excludes the 'female' from the subject position, by calling on the subject to 'enact' qualities reserved for 'the male'. De Lauretis maintains the only position for 'the female' within this structure is as passive narrative markers; a place from which the hero departs, or is headed through or to (1984: 118-119). Susan Knutson describes this structure as exclusively the *male* hero's achievement of manhood through the defeat of, or the attainment of the feminine as reward (2000: 41).

On the surface, it would seem there is no 'conflict' here. Form and subject-matter concern themselves with 'coming into manhood'. Here lie the rubs: the definition of

[9] ADF – Aristotelean Dramatic Form; Rush Rehm maintains the structuring of contemporary theatrical narrative forms draw their roots, through the conventions of 19th century realism, to the Aristotelian three act poetics (2003: 32).

manhood and the inference that 'manhood' is gained through the suppression of women.

Sue-Ellen Case describes the resolution of ADF as organised around the restoration of gender binary hierarchies, which results in the passive, emotional, and misogynistic image of women at the narrative's end (1988: 129). Gender theorists, Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelenhan point out that binaries function on three levels; firstly, to define subjects in opposition to each other; secondly, to arrange the subject positions into a hierarchy, and finally to reduce the possibility of positions available to 'either or' terms (2004: 24). Case can then be read as simultaneously outlining the image of men at the narrative's resolution in its binary opposition to that of women; as active, logical and so on.

This image of masculinity is monolithic in nature and speaks of a 'singularity' of manhood which Knutson says is achieved through ADF. This definition of masculinity runs in contradiction to what MMS[10] theorists Morell (2001) Kopano Ratele (1998) and Robert Connell (1995) define as a multiplicity of masculinities. Connell maintains it is this monolithic view of masculinity which MMS seeks to deconstruct through investigating the male and masculine subject as both oppressed and oppressive in their gendering (2000: 7-8). In this way, monolithic 'masculinity' is deconstructed as multiplistic, hierarchical in its multiplicity; the site of both oppressive and oppressing dynamics (Connell 2000: 10) and unstable in the face of ever-changing socio-political situations (Ratele 1998: 63). I contended that this view of masculinities is more helpful in aiding my enquiry in writing an 'ending' for *Revolt* which seemed to require the recognition of multiple masculinities in lieu of the validation of a monolithic representation.

Yet as Knutson and Case maintain, ADF validates and concludes not with this multiplicity, but with a singular definition of manhood. Connell calls this definition of masculinity as the most visible and 'authoritative' of a spectrum of masculinities, one which best describes the cultural-specific patriarchal ideal of 'man' (2000: 30). In this way Knutson should be read as maintaining that ADF is an exclusively *male* hero's achievement of a cultural-specific patriarchal ideal of manhood (2000: 41). An 'icon' of man, which I explore in greater depths in ***The Character of Man***.

[10] Men's and masculinities studies.

Read this way, the structure can be interrogated as not validating masculinity wholly, but rather a narrow spectrum of masculinity. Herein might lie possible reasons behind the unease I felt writing and re-writing a resolution for *Revolt*. The spectrum of masculine and male characters to be represented in *Revolt* transverse the gamut of race, culture, age, and economics. Is there narrative space then in ADF for these masculine characters who were non-monolithic in their gender, non-binary masculine characters? And how exactly was ADF organised through and around its ideal 'male' subject; as exemplar of hegemonic masculinity[11]?
In this article then I will interrogate the structural influence of patriarchal 'masculine' gender ideology on the 'male dramatic form' and its 'male' subject'.

### The Narrative's the Thing

> ***DAWID**: 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. (TINDO)*

I put down *Revolt*. The questions occupying my time became about theatrical narrative form, and masculinity.

According to Rush Rehm; "the conventions of theatrical realism, championed in the nineteenth century [are] still dominant today…" (2003: 32). Realism's linear structure, one event leading the following event to climax, can – in theatrical terms – be drawn back to the Aristotelian tragedy plot structure. Modern incarnations of this structure include the naturalist movement's 'well-made' play (Carlson 1993, Innes 2000) which has informed the contemporary realism still in dominant use today (Kennedy 2010, Robinson 2016). It is for this reason that contemporary critiques of dramatic narrative structure, such as those by Knutson (2000) and Lewis (2007), and, importantly for this research, feminist critiques of theatre, such as those by Case (1988) and Aston and Harris (2006), have made use of the Aristotelian model to frame their critiques. Since I was determined to rethink the representation of masculinities and its impact on and through dominant 'three-act' structure poetics for the purpose of practically re-constructing narrative to 'hold' non-binary masculinities in a tractable manner, I too used ADF as a starting point.

[11] Here 'hegemonic masculinity' is used as defined by Robert Connell in *Masculinities* (1995): the exemplar of the patriarchal male role.

But without *Revolt*. I had put *Revolt* down. *Revolt* was a text in search of form. Without a narrative structure to sort through I had no site for my exploration of ADF. Also, without raw material to explore, I had no material structured through ADF, to *deconstruct* in the project of writing. This project was not merely a critique of masculinity representation through and in ADF, but, as I explored in (*Un-)Writing Masculinity: An Introduction*, "…of practice, of rewriting or rather un-writing this representation".

The term 'deconstruction' is used here as defined by Jacques Derrida, who described it as a questioning strategy "…to show how [a discourse] undermines the philosophy it asserts, or the hierarchical oppositions on which it relies, by identifying in the text the rhetorical operations that produce the supposed ground of argument…but in order to breach it" (Culler 2007: 84). This Derridarian deconstruction allows not only for the 'breaching' of the unity between patriarchal ideology and narrative form for the purpose of non-patriarchal masculinity representation, but allows for the exposure of the ways in which Aristotelian narrative is underpinned and informed by patriarchal definitions of masculinity.

I needed a subject-text. To critique. And deconstruct through the practice of writing. I decided on Athol Fugard's *Sorrows and Rejoicings* (*SaR*).

Fugard is a theatre maker whose shadow looms large over the South African theatre Industry. Carol Becker has called Athol; "South Africa's most famous playwright" (1998: 92). Anton Krueger maintains his work has become 'synonymous with a theatre of resistance in South Africa' (2010: 63). His work has garnered both local and international success (Krueger 2010: 63), as well as local and international critique (Mda cited in Krueger 2010; Brantley 2002).

Born in Middleburg, Fugard grew up, and spent years as a playwright, in apartheid South Africa. Throughout an active career, Fugard has produced an extensive catalogue of play texts, film scripts and novels, which by and large grapple with the 'lived experiences' of the oppressive politics of the apartheid regime (Maclennan 1993: 517).

As Alan Shelly maintains, Fugard was culturally of mixed descent; with both British and Afrikaans antecedents (2009: [Sp]). It is this heritage, Shelly maintains, that can be seen to colour the perspectives of Fugard's work; the 'Afrikaner mindset' so well

studied in work such as *Hello and Goodbye* and *The Road to Mecca*, and the Irish influence seen in *'Master Harold'… and the Boys* (2009: [Sp]).

But as Albert Wertheim points out this very part of Fugard's identity produced a palpable paradox in his earlier works, particularly those focused on apartheid. While his whiteness and middle-class privilege gave him some distance from the black, coloured and mix-raced subjects of his earlier work (*Boesman and Lena*, and *Bloodknot*) which gave these works a unique 'outsider' perspective, it also prevented him from articulating a truly lived experience of matters around race and apartheid, and rendered some of his character treatments problematic (2000:2). This quality of his work has drawn much criticism for underplaying matters of race and its intersectinality (Wertheim 2000:3).

Post-democracy though has seen a shift in theme and content in Fugard's works (Shelly 2009: [Sp]). According to Shelly, Fugard's more contemporary works, such as *The Captain's Tiger* and *The Train Driver*, have begun to explore more intensely the place of white men in democratic South Africa (2009: [Sp]).

It seems no coincidence then, that during my research through the sparse work on masculinity and South African theatre, I should find multiple references to not one but to several of Fugard's works.

In *Experiments in Freedom*, for instance, Krueger makes use of Fugard's long-spanning career, to analyse works from different periods of Fugard's career, to demonstrate a gradual evolution of the representation of masculinity in South African theatre. Importantly, this includes a study of *SaR*. However, while Krueger's examinations are importantly rooted in the analysis of the evolution of the representation of the masculinity and reflecting on the historical influences which might have precipitated the evolution, his study does not address issues of narrative structure and its influence of this representation.

Of *SaR*; I had been reading and working through this play, before my research began in earnest, as part of my work as a drama lecturer. I was struck by its Oedipal structure; the story within a story.

Set in the Karoo, *SaR* unpacks the betrayals of its protagonist, poet Dawid Olivier, against the women in his life. After returning from his funeral, his wife, mistress, and daughter, recount the life of Dawid. Assisted through flashback monologues by Dawid

himself, the women recount his illicit love affair with his mistress during apartheid, the deterioration of his marriage in exile, and his unsolicited reconnection with his daughter during his final return to the Karoo, where he dies of cancer.

The choice of play text is quite specific. Firstly, in *The Return of Myth* (2006), Greek theatre theorist Marianne McDonald traces the influence of ADF on the work of Athol Fugard. As McDonald maintains; "as Fugard's own plays developed, they began to have a classical structure" (2006: 22). McDonald draws parallels between classic Greek narrative and several of Fugard's works including *SaR;* namely through stylistic elements such as chorus usage in *The Cell*, structural elements such as the observation "…of classical unities of place, theme, and time" (2006: 22) in *Blood Knot*, and story elements such as the thematic influence of *The Abbess* and *SaR* (2006: 38).

McDonald's analysis of *SaR* briefly points to its similarities with Euripides's *Oedipus Rex*; male protagonists whose lives are impacted by the death of a father figure, and the pivotal influence of this in forming their character and the narrative structure (2006: 40). Extrapolated in this way, McDonald's analysis seems to provide the strongest possible link between *SaR* and ADF, as this is the very work Aristotle makes use of in his *Poetics* to discuss the ideal narrative form (Aristotle 2006: 35).

Secondly, in *A White Man in Exile*, theatre academic Anton Krueger explores the notion of South African hegemonic masculinity and representation through "the character of Dawid Olivier, who is the protagonist of…*Sorrows and Rejoicings*…" (2011: 119). Krueger's study provided me with two important pieces of information: the image of young Dawid as 'King of the Forest', or the masculine ideal, in contrast to the emasculated older Dawid; and also, an interpretation of the play's conceptualisation of the nature of this masculine ideal (as protector, sustainer and father figure) (2011: 125).

This choice though is not, however, without issue. Dawid's presence in *SaR* is a memory. He does not interact directly with any of the other characters. At times Dawid's interaction with Marta, for instance, is inferred in his monologues; his first appearance, for example, implies that Marta asks after Allison (pp.17), though in fact she remains silent, a shadow in the scene. And here lies the rub; expect for these

inferences via Dawid's monologues the women of the play are rendered inactive and silent in all of Dawid's big speeches. And he does have many. Indeed this indictment forms the centre piece for Christina Scott's review of *SaR* (2001). The women, Scott maintains, are rendered silent in the service of Dawid's story (2001:[Sp]). Dawid, Scott maintains gets the bulk of the 'airtime' and certainly get the better 'quality' airtime as *SaR* does not present much in the way of the interior lives of these women (2001:[Sp]). The women of *SaR* are, dramatically speaking, 'outsiders-within' the narrative. Driven to the periphery of the narrative, Marta, Allison and Rebecca form the silence over which the white man Dawid speaks. It is a positionality which might offer a unique perspective in the project of (un-)writing masculinity, certainly one which presents many challenges considering my own positionality as an 'insider-without'.

At this stage though, *SaR* provided me with an ADF play whose subject matter was hegemonic masculinity. I put down *Revolt*.
I decided on *SaR*.

### Writing Through Problems of Writing as the Problem

> ***B.J:*** *You can't just write what people did or didn't do. History doesn't happen with starts and finishes. It's not a judgment. There are people there. (TINDO)*

But I did not put away my writer's pen. These research articles were born inside a desire to write. This research is about writing about writing, but also about writing. The aim of exploring the structural relationship between patriarchal gender ideology and theatre narrative, will be written through these articles about writing, and written through the act of writing or un-writing the narrative of *SaR*.

I turned to feminist theatre studies (FTS), to its investigations of narrative and gender.

Sue-Ellen Case (1988) reads the evolution of FTS in a similar practice-research economy. Purely epistemological research holds a troubled space in FTS[12], it can be viewed as elitist and, as explored in *An Introduction*, 'masculine'. The knowledge

[12] Case (1988) maintains that theory holds a troubled position within the feminist movement. Considered elitist, Case states that "…theory is characterized as separate from practice, luring feminists away from working on the issues of socio-political oppression…for this reason, it is useful to locate the project of feminist theory within the realm of political practice" (1988: 112).

generating capacity of the experiences and practices of pioneer practitioners of feminist theatre (FT) is as important as the feminist theory interventions on FT practice (Case 1988, Aston & Harris 2006). Theory should both empower a practical resistance to theatrical imprints of patriarchy, while also creating space for the production of knowledge through means other than epistemological, such as through practice.

### Practice as Research

Franc Chamberlin describes 'creative research' or 'practice as research' (PaR) as the use of the actual creative practice as a research tool, as a manner of generating knowledge through grappling with epistemological questions inside the artistic practice, such as dance, painting or performance; or in my case, creative writing. The practice then simultaneously generates knowledge, and 'documents' the application of the effects and impacts of this knowledge (2002; cited in Thomson 2003 pp. 162).

Christopher Baugh maintains that this 'final' practice-project must contain within it, the inherent research value of the research project. For a creative work to be considered research, it must not only generate knowledge through its practice, but stand as research without lengthy academic explanation, or risk becoming redundant in the face of 'sophisticated' academic writing (2002; cited in Thomson 2003 pp. 162). Baugh does call for a brief academic guide to the work, to act as a 'passport' and frame the reader, or audience member's experience of the practice-project as research (2002; cited in Thomson 2003 pp. 162).

Caroline Rye, though, writes against this academic 'passport'. She maintains that requiring the art practice used as a research tool to speak solely for itself, favours work which more closely mirrors traditional research modes. This does not provide space for other more experimental artistic endeavours, such as temporal performance art or hard to document site specific art-practice, from being considered as research (2002; cited in Thomson 2003 pp. 164). Also, this 'passport' runs the real risk of becoming what Chamberlin refers to as 'documentation' rather than part of the research (2002; cited in Thomson 2003 pp. 162).

Rather Rye calls for a more nuanced relationship between the practice-project and its academic documentation. Both should be seen as different methodologies used in tandem to explore epistemological questions; each stands alongside the other in a broader research project creating an interdisciplinary investigation crisscrossing their

strengths of theory and critique, and practice and theory application (2002; cited in Thomson 2003 pp. 165).

While definitions and limitations of PaR are still in flux (Trimmington 2002: 54), PaR offers a method of retaining creativity at the centre of this research project. It simultaneously allows me to work through questions of writing about masculinity, through the 'language' of theatrical writing, from which the research question was born, while also allowing me to harness the ability for the practice of writing and applying the theoretical explorations directly to narrative writing to generate experiential knowledge. Thus, what sociologist Hillevi Lenz-Taguchi would describe as 'feminine' experiential knowledge generating capacity, is given equal epistemological weight in my research as more traditional masculine modes of research (2010: 142). A method of research which in spirit appeals to my research intention of deconstructing 'writerly' gender binaries.

Since this research seeks to interrogate and deconstruct representations of masculinity, particularly through ADF, using *SaR* as its case study, it would seem pertinent then to root this analysis of *SaR* with a theoretical exploration of ADF and its gender critiques.

### And in the End, will Someone Die?

> ***ALLISON:*** *So, the curtain falls? Your final act is written David? So long and farewell to Allison. Don't I get my happy ending? Don't I get some resolution? (TINDO)*

Elizabeth Belfiore describes Aristotle's *Poetics* as an examination of the constitution of the dramatic form of tragedy and outlines six qualities as integral to its definition: plot, character, thought, style, song and spectacle (2009: 630). Plot, Belfiore maintains, is paramount to Aristotle (Belfiore 2009: 630). Importantly in the *Poetics* Aristotle describes three parts of ADF: suffering, discovery, and reversal (2006: 35). Aristotle maintains; these elements must develop out of the arrangement of the story, with each action brought to pass out of necessity from actions preceding it (2006: 34), in this way linearity of cause and effect remains pivotal to the organisation of the ADF. It is this linearity and action, according to Aristotle, which is pivotal to the production of catharsis, the purging of pity and fear, in the audience which Aristotle posits as the chief function of tragedy (2006: 26).

As such Aristotle identifies what has become known as the three-act structure; the beginning or the event of suffering, the middle or the build up towards climax (the moment of discovery), and the end or the resolution (the reversal of fortune) (Sachs 2006: 3).

### Feminist's Case Against Aristotle

These very qualities of logical linearity, and progression through action are critiqued by feminist theatre (FT) theorists as phallocentric and misogynistic (Aston 1995, Dolan 1988). As briefly explored in *An Introduction* this narrative structure inherently excludes the 'female' subjectivity position (de Lauretis 1984) and reduces the position for 'the female' within this structure, to passive narrative markers, a site of departure, arrival or of conflict[13] (de Lauretis 1984, Mulvey 1989).

Structurally, Case describes, how the resolution of ADF is organised around the restoration of gender binary hierarchies, which not only results in the passive, emotional and misogynistic image of women at the narrative's end but can undo any resistance to gender binary ideology the character represented through the course of the narrative pre-resolution (1988: 129).

As Mulvey posits, ADF is generated through the pursuit and destruction of a masochistic female by a sadistic male (1989: 22). It is the female's lack of a penis, Mulvey maintains, which produces a castration fear within the male character which is appeased through the pursuit of the obliteration or ownership of the female character (1989:22). The male desire for the phallus, and for phallic power which the female character comes to represent in ADF, can be seen as the motivational force behind the generation of the narrative, its structures, and the misogynistic formulation and presentation of female characters (Mulvey 1989:22).

Indeed, the tangible relationship between desire and narrative structure has been well explored by de Lauretis (1984), and Knutson (2000) and through intersectional studies of race, gender and narrative by Butler-Evans (1991) and Sengupta (2006). The scope and fullness of these explorations is too broad to do justice here, though suffice to say desire, it seems, is pivotal to the formation, consumption and enjoyment of ADF. Equally, in this thesis, I could point to the use of desire as a theme important to the

[13] Read (*Un-)Writing Masculinity: An Introduction* pp.3-4 for an expansion of Mulvey's theory of women as site of narrative conflict.

formulation of the *SaR* narrative. Desire might be a useful lens through which to analyse narrative structure, *SaR* and (un-)write masculinity.
And yet it is the necessity of this narrative of *desire* to turn to 'obliteration' or violent 'control' through the climax AND resolution of ADF which I find of great interest here. If violence is pivotal then to the realisation of desires in ADF, and as Peter Murphy maintains, "…is the single most evident marker of manhood" (2004: 189), then violence and not desire seems the more effective lens through which to analyse masculinity and narrative.

But before I get there, what of ADF's impact on and through hegemonic masculinity? And how does ADF construct the 'icon' of man? Resolution, or ADF's reversal is structurally key.

**Reversal**

According to Aristotle, the moment of 'discovery' or climax is linked directly to the fortunes of the protagonist undergoing the 'discovery', and thus it generally occurs alongside the 'reversal' (2006: 35). Aristotle describes 'reversal' as the change of fortune of the protagonist from that which the narrative has implied as an expectation prior to the moment of 'suffering' (2006: 34), and thus can be from 'good' to 'bad' and vice versa.
If Knutson is to be believed, that ADF is a journey to manhood through the defeat of, or the attainment of the feminine as *reward* (2000: 41), the attainment then of manhood and its resultant reward, can be considered good fortune. For the 'reversal' aspect of ADF to occur, the masculine protagonist must move to this 'good fortune' from a site of 'not-having' or 'in-conflict-with' the feminine; 'bad fortune', or vice versa. The image of 'manhood', or 'icon of man', ADF sets up as part of this 'reward' is therefore defined through the defeat or control of the feminine. This icon is not only fully binary in its masculinity, and as discussed above hegemonic, but hinged on violence[14]. Violence, Peter Murphy maintains, "…is the single most evident marker of manhood" (2004: 189). The violent dominance of hegemonic masculinity over femininities works to 'mark' the 'feminine' as assailable and therefore 'non-male' while reaffirming

[14] I use the term violence here, as described by Judith Butler; the supersession of a subject's will by power or operational forces which are enacted with the express intent of imposing a 'constraint of being' (2009: 169).

hegemonic masculinity's status as unassailable and 'masculine' (Murphy 2004: 189). By generating the final gender-binary icon of ADF resolution through the defeat of the feminine, affirms the masculine subject equally as masculine and the enactor of violence. Conversely all other subjects involved in conclusion of ADF, (alternative masculinities and all femininities) are 'feminised' through their status as victims of violence. In this way, the 'reversal', or the finalising act of Icon affirmation (AIA) rewards not merely masculinity, but violent hegemonic forms thereof.

**In *SaR*:** The conclusion of Fugard's play presents a similar gender-binary image of two of its lead characters white Dawid and coloured Marta. In a final memory of Marta's, we are shown "the night [Dawid] first made love to [Marta]" (Fugard 2002: 52). Marta is silent in this scene, as has become convention throughout Dawid's monologues. Though here, unlike in previous speeches where it is implied she has some verbal response, (Dawid's opening monologue infers that Marta asks after Allison (pp.17) or later, that she asks if Allison agrees with Dawid's decision to leave South Africa (pp.27)), her response is emotional: she cries (pp.54). Marta is cast, in this memory as she is cast throughout the play, as passive and emotional; few of her actions influence the narrative progression, and more often than not her dialogue is framed as emotional exposition. Coloured Marta is also, finally, claimed by a 'manly' white character as a 'sexual object' – a stereotypical narrative arc befalling black women in western colonial theatrical representations (Plante & Mau 2018). Framed as emotional, passive, and as an object for white sexual pleasure, I read Marta as the image of the colonial-patriarchal black feminine ideal (Aston & Harris 2006, Plante & Mau 2018).

Dawid is all talk and action! In the stage directions Fugard writes of Dawid that "…*he* first made love to *her"* (Fugard 2002: 52). White Dawid is presented as the initiator of this act, coloured Marta its recipient. He talks, without interruption, of the Karoo and Marta, and spontaneously produces not one but two rough poems. Krueger links all three of these concepts; land, language and writing, to Dawid's sense of masculinity (2010: 78). However, one cannot ignore, as Rebecca Plante and Lis Mau (2018) maintain, that these qualities of activity, (land) ownership, and 'creative intelligence', have also largely been ascribed to western colonial whiteness. These three concepts can particularly then be described as giving Dawid a sense of his white masculinity.

In this closing scene, Dawid is shown as active, logical, and in command of and exercising the very faculties *SaR* defines as ideally masculine; the image of colonial and patriarchal masculine ideal (Morrell 2001; Plante & Mau 2018). In this way Dawid not only dominates dialogue and action, but importantly produced actions that have narrative effecting consequences; it is this poetic active Dawid who will promise Rebecca to reunite their family, this Dawid will become the Dawid who fails. Marta remains constant in her passivity.
This conclusion, read in this way, produces a gender binary between Marta and Dawid which can be called misogynistic, patriarchal and racist.

Though this scene is a memory which predates much of the action of the play, placing it at the end of the play allows the fulfilment of desires held by both Marta and Dawid to be re-united, throughout the play:

**MARTA:** He gave it its life. Everything had its place because he was coming back. And that includes me… 'Stinkwood Marta'…so she swept and dusted and polished, and waited (Fugard 2002: 52).

**DAWID:** There was a part of me that would have been quite happy if it had all ended there, but I knew it couldn't because there was still you… and Rebecca. My journey wasn't over (Fugard 2002: 16).

On the face of it, it would seem that Dawid's action and Marta's passivity through the play have been rewarded with this reunion. However, this is a memory, not an actual reunion. It is a 'reward' enjoyed by older Marta who can remember the scene, and by the young Dawid of the scene. Both of whom as proved, encapsulate binary colonial patriarchal gender ideals. The older, and as Krueger terms 'emasculated' (2010: 81), Dawid is not afforded such a pleasant reunion (Krueger 2010:83) but can be seen to be punished for his gender performance with death.

Since *SaR* is a tragedy whose chronology moves Dawid from this 'happy' scene to his death, as an emasculated figure, unable to write, this final 'reversal' scene functions as a demonstration of the 'good fortune' from which Dawid has fallen, and generates Aristotle's catharsis as it is played after the description of Dawid's death and failed reconnection with his daughter; his 'bad fortune'.

It is appropriate then that the 'final' chronological image of Dawid is this tragedy, is decorated with the absence of a connection with family, or his land, or his writing. Marta describes his final days in the Karoo as 'deurmekaar', 'ghostly', and spent in isolation emotionally staring out the window *at* the land (Fugard 2002: 17-18). Dawid is now cast not just as emasculated, without possession of the faculties which *SaR* defines as masculine, but as passive and emotional; the image of the patriarchal feminine ideal (Diamond 1997, Aston & Harris 2006). Older Dawid is cast then as a feminised masculinity. Since older Dawid is now the 'femininity' which ADF requires defeat of, the character arc's conclusion of death, can be read to link this fate with punishment for his 'descent' into femininity, and therefore his fatalistic 'defeat'. In this way *SaR's* resolutive link of 'bad' fortune with femininity and hegemonic masculinity with 'good', is both misogynistic and homophobic[15].

It is this defeat of the 'feminine' which characterises the action of climax/ 'discovery' of ADF.

**Discovery**

'Discovery' is described as a moment of enlightenment (Aristotle 2006: 35). According to Joseph Campbell, the moment of 'discovery' is designed to reveal a protagonist's 'blind spot' whose acknowledgment, facilitated through a reckoning with an authority figure, will allow an understanding of the conditions which lead to the narrative originating moment of 'suffering' (2004: 135, 201). This 'reckoning', linked to Knutson's notion of 'feminine defeat', characterises the ADF climax and results in a gender-binary reversal of fortune discussed above.

However, this 'discovery' must pertain to the nature of the deficit within the protagonist which allowed the 'suffering' to first occur (Campbell 2004: 46). The protagonist is asked to recognise and deliver its reply to this deficit, through what Knutson describes as the 'defeat' of the feminine (2000: 41). In other words, *revenge* the 'suffering' or, as I term it, the originating act of violence (discussed later), with an act of greater

[15] According to Murphy homophobic attacks often employ violence as a technique of confirming masculine dominance (2004: 189). The violent dominance of hegemonic masculinity over feminised masculinities works to 'mark' the 'feminised' masculinity as assailable and therefore 'non-male' while reaffirming hegemonic masculinity's status as unassailable and 'masculine' (Murphy 2004: 189).

violence.; an act of revenge violence (ARV). In doing so the protagonist shifts from the 'feminine' position of victim of violence, to that of 'masculine' perpetrator of violence (Murphy 2004: 189). Since the ADF protagonist can be seen as not just ideally male but exclusively masculine (de Lauretis 1984, Case 1988), ADF can be said, then, to pivot on the image of 'deficient' masculinity on a violent journey towards ARV to achieve hegemonic masculinity through violence.

The narrative is at once constructing the protagonist as 'deficiently' masculine through the moment of suffering, but also by identifying this deficit as the goal to be attained through the climax, through violence, the text simultaneously is identifying the masculine ideal. If the achievement of narrative climax produces 'manhood' (Knutson 2000: 41), to answer the deficiency will create a competed and hegemonic 'icon' of man. If, as Knutson maintains above, this deficit is answered through a defeat of the feminine, then the deficit itself can be defined as feminine, and the ideal achieved through its defeat can be seen as not just masculine, but hegemonically masculine. This ideal is the text's 'Icon' of man: the ideal version of the protagonist who would not allow the moment of suffering to occur again. The play is thus organised around testing the protagonist against this 'icon of man'. The text's build up is designed to test the ability of the protagonist to defeat not only an outward manifestation of femininity but it asks the protagonist to do so by defeating an inward manifestation of femininity too. Successful completion of this results in a favourable 'reversal'. Failure 'feminises' the protagonist, as the victim of the originating violence and this final ARV, and results in a non-favourable 'reversal'. In this way ADF rewards with favourability only hegemonic masculinity and can be seen to punish with less favourable reversal, any alternative masculinity as well as all femininities.

**In *SaR*:** Read in its chronological order, *SaR* tells the story of Dawid and Marta, whose union is never formalised due to apartheid laws (Krueger 2010: 78). Dawid produces literary works against this regime and is subsequently banned and exiled to London with his wife Allison, where he vows to continue to write in order to bring the apartheid regime to its demise so he can return to Marta and their daughter Rebecca. Dawid fails in this quest and returns home an emasculated man. His failure is brought to light during a confrontation with Rebecca and soon after he dies (Krueger 2010: 78). Read

this way one can locate SaR's climax or 'discovery' at the moment of confrontation between Rebecca and Dawid.

This climax is told through a memory of Rebecca's. Her first and only outburst in the play, and her only contribution to the recollection of Dawid's life. Rebecca tells of her return to Dawid's Karoo house, for the express purpose of confronting him for all the pain and suffering he caused her and Marta (pp.42). When she meets Dawid he is a shadow of his former self, a 'delirious' and 'sick old white man'. Dawid, does not recognise Rebecca as his daughter, but unwittingly confesses to her his failings as a father and as a man. Importantly he mentions a promise he made to Rebecca, not only to return to her, but to change the world through his writing for her benefit before he does (pp. 45). It is this promise which becomes his goal, the driving force through the narrative structure. In this way *SaR* solidifies three points; the division of Dawid from Marta and Rebecca through apartheid as the originating moment of violence/'suffering', the unification of this family unit through the defeat of the apartheid government through the act of writing as the goal which will constitute the ARV, and the image of the ideal 'icon' of man as father, provider, writer and defender of family.
Dawid's journey to manhood is facilitated then through moments of resistance to and defeat of the apartheid government for the purpose of bettering Rebecca's life and returning to Marta and the Karoo. This explains why *SaR* limits the memories retold by the women to images of his writing or failure to do so, his interaction of inaction against apartheid and his obsession with coming home. Each image offers a progressive picture of Dawid as ineffective in fulfilling this promise and outlines his attempts to ignore or avoid this promise (Fugard 2002: 32-38). Dawid has failed to write, and thus failed to use these writings to effect change for Rebecca. Indeed, Dawid fails even to vote in the 1994 elections for a better life for his daughter (Fugard 2002: 38).
It is this realisation/'discovery' which Dawid has during his 'disorientated' ramble with Rebecca. He outlines his inactivity, his unfulfilled promise, as well as his recognition of the impact this has had on Rebecca:

**Dawid:** I suppose… there is anger and resentment. I don't blame her. I would be. And more. I'd disown him. (Fugard 2002: 45).

In *SaR* Dawid himself identifies his deficit: he is unable to keep his promises; he possesses neither the selflessness nor the *active* follow-through to keep promises and provide for Rebecca (Fugard 2002: 45). In this way, he recognises his failure to maintain or obtain the image of male ideal, which Krueger maintains *SaR* sets up as the protector, sustainer and father figure (2011: 125).

It is not only the singularity of this 'icon' image, which results in Dawid's downfall but its requirement of violence for its fulfilment. Had ADF provided more favourable representations of 'alternative' masculinities, we may have seen Dawid's failure in this regard as only a part of an entire human being rather than as his defining quality, and certainly not as the quality which defines his manhood.

But what of the violence?

In order for Dawid to have succeeded in his climactic moment of discovery, he would have had to be actively involved in changing the world for Rebecca's benefit. The narrative outlines several ways he could have done this, each hinged on the idea that the return action be violent. Dawid himself explains to Marta, that his writing is a '*weapon*', which he will use as his contribution to '*fight*' against apartheid for Rebecca and Marta (pp.26). He maintains that the fight will be short as "those bastards won't last much longer" (Fugard 2002: 27). His success is hinged on his violent contribution to the defeat of the government through his writing. Though the government does fall in 1994, it does so without Dawid's intervention. He remains the victim of its violence, and therefore he remains symbolically separate from Marta and Rebecca, even though he returns to the former it is not joyous, and his reunion with the latter is unrecognised. And he dies emasculated.

**Suffering**

Belfiore describes 'suffering' as a 'destructive and painful' incident that occurs largely within, but that are not limited to, familial relationships (2009: 633). Campbell describes this narrative part as a blunderous incident which frames the organisation of the rest of the narrative by calling a hero into action (2004: 46). I have termed this moment the originating act of violence (OAV).

De Lauretis maintains this moment of 'suffering' is central to the 'masculine' gendering of the hero and the subsequent exclusion of the 'feminine' subject, as not only is the action needed to respond to this call seen as masculine, but the position from which the hero departs is by contradistinction seen as feminine and passive (1984: 118-119). However, since this inciting incident is defined as a blunderous event which causes suffering, it aligns itself with Judith Butler's definition of a violent act. According to Butler, violence can be described as power or operational forces which are enacted in ways that supersede a subject's will, causing injury, with the express intent of imposing a 'constraint of being' (2009: 169).

Read alongside Murphy's (2004) theory of gendering of violent action, I maintain that the protagonist is not gendered as masculine during 'suffering', but rather as a 'feminised' masculinity, as a victim of this OAV.

This OAV functions then on two levels: to feminise the masculine protagonist, which causes the dramatic drive to return this masculinity to its binary form; and to present violence as the means of return. In this way, I maintain that ADF is structured as a violent narrative structure whose sole purpose is the validation of not broadly masculinity, but specifically patriarchal, violent and hegemonic masculinity.

**In *SaR*:** Quite simply the OAV can be read as the unsolicited legal action by apartheid laws which prevented Dawid from formalising his relationship with Marta and Rebecca (Krueger 2010: 78). Dawid is revealed as 'feminised' though this 'action'. Not only is he a victim of this violent intervention into his relationship with Marta, but he is passive in his response to it. He offers no formal response to this separation. While he points to 'comrades' fighting apartheid in exile as his reasoning for leaving South Africa, he neglects to recognise the thousands who transgressed the very laws which prevented him from being with Marta and to look here for a solution to the prohibition of his relationship. Nothing is evidenced of Dawid's response to this separation, and therefore I read him as being unable to fulfil the image of 'icon' of man as provider and father figure at this moment of violence, and his journey and indeed the narrative of *SaR* is organised around fulfilling this image, becoming this father, through the defeat of the apartheid government.

**An End but not a Conclusion**

I read ADF then as a narrative structure arranged around acts of violence. Acts which can be seen to colour the progression of the narrative with violence and produce subject who are gendered and framed through violence.

While I do not disagree with assertions by Case, Mulvey and de Lauretis of ADF as a masculine form concerning masculine subjects, I propose a more nuanced reading. In light of its violent nature, I read ADF as specifically a 'hegemonic' masculine form, which is arranged along deeper inter- and intragender power dynamics which result in the validation of a particular gendered and raced masculinity, and the subordination, feminisation and then punishment of all other (raced and sexuality) forms of masculinity, as well as female marginalisation and the misogynist and racist representation of women. In this way, I maintain that ADF requires an exclusively hegemonic (largely white) masculine subject, and that all other masculinities and femininities are excluded from this position.

The 'icon' of masculinity that is therefore given reward and validation through ADF is one who is equal parts logical, active and violent. Read this way, I maintain the ADF subject as hegemonically masculine; a socially constructed 'icon' of action and violence, who is without gender challenge both from outside his gender, as well as within.

Given this structure, it is little wonder that the final image of older Dawid is of a man dying, while our final image of Dawid overall is one who embodies the ideal of masculinity. Similarly, it would seem it was no coincidence then, that erstwhile writing *Revolt* through ADF, I felt compelled to move the teenage protagonist into conflict with his father in ways which would validate only a certain view of masculinity.

It would seem then that this 'icon' of masculinity is pivotal in shaping the narrative structure. Indeed, Aristotle maintains that character is the most important element to a successful application of ADF, after plot (Sachs 2006: 8). In light of this new reading of ADF, who is this 'ideal' subject of ADF? For a more detailed exploration of character as the exemplar of hegemonic masculinity and violence, please turn to **The Character of Man**.

What can be said though is that this 'icon' of man validated through ADF is neither 'real' nor 'natural' but a distillation of gender ideology in the symbolic form. In other

words, the ideal masculine image Dawid aspires to be in *SaR* is – in an adapted reading of Case – an image based on racist apartheid cultural gender ideology not on reality', 'biology', or lived experience (1988: 129). It is the feminist challenge to this very 'unnatural image' of women tangled in patriarchal ideology, which Case (1988) and Aston & Harris (2006) cite as the root of the narrative, form and content interventions of FT.

However, in order for this study to use the FT techniques which challenges 'dominant-theatre' representations of gender and facilitate narrative interventions on behalf of masculinities, a rethinking of their application would be necessary to account for the privilege afforded the representation of 'men' and 'masculinity' at the expense of 'women' and 'femininity' within ADF (Kaufman 1994, Whitehead & Barrett 2001).

A second concession that must be made in applying FT gender interventions, regards the gesture towards a new poetics. Case famously called her summation of FT '*Towards a new Poetics'*, and it's possible to infer here that what I am calling for is a *new* form to hold a more nuanced masculinity.

However, the creation of a *new* form can be seen to mirror patriarchal gender binary, in that it requires a *set* definition of a 'new masculinity' subject in order to galvanise itself around. Inevitably this kind of gender definition creates an opposite or 'other' and reduces the probability of this form's ability to explore the plurality and multiplicity of masculinities, and runs a real risk of becoming equally as misogynistic in its 'masculine' focus as ADF; defeating an objective of this research.

Also, by associating ADF with violence, any attempt to deconstruct violence runs the risk of exploring only its opposite, which similarly confirms the violence/nonviolent binary. Also runs real risk of eradicating conflict on which drama operates.

To read about these interventions and how I have re-read them alongside issues of hegemonic masculinity and privilege, please read (**Un-)Writing Athol's Narrative**.

**The Character of Man:**

The Hegemony. The Violence. The 'Icon'.

**A Beginning That is not a Start**

***DAWID:*** *Heroes were thought up by the Greeks to frame stories, give poems endings; make us forget that every hand we hit out in defence, looks like a hand hitting out in offense to someone else. (TINDO)*

***Sorrows and Rejoicings (SaR):*** a play by Athol Fugard. Written in the Aristotelian dramatic form (ADF)[16], the narrative draws the life-story of Dawid Olivier around his affair with Marta Barends. This interracial relationship – illegal during the play's apartheid-era South African setting – sets Dawid on a journey of retribution and reunion. Running through this narrative are two chronologies; Dawid's abridged life story told through flashback[17], and the story of three women (Marta, Rebecca – Dawid and Marta's illegitimate daughter – and Allison – Dawid's wife) who negotiate the particulars of Dawid's death in the aftermath of his funeral. The narrative draws both stories into a climax with a flashback confrontation between Dawid and Rebecca, concerning his failure to fulfil his promise to reunite and better the lives of his fractured family.

*SaR* resolves with Dawid dead. Marta ends the play restored as mother to a dutiful Rebecca, reunited with her lover Dawid (in the play's final flashback memory), and rewarded with Dawid's house. Rebecca is stripped of the agency which characterised much of her earlier character arc, is given a house she didn't want, and reconciles with a father she was determined never to love. Allison, the woman who 'stole' Dawid from Marta, and is accused of 'dragging' him to London away from his family, concludes the play with no husband and no house, and without the poetry she wanted as a memory of Dawid.

In my reading of *SaR* I have often returned to this ending. Not just to Marta's memory which closes the play, but the context from which the memory is born. I read this

[16] In *Three Acts to Manhood,* I have outlined the way in which one can view the narrative structuring of *SaR* as an example of ADF as outlined in Aristotle's *Poetics.* Please refer to this article for further clarification.

[17] By enacting moments that fall outside of the dramatic unity of time *SaR's* flashbacks can be seen to break with Aristotelian conventions of tragedy and seemingly challenge the linearity of the narrative progression. Ackerman however maintains that these flashbacks are 'enacted memory'; rather than relying purely on characters reporting the past Fugard 'enlivens' the memory, "…the writing suggests [the flashbacks are] simply related to the other characters in real dramatic time" (Akerman 2002: xx). *SaR* can thus be said to hold with the classic unities, as well as narrative features which define ADF.

ending as a family reunion of sorts, Marta and Rebecca are united leaving Dawid's house, a house they have now inherited, having reconciled with the memory of Dawid. And yet what troubled me was that this reconciliation was facilitated by the death of Dawid, and the dismantling of Allison's life, as well as Rebecca's agency.

At the time of reading this play, I had been thinking about the relationship between the dramatic subject and theatrical narrative. Particularly I had been meditating on the relationship between masculinity and ADF. Brecht maintains that theatrical forms are fundamentally shaped around a subject (1964: 29), I thought then of the subject of ADF. My reading of *SaR*'s conclusion seemed to confirm feminist theatre studies (FTS) readings of the misogynistic effects of ADF on female characters (Case 1988, Seham 2000). Susan Knutson maintains that ADF is organised exclusively to venerate and reward the *male* hero's achievement of manhood (2000:41). But what of the effects of ADF on *SaR's* subject, Dawid, around which it has been shaped? Dawid is dead. His memory never venerated, rather the play attempts to make peace with his failures. In the plays' final moments, we are shown a memory of the Dawid who used to be, before he became the man who's actions the play contends with. Effectively the memory of older Dawid, who has failed in his quest, is replaced by a memory of his younger self, who represents the possibility still of a successful quest journey. Is this erasure a reward?

In her work *When Women Kill*, Belinda Morrissey maintains that dominant narrative conclusion conventions are hinged on an image of the passive non-agentic woman (2003: 170). If female characters, such as Allison or Rebecca, are engendered with agency, it is only 'borrowed' to them for the duration of the narrative. Agentic[18] female characters have this agency removed through their ultimate 'rescue' by the male protagonist in ADF conclusion (Morrissey 2003: 170) – 'rebellious' Rebecca's future is secured not through her action but through an inheritance from Dawid – or through banishment or punishment (Morrissey 2003: 170) – Allison ends the narrative without that which she claims she treasures most in the world due to Dawid's abandonment, and returns to London alone and 'unloved'. In such ways ADF recuperates the 'troublesome' female character, by forcing a conclusion where she accepts a more

[18] I use the term agency here as defined by E. Graham McKinley, who maintains that while 'agency' is a contested term, in feminist circles it has come to be defined as not only the attribute of subject autonomy, but the *ability* to access or inhabit multiple and varying subjectivities, from which autonomy can be pursued. (1997: 251).

'patriarchal-normative' female role (Morrissey 2003: 170). This is one of the ways Sue-Ellen Case maintains that the representation of female characters in ADF is constituted, not through 'natural reality' but, as a cultural construction generated from patriarchal ideology (1988: 118). This produces a 'sign of woman' which functions as a patriarchal *ideal* rather than a representation of the 'real woman'. Case maintains ADF resolution is organised to restore 'women' within patriarchal gender binary hierarchies, favouring male/masculinity over female/femininity (1988: 129).

Read another way, though, ADF narratives are hinged on the ability of the *male* protagonist to remove agency from a *female* character. Knutson reiterates this reading when she described ADF as an exclusively *male* hero's achievement of manhood through the *defeat* of, or the attainment of the female as reward (2000: 41). One could then read *SaR* as Dawid's journey to remove agency from the play's two agentic women – Allison and Rebecca – which he seemingly does through bequeathing the later his house and abandoning the former with little else to do but fulfil his wishes to ensure Rebecca is housed and taken care of (Fugard 2002: 48). And yet, chronologically speaking, Dawid is dead at the point at which their agency is removed, and unable to be recuperated into what Case's describes as the ADF marriage plot. It is his younger self who is joined in memory with Marta, at the plays conclusion.

However, Russian narratologist Vladimir Propp describes dominant three-act narrative structures (such as ADF) as the arrangement of story elements to 'summon' a male *hero* to perform a task (2012: 170) – as Dawid is summoned to retribution, to unify his family. The completion of this task will require not merely 'specific' talents that only a *true hero* will possess, but the defeat of false male heroes who will attempt to compete the task themselves (Propp 2012: 171). The hero will be rewarded for his victory over false heroism with marriage to a female character (Propp 2012: 171-172), restoring in its resolution as Case maintains, the patriarchal gender binary hierarchies (1988: 129).

Reading Propp in tandem with Knutson and Morrissey, ADF can be described as a narrative structure which is drawn specifically to create a situation for the demonstration and reward of particular qualities of 'heroism' possessed by a *specific* male protagonist, at the expense of female agency and the defeat of all oppositional characters; female *and* male.

In this way, could I read younger Dawid as the hero, rewarded with Marta? And the older Dawid as the false hero, rewarded for his pretence and failure with death? And

if so, why? What were the qualities better expressed in the younger Dawid which resulted in reward, which when not present in older Dawid resulted in death?

This dramatic tension between male/masculine hero and its oppositional male/masculine false hero troubles the monolithic image of masculinity which Case and Knutson maintain is at the centre of ADF. The ADF subject is not just male, not merely masculine, but rather specifically a masculinity dominant over other masculinities. ADF conclusions result not merely in masculine validation over femininity, but also over 'other' masculinities. This tension seems to point to the complex relationships between *multiple* masculinities, a concept well described by theorists of men and masculinities studies (MMS)[19] such as Robert Connell (2000) and Robert Morrell (2001). If the ADF hero is defined by his achievement of manhood (Knutson 2000: 41) and the 'false hero' by his failure to do so (Propp 2012: 172), what kind of 'masculinity' is used as the 'yard-stick' whose (non-)achievement results in the narrative split between these two archetypes?

If ADF is drawn around the revelation of the male/masculine hero, who is this protagonist, this hero, this *character*, who instructs the formation of the narrative? If, as Knutson postulates, this protagonist achieves manhood through the structure (2000: 41), how is the protagonist characterised in order to facilitate this journey into this *specific* masculinity, and what image of masculinity is venerated as the end-point? In this article then I will interrogate the composition of the ideal masculine ADF subject, and the influence of patriarchal 'masculine' gender ideology on the representation of 'male/masculine' subjects.

## The Character's the Next Thing

***DAWID**: I'd be just another white man hurting on someone because someone hurt on him. (TINDO)*

In Joe Sachs's *Introduction* to his translation of the *Poetics,* he discusses an important element of ADF: character. Deemed the most important element of ADF behind plot, Sachs describes the ideal ADF central figure as 'decent' and 'trustworthy', whose

[19] Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelenhan maintain that pro-feminist men's studies takes as its cue feminist explorations into gender, and explores masculinity as a socially constructed concept (2004: 86). The development of men's studies has led to the establishment of several important notions of masculinity including Connell's theorising of multiple masculinities and the multidimensional aspects of power between them (2000: 31).

aspirations are moral and 'exceptionally' ethical (Sachs 2006: 8). Aristotle himself describes ADF's ideal protagonist as possessing 'logic' and 'goodness', as well as a consistency in characterisation to which all their actions can logically be linked (2006: 41).

Pivotal to this characterisation is what Aristotle called the great *hamartia,* a term Sachs describes as a 'mark missed by a spear or arrow', a climactic error linked to the character's aspirations which result in a conclusion outside of expectation but still within logical progression (Sachs 2006: 7). The ideal ADF subject's decency and goodness, and inherent hamartia are vital then, in specific combinations, to materialising the raw story 'events' which are needed to populate the narrative points of ADF and facilitate its purpose; emotional catharsis (Aristotle 2006: 26).

In *Feminism and Theatre* (1988) Case delivers a critique on the ideal Aristotelian subject (IAS) of ADF. By pointing to extracts from the *Poetics*, Case maintains that Aristotle excludes women from IAS status, by describing women as 'naturally' and inherently inferior in the 'goodness', 'bravery' and 'intellect' necessary to fulfil the structural requirements of IAS (1988: 17). Helene Foley states that when female characters do assume such qualities they are subjected to severe ridicule from within the narrative, are lambasted as inappropriately 'masculine' and/or 'unfeminine', and, as with Propp's 'false hero', meet a 'disastrous' end (2003: 263). Indeed, Aristotle himself describes the qualities central to the constitution of IAS as naturally present in, and more appropriately characteristic of, men (2006: 41). By characterising these qualities as appropriately 'manly' or 'masculine' and necessary for the composition of the ADF central figure, Case maintains that the IAS is not just ideally male but exclusively masculine (1988: 17).

In character terms this might explain why, while the thrust of the present action of *SaR* is explored through three women, none of them occupy the subject position. This does not excuse nor explain why the focus of each of the characters leans so heavily in favour of discussing and exploring Dawid's life over their own. Rather, what I am exploring here is the particular phenomena whereby the three living, breathing female characters seem unable to settle into a position where they can affect structural influence on the narrative of *SaR*, in the presence of a *memory* of a man. Even in memory form the male character of Dawid usurps the narrative structuring from the

women and becomes the agent of change and narrative progression. It is Dawid who moves to Johannesburg, Marta who waits; Dawid who decides to move to London, Allison who moves with him. As does the narrative. Even when these three women have moments of agency, they hardly ever impact the narrative structure, and when they do, such as Rebecca's inducement of the climax, it is done in tandem *with* Dawid, allowing him to dominate every pivotal structural point with the narrative. Since IAS requires within a character the most socially acceptable constitution of masculinity to effect ADF, a masculine/man will always usurp the structural effecting subject position from a feminine/woman.

However, in chapter 15 of the *Poetics,* Aristotle makes it clear that while these qualities are 'unnatural' in women, they are present in men in levels appropriate to their class (2006: 41). Gerald Else writes that Aristotle believed men to possess goodness and intellect in a measure limited by their 'kind' or 'natural' position in society (1957: 458). While 'lowly' classes of men may possess these qualities, it is inappropriate/unnatural for them to possess these in quantities required to fulfil the station of IAS (Else 1957: 460). Only men of 'conspicuous rank' and marked prosperity are 'appropriate' and natural subjects for IAS (Else 1957: 458). Effectively, if I read Else's clarification alongside Case's assertion above, I read Aristotle's description of the IAS as a man who is naturally in possession of 'masculine' qualities in quantities appropriately higher than most other men within the narrative, and 'naturally' higher than all women in the narrative.

Dawid is described, by Marta, as belonging to a prominent Karoo family to explain why his funeral is so well attended (Fugard 2002: 9). Moreover, it is Marta who describes the wooden table which dominates the set, as being cut from a tree which was once the 'King of the Forest' (Fugard 2002: 13-14), a table which Anton Krueger maintains is central to the image of Dawid's masculinity (2011: 124). Krueger describes this passage as one which indicates that Dawid, like the tree, *once* exemplified masculine ideals "of protection and sustenance, and has come to represent a type of father figure in the family home" (2011: 125). At the start of his chronology then, it would seem as if Dawid fulfils the IAS requirements of prominence, high social-standing and a venerable form of masculinity. Younger Dawid fulfils the IAS requirements.

Krueger also, importantly, identifies the play's post-apartheid setting as important to the construction of, and the dismantling of, Dawid's masculinity through the course of the text. Krueger posits older Dawid as a relic of white Afrikaans power, with diminished claim to socio-political dominance in a democratic South Africa (Krueger 2011: 126). As such, Krueger effectively ties the image of younger Dawid - the 'King of the Forest' - with the socio-historical positioning of white Afrikaans masculinity as the dominant masculinity in apartheid-era South Africa (Krueger 2011: 125). As such younger Dawid's social class within his society endows him social power and influence in amounts greater than the female and coloured characters of *SaR*, increasing his 'fitness' to hold the position of IAS.

### Victory Maketh the 'Man'

***MARTA**: This man who defeated the thieving Trojans, this man who pulled one over on that one-eyed giant, this good man who fought a monster of the sea; he pulled himself onto her front step. (TINDO)*

Informed by feminism and gender theorists such as Simone De Beauvoir (1956) and Judith Butler (1990), Robert Connell describes 'masculinity' in three ways: 1) a series of corporeal characteristics and actions which are socially read as being 'of man', 2) a socialised position of power produced through the enactments of such actions and characteristics, particularly when performed by men, and 3) a social 'position' marked out by social ideology through which any person regardless of sex can move and inhabit, through the performance of such characteristics (1995: 71). In *The Men and The Boys* (2000) Raewyn Connell describes a relational formation between three broad categories of masculinity in the patriarchal gender order, namely hegemonic, complicit and subordinate. Hegemonic masculinity is defined as the *ideal* patriarchal male role; that which is inherently of 'man' but also that which is inherently not 'of woman'/feminine (Connell 2000: 31). Jack Kahn describe this role in Western patriarchal societies as one which exemplifies the qualities of aggression, dominance and heterosexuality (2009). According to Peter Murphy, violence as a tool for dominance is an overriding characteristic of hegemonic masculinity and is pivotal in defining socialised hierarchies with other masculinities and all femininities (2004: 189) and fully exercising full patriarchal dividend; the privileges afforded to men and masculinity in a socio-economic, political and institutional environment informed by patriarchy (2004: 153).

It may seem appropriate then to associate the 'conspicuously ranked' and 'naturally' and appropriately 'masculine' IAS with this hegemonic form of masculinity. Except that if hegemonic masculinity is the ideal, the patriarchal binary opposite of 'femininity' (Connell 2000: 31), and IAS in one who is *still* to achieve 'manhood' through ADF and the control and/or defeat of femininity (Knutson 2000: 41). I propose rather to associate the IAS with what Connell defines as complicit masculinities (CM); "masculinities which are organized around acceptance of the patriarchal dividend, but are not militant in defence of patriarchy" (Connell 2000: 31). These types of masculinities do not occupy positions of complete dominance in intragender relations, and thus their access to patriarchal privilege is comparatively limited (Sargent 2005, Kahn 2009). The capacity then for CM to experience both sides of domination, makes the necessary allowances for this kind of masculinity to undergo what Aristotle outlines as the narrative initiating moment of violent 'suffering', while maintaining the capacity for an 'appropriately' violent response; the narrative thrust of ADF.

It would seem more fitting to associate hegemonic masculinity with what Case might call the 'male' binary position produced through ADF resolution conventions (1988: 129); the 'position' to which the IAS aspires to and can only achieved through defeat and thus separation from the feminine. Yet as Michael Kaufman explains, no living 'man' has the ability to execute living without the experience or practice of needs, feelings or actions socially associated with femininity (1994: 148). The 'manhood' which IAS is purported to achieve through ADF is neither 'real' nor 'naturally feasible'. Indeed, Joseph Campbell maintains that the hero symbolically attains 'divine' status through the successful fulfilment of ADF, moving from mere mortal to omnipotent divinity (2004: 31). I contend then that, in a similar epistemological vein as Case's assertions concerning the constructed and unnatural appearance of female characters in ADF (1988: 118), the male characters of ADF are based not on 'natural reality' but on cultural constructions generated from patriarchal ideology, producing an 'icon of man' which functions as a patriarchal *ideal* of male/masculinity rather than a representation of the 'real man'.

Indeed, the goal younger Dawid is set to achieve through the narrative of *SaR*, would see him become not only the protector, sustainer and father figure of his family unit

with Marta and Rebecca, but also importantly this patriarchal ideal (Krueger 2011: 125) is facilitated through his active and 'violent' defeat of the apartheid regime which tore his family apart (Fugard 2002: 45). During a memory in which Dawid himself is still quite young, he articulates this goal, to a Rebecca, who is still a toddler:

**DAWID:** I'll make you proud of me, Rebecca. I promise. This world is going to change, and when it does, I'll come back and you will be proud of me because I will have worked for that change. My writing will be part of a better world (Fugard 2002: 45).

What a Herculean feat it seems to me; defeating the apartheid regime with writing as a weapon. And yet this is the point! As I read Aristotle, the hero's aspirations must be moral and ethical, and their achievement must be facilitated through a seemingly impossible task which will result in an upward reversal of fortune (2006: 41) which Campbell describes as divinity (2004: 31). *SaR* affords us one chance to glimpse this 'divinity', in the final moments of the play; Marta's memory of young Dawid. Chronologically speaking this Dawid present in the final memory is already the fiery university activist protesting apartheid, as well as an author whose anti-apartheid work is garnering attention. In this scene, he effortlessly makes use of his 'weapon' of poetry to profess a love for his country and Marta.

With this one memory, Fugard demonstrates that Dawid has within him both the possibility and Propp's 'special' talent, to achieve *SaR's* narrative goals through this Herculean feat. Therefore, Fugard demonstrates that Dawid possesses the potential for 'divinity' which Campbell maintains is pivotal to the constitution of IAS (2004: 31). In this way young Dawid becomes symbolic of the 'icon of man', the realisation of which becomes the goal of *SaR*. This is a goal achieved through violent action; the defeat of the feminine.

The IAS then is a male of complicit masculinity who possesses the potential for violence through which 'Iconic' hegemonic masculinity status can be reached.

## Defeat Maketh the 'Woman'

***DAWID**: This woman who had raised his boy strong and true in the image of his father, this woman who had grown more beautiful with the waiting; he pulled her into himself onto that front step. (TINDO)*

This journey to 'Iconic' realisation, though, begins not in victory but rather with in defeat. Aristotle describes this narrative initiating point as 'suffering'. I have described it as the originating act of violence (OAV)[20]. According to Murphy violence operates in ways which are gendered, and which cast the victim of violence as feminine (2004: 189). As the intended 'recipient' of such an act, the protagonist is thereby momentarily 'feminised' by the OAV at the narratives' inception.

According to Campbell though, this OAV is in itself facilitated by the IAS's *hamartia* or 'blind spot' (2004: 135, 201). Feminist narratologist Angela Curran describes the hamartia as an error, done in ignorance, which results in tragic 'misfortune' (1998: 292-294). The exact nature of the error is contested. John Thorburn maintains that analysis of particular Greek tragedies supports the notion that the error is moral in nature, a 'fatal flaw' arising from an unrecognised weakness in character (pride, arrogance, ill-temperedness) (2005: 385). Curran postulates that the error may also be constituted within action; since the hamartia is directly linked to plot reversal and recognition which produces the climactic action of the narrative, the error may be an action carried out in ignorance of its climatic impact (2016: 195).

But perhaps there is another way to use the plot function of the hamartia to facilitate its description. As I read both Thorburn and Curran, I am struck by one overarching similarity: ignorance. Aristotle himself describes the structural significance of a protagonist's ignorance as being pivotal to setting up the climactic moment of 'discovery' (2006: 35). A character must engender a specific 'blind spot' which produces the act of suffering which initiates the narrative. This ignorance must persist until the protagonist is forced through a climactic moment of self-reckoning to move from ignorance to enlightenment and move the narrative through a reversal of fortune. Importantly, Campbell describes this motion from ignorance to enlightenment as the IAS's moment of transcendence; the elevation of the hero from the mortal to the divine.

[20] In *Three Acts to Manhood,* I have outlined the way in which one can view the Aristotelian narrative point of 'suffering' as a 'destructive' event (Belfiore 2009: 633), designed to call IAS into the action of retribution; a narrative originating act of violence. Please refer to this article for further clarification.

Since the end point of divinity and its enlightenment is, as above, described as hegemonic masculinity achieved through the defeat of femininity, the IAS's internal hamartia or ignorance, and the external oppositional force which arises through this hamartia with which the hero must reckon with during the ADF climax, can be described as feminine. Aristotle, himself, is clear in describing ignorance as a quality associated with 'women' or 'femininity' (2006: 41).

In character terms, it is pivotal then that the IAS is constructed in a way which not only hints at the potential for 'divinity' and enlightenment but is feminised both through an internal femininity or hamartia and through victimisation in OAV. The journey to manhood is facilitated then through an internal and external struggle against femininity. A journey marked not merely by this conflict, but as Murphy maintains is marked by violence (2004: 189). To be clear, while the IAS must be feminised, he is not a 'feminised masculinity'.

While the IAS cannot be hegemonic masculinity, he can also not be the subordinated masculinity. As Connell describes them, subordinated masculinities are defined as masculinities deemed wanton or 'unmanly' by patriarchy (2000: 31). These masculinities are centred on socially 'othered' races, sexualities, ethnicities and so on. (Connell 2000, Kahn 2009). Gender theorist Justin Charlebois maintains that since these masculinities are deemed 'unmanly' they are assimilated into a 'feminine' positioning within patriarchal society, and thus are severely limited in their access to the patriarchal dividend (2012: 12). Since Aristotle maintains that the 'natural' lack of the qualities necessary to constitute the IAS in women deems them as inappropriate choices for the IAS (2006: 41), masculinities symbolically assimilated into this patriarchal feminine position are also deemed wholly inappropriate choices (Aristotle 2006: 41).

This might go some way in explaining what Carla McDonough maintains is a paucity of tractable representations of black male and/or queer protagonists within ADF and the western dramatic cannon (1997: 137, 168) the relegation or black and/or queer masculinity to supporting roles outside IAS roles (1997: 139, 168) and the necessity for the development of alternative dramatic forms for the representation of black and queer masculinities (1997: 140, 168).

This being said, IAS can conclude his journey through ADF as a subordinated 'feminised' masculinity. If the IAS cannot muster the violent 'special talent' needed to defeat the femininity during ADF climax, the IAS will fail to overturn the feminisation of the OAV and by suffering another 'victimisation' through the climax, the IAS will be marked as thoroughly assailable and therefore in the symbolic patriarchal gender order of ADF be relegated to 'non-male' status (Murphy 2004: 189). Such masculinities will suffer the same fate as 'inappropriately masculine' female characters; 'rescue' by the male protagonist in ADF conclusion, or more predominantly, banishment or punishment (Morrissey 2003: 170).

Dawid's moment of self-reckoning occurs during Rebecca's confrontation with him, when Dawid is a dying old man, a shadow of his former self. While he is unable to recognise Rebecca when she knocks at his door, he does meditate on the effect of his actions on her and Marta. It is during this speech that he recalls his promise to Rebecca as a toddler; to reunite and better the lives of his fractured family.

The gravity of his failure to do so gives him pause. Finally, he admits what has become apparent through the narrative of *SaR*; Dawid engenders neither the *active* follow-through nor the selflessness necessary to fulfil the promises he has made to Rebecca (Fugard 2002: 45). This inherent selfishness and passivity of Dawid is set up as diametrically opposed to the image of the masculine protector, sustainer and father figure, which characterised Young Dawid as the Icon of man! As such Older Dawid is effectively cast as 'unmanly', the opposite of hegemonic masculinity; feminine!

It does not seem like much of a stretch then to conclude that since Dawid now represents a 'troubled' gender category, 'feminised' masculinity, his death can be seen as part of the ADF conclusion conventions which recuperate genders represented within the narrative into more 'patriarchal-normative' binary roles (Morrissey 2003: 170).

The inclusion of young Dawid in the final memory functions then not merely as a yard stick against which Dawid's failures can be measured to solicit catharsis, but also as a symbolic representation of the patriarchal gender order binary, which would see the 'correct' binary roles, rewarded with a happy union of Marta and Dawid.

**A Conclusion but not an End**

Since ADF stresses the logical nature of its progression and outcome (Rehm 2003: 32), both possible realisation of the scenarios outlined above, the IAS assent to Icon and IAS 'feminisation' and defeat, must be contained within the narrative structure. So to, the possibility for the IAS to achieve both Iconic hegemonic masculinity status, and to recede into 'feminised' status must exist within the character from its conception. However, the achievement of the Iconic hegemonic masculinity status remains the goal, the yardstick against which IAS will be measured, through the trails and tests which populate the ADF structure. In this way ADF can be seen to venerate not merely masculinity as a broad gender position, but rather specifically hegemonic masculinity. The gendering of the IAS, itself, cannot broadly be described as masculine, rather as I have posited can be seen to be CM. Even then this description of the gendering of IAS is simplistic. In order for the ADF to formulate around IAS, the subject must possess a feminisation, a 'feminine' hamartia, and equally possess the ability to be feminised through OAV. In equal measure, but with the possibility for development, the IAS must possess hidden within the character the possibility for climatic, narrative-ending violence, and the potential to ascend to Iconic hegemonic masculinity.
Therefore, far from simply being masculine, I describe the IAS as a male of complicit masculinity, in possession of a feminising hamartia, and the capacity to be feminised through OAV, but also contains the potential for violence through which such feminisation can be overcome, and Iconic hegemonic masculinity status can be reached.

It would seem then that this 'icon' of masculinity is pivotal in shaping the narrative structure, indeed to the structuring and unfolding of ADF. In light of this new reading of IAS, how can one view the relationship between masculinity and ADF? For a more detailed exploration of narrative structure, hegemonic masculinity and violence, please turn to **Three Acts to Manhood**.

Since it is then an 'icon' of man venerated through ADF, the question that lies before me then is this: can theoretical narrative structure be manipulated, opened, and/or challenged to untangle masculinity representation from this 'icon', to create narrative

space for the tractable representation of other masculinities? After all this research has at its foundation the project of writing or un-writing masculinity. According to Case (1988) and Aston & Harris (2006) feminist theatre (FT) does much in the way of negotiating and challenging the 'unnatural image' of women represented through ADF. The FT gender/narrative theories and interventions which challenges 'dominant-theatre' representations of gender could offer a means of deconstructing ADF and its patriarchal shaping of the male subject as hegemonically masculine.

To read about how I have thought through these questions of un-writing narrative and masculinity through the use of FT techniques please read **(Un-)Writing Athol's Narrative**.

**(Un-)Writing Athol's Narrative:**

Using Feminist Theatre Studies as a Platform to (Un-)Write Masculinities.

**Another Start, Another Beginning**

> ***LUCILLE:*** *Don't. I didn't walk out of one home with those men to start another one with you. You know it.*
>
> *(TINDO)*

***This is not Dawid Olivier (TINDO):*** This is a bricolaged play-text in draft form; story-bits and scenes which divergently explore characters and their individual perspectives of an apartheid-era affair; blending, juxtaposing and hinting at the lives and personal 'truths' of Marta Barends, Dawid Olivier and Allison Fogarty; the three 'corners' of this affair. Interspersed between these scenes are documentary-styled vignettes which probe the performers' thoughts and views on the issues of infidelity, gender and indeed the very play-text they are performing. This is a play about an affair. And it is not. It is as much about an illicit affair 'as a man is about a fish'[21]. The events of the affair are 're-written', perhaps un-written, with every version, producing interesting clashes of 'truths'. Not lies. Perhaps lies. And this is the point. At its core *TINDO* is, more than an affair-play, a 'patch-work' meditation on themes of truth, memory, culpability, perpetration, victimhood, storytelling, and how ideas of 'masculinity' can inform, undermine, taint and malign these.

I wrote *TINDO* as a dramatic response to the questions which fundamentally underpin my research exploring the Aristotelian dramatic form (ADF) and its relationship with hegemonic masculinity[22] which has been formulated into this *(Un-)Writing Masculinities* series of articles. But also, in large part, I wrote *TINDO* as a pivotal part *of* the research itself. While I had been pulling these characters and events – inspired by Athol Fugard's *Sorrows and Rejoicings (SaR)* – into my ideological and narratological debate, I had begun to pull theories and hypotheses into the dramatic space of *SaR's* Marta, Allison, and Dawid which became *TINDO*, as a way of academically and dramatically *writing through* the questions of my research. The questions were ones which sought to rethink dominant representations of masculinities and masculinity's impact on and through ADF, specifically in

[21] Referencing the discussion between Dawid and the reporter in scene 2 of *TINDO* pp.9.

[22] Here 'hegemonic masculinity' is used as defined by Robert Connell in *Masculinities* (1995): the exemplar of the patriarchal male role.

'deconstructive'[23] ways which gesture to 'rewriting' or rather 'un-writing' this representation through dramatic text.

The scenes and dramatic events of *TINDO,* then, are more than an exploration of the story. They become important projects in this research; meditations on, and gestures towards the deconstruction of ADF and the monolithic form of patriarchal masculinity which, I maintain[24], underlies it. But also, they are an epistemological endeavour which gesture toward a non-discriminatory narrative space for the tractable and nuanced representation of a wider variety of masculinities, and that, importantly, functions to explore theatrical mechanisms which destabilise the use of violent hegemonic masculinity as an ethotic underpinning of ADF. *TINDO* is then a play. And not just a play.

*TINDO* importantly remains in draft form. This is critical, as you read these articles and as you read the work itself. It is not a conclusive 'finished' dramatic work, but rather a work in progress, because it is a *gesture.*

This in itself is an academic/artistic act of resistance, a conscious theatrical 'deconstruction' forgoing the 'closure'/ 'finality' which characterises ADF (Troftgruben 2010: 47). This quality has become a significant focus of my research, as it is invariably linked to resolution and privileging what Marc Weinblatt and Cheryl Harrison might term the 'modernist' binaries of political (and gender) power which result in ADF's pejorative representation of the subaltern (2011: 30).

I have left *TINDO* in this draft format for you to read here as part of my Masters, in part, because *TINDO*'s purpose was to research ADF deconstruction, and not to be produced as a work in its finality. In part because the production of a conclusive gesture away from ADF is in danger of a) assuming that such a move is 'completely' possible, and b) re-establishing a definitive singular modality of 'truth' which Claudia Baracchi maintains is at the heart of ADF and its de-valuation of 'othered' perspectives (2014: 176), part of the very hegemonically masculine quality of ADF I am seeking to deconstruct.

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[23] The term 'deconstructive' is used here as defined by Jacques Derrida, who described 'deconstruction' as a questioning strategy "…to show how [a discourse] undermines the philosophy it asserts, or the hierarchical oppositions on which it relies, by identifying in the text the rhetorical operations that produce the supposed ground of argument…but in order to breach it" (Culler 2007: 84).

[24] Please read *Three Acts to Manhood*, where I explore in more depth connections between ADF and hegemonic masculinity.

In *Three Acts to Manhood*, I investigate the relationship between dominant forms of dramatic narrative structure (ADF) and patriarchal binary forms of masculinity, or what Robert Connell (1995) calls hegemonic masculinity. Though the breadth of this investigation is too intricate to outline comprehensively here, suffice to say, in the article I read the feminist theatre studies (FTS) interrogation of ADF and its dramatic suppression of women and femininity[25], through the men and masculinities studies (MMS) expanded framework of masculinity[26] as a violent, oppressive and 'oppressed' gender[27] in an attempt to explore the relationship between ADF and masculinity. Using *SaR* as a case study, I outline how Aristotle's narrative initiating act of 'suffering' (2006: 35) can be read a narrative originating act of violence[28] (OAV). Dawid is torn away from his coloured mistress Marta, and their daughter Rebecca by apartheid, an OAV which both 'feminises' Dawid the protagonist and sets him on a journey of 'becoming' hegemonically masculine through a series of violent narrative progression nodes with the goal of bringing down apartheid and so re-joining his family.

These nodes culminate in Aristotle's Discovery/climax and the Reversal/resolution (2006: 35) or as I read them, the climactic act of revenge violence (ARV) which produces the finalising act of violent Icon (or hegemonic masculinity) affirmation (AIA). Here Dawid must wield full violent patriarchal masculinity in the achievement of his goal, resulting in the oppression of all other gendered characters, and his ascension to complete hegemonically masculine status. Dawid fails to do so. His confrontation with a now teenage Rebecca confirms his inability to achieve either his goal or Iconic status, and it is Dawid who is violently oppressed within the narrative; reduced to a passive and incoherent 'shadow' of a man, Dawid dies.

In this way I read ADF as a dramatic narrative form that is underpinned by violence as a progressive tool, galvanised around the veneration of a limited and violent hegemonic form of masculinity, and hinged on a climax which resolves with the

[25] Specifically, here I refer to the seminal feminist analyses of ADF by Case (1988) and Mulvey (1989).
[26] Specifically, here I refer to the seminal MMS works of Connell (1995, 2000) and Morrell (2001).
[27] According to Michael Kaufman the accessing and yielding of the patriarchal dividend which produces 'masculine' power, is as much about adhering to social ideals of masculinity as it is about suppressing or repressing characteristics defined as feminine (Kaufman 1994: 144). Kaufman theorises an internalisation of the social gender order of patriarchy, which he demonstrates is the root of a conflictive and contradictive relationship with power within men's experience in a patriarchal gender order.
[28] The term violence here is used as described by Judith Butler; power or operational forces which are enacted in ways that supersede a subject's will, with the express intent of imposing a 'constraint of being' (2009: 169).

restoration of the patriarchal binary gender order and the violent eradication[29] of all non-patriarchal representations of gender (feminine and masculine). The question of the deconstruction of these structures for the purpose of gesturing towards more tractable narrative space for a plethora of masculinities, remained at the forefront of my research.

FTS points to techniques and ethotic principals, widely used in feminist theatre practice, which pry open ADF, challenge it, reworking the narrative space with the implicit political purpose of challenging traditional modes of representing women, femininity and female subjectivity (Aston & Harris 2006). But here, what about masculinity? Could I use FTS to pry open ADF, and its violent nodes, to challenge traditional representations of masculinity? And what would this mean for narrative structuring? If anything.

To apply these techniques directly from FT practices to the re-scripting or un-writing of *SaR's* ADF, in the hopes of a more nuanced portrayal of masculinity is problematic. Many of these techniques were crafted with the express political function of revealing the ways in which patriarchal masculinity is formatted against femininity, and so to deconstruct patriarchal forms of femininity, FT techniques may purposely leave 'masculinity' as a stable pejorative identity (Mangan 2003: 225).
The application of these FT theories and practices to the representation of masculinity is made more problematic when one takes into account the inherent privilege of masculinity in the symbolic patriarchal order of theatre even in its subordinated forms (Kaufman 1994, Whitehead & Barrett 2001). The application of FTS techniques to the question of gender by FT cannot fully account for this question of privilege nor the problematic relationship of masculinity and power. As I discovered in the writing of *TINDO*; adaptation is required.

*SaR* became then not just a site for the exploration of ADF and masculinity but further, a site for reworking FT gender representation techniques with the implicit political

[29] In *Three Acts to Manhood* I outline ADF as a specifically 'hegemonically' masculine narrative form. This theatrical narrative form is organised along deep social inter- and intragender power dynamics which produce the veneration of hegemonic masculinity, but also result in the violent subordination, feminisation and punishment of all other forms of masculinity, and all forms of femininity.

purpose of challenging traditional modes of representing men, masculinity and male subjectivity, which has evolved into *This is Not Dawid Olivier. TINDO* became a way of thinking through creative practice, of working through these research questions in the very form I was critiquing and exploring.

This article can/should be read in tandem with and alongside *TINDO*. It is an academic 'highlights-reel', a guide that points to and hints at some of the processes worked through, some of the techniques and theoretical frameworks engaged with, and a choice-selection of my reflections on the insights gained through 'writing-through' the questions of deconstructing ADF and its exclusive relationship with hegemonic masculinity.

## Towards a Different New Poetics

> ***DAWID:*** *What's a man supposed to do then? I'm not saying women can't play at this hero business, but when last did a damsel give eye time to a squire-in-distress? (TINDO)*

It began with FTS. The questions occupying my time became about writing and theatrical narrative form, and gender.

Feminism holds an important place in the academic and epistemological way gender is understood, written about and challenged (Pilcher & Whelenhan 2004: 56). Indeed, due in most part to this, gender theorists Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelenhan maintain that the theoretical root of MMS and its study of masculinity lies in feminist theory of gender (2004: 83-84). Similarly, while investigations of theatrical representation of masculinity and men are limited (McDonough 1997, Mangan 2003), they are importantly rooted in FTS in ways which facilitate the examination of the theatrical male subject as a gendered construct (McDonough 1997: 1). It is little coincidence then, that I too frame this study, here, with FTS.

### Feminist Theatre

Feminist theatre (FT) can be described as theatrical forms/practices informed by the political ideologies of feminism (Aston & Harris 2006). According to Case these practices include the centralisation of female subjectivity and 'women's' stories in ways which challenge the *structural* and institutional imprints of patriarchy in the theatrical form (1988: 65). FT is then a theatrical form which concerns itself not merely with content. Rather it is more intricately concerned with all faculties of the theatrical art

form, including narrative structure, presentational form, the complex relationships between the performance art and its audience, and issues of content and specific character gender representation, with the express purpose of countering the pervasive manifestations of misogynistic patriarchal ideologies underpinning the entire theatrical art form, and pursuing 'theatre' driven by feminist politics (Case 1988, Aston & Harris 2006).

It is important to note that there are several recognised imprints of FT, including radical feminist theatre, black feminist theatre, and materialist feminist theatre (MFT) (Case 1988: 64-97). I focused this research on the practices of MFT due mainly to its focus on deconstructing gender as a product of socio-economic, historical and racial power dynamics (Case 1988: 130) which allowed me the opportunity to look at theatrical gender representations, specifically masculinity, in a largely intersectional[30] manner, a way of looking at intragender and social power dynamic which mirrored closely MMS description of the intergender power hierarchies of masculinity. Also, importantly, the study of MFT offers a specific focus of its theatrical practice on the deconstruction of ADF through non-linear and non-mimetic forms of theatre (Case 1988: 93).

**MFT**

According to Aston, MFT practices are informed by socialist/materialist feminist theories which seek to articulate the social construction of gender and "…to locate oppression in terms of the complex matrix of gender, class, race, ideology, etc…" (1995: 69). As such, MFT has roots in Marxist politics and the Brechtian Epic Theatre style which theatrically exemplifies it (Aston 1995, Diamond 1997). According to Elizabeth Wright, the aim of Epic Theatre is the arousal of political awareness in the spectator, and the disruption of the illusion of theatre to reveal its underlying ideological argument (1989: 2). In order to do so Bertolt Brecht called for the systematic challenge of the facilities of the realist theatrical practices (ADF) he saw as exemplifying "…the reification of human and commodity relations under capitalism" (Diamond 1997: ix).

[30] In *Mapping the Margins* (1991) Kimberle Crenshaw maintains that prevailing social ideologies on race and class are integral parts of the socio-cultural fabric which informs the 'power-ordering' of genders and have a serious impact of the shaping of gender performance and its reception. Rather than speaking of gender in broad terms of oppression and power, Crenshaw calls for a multidimensional or 'intersectional' expression of gender power and oppression, which takes into account a lived experience of being at the 'crossing-point' of a complexity of social power dynamics, which cannot be exclusively expressed through the exposition of gender power relations under patriarchy.

In *Unmaking Mimesis,* Diamond examines the influences of Epic Theatre on the practices of MFT. Inspired by Epic Theatre, MFT practices are concerned with generating forms which present the female subject afresh (Diamond 1997: 45). According to Diamond MFT seeks to 'defamiliarise' the patriarchal ideologies behind the social construction of gender to express how ADF is involved in the practice of culturally demonstrating patriarchal ideology which oppress women, and so encourage spectators to rethink their own construction of gender (1997: 46). Case maintains that since the dominant theatrical image of 'woman' is encoded by and through the narrative structure of ADF to mirror dominate and patriarchal ideologies of gender, MFT becomes a process of 'making visible' this coding by deconstructing ADF and 'pulling-open' this misogynistic image and its narrative function (1988: 117). Case describes techniques made prominent by the *Monstrous Regiment Theatre Company* and Caryl Churchill, such as cross-gender casting, to highlight the distance between biology and the construct of gender; the presentational acting style of Epic theatre to avoid sentiment eclipsing politics; and importantly here, the use of several narrative forms, including circular, to avoid the climax/resolution of ADF (1988: 85-86).

But now, what of the generation of narrative form which would present the male subject 'afresh'? What of the generation of a narrative form which would present *SaR*'s Dawid and indeed the other male and 'masculine' characters afresh?
And how could the MFT narrative interventions be useful in the generation of forms which challenge and deconstruct ADF and its hegemonic masculinity underpinning for the tractable representations of a wider definition of male subjectivity and masculinities? For Dawid? And for the male and 'masculine' characters of *SaR*?

**Form**

In ***Three Act to Manhood***, I discuss the manners in which the ADF of *SaR* venerates hegemonic masculinity and violently excludes all other genders, through the analytical engagement of the three Aristotelian narrative nodes; suffering, discovery and reversal.
It's no coincidence then that my earliest ideas for *TINDO*, revolved around the disruption and deconstruction of these three nodes. In my early notes I had written three small ideas; to disrupt the OAV: have Dawid leave and return to the Karoo for

reasons *other than* cleaving vengeance for his split family; to disrupt the ARV: have Rebecca engage in several versions of her climactic argument with Dawid including one 'happy' reunion, and maybe one where her father was Sarel and not Dawid; and finally to disrupt the AIA: present the lives of Allison, Marta and Dawid as if these events had not happened, or had happened differently than in *SaR*.

The ideas, when played together, read nothing like a coherent work. Too little of the original story was present to give context for the deconstruction of the scenes, to understand *why* I had interfered with them in this way, and yet if you knew the story it became clear that the original three act structure was still present; Dawid still left his family, failed to reunite them, and lived with the consequences. The deconstructing of the nodes had become too much of a focus of the work, that they were indeed the *focus* of the play. I was risking re-establishing the very structure I was deconstructing. I needed to *move past* them, not just deconstruct them.

Though, this venture was not without its benefits, and here is why I discuss this ineffectual first 'doodle'. By carefully focusing on destabilising nodes of ADF what became vitally clear to me was the manner in which ADF drew the characters of Dawid, Marta, Allison and Rebecca and events of *SaR through* these nodes, which produced an intimately linear and interdependent relationship between nodes of the form. The events of the OAV had to be draw out and elevated into the ARV, and the elements of this act were tied up to form the AIA. Even if, as I had planned, these elements were scrambled in chronology, the internal connective logic would satisfy the 'three-act' demands of ADF. The logical progression between nodes, I discovered, was as important to ADF as the nodes themselves. By drawing this study narrowly to focus on hegemonic masculinity as 'violent', what I had neglected to take into account was how the linear mode of ADF favoured the 'masculine' quality of 'logic' as an underpinning, over all other human qualities as possible modes of connection (Case 1988: 123).

At its most macro level, then, the shape of ADF was not merely singular in its linearity but one which 'logically' escalated narrative elements upward in action towards a climax and then falling sharply as the resolution was formulated. Sue-Ellen Case outlines ADF's narrative arrangement as a dramatic "…replication of the male sexual experience…reflecting the nature of the male's sexual physiology" (1988: 129), the

influence of hegemonic masculinity then lies not merely in the dramatic nodes, but in the relationship between these nodes of ADF, the shaping of the narrative.

Since it is this 'logical' interdependency between nodes, this shaping of the elements of the theatrical event into a linear progression of the narrative which produces the nodes, that I moved my exploration into ADF deconstruction to its shape/form. To deprive a narrative structure of the means to formulate actions and characters in ways which produce the ADF nodes and its violent framing of masculinity, seemed to be a more effective way of deconstructing ADF without reproducing it.

A persistent idea in my early notes was one of 'revised' versions of the same story. The idea was to complicate linearity with a spiral narrative structure, one which would repetitively retrace the narrative in several versions. By laying out the three major Aristotelian narrative points as *SaR* had conceptualised them – Dawid's separation from family, his journey towards reunification, and his failure to do so – and then replaying these nodes in ways which challenged Dawid's motives, rewrote his actions, and shifted the narrative producing subject to the stories 'othered' characters (Marta, and Allison), I had hoped to destabilise the validity of either of the stories as fundamentally true, and challenge ADF's representation of a single masculine hero's story, a single truth.

Indeed, feminist narratologist Rose Page mentions two dominant feminist narrative interventions used to deconstruct this linearity of 'masculine' ADF; the increase of narrative voices or perspectives to destabilise the single male hero's journey, and the rejection of the masculine linear narrative progression in favour of *circular or 'jumbled'* narrative structures which destabilise traditional narrative gender positions (2006: 9) and which are drawn from the 'non-linear' lived experience of 'real' women (Case 1988: 123). The idea was to 're-contextualise' Dawid's story through different voices, producing conflicting narratives, and then to engage the audience much like a trial would a jury, shifting the onus from the play to the audience to construct 'truth' from what had been represented.

However, in early scenes and narrative outlines, what became clear was the persistent need for each 'version' to engage a 'masculine' subject position. In Allison's version, she became a successful academic, who *'rescues'* a drunk Dawid and *sends* him

home to recover or die. Allison assumes the narrative generating 'active' masculine role, and this resulted in a need for Dawid to be 'passive'/feminised. A similar fate befell Marta, now a B&B owner in the Karoo, who receives a sick Dawid.

The contradictions between stories relied on the swapping of characters between the feminine and masculine positions, which may on the surface seem to validate the idea of gender fluidity, but the overall structuring still relied on an active masculine 'hero' to drive the narrative. Essentially reproducing ADF.

In contrast, scenes that focused on Dawid, explored his internal world; Dawid confronted his emotional response to his grandfather's passing, and his guilt over not voting for change in South Africa. These scenes became expositional and devoid of action, and largely kept Dawid in the realm of 'feminine' emotion[31], never quite rising to the exploration of gender fluidity that I had intended. These monologues reproduced the image of a 'white man speaking over women', an image for which *SaR* had received such vehement critique from Christina Scott (2001). In her review of *SaR* Scott writes: "these are the women's remembrances and yet they don't feature in them. Dawid hogs all the flashback airtime" (2001:[Sp]). Here Scott highlights not only the lack of 'airtime' or dialogue afforded the women, but also their relative lack of narrative influence – a double suppression of the women in *SaR*.

By giving Dawid extended monologues, the early iterations of TINDO reinforced this image of a male dominated ADF.

One could also perhaps look at this draft version of TINDO, and point to the generous 'airtime' afforded Dawid. Though he is a not the focus of TINDO, Dawid's relationships with each of the other characters featured, affords him space within almost all narratives represented. Though I have expanded the narrative and generated scenes between Marta and her mother Rachel, and Sarel and B.J, and so on to offer narrative space to 'othered' perspectives, practically Dawid's voice still outweighs those of the women of TINDO. T

he women are also in some regards silenced in TINDO; in scene 17 for example; Dawid arrives in the Karoo to tell Oupa of his pending immigration to London, Marta is seen only briefly, and while Allison is given a 'version' of this scene (scene 39), Marta's

[31] According to Mark De Valk and Sarah Arnold patriarchal societies have come to ascribe qualities such as passivity, emotionality and submissiveness to the female or feminine gender position, while conversely ascribed activity, logic and dominance to the male or masculine gender position (2013: 98).

perspective on this scene is not given voice in TINDO at all. Again on pp.77 Marta and Dawid make love off stage while Allison sits on stage silent, and yet the voice heard framing this scene is Dawid's. While I have attempted to write through broadening perspectives, by focusing on the challenging of white capitalist patriarchal definitions of masculinity it seems I have narrowed my writing focus mainly on the aspects effecting masculinity. My position as an 'insider-without' has perhaps blunted some of my objectives over the drafting of TINDO. It has blinded me to the positionality and the voices of the women of TINDO, and so I seem to have overlooked the moments where academic pursuit, research and my own 'insider-without; positionality have silenced women; silenced Marta! Though TINDO is not a final draft, this is a serious oversite, which threatens to un-do my un-writing by positioning a white male voice as dominant over female and black voices.

Though actual written narrative space is not the only, and certainly not as I read it, the central issue in Scott's indictment. And here I find some solace. Scott is at pains to point out that the women of *SaR* are cast as theatrical props in the service of the only fully developed all speaking, all doing Dawid (2001:[Sp]). Lack of story Impact, narrative influence and voice presence, is what I read as central to Scott's indictment. Each narrative introduced and re-written during the course of TINDO, allows the women and 'othered' men to present their voice, their story and their motives into the tapestry of the narrative – even and especially when it runs in contradiction to versions and narratives presented elsewhere in the play. By allowing these conflicting narratives, motives and voices, to weave the story, each character is afforded influence without dominance, voice presence even in silence, and narrative influence even with scenes of inaction.
The mitigation of this imbalance of 'white men speaking over women' is a central focus as I continue to draft TINDO.

The 'masculine' hero which generated the macro structure of ADF was replicated, I discovered, in the micro structures of a narrative; within the scenes. For the representation of masculinity to be challenged I needed to work on both macro and micro structures.
Also, as I discovered, these 'new' feminist structural forms run a real risk of re-entrenching the patriarchal gender binary, by assuming there is a discrete gender from

which narrative form can draw inspiration (Case 1988: 130). Furthermore, by rejecting completely the structural elements of ADR, some forms of FT draw ADF into a narrative binary and therefore into a hierarchical power relation, which negates the MFT project of deconstructing the 'traditional' gender inscriptions embedded in ADF (Case 1988: 130).

While these forms have been conceptualised with the express purpose of presenting feminist politics through the dramatic form, the forms themselves might hinder the exploration of a broader range of masculinities by excluding those parts of the gender which are active and conflictive by 'nature' or through socialisation, and restricting participation within the narrative to exposition. Alternatively, these forms risk framing masculinity and its experience as only stable and pejorative (Mangan 2003: 225). Perhaps there was another way to look at the relationship between the shape of narrative and gender.

In *What Gender is, What Gender Does*, Judith Roof describes gender as a performance[32] possessing a 'perpetually adjusting' quality; the ability of an individual's gender performance to exhibit combinations of the behaviours, gestures, or characteristics colloquially termed 'masculine' or 'feminine' regardless of their sex (2016:5). Gender is fluid (Howard & Hollander 2000:28).

Could this fluidity of gender hold a key to shaping narrative for my political purposes?

However, David Knights and Deborah Kerfoot maintain in *Between Representations and Subjectivity*, attempting to frame gender outside binary terms in favour of recognising this theorised fluidity may be counterproductive to the project of gender equality, and the dissolution of the oppressive patriarchal gender power dynamics (2004: 431). Since gender fluidity, by nature, resists stability and through its instability, resists definition, attempting to theorise gender or its representation solely through this characteristic would reduce the fluidity to concrete terms which risk re-establishing hierarchical gender orders, this is then not only counter-intuitive but maybe also by

[32] Gender performativity is a term defined by Judith Butler. Butler maintains that gender can be defined as a series of corporeal actions and which produce an effect which is read in a certain social context as being related to positions of masculinity or femininity (1990: 185). Gender is therefore not a natural constant, but rather an unstable 'performed' identity, socially constructed as stable and read as binary to maintain the patriarchal gender order[32] (Richardson 2013, Roof 2016).

trying to define that which is beyond definition, impossible (Knights & Kerfoot 2004: 431).

Rather Knights and Kerfoot propose 'undermining' the hierarchal positioning of the gender binary through dismantling the conditions which produce the binary and reinforce it hierarchical division of power (2004: 431). In this way, the 'object' of study is not removed, so to say, but rather detached from its definition and function within the power dynamic. The point here is not to then reshape the 'object' of study, to redefine gender, but rather to demonstrate that gender is not 'defined', that the definition does not hold true as universally as the ideology of patriarchy assumes (Knights & Kerfoot 2004: 432).

Knights and Kerfoot suggest positioning such an enquiry or 'undermining' practice between the 'representation' or object or enquiry, and the subjectivity which produces it (2004: 432). In this way, the social constructed-ness of gender is revealed, as well as the inability of this constructed-ness to 'hold' the 'fluid' nature of gender. In this way the binary becomes pivotal for the gesturing towards fluidity without attempting to define fluidity (Knights & Kerfoot 2004: 432).

I was then in search of a form that would allow me to represent a gesture towards ADF, its constructed-ness, and its required hegemonically masculine functions, and demonstrate its representation of masculinity and the 'story' of SaR as only 'true' within the context of ADF structure. By decontextualising the nodes of ADF and presenting them as just a version of 'truth' in a certain context, allowed the representation of multiple perspectives of masculinity and story to be represented simultaneously on stage within a narrative.

I was reminded of the art movement of Cubism, and its use of making visible multiple perspectives and angles of an object within the same representational field.

### All the Pieces Together and a Hole

**ALLISON:** Now, I'm not saying change the story, but the perspective. Now you make her real, dynamic; you tell her perspective and maybe he's the one coming home as a prize for a hero!

According to Anne Ganteführer-Trier, Cubism can be defined as a 20th century art movement which sought to reject the 'naturalism' and 'realism' styles of the 19th century, in favour of representing a unity of multiple perspectives of its subject matter on the same canvas (2004: 7). By doing so, the artist would pull into view all

observable sides of the object, so that on one hand it was represented in its 'entirety', but when viewed as a 'whole', the object became almost completely something else, (2004:7) demonstrating even in our attempt to represent a 'whole', the representation is unable to contain the object in its fullness.
Though Cubism did have an impact on theatre design, and in varying degrees on choreography and stage movement (Glover 1983, Skinner 2015), I will not be drawing on this theatrical influence. Rather my interest is in transposing the representational ethos of Cubism into a theatrical narrative structure, as a way of decontextualising scenes from the hegemonically masculine logic-progression of ADF.

I began to think of a ways theatrical narrative could unify multiple perspectives on a subject matter, in ways which deconstructed it and made us see it afresh. I began to think of the focus of *SaR*. Writing in the introduction to the published work, Anthony Akerman describes the play as a "…requiem for an exile" (2002: xix); the story of a white man who resisted the apartheid regime, and the emasculating experience of his exile, told through the exploration of his illicit affair with his maid Marta.
It had become clear to me that there were narrative elements of *SaR* which were so tainted by ADF, actions of characters such as Marta's perpetual waiting, and plot points such as Dawid's death, that I needed to loosen my reliance on the version of the story as told through *SaR*, or risk including their gender pejorative qualities into my new work. This is partly to blame for the exclusion of, amongst other elements, Dawid's death and its link to AIA, from *TINDO*.

I decided to focus on the subject and vehicle of *SaR*; Dawid and his affair. I began to write down ideas for little scenarios, which would show Dawid in multiple perspectives, and also present the parts of the affair of *SaR* in several different lights.
Importantly, this included perspectives which were not 'authored' by Dawid. I wanted to know how Allison saw Dawid, or how the first meeting between Marta and Dawid would be told from Marta's perspective. Furthermore, I wanted to know more about Allison, and Marta in ways which would develop their role in *TINDO* from a 'functionary' one which facilitated Dawid's storytelling and claimed for themselves a subjectivity within this narrative. In this way I developed 'impressions' of Dawid, Allison and Marta which would be collected together into a narrative.

But here lay the rub: for these scenes to facilitate an 'impression' of Dawid, they required their own internal scene structures, and their own internal 'truths'. The scenes were no longer about transcribing 'reality' but rather gathering the dramatic facilities of the scene to gesture at a 'facet' of these characters or actions. In this way parts of the character or action might be manipulated, characteristics altered to best serve the impression, not to create 'truth'.

In the opening scene for instance (pp.3-7), Dawid's parents and arguing over Dawid attending a 'Voortrekker' club for boys. In this scene, we see Dawid through his parents' eyes. His mother, Marike, sees him as an artistic boy who needs to be nurtured, and not sent to this club. His father, F.W. sees him as a soft boy who needs to be toughened up, and therefore advocates his attending the club:

**FW:** That boy will go to Voortrekkers. How else will he learn becoming a man; all soft at your elbow and dreaming of words? (pp.3)

In subsequent scenes, we do indeed see Dawid attending the club (pp.16-18), but here the club co-ordinator mentions it was Dawid's mother not father who insisted he attend. In another scene (pp.19-21), Dawid denies ever attending Voortrekkers at all, applauding his parents for saving him from the negative impact of such clubs.

**DAWID:** That's why I'm glad I never went to some Voortrekker club to bend me into a shape so far from reality I couldn't see the story for the truth. (pp.21)

Though the latter scenes dispute the semantics of this first scene, what we are left with then is a collection of impressions of Dawid, rather than facts. Young Dawid in the opening scene, is drawn to playing with the more traditionally female toy: a doll. This seems to confirm his mother's impression. However, at the end of scene 7 (pp.18) he is just as willing to use the traditionally masculine quality of violence (Murphy 2004: 189) to overpower a Nat supporter, to vent his frustration.

Using this technique, I developed impressions of all the 'corners' of the affair, of Allison, Marta and Dawid. In doing so I created and conceived of many versions of their lives; a Dawid who stayed in the Karoo and became a farmer, a Dawid who was driven by politics and not writing; an Allison who never married Dawid, or who met Dawid as a student not a teacher (and thus challenging this problematic student-

teacher power relation), and a Marta who owned a B&B, or who had a child with Sarel, rather than Dawid.

The contradictions, and the opportunities to explore a more nuanced representation of each character's gender, were stunning. These 'impressions' allowed me to expose the 'masculinity' Dawid possessed as context specific and ever changing and not monolithic as set out in *SaR*. But also, these scenes exposed how Dawid's access to hegemonic masculinity and its patriarchal power was dependant on the situation and gender composition of those around him. He manages only to demonstrate power over those whose reach to power is less than his. In a scene (pp.8-11) where he is playing rugby with coloured Sarel and white Afrikaans B.J., Dawid is spoken over and corrected by the more aggressive and more rugby proficient B.J., who effectively feminises Dawid through his wielding of hegemonic masculinity in this scene. However, in the same scene, Dawid enacts the similar mode of correction and over-speaking in his interaction with the coloured Sarel, whom he deems less of a challenge to his masculine power, and due to his race, has less access to the power wielded by the other two male characters. Other scenes continue on a similar juxtaposition of Dawid's varied access to patriarchal power, depending on the context and collection of characters he shares the scene with. Dawid's masculinity is therefore never stable and always under revision. In this way the contradictory nature of these scene 'impressions' allowed me to explore Kaufman's concept of the contradictory nature of patriarchal power (1994: 148), and to present Dawid's masculinity not as a singular blooming into hegemonic masculinity, but rather as Connell (1995, 2000) posits masculinity; socially constructed, with varying degrees of access to patriarchal power dependant on context. In other words, fluid.

As I worked though challenging perspectives of the characters within the 'story', I was struck by my own perspective. Here I was, myself, the sole author of these varying perspective on Dawid. The concept, then, of increasing perspective moved from an internal character project to an external authorship project. Gail Crimmins describes another facet of FT, which draws on the lived experiences of its performers in order to create the content of a performance text (2017:56). Though this in itself was not the aim of my project, I was interested in the idea of several 'authors' contributing perspectives and opinion on the subject matter. It would destabilize the centrality of my white male voice on the matter and share the dramatic field with other voices.

Embedded into every ‘part’ then of *TINDO*, are several documentary styled moments where performers are asked to break from character to expose the ‘performance’ as a performance, but more importantly, to express their own opinions on the content, ideology and themes of the play. This content would shift between various performances, depending on the actors who make up the cast, in this way the play would have a shifting and unstable variation of voices who provided perspective on the play, on the theme and on the characters.

By collecting these impressions both fictional and non-fictional side by side, I aimed to create multiple and sometimes contradictory reflections on the subject Dawid, and of the action of the affair. In this way neither ‘FTS’ pursuit of character over action (Crimmins 2017: 56) nor the ADF pursuit of masculine action over character (Belfiore 2009: 630) was given precedence, rather they could run alongside each other and leave the audience with an ‘impression’ of who Dawid was and what happened. Also, the masculine ‘logic’ which I described earlier as the progressive glue between the ADF nodes, is unable to draw the scenes together into ADF, as each scene re-writes the past scene’s logical progression of action, or negates the motivation for the action in the scenes that proceed it. Or both. Completely distorting the masculine linear progression. In this way I could represent any of the actions of SaR’s ADF nodes, but each where being rephrased, repurposed and thus lost their reliance on ‘masculine’ violence and logic to connect one to the other.

But now that I had these scenes, the question became: How would I collect these scenes? How would I assemble them into a narrative without re-establishing a form which imitated and then recreated the nodes of ADF?
Here is perhaps the strongest link between the writing of my epistemological research articles and my creative practice project. In writing these articles, I was determined to resist a linear academic narrative in the process of committing to paper my thoughts. The use of ‘articles’ as way of framing my thesis, was in part inspired by a reading of Mary Kolawole’s *Transcending Incongruities* in a 2002 edition of *Agenda*. Though the content had stirred thoughts on an epistemological level, the grouping of the articles in *Agenda* is what caught my eye. In this edition the articles where selected because they spoke to differing perspectives of the place of feminism in Africa. Each article them produced its own response to the theme. Theme.

This revelation was not only the genesis of the idea which would result in the separation of my Masters' thesis into several articles, but resulted in *TINDO* being divided into 4 'parts' – not traditional theatrical acts' – and organised according to theme, and not action nor character: seeming vs. being, the restrictiveness of manhood, subordinated masculinity, and the fluidity of identity.

Part 1 for example is an arrangement of scenes which explore the theme of 'seeming vs. being'. Here I collected scenes in which the characters either discuss or move through situations, which pivot around the idea that what is expected of the character or scene is proved incorrect or limited in its perspective. In scene 2 for instance Dawid is interviewed by a newspaper reporter. Here he expressly tells both the reporter and the audience that what someone will write of him will not be able to contain the entirety of his persona or history:

**DAWID:** 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. (pp.9).

In a subsequent scene B.J indicates that a school peer has signed up for the army to present himself as brave, where in fact they perceive this not to be the case (pp.10).

These collections of scenes are then ordered in ways would allow the narrative to move in a spiral, crossing similar marks in a repetition of a scene which allows for a change in perspective and perhaps a change in theme. For instance, Part 1 begins with a car accident, and progresses through a few scenes till we meet Allison and Dawid in London, where Dawid leaves Allison (pp.14-16). Dawid and Allison give conflicting motivations for Dawid's actions; Dawid confessing he is leaving to find his writing voice, Allison convinced it's to reunite with Marta. The part progresses with a few more scene till we find ourselves once again with Dawid and Allison in London (pp.22-24). This time, their argument runs differently, with Dawid maintaining his actions are to reunite his family, while Allison thinks his actions are politically motivated. This scene is revisited once again in Part 3; scene 28 (pp.56-58). This time we witness a less abrasive discussion on the matter, and Dawid admits to leaving London to go home to die. Each rotation between these and several other repeated scenes allows the audience to view the character again, as framed by a different

theme and a different perspective differently, and thus like the Cubists 'pull open' the subject and draw an increasingly nuanced but unstable 'picture' of the characters and the actions.

This spiral shape is also the inspiration behind *TINDO's* 'conclusion'. I wanted to suggest that beyond what was represented by *TINDO*, there would/could be more 'perspectives' to pull open, more ways of looking at each of the characters and the actions. In this way, challenge the finality and conclusion which characterises ADF resolution/AIA (Troftgruben 2010: 47). The spiral shape suggests to me continuous motion through similar points. It is for this reason that I draw together in Part 4, a collection of revisited scenes. I wanted to suggest more tightly this idea of a spiral circling scenes we have already seen. The highpoint of this part is a dream during which Dawid is confronted by the authors of some of the perspectives of his character, collaged together, and must contend with his own shifting gender responses to each of the confrontations.

This dream had at one stage dissolved into what is now scene 44 (pp.83-85). Here a disorientated Dawid answers a knock at the door, and in a version of an earlier scene where Oupa receives young Dawid after the car crash which killed Dawid's parents, older Dawid receives his younger self. Both Oupa and Dawid give young Dawid a version of the speech Dawid gives to young Rebecca before he leaves, in which he promises to protect the young child and make her life better than his. Though this scene does decontextualise both the original speech Dawid gives to Rebecca and the scene where Oupa receives young Dawid, providing an excellent spiral moment as a conclusion, I felt the re-union positioned Dawid as man who will save the hapless baby. Here Dawid becomes masculine, a man of proposed action, and young Dawid becomes feminised as he is being enacted upon by the older Dawid. Ending the play in this way ran too close thematically to the original ending of the play, where Marta is feminised and Dawid promoted to Iconic status, and presented a scene which replicated in feeling ADF resolution. Since multiple versions of Dawid had just been presented in the dream sequence, by allowing Dawid to hold and care for a younger self, felt like a unification of these versions, and indeed felt like Dawid was now 'whole' stable identity rather than fragmented or fluid as was my wish. I moved this scene. Moving it to just before the dream, allowed the dream to split what this scene seemingly joined, to resist the presentation of monolithic masculinity in favour of fluid,

fragmented, and context-based 'masculinity'. This move also allowed the dream to dissolve into the only exact replication of a scene. The play concludes, then, almost where it started, with the reporter interviewing Dawid. Here Dawid's observation of the attempt of writing about him takes on a whole new meaning:

**DAWID:** 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 pretence of truth as truth; fool's errand (pp.89).

This scene had been the genesis for the telling of a variety of perspectives on Dawid when we first came across it in Part 1. It carried with it, then, as a 'ending' not just the warning that what we have seen is not a conclusive version of who Dawid is/was – in itself a challenge to the singularity of truth and masculinity in ADF – but also the possibility of yet more undiscovered perspectives, hinting that what we have come to know about Dawid Oliver is not Dawid Oliver. Herein lay the inspiration for the title, *This is Not Dawid Oliver*.

### A Question of Violence

**RADIO:** – this 1922 mine strike, also referred to as the Rand Revolt, began as a dispute over pay cuts//this 2012 wildcat strike, also referred to as the Marikana Massacre, began as a dispute over a pay increase… *(TINDO)*

While there may be many ways in which masculinity may be theatrically restaged, I aimed with this study to look at the element of narrative. Since, as Susan Knutson maintains, ADF is a *male* hero's quest to achieve manhood, and that manhood is marked most evidently by violence (Murphy 2004: 189), I have described ADF as a structural instrument of *violence* which frames its narrative and its ideal subject in terms of violence.

Alongside thoughts of form, where the important questions of violence. Since I had maintained violence was pivotal to the production of ADF and its representation of masculinity, how was I going to address or redress the issue of violence in *TINDO*?

At first, I had been attracted to the idea of what Crimmins calls 'non-confrontational' drama as advocated by more contemporary versions of FT (2017: 56). The idea was to present juxtaposing ideas in ways which never rise to the level of 'violently' favouring one version or opinion over another, allowing each view point equal narrative space and agency. While this works well for the 'documentary' styled theatre which Crimmins discusses, the application into fiction-based theatre seemed problematic. In my attempt to devoid scenes of their 'violent' conflict produced many expositional scenes, where characters where either giving monologues, or creating environments for such monologues to be given. The early *TINDO* scenes seemed too much in ethos then like the ones from *SaR* from which they drew their inspiration.

Also, the idea of removing action and conflict completely from my narrative, felt like it was creating binary form with ADF rather than deconstructing it. I began to think about, read about and shift though conflict and violence, to find a way to look at framing conflict rather than removing it from my narrative. Again 'decontextualisation' became key. But first, what was violence?

### Violence

In both *Precarious Life* (2004) and *Frames of War* (2009), Judith Butler explores the issue of violence. According to Butler, violence can be described as power or operational forces which are enacted in ways that supersede a subject's will, with the express intent of imposing a 'constraint of being' (2009: 169).

The social conditions which mediate the perpetration of violence are a chief concern to Butler. Butler maintains that for an act of violence to occur the perpetrator-subject must apprehend the victim-subject as 'living', but not recognise this 'life' as being of any 'worth' (2009: 5). If a 'living-subject' is recognised as having 'worth', there is a presumption that this subject has significance which would cause grief if lost, and thereby prohibits the enactment of violence. Butler terms this quality of a living-subject: 'grievability' (2009: 15). Grievability functions then as an organisational system moulding socio-cultural structures and institutions to guard those who are recognised as 'having life' against 'being lost', and to expose those who are deemed 'unworthy' to conditions fertile to violence (Butler 2009: 15).

Butler continues that the socio-cultural conditions required to sustain grievable life, are therefore manipulated with the express intent of exposing the 'unworthy' lives to increased precarity, in ways which are "…deemed necessary to protect the lives of the

'living'…" (2009: 31). Violence is therefore an act sanctioned by a perpetrator-subject, but without the consent of the victim-subject, of exposing the life of the victim-subject to the possibility of 'loss' through an injurious 'constraint of being', in order to protect 'grievable' lives from suffering that very fate (Butler 2009: 31).

Drawn alongside Butler's theories, it is clear to see how ADF structures its narrative to manufacture conditions which mediate and require the perpetration of violence, and which frame its hero, or hegemonically masculine Icon, as grievable. By requiring a hero who is 'decent' and 'trustworthy', with aspirations that are 'exceptionally' moral and ethical (Sachs 2006: 8), ADF sets up the hero as possessing 'worth', and thus grievability. It stands to reason then that the elements of ADF then are drawn to empower, test and fortify the hero, to prepare him for his final ARV to ensure against his 'loss'/defeat (Campbell 2004: 46). However, the narrative progression of what Russian narratologist Vladimir Propp would describes as the false hero, in the case of *SaR* Dawid, is drawn to increase his precarity, and expose him to an increasingly greater possibility of 'loss' (2012: 171-172).
But how to deconstruct this violence?

**Nonviolence**

Importantly Butler then posits her theory of nonviolence: a principal she describes as a manner of meeting violence, and the aggression which evolves into acts of violence, which does not result in the disavowal of a subject's grievability (Butler 2009: 170). This is not, Butler maintains, an attempt to eradicate violence, but rather to find other means of expressing the aggression from which violence stems (Butler 2009: 171). Central to this ideal of nonviolence is the recognition of 'our' shared precariousness and extending the idea of 'grievability' to all lives. If all lives are seen as equally grievable, then, actions which will precipitate their loss will be guarded against (Butler 2009: 170).
This concept of nonviolence as a manner of receiving violence, without eradicating it, was very enticing to me. What it would allow me to do is represent the actions of the scenes, especially those who had roots in the ADF node of OAV, without the action evolving into progressive acts of violence which ultimately result in the ARV or climax. Also, by framing the participants within the act of violence as grievable, a nonviolent

approach to writing has the potential to deconstruct ADF's requirement for vengeance and/or judgment, and the ability of the violent act to generate gender positions.
But as a writer, how could this concept be used in the formulation of narrative, scenes and characters?

Butler's theory of nonviolence works in several practical manners: firstly, Butler argues for a more complex reading of both the perpetrators and the victims of violence. As the wielders of violence, perpetrators conceal their precariousness, by highlighting and demonstrating, thorough violence, the precariousness of others (Butler 2009: 178). The act of violence however, can be seen as revealing the 'fear' of the precariousness which generates not only the violent act but the moral justification for such an act (Butler 2009: 177). Butler argues that demonstrating the grievability of all lives challenges the justification for violence and necessitates a 'responsible' nonviolent solution to this fear and aggression (Butler 2009: 177).

In characters terms I began to look at the multiple perspectives of each character as an opportunity to trouble their representation as either a victim or perpetrator of the actions and injurious actions of *SaR*. By producing conflicting perspectives, which trouble this binary, and presenting their lives and persona's outside the 'violent' action – Dawid outside the affair, or outside his quest to topple apartheid for the unification of his family – allowed the characters to be viewed as more than a perpetrator or victim, increasing the dramatic representation of their grievability, and challenging the gender division brought on by ADF acts of violence.
For instance, in scene 5 (pp.14-16) Dawid leave's Allison, without her consent, which leaves her angered and without her 'happy ending' (pp.15). However, by the time we see this scene played out again in scene 10 (pp.21-23) or again in scene 28 (pp.56-58) the impressions of Dawid and Allison collected through the interim scenes make it difficult to condemn either character for their actions. Dawid is shown as equally a passionate writer, lover to Marta and Allison, and a political creature, giving credence to all his motives to leave. At the same time these very qualities when seen through Allison's perspective justify her anger and her condemnation of Dawid's action, which allow the audience space to empathise with her position. In this way while the act itself of leaving Allison is not disputed, the audience is asked to shift through impressions of the character in ways which present Dawid as a 'living' subject, to recognise his

grievability and so mitigate the condemnation from the audience, it also mitigates the need for an ARV, as this act loses its justification and its apparent morality. In essence it disturbs the requirement of an OAV to produce ARV and thus produce ADF.

Secondly, Butler challenges the 'framing' of the narrative of violence. Butler maintains that violence is framed in ways which cast living beings as either grievable or ungrievable (2009: 1) excluding elements of a lived life which would contradict this framing. The deconstruction of this framing is necessary for the recognition of shared grievability (Butler 2009: 169)

On a very literal level I contemplated the framing of the scenes and characters of *TINDO* itself. A convention of theatre or indeed any storytelling is that the audience will only know as much about the characters as the story is demands. ADF frames scenes and characters in a way which excludes the lives and events which do not directly touch on the progression of the hero's journey, so as to present a single 'truth' (Baracchi 2014: 176). Weinblatt and Harrison maintain that this singularity of 'truth' is linked to privileging binaries of political (and gender) power which results in the pejorative representation of the subaltern within ADF (2011: 30), and thus enables ADF to frame as justifiable violent acts within its structures. The lives of Marta, Allison and Dawid continue beyond the space represented in *TINDO*. A staged version of *TINDO*, and the scenes played out are only a 'slice' of these lives. I wanted to indicate this. It is for this reason that the actual framing of the scenes has been shifted, to include many moments of offstage action. By bleeding the onstage action offstage, or playing the action entirely offstage, I wanted to gesture to a life lived beyond the proscenium, to gesture to the fact that what was showable on stage was just a selection, a staged impression of the lives of the characters. Scene 3 (pp.8-12) for instance consists of Marta and Rachel setting a dining room for dinner, while the spoken dialogue happens offstage. Scene 42 (pp.80-82) happens entirely offstage. Scene 17 (pp.33-40), begins with an empty stage with several conversations happening at the same time off stage, pressing the audience to cherry-pick what it will listen to. I wanted to reflect the 'messy' nature of 'lived' experience; that at times we cannot pay attention to exactly every detail that pertains to a particular event, and therefore to represent a scene or event as 'clean' and logical and thus ready for judgment as in ADF, denies this quality that not everything knowable of an event can be represented.

This made me reconsider the end of the play. Characters' lives do not 'end' with the closure of the events of a play, and the events of a play have consequences outside the dramatic representation. I placed a final scene to be played after the 'end' of the play as the audience leaves, to press again that the context I can represent is limited and that the lives of the characters and the events which might be offered as mitigation for any action cannot be reduced to a play.

To deconstruct the 'frame' of a scene and of the violence and conflict within the scene, is to represent lived lives greater than my representation, and offers the opportunity to gesture to the grievability of the character represented. In this way, 'masculinity' loses its ability to create definition through violence, as it is without an undisputed 'feminised' victim. By gesturing to lives lived beyond the framing of *TINDO, TINDO* provides opportunity for masculinities and femininities to move through acts of violence and not be defined by them. Violence would require the limitation of representation to entrench its victim/perpetrator binary. In this way, the power of violence to maintain the hierarchy within patriarchal masculinities (Murphy 2004: 189) is dissolved, opening the door to tractable representation for subordinated masculinities.

### Is this the End?

> **DAWID:** 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. *(TINDO)*

Through the compilation of this series of articles, and more directly through the writing of *TINDO*, I have come to realise a number of things that to speak of the deconstruction of ADF. To speak of 'pulling' open narrative space for tractable representation of a broad variety of masculinities, is to speak directly to the deconstruction of ADF's ability to reductively draw a 'masculine' hero through violent nodes, and culminate in a 'violent' patriarchal division of genders, the veneration of hegemonic masculinity and the violence which characterises it, and the masculinisation of its structural mode of progression and the characterisation of its ideal hero.

While there may be many ways to destabilise hegemonic masculinity in ADF, I propose a 'pulling open' of its patriarchal narrative structure which would gesture *away* from ADF, rather than to the 'nuanced representation of masculinity. In this way the gesture

is characterised by 'opening' narrative space, rather than defining 'tractability' of representation and so avoid reinstating gender binaries.

I have described my gesture to 'pull-open' *SaR* through a focus on form and the theory of nonviolence, but I have also employed many other techniques in the writing of *TINDO*. Feminist and Epic theatre techniques of Alienation[33], for instance informed the use of repeated scenes. These repetitions allowed dialogue to be swapped between characters, or situations to change and so decontextualize and defamiliarise the scene and dialogue in ways which question character, truth and representation. Also, MFT's use of historicization[34] inspired the use of radio broadcasts. Several scenes are underscored by radio broadcasts which not only set the shifting time lines to challenge ADF's unity of time, but each are framed around issues of political upheaval, mining strikes[35] and elections. These broadcasts collectively highlight the constructed-ness of race and class power dynamics, through the juxtaposition of similar stories in South African history, and highlighting their race and class distinctions.

To 'pull-open' ADF, though, for the purpose of representing a variety of masculinities, requires several considerations not the least of which is a question of privilege. A 'gesture' which deconstructs ADF, should account for patriarchal privilege both within and outside of the narrative form, but also in ways which counter the singularity of masculinity as the directive narrative voice, and the favouring 'masculine' action to conceptualise scenes.

Through the manipulation of techniques lifted from FTS and MFT, in the project of writing *TINDO*, I was reminded of another very important concept. Gender is multifaceted. By focusing this 'gesture' on the destabilisation of the violent hegemonic masculinity of ADF, I had overlooked the multiple other modes of domination patriarchy has empower the masculine position with. One such 'power dynamic' I had overlooked was ADF's veneration of 'masculine' logic to govern the progression

[33] According to theatre theorist John White, alienation is a political technique designed to defamiliarise both the dramatic work from its audience as well as the character and situation from the actors in ways which reveal their ideological construction (2004: 122-123).

[34] Historicization, White maintains, is the use of history to show the historical manner in which social constraints and ideologies are constituted, as opposed to being 'natural' and 'timeless' certainties (2004: 96).

[35] Here a full circle; what began as the inspiration of this journey – the Rand Revolt – becomes a way to reflect of the South African history of 'man-making' through mining. This small gesture in TINDO opens a link between *TINDO* and *Revolt!*

between its structural nodes, to the detriment of 'feminine' emotion. This quality had a far-reaching impact on framing scenes; even when ADF is challenged with non-chronological ordering, the logical progressive links still connect scenes in ways which can produce the ADF structure.

The socio-political position of hegemonic masculinity is also reliant of a variety of other social nodes including race and class which factor into debates of power and dominance. These factors speak of more nuanced ways in which characters access power and wield it, and so to, to the modalities of power which must be unpicked and un-written if one is to make a serious attempt at un-writing masculine representation. Many such factors warrant a more in-depth examination to 'pull-open' their influence on masculinity and ADF. But here lies the start. Perhaps, since these racial and class power dynamics rest on similar binary relationships to what I have discussed here, similar techniques can be framed to challenge racial and class hierarchies.

While there are many techniques which I pulled from FTS and other sources and applied to the creation of *TINDO*, few were as impactful as Butler's theory of nonviolence. The pursuit of tractable representations of masculinity on stage is in its essence a nonviolent theatre approach. This theory allows space for the representation of the violent manner in which masculinity is used to oppress all femininities and subordinate masculinities, without framing the representation and the genders within it through violence itself. By expanding the way in which characters are framed beyond a victim/perpetrator binary, a narrative can afford each position with and effected by the act of violence access to a grievable representation. In this way the power gender dynamics which are traditionally facilitated through an act of violence in ADF are deconstructed, and the binary is rendered powerless. How I have applied this theory of nonviolence to narrative and theatrical form is merely a start. The potential for broader theatrical application is still to be explored.

For a more detailed exploration of how ADF manipulates this gender binary, and makes use of violence to frame a narrative, please (re)turn to **Three Acts to Manhood**.

For a more detailed exploration of character as the exemplar of hegemonic masculinity and violence, please (re)turn to **The Character of Man**.

And to read the results of the explorations of nonviolence, FTS and my retelling of *SaR*, please (re)turn to ***This is Not Dawid Olivier***.

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**PLAGIARISM DECLARATION**

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