

Dictionaries and Discourses of Deviance

moffie—n. (Afr.) 1. gay man 2. effeminate gay man – generally with pejorative connotations (cf. andersom, bent, bit, boy, camper, choirboy, class gay, clone, common gay, Fifi, friend of Dorothy, faggot, family, Fanuskind, girlfriend, Gladys, happy camper, koekblik, koorknaap, madam, Martha, Mary, member of the team, moffinia, molvyn, mother, muffin, ouma se kinders, pixie, princess, queen, she, sister, skeef, skeef geklap, slappolssiekte, stabane, straatkat, team player, trassie) [Saylor slang, first recorded in 1929, the word (morphy) was used as a term of contempt among seamen for effeminate, well-groomed young men]¹

moffie—Afrikaans for poof or fag. Slang and often derogatory word for homosexuals, usually male. The term 'moffie' is first mentioned in South African sea slang from 1929. A 'mophy' is a derogatory term among seafarers for delicate, well-groomed young men. Difference of opinion on the origin of the word. Possibly a bastardisation of 'mofrodite' (castrated Italian opera singer), or derived from the Dutch word 'mof' (article of clothing) or, less probable, the English word 'mauve' (a colour associated by some with homosexuality).²

moffie—(pejoratief wat in die verlede dikwels neerhalend op “vroulike” optrede en voorkoms gedui het; sommige beskou dit tans as ere-term) gay man.³

The word 'moffie' stands central to changing representations of abnormal or deviant Afrikaner masculinity in apartheid South Africa. The different meanings assigned to this word delineated relationally what was considered normal and acceptable at any given time, and helped the dominant culture police the boundaries of the wider gender order. Unpacking the changing meanings assigned to the term allows us to better understand the reorganisation of sexual categories among Afrikaans-speakers, as well as changes in the gendered ordering of Afrikaner society, during the second half of the twentieth century.

The historian George Chauncey writes that the dominant sexual culture in pre-World War II America came into existence as a result of the process of defining normal masculine behaviour in opposition to the gay subculture: "...for in its policing of the gay subculture the dominant culture sought above all to police its own boundaries."⁴ As elsewhere in the world,

¹ K. Cage, *Gayle: the Language of Kinks and Queens: a History and Dictionary of Gay Language in South Africa* (Jacana, Johannesburg: 2003), p. 83.

² B. Luirink, *Moffies: Gay Life in Southern Africa* (David Philip, Cape Town: 2000), p. 150.

³ D. Botha, *Party van Ons: Homeros Leesboek 2001* (Tafelberg, Cape Town: 2001), p. 298.

⁴ G. Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890—1940* (Harper Collins, New York: 1994), p. 25.

stereotypes of the 'other' served to construct ideas about the 'self'.⁵ Knowledge of normal, acceptable masculine conduct therefore depended on what was considered abnormal or deviant. It follows that perceptions of hegemonic masculinity,⁶ to use Raewyn Connell's term, changed along with shifting definitions of sexual deviance. The dearth of research into the policing of nonconformist sexuality in South African society⁷, and specifically Afrikaner society, helps explain the general paucity of studies on Afrikaner masculinity. The policing of nonconformist sexuality, in turn, evaded historical scrutiny largely because homosexuality posed a threat to the patriarchal gendered order on which Afrikaner power rested and did not fit into the prevailing meta-narratives of Afrikaners as heroic *volke* or racist scoundrels.

It is important to note, however, that not only policemen and lawmakers patrolled the boundaries of nonconformist sexuality. The people, institutions and instruments responsible for shaping formalized ways of thinking about sexual deviance also had an important part to play. Significant among these were editors of descriptive dictionaries who were tasked with demarcating the "limits of acceptable speech"⁸, and thus to act as gatekeepers to truth, for Afrikaans speech communities. Dictionaries are perceived as "authoritative containers of knowledge" and general dictionaries such as monolingual descriptive dictionaries are "compiled for the average member of a speech community".⁹ Policies regarding the uptake of sensitive and insulting lexical terms in descriptive dictionaries historically tend to reflect changing societal mores and values.¹⁰ But they also helped shape popular consciousness, prevailing hegemonies

⁵ R. Reid & L. Walker (Eds.), *Men Behaving Differently: South African Men Since 1994* (Double Storey, Cape Town: 2005), p. 3.

⁶ Connell posited a hierarchy of masculinities, made up of four levels of masculine privilege: hegemonic, complicitous, marginalised and subordinated. Hegemonic masculinity is defined as the "configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy." See: R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (University of California, Berkeley and Los Angeles: 1995), p. 77.

⁷ K. Cage, *Gayle*, p. 14; G. Retief, 'Keeping Sodom out of the Laager: State Repression of Homosexuality in Apartheid South Africa', in M. Gevisser & E. Cameron (Eds.), *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa* (Ravan, Johannesburg: 1995), pp. 99-111.

⁸ J. Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (Routledge, New York: 1993).

⁹ R. Gouws & D. Prinsloo, *Principles and Practice of South African Lexicography* (Sun Press, Stellenbosch: 2005) pp. 1—14.

¹⁰ P. Harteveld & A.E. Van Niekerk, 'Policy for the Treatment of Insulting and Sensitive Lexical Items in the Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal', in *Lexikos* 5(1995) pp. 249—266.

and bourgeois morality. That these dictionaries were considered potentially powerful ideological weapons is evidenced by the amount of time and effort invested by successive governments in establishing a monolingual dictionary in Afrikaans (a very young language), and in so doing having a hand in defining the limits of acceptable speech for what was perceived as its biggest and most prized constituency.¹¹² From the 1890s to the 1940s ethno-nationalists were embroiled in a 'language struggle' that had as its aim to achieve official recognition for Afrikaans and to elevate the language culturally. According to Hermann Giliomee, the "outcome of these political battles would shape a more exclusive Afrikaner identity."¹³ Descriptive dictionaries, such as the WAT and HAT, thus formed part of a larger process that gave shape to the specific contours of Afrikaner nationalism.

Changing meanings assigned to the word 'moffie' mirrored, perhaps even shaped, shifting attitudes towards homosexuality; specifically towards male homosexuals. Kobus Du Pisani delineated changing perceptions of homosexual men by the Afrikaner establishment during apartheid. Although "a variety of forces (including Christian teachings and the life forms that grew around these, capitalism and the expansion of commercialised agriculture, and biomedical institutions and practices), began to shape and pattern sexual decisions, sexual morality, and sexual discourses"¹⁴ well before 1948, an interesting picture emerges when one compares the prevailing attitudes Du Pisani traces in his analysis to contemporary lexical

¹¹ In 1926 the National Party government and National Press (Nasionale Pers) agreed to compile a monolingual Afrikaans dictionary for publication in 1929, with J.J. Smith, an Afrikaans professor at Stellenbosch University, as its editor. This unrealistic time frame shows how pressing a matter the project was seen to be. Unsurprisingly, the deadline was not met. It was extended by five years, with the same result. A Commission of Control was installed with the Secretary of Education as chairman and the rector of Stellenbosch University as administrator. The first part (A-C) of the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (WAT) appeared in 1951, and the second (D-F) and third (G) parts in 1955 and 1957 respectively. The first edition of the more compact *Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (HAT) appeared in 1965 (F.F. Odendal, 'HAT Veertig Jaar: 'n Persoonlike Oorsig', in *Lexikos* (2006)16, pp. 280—289).

¹² This paper focuses exclusively on the ways in which the sexuality of white Afrikaner men was policed by gatekeepers of acceptable speech (in this instance, lexicographers). While "moffie" life has for a long time been an accepted part of the social fabric of working class coloured communities in the Western Cape, the (no doubt) many ways in which this vibrant culture has influenced and shaped the policing of sexuality of white homosexual men, although worthy of investigation, are beyond the scope of this paper.

¹³ H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Tafelberg, Cape Town: 2003), p. 356.

¹⁴ C. Burns, 'Writing the History of Sex in South Africa', paper presented at the Wits Institute of Social and Economic Research, 6 August 2012, p. 4.

definitions of the term 'moffie'. For the purposes of this article, definitions in different editions of the *Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (literally: Hand Dictionary of the Afrikaans Language) (HAT) are utilised. Successive editors of the HAT prioritised making available to the public “a complete reflection of the Afrikaans vocabulary”.¹⁵ The HAT, which first appeared in 1965, was “received very favourably” around the country and was soon “accepted as authoritative” by “old and young.” It became a ubiquitous feature in “schools, government offices and with businesses people.” Importantly, it was also “accepted as authoritative when meanings of words were determined in both lower and higher courts of law”.¹⁶ The definitions contained in the different editions of the HAT interacted in polyvalent ways with changing socio-political contexts; acting as ‘statements’ in a changing discourse on dominant Afrikaans approaches to governing sexuality. In order to establish the directionality of these interactions, interviews were conducted to gauge differences between official definitions and everyday usage and thus whether lexical definitions reflected changes in the socio-political landscape and to what extent (if at all) everyday usage played back into the ways in which Afrikaans-speakers gave meaning to sexuality. Comparisons are also drawn with representations of male homosexuality in the popular print media.

mof¹, (mowwe; moffie). **1.** Verkorting van *mofskaap of mofbees*: ‘n *Trop van duisend mowwe*. ‘n *Mens sien deesdae selde ‘n mof(bees)*. **Mof**: **..bul, ..hamel, ..kalf, ..koei, ..lam, ..ooi, ..os, ..ram.** **2. Mof.** Spot- of skimpnaam vir ‘n Duitser, vroeër ook vir ‘n Engelsman. UITDR: Swyg soos ‘n mof, volstrek niks sê nie.¹⁷

mof², (mowwe; -fie). **1. a.** Soort handskoen met ‘n afsonderlike skede vir die duim, maar sonder (of met gesamentlike) bedekking vir die vingers: *Moffies van wol, vel*. **b.** Los, mouvormige kledingstuk met albei ente oop, waarin die hande gehou word om hulle teen kou te beskerm. **2. a.** Breë metaalring om pype aan mekaar te verbind; sok. **b.** Verwyde ent van ‘n pyp of buis waarin die ent van ‘n ander pas. **3.** Vervangbare, silindervormige metaalring vir die silinder van sommige masjiene; huls.¹⁸

¹⁵ F. Odendal, ‘HAT Veertig Jaar—‘n Persoonlike Oorsig’, in *Lexicos* (2006)16, pp. 280—290.

¹⁶ F. Odendal, ‘HAT Veertig Jaar—‘n Persoonlike Oorsig’, in *Lexicos* (2006)16, pp. 280—290.

¹⁷ Literally: **1.** Abbreviation of *mof-sheep or mof-bull*: *A herd of a thousand mowwe*. *One very rarely sees a mof(bull) these days*.

Mof: **..bull, ..wether, ..calf, ..cow, ..lamb, ..ewe, ..ox, ..ram.** **2. Mof.** Name used to taunt or make a mockery of a German, and in the past an Englishman. EXPRESSION: To keep quiet like a mof, to say absolutely nothing.

¹⁸ Literally: **1. a.** A type of glove with a separate sheath for the thumb, but without (or with combined) cover for the fingers: *Moffies of wool, hide*. **b.** Loose, sleeve-like article of clothing, with both sides open, in which hands are kept to protect them against cold. **2. a.** Wide metal ring used to attach pipes to one another; socket. **b.** Widened end of a

mof³, (mowwe). Outydse soort koekie.¹⁹

mof⁴, b.nw. (nie alg.) Besope, dronk; ook, dronkgeslaan, verbysterd: *Na 'n paar sopies was hy mof. Ek is totaal mof van die onverwagte nuus.*²⁰

According to Burns a South African sense of immorality was “a firmly established part of public life” by 1957.²² During the early to mid-1960s, there existed a general consensus in Afrikaner society that homosexuality was “sinful, unnatural and abnormal” and that it was not to be “talked about in ‘decent’ circles.”²³ It was effectively “suppressed as an alternative expression of masculinity through isolation and a conspiracy of silence.” While the word ‘moffie’ appears in the first (1965) edition of the HAT, it does not overtly signify a male homosexual. It is defined as a diminutive of ‘mof’, which, in turn, is assigned four meanings. The first of these is an abbreviation of the word ‘mofbees’ and denotes a cow that is not racially pure (a “bastard”) and hence inferior; or a foreigner, specifically a German or an Englishman. The second signifies a mitten; a loose-fitting, sleeveless article of clothing; or a socket into which a piece of pipe fits; and the third an old fashioned cookie. The fourth is defined as being drunk or otherwise intoxicated. The verb ‘moffel’, derived from the same root, is defined as a clandestine, sly act.²⁴

The lack of an explicit definition of ‘moffie’ as male homosexual (despite being recorded in a dictionary of nautical terms as early as 1929²⁵) is in accordance with the silence on the subject that pervaded ‘decent’ Afrikaner circles. Shaun de Waal writes that semantic links are

pipe or tube into which fits the end of another. 3. Replaceable, cylindrical metal ring for the cylinder of some machines; sleeve.

¹⁹ Literally: Old-fashioned type of cookie.

²⁰ Literally: adjective (not common) Intoxicated, drunk; also stunned, dazed: *After a few drinks he was mof. I am utterly mof from the unexpected news.*

²¹ P. Schoonees et al, *Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*, (Perskor: 1965), p. 550.

²² C. Burns, ‘Writing the History of Sex in South Africa’, p. 18.

²³ K. Du Pisani, ‘Puritanism Transformed: Afrikaner Masculinities in the Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Period’, in R. Morrell (Ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (University of Natal Press, Scottsville: 2001), pp. 157—175.

²⁴ Schoonees et al, *Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*, (Perskor: 1965).

²⁵ The term ‘morphy’ was a derogatory term used by sailors to describe effeminate, well-groomed young men. See: K. Cage with M. Evans, *Gayle: The Language of Kinks and Queens. A History and Dictionary of Gay Language in South Africa* (Johannesburg, Jacana: 2003).

extremely tenuous in these instances.²⁶ De Waal refers to etymological origins, however, and it is obvious that the term—despite not being overtly linked to male homosexuality—is assigned (or has come to accrue) a set of very specific negative connotations. It is imbued with meaning by being situated in a particular semantic field. This discursive formation links it to impurity, deceptiveness, effeminateness (in that it is linked to the domestic sphere) and antisocial behaviour. The term 'moffie' is thus made, or comes to be, synonymous with all things unmanly and *'volksvreemd'* (un-Afrikaner). This resonates with Du Pisani's description of homosexuality as one of the "primary manifestations of masculine 'deviance' in Afrikaner society during the apartheid years."²⁷

Ethnographic evidence indicates that most behaviour and practice perceived as deviations from the norm of proper masculine conduct were conflated and lumped together under the term 'trassie' during the late 1950s and early 1960s. One informant, a fifty nine year old Afrikaans-speaking male who self-identifies as homosexual, recounted that at primary school, he "was called a trassie" by class mates. Prior to being labelled thus, he had not known what the word meant, and asked his mother to define it. She told him to go and ask his father, who almost gave him "a hiding" when he did so.²⁸ Another homosexual man, who 'outed' himself in an interview with the *Huisgenoot*²⁹ in 1979, related that he grew up in the countryside (*"op die platteland"*) "where people don't speak about these things, but will whisper behind their hands: "look at that trassie""³⁰ The word 'trassie', according to another informant, an Afrikaans-speaking woman who grew up in a middle class household and graduated from high school in Pretoria in 1969, was a term "used by old people to refer to men who dressed in women's

²⁶ S. de Waal, 'Etymological Note: On Moffie', in M. Gevisser & E. Cameron (Eds.), *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa* (Ravan, Johannesburg: 1995), p. xiii.

²⁷ K. Du Pisani, 'Puritanism Transformed', p. 167.

²⁸ Interview conducted in Pretoria on 21/07/2011.

²⁹ The magazine was founded as *De Huisgenoot* in 1916, and had as its aim to provide Afrikaans-speakers with information and entertainment. Afrikaner nationalist causes dominated the magazine's content for the first decades of its existence. However, popular taste and culture took the front seat during the 1950s and '60s. In 1977 the definite article was dropped from the name and the magazine simply became known as *Huisgenoot*. After a slump in sales in the late 1970s, *Huisgenoot* took a populist, profit-driven approach under new editor, Niel Hamman. Popularity soared and circulation reached 542 118 copies per week in 1994.

³⁰ L. Gomes, "'Ek is 'n Homoseksueel'", in *Huisgenoot*, June 28, 1979, pp. 10—14.

clothing, to intersexed people, and to all other people who exhibited 'unnatural' behaviour."³¹ Everyday usage of the term is partially reflected in the 1965 edition of the HAT, which defines a 'trassie' as a "*Tweeslagtige wese met onvolledig ontwikkelde geslagsorgane van albei geslagte; hermafrodiet*"³² (literally: intersexed creature with incompletely developed reproductive organs of both sexes; hermaphrodite). It is important to note, however, that there is no explicit link to homosexuality in this definition. Nor is this link drawn in the definition of sodomy; a term used in the 1953 translation of the Afrikaans Bible to denote immoral sexual acts.³³ The 1965 edition of the HAT defined sodomy as "*teenatuurlike ontug; geslagtelike omgang tussen mens en dier*"³⁴ (literally: contra-natural/unnatural immoralities; sexual congress between human and animal). The common denominator thus seems to be behaviour that is perceived to be 'unnatural' or 'against' nature, but which is not overtly spoken about as sex between men.

This silence was shattered by a police raid on a house in Forest Town in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg in January 1966. According to a submission to parliament, police officers came upon "a party in progress" at which "approximately 300 male ... homosexuals" were "dancing to the strains of music, kissing and cuddling each other in the most vulgar fashion imaginable", and pairing off to continue "their love-making in the garden of the residence and in motor cars in the street"³⁵ This sent shockwaves through the white establishment. A slew of reports and articles on the "problem of homosexuality", previously the "most taboo of subjects",³⁶ appeared in Afrikaans-language periodicals and magazines, such as the ubiquitous *Huisgenoot*. According to these, homosexuality was a serious psychological malady. "Passive" male homosexuals (those with non-normative gender presentation) were portrayed as "lazier than ordinary men of the same age", "prone to avoid jobs that demanded even slightest amount

³¹ Interview conducted in Pretoria on 07/07/2011.

³² Schoonees et al, *Handvoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*, (Perskor: 1965), p. 899.

³³ 1 Kor. 6: 9-10: Of weet julle nie dat die onregverdige die koninkryk van God sal beerwe nie? Moenie dwaal nie! Geen hoereerders of afgoddienaars of egbrekers of wellustelinge of **sodomiete** of diewe of gierigaards sal die koninkryk van God beerwe nie.

³⁴ Schoonees et al, *Handvoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*, (Perskor: 1965).

³⁵ G. Retief, 'Keeping Sodom out of the Laager', pp. 101—103.

³⁶ G. Louw, 'Homoseksuele Onder die Soeklig', in *Huisgenoot*, May 20, 1968, pp. 14—66.

of work” and as people who “tended to become male prostitutes or to do jobs preferred by women.” Homosexuals were thought to “think of themselves as better than normal men” and as individuals who affronted mainstream sensibilities through their portrayal of themselves as “more talented, more intelligent and more sensitive than other people.”³⁷ Prominent public figures predicted that homosexuality, if left unchecked, would lead to the complete and utter ruin of civilised life in South Africa. Parallels were drawn with Rome and Sparta, and the fate of biblical Sodom invoked. Sodomy was now overtly linked to sex between men and texts from the Bible (specifically 1 Corinthians 6:10 and 1 Timothy 1:8—10) quoted to condemn the practice.³⁸ A Commission of Inquiry into Homosexuality was formed and amendments to the Immorality Act were recommended and passed into law in 1969, “amidst much mutual back-patting between government and the opposition”. This led to a clampdown on outdoor cruising spots and police surveillance of bars, clubs and parties during the 1970s. Police raids and the threat of one’s identity leaking to the media became constant threats. Such exposure was likely to mean unemployment, social ostracism and “vitriolic abuse wherever one went.”³⁹

Ethnographic evidence suggests that the raid in Forest Town might have prompted the uptake of the term ‘moffie’ into the lexicon of ‘decent’ Afrikaans circles. According to the Afrikaans-speaking woman cited above, “I heard the term for the first time in high school. We didn’t know of it before 1966 or 1967.”⁴⁰ The Afrikaans-speaking male (also cited above) recalled being called a ‘moffie’ for the first time in high school during the late 1960s. It is interesting to note, however, that this change in lexicon was not exactly mirrored in the ways in which homosexuality was represented in the popular print media, or the ways in which homosexual men were thought to self-identify. As late as 1968, the magazine *Huisgenoot*, for example, referred simply to “homosexuals”, and reported that male homosexuals referred to one another as

³⁷ G. Louw, ‘Homoseksuele Onder die Soeklig’, in *Huisgenoot*, May 20, 1968, pp. 14—66.

³⁸ G. Louw, ‘Homoseksuele Onder die Soeklig’, in *Huisgenoot*, May 20, 1968, pp. 14—66.

³⁹ G. Retief, ‘Keeping Sodom out of the Laager’, pp. 101—103.

⁴⁰ Interview conducted in Pretoria on 07/07/2011.

“fairies”, “queens”, “girls” and “meisies” (the Afrikaans word for girls).⁴¹ According to my male informant, “I never used the term moffies. We were called moffies.”⁴² In an article on homosexuality written by a “well known psychiatrist” for the popular women’s magazine *Sarie Marais* in 1968, the term moffie was only used once and only to indicate a simplified or layman’s (and definitely heteronormative) understanding of homosexuality: “*In terme van broekdraers en rokdraers is daar mans en vroue, met die enkele tussenklas: moffies. ... In werklikheid is die vraagstuk egter veel ingewikkelder.*” (“In terms of wearers of trousers and wearers of dresses there are only men and women, with a single class in between: moffies. ... In reality the question is much more complex.”)⁴³ These changes in the differing ways in which Afrikaans-speakers spoke and wrote about homosexuality would, during the 1970s, come to influence dominant approaches to governing sexuality and how a plurality of meanings were ascribed to homosexuality.

moffie¹, (-s). Vkw. van *mof¹* en *mof²*.⁴⁴

moffie², (-s). **1.** Verwyfde mansmens. **2.** Homoseksualis. **3.** Hermafrodiet, trassie.^{45,46}

Homosexuality in the United States (and many other Western countries) became normalised during the early 1970s. After a series of violent demonstrations against a police raid at the Stonewall Inn in New York, gay activist organisations were formed and newspapers established to promote gay and lesbian rights. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) voted in favour of the omission of homosexuality as a classifiable sexual disorder from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) in December 1973. However, change was slower in South Africa.

⁴¹ G. Louw, ‘Homoseksuele Onder die Soeklig’, in *Huisgenoot*, May 20, 1968, pp. 14—66.

⁴² Interview conducted in Pretoria on 10/5/2011.

⁴³ ‘Die Eensames in ons Midde’, in *Sarie Marais*, April 24, 1968, p. 53.

⁴⁴ Literally: Abbreviation of *mof¹* and *mof²*.

⁴⁵ Literally: **1.** Effeminate man. **2.** Homosexualist. **3.** Hermaphrodite, trassie.

⁴⁶ F.F. Odendal et al, *Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*, Second Edition (Perskor: 1979).

According to *Huisgenoot*, increasing percentages of South Africa's homosexual population were beginning to come out of "their hiding places" by 1979. However, there existed no significant homosexual "movements or publications" with mass circulation; the magazine *Equus*, circulated in Hillbrow, being the only publication to "touch on the lifestyle, tastes and preferences of this section of the community."⁴⁷ Public opinion regarding homosexuality ranged from "sympathy to the strongest aversion" and for most "the attraction of one man to another" remained "unfathomable, strange, even repugnant. A source, oftentimes, of insults and criticism."⁴⁸

Following an ideological shift to '*verligtheid*' (enlightenment) in Afrikanerdom during the 1970s, the position of Afrikaans churches towards homosexuality softened without changing fundamentally. Homosexuals were still regarded as sinful, but pleas were made to accept and tolerate them so that they could "be 'healed' by the grace of God."⁴⁹ Many churchgoers found this hard to accept, however. In a letter to die *Huisgenoot*, written in reaction to the article cited above, "Diep Teleurgesteld" (literally: Deeply Disappointed) from Sannieshof expressed his or her "absolute horror at the disgusting article regarding homosexuality" and added that to the magazine's overwhelmingly "Christian readership sin remains sin and Sodom stays Sodom—not South Africa."⁵⁰

In scientific circles homosexuality was generally considered pathology; an ingrained psychosexual disorder, to be dealt with medically. (Although "practitioners and psychiatrists were divided and irresolute about the origins, manifestations and treatment of 'homosexuality'" the "state did rely on psychiatrists' 'expertise' when trying to define and deal with what it perceived as a large influx in white male homosexual activity in the 1960s."⁵¹) In the military, homosexuality was actively discouraged and in extreme cases 'treatment' options included electric shock

⁴⁷ L. Gomes, "'Ek is 'n Homoseksueel'", in *Huisgenoot*, June 28, 1979, pp. 10—14.

⁴⁸ L. Gomes, "'Ek is 'n Homoseksueel'", in *Huisgenoot*, June 28, 1979, pp. 10—14.

⁴⁹ K. Du Pisani, 'Puritanism Transformed', pp. 169—170.

⁵⁰ 'Briewe' in *Huisgenoot* July 26, 1979, p. 90.

⁵¹ T. Jones, 'Averting White Male (Ab)normality: Psychiatric Representations and Treatment of 'Homosexuality' in 1960s South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34(2) June 2008, p. 399, p. 402.

'therapy' at the notorious Ward 22 of I Military Hospital in the then Voortrekkerhoogte.⁵² Policing the boundaries of appropriate masculine behaviour implied the constant redefinition of sexual deviance. A deep seated need to establish a state-led position against homosexuality thus forced its recognition in the wider lexicon, which, in turn, reinforced the state's need to be seen policing it. This acknowledgement of its deviant existence allowed the state to 'heal' and/or 'treat' it, but, ironically, in the process granted it 'semantic space'. The gatekeepers of morality were thus forced to create '*moffies*' in language.

The second (1979) edition of the *Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (HAT) serves as a prime example of how semantic shifts can mirror changes in the socio-political/ideological landscape. In it, the silence that surrounded homosexuality for much of the 1960s was broken and the term 'moffie', for the first time, overtly linked to male homosexuality. A definition was added to those listed in the 1965 edition, that describes a 'moffie' as a '*vernyfde mansmens*' (literally, a man who has been made, or who has turned into, someone who acts like, or is, a woman), a '*homoseksualis*' (literally, homosexualist), a '*hermafrodiet*' (hermaphrodite), and a '*trassie*' (a diminutive contraction of transvestite).⁵³ These terms all have derogatory, pejorative meanings. Homosexuality is represented as pathological and against nature. The root *wyf signifies female members of the animal kingdom (as in 'leeuwyfie') or women of ill repute (as in 'viswyf' or 'wyf'). The additions of the prefix *ver- and suffix *-de turn *wyf into an adjective, signifying someone who has become, or has come to act like, a 'wyf'. The addition of the suffix *-is to 'homoseksual' is significant in that it equates homosexuals with other *-ists perceived to threaten the pillars of Afrikanerdom, most notably 'kommuniste' (communists) and 'liberaliste' (liberals). At a time when Afrikaner male power depended on a patriarchal, racialised order, and Afrikaner men and women were actively encouraged to outbreed their black counterparts, homosexuality was perceived as a direct threat to the gender order on which Afrikaner power rested. The terms

⁵² R. Schaap, *State of Emergency: An Exploration of Attitudes towards Homosexuality in the SADF, 1969—1994*, MA Thesis, Stellenbosch University (Stellenbosch: 2011).

⁵³ F.F. Odendaal et al, *Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*, Second Edition (Perskor: 1979).

transvestite (properly defined as someone who voluntarily and regularly wears clothes of the opposite sex) and hermaphrodite (properly defined as a person who has both male and female sex organs) are lumped together under the rubric 'moffie', turning it into a signifier of all things that do not conform to heteronormative standards.

It is noteworthy that the term 'moffie' still did not feature in the vocabulary used in the popular Afrikaans press by the end of the 1970s. In October 1974 a new Publication Act became law. According to this repressive piece of legislation a technically autonomous Board of Censors with extraordinary discretionary powers was given the power to ban publications considered potentially harmful to public morals. Publications most likely to be banned were 'guilty' of "'improper' treatment of some forty-four topics" including "homosexuality" and "sodomy."⁵⁴ When referring to male homosexuality, magazines such as *Huisgenoot* were likely to use the terms 'homosexual' and 'gay', only using the term 'moffie' when directly quoting members of the public. (Since the late 1960s, the lay public were thought to speak of homosexuality in "the most blatant of generalisations"⁵⁵.) On such occasions editors were likely to endure the wrath of a large section of readers who still considered the subject taboo and who yearned for the days when it was not breached in polite conversation. In response to the *Huisgenoot's* report on homosexuality in South Africa, published in June of 1979, Paterfamilias "Afrikanervader van Sewe" (literally: Afrikaner Father of Seven) from Goodwood, for example, expressed his deep shock at the article having been published: "Why must there be written about this sort of thing?" he asked. In his opinion, only those who have fallen prey to "volksvreemde" (un-Afrikaner) and "buitelandse" (foreign) influences could exhibit this "afwyking" (deviance). Afrikaners, he wrote, "are not able to live such an unnatural and deviant life." Another reader, a teacher with the pseudonym "Pedagoog op K" (Pedagogue from K), asked "do people know

⁵⁴ P. McDonald, *The Literature Police: Apartheid Censorship and its Cultural Consequences* (Oxford: 2009).

⁵⁵ "Wanneer die leek oor homoseksualiteit praat, gaan dit gewoonlik gepaard met die blattantste veralgemenings denkbaar." G. Louw, 'Homoseksuele Onder die Soeklig', in *Huisgenoot*, May 20, 1968, pp. 14—66.

what danger homosexuality holds, especially for young boys?" To his mind there existed only one answer: "the sambok!" (the sjambok / cow-hide whip).⁵⁶

Openlik, sonder enige poging om hul bedrywighede te bedek, het die homoseksuele in die klubs en die kroeë verkeer. Vroue het hul liefde vir vroue laat blyk, mans vir mans. Hulle het hande gehou, mekaar omhels, selfs innig gesoen en nie omgeegee nie. So het ons hulle in Johannesburg gesien.⁵⁷⁵⁸

By the 1980s, attitudes towards homosexuality in South Africa had started to change. Anti-homosexual legislation was irregularly applied in metropolitan centres; constant police harassment of social gatherings ceased and gay bars operated without attempts to shut them down; gay couples openly cohabited; the Gay Association of South Africa was established; and the first National Gay Convention held. Literary figures like Koos Prinsloo, Hennie Aucamp and Johann de Lange and performing artists such as Pieter-Dirk Uys and Nataniël started exploring the topic.⁵⁹ Art, but specifically literary representations underscored and represented "some of the important contestations around identity and sexuality."⁶⁰

In March of 1981 the *Huisgenoot* published a double-spread interview with pop-star, Christian evangelist and confirmed bachelor, Cliff Richard entitled: "Accept men who are 'different', says Cliff".⁶¹ The gist of the article was that the church needed to accept that homosexuality existed, and that it was wrong to shun homosexuals. A few months earlier, the magazine published an article about two homosexual men in the United States who had adopted a child.⁶² Though not entirely positive about what it perceived to be the likely sexual development of the child, the article was a "representation of important contestations around

⁵⁶ 'Briewe' in *Huisgenoot* July 26, 1979, p. 90.

⁵⁷ L. Gomes, "'Ek is 'n Homoseksueel'", in *Huisgenoot*, June 28, 1979, pp. 10—14.

⁵⁸ Literally: "Openly, without any attempt to hide their business, the homosexuals congregated in clubs and bars. Women displayed their love of women, men of men. They held hands, embraced one another, even passionately kissed and didn't worry who saw them. This is how we saw them in Johannesburg."

⁵⁹ See for example: K. Prinsloo, *Die Hemel Help Ons* (Johannesburg, Taurus: 1987); H. Aucamp, *House Visits* (Cape Town, Tafelberg: 1983).

⁶⁰ M. Crous, 'En Ek Sê Dis 'n Trassie', in *Agenda* 67(2006), p.49.

⁶¹ R. Edison, 'Aanvaar mans wat anders is, sê Cliff', in *Huisgenoot* 19 March 1981, pp. 138—9.

⁶² 'Getroude homo's neem 'n kind aan', in *Huisgenoot* 24 July 1980, pp. 134—5.

identity, sexuality⁶³ and marriage. Importantly, it also introduced the term 'homo' into the lexicon of Afrikaans-language popular print media.

Three weeks after the article appeared, a letter by a reader was published that expressed concern about the term 'homo'.⁶⁴ According to the author it was a demeaning term and "created the impression that you are laughing at this sort of "nonsense"." Moreover, it was a "banal name for homosexuals who, like perverse heterosexuals, lie around in dark alleys, attack people, commit sodomy and don't care about their deeds." Rather, homosexuals were "unhappy and malformed people ... who fight a thorn in their side on a daily basis." The writer concluded by asking that "these poor people" are not further demeaned through the use of derogatory terms such as 'homo'. In a reaction to the letter *Huisgenoot's* editor noted that it was "news to us that homo's is a derogatory term. It is an accepted abbreviation of the term homosexuals." Around this time, young homosexual men who wrote anonymous letters to *Huisgenoot's* advice column, *Sake van die Hart* (Matters of the Heart), edited by clinical psychologist, professor in practical theology at the University of South Africa and Dutch Reformed preacher, Murray Janson, started to refer to themselves as 'homos'.⁶⁵ Previously pseudonyms such as "Desperate" had been the order of the day⁶⁶. It should be noted that these men, without exception, were very conflicted about their sexuality and wrote to Janson for advice about how to rid them of, or how to heal "the problem of homosexuality"⁶⁷. One man wrote:

I have the problem of homosexuality. I don't smoke, don't drink, don't go to the bioscope and I strive towards godliness, but men are my problem and will keep me out of heaven. I have fasted for thirty days and prayed, but God's time to change me was not my time. I call with my body and soul to God for help and ask the faithful across the country: Please pray for me!! I cannot take it all any longer."⁶⁸

⁶³ M. Crous, 'En Ek Sê Dis 'n Trassie', in *Agenda* 67(2006), p.49.

⁶⁴ Geen Homo, 'Wek Wanindruk' in *Huisgenoot*, 14 Augustus 1980, p. 4.

⁶⁵ M. Janson, 'Sake van die Hart', in *Huisgenoot* 19 February 1981, p. 116; 16 July 1981, p. 65.

⁶⁶ M. Janson, 'Sake van die Hart', in *Huisgenoot* 18 December 1980, p. 113.

⁶⁷ M. Janson, 'Sake van die Hart', in *Huisgenoot* 9 July 1981; 8 October 1981, p. 56.

⁶⁸ M. Janson, 'Sake van die Hart', in *Huisgenoot* 9 July 1981.

It is unlikely that any of them appropriated the moniker out of pride. Indeed, in 1985 a researcher from Pretoria wrote a letter to *Huisgenoot* in which s/he claimed “gays can in fact be ‘helped’”, and urged interested parties to write to him/her so that they could participate in a study.⁶⁹ Almost two months later another letter, this time entitled “Gays getting ‘helped’”, was published that thanked *Huisgenoot’s* readers for their “overwhelming reaction” and promised to respond in due course to “everyone who wrote”.⁷⁰

Efforts at ‘curing’ homosexuality notwithstanding, the Afrikaner institutions that had once so rigidly defined masculine deviance and hegemonic masculinity were starting to lose the legitimate authority necessary to do so. The first of the letters cited above was prompted by an article in *Huisgenoot* that argued that parents should accept their homosexual children’s sexuality and to not try to alter it. Instead, “parents should ask themselves what they can do to help their children to find fulfilment in and give positive expression to the gay part of their existence.” It went on to urge parents to encourage their “gay son to bring his friends home”, to “help him talk about his relationships, and to share in his friendships.”⁷¹

The onset of the AIDS epidemic counteracted these positive trends and “emphasised the dangers of promiscuity and lifestyles contrary to societal mores, resurrected homophobia, and seemed to harden the attitudes of those with an anti-homosexual stance.”⁷² *Huisgenoot* published double-spread articles entitled “HOMO-SICKNESS—‘new leprosy’ spreads” and “I HAVE AIDS...’: The tale of a living dead man.”⁷³ A male informant recalled that “homosexuality was always called a disease”, and AIDS gave already prejudiced people a “new whip with which to beat you. Originally they only had the Bible. Now they had VIGS” (the Afrikaans abbreviation of AIDS: Verworwe Immunitetsgebrek Sindroom), to which some people cruelly and crudely referred to as “*Vreeslike Infeksie in die Gatsisteem*” (literally: terrible infection in the anus/arse

⁶⁹ M.J. du Preez, ‘Gays kan wel ‘gehelp’ word’, in *Huisgenoot* 30 May 1985, p. 8.

⁷⁰ M.J. du Preez, ‘Gays word ‘gehelp’’, in *Huisgenoot* 25 Julie 1985, p. 6.

⁷¹ J. Viljoen, ‘My Kind is Gay...’ in *Huisgenoot*, 2 May 1985, p. 11.

⁷² K. Du Pisani, ‘Puritanism Transformed’, p. 170; G. Retief, ‘Keeping Sodom out of the Laager’, pp. 103—104.

⁷³ A. le Roux, ‘HOMO-SIEKTE—‘nuwe melaatsheid’ kring uit’, in *Huisgenoot*, 21 February 1985, pp. 17-8; R. Meyer, ‘EK HET AIDS...’ Die verhaal van ‘n lewende dooie’, in *Huisgenoot*, 21 February 1985, pp. 18-9.

system). “Family members who came to know about your status used it as an excuse to keep their children away from you.” The result was that “more people now had the opportunity to judge you.”⁷⁴ Articles in *Huisgenoot* sought to expose Hollywood stars such as Rock Hudson, Tyrone Power, Sal Mineo, Errol Flynn, Richard Chamberlain, Ramon Navarro and Montgomery Clift as “false” and keepers of “dark secrets”, because of their sexual preference.⁷⁵ The magazine also published heart of darkness narratives, replete with descriptions of trips up the Congo River and tales of ‘native savagery’, such as the story of photographer Corrie Hansen’s journey to the then Zaire in search of the monkey thought to be responsible for spreading the HI virus to humans.⁷⁶ Letters in the advice column *Sake van die Hart* summarised public opinion with captions such as “Homosexuals are bothersome”.⁷⁷ A story told by a twenty eight year old female Afrikaans speaking informant illustrates very well how the onset of AIDS resurrected homophobia. She recounted:

In the 1980’s my parents had many gay friends and had a particularly good relationship with a couple living in Pretoria. Not having any of their own children, Johan and Albert [not their real names] took a lot of interest in my sister and I who were toddlers at the time. Hugging and kissing them was nothing out of the ordinary, just as it was not unusual to hug and kiss relatives or other close friends of the family.

This affection ended quite abruptly towards the later part of the 1980’s and Johan and Albert would no longer sit with my sister or me on their laps, or even hug and kiss us goodbye. My sister and I were very young at that stage and don’t recall how or why it happened.

Years later my mother brought the lost affection up in a conversation with Johan. He admitted that with the stigma of AIDS attached to gay men, and in particular that it could be transferred via hugging or kissing, he and Albert did not want to make my parents uncomfortable by touching their children. They instead withdrew their affection in case my parents might be worried that Johan or Albert had Aids and that it would be transferred to my sister and me.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Interview conducted in Pretoria on 16/11/2012.

⁷⁵ J. Olivier, ‘Rock: Vals Beeld tot in die Dood’, in *Huisgenoot*, 17 October 1985, pp. 20-1.

⁷⁶ C. Hansen, ‘My Nagmerrie-soektog na die AIDS-aap’ in *Huisgenoot*, 24 October 1985, pp. 152-3.

⁷⁷ ‘Homoseksueles is lastig,’ in *Huisgenoot*, 3 October 1985, p. 32.

⁷⁸ Interview conducted in Pretoria on 27/2/2012.

When it became apparent that HIV could not be transmitted by means of kissing or hugging, the virus also came to be associated with heterosexual populations and the racialised other. This had a profound effect on perceptions of Afrikaans speaking homosexual men. In August of 1985 *Huisgenoot* published an article entitled “AIDS: Tens of Millions can die” that conjectured that heterosexual populations in Africa were most at-risk populations and that commercial sex workers were the most likely vectors of infection. AIDS could therefore no longer be seen as an illness that affected only homosexuals.⁷⁹ On 5 September the magazine published a letter from a reader thanking the editor for the “insightful article”, that concluded by asking “have you ever thought how we must feel to hear about the homo-sickness on a daily basis, now we are just being accepted by the world?”⁸⁰ Yet many young Afrikaans-speaking men clearly still struggled to manage tensions between perceived societal expectations and their own sexual preferences, as epitomised by a letter published in the advice column *Sake van die Hart* beseeching Murray Janson to “Please [help me], I am not an everyday “moffie!”⁸¹

moffie², (-s). **1.** Verwyfde mansmens. **2.** (*neerhalend*) **(a)** Manlike homofiel **(b)** Hermafrodiet, trassie.⁸²⁸³

moffie², s.n.w. (-s) (*seksisties*) **1.** Verwyfde mansmens. **2.** (*beledigend*) **(a)** Gay. **(b)** Hermafrodiet, trassie.⁸⁴⁸⁵

The 1990s was a watershed decade for gay rights in South Africa. The new constitution outlawed discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, translating into theoretical equality before the law. Moreover, the democratic transition brought changes in the gendered ordering of society and created what some scholars of masculinity regard as a climate conducive to

⁷⁹ J. Viljoen, ‘AIDS: Tien Miljoen kan sterf’, in *Huisgenoot*, 8 Augustus 1985, pp. 20-2.

⁸⁰ V. Hamilton, ‘Almal’ kan Aids kry – nie net Homo’s’ in *Huisgenoot* 5 September 1985, p. 8.

⁸¹ ‘Liefde blom in die Weermag’ in *Huisgenoot*, 24 Augustus 1989, p. 75.

⁸² Literally: **1.** Effeminate man. **2.** (*derogatory*) **(a)** Male homophile **(b)** Hermaphrodite, trassie.

⁸³ F.F. Odendal et al, *Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*, Third Edition (Perskor: 1994), p. 673.

⁸⁴ Literally: (*sexist*) **1.** Effeminate man. **2.** (*offensive*) **(a)** Gay. **(b)** Hermaphrodite, trassie.

⁸⁵ F.F. Odendaal et al, *Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* Fourth Edition (Perskor: 2005), p. 728.

'coming out'. The word 'gay' seems to have been appropriated by some Afrikaans-speaking homosexual men who started to self-identify as such. According to Danie Botha the word '*moffie*' had by this time become an honorary term for some Afrikaans-speaking men who self-identified as homosexual⁸⁶ Ministers of religion, such as Pieter Cilliers, and theology students 'came out'. Gay people openly performed/broadcasted/enacted their sexual orientation at gay protest marches. Afrikaans churches moved away from their 'turn or burn' position and, at its 1995 General Synod, the Dutch Reformed Church commissioned a study on homosexuality to look into the handling of practical situations. Homosexuality increasingly came to be accepted as a part of social reality. Despite this, discrimination, marginalisation and victimisation persisted in many walks of life and large numbers of gay men continued to live closeted lives.⁸⁷

The 1994 edition of the HAT reflects this ambiguity. The meanings of 'hermafrodiet' and 'trassie' are still conflated under the rubric 'moffie', and the 'verwyfde mansmens' definition remains. 'Homoseksualis' is changed to 'homofiel'. Homosexuals are thus taken out of the ideological realm and no longer equated with communists. However, the addition of the word stem *-fiel (*-phile/*-philia in English)⁸⁸ links 'moffie' to pathologies and disorders normally associated with showing inappropriate affection, usually of a sexual nature, to certain types of people or objects (such as paedophile/paedophilia or necrophile/necrophilia). It is explicitly stated, however, that the last two definitions ('homofiel' and 'hermafrodiet'/'trassie') are 'neerhalend' (derogatory/derisive).⁸⁹ It is also possible that the addition of the word stem *-fiel was an attempt to emphasise love rather than sex in line with the American homophile movement of the 1950s and 1960s.⁹⁰ It is clear, however, that the term still carried with it negative connotations.

⁸⁶ D. Botha, *Party van Ons: Homeros Leesboek 2001* (Tafelberg, Cape Town: 2001), p. 298.

⁸⁷ K. Du Pisani, 'Puritanism Transformed', p. 170; R. Reid & L. Walker (Eds.), *Men Behaving Differently*.

⁸⁸ Phil- from the Greek is used to designate "a tendency to consort with or prefer something."

⁸⁹ F.F. Odendaal et al, *Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (Perskor: 1994).

⁹⁰ Organisations and strategies employed by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) communities in the United States before the confrontational activism that characterized the 1970s.

In letters published in *Huisgenoot* during the 1990s, people who self-identified as homosexual most frequently referred to themselves as “gay.” These letters commonly expressed concerns regarding accessing new-found constitutional rights during a time in which institutional homophobia was still the norm. In a letter entitled “Give gays a chance at parenthood”, H. and H., for example, wrote that “it [parenthood] is a joy that should be denied no one on the basis of sexual orientation” and asked readers to “give us gays a chance to show our mettle.”⁹¹

The long, fraught shift towards normalisation continued with the dawn of the new millennium. The 2005 edition of the HAT labels the term ‘moffie’, in all its valences, as derogatory. ‘Verwyfde mansmens’ is labelled sexist, while ‘hermafrodiet’ and ‘trassie’ are labelled insulting. ‘Gay’ is added to the definitions (it is also labelled insulting), while ‘homofiel’ is entirely omitted.⁹² Evidence suggests that the Bible is no longer quite the “whip with which to beat” homosexuals that it once was. In an article on homosexuality and religion, published in the widely circulated Afrikaans-language newspaper *Die Burger*, Dr. Chris Jones of the University of Stellenbosch wrote that “homosexuals should be granted the right to give expression to their [sexual] orientation”, but only if this is done “according to specific evangelical principles.” This caveat means that only “a permanent relationship” that revolves around “mutual love and respect”, and not “promiscuity and other indulgences”, should be countenanced. Jones points out, however, that this inclusive and tolerant viewpoint is by no means hegemonic in the predominantly Afrikaans Dutch Reformed *Susterskerke*.⁹³ Yet it would seem as though even Dutch Reformed theology might be moving with the times, as evidenced by Ralph Barnard’s recent book entitled “Gays and God: An impossible Friendship?”⁹⁴ in which it is argued that “until homosexuals—of which the biggest group in South Africa identify themselves as Christians and most of whom grew up in Christian congregations—no longer feel unwelcome in

⁹¹ ‘Gee ons Gays nou Kans op Ouerskap’, in *Huisgenoot*, 11 August 1994, p. 6.

⁹² F.F. Odendaal et al, *Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (Perskor: 2005).

⁹³ C. Jones, ‘Besin so oor Geloof en Gays’, in *Die Burger*, December 24, 2011, p. 8.

⁹⁴ R. Barnard, *Gays en God. ‘n Onmoontlike Vriendskap?* (Cape Town, Griffel: 2011).

the church as a result of being rejected and condemned, the church is out of sync with the Bible."⁹⁵

The broad contours of lexical evolution reveal much about how the dominant culture conceptualised and reconceptualised sexual deviance in order to define normal and acceptable masculine behaviour. During the 1960s an idealised masculinity emerged, epitomised by the rugged, quiet, conservative family man; the 'paterfamilias'. This figure stood in direct opposition (and owed its very existence) to all things weak, foreign, impure and frivolous. During the 1970s this ideal changed somewhat and came to incorporate everything that resisted heteronormativity and the 'natural' order of things. During the 1980s and 1990s the Platonic ideal became more liberal and more accepting, yet still weary of its diseased shadow. The new millennium brought a new set of markers of sexual deviance, for 'moffie' no longer seemed to fit the bill (despite discrimination persisting in some very conservative circles).

Different meanings assigned over time to the term 'moffie' acted as 'statements' in a changing discourse on dominant Afrikaans approaches to governing sexuality. As such, they illustrate evolving anxieties around what it meant to be white and Afrikaans-speaking in South Africa. Prominent historian of Afrikaners, Hermann Giliomee, posits that the history of this group is characterised more than anything else by "anxieties about survival that mark numerically weak peoples."⁹⁶ During the apartheid years these anxieties were inextricably entangled with fears of miscegenation and manifested in all the various ways in which sexuality was governed. In order to effectively police the boundaries of sexuality, so as to effectively respond to perceived threats to ethnic survival, racial and sexual 'others' had to be constructed in language. Different definitions of 'moffie' in various editions of the HAT thus plotted "shifting moral and

⁹⁵ G. Bothma, 'Review: Gays en God: 'n Onmoontlike Vriendskap?' in Teo.co.za. Accessed on 12 March 2012 at: <http://teo.co.za/artikel/articles/439/1/Gays-amp-God-n-Onmoontlike-vriendskap-deur-Ralph-Barnard/Bladsy1.html>

⁹⁶ H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Tafelberg, Cape Town: 2003).

intellectual centres of gravity”, “from church to state,” from biblical morality to bureaucracy, and from “theology to sociology.”⁹⁷ These shifts necessitated the gatekeepers of morality first to acknowledge and then to constantly redefine homosexuality and its deviant existence in order to establish a state-led position against it and allow for its effective policing. This recognition in the wider lexicon ironically granted homosexuality semantic space within the limits of acceptable speech and in formalised ways of thinking, and eventually allowed for its normalisation. As the socio-political landscape changed along with the shifting sands of state (re)formation, so inevitably too did discursive formations and the statements that these are comprised of. The dawn of multi-racial democracy in South Africa forced a reconceptualisation of ideal manhood, and of course of its opposite/s. The result is that homosexuality is no longer the primary marker/sign/statement of masculine deviance in ‘polite’ Afrikaans society that it once was.

It is interesting to note that there is a surge of homophobia among other South African groups (or imagined communities), as closely aligned to the state as Afrikaners once were, who busy themselves with similar projects of ethnic nationalism—necessitating (re)definitions of ideal masculinity and male deviance. However, growing unemployment and changes in the gendered nature of work that accompanied the restructuring of South African society post-apartheid combined to make traditional markers of manhood unattainable for many young South African men, many of whom find it easy to blame lesbian women for these frustrations. This has seen to it that in these communities female homosexuality is perceived as more deviant than its male counterpart; in direct opposition to Afrikaner conceptions of homosexuality. Whatever the case, homosexuality once more poses a threat to the patriarchal gender order on which power rests and yet again does not fit into the meta-narratives being constructed.

⁹⁷ N. Roos, ‘Work Colonies for White Men and the Historiography of Apartheid’, paper presented at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research, 1 April 2010.