

Director's Notebook

"Master Harold"...and the Boys

by Athol Fugard

Table of Contents

I. THE PLAY TEXT, ITS CONTEXT, AND THE IDEAS PRESENTED	1
a. Context	1
b. The Play and Its Themes	2
II. ARTISTIC RESPONSES, CREATIVE IDEAS, AND EXPLORATIONS	4
a. Initial Impressions & Ideas for Characters Depiction	5
b. Techniques I want to incorporate	6
c. Influences	7
III. DIRECTOR'S INTENTIONS & INTENDED IMPACT	8
General Directorial Intentions and Intended Impact	8
The Set	9
Properties	11
Colors, Lighting, and Sound	12
Characters and their Costumes	13
IV. STAGING TWO MOMENTS OF THE PLAY	18
a. Moment 1 (The Kite scene, pg. 28 to 32)	15
b. Moment 2 (Hally's conflict bursts out, pg. 49 to 51)	18

I. THE PLAY TEXT, ITS CONTEXT, AND THE IDEAS PRESENTED

During the process of choosing a play for the Director's Notebook, I stumbled on "*Master Harold*"... and the Boys (in short, "*Master Harold*"...). It impacted me significantly, not only in a way that a foreign student from Vietnam was enlightened with knowledge about the apartheid in South Africa and racism around the world in general. Not only did it deeply resonate with similar works I had previously read and liked such as *Native Son* by Richard Wright and *Cry, the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton; "*Master Harold*" ... also broadens my vision as an actor, director, and theatre explorer regarding to how emotionally and psychologically immersive a play can go and still remain culturally poignant and politically charged. Instantly listed as one of my favorite plays, "*Master Harold*"... was believed to be intensely biographical, paralleling with Fugard's personal life and his constant efforts into raising consciousness of the apartheid's destruction, especially to those who were foreign to South Africa. In my point of view, the play is a portal fusing an intimate story about relationships and the gigantic cultural world in the 1950s.

a. Context

South Africa, Port Elizabeth, and the Apartheid

South Africa was one of the nations that underwent extreme pains in the endeavor of organizing itself after World War II and the deterioration of its colonial identity. A system called apartheid, which directly means "apartness" in Afrikaans, persisted for half a century and legally separated black and white South Africans. Black and "coloreds" (mixed race) were told where to live, what jobs they could do, and what they could own, while the white minority created themselves a monopoly on the country's resources, leadership, wealth, education ("Harold Athol").



Image 1 – An instance of signs during the apartheid in South Africa

- Supported by the National Party (NP) government, the apartheid was introduced and legalized in South Africa in 1948. It became effective during a period when countries were avoiding racist policies due to the problems of racism noted in World War II. While the world was turning away from the such laws and promising for acts of decolonization, South Africa introduced the apartheid. The frustration with the government is prominent in "*Master Harold*"... through the character Hally and the author Athol Fugard himself.
- **Group Areas Act, 1950** – started the physical segregation between races, particularly in urban areas. ("A History")
- **Bantu Self-Government Act, 1959** - Different racial groups had to live in different areas. Only a small percentage of South Africa was left for black people (who comprised the vast majority) to form their "homelands" ("A History"). People were forced out of their homes that they had owned for decades and moved to underprivileged areas far away from their workplace.
- On paper, the law speaks to equal development of the different racial groups and freedom of cultural expression, but the way it was implemented made this impossible ("A History"). This

contradiction resulted in the disillusionment which was discussed by the characters in the play multiple times.

- The laws prohibited inter-marriage and social integration between racial groups, forced them to live in isolation and develop independently and unequally.
- To have a friendship with someone of a different race generally brought suspicion upon you, or worse (“A History”). This cultural phenomenon is reflected through the intimate yet complicated relationship between Hally and the black servants in the play, inspired by Fugard’s own experience with an old black friend.



Image 2



Image 3 – Black South Africans who were protesting beaten by police

The city of Port Elizabeth underwent various large-scale transformations in its land use patterns when the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 with the application of racially segregationist legislation. This included the separation of citizens into so-called *White*, *Bantu*, *Colored*, and *Asian* suburbs (“Port Elizabeth”). The laws demanded that that such areas should be set apart by buffer strips at least 100m wide. This physical barrier is mentioned in the play by Willie and Sam talking about not having enough money to take the bus home because it’s far away from the tea room. There are also moments of flashbacks where Hally/Fugard recalls living in the same home with Sam and Willie when he was young and the apartheid hasn’t taken place yet.

Despite the removal of Group Areas limitations in 1991, most middle and upper income Black families are trapped in their old suburbs through an inability to dispose of their properties without suffering massive financial losses

(“Port Elizabeth”). This speaks to the constant, literary battle that Athol Fugard had fought against segregation and racism through his plays and productions that left a bold, striking mark on local and international populations even after the apartheid was abolished.

b. The Play and Its Theme

“*Master Harold*”... *and the Boys* is among Fugard’s most acclaimed work. Profoundly autobiographical, the play is based on an incident between Fugard and an older black friend. He wrote the play after many years of shame, guilt, and regret as a means of dealing with his self-disgust and the horrible things that he did to the trusted friend and mentor. There are three main characters present in the play, but a couple more that are discussed in the background:

Hally is a “seventeen-year-old white boy” (Athol Fugard 9). In some regards, Hally is a typical high school kid, drawing funny pictures of his teachers, complaining about homework, getting into heated philosophical debates with Sam. Hally is a friendly, cynical, intelligent, and somewhat arrogant kid who appears rather sophisticated for his age.

Sam is a "black man in his mid-forties" (Fugard 3) working as a waiter in the St. George's Park Tea Room. Fugard paints him as a wise, curious, cultivated, and compassionate man who is extremely patient with Hally and comforts his problems with his family. He doesn't complain with his job as a servant in a tearoom and his lack of opportunity.



Image 4 – Athol Fugard (middle), Winston Ntshona (right) and John Kani. The three co-wrote "The Island"

Willie has working with Sam for many years, first at the boarding house and now at the tearoom, and he looks up to Sam. He calls him "Boet Sam" (Brother Sam) and looks for him for guidance about dancing and women. Similar to Sam, he has also been Hally's friend since the beginning. Willie is poor. He doesn't have enough money for a song on the jukebox. Unlike Sam, he doesn't seem to have much restraint, beating his girlfriends and resulting in them quitting dancing with him.

The exposition of the play bears almost complete resemblance to Fugard's life. His family moved to Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape. His father, the elder Harold Fugard, was a jazz pianist. Unable to work due to his disability, he drowned into alcoholism. Mrs. Fugard took full responsibility of feeding and keeping the family

moving forward – operating a small boarding house, and later a small café, providing the settings for "Master Harold" ... and the Boys. Fugard's father shared many of the prejudices of other white South Africans, but his mother never accepted the injustice of the system and communicated her values to her son ("Athol Fugard"). The play was premiered in March of 1982 at Yale Repertory Theatre due to its prohibition in South Africa. When it was finally performed in South Africa in 1983, the work left most of the audience in tears ("Shmoop Editorial Team"). Those years were an important moment in the history of apartheid, when the rest of the world started to take notice and isolated South Africa in an effort to put pressure on the government to change its racial policies ("The End of Apartheid").

The strengths and characteristics of Fugard's works:

- They convey eminent, powerful political messages without being dogmatic
- They do not explicitly criticize the apartheid, but rather tell stories of humans and the sorrows that arise in them as a by-product of the apartheid. He said of his writing, "The sense I have of myself is that of a 'regional' writer with the themes, textures, acts of celebrations, of defiance and outrage that go with the South African experience. These are the only things I have been able to write about." ("Athol Fugard")
- **Realism** – the form of theatre that depicts reality and current social, political events, complemented with the author's own narratives and opinions. Fugard uses the realist style in his literary works as means to protest the authority by portraying simple but honest pictures of everyday life in the apartheid.

Themes

Athol Fugard uses the relationship between a teenage white boy and his mother's two black employees to point out the conflicts, class and race divisions, and injustice that plagued the young nation under apartheid. Hally, the boy, takes out his frustrations with his parents on his friends Sam and Willie, two adult black men that work in his mother's café and whom he's known and loved all his life.

- **Racial tensions** are the major theme in "Master Harold" ... and the Boys. The face image of the South African apartheid is put on the stage: A young, impressionable white character looks down

upon two older black men. Through the interactions, Fugard illustrates the pro-found racial wounds that infested his world in the 1950s under the segregation system. Hally considers Sam to be the closest friend that he's ever had in his life. However, ultimately, the relationship shatters, overshadowed by the differences of status and skin colors that the system has imposed on the young Hally as he expresses them throughout the play.

- **Coming of age:** Hally, the protagonist of *"Master Harold" ...and the boys*, is not an easily likable kid. He's hot-tempered, arrogant, even disrespectful and malicious sometimes. However, he can also be warm, sweet, curious, caring for others and nostalgic for his childhood. He's trapped between being an innocent kid that is eager to grow and being an adult in an unjust society that gives him an unequal, somewhat strange and unreasonable for him, proportion of power based on his skin color.
- **Violence:** South Africa in the 1950s was stricken with violence and fear. The running undertone of violence was evidently throughout the play, especially whenever Hally gets angry. The characters get along with each other on the surface and although there isn't any actual fighting or physical conflict, Fugard was able to build up an intense anticipation of violence through the characters' behaviors and attitudes. Racial violence is always lurking, ready to erupt.
- **Father/Son Relationship:** Hally's father is an alcoholic white man whose racism manifests Hally and his behaviors towards his two black "friends." The father never appears onstage but his figure evidently impacts Hally a great deal. Hally is profoundly ashamed of his father but shrinks under him and refuses to admit his feelings.
- **Ballroom Dancing/Dream of a better world:** Being one of the most prevalent imageries in the play, ballroom dancing is present throughout the plot, at the beginning, as the play progresses, and at the end of the show. Dancing is source of amusement and relaxation for Sam and Willie – a hobby, something to enjoy after or during the dreary workday. Dancing also plays an important cultural pillar for the black community in Port Elizabeth. As Hally asks for ideas for his homework, Sam suggests the dance competition as a symbol of an ideal world in which people can live together in harmony without colliding with each other. Dance provides a safe space for Sam and Willie, away from the struggles of apartheid-era South Africa – a world full of conflicts, threats, divisions and hatred.



Image 5 - An innocent black boy escapes the wrath of Apartheid White killer.

II. ARTISTIC RESPONSES, CREATIVE IDEAS, AND EXPLORATIONS

I remembered being extremely emotional after the initial read-through of the script (and surprisingly after every time I read it again). "Emotional" doesn't just mean mere joy and sadness, but also pity, rage, bitterness, contentment, disappointment, playfulness, revelation, sympathy. It was evident that the play is intimate and filled with ups and downs of sentiments – elements that I'm keen on the most in literary works and theatrical productions in general. However, with this note in mind while constructing the Director's Notebook, I reminded myself not to make use of the roller coaster of emotions of the play unjustifiably, but rather to create an undercurrent of subtleties in which emotions are expressed vocally and physically. Fugard, in my point of view, did not create *"Master Harold" ... and the Boys* to fill it with a bunch of emotions thrown directly and utterly to the audience's face, but to make them reveal themselves through a private and visceral narrative of his past, his world, his society, South Africa.

a. **Initial Impressions & Ideas for Characters Depiction**

Sam

- He expresses no resentment, hardship or discontentment towards Hally, but hopes for a better society
- He is encouraging, wise. He cares about Willie, his dear friend and co-worker and Hally, whom he seems to consider to be his own child although Hally often teaches him about many things from school
- He struggles with words, learns pronunciations and definitions from Hally. He is inquisitive and very keen on learning despite the social expectations for black and colored citizens
- He tries to show Hally what he's learned. He mentions names of generic, famous figures such as Abraham Lincoln, William Shakespeare, Jesus Christ, etc, who brought social changes throughout history. He deeply appreciates Hally's lessons and proves to be a smart, wise man that has a good memory for things.
- He is increasingly patient with Hally's anger as though accustomed to it
- Powerful moment: *Master Harold, [...] Master Harold, [...] Master Harold [...]* (Fugard 56). This is when Hally fully succumbs to the racist system that is imposed heavily on him by society and his father. He spits in Sam's face after bitterly rejects all attempts to salvage his depression and disillusionment of the world, of his family, and of himself. The moment when Sam switches his tone of voice and repeatedly calls Hally as "Master Harold" - when Sam knows he's failed and also capitulated in the system of "how things are supposed to be" - somehow makes me even more furious than when Hally abandons his innocence. This is one of the most dramatic, powerful and symbolic scenes in the play in which all major themes come together tempestuously, yet harmoniously – Hally's transformation and coming of age, Sam's acceptance and simultaneous resistance against social regulations, the near bursting of violence that has been contained throughout the play, the shattering of the better world that Sam describes previously.

Willie

- He gets nervous about the dance competition
- He is afraid that his partner, Hilda, would run away but often abuses her. He admits that he's hurt Hilda but doesn't agree to reconcile
- He is somewhat looked down upon by Willie and Sam because of his clumsiness and lack of education
- Willie brings cheerfulness to the table despite his depiction as a traditional, stereotypically African man.
- He often gets furious when his dad is mentioned, immediately changes into a worsening mood and gets irritated at the waiters.
 - He tries to convince himself that his father is not coming home throughout the play (carefully calculating and deducing based on facts).
- He somewhat hates school but expresses hope for a better future. Hally cares for the politics/future of South Africa.
 - Reflects the hope of Athol Fugard for social reforms in the future - longing for changes.
- Hally is strangely practical and pragmatic for a young man; ideologies of a typical teenager that Fugard might have had in the past
 - To the comic books - "*Rubbish. Mental pollution*" (11)
 - ("*Mathematics won't get you out of that one*") (16))
 - "*Failing at a maths exam isn't the end of the world, Sam. How many times have I told you that examination results don't measure intelligence?*" (17)

- He is interested in history, literature and historical figures and uses them as arguments (Winston Churchill, Napoleon, Charles Darwin as a man who benefitted all mankind, Tolstoy for a man who was not good at school but became revolutionary anyways)
- An **atheist** – Hally likes no religion
- He's proud to know he educated Sam
- Hally is often stripped of emotional appeals and only identifies with the intellect
 - *Emotionally yes. Intellectually no.* (42)

Powerful moments: Monologue (25), the kite story (26-30)

- The monologue is significant because it portrays the precious memories with Willie and Sam when Hally/Athol Fugard when he was a kid. It also sheds light on the circumstances of Hally's family and current South Africa. Hally remembers how he was ashamed by playing kite with a native African man, a story where Athol Fugard shows extracts of society's presumptions and stereotypes when the apartheid was effective.
- Many of the only moments where Hally gets nostalgic, really happy and dreamy are while he recalls memories of his youth.
- Symbolism of the Kite story:
 - It speaks closely and profoundly of Hally/Fugard's childhood and the times when his happiness peaked. The delivery and portrayal of stories like this must be given great attention because they can be used by the audience to contrast with the current Hally, and how his life deteriorates gradually as time passed. This made me speculate the ways of producing these moments: whether to let the actors immerse completely in the past and remove themselves from the present using lighting and sound techniques or to let them stay in the moment and emphasize the differences in physical and emotional appearances.

b. Techniques I want to incorporate

Although the portrayal of the characters plays a more significant role, in my opinion, for the production of this play, I still want to pay great attention to the external and technical elements such as lighting, sound, and stage in order to create a suitable atmosphere for the audience before, during, and after the show. The right mood can considerably enhance the inherent sentiments of the spoken text and the overall delivery of the play's messages to the audience.

In regards to set design, I want to keep it as minimal as possible with the presence of only essential properties. There are two main reasons for this. The first reason is to create a simplistic and intimate space in which the audience doesn't get distracted by the surroundings and keeps their focus on the actors. The second rationale is to leave more space for Willie and Sam's dancing scenes which, as I discussed in my initial impressions above, play a significant role as symbolism for the hope of a better world. The picture, to the right, of a "*Master Harold*"... and the Boys production in 2016 (with Christopher H. Barreca as the scenic designer) features elements that I really want to be the essence of my stage: a run-down brick wall, dim lighting, dark, murky colors, and a lot of space for the actors' interactions.



Image 6 – Sam (Leon Addison Brown) and Willie (Sahr Ngaujah). Photo by Monique Carboni

Additionally, I want to make the window to the outside world a representation of South African society as well as Hally's feelings. I believe this natural element will greatly intensify the mood of the current scene as well as play as a "shock" factor that would engrave the characters' messages in the audience's head. Athol Fugard places the setting of the play to be in a stormy afternoon in a tea room in St. George's Park. I want the raining sound to be subtly present throughout the play; it mustn't interrupt or distract the flow; therefore the volume has to be under total control and adjusted when needed (i.e. loud as the show starts, low during the play, strongest when they are arguing, lowest when the conversation is important). I think it would be cool to have actual water splattering/pouring down the big window, which could also be just a small column portion (the rest could be covered with curtains). To minimize the amount of water used further, tubs could be placed backstage under the stream so the water could be reused over time.



Image 7

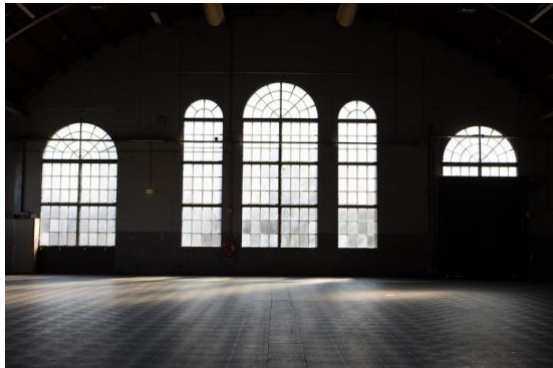


Image 8

external state of South Africa, and adding contrasting factors that would make the audience more receptive to the message of the scene.

In contrast, when Hally, or Sam, begins to immerse themselves in stories of his childhood, the light beams mimicking sunlight would flow into the room, symbolizing happiness and innocence of Hally's nostalgic childhood to which he's trying to return. Ideas for the transformations between the two realms include flashes of lightning roaring thunder sounds. Although these techniques might add a little bit of surrealism into the show, they embellish Fugard's realism by keeping the natural forces outside present and influential to the audience throughout the play, being reflections of the

c. Influences

Three years ago, I watched a play called "*The Sand Castle*" performed at The National Drama Theatre of Vietnam. The set was simple, the costumes were casual, and the characters were members of a typical family you can see anywhere in Vietnam. However, what imprint every detail of the play in my head were the emotions the actors were able to get across and the terrifying truth that the play portrayed. It depicted the lives of the people in a highly respected family with cultural background and honorable military tradition. However, the outward appearance covered the inside filled with trickery, lies of hypocrisy through deceitful, hollow, and bland words. I was really impressed with the transformations of behaviors and attitudes of the characters which still stun me today while thinking about it. The play definitely inspires my love for the more intimate and subtle type of theatre that possesses the ability to be as overwhelming as any other type of production.

It was when I moved to high school in the U.S. that my theatre watching experience started to expand. In 10th grade, I watched *Twelve Angry Jurors* (Reginald Rose) and *Death by Design* (Rob Urbinati) which were both produced by our theatre instructor and performed by our school's students on a large stage. Not grandiose, for me, they were definitely great introductions to American culture and provide me with clear frameworks of how drama and comedy work with basic lighting and set (which is similar to the essence of "*Master Harold... and the Boys*" to an extent). Since then, I have observed numerous student-produced in class/projects and professional productions on Digital Theatre Plus - an education, online platform where theatrical content can be found. *Casanova* and *All My Sons* were the two plays that I watched through the website, both of which I found extremely valuable in informing my vision for "*Master Harold...*".



Images 9 and 10 –
Intimate acting and
minimal set design –
Elements I found
powerful in "*The
Sand Castle*" 2016



Image 11 – Giuliano Contadini in
Casanova, 2017 – Photo by Caroline
Holden

Casanova is a ballet directed and choreographed by Kenneth Tindall for Northern Ballet company based in the UK ("*Casanova*"). Although the dancing in "*Master Harold*"... isn't as half intense as that in the ballet, I learned a lot about proper lighting for dance scenes. It features a dark, mysterious atmosphere that lures me as a spectator into the world of the time period. The lighting throughout the play serves many purposes. Amber and warm lights are used to depict playfulness and surreality. Darker blue and chilling purple ones are used in dramatic moments. They ease me, enrage me, hypnotize me and help me with feeling what the actions and dance moves are telling me to feel. I noticed that the dancers' faces must always be well-lit while they are in motion regardless of where they go. My favorite moments also include those that use one single light beam straight from above to focus on one single actor while everything else is pitch black. It was a very effective attention drawer and inspired my vision to use a similar light source for Sam's description of the dance competition in "*Master*

Harold"... and the Boys.

All My Sons by Arthur Miller, directed by Howard Davies, was a play that focused more on the actors' physical expressions and tones of voice. There were very subtle yet dramatic and powerful moments throughout the play. For instance, when Kate Keller (or "Mother," played by Zoë Wanamaker) recalls a memory of her son that has now gone missing, her eyes stop moving, her voice starts to tremble, her arms begin to shake, and her body struggles to hold itself up while continues to face forward, as if she's looking for something that doesn't exist anymore. The element that took the moment to another level of emotions for me is the sound effects that start to play during the flashback, calling "*Mom! Mom!*" - a distorted version of the voice of the child from the past. The technique, though quite simple and delicate, hits me very hard and notably enhance the sentiments of the scene.

III. DIRECTOR'S INTENTIONS & INTENDED IMPACT

General Directorial Intentions and Intended Impact

The first and foremost intention that I have for this production is to re-create and tell Athol Fugard's experience as truthfully as I could. I want to construct a small, intimate atmosphere filled with large and significant conversations. I want to emphasize thematic elements and enhance the sentiments carried out by the characters' language, both physically and verbally. I want to clearly demonstrate Hally's coming of age, his search for a father, his abandonment of one, his warm and sweet side, his rude and hateful manners, his temptation by the vision of a world without collisions, his cruel rejection of Sam, and his ultimate embracing of the racist ideology pressured by society and his father. More importantly, I don't want the audience to consider this play as a diatribe or over-the-top denunciation of a political doctrine. Rather, my sole rationale to candidly present to them the theatre of humanity, of stories, of nostalgia, of relationships, of sweetness, of disappointments, of relationships, of the heart. Only when I succeed to do that, I believe it will inspire revelation, conversations, an in-depth investigation into the questions that Hally and Athol Fugard asked, and ultimately, urges for real change.

Although the apartheid came to an end in 1994, discrimination still exist all over the world in all kind of contexts - race, religion, sexuality, etc. The younger generation is witnessing an era of offensiveness, brutality, confusion, and discontentment. Similar to Hally, teenagers like myself are constantly wondering whether there will be "a man of magnitude" (18), a figure of greatness who will transform society, who will have an answer to the streams violence and injustices we are being exposed with. Following Fugard's philosophy, I want to make people like me the intended audience and through this show, to tell them that they can be that person of magnitude. I want them to watch Sam and Willie dance and to realize that the beautiful world that they described to Hally - one without any collisions in which accidents don't happen - is entirely achievable. But they don't have to be Charles Darwin or William Shakespeare to be able to go there. They just need to be kind, to take care of themselves and other people even though they feel that they can't, when questions and confusions just keep flooding into their heads, even when the pressure of attitudes and institutionalized prejudices that society taught us from the moment we are born tell us not to.

The Set

As I have mentioned earlier, the set will be pretty minimalistic with only essential properties, leaving room for the actors to move freely, especially for Willie and Sam to tease around with each other and for when they dance. The play will start with most chairs and tables stacked neatly right stage, leaving one set in the middle of the room where Hally will sit and converse with Sam and Willie. The two servants will at first practice dancing and joking around the center table which irritates Hally gradually, up to the point that Hally, infuriated by the servants' bantering but mostly by his father's imminent return, shouts at the two and moves the table downstage left, in front of the big window to do his homework.

- [...] *Please, Sam! Just leave me alone and let me get on with it. I'm not in the mood for games this afternoon [...]* (35)

This could leave even more room for the dance scene after that where Sam and Willie reenact the dance competition as the topic for Hally's homework.

- *You going to write about it, Master Hally?* (43)

Although most of the actions revolve around Hally and the center table set, other elements will not be abandoned as they are essential to the play.

- The floor of the set will be covered with black and white tiles to represent the common trend of the 1950s and symbolize the mixing of skin colors in the tea room.



Image 12

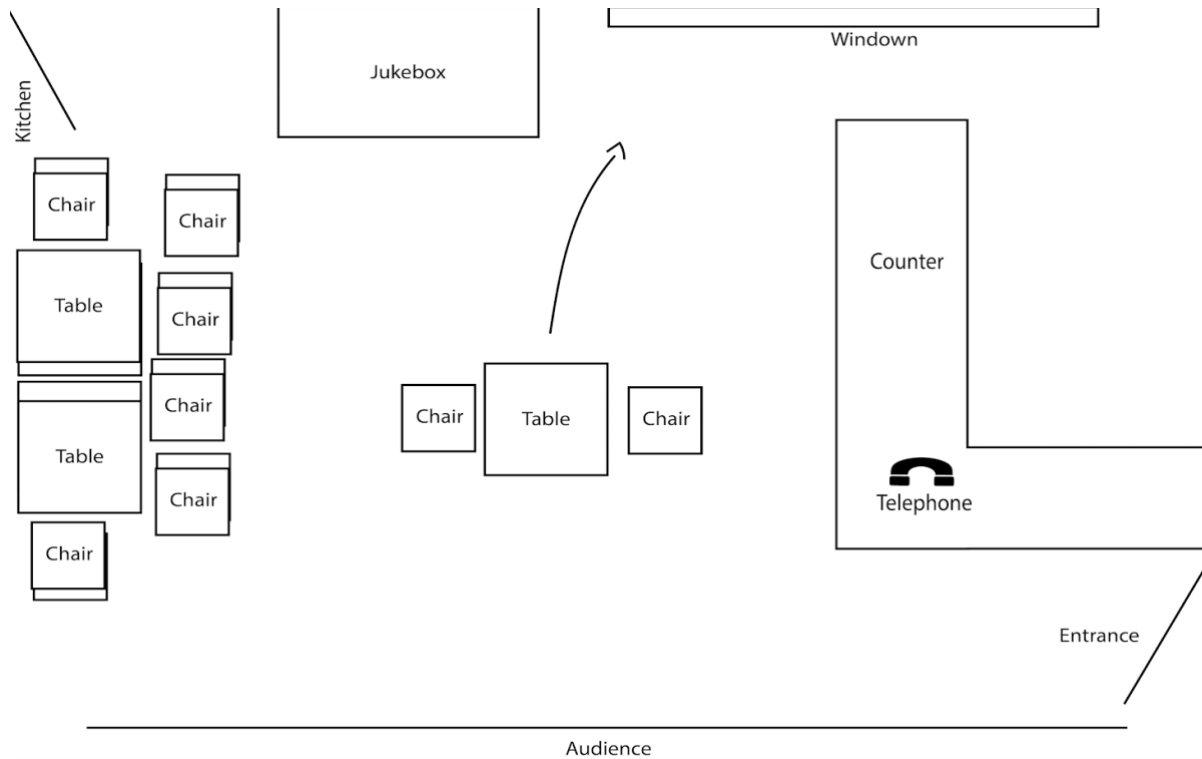


Image 13 – A sketch of the set created by me via Adobe Illustrator

- Willie will be near the jukebox as he is eager for some music in order to practice dancing.
- The kitchen door on the upstage right will also be frequently used for the cleaning equipment (bucket, rags, broom, etc.) to be taken out and put back in.
- The chairs stacked neatly on the right could also be easily utilized anytime by Willie or Sam when they want to sit near Hally and listen to his “lessons,” day experience, and stories from the past (such as the replacement for the bench in the kite story)
- The main entrance is put downstage left, closest to the audience, mainly for the purpose of focusing on Hally’s entering at the beginning and storming out at the end. The two moments are significant because they show the contrast between Hally’s temper and attitude when the show starts and ends (Doors must be built and angled to open up towards the audience, showing the actor’s physical form and facial expressions clearly).
- The same rationale is applied to the telephone. The audience must be able to spectate and hear closely Hally’s physical reactions and changes in tone of voice when talking to his mother on the phone.
- The window upstage left will be another location apart from the center table that Hally wanders to while taking a look at the world outside or reliving his memories in the past. The light transformation from outside of the window will symbolize Hally’s mood and become signals of whether Hally is dwelling in the past, or has been pulled back to reality.
- The window can be a large and covered with clear water frost film as shown in the above picture with a bar of transparent glass on the top to make sure lighting effects (sun beams, lightning, etc.) are shown clearly to the



Image 14

audience. This allows the audience to be able to see infrequent, little streams of rain water rolling down without being too distracted by it. This type of window film is also effective in letting light through. It will need decorations of letters (such as “St. George's Tea Room” outside) and be a little bit of age to fit the rundown building theme in the 1950s.



Image 15

- Regarding the rain/water stream system, an inexpensive, simple, and efficient water sprinkler can be made (tutorial “\$15 DIY Film” by Tom Antos via YouTube) to mimic rain water occasionally hitting the window from outside. The materials include a sprinkler and soaker hose which has holes along the tube that make the effect in the picture on the left, metal stands, a piece of wood and copper clad clamps to attach the hose to the horizontal bar and bring it up high. Both the hose and the piece of wood only need to be equal to the width of the window frame to avoid disturbing the rest of the set pieces. Underneath will just be tubs that catch the water. The amount of water dispensed will be regulated and not excessive enough for a drainage system to be necessary.

Properties

A list of most props can be written down from Fugard’s description of the opening scene and more can be found throughout the play:

- Tables and chairs have been cleared and are stacked on one side except for on which stands apart with a single chair. The model for these can be seen in the picture, on the right, of a lounge in Port Elizabeth in the 1950s.
- Knife, fork, spoon and side plate in anticipation of a simple meal
- A pile of comic books + Brandy for Hally’s father. Essential: The things that represent Hally’s father and his imminent return from the hospital. They make Hally feel disgusted. He expresses disapproval towards the comic books (11) and smashes the brandy bottle (51) - needs to be handled and rehearsed carefully so that pieces of glass won’t get into the actors’ eyes.
- A serving counter of:
 - A few stale cakes. Essential: Hally seems to really like these cakes as he eats them cheerfully while being mesmerized by Sam and Willie’s description of the dance competition.
 - Not a very impressive display of sweets, cigarettes, and cool drinks, etc. These have the potential to be swiped down violently to the floor by Hally’s uncontrollable fury at the end. Things such as dishes and bowls must not be made of glass/breakable materials. Light stainless steel can be the replacement.
 - A few cardboard advertising handouts of Badnury’s Chocolate and Coca-Cola. These can be hung on the left wall or put on a small shelf on the counter.



Image 16

- A blackboard on which “an untrained hand” (3) has chalked up the prices of Tea, Coffee, Scones, Milkshakes with all flavors, and cool drinks
- A few sad ferns in pots
- A telephone. Essential: The telephone is where Hally says most of his monologues, which are often pretty extensive especially towards the ending scenes. He expresses his emotions through the holding of the receiver: fidgeting while nervous, tightly gripping while worry, shaking and twitching while angry, etc.
- An old-style jukebox + Coins for Willie
- Towels + Bowl of soup that Sam will serve for Hally after he enters
- (Optional) Maybe some posters Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, and Count Basie. They would add a little taste to the wall decoration and clarification for those who are not familiar with them at first like me.
- Textbooks in Hally’s backpack (Sam took out “Modern Graded Mathematics for Standards Nine and Ten”) + Papers for homework. Essential: These show the bulk of Hally’s personality, his views on school and education through the way he holds and treats them. He tears his homework paper apart in the ending scene (50).
- Cleaning equipment

Color, Lighting, and Sound



Image 17 – A color palette created by me via Adobe Color Wheel

For this production, I want to pursue a dark blue and, general earth-toned colors with traditional yellow light. As I have discussed in section II, the direction of colors and lighting will be of a rather dim and moody one throughout the play, with dark red/violet (#800617) as the walls’ paint, brown (#843700) as the general color of furnitures, warm yellow light (#E6C00B) for sunlight, and the dark ocean blues are for the coats and the storm outside the window. This general palette creates a balance of different tones and moods, representing the variety of sentiments the audience will experience throughout the play.

Regular lighting will be quite simple and universal from beginning to end. Some objectives to achieve include always keeping the actors’ faces well-lit for facial expressions and finding a balance between the dingy and dramatic mood in serious scenes and the luminous (not overly bright) atmosphere for dreamy and joyful moments. There are also important elements that require extra attention and practice for lighting such as the effects behind the window, the beams of sunlight during the kite scene, flashes of lightning for the storm and transformation from sunlight to dark blue (from the kite scene to when Hally’s mother calls, pages 28 to 32). No special lighting (i.e. spotlights) will be needed for monologues and most flashbacks because they are tied closely to the conversations. Light effects are used in the kite scene and the dance competition because those are when the characters actually get up to reenact, perform, and interact.



Images 18 and 19 – Elements of light bulbs that I want to include in the set design



Image 20

For Sam and Willie's re-enactment of the dance competition, I want to incorporate a few more sophisticated elements such as blue gel filtered lights and gobos. I consider this scene to be one of the most significant moments in "*Master Harold*"... *and the Boys* as it symbolize the characters' dream of a better world, a "beautiful one in which accidents don't happen" (45). Through the scene, we can also witness Hally's evident temptation and burning desire for an improvement in life. To him, this scene is cheerful, fascinating and mesmerizing than anything he's seen before. My goal is to retain that feelings for the audience to an extent. The ambience I want to achieve is similar to

the effect of the above picture, although its intensity and brightness will be toned down to create a serene and relaxed effect for the spectators' eyes. A gobo is a round metal or glass disc with an image or shape etched in it which can be projected by inserting the gobo into a profile lantern ("Lighting Effects"). Gobos can be used to create beautiful patterns on the floor; and when combined with animation disks, they can emit moving patterns and provide a sense of sophistication and movement to the scene.



Image 21, 22, 23, and 24 – From left to right – An example of the desired effect; Collection of B size gobos made by DHA Lighting; Holder to metal gobos; Animation disks

Besides sound effects such as telephone rings, raindrops, and thunder which enhance the "shocking moments" during the play, I want the music used to have the same impact as well. For pre-show music, I chose the instrumental version of *Thanks Heaven for Little Girls* by Maurice Chevalier due to the light-hearted, cheery, and relaxing tone that it sets before the show starts. It will then shift into the next song with which Fugard starts the script - Thomas Wayne and the DeLons' *Scandalizing My Name* - as the play starts, showing Willie working and humming to the tune. The American jazz pianist and composer Count Basie was mentioned by Willie when he wants to practice dancing. For this reason, *Dance of the Gremlins* and *Swingin' the Blues* orchestra medley from Count Basie in 1941 will be played during the dance contest scene. The jazz music which features fast-paced tunes, as well as elegant piano, is perfect for allowing Willie and Sam to demonstrate both quickstep and slow foxtrot dance for Hally. For the ultimate dance by Willie and Sam at the end, there will be *Little Man, You've Had a Busy Day* covered by Sarah Vaughan and Count Basie to conclude the show.

Characters and their Costumes

Although the characters' portrayals and intentions have been discussed extensively in the brainstorming section, I will talk about the essential aspects of each character and their costumes.

Sam is a black man who is “two scores and five” (45 years old). In the script, Fugard describes him and Willie as wearing the classic white coat of a waiter. Willie calls him by “Boet Sam” which endearingly means “Brother Sam.” Therefore, his attitude, saying, and teasing towards Willie must come from a good intention that not only elevates the scene but also pushes Willie to a better place (i.e. dance practice, relationship advice). Sam is clearly the more seasoned dancer than Willie. He is substantially encouraging and supportive to both Willie and Hally. He might not have the academic knowledge bulk of Hally, but regarding life, Sam is the wisest and most experienced in the room. He shows no resentment or irritation towards Hally even when the young boy is being disrespectful. He understands Hally. He understands the youth of South Africa, and although he somewhat replaces the father figure that Hally needs (asking about school, joking, telling stories, etc.), he upholds the system and the master-servant relationship. Sam is also very inquisitive and keen on learning from Hally despite his struggles with words and pronunciations.



Image 25

Willie is around the same age as Sam. Although also working as a waiter in the tea room, his costumes for this show will be a little sloppier and stained as a result of frequent cleaning and scrubbing the floor. He has his sleeves and trousers rolled up also for the purpose of this job. Willie is aware of his limitations and intellectual capability, and although he’s slightly looked down upon by the other two in the room, he never talks about or shows concerns about it. Willie is the typical man of South African, black culture. He’s determined and nervous about the Ballroom Dancing Championships that would take place in New Brighton in two weeks. He abuses his girlfriends. Willie represents the treatment that women in South Africa received during the 1950s. Both black women in traditional societies and white women in settler society were considered to be subordinate to men who took all the major decisions in the population at large and within the home (“History of Women’s”). Athol Fugard also wants to change this by having Willie promises to reconcile with Hilda at the end of the play.

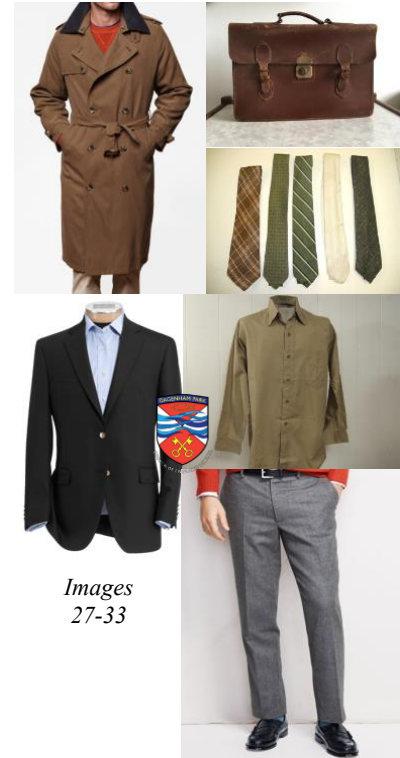


Image 26 – Sahr Ngaujah as Willie in a “Master Harold”... production, 2016

Hally is a seventeen-year-old white boy who is a close friend with the servants since his childhood. In the beginning, Hally enters from the storm outside with a wet raincoat and carrying his school case. He has just finished school. South Africa school uniforms, as well as the garments, were strongly influenced by British school uniforms (“South Africa”). Hally will be wearing a golden-brown khaki shirt with a tie, covered by a black blazer with a school badge on the left chest. For the lower half, he will be wearing gray flannel trousers and black shoes. Fugard depicts his clothes as “neglected and untidy” (Fugard 10). His tie will be loosened up; his shirt is partially unbuttoned; his trousers are in need of ironing; his shoes are dirty from the rain outside. He doesn’t like his father but gets accustomed to pretending that he does, especially to his mother. Sam and Willie are the only people that Hally can speak truthfully to. Whenever someone mentions his dad, Hally’s mood and attitude are immediately worsened, thus the anger towards the servants. He detests every physical and memorial thing that reminds him of his father: to the comic books, he called them “rubbish” and “mental pollution”; and the brandy bottle evokes images of his alcoholic father and gets smashed to the ground by Hally right before the play ends. Moreover, Hally’s unconsciously internalized his father’s racism which manifests itself in his disrespectful treatments of Sam and Willie. Hally becomes a subordinate before his father, even after he mocks his mother for doing so.

Hally loathes school (except for some interesting parts) and the social system in current South Africa. He represents the hope of Athol Fugard at the time for reforms and revolutionary changes. He's extremely knowledgeable in history, literature, and historical figures that he considers to be a "man of magnitude." He seems to hate learning but insists on enlightening Sam with his knowledge, and enjoys it when "his pupil" remember the educational content. These are moments that Hally gets enthusiastic, cheery, sweet, arrogant, and intelligent.

Most of the sentiments I want the audience to feel come from Hally. I want the experience to be similar to mine when I first read the script: happy, hopeful, enraged, disappointed, calmed, motivated, shocked, appalled, entertained. Hally needs to physically embody all of those things. Since he's still an impressionable, young boy under a lot of pressure, feelings of inexperience and negativity will radiate more than those of positivity. However, I want the audience to fully understand his circumstances, his transformations, his obstacles in order to empathize for him. In spite of his setbacks, Hally's essentially a warm, smart, insightful, and compassionate person. My biggest objective for Hally's portrayal is to clearly show his bright side, his pain, his constant, internal struggles to switch opposite personalities, etc. physically and vocally.



IV. STAGING TWO MOMENTS OF THE PLAY

1. Moment 1 (The Kite scene, pg. 28 to 32)

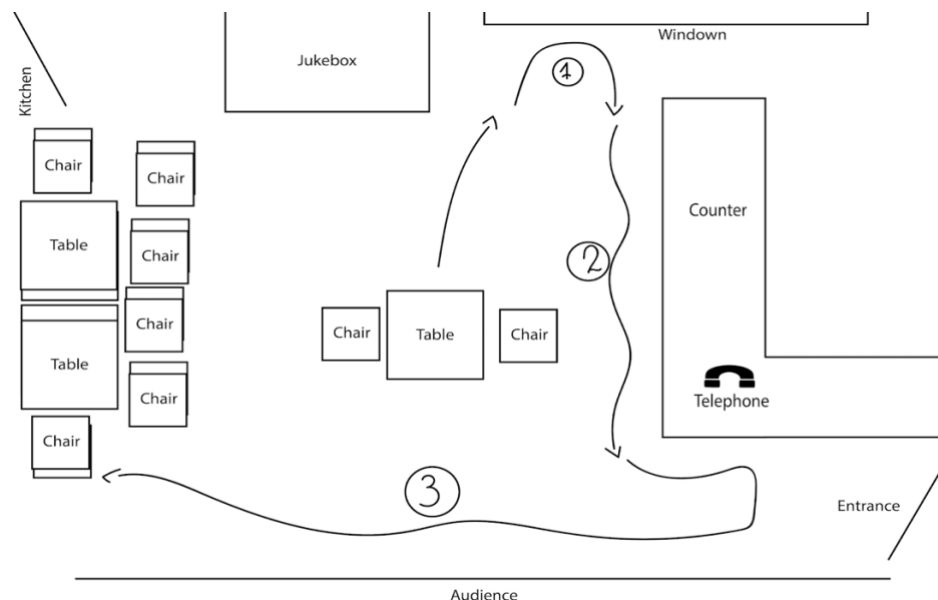


Image 34 – Illustrated blocking created by me via Adobe Illustrator

The first moment I choose to focus on is taken from the Kite scene where Hally and Sam re-enact a lovely memory when Hally was a little boy (see Appendix for the script and annotations). This scene is significant because it shows how the South African system and stereotypes impose shame on an individual at a young age. Sunlight effects behind the window will shift in immediately when Hally says "It started off looking like another of those useless nothing-to-do afternoons" (Fugard 28). These will make a signal for a mood change in the audience, from the dim and murky tone to an atmosphere full of joy and brightness. The aura of the stage is Hally's memories, partly there, partly surreal. He first wanders to the window to observe the outside, fully immersing himself into the narrative of his story. His steps are light and delicate, as he is no longer a teenager, but a child with his trousers rolled up to mimic the short trousers he wore when he was seven. Turning around and heading towards the audience, Hally touches and caresses the counter and the objects on it not as the way that they are, but rather what he imagines them to be. He treats his surroundings like he's moving in his old house, through the corridors that led to Sam and Willie's room. He and Sam both enjoy the experience. Reaching downstage left, next to the telephone is where Hally would converse to the Sam in the past while re-telling his feelings about the kite situation. Standing there will make his voice much louder and accessible for the audience, as well as allow them to see his body language and facial expressions clearly, thus better delivery and impact.

I mean, seriously, what the hell does a black man know about flying a kite? I'll be honest with you, Sam, I had no hopes for it. [...] In fact, I was shit-scared that we were going to make fools of ourselves. (29)

- Although talking about stereotypes and racism, Hally must not show signs of ill will, but rather just the innocence of a little boy who was not sophisticated enough to comprehend fully the weight society imposed on him. This moment must inform the audience that during the 1950s, to have a friendship with someone of a different race generally brought discrimination and suspicion upon the individuals, even though Hally was just a little boy. This cultural phenomenon emerges

Image 36 – My annotations on the script – Page 30-31

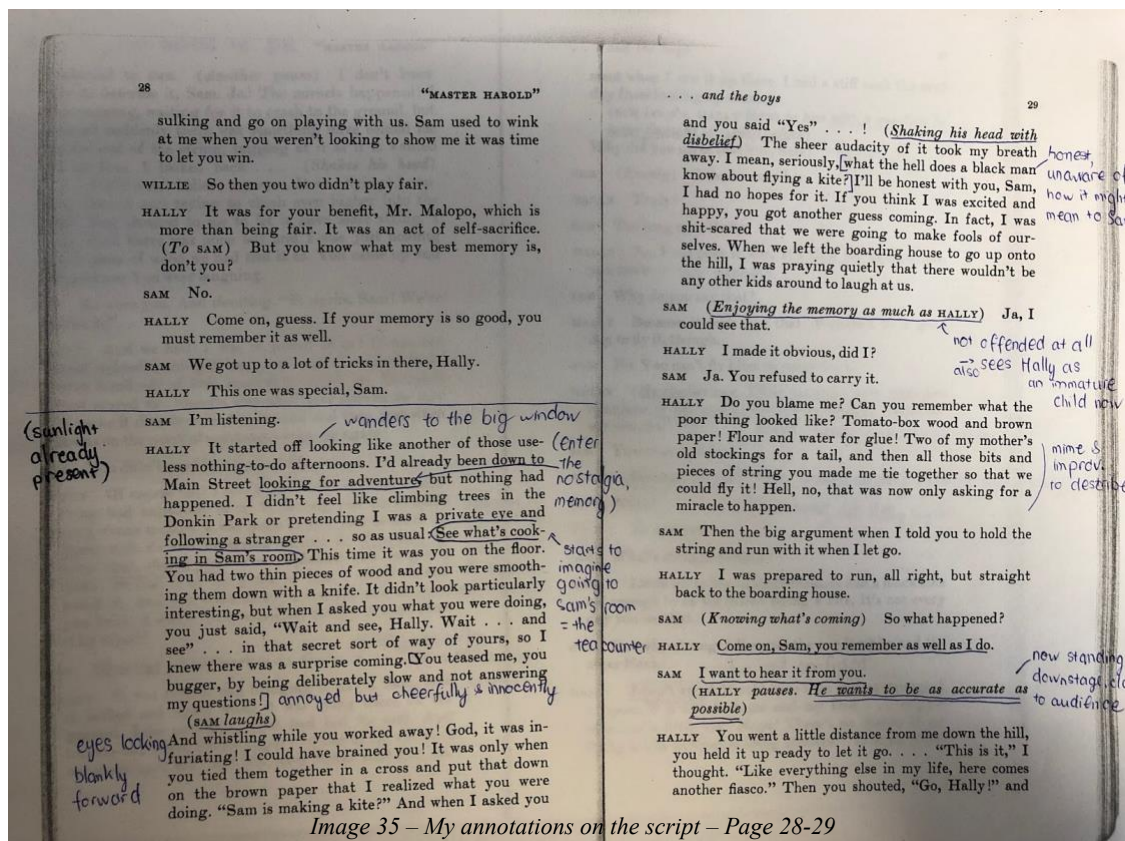


Image 35 – My annotations on the script – Page 28-29

throughout the play with the relationship between Hally and the servants. However, younger Hally is not aware of it. The little boy's attitude is not as intimate to the servants as the older Hally, but it's not at all complicated like it is now either. Hally in the kite story cheerfully and carelessly continues to act out the story, moving across to the downstage right to illustrate Sam

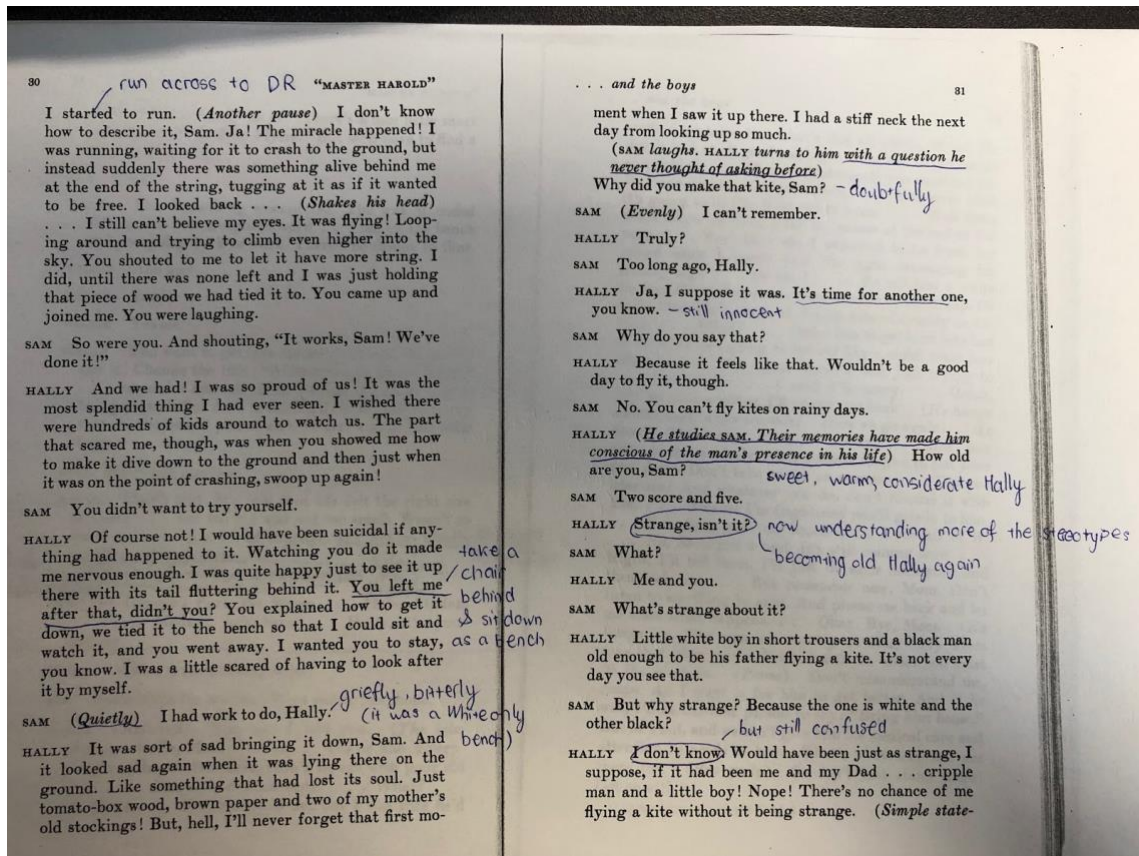


Image 36 – My annotations on the script – Page 30-31

flying the kite, and then taking a chair from the stacked ones as the bench from the narrative to sit down and look at the sky.

Why did you make that kite, Sam? (31)

- This is the moment where Hally starts to question his own childhood's happiness, clearly showing doubts and stereotypes of contemporary South Africa. The imaginary kite has just been brought down, so has the sunlight effect to represent sunset in the late afternoon, so has the ambiance of the whole stage, and so has the mood of the audience. Hally turns to Sam with the above question - a question he never thought of asking before. Hally instantly grows a little older. He becomes a little more tired - bent back, slight frowns, nervous eyes, fidgeting fingers. These physical representations deliver a signal to the audience to inform them that an internal transition has occurred.

It's got so bloody complicated since then. (32)

- This is the line Hally says before the telephone rings and the sunlight effects end, followed by the sudden flash of lightning and thunder at the window. This might come across as a shocking factor for some spectators, but unexpected and right-in-the-face transitions are what intensify the atmosphere and make people focus even harder to the details of the characters. Prior to this, Hally says the line above with a great level of bitterness and fury, almost returning to his seventeen-

year-old teenager self. When the phone rings and as Sam picks it up, Hally is wrecked with anxiety and anticipation for what his mother has to say on the phone. He becomes more uptight, jittery, hot-tempered, distressed. All signs of the Hally in the kite story has disappeared.

2. Moment 2 (Hally's conflict bursts out, pg. 49 to 51)

I choose to discuss more on this scene because of its significance as the fallout of Hally's conversation with his mother knowing that his father will come home soon (see Appendix for the script and annotations). The objective is to contrast it as much as possible against the beautiful and mesmerizing scene where Sam and Willie re-enact the ballroom dance championship. The room becomes dark and grim again. Rain falls harder outside with more frequent flashes of lightning and roaring thunder (Remember that the purpose is not to distract the audience from the actions on stage, but rather to blend all the internal and external elements together, setting up the dramatic and intense mood for the audience).

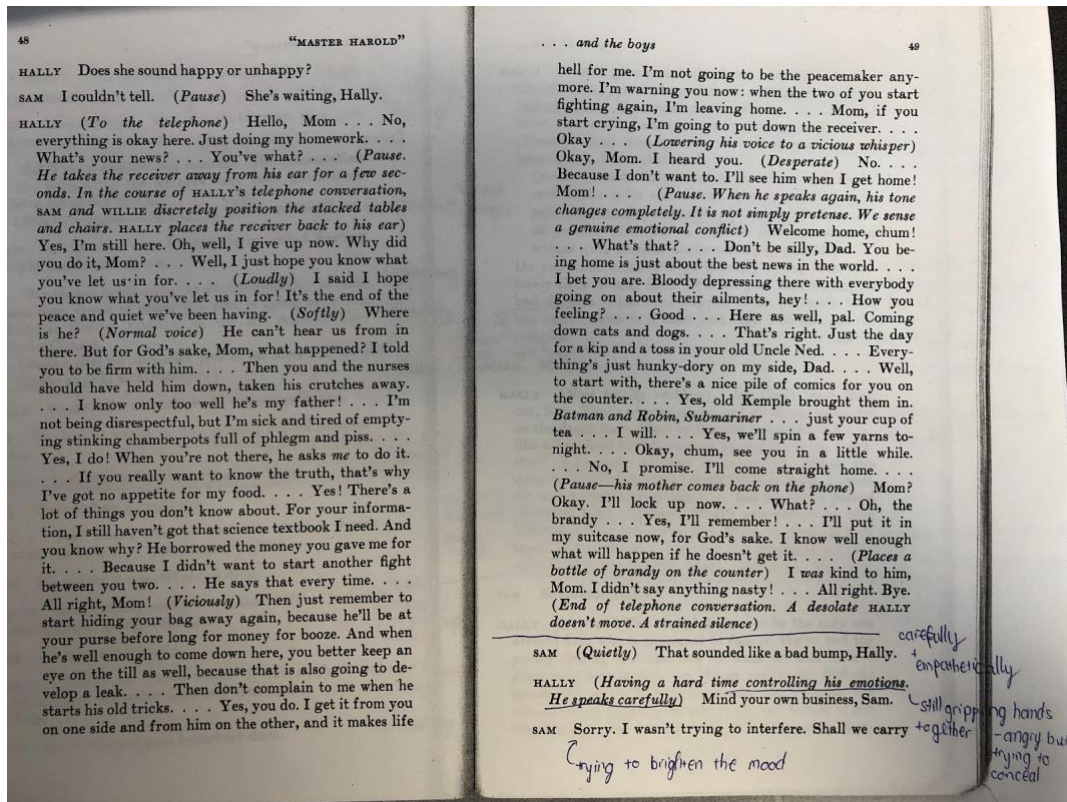


Image 37 – My annotations on the script – Page 49

The scene starts with Sam trying to alleviate the phone call in which Hally does his absolute hardest to suppress his true emotions so that he can talk "normally" to his father. Hally snapped Sam with the line "My you own business, Sam" (49). His entire body is shivering. He is consciously making a choice whether to burst his emotions out or to conceal it just like he always does. His hands are gripped to each other firmly. His eyes twitch as his brain goes through a series of images of how terrible his life is going to be once father comes home. Hally is extremely ashamed. He abhors his father. He abhors himself for pretending to like his father.

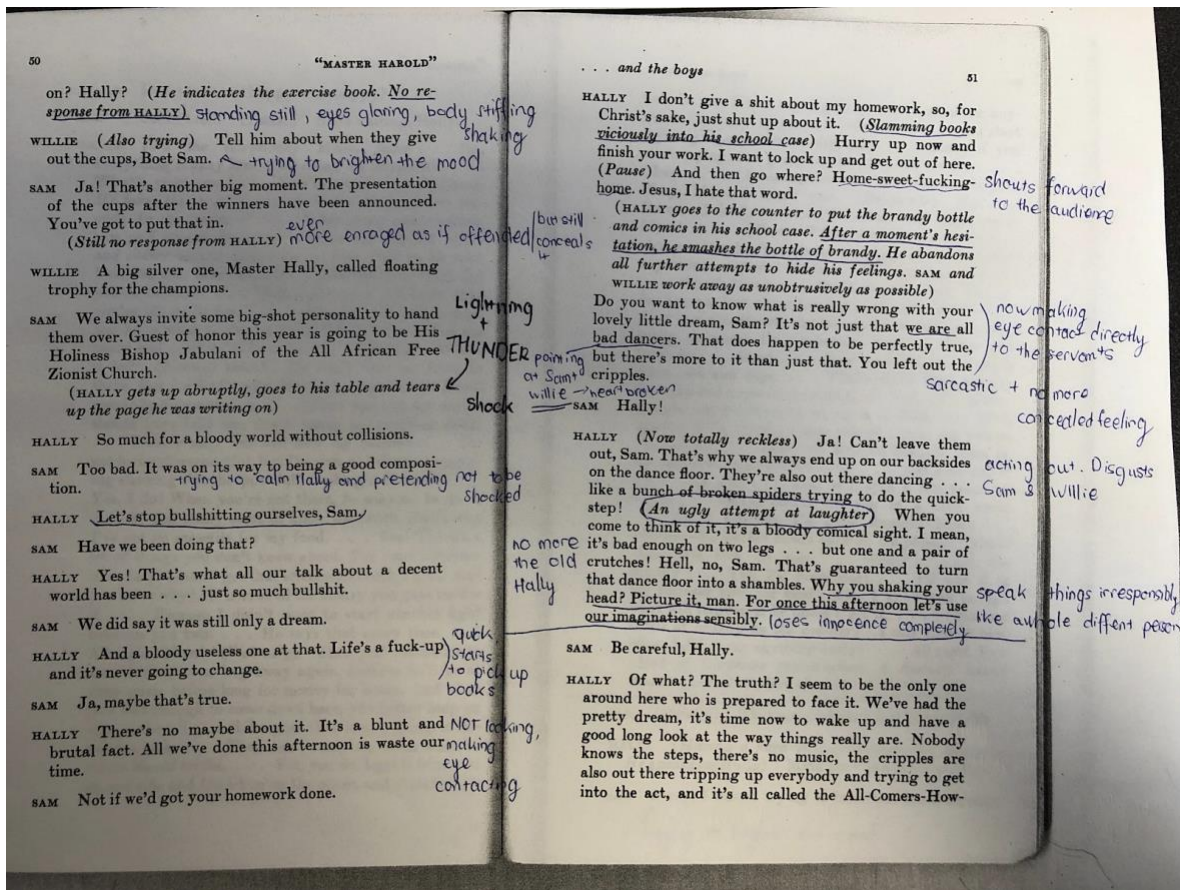


Image 38 – My annotations on the script – Page 50-51

So much for a bloody world without collisions. (50)

- Hally says this line as he abruptly gets up, goes to the table next to the window and tears up the page he was writing on about the dance competition. I want the audience's first reaction to be outrage. Hally has to carry out his actions like he absolutely means it. He means to enrage the servants who just mean good for him. He means to disrespect and to annihilate all faith in humanity and positivity. Hally's entire physical representation is now just totally uptight like his body would literally burst when something is said.
- Secondly, I want the audience to sympathize for Hally as they slowly realize his behaviors and attitudes expresses the struggle to control emotions as a young, impressionable, angst-ridden teenage boy. I want them to see that Hally was at fault directing his anger towards the wrong people - those who just mean good for him. I want the scene to become an accusation of Hally, of society, but also a justification for his actions. I want to make a revelation that Hally's perspective stems from a much bigger, grander source (society and authority, hence the storm representation outside the window that symbolizes an external, impactful factor that Hally cannot control) than merely teenage angst. He is filled with disappointment from his family and disillusionment for the current state of his life which he has no ability to change. Therefore, there comes the need to swipe away this feeling of self-insignificance; there comes the need to get mad at supposedly inferior people in the room, Willie and Sam.