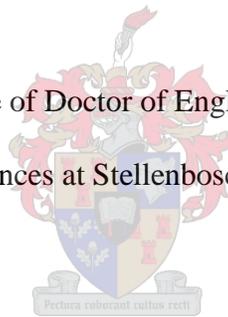


# **Institutionalised Homosexuality in South Africa: Queering Same-Sex Desire**

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Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University



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## **DECLARATION**

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08 June 2015

### **Abstract**

This dissertation looks at South African literary and cultural representations of male homosexual desire from 1948 to 2013. It employs Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics/biopower and Judith Butler's heterosexual matrix amongst others to engage with South African literary and cultural representations of male homosexuality. The country is seen to associate homosexuality with a similar sense of pathology as was the trend in the colonial centre. Later, as the continent comes to rely less on Western frameworks of self-definition there is an indigenisation of these Western identities as they rub up against conservative patriarchy and homophobia. I analyse texts set in the various institutions that form/ed the foundation of the modern capitalist state that is South Africa. They reflect my argument that in a society geared at institutionalising (white) heteronormativity there was/is still space for a queering of self and other which in turn allows moments of intimacy and transgressive dissidence. The homosexual man and his interplay with the heteronormative family, army, schools and prisons reflect the racist and gendered nature of South African society and the problematic way in which femininity has become conflated with a state of subjection. Similarly, homosexuality is seen to become a generative site where performances of masculinity and gender can be queered.

### Opsomming

Hierdie proefskrif kyk na Suid-Afrikaanse literêre en kulturele uitbeeldings van manlike homoseksuele begeerte vanaf 1948 tot 2013. Dit werk met Michel Foucault se konsep van biopolitiek/biomag en Judith Butler se konsep van die “heterosexual matrix” as 'n lens waardeur die Suid-Afrikaner literêre en kulturele konstruksie/s van homoseksualiteit gelees kan word. Homoseksualiteit word in die land geassosieer met 'n gevoel van patologie soos die tendens was in die koloniale sentrum. Later, wanneer die vasteland minder op Westelike raamwerke van self-definisie staatmaak is daar 'n verinheemsing van hierdie Westelike identiteite soos hulle wryg teen konserwatiewe patriargie en homofobie. Ek bespreek tekste wat wys hoe biopolitiek die basis van Suid Afrika as moderne kapitalistiese staat vorm. Die tekste weerspieël my oogpunt dat in 'n samelewing gerig op die institusionalisering van (wit) heteronormatieweiteit daar nog steeds ruimte is vir 'n “queering” van die self en die ander wat op sy beurt oomblikke van intimiteit en grensoorskryding bewerkstelling. Die homoseksuele man en sy wisselwerking met die heteronormatiewe familie, weermag, skole en tronke weerspieël die rassistiese en geslagtelike aard van die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing asook die problematiese manier waarop vroulikheid verwar geword het met 'n toestand van onderdanigheid. Net so kan homoseksualiteit gesien word om 'n generatiewe terrein waar vertonings van manlikheid en geslag “queered” kan word.

## **Acknowledgements**

I thank my family for your unconditional love and acceptance. I am happy and blessed to have been shaped and loved by you.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### *Overview:*

As Andrew Tucker, in *Queer Visibilities, Space, Identity and Interaction in Cape Town* (2009) notes, South Africa took a giant step forward with regard to ensuring equality for homosexuals<sup>1</sup> in South African society when in 2006

[i]t decided to grant same-sex couples the right to marry [...] [and thereby] position [itself] as the most progressive country on the entire continent. [...] In just one and a half decades the country has gone from persecuting and arresting individuals with same-sex desire, to allowing them to adopt children and marry. (Tucker 1)

The reasons as to why South Africa is the first post-colonial state, which during and post transitioning, chose to cast itself as a model of human rights has been a debate amongst academics and critics for quite a number of years. Gerald Kraak in “Homosexuality and the South African Left: The Ambiguities of Exile” (2005) suggests, “the notion of gay equality passed so smoothly into the constitution [primarily due to the fact that the] ANC elite ha[d] a utopian social progressive ideology, influenced largely by the social-democratic movements in the countries that supported it during its struggle [against apartheid]” (119). Examples of these are Australia, Holland, Sweden, Canada and Britain. It is thus not surprising that when the South African parliament passed the Civil Unions Act of 2006 it was done by a majority ANC - led vote with most of the smaller opposition parties (examples being the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘homosexual’ was first coined in 1868 by Károly Mária Kertbeny. The term refers to people with same-sex attractions regardless of gender and has been criticised as pathologising. I would like to note to the reader that I am cognizant of the fact that the term ‘homosexuality’ seeks to include women’s sexual attraction to other women. The nature of my study grounds it in representations of male same-sex desire. This has led to my use of the male pronoun when discussing notions around ‘homosexuality’ and or same-sex desire. This was done for readability and clarity as the texts limited the claims I could make (if any) of female same-sex desire and its representation in South African cultural and literary texts.

African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) and the Independent Democrats (ID)) opposing the bill. It is Kraak's opinion that whilst in exile:

[K]ey South African leaders came to understand and accept – and in the case of women, benefit from - the sexual liberation movement. Foremost among these were Frene Ginwala, [then] Speaker of Parliament; Albie Sachs, [at that time] a judge on the Constitutional Court; Kader Asmal, [then] Minister of Education; and Thabo Mbeki himself, South Africa's second democratically elected President. (Kraak 119)

Kraak's account underplays the role played by gay rights activists inside the country under apartheid, as well as the struggle ideals of other movements in the liberation struggle. His point though does highlight the disconnection between the ideals of freedom and equality of the founding political elite of the new South Africa and the constitution of South Africa, and the blatant homophobia of 80-85 % of the country's citizens that directly leads, for example, to the murder and rape of lesbians in South African townships (Robert and Reddy, "Pride and Prejudice" 10).

Neville Hoad connects the passing of the Civil Union Act and South Africa's relative tolerance to the long history of oppression in the country and its envisioned future as a democratic, multicultural, republic:

Given a population enormously sensitive to questions of discrimination and with a vast majority having the experience of oppression vivid in their memories, a national culture with an allegiance to concepts of equality is being forged in South Africa. Gays and lesbians now almost find themselves part of this new South African hegemony. (*African Intimacies* 80)

Despite shedding light on the obvious concerns connected to acts of homophobia in South Africa as well as the rest of the continent, the work of Hoad and others offers us new ways of engaging with sexuality in South Africa and Africa at large. This is particularly true with regard to the ways in which people construct and mediate these sexualities in our accounts of them. In his analysis of

the issue Hoad illustrates this trend in an effective manner when he argues that “‘homosexuality’ is one of the many imaginary contents, fantasies, or significations (sometimes negatively, sometimes not) that circulate in the production of African sovereignties and identities in their representations by Africans and others” (xvi). His construction of homosexuality draws on a view of globalization and capitalism as a strongly influential means through which Western models of behaviour and identities are enforced and appropriated in various and often times culturally opposed non-Western societies. These ‘enforced appropriations’ lead to inevitable tensions and crises.

In 2012 Brenna Munro published her inspiring work *South Africa and the Dream of Love to Come: Queer Sexuality and the Struggle for Freedom*. The text is significant to one’s understanding of the way in which male homosexuality has come to be represented in South African literature and successfully opens up texts that are not normally considered to be part of the queer canon to a queered reading. By “placing this minor strand in South African life and letters at the centre of analysis [she] helps us see that interlinked questions of sexuality, gender and race have long been a crucial component in South Africa’s vexed post-imperial history” (xi). In addressing the question as to why South Africa chose to cast itself as a beacon of rainbow nationalism she notes that:

The question of gay rights was an element in many narratives in the “transitional” public culture from which this constitution was forged and with it engaged, and thus played an integral yet often overlooked role in producing the new imaginary of the “rainbow nation” – a phrase that encodes the intersection of multiracialism and gay rights. [...] The deployment of the figure of the gay person as a symbol of South Africa’s democratic modernity is [...] a radical departure from the traditional, heteronormative familial iconography of nationhood [...]. (vii-viii)

Munro’s research convincingly establishes that during “the years of escalated struggle against apartheid, from 1960s to the 1990s [...] [m]ale homosexuality began to take shape as a legible

concept in South African writing [...] often standing for the perversity of apartheid – but also sometimes fashioned as a sign of resistance to the mores of an authoritarian regime that attempted to regulate everyone’s sexuality in the name of racial purity” (viii). Her work provides much needed insight into the representation of male homosexuality by black writers at the time and resonates with my view that apartheid South Africa is most legible through its institutions<sup>2</sup> that were geared to perpetuating a capitalist system based on what Foucault terms bio-politics. Many of these writers were also political prisoners and thus draw on their experiences in notorious prisons like Robben Island and Victor Verster Prison (now Drakenstein Correctional Centre). In this context male same-sex desire becomes a narrative strand that is embedded in the realistic representations of suffering in prison and elsewhere in an attempt to document and bring awareness to the horror that was the apartheid regime.

Munro’s argument that “[t]he idea of embracing gay rights made people feel modern, magnanimous, and uniquely South African – at least for a while” (ix) is strongly supported by my research, and I want to recognise her view that “[g]ay identity is, however, an inherently ambivalent symbol for nationalism, because it is so deeply associated with cosmopolitan modernity” (ix). As she notes:

While “being gay” or “being lesbian” was reimagined in the 1990s as distinctly South African, the very “newness” that made these sexualities apt symbols for a transformed nation is also easily understood as “foreign” – and, in this context, as “un-African”. Indeed, a Western-style gay identity is often understood in the global South through the formula “gay equals modernity equals capitalism,” and as South Africa’s re-entrance into the

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<sup>2</sup> The notion of institutions and their influence in shaping configurations of homoerotic desire in South African imaginaries lies at the heart of this discussion. At the same time, it should be noted that this focus limited the texts available for discussion which in turn had various limiting effects on the study. One of the questions that arose was what does the prioritisation of institutionalisation obscure in the study? Another is why these texts and not others? I acknowledge these concerns and suggest the limitation of the format of a Ph.D. dissertation as a reason as to why many texts were excluded and other not engaged. I chose those texts that singularly serve to illustrate variation in the use of the same theme which meant that narratives set outside of the limitations of the “institutions” under discussion here have been excluded.

global economy has not brought about prosperity for the majority of the nation's citizens, homophobic violence has been on the rise. (ix)

Despite the entrenched homophobia same-sex desire was faced with in the country, the South African narrative suggests a keen engagement with prison as a space of restrictive transgressions. In the first two chapters of *South Africa and the Dream of Love to Come* (2012) Munro discusses what she identifies as two distinct but interrelated “fraternities” that developed amongst black and white men in the country. Munro’s first chapter marks prison writing as “an important location for the production of ideas about homosexuality” (xxxvi), an observation further affirmed by the fact that the prison functions as a dominant theme in gay erotica. As Munro shows, “‘comradeship’ [...] is both a mode of collective resistance and a form of attachment between men. As such, it is often riven with anxieties about homosexuality, haunted by sexual confusion and trauma” (xxxvi). Along with this fraternity of black masculinity, “male antiapartheid prison writing [...] constructed [homosexuality] as the antithesis of comradesly commitment[;] [...] yet the concept of discipline which was so central to surviving prison with dignity, itself paradoxically encoded the fear that comradeship could convert into love and sex” (45). Munro chooses to engage with prison writing because of the established importance of the genre as a form of freedom writing and a means of political resistance and instruction. Her work engages succinctly with a wide range of genres in which homosexuality is often veiled or written off in a few sentences, a paragraph at most. At the same time it highlights the need for the encouragement and development of the current archive so as to gain broader insight into the polemic experience of homosexuality in South Africa. As Munro notes:

South African prison memoirs from the 1960s to the 1990s form a web of interconnected personages and incidents [...] For this intimate public sphere of activists who had been through similar experiences, read each other’s accounts, and were writing with each other in mind, and for the larger

reading public beyond, assumptions about issues such as sexuality very much became “common sense”. (12)

In strong opposition to the comradeship of the prison, Munro identifies the development of a ‘brotherhood’ of whiteness that was encouraged and established amongst white men during this period. She explores this notion that white masculinity under apartheid simultaneously discouraged and attempted to correct/eradicate homosexuality, whilst at the same time encouraging homosocial and homoerotic encounters through which its abuse is often sexualised. An example of this is the common strand in white male homosexually themes writing where the same-sex isolation of the military and the boarding school is often used to illustrate homoerotic trends of abuse suffered by the characters at the hands of their peers. Munro effectively illustrates how the “[t]he fraternity of antiapartheid prison “comradeship” had an odd mirror in the white “brotherhood” of the South African apartheid military” (81) when she notes how

[y]oung white men were conscripted into this fraternity to fight in the regional border wars. [...] The coercive military brotherhood was one that constructed an ideal masculinity in contradiction not just to women on the “home front” but also to the figure of the “moffie”. (Munro 81)

Male homosexuality becomes marked as a danger to white male patriarchal dominance in the country in that the act in itself became deemed as unnatural or sinful and deviant to heterosexual whiteness. This is further compounded by the fact that gay men became increasingly involved in the resistance campaigns in the country. As Munro highlights in her reflection on white movements in opposition to apartheid in the 1980s, “gay men participated [in opposing] conscription and [criticising] the authoritarian culture of apartheid as a whole, linking the enforcement of normative masculinity and inculcation of racist ideas within the family to the mandatory ideological and gender conformity of the army” (81).

My aim here is to contribute to Munro's academic contribution, as well as the socio-political discussion concerned with the construction of homosexual identities as un-African in relation to that which is normal African (hetero)sexuality. The problematic issue regarding the application of the terms "gay", "lesbian", "homosexual" and "heterosexual" to the African context is an issue of hot debate in the African academy. Subsumed under the broader term "queer", these political identities based on sexual preference have been broadened to include those who do not adhere to popular performances of gender or biological sex. Author Pumla Dineo Gqola, in *Queer Africa: New and Collected Fiction* (2014) edited by Karen Martin and Makhosazana Xaba, succinctly summarises the concerns when she states:

While some use the label comfortably, others are worried about whether it adequately speaks usefully to contexts outside the geographical politics of its emergence. [...] Others use it selectively and carefully, as shorthand, or under erasure, depending on what political work they are invested in doing across temporalities and geographies. (2)

This concern with naming and categorisation reflects a tendency in the South African context for humiliation to occur through a dehumanising process of governmental naming. This is reflected in the ways in which the apartheid regime, as an extension of the colonial state, uses classification and naming as a means through which to deny humanity and citizenship. This is particularly obvious in the theoretical frameworks employed to engage with queer sexualities and identities in the South African academy and to some extent Africa at large. Within this context the other is made to assume these labels, and through applying them to the self and the other becomes inextricably linked to the perpetuation of the hierarchical structure that ensures social standing and capital within a discriminatory context.

The dehumanising qualities of categorization are taken to their full where a person is negated through the successful application of a marker that disqualifies him or her and traps the subject in an officially sanctioned identity that sits comfortably with a racist, hierarchical society. It is because of this established societal world view and rules that the divergent/queer becomes an outsider/other. The divergent is made to quickly recognize their political status as interloper, which connects their nonconformity directly to the political. In the South African [sub-Saharan] context, largely because of the absence of an affirmative lifestyle and public culture, there has been an “invisibilisation of homosexuality”<sup>3</sup>. This has led to the absence of common public corroboration to evoke when one is confronted with the criticism that there is little evidence of homosexuality in the sub-Saharan context. The historiography of homosexuality in South Africa allows for insight into a multicultural, modern development of sexual behaviour becoming political identity. I argue that this Western construction of homosexuality is strongly tied a politicisation of sexuality which constructs the homosexual as pathological to the rest of heteronormative society. These kinds of constructions have been and in some cases still are transmuted to Africa as African scholars are exposed to Western knowledge. At the same time there is anthropological, historical and legal documentation that even in the face of severe censorship and restriction a queer desire can be and has been imagined onto the same very landscape that seeks to erase it<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> See Epprecht's article “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe” (2006).

<sup>4</sup> Examples of studies that seek to establish evidence of ‘homosexuality’ in precolonial Africa are: Johnson, Cary Alan. "Hearing Voices: Unearthing Evidence of Homosexuality in Precolonial Africa." *The Greatest Taboo: Homosexuality in Black communities* (2001): 132-148; Isaacs, Gordon, and Brian McKendrick. *Male Homosexuality in South Africa: Identity Formation, Culture, and Crisis*. Oxford University Press, USA, 1992; Morgan, Ruth, and Saskia Wieringa. *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men, and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-sex Practices in Africa*. Jacana Media, 2005; Amadiume, Ifi. *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1987; and Murray, Stephen O., and Will Roscoe, eds. 1998 *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

My original study was undertaken from the point of view best expressed by Judith Raiskin in *Inverts and Hybrids: Lesbian Rewritings of Sexual and Racial Identities* (1994), who argues that “[t]he evolutionary development of the [...] homosexual offers [a] synthesis of contradictory powers. The ability to live with ambiguity and contradictions [allows] homosexual[s] to serve as mediators and translators” (61). Homosexual characters mediate and translate conceptions and constructions of identity that may reflect heteronormative expectations of self and other. South African authors’ representation of male homosexual characters allows for a window through which one is able to glimpse a range of constructions of homosexuality and masculinities in dominant South African culture/s and provide representations that belie the dehumanising labelling of homosexuality as un-African. Karen Martin and Makhosazana Xaba, in the preface to *Queer Africa*, address the particular usefulness of a study into literature that raises the complicated notions that influence constructions of gay narratives and gay identities when they note how

[t]he arts allow us to consider experiences radically different from our own in ways that other forms of representation [...] can’t. In imaginative space, dominant narratives hold less sway; possibilities we haven’t considered suggest themselves. We are confronted with our own prejudices and preconceptions. And we may discover in others our own unrecognised selves. (vii)

In the introduction to the same collection, Pumla Dineo Gqola broadens the usefulness of queer narratives in addressing the ways in which “ ‘queer’ [...] rubs up against ‘Africa’ ” (1). For her

the stories go beyond simply showing how it is possible to imagine queer expression on any landscape. It is not an additive, inclusive vision proposed here, but one that takes the queer imagination seriously as a lens through which to view the macro political and the intimate, always at the same time. (3)

My primary focus is on how South African literary texts reflect the ways in which the application of Western terminologies and political identities have influenced the South African conception of

what is homosexual, whilst at the same time looking at how South African dominant culture/s have influenced and appropriated these terms and political identities. This conception is seen to be illustrated in the representation of characters in works published in South Africa that engage with the pre-transitional, transitional and post-transitional experience of the male homosexual who is still very much in a moment of becoming in the country and the continent at large.

Mary McIntosh in “The Homosexual Role” (1968) argues that “[t]he creation of a specialized, despised and punished role of homosexual keeps the bulk of society pure in rather the same way the similar treatment of some kinds of criminal keeps the rest of society law-abiding” (reprinted in Plummer, *Making of the Modern Homosexual* (1981), 32). In South Africa, under its extended period of colonial control and to a large extent still today (2014), the need to categorise and label as a means to discriminate largely influences the construction of the human experience, particularly as a political subject. Michel Foucault’s notion around the importance of discourse/s to naming, specifying and monitoring sexualities marks a move “from [focussing on] what might be called ‘real world events’ to a preoccupation with the power-language spirals through which social life is constituted” (Plummer, *Making of the Modern Homosexual* 52). He allows for a reading of South African masculinities that constructs normalcy based on institutionalised notions of race, gender and sex and is seen, under apartheid, to be obsessed with policing any intersections. In a country which has eleven official languages, but that is mostly influenced by Western discourses, there is a particular institutionalisation of labels as a means by which to discriminate against others. A major concern raised by this enquiry is what contemporary narratives tell us about the intersections between the changing/persisting trajectories of the construction of identities of the homosexual on the one hand, and persistent/changing social formations along class, race, and gender lines, on the other. I suggest that an attempt to apply Western concepts to local

subjectivities and identities fails to recognize the impracticality of such an endeavour and to a large extent leads to the disruption of more nuanced local engagements with subjective experience, particularly with regard to men who have sex with men.

From this perspective, the use of the term queer as an overarching category that subsumes and includes, amongst others heterosexuality and homosexuality, is done here in full awareness of the worries Gqola (above) raises. To a large extent the effective application of these labels as a means to signal otherness/deviance from the norm forms part of the foundations of this discussion. The labelling of characters as pansy, moffie, wyfie, strange, etc. is shown to be a large influence on the way in which they will be responded to by society. I would thus like the reader to note that the terms referring to a sexual performance-related identity and gender are used here always in the awareness that these categories are not stable and are under constant contestation. I have used the various terms (same-sex desire, male homosexual, gay, queer, moffie) in such a way as to best describe the general meaning associated with the setting being discussed.

South Africa's particularly structured history of inequality is directly linked to colonialism and apartheid, systems based on racial segregation and inequality. Although the country shares this heritage with other colonial states where racism had become institutionalised, the country under apartheid became the largest experiment in racially based social engineering in world history<sup>5</sup>.

Racism in the twentieth century takes on a particularly unique form, as it intersects with views that

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<sup>5</sup> In "Same-Sex Marriage, Civil Unions and Domestic Partnerships in South Africa: Critical Reflection on an Ongoing Saga" (2007) Pierre de Vos and Jaco Barnard highlight the far-reaching effect of apartheid when they note that in its interpretation of the Constitution of South Africa with regard to the legalization of same-sex marriage the Constitutional Court was guided by the view that "during the apartheid era gay men, lesbians and other sexual minorities suffered a particularly harsh fate, having been branded as criminals and rejected by society as outcasts and perverts. This exclusion and marginalization — and the concomitant hatred and violence that it invariably produced — was experienced more intensely by those South Africans already suffering under the yoke of apartheid because of their race and/or sex and/or economic status"(797). This view highlights the extent to which apartheid sought to regulate even those most intimate of personal-political matters.

hold women as unequal (patriarchy) and traps men and women alike in restrictive performances of masculinity and femininity. The Second World War was one of the most pivotal historical moments concerning the rights of women. Centuries-old views on the position of men and women in society were undermined as women were forced by necessity to enter the workplace and prove themselves as capable as men. This revolution of the sexes later became interrelated and involved in the struggles for racial equality and queer rights. This somewhat unique situation offers the scholar particular insight into the construction/s of sexual otherness within the (white) heteronormalcy of a racialized context.

Michel Foucault's concept of "bio-power", as put forward in *The History of Sexuality: Volume One* (1979) has been a useful framework through which studies into the intersections between race, sex and class have been approached. When applied to apartheid South Africa as a modern, capitalistic, nation state it becomes clear that it "was without question an indispensable element in the development of [South Africa's racist] capitalism" (140-141). Like most capitalist states, particularly ones where the economy is racially structured, the South African government used bio-power and "bio-politics" to ensure "the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic process" (141). Alongside this, racist capitalism also required "the growth of both these factors, their reinforcement as well as their availability and docility" (141). I argue that under apartheid the South African government developed "methods of power" that were "capable of optimizing forces, aptitudes, and life in general without at the same time making them more difficult to govern" (141). As Foucault argues:

[T]he rudiments of anatomo- and bio-politics [...] present at every level of the social body and [are] utilized by very diverse institutions (the family and the army, schools and the police, individual medicine and administration of collective bodies) [...]. (141)

In the South African context the “rudiments of anatomo- and bio-politics” are developed to their most pathological, as the institutionalisation of apartheid becomes an extreme example of the way in which capitalism has sought to regiment the bodies of the polity. It is against this background that Foucault’s assertion concerning the “importance assumed by sex as a political issue” becomes a particularly useful way through which to articulate South African engagement with the ‘queer’ and its role in the perpetuation of white heteronormativity. To him,

[o]n the one hand it was tied to the disciplines of the body: the harnessing, intensification, and distribution of forces, the adjustment and economy of energies. On the other hand it was applied to the regulation of populations, through all the far-reaching effects of its activity. (145)

For Foucault sex “fit[s] into both these categories at once, giving rise to infinitesimal surveillances, permanent controls, extremely meticulous orderings of spaces, indeterminate medical or psychological examinations, to an entire micro-power concerned with the body” (145-146). I borrow my notion of South Africa as institutionalised space from Foucault’s understanding of the way in which that which polices bio-political power becomes so integrated into societal structures that the nation state as a whole becomes a metaphorical institution in itself, much like the “the family and the army, schools and the police, individual medicine and administration of collective bodies” are institutions meant to police and perpetuate heteronormativity.

This framing of South Africa as a racialized institutional space was influential in determining the texts that are analysed. I use narratives set in the various institutions that is South African society so as to make broader comments about the country as a whole. For reasons of workability I have divided the thesis into three broad time periods or historical moments. The first is referred to as pre-transitional and covers the extended period of colonialism that came to an end

with the first democratic election held in the country in 1994. It is seen as a period during which white heteronormative masculinity was actively encouraged and the white family became the standard representation of the South African state. Chapters One and Two fall within this period, and I engage with texts that highlight the extent to which institutions like the “the family and the army, schools and the police, individual medicine and administration of collective bodies” became the means through which white South Africa came to measure and perpetuate a very particular heteronormative masculinity at the centre of South African society. Given the conservative patriarchal nature of (white) Afrikaner society, homosexuality in the country came to be constructed along Western lines of pathology and sin. This is a notion that conflates white colonial dominance with a particularly militarised masculinity, where to be a citizen demanded of one to be heterosexual and in a position of power. I argue that this led to an early association between weakness and femininity, as well as framing the white male homosexual as dangerous to the status quo, as he in his choice of sexual expression seemingly shuns a God-given white superiority.

This broad historical moment is followed by a time of transition in the country. This period is marked by negotiations surrounding the country’s constitution, and is seen to come to an end with the ratification of the Civil Unions Act in 2006. This is seen as a time of great change as South Africans from all walks of life are forced to renegotiate entrenched notions of identity. Chapters Four and Five address this issue, looking at narratives set during this time of transition. Under apartheid there is a marked absence of queer narratives written by black authors. The large number of narratives addressing same-sex issues that were published in Afrikaans during this time suggests that there is a link between whiteness and the level of dissidence which the white Afrikaans writer can approach in their work. Mention of same-sex behaviour is found in the

writing of black political activists recounting their experiences in prison but these seem often to conflate male homosexuality with the criminality and pathology of the apartheid state.

With the democratisation of the country this soon changes. I argue that as the country became more open with regard to the new forms of personal categorisation available after the fall of apartheid the literary texts set during this period come to reflect it. In Chapter Four I discuss *The Number* (2004) by Jonny Steinberg. This text is set in prison and investigates the mythology that surrounds the infamous Number Gangs of South Africa. Focussing specifically on the role of the 28 Gang and its association with same-sex sexual activity, I seek to develop the notion that South Africa can be read through an analysis of its institutions and the norms and identities that are made available or limited by them. The subcultural milieu of the 28 Gang is particularly significant as it fits both the category of violent masculine figure as well as that of fetishized, queer rapist. The impact of this construction is shown through an analysis of the advertising campaign “Papa Wag Vir Jou” aired on South African television in 2012 as an attempt to discourage drunk driving. Both the advertisement and Steinberg’s texts illustrate the extent to which the queer sexualities and masculinities of prison have become conflated with the notion of eroticized homosexual threat. In a culture where femininity and womanhood are synonymous with subjugation and submission the same-sex attracted man in prison is allowed a framework where he is able to retain his violent, hetero-masculinity by reframing the men he has sex with as women. I suggest that there is more going on during these encounters than the simplified notion that all prison sex is rape: the representation of the 28 Gang in prison allows for a state of being queer that through its criminality is able to escape the damnation and feminization associated with it in ‘normal’ society. Within the structure of the gang and the confines of the prison, supported by its creation myth, same-sex desire is placed at the centre of criminality and manhood. At the same time prison allows a space

in which homosexual desire is possible and thus becomes a literary setting fraught with same-sex eroticism.

Chapter Five engages with K. Sello Duiker's two novels *Thirteen Cents* (2000) and *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2001). Not only do these texts address subjects (paedophilia and male homosexuality respectively) often figured as taboo in the country, they can also be read as meditations on 'the state of unease' that is lived in the newly minted rainbow nation. As Azure resists racial classification by disrupting it with his eyes, he is also seen to transgress the spaces of the newly accessible white space. It is here that his encounters as queered child allows insights into the ways in which prison masculinity and gang culture have come to intersect with society outside of prison. This becomes increasingly so as men enter and exit institutions and carry with them a historiography memorised/internalised in prison. When Tshepo, the protagonist of *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, is released from a mental institution he too moves in with an ex-prisoner and gang member by whom he is brutally beaten and raped. His experience with this image of prison sexuality and masculinity sets him on a path that has him for a time working as a male escort in a largely white gay massage parlour. During his experiences here he finds what at first seems like an embracing and supporting environment, but he soon is made to realise that it is his services and fetishized blackness that allow him access to the newly empowered gay spaces that dot the city of Cape Town. Duiker's work raises important questions regarding access to space and the important role race and class play in determining the experience of male homosexuality in the country. I argue that, like the militarised whiteness I discuss in Chapters Two and Three, there is a specific representation of same-sex sexuality in Duiker's two novels that suggests it is regarded as socially dangerous if not channelled in an appropriate way and confined to designated queer spaces. This can be seen in the way black men find other ways of legitimising their sexualities by framing them

in heteronormative ways. In South Africa this is particularly problematic, as the narratives suggest a consistent representation of submission during same-sex encounters as correlating with the subdued state of femininity and womanhood associated with blackness under apartheid. Within this milieu sexual violence portrayed against feminized men become the natural consequence and rightful privilege of manhood, which is affirmed through violence when disqualified by social stressors which amongst others include race and class.

Chapter Six is framed as post-transitional, a period that is seen to stretch from 2006 to 2014. It marks a moment in South African history when citizens are engaging with the complexities of South African citizenship as they come to live lives as envisaged by their rather progressive constitution. Continuing the theme of South Africa as an institution, I examine the way in which the association between femininity and submission has come to be a means through which queer representation of black masculinity eroticises the male prisoner's body in South African popular culture. I look at two of South African band Die Antwoord's music videos from their album *Ten\$ion* released in 2012. I argue that there is a specific aesthetic to these videos that serves to eroticise the male gangster through a focus on his gang tattoos and body. The almost anthropological lens of the video serves to frame a particularly acute engagement with South African identity that is common to the band's conception of itself. Wanga, the lead male vocalist of the band, has said in press releases and in person that he regards himself as a "white kaffir", ironically symbolised by his stage name Ninja, a derogatory term used by some to refer to black people. In another video released in response to the backlash the band received at the hands of American gay rights groups because of their use of the term faggot, Ninja informs the viewer that DJ Hi Tek himself is in fact gay. He explains that when DJ Hi Tek uses the term faggot he does so because he "has made it his bitch". This in his view has to do with the band's South Africanness

and the fact that “we” are not as “sensitive” about these things as they mean different things to us. This repurposing of self and South African identity by the band suggests an attempt to reposition themselves by escaping categories and their limiting labels. For me these videos are examples of the way in which the new institution that is contemporary South Africa allows for a reframing of subjugators that leaves them open to re/interpretations of sensitivity and sexual intimacy, a possibility perhaps best illustrated by the eroticised male gangster.

This section concludes with a look at the recently released play *Rooiland* (2013) by Tertius Kapp. In the narrative, when recounting his past relationship with another prisoner, one of the characters, Pastoor, is adamant that there was something more, more than the intimacy that the 28 Gang and prison allowed and necessitated, to his relationship with his prison husband. Although Western discourse highlights a coming out and declaration of homosexual feelings as politically freeing and a possible speaking back to dominant heteronormativity, it at the same time traps the so identified person within a framework of categorisation and identification that was largely formed in the West. My research shows that the queer archive in South Africa reflects a tendency for male same-sex attraction to find utterance even when all is set to police against it. As the country is seen to seek to restrict and neatly package sexuality, drawing on popular images and social historiographies wholesale imported from the West, there is a concurrent narrative that seeks to position men who have sex with men as patriarchal figures who retain masculinity through dominance.

### ***Theorizing Indigenous Sexualities***

In “Shifting Sexual Morality? Changing Views on Homosexuality in Afrikaner Society during the 1960s” (2012) Kobus du Pisani offers a historical context for homosexuality’s overt

entrance into official public discussions in South Africa when it evoked an official response from the apartheid government. He notes the presence of laws criminalizing homosexual behaviour far prior to the unification of South Africa in 1910 but highlights that

[i]n the nineteenth century [...] in most Western countries homosexual deeds were criminalised. Heterosexual masculinity was institutionalised by repressive legislation to curb and criminalise homosexuality. Heterosexual power was asserted and homosexual masculinity was subordinated to heterosexual masculinity. (188)

The repressive attitude of the South African white community to homosexuality can thus be viewed as in line with its colonial centre. Given the significance whiteness as a colonial enterprise has within Afrikaner culture it is not surprising that when the Reformed National Party (a precursor to The National Party) was elected into power under the leadership of the Dutch Reformed Church reverend D. F. Malan in 1948 there was a retention of colonial statutes criminalising sodomy in the country's new unified constitution. Du Pisani notes how

[i]n the 1950s an explicitly homophobic youth subculture of violent "moffie-bashing" emerged in South African cities. Homophobia was not limited to white communities. *Drum*, a popular magazine aimed at the urban black population, was the first mass publication in which homosexuality was openly discussed and portrayed as a "disgrace" and an "evil". (188-200)

The object choice in heterosexuality and bisexuality also serves to perpetuate the dominance of men as the actor/doer, in that the position of the penetrator is seen to sit comfortably with the traditional role of men thus affirming the perceived connection between sexual submission and femininity. In the South African context we find that it is exactly the categorisation and institutional homoeroticism that allows for the racial oppression which is re-inscribed to subvert categories and established roles. Considering this complexity of human sexualities, Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) come to describe a "heterosexual

matrix” or, as she develops it in her later work, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993), a “heterosexual hegemony”. In *A Critical Sense: Interviews with Intellectuals* (1996), edited by Peter Osborne, Butler explains her shift in terminology: “There’s a very specific notion of gender involved in compulsory heterosexuality: a certain view of gender coherence whereby what a person feels, how a person acts, and how a person expresses herself sexually is the articulation and consummation of a gender.”

Henriette Gunkel in *The Cultural Politics of Female Sexuality in South Africa* (2010) highlights links between racial politics and sex in the racist context of South Africa. Her study of the issue is illuminating and helps to frame homosexuality as a racialized threat to the body of the white nation. There is a tendency amongst the general public and scholars alike, to present sexuality as a trichotomy,<sup>6</sup> this is further pressurised by the racial experiment that is apartheid South Africa. Here conceptions of normal sexual behaviour and racial superiority interconnect to further foreclose on experiences of sexuality and gender. Gunkel finds that

[w]hile the aim of the apartheid government was to entrench racial discrimination through law [...] it simultaneously introduced laws that regulated the apparatus of race through sexuality by linking sexuality directly to race. Sexuality, within the apartheid project, was the biopolitical interface between the individual body and the population body and for this reason it became the main target of power. [...] From the beginning the apartheid regime focused on sexuality as a regulatory factor of the race regime. (Gunkel 29)

The apartheid South African government’s attempt to limit sexual freedoms is a strong indication of its needs to categorise and restrict cross-categorical “miscegenation”. Nazir Carrim in “Human Rights and the Construction of Identities in South African Education” (2006) addresses the importance of homosexuality as a disruptive force that is dangerous to dominant (white) heteronormativity when he argues that

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<sup>6</sup> Heterosexual, bisexual and homosexual.

“the homosexual” under apartheid was invisibilised by illegitimation and marginalised by repressive forms of denial and misrecognition. [...] The Afrikaner male “body” [became] one that is virile, dominant and procreative; the Afrikaner female “body” subordinate, fertile and reproductive. Such positioning of bodies was critical for the survival of Afrikanerdom itself. (111-112)

As integral to the institutionalisation of racism amongst Afrikaner people in the country, this dichotomy of gender’s hierarchical associations became a dominant force in the lives of the other people who call the country home. This is a theme that is highlighted here and echoed in the narratives discussed later that seek to draw similarities between the state of being a white homosexual and that of the oppressed black ‘other’ under apartheid. Although undermined by the superiority afforded through whiteness, the image of the suffering homosexual as racial other became an important theme through which writers came to question the regime.

In 1999 Jean du Plessis published *Oor Gay Wees (On Being Gay)*. The text is interesting in that it addresses Afrikaner conservatism and the group’s damaging views with regard to homosexuality, in Afrikaans. As an example of how this happens he addresses subculture formation in the South African (Afrikaner) gay community:

As gevolg van diskriminasie en die noodsaaklikheid van geheimhouding ter wille van oorlewing, het daar ook ’n gay “onderwêreld” ontwikkel. Dit bestaan hoofsaaklik uit klubs, disko’s en kroëë, soms uitsluitend vir ingeskrewe lede. [...] Die atmosfeer en die aktiwiteite wat hier plaasvind is in ’n groot mate die produkte van diskriminasie en geheimhouding. [...] Die eksklusiwiteit van hierdie plekke beklemtoon die enigste raakpunt wat daar tussen die kliënte bestaan, naamlik hulle seksuele oriëntasie. Dit, te same met die gevoel van vryheid van die diskriminasie van die wêreld daarbuite, lei maklik tot die ontwikkeling van ’n atmosfeer van promiskuiteit. (72-73)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> “A gay ‘underworld’ developed because of discrimination and the need for secrecy in order to survive. It consists mainly of clubs, discos and bars, sometimes only accessible to registered members. [...] The atmosphere and the activities that take place here are largely the products of discrimination and secrecy. [...] The exclusivity of these places emphasizes the fact that the only thing the customers have in common with each other is their sexual orientation. This, together with the sense of freedom from the discrimination of the outside world, can easily cause the development of an atmosphere of promiscuity” (72-73).

Du Plessis illustrates the well documented way in which subcultures respond to the attempts by heteronormative society to police them by developing their own rules and norms. These norms often reflect their status as discriminated-against group whereby they are seen to reject heteronormative ideas of monogamy and acceptable sexual behaviour. During apartheid these subcultures were largely “white, male and middle class”, and if black forms of these subcultures existed they remained largely unexpressed in literature published during that time (Gevisser, “A Different Fight for Freedom: a History of South African Lesbian and Gay Organisation from the 1950s to 1990s”, 17). This is not surprising as white, middle-class men were the ones that held most power in South Africa at the time, primarily because they fully embodied that which the apartheid government stood to protect and preserve: white, economic, patriarchal dominance. The very same white hetero-normativity that foreclosed and strictly policed white masculinity and sexuality at the same time afforded white men the opportunities and power to engage with more publicly in same-sex behaviour. For white homosexual men there was also a well-established gay voice emerging in political discourse in the West at the time, which further allowed white middle class men the opportunity to develop this identity more fully.

Gordon Isaacs and Brian Mckendrick, authors of *Male Homosexuality in South Africa* (1992), note with reference to the formation of white male homosexual subcultures in South Africa:

Since homosexuals do not obtain social support from the major South African culture[s], which reject their identity as invalid and unacceptable, a homosexual subculture has evolved which validates the homosexual identity, and at the same time entraps the individual in a subculture milieu that stresses ‘difference’ and ‘separateness,’ contributing further to identity crisis. (xi)

Both Du Plessis, and Isaacs and Mckendrick, raise the question of whether or not the acceptance of self and labelling of self as homosexual stem from an accepted notion of one's own deviance in relation to the hegemonic norms of the society in which one lives. United Nation researchers<sup>8</sup> in sexual health and HIV/AIDS have found that Western labels that determine Western forms of sexual performance do not adequately capture the realities of what is happening within Africans' sex lives. As scholars we are confounded by the issue as we lack an alternative vocabulary.

Homosexuality immediately invokes both a history of political struggle for rights and equality in the West as well as the medicalised pathological construction which is evident in the etymology of the term. Exactly because of the complicated nature of labelling sexual behaviour as identity I find that HIV/AIDS studies have employed the term men-who-have-sex-with-men (MSM) as a means to escape the problematics of naming when describing a behaviour using a discourse that does not adequately account for it and it stems from a context that has neatly packaged these identities into scientific and socio-political categories through its use of discourse.

In her analysis of the issue in the article "The Homosexual Role" (1968) McIntosh notes a particular phenomenon that further constructs the theoretical lens through which I have focussed my analysis:

It is interesting that homosexuals themselves welcome and support the notion that homosexuality is a condition [or lifestyle]. For just as the rigid categorization deters people from drifting into deviancy, so it appears to foreclose on the possibility of drifting back into normalcy and thus removes the element of anxious choice. ("The Homosexual Role" 189)

Becker also addresses this in *Outsiders*, where he argues that "[m]oving into an organized deviant group [as is the case for the modern homosexual man] has several consequences for the career of the deviant [...] [whereas] deviants groups tend, more than deviant individuals, to be pushed into

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<sup>8</sup> See "UNAIDS: Men who have sex with men" (PDF). UNAIDS. 2006. Archived from the original (PDF) on June 21, 2013. Retrieved April 2, 2014.

rationalizing their position. At the extreme, they [have to] develop a very complicated historical, legal, and psychological justification for their deviant activity” (37-38). This justification is then seen to take on the form of “a working philosophy for the active homosexual, explaining to him why he is the way he is, that other people have also been that way, and why it is all right for him to be that way” (38). What Becker describes is perhaps best coined as a historiography of gay identity, a modern development deemed to ultimately be hindered by its ahistorical nature.

In “Intra-psychic Effects of Stigma: a Process of Breakdown and Reconstruction of Social Reality” (1981) Sara Fein and Elaine M. Nuehring find that

newly self-acknowledged homosexual individuals cannot take for granted that they share a world with others who hold congruent interpretations and assumptions; their behavior and motives, both past and present, will be interpreted in light of their stigma. (4-6)

Therefore, as homosexual men identify as and come to rely upon the existing conception of homosexuality, they limit themselves with regard to their ability and freedom to choose a manifestation/performance of their sexuality that is based on subjective, individual experience and personality. In the homophobic context, the self-labelled homosexual is more likely to assume or be taught a history of undoing through unbecoming. Recent debates around the inaccessibility of white urban gay spaces to black people who identify as gay have lent support to the common argument that there is a huge schism between white and black “gay” culture, and this divide has been strongly influenced by a history of racism and socio-political inequality and difference.<sup>9</sup>

Butler usefully suggests that “[t]he taboos and laws within [a heterosexual matrix of desire] are generative, which means that far from repressing homosexuality, the taboo against homosexuality produces *in order* to repress it, so that a “natural” homosexuality is crafted even as

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<sup>9</sup> See Andrew Tucker’s “Shifting Boundaries of Sexual Identities in Cape Town: The Appropriation and Malleability of ‘Gay’ in Township Spaces” (2010).

it is foreclosed, thereby rendering heterosexuality both intelligible and secure” (Salih and Butler, *Butler Reader* 8). In *Bodies that Matter* (1993), Butler has a much more dynamic analysis of the way linguistic categories function socially and argues that the term queer is one that “signalled degradation has been turned – “refunctioned” [...] – to signify a new and affirmative set of meanings” (223). Usefully for our discussion here, she notes how

[t]he expectation of self-determination that self-naming arouses is paradoxically contested by the historicity of the name itself: by the history of the usage that one never controlled, but that constrain the very usage that now emblemizes autonomy; by the future efforts to deploy the term against the grain of the current ones, and that will exceed the control of those who seek to set the course of the terms in the present. (Butler 228)

In the light of this, the identification of self as homosexual carries with it an immense amount of accepted and sometimes unconscious assumptions of what it means to be homosexual and its influences on performances of sexual identity and one’s socio-political standing. In apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa this is complicated even further by the fact that the modern conception of gayness and gay identity has for long largely been linked to middle-class, white men. An example of this is the way in which class and access to media limit the messages the homosexually identified person who finds himself in a poor environment has access to. It is as if the black homosexual as well as the ‘lesbian’ has been excluded from dominant gay culture.

*Foucault and Queer Theory* by Tamsin Spargo traces the contribution Michel Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* had on the establishment of queer theory. She offers a “brief and partial ‘genealogy’ of a particular set of discourses on sexuality culminating (temporarily and not exclusively) in the current queer moment” (10). Michel Foucault’s idea of the historical construction and medicalisation of homosexuality in Western culture becomes a useful lens through which to construct a discursive South African construction of homosexuality. The most

relevant aspect of Foucault's theory is that it "insisted that the category of the homosexual grew out of a particular context in the 1870's and that, like sexuality generally, it must be viewed as a *constructed* category of knowledge rather than as a *discovered* identity" (17). Similar arguments have been used in the discussion of race and the other, which reflect queer theory's use of post structuralism. Important for my argument is Spargo's assessment of "Foucault's work [...] [as having shown that] demanding the recognition of a distinct homosexual identity inevitably reaffirms a binary and unequal opposition between homosexual and heterosexual" (47) – a binary that is restrictive and shows a nineteenth-century need to classify, organise and ascribe.

### ***These Queers are un-African: On Homosexuality as Foreign Import***

In South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa at large this mainly Western medico-religious construction of the homosexual has been further complicated by the fact that recent political and social discourse surrounding the issue has attached another label to it: homosexuality as un-African<sup>10</sup>. In "Pride and Prejudice: Public Attitudes toward Homosexuality" (2008) Benjamin Roberts and Vasu Reddy comment that

[t]he assertion of [homosexuality's] 'un-Africanness' conceals a moral and cultural view that African societies are somehow unique and therefore immune to what is perceived to be a Western and European import. (11)

Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe in *Boy Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African*

*Homosexuality* (1998) provide textual confirmation when they note that Winnie Madikizela

Mandela, ex-wife of the first democratically elected president in South Africa, Nelson Mandela,

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<sup>10</sup> Marc Epprecht in *Hungochani, the History of a Dissident Sexuality in South Africa and Heterosexual Africa? The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS* addresses this current development and convincingly illustrates that this construction of homosexuality as "un-African" is based on thinking around homosexuality, gender and race that was strongly influenced and shaped by colonialism, racism and the colonial context.

described homosexuals as “utter filth” and “alien to [African] culture” (11). This blatant homophobia is further evident in the utterances made by powerful public figures like Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, who in 1995 famously expelled the NGO Gay and Lesbians of Zimbabwe from the Zimbabwean International Book Fair, and later stated that “[i]f dogs and pigs don't do it, why must human beings? Can human beings be human being if they do worse than pigs?” (Hoad, *African Intimacies* (2007), xiii). Ex-president Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya stated that homosexuality “is against African tradition and Biblical teachings” (Hoad, *African Intimacies* xii). While ex-president Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda instructed his security forces “to look for homosexuals, lock them up, and charge them”, President Sam Nujoma of Namibia assured his people that they “will make sure that Namibia will get rid of lesbianism and homosexuality [...] [as] [i]t is the devil at work [...] destroying the nation” (Hoad *African Intimacies* xiii). Even South Africa’s own Jacob Zuma has described homosexuality and the idea of same-sex marriage/civil unions as “a disgrace to the nation and to God” (Stobie, *Somewhere in the Double Rainbow* (2007), 15). The President later retracted his statement, saying that he had been misunderstood. His retraction was necessitated by the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) which upholds the “equality” of homosexuals, a constitution that is informed by the struggles of oppressed peoples against discrimination in South Africa.<sup>11</sup> Current constitutional (pro)vision seems to be in contrast with public opinion and conceptions of homosexuality.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> “Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. Everyone [...] is protected against any unfair discrimination, direct or indirectly, by the State or any person on the basis of [...] sexual orientation” (*The Constitution of South Africa* 43).

<sup>12</sup> The shockingly high level of homophobia present in the country has been confirmed by a Human Sciences Research Council survey entitled the *South African Social Attitudes Survey* conducted in 2008 and the research of Hennie Kotze and Pierre du Toit published in *Democracy and Peace in South Africa: the Pursuit for Freedom as Dignity* (2011).

Since research was started on this project there have been a number of developments with regard to the construction of homosexuality as un-African by some public and powerful African figures. In “Contesting Narratives of Queer Africa” (2013) Sokari Ekine addresses the “[t]wo distinct, yet interlinked, narratives [that] dominate discussions of queer African sexualities” (Ekine and Abbas, *Queer African Reader* (2013), 78):

[O]ne claims that queer sexualities are ‘un-African’ and the other treat Africa as a site of obsessive homophobia. The first stems from a mix of religious fundamentalisms, which insist on strict literal interpretations of religious texts, and a culturally essentialist position which pathologises and denies the existence of queerness on the continent. [...] The second narrative on ‘African homophobia’ is rooted in colonial discourses of deviant and peculiar African sexuality and in contemporary neoliberal, global ‘LGBT’ agenda which seeks to universalise white Euro-American sexual norms and gender expressions. (78)

As Hoad highlights in his discussion of the issue in *African Intimacies*, there seems to be a sense of us versus them/here versus there that lies at the heart of these statements. He illustrates this through President Robert Mugabe who, after a return from travels to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the Republic of South Africa, reportedly stated “[t]hey can demonstrate, but if they come here we will throw them in jail” (Hoad xi). For him “[t]he difference between ‘here’ and ‘there’ suggests that tolerance of homosexuality is becoming [...] a strategy for marking national and civilizational specificity” (xii). However, rather than ‘becoming’ it seem to me a reflection of the repressive regime that employs bio-power as a means of capitalist reproduction and perpetuation. This notion is supported by a similar statement from Museveni: “When I was in America some time ago, I saw a rally of 300,000 homosexuals. If you have a rally of 30 homosexual here [in Uganda], I would disperse it” (Hoad xii).

Of primary importance to one’s understanding of these statements are the ways in which they relate to South Africa’s hard-won constitutional democracy. Museveni and Mugabe’s views

are indicative of the oppressive systems they have created. It is thus not surprising that Mugabe, as a dictator and mass-murderer<sup>13</sup>, is unable to recognise the rights of any of his citizens, let alone homosexuals. Uganda has a disturbing history of human rights violation and institutionalised discrimination, it had itself suffered under the madness of the oppressor, Idi Amin, and Museveni's views reflect the value of citizenship and human life in Uganda. Ekine's interpretation of the problem is illuminating, as it concisely addresses the core motivations behind these statements as "systematic and indicative of an instrumentalised, well-organised campaign which exposes the cosy relationship between religious and cultural fundamentalisms asserted through vigorous nationalist political agendas" (Ekine and Abbas 78). Ekine highlights how "[t]he struggle to break free of colonialism was largely a political project, which involved patriarchal structures" (81). In this context, "nationalist movements used the same colonial, militarised masculinities as a foundation for liberation and post-colonialism, thereby maintaining the non-status of African women" (81). Ekine

The heterosexualisation project of nation building is further facilitated through legislation or re-legislation [...]. Heterosexuality is consolidated as the only acceptable basis for citizenship and the establishing/re-establishing of order and preventing/ending chaos brought about by sexual/social deviancy of the queer imposition. Thus the renewed legislation builds on the 'civilising mission' of colonialism by reinforcing heterosexuality as the natural order, existing without complication or contradiction. (81)

One of Ekine's sources is the same Hoad's *African Intimacies: Race, Homosexuality and Globalisation* used here. In it Hoad goes on to highlight what I believe is central to a reading of literary representations of "homosexuality" in the context of South Africa and the increasingly

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<sup>13</sup> Alexandra Fuller addresses the rise of Mugabe as a dictator and murderer in her article 'Oppression, Fear, and Courage in Zimbabwe' *National Geographic*: May 2013: "There are two major ethnic groups in Zimbabwe: the majority Shona and the minority Ndebele. Mugabe is Shona. In 1983 Mugabe deployed his North-Korean-trained Five Brigade into the west of the country to pre-empt any Ndebele political opposition. Over the following five-years, an estimated 20,000 Ndebele were massacred" (78).

globalised world at large: “claims to rights on the basis of homosexuality has been a fraught business in the modern West”, often drawing on long histories of activism and struggle towards equality along with public debate or discussion (xxiv). This “long history of activism and struggle” is largely absent in Africa, and where it happens the recognition of homosexuals’ right to equality is often tied to recognising equality for all.

Marc Epprecht in *Heterosexual Africa?: The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS* (2008) observes that the recent construction of homosexuality as un-African is not only reserved for political leaders whom Ekine and Abbas argue may be using them as “diversionary, a way of distracting the populace from more urgent needs such as the removal of fuel subsidies, high unemployment, corruption or fighting terrorism” (Ekine and Abbas 84), but also that these forms of engagement extend to “various professional and scientific discourse in and about Africa south of the Sahara” (6). Epprecht highlights that the view of homosexuality as foreign to Africa may be grounded in some truth, since “few Africans south of the Sahara even today would identify as homosexual, bisexual, lesbian, gay, queer, or any of the other terms coined in the West to signify a more or less innate individual sexual orientation” (*Heterosexual Africa* 4). He notes how:

The language by which same-sex relationships are described [...] is often Eurocentric – the word homosexuality [...] still does not accurately describe the majority of men who have sex with men [...] in Africa. (Epprecht, *Heterosexual Africa* 8)

An example of this is the noted retention of colonial laws that outlaw homosexuality or sodomy and the fact that homosexuals were regarded, in many instances, as being affected by some form of degenerative madness. An informed decision to apply the label of homosexuality within the homophobic African context to self might not be a favourable one for the same-sex attracted

person as it carries with it a further definition of pathologised minority status and, of course, a colonial etymology. Despite this actuality, it remains an established fact that “many people who do not so identify nonetheless sometimes, and sometimes even predominantly, have sex with people of the same sex” (Epprecht, *Heterosexual Africa* 4).

Butler in *Bodies that Matter* (1993) signals the significance and fertile nature of an investigation into sexuality in a country such as South Africa under apartheid when she notes that “[e]specially at those junctures in which a compulsory heterosexuality works in the service of maintaining hegemonic forms of racial purity [the] ‘threat’ of homosexuality takes on a distinctive complexity” (18). Consequently, the effect of racial classification and the rights and privileges that closely accompany such racial labelling cannot be ignored and, as noted earlier, in the case of South Africa it led to the development of two separate gay subcultures; one black and the other white (Isaac and Mckendrick xi). Gunkel’s application of Foucault’s theorising of the ‘biopolitical’ helps one to further position the homosexual body as a discursive form of signalling indigenised (white) heteronormative masculinity. This was compounded by the fact that in the 1980s gay rights organisations in the country became increasingly linked to support for the struggle towards equality of black people. The marked absence of black men from the empowered white space suggests the predominant gay identity developing in the urban centres as constructed along the same lines that leave the person of colour as the voiceless other.

I suggested earlier that racialized capitalism and urbanisation in the country allow the white male homosexual more freedom with regard to self-labelling, and was essential to creating sub-cultural spheres of belonging in which a white homosexual historiography was developed and affirmed. At the same time black South African men were, as they had been for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, migrating from the rural areas to the more developed centres of industries

around the country in huge numbers. There they found work in mines and factories, as gardeners and manual labourers. Large numbers of black labourers lived in single-sex compounds concentrated around these industrial centres. These compounds were run by large mining companies and other big corporations, forcing black men into an existence divorced from familiar and normal sexual interactions and leading to the denigration of black family life. This in turn often led to the emergence of a subculture of what Gevisser refers to as “circumstantial homosexuality” (18). Circumstantial homosexuality is also what is argued to take place between men in prisons and in the army. Same-sex circumstances and the biological sexual needs of men seem to make them particularly vulnerable to the pleasure of homosexual encounters, even though circumstantial. Gevisser suggests that the notion of circumstantial homosexuality does “[c]ertainly [show that] there were those black men who practised homosexuality for lack of a more appealing heterosexual alternative,” but it also provides record of “those who found themselves, and who remained in town, living homosexual lives, rather than returning to either wives or the possibility of marriage in their rural areas” (18). Gevisser hints at the view that sexuality, even within the circumstantial, allows for an utterance of desire and intimacy. Later, I find that structured circumstantial homosexuality finds mirroring in the texts that envision the male prison as a homoerotic space. Similarly, both the mine marriage and prison marriage are means through which male same-sex desire can be enacted whilst still retaining the dominant status of hetero-masculinity.

Despite this and for reasons mentioned previously, black homosexuality in apartheid South Africa remains largely un-documented. A phenomenon that is particularly frustrating with regard to this study is that it leaves almost no texts available for analysis here. Most of the archive is constructed from anthropological-type studies such as those of Gevisser and Hoad. These find support for the nuanced nature of black heterosexual identity in the studies done to find prevalence

and curb the occurrence of circumstantial homosexuality. For racist and economic reasons, homosexuality was constructed as part of black sexual pathology in general, mine marriages and same-sex interactions in the countries' prisons were tolerated. The sparse documentation of black same-sex desire is in stark contrast to white homosexuality, which finds utterance in explicit and often overly literary ways, particularly in Afrikaans literature. An example of this is the work of Koos Prinsloo, a noted Afrikaans author who often conflates homosexual identity with that of the author, his work suggesting a strong link between homosexuality and the process of literary narrativisation and/or creation. This link is even further complicated by Gerrit Olivier in *Aantekeninge by Koos Prinsloo* (2009) in which he suggests that Prinsloo's whiteness and his role as transgressive writer in the South African context are mutually dependent. In a racially oppressive state it seems it is whiteness itself that enables the expression of homosexuality (2). Like other scholars of homosexuality in South Africa, Gevisser notes the obvious complications that stem from being involved in a study that investigates an identity that is strongly shaped by the socio-cultural circumstances in which the individual enacts and experiences his/her sexual subjectivity. Different views with regard to homosexuality and the construction of homosexual identities highlight the way in which "the narrative coherence of the story [of homosexuality in South Africa] [...] is undermined by the understanding that it is impossible to identify a single cohesive gay identity" (17), further compounded by the "sparse documentation of black lesbian and gay history" in the South African archive (Gevisser 7).

For Henriette Gunkel in *The Cultural Politics of Female Sexuality in South Africa* (2010):

In different historical periods homosexuality has been considered as un-American, un-Indian, un-Iraqi [...]. During apartheid homosexuality was read as un-Afrikaans by a range of cultural and religious organizations that feared wealthy Jewish and English men corrupting [poor] Afrikaner boys. In fact there is a long history of constituting homosexuality as something outside tradition and culture and thus outside the nation. (27)

One of the factors influencing the positioning of the homosexual as “outside the nation” is the role of the receiving/submissive homosexual. This is a theme that runs consistently through South African literature highlighting the significance of masculinity and sexuality with regard to perceptions of victimhood and vulnerability. Enacting the role of the overly inscribed submissive female in the act of sodomy, the bottom is seen to reinforce male patriarchal sexual virulence.

In 1969 the Immorality Act that governed sexual activity in the country was amended and became the Sexual Offences Act, carrying with it harsher penalties for homosexual behaviour. There was an increased concern with homosexuality following a “police raid on a private party in Forest Town, Johannesburg in January 1966” (Cage 12). This case was so influential that it led to the then Minister of Justice, PC Pelser, stating in a House of Assembly debate in 1967 that

[h]istory has given us a clear warning and we should not allow ourselves to be deceived into thinking that we may casually dispose of this viper in our midst by regarding it as innocent fun. It is a proven fact that sooner or later homosexual instincts make their effects felt on a community if they are permitted to run riot. Therefore we should be on the alert and do what there is to do lest we be saddled later with a problem which will be the utter ruin of our spiritual and moral fibre. (Cage 12)

This representation of the homosexual as the “viper in our midst” evokes the biblical language of Genesis (a constant in South African political discourse of the time) in which the snake is responsible for the fall of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Eden. It also highlights the significant shift in importance attached to the potential role the white homosexual could play as a threat to white masculinity and dominance and, White society’s ability to defend against and oppress the feminised black masses that threatened to expel the masculine white nation from South Africa, their God given Eden.

Failure to perform the white hyper masculine heterosexuality associated with the oppression of millions of black others led to ostracism and, in some cases attempts at cure, both through psychotherapy and medication and, in extreme cases, imprisonment, gender reassignment surgeries and rape. Gunkel succinctly summarises the way in which current resistance in the country is inextricably linked to the neurotic way in which racist regimes are forced to institutionalise heterosexual and thus masculine militaristic control:

[T]he apartheid regime needs to be understood in the following ways: as a community of the colonial project, as being based on institutionalized white supremacy and as having underwritten its race regime through heterosexuality. [...] This is evident in post-apartheid homophobia which [...] further highlights that contemporary homophobia is, in effect, reintroducing a colonialist and racial discourse of sexuality into a postcolonial project. (Gunkel 28)

In *South Africa and the Dream of Love to Come* (2012) Munro also grapples with this notion when she argues that “[h]omosexuality in Africa is bound up with a contradictory modernity that has been produced both within and against imperialism, and this is what makes the question of gay rights in Africa so politically fraught” (xvii). Heterosexuality is positioned here as that which represents the health and normal reproduction of the state and, with the added label of homosexuality as un-African, heterosexuality becomes connected to the well-being and perpetuation of an indigenous Africanness and the post-colonial nation state. The heterosexual relationship and Christian marriage are now reconstructed as the primary basis on which the post-colonial African nation state is founded and through which it exists. Homosexuality thus becomes associated with that which seeks to undermine the state and patriarchal dominance and, in the case of the fight for the freedom of the oppressed, homosexuality becomes a threat to the preferable image of the hyper-masculine freedom fighter.

I support Munro’s concern when she comments:

Homosexuality has [...] long been an important site for contestations over the terms of African modernity – and indeed is now more politicized than ever. The concepts of “gay” and “lesbian” identity have come into wide global circulation in the last two decades, through the travels of migrants and tourists, the global traffic in images of and narratives about gay and lesbian people, and the discourses about sexuality being used by global religious institutions, by organizations fighting Aids, and by international human rights groups. (xvi)

Likewise, Stephen Murray and Will Roscoe in *Boy Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexuality* (1998) and a more recent scholarly work by Sylvia Tamale as presented in *African Sexualities* (2011), highlight analogous ways in which African sexualities have been constructed and engaged with in colonial texts and subsequently. These scholars support the view that, drawing on scientific racism and a hypocritical ideal to civilise an inferior race, much of African sexualities were framed using the same hierarchal structure that placed Africans on the lowest rung of humanity and civilisation. Seeing that the African is primarily constructed as other to white normalcy, like the African body, and in particular the African woman’s body, African sexualities became medicalised and eventually pathologised through racist categories. Due to this, various well-known stereotypes about African sexualities have been developed and perpetuated. The one that is most important here is the construction of Africans as primarily heterosexual, with missionary sex as the primary position in which this sexuality was performed – an idea that stems from the association of homosexuality with degeneracy, decadence and sodomy.

It is thus ironic that while South Africa has taken major steps to outlaw discrimination based on a person’s sexual orientation, many other African countries seem to be regressing in that they are becoming increasingly more homophobic, and in doing so affirming a racist pathologising

of African intimacies. Despite its light of rainbow nationalism<sup>14</sup> even South Africa has seen an increase in homophobic attacks<sup>15</sup>. Roberts and Reddy in 2008 found that eighty percent of South Africans considered “sex between two men or two women [as] ‘always wrong’ ” (4). According to them, “th[is] negative attitude and reluctance to ‘accept’ homosexuality could [...] be linked to levels of education and awareness of people, rural-urban divide, age, culture, and religion” (Roberts and Reddy 4). This is not surprising since these are the qualities that inform and perpetuate other forms of discrimination such as gender-based violence, religious intolerance as well as racism. What is striking is that in 2008 eighty percent of South Africans fundamentally disagreed, at least in part, with their constitution – which suggests incongruence between how the country’s constitution imagines itself as a modern African state, and how its people engage with issues of homosexuality, and with the realities and responsibilities that it highlights as part of life in a liberal democracy. Evidently, despite the deep sense of enlightened thinking that constructs and informs the notion of sexual orientation in the South African Constitution, there are at the same time concurrent constructions of difference as foreign and deviant – largely influenced by the post-colonial, anti-West patriarchy of a nationalist elite as well as a legacy of colonial demonization. A major concern raised by my research is with the ways in which terminology and subsequent categorisation are used in the South African context to dehumanise/emasculate the homosexual, which is often seen to result in him being feminised through naming, thereby leaving him vulnerable and apparently deserving of abuse. In this framework, to be a man is shown to be conflated with being heterosexual and the ability to inflict violence. Many of the African countries

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<sup>14</sup> Rainbows are significant in that the a rainbow flag has been adopted as the flag of the LGBTI community and Desmond Tutu named South Africa the “Rainbow Nation” in 1994. Both reflect multiculturalism and variety. One can go so far as describing South Africa as a Queer nation.

<sup>15</sup> In his headline “South African Gay Rights Activists Warn of Homophobic Attacks after Murder” (*The Guardian* (May 2011) journalist David Smith uses the word “epidemic” to describe the onslaught of violence experienced by queer people in this country.

which are particularly vigilant in policing and punishing homosexual activity are societies/nations that have questionable human rights records themselves. Examples are Zimbabwe, Uganda, Nigeria, Egypt, and Malawi. Under apartheid the situation in South Africa seemed to be similar, the only difference seemingly being that whiteness and the particular threat of the white homosexual became conflated with discourse that was already infected with a construction of the self as masculine and superior and the other as feminized subordinate. In conjunction with this, Epprecht in “‘Bisexuality’ and the Politics of Normal in African Ethnography” (2006) remarks that

African societies [have] traditionally placed an extremely high and prodigiously over determined value on heterosexual marriage and reproduction. Individual sexual desire was largely subsumed to the broad interests of the extended family or lineage or enabled in ways that did not endanger those interests. (Epprecht 188)

Epprecht finds that this “invisibilisation of homosexuality” is also influenced by a broader silence around sexuality and issues of modesty in African societies.<sup>16</sup> It thus seems that it is only recently that Africans have had the opportunity to reflect and discuss their own sexualities in public.

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<sup>16</sup> See Marc Epprecht’s “‘The Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexuality in Zimbabwe: Mapping a Blind Spot in an African Masculinity” (1998).

## **Chapter 2: Colonial Transcriptions of Homosexual Identities: Early Attempts at Categorization**

### *Overview:*

Chapter Two is framed as pre-transitional and addresses the significant effects which constructions of race and masculinity under South Africa's extended period of colonialism had on a homosexual man's identification, self-identification and subjectivity as represented in selected narratives/texts. It suggests that constructions of race, sexuality and gender during South Africa's colonial period resulted in a transcription of emerging Western views concerning homosexuality that held it as first an abominable act and later a sexual depravity. Like many other African countries that suffered under colonialism and racial oppression, South Africa borrows many of its constructions concerning sexuality from the colonial motherland. In fact, prior to South Africa's emancipation from racial oppression in 1994, many of the laws that governed the sexual interactions of the citizenry had been introduced into the statutes during Dutch and British rule. Ken Cage in *Gayle, the Language of Kinks and Queens* (2003) notes how "South African law is rooted in Roman-Dutch law, in which 'unnatural practices' between men were criminalised" (11). This suggests a link between homophobia in South Africa under the institution of colonialism and the construction of homosexuality as unnameable in the colonial centre.

The following is a close analysis of the film *Proteus* (2003), directed by Canadian John Greyson and South African Jack Lewis, which looks at the ways in which the film seeks to historicise a modern gay identity that remains unnamed during the early days of the colony. The film is set over a ten-year span stretching for 1735 to 1745 and provides an account of early documentation of same-sex attraction at the Cape. It highlights the extent to which the colonial process is fundamentally also a process of naming and categorisation. Through its setting on Robben Island the film introduces one of the important themes discussed in this dissertation: the

prison as homoerotic space. The character Claas Blank is constructed as seeking to escape his ‘limited categorical identity’<sup>17</sup> almost as much as he wishes to escape his incarceration. Importantly, it is exactly the confines of the prison that allow him a sense of agency in a context where he is constructed as belonging to a subspecies of humanity. The notion of the prison and the setting of the film on Robben Island are significant, not only because they find resonance with constructions of homosexuality as enabled through the circumstance of prison, but also because so many South African political prisoners were held on Robben Island. Through this, the film represents a politicisation of sexuality which seeks to tie it to the country’s long fight for freedom and racial equality.

Also of relevance here is the short story “Pinch” by Martin Hatchuel, published in the collection *Queer Africa: New and Collected* (2013). The story recounts the experiences of two young men who have been friends since childhood, having grown up on neighbouring farms. They develop a game they play with each other that lends its name to the title. This game becomes a symbol of their queer desire for each other. The story is useful because of its queering of the heteronormative Afrikaner youth’s experience whilst serving his compulsory time fighting in a Boer commando. Although operational during the time of *Proteus*, the Boer commando comes into its own during the South African Wars. The intimacy of their childhood game, compounded by their shared experience in the commando, places the two young men in a position of intimacy that enables an expression of their desire for each other. As the story concludes, the pair uses the term “pinch” to express this attraction and love in a coded manner when they are captured and executed by an English regiment patrolling the area in which they are lost. Significantly, the pair has been

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<sup>17</sup> ‘Limited categorical identity’ refers to the way in which Claas’s performance of identity and freedom is restricted by the categories applied to him by his colonial overlords. So for example he is seen to be first restricted by his ethnic identity of Khoekhoe and secondly by the masculine heteronormativity prescribed by his cisgender.

separated from the rest of their group, and I argue that this represents a separation from the broader Afrikaner masculinity and heteronormativity associated with whiteness at the time. It is during this period of separation that they are allowed to acknowledge to themselves and each other the complicated feelings of attachment the two had shared since childhood. The story is interesting as the Boer commando is generally viewed as the precursor to the South African Defence Force under apartheid. It highlights the way in which these early Afrikaner masculinities were shaped by the harsh requirements of the land, as well as their duty to govern and oppress the indigenous peoples.

*Proteus* engages with the epoch of colonisation which can be seen to stretch roughly from 1652-1815 when South Africa was a Dutch colony. “Pinch” on the other hand addresses (white) nation- building in the country and the consolidation of Afrikaner hetero-masculinity happening from 1815-1910 when the country was still a British colony. These re-envisionings of the queer archive in South Africa have become a way through which modern queer identities are transposed onto the historical record. This is often done in a way that reflects Western assumptions with regard to the exclusivity and permanent nature of sexual orientation. *Proteus*, a film released in 2003, takes on this task of retrospective historiographer as it explicitly forces the South African public to engage with the historical proof of same-sex sexual activity during colonial times. The release date of the film comes to be significant, as it is during the same time as the country was debating legalising same-sex marriage. *Proteus* creates a grand narrative that ties contemporary gay relationships to the archetypal representations of belonging, “miscegenation” and liberalism in the Cape. Looking at the film evokes the unproductive nature of “miscegenation”, suggesting thwarted multiculturalism and equalitarianism even at the beginning of documented same-sex history in the country. I examine the film, looking at its representation of the real historical relationship between a Dutch convict and a KhoeKhoe that has been mined from the archive by the

directors themselves. With its release the film enters a political and academic debate raging at the time in the country, whilst also becoming an artistic representation of the historical record transposing a very modern engagement with gay identity as a political category and a legal right.

***What Is This Thing? What Is Its Name? Colonial Transcriptions of Homosexual Identities***

In “Screening Historical Sexualities: A Roundtable on Sodomy, South Africa, and *Proteus*” (2005) Noa Ben-Asher, R. Bruce Brasell, Daniel Garrett, John Greyson, Jack Lewis, and Susan Newton-King provide a useful framework through which to read film. As the summary to the commentary notes:

The debate explores the precarious and artful interrelationship between histories, nations, narratives, and the law; cinematic intent and spectatorial interpretation; same-sexuality, conjugality, and difference; and even, as one participant dares to put it, *love*” (437-438).

The film and the subsequent discussion between the directors and the panel highlight the ways in which polemic and the arts are interlinked in queer theory and queer representations. Director Jack Lewis provides the reader with the context (2003) in which the film comes to be. As noted, the film was released three years before the legalization of gay marriage (30 November 2006) in the country, and seeks to speak to the South African context. It does so by grounding same-sex relationships amongst the roots of the South African citizenry and its struggle towards non-racialism and democracy. As Lewis explains:

We were working on the campaign to include [a provision prohibiting discrimination] (sic) on grounds of sexual orientation in the South African constitution. I was looking for a story that would relate the need for constitutional guarantees of equality for gays and lesbians to the lives of people today. The story of the two prisoners on Robben Island [just off Cape Town] (sic) was exactly that, an interracial love

story but also a tragedy about two guys caught up in the geopolitics of the day. (Ben-Asher et al 438)

The directors note that they were cognizant that their film was to be “South Africa’s first “gay” feature, the burden of representation was pretty enormous” (438). “In fact [, for the directors] the question of who represents what and how they represent it is one of the main themes of the film” (438). The director’s use of scare quotes in referring to their film as gay suggests sensitivity on their part to the nuanced ways in which this foreign, contemporary label relates to indigenous sexualities, particularly those that existed prior to the modern development of gay identity. In her analysis of the film in a chapter entitled “Gay Prison Revisions”, Brenna Munro in *South Africa and the Dream of Love to Come: Queer Sexuality and the Struggle for Freedom* (2012) is of the opinion that “[t]he film [...] indicts empire as strongly as it does homophobia. The colonial system that convicts the two men [in the film] [...] is a travesty, from the criminalization of “disrespect toward whites” to the charging of prisoners’ families for the costs of trials, and the brutality of the physical punishment we see being meted out is extreme” (Munro 64). The film thus comes to represent a significant part of South Africa’s oppressive history. Jack Lewis laments the lack of interest in the film shown by South African audiences outside of the homosexual community and academic circles. The film seems to have fallen short of its envisioned significance to the South African archive because of its lack of mass appeal. For the directors:

Historically and aesthetically, [...] [the film] goes where no other movie has gone before in terms of everything from the destruction of the Khoi people, to “Cape liberalism” and the relationship between the Cape and the Netherlands, to the historical development of the idea of homosexual identity, both in the colony and in the Netherlands. *Proteus* is not simply a “gay” movie. (439)

There are a number of quite explicit sex scenes between Claas and Rijkhaart, most of these showing Rijkhaart being anally penetrated by Claas, the act of sodomy for which the two were to be executed later. This representation of sex between men can be shocking to some and it seems to reaffirm Hennie Aucamp's view in *Wisselstroom* (1990) that film representation of the homosexual act may be more than the South African audience is willing to accept:

Die rolprent, maar bowenal die teateropvoering, is 'n baie fisieke aangeleentheid. Dis fisiek, grafies, driedimensioneel op 'n manier wat 'n roman of 'n verhaal nooit kan wees nie. [...] Wat die kyker sien is baie werklik en konkreet. (18)<sup>18</sup>

Despite the director's assertion that the film be viewed as more than a "gay" movie" the explicit enacted sex is shocking to the heteronormative viewer and does not allow for escaping the heterosexual hegemony implied by the cisgender of the two men. The sex scenes also adds tension to the film, carrying across the sense of transgression involved in the acts, as the story is set entirely on Robben Island where the two men are serving out their sentences. The scenes are rushed and passionate, conveying the time constraints the two prisoners would have suffered when enacting their intimacy. Munro, similarly, reads these scenes as "explicit depict[ions of] the two men's penetration of one another" (62-63). This supports my claim that whilst the film seeks to escape being labelled as a gay film the sex scenes and the directors' framing of their inspiration to make the film suggests that it first and foremost cannot be read as anything else.

There is a clear hierarchy to be discerned in the prison in which the two are kept. Race is used as the first marker through which one's standing is determined: in the case of the prison society in *Proteus*, Rijkhaart's desire for a public relationship with Claas is not only transgressive in terms of his racial privilege but similarly seeks to escape 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>18</sup> "The gay drama in production – whether on the high stage, on film or video – does not allow the viewer to forget for a moment what the sexual orientation of the (main) characters is. [...] The film, but most of all the theatre performance, is a very physical matter" (18).

restrictions on sexual behaviour as primarily heterosexual and for the purpose of ensuring the reproduction of the family and state through the act of procreation. Claas's response that the other men may notice, asking if this is what Rijkhaart wanted, marks him as a racial inferior, obliged to be more vigilant in invisibilising himself and his transgressive desire. It is reasonable to assume that if the two were found out Claas would imagine himself as being subject to harsher punishment than Rijkhaart. Here is their interchange in full:

CLAAS: Wait?

RIJKHAART: What's with you?

CLAAS: What? Stay let's finish the pipe.

RIJKHAART: Why do you suddenly want to talk?

CLAAS: Better than talking to myself.

RIJKHAART: And next week? Next month?

CLAAS: What?

RIJKHAART: Nothing.

[He moves to leave the tent the two are in. Claas grabs his leg and pulls him back.]

CLAAS: Tell me about Amsterdam?

RIJKHAART: I've told you already.

CLAAS: Tell me about the cinnamon. What's wrong now?

RIJKHAART: You ignore me and you don't talk to me now suddenly you want to hear about cinnamon.

CLAAS: Come. Tell.

RIJKHAART: As you like. As usual.

[He tells him the story he had told him about seeing Nevin have sex with a sailor in Amsterdam.]

CLAAS: You're so good.

RIJKHAART: Nevin is so good.

CLAAS: No, you. You're so hot.

RIJKHAART: It's your Nevin that's so hot.

CLAAS: You! You're so lovely.

RIJKHAART: Perhaps this week.

CLAAS: You know the others watch me all the time.

RIJKHAART: So we fuck. Months go by and you won't look at me.

CLAAS: We can't be friends or they'll know.

RIJKHAART: They know, Claas.

CLAAS: They don't. They can't.

RIJKHAART: They've known for years.

CLAAS: They mustn't know. If they found out they'd kill us.

RIJKHAART: You're alive. I'm alive, and yet everyone knows.

CLAAS: How's this, sailor? I thought you were the careful one.

Claas's concern seems to be primarily one of self-preservation; "They mustn't know. If they found out they'd kill us". Ironically, this is exactly what happens and Claas in this moment foreshadows the inevitability of the pair's death. The acknowledgement Rijkhaart is asking for highlights the extent to which he has become emotionally attached to Claas. This is what moves their encounters from a space of circumstantial homosexuality. Munro in her reading of the film proposes "that although we cannot know whether the actual twenty-year relationship between the two men involved what *we* would call 'love,' we cannot rule out an emotional attachment, either; prison relationships are nothing if not complex" (65). It is clear from the dialogue in the scene quoted above that Rijkhaart wants them to be friends, companions, and compatriots. Rijkhaart's inability to express what he wants reflects limitations placed on his racialized white body. Simultaneously, as habitual sodomite and superior European, Rijkhaart is familiar with the strong homosexual sub-culture developing in the colonial centre. For him there is an established example of how the two can love: "The historical Rijkhaart came from Rotterdam and could conceivably have been acquainted with an emerging homosexual subculture in that town, but he was only eighteen years old when he was deported in 1713" (Ben-Asher et al 440). Similarly, Claas is limited by his inescapable standing as racial subaltern. This is an example of how the early colonial space seeks to enclose both body and mind within a specific category that would then have affected social standing and access to social capital.

In the next scene Rijkhaart is shown drawing water when he finds Claas's beads lying on the ground next to him. It is a gesture that translates well, for Rijkhaart who is warmed by it and starts to wear Claas's beads around his neck with pride. The beads become a symbol to the rest of the prison community that the two of them are sexually and emotionally involved with each

other as it serves to tie each character to the other. In this context the beads take on the significance of the wedding ring and Claas's giving of it to Rijkhaart becomes a means through which the couple is able to share their bond publicly, although arguably in a much coded manner. Ironically, it is in response to Rijkhaart's wearing of the beads that the pair starts making more explicit attempts at social control of the other prisoners. It becomes clear when he is later confronted by a white prisoner, who ultimately testifies that he had seen the pair on numerous occasions engaging in the "abominable act," that it is not the act of sodomy that drives him to testify against the two. Instead, he is affronted by the fact that Rijkhaart would willingly submit himself to and wear the symbolically laden beads of a "Hotnot". He asks Rijkhaart why he does not become his "wyfie", thus seemingly wanting to rectify the miscegenistic nature of Rijkhaart and Claas's relationship. I support Munro's consideration of the film:

*Proteus* presents sexual love between men in the prison, and the declaration of same-sex desire, as a form of heroism that is part of South Africa's history of struggle against imperialism. The relationship between the two imprisoned men is based not on dominance but on mutual desire - albeit initially conflicted. [...] [I]t is significant that both male leads are conventionally masculine - their relationship is in that sense both egalitarian and homonormative. (62)

It is my view that it is exactly this semblance of egalitarian homonormativity that threatens the racially- based colonial structure, even in its carceral institutes. This is the reason why the white prisoner confronts Rijkhaart about his relationship with Claas – through their mutual submission to each other Rijkhaart is seen to be playing a part in undermining the racially-based structure of the prison. Ultimately, the jealous, racist, fellow-convict tells one of the guards about the two and their sexual engagement. In response to this the two are lashed/tortured in an attempt to make them confess their "abominable nature". This scene finds meaning in Foucault's ideas around confession and its importance in maintaining capitalist heterosexual hegemony. The two

prove man enough, as they withstand the pain and, having not been made to confess, the two are left to further serve out their sentences together. This scene, in which the two are tied together and whipped, helps to support the relationship in the minds of the viewer. Their physical torture serves to present the two as a romantic couple – which is a theme that continues throughout the film, as the two are later kept in the same prison cell when they are tortured at the castle, as well as tied together when they are executed by drowning. This suggests that from the earliest times the South African sodomist body was attacked in an attempt to correct it from its abnormal tendencies. The first punishment of the two being lashed together is a clear indication of the way in which homosexuality is located in the body and it is through physical punishment, torture or treatment that it is policed and extracted from the body.

Of the texts used in this study this narrative is the earliest, hence it is placed as the first to be analysed here. Ironically, whilst it is the earliest, it is one of the most contemporary examples of representing a history of same sex desire in South Africa. The historical record dates Claas and Rijkhaart's trial for sodomy as occurring in the year 1735. The debate surrounding same-sex marriage in the country that was ongoing when the film was made serves to complicate the film's position as the first representation of homosexuality/ies in an attempt to encourage the legalizing of the gay marriage bill in South Africa. The representation of the two white characters pursuing Claas in the beginning of the film, when he is first arrested and consequently sentenced to imprisonment on Robben Island, labels them as precursors to Afrikaners – as Dutch settlers, espousing an indigenized version of European culture. At the same time Claas's own identity is constructed as extending to and blending with the apartheid racial category of coloured, which refers to the mixed-race people of whom Claas is a symbolic progenitor. The "miscegenation" common at the Cape during these times causes Claas and Rijkhaart's love story to be tied to the

first record of (Western) history at the Cape. Their story serves to enrich a study of the early history of the Cape, albeit queering the archive and historical record. Due to their awareness of the film's significance as gay polemic, the directors have spent much time ensuring that the representation of this love story sits well with the historical data of the time.

The filmmakers' use of experimental filmic devices allowed them to position the narrative as both reproducing and constructing the archive. These devices remind the modern viewer of his/her place and context which in turn means that the film becomes an uncanny almost melancholic reproduction of the past from the present. Examples of this is the use of modern petrol drums and plastic bags in the film where the two items become symbols of contemporary influence on the film. It reminds us that this is a modern reproduction of the past and that through this reproduction the film is meant to be a fictionalised representation of historical events. Since the script and subsequent film was inspired by the legal testimonies of the two accused (Claas and Rijkhaart), it is limited in that it seeks to construct contemporary meaning out of historical data that often do not record personal/private motivations and insights into the reasons and true nature of certain incident. At the same time, the film is the first full-length South African feature film directly engaging with same-sex relationships. This is also true for the collections, *Wisselstroom: 'n Bloemlesing* (1990),) and *Queer Africa, Collected and New Fiction* (2013), both being firsts of their kind. Each of the compilers of these collections shows an awareness of their contributing to and creating the queer archive. Through the publication of their anthologies, they bring together representations of homosexual experiences in the country, and recently on the continent as a whole.

As Jack Lewis recalls:

When John and I were trawling through the Cape Town archives, it was quite spooky coming across the convict register in which the names of

Claas and his “race” (registered as “Hottentot”) and Rijkhaart were religiously entered year after year. [...] The fact that Claas was “Hottentot,” or more precisely Khoi, made a huge difference: they are the “first peoples” of southern Africa, who have inhabited these parts for millennia. There was a genocidal campaign waged by the colonists to eradicate them, and it was going on at the time of the events described in the movie, as *Proteus* points out in various ways. (438).

It is precisely because Claas is a “Khoekhoe” that this particular story enters the public imaginary. There are other studies of the colonial record showing evidence of same-sex attraction and sodomy as enactment thereof around the Cape, but the story of Rijkhaart and Claas is rare because it tells of consensual sex across racial lines. The importance of race and the history of racial oppression in the country are shown to influence the most intimate of acts in human relations, and they position this intersection between race and sex right at the beginning of South Africa’s history under colonialism. This notion is not unproblematic, as the film serves to suggest a corruption of the indigenous man by the habitual colonizing sodomite, a reading all too familiar within the homophobic confines of African scholarship. Although the first instance of sex between the two men was initiated primarily by Claas, it is Rijkhaart that is represented as the seducer. At the same time the film seeks to undermine this, as Claas is initially not shown to submit sexually to Rijkhaart. Claas is represented as submitting to Rijkhaart sexually in those moments when he is most stressed and needs some form of affection and acknowledgement.

Sex is fundamentally imbued with socio-political power, and both characters use this sexual power to further their own self-interested enterprise. An example of this is how Claas later uses Nevin’s sexual attraction to him to try and ensure an early release from prison. Perhaps the saddest way in which the love between the two men and their sexual encounters is shaped and restricted is when Rijkhaart later suggest that he and Claas could make a life for themselves together after being released from prison as “master and servant”. Despite this, a sign of how he

further uses his race and sexuality to attain some form of power is Claas's insistence that he will be "free". Ironically, it is Rijkhaart who is able to provide him with comfort by which he is able to escape his incarceration – sexual moments in which they transcend the confines of their racialized skins and the colonial carceral space. In my view it is here that the importance of *Proteus* as a narrative lies.

Directors John Greyson and Jack Lewis "purposely introduced anachronistic props and costumes from the 1960s [...] to reference the Robben Island that everyone knows, the apartheid era prison of Nelson Mandela" (452). They note that they "wanted the present to haunt the colonial past, with material ghosts from living memory interrupting and problematizing this account of Claas and Rijkhaart in 1735, a period of Dutch colonial history that barely exists in the popular imagination and that has almost no visual referent in the mainstream culture" (452). The notion of introducing this memory into the "popular imagination" and "mainstream culture" meant that "*Proteus* is not only aimed at conveying something to gay South Africans" (439). As indicative of how the film seeks to avoid singularly addressing a 'gay' audience Greyson notes how "[i]t [...] asks questions about how we come to be who we are, and about the role of a 'gay identity' in that" context (439). The film thus rubs up against recent notions of homosexuality as un-African and the complicated political nature of such statements. It attempts an answer which suggests that sex in the African context is complicated by an intersectionality that still shapes current constructions. This reflects the sad, racist influences of colonialism that still haunt our societies, even one as notably constitutionally advanced as South Africa is.

The narrative of the film represents a response to the idea of homosexuality in Africa as imported through colonization. By entering this debate the film's presentation of archival data to the converse serves to answer the question of homosexuality's presence in Africa by staging

performances of it. The research and factual information that support and ground the film help to further serve this polemic commitment. The name of the film in itself, *Proteus*, has interesting connotations which help to frame Claas's subaltern identity, and the film as a first gay full-feature film. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1997) defines proteus as deriving from Greek mythology, referring to "a sea-god able to take various forms at will"; "a changing or inconsistent person or thing" (1101). The legend holds that if one were to successfully hold Proteus down in submission he would tell the future<sup>19</sup>. Proteus lends his name to the various species of protea flowers native to South Africa, the flower being used as a key visual in the film and its cultivation on the island providing the context for the two main characters' affair. Significantly for the ambitions of the film it also has the connotation of being the first of a kind, a reference to the legendary Proteus being the first son of Poseidon. This framing through naming allows for aetiology that places the modern homosexual's historical identity at the beginnings of documented history in the colonies.

#### Transcription as Historicizing Gay Identities

The film opens to reveal three white stenographers. It is set in 1964 South Africa, the prime years of the apartheid regime. The archive and its function as record-keeper and retainer of historical documents have been integral to the discussion around homosexuality in South Africa, and Africa at large. This is indicative of the important role an almost archaeological excavation of the historical archive has had in allowing a post-colonial reimagining of indigenous histories and sexualities. In this kind of research, particularly concerning 'homosexuality' in the South African context, the legal archive is of particular concern. The

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<sup>19</sup> "Aeschylus created a satyr play on an episode in the *Odyssey*: Menelaus's comic encounter with Proteus, a sea god who has the Dionysian ability to change into any form he desires. [...] [W]ith Proteus metamorphosing himself successively into a lion, serpent, panther, boar, body of water, and tree. [...] Menelaus at last forces Proteus to use his prophetic gifts to foretell the Greek leader's successful return" (Harris and Blatzner, *Classical Mythology*, 544-545).

harsh laws punishing sodomy that governed the country up until 1996 allow the archivist access to court cases that reflect sodomical relations. Through these one is able to read subversive ways in which male-on-male sexuality in the country had been shaped by intersections between race and gender.

This process of transcribing and recording is what drives the narrative in *Proteus* and highlights the importance of identification through naming and categorisation. As it opens in the archive, the film is first and foremost grounded in the legitimacy of the text. This is quite literally symbolized by the original record in the film as “the manuscript you see in the opening sequence of the movie is the actual manuscript record of the trial of the two men” (Brazell, “Screening Historical Sexualities” 438). It is the “Criminele Regts Rolle des Casteels De Goede Hoop” (1735), a document integral to a number of studies in life at the early Cape colony. The film’s quotes from the manuscript include “a full confession [that] was made with the filthy and abominable words: Send mij maar op, ik het hom in’t gat geneukt”. R Bruce Brazell discusses the difficulties with regard to language, transcription and translation that the film raises through its recollection of words. The archive and court record are made to stand and speak for the experiences of Claas and Rijkhaart, thus seeking to affirm the modern viewer’s finding familiarity in the story and characters. Rijkhaart’s statement, “send mij maar op, ik het him in’t gat geneekt” is constructed as a direct confrontation, a political and social defiance of the heteronormative colonial institution.

But the archivists, marked by their familiar conservative dress, are occupied with a process of decoding and relabelling that ultimately take the form of censorship. The problem is presented as one to do with translation, and this is done taking a historical perspective into account. “Gat neukt” refers in Afrikaans to sewing a hole (as in an item of clothing), but because

the translation is into English the archivist relies on the construction of sodomy in the British/European tradition as “an offence against God and man alike”. From the onset, the act of sodomy as a signal for homosexuality is marked in the film as that which is open to mistranslation and erasure. “I fucked him up the arse” becomes a declaration which is too descriptive and deviant – something that is an “offence against God and man alike”. It is a declaration that sits uncomfortably because of its suggestion of pleasure and desire. As Noa Ben-Asher notes, “overall, the film is cynical about academic attempts to historicize sexualities. In the opening scene, for example, as the 1950s-style ladies with typewriters try to translate *fucking*, they criticize themselves for being too modern, too contemporary” (441). The narrative is thus self-aware in representing itself as an attempt at reconstituting a ‘gay history’ that is seen as important to the contemporary affirmation of gay identity within the legalisation of gay marriage in the country. “I fucked him in the arse” becomes a battle cry that seeks to resound from the beginning of South African history.

Ben-Asher argues that “the film critically locates the viewer’s relationship to sodomites as ‘pre-modern homosexuals’, in parallel with the [...] colonizers’ determination to give scientific names to African plants and races”. According to him “[w]hen we try to understand how the ‘modern homosexual’ came about, we are engaged as voyeurs in erotic acts of translation” (441). As Ben-Asher remembers:

Linnaeus named *Proteaceae*, the national flower of South Africa, in 1735, the same year that Claas and Rijkhaart were tried and executed in Table Bay [...]. [This] allowed [them] to mobilize the metaphors of binomial classification and in a broader sense the central question of naming that drove [the] story: what names could Claas and Rijkhaart have for each other, for their feelings, for the sex they shared? (440)

R. Bruce Brasell engages with the “[m]ultiple languages [...] spoken in the film”, highlighting the fact that “[n]ot only are spoken dialogue and written words translated in the narrative of the film by one character for another, but the film itself then translates those diverse languages into English subtitles” (442). This gives the film the sense of mediation one finds when confronted with reading the archive as historical proof for a very modern construction: homosexuality. The archive in general affords the reader the ungainly perspective of the colonialists, with in some cases explicitly racist engagement with the other. One is forced to perform a multi-discursive reading past/through whilst at the same time acknowledging the contextual perspective. There is a careful reading that is first marked by an undeniable scepticism of the narrators and characters. Brasell highlights this when he notes the unreliability of the film as carrier of historical meaning:

Given the incredible intertwining of languages in the film and the dependence of an English-only speaker on translations, such a spectator might wonder if the filmmakers, like Claas, are unreliable translators. Yet all that such viewers can do is nakedly trust the filmmakers not to mislead them as Claas does to Virgil and Rijkhaart.

With its intersecting narratives of colonial expansion and the transgressive, miscegenistic love stories of the Cape, even Claas Blank is named for his protean qualities. His name becomes a means through which to signal the undoing of his people and their descendants. Blank is Afrikaans for white, the term blank in English further enriches his name, evoking a sense of nothingness, something to be written onto, filled in. Like the land that is being occupied by white colonial experience, Claas becomes the subject onto which it is written. Claas speaks English and Dutch, language skills that come to be invaluable to him and his safeguarding of his own life and restricted rights. When we are introduced to him he is being pursued by a group of Afrikaner men – the film's reference to a Boer commando. He is found in a large wooden chest into which two English botanists are putting their collected specimens. This introduction is significant, as

later Claas is throughout the film a specimen. This is made most explicit when he is used by Niven as a source of the indigenous names for the plants being collected. He is also ethnographically rendered by the botanist as an example of his people; whilst at the same time presented as wanting to enter the botanists' service as both servant and sexual partner.

Addressing the way in which Claas himself resists the Western tendency towards scientific categorisation, Francois Olivier highlights that as a Khoekhoe "Claas is the bridge between simian and Homo erectus [,] one of nature's oddities" (101). In "A Queer (Re)Turn to Nature? Environment, Sexuality and Cinema" he associates "the herbarium in the film [with a] space of order which is threatened by the disturbing relation between Nevin and Claas, disturbing because of the colonial power relations which Claas resists, and disturbing because of the nature of Nevin's sexual desire which does not fit into Linnaeus's systematizing of nature, and by analogy human sexuality" (102). Claas thus embodies that which lies outside the realm of a simplified and categorised possibility: he is as racially confusing as he is sexually, and all the while he engages in an active attempt at dissidence. In this context the narrative and identities of the two botanists represent a more heteronormative manifestation of same-sex relationships and provides a counter-narrative against which Claas and Rijkhaart's relationship is juxtaposed. Through their education and similar whiteness they are able to hide their relationship more effectively and are able to retain, at least on the part of Nevin, their lives.

Claas is the only survivor of "a pack of Hotnots [who supposedly] stole [the] livestock" of a group of men, marked as precursors to the later white Afrikaner man. "We killed most of them but one of the bastards escaped us", a statement by one of Claas's pursuers, serves to extend the narrative to the increasing attempts by the white farmers around the Cape to rid themselves of the scourge of the "Hottentot". An engagement with this history suggests that

some farmers around the Cape were using the excuse of reprisal for cattle thefts as a means through which they could expand their farmlands and raid indigenous people's homes for cattle and goods. This first example of incongruent historical narratives in the film serves to ground one of its concerns – that of intersecting histories and the need for nuanced and informed representations of such histories.

When Claas is found in the wooden chest he appeals to one of the men in his own language, English. His ability to speak the language of “superior” men marks him as different from other ‘Hottentots,’ and he draws the already homo-eroticized men's attention. He begs them to take him to the magistrate and not allow him to be taken away by the Afrikaners, who presumably would have killed him, as they did the rest of his group. He asks to be allowed to plead his case as per the laws that govern the colony. This multilingual Claas is empowered in his subordination. He is quite literally the subaltern that does speak and does so boldly and urgently, affording him a post-colonial voice. This voice is most clear when he at the end of the film uses it to confess, and cast his lot with his lover, who has already been found guilty and sentenced to death based on a confession derived through torture. Here the body is cast as that from which one extracts the truth, even when a common discourse is lacking. Earlier and because of his multilingualism Claas is found not guilty of theft, which saves him from certain death.

The botanists in the film are engaged in a process of identification and naming. Francois Olivier addresses the importance of naming and classification to reading the film when he notes:

Niven represents the post-enlightenment shift in how the natural world and human nature is viewed. Proteus is significant [...] because it draws interesting parallels between two systems of representation: eighteenth-century natural history and modern-day sexual categories. The film's cinematic presentation asks us to consider how the latter is historically rooted in the former. The development of contemporary sexual categories

was not possible without the new epistemological regimes ushered in by eighteenth-century enlightenment; a framework that produces specifically Western notions of legibility (in which queerness is often devalued or seen as a threat). (99)

An example of this in the film is how Claas's multilingualism allows him to volunteer for the task of naming and categorisation. He embodies the limits to any classification system that seeks to make and maintain a Western centred order in the world. Claas uses this act of translation as a means through which to have his resistance enter the historical record, supporting his sense of agency and dissident personality. This is symbolized through the subtitles translating the name of one the plants he is asked to identify as "cunt". As a modern filmic feature imposed on a re-imagined past, the subtitles help the modern reader to locate how language and understanding are used as a means of transgression and dissidence. This is confirmed by the fact that the black prisoners use Khoekhoegowab (Nama) as a means through which to communicate with each other without detection. Through these devices Claas becomes the voice of the indirectly documented indigenous archive, an archive which is sparse.

As another symbol of his compromised nature and tenacious intelligence Claas is often reminded of his position as subordinate and prisoner. This reading of the relationship between Claas and Rijkhaart helps to illustrate the complexities and nuanced ways in which sexuality and identity were conceived of before the medicalisation of the homosexual. Olivier addresses this particular notion when he argues that

Claas, Rijkhaart and Virgil's shared homoerotic desire undermines Enlightenment science and, specifically, the workings of Natural History's gaze; which [...] [is] a technology of specification that often serves a homophobic, heteronormative and/or colonial-imperial world view. (103-104)

Indication of how Claas, in particular, resists a simplification and categorisation of self and sexuality is shown by him telling Rijkhaart about the girl he is to marry when he leaves prison, whilst having sex with him. Given the sexual nature of the story it seems that he is constructed as fantasizing about the girl. She more so than Rijkhaart functions as a sexual stimulus, and in fact Rijkhaart is reduced to a hole to be penetrated. He speaks of her big breasts – stereotypical markers of indigenous femininity and womanhood as embodied in the well-researched body of Sara Baartman. Also, as Ben-Asher claims, “[v]ery often what is read as gay history is actually bisexual history—or the manifestation of polymorphous sexuality” (“Screening Historical Sexualities” 442). This is particularly true for sexualities in South Africa, where it is only through the act of illicit sodomy that one is able to access an archive that suggests a form of same-sex male sexuality in the country. This representation or archive is thus marked by the notions of deviance and non-conformity.

Claas’s inability or unwillingness to name what they have reminds us of his role as unreliable translator for the English botanists. Even in his multilingualism he is unable to find a word to classify and explain his relationship with Rijkhaart. At the same time he resists falling back on established heteronormative terms which describe a similar heterosexual interaction. This heterosexual biological discourse is what Claas relies on when negotiating sexual positions with Rijkhaart. Sexual submission on the part of a man through penetration is here referred to as being the wyfie, supporting an earlier claim that Claas and Rijkhaart’s sexual encounters are mired in an intersection of race and patriarchal positioning. Claas can be seen as refusing to acknowledge this to himself, to label his subversion, insisting instead that his primary goal is to flee the Cape and reconnect with his mother and extended family.

In one of the most meaningful interchanges between the two one becomes increasingly aware of the limitations set on the pair's relationship because of the racist colonial society in which they find themselves. Here Rijkhaart and Claas are on top of the water tower, a space that has become marked as the couple's intimate space:

RIJKHAART: In five years, I'll be out too. Madelief says they're giving out farms beyond the Berg River. I could get one.

CLAAS: That's no help. By that time, I'll be long gone.

RIJKHAART: We could live together; raise cattle as master and servant.

CLAAS: They'd never let us.

RIJKHAART: They'd never know. We'd be so careful.

CLAAS: They shoot us dead. Don't cry.

RIJKHAART: I've never asked for anything in my life, Claas.

CLAAS: Nor, I.

RIJKHAART: Say it.

CLAAS: What?

RIJKHAART: What we have.

CLAAS: What have we?

RIJKHAART: What it is.

CLAAS: What is it?

RIJKHAART: What we are.

CLAAS: What are we?

RIJKHAART: I don't know, what's the name for it?

CLAAS: What is the name?

RIJKHAART: Why can't you say it?

CLAAS: "There is no name."

As mentioned before, beyond naming their sexual engagement Rijkhaart also wants an acknowledgment of their love or at least the emotions he is feeling. He has even gone so far as to imagine a life beyond prison for the two, where they hide their sexuality under the common image of the master and servant.

The refusal to name a sexual experience or attraction in an attempt to escape the controlling effects of categorisation highlights the way in which same-sex experiences in the country have always rubbed uncomfortably against neat categorization. The queer nature of the

film *Proteus* is that it raises the interesting conflation between prisons as institutions of disempowerment at the same time as prison functions as a space of opportunity. Whilst Claas and Rijkhaart's institutionalisation restricts their bodies and seeks to control their criminality through controlling and punishing their physicality, so too does the prison provide a space in which their queer love is possible. It is a space that through its isolation from heteronormative society allows for an interracial homosexuality that is not possible outside the confines of the prison.

### ***Historicizing "Queered" Institutions: Proteus as Archival Project***

The way in which Rijkhaart as a colonial sodomite is himself hindered by his intentions and the political power of desire is shown when Rijkhaart tells Claas of his childhood in an orphanage. Orphanages are themselves homoerotic spaces as the children are often separated and grouped together based on their biological sex. The pitfalls of such a space are hinted at when Rijkhaart tells Claas:

RIJKHAART: I never broke a rule for fear of the drowning cell. I had nightmares I couldn't pump fast enough. For six years I made sure that I never got the drowning cell.

The image of the drowning cell is important as the story functions as a means through which Rijkhaart is able to create and cement his community and relationship with Claas. It later becomes clear that Claas's remaining on the island by not trying to escape and his relationship with Rijkhaart were because of the latter using this to hoodwink Claas. The unreliability of the

narratives people tell is confounded when Rijkhaart tells Claas of the true motivation around his story about the drowning cell:

RIJKHAART: You can have my gruel, my water. You can yell at me. Hit me, Claas. I lost my head. You know I can't stand pain, I'm not a proper man.

CLAAS: You were in the drowning cell barely an hour and you confessed.

RIJKHAART: It was the wet bag. He choked me with the wet bag.

CLAAS: You said drowning cell.

RIJKHAART: There is no drowning cell.

CLAAS: You said it was in the courtyard.

RIJKHAART: It was a story.

CLAAS: What?

RIJKHAART: It was the dagga talking, Claas. I wanted you to stay with me.

CLAAS: You said it was like the one in your orphanage.

RIJKHAART: In the orphanage, when I ran away I learned that it was a story. It was just a story they made up to scare us.

CLAAS: There was never a drowning cell?

RIJKHAART: They did you with the wet bag also. You were half dead when they brought you back. There was never a drowning cell. It was only in your imagination.

Despite the superiority afforded Rijkhaart because of his contextual position and race, as well as his knowledge about what the two are engaging in, he is made to occupy the position of the submissive throughout the film. It is at this moment that the viewer realizes that he had not been as passive as his performance had suggested. He is shown to have been steadily manipulating Claas into enacting an intimacy that he wanted or desired. He is for the most part of the narrative speechless, only raising his voice with regard to issues he finds of particular emotional concern. The film reinforces this by focusing most of the narrative and action around Claas; in fact one gets the clear sense that this is Claas's world/film into which Rijkhaart is intruding. His voice interrupts the idealistic limited bodily acts of transgression Claas is comfortable with, inserting into it a sense of emotion, a sense of culture. The narrative's focalization on Claas serves to further feminize or subordinate Rijkhaart through his lack of a focalised voice. This feminization

is reiterated in the scene where Rijkhaart refers to himself as not being “a proper man”, unable to “stand pain”. There is a clear association between masculinity and the ability to withstand torture. Interestingly, it is exactly this compromised nature of Rijkhaart that seems to spark Claas’s attraction to him. Claas’s interaction with a fellow-inmate of colour when Rijkhaart is first brought to the island (“Watch out for the faggot”; “He’s a two-sexer?”; “No, just a Dutch faggot”) reminds one of this.

When the two men are chosen to help the two botanists, Virgil Nevin and Lourens, it becomes clear to the viewer that there is an attraction between the Dutchman and Claas. The relative freedom, compared to the confines of the prison that the botanists’ garden on the island affords the men allows them to create moments of intimacy. The narrative of Claas and Rijkhaart’s relationship is mirrored by that of the botanists: Lourens is portrayed as quite feminine and almost camp in his performance of eighteenth-century masculinity. Nevin is obviously marked as more masculine and embodies the homoeroticism of the male colony/colonial enterprise, demonstrating the intimacies that developed between men in these extremes of circumstances. When Nevin is later shown to be making an ethnographic painting of Claas, it becomes clear that his attraction to the native is largely that of scientific voyeur to specimen, as he looks at him through the fetishized lens of the colonial scientist. He is cast in this role quite early and fully assumes it when he finds Rijkhaart and Claas having sex for the first time. Instead of confronting them or having them punished, he peers at them through an opening in the side of the water tower. For Daniel Garrett, “[t]hat both Virgil and Claas have a sexuality that is fluid—difficult to define, more bisexual than homosexual—is itself an affirmation of human complexity” (442). This notion of the complex nature of human sexuality is squarely grounded within a social constructionist worldview which holds that the category of the

homosexual is a means through which heteronormative patriarchal (white) society is able to keep itself perpetuated. I found that this notion is particularly significant in a reading of South African texts, as it takes into account the effects of the double labelling/stigmatization of the black homosexual, whilst highlighting the compromised state of the white homosexual in the country.

The clearest moment of Nevin's sexual attraction to Claas as a fetishized specimen is found when Nevin is shown drawing Claas. This is also the moment in which Claas is shown to be conscious of his position as an empowered sexual object. This is another way in which Claas is shown to use his ability to speak Nevin's language as a means through which to enable his own agenda. In this strange way, Claas becomes the most empowered character in sexual terms in the film and his use of body and tongue allow for his interloping and sedition. In an earlier scene he uses this to mark Rijkhaart as the aggressive sodomite who cannot control his urges and is clearly a danger to the other men. As viewers, we become aware that Claas understands the dangers of their behaviour, whilst at the same time recognizing the power it grants him. This is clearly shown when he threatens Rijkhaart with Nevin. He is thus able to read Nevin's attraction to him as a means through which to attain a form of agency.

Finally, the film serves as a means through which to introduce the terms *holnaaier*, *moffie*, *wifey* and *married* to our discussion. Each one of these reappears in a number of narratives engaging homosexuality in South Africa. They function as signs that signal the extent to which homosexuality in South Africa has been constructed in relation to heteronormativity, and how construction of gender influences the way in which the homosexual relationship is engaged with. The feminine Lourens thus becomes *wifey* to his masculine husband Nevin, who is literally also married to a woman. For Rijkhaart they remain "moffies", suggesting "moffie" as an early way of naming the sodomist both in an affirmative way and at the same time being

derisive. *Proteus* serves to highlight the way in which categorisation and naming have become integral to the South African heterosexual hegemony. The narrative is conscious of its role and its place within the South African gay milieu, assuming multiple voices and narratives, each seeking to address the complex nature of sexuality in the country as a place where race, gender and sexuality were made to intersect so as to determine categories of social worth and position. As a film set in the institution that was Robben Island, it serves to highlight the all-encompassing nature of “white colonial” control through the capitalistic exploitation and political position of the bodies of the polity.

***The Making of a “Snaakse” Boer: Early Constructions of Afrikaner Heteronormativity.***

One of the important notions I argue in this thesis is the idea that white masculinity in South Africa has for long been strictly regulated so as to perpetuate the well-being of the white family as primary representatives of the capitalist state. As that which constitutes and reproduces the white nation in Africa the white family attains a position of sanctification. Within this context, white men become charged with the duty to enforce their dominance over the land and its people in an attempt to safeguard the white hearth. The commando was integral to the expansion of white settlements into the colony, as they both serve as protectors against indigenous onslaughts whilst at the same time doubling as offensive hunting parties, tasked with clearing the land of its pesky subhuman inhabitants. In the article ““A Boer and His Gun and His Wife are Three Things Always Together”: Republican Masculinity and the 1914 Rebellion” by Sandra Swart, she engages the influences of the Boer commando, as precursor to the South African Defence Force, on the shape Afrikaner masculinity is to take under apartheid:

Afrikaner masculinity [...] was encoded and institutionalised in the Republican commando system, which functioned as a practical and symbolic mode of the masculinity of Boers, who, by the turn of the century, were coming to consider themselves as constituting Afrikaner society. The commando system extended to politics, culture and social mythology, a phenomenon that was to continue into the late twentieth century. *Kommando* was part of the social machinery in the construction of Afrikaner manhood, carrying a popular masculine culture [...] [I]t would appear that enrolling in the commando was a rite of passage. [...] *Kommando* was then a system for assigning status and was important in early socialisation of the young boer [...]. (738)

“Pinch” by Martin Hatchuel published in the collection *Queer Africa: New and Collected* (2013) narrates a similar retrospective historical reimagining of the love as *Proteus* does. The story describes the experiences of two young Afrikaner men who have become separated from the rest of their commando. It can be seen as an attempt to re-inscribe a history of Afrikaner hetero-masculinity with that which is queer. The story’s inability to come up with a term for the two men’s relationship, and it ending in their death, highlights the limitation of sexual identity afforded young white men in the country at the time. At the same time it suggests that these attractions and relationships were there, even if not overtly documented. The story is set during the Anglo Boer War which began in 1899 and ended in 1902; by doing this the author is clearly trying to evoke a connection between the events most associated with Afrikaner identity and the Afrikaners’ right to self-governance and dominance. During this war the Boers made use primarily of guerrilla tactics, where small groups of armed men would roam the country and attack the British forces, cutting off supplies and effectively undermining British ambitions to bring the colony back under its control. At this point in the South African historical chronology, Claas’s people had been hunted to near extinction and a more brutal institutionalised racism was taking hold. This was based on the mythology that was created at the time to justify Afrikaners as true rulers of the land.

When we find Meiring and Ludolf they have been separated from their commando. They are lost and are desperately trying to avoid capture by the British forces. Early in the story the reader is made aware of the nature of the attraction between the two men:

Ludolf could smell his animal smell and felt the rough, filthy cloth of his jacket against his cheek. [...] The smell was nothing: they'd got use to the stink of each other long ago and they'd got used to sleeping in pairs like this, sleeping as all the men did when they were on commando and the nights in the veld were cold beyond cold [...] But Ludolf had never got used to Meiring's body. It was too close. It was too fine. [...] "I'm cold," said Meiring and pushed himself backwards against Ludolf. But Ludolf had to hold himself away, hold the lower part of him away so that Meiring wouldn't feel his hardness. He felt bad as soon as he'd moved like that and made up for it by putting his arm around Meiring's shoulder and hugging his chest against his broad, strong back. (166)

The homo-eroticism of the army, the forced physical intimacy of men, at war frames the narrative. The two men are forced to share a blanket and as they do so they are placed in a position where physical intimacy is possible and accepted. This kind of intimacy finds a common trend in South African narratives as a men-only institutional space – all-boys schools and boy boarding schools, men's prisons, segregated mental institutions, the army/commando, and the South African mine hostel all allow for intimate physical contact between men and each other's bodies. This is further reinforced by the fact that white and black South African men are shown to form masculine fraternities, each influenced by a similar construction of femininity and or weakness of body and mind, as a way through which a man might be corrupted into homosexuality<sup>20</sup>. There is no sense that Ludolf feels concerned about the physical intimacy - instead he clearly is enjoying it - it's the effect of Meiring's fine body on his that makes him self-conscious and embarrassed. He is more concerned about the way in which Meiring would react to his discovery of Ludolf's attraction as signalled through his erection than the fact that he had the erection. This suggests an acceptance of

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<sup>20</sup> See Brenna Munro in her book *South Africa and the Dream of Love to Come: Queer Sexuality and the Struggle for Freedom* (2012).

the unnamed sexual desire the two are experiencing in these moments of intimacy. Ludolf provides the reader with his sense of the political structure of their friendship or, to borrow Munro's term, "fraternity of whiteness" (81):

They were friends and they were equals, but Meiring had always taken the lead like this. And it wasn't just his age: he's always been quicker than Ludolf, less trusting of others but also more daring, before the war always first with ideas for adventures, always leading them into trouble – and often leading them out again. But in the eighteen months since they'd become men by joining the fight [...], Meiring had aged the quicker of the two. (168-169)

Meiring is clearly cast here in the masculine role as he "take[s] the lead", has "always been quicker", "more daring", "first with ideas", and more affected by the war, as is shown by him having "aged the quicker of the two" (168-169). These labels remind one of the stereotypical labels around masculine prowess that affect construction of men in this era, as they are envisioned and celebrated through modern reimagining. Meiring's masculinity is also reflected by the positions the two assume when sleeping. Highlighting the queer intimacy of the militaristic Boer commando as microcosm, Ludolf recounts how he wakes to find Meiring lying "behind him, his body pressed tight against his own, knees behind knees, his hand on Ludlow's shoulder" (175).

[His] eyes grew wide as he realised Meiring's hardness was pressed against him, too, and that it was warm through the layers of their clothing. [...] Suddenly Meiring's hand moved onto his chest and he felt himself pulled even closer and he pushed himself back against him, pushed with his backside against his hardness and it was good. He felt it too, he thought. He feels it too. And his heart beat in his ears and his eyes filled and he squeezed them tight and he thought about kissing him. He'd never kissed anyone before, but he knew what it was and he didn't care, in the morning when they woke he'd kiss him. (175)

Meiring is shown to take the lead even in sexual engagement. The fraternity the two have developed through childhood and the closeness this allows both emotionally and physically

seemingly provides Meiring with the masculine power to be open about his sexual excitement. Even here, Ludolf is cast as the traditional feminised man, left to long for Meiring to kiss him, unable to turn around and initiate the sexual interaction. The fact that Ludolf is inexperienced in these matters highlights the sense of fluid sexuality associated with their age. Like Claas and Rijkhaart it seems the two do not know how to define what they are feeling but know the physical expressions of it.

This sense of erotic bliss is sadly interrupted, and the young, passive and inexperienced Ludolf is not allowed to have his wish fulfilled. The two are not provided the opportunity again to engage their love for each other. They are found the next morning by a group of British soldiers, who in this case represent the organised structure of the heteronormative (civilised) military which is in stark contrast with the animalistic proximity of the Boer commando. One of the soldiers, upon scrutinizing Meiring:

“This one’s wearing British insignia,” he said, pointing at Meiring. [...] “If the enemy wears our insignia, it’s a capital offence. Execute him.” “But a trial, sir, what about a trial?” “Why’s he getting his gun out?” said Ludolf. But Meiring said nothing. [He] turned to look deeply at Ludolf as the officer drew his weapon and pointed it directly at his beautiful, blonde head. And then he smiled at the boy he loved and said, once and sadly, “Pinch.” (176).

“Pinch” is the title of the story referencing the game the couple had played together since childhood, one which provided access to the other’s body - the sudden pinching of another’s body being a means by which to inflict and derive pleasure. Meiring’s being the first to be executed and his grasp of the coded exchange between the English men is contrasted with Ludolf’s relative ignorance and allows him to yet again take the lead in their relationship. The destruction of their queer bodies’ leaves the love story interrupted, placing it firmly within the romantic tradition of

young, forbidden love, undone through death. It highlights the cruelty of war and its gruesome toll on the lives of young men.

The conscious development of an archive which represents same-sex sexual attraction before and during colonialism will always be a retrospective reimagining. However, it is comfortable to be able to draw on narratives that construct one's sexual preference as having been enacted since documented history at the Cape of Good Hope. This is especially true in times when some seek to deny homosexuality its humanity and Africanness. *Proteus* signals the problematics around the importation of labels, as we misread and mislabel others. It suggests that even though things cannot easily be named they can be reduced to action, and in this case the act of sodomy became the representation of same-sex love and a relationship that lasts over ten years. It also introduces the notion of the carceral space/institution and its absence of women as a common cause for the situational homosexuality in the country, which some have used to discount same-sex relationships in prison. Importantly, this connects the homosexual inextricably with the notion of the social deviant/criminal. Within this context, Rijkhaart and Claas, along with their relationship, becomes a marker of their greater, embodied depravity. Rijkhaart is the habitual incorrigible homosexual and Claas cannot escape his subhuman criminality and sexual depravity. It is only through an unmaking – death – that their memory can be celebrated in their society.

“Pinch” is a similar attempt at re-inscribing homosexuality into a historical narrative that seeks to cast itself as largely hetero-masculine. In the highly policed institution of the Boer commando and the early Afrikaner community the undefined becomes a means through which to share intimacy and find love. Although the two characters are unable to express their love for each other verbally and name who they are, they seek to make new meaning of a childhood game. Pinch comes to represent their identity, sexuality and love for each other; it becomes a symbol for the

way in which humans are able to find coded expressions of sexuality even in the face of harsh controls.

### Chapter 3: Armed Afrikaner Men: Militarized Male-Eroticism

#### *Overview:*

Under apartheid, the Afrikaner and his language, Afrikaans, came to dominate the socio-political landscape of the country. As what can be described as the heteronorm against which the other was judged, white masculinity became particularly defined and measurable. White Afrikaans homosexuals thus occupied the interesting space in which they were both oppressed and labelled deviant because of their sexuality, whilst still retaining the power of their whiteness and Afrikaans dominance. The treatment of homosexuality by the South African Defence Force (SADF) under apartheid provides a theoretical context within which an analysis of *Moffie* (2006) by Andre Carl Van der Merwe is framed. *Moffie* is earmarked as the primary text for analysis here. It is for the most part a military text in the sense that it documents the experiences of a homosexual conscript as he navigates brutal, patriarchal masculinity whilst growing up and when in the SADF. The text is interesting in that it highlights the extent to which the Western medicalisation of homosexuality has influenced the ways in which the institution of the South African government – and as an extension the SADF – constructs and engages with homosexuality as a condition, pathology or deviance.

Prior to his experiences in the military Nicholas, the protagonist of *Moffie*, is already measured as lacking white masculinity. *The Oxford Dictionary* define moffie as “South African [English that is] informal [and/or] derogatory [and refers to a man who is] regarded as effeminate [or] a male homosexual” (867). This definition is appealing in that it highlights the inextricable link, even linguistically, between the label that is attached to the homosexual in South Africa and the stereotypes that inform the successful application of that particular category. Nicholas being branded a moffie signals to the reader a perceived lack of the kind of masculinity that apartheid

South Africa demanded of its white male citizens. This branding is not only done by his father, a stereotypical image of white patriarchy in the novel, but also by other Afrikaner men who seem to have a keen ability to identify the stereotypical signifiers/symptoms which indicate his moffiehood/homosexuality. Moffie, in the context of the novel, is often used to imply cowardice or a lack of (white) male aggressiveness. This suggests that the term ‘moffie’ reinforces racist, white, patriarchal, hetero-norms by serving as a deterrent. Every Afrikaner South African boy was taught to avoid having this term applied to him, coercing him into performing a particular masculinity and sexuality imperative for the survival of white dominance.

The analysis of *Moffie* will be supported through a number of Afrikaans short stories that primarily address the experiences of Afrikaner homosexuals in South Africa under apartheid. *Wisselstroom* (1990) compiled by Aucamp is the source of four of the six stories discussed here. They are “Die Redder” (1948) by I. D. du Plessis, “Die Jag” (1990) by Victor Munnik, “Stomp Hande” (1990) by Etienne van Heerden, “Swepe” (1990) by P. J. Haasbroek, Danie Botha’s “n Middag Langs Die Voor” (1990) and Zirk van den Berg’s story “Voor die Trein” (first published in *Ekstra Dun vir meer Gevoel* (1981)). “Bleek Hande” (1949) by Willem van der Berg was republished in *Soort Soek Soort* (1997), compiled by Johann De Lange. All these texts narrate the experiences of white men who grow up during apartheid and later come to identify as homosexual or gay. Whilst growing up the characters are shown to be confronted with various explicit and some hidden ways in which Afrikaner society seeks to restrict/limit performances of masculinity and whiteness. They narrate the ways in which the white colonial space proclaimed the homosexual as unfit to live. This is made explicit through the death of a number of the queer characters. In these white Afrikaans narratives death is seen to result “through either direct or

indirect killing” (Aucamp 31)<sup>21</sup>. As Aucamp notes, they also draw attention to “how often the gay figure is an artist: a painter, a poet, a writer, a composer” (16) and asks whether or not this can be read as an indication of a “conscious attempt [on the part of the writer to use the image of] the painter/poet as a metaphor for “n Annerste Soort” [a Different Kind/Type]. This he suggests may be in the “hope that the artistic otherness absorbs the sexual otherness in the imagination of the citizenry” thus making it less likely to respond to the representation with abhorrence and offence 16)<sup>22</sup>.

### ***The Hunt as Initiation into Afrikaner Manhood***

In “Die Redder” (1948) by I. D. Du Plessis, republished in the short story collection *Wisselstroom* (1990) edited by Aucamp, the general theme is that of the hunt and its subsequent required proficient, militaristic masculinity. It reflects the strong notions in Afrikaner culture that dictate sufficiency in providing sustenance and defending the homestead from a looming black peril. Skilled use of a rifle is of primary importance at the beginning of the colony but later, as the republic established its control over the black masses and their wild land through instituting its apartheid policies, hunting became a form of sport and pastime. Simultaneously, it retained its symbolic connection to Afrikaner masculinity and racial superiority. In this milieu the first hunt quickly becomes a means through which the masculine/dominant is discerned from the

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<sup>21</sup> All translations from Afrikaans into English are my own. Where I have made use of short quotes which could be grammatically integrated into my sentences I used my English translations, and the Afrikaans original is then provided at the bottom. For longer quotes the Afrikaans original was quoted in the text and the translation provided as a footnote. This was done for the sake of readability.

<sup>22</sup> “Dis opvallend, ook in wêreldletterkunde verband, hoe dikwels die gay-figuur ’n kunstenaar is: ’n skilder, ’n digter, ’n skrywer, ’n komponis. [...] Is hier sprake van ’n bewustelike greep – die skilder/digter as metafoor vir “n annerster soort”, met miskien die hoop dat die artistieke andersheid die seksuele andersheid gaan absorbeer in die verbeelding van die burgers?” (16).

feminized/inferior. Many an Afrikaner boy was expected to know how to hunt an animal and kill it. This often takes on the form of an initiation ceremony and signals a movement from boyhood to youth. This is significant in that there are specific developmental restrictions that are placed on the white man in South Africa as he moves from childhood to youth to manhood.

I. D. Du Plessis's "Die Redder" was first published in a collection of short stories entitled "Gevreesde Vriend" (1946). In it the reader finds "snaakse" Jan reluctantly accompanying two of his friends on a hunt (21). From the beginning the other two men are marked as more masculine than him – a fact that is further compounded by the description of him as strange/queer. Ironically, the men do not seem to be particularly good at shooting and killing their prey because, after wounding the steenbokkie, twice one of the men is forced to sever the animal's spine with his knife in an attempt to kill it. This is a somewhat extraordinary way of killing the animal, in that one would normally cut the animal's throat. In a reference to the hunter's impotence which is illustrated through his inability to kill the animal with his phallic weapon, the knife he uses to sever the animal's spine is too short for the task and he is forced by Jan's screams to "cut his throat"<sup>23</sup> (21). Jan's suggestion of the logical and quickest way of killing the animal allows the reader to associate him with compassion. He is able, unlike the other two men, to recognize the suffering of the animal. This quality of compassion is what marks him as different from the other hunters and helps to position him in the light of the queer/strange. In South African literature this reading is further complicated by the connection between the South African landscape and the native/black inhabitants of the land. The oppression and subjugation of the wildlife in the country, the demarcation of territories and fencing of farms are seen as a metaphor for the subjugation and oppression of black inhabitants of the land.

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<sup>23</sup> "Sny hom keel af" (Aucamp 21).

After this traumatic introduction, which leaves the reader sympathising with Jan, he leaves the other two men, who are in the process of carrying their prize home, and wanders off into the bush. It is in this solitude that the reader is given an insight into his inability to passively witness, let alone participate, in the slaughter of the animal. It is only when he is alone with his own thoughts that the reader is allowed access to his inner turmoil. Du Plessis's narrative is very different from those published later in the Afrikaans tradition, especially after the fall of apartheid, in that its narrator reflects a tormented, painful engagement with his own homosexuality. The sombre tone of the narrative is of course directly related to the oppressive nature of the apartheid regime and its restrictions of freedom based on categorization. It is notable that later narratives within this tradition are more affirmed and bold in their representation of the homosexual man's experience. This is particularly true of collections that have been published in recent years, which are seen to be speaking back to claims that seek to dismiss or tarnish the homosexual experience. This is a luxury that is in itself thanks to the politicisation of gay identity and active attempts in the all too recent 'gay' community to establish positive images of the homosexual experience.

The internal suffering with which Jan is struggling is illustrated through his engagement with his own sexuality and the need to keep it hidden from his friends and family:

Die ou beklemming bekruij hom, die beklemming van die dae voor sy verblyf in die buiteland, toe hy op hierdie vlaktes rondgedwaal het, oortuig dat daar vir hom geen uitkoms was nie; dat hy bo alle mense vervloek was en dat die lewe niks vir hom oor het nie. Wat het hy gedoen dat hy so die lewe ingeslinger moes word, liggaamlik gesond maar geestelik mismaak: 'n man wat die lewe deur die oë van 'n vrou beskou, 'n onding, gedoem om onder die gevare van sy niemandsland te beswyk? (49)<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "The old tightness stalked him, the tightness from the days before his stay in a foreign country, when he was on these plains wandering around, convinced that there was no outcome; him, cursed above all men and that life holds nothing good in store for him. What did he do to be slung into life like this, physically healthy but mentally flawed: a man who views life through the eyes of a woman, an absurdity, doomed to die in a dangerous no-man's land?" (49).

The description of himself as “a man who views life through the eyes of a woman, an absurdity” reflects the influence of Western theories on the construction of homosexuality (49). At the time the narrative is written, homosexuality is still engaged with as a form of hermaphroditic sexuality, although now theories locate this dualistic embodiment of the sexes in the mind/psyche. A modern reader would further infer that Jan might also be suggesting that he is in fact transgendered and not just homosexual. The complexity of his situation and his lack of understanding are indicative of the queer’s quest for belonging and a historical aetiology. “[D]oomed to die in a dangerous no-man’s land” (49) is ominous, in that it seems to foreshadow the somewhat open ending in which Jan is found lying on his back, “with the stars above him, and the peace of the plain around him. When they come to find him, the puff adder that was still lying near him, puffed like he was lord and master of the future” (55)<sup>25</sup>. Instead of it being the accident, as might first appear, Jan’s death may have been suicide. Unable to suffer the lie he is forced to live in his Vaderland he sees no other outcome but killing himself. He is not able to find the sense of white fraternity he is meant to engage in the country and he is undone, “doomed to die in a dangerous no-man’s land”.

Forced to rather die than ever have the truth about him known Jan has to wear a constant mask, even amongst his best friends (49):

As party van hulle moes weet wat in sy binneste omgaan, hoe hul manlikheid hom lok, hoe hy na meer as hul vriendskap verlang – watter veragting sou hulle nie vir hom voel nie, hoe sou hulle hom as ’n melaatse vermy. Tussen die drang na waaragtige liefde en die vrees dat die masker hom sou ontval, dat sy blinde verlange hom sou dwing om alles te verloor wat hom in die lewe dierbaar was – tussen hierdie uiterstes het hy gespanne gebly, sodat die wêreld donker geword het van frustrasie en die pyn. (49)<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> “met die sterre oor hom en die vrede van die vlakte om hom heen. Toe hulle by hom kom, het die pofadder wat nog naby hom lê, geblaas asof hy heer en meester van die toekoms was” (55).

<sup>26</sup> “If some of them had to know what he was feeling inside, how their masculinity lures him, how he longed for more than their friendship - what contempt they would feel for him, how would they avoid him like a leper.

Away from the restriction of Afrikaner culture and its masculinity that both attracts and excludes, Jan is afforded more freedom to explore his queer identity, and he does so by spending ten years in Europe. The idea of moving to Europe to escape South Africa's repressive laws is not restricted to the homosexual experience, and many others oppressed South Africans, like banned authors and political leaders, moved to Europe because of its relatively open and prosperous societies. One of the means through which the white South African man tried to delay his compulsory military service was by going and studying in Europe. It is in Paris that Jan meets Henri and quickly becomes part of the vibrant youth sub-culture in the city. The cosmopolitanism of the crowded foreign city stands in stark contrast to the restrictive vastness of the South African farm. It is here that he is afforded ten years of love and life without judgement, a time during which he is allowed to let his mask slip. It is only in death that the field/farm becomes welcoming and accepting of Jan and his return to his 'vaderland' becomes a return to non-being, to hiding, the mask of heteronormativity to be replaced with the mask of death.

It is Henri who saves Jan from killing himself the first time:

As dit nie vir Henri gewees het nie dan het hy die afgrond ingegaan, in daardie dae toe hy homself nog nie kon aanvaar nie, toe sy eie geaardheid hom 'n gruwel was. (51)<sup>27</sup>

It seems that this time the slaughter of the animal and the reality of life in South Africa as an Afrikaner homosexual man causes Jan to fulfil his longing to die. Jan's character helps one to conceive of a society in which to be homosexual is constructed as being wifeless and childless.

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Between the desire for true love and the fear that the mask he wears would slip that his blind desire would force him to lose everything dear to him - between these extremes he remained strained, so the world became dark from frustration and pain" (49).

<sup>27</sup> "If not for Henri he would have entered into the abyss, in those days when he still could not accept himself, when his own temperament was disgusting to him" (51).

This state of lacking seems to take away from the humanity and usefulness of the individual to society. In a land where the perpetuation of white dominance is structured squarely around the family and its dominance of the land, the homosexual loses socio-political capital and comes to be treated with hostility and aggression. The institution of the white farm and the hunt is seen to illustrate some of the ways in which white society used bio-power as a means through which to control the bodies of its subjects. The queer white Afrikaner is forced to leave his family farm and the broader social space that is the country if he is to live out his life as a self-identified homosexual. The narrative shows that the Afrikaner community had well-developed stereotypes associated with same-sex desire and most of these focused around notions of degeneration and weakness. The hetero-masculine phallic gun and its use to enforce white dominance over the feminized African land can be seen to be mirrored and measured through the use of the gun during the hunt. The ability to inflict violence becomes the means through which white heteronormativity is perpetuated.

### ***A Different Kind of Hunt: Melancholic Pederasty***

Two stories in *Wisselstroom* (1990) work with the theme of the hunt, but present it in a somewhat more stereotypically challenging way. The idea of stereotypes in gay literature is addressed by Aucamp, who writes:

“[S]tereotypes” exist in real life and in literature. The chances of type-formation within the gay community are very strong, for role-playing and role modelling is often a component of the gay lifestyle. (18) [...] Where does the heterosexual community’s image of the gay come from? Are they not of the gay community itself, in particular of writers who write about gays? (18-19)

“Stomp Hande” by Etienne Van Heerden and “Die Jag” by Victor Munnik represent this theme of sexual exploitation of children by homosexually marked men and present the homosexual man as the familiar literary or music teacher. This places the homosexual in a stereotypical position of suspicion, since he is immediately associated with being a threat to the boys in his care. According to Aucamp schools, boarding schools and orphanages can be constructed as spaces in which the homosexual youth is able to experience his first same-sex sexual experience. This is largely influenced by a conflation of hormones and sexual experimentation, and the fact that young men are constructed as not yet having been fully cemented into their heterosexual masculinity at this age. In “Stomp Hande” the teacher’s hunt for his prey is thwarted by a religious communalism true to Afrikanerdom. In this case the teacher’s specialty is mathematics and he also doubles as rugby coach after school. Different from the teacher who is primarily involved in the Arts, this one symbolises in his dress, subject matter and extracurricular activity the kind of masculinity most acceptable to Afrikaner society. Throughout the story the teacher is referred to as “die safaripak”. Safaripakke were often worn by male teachers as a kind of uniform. It has become associated with authority and a sign of learnedness and status. In South Africa there is the further association of the safari suit with the Afrikaner or Boer. It thus can be read as a sign of white authoritative masculinity. Aside from the safari suit, there is also the cane which is used to exert the teacher’s authority and masculine power.

The whipping scene to which the reader is first introduced signals hidden layers of fetishism and paedophilic fantasies associated with pain and humiliation – a clichéd representation of the depravity of the homosexual man. Riaan the protagonist is aware of the queer nature of the scene, “[h]e knows how comical he looks to the others in the desks with his head near his lower legs, elbows against the knees, grey school trousers teaming tight across his ass” (*Wisselstroom*,

44)<sup>28</sup>. Riaan is being whipped for being late once again for mathematics class. He had been praying to be alleviated from the sin of masturbation with a few of his schoolmates at a dam nearby. He attends Paul Roos Gymnasium, South Africa's oldest all-male white Afrikaans school. As part of the hunt "[t]he safari suit bends over him [,] [he is so close that the student can discern his masculine smell;] [h]e smells of shaving oil. The teacher's face was close, too close. He can smell his skin" (Wisselstroom, 45<sup>29</sup>). This sense of the invasion of the personal space of the attractive pubescent young man is used as means to create tension and expectation. Riaan recounts the ritual of his seduction:

En dae later het Meneer gesê hy moet smiddae kom vir ekstra lesse. In die woonstelletjie met die Ge Korsten-plate. 'n Frik Du Preez-poster teen die muur. Zane Grey-boeke, Archimedes-tydskrifte, *Physical Fitness for Men* (46)<sup>30</sup>

Due to the use of stereotyping the reader is familiar with the dangers inherent in the invitation extended to Riaan to come to his teacher's flat for *extra* lessons. The inappropriate closeness forced by the teacher's leaning in, serving to eroticise an already transgressive representation, makes the scene in his flat ripe with sexual expectation on the part of the reader. The use of transgressive sexuality, that of a male teacher seducing a male student, functions well in that it forces the reader to engage with the problematics around these kinds of sexual encounters in particular, and the transgressive nature of sexuality in general. The music, the posters and the magazines serve to mark the teacher as a homosexual. Unfortunately, the innocence of the child,

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<sup>28</sup> "Hy weet hoe hy vir die ander in die banke lyk: komieklik, met sy kop naby sy onderbene, elmboë teen die knieknoppe, grys skoolbroek wat styf span oor sy gat" (*Wisselstroom*, 44).

<sup>29</sup> "Die safaripak buk oor hom[,] [h]y ruik na skeerolie. Die onderwyser se gesig is naby, te naby. Hy ruik sy vel" (*Wisselstroom*, 45).

<sup>30</sup> "And days later Sir said he should come for extra lessons in the afternoon. In the small flat with the Ge Korsten records. Frik du Preez poster on the wall. Zane Grey books, Archimedes magazines, *Physical Fitness for Men*" (46).

who seemingly leaves the flat in shock, only able to reflect upon it properly later, taints these symbols as signs of a paedophile that uses homoerotic magazines to seduce his learners. This is reminiscent of the conflation in general terms between homosexuality and paedophilia. The homosexual man is unable to distinguish between a viable sexual partner, as in a grown man, and not, as in a pubescent child. This is one of the common ways in which heteronormative societies have guarded against homosexuality, under the auspices of saving the children.

It is interesting that the archaic Western stereotype of pederast is re-inscribed in the Afrikaans homoerotic text:

En iewers gedurende die tweede les het meneer se hand op sy bobeen kom lê. [...] Meneer se hand met die stomp vingers. Die kort, dik duim. Die klein naels. [...] Meneer se dom hande. Meneer se stomp hand op sy dy, sy Wiskunde stem dik van syfers, en dik van, het hy later gedink, drang? (46) [...] “Nee wag, Meneer,” het hy verskrik gesê, die vlak asem naby sy oor, die stomp vingers wat koorsig raak op sy dy. Buite eers, verby die duiwe in die park, het hy kon se wat hy moes: Mofgat! (47)<sup>31</sup>

“Mofgat”, like moffie from which it is derived is used here to mark the teacher’s action and advances as homosexual. Because of the derogatory notions attached to the word moffie, mofgat places the teacher in a position of perversity and femininity. As gat is here loosely translated as ass, mofgat directly reduces the teacher to a queer-ass, altered and sodomical. It is only after this encounter that we discover that Riaan had been joining his friend in prayer so as to rid himself of his obsessive need to masturbate, which he has been doing as often as he could. Riaan’s obsessive masturbation marks him as over-sexualised and thus ripe for the advances of a homosexual paedophile. This serves to establish the story as a means through which to investigate the early

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<sup>31</sup> “And sometime during the second lesson sir’s hand came lying on his thigh. [...] Sir’s hand with its stubby fingers. The short, thick thumb. The small nails. [...] Sir’s blunt hands. Sir’s hand on his thigh, his mathematical voice thick with figures, and as he thought later, desire? (46) [...] ‘No wait, sir,’ he said dismayed, Sir’s breathe shallow close to his ear, the stubby fingers feverishly touching his thigh. It was only outside, past the pigeons in the park, that he could say what he should have: Mofgat!” (47).

experiences of an adolescent boy as he develops sexually and struggles to reconcile his masturbation with his Calvinistic upbringing, which views masturbation as pathological.

After the encounter in the flat he swears off masturbation. He seemingly associates the bad encounter with the teacher as punishment for his sexual perversion, and tries to repent religiously. It is ironic that this religiously induced need to stop masturbating leaves him open to the attention of his predatory teacher, as this is the reason why he is often late for class. Besides gaining some form of control over his masturbation, even if only through Calvinistic suppression/repression, his life gets better in another way as well after the encounter in his teacher's flat:

Maar na die middag in die woonstel het Meneer nooit weer oor hom kom buk in die klas nie. Die safaripak het sy oë vermy. Hy was vry. Meneer se stomp hande het hom losgemaak van huiswerk, van die geel rottang, van bybly by die rugby-oefening. (47)<sup>32</sup>

Riaan as heteronormative youth, after having read his teacher successfully and labelled him a mofgat, is now empowered. The teacher, in his inept attempt at a sexual encounter with a child, has left himself vulnerable. He recognises that he is now in the power of the child who can at any moment 'out' him. Despite this, the tension in this story remains unresolved.

The tragic consequences of the paedophilic homosexual hunt in which the male youth is prey is best illustrated through a short story entitled "Swepe" by A. J. Haasbroek. Martiens finds himself in an orphanage for white youths. The boys are left in the custody of the orphanage until they are eighteen years old. In apartheid South Africa these youths would then be taken up into the military for their compulsory service and training. The unusual position of the (white) male orphan allows for a masculinity and body that is entirely shaped and under the control and construction of the state. Although tormented by the older boys, a phenomenon almost expected from boys of this

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<sup>32</sup> "[A]fter the afternoon in the apartment sir never bent over him in class again. The safaripak avoided his eyes. He was free. Sir's stubby hands had untied him - homework, the yellow cane and keeping up with the rugby practice" (47).

age, Martiens is able to find friends and some semblance of a childhood. This is tragically interrupted when the reader is introduced to Meneer Eben, the music teacher. It seems Meneer Eben and the nameless Meneer/Safaripak from ‘Stomp Hande’ share a familiar modus operandi: they ask the young men to come to their rooms and once there they make untoward advances. The first of these advances is stereotypically the touching of the youth’s leg. One night, whilst continuing his molestation of Martiens which had developed quickly into a regular occurrence, Meneer Eben is interrupted when one of the boys knocks on his bedroom door crying. He tells the teacher that they are being assaulted by Erik and Muis. Erik and Muis are the two resident bullies who enact the kind of brazen masculinity endorsed by this South African institution. They are older and stronger than the other boys, as both are eighteen years old and are about to leave the orphanage.

When Meneer Eben gets to the boys’ dorm he discovers that Erik and Muis are making the younger boys wrestle each other naked. Erik and Muis are drunk, or rather “net lekker”. They have also been sniffing benzene. Emboldened by this, and un-intimidated by the teacher’s authority, they proceed to lock Meneer Eben in the room with them. It is here that the reader is informed that Martiens is not the only child Meneer Eben had sexually molested with during his time teaching at the school:

“Jy? Jy’t ok maar jou speletjies met die outjies. [...] Ag toe nou, man kom speel bietjie saam. Dis mos vir jou ok mooi as hulle sonner broek is. Jy kan mos nou lekker kyk. En sommer vat as jy wil. Ons sal rêrig niks se nie, nê, Erik. Jy wil mos, hê? Ons het jou al gesien hoe jy kyk. Altyd innie badkamer, kamma om te sien lat die outjies nie water mors nie. Maar dan kyk jy anner dinge”. (62)<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> “‘You also have your little games with the guys.’ Two pieces of glowing coals appeared in Eben’s ash white cheeks. ‘I do not know what you are talking about,’ he said. ‘Open this door.’ ‘Oh come on man come play with a little. Is it not beautiful to you too when they are not wearing pants?’ ‘Now you can look nicely. And touch if you want to. We will really say nothing nê, Erik. You want to, right? We have already seen how you look. Always in the bathroom, pretending to watch so the guys will not waste water. But then you look at other things. See? You will not get difficult. We know all your tricks’” (62).

Erik takes the passive body of Meneer Eben, now stripped of his title through his perverse actions made public, and dances with it around the room. Throughout this, Eben remains passive: he is forced to enact the part of the women in the dance and through this he is further stripped of his authority and masculinity. Erik is fully assured in his control of the situation:

“Kom ons dans [...] Een-twee-drie. Een-twee-drie. Jou lekker ding! [...] Moenie so skaam wesie man, druk my ’n bietjie.” [...] “Draai hom, Erik. Hy wil mos die kleintjies vry. Nou kan hy met ’n lekker sterk ou dans. Kyk net hoe laaik hy dit.” Eben [...] tree slap en hulpeloos agteruit soos Erik hom tussen die beddens deursteur. (63)<sup>34</sup>

He presses his face in Eben’s neck as one would when kissing a lover. He tells him to feel his beard. The beard is a marker of his masculinity that contrasts him with the young men and teacher in the room. Like their mollified teacher, who has previously pacified many of them, the “[y]ounger boys are standing dismayed by the walls, unsure if they should look at the teacher’s faint struggling in Erik’s powerful arms. ‘Now I want to vry you bitch.’” (63)<sup>35</sup>. The use of the term bitch concludes Eben’s feminization: his sexual activity with the boys has reduced him to a queer mix between monstrous abuser and feminised victimhood.

Erik helps to shed light on their actions when he confronts Meneer Eben with his own past sexual abuse:

Dit was vir jou lekker, hê? Toe het jy met my gemaak net soos jy wil.  
Nou is dit jou beurt. Ek gaan jou breek. Jou heeltemal breek. Ek is nie

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<sup>34</sup> “‘One-two-three. One-two-three. Your lekker thing!’ he sings. ‘Don’t be shy man, hug me a little.’ [...] ‘Turn him, Erik. This is what he gets for messing with the boys.’ ‘Now you are dancing with a nice strong man. Look how he likes it’” (63).

<sup>35</sup> ‘Nou wil ek vry, jou teef.’ (63).

meer dertien nie. Ek wag al lank hiervoor [...] Die slag is ek bo, jou vark [...]. (64)<sup>36</sup>

This scene of the rape of Meneer Eben is a key event around which the rest of the story revolves. It serves as a means through which Erik and Muis are able to enact a normalising measure through which they reclaim their masculinity and sexuality, whilst at the same time punishing their teacher's social deviance. His sexual violation becomes a means through which he is disempowered and dehumanized or undone. He becomes a female dog. His actions and sexuality are tainted and yet this stands in stark contrast to Erik and Muis's actions. The irony is that they themselves were caught enacting a sexual scene that in itself suggest homosexual attraction. It seems that Erik engages his own sexuality through the lens of the abuse he suffered when he was a child. When he is caught in his own questionable sexual engagement he chooses to punish that which he blames for his corruption. The rape becomes a climax to Erik's interrupted sex play with the boys. Aroused and intoxicated when he is discovered by Eben, his rape of the teacher becomes a means through which he is allowed to express his own sexual attraction to the other young men in the orphanage. The fact that he had waited a long time to force himself on Eben suggests that he had fantasized sexually about his victim and the sexual power associated with the act. The eroticism of this act remains undermined, however, by the forced nature of the act and the anger associated with it as an act of revenge through Erik's feminizing discourse.

Aside from the school being an institutional space the white Afrikaans family played perhaps the most significant role in determining white masculine heterosexuality. Victor Munnik's "Die Jag" is another story published in *Wisselstroom* and is interesting supplementary reading alongside the two stories analysed above. For now it is important that we pause and take stock of

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<sup>36</sup> "It was nice for you, right? Then, you did to me just what you wanted. Now it's your turn. I'm going to break you. Completely break you. I'm not thirteen anymore. I have been waiting a long time for this [...]. 'This time I am on top, you pig [...]' (64).

the theme of the hunt which is constructed as that which is conducted by an adult male teacher who is in pursuit of children as his prey. The homosexual paedophile is one that is a common societal fear. It is thus interesting to note that homosexual stories themselves reflect this stereotype and often times encode it with eroticism, bordering on the perverse. It is a sexual ‘perversion’ that reminds one of The Marquis de Sade’s *120 Days of Sodom* (1785) and Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita* (1955). The literariness of the text and the particular structure and condensed nature of the narrative allows for an encoded homosexuality that many homosexuals would find problematic. The novel *Embrace* (2000) by Mark Behr offers a fully developed notion of the theme of the paedophilic teacher and the sexuality of a teenage boy. The novel has received much critical attention and its themes have been developed to a large extent by a number of strong academic engagements. There seems to be a literary trend to find a connection between the first discoveries of homosexual feelings and the experience of the homosexual man who is surrounded by sexualised, hormone-ridden (nubile) young men, and this seems to relate to the need for historiographies. McIntosh hints at the idea of the all-male school and dorm as a sexual space established since European engagement with writings around Socrates began. The accusation around Socrates’s death, that he had corrupted the youth of the city-state, is both the first reading of homosexuality (although in this case pederasty) as social rebellion/dissidence, as well as the first account of the male teacher sexually engaging with his student<sup>37</sup>. Learning, writing and teaching thus become tendencies linked to homosexuality.

One of the institutions in which a homosexual experience is made possible by the unnatural absence of women is the boys’ high school. At the same time these are institutions where a particular (white) masculinity is developed and a space that seeks to identify and foreclose on any

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<sup>37</sup> See Jonathan Dollimore’s *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (1991).

form of homosexual experience. At the same time it is interesting to note that the queer narrative in South Africa reflects an engagement with this space, placing in it the homosexual teacher who is framed as paedophilic victim. What these stories illustrate best is that even in those spaces most likely to be strictest in their policing of heteronormativity there is at the same time an enabling of a queered identity and sexuality where a child can become both a sexual object and a fierce reinforcer of societal measures of control.

“Bleek Hande” (1949) by Willem Van Der Berg is interesting in that it helps to illustrate the links between reading the homosexual and the brutal masculinity required of young Afrikaner men (De Lange, *Soort Soek Soort* (1997) 14). Set in the confines of the rural farming community, it sheds light on the lengths to which the Afrikaner patriarch would go to cure his son of his dissident sexuality. Bertus is a young man whose pale hands mark him as different from his father and other young men in his community, and they become the focus of his father’s projected fear that his son might be a moffie:

Al sestien jaar oud en op ’n boereplaas grootgeword en hy kan jou wragtig nog nie eers ordentlik perd ry nie. Sy maats is almal harde werkers en uithaler boere [...] [m]aar net waar ek gaan, moet ek my skaam vir my eie kind met sy fyn handjies en sy wit gesiggie. Maar van nou af sal hy bars. Hy sal leer werk en ’n man word – voor dit heeltemal te laat is. (*Soort Soek Soort*, 15)<sup>38</sup>

Bertus’s father’s need to cure his son is further strengthened by a comment made by Giel:

Bertus is anders. [...] Jy weet tog self. Die kinders se altyd Bertus moet nooit gaan boer nie. Hy's gemaak vir ander dinge. Kyk hoe mooi speel hy klavier

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<sup>38</sup> “Sixteen years old, grew up on a Boer farm and he can honestly not even decently ride a horse. His mates are all hard workers and good farmers [...] [b]ut wherever I go, I am embarrassed by my own child with his delicate hands and his white face. But from now on he will suffer. He will learn how to work and become a man - before it's too late.” (*Soort Soek Soort*, 15).

op skool en oulik teken hy – met daardie fyn hande van hom. Dis die dinge wat hy moet doen. (17)<sup>39</sup>

It becomes clear that Bertus's difference is focussed around his artistic ability, his soft hands becoming visible markers to be contrasted with those of a farmer. Giel's comment engages Maans's concern about his son's masculinity further and leads to his determination to have his son break a horse he has just bought or for his son to be broken by the experience. The idea of enforcing one's will upon another until the creature submits is an almost archetypal expression of masculinity and an acknowledged test of manhood. In the case of the South African white man this trial of will to dominate as a sign of manhood is further imbued with the racist undertones of white suppression of black people and the South African land. Maans gives his son Bertus, the horse Koper and the "Hotnot" farmhand Kiewiet the task of testing Bertus's fortitude by instructing his son to break the horse before his return later that day.

As Bertus, against his will and under protest, tries to break the spirit of the horse, he is thrown and in the event Kiewiet laughs loudly at him and his ineptitude. To this Bertus responds by reminding Kiewiet of his position as racial subordinate:

“Nou loop jy, Hotnot – loop of ek breek jou vandag jou nek.” “Maar basie...”  
 Sy stem was sag en kalm maar vlymskerp: “Ek sê jou loop of ek breek jou nek. En joune gaan nie die enigste wees nie. Julle gaan almal betaal hiervoor, almal van julle”. (19)<sup>40</sup>

It seems that Maans was correct in assuming that forcing his son to tame the horse by whipping him into submission would make a (white) man of him. It is interesting however what kind of man

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<sup>39</sup> “Bertus is different. [...] You know that yourself. The children always say that Bertus should never become a farmer. He's made for other things. Look how beautifully he plays the piano at school and how cute he draws, with those delicate hands of his. That's the sort of thing he should do” (*Soort Soek Soort*, 17).

<sup>40</sup> “Now go you Hotnot go or I'll break your neck you today.’ ‘But Basie ...’ His voice was soft and calm but sharp: ‘I said go or I'll break your neck. And yours will not be the only one. You will all pay for this, all of you’” (*Soort Soek Soort*, 19)

he quickly becomes, and that those around him obviously appreciate this new-found form of masculinity. After spending most of the day whipping and riding the horse, Bertus finally hands the animal over to Kiewiet and warns: “He is as meek as a lamb. But you are all going to pay for this - all of you” (19). As he walks away he puts his hands in his pockets and there they remain still, immobile (19). This description of his hands is in strong contrast to that mediated through his father earlier, and it suggests that this Bertus is not the same Bertus as the one who started the process of breaking the horse. His soft hands have been reshaped by the use of a whip into those of a Boer. Having done so he seems to have been broken himself so as to fit the stereotype his father expects him to inhabit. His warning to Kiewiet as the Hotnot present is significant in that the destruction of his feminised boyhood is linked to his taking on a racist domineering manhood which is illustrated through his threats.

### ***Cruising/Sex-Hunt: Sex as an Attempt at Community***

Aucamp highlights cruising as another form the theme of the hunt take in South African literature. In this hunt the homosexual “hunts” for another by looking for little signs and gestures: a lingering handshake, a long stare. In a society where homosexuality is considered abominable the homosexual finds himself having to conceal his true nature. This kind of legibility of the body as text becomes integral to the attraction of sexual partners. He must also become a great keeper of secrets, a master of performance and a skilled reader of queer performances. For some this is better mastered than for others. The love and acceptance that Jan in “Die Redder” discussed earlier longs for is unacceptable in apartheid society, and he is forced to kill himself. Others are able to live double lives by wearing the public mask of heteronormativity whilst living a secret life of homosexuality. Aucamp’s views on cruising offer a working definition for our engagement:

Seksjag is natuurlik nie tot die homowêreld beperk nie, [...] maar dis eweneens waar dat cruising 'n obsessie en verslaafdheid in die gay-wêreld kan word wat nie tipies vir die heteroseksuele wêreld hoef wees nie. Die desperate seksjagter word dikwels 'n "danger-freak" – iemand wat nie net sy eie liggaamlike veiligheid en sosiale status waag nie, maar afhanklik raak van gevaar vir seksstimulus. En hiermee is die skadukant van die jag benoem: dat dit die jagter aan primitiewe lae in sy eie psige mag blootstel. (194)<sup>41</sup>

Danie Botha's story's entitled "n Middag Langs Die Voor" (1980) evokes a sense of the locale of the farm and locates the Afrikaner man, although here in the city, as still connected to the subjugation of the land. The word voor in Afrikaans has the double meaning of being the same word for feeding trough and urinal. The feeding trough is primarily associated with the white farm as Boer space but the reader soon realizes that the title in fact refers to a urinal in men's' public bathrooms. Under apartheid, public bathrooms were segregated alongside racial lines. A urinal in a white's-only male public bathroom becomes a way through which white masculine privilege is affirmed and propagated. At the same time the exclusively masculine milieu of the space serves to eroticize it.

The protagonist, Jasper, has been in this particular bathroom for a while, waiting for the right man/prey to walk in that will accept his performance of the vigilant sex hunter. One of the signs that Jasper looks for in his hunt for a sexual partner is whether or not the man immediately leaves after finishing peeing or whether he lingers, not closing his pants. This signals to Jasper that it is acceptable for him to sneak a peek at the man's crotch so as to determine whether or not he is playing with himself. Jasper standing at the urinal is a clear marker to the other men that he is not

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<sup>41</sup> "Cruising, i.e. hunting for sexual partners is defined in *The Queens' Vernacular* as both: [H]eavy cruising: looking for sex partners seriously: no time to chit-chat with acquaintances on the street and [J]ohn cruising: looking for agreeable men in public toilets. The sex-hunt is of course not limited to the gay world, as above statements in a gay dictionary might suggest, but it is also true that the tendency of cruising to develop into an obsession and addiction in the gay world is not typical for the heterosexual world. The desperate sex hunter often becomes a 'danger-freak' - someone who not only puts his own physical safety at risk but also his social status, dependent on risk for sexual stimulus. And this is the dark side of the hunt: it exposes the hunter to primitive layers of his own psyche" (194-195).

in the bathroom for normal activity (to urinate). His persistent presence and lack of purpose signals that he is an interloper of sorts and thus opens him up to deviant sexual behaviour. His actions provide insight into the public/private way in which homosexual men are forced to risk their lives/social status so as to experience even the slightest form of intimacy. This affirms Aucamp's claim that the "desperate seksjagter" often becomes a "danger-freak". The risk inherent in the process of cruising is suggested by Jasper:

As dit wel die geval is sal Jasper dit waag om ook te speel. En om op te kyk in die man se oë. Daarna die beslissing. Die man sal haastig sy piel by sy onderbroek insteek, snoep sy gulp toemaak en dan half omgekrap sy hande gaan was en met 'n frons by die deur uitstap. Of die man sal 'n oomblik afkyk na hom, dan vinnig weg, vas teen die muur, die kop agteroor of hy na asem soek, miskien weer terug. Dan tog maar sy stuk wegsit, stadig na die was bakkie en die spieëls stap, asof ingedagte die hande was, drie, vier maal aarselend hare kam en uiteindelik in die spieël bly kyk. En dan weer na die voor toe kom, maar hierdie keer laer af beslis langs 'n ander ou gaan staan. (74)<sup>42</sup>

From his description of the scene it seems Jasper is not inscribed with the right message that would allow his luring of a sexual partner. Although his desire for sexual interaction is clear, and the space becomes known as a general gay cruising space which imbues it with a sense of safety and transgression, he is not physically attractive.

With this focus on the physicality of the homosexual aesthetic the narrative signals a shift from the focus on exclusion from the heteronormative and offers insight into the nature of the underworld that is gay life in South Africa under apartheid. Here the author engages the often criticised notion of the Adonis-like white body in gay culture. Masculine beauty and physicality

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<sup>42</sup> "If this is the case, Jasper dared to play. And to look into the man's eyes. Then the decision. The man will hurry his dick into his pants, quickly close his fly and then, half upset, go and wash his hands, and walk out the door with a frown. Or the man would look for a moment down at him, then quickly away, eyes to the wall, the head back as if he may struggling to breath. Then he would do up his piece, slowly walk back to the basins and the mirrors, as if deep in thought wash his hands, three, four times hesitantly comb his hair and finally just stand there looking at himself in the mirror. Then he will return back to the urinal, but this time lower down definitely standing next to another guy" (*Wisselstroom*, 74).

have increasingly become ways through which homosexual men have been able to deconstruct images of them as degenerate and unhealthy. This obsession with the aesthetic and obvious healthy personification of male beauty stems, in part, from the barrage of images of homosexual AIDS sufferers in the 1980's. In response to this, gay men became increasingly focussed on developing bodies that espoused health and beauty. Unfortunately for Jasper, he does not meet this standard of beauty set by the homosexual subculture in the country at the time. He is fully aware of this fact, adding a further sense of obsession, shame and melancholia to his actions:

Hy kan hom voorstel hoe die mans hom hier sien staan. Geset. Vet. Enkeles sal hom dalk as friskebou beskou. Groot rooi gesig wat links en regs loer. Die gesig van 'n lywige vrou of van 'n tienerjarige seun by die lyf van 'n vyf-en-dertigjarige man. Die mond wat oophang. Die hande wat aanhoudend op dieselfde plek – voor sy bene. (75)<sup>43</sup>

Jasper's desperate and dangerous sex hunt ends unsuccessfully, as even in this space of possible transgressions he does not fulfil the physical requirements set. He is not attractive enough, and despite his concerted efforts, social risk and the agreeability of the space and people to a person of his tendencies he is forced to leave empty-handed. So desperate is he for sexual contact and social interaction with another man that even whilst journeying home he seems powerless. He passes those around him in the streets focussed on men he finds attractive, hoping to be given a signal, a nod, an acknowledgement, something that he can use to ascertain that the other man is homosexual. When he finally gets onto the bus he takes to return to his apartment he punishes himself by focussing his failure on his overweight body. He "feel[s] his fatness" (75). Here the body becomes the means through which the homosexual judges another homosexual as other. In his lack of attractiveness, his fatness, Jasper finds himself not only excluded from normal society

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<sup>43</sup> "He can imagine how the men see him standing here. Overweight. Fat. Some of them might describe him as stocky. Big red face peeking left and right. The face of a bulky woman or a teenage son with the body of a thirty-five year old man. The mouth hanging open. Hands repeatedly in the same spot – in front of his legs. He breathes in, pushes his shoulders back, lifts his head, and plants his feet a little further apart" (75).

because of his sexual attraction, but also excluded from intimacy by his sub-cultural group based entirely on the appearance of his body. In the end, Jasper is reduced to masturbation, a form of a narcissistic re/turn to the homosexual self:

In die badkamer maak hy sy gulp oop, steek sy hand in. Hy draai na die spieëltjie bo die wasbak. Hy bring sy gesig nader. Sy lippe krul teen die glas. (75-76)<sup>44</sup>

In another variation of this theme, Zirk van den Berg's story "Voor die Trein" (2006) presents a burly, racist white man as recounting the tale of how he and some of his friends raped a "hottiemoffie" on Goodwood train station. In the first paragraph the narrator connects trains to sexual taboos (*Wisselstroom*, 77) which create the expectation of transgression. The story is narrated by an unnamed first person narrator who overhears another story being told by a man named Barnard. The effect of this is that the closeted homosexual is made responsible for mediating the story of the rape of another 'moffie' to the reader. The difference between the moffie that is raped and the homosexual here is that the moffie's drag and race mark him visibly as other, and thus the logic of the narrative and culture engages him as a deserving victim. The title "Voor die Trein" is ironic in that it signals the strange heteronormativity of this interchange, as the story of the rape is recounted as small-talk made whilst waiting for the train. Despite the story being mediated through a narrator whom the reader assumes to be gay and who is accompanied by another man, Ernst, explicitly constructed as gay, Barnard's recounting of the rape of the hottiemoffie is constructed as a warning to the other two homosexual characters present on the station and serves to affirm his own heterosexual masculinity. I argue that the story suggests that in the South African space under the oppression of the institution of apartheid there are varying degrees of queer performances allowed. The performance of womanhood enacted by the

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<sup>44</sup> "Later, in the bathroom, he opened his fly, stuck his hand in. He turned to the mirror above the sink. He brought his face closer. His lips curled against the glass" (*Wisselstroom*, 75-76).

“hottiemoffie” is one that is not accepted at all, one that allows for the white man to use his phallic weapon to correct and assert his dominance. Aucamp argues that Barnard recounts the story as a “boer-joke” (*Wisselstroom*, 196), giving the sense that this is in fact familiar behaviour, or at least behaviour familiar to certain kind of masculinities. This is further supported by the fact that after Barnard finishes his story the other “guys on the platform roared with laughter” (78)<sup>45</sup>. What becomes clear is that the heterosexual (white) man’s sexuality is not and cannot be brought in to question even if he were to perform a homosexual act. This highlights the fact that the homosexual act as rape imbues the heteronormative man with violence and dominance, and his victim becomes both cause and reason for his own abuse, leaving the attackers’ heterosexuality unchallenged.

In “Voor Die Trein” the transgressive nature of the victim’s performance of gender, compounded by his race, negates him as person and he becomes the objectified racial, sexual, gendered other. This objectification/dehumanisation is best illustrated by his being labelled a hottiemoffie. Barnard recounts:

Een aand op hierdie einste stasie sien ons ’n hottie moffie hier staan. [...] Nou check ons hierdie moffie, jy weet, so ’n wit broekie in sy hol in opgetrek, met ’n serpie aan en ’n handsak oor die skouer, die works. Jy weet moes hoe lyk hulle, jy kan mos sommer sien. [...] Anyway, ek se: check daai moffie. En Frik, hy wil sommer die outjie gaan bliksem. ’n Hotnot en ’n moffie, se hy, twee goeie redes. [...] Toe ons nader kom, gaan staan die moffie so met sy rug teen die wagkamer, en ek sien hy lyk skyt bang. Wat's jou case? vra ek hom, dis mos eintlik ons wat ons gatte teen die muur moet hou vir jou. (77)<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> “Die ouens op die peron het gebrul van die lag” (*Wisselstroom*, 78).

<sup>46</sup> “One night on this very same station we see a ‘hottiemoffie’. [...] Now we check this moffie, you know, short white pants pulled up his ass crack, with a scarf and a handbag slung over the shoulder, the works. You know how they look, you can always tell just by looking at them. [...] Anyway, I say: check that moffie. Frik, he just wants to beat the guy up. A Hotnot and a moffie, he said, two good reasons. [...] As we approach, the moffie turns to stand with his back against the waiting room wall, and I see he is shit-scared. What’s your case? I ask him, is it not really us that should keep our butts against the wall with you around” (*Wisselstroom*, 77).

As mentioned earlier, the term ‘moffie’ as it is defined and used in South Africa under apartheid reinforces racist, white, patriarchal, hetero-norms. Of primary interest here is the compounded catchy term hottiemoffie, a conflation of two discriminative slurs, which suggests an entanglement between racial inferiority and sexual otherness. The hottiemoffie being in drag evokes a performance of coloured femininity/masculinity that is disruptive, and the white men resolve to rape him as punishment for his transgression.

Raping the homosexual seems to be a common theme in the South African narrative and, as is common in the representation of female rape, the victim is blamed for his own violation. “The queer cried, but I said: this is what you wanted. And then we took turns to fuck him” (78)<sup>47</sup>. His rape is thus his own fault: men who dress like women are raped and abused, and by dressing in ‘drag’ he invited abuse and subjection. The term hottiemoffie is further interesting in the sense of the pun on the word hot, short for Hottentot. Hottentot/Hotnot is the derogatory Afrikaans term used to refer to people who are also identified as coloured people. The hot of the ‘hotnot’ reminds the modern reader of the established ways in which white men in South Africa seem to have been unable to keep their civilized hands off the warm flesh of the wild, indigenous women. Within this logic, the bodies of the coloured women are made consumable by the white man. This is further complicated by the fact that coloureds as a racial/cultural group stem from a diverse group of people who are the result of “miscegenation” between white settlers, indigenous peoples and Malay slaves brought to the cape by the Dutch East India Company. When the hottiemoffie is encountered by Barnard and his other white male friends, he is read to be as consumable as the coloured women he is dressed as. This is perhaps best illustrated by Frik when he says, “A Hotnot

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<sup>47</sup> "Die moffie huil, maar ek sê: jy wil mos. En ons vat beurte om hom te naai" (*Wisselstroom*, 78).

and a moffie, [...] two good reasons” to attack him and beat him up (77)<sup>48</sup>; two categories that are used to deny humanity in the racist capitalist space.

The broad theme of the hunt and the pursuit of the sexual object as prey as the moffie start running and are pursued by the men. They quickly take on the image of a gang of gay-bashers pursuing an innocent victim or a racist white mob pursuing a black fugitive:

Daar onder die brug, tussen die spore, vang ons die moffie. Hy skree soos ’n vark, maar dis laatnag en hier is niemand. Ons laat hom maar skree. Toe Frik aankom, wil hy die moffie moer toe skop, maar ek se: nee wag, ek het ’n beter plan. Die moffie spartel en kerm, hy pleit later, maar ons druk hom vas en trek hom kaalgat uit. Ek wys vir die ander en ons knak hom vooroor oor die een spoor [...]. Die moffie huil, maar ek sê: jy wil mos. En ons vat beurte om hom te naai. (78)<sup>49</sup>

Barnard and his friends’ ability to read the hottiemoffie first as a marked Hotnot and then a man in drag allows them to label him as open for abuse, firstly because of their whiteness and secondly because of their dominant heteronormative masculinities. Barnard mentions the fact that they were drunk and that he was very “horny” (77) due to the fact that he had not yet been married to Charmaine as a possible reason for his actions. “In those days I was still horny, man” (77)<sup>50</sup> and it is this horniness that is the real reason as to why Barnard and his friends are motivated to gang rape the hottiemoffie. It is also this horniness that makes it is acceptable for him to recount the story as a Boer-joke and not feel tainted or in any way diminished by his actions. It would appear that in this instance the homosexual’s humanity and masculinity are already compromised, so that he is

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<sup>48</sup> “n Hotnot en ’n moffie, [...] twee goeie redes” (*Wisselstroom*, 77).

<sup>49</sup> “Beneath the bridge, between the tracks, we catch the moffie. He is screaming like a pig, but it's late at night and there is no one around. We let him scream. When Frik caught up he wanted to kick the moffie to death but I said; no wait, I have better plan. The moffie is struggling and groaning, he starts begging, but we pin him to the ground and strip him butt naked. I indicate to the others and we bend him forward over the track. [...] The moffie cries, but I say: you wanted it. And we take turns fucking him” (*Wisselstroom*, 78).

<sup>50</sup> “Daai dae was ek nog jars, jong” (*Wisselstroom*, 77).

getting what he deserves and on some level desires. The white men's masculinity and whiteness are reinforced by their actions: it is constructed as natural for a white man to attack and assault a coloured man, and if that coloured man is sufficiently feminized he is open to further abuse other than the merely physical. It is clear that the sexual violation is to form part of whatever they plan to do to the moffie, as the description of his short pants and fear places him in a position similar to his fetishized sisters. This is a situation I come to find not uncommon in South African narratives and it suggests intersections between a form of racial fetishisation of the other which is reinforced by racial inequalities and supported through (white) hyper-masculine militaristic and strangely homoerotic-driven sexual violation.

### ***Hunting for Moffies***

As shown in the discussion above, in the case of narratives that engage the hunt as a moment of initiation and failure of masculinity, the terms moffie and anders [different] are attached to the homosexual after he fails to perform a particularly defined white masculinity. In “n Middag Langs 'n Voor” the author suggests that it is not only the homosexual who is read by heteronormative society and found lacking. In the homosexual space homosexuals may reject each other as not embodying a particular performance of the prescribed homosexual body. In *Moffie*, Van der Merwe traces the development of the narrator, Nicholas, as he navigates the restrictive masculinity that lies at the heart of apartheid South Africa. The novel is semi-autobiographical and can be described as a post-apartheid re-imagination of experience under apartheid. It is based on notebooks the author kept whilst in the army, and in an acknowledgements section in the novel Van der Merwe addresses the reasoning behind his writing the novel: “As a gay man with deep spiritual desires [his] only way of processing the confusion [he] felt about [his] sexuality was to

write about it” (7). The narrative is strongly influenced by the adult voice of the author, which often seeks to give coherence and an analysis of the events described in the novel. In this way it comes to attain the structure of a bildungsroman, a common genre for writing while engaging queer sexuality. Van der Merwe notes the previously mentioned construction of homosexuality “as sinful” by the church, “unlawful” by the regime and “offensive” by the rest of society as hugely influential on his own identity and experiences as a gay man growing up in the country (7).

*Moffie* follows Nicholas as he is legally forced to enlist and serve his mandatory service in the South African Defence Force (SADF). Nicholas’s father, frustrated by his own failed attempts at ‘curing’ the boy, trusts in the power of the military to cure his son of his moffieness and restore him to normalcy. As highlighted earlier, Nicholas, much like Bertus in “Bleek Hande,” is judged by his father as lacking in masculinity, a sign of possible perverse sexuality. He too decides to make a man out of his weak son. He is “happy that [he is] going to be taught some lessons – lessons he could never teach [Nicholas], lessons [Nicholas] refused to learn: his doctrine, blast-frozen in Calvinistic self-convincing, a safety belt of dogma and fear” (Van der Merwe 18). Nazir Carrim in *Human Rights and the Construction of Identities in South African Education* (2006) provide evidence that supports my claim that there is a clear connection to be made between Afrikaner heterosexual masculinity and oppression. He highlights how “Apartheid was a political doctrine justified religiously in terms of Afrikaner Calvinism, which situated the white Afrikaner male in a position of dominance and control, in the image of a white male who subordinated women (including white women), who was staunchly anti-communist and homophobic” (101). His discussion of the context suggests that Nicholas’s father hopes that the army will teach his son “how the real world works”, separating him from his “mother[’s] apron strings” and that this was a common concern for Afrikaner families (Van der Merwe 19).

In Van der Merwe's text there are numerous instances in the narrative where Nicholas is faced with the danger of being read as homosexual. This makes him vulnerable to being overtly discriminated against. Jenifer Rees in her thesis 'Masculinity and Sexuality in South African Border War Literature' (2010) addresses this issue when she highlights the extent to which the label moffie looms over Nicholas's social interaction with others, especially his father. She describes the novel as being "about growing up, 'coming out' and surviving the army, in the face of the highly masculinised, homophobic, environment of the apartheid South African home and that of the SADF" (34). This description signals the way in which the novel constructs Nicholas as being first judged as snaaks/[different] in his home.. Home is meant to be a place of family, safety, belonging, acceptance and warmth. It is only much later in the novel that Nicholas finds a sense of home which seeks to escape the restrictive categorisation of heteronormativity with his friend Malcolm. This 'home' is never fully realised as it is forced to remain hidden in the closet by society and state. In a broader sense, Nicholas cannot find a sense of 'home' in that he is ostracised and read as feminine because of his perceived homosexuality.

Nicholas's relationship with his brother is cut short when Frankie is run down by a car outside the family's house. In true Afrikaner tradition Frankie, as the oldest son, is constructed as the apple of his father's eye and he will inevitably inherit the biggest share of his father's estate. He is also expected to perpetuate the Van der Merwe bloodline. After the accident there is a marked shift in the dynamic of the family. The father's attention shifts from the dead son to the son second in line. Upon close scrutiny he is found lacking, which is evident when he states:

Poofter, queer, moffie, sissy, homo, pansy, fairy, *trassie* – how those words scare me. I'm so terrified of being 'discovered' that I obsess about it. Being a homo gives everybody the licence to persecute one. If I'm found out my life will be ruined. I MUST, AT ALL COST, KEEP THIS A SECRET. (59)

In another significant scene in the novel the protagonist, his brother and cousin are taken on a hunt by his father and uncle. The hunt of the animal reminds one of Nicholas's experiences in the South African Defence force where he is forced by law to hunt down propagandised black enemies on the borders of South Africa.

At this point the theme of the hunt is extended to include the South African Defence Force and its role in policing masculinity and sexuality:

The springbok arches its back and jumps fantastically high, defying gravity. Three times in a row it bounces with majestic grace; head down, horns forward. At the apex of the third leap all its energy suddenly disintegrates. I reel at the sound, cover my ears, close my eyes. Not only against the noise, but also against the destruction I have just witnessed. [...] [I] never want to hear that sound again. [...] I slip onto the dirt and dry blood on the corrugated floor. Still I don't let go of my ears. (37)

The irony of Nicholas's reaction to the sound and mechanics of the guns foreshadows a narrative and life that is entirely altered through its engagement with Afrikaner militaristic masculinity. This description of the hunt of a *male* springbok reminds one of the opening paragraphs of the novel in which Nicholas describes being out on patrol whilst in the army:

I see the devastated woman's ragged run. It is as if she is trying to rip the pain from her chest. Her tattered clothes flutter like streamers bursting from inside her. We round the kraal, [...] [s]he is looking up when the bullets enter her body. Then she falls, face down, crumbling as if her frame has been whipped out of her. There is a small puff where she falls, the response of the dead dust to this stolen life. (11)

There is clear similarity in imagery and description between these two extracts. These highlight links between the hunt as a means of feeding the (Afrikaner) family as well as a way through which to measure a young man's masculinity performed through the subjugation and murder of the animalistic other. To Nicholas's sorrow he and his older brother Frankie fail in establishing their

(white) masculinity effectively. Their response to the killing of the animal marks them as different, sensitive. There is a connection here between empathising with the dead native springbok and the dead native woman. Their freedom and lives are curtailed by the fierce weaponry embodied in the guns and symbolising the white heterosexual phalluses through which Nicholas is forced to exact white patriarchal dominance.

To support this construction of Nicholas as a symbol of the corruption of white dominance the narrative juxtaposes the protagonist with other male characters around him. He is subjected to a continuous process of being measured against others and is consistently found lacking. As a contrast to Nicholas and his brother, who are largely influenced and feminised by the softness of their mother and their urban experiences, “[i]n Hanno pulses a father-shaped competitiveness, scab deep, barely civil” (35), the kind of boy masculinity that affirms that he is to be a dominant and domineering Afrikaner man. When Nicholas and Frankie beg their father to take them back to the house, Hanno and his father laugh at them while, their father becomes ever more embarrassed. Hanno is so emboldened by their show of cowardice that he calls Nicholas a “sissy”, the Afrikaans equivalent of which is moffie. The influence of the term moffie on the narrative is so extensive so as to be the title of this semi-autobiographical novel. The narrator’s experience of the term is as much integral to the story as are his experiences of the military.

South Africa, between the 1960s and 1980s had laws in place that forced every able-bodied white South African man to undergo two to three years of compulsory military training. This compulsory conscription was a way in which white patriarchy could protect its God-given empowered status, and required the active cultivation of brutal, militarised, hyper-heterosexual masculinity. Van Der Merwe highlights the extent to which Western medicalisation of homosexuality has influenced the ways in which the South African government, and as an

extension the SADF, constructed and engaged with homosexuality as a condition, pathology or social deviance and danger. In support of this I cite Tiffany F. Jones, who in “Averting White Male (Ab)normality: Psychiatric Representations and Treatment of ‘Homosexuality’ in 1960s South Africa” (2008), engages with how the “South African Defence Force Military Hospital at Voortrekkerhoogte partook in human rights abuses by utilising aversion therapy, hormone therapy, sex-change operations and barbiturates in the 1970s and 1980s on young white homosexual men as a means to ‘cure’ them of their homosexual ‘disease’ ” (398)<sup>51</sup>. Aside from the obvious usefulness of the military to inculcate and police a particular form of masculinity, another consequence of the militarisation of white men in South Africa was that many who completed their compulsory military service were implicated in the oppression of the black majority. Through their time served fighting in the country’s various wars they are intimately tied to acts of brutality and violence in the name of the father and country. This militarisation, along with the particular hyper masculinity armies perpetuate, is argued to have had a major effect on the broader South African society, both white and black. Most white men who would have been subjected to the ‘indoctrination/re-education’ of the military would bring to ‘normal’, racist society the mentality and behaviours that mark the masculine heterosexual behaviour inculcated by the army. At the same time, it is ironic

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<sup>51</sup> According to Jones “Aubrey Levin, then Head of Ward 22, but now a professor associated with the forensic department of the University of Calgary in Canada, was implicated in inciting such abuses” (398). Interestingly South African media house NEWS24 reports in an article entitled ‘Sex Abuse Doctor Blames SA Technique’ (2012) that Levin now 74 had been “accused of sexually assaulting 10 patients in Canada” (1). Quoting from the *Calgary Herald*, a Canadian newspaper that had extensively covered the developments of the trial, the article claims that Levin testified in court “that he was merely using a treatment technique learned in South Africa” (1). “When I worked in South Africa we did just about everything. Some would say it was ... the land of medical cowboys because we used to learn to do everything” (1). According to the article “[a] Toronto-based expert medical witness [Dr Ethan Grober] testified that Levin was not performing BVR [bulbocavernosus reflex testing] in footage one of the complainants took of the alleged assault using a spy camera” (1). Grober testified that what can be seen in the footage “was not a simple elicitation of reflex but a long repeated fondling or massage of the penis” (1).

that it is exactly the homo-eroticised image of the young male body and male space of the military that enables an eroticised homophobia.

As is clear from a look at the material documenting the medicalised construction of homosexuality, scientific engagement with homosexuality has primarily been based on the reading of specific symptoms or, in the broader social sense, deviant behaviours/performances. This has been the case for many other artificially constructed differences such as race and gender. This then positions the homosexual body itself as a text, and the homosexual becomes legible through the sum of his stereotypical symptoms. Despite Nicholas's best efforts to conceal his 'condition' from the rest of his society and family he is doomed to be discovered and labelled as 'other'. This is quite clear from how his father is almost obsessively concerned with cutting what he perceives as his son's too close ties to his mother's apron. Later when he is in the SADF he is also clearly recognised as 'queer', he is then successfully read as not fitting the stereotype of maleness, signalling some form of weakness and defiance/dissidence with regard to his political views. It seems that the white homosexual by the mere fact of not fulfilling white heteronormativity is constructed as dangerous under apartheid ideology, and because of this some citizens become overly vigilant and particularly skilled at recognising homosexuality.

Nicholas often connects his own suffering to that of the black South Africans who surround him. This reintroduces the theme which regards the struggle of the white homosexual under apartheid as comparable to the suffering of black people. Nicholas goes so far as to tie his deviant sexuality to another form of deviance under apartheid law: interracial sex/"miscegenation". In reflecting upon the valley in which he spends his childhood, he notes that "through it all runs the cord of sexual discovery" (22). He notes the expected "mortifi[cation]" of his father "if he knew about the sex, his son's exploration of the unmentionable, the other races. Yes, to him that would

be the ultimate evil” (22). This suggests a perceived hierarchical organisation of sexuality according to connoted perversity. Sodomy between two men is thus seen as undesirable as sex between a white person and a person of another race. Nicholas, in engaging sexually with his father’s black farm workers, is violating a double taboo.

Nicholas at a young age accepts and acknowledges the fact that he is homosexual:

Gay - this word and everything it stands for – is what I am at the age of nine, although I have not even heard it yet. I know it, I feel it and, in secret, I start living it. (59)

At the time of his brother’s funeral, it becomes clear that even his mother is fully aware of his ‘affliction’. However, unlike the reaction of most in his society, his mother’s is more sympathetic. Although she is overwhelmed by the fact that “[h]er one son is gone and the other is ‘different’ [she feels a strong impulse to] protect [him]” (59). One gets the sense that her reaction to his homosexuality would have been different had she not lost her eldest son, his brother. Her reluctance signals her own adverse reaction to her son’s possible homosexuality. In a telling moment, on the evening of the funeral Nicholas is found in the kitchen with his “mother, auntie Sannie, Bronwyn [...] and three servants” (59). The kitchen, already a space of femininity is now further imbued with a sense of inferiority which is introduced by the servants being present. It is also a space of transgression and racial mixing in a country where almost every aspect of white life was kept separate from that of black people. The men are occupied in other areas of the house. This separation clearly locates Nicholas in a feminine space and becomes one of the ways in which his homosexuality becomes legible.

His brother’s death is the moment when he comes to be most visible in his homosexuality. “From the time that Frankie goes to the angels [...] everything starts going wrong” (60). This is primarily because “until his death” his “wound always seems to be hidden by Frankie” (60).

Frankie functions as the scab/mask that allows Nicholas to escape the brutal eye of expectant, white hetero-normativity. After his brother's death he is left exposed in a country where the men seem to be particularly skilled at discerning difference and pouncing on it like lions do their prey. A later encounter whilst playing cricket, that much like rugby is strongly associated with white South African identity and masculinity, signals that it is not just the adults that function as guardians of the white family and its perpetuation through heterosexuality. On the occasion of choosing teams Nicholas notes that the others do not seem to be too excited about having him on their team. He asks himself:

What is wrong with me? What did I say? Did I carry on too much? Did I try too hard? Was I too girly? What did I do or say that by the time we got to the beach for the cricket match, they already knew they didn't want me in their team? When the Bellville Tennis Club divided us into two groups, with each captain having alternate chance to choose a player, why then already did nobody want me in their team? (60)

This is a question of belonging and acceptance and it haunts much of the novel, as the narrator not only navigates himself through the "shamed" discovery of his sexuality as a condition but also his privileged state as white man and the extremely high price he is required to pay for it.

Lee Edelman in *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory* (1994) presents an explanation as to why homosexuality became legible in heteronormative society. According to him the medicalisation of the homosexual allowed "homosexual identity [to become] developed to the extent that it had become "expressed and therefore recognised" (6). Both outsiders and insiders of the divided homosexual subculture/s in South Africa, much like in the rest of the Western world, began reading "clothes, gestures, particular buildings and particular public places" as "having specifically homosexual connotations" (6). And in this way "[h]omosexuality becomes socially constituted in ways that not only make it available to signification, but also cede

to it the power to signify the instability of the signifying function *per se*, the arbitrary and tenuous nature of the relationship between any signifier and signified” (6). According to Edelman, “[a]s soon as homosexuality is localized, and consequently can be read within the social landscape, it becomes subject to a metonymic dispersal that allows it to be read into almost anything” (6). The state of the homosexual thus becomes one that is almost Kafkaesque in that he is in constant danger of discovery through being read. This is clearly signalled in *Moffie*, in the sense that Nicholas and his friends as examples of homosexuals in the military are constructed as most concerned with the possible discovery of their hidden homosexual attraction. Nicholas himself notes his inability to discern those who are homosexual from those who are not. When he meets Malcolm for the first time he mentions that he suspects the possibility of him being gay and he suspects that he suspect that Nicholas is gay. However, neither can be certain as there is much chance of misreading. He notes that he had been wrong before in determining other men’s sexuality and that the risk of exposure in the army is too dangerous. For this reason, like Nicholas “if he were gay, he would too have lived too long with the fear of the ripples exposure would cause” (78). For Edelman “[t]he cultural enterprise of reading homosexuality must affirm that the homosexual is distinctively and *legibly* marked, it must also recognise that those markings have been, can be, or can pass as, unremarked and unremarkable” (7). As Nicholas suggests, because of the harsh punishments for homosexuality, many homosexuals become skilled at mimicking heteronormativity. In his discussion of homosexuality under apartheid Carrim puts it in another way:

The “marking” of “the homosexual”, whilst on and of the “body” was silenced, denied, displaced or repressed so that it could not show its “face”, neither could it be mentioned (*Human Rights and the Construction of Identities* 109).

Carrim gives an overview of “the apartheid Sex Laws of the 1960s”, stating that they “were the most explicit in the illegitimation of homosexuals in South Africa” in that they “demonised and pathologised” them, “project[ing] gays and lesbians in term of denial” (111). The homosexual “under apartheid was invisibilised by illegitimation and marginalised by repressive forms of denial and misrecognition” (Carrim 111). By the time Nicholas is conscripted into the military which is in the 1980’s, the 1960’s construction of the ‘perverted homosexual’ has become well established, and he is fully aware of the fact that if he is to survive the army he must effectively invisibilise his illegitimate and marginalised sexuality by performing the required white heterosexuality and militarised masculinity. I support Carrim’s view that ““the homosexual” provided Afrikaner Calvinism with a way in which to imprint “race”, gender and sexuality with a common “mark” of ensuring the survival of the Afrikaner “race”” (111). And he is of similar belief that it thus becomes imperative for the apartheid government to maintain

[t]he Afrikaner “body” [...] [as] “white” and “heterosexual” [...] The Afrikaner male “body” being one that is virile, dominant and procreative [...] [becomes] critical for the survival of Afrikanerdom itself and as such failure to enact these qualities is harshly punished. (Carrim 111)

This connection between the need to restrict homosexuality, whilst at the same time enacting and encouraging homophobic, homosocial/eroticised behaviour is highlighted in *Moffie* by the various moments in the novel that are loaded with a strong sense of homoeroticism, even when the events being described are consciously de-eroticised by the participants. This is clear, for instance, when Nicholas tells of how his uncle Dirk humiliates him and by extension his father when he encourages the boys to wrestle, and in so doing taunts Nicholas about his lack of skill and masculinity (55-58). It is also evident from his descriptions of the bodies of his fellow conscripts as they share intimate moments, like using the toilet, taking showers and moments of extreme fatigue

and humiliation. Each one of these moments is charged with the erotic of the homosexual gaze as the military provides for a readily available number of young fit male bodies that become further idealised by their white virility.

In *The Aversion Project: Human Rights Abuses of Gays and Lesbians in the South African Defence Force by Health Workers during the Apartheid Era* (1999) Mikki van Zyl, Graeme Reid, Neville Hoad and Karin Martin found that “[g]ender and sexuality often played a role in the ritual humiliations [of conscripts whilst in the army] through a focus on genitals” (43). As the authors remind us,

“[M]ilitarism reproduces certain gender roles which link males to masculinity, and femininity as the ‘natural’ corollary to females. It is also a construction of violent masculinity which underlies the brutal treatment given to, and suffered by soldiers during basic training.” (42)

There thus seems to be a connection between militarisation, homophobia and the construction of homosexuality as deviant. The hyper-masculine heterosexuality of the army becomes the acceptable sexuality, overly policed and constructed as normal. According to Van Zyl et al “[t]he most consistent label, inside and outside the army, was that homosexuality was a sin and evil. Any homosexual person who was religious, was confronted by their own unnaturalness” (63). Van der Merwe supports this view in that Nicholas in the novel highlights the fact that “[t]he defence force distinctly forbids homosexuality, regarding it as an unpardonable offence against God and country, so perverse that it is socially acceptable to mete out punishment to anyone found to be of such orientation” (78).

As a conscript in the SADF, Nicholas is in constant danger of being read as homosexual. Should he be determined to be one he notes that “the army had no qualms about ‘outing’ the person to their parents” (78). *Moffie* speaks to this in the form of Dylan Edward, one of Nicholas’s

closest friends whilst in the army and also his first true homosexual love. Dylan commits suicide in what is seen as an attempt to escape feelings of self-loathing and unhappiness brought on by an inability to accept his homosexuality. Dylan's sexuality is further confused by the sexual abuse he suffered at a young age at the hands of an uncle. In a letter to his parents Dylan highlights the extent to which apartheid South Africa excluded the homosexual from becoming a full citizen. He writes that "[t]here is something about" him that he is "unable to change" (276). The choice of words signals a sense that he would be required by his parents and society to try and change, that he himself has in fact tried to change but found it impossible. And, like his failure in being homosexual, the fact that he could not reconstruct himself as heterosexual serves to further his notion of himself as lacking. This sense of inadequacy, much like Nicholas's, is something Dylan is aware will cause his parents "great pain and shame" (276). The shame being experienced by the fathers of both men is particularly great as they signal a failure of white patriarchy.

Much like with Nicholas, it is the fear of being discovered and labelled by others as homosexual that drives Dylan's unhappiness. He signals this in his letter when he states, almost as if to have it be declared as diagnosis, that he is "a homosexual; [he is] gay" (276). This inversion of the coming out scene, where the homosexual is seen to publicly affirm self and sexuality, sees Dylan's letter become a means through which he is able to claim his sexual identity, even if only in death. As Dylan writes to his parents:

I know this is not tolerated. I know that you see it as a weakness, as despicable. I know how you feel about the shame this would bring on the family, but believe me, I CANNOT CHANGE. It is for this reason that I have decided to end it all. [...] I am not miserable because of the army [...] I have fallen in love, and it is a love I know I can never have. [...] I simply cannot live like this, [...] because I know you know I will never be allowed to live with a man. I am sure the man I love is also gay. To know that it is right there and to know that it can never be is more than I can bear. It is all I think of, constantly, and I feel as if I am going mad. (276)

For Dylan even the unbearable torture of the army is not as bad as life outside of this man's world in a society that abhors male-male intimacy. Instead, it is the homoeroticism of the crowded male nature of the army that makes life bearable for Dylan, as this is where he meets and falls in love with Nicholas. The restrictions and the extreme circumstances the army seeks to place on their interactions, both public and private, are enough to make him realise that the life of a homosexual in South Africa is one of secrets, fear of discovery, denial and persecution. It is this life of denial and repression that he cannot lead, and yet it is this life he is doomed to live because of his status as a deviant/criminal in white South Africa at the time. He subsequently kills himself, suggesting that a life of self-denial is not a life worth living.

In an attempt to comfort Dylan's parents by affording their son a denied sense of masculinity, Nicholas tells his father that his son "was a man [...] [and that] [h]e coped with all the [...] training, in fact better than most" (Van der Merwe 273). It is interesting that Nicholas bases his measurement of a man on how much physical training/torture he can endure and how well he copes with it. This signals the massive influence of childhood experiences of physical inadequacy and the subsequent tendency by those present to construct him as lacking because of it. Nicholas reiterating the fact that Dylan was a man highlights his need to find a new way of measuring his own masculinity, and find affirmation in his survival of the army's training and even a stint on the border, where he fought on par with heteronormatives. These are surely not the actions of the despised effeminate moffie Dylan's father constructs his son as. Nicholas's defence of Dylan's manliness/masculinity, based on an ability to withstand harsh physical and mental training/abuse, stands in stark contrast to the way in which Sergeant Dorman summarises him: "Stassen [was] a moffie, a weak moffie, a fucking fudge-packer [...] [t]he world doesn't need shit like that!" (184). This statement, which seeks to tie Dylan's suicide to an act of submission or surrender, blames his

sexuality for his lack of manly strength. This is in keeping with the image of the white soldier the SADF tried to create. Dylan's suicide becomes a marker of his already feminized, weak form. As noted, this weakness is in turn inextricably linked to homosexuality, as the heterosexual man is constructed to readily confront and overcome various physical and mental difficulties. Nicholas's recollection of Dorman's verbal assault of him supports this reading:

“Are you giving up, you little cunt?” [...] “Van der Swart, you were his little arse-fucker, weren't you? Did you two have a lover's quarrel? Yes, that's probably why he couldn't take the punch hey?” [...] “Your friend [...] was a fucking fag, fairy, moffie, queer poes! And I hate his type. He deserved to die”. (Van der Merwe 185-186).

The danger of being discovered as homosexual in the SADF is not embodied only by Dorman and his response to Dylan's death but is similarly highlighted when Nicholas and his friend Malcolm discuss the issue. Malcolm has become Nicholas's closest friend and it is with him that he is able to find community and acceptance. Malcolm tells of a young man he “knew [...] who was in ward 22” (178). Ward 22 has become symbolic of the army's medicalised engagement with homosexual identity. This was done with “[h]ormone therapy, shock therapy [and] aversion therapy” (178). The idea of reading the homosexual again comes to mind during Malcolm's narrative in that the young man is read as a ‘moffie’ simply “[b]ecause he was going to study drama” (179). This desire to study drama becomes a marker of sensitivity, femininity and of course homosexuality. Because of this perceived otherness he is assigned to a “platoon, the reject platoon, as they called it, with all the druggies, gay guys and fuckups, and he just rebelled, so they punished him” (Van der Merwe 179). In “Assessing the Integration of Gays and Lesbians into the South African National Defence Force” (2010) Aaron Belkin and Margot Canaday signal a possible reason why the first step in dealing with the young man's homosexuality was to move him to a unit already associated with deviancy and “reject[ion]” (Van der Merwe 179). Due to the need for a steady stream of conscripts

to defend white patriarchal dominance the SADF was forced to have somewhat self-conflicting policies on homosexuality.

In the later years of apartheid, conscription became rather unfavourable amongst those “ambivalent about apartheid” (Belkin and Canaday 3). Belkin and Canaday notes how “military officials worried that an all-out ban on homosexuality might provide young, white South African men with a relatively easy way to avoid military service” (3). This in turn meant that these officials had to accept that some of the men that were forcefully conscripted would partake in sexual activity with other men whilst in the army or at the very least have a desire to do so. They argue that “a dual policy on homosexuality was developed soon after conscription was adopted in the mid-1960s” (Belkin and Canaday 3). Even though homosexuality has become loaded with perversity and femininity, and described as a sin and abomination, it was to be tolerated so as to perpetuate whiteness. This reinforces the common construction of race as the primary basis on which power is allocated within the South African context. In their research Belkin and Cannaday found that

[h]omosexuality among the conscript force was officially tolerated, but gay conscripts were considered to have a ‘behavioural disorder’ and were not appointed to leadership positions or entrusted with sensitive information. (3)

Ironically, the SADF’s moving of the young man in Malcolm’s story to the “reject platoon” becomes a twisted sign of kindness on the part of the military to the young man. It signals that he was to be tolerated whilst in the army. However, if one looks at the way in which he is responded to upon “rebellious” whilst in this platoon of “rejects” one notes that under this temporary tolerance, which is primarily based on practicality, there runs a river of strict intolerance. Malcolm tells Nicholas that all “the gay boys they catch out [...] end up [...] [in rehabilitation]. First psychiatric

ward, then DB” (179). This suggests that the way in which the army dealt with the person who has been read as homosexual was systematic and suggests an established bureaucracy developed to deal with the ‘problem’. In this way it reflected the modernistic tendencies of the apartheid state. The reject is first placed with other rejects. This I am sure is to manage them better and fits with the medicalised notion of placing all those infected together, thus isolating them from the rest who are uninfected/affected. If this separation is met with resistance or if it leads to further more public acts of deviance the homosexual is subjected to his first round of treatment, psycho-analysis and therapy. This can be seen as a means through which to try and locate and classify the type of pathology. In *Moffie* there seems to be a suggestion of childhood sexual abuse, as is the case with Dylan, who is molested by an uncle whilst living in New York, and suggested in the moments of the wrestling match with his cousin, where his uncle Dirk is presented as almost feverish with sexual excitement because of the match. Another strong theme that suggests a cause for Nicholas’s homosexuality seem to stem from trauma suffered after witnessing the death of his not much older brother when he is a child and his subsequent over-attachment to his mother. Once the perceived source had been localised and psychotherapy was found ineffective, hormone therapy was used. In the case of the character of the young man in *Moffie*, as well as many other men in South Africa, “hormone therapy changed him” (Van der Merwe 179). Dylan tells Nicholas that

he has hardly any libido, but he definitely still prefers men. The shock-aversion therapy was a bad joke, apparently really painful, but with no results ... real crap sort of Nazi experiments. He’d act like he didn’t like the picture they showed him and afterwards he’d wank soon as he got the chance. (179)

The South African Defence Force perpetuated the view that homosexuals in the military were a risk, in that they could not be trusted with state secrets because it was easy to blackmail or seduce them. The homosexual is thus weak because of a pathological obsession and appetite for

sodomy, as well as the recognised notion that the prosecutorial nature of the homosexual's subjectivity exposes him to exploitation and manipulation. This notion is supported by Van Zyl et al when they argue that

the ideology of militarism centralises certain constructions of masculinity. [...] The armed forces [were and still] are bastions of traditionalism, reproducing historically specific gendered categories of the sexes. No other government department is so closely aligned with state power and notions of national security. (Van Zyl et al 39-41)

Because of this need for a particularly militarised, racist, misogynistic hyper-masculinity the apartheid state was forced to be conscious and proactive in establishing norms that centre the white heterosexual couple and marriage as the norm in South Africa. The construction of homosexuality as bodily condition led to the idea that it can be extracted from the body. Consequently, it is not surprising that the South African Defence Force treats homosexuals with aversion therapies.

What becomes an issue of interest here is the way in which homosexuality was responded to. This response allows one to make certain assumptions about why homosexuality was particularly constructed as a danger to whiteness in South Africa. First, there seems to be a conception that homosexuality is a religious sin and evil. In the highly Calvinist society that is South Africa homosexuality becomes a threat to the morality and spirituality of the Afrikaner volk. Second, one notes the fact that in South Africa the white homosexual was in fact privileged because of his white maleness. If the white homosexual were able to perform the masculinity that apartheid South Africa required then he would be afforded the same power of dominance any heterosexual white man was afforded. What this means is that the white homosexual came to represent and constitute a possible political opponent that is able to hide in the midst of the empowered circle and not be identified. This became even more of a peril as homosexual movements came to support anti-apartheid activities and the black liberation struggle. The struggle

for gay rights, much like other struggle movements, thus becomes constructed as that which stands in direct opposition to the apartheid state and is met with the same kind of response and rhetoric which is often framed in the language of the “Old Testament” of *The Bible*. Carrim in *Human Rights and the Construction of Identities in South African Education* suggest that there is a further connection to be made between the construction of homosexuality as a threat and the fact that homosexuals are constructed as dangerous to the process of “reproduction of capitalism” (123). He argues that

[i]n keeping with the feminist argument that women are positioned in capitalism in subordinate positions in order to reproduce the conditions of capitalism, it follows that “the homosexual” which “threatens” the “heterosexist family” would be considered inimical to the reproduction and perpetuation of conditions of capitalism. The pathologising and demonising of “the homosexual” then provides a political economic ideological basis for the continuation of capitalism. “The homosexual” threatens the continuation and reproduction of the conditions of capitalism. (Carrim 123)

Chapters One and Two have been framed under a broad historical period roughly stretching from the start of colonising the country and ultimately come to a close with the end of white minority rule in 1994. This period is seen to be an extended colonial period through which Western European norms became ingrained in the way in which we categorise and label self and others. In Chapter One we find that the absence of a name, an archive, can be sidestepped by the physical mark of behaviour, as it is symbolised through the criminal record in *Proteus* and the game of pinch in the short story “Pinch”. In Chapter Three we turn to examples of this notion of white militarized heterosexuality, using the theme of the hunt, a common symbol in Afrikaner culture, to trace the ways in which this culture interact with dissident sexualities. It uses representations of the military to signal a fully, state sanctioned, white masculinity that is strictly determined and linked to processes of hunting and militarization. The next chapter focuses on representations of

homosexuality in South African texts published during the fall of apartheid. This period is seen to stretch from the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 till the early 2000s. The chapter takes on a similar form to the previous one, reading Afrikaans texts next to English ones marking the ways in which the identification and labelling of the homosexual constructs him as other and open to abuse and misuse. It is different from this one in that now we have the presence of a prominent black (gay) voice. This form of voicing is largely silent in homosexual literature written during South Africa's extended colonial period.

## Chapter 4: “Men without Women”: Queering Sex in the Carceral Space

### *Overview:*

This stage in our discussion marks a turn in the broad historical framework in which this thesis has been set. In Chapters Two and Three we looked at the ways in which the institutions of colonialism and apartheid found their expression in the categorization of people. The labels applied to people and the behaviour in the country is argued to have been created as part of a nationwide attempt to police whiteness and the heteronormative patriarchy it supports. In this way the prison and the military become the two most important symbols of the racist discriminatory nature that constructs how sex interacts with politics. I argue that this restriction of white masculinity and sexuality can also be seen in the way in which queer narratives represent same-sex desire and illustrate this with examples of how the hunt serves as a measure and marker of masculinity. The narratives set in the institution of the school allow for a way to illustrate how transgressive encounters have become synonymous with homosexuality. The conflation between the stereotype of the homosexual teacher as pederast and its use to grapple with the budding sexualities of young men who are themselves marked as queer is shown to be an artificial means through which the queer narrative seeks to show how apartheid pathologised pleasure, attraction and love are expressed through sex. While the capitalist racism at work in the country sought to limit dissidence, particularly and obsessively with regard to sex, its repressive nature offered a circumstance in which such interactions were exactly possible. The glorification of the masculine, superior whiteness of the European man’s body, browned by the South African sun and work to muscular health by physical exercise, the military and the brutalisation of the land are made all the more erotic to the queer eye.

We now move on to the next part of South African history, divided here into two sections, transitional literature and post-transitional literature. Due to the long silencing of black voices in the country and a culture of silence surrounding sexual issues in black communities in the country, it is at the end of apartheid that we see an extension of the discussion of same-sex desire to include black voices. The next two chapters seek to illustrate how the image of the prison as an institution of corrective punishment plays an integral role in the way homosexuality is navigated in the country. As a people invisibilised through legalisation, black people in the country found themselves intimately knowledgeable about the carceral spaces of the country. Due to the lack of economic development, social disintegration because of forced removals, and the disintegration of the black family/community, black men found them negotiating a social landscape that was legally accessible but economically denied. Chapter Four looks at the way in which the prison and heteronormative based homosexuality enable a similar engagement with the black male body as the fetishized subaltern. In these chapters we find that the heteronormativity of white masculinity finds a similar expression to the heteronormativity of black sex.

This chapter examines a period framed here as transitional, where new public expression of black homosexuality is marked by the availability of texts that represent same-sex behaviour amongst black men. This increase in publications discussing this often taboo topic coincides with new spaces of expression and occupation opening up for the majority of South Africa's black citizens. The idea of a transition is important for a discussion of the average black South African citizen as s/he is now allowed to interact with their white oppressors in a post-colonial dialogue that seeks to validate and document black experience. For the average white South African man it is a time of uncertainty as he is forced to face his violent racist masculinity and account for his actions as oppressor. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission functions as a good example of

how the white man, amongst others, is expected to enter a space of public confession. A similar expectation is held of the black man who fought for freedom from the oppressive apartheid state.

I discuss the advertising campaign that has generally come to be known as “Papa Wag vir Jou” (2011)<sup>52</sup>, a creation of Brandhouse and directed by Robin Goode. I argue that the success of the message the campaign sought to convey relied heavily on established social imaginary that conflates all-male institutions with homosexuality and male rape. The discourse of the television advertisement served to at first present the prisoners as average romantic men looking for love. This soon changes when the men are shown to be prisoners, some of the actors being real-life known gang affiliates. Here drunken driving, and by extension criminality is queered in such a way that criminals are allowed a sense of same-sex attraction, even if that attraction is presented as threat of violence and rape. *The Number* (2005) by Steinberg provides a long engagement with the structure and mythology that shape experience in the country’s various carceral institutions. These texts provide an almost anthropological framing of a masculinity that is seen to be both threatening and sexually alluring to the South African public. The discussion of these two texts is supported by a reading of two Afrikaans short stories, “Laaities” and “Jare” by Jan van Tonder, and includes Aucamp’s *Wisselstroom* (1990). I argue that these manuscripts allow for a queering of the prisoner and the criminal body, enabling a structured ratification of homosexuality that retains links to the construction of masculinity and manhood outside of prison.

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<sup>52</sup> On a side note, murder accused Shrien Dewani used this particular advertising campaign in his defence against extradition to the country from Britain on charges of conspiracy to murder his wife. Dewani, in a statement given in South African Court during his trial, has labelled himself as bisexual. I include two uniform resource locators for newspaper articles addressing the issue:

(<http://www.2oceansvibe.com/2012/02/28/a-sequel-to-the-infamous-papa-wag-vir-jou-drunk-driving-campaign-is-out-video/>) and (<http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2012/02/28/unhappy-hour-for-drunks>).

*Papa Wag Vir Jou*<sup>53</sup>: *Male Prisoners as Sexualised Others*

As Isak Niehaus's title "Renegotiating Masculinity in the South African Lowveld: Narratives of Male-Male Sex in Labour Compounds and in Prisons" (2002) suggests, the interest in sex within the all-male mine compounds of South Africa has often coincided with studies into sex in the all-male prisons of the country. The two spaces offer insight into notions that have been developed around the gendered nature of homosexuality in these spaces. Sasha Gear has published widely on the issue of sex in prisons and, in "Behind the Bars of Masculinity: Male Rape and Homophobia in and about South African Men's Prisons" (2007), borrows Dursuweit's (1999) notion of the "South African carceral institute" to suggest similar performances of "sexual interactions and identity formations in [...] mine compounds and, more recently, prisons" (197).

He remarks how

[s]ubsequent to an initial break with the notion of these closed institutions as sealed off from processes in broader society, scholars are divided on the question of whether inmate identities and sexualities represent smooth transitioning consistent with outside identities or whether a rupture [...] occurs between previously existing identities from the outside and those experienced during incarceration. (197)

This debate is integral to an investigation into the representation of same-sex attractions in the carceral space because it allows insight into the ways in which identities developed around male-male sexual attraction in prisons reflect hetero-social trends and norms outside of the institution. The notion of the carceral institute sits wells with a reading of the broader societal change happening in the country during this time of transition, as the metaphor allows for the country itself to be read as a newly released inmate from a system that in itself was carceral.

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<sup>53</sup> [Daddy is Waiting for You]

Gear notes the argument made by Zackie Achmat in “‘Immoral Practices’ and ‘Unnatural Vice’ in South African Prisons and Compounds, 1890-1920” (1993) against the construction of prisons as closed institutes, noting that “the sexual practices taking place in compounds could not be reduced to their relation to rural communities and outside preoccupations, nor should we be intent on uncovering motivations for participation”. In his reading of Achmat,

the compound ‘partially freed the male body in its enslavement’ [...] allowing a ‘definitive change in the relations between the concepts of sexual pleasure and sexual reproduction’ [...]. The compound or prison is thus conceptualized as a ‘rupture’ that, by breaking with inhabitants’ outside lives, presents possibilities for them to explore new configurations of desire and pleasure. (197)

I support Achmat’s view of these two forms of sexual engagement amongst men being indicative of both continuity as well as a rupture with the men’s identities outside of the carceral institute. His conception of this “rupture” as being “broader and more multi-natured than the existing work suggests” underscores his view. Achmat highlights that “some of these breaks [...] occur because of continuities with outside norms [leading to them] organis[ing] in contradictory unevenness between differently placed actors, and between levels of social organisation” (198).

Public discourse around homosexuality in South Africa has often taken on somewhat interesting and confusing forms, indicative of the ways in which the diverse forms of oppression affected notions around gender, race and sexuality in the country. An ideal example of this is the afore-mentioned series of advertisements shown on South African television warning drivers against drinking and driving during the Christmas holidays in 2011.<sup>54</sup> The company’s brief was

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<sup>54</sup> As a side note, murder accused Shrien Dewani used this particular advertising campaign in his defence against extradition to the country from Britain on charges of conspiracy to murder his wife. Dewani, in a statement given in a South African Court during his trial, has labelled himself as bisexual. I include two uniform resource locators for newspaper articles addressing the issue:

(<http://www.2oceansvibe.com/2012/02/28/a-sequel-to-the-infamous-papa-wag-vir-jou-drunk-driving-campaign-is-out-video/>) and (<http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2012/02/28/unhappy-hour-for-drunks>).

reported to have been to raise public awareness around drinking and driving during the country's festive season; its primary aim was to change mind-sets, forcing drivers to think twice about their actions. The first video in the campaign opens to a number of men seemingly describing their ideal sexual partner. The dialogue goes:

MAN ONE: Hi, my name is Leonard. I'm looking for that special person.  
MAN TWO: I am looking for a soul that is energetic and is understanding.  
MAN ONE: I don't know what to say.  
MAN TWO: I like a really, nice pleasant body.  
MAN THREE: Someone that can handle heavy situations with a smile.  
MAN FOUR: These hands will never let you go. I am quite demanding physically.  
MAN FIVE: I have all the time in the world for you.  
MAN SIX: I'm gonna change you. [Gesturing at his head so as to signal the mind]  
MAN FIVE: Don't be scared of me, I'm not an animal.  
MAN SIX: Papa wag vir jou.<sup>55</sup>

Closing to a black screen with the words "They'd love to meet you. Never drink and Drive" the advertisement serves to highlight the inextricable way in which the prison has been confounded with homosexuality in the South African context. Through a homosexuality fraught with the threat of violence and violation of personhood through rape the advertisement positions the prison within the familiarity of a space where same-sex sex is tolerated. The advertisement drew a lot of criticism from human rights campaigners as well as the coloured community, arguing that this use of sexual violence as a threat against drunken driving reinforced ingrained pathologies around sex and submission in the South African imaginary. Furthermore, it perpetuated the stereotype that men of colour were criminal and threatening.

Of interest to me is the discourse reflected in the dialogue itself. Opening with somewhat non-threatening middle-aged white men, the advertisement at first appears as a cross between a comedic skit and an online dating service video. The men primarily describe their ideal partner;

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<sup>55</sup> (<http://10and5.com/2010/12/02/whodunnit-new-drive-dry-tvc/>)

one assumes that they are heterosexual because of their demeanour and characterisation. Leonard, whose first name introduction helps to familiarise the viewer with the cast of the advertisement, wants a “special [...] person”, whilst Man Two wants an “energetic” “soul” who is “understanding” with a “really nice, pleasant body”, Man Three is seeking “[s]omeone that can handle heavy situations with a smile”. All of these requests in a mate seem reasonable and the advertisement is able to normalise the characters and their requests. Man Three’s request for somebody that can “handle heavy situations with a smile” and Man Two’s insistence on a “really nice, pleasant body” serve as markers for the reader. They carry a dangerous undertone and it is here where the conflation between homosexuality and criminality first intrudes. The white men’s requests and statements are far less threatening to the viewer than those of the black and coloured men who follow them in the latter part of the advertisement; they serve to load the atmosphere with tenderness and care. This representation of them creates a sense of intimacy which is seen as both absent yet integral to an understanding of prison same-sex attractions. The notion of the body and its aesthetic are important markers in the discourse of the advertisement as the male body becomes a marker for sexual virulence, physical power and violence.

Following this mild introduction to the romantic notions of the non-threatening, slightly comedic, white men the tone of the advertisement changes with the introduction of the first black man. Within the South African context there is a strong imaginative relationship between the black man and criminality, and Man Four’s assertion that his “hands will never let you go” and that he is “quite demanding physically” serve to introduce the notion of sexual threat and violence. These conflated notions of homosexuality, prisons, criminality and sexual and/or physical violence function at the same time as notions of heteronormative romantic support and partnering. As we move from the white passive middle-aged romantic requests at the beginning of the advertisement

we are boldly confronted by the overly familiar image of the tattooed “coloured” prisoner. Their sexual demands are not hidden and the subtext of the dating video is directly threatening and suggestive, changing the tone of the advertisement. At this point the camera also starts panning out and soon one sees that the dating videos are in fact being shot in prison and that the men in the videos are prisoners. It is now that Man Five threatens that he “has all the time in the world for you” and asks that you do not be afraid of him: “I am not an animal.” Man Six is perhaps the most ominous in his representation of prison sexuality and how it ruptures society when carried with the prisoner back to normal society upon release. The words “I am gonna change you” uttered whilst gesturing at his head suggest a mental change to be enacted upon the addressed and highlights the sense of permanence connected with the recasting that happens in prison. The fact that this image and its ascribed notions served so well in deterring drunk driving in the country is strengthened by the fact that the campaign won several media awards, which highlights the extent to which this image of a conflated, “carceral” feminization of men has become a familiar cultural image for the South African imagination.

In an attempt to construct the ways in which prison has become marked as a space in which men’s sexualities are queered, let us take a brief look at two other examples. In July 2010 *Frontline World*, a documentary series that airs on and is produced by The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), an American broadcasting network, screened an episode entitled *South Africa: Inside the Cycle of Rape*. The documentary follows the work of Chris Malgas, warden and therapist, who facilitates a “counselling program for sex offenders at Pollsmoor” Correctional Facility. Although the film engages rape as perpetuated by men mostly against women, it also highlights the prevalence of rape in male prisons. It frames the two together in a statement that holds “gang violence and rape [as] rampant in [Pollsmoor]”. Pollsmoor is commonly known as the stronghold

of the Number Gangs and it is here that many an offender finds themselves exposed to the norms and values that govern gang masculinity and police prison sex. Of particular interest is the interview with Turner Adams who has been serving time in the prison for the last 26-27 years. From the beginning, Adams makes it clear that the sexual abuse he experienced and participated in is not constructed as rape: in fact for him it is a privilege of his status and associated power afforded him by the gang. “We had this thing that we just took what we wanted because all the people around us were afraid of us”. Within this context sex becomes the fear-enforced right of those who find power through their homosocial gangsterism. As Adams illuminates:

I started at the young, tender age of fifteen. I was fifteen when I was sentenced. I’ve got (sic) exposed to a lot of things in prison. I was harassed; I was verbally abused, sexually abused, because guys wanted to just ... sodomise me because I was a youngster, attractive youngster. When I grew up the same things that they wanted to do with me I was doing it with other guys in prison.

Significantly, there are a number of issues raised by Adams that resonate with the notion Gear find in his research of prisons, supporting its function as a space of ruptures, a space where sexuality and masculinity can be undone and then reformed. Sentenced to jail as the perpetrator of heterosexual rape, Adams soon became the victim of sexual aggressors himself. His youthful attractiveness leaves him vulnerable to the abuse of others: “guys wanted to just ... sodomise me because I was a youngster, attractive youngster”. The specification of his having been an “attractive youngster” and this being the reason for him being the object of others’ sexual desires serves to move his experiences from that which is traditionally framed as primarily related to power to a position that includes sexual attraction.

The title of the episode suggests that the sexual exploitation of men in prison leads to their sexual exploitation of other men later, when they have attained the appropriate position and related

privileges in the gang. This is perhaps best signalled by Adams's statement that "[w]hen [he] grew up" "[he] was doing it with other guys"; "the same things that they wanted to do with me". Quite clearly a rupture has happened here: the heterosexual aggressor becomes the homosexual victim, to then later take on the position of the homosexual aggressor. In this sense there is an obvious cycle of abuse, yet at the same time there is a focus on the body and desirability. This is a hierarchy where men are made to understand what it feels like to take on the submissive role of being penetrated (being a woman), thus earning the right to later again be remade into a man, this time to fulfil the role of dominant penetrator. In this way the gang can be seen to be perpetuating an unspoken desire and need for sexual intimacy in prison by placing it within a strictly controlled power system. The way in which this functions is perhaps best expressed by some of Lizelle Albertse's informants in her study entitled "Gang Members' Experience of Victimization and Perpetuation of Rape in Prison" (2007), where their statements mark the ways in which sex with other men is framed within the discourse of the 28 gang. One of the informants notes how when he "had the privilege to take his own 'privates' to have sex with [...] [he] was nervous, but [...] enjoyed the power and the control that the number gave [him]" (59). His statement supports the view that the number gangs are active attempts to enable same-sex encounters in the carceral space, whilst maintaining the hegemonic masculinity of the men who engage in these activities. Due to the fact that the uninitiated have little experience with the workings of prison, his immediate subjugation is seen to be an attack on his masculinity. It is only later when he has been fully indoctrinated with the gang's dogma that he comes to recognise that "they are just doing a job for their number" (60). The following statement serves to support this claim:

It was the first time that I would have the privilege to actually penetrate a man instead of him doing it to me. I felt I deserved it; I worked hard for it and went through a lot of humiliation... The number says I cannot refuse to

have sex with a 'private'. It was my new job; it is a right and also a kind of privilege. (62)

The inner workings of the gang are such that they consume the individual and make his body an appendicle of the gang. In this binary structure sex with other men takes on the form of privilege, something that is earned through hard service and humiliation. The rules demand that the weakest member cannot refuse to have sex with a "private"; "it [is his] new job, [...] a right and [...] privilege" (62) and by fulfilling this job, by being afforded this privilege to be the object of other men's affection, the new recruit/uninitiated is later rewarded with a rank and the right to have sex with other men who are in a similar position as he was when he first entered the institution of the prison.

Here I include details of Albertse's research as it provides contextual confirmation that highlights the way in which the South African institution of the prison has been and still is a space in which heteronormativity and masculine dominance are under constant contestation and reconstruction. These narratives show the purpose of sexual experience in prison to be an attempt to familiarise these queered/deviant men with the state of being a woman in a patriarchal society. It is only when they fully understand the victimisation of the feminized other that they are allowed to function as men again. In this sense, the prisoner's experience in itself becomes part of the initiation into the upper echelons of the 28 Gang. Another of Albertse's informants notes that he "knows how [the men he later had sex with] feel, because he was there. [He had been made to] feel like a woman once, like [his] manhood was taken away, but [he] got it back when [he] got an office and [he] earned the right to take these men to have sex with them" (60). His statement reveals the way in which the structure of the gang seeks to justify the sexual desire of its members by placing it within an overarching framework where men have to temporarily submit so as to later

attain dominance. Although I am taxed to find an account of a prisoner who speaks to the pleasure of being sexually penetrated by another man, it is clear from these men's accounts that sexual pleasure is derived from anally penetrating "attractive youngster[s]":

After I had sex with the man for the first time, I enjoyed it and I decided that I wanted to do it again. From then on I created opportunities to have sex with the new ones. [...] Their looks and their bodies started turning me on as well... [...] To have sex in prison with men is part of the number and it is also part of me, because I am the number. It is in my blood and in my veins. It is my right as an 'indota'. I have worked hard and proved myself worthy of this right. (62)

There is no denying the important role and power afforded the newly re-made man, especially after his long service to other members of the gang as sexual object. What is important to note is that concurrently with this sense of inhabiting a space of privilege is the enjoyment of the sexual benefits that come with attaining a position of status in the gang (indota). Similarly, the men's statements signal that they were changed, first to privates, and later when they had earned it, to Indotas.

Albertse's informants speak of their sexuality as having become altered and how when they exited prison they found themselves trying to recreate the male-male intimacy they were privy to in prison. Consider the following statements which suggest that as the uninitiated is eroticized and sexualised so too does he start to see the desirability of other men, an attraction that persists even when he returns to heteronormative society:

Sometimes, even now, I get excited by young men and boys, even when I have my girlfriend around me. [...] The experience [sex with a woman] was good, but I kept on seeing the bodies and faces of the men that I had sex with in prison. [...] I was outside for almost six months and I saw a lot of men that turned me on. I found it difficult to resist them but I was forced to [...] I am not allowed to think about the men I had sex with."

This construction of homosexuality in prison supports the view that there is more than power and politics reflected in these encounters.

Before we move on to examining the printed version of the “Arrive Alive Campaign” I want to introduce the theoretical work done by John Mercer, and particularly highlight his article “In the Slammer: The Myth of the Prison in American Gay Pornographic Video” (2008) as a means through which to gain insight into why this particular campaign serves so succinctly highlight the way in which prison and the body of the prisoner are represented here as both sexual threat and sexual provocation. His article categorises the all-male space of the men’s penitentiary as “a highly eroticised” milieu (151). I support his view that “the significances of the prison are multiple [as it] [...] draws on a gay mythology of homosexual desire [...]” (151). This same “mythology of homosexual desire” positions itself uncomfortably between the realm of sexual arousal and sexual threat, evoking notion of sadomasochism whilst similarly casting the prison as an extra-societal space of exploration and reinvention. “Prison scenarios [...] [thus] offer[s] idealised spaces for the acts of pornography [as explicitly, visual representation of homosexual desire]” (151-152) whilst at the same time operating as a space that is fundamentally threatening to the sexual heteronormative integrity of a man.

As Mercer stresses in his discussion of the issue:

The discourse of the all male environment posits scenarios where the restrictions of the heterosexual world no longer apply, where, in the absence of females as objects of sexual desire and release, men are compelled to use each other as substitutes, or where men’s true sexual desires for each other can be articulated. (156)

When applied to the representation of the prisoner in this advertisement campaign, and as is broadened out by Achmat’s views on the issue which represents prisons as a space in which ruptures happen, the advertisements seem to draw on a similar “mythology of homosexual desire”

as is used in mainstream gay pornography. One is reminded of Aucamp's view which holds that the homosexual world/artist is responsible for the stereotypes which heteronormative persons have regarding it and its experiences. Mercer helps to cast these advertisements in a new light, highlighting the multi-vocal nature of the prison narrative as both affirming as well as invisibilising same-sex desire. It does this through a strict structure of gender and a vigilant policing of sexual politics in carceral spaces. Like the discourse of the prison narrative that positions the carceral institute as both denying and enabling male-male erotic, the "discourse [of gay pornographic performances of these spaces] manifests itself as either the supposedly straight man being inducted into the joys of gay sex or, in conjunction with the discourse of the all male (sic) environment, the red-blooded heterosexual male using the opportunity of gay sex as an outlet for his uncontrollable sexual urges" (157).

Importantly, Mercer notes that "[t]his discursive category can be regarded as homophobic as it appears to celebrate and affirm hegemonic masculinity by eroticising the heterosexual male and his milieu" (157). Equally, it seeks to affirm male-male sexual encounters, suggesting a blurring of categories and a subsequent ability to escape one's heterosexual identity, a category that is framed as equally as damaging and restrictive as homosexuality. Ironically, prison becomes a space where the perceived freedom of sexual object choice as well as gender performance in 'normal' society are seen to be as limiting to sexual performances/expression as prison is in limiting one's movement. He encapsulates this view when he notes that "[p]risons are all male, self-contained environments where the social conventions of the outside world (i.e., the heterosexual world) do not apply and where hierarchical power relations can be played out" (162), a view similar to that of Achmat and Gear noted earlier. Within this context, "[p]risons afford opportunities for characters identified as heterosexual to channel sexual energies through

homosexuality [...]. [T]he prison becomes a fetishized space of danger, sexual tension and desire” (162). It is my contention that within the confines of the South African imaginary, prison carries this same meaning of a “fetishized space of danger, sexual tension and desire” (162).

The print advertisements provided a more developed and coherent narrative that concludes with the unspoken opportunity of prison rape or consenting same-sex sexual activity. It starts with a motorist being arrested for drunk driving and ends with the same first-person observer being locked up in prison with the threat of sexual violence looming:

**Figure 1:**



Following a presumed drunken driving incident the viewer is escorted into the cavernous confines of the police van. The van as an image of institutionalisation and control of deviant behaviour becomes the first space that is homo-eroticised in a threatening, violent manner when the viewer is

next introduced to the three other occupants of the van. The tattoos, grimy bodies and poses of the men serve to encourage a reading of them as other, marked, and deviant. This deviance is quite literally inscribed on the body of the man in the middle. His tattoos suggest that he is a gang member and has in reality spent time in jail, and one is forced to make connections with prison sex and rape.<sup>56</sup>

**Figure 2:**



The man on the left is particularly other in this representation as he is feminised by his hair and pose. The man in the middle's positioning suggests his dominance over the feminised man on the left. There is confusion between markers of gender, age, race, sexuality and masculinity which

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<sup>56</sup> As another example of the way in which prison intersects with society in a more open way than we think, Francois Tiemie who plays the role of the main character in the advertisement was an ex-prisoner and gangster. His utterance of the words "pappa wag vir jou" suggests experiential knowledge and understanding.

leaves him othered to the extent of the grotesque<sup>57</sup>. The three figures in the advertisement have a sense of unity; they share a brotherhood and a prior knowledge to which the viewer is not privy. Each man is othered to the extent that his body becomes the representation of that which stands outside of heteronormative law-abiding society. As a group they take on the form of a sub-cultural/dissident masculinity, and in turn their criminality is conflated with their proclivity to sexually deviant behaviour. In South Africa, as is discussed by Munro, the prison looms large as a place of torture and disappearance, as it is still scarred by its racist apartheid history and the brutalities required enforcing it. Even the colour of the police uniforms and the police vehicle are marked by South Africa's divided past. The creators of this image thus seek to capture an imaginary that is uniquely South African, drawing on its conflated nature to speak to its various groups using the same visual markers.

**Figure 3:**



<sup>57</sup> For a more developed engagement with the role of the monster and the grotesque in Western representations see *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (1996) edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen.

Figure 3 brings the sexual expression and eroticisation of prison sexuality and masculinity down to a blunt realisation when the viewer now enters the overcrowded prison cell. There are three single beds shown and casually draped over them are eight men, who presumably share the cell. The image is fundamentally threatening and yet at the same time this underlying threat of sexual intimacy (forced or otherwise) serves to resonate with contemporary pornographic representations that position themselves in the prison. With a caption that reads: “They’d love to show you a good time” the ambiguity of the image is ruptured by the brutality of the men, visually shown through their physical muckiness and the general griminess of the cell. It is here that Figure 4 comes into its own:

**Figure 4:**



Loaded with sexual tension and physical threat, the narrative culminates with the men longingly staring into the camera. They are both welcoming and threatening. Their intention is undeniably sexual, eroticised through their physical familiarity and intimacy. There is a particular visceral quality to these images through the use of set design and colour coding. This highlights the problematic of the advertisement in that it suggests an acknowledgement and purposeful failure on the part of the South African Police and Prison Services to guarantee the safety and physical integrity of prisoners. The target audience, which can only be male, is forced to accept that if they were to disobey the law they will be submitted to violent sexual abuse which is constructed as being a fundamental part of their punishment enabled by the prison as a carceral space. There are thus close links drawn between male-male rape, hyper-masculinity and the performance of heterosexuality, albeit here in a way that problematically positions the homosexual as being a sexual threat in prison as well as fundamentally associating criminality with homosexuality.

Sasha Gear, in “Behind the Bars of Masculinity: Male Rape and Homophobia in and about South African Men's Prisons” (2007) investigates the extent to which in the “dominant discourses on prison sex and sexual violence a blurring occurs between homosexuality and “male rape”” (2). He highlights how “sex between men and the rape of men in prison remain smothered by taboo and stigma” (2), stemming from

[d]iscourses that militate against meaningful engagement and fuel destructive myths [...] [which has led to a] confus[ion of] significant differences between issues of sexuality and violence. Homosexuality and male rape [...] are evoked and confused. [As a consequence] [s]ame-sex desire and male rape victims are alternately demonized and unacknowledged. The place where men encounter these discourses is in prison. (2)

Taking into account the numerous problems with the South African justice system and the overcrowding of prisons, one is safe to assume that many of the men who are raped in prison are

released into normal society, damaged and espousing a new discourse of masculinity that asserts itself through the use of the phallus as a weapon. As mentioned earlier, there are clear problems with reading prison sex as consensual homosexual sex. Firstly, many of the men who engage in same-sex sexual activity do not identify as homosexual; instead they refer to themselves as Indotas, re-enacting a broader societal construction of the heterosexual man as provider and dominator and the private as submitter. Secondly, by its nature prison is a dynamic place, there are various forms of power structure, and a young man's willing submission to a dominant prisoner may ensure his protection and safety. As Gear notes, "[t]ypically, any suggestion of sexual activity behind bars elicits from the public anxious pronouncements and denouncements" (4) and this is primarily because of South Africa's entrenched homophobia.

In the advertisements discussed earlier I highlighted the encoded discourse that conflates homosexuality with prison sex and/or rape and suggests it as just punishment for deviant behaviour. I want to support Gear's view that "[m]ultiple public anxieties surrounding crime, violence and homosexuality [in South Africa have] produce[d] a conflation of male rape and homosexuality", of which these advertisements are a good example (4). In another paper entitled "Sex and Damage in Men's Prisons" (2005) Gear suggests that the notion of prison as a space that allows for ruptures in sexual identity needs to be broadened, as "some of these breaks in fact occur because of continuities with outside norms" (198).

This lack of differentiation is also evident within prisons themselves [...] fuel[ing] homophobia and entrench[ing] dangerous ideas about what it means to be a man. (4)

In order to clearly understand Gear's notion of the transference of homophobia from prison to society and vice versa, and the construction of women and passive men as an inferior femininity, one has to take into account that he views "masculinity as being 'precariously' achieved by

constantly warding off its threats, specifically by rejecting femininity and homosexuality” (7).

Gear’s work shows that

[b]ecause vulnerability is constructed within dominant notions of gender as a fundamental facet of femininity, and sexual contact with another man (even unwanted) is associated with homosexuality, same-sex male rape becomes directly linked to both of ‘masculinity’s’ others: femininity through vulnerability, and homosexuality through same-sex contact. (Gear 2007: 7)  
[...] A feature of the hegemonic definition of prison manhood is an exclusively penetrative sexual role while ‘womanhood’ demands an exclusively receptive sexual role. (Gear 2007: 10)

### ***Constructing a Queered Prison Masculinity***

*The Number* (2005) by Steinberg offers the reader insight into the ways in which Gear’s “broadened and multi-natured rupture” intersects with the normalities of life outside of the prison. In the book the prison is presented as a space of re/education, a place where instead of being rehabilitated the criminal is in fact further consumed by deviant behaviour. The all-male structure of the prison becomes an artificial microcosm that is read to intensify manifestations of masculinity, maleness and sexuality that exist outside of the prison. Where in normal society women occupy a vulnerable position, leaving them more likely to be subjected to physical violence and sexual abuse/rape, in prison the absence of women means that the heterosexually-identified man is forced to project this means of establishing dominance onto other men. For the most part, men in prison can be argued to be physically more able than other men. Crime, particularly personal and violent crime like robbery and rape, suggests that the man who is to engage in criminal behaviour would *a priori* be able to express a particular form of dominance/masculinity/threat. The ability to have another man assume the role of womanhood thus allows the male prisoner a means through which to perpetuate his heteronormative masculine dominance inside the prison.

The title of the book references the self-styled Number Gangs that have become synonymous with the South African prison system and confronts the ways in which sexuality and masculinity engage with each other in these gangs. Simultaneously it reflects trends in South African society which influenced these prisoners. Interestingly, what Steinberg finds is a historical narrative that is used to underwrite the legitimacy of the gangs and serves as a creation myth for its sub-culture. This myth mirrors similar ones shown to be developed by other sub-cultural groups, for example modern gay people themselves, which creates a sense of a unity and a cultural, albeit ahistorical heritage. Steinberg finds two version of the same story, one from the official archive recounting a historical figure and the other created through the oral myths of gang members as they retell and embellish the story of the historical figure so as to serve their own political aims inside prisons. William Steenkamp/Magadien Wentzel is a “small and balding” man “in his early to mid-forties perhaps, and he [i]s astonishingly thin” (537). Steinberg’s description of Wentzel shows him physically marked by a life of crime and prison. Wentzel’s version of prison history salute[s] the 26, 27 and 28 groups for showing courage [when] [t]hey stood up and fought for [prisoners’] rights under the apartheid regime, for [prisoners] to be treated in a humane way” (537). But sadly, according to him,

when democracy came to South Africa everyone forgot that we shed blood in prison for the sake of democracy. Instead we were labelled as gangsters. Let me put the record straight: we were never gangsters. With our souls and our minds we were freedom fighters. We put our bodies on the line for democracy, and we are doing it yet again for a change’. (549-560)

Wentzel’s claim stands as a counter-narrative to the one that is generally ascribed to prisoners in South Africa. His links to the prison gangs of South Africa and claims of a political purpose and heritage under apartheid that have not been recognised and rewarded stands in contrast to Brenna Munro’s notion in *South Africa and the Dream of Love to Come* (2012) that political prisoners

presented gangsterism as opposed to political prisoners, who associated gangsters with the violent crime of forced sodomy. Munro concludes her analysis of anti-apartheid prison writing by arguing that “within [...] [it] male homosexuality was constructed as the antithesis of comradely commitment” (45). She goes on to argue that

[t]he perverse amorality of the white agents of the apartheid state was spelled out through their (homo)sexual sadism, while the criminal gangs and their world of violence and desire were cast as the opposing pole of the political prisoners’ democratic culture of reasoned debate between men.  
(45)

Conversely, Wentzel’s claim presents the clear constructions of the gangster in the prison writing of anti-apartheid heroes as false, or at least less black and white in nature. His claims signal an attempt on the part of the prisoner to speak for himself. He becomes the post-colonial subject, his narrative speaking on different levels to remind others of the humanity of the criminalised. This notion is reflected in the television advertisement discussed earlier, where one of the men states to the camera that he is not an animal. This recasting of the prisoner in his own terms is linked by Steinberg (2005) to the fact that “[s]ince the end of apartheid, journalists, social workers, NGOs and government officials had begun speaking to members of the Number Gangs, which for the past century had been entirely mute” (573). He notes how “[t]he gangs, in turn, wove a single discourse, with impressive speed, and offered it to the world” (573). This press “conference history” Steinberg is privy to becomes a means through which we glimpse the ways in which sexuality, masculinity and intimacy are thought of and performed in prison gangs. In Wentzel Steinberg finds a willing source that is able to explain the “[un-]spoken” “mythical history” as well as the rank structure in prisons. For us this mythical history is important as it serves to queer a narrative of masculine sexual and physical intimacy that is often left unexamined and has recently been increasingly denied.

Wentzel's aim is clear and it is to tell the truth of what is really happening in prisons and how the prison gangs are truly structured and operate. In one of his early conversations with the author he confronts him on the role the media have played in perpetuating the image of prisoners as rapists and incorrigible criminals. Wentzel concedes:

Ja, there are those who break the rules and sodomise. Eight, nine years is a long time to be inside, without a woman, and there are prostitutes on the inside, so a 26 might pay somebody for sex. Or if they have no money to pay for sex, they may use force. But people are not sodomised the way you read about in newspapers. It is not true that to join the 28s, you must be fucked in the arse. That is propaganda spread by our enemies. I am a proud 28, a proud 28. Don't come here to spread rumours about us. If a member rapes somebody he is severely punished. Write that. Write the truth. (626)

The prisoner is thus aware of the ways in which the community outside of prison demonises prisoners and the 28 Gang in particular. Their association with sodomy is seen to construct them as violent, hostile predators whose pathology is learned and encouraged by prison masculinity and the absence of women. There seems to be an acceptance that male sexuality is virulent and that the absence of women will invariably result in the commission of homosexual sex acts. The structures of the gang become a means through which this male sexual virulence can be indulged.

In chapter three of his narrative entitled "Nongoloza and Kilikijan" Steinberg investigates the two figures of Nongoloza, one being a "real-historical figure who walked the actual streets of early Johannesburg", the other the "mythical Nongoloza, whose story was invented and transmitted by thousands of South African prisoners" (895). Steinberg brings to light the fact that

[a]ll we know of Nongoloza's youth is what he himself left us. In the 1912 Department of Prisons Annual Report, there is a thin, three page memoir which the outlaw dictated to his captors from his prison cell in Pretoria. (903)

The memoir, albeit short, serves as an archival link that connects the mythology of the Number Gangs to actual history, highlighting the fluidity that exists between the cultures that have

developed in South African prisons and constructions outside of prison. The historical gang that was started by Nongoloza was organised by him “under what has since become known as Nineveh law” (958). Nongoloza explains the law’s stance on homosexuality:

As to the practice of *hlabonga* which you complain of as existing among the Ninevites in gaol, [...] in that the soldiers subject the *piccanins* to immoral practices, that have always existed. Even when we were in the hills south of Johannesburg, some of us had women and others had young men for sexual purposes. (969)

Nongoloza’s memoir, whilst offering tangible proof of the Number Gangs being grounded in a real history of resistance against the white oppressors, as is derived from the name of his gang, the Ninevites, also serves as early indication of same-sex sexuality in the African context. The claim by Nongoloza that *hlabonga* has always existed [...] [e]ven when we were in the hills” locates same-sex behaviour in the indigenous landscape of the country. The notion that it was common for some men to have women for “sexual purposes” whilst others had young men allows for a democratic construction of sexual choice and preference (969).

The mythological version of this origin myth of the number prison gangs of South Africa symbolically describes the way in which homosexual sex had become integrated into the masculinity of the criminal/bandit, thus shaping the ways in which sexual relations are governed in prison society through militaristic structures that determine specific roles and privileges for specific members of the gang. The 28 Gang member in particular is allowed to retain his masculinity, even as he is able to enjoy a sexual act that is meant to strip him of this same hetero-masculinity. The multiple version of this myth is ascribed by Steinberg to the common characteristic of “oral histories, there are countless variations in the story” (1068). In the same way that this myth has various versions, the artificial society of masculinity constructed in the prison is seen to be in constant flux, much as it is outside prisons. The effect and importance afforded the

allowance of same-sex activity (homosexuality) in the prison gangs is constructed as the reason why the original group of bandits is said to have originally split into two separate gangs and then later three: the 28s, the 27s, and the 26s, respectively. The split reportedly happened because Kilikijan discovered one of his men, Magubane, having thigh sex with Nongoloza. He was outraged but Nongoloza assured him “that it was written in the law that what he and Magubane were doing was permitted” (1172). “It says on Rooiland’s hide, Nongoloza explained, that women are poison and that soldiers must choose wives from the young men in their ranks” (1172).

As Steinberg notes, there is still hot debate around which one of the gangs was right as to what the original undivided gang law said concerning sodomy in the gang. What is not in dispute is that the standard custom (still in practice) for this band of criminals was for the group aligned with a man named Kilikijan to engage in their criminal activities during the day and abstain from sexual intercourse with other men. This group was later to become the 26s. Conversely, the group associated with Nongoloza partook in their criminal activities at night and defended to the death their sole right to engage in sexual activity with other men. The appeal to law by Nongoloza signals the way in which some narratives engage the prison as transgressive space in which same-sex attraction and violent masculinity sit comfortably in support of each other. It seems that even in the mythology of the prison gang’s homosexuality is restricted to a performance of a gendered hierarchical structure that reflects the broader social structure. There is an acknowledgement that some men prefer to have sex solely or otherwise with other men, the gang’s original law and founder claiming it as his legal right. Together with this there is the rejection of this kind of sexual intimacy. Ironically, it is quite clear from the research available that all gangs in prison have some way of managing the sexual desires of their members, but it is only the 28s Gang, it seems, that will publicly align itself with sodomy/homosexuality.

Two Afrikaans short stories included in *Wisselstroom* (1990) compiled by Aucamp are set in prison. They are “Laaities” and “Jare”, both written by Jan Van Tonder. The first person narrator of “Laaities” tells the story of young men and their fate in South African prisons as they are forced to either assume the identity of a man or that of a wyfie. According to the anonymous narrator, a man who has been in prison a number of times – a “laaitie” – is more precious than food (79). This construction of masculine subordinates as part of the prison economy reminds one of the way in which sex and intimacy in prisons are reduced to men having to pay in some way or form for access to the sexual pleasure they are afforded by their laaities. He emphasises that they are worth more than a whole arm’s length of marijuana (79,) signalling the extent to which the laaities’ bodies are commodified objects to which the economic structure of the prison ascribes a particular value.

Whilst providing us insight into the workings of sex in prison the narrator is anxious to assure the reader that he neither smoked marijuana nor ever kept a laaitie (*Wisselstroom*, 79). The reader notes the need to establish a relative morality and trustworthiness on the part of the narrator despite his criminal habit; he establishes it through his denial of both smoking illicit drugs and engaging in same-sex behaviour. The narrator seeks to escape the moral judgment associated with a character so violent as to force another man into sexual submission. The violence in this case is always undermining the underlying sexual attraction that allows for the choice of the laaitie as sex partner. What is ironic is that the narrator has been in prison before: in fact he is so skilled at negotiating prisons and their cultures that he has earned two blue blazers. The narrator’s authority and the performance of masculinity that are required make it ironic that he should not have a laaitie of his own, especially as he notes how “every man who is big and strong, or cook, or smuggles goods has his own boy” (*Wisselstroom*, 79). As Gear explains:

Male prison populations tend to be divided into people indentified as ‘men’ and those identified as ‘women’. [...] ‘Marriage’-type interactions are reportedly the most common site of sex in men’s prisons and are accepted in the hegemonic inmate culture as the right place for sex to happen. [S]exual mores [can thus be seen to be] arrange[d] around a conflation of gender and sex role: men penetrate and women are penetrated” (Gear 2005: 199).

This “conflation of gender and sexual roles: men penetrate and women are penetrated” restricts the manner in which the homosexual in the prison is seen to be constructed. The act of sodomy as performance of homosexuality is undermined by the fact that the dominant men remain masked in their masculinity and, the transgressive nature of their desire and performance thereof is minimized. Furthermore, this structured way of sexual engagement allows for the men who are remade as women to enter into and gain from an economy where they are commodities with restricted direct ownership/agency.

According to “Laaities”’ narrator, homosexuality in prison is a natural consequence of the absence of women and reaffirms a construction of prison sexuality as temporary. This is the common construction of homosexuality in prison, where it is read as situational. When the heterosexual man who has sex with men in prison returns to “normal” society he is expected to leave behind his homosexual attraction and pleasures. The narrator ties the prevalence of sex in prison to the failure of the prison as a whole to control and regulate sexual desire:

Onse eige vrouens kan ons nie eens van ’n huwelikspelig bedien as hulle hier kom kuier twee kere in die maand nie. Dis nou hoe die laaities so kosbaar geword het. Vir ’n jong seun, so sewentien, agtien jaar, en net mooi tronkryp, is ’n mooi gladde vel en ’n kind-gesig en lekker vet boude ’n seën of ’n straf as hy hier toegesluit word. Hang nou net af hoe slim hy is of hoe dom hy is. (*Wisselstroom*, 79)<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> “Our own women cannot even perform their marital duty when they come here to visit twice a month. That’s how the laaities became so precious. For a young laaitie, about seventeen, eighteen years, and just about prison ripe, a nice smooth skin, a childlike face and nice fat butt can be a blessing or a curse when he is locked up in here. It just depends on how smart or stupid he is” (*Wisselstroom*, 79).

For Gear “[t]he polarized gender categories that this [prison] moral economy requires demand that some inmates depart from the way they have up until their incarcerations understood themselves and been understood by others” (199). The fact that the unnaturalness of imprisonment keeps the men from their natural sexual desires and forces them to satisfy these desires with young men reminds one of a similar narrative that has come from the mines and their construction of mine-marriages as a consequence of the inhumane space of the mine hostels. There seems to be a conflation between the notion of the prison as a form of oppressive apartheid space and the racist economic exploitation of the mines. In both cases “normal” men’s bodies are confined and they are forced to find other, dissident forms of escaping this bondage. The prison/mine marriage thus becomes marked as a means through which the incarcerated man is able to reaffirm and reclaim humanity through enacting a union that is at the basis of the “heterosexual hegemony”, to borrow Butler’s term. One of the ways in which the incarcerated is able/forced to perform this reincarnation of the other is often through a process of trickery where “targets are [...] tricked into [...] behaving in a way that can be claimed to invoke more familiar assumptions about gender that are based on its dominant construction into either/or categories (where ‘men’ are providers and protectors, and ‘women’ are dependent and vulnerable)” (Gear 2005: 201).

In the case of van Tonder’s story, the male sex object is first emasculated through references to him as a *laaitie*. He is not a man and he, like a boy, can be made to subject himself to the sexual advances and dominance of the stronger and more empowered man. This reminds one of the constructions of the compulsive homosexual teacher discussed earlier. He too, in his attempt to seduce the boy, reflects a similar reliance on his position as empowered elder/man to subject the boy to his sexual advances and dominance. As mentioned, sex with the boys is seen as a release and natural consequence of the unnatural circumstances of prison. This logic suggests that if the

men were not in prison their weaker, feminized wives would fulfil this marital duty, similarly subjected to the whims and desires of the man. It further helps to eliminate the stigma attached to the empowered man, as he has to make public and overt his sexual advances to the laaitie, required by prison norms/gang law to stake his claim publicly, declaring his ownership of the laaitie to the other men. In this sense the prison marriage, like the mine marriage, functions in a similar way to the heterosexual marriage in normal society. It is thus not surprising that similar qualities of the body are required of the attractive laaitie. The desired pretty face and smooth skin help to further place the young man in the position of the submissive woman as these qualities are stereotypically associated with femininity and softness.

The reference to the “nice fat butt” by Van Tonder’s narrator in “Laaities” draws the reader’s attention to the primary function or role of the person following his forced re-understanding of himself and others. A focus on the plumpness of the buttocks reminds one of the femininity projected onto the bodies of the laaities, whilst at the same time highlighting the extent to which the lens through which the “men” look at the boys is sexualised and constructs them as eroticised others. Large woman’s buttocks have for long been a sign/symbol of fertility in human history. The fat butt of the laaitie is made to serve as a reminder of a primal attraction to voluptuous bums held by most (heterosexual) men in general. The reference by the narrator to whether or not being marked with the qualities deemed desirable in prison can be seen either as a blessing or a curse, depending on the intelligence of the boy, reminds the reader that all prison sex is transactional and to some extent coercive. The laaitie is thus to accept the markers and subsequent value of his body as feminised sex object and use this to usurp his passivity and victimization. The state of feminized sex object is imbued with a masculine agency through which the laaitie is then able to survive prison.

Steinberg notes this phenomenon in real-life prison. He recounts “watch[ing] a prominent 26 [...], Gerald, walk hand-in-hand down the corridor with his lover, Benjamin” (6771):

Gerald was enormous, about 6ft 3, his face contentedly blank. Benjamin was about nineteen, boyishly slim and ostentatiously camp. Like most gay men in prison, he was, by necessity, inveterately tactical. ‘*Frans* dick is useless to me, [...] *Ndota* dick is my passport to being ok’. (6781)

Benjamin worked as “an upmarket rent boy” before landing in prison. He is thus presented as well versed in the use of his body to ensure financial gain and economic survival. In the prison his ‘gay’ identity is subsumed by the primary need to protect himself from the aggression of other prisoners. As a result he uses skills key to his survival on the outside as a means through which to ensure “being ok” in prison. Whilst passing the two in one of the prisons corridors Steinberg observes how “Benjamin looked up at Gerald’s face, and his eyelashes quite literally fluttered. His face was so extravagantly mercenary that I giggled” (6781). Steinberg goes on to recount how

[h]e raised an eyebrow when he heard [him] laugh, then winked at [him] over Gerald’s shoulder, as if [they] were sharing a joke at a stupid man’s expense. Gerald was oblivious. He was showing off his prize like a gaudy jewel, slipping his hand down the back of Benjamin’s trousers with tacky exhibitionism, licking his ear lavishly. (6781)

This has been identified by Wentzel as a sign of how the Number Gangs have become corrupted by the coloureds of the Western Cape (6802). Steinberg’s account of this scene highlights the way in which some of the young laities in Van Tonder’s story used the economic and social system of prison to further their own ends. In this framework homosexual engagement is re-cast as a privilege reserved for the most powerfully imbued, thus reflecting the simplistic representation of gender relations in heteronormative society where womanhood’s passivity and the power to enforce submission on the part of the masculine has become sexually commodified.

Wentzel's first-hand account of his own experience of being made a man when he was first recruited into the 28 Gang presents this ritual as fundamental to the survival and perpetuation of the various gangs and the norms that determine the sexual interactions of its members. He is asked a riddle by members of the gang and his answer is used by them to determine what role and position he will occupy. The idea of a riddle suggests prior initiation, and for the first-time offender this requires that he must have been exposed to others from the gangs when he was still outside of prison. Wentzel recalls how

through that riddle ["they were deciding"] [...] whether I would be a sex-son, or a real silver. A sex-son is [...] a sex object; the soldiers, the members of the gold line, sleep with him at night. (3016)

Wentzel's account of the construction of the sex-son in prison sits comfortably with Sasha Gear's argument that "[i]t is precisely the drive to re-establish this outside arrangement [(the gendered hierarchical structure of heteronormative society)] that is simultaneously behind the sudden and decisive break from existing identity structures that is experienced by some prisoners in the forcible reconstruction of them as 'women'" (Gear 2005: 203). The break in identity that allows for the making of same-sex sexual partners in prison is thus one that is seen to be primarily based on the notion of the man as rational and physically capable. Aside from the riddle that tests the newcomer's a priori knowledge of prison as well as his street-smarts, the prisoner is also subjected to the threat of force and sexual violence.

The notion of the sex-son not being a real 28 is another means through which the newcomer is tricked into womanhood and signals the sexist notion that women do not have access to the secret knowledge of men as is symbolised through the fact that the sex-son is "never told much about the history" of the gangs (3016). Wentzel reaffirms the non-status of the sex-son/wyfie when he notes:

It is the sex-sons who are fucked. [...] And when I say they are fucked, I mean something very specific. [...] They can only have thigh sex. [...] [I]f he is being fucked up the arse, there is hell to pay. (3047)

This ritualised and hierarchical engagement with same-sex desire and sexual activity allows for the heteronormative man to reconcile his preferred heterosexual masculinity with his need for sexual gratification. The distinction between penetrative anal sex as prohibited and thigh sex as allowed suggests an attempt to distance the participants from the deviant act of sodomy. This evokes the numerous stereotypes Gear notes that surround the effect of anal sex on the sex-son, some of whom are said to often start exhibiting the bodily shape of women. For Gear

[t]he individual is inserted into the position that up until then defined what he is not. He is situated as his erstwhile ‘other’. At the broader level, however, the status of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ is affirmed. (Gear 2005: 203)

This is illustrated through Wentzel’s insistence that the sex-sons are not part of the real 28 Gang. Thus the gang seeks to distinguish the violent masculinity it encourages as separate from the femininity associated with sexual submission.

The break between the identities of the prisoner inside and outside of the prison is best illustrated through Steinberg’s discussion of Wentzel’s relations with the people in his life outside of prison. He notes that there are a number of things about Wentzel “most people in his life [...] [did] not know for a long time” (3225). One of these is that

[o]f [his] many identities, one was [...] written on his body; there was a tattoo of a penis along the length of his stomach, a symbol of the 28’s celebration of sex; and on his left collar bone were the words “Moliva boy” [...] (3234)

Wentzel conceals his tattoos when he is outside of prison, which signals how the markers that served to imbue his body with power in prison now serve to mark him as a homosexual criminal. The tattoo of the penis that in prison signalled his own sexual prowess now becomes a sign that is

to be hidden from the heterosexual partner. It marks him as sodomist, maybe homosexual, and with the connotations in the South African imaginative between homosexuality and prisons this hidden marker serves to eroticise his body for the initiated gang-affiliate. This tattoo, along with that of the words *Moliva Boy* on the left side of his body, highlights the fact that Magadien entered the gang from the silver side, the side most often associated with sexual submission in the gang. They become literal markers of his constant interest in sodomical sex and his subversive (although denied) role as sexual object. It seems then that Magadien hides his tattoos from his heterosexual partners and other people in his life as it signals desire and pleasure being derived from that which is frowned upon in the homophobic society from which he originates. In this sense prison is reimagined as a space in which Magadien is able to access a masculine intimacy not provided for in the hierarchical poverty-stricken spaces of the Cape Flats.

The construction of the regulatory mating protocol of prison reminds one of that which can be experienced in nature, where the males of the species engage in physical combat to gain mating rights with the females. Prison dehumanises the already criminalised person even further and his only resolve is to regress to the animalistic where fat buttocks and submissiveness are deemed attractive sexual qualities and physical force and intellectual cunning determine one's social position. Van Tonder's "Laaities" come to focus on the experiences of a particular young man the narrator observed. At first the attractive young man is imbued with a sense of power as the men compete for his attention. Everybody wants him and they are prepared to fight for him. The power to evoke this form of competition between the men is projected on to the young man, even though as soon as the strongest man has proven him to be most worthy of the new laaitie, he is presented to lose all sense of ownership over his body. Sasha in his research into this ritual of making laaities found that "[l]acking prison 'suss', first time offenders are especially vulnerable to the

manipulation regularly employed by other inmates” (Gear (2005) 200). The laaitie is placed in the role of a woman, expected to manipulate and use the dominant male so as to ensure personal survival. With or without consent the winner will claim his laaitie and the boy is expected to remain loyal and faithful. His sexual and emotional pleasure or well-being are not important and when he is unwilling to submit he is raped. The pressure thus seems to be on the young inexperienced and desirables to align themselves with the most bearable (sexually and otherwise) dominant man in prison. His failure to secure himself the protection of such a figure may leave him open to the abuse of others.

In van Tonder’s narrative Groot-Gert, one of the gang leaders in prison and whose name suggests a man of big build, has his eye on the laaitie who is the focus of the narrative. Although the boy refuses to accept Groot-Gert’s gifts and mating advances Gert does not accept no for an answer. “Die laaitie wou nie gehê wees nie, maar Groot-Gert het hom gevat soos ’n vrou wat nie gehê wil wees nie” (81)<sup>59</sup>. This statement reinforces the state of objectification and commodification the boy is made to occupy. Interestingly, Steinberg does suggest some recourse for the rape victim in prison and notes Wentzel’s insistence that forced penetrative sex is rare as penetrative sex is not allowed. Wentzel’s account is typical of the way in which prisoners are often engaged in softening or presenting a counter-narrative to the dominant one circulating around same-sex behaviour in prison. In his version of the prison gang structures he notes that “[t]he Silver-Two is also responsible for the sex-sons; if a soldier forces a sex-son to have penetrative sex, the sex-son must report the incident to the Silver-Two” (3125).

The laaitie in van Tonder’s story is uninitiated into the kind structure of the gangs that govern life in prison. His story is thus a tragic one as it comes to an end one night when the

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<sup>59</sup> “The boy would just not be had, but Groot-Gert took him like a woman who does not want to be had” (*Wisselstroom*, 80).

attractive new “laaitie” is emotionally distressed about something not revealed to the reader. One can assume that it has to do with how he has been treated by Gert and his general experience of life in prison. He is comforted by Groot-Gert’s other laaitie. The positioning of laaities/wyfies/sex-sons in the ranks of the 28 Gang allowed for a similar construction of a coterie/harem of subordinate men who are able, although in limited ways, to afford each other a sense of belonging and comfort. Groot-Gert’s first laaitie, who became a sort of first wife after Groot-Gert forced the new boy into submission, is found holding the young man in an attempt to comfort him. Groot-Gert misreads the situation, immediately assuming that his two laaities are finding intimacy, communion and sexual pleasure without him. This is seen as a fundamental transgression of prison norms as it signals willing homosexual engagement and a sense of emotional involvement not allowed by prison social norms and mores. Their engagement with each other is seen as consenting and for personal pleasure, privileges they are denied unless these are ratified by their resident patriarch, Gert. Out of rage Groot-Gert jumps from his bed and stabs both men to death. He sits with their bodies until the prison guards come and take all three of them away.

Again one is confounded by a common theme suggesting that if homosexuality does not serve a particular purpose that perpetuates heteronormative masculine dominance then it is not tolerated. The mistake made by the two laaities in this context is that they transgressed the norms surrounding the functioning of prison sex/intimacies. “Laaities” is interesting in that it gives insight into the sexual liminality that exists in prison. It suggests that South African society is strongly influenced by gender stereotypes and role expectations, and that these influences even affect the shape of sexual relationships and interactions in men’s prisons. Groot-Gert defends his privileges through an enactment of violent prison masculinity. When the two laaities are found in a moment of emotional intimacy and embrace they evoke such rage as to deserve them both being brutally

killed – forced into not being. The narrative cynically concludes with nine years being added to Groot-Gert’s sentence for the crime of murdering the two laaities “[b]ut he does not mind, [...] because he still has other boys” (81)<sup>60</sup>. This ending serves to suggest that young attractive subordinate men in prison abound and are as interchangeable as women are outside of the carceral space. Groot-Gert is allowed to have other boys as he is able to claim them physically. It is interesting to note that after killing the two young men Gert is shown to sit with their bodies until he is taken away by the guards the next morning. Gert’s vigil suggests that there must have been some emotional attachment to his two laaities, although he reacts to them with extreme violence, his actions shortly afterwards suggest that he is regretful.

The inclusion of the story in an anthology that is meant to provide an overview of gay literature in the Afrikaans short story tradition further serves to reinforce a notion that a nuanced reading is needed when one confronts narratives recounting same-sex experiences and relationships in prison. Mercer’s engagement with the role of the prison as significant space in gay pornography reiterates the way in which the prison allows for a positive confusion and reinvention of sexual roles and identities here hinted at by Gert’s embrace of the dead bodies of his wyfies. The Afrikaans play *Rooiland* (2013) by Tertius Kapp, written and first performed in 2013 to rave reviews, suggests a similar engagement with the prison as space of transgression and reconstruction of sexuality and masculinity. The play is discussed in more detail in the final chapter, as it is a more recent representation of this theme which seems to have become inextricably linked to the country’s engagement with same-sex sex inside and outside of its prisons.

The title of the story “Jare”, also by van Tonder, provides the reader with a clue as to why the protagonist, Dirk, finally submits to a male-male sexual affair with one of his cellmates.

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<sup>60</sup> “Maar hy gee nie om nie, [...] want hy het nog ander laaities” (*Wisselstroom*, 81).

Seemingly less restricted by the gang cultures of prison, this story allows for a negotiation of identity and sexuality that leads to a choice of homosexual intimacy grounded in fairness and desire. Our protagonist, Dirk, has been in prison for some time when he starts his narrative and he makes a point of noting that he has been too distracted to think about sex. He mentions the stress of the court case, the judgement and adapting to prison as major mental concerns and reasons for his lack of libido. As time passes he becomes increasingly frustrated with his situation as his body imposes its need for sexual release on to his traumatised rationality. Dirk decides not to masturbate but let his body take care of it itself through nocturnal emissions. This representation positions sexuality solely as the biological, sex becomes a physical need that must be fulfilled much like hunger and thirst. Things are not made easier for Dirk by his cellmates, who are quite openly and loudly engaging in sexual relations with each other. Because of the close proximity inherent in social relations in a prison cell, he is fully aware of what they are doing and one gets the sense that he is able to see and hear them fully.

Loutjie is particularly challenging with regard to his sexuality and Dirk's need for sexual release. Dirk recounts the many times Loutjie has approached him for sex:

“Hier's nie vroumense nie, Dirk. Maar Loutjie's hier.” [...] Snags loop Chris na Loutjie se bed. Hy het wakker geword van hulle. Dis lankal nie meer vir hom vreemd nie. Hy walg nie meer nie. Hy het selfs al, by die aanhoor van driftige asemhalings, sy lyf daarop voel reageer. (83)<sup>61</sup>

Dirk's seduction into homosexual sex is definitely slow and his resistance signals perhaps a true aversion to homosexual engagements. This is reiterated through his reference to not being nauseated any more by their sounds, suggesting a gradual degradation of his repulsion at sex between two men. Instead he starts to enjoy their sexual encounters in a voyeuristic way through

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<sup>61</sup> “How many times Loutjie have not come to him: ‘There are no women here, Dirk. But Loutjie's here.’ [...] At night he heard Chris walk to Loutjie's bed. They woke him. It is no longer strange to him. They no longer nauseated him. He even, at the sound of angry breathing, felt his body respond” (*Wisselstroom*, 83).

which he is able to experience intimacy and sexual release. Despite his rational choice to not succumb to the deviance of prison sex his own body becomes his enemy, responding to their sound and actions as he becomes increasingly more sexually aroused by them.

One day when Chris is late to return to the cell Loutjie suggests to Dirk that the two of them become better acquainted sexually. "You shouldn't torture yourself like this, Dirk. [...] Do not torture yourself. There are still too many years" (83)<sup>62</sup>. After he and Loutjie finish having sex Dirk sits on his bed staring at a picture of his wife. He feels a strong impulse to apologise, but this passes and he says: "Everything is now manageable, Leandie" (83)<sup>63</sup>. This ending allows for the possibility of intimacy and fulfilment in prison. The all-male space is unnatural but the 'unnatural' act of homosexual sex allows for softness, as emotionally symbolized through the figures of Loutjie and Leandie. That which Dirk longs for most is intimacy with his wife, but Loutjie signals to him that he does not have to do without the intimacy or sexual comfort of human contact. He must but change his object of desire. This notion highlights what Gear sees as a rupture that happens in the prison, a rupture that opens the male prisoner up to the reconsideration of his sexual preferences. Loutjie's name suggests a state of femininity and his explicitly sexual suggestive nature casts him as sexual object: he is a homosexual rather than a man who has sex with "boys". It is his constant advances that finally allowed Dirk to open himself up to sexual contact with a man, reiterating the view of homosexual man as seducer or corruptor and prison as space that allows and promotes such corruption.

The sexualisation of prisoners has led to a conflation of images that present him as a threat to personal integrity as well as positioning him as a fetishised sexual object. As mentioned earlier,

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<sup>62</sup> "Jy moet jousef so martel nie, Dirk. [...] Moenie jousef martel nie. Daar is nog te veel jare" (*Wisselstroom*, 83)

<sup>63</sup> "Alles is nou hanteerbaar, Leandie" (*Wisselstroom*, 83).

Mercer's research finds that one of the common themes present within gay erotic and/or pornographic media is the prison-inspired sexual encounter. Many of these encounters re-enact a masculinity and sexual brutality that reminds one of the abuses suffered at the hands of the sexual aggressor in prison. The prison, in and of itself, becomes a space marked with eroticism and sexual fantasy even in the minds of the average modern gay pornography viewer. Mercer addresses "the generic nature of the scenarios most frequently presented in gay porn videos; scenarios that can be seen as actively contributing to the construction of a gay mythology" (154). His use of the term mythology "refer[s] to a more traditional sense of the word, drawing on ideas of the fantastic and the metaphorical". For him "gay porn's principle function is the production of fantasy and the solicitation of desire. A potential contradiction appears to emerge in this specific articulation of myth as both normative and fantastical" (155).

Within this context the South African prison, like its other homosocial masculine spaces, becomes a means through which to re-envision or reformulate one's sexuality as one is forced to negotiate a world where women are absent. The "all male, self-contained" nature of the prison allows for a kind of sexual expression to be imagined that is not possible in heteronormative society. In this case the homosexual man is both affirmed as the prison allows and is constructed to enable homosexual behaviour, while the heterosexual man is allowed to explore same-sex sex, something he would not as easily allowed outside of prison. It is as Mercer and Gear note a space of containment, rigid gendered hierarchy, violence and exploitation but also a space where new (sexual) identities are forged. This is supported by the story of the 28 Gang as told by Steinberg and the use of the prison as setting in a queer narrative. In the same way that the prison is not a

space of singular sexual meaning, where there are slippages in constructions of gender and sexuality, so too the prison is not impermeable<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> In *HIV / AIDS in Prison. Problems, Policies and Potential* (2003) K. C. Goyer supports this view when he notes that “[t]here are approximately 175,000 prisoners incarcerated in South African prisons at any given time. However, this does not mean that 175,000 criminals are locked away, isolated from the public, and unable to impact on the lives of those in the general community. Over 40% of prisoners are incarcerated for less than one year; only 2% are serving life sentences. On average, 25,000 people are released from South Africa’s prisons and jails each month. This translates into 300,000 former prisoners returning to the community each year. And they bring their illnesses, infections, and/or diseases with them” (11).

## Chapter 5: “Words Gone too Soon”<sup>65</sup>: Queer Duiker

### *Overview:*

Born on the 13 April 1974 in Orlando West, Soweto, Kabelo Sello Duiker grew up at the height of apartheid and his work reflects the deep influences of the system, not only on the people of the country but subsequently also on their choice of artistic expression. Duiker’s first two novels, *Thirteen Cents* (2001) and *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2002), are often read as highly autobiographical and this has led to claims like that of Munro’s that Duiker “appropriates the coming out narrative” using it to “rebuke the failures of South African [rainbow] nationalism” (198). At the same time I argue that Duiker’s narratives engage with a world where the boundary between gangster masculinities and feminine victimhood is strictly policed, because it is so highly permeable. His representation of a pathologically racialised and gendered society in which (white) men are dominant and women submissive victims gives insight into a world often neglected by authors within the South African literary context.

Duiker’s narratives are fundamentally urban; they are as rooted in the city as their characters that traverse the city space. I agree with Munro when she frames *Thirteen Cents* as a “un-coming-out novel” and notes the way in which the novels, when read in sequence, suggest that with *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* Duiker presents “a black man’s coming-out story that is simultaneously a critique of the national consumption of both ready-made identity and global capitalism” (198). Noting this concern in Duiker’s work, this chapter discusses his representations of masculinity and same-sex attraction in the South Africa city (queer Cape Town).

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<sup>65</sup> *Words Gone to Soon: a Tribute to Phaswane Mpe and K. Sello Duiker* (2005) edited by Mbulelo Mzamane.

***“I am almost a man”: Manhood and Understanding How it feels to be a Woman***

*Thirteen Cents* addresses the sexual exploitation and negation of a child and the areas of contestation this causes in relation to gender and sexual identity. It offers this from a subject/object/‘other’ that lives on the margins of society, wandering the streets of Cape Town and sleeping on a beach near Sea Point. Azure “live[s] alone”:

The streets of Sea Point are [his] home. But [he is] almost a man. [He is] nearly thirteen years old [...] [and] can take care of [him]self. (Duiker 1)

This positioning of self by the first-person narrator signals the absolute loneliness that haunts the narrative, especially when read in relation to the fact that both his parents are dead. It also conveys the urgency with which Azure wants to inhabit the masculine space he sees the men in his world occupy. This is a space that will offer him the opportunity to escape his circumstances through enforcing his masculine will on the weaker feminized subjects that inhabit his world. The absence of parents and a stable home at such a young age has left Azure to learn many of life’s harshest lessons independent of the safety and guidance of a home and family. This lack of familial space leaves him vulnerable to the exploits of the white and coloured men around him. Aside from Sealy, Bafana and Vincent who are black, all the other men in the narrative are either coloured or white. In a hierarchy that places white middle-class paedophiles first, closely followed by violent gang members, Azure is forced to choose between what it means to be a ‘man’ and what it means to be a woman and by extension a moffie/queer.

Azure’s world is structured along the gendered lines that govern interactions in the rest of South African society. Early in the novel Azure explains to the reader what it means to be a man under the circumstances in which he is forced to live and why he is desperate to become one when he turns thirteen. He needs to be a man so as to escape the submissive, disempowered space of the

child or woman – the two are often conflated in the novel as symbolic of the dominance of patriarchy and the victimization of children and women in South African society. The novel presents the masculinity illustrated by the gangsters in the narrative as being essential for the survival of life on the streets of Cape Town. For a moment, whilst walking barefoot along the beach - trying to get away from Bafana who has disappointed him because of his desire to do drugs with rich white teenagers - Azure is overcome with his situation and a deep sense of disempowered loneliness and sadness creeps in. He immediately rejects the emotion, going through an almost frantic series of questions and reasons as to why he is not to cry. These qualities of a man, as signified first by adulthood and then maleness, become Azure's mantra: number one and most importantly, "[m]en don't cry" (23). Never has he seen any of the men around him cry, not Sealy, nor Gerald, nor Allen. Not even his father ever cried. Men do not cry because "tears are messy, [t]hey make your eyes all puffy and just runs from your nose and it's messy. Grown-ups aren't messy. [...] [T]hey don't cry" (23). In Azure's world no adults cry, not even white prostitutes when they are brutally assaulted by their pimps. Liezel, Joyce and his mother do not cry. In fact his "mother, she never cried. Her tears were her blood. She cried only when [his] Papa beat her until she bled" (23-24).

This almost obsessive rambling about the need to not be messy and hence not cry reminds one of an earlier episode with a white man in his flat. The significance of that description is the fact that Azure conveys that he fears in some way spoiling/marking the clean white space of his client. Later, when he is beaten up by Sealy and taken to the hospital by Vincent, he is afterwards taken to a house and instructed to wash himself. At this house he witnesses the sexual exploitation of young women and this creates an association between his own identity as blue-eyed black child prostitute and the sexual exploitation of the young women around him. Interestingly enough, the women in

the narrative are constructed as far more empowered than Azure, which is due to their adulthood. His need to become a man and express his dominance over those deemed passive and feminine highlights his desperation to escape his current space of marginality, total disempowerment and lack of social identity. There is thus an interesting connection for Azure between cleanliness, the ability to have a clean space and the power that comes with manhood. It is the man's ability to assert his dominance, physically and sexually, as well as avoid messiness that marks his level of a gangsterised hyper-masculinity in Duiker's imagining of the streets of Cape Town.

Throughout the narrative Azure denies any sense of gayness which he conflates with the term 'moffie'. Shaun Viljoen in his paper on the novella entitled "K. Sello Duiker's *Thirteen Cents: An Introduction*" (2013) highlights the extent to which racial categories and consequent access to space is reinforced by Azure being a black child with blue eyes. Blue eyes in South African society carry particular weight because of their associations with whiteness or more specifically in this case, "miscegenation". Viljoen highlights that:

Azure's physical appearance is as unsettling as is his narrative positioning. [...] Azure troubles the main racial categories of apartheid identity, "white", "coloured", and "black" – he is none of them and at the same time all of them. Not only do his looks defy inherited racial classification, but his dress sense has no regard for conventions that are racially associated. (35)

It is ironic that whiteness is constructed by Gerald as relating to power and privilege, qualities that he does everything in his power to restrict to himself, when it is the white men that seem to affect Azure the most. Close to the end of the narrative before Azure takes a pilgrimage up Table Mountain he informs the reader of the things he has experienced and seen. He recounts the ways in which adults, and particularly white men, have proven themselves to be cruel, unkind and in some cases purely evil:

I've seen a woman being raped by policemen at night near the station. I've seen a white man let a boy Bafana's age into his car. I've seen a couple drive over a street child and they still kept going. I've seen a woman give birth in Sea Point at the beach and throw it into the sea. [...] I have seen enough rubbish to fill the sea. I have been fucked by enough bastards and they've come on me with enough come to fill the swimming pool in Sea Point (142).

Azure is haunted by the abuse he suffers at the hands of his clients and that which he witnesses wandering the streets of Cape Town. It is his status as dispossessed youth that leaves him vulnerable to the exploitation and subjugation by adults. He states that he does not want to allow thoughts of those who

pick [him] up at night when their wives are not watching and fuck [him] for peanuts till [he] bleed[s]. [...] [Those] who do it in the dark with children because their dick is so small. [He does not] want to think about assholes who don't wash their *ballas* but want you to suck them till they come. (143)

Bleeding from the anus is later connected by Gerald to femininity and Azure's over fixation on his mother. This suggests that the assumption of the submissive role during sex with a man denotes some kind of damage. Alongside his experiences at the hands of the 28 Gang members, and engagements in sexual activity with white men he meets at the moffie beach near to Sea Point, or whilst cruising the park or station, he witnesses the abuses of others suffered at the hands of heteronormative men.

In an interesting scene in the novel Allen is described as he beats up one of his white prostitutes. Through this description Azure affords the reader his best insight into his construction of (white) femininity in his world. He finds Allen conversing with a white woman who is concerned about the well-being of her "pussy" (14). The interaction is almost comical and suggests a total objectification and commercialisation of the (white) woman's body. The ownership and access Allen enjoys to the white woman's body is only possible at this time in South Africa's

history and signals the way in which Duiker reflects on the changes that have happened in the country. The position of white prostitutes is seen to have become worse as they are now under the control of coloured men. The use of the word pussy and the fact that the discussion is happening in plain sight and loud enough for Azure to hear from a distance highlight the way in which women have been reduced to property and serve to mark Allen as socially deviant and/or defiant.

There is a connection to be made here between Azure's thinking around anal sex and the damage it causes, resulting in bleeding, and the over-use of the white prostitute's vagina. Both are suffering the physical consequences of earning a living through the sale of their bodies:

I don't see why I have to work today. I haven't had a day off in two weeks, Allen. What about my pussy?" "Fuck you," he punches her and she falls flat on her face in the street. [...] "You and your pussy, fuck you. You're full of shit," he goes on and grabs her by the hair. That's the problem with the white bitches. I find that they never know when to shut up and here the *ouens* don't give them a chance. They are heavy-handed. They just whack. And if that doesn't do it, they *naai* and then they fuck them up even more. [...] The white girl is bleeding but she doesn't cry. "I should *naai* you for all the shit you cause, you stupid bitch" [...] "Get up you cunt! *Poes! Fokken naai.*" (14)

This description from Azure's perspective is haunting because it foreshadows what is to happen to him not too long afterwards at the hands of Sealy and the 28 Gang members on the instructions of Gerald. During Sealy's attack on him, and other moments when the dominant men in his life try to coerce him into something or subject him to violence/sex, the same kind of de-humanising, racialised, misogynistic discourse is used:

Beat him till those blue eyes of his turn purple. Kick the sunshine out of his smile, that little *moegu* calling me a kaffir! Who the fuck does he think he is? Just because he's got blues eyes, fuck him, he's still a kaffir. Does he know who I am? Does he know the Twenty Eights? (28).

Here Gerald's discourse reminds one of the ways Azure constructs the white prostitute as being beaten up because of white women's propensity to speak too much. It seems that it is the same

mistake Azure has made – that and having blue eyes, a disruption of a racial category that is fundamental to this heteronormative society where wealth is still primarily distributed along racial lines. This is further supported by the fact that Azure’s primary wrongdoing so as to evoke the vicious beating is to mistake Gerald for Sealy, a light-skinned coloured for a dark-skinned black man. The masculinity that the men perform in Azure’s world suggests intolerance of any form of ‘insubordination’ and the perceived attack on Gerald’s superior race is also an attack on his masculinity and dominance. If this physical violence does not achieve the primary goal, Allen’s earlier discourse suggests the next step will be rape, callously referred to by Azure as *naai*. The word *naai* in this context implies the use of the penis as a weapon and reminds one that the other use for this Afrikaans word connotes sewing with needle and thread. Both these images evoke a sense of trying to close a woman’s mouth by closing her sexual organ, which is already in this context constructed and over-worked and in danger of damage; there is also the sense of trying to cause the bleeding Azure mentions suffering after anal sex. The pain and damage experience by the subordinate is directly related to the level of dominance of the superior.

Later, when Azure is forced by Richard to *suig* his *piel* Azure, like the prostitute, becomes the *naai* stripped of his identity and reduced to his primary function. The use of the word *naai* in this instance suggests that the subject has become synonymous with the act, so they carry the verb as signifier of their vulnerability to having the act forced upon them. The scene with Richard and the other men is particularly suggestive:

“Close the door.” I close the door. He opens his fly and lets out his *piel*.  
“Come here.” I hesitate. “*Hei, gemors*, don’t make me shout. I just gave you nice food.” “Yes, Richard,” I say and come close to him. “Sit on the bed,” he says. I sit on the edge of his bed. He stands with his dick in my face. “*Tsek jou naai! Jy dink jy’s mos n kleurling, ne? Suig. Suig*,” he says and shoves his dick in my mouth. “Open properly, *jou naai. Poes. Tsek*. Take it all.” I do as I’m told. He stands there and starts rocking his pelvis. My jaws get tired. I

take his dick out of my mouth and wank him. “*Tsek, jou naai! Suig*. I know how to *skommel*” I put it back in my mouth. (53-54)

Azure is forced to accept the desires projected onto his body by the adult men around him. His abuse in this instance is related to his racialised body and subjugated state of being a child. Because he has blue eyes and mistook Gerald for Sealy, a kaffir, he is forced to submit himself to the men sexually. Richard relates the act to his having provided Azure with a place to stay and some food to eat. Azure thus has to earn his keep by performing a sexual act.

This scene, read alongside the one quoted below, offers another layer of meaning to the text. In this instance Azure is reflecting on his position and the skills he has required whilst working as a child prostitute:

I know how to please a man. I know these bastards. I’ve done this a thousand times. They all like it if you play with the part between their balls and asshole. And you must not pull too hard on the dick. It’s better if you play with the dick as close as possible to the tummy, otherwise they say it’s sore or it starts flopping. (84)

The clear difference between these instances is that during the sexual encounters with the white men Azure constructs himself as empowered and a willing participant. The extent to which this is true is problematic, though one cannot help but acknowledge his claims that he is good at satisfying the needs of men. Here in this moment with Richard he has no choice and because of this he experiences the action of the others as abusive and aggressive. Richard’s sexual needs demand satisfaction and the blue-eyed, injured, thirteen year old boy is the most obvious means through which to satisfy those needs. Azure’s dispossession is total: whereas with the white men he is afforded cold, comforting cleanliness and some pleasure, ultimately being rewarded with money, here he is stripped of that last sense of agency. He becomes an orifice that is meant to satisfy masculine sexual desire:

The door opens. “Hey, what’s going on in here? I also want to join the party,” one of them says and laughs. Richard smiles as the other unzips his fly. “It’s my turn,” he says and shoves his semi-erect dick against my cheek. “*Tsek*, Richard,” he jokes. Richard takes out his *piel* from my mouth but he doesn’t put it away. He starts playing with himself while I suck the other’s *piel*. Soon they all join in and take turns with my mouth. “*Suig, suig*,” they keep prodding me. (53-54)

There is a clear sense of homoeroticism in this scene. It is important to note that it is safe to assume that the gang members assaulting Azure would not otherwise identify as homosexual/gay. They have seemingly disassociated the homoeroticism of their interaction and language from their sexual identities as violent, hyper-masculine heteronormative men.

As Viljoen suggests in his discussion of Azure’s own vehement denial of homosexual attraction, “it is possible to nuance this reading with one that also sees the novel as a bildungsroman of the boy’s sexuality in formation, with the exploration of inchoate sexuality, perhaps even homosexuality, as a sub-text” (4). I agree with Viljoen who suggests that Azure’s insistence on his heterosexuality as implied by his refusal to self-apply the term ‘moffie’ becomes a means through which he can be read as a moffie. As he proposes:

“I’m not a moffie”, suggests the young boy’s repression of the disturbing possibility of its opposite – too traumatic a thought for someone his age and in his context to admit. By reading against the grain of the narrator’s own claims, or finding contradictory moments on its surface, this bildungsroman then is as much about survival and subject formation on the urban edges as it is about marginalised sexuality in formation (rather than an assertion of a particular set sexual identity). (Viljoen 5)

The scene with Richard and his friends functions as a form of gang initiation and ‘rite of passage’, as is explained by Gerald, who upon Azure’s return informs him that his shack under an unfinished bridge is now Azure’s “new home” as well (72). Gerald claims ownership over Azure and signals this by renaming him Blue because Azure is too difficult for him to pronounce and remember. This

signals to the reader a total reconstruction of Azure's identity: Gerald had found the boy lacking, but since the initiation has created a new, more suitable identity which signals Azure's subordination and usefulness to him. Like the white prostitute who is owned by Alan, he is now Gerald's property. Gerald also explains to him why he was starved and sexually abused by Richard and the rest of the gang. It seems the thirteen year old boy "had to understand what it means to be a woman" (72). Gerald: "I know that you understand what it means to be a woman already. You bleed through the anus when you shit, don't you?" The reader has been made aware of the pain Azure suffers as a result of the 'work' he performs. After the first series of sexual encounters he allows the reader access to this intimate part of prostitution when he speaks of how his "face lights up even though my asshole is sore" when a client gives him money in exchange for services rendered (30). Anal sex is considered high-risk sexual behaviour, in that it can lead to tearing in the rectum as a result of too rough sex. Men who work in the same-sex sex-industry are particularly vulnerable because of the regular repeated sexual interaction such employment requires. Azure describes himself as he "walk[s] towards the water and take off my pants. [He] sit in a shallow pool and let the cool water cover [him] up to [his] waist. [He] sit[s] for a while until [his] bum feels numb" (30). Here the ocean takes on the role of healer, its salt water helping to soothe the pain that serves as a reminder of Azure's subjection. The image of the ocean is particularly important in the novel because of Azure's association with it as mother, destroyer and friend.

Azure offers insight into the constructions of masculinity and obscured/corrupted heteronormative sexuality in those parts of the South African context often excluded from literary engagement. It raises an uncanny reminder of the cruelties that poverty exacts and requires its sufferers to subject each other to. In the previous chapter Steinberg's *The Number* (2010) offered

insight into the mentality of the gangsters who dictate the course of events in most of Azure's narrative, and enact upon his body those violent acts determined acceptable by the ideology behind the 28 Number Gang of Cape Town. It illuminates their views of gender and their own sexualities that manifest themselves, in that it is acceptable for them to partake in the (homoerotic) rape of a male child and experience pleasure because of their camaraderie and dominance. As Magadien Wentzel suggests in *The Number*, there is a masculinity that was determined and mythologized in prisons amongst prison gangs that later leaked out into society, as these men were released from prison but carried with them gang affiliations. This sub-cultural mythology carries the construction of submission as weakness and dominance as strength to the extreme. The sexual domination and violation of Azure by the gangsters becomes a means through which these men can be seen to impose their own oppression and sense of sexual perversion upon others, whilst simultaneously being afforded an opportunity to express sexualities that are structured by gang norms.

### ***The Mental Institution and Male Brothel as Spaces of Queer Community***

Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2001) main character Tshepo pushes and pulls against himself and sanity much in the same way as his sexuality ebbs and flows towards homosexuality/gayness. Tshepo's narrative is contextualised in a country that was at the time pushing and pulling against itself in terms of just having shed the yoke of apartheid. He moves from the space of the medicalised homosexual, as represented through his time in Valkenberg Psychiatric Hospital, to what reads as a self-accepting modern South African black gay man as framed by the new identity and name of Angelo-Tshepo. Michel Foucault has established the close connection between medicalised discourse and societal constructions of homosexuality. He also

draws clear links between the construction of the homosexual as weak and thus prone to psychological pathologies, and the increase in the treatment of homosexuals by psychologists. As is illustrated in Chapter One similar notions of homosexuality as causing mental degeneration are common.

Duiker's narrative is primarily polemical in that it stands in direct defiance of views held by those like Molefi Keke Asante, who views homosexuality as "a form of white decadence introduced to black women and men from without" (Edelman 59). The fact that Duiker himself was a black, supposedly gay, South African man who resisted the label gay being applied to him or his writing ironically serves to cast it as exactly that, queer. Despite this milieu, the text becomes a physical embodiment of the conflicts that are present in those who experience marginal subjectivity. It offers the potential for new insights into the way in which restrictive (2014) societal norms influence the construction of homosexual desire as other/queer, and how characters construct their identities, performance and narratives in relation to this. Duiker's engagement with the subject suggests a subversive construction of homosexuality that is similar to Dollimore's in *Sexual Dissidence* (1991), a reading that manifests itself in the subversive who is often further victimized by his/her generally subverted state. In *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* homosexuality becomes a means through which the subject is able to re-imagine his racial, economic or sexual identity. Alongside this it engages how some men negate the masculinity of others in an attempt to escape their own perversion/subversive constructions and or sexuality/ies.

In *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* we find young Tshepo drifting from disempowered space to disempowered space, seeking that sense of 'home' that was destroyed when his mother was raped and murdered at the hands of men hired by his father. As readers we discover later that the young Tshepo had also been raped by these men. It seems to be this incident of violation that

causes him to lose touch with reality and slip into some form of psychosis, this and his excessive use of cannabis. For a child who ultimately grows up to identify as gay/homosexual, this incident is even more impactful with regard to the shaping of his sexuality. I suggest that his rape is seen as connected to that of his mother; against this backdrop all relationships with men become framed with a similar sense of threatening, violent sexuality. Again, in Duiker's work, we find the connection between the rape and subjugation of women and the homosexual man. When we are introduced to him, Tshepo is in a mental institution, a space synonymous with homosexuality. From the moment we are introduced to Tshepo he is marked by his madness. Mental instability becomes the first means through which he is made to occupy the space of the institutionalised. Mmabatho tells us of the day they finally found Tshepo who had gone missing shortly before:

The police find Tshepo roaming around Main Road in Woodstock. He is naked except for an old sheepskin seat cover that is precariously wrapped round his waist. He speaks fast, raving at us as David and I approach him. It is hard to keep him calm. I give him my sweater and plead with him to get in the car with us but he refuses. The police are relieved to have us take him home. Sergeant Andrews tells us about how he found him parading naked in front of a busy butchery in Salt River. (13)

Tshepo's naked body, wearing only "an old sheepskin cover", is made readily available for others to read and with it there seems to be a longing to return to a pre-colonial identity, even in the midst of contemporary South Africa. Later he is institutionalised at Valkenberg. First Tshepo is marked by his inappropriate social behaviour and then he is quite literally captured and interned in a space of medicalisation by the police. Tshepo describes his experiences in the mental institution:

Under the doctor's gaze I become a child again. I listen meekly as they plot their strategies against my mind. I don't make a fuss when they medicate me even though I know it is going to assault my system. After medication I find myself oscillating somewhere between sleep and calm. Everything seems to slow down. (19).

Like with the prison there are rules that govern the interactions permitted in the South African mental institution and “[i]t doesn’t take long to know all the rules; where to sit, when to go to the toilet, which nurse you can trust” (20).

For Tshepo there is a comparison to be made between life in prison and life confined in a mental institution. He illustrates his sense of being a prisoner of his body/condition and the mental hospital in itself. “What are we supposed to do if we cannot laugh at the inappropriateness of being locked up like criminals?” (20). Zebron is the first glimpse at the masculinity that is here seen to be dominant in Duiker’s representation of the institutional space. He has “dark torturer’s eyes” and he is presented as using them, along with his “aggressive grimaces”, to intimidate Tshepo (20). For Tshepo

what is strangest about [Zebron] is that he doesn’t really have a face. He’s got these nondescript features that remind me of a police identikit. [...] Apart from a low brow and deep-set eyes, Zebron has a forgettable face. His face would make him a perfect criminal. (20).

Through Tshepo’s description of Zebron there is a clear indication of how he “commands the kind of respect reserved for gang leaders in prison. It makes [him] wonder who he was before he came in here” (20). Zebron and Tshepo, each in their own right, become interlopers, Tshepo for his stints in mental institutions and then later his work in a white massage parlour, and Zebron for the movement from violent gangster to prisoner to mental patient. Tshepo finds that “[t]here’s something disturbing about [Zebron], an unwelcoming air as though a dark cloud is hanging over him. But this same quality also makes him curiously interesting” (31). Tshepo’s fascination with Zebron is also shown to be related to his body. His description speaks of a considered reading and,

interestingly, this reading is underscored by an eroticisation of Zebron's body – “[s]itting next to [him], Zebron crosses his legs tightly, crushing his balls” (21).

The character of Zebron is of specific importance to our discussion because of the way he constructs women, and his murder and rape of them, as being part of his right as a particularly masculinised man. It is not clear whether or not Zebron's narrative is fabricated by him so as to shock his psychiatrist – the vivid delusion of a psychiatric patient, or the truth emboldened by his pathological mind. What is clear is that he is a danger to women. He relates this to his being sexually aroused by their fear and pleading. This negation of their voice serves in turn to reinforce his own sense of entitlement with regard to the subjugation of those he deems as weaker than himself. Here is an example of Zebron asserting his masculinity during a psychiatric session:

Have you ever raped anyone? [...] Have you ever been a little rough with a woman? Ever felt her strength giving in under you? [...] We were only supposed to shoot her. But I got turned on by her fear. She looked so scared, so innocent. I liked that. I had to have her. We all had her. (41)

Zebron's pathological engagement with women as submissive sexual object relates to the violent masculinity his father enacts upon his body when he is a child. The beatings he receives at the hands of his father function as a means to frame his sexual abuse of his younger sister: “When no one was at home I would force her to have sex with me. It was nice. It made it easier to live when I heard her cry. [...] I was broken a long time ago” (42). Through its representation of the various women over whose bodies the male characters of the novel traverses one finds references to the South Africa's horrible history of domestic violence and the sexual abuse of women. This phenomenon has been linked to its history of institutional racism and oppression.

Zebron's discourse is a language that reduces women to their primary biological function, bitch. Like the woman for whose murder he was incarcerated, and whose haunting memory creeps

into his psyche in a disruptive and pathological manner, Zebron's sister "didn't stop crying, couldn't shut up" (43) and it is this expression of vulnerability and distress that excites him. Zebron's motivations with regard to his relationship with Tshepo remain unclear for much of the narrative. One is allowed insight into what can be read as a masculine attempt at finding companionship, even though this companionship may be restricted and policed by strict dictates surrounding levels of intimacy and emotional connection. As he explains, he is "not looking for a best friend or a soul mate, just someone to help pass the time" (46).

Tshepo's solitary personality leaves him open to Zebron's misreading of his behaviour; like Zebron "he also keeps to himself" which suggests notions of independence and a rejection of community (46). The desexualised nature of Zebron's description of the kind of companionship he requires from Tshepo serves to present him as a dominant, violent, misogynistic, yet heterosexual man. This view is undermined by the context within which Zebron's assessment of Tshepo happens. Shortly after Duiker provides the reader with insight into his interior, private self, which is calculating and manipulative, he loads the need for companionship with a sexual undertone which serves to underwrite Zebron's choice of Tshepo as friend with a subliminal search for sexual release. In Zebron's world view Tshepo's passivity and uninitiated nature leave him open to the same kind of violent sexualisation that allows for the victimisation of the women in his life. The decision to have Tshepo as companion happens entirely within Zebron's masculine framework, leaving Tshepo open to a repositioning/remaking as feminine compatriot. Through Zebron's interest in the sexual activities of the other men he becomes legible as preoccupied with Tshepo's body and sexuality. This reminds one of Tshepo's earlier descriptions of him crossing his legs and almost crushing his testicles, signalling his own concern with the body of the medicalised, institutional masculinity that Zebron represents:

“When was the last time you had a real hard-on? When was the last time you felt like skommeling?” [...] “They medicate the food, you know.” “You think?” he says and pulls a face, the naïve expression of somebody finding his way in life. It makes me want to squash him, to harm him the way children and animals instinctively target the weaker ones. It’s his eyes, they give away too much. (46-47)

During Zebron’s sessions with his psychiatrist the reader is allowed insight into the ways in which sexual arousal has become conflated with masculine dominance and the ability to exact violence on a feminine victim. In this light Zebron’s desire to squash Tshepo becomes a way through which to read his sexual attraction to Tshepo.

Duiker’s sequencing of these events allows the reader to draw links between Zebron’s engagement with Tshepo and his violence against him. For Zebron there is an inextricable link between sexual desire, sexual release and violence. There is order in the way Zebron carries out his remaking of Tshepo: first he chooses Tshepo as a companion, regardless of Tshepo’s dislike of him, he then moves on to sexualise his engagement with Tshepo, and finally his feminisation of Tshepo is complete when he equates his “naïve expression” to that of the “silly bitches” he has done violence to (47). Zebron’s earlier references to his psychiatrist and Tshepo as “laaities” and Tshepo’s reading of him as an ex-prisoner serve to link his interaction with Tshepo to that of the prison masculinities discussed in the previous two chapters. Duiker helps to broaden that reading, suggesting that not only do prison and the masculinities espoused there by the gangs shape sexual interaction amongst men in prison in such a way that they become gendered, his narrative also supports the notion that this form of dominant hetero-masculine same-sex sexuality has become common in the South African imaginary, and that its influences can be felt in as varied circumstances as the narratives that reflect it.

Ironically, the same masculine potential to evoke fear and perform sexual or physical violence is presented to at the same time promote a pathological form of same-sex sexual attraction/interaction. This violent eroticising of the feminised body is best illustrated by Zebron:

“I don’t like your face when you say stupid things like that,” [...] A violent image of me shooting him with a 9 mm dashes through my head, momentarily making my head spin. It’s as if I’m temporarily possessed when that happens. [...] He has that irresistible quality about him that just makes you want to abuse him. (48-49)

Duiker uses Zebron to construct a particular form of violent masculinity that is shaped by the harsh social environment in which he grows up and his implied previous imprisonment/institutionalisation. His position is perhaps best illuminated by Sasha Gear and Kindiza Ngubeni in *Daai Ding: Sex, Sexual Violence and Coercion in Men’s Prisons* (2004) who notes:

Violence does not occur in a vacuum but rather is embedded in the way that many people have become accustomed to relating to each other. [...] Violence is also wrapped up with particular identities, often with notions of masculinity and may be used as an expression of ‘manhood’. Or it may constitute a response to a sense of marginalisation and be acted out as a way of asserting a claim to power, often in the contexts where there is a sense of broad disempowerment. (Gear 2004, 2)

As noted, the notion of a victim’s performance of fear-evoking sexual excitement is a persistent theme throughout the novel and its predecessor. Although Zebron is the first embodiment of this world view, Tshepo’s journey provides us with various examples of the same form of gendered masculinity. Familiar to us, his father is one of the primary social controllers who first identify him as lacking: “I don’t think I am the kind of son he wanted. [...] He didn’t like me” (75). The first instance when Azure is made to occupy the symbolic state of submissive femininity is when his mother is raped and murdered by men he later finds out were hired by his father to do so. His

mother had threatened to turn him over to the police, and her rape and murder were both punishment and execution. It is not clear why Tshepo is raped during the assault as there is no clear reason as to what purpose this might serve in the punishment of his, then, already dead mother. Tshepo's representation of himself as being read by his father to not be "the kind of son he wanted" allows the reader to infer that his rape may have been either an attempt at cure or punishment on the part of his father. This is reinforced when the physical violation of his mother is re-enacted upon his body when he is raped by the men. Unlike his mother who is left to die a physical death, Tshepo is wounded through this remaking of his body and identity, and it is here that his anal bleeding starts. As in *Thirteen Cents* Duiker quite literally represents the violent feminisation of the inferior man/boy as resulting in their physical alteration signalled by their bleeding from their anus. Duiker's representation of this gendered sexual violence is a theme that occurs both in *Thirteen Cents* and *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*. I find that the act of rape is framed as a particularly masculine type of homoeroticism through which a gangsterised sense of homo-sociability is reaffirmed and a victim is remade into a queer conflation of wifeness with masculinity. We can see this in Tshepo's description of the incident:

I opened my eyes and screamed no. A deformed penis with traces of blood was staring at me. [...] The one took me from behind while the other almost choked me with his dick. They laughed. And you'd think they seemed crazy but they didn't. They looked like they were having a good time. Then in all the madness I heard two gunshots from outside. I yelled. I cried because I knew they were for Mama. When I wet myself they let me go'. (77)

This conflation between his mother's womanhood and sexual victimization with Tshepo's own sense of himself as the kind of son that his father did not want helps to develop Duiker's notion that to be a woman is to be subjected to the will of men, an idea first presented and developed in *Thirteen Cents*, where Azure is presented as actively avoiding and fearing the space of

femininity/victimhood he sees the women and effeminate men (moffies) as occupying. Zebron's construction of women as silly bitches is extended to the representation of the kind of masculinity and sexuality that Tshepo performs and or identifies with. This is seen when he describes Tshepo as having "that irresistible quality about him that just makes you want to abuse him" (49); the aggrieved expression on his face is for Zebron synonymous with womanhood as victimhood (48).

Although not entirely aware that his performance of masculinity has again been judged lacking, only this time by Zebron, that he has become conflated with womanhood, that like all silly bitches he too deserves to be raped and murdered, Tshepo is aware of his affinity for women as companions and friends. He "wonder[s] why [he] always surround[s himself] with women, why [he] can never look another man in the eye, why [he] won't allow [his] own masculinity to blossom" (92). Along with these questions of gender and his supposed heteronormativity, Tshepo is also starting to learn the rules associated with the masculinities that were those of his rapists and his mother's rapists/murderers along with what he had earlier recognised in Zebron. He is "beginning to come round to his way of thinking[:] [...] becoming a little like him [as they] [...] walk around th[e] place [...] both of [them] like predators, stealthy cats waiting for a chance to be freed" (138-139). Duiker's representation of Zebron, and later of Chris, present the reader with a man who is sexually titillating exactly because he is sexually/physically threatening, and suggests that these men populate the newly founded democratic South Africa. Duiker presents Tshepo's transformation into one of these newly established political identities or categories. Prior to this process of transformation, spearheaded by his new-found communion with Zebron, Tshepo resembles a repressed homosexual whose denial of his true sexual identity, coupled with trauma suffered at the hands of his father's henchmen, has led to his institutionalisation.

The novel signals academic awareness, in line with Foucault's notion of the institutionalisation of sexuality and its subordination through classification. Later, when Tshepo becomes part of what Brenna Munro (2012) refers to as "a multiracial community of men - the brothel" "[t]he experience of the brothel transform[s] him", much in the same way that he is transformed in the mental hospital. Unlike his later transformation into Angelo, Tshepo's first change is physical:

I'm changing, I'm evolving. [...] I'm becoming something else. [...] I have become sensitive to the presence of women. [...] My body is changing, in very subtle ways [...]. [...] I have started bleeding, like a woman. But not at the obvious place, at the other place. [...] [I]t comes and goes like a cycle, a strange mutated cycle. [...] [M]y body holds this pain sacred. It forces me to think inwardly. Perhaps the distance between a man and a woman is not that far. I know this sounds strange but this is the (139) only logical explanation I have to acknowledge what is happening to me. How else can I explain this acute sensitivity? (140)

Duiker's death has been mourned as a great loss to the literary community<sup>66</sup> and it is quite clear from this extract why. Duiker's use of the body to describe the way in which Tshepo's acceptance of his homosexual attraction is manifested in the physical is rich and functions as a means to address some of the most contested ideas in theories engaging gender and discussion around sexualities currently. The stereotype of the homosexual being like a woman is accounted for by the biological changes experienced by the institutionalised homosexual. There is sensitivity to other women, much in the way that women are seen and constructed to share a similar experience and a general understanding of each other's plight. This sensitivity is then further developed to an understanding, a speaking of the same language, and a meeting of minds.

Tshepo is quite literally infected with womanhood, it is a "virus [he does not] [...] understand" (139). This construction of femininity as a contagion, as well as a learned behaviour,

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<sup>66</sup> *Words Gone Too Soon: a Tribute to Phaswane Mpe & K. Sello Duiker* (2005) by Mbulelo Mzamane.

reminds one of the homophobic fears of the homosexual as corruptor and seducer. This contagion that is his emerging homosexual identity is directly imposing itself on his body; it is altering him, remaking him. This change is seen to announce itself most vividly through the image of the menstrual cycle. Here Duiker seemingly connects a homosexual identity with a victimised, subordinate womanhood - the archetypal representation of the wounded woman is directly transcribed onto the homosexual body and manifested through his own bleeding wound.

Significantly, the image of the bleeding man is a theme that also exists in *Thirteen Cents*, where Azure bleeds from his anus because of the regularity with which he is forced to have anal sex, as well as through the image of Gerald's white prostitute whose vagina is quite literally in danger of being overused. One is reminded that Gerald's response to her is that he should naai her for complaining, an image that suggests further damage and possible bleeding. It is ironic that this moment of acceptance, this period of physical transformation and mental reorientation, is met by Tshepo's encounter with Chris Swart.

“Chris Swart [...] is quiet and moody and has the sort of gait that betrays that he was once in prison” (152). Tshepo notes how “Chris is [also] meticulously clean, something that he learned in prison [...]” (152). He reminds the reader of Zebron, becoming an example of the way men who have been exposed to the rigid violence of prison masculinity and sexuality are permanently altered by this experience and how many of them are never able to overcome this shaping. This is further supported by the text when Tshepo notes that he learns from Chris that “[p]risons like hospitals are supposed to be run on cleanliness. Warders pride themselves in keeping their sections spotless” (152). Chris asserts his dominant masculinity quite early in the space of the flat the two shared together by “tak[ing] the bigger room without a door while [Tshepo] settle[s] for the smaller one leading into the bathroom” (152). Although he “soon get[s] used to interruptions as Chris makes

his way in and out of the bathroom” (152), Tshepo is in the unfortunate position of not having privacy despite having a door. In prison and the impoverished community Chris comes from, personal space is at a premium and so even from the start of this engagement, and despite Tshepo’s seeming naivety, the reader is made aware of the fact that Chris has assumed the dominant position in the relationship, as he immediately claims his first masculine privilege. Coupled with the fact that he was in Pollsmoor Prison, home and stronghold of the 28 Gang Steinberg focuses on in *The Number*, the reader easily recognizes the threat Chris poses to the newly self-acknowledged homosexual who is attracted to the protagonist. He also resists Tshepo’s attempts at drawing similarities between their experiences, seeming to be vehemently resisting any form of confusion between who he is and who Tshepo is – a convicted murderer and ex-prisoner who is masculine when compared to the feminine mental patient. Chris also uses his experience of poverty and criminality against Tshepo who he presumes has middle-class privilege. The space of the shared flat thus becomes a metaphor for the ways in which these kinds of opposing personal positions are allowed to interact with each other intimately in the open South African society that is forming at the time the novel is set.

Like Zebron, Chris is a product of the Cape flats - an impoverished hangover of apartheid’s attempt at racialised city engineering. These are areas whose people are plagued by gang violence, drug abuse and crime. I quote Zebron describing his childhood to give us insight into Duiker’s representation of these communities and the effect they have on the young men growing up in them:

I was bred in the Cape Flats. [...] It is more about thug life, Friday night at Bennie’s tavern where you can get bootleg liquor for nothing, doing buttons with zol or getting your piel sucked off by some cheap, HIV positive prostitute that you paid for to do you and your friends. It is about klapping Rochelle because “sy het ’n groot bek en ek likes dit nie”. [...] It is about drug lords running the streets and the streets running them into jail and more trouble. Till the Twenty-Eights don’t like the Twenty-Sixes and your connection becomes you enemy. [...] By the time I was fourteen I was

accustomed to magistrate courts. [...] But it's true, I learned to think. I had to. Some of us are not that fast. (155)

Chris is thus what can be considered a career criminal, a direct result of his community and an embodied reminder of the social crimes of apartheid. Significant to our discussion is the way in which Chris's sexual behaviour is framed as homosocial, even before his experiences in prison. At the same time he is initiated into gang culture and criminality quite young, at fourteen, suggesting he has been socialised into his criminal masculinity from an early age. "[G]etting your piel sucked off by some cheap, HIV positive prostitute" illustrates the wilful risk associated with life in these communities (155). Chris's account of his own sexuality suggests something that is demanding in its need for satisfaction. At the same time it includes his male friends. Soon one realises that Chris's engagement with Tshepo has been nothing but a passive means through which he has been actively trying to express his masculine dominance over an already feminized Tshepo. Munro highlights how "Chris resent the advantages that Tshepo's education has given him in life and he is both attracted by Tshepo's gentleness and scornful of it" (207). It is illuminating to note that for many of the respondents in the Gear and Ngubeni study, as well as in Steinberg's *The Number*, one of the most common ways in which men are tricked into being *wyfi*s in prison is through their lacking prison savvy and thus being manipulated by other prisoners into becoming indebted to them in some way. Others are seen to lack intelligence, and Magadien Wentzel in Steinberg's book suggests that he was recruited into the 28 Gang and spared sexual subordination/*wyfi*making by performing a particular intelligence. This notion is reiterated by Zebon when he reads Tshepo as not having "learned the rules" (160).

In their research Gear and Ngubeni found that the process of *wyfi* and men-making in the cultures of the prison gangs takes on a form of socialisation and education where the new arrivals

are taken under the authority of an older prisoner whose duty it is to educate the uninitiated about the norms and values that shape masculine identities in prison. One of the lessons taught these young men is to remain stoical even in the face of aggression and violence. Chris is presented as having internalised these lessons well, as Tshepo finds him particularly difficult to read and thus to a large extent inaccessible. It is only later that he is granted a glimpse of Chris's interiority and this only after the two had been spending quite some time in each other's company, socialising and visiting nightclubs that he "become[s] aware of Chris and how fragile he really is, always hiding his fears and hopes behind a particular look" (160).

The Tshepo who is reconstituted whilst being in Valkenberg Psychiatric Hospital is finally able to recognise his sexual attraction to men. Although he still finds it difficult and his desire has not been developed to the stage where it has become explicitly labelled and politicised, Tshepo signals awareness that an acknowledgement of same-sex attraction is soon followed by a categorisation meant to classify, restrict and construct. Tshepo is here shown to be focussed on the emotional and physical quality of his attraction. Although there is no mention of love yet, this is the moment the reader becomes most critically aware of Tshepo's movement from an, albeit queer, heterosexuality to that of a more fully developed and Western influenced recognition of himself as being homosexual first, and later he assumes the nom de plume of Angelo. Despite his willingness to name his attraction he still experiences it as something "terrible" (166). So much so that he is unable to "face [him]self in the mirror" (166). He describes it as "awkward, liking a person, especially a guy, in that way. It's never happened. I don't know what to do. I desperately like him. Can't he see that?" (166). Through this comment Tshepo shows his ignorance with regard to the historical representation of homosexuality in Africa and the world at large. For him, as uninitiated African man, he is not comfortable with his newly self-acknowledged attraction to men, which is

compounded by the fact that he is unfamiliar with the rituals of homosexual courtship. Later in the narrative the space of the male massage parlour/brothel is used as a place of learning, as Tshepo is allowed to draw on a broader gay community from within the historical and social network provided by it.

There is a childlike naiveté to Tshepo, first highlighted by Zebron who explains it as a sign of how no one/man has taken the time to teach him how to be a man in South African society. Now Chris's interaction with Tshepo and his attraction to him as hyper-masculine gangsterised man is undermined by his untutored position as inexperienced homosexual and privileged black academic. Later, when Tshepo/Angelo starts to work in the massage parlour he is finally initiated into the love and intimacy that can exist between men, in the "brotherhood" of the gay space. He is thus provided a historical perspective, as well as being grounded in the (Western) categorisation of gay as political identity. Ironically, this brotherhood is successfully undermined by Tshepo's blackness in the largely white space of the male brothel. It is here that Duiker is seen to highlight the options for categorisation and self-labelling that exist for the black man in post-apartheid South Africa. He signals the extent to which even the "brotherhood" of gayness reflects the racist nature of the broader heteronormative society that is South Africa, where the liberal discourse of the 'Queer Diaspora' is restricted to those white and Western.

Despite Tshepo's willingness to do anything Chris may ask of him, Chris is seen to have "no regard for [him]" (168). In fact Tshepo "suspect[s] he doesn't think much of him because he never asks him for anything. [...] His pride, his resolve, they devastate [Tshepo whilst at the same time] [h]is discipline makes him all the more beautiful. Unattainable" (168). Motivated by what is constructed as a sense of racial superiority, because of his coloured identity, as well as his belief that Tshepo is one of the newly-found spoiled rich black kids in the country, Chris increasingly

starts viewing Tshepo with contempt and violent hatred. Whilst Tshepo's narrative of their friendship frames their relationship in a more positive light, Chris is very clear about his contempt for Tshepo. Munro's notion that Chris is both attracted by Tshepo's "gentleness and scornful of it" suggests a hidden sexual attraction on the part of Chris towards Tshepo. This is supported by the way in which he is described as using his body and its fitness as a means to intimidate Tshepo. His earlier reference to him paying for sexual interaction which included his friends suggests that there is a longing for some form of homosexuality, yet at the same time this longing is strictly policed and only allowed within very specific, ritualised spaces and situations. This construction of Chris is seen as why there is an underlying sexual tension that runs through the chapter covering the short period the two share the flat together. Aware of Tshepo's sexual attraction to Chris and allowed into Chris's own conflicted interchange with Tshepo's identity, the reader experiences a sense of violent sexual tension that ultimately evokes the fear of rape, a fear that is rewarded when Chris and two of his friends later brutally rape Tshepo for money that he owed Chris. The idea of manipulation and scheming that Gear and Ngubeni find in their research is highlighted by the way in which the rape is presented as the final act in a series of well thought out moves to deconstruct Tshepo.

There is an interesting connection to be drawn between Tshepo's objectification of Chris and the way in which men of the 28 Gang are said to view their bodies and that of other men as sexually desirable. In Steinberg's *The Number Magadien* elucidates the construction of prisoners as sexual objects by other prisoners and - to an increasingly significant extent - society at large. He notes that in the 28 Gang culture the "sex-son [...] is a sex object" (3032) and it is the "sex-sons who are fucked" (3032). As mentioned earlier, Magadien himself has "a tattoo of an erect penis" on his stomach, "its head staring up at his belly button", marking him as a virile man who is

strongly influenced by his penis (3032). The tattoo becomes a constant reminder of Magadien's role in the 28 Gang and a symbol of the gang's emphasis on sex between men. Although it is only later revealed that Chris is a member of the 28 Gang, Tshepo's descriptions of him marks his body as that of someone who is aware of his own sexual appeal and suggests attempts to retain a physical form which espouses masculinity, sexual prowess and health. Tshepo describes him as "furiously attractive", with "lips [that] are pink and full and long to be looked at" (167). For him Chris has "features [that] are clothing for a god", an exaggerated beauty that leaves him "enthralled to watch", "even when he's doing the dishes" (167). Tshepo, here muses on the beauty of Chris as fetishised prisoner:

Hard labour and prison discipline have only made him more beautiful, his moodiness and reticence more pronounced [...] His powerful arms and strong but elegant neck keep me guessing about the rest of his landscape. I wonder what lies under the clothes that fit him so well. I wonder how soft or rough his skin is, how gently his breath comes and goes. And his scars and the stories that each scar would have to tell. (167)

Tshepo's objectification and sexual attraction to Chris can thus be seen to be related to the way in which the male prison is constructed as an erotic space by Tshepo - "[h]ard labour and prison discipline have only made him more beautiful" (167).

Chris "only need[s] a woman for one thing": her vagina. His primary means of sexual gratification is masturbation but "[i]t's not good to skommel too much if you an outie":

Sometimes it gets so bad that I go to nearby Salt River where you can get a cheaper prostitute who doesn't look that bad for a reasonable price. And you can naai her till your piel is sore. [...] I don't think Tshepo would approve so I never tell him when I do this. He wouldn't understand. [...] I don't know how he does it, how he handles the lonely nights without female company. Me, I like to naai. (172)

Again there are intersections between Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* and *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* as the familiar Sea Point area becomes the space where a prostitute is to be obtained. The reference reminds one of Azure's description of the white prostitute Gerald threatens to naai for her insubordination. "And you can naai her till your piel is sore" (172). Chris's preoccupation with Tshepo's sexual activities serves to cast him as being curious about Tshepo's sex-life, suggesting an attraction that in his world can only be uttered in the structured way of the gang. Soon Tshepo is made to suffer the physical abuse of which Chris has become a skilled practitioner. Later, after he punches Tshepo he seems to be overcome with regret and helps him stop the bleeding. It is after this moment that Tshepo seem to be able to discern the storm that is raging inside Chris – a storm that is as socio-political as it is sexual. As with Zebron, and almost as a continuation of Tshepo's earlier experience with him, Chris is presented as walking a thin line between severe sexual-emotional attraction and utter anger and violence. Tshepo comes to represent to him that which he has lost, that which he cannot allow himself to be. It is speculative to suggest that Chris is able to read Tshepo's sexual attraction to him as this is never blatantly mentioned in the text, but safe to assume that prison would have prepared him so as to be able to read the bodies of others more effectively than most. This keen ability to police masculinity and sexual attraction would suggest that he may have read Tshepo as queer right from the beginning of their cohabitation. This is illustrated by Chris:

I fixed him good. He doesn't bother me anymore. And he keeps the house clean, like I want. (210)

The idea of Chris reading the newly released Tshepo as 'queer' and then forming some kind of ritualised prison-based system of 'marriage' based on his masculine dominance and Tshepo's feminine passivity is perhaps best illustrated when he one night climbs into bed with

Tshepo. Before we proceed to the quote I would like to return to the idea of a ritualised prison-based system of marriage and suggest that Tshepo's prior experience in a mental institution under the tutelage of Zebron leaves him vulnerable to enact the role that Chris expects of him. Tshepo describes the scene:

Chris stands at the door stark naked, a taunting lecherous look on his face. "I need a piss," he mumbles and staggers to the bathroom. As always he urinates into the water, as though the drilling sound like an industrial pump were a test of virility. [...] [H]e [...] starts posing, flexing his muscles the way bodybuilders do but he is drunk and clumsy about it, his sizable penis flapping between his thighs unabashedly. It hurts inside to see him like this. [...] he pokes me, his groin a few inches from my head. [...] He holds his cock and balls in his hand and sneers. A little aroused, a little angry but very confused I watch him. He pushes me into bed and gets in with me. It is better to let him do what he wants, I tell myself, thoughts caught somewhere between lust and fear. Surprisingly he sleeps. [...] In the morning when I get up from my bed he is not there. And in the afternoon when I see him he acts like nothing happened. He doesn't even mention my eye, now fully swollen. (176)

For not leaving the flat after being assaulted by Chris he seemingly rewards Tshepo with the sexual interaction he wants. For Chris the relationship has come full circle in its resemblance to the kinds of manly interaction he has experienced since he was fourteen years of age. It is here that the placing of the rooms and the power the space affords Chris become visible as he enters the room, glaringly unclothed. His body and its beauty become his means of performing a warped apology for his actions whilst at the same time moving the ritual one step ahead and introducing the aspect of sex into their marriage. The provoking lewd look on his face and his use of his body clearly indicate his sexual intentions and are meant to seduce Tshepo. When Chris later labels Tshepo a naai and gemors he completes his ritualised feminising of him (211). Through this relabelling of Tshepo as naai he is reduced to fucking, a label that suggests a familiar notion of the sexually submissive man as the wyfie in prison – constructions of masculinity to which Chris had

been exposed during his sentence in prison. And it is after this relabelling that Tshepo becomes open to sexual assault and rape, one of the accepted ways in which homosexual experiences are to be had in prison.

Soon, after the moment of intimacy Chris creates by crawling into bed with Tshepo naked, Tshepo is exposed to the way in which the heteronormative masculinity Chris has been socialised into expresses its sexual attraction. It is such that when Tshepo returns home one day after searching for employment following the loss of his job due to Chris's lies, he finds Chris with his friends Brendan and Virgil in the flat. I quote the passages at length and ask for the reader's patience in reading them. The fact that there are three men reinforces the sense of the gang rape of a man as a homosocial erotic experience. Chris:

I [...] give him a warm klap. He falls on his bed, that stupid scared shitless look on his face. [...] "Gemors, do you know who I am?" [...] "This is who I am, gemors," I say and show him my twenty eights number on my left hand. I don't think he ever noticed it. "Do you know why it's on my left hand, gemors?" [...] He shakes his head. "Wait here. I'll tell you. I'll show you," I say and go to the bathroom. I return with a tub of Vaseline. (212)

Following his earlier abuse of Tshepo, which went unreported/un-responded to and was then sublimated through a lecherous act of homoerotic seduction, Chris is to complete his subjugation of Tshepo through rape. The fact that his twenty eight number is on his left hand signals Chris as having occupied the position of the wyfie in prison. He was thus the object of sexual desire and pleasure in the carceral space. The fact that Tshepo never noticed the tattoos affirms his lack of knowledge, which is reiterated in his not understanding the meaning of the placement of the tattoos and what is to be done to him. Chris highlights this when he informs Tshepo of the rules that govern what is happening to him:

"Hei jou, naai. Take off your clothes." Brendan says and klaps him. [...] "You check, these are also my brothers," I say and they show him their

twenty eight numbers. But it is on their right hands. And Virgil has three lines under his number. [...] Eventually they strip off all his clothes and he lies there on his bed, covering his small piel with his hand while the other hand covers his face. [...] Virgil stands back and gives me the signal. I take off my pants. Virgil and Brendan pin him down and spread his legs. They bring his chops towards me. I get an erection and puts lots of Vaseline on my piel. I try to force my way in but he is too tense. (212)

The gang forms a brotherhood of masculinity where homosexual practices are tolerated as long as they adhere to the rules set for the performance, “these are also my brothers” (212). Duiker later contrasts this brotherhood with that of the male brothel when Tshepo is presented with an alternative to the violent formalised same-sex sexuality that Chris enjoys and demands. The placing of Brendan and Virgil’s tattoos signals that they occupied the position of the husbands in prison<sup>67</sup>. They are also the ones that entered the 28 Gang through blood<sup>68</sup>; their position in prison would be in stark contrast to Chris’s<sup>69</sup>. Ironically, in normal society they all become penetrators, suggesting that outside the brotherhood everybody occupies the space of a ‘woman’. Their concern is with the practicalities of the act: getting Vaseline for lubrication, stripping him naked to provide easier access, not hitting him in the face so as to avoid prosecution and perhaps most significantly, the giving of the signal highlights the formalised nature of the sexual act.

It is important to note that there are a number of issues being conflated in the rape scene Duiker presents from Chris’s perspective. The most important for our discussion is the issue of

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<sup>67</sup> “On the Sunday – the year of the rights - his recruitment ceremony is performed. He is again placed in the centre of a cell, but this time several people surround him. The first to approach him was the Nyangi [...] he tells Magadien to hold out his arms, palms upwards; he takes a gold pipe off his shoulder and slaps it on Magadien’s right wrist, then a silver pip on his left wrist” (Steinberg 3091).

<sup>68</sup> “A silver ought not to stab to join the 28s; that is reserved for a soldier, a gold line member. Indeed, a silver is barred from spilling blood until he has climbed far up the hierarchy” (Steinberg 3060).

<sup>69</sup> “The 28s are divided into two parallel hierarchies. The one is called the silver line or private line; controversially, some call it the line of wyfies – wives. The other is the gold line, also referred to as the line of soldiers” (Steinberg 3018).

male rape as being concerned with violence and not sexual pleasure. I would like to suggest that Duiker presents the two as inextricably link to each other. The men's violence signals clearly that this is about dominance and subjugation, suggested by Chris, Virgil and Brendan raping Tshepo as punishment for him owing Chris money. Simultaneously, it is also a form of ritually moving the two men up the ranks in the gang. Through the rape of Tshepo, where he is provided the privilege of penetrating him first, Chris is able to remake himself as a man. However, beneath this violence lies the husky tone of sexual excitement and homosexual attraction. Chris "go[es] for a long time, taking nice long strokes" ultimately yelling 'Ek gaan water breek!' [...] spill[ing his] come all over his back" (212). His sexual performance becomes a means through which to reaffirm the brotherhood whilst at the same time serving to excite the other men. His reference to Tshepo liking it and this being what he had to experience in prison remind him of being subjected to the same kind of dominance and being asked the same question. In this sense, his sexual enjoyment is reinforced by his humiliation of Tshepo, and because of the earlier experience in Tshepo's bed he is also asking the question sardonically. At the same time it burdens him with having sexually enjoyed the experience, which it is in fact what *he* likes.

When his time comes Virgil "pumps into [Tshepo] like he hasn't had a woman in a long time. He makes strange faces as he pumps. 'Ja, you made him nice and wet,' [he] says, [referring to] the blood and sweat dripping down [Tshepo's buttocks] and thighs" (213). There is a clear attempt by the men to prolong the sex; they are also concerned with making it enjoyable for themselves. When Chris notes that Virgil "goes on for a long time, maybe fifteen minutes[,] [until even] Virgil [...] starts getting impatient with him and hurries him on to breek water" it is perhaps most clear that the three men must be understood to be enjoying themselves. Virgil's impatience serves to suggest an urgency of desire and need which is further reinforced when Brendan "pull[s]

out just before he's about to come and makes [them] turn Tshepo, then he shoots his load all over Tshepo's chest" (213). The performance of the ejaculation and the erotic intimacy provided by the act of ejaculating on Tshepo's chest serve to further underscore a ritualised sexual interaction. The sexual assault marks a sharp turn in the narrative and the way in which Tshepo engages his sexuality and masculinity. Chris's statement "[g]et cleaned up, gemors [...] Don't worry, he knows what to do. He won't fuck with me" completes Tshepo's feminisation, and ironically it is this moment that seemingly frees him from his naïve status of the uninitiated (213). Again in Duiker's work, the victim of violent gangster sexuality prevalent in the Cape Flats is seen to be remade/re-inscribed, this re-inscription most visible in their bleeding from the anus after being sexually exploited. For both protagonists these moments of subjugation and inscription allow for them to move towards an acknowledgement of their homosexual attraction.

Forced out of his home and job by his rapist, who until recently he idealised in descriptions reminiscing about his godly features and strong prison-honed body, Tshepo starts work at a massage parlour and takes on the name and new identity of Angelo. He is soon put to work as one of their two resident "black stallion[s]" (238) and is quite popular with the white clients who frequent the establishment. Brenna Munro notes the importance of the brothel as a space of transformation for Tshepo:

Tshepo "comes out" in the context of a multiracial community of men – the brothel. The experience of the brothel transforms him, and his narrative in this section is told under a new name, "Angelo." Tshepo/Angelo goes from being the resistant subject of treatment in the asylum to sex worker-as-therapist [...]. (209)

From here on the rest of the narrative reads as a novel-cum-historical exploration, and it is here that Duiker best illustrates the new avenues opening up (black) South African sexualities and his awareness of the problematic facing same-sex-attracted men, and men in general in the country.

The male brothel becomes the “the last place for men. [...] A bastion” (244) and it is a direct result of the democratic South Africa and its recognition of sexual orientation in its constitution. “Our fathers don’t have anywhere left for them, where men can be on their own without women [...] This place it’s like a club, an exclusive men’s club” (244).

Munro’s reading of the novel sheds light on the construction of the male brothel and Tshepo’s experiences there as representative of a broader community when she notes that

Tshepo [...] [represents] the symbolic figure through which the nation’s past is exorcised and a new national sense of belonging and affiliation are forged. (208) [...] In Tshepo’s sexual encounters, penetrating and being penetrated becomes a literalization of the breaking down of old boundaries after Apartheid. (209)

Karel serves as the primary voice through which the theme of an almost organic, natural masculinity is possible that includes homosexual encounters: “I don’t think you know that things are never going to be the same again. The world is changing, things are happening. Nature is talking to us but few are listening” (245). Karel’s discourse reflects the changing climate of the country, a country where a young black man can move from being a mental patient to living with a coloured gangster who rapes him, to entering the largely white space that is Cape Town’s gay scene as a fetishised “black stallion” (254). Within this space Tshepo is as fixed in his blackness as he is stripped of it through the mystical disembodiment of sex. Munro perhaps best explains this notion when she writes that “[i]f sex is [considered] “serious,” “artistic,” and “revolutionary” work [in the novel] , it is also a kind of magically immediate nationalism, connecting people viscerally who otherwise would have nothing in common” (210). In Duiker’s representation of the gay brothel it becomes a space where “men from all walks of life” come to seek intimacy with other men. It provides an aetiology where “[s]ex is always the same whether you do it with a man or a woman, it’s just a matter of choosing. [...] Preferences. Maybe you don’t even like men. Maybe

you think you do but you don't really" (245). Karel's construction of sexual identity is based on preference and stands in opposition to the view that holds homosexuality as an orientation/political identity. Within this framework sex becomes a form of "communicating, a way of saying things" (245). "Men [who] really haven't been given the chance to explore their sexuality" are provided with a safe space in a new country where their choice is constitutionally supported. Although their behaviour is still grounded in secrecy because they "are either married or expected to be" this space provides them with an inbetween where men can "explore the possibilities of being men" (248-249). Fundamental to this exploration is the experience of intimacy with other men.

Duiker develops this notion through Karel, who presents an informed opinion when he notes how

[i]n so-called primitive societies a man, even a boy, knows what he is doing when he puts his penis inside a woman. He knows that she might fall pregnant. There isn't the blind stupid ignorance you get in urbanised places where you get thirteen and fourteen year olds pregnant because they were experimenting with sex. That sort of thing never happens. And the women too, they are aware of themselves, of how weak they are against a man's strength and how to use sex in their favour. [...] Perhaps it is true that so-called primitive people are more sexual. [...] The thing about Western culture is that it sanitises sex and horniness with politeness and manners, but in a rigid form. (249)

Karel's argument resonates strongly with Foucault's thoughts on the medicalisation of human sexuality, and thus the narrative enters the academic debate suggesting that Western engagements with sexuality have had a detrimental effect on the way in which it has been indigenised in colonial contexts. The high culture of the West, easily conflated with cultural superiority, "sanitises sex" restricting "horniness with politeness and manners" and forcing sexual expression into its most "rigid form" (249). As Munro argues, the "presentation of the gay man and the sex worker as patriots and possible presidents [in the novel] seems like a direct rebuke to Robert Mugabe's notion

that homosexuality is “cultural prostitution’ for Africans” (210). Contributing to this is Duiker’s direct engagement with the issue in his novel when Tshepo remarks that

people always say that black culture is rigid and doesn’t accept things like homosexuals and lesbians. You know the argument – it’s very unAfrican. It’s a lot of crap. In my experiences that kind of thinking comes from urbanised blacks, people who’ve watered down the real origins of our culture and mixed it with Anglo-Saxon notions of the Bible. It’s stupid to even suggest that homosexuality and lesbianism are foreign to black culture. Long ago, before whites, people were aware of the blurs. They must have been (250).

Throughout the novel various characters take on the task of educating Tshepo about the underground world of gay life in Cape Town and inducting him into the mythology of homosexual desire in the city which functions as microcosm for the country at large. The most influential is West who functions as both guide and teacher. Through his tutelage Tshepo is able to form part of this new brotherhood for which there is a history and established cultural norms. There are even role models on whom to model one’s own performance of sexuality and Tshepo’s new found (affirmative) gay identity:

Some of the top achievers I personally know are gay [...] Oscar Wilde, James Baldwin, Navratilova, George Michael, he’s such a cutie. [...] David Geffen [...] [t]hat media mogul guy who runs that thing with Spielberg and the other guy? [...] Unfortunately not many people in the upper echelons of society are willing to come out of the closet. [...] I’m thinking of Michelangelo, Alexander the Great, even da Vinci, some have claimed. And of course all the designers, chefs, most of them seem gay. And the arts. A lot of gay people seem to be lured into the arts. It’s no coincidence. There seems to be a greater intelligence behind it. (253)

For West to be homosexual is not to submit to the will of others, it is to walk amongst the greats of history. Despite the obvious problematical nature of anachronistically applying modern political labels of sexuality to ancient sexual behaviours, West reflects current debates around the sexuality

of influential figures and their need to admit to same sex-sexual interest so as to help lessen the stigma attached to the identity associated with it.

This gay brotherhood is undermined by its exclusion of women as West's discourse reflects a concern with maleness and masculinity. For Munro too the image of "[t]he brothel-as-nation is also an exclusively male affair" which allows the novel to return "to a central problematic of gay [...] writing: How does one celebrate gay male sexuality without being "phallogentric?" (214). The image of Andromeda soon also serves to remind Tshepo of his state as fetishised other in this space of liberal white masculinity. The following description of him suggests an engagement with his body and sexuality that reminds one of anthropological narratives that construct the noble savage as intrinsically heterosexual:

Andromeda kind of represents the male archetype, the original guy. Adam, if you want to be biblical about it. His sexual prowess, his blackness, we celebrate them in a very overt way. Now on the outside this might be considered racial stereotyping, you know what I mean? [...] I'm talking about the myth about black men and large penises and all the rest. Well, we celebrate him and the phallus openly. [...] [T]here are deeper implications in adopting a black man as a male archetype. We're saying there is something to be said about the experience of masculinity when you have a dark complexion, that because of history and society automatically you become a threat, an outsider. And because you're forced into this position you see things, what other guys cannot. Your experiences as a man are deeper, more masculine-affirming. I mean I'm not being condescending but I'm sure you can confirm for yourself that the black experience is different from mine. (301)

Munro accurately describes *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* as "half picaresque and half bildungsroman, in which the varied national landscape is continually unfolding before the gaze of the protagonist" (208). Her reading of the novel as metaphorical for the socio-economic and political changes that the country is going through at the time, and her casting of Tshepo and the

other characters as inhabiting a queer citizenship, help to highlight the novel as an early example of post-transitional narrative and its engagement with homosexuality.

In her reading of the novel, one that I want to reiterate here,

The development of the central character [is] corollary to national progress; Tshepo's journey is one of growth out of madness toward self-definition, exorcising the damage of the past but encountering new forms of violence. Like South Africa, Tshepo – whose name means “hope” in Sotho – emerges from a tragically divided and abusive family and chooses a (gay) fellowship with people who are not his kin. (208)

Munro's view, read alongside the earlier description of Andromeda and his state as archetypal black Adam, signals the way in which the post-apartheid space of the male brothel reflects the racist nature of the dominant (white) gay identity in the country. “[T]here is something to be said about the experience of masculinity when you have a dark complexion, that because of history and society automatically you become a threat, an outsider” (301) and this is true even for this utopian gay brotherhood. “And because [black men are] forced into this position [they] see things, what other guys cannot. [Their] experiences as [men] are deeper, more masculine-affirming” (301). Brenna Munro notes Tshepo's “great capacity for sympathy [...] [seen when] at certain points in the novel he feels himself inhabited by other people's histories”, suggesting that although his experiences as a black man may be different he (like others in the brotherhood) has the ability to create community with those who are most unlike him sexually. An example of what Munro refers to is his embodiment of “the anguished memories of a black woman who lost her child to the violence of the apartheid state and [...] memories of Afrikaners being tortured by the British during the Boer War”. I support Munro's view that “[h]is boundaries with others are as permeable as the narrative itself, and it is as if the whole nation has been pulled into “his” story” (209). This construction of the permeability of the black man, as is embodied by Tshepo and through extension

Andromeda, is in opposition to the racially subjective experience inferred in the Andromeda quote earlier.

As the narrative progresses Angelo starts to “wonder why almost all the men that come see [him] are white. He asks himself “[w]here are all the black men?” signalling the lack of economic transformation in the country. A lack of resources makes queer black men and women particularly vulnerable to attempts at social policing and communal control. For black men homosexuality is something that is to be hidden, a subject that is not discussed. The “schizophrenic dancing queens” of the night transform themselves into “rigid, macho men” (331). In Duiker’s representation, black men are trapped by the “pressure [their] culture exerts on [them]” resulting in “dirty look[s]” and a palpable sense of anger “they seem to feel about liking men” (331). It is this lack of freedom compared to that of Western (white) culture to inhabit a gay identity or allow for homosexual intimacy that leaves Tshepo unguided, despite his hope “to find comfort , perhaps guidance in them” (331).

When reflecting on his own lack of experimenting when first joining the brothel, Tshepo presents his experiences as metaphorical for the way in which black men are seen to be trapped by their cultural worldviews:

Quietly I have held my body a prisoner. I put limits on my body, cordoned off a certain part of me. I starved myself of the curiosity of discovery. [...] The truth is it takes courage to love a man, to sleep with him. [...] So why the uproar about it? Why shouldn’t two men show each other love, the way they want? Who is anyone to judge the same impulses that govern us all? (333-334).

In a context where the black homosexual is seen to be excluded from the largely white and Western gay identity this passage serves as a postcolonial declaration of equality. Tshepo connects his inability to allow himself to be penetrated by his clients and other men to an internalised lack

of self-acceptance. The statement “love hurts” and “the truth is it takes courage to love a man, to sleep with him” help to highlight Tshepo’s realisation that to be gay is to fight for a political identity (333). This is a fight that is fought by individuals on a personal level but it is inextricably linked to the global diasporic experience of a modern gay identity. “I held myself in bondage”, “[n]o one is gonna liberate me. Who am I waiting for? What am I waiting for? It’s not like anything is going to change” become a challenge to the character himself, but to the (black) queer South African reader as well. They are called to stand up for their own liberation despite the consequences they are to face with at the hands of “bigots, hypocrites” and “hetero-fascists” (334).

For Munro “*The Quiet Violence of Dreams* is [...] a queer paradox: the narration of a gay subject “finding himself” that is also “a jeremiad against consumer labels and ready-made identities”:

The novel embodies this conflict in its dialogic form, where two modes of writing, the realist – in which gay identities are a recognizable way of translating a person – and what we might call the visionary, compete for space. (216) [...] The question of whether queer postcolonial sexuality can be represented, or indeed translated, what the right national or literary language, and indeed the right genre, for it is, lies at the heart of the novel. (217) [...] [T]he novel itself, wrestles with whether “gay literature” is part of the imperial cultural formation, or library, of stolen ideas and images. Conversely, is Duiker’s use of the coming-out novel also “plagiarism,” or indeed mimicry? (218)

An answer to Tshepo’s questions may be found in his own words when he asks himself: “What was I waiting for? The earth didn’t open up and swallow me. Permission? Whose permission? Who really cares?” (334). In the new South Africa the black homosexual is only limited through his own sense of obligation and responsibility. The question becomes easy statements, exemplars of the “jeremiad” nature Munro ascribes to the text and a direct address to black South African

men struggling with their sexuality as conflicting with their “traditional” conceptions of self and what it entails to be a man:

Who knows anything about [you], what [you’re] capable of? Surely that should be more important than what [you] do with men in bed. Permission? Fuck permission. [Do] it for [yourself], because [you] want to. Perhaps this is the last rite of passage [...]: liberating [the] body. No one should tell [you] what [you] can and can’t do with it, when it is [you] who face loneliness, despair, confusion. No one has all the answers. No one has all the reasons. Life is not built on superiorities” (334).

Duiker leaves the reader with a final word that is read as an affirmation of homosexuality whilst at the same time avoiding the application of Western labels to the new ways in which avenues of sexual expression have opened up, when he muses through Tshepo:

To love a man? It is like feeling the roaring ocean inside you. It is like knowing the source of the north wind. It is like getting your reward at the top of a mountain, a breathtaking panorama. It is like running with wild horses, panting with excitement. It is like deep sea diving, with the water below being perfectly clear. It is like falling backwards and laughing after realising there is nothing to fear. (334)

As noted by Munro in her analysis of Duiker’s work, the novels can be read as “revisiting the sexual trauma that haunts the prison memoirs of the apartheid era, reframing it within a celebration, rather than a stigmatization, of consensual same-sex erotics” (199). I would like to add to this reading by suggesting that his work also highlights the trauma, sexual and otherwise, that the oppressed peoples of South Africa suffered under apartheid. The actions of the men who commit homosexual violence in these two novels represent the ways in which this trauma still shapes our racial, gender and sexual identities. In *Thirteen Cents* Duiker illustrates the notion that to be a man is to be masculine and hetero-dominant. Azure’s lack of a family leaves him to be socialised into a brotherhood of brutalized boys who in turn have grown up to become brutal perpetrators. Through this he highlights the ways in which various parts of South African society

remain primarily structured along misogynistic gendered lines. Through this construction the man who finds other men attractive and wants to experience sexual pleasure with him is allowed this, whereas this gendered hierarchy keeps his masculinity and heterosexuality intact. It is the penetrated that is relegated to the space of womanhood, whose heterosexuality is brought into question and whose masculinity is affected. Azure's denial of a same-sex attraction becomes a means through which he is thus able to claim a space of dominance and power in a world where this is restricted to heteronormative men. The scene of the forced group fellatio suggests that in this context there is allowance for same-sex attraction/sexual experiences as long as they do not challenge the gendered hierarchy of the brutalised community from which these men stem. In *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* Duiker continues to explore this underworld of hyper masculine same-sex sexuality but presents a subcultural gay brotherhood that stands in direct opposition to this pathological, repressive, hierarchical engagement with gender and sexuality. Through his engagement with the mental patient (Zebron) and the ex-prisoner (Chris), Tshepo encounters the embodiments of a medicalised, criminally repressed, homosexual who stands in direct opposition to the brotherhood of the gay massage parlour. Significantly, the gay identities of the men who work in the massage parlour and the brotherhood they are able to form are undermined by the trauma of apartheid as this space remains one of racist fetishisation of the black man.

Munro importantly notes that the novels "revisit the sexual trauma that haunts the prison narratives of the apartheid era, reframing it within a celebration, rather than a stigmatization of consensual same-sex erotics" (199). Within the context of the squatter camps and poor housing of the Cape Flats, Duiker represents a community where violent gangsterised masculinities are seen to be dominant. These masculinities are fundamentally related to heteronormative performances of sexuality and gender. Within the image of the 28 Gang member the homosexual and the violent

gangster become confused, leaving sexual assault and rape of a man open to being re-inscribed as a form of bonding and reaffirmation of a sub-cultural prison-forged brotherhood. This reframing of same-sex erotics takes on a distinct form where the criminal body becomes sexualised and fetishised. There is a fundamental conflation still between sexual dominance and hetero-masculinity as is shown through the instances of violent homo-erotic rapes in Duiker's work. I agree with and reiterate Munro's view that Duiker "engage[s] [...] newly legitimized notions of a Western-style gay identity as they intersect with the national coming-out narrative, and indeed with the vexed national discourse about rape and AIDS" (199). Yet at the same time we will find that Duiker suggests that even this celebration of "same-sex erotics" is fundamentally undermined by the "trauma" left on and in the bodies of men in the country (199).

## **Chapter 6: Contemporary Labels of Dissent: Die Antwoord Appropriates the Number**

### *Overview:*

This chapter examines three music videos of a South African band called Die Antwoord. It looks at the ways in which they construct homosexuality through their use of the word “gay” and Number Gang related imagery. The band enjoys much notoriety and it serves as a way to talk over contemporary constructions around homosexuality. The fact that the band has also been seen to appropriate gang signs and tattoos in their videos suggests an engagement and understanding of the masculinity and sexuality at issue in this thesis. In 2012 the band released their album entitled *Ten\$ion*. The album is within the normal style of the band, mixing English and Afrikaans lyrics in a way that reflects its Western Cape coloured influences. The band has been criticised for what is viewed as their appropriation of “coloured” culture and rebranding it as a new white zeffness. I would like to suggest that the band signals a change within the South African milieu, where identities and sexualities have become as interchangeable as the various social encounters the country’s rainbowism allows.

Of particular interest for our discussion here and my argument are three songs and their music videos which give insight into the way in which the counter culture of homo-social prison sexuality has leaked into normal society and has come to show itself in one of its most popular cultural representations. “Evil Boy” featuring Wanga Jack sparked particular debate around the band’s exploitation of black and coloured people. “Fok Julle Naaier” was released and immediately it raised concern, particularly amongst the gay rights groups in the United States of America. “Cookie Thumper” has been equally criticised for its eroticisation of Yolandi as pubescent orphan.

***“Let Us Set the Fokken Record Straight, DJ Hi-Tek Will Fuck You in the Ass”***

“Evil Boy” was first released in 2009 with the music video featuring a character conceived of and designed by Ninja himself. The song was inspired by an experience the group members had with a young man who lived on a farm Yolandi lived before the band was formed. In a press release Ninja addresses the circumstances surrounding the inspiration for the song and the video and tells of a particular experience with Wanga Jack, the young man featured in the video, where he shared that there had been attempts by some men in his community to force him into being circumcised, an important part of the ritual to remake him into a man<sup>70</sup>. Ninja’s press release is divided into eight parts and refers to the characters in the third person, serving to reframe the press release as a narrative account of the events. It clearly shows the literary skills of the author who is presumably Ninja himself, and serves to introduce what is seen here as a clear academic engagement with self as cultural representative and creator/symbols of meaning.

Ninja recalls that

after Ninja stole Yo-landi from the farm (some time ago) her and Ninja would visit the farm from time to time to hang out with Wanga and some of the other kids. At this point in time Wanga (and some of the naughty boys from the farm) had just got out of Pollsmoor prison for getting up to mischief again. But Ninja and Yolandi just loved Wanga because he was just so cool, and fun, and just kind of like, a lost soul, looking for direction in life.

In Ninja’s account Yolandi is made to inhabit the passive role of the fair-haired lady forced to evacuate her dwelling because of the indecent advances of an older, decrepit man. The boys are marked early with their criminality and their visit to Pollsmoor serves to link them to gang culture and prison masculinity. By now we know that young men who go to prison are most likely to

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<sup>70</sup> For a lengthy engagement with the circumstances that led up to Wanga’s allegations in the media that Die Antwoord had exploited him see: <http://www.channel24.co.za/Music/News/Die-Antwoord-reacts-to-exploitation-allegations-20130930>.

assume the passive role during sexual relations in prison. The criminality of these young men does not concern Ninja or Yolandi who are familiar with this subculture and find communion with Wanga Jack in particular. He is but a “lost soul, looking for direction in life” and it is the white Ninja that takes on the task of providing this direction, initiating black Wanga into a Western heteronormative performance of manhood where money is the consequence of hard work and accessing particular support networks. Ninja recounts how he

taught the boys a lesson after the show, when he paid them for dancing with them. Ninja told the boys that money is nrg. He said that the more time and nrg u put in2 something you love, the more money you will get from it, and that magic doors will start opening for you in life if you do this. But if you dont give lots of time and energy to something you love, you obviously wont get that much money for it, and all the magic doors in life will stay closed to you. (sic)

Ninja addresses their economic survival by introducing them to Western capitalism, an attempt on his part to remedy the poverty the boys are faced with growing up on a farm in contemporary (2012) South Africa.

At the same time he also seeks to position himself as confidant and place of recourse when:

Wanga told them that everytime he went home to visit his mom in the hood, the men from the hood would hit him and tease him because Wanga was not circumcised. Wanga told N¥ that he was too scared to go to the bush to get circumcised to become a ‘man’. Every year hundreds of kids die (or get left with tragic penis problems) from this old school Xhosa custom, which Ninja thought was a bit silly. So when Wanga told Ninja about this little problem he was having, and what he was expected to do to ‘become a man’, Ninja lifted up his sleeve, pointed at his EVIL BOY tattoo, and said: “Yo Wanga, why don’t you just stay ‘EVIL BOY 4 life’ like me?” And Wanga smiled a big, relieved smile. Then Ninja asked Wanga if he wanted to try something fun, and Wanga said, ja!

Wanga's choice not to be circumcised highlights the conflict South African society faces as its cultural practices rubs up against a Western-based parliamentary democracy. Wanga's return to his mother in the hood suggests a return to the traditional hearth where customs are enforced through physical and verbal assault. It is well known that in some cases in South Africa boys are kidnapped and forced to undergo the circumcision ritual. Wanga's concern thus represents a real threat to his bodily integrity and his freedom of choice. It is here that the notion of the homosexual becomes significant as circumcision is seen as one of the ways in which homosexuality can be cured or prevented in Xhosa men. The notion is that without attaining manhood through enduring the pain of the ritual the boy remains socially constructed as a boy. Because the strictures that bind a boy's sexuality and masculinity are not yet fixed a boy who has not been remade a man is seen as dangerous to the heteronorm that governs Xhosa customary life. Wanga's foreskin becomes the political symbol around which the band is allowed to represent homosexual behaviour, circumcision and cultural appropriation.

The question around who invented the Evil Boy character and who wrote the lyrics to Wanga's verse invokes the conflicts raging in debates around the band and its tendency to appropriate the identities and work of others. The fact that Ninja insists that he wrote the verse himself and that he had to teach Wanga how to rap it in his style reminds one of colonial notions where the black man is cast as a skilled mimic. In this inversion of racial categories white ninja becomes the identity that is assumed through appropriation whilst black Wanga is reduced to live puppet. He performs a role written for him, is encouraged to inhabit the identity in future projects and speaks words in his tongue which had been written for him by Ninja in English and then translated by him into Xhosa. The new South African fairy tale, where the white Ninja steals away the fair Yolandi from her horrible landlord, creates an interracial family with young black Wanga

mentored to inhabit the Evil Boy identity created for him by the great white Ninja, sadly disrupted by the intrusion of Wanga's criminal identity honed through his time spent in jail and the poverty that traps his community. This representation of Wanga serves to construct him as someone who is able to traverse South African social landscapes and inhabit each space with a new, constructed identity. He is at times the lost soul, struggling farm boy, ex-prisoner, consummate thief and drunk, each persona projected onto him by Ninja's narrative. Within the context of this controversy the video and particularly Wanga's verse becomes an important indication of the ways in which male homosexuality is represented by the band. It also serves to introduce the particular aesthetic and tone of the three songs discussed here. I argue that the band has a developed theme of violent gang homoeroticism and uses it as a particular means through which to frame homo/sexuality and male identity.

The narrative of the video frames Yolandi dressed as queen-of-rats asking evil boy why his penis is so big, to which he responds:

All the better to love you with!  
 No glove no love!  
 If you don't believe me  
 Take your dirty hands off my umthondo wisizwe! [penis of the nation, pun on this]  
 [...]  
 Mamelapa umnqunduwakho! [listen here, you fucking asshole]  
 Andifuni ukuyaehlatini! [I don't want to go to the bush with you]  
 Sukubamma incanca yam! [don't touch my penis]  
 Andi so stabani! [I'm not a gay]  
 Incanca yam yeyamantombi [this penis is for the girls]  
 Incanca yam iclean! [my penis is clean]  
 Incanca yam inamandla! [my penis is strong]  
 Ndiyinkwekwe enkulu! [I am a big boy]  
 Angi funi ukuba ye endota! [don't want to be a man]  
 Evil boy 4 life! yebo! [yes]

The image of Evil Boy intrudes as much into the lyric as he is made to intrude into the visualisations of the video. Framed within the narrative that Ninja recounts in his press release,

Evil Boy's state of undress and swinging around of his seemingly large genitals serves to load him as sexualised racial interloper in a narrative that seems to otherwise address the band's rapid success, Yolandi's sexual skills and the size of Ninja's member. The interruption and uneasy fit of Wanga Jack's verse in the narrative, coupled with his eroticised nature in the video, help to establish the milieu that influences the visuals of the album and the three songs that are discussed here. The narrative is primarily focussed around Evil Boy's large black member. Ninja's reference to himself being hung like a tokoloshe serves to equate him to his black counterpart. In fact during the videos his white dominance comes to its full being in the representation of a grotesque elongated penis he uses as a microphone.

It seems Die Antwoord is seeking to subvert the notion of manhood as it is embodied through the process of circumcision by tying it to what would be deemed highly insulting to a heteronormative Xhosa man: (white) homosexuality. The lyrics "I don't want to go to the bush with you. Don't touch my penis. I'm not a gay. This penis is for the girls. My penis is clean" conflate various stereotypes and highlight the problematic way the band comments on the cultural issue of circumcision whilst at the same time making a statement about homosexuality. As the lyrics were primarily written by Ninja this becomes more problematic, as the image of him using his long penis as a microphone suggests that he is through, the character of Evil Boy, allowed to speak for the black penis. In other words and ironically, Evil Boy's refusal to partake in a traditional custom is voiced through the monstrous paternal white penis. The framing of the initiation ceremony as gay and the elders who partake in it as homosexually motivated seemingly seeks to draw on existing fears of the homosexual as predatory by re-framing them into a position where they are now responsible for the continuation of a custom that kills so many young men. This conflation is not only a deep insult to Xhosa cultural practices, but is also a strong attack on homosexuality. The

threat of HIV/AIDS and its Western conflation with homosexuality is also hinted at when Wanga refers to his penis as being clean, seemingly linked to the fact that his penis is only for girls. What thus becomes clear from this particular song and its video are the ways in which South African popular culture has come to adopt some of the myths surrounding homosexuality. The connection between the initiation process and its curing of homosexuality suggest a subliminal message which is that only gays should be subjected to the process of man-making through circumcision, reinforcing the notion that it cures this deviant behaviour.

The video “Fok Julle Naaiers” (2012) is the clearest example of the way in which the band glorifies violent gangster masculinity whilst at the same time drawing on an eroticised aesthetic where the black bodies of those in the videos are appropriated to make a political statement. Within the aesthetic of the video the (black) male body is threatening whilst at the same time sexually arousing. Again the relative nakedness of the men in the video leaves their bodies exposed to be read and projected onto. It is also interesting that the images reflect other photographic engagements with the South African gang member’s body. I have taken a still from the video which presents the reader with a reminder of the aesthetic of the video:

**Figure 5:**

“Fok Julle Naaiers” opens to a painted background that cleverly reminds one of the gang graffiti found in the various coloured neighbourhoods the band is said to have been guilty of appropriation. The first verse frames Ninja as a 26 Gang member and this is reinforced by the images of the other men, some of whom are clearly tattooed with the gang’s numbers. Yolandi becomes the interloping 27 Gang member, and her femininity leaving her almost out of place within the masculine framework of the video and lyrics. The song continues the narrative of the album, positioning Ninja and Yolandi as the proponents of Zeff culture, a sub-cultural counter-culture that draws its inspiration from whichever source it chooses. The tone of the lyrics changes and Ninja refers to himself as the “Great White Ninja”, reminding one of his massive microphone

penis in Evil Boy as well as blatantly expressing his view that he sees himself as a black white man - ninja is a derogatory term used by some coloured people to refer to black South Africans. His reference in this case illustrates his familiarity with coloured identity and positions him as the bandit he claims to be. Soon the young black men in the video are depicted brandishing automatic rifles. This is a clear reference to President Jacob Zuma, which reminds of the first line to Wanga's verse in "Evil Boy": "Take your dirty hands off my umthondo wisizwe!" a clear pun on Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation).

The heteronormativity of the spear of the nation as represented through the bodies of the 26 and 27 gang members is replaced in the final scene by that of DJ Hi-Tek, another creation of the mind of Ninja. Behind DJ Hi-Tek the graffiti on the wall reads: "28", "Viva ANC", "moffie" and "4 hot bum sex call", while there is also a drawing of the Evil Boy character holding his massive penis. The sequence is bizarre and reflects Ninja's uncomfortable engagement with homosexuality. The reference to the African National Congress (ANC) seems out of place but serves to connect the party to homosexuality and is perhaps a crude reference to its role in the legalisation of gay marriages. The lyrics as framed in this sequence provide an uncanny conclusion to the video. An engagement with the text highlights a simple succinct political statement which is reinforced by the reference to the ANC on the wall:

DJ Hi-Tek will fuck you in the ass [...]
 Fuck you in the ass, you punk ass white boy
 [...]
 DJ Hi-Tek, yo you can't touch me, faggot
 You're not man enough, I'll fuck you in the ass
 [...]
 DJ Hi-Tek will eat your asshole alive, bitch
 Fuck you hoe, DJ Hi-Tek will eat your asshole
 I'll fuck you in front of everybody, bitch
 Look at you scared, look at you scared now hoe
 Uh, you're scared of a real man
 Look at you scared, it's DJ Hi-Tek, bitch

I'll fuck you till you love me, faggot  
I'll fuck you till you love me  
Fuck you till you love me [...]  
You can't last two minutes in my world, bitch!

The repetition of the word fuck highlights the aggressive tone with which the act is to be performed whilst at the same time referencing the rhythmic nature of fucking. “DJ Hi-Tek will fuck you in the ass” is repeated six times, both as seeming threat and as indicator of the length of the act. Addressed is a “you punk ass white boy” who “can't last two minutes in [DJ Hi-Tek's] world”. He is subsequently a bitch. Again, and this time in a music video seemingly far removed from the prison narrative and metaphor that conflates homosexual rape in prison with willing homosexual sex, the labelling of the “punk ass white boy” as first boy and then bitch serves to strip him of his masculinity. In the context within which the video enters the public domain white masculinity is already under severe threat, both real and imagined, the ability of the white boy to assert his dominance over the racial other is undermined in post-apartheid South Africa and leaves him open to abuse. The fact that DJ Hi-Tek “will eat [his] asshole alive” and “fuck [him] [...] in front of everybody” presents him as affirmed in his homosexuality. His utterances are both threat as well as promise of sexual pleasure, suggesting an ingrained same-sex proclivity on the part of the white boy. “I'll fuck you till you love me / Fuck you till you love me” is also repeated three times, serving as a closing refrain and promise and reminding one of the repetitive nature of the act, as well as supporting the view that DJ Hi-Tek will take his time in enjoying fucking the punk ass white boy's ass.

No strangers to controversy and following an outcry by both local and international gay rights groups, Ninja released a video addressing the verse and DJ Hi-Tek's own homosexuality.

Released on the video hosting website Vimeo.com<sup>71</sup> the short interview entitled “Faggot” is meant to out DJ Hi-Tek as gay and is perhaps the most interesting academic engagement with homosexuality yet offered by the group. Ninja is presented sitting on a bed and is directly addressing the camera and thus the viewers. In this case one can construct the audience as primarily American, as the video does solely address their concerns. Ninja mentions that the group’s manager has raised concerns with DJ Hi-Tek’s use of the word faggot and as a result they have decided to address these concerns with regard to four issues:

Number one: DJ Hi-Tek is gay, so there you all know.

Number two: DJ Hi-Tek says the word faggot does not hold any power over him. Hi-Tek says faggot all the time, because he’s like kind of taken that word and made it his bitch.

Number three: Just to be fucking clear, Die Antwoord are not homophobic. Some of my tightest homies are gay. Like for instance DJ Hi-Tek who is obviously one of my best buddies in the whole fokken universe.

And finally Number four: It comes across to us that some people from America are heavy sensitive about the use of certain words, but the thing is, what you need to understand is, we are not from America, we from South Africa and in South Africa people aren’t so pumped up about words. Like for instance in South Africa a white guy will say to a black guy ‘yo what’s up my nigger?’ and the black guy will be like ‘eh, what’s up my nigger?’, and no one freaks out or anything. That’s why they say South Africa is a rainbow nation because you get different people of different colours and different sexual styles or whatever, all comes together as one. Like in South Africa we even have a pay of line that says “simunye” which means we are one.

This framing narrative which provides a lens through which to read the band’s representation of homosexuality allows for a threatening gangsterised sexuality to become affirmed within the global politics surrounding gay rights. The reference to the fact that DJ Hi-Tek has “taken that word and made it his bitch” positions the music video as a response to the process of appropriation itself and highlights the way in which labelling can be used to subjugate or affirm. The 28 Gang members thus becomes a warped, romanticised symbol of the forms of identities the ANC government has

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<sup>71</sup> <http://vimeo.com/31741727>

allowed in the country. There are other tongue-in-cheek references made to the complexity of this debate and their role in it when Ninja speaks of how many gay homies he has but is seemingly only able to mention one. This, with the stated fact that DJ Hi-Tek is one of his best buddies in the universe, serves to both separate and mark Ninja himself as embodying gay curiosity, with DJ Hi-Tek a grotesque example of a militant, violent gay identity. Ninja illustrates an understanding of the debate around the application of foreign labels and world views on indigenous behaviours or identities when he notes that in South Africa people are not as hung up on some of the words that Americans are, two of these being nigger and faggot. For him it is precisely South Africa's diversity that allows for cultural mingling and the formation of new identities and notions of being. In this space the negative criminal image of the 28 Gang member is remade into an image of a deviant resister who speaks back to heteronormative masculinity in a discourse it best understands: sex as violence. It seems that while "Evil Boy" is meant to speak on behalf of black men addressing their concern with homosexuality and circumcision, "Fok Julle Naaier" constructs sexuality and identity from the perspective of a speaker who is himself marked as resistant to categorisation, as is signalled by his reference to himself as a white ninja and in a much criticised later song a white kaffir<sup>72</sup>.

Die Antwoord's queering of South African masculinity and heteronormativity is perhaps best illustrated through their song and music video, "Cookie Thumper". Released in 2013 the music video has a developed plot and presents a complex story line which is at first not as obvious. Framed in her stereotypical position as a young girl, an image familiar from the band's videos that rely heavily on Yolandi's naturally short stature and youthful looks, Yolandi acts as protagonist and the video becomes a means through which she is able to frame an illicit affair with a racial

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<sup>72</sup> "God made a mistake with me. I'm actually black, trapped in a white body" ('Die Antwoord's Ninja: I'm actually black' by Pauli van Wyk, (<http://www.channel24.co.za/Music/News/Die-Antwoords-Ninja-Im-actually-black-20120217>)).

other. Anies's presence in the neighbourhood and in the video mark him as an interloper, out of place and is reminiscent of the late eighties when white neighbourhoods were still off limits to black men. This initial representation serves to mark him as queered as he is visually and historically out of place in the video. The fact that it appears to be a poor white neighbourhood, familiar to the South African imaginary, ties the videos to apartheid and its concern with restricting interracial mingling to a bare minimum. Anies is presumably selling dagga to the young people in the neighbour and he is framed as corruptor as well, in the sense that his criminality intrudes into a policed white space.

At the beginning of the videos a disembodied narrator presents the audience with a framework through which the video and the song are to be read. The narrator states:

DISEMBODIED NARRATOR: There once was a little girl/ Who had a crush on a bad, bad boy/ But when that bad boy got out of prison/ That little girl's ass was in big, big trouble!

Significantly, we find Yolandi framed as a "little girl", this description seeking to evoke a sense of innocence and naivety which is strongly emphasised by Anies being a "bad, bad boy". His badness is soon specified as he is seen to be an ex-prisoner, connecting him to criminality and pathology. When he returns from prison it is "the little girl's ass" that is in "big, big trouble". Anies is here made to carry the markers of someone who is street-smart and dangerous, and his time spent in jail also serves to position him as a possible sodomite. It is only later in the video that we are made explicitly aware of why "the little girl's ass was in big, big trouble" when it is revealed that Anies prefers having anal sex. At this stage the ambiguity of the line allows for one to assume that he was dangerous and that her life or well-being was under threat. Later we

discover that it is in trouble of being entered by something “big, big”. The trouble here is a reference to the possible pain she may experience whilst being penetrated by Anies’s big member.

Following the narrator’s framing, suggesting links between Anies, his criminality and prison, the reader is privy to the first meeting between Yolandi and Anies since his release from prison. After greeting Anies, Yolandi asks him whether or not he has “some love for [her]”. Again the narrative relies on the abstruse language of this question as it becomes clear that she is referring to her sexual attraction to him, whilst at the same time asking if he has dagga that she can buy. This serves to establish the video’s discourse where dagga and Anies’s association with it becomes indicative of illicit behaviour and a breaking of social norms and values. In response to the “little girl’s” ambiguous request for “love” Anies reaches into the front of his pants and pulls out a rather long dagga cigarette. This helps to sexualise the exchange as well as serving to remind the reader that Anies was a “bad, bad boy” who was “big, big trouble” to “the little girl’s ass”. His request that she smell it is again an ambiguously queered statement as it is unclear whether or not it smells of dagga or if the dagga cigarette smells of Anies. Yolandi’s response serves to cement Anies’s sexualisation: “Ag, I can smell it from over here”.

Within the queered ambiguity that is the discourse of the video, Yolandi can smell the dagga “from over here” because of the quality and strength of Anies’s product. At the same time the dagga cigarette becomes an extension of Anies’s manhood and his hyper-heterosexual virility. Through this ambiguity Anies is seen to be made to occupy the position/role of the sexualised other, while he becomes the passive object onto which Yolandi is allowed to project her repressed (naïve, white) sexual desire. This is best illustrated when she asks him to show her his chappies (tattoos). As we are aware by now the tattoos gangsters choose to inscribe on their bodies is a coded message that tells those in the know about their position in the gang and their rank in prison.

When she lifts his shirt and looks at the tattoos on his chest and arms her naiveté is reinforced as she is not familiar with what the tattoos mean. One is reminded of Magadien Wentzel in Steinberg's *The Number*, who explains why he would hide his tattoos whilst having sex with a woman. He is seemingly unwilling to allow her access to a secret self-history that ties him to homosexuality and feminine submission. Anies's willingness to share this personal history that has been etched on his skin is explained in the video through his lack of association with the 28 Gang and thus the role of the feminized, passive submitter to male dominance. This is contrary to the real experience of young attractive men who go to prison as they are often made to occupy the lowest rung of the gang hierarchy, a position synonymous with being the recipient during anal sex. In her attempt to decode the secret message written so obviously on Anies's body we are allowed insight into his stereotypical masculinity.

Note the exchange between Anies and Yolandi concerning the meaning of his tattoos. The fact that he acts as translator and mediator makes him unreliable as a source. This is supported by the fact that he has already been framed as a criminal and "bad, bad boy". I quote:

ANIES: Ja die een is vir, kyk, geld. Die ander een is bloed. [Yes, one is for money. The other is blood.]

YOLANDI: So jy is 26 en 27? [So you're a 26 and 27?]

ANIES: Ja. Sien al twee kampe gaan mos son op man. [Yes, because both camps rule when the sun is shining.]

YOLANDI: En 28? [And 28?]

ANIES: Hulle gaan son af. [They rule at night.]

YOLANDI: So jy's nie saam met hom nie. [So you are not with him?]

ANIES: Ha-ah! [No!]

From the narratives discussed in Chapters Four and Five we are now familiar with the notion that most men in prison, regardless of gang affiliation, will at some point have male-male sex. The important distinction that Anies makes thus has more to do with how sex between men in prison is framed by the rules that govern membership in each gang. Whilst the 26 and 27 Gangs are involved with smuggling and the prison economy during the day, it is as clear that all prisoners become metaphorical 28's at night as all gangs have some form of same-sex activity, but as Steinberg's Magadien and Gear's informants suggest, only the 28's that will go to war for it. Consider Anies as represented in the video: Anies's fit body and attractive looks makes him an ideal candidate for a fetishized prisoner affirming a tendency in South African narratives to load male prisons with the possibility of same-sex experiences and violence.

Throughout the development of the narrative presented in the video there is a passing of time as the video is constructed as taking place in one day. Yolandi who is on her way back from school to the orphanage in which she stays reconnects with Anies whilst he conducting the business of the 26 and 27 Gang. According to the mythology that governs the functioning of the gang it is during the day that the 26 and 27 Gangs are seen to exercise power in prison and are allowed to go about their business. The 28 Gang is fundamentally associated with the activities of the night: sex in prison is thus excluded from his visible identity markers which serve to explicitly frame him as heterosexual. As the narrative of the music video develops Yolandi is contacted by Anies who asks her to come and visit him later in the evening. It is during this meeting and through his request that he becomes queered and takes on the persona of the 28 Gang members who prefers anal intercourse even when having heteronormative sexual engagements with women. Through this the video seeks to position Anies's sexuality as fluid, something that is restricted to the confines of the night whilst retaining its transgressive nature.

When Anies and Yolandi eventually have sex the video presents her as shocked at Anies's preference for her "boude". It is through this positioning of Anies's sexuality that we see the ways in which Die Antwoord construction of homosexuality come to a full. For them the image of the 28 Gang member is threatening, empowered, yet erotically queer. The use of the conflation of homosexuality with HIV, queer eroticism and gangsterism helps to construct images of same-sex desire in the forms of Bra Anies, Evil Boy and DJ-HiTek. All three of these characters are highly gang-heteronormative whilst at the same time seeking to resist strict categorization and institutionalisation of their masculinities and sexualities. Ninja's response to the backlash the band received at their use of the word faggot is perhaps best illustrative of the way in which queer sexuality in South Africa seeks to describe itself:

DJ Hi-Tek says the word faggot does not hold any power over him. Hi-Tek says faggot all the time, because he's like kind of taken that word and made it his bitch.

**Conclusion:****Rooiland, 'n Tronk Drama: More Than a "Wyfie"**

Tertius Kapp's *Rooiland* (2013) is set in an average South African prison cell and involves four primary characters as they try to navigate the rituals of the prison. The first scene of the play shows Fransie and Pastoor trying to ascertain if Adidas was asleep. "Adidas is 'n aktiewe lid van die 28's. Sy gesig is sterk, sy lyf slank en gespierd" (8).<sup>73</sup> Adidas follows the same ritualised way of trying to have Fransie submit sexually to him. It is the character Pastoor who is seen to try and help Fransie navigate this ritual. As Pastoor educates Fransie about the working of the gang and what it is Adidas is trying to do to him we come to learn that he himself had at some point been the "wyfie" of a powerful gang member.

**PASTOOR:** Tony. Sy naam was Tony America. Hy't gewys ek moet by hom kom sit. Toe't ek nog nie geweet wie hy is nie. Maar hy was 'n sterk man, sulke breë skouers. In die gym het die are so by sy arms uitgestaan. En sy oë het so gekyk of dit regdeur jou kyk, maar alles raaksien ook. Tony was 'n generaal in die 26's.

**CHRIS:** En toe word jy sy wyfie?

**PASTOOR:** Dis wat ons vir almal gesê het. Dat ek maar net sy laaitie is. Maar dit was nie so nie. Dit was... (48-49)<sup>74</sup>

The tragic ending of the play in which Pastoor is forced to recast Fransie as a 26 Gang member so as to save him from persecution by the 28's signals the ways in which Pastoor's description of his

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<sup>73</sup> "Adidas is an active member of the 28's. His face is strong, his body lean and muscular. The rank is Captain-One is tattooed on his shoulder, three stars on each shoulder. On his back is tattooed: the horns of the ox Rooiland and between kapsabels with the numbers 2 and 8, a lion, a sparrow and the barely legible words: My heart beats three times a year. The cell in which he is now is in a wing of the prison where the 28's was not as strong, and so he was sent to recruit young Fransie" (8).

<sup>74</sup> "PASTOOR: Tony. His name was Tony America. He pointed me out to sit with him. I did not know who he was then. But he was a strong man, such broad shoulders. In the gym, the veins in his arms stood out. And his eyes looked as if they saw through you, but saw everything too. Tony was a general in the 26's. / CHRIS: And then you become his "wyfie"? / PASTOOR: That's what we told everybody. That I am but only his 'laaitie'. But it was not so. It was..." (48-49).

relationship with Tony exists within but also stands outside of the ritualised and restrictive nature of prison society. As the narratives in this thesis show, there is a space for homosexuality in all spaces, some more obvious than others. South Africa's divided history has led to a society where categorisation has become institutionalised. Homosexuality in South Africa and Africa at large is particularly marked by the transference of a Western need for need categorisation, especially with regard to sexuality. This has left same-sex attraction open to various forms of un-naming and/or misnaming. Its divided social history leaves narratives written under apartheid largely engaging the white homosexual experience. Admirably and significantly, Afrikaner authors have used their whiteness to highlight the oppressive nature of the apartheid state as is reflected through its treatment of homosexuality.

I discuss the way in which white masculinity and sexuality became particularly and restrictively defined. The oppressive nature of the colonial enterprise requires a brutalisation of white men. Whiteness has recently come to be seen as an important field of study, and my look into restrictive white male sexuality suggests that white men in particular become trapped in almost ritualised carceral masculinity where boundaries are strictly policed. In this sense we find that the literature reflects a consistent theme of the hunt and the military – both strong symbols of (white) masculinity and dominance. The framing of the homosexual as other/strange allows the Afrikaner community and state to enact rituals of curing the homosexual of his affliction or the community of the afflicted. In response a historical narrative was developed by homosexuals that reflected subcultural trends similar to the subject that forms the basis of study in societies that label others as deviant. The absence of black characters from many of the narratives set during apartheid signals a disavowal of black men and women in the broader society. Since South Africa's transition there have been various reconstructions and relabelling of homosexuality as identity. Like the carceral

space that is the white militarised oppressive state we now find that prisons are shown to reflect particularly significant representations of same-sex attraction. The 28 Gang is of particular significance here, as although many men engage in sex whilst in prison, it is only the 28 Gang that claims this as fundamental to the gang's identity. We find that there are ruptures and links between these carceral (apartheid military, mine compound and prison) masculinities and the man's identity when he returns to heteronormative society. In prison and because of the gang's acknowledgement of same-sex sexuality, an opportunity is created that allows for ruptures in one's sexuality and sexual identity which is based on Western theoretical constructions.

In post-apartheid prison narratives the prison is often presented as a space in which masculinity and sexuality can be redefined or reimagined. A major concern is the obvious association between femininity and the duty to satisfy a man's sexual desires. This theme in gay narrative allows for an eroticisation of men who would otherwise deem themselves heterosexual and masculine. Prison and the 28 Gang are seen to be of particular importance to the South African imaginary and its engagement with sexuality. Within the institutions of South Africa that affirm its heteronormative capitalism there has been an active attempt at erasing same-sex desire. Ironically these narratives reflect that at the heart of the most restrictive of regimes, homosexuals in the country found ways in which to imagine themselves onto the landscape. Their imaginings reveal a development in the level of acceptance South Africans have shown them, mirroring how they have also come to accept each other. The arena of sexual experiences that have been enabled through the institutions of the country (the family, the farm, the school, the city, the military, the prison, the mental institution) allows for a queering of male sexuality that is not always possible in the rest of society. The categorisation and institutionalisation of same-sex desire in South Africa is particularly important, as in our context it is seen to allow or disallow certain identities and sexualities. Pastoor

and Tony choose to safeguard themselves and their homosexual love by framing their relationship within the prison's framework of gendered sexuality and discourse.

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