Coloured Men, *Moffies*, and Meanings of Masculinity in South Africa, 1910-1960

Cody S. Perkins
Flint, Michigan

Bachelor of Arts, Michigan State University, 2009
Master of Arts, University of Virginia, 2011

A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Corcoran Department of History

University of Virginia
May, 2015

_____
Dr. John Edwin Mason

_____
Dr. Joseph C. Miller

_____
Dr. Claudrena N. Harold

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Dr. Denise Walsh

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the ways in which Coloured South Africans, popularly defined as "mixed race," responded to disparaging and gendered stereotypes about Coloured men during the first fifty years of Union. White South Africans used both popular media and official rhetoric to portray Coloured men as lazy, cowardly, drunkards, and absentee fathers. In response, Coloured men developed a discourse that lionized loyalty, bravery, athleticism, morality, and respectability. Many Coloured men disputed the acceptability of those who they thought threatened their status as masculine and respectable citizens. Gay and transgender men, or *moffies*, were the center of one such debate during the 1940s and 1950s, while Coloured *skolly* gangsters drew public ire beginning in the 1930s. I frame my analyses of this discourse around the concepts of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities to demonstrate the ways in which ideals and practices of masculinities often overlapped, reinforced, and challenged one another on local and global scales. Drawing on archival research conducted in Cape Town in 2011 and 2013-14, this project contends that South African gendered identities emphasized inclusivity and cosmopolitanism that contradicted the exclusive and divisive racial identities promoted under White supremacism.

Acknowledgements

I cannot take sole credit for this project as countless people have made their marks along the way. In the early stages of developing the project, Peter Alegi, Claudrena Harold, Jon Lendon, and Christian McMillen all offered advice. Vivian Bickford-Smith and Mohammed Adhikari took the time to meet with me on my first research trip to Cape Town and bolstered my confidence that the project was both feasible and worthwhile. Todd Ellick and Alison Montgomery also shared in that first trip, made suggestions, and were good friends throughout. The staff at the Cape Town branch of the National Library of South Africa was friendly and unbelievably helpful, as was the staff at the Western Cape Archives and Records Service. They made my work in Cape Town enjoyable on a daily basis. I must also make special mention of Jacqueline du Plessis, who was my first Afrikaans teacher and later a good friend who shared her family with my wife and me.

I presented several chapters of this dissertation at conferences around the country and offer my thanks to all those scholars and audience members who offered feedback along the way. A portion of Chapter Three was presented at the 2014 “Sports in a Africa and the Global South” conference at Ohio University. Chapter Five was first shared with the participants at the Fall 2014 North Eastern Workshop on Southern Africa. The NEWSA community was incredibly welcoming and encouraging, and I look forward to sharing more work in the woods of Burlington. And finally, Chapter Four found a venue at the 2015 African Studies Association Annual Meeting in Indianapolis. Scholars at each of these

conferences offered constructive criticisms and friendly advice during an intense year of research and writing.

My family has been incredibly supportive through all of my academic endeavors. I am thankful for the never-ending encouragement and optimism of my mom, Cindy, and the support of my dad, Criag. My aunt Patty and uncle Roger have been second parents to me, and I am saddened that Roger passed before he could read this dissertation. I will always be grateful to him for showing me what it means to be a good man. I am forever obliged to my brother Josh and his family for opening their home during my last year of writing. Their selflessness kept us afloat, ensured I would finish the project, and afforded me the opportunity to get to know my nieces. My brother Cory has always shown an interest in my work and made the long trip to Charlottesville to spend several holidays with us, bringing a little bit of home with him. I must also thank my in-laws, Ginny and Ken, for their patience while I inched slowly toward a steady paycheck.

During my time at the University of Virginia, I was lucky to have a close cohort of friends and fellow scholars with whom I could work and play. John Terry, Chris Cornelius, Alec Hickmott, Mary Hicks, Trevor Hiblar, Ryan Bibler, Beth Schumaecker, Cait Morris, Tom Butcher, and Noel Stringham all made my time in Charlottesville exceedingly pleasant. Willa Brown, Kristen Lashua, and Evan McCormick are also good friends who read early drafts of several chapters. Jim Ambuske and Sarah Donelson became my second family, and I am grateful for their companionship, humor, and support.

The faculty and staff of the Corcoran Department of History served me well and I am thankful for their efforts. Jenni Via is a master in all things bureaucratic and always a friendly ally. Paul Halliday and Max Edelson are great advocates for all of the graduate students in their department. Joe Miller served as a mentor in both teaching and scholarship and helped me find my footing as an historian of Africa. Most importantly, this project would not have been possible without the support and attention of my advisor, John Mason. He has always been open to my ideas and pursuits and knew when to rein me in or let me go. I can only hope he will agree to take my author's photograph for the book jacket.

Finally, my most sincere and inadequate thanks go to my wife, Sarah. This project is as much a testament to her hard work, sleepless nights, and dedication to what comes next as it is to mine. I am sure that I did not deserve all of the sacrifices she has made over the last six years, but I hope she feels some of the satisfaction that comes with this finished product. The last period on the last page is her curtain call. This dissertation is dedicated to her.

- Memphis, Tennessee
April 2015

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAP – Abdullah Abdurahman Papers

APO – African People's Organisation (African Political Organisation before 1919)

A.P.O. – The official newspaper of the African People's Organisation

CSRU – City and Suburban Rugby Union

GSD – Gender and Sexually Diverse (an alternative identifier to homosexual, transgender, and transvestite that does not necessarily rely on the categorization of Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning designations. GSD represents a spectrum of gender and sexual identities)

M.P. – Member of Parliament

NEUM – Non-European Unity Movement

NLL – National Liberation League

NZRFU – New Zealand Rugby Football Union

SARB – South African Rugby Union

TLSA – Teachers' League of South Africa

WPCRFU – Western Province Coloured Rugby Football Union

Introduction

Derisive stereotypes and jokes have been at the heart of popular understandings of Coloured South African identities since at least the late nineteenth century. According to one joke, the Dutch commander Jan van Riebeeck landed at Table Bay in 1652, and the Coloured people were born nine months later. The punch line of the joke lays the onus for creation of the racially anomalous Coloured at the feet of lonely White sailors who could not contain themselves at the sight of indigenous women, presumed barriers of race be damned. According to historian Mohamed Adhikari, another joke culminates with the punch line, "God made the white man, God made the black man, God made the Indian, the Chinese and the Jew—but Jan van Riebeeck, he made the Coloured man."[1] Following the logic of these pointedly sexualized jokes, the moral impropriety attributed to the origins of the Coloured community led to physical and racial degeneracy among the "mixed race" Coloured South Africans, producing a community of absentee fathers, drunks, cowards, and criminals. Adhikari and other scholars have documented the historical stereotypes well,[2] this dissertation is the first project to describe responses from the Coloured

[1] Mohamed Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 20. Adhikari provides the most detailed description published to date of historical Coloured identities and their associated popular stereotypes, almost all of which are derisive.

[2] See also Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice, 1875-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

[2] See also Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice, 1875-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Grant Farred, *Midfielder's Moment: Coloured Literature and Culture in Contemporary South Africa* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000); and John Western, *Outcast Cape Town* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981).

community, and Coloured men in particular, as they attempted to defend their respectability in terms of masculinity.

Coloured men's responses to the gendered and sexualized stereotypes of them as a "mixed race" reveal the power of stereotypes to marginalize members of the young South African nation-state based on more than race alone. White political elites tapped stereotypes about sexualities and gender roles to create a public discourse pitting European propriety against non-European depravity, civilized against uncivilized, and normality and respectability against deviance. Beginning with the South African War (1899-1902), political and cultural leaders of the South African nation-state embarked on a process of gendered stereotyping of Coloured South Africans in public media and formally sanctioned reports. Their campaign of cultural disparagement became increasingly racialized through the 1930s. As counterpoints to these distinctly gendered politicized stereotypes, Coloured men responded in systematic presentations of themselves as devoted family men, loyal citizen-soldiers, powerful athletes, and respectable members of their communities.

In the sixty years after the South African War, Coloured South Africans – a majority of the residents of Cape Town – struggled for the franchise, access to employment and government services, and social respectability within an anxious political union coming to terms with its diverse population. Increasingly racialized and gendered stereotyping was an important medium in that process. White politicians, and especially National Party leaders in the wake of the Second World War, championed a thoroughly racialized organization of the Union. Government officials specified the political and economic status of Coloured

South Africans as a coherent racial group, but the popular definition of "Coloured" as "mixed race" blurred the ideological polarity at the base of racialization. Government officials, medical officers, and academic sociologists more frequently turned to Coloured South Africans' sexuality and gender norms to exemplify racial mixture as degenerate. White experts attributed the alleged prevalence of urban prostitution in Cape Town and sexually transmitted diseases among Coloured South Africans to their origins in miscegenation and highlighted what they perceived as unusual gendered relationships like the lack of sex-segregated sleeping quarters in Coloured homes and a relatively high numbers of single mothers. Government and academic reports paralleled White South Africans' infantilizing and desexualizing descriptions of Coloured men as "Cape boys," irrespective of age or accomplishments.

Anxieties about the degeneracy of sex across stereotyped racial lines depicted the Coloured community as a warning to Whites and, to a lesser degree, Africans to avoid the impropriety and ridicule associated with mixed-race sexual relationships. These sexualized stereotypes about Coloured South Africans became increasingly denigrating and politically powerful as political elites steered the South African nation-state toward institutionalized racial separation and apartheid. These processes of political punching and counter-punching culminated in the debates surrounding the passage of the two inaugural pieces of apartheid legislation. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 banned marriages between White South Africans and South Africans of other races. One year later, the Immorality Act, which prohibited sex between Whites and Africans, was amended to outlaw sexual intercourse between Whites and all

others, pointedly including Coloureds. Coloured men did not live their lives solely in reaction to public policies, though. They sought to define themselves in relation to their families and the men and women in their communities.

Miscegenation, Race, and the Historiography of Coloured Identities

Before moving toward a history of how Coloured men have defined their identities as men and citizens, some historiographical context is necessary. Historians and other scholars have most often defined Coloured South Africans in terms of miscegenation and their social and political status relative to Whites. However, Coloured South Africans defined themselves just as often through gendered identities, as revealed by the differentiated performances of masculinities central to this study. The earliest works of Coloured history reflect a paternalist Cape liberal tone in which Coloured South Africans strived to overcome racial shortcomings under the benevolent guidance of Europeans. These studies focused on determining the most accurate proportion of races that comprised the Coloured mixture before outlining basic political achievements.[3] Coloured perspectives on day-to-day experiences are absent, and therefore these early works represent little more than White perspectives on Coloured identity.

[3] William M. Macmillan, *The Cape Colour Question: A Historical Survey* (London: Hurst, 1969), first published in 1927, and J. S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1968), first published in 1939, are representative of this strain in the historiography. That both works went through several printings into the 1960s is a testament to the persistent association of miscegenation with Coloured identity in popular and scholarly understandings. I. D. du Plessis and C. A. Lückhoff, *The Malay Quarter and its People* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1953) also represents this strain, though focus only on the "Malay" segment of the Coloured population. du Plessis' thesis rests on arguments of authenticity (Malay) and hybridization (other Coloureds) in positioning Coloured South Africans relative to members of other races. du Plessis argued that Malay culture in the forms of *nagtroepe*, Islam, and the close-knit urban neighborhoods of Cape Town represented an authentic Coloured culture through which a Coloured identity should be defined.

The rise of the White supremacist political regime, culminating in the electoral victory of the National Party in 1948, spurred scholars to reconsider the racial dimensions of Coloured identity. In *Colour and Culture in South Africa: A Study of the Status of the Cape Coloured People within the Social Structure of the Union of South Africa* (1953), sociologist Sheila Patterson attributes the origins of a distinct Coloured racial community to incessant government attempts to classify the population. By foisting distinct regulations regarding residence, education, property, and enfranchisement on White and African communities, Coloured South Africans were defined by the government as those people who did not fit neatly into another category. Patterson argues that Coloureds represented a coherent racial identity, one that thrust them in the middle of the "bipartite" racial conflicts between Whites and Africans.[4] Patterson's definition of Coloured identity rests on its intermediary status, but she does not describe Coloured South Africans as inherently inferior or subjectively marginal.

Patterson's work initiated a new theme in studies of Coloured history and identity, one in which scholars defined Coloured South Africans predominantly through their relationship to the apartheid regime. For example, examinations of the "passing" phenomenon in which light-skinned Coloured South Africans claimed White identities shed light on the fluidity of racial identities defined under apartheid. However, many of the "passing" studies portrayed only a small segment of the Coloured population and largely ignored those Coloured people

[4] Sheila Patterson, *Colour and Culture in South Africa: A Study of the Status of the Cape Coloured People within the Social Structure of the Union of South Africa* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), 193.

who celebrated their identities.[5] In fact, studies of "passing" are more indicative of Coloured perceptions of hegemonic White identities than they are of Coloured experiences with their own histories and identities. Scholars' emphasis on race relations did shed light on the diversity within the apartheid categories. Michael Whisson, for example, demonstrates the range of historical experiences claimed by all those labeled as Coloured: some spoke Afrikaans while others spoke English; Christianity and Islam were important to different segments of the population; and the urban/rural divide often determined perceptions of elite status within Coloured communities.[6] Whisson's study is noteworthy as one of the earliest attempts to lend voice to Coloured South Africans in recognizing how they perceived themselves and their communities. Most other contemporary studies can be reduced to tautological narratives of a racial group's understanding of its place in the racial hierarchy.

In the 1980s, two seminal studies of Coloured identity extolled the essential relationship between race and class in South African history. In *Making Race: The Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in Cape Town* (1987), Ian Goldin explains that Coloured identity was reconstituted around the turn of the century from earlier iterations in response to increased economic competition along ethnic lines.[7] In the early years of the twentieth century, Africans who moved to the Cape to escape the South African War in the interior accounted for much of the competition. Hoping to avoid being undercut on the labor market,

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[5] See, for example, Graham Watson, *Passing for White: A Study of Racial Assimilation in a South African School* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970).

[6] Michael G. Whisson, *The Fairest Cape? An Account of the Coloured People in the District of Simonstown* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1972), 13.

[7] Ian Goldin, *Making Race: The Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in Cape Town* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1987), 14.

Goldin argues that Coloured artisans and trade unionists organized to exclude Africans from skilled labor. In turn, White artisans also formed racially exclusive unions and guilds, pitting laborers of different races against one another for access to work, resources, and even housing.

According to Gavin Lewis, the political motivations of the African People's Organisation were driven by class divisions within Coloured communities. In its early years, the APO's primary goal was to expand the non-racial franchise from the Cape to the rest of the territories that would be included in the Union. When that effort failed, the APO refocused on maintaining those rights for the propertied Coloureds in the Cape. Abdullah Abdurahman and the rest of the APO leadership represented themselves as middle-class Capetonians, placing pride in education, religious affiliations, professional roles, and speaking English. As the White supremacist government rebuffed the APO's political agenda throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the organization became more representative of Coloured communities throughout the country. It reached out to the working-class farm laborers and miners—predominantly rural and Afrikaans-speaking people—to expand its membership and influence. By the 1940s, the APO reflected a majority of the Coloured communities around the Cape and elsewhere in opposing the creation of the Coloured Affairs Department.[8]

A more recent trend in scholarly literature concerning Coloured identities is one that emphasizes Coloured marginalization under White supremacist rule.

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[8] Gavin Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall: A History of South African "Coloured" Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 57-63.

Mohammed Adhikari has been the most prolific proponent of this perspective, suggesting the many Coloured South Africans have suffered from an inferiority complex due to persistent negative stereotyping.[9] As a result, Adhikari contends that Coloured identity is characterized by an assimilationist attitude, "which spurred hopes of a future acceptance into the dominant society."[10] Additionally, Coloured identity is supposed to have been organized around a distinction with African identities in order to avoid the most serious negative consequences of White supremacy.[11] A central premise of this project is that Coloured South Africans' histories need to be understood as more than studies of racial identity. Furthermore, while Coloured political discourse may have been defined by assimilationism, everyday life in Coloured communities was marked by relationships among friends, families, and neighbors.

Adhikari has also offered an important critique of the existing literature on Coloured identities and histories. Much of the most recent writing, "either reproduces the simplistic formulations of popular racist conceptions of coloured identity or focuses narrowly on coloured protest politics and the social injustices suffered by the community."[12] This project breaks with that trend of reproduction by focusing on everyday experiences and contextualizing protest politics as they applied to ordinary South Africans as opposed to the leaders of popular

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[9] Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough*, 15.

[10] Ibid., xii.

[11] Mohamed Adhikari, "Predicaments of Marginality: Cultural Creativity and Political Adaptation in Southern Africa's Coloured Community," in *Burdened By Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa*, Mohamed Adhikari, ed. (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2009), xiv.

[12] Mohamed Adhikari, "Hope, Fear, Shame, Frustration: Continuity and Change in the Expression of Coloured Identity in White Supremacist South Africa, 1910-1994," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32, no. 3 (September 2006): 467.

organizations. For instance, the African People's Organisation is present in my narrative, but it is not the sole driver of the narrative. Popular perceptions of miscegenation are also central themes of the dissertation, but only insofar as Coloured South Africans were made to confront racism and gendered stereotypes on a regular basis.

For at least the last two decades, the association of Coloured identities with miscegenation has been largely rejected but not ignored. In her introduction to perhaps the most important volume on Coloured identities and histories, sociologist Zimitri Erasmus posits that, "Being coloured is about living an identity that is clouded in sexualised shame and associated with drunkenness and jollity."[13] Erasmus and her fellow contributors contend that Coloured identities are products of "cultural creativity" as opposed to racial mixture, but the histories and historiographies of Coloured South Africans burden them with the baggage of sexualized and gendered stereotypes produced in the contexts of slavery, colonialism, and White supremacy. One goal of this project is to shed light on that historical process while also demonstrating that other South African social identities—including White identities—were produced through similar processes. Coloureds cannot be thought of as the only communities in South Africa inadequately and inappropriately defined by race, and this project demonstrates that many South Africans asserted that fact through the lens of gender beginning in the early twentieth century.

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[13] Zimitri Erasmus, "Introduction: Re-imagining Coloured Identities in Post-Apartheid South Africa," in *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: New Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town*, Zimitri Erasmus, ed. (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2001), 14.

Racing Gender and Respectability

The intent of studying the masculine identities among Coloured men is to highlight the essential relationship between racial identities and gender identities. In modern, cosmopolitan communities, the two are inextricably linked. Much of the analyses in the dissertation are framed around R. W. Connell's original conception of hegemonic masculinity and other scholars' subsequent critiques. Connell defined hegemonic masculinity as the practices and ideals most widely accepted as normative, but also acknowledged that hegemonic masculinity is necessarily constructed in relation to subordinated masculinities and femininities.[14] That space for fluidity between hegemonic masculinity and any number of subordinated masculinities is one of the operative contexts in which the "cultural creativity" described by Erasmus plays out. Coloured men, for example, recognized that though they were excluded from hegemonic conceptions of masculinity in South Africa because of their race, that was often the only excluding factor. Hegemonic masculinity is not a destructive force, but rather an organizational strategy that is always under contention. As Connell notes, "If we did not recognize this it would be impossible to account for the everyday contestation that actually occurs in social life, let alone for the historical changes in definitions of gender patterns on the grand scale."[15] In other words, just because Coloured men represented a subordinated masculine identity does not mean that they were satisfied with that social position. Indeed, more often

[14] R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 183.

[15] Ibid., 184.

than not, they challenged the normative order while accepting the normative appearances and actions.

Connell's conception of hegemonic masculinity fits neatly with the racialization of the global communities, especially under colonial contexts. Hegemonic masculinity was (and often still is) intimately connected to White racial identities. In South Africa, historian Robert Morrell has applied Connell's conception to White settler communities, noting that White masculine ideals exemplified through sports, education, and Christianity gained ascendancy through colonial conquest.[16] In the same way that race reflected a hierarchy of bodies, so too did masculinity and femininity.[17] The ranking of subject bodies was substantiated in South Africa's White supremacist regimes, but the gendered ranking of men and women remained implicit in many social histories of South Africans. White supremacy claims that White men are superior to Black men in measures of race as well as measures of masculinity.

Coloured men performed many of the traits of Connell's subordinated masculinities, but they also articulated their own ideals and practices distinct from those accepted as hegemonic. That process contradicts much of the historiography that claims Coloured identities are closely tied to aspirations for inclusion in White communities and the marginalization that results from repeated rejections.[18] Instead, Coloured men situated their masculine ideals and practices among a constellation of masculine communities from around the

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[16] Robert Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal, 1880-1920* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2001), 27-28; 36-38.

[17] R. W. Connell, *The Men and The Boys* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 61.

[18] See, for instance, Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough*, xii.

world that at various times included White South Africans, Black South Africans, White men in the British Empire, African Americans, and Maori men. The continuous reconfiguring of masculine identities shows the significance Coloured men exhibited in defining their identities in relation to their local communities and global attitudes. Coloured men refused to accept a hegemonic masculinity based in White supremacy wholesale; most Coloured men did not wish to be White men. That resistance should be accepted as one of the defining features of Coloured identities even when political resistance was not prevalent among Coloured communities. The ability to forge a coherent gender order within their communities allowed Coloured men to posture for political power even though they were excluded on the basis of race.[19]

Among those who study masculinity, hegemonic masculinity has been the most popular target for examination. Nikki Wedgwood explains this as a result of, "dominant forms of masculinity being the most prominent and the most desirable for many feminists to critically analyse."[20] This project bucks that trend, instead focusing on the subordinated masculinities of Coloured men that sometimes reflected hegemonic ideals and sometimes took on conflicting meanings. Coloured men signaled the contradictions of White supremacy through their expressions of subordinated masculinities; perceptions of what made a man a man often aligned across the races, but incongruent perceptions of

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[19] John Tosh, "Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender," in *Masculinities in Power and War: Gendering Modern History*, Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh, eds. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 49.

[20] Nikki Wedgwood, "Connell's Theory of Masculinity—Its Origins and Influences on the Study of Gender," *Journal of Gender Studies* 18, no. 4 (December 2009): 335. Wedgwood warns of reifying the systems of oppression by "studying up" only the dominant forms of any social order.

race determined which masculine identities achieved hegemony and which were subordinated.

By framing my project as a study in the relationship between hegemonic, complicit, and subordinated masculinities, I am able to present a valuable response to critiques of Connell's work. Coloured perspectives offer a window into the re-imaginings and reinforcement of masculine ideals and practices outside of the hegemonic group; this is not a story of oppression, but rather one of men asserting their masculinities and humanity in ways they viewed as beneficial. I am also able to demonstrate the ways in which masculinities are related on local, regional, and global scales. South Africans identified in intensely local ways—claiming identities tied to District Six or the Bo-Kaap, for instance—but were not isolated from regional and international contexts. Coloured men saw themselves as South Africans, as members of the British Empire, as part of the West. They were Unionists, Communists, Garveyites. They were Christians and Muslims and neither. These local, regional, and global identities were not mutually exclusive. In fact, these identities informed one another and allowed Coloured men, like men throughout South Africa and across the globe, to declare bonds of fraternity that transgressed national and social boundaries.

A critical component of this dissertation's thesis is the relationship between South Africans' conceptions of gendered identities and respectability. Men who embodied hegemonic masculinity most often did so through demonstrations of respectability in adherence to normative appearances and actions. Respectable men and women styled their hair a certain way, wore particular clothes, ate their meals with dictated manners, attended religious

services, aimed to educate their children, and generally rebuffed any assertions that they did not comport themselves with such dignity. All of these activities were gendered, and as African Americanist scholars have demonstrated, divided along racial lines. Like Coloureds, African American women or Africans under European colonial rule relied on expressions of respectability to overcome depictions of racially subordinated communities as unclean or sexually immoral. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, for instance, argues that African American women used their participation and leadership in the Black Baptist church to resist assertions from White Christians that African Americans were morally degenerate compared to Whites.[21] Higginbotham's subjects were out to make the case that their moral fortitude and commitment to Christian values reflected similarities with Whites that were irrespective of race.

Other historians of African Americans have explored the ways in which changing conceptions of respectability, especially during the middle of the twentieth century, confirm the intimate relationship between gender norms and respectability. LaKisha Michelle Simmons highlights a duality in the identities of students at Howard University during the 1930s. On one hand, their privileged roles and educated elites in African American communities reflects popular ideals like the New Negro and the Modern Girl. On the other, students' semi-private "confessions" to pre-marital sexual relationships challenged the moral boundaries of respectability. Simmons writes that, "The concept of respectability has been central to African American gender history precisely because

[21] Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 187.

respectable behaviour demanded adherence to the dominant culture's notions of proper gender roles and sexual comportment."[22] Similarly, Kevin Gaines argues that respectability was a means by which African Americans could assert, "a positive black identity in a deeply racist society."[23] If racial uplift was a goal to be achieved by the racial community as a whole, respectability was a goal that could be achieved on the individual or family level.

As will be shown in this project's focus on the Coloured communities of South Africa, a shared racial identity did not always translate to universally accepted gender norms and definitions of respectability. Victoria Walcott suggests that class differences among African Americans in a rapidly urbanizing Detroit manifested in competing ideas of respectability. In *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit* (2001), Walcott explains that middle-class women identified themselves as respectable through participation in their local churches and the club movement. Working-class women who scrounged to support their families through brothels, bootlegging, and gambling did not see themselves as any less respectable than their middle-class counterparts, but differences in daily experiences were undeniable.[24] Churchgoers and club members certainly did not see prostitution and gambling as a respectable means of social uplift, but the goal of social uplift was shared just the same.

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[22] LaKisha Michelle Simmons, "'To Lay Aside All Morals:' Respectability, Sexuality and Black College Students in the United States in the 1930s," *Gender & History* 24, no. 2 (Aug. 2012): 433.

[23] Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 3.

[24] Victoria W. Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

Historians of Africa have drawn on those ideas shaped by African Americanist scholars to demonstrate globally pervasive yet malleable definitions of respectability. Lynn Thomas, working as part of the "Modern Girl Around the World" Research Group, links conceptions of respectability among communities in Johannesburg to young women in the United States, India, and China. She posits that, "Racial respectability refers to people's desires and efforts to claim positive recognition in contexts powerfully structured by racism, contexts in which respectability was framed through racial categories, and appearances were of the gravest importance."[25] Thomas' simple definition complements this project's analysis of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities. Coloured South Africans' desires and efforts to embody a racial respectability was dependent on both coherent gender norms and a recognition from others—fellow Coloureds, other Black South Africans, and Whites—that they were progressing toward their goal.

In studies of communities across the African continent, historians have used local conceptions of respectability to access subordinated groups' attempts to achieve recognition of rights and belonging from colonial authorities. Rachel Jean-Baptiste's *Conjugal Rights: Marriage, Sexuality, and Urban Life in Colonial Libreville, Gabon* (2014) explores young women's navigation of sex and love in new urban environments. Though previously taboo, sex outside the confines of marriage and interracial sex became means through women could

[25] Lynn M. Thomas, "The Modern Girl and Racial Respectability in 1930s South Africa," *The Journal of African History* 46, no. 3 (2006): 467. Thomas and the rest of the research group published their complementary studies as: Alys Eve Weinbaum, et al., eds., *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

achieve respectability in terms of economic viability and legal recognition.[26] Other historians, such as Elisabeth McMahon and David Maxwell, have used respectability to explain changing social relations among newly freed slaves and their former masters or new communities.[27] Respectability's salience in studies of contexts of social flux—urbanization, emancipation, liberation—illustrate the ways in which individuals and communities deployed respectability as a way of connecting with hegemonic power relationships.

White settlers on the continent also made efforts to appear respectable to their neighbors and the governing administrations. Robert Ross, for example, suggests that popular notions of respectability relied on gendered relationships. The, "imposition of British ideas of respectability on the Colony," in the Cape resulted in highly regulated relationships between men and women, farmers and city-dwellers, and Black and White residents of the colony.[28] British settlers and colonial administrators brought with them distinct styles of dress, new forms of Christianity, and a relatively rigid social system that included racial, gender, and class hierarchies. Those gendered norms, popular manners, and even descriptions of body language (a Black man averting his eyes from a White

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[26] Rachel Jean-Baptiste, *Conjugal Rights: Marriage, Sexuality, and Urban Life in Colonial Libreville, Gabon* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014), 221. Jean-Baptiste explains that women's status as respectable could fluctuate throughout their lives dependent on their relationship to White men, "as lovers, wives, or daughters." Urban youth and sexuality is a common theme in studies of colonial respectability. See, for example, Emily Callaci, "Dancehall Politics: Mobility, Sexuality, and Spectacles of Racial Respectability in Late Colonial Tanganyika, 1930s-1961," *The Journal of African History* 52, no. 3 (Nov. 2011): 365-384.

[27] Elisabeth McMahon, *Slavery and Emancipation in Islamic East Africa: From Honor to Respectability* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); David Maxwell, "Freed Slaves, Missionaries, and Respectability: The Expansion of the Christian Frontier," *The Journal of African History* 54, no. 1 (March 2013): 79-102.

[28] Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 4.

woman) persevered well into the twentieth century and are reflected in many of interracial gendered relationships described in this project.

This project extends the discussion of respectability into the realm of Coloured gender identities as they related to racial stereotypes. If respectability was, as George Mosse has described it, the "vital cement of society," Coloured South Africans presented themselves as respectable to claim they were already a part of the South African nation.[29] This contrasts with the works of Adhikari, Goldin, and Lewis in which Coloured South Africans are described as on the outside looking in. Respectability and the gendered norms that identified it allowed Coloured men to claim inclusivity based on masculinity while rejecting the exclusivity of race.

Coloured South Africans by the Numbers

The demographic structure of the Coloured population of South Africa is traceable through several government sources throughout the period of inquiry. Despite inconsistencies in the government's definition of "Coloured" for censuses and other reports, there is a clear illustration of a Coloured population concentrated in the western Cape. According to the South African Native Affairs Commission, there were between 350,000 and 400,000 Coloureds in the Cape Colony in 1902.[30] The imprecise number is most likely a reflection of the influx of refugees from the interior during the South African War. A few decades later, the Cape Coloured Commission reported a significant growth of the Coloured

[29] George L. Mosse, *Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 133.

[30] *Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission*, 1902, NA 623 B1965, Western Cape Archives and Records Service.

population throughout the Union. The Commission cites a 1936 census showing out of a total Union population of 9.5 million people, Coloureds comprised more than 760,000. About 89 percent of Coloureds lived in the Cape Province.[31] A 1942 report by University of Cape Town Professor Edward Batson reveals that about 153,000 Coloureds lived within the Cape Town city limits, mostly in poverty or working-class conditions.[32] By 1960, Coloureds made up about ten percent of the total Union population of 1.5 million. Almost 90 percent of the Coloured population lived in the Cape Province, especially the western region. A quarter of the population lived on the Cape Peninsula.[33]

Sources

Much of the primary source research for this project was conducted over the course of two research trips to Cape Town, one in the summer of 2011 and another in 2013-2014. Most sources were collected in the city's branch of the National Library of South Africa and the Western Cape Archives and Records Service, though significant primary sources were also available through university libraries in the United States and the Center for Research Libraries' collections. Integrating more Afrikaans sources will be a central point of revision and expansion for the project in the future.

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[31] U. G., No. 54, 1937, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1937), 85.

[32] Edward Batson, *A Contribution to the Study of Urban Coloured Poverty* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1942), 3. Batson reported that 25,000 Coloured households in Cape Town lived below the poverty line in 1938-39.

[33] S. P. Cilliers, *The Coloureds of South Africa: A Factual Survey* (Cape Town: Banier Publishers (Pty.) Ltd., 1963), 16.

Depending on the temporal and topical focus of each chapter, the foundation of primary sources shifts significantly. However, newspapers targeted primarily toward a Coloured, Black, or working-class audience were the most useful in constructing interesting narratives through which to relay discourses of masculinity and race as they related to everyday life. Articles, editorials, and letters from the *A.P.O.*, *Cape Argus*, *Cape Standard*, *The Sun*, and *The Torch* were particularly helpful as were pieces from *Drum* and the *Golden City Post* for articulating popular culture and sentiments over the course of several decades. In terms of providing representative voices, these newspapers vary in audience and reach. The *A.P.O.*, for instance, never attracted a readership larger than about one percent of the Coloured population, while *Drum* had the largest readership of any publication on the African continent in any language. The *Cape Standard* and *The Sun* both had circulations of tens of thousands, but targeted mostly separate readerships. *The Sun* supported the political aims of the APO and encouraged support for the United Party. The *Cape Standard*, meanwhile, usually espoused more leftist political goals and sometimes lent support to the Communist Party of South Africa. Coloured South Africans lent their voices as producers and consumers of these sources, dictating the opinions and topics that would attract the most attention and amass the most support.

Other important primary sources for the project include the papers of Abdullah Abdurahman, pamphlets from various political organizations, and contemporary literature from South Africans in the forms of novels, poems, and essays. Though not a focal point of this project, visual representations of Coloured South Africans in advertisements, cartoons, and photographs helped

me contextualize much of what I read. I believe visual media will be another fruitful source of history as this project develops in later iterations.

Another acknowledged shortcoming of this dissertation is the relative silence of women in my chosen sources. The absence of more feminine perspectives on how the formation and expression of masculinities in South Africa is regrettable, but also reflects the absence of women in many of the available sources. Connell and others have rightly pointed out that conceptions of hegemonic masculinities were originally meant to exist in conversation with conceptions of hegemonic femininity, but the connections eroded over several decades of changing emphasis.[34] Women's perspectives on masculinities in general, and Coloured masculinities in particular, could be explored through several avenues. The APO included a Women's Auxiliary, and women were active in many political and civic organizations. Newspaper coverage usually described only women's activities as opposed to women's views, but other sources may be identified to offer new perspectives. Abdullah Abdurahman's daughter, Cissie Gool, also became a prominent political leader and activist. Her personal papers as well as other archival records may prove valuable as a starting point. I hope to correct this lacuna during future diggings in South Africa's libraries and archives.

Terminology of Race

One important criticism of this project is my use of the term "Coloured" to describe the primary subjects of the study. Coloured is a contentious label both

[34] R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity" Rethinking the Concept," *Gender & Soceity* 19, no. 6 (December 2005): 848.

because of its ambiguity and its association with the apartheid categorization scheme. Like "Native," "Bantu," "Coolie," and "Bastard," the term has carried significant negative connotations at different times when deployed to distinguish supposedly lesser races from a dominant European/White race. My use of the term throughout this project necessarily racializes the historical subjects, but my intention is neither to convey nor condone the pejorative connotations associated with South African racial colloquialisms. Instead, I use Coloured to identify those individuals and groups who adopted or were forced to identify as Coloured, either socially or legally. South Africans who described themselves as Coloured or were described by others in the same way shared experiences of discrimination and stereotyping, but also experiences of cultural and political expression that makes the term useful for historical consideration.

Throughout this dissertation, I capitalize all terms denoting racial groups except in cases of direct quotation of sources. Black refers to all South Africans who suffered from racial oppression, both before and during apartheid. Within that category, I include South Africans of indigenous heritage, Coloureds, Indians, and all others who did not primarily identify as being of European heritage. Like Coloured and Black, I also render White with a capital "W" to mark it as a socially constructed identity, not a neutral category by which all other races are measured.[35] By doing so, I hope to emphasize contingencies in the historical narratives of race and gender in South Africa. Black South Africans cannot and should not be thought of as Black because they are not White; it is essential to

[35] One exception to this style is in the phrase "poor white," which refers to a specific demographic identified first by the Cape and then by the South African government. "Poor whites" are explained in more detail in Chapter One.

remember that White South Africans defined themselves as being non-Blacks. The hegemonic political orders of the twentieth century permitted White South Africans to conceptualize and present their status as natural and non-transferrable. My goal in using the contentious terms most commonly associated with White supremacist rule in South Africa is to highlight the struggles to define and redefine those social categories of race as well as gender, sexuality, and class throughout the twentieth century.[36]

Chapter Summaries: Respectability and Deviancy

This project is organized around perceptions of respectability and deviancy is Coloured men's experiences with masculinities. The first chapter explores the popular and sometimes official discourse surrounding stereotypes about Coloured South Africans and their supposed origins in miscegenation. White politicians deployed many of those stereotypes to support efforts to alleviate the "poor white" problem of the 1920s and 1930s. By calling attention to the degenerative plight of "poor whites," who often lived in multi-racial neighborhoods or shared farming responsibilities with Coloured families, White politicians intensified a racial divide among working-class South Africans. This discourse was based on the idea that multiracialism, especially in its most extreme form of miscegenation, led to the degeneration of intellectual, physical, and moral capacities. By following a charitable case study of a young "poor white" girl named Annie Meyer, I explore the ways in which popular discourse in the

[36] At various times, I describe certain sources, places, organizations, etc. as "Coloured." For example, I refer to "the Coloured press." In those instances, I mean only to convey that Coloured South Africans were the primary consumers, residents, or members. "Coloured" is used to establish relevancy of reference.

forms of popular literature, newspaper commentary, and common observations melded with policy statements and government reports to cast Coloured South Africans as racialized and gendered "others."

Using Chapter One as a foundational section, this project moves on to consider idealized conceptions of masculinity within Coloured communities that supported claims of respectability. Chapter Two explores the motivations of Coloured men who served with the Cape Corps and other military units, as well as debates about whether or not military service tempered government perceptions of Coloured men. Many Coloured men argued that service during the First World War would lead to greater recognition and expanded rights after the war. After those gains failed to materialize in the ensuing decades, some Coloured men expressed hesitation or outright disillusionment with military service when war again broke out in the late 1930s. As a masculine commitment common to citizen men across the globe, Coloured men couched their understanding of military service in terms of loyalty, duty, and equality. Even those men who opposed military service during the Second World War argued that Coloured men's long history of service with colonial and Union armies proved their manhood and worthiness of equal rights. This discourse was not unique to Coloured men, of course, and similar histories exist for White settlers across the British Empire, African Americans, and an array of so-called "martial races."

Chapter Three also explores Coloured men's claims to respectability and equality, but does so through narratives of sporting cultures and interracial competitions. Beginning in the 1930s, Coloured South Africans strongly identified with African American athletes like Joe Louis and Jesse Owens. Those

athletes' successes against White opponents on international stages created a context in which Coloured men challenged the masculinity of White South Africans who refused to participate in non-segregated competitions. Coloured athletes measured themselves against the achievements of Louis, Owens, and other racially subordinated competitors and also noted White athletes' shortcomings. Many Coloured South Africans viewed athletic training and competition as evidence of physical prowess and rebuttals to popular stereotypes that described Coloured as physically degenerate. By the 1940s and 1950s, the Coloured press celebrated efforts to integrate the South African Olympic team and leveled heavy criticisms toward national teams who refused Black players and avoided competition against integrated teams, most notably the New Zealand All Blacks with its fearsome Maori stars. Coloured commentators were not indifferent to the importance of sports—especially rugby and cricket—for White South African masculine identities, and their efforts to cultivate their own sporting cultures while criticizing what they viewed as the hypocrisies of the hegemonic masculine order were as impassioned as any anti-segregation protest.

Chapter Four begins an engagement with Coloured men's experiences with expressions of masculinity that they perceived as deviant and potentially threatening to wider acceptance into the hegemonic social order. One of the most enduring archetypes of young Coloured men is the skolly, the menacing Coloured gangster lurking on the street corner. This chapter follows the prominent trope of the "skolly menace" that first gained public attention in the 1930s and reappeared in the decade following the Second World War. I argue that Coloured commentators seized on skollies as a way of isolating stereotypes about Coloured

men's criminality and deviancy and focusing negative attention on a small segment of the population, one that neither represented nor was accepted by the majority. This chapter also demonstrates the ways in which Coloured men believed that masculine institutions like the military, athletic training, and boys' clubs could reform young skollies. Rather than reflecting a product of racial degeneration, skollies were interpreted by Coloured men as youths enacting deviant gender roles.

The final chapter again considers Coloured South Africans' perceptions of deviant gender roles, this time in the form of the transvestite, transgender, and gay men known colloquially as *moffies*. Drawing on newspapers and sensationalized magazine features in *Drum* and the *Golden City Post* during the 1950s, I show how South Africans thought of *moffies* as strange at best and dangerous at worst. However, many Coloured South Africans welcomed *moffies* in their flamboyant roles as burlesque performers and troupe leaders during the New Year's Coon Carnival. The carnival was a popular public display of deviant masculinity, and the *moffies* fit in with performances of Zulu warriors, American Indians, and jovial African American minstrel troupes as temporarily acceptable masculinities. Debates within Coloured communities about the relative respectability of *moffies* were held against the backdrop of the early implementation of apartheid. Many Coloured men emphasized their own respectability by contrasting their masculinity with *moffies* and other expressions of deviancy like drunkenness and criminality. That discourse of respectability provided an outlet for expressions of conformity with the hegemonic gender

order while protesting the racial hierarchy of 1950s South Africa at precisely the moment when White opposition to racial integration peaked.

Chapter One

"Poor Whites" and Degenerate Coloureds: Public Imaginings of Race and Respectability in the Discourse of Segregation

Annie Meyer was in trouble. Her family was suffering through the depressed economy of 1930s Cape Town, seeking out assistance from the General Board of Aide to help make ends meet. Her father worked on a road crew, but was expecting to be let go any day. Annie's mother earned some money by sewing from time to time, but she had "given herself over to the force of circumstances."[37] Annie's maternal grandfather and two younger brothers, aged twelve and sixteen, rounded out the immediate Meyer clan. The family's home in a tenement building was generally in disarray, and the six members of the family crowded into two beds at night. For her part, 17-year-old Annie had recently been fired from her job in a clothing factory for talking to coworkers, but she did not seem to mind. She had found comfort in the company of some young Coloured neighbors.

The "Meyer Case" was presented in a report of the General Board of Aide of Cape Town as a typical example of a "problem case" with which the Board regularly dealt. The Meyers exemplified a type of problem case in which there was a "danger to the children of embarking upon illegal sex relations, intermarriage of white and coloured, crime and delinquency and further development of the pauper type."[38] The Board classified the Meyers as White or

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[37] Abdullah Abdurahman Papers, Cape Town General Board of Aide Report (*ca*. 1932).
[38] AAP, Board of Aide, 21.

European, but they were clearly treated as a less respectable "poor white"[39] family that played fast and loose with conventions of the color bar and everyday decency. An unnamed female student from Stellenbosch University visited the Meyer family on numerous occasions throughout the early 1930s, and her findings created the basis for the "Meyer Case." Of particular concern to the visitor were Annie's relationships with Coloured men in the neighborhood. The visitor scolded Mrs. Meyer for not being "greatly concerned about the companions of her daughter, Annie… who associated with coloured men, who are even permitted to visit Annie and take her out."[40] Indeed, young Annie is at the center of the visitor's report on the family's social conditions. While the family struggled with employment, access to appropriate housing, and payment of school fees for Annie's younger brothers, the visitor's anxieties about mixed-race relationships—sexual and otherwise—dominate the focus of her report to the Board.

The Board's visitor was not alone in her anxieties about mixed-race sex, or for that matter, Coloured South Africans in general. The roles of Coloured South Africans in the political, economic, and social spheres of the young nation-state were common topics in both popular and official discourse. Since the South African War (1899-1902), Coloured elites, almost all of who were men, argued for

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[39] For more on the concept of "poor whites" in South African history, see Colin Bundy, "Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen: White Poverty in the Cape Before Poor Whiteism," in *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa, 1850-1930*, edited by William Beinart, Peter Delius, and Stanley Trapido (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986); Jeremy Seekings, "'Not a Single White Person Should be Allowed to Go Under:' Swaartgevaar and the Origins of South Africa's Welfare State, 1924-1929," *Journal of African History* 48, no. 3 (November 2007); and Annika Teppo, "The Making of a Good White: A Historical Ethnography of the Rehabilitation of Poor Whites in a Suburb of Cape Town," Ph.D. diss., University of Helsinki (2004).

[40] AAP, Board of Aide, 23.

an inclusive political alliance with White South Africans based on mutual ideas of respectability, as well as competition with Black South Africans over jobs and access to services. Many White South Africans, however, perceived their male Coloured compatriots through the lens of stereotypes about promiscuity, drunkenness, laziness, and a lack of masculine respectability. The stereotypes commonly featured in official correspondence and reports concerning crime, prostitution, poverty, and other social ills throughout the country. South African officials were so confused by the stereotypes and ambiguous legal status of Coloured South Africans that, in 1934, the Governor-General commissioned an "Inquiry regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union" (published in 1937).[41] The commission's report attempted to dispel many of the misgivings associated with Coloured South Africans, at least within government circles, but the report was not widely read among the general public.[42] The stereotyping of Coloured South Africans was disseminated to a wide audience through popular culture, such as the works of author Sarah Gertrude Millin, and in common jokes and public portrayals.

As powerful and proliferate as Coloured stereotypes were, they account for only part of White (and sometimes Black) South Africans' anxieties about racial mixing. South Africans of all races used stereotypes as strategies to exclude others from jobs, civic and political organizations, cultural and recreational groups, and participation in government. However, competitions for employment

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[41] U. G., No. 54, 1937, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1937).

[42] Readers of the *Cape Standard*, a Cape Town weekly targeting Coloureds, would have been an exception. The paper ran several in-depth analyses of the commission's report and its implications for the Coloured communities of the Cape Peninsula. See *Cape Standard*, 22 February 1938, for example. The analyses ran for several weeks in early-to-mid 1938.

and better wages, political rivalries, and popular media contributed as much to anxieties of racial mixing and racial degeneration as did the stereotypes. Families like the Meyers struggled to survive during the interwar years, especially in the early years of the global economic depression of the 1930s. The Union government tried to offer White families every advantage, but many families still wrestled with poverty. Coloured families, often due to their close proximity with poor White families, bore the consequences of stereotypes and policies designed to produce and strengthen a larger White middle class at the expense of Blacks.

In order to understand why the Board's visitor concerned herself over Annie Meyer's Coloured companions, it is important to understand the prevailing attitudes about the mixing of races and Coloured South Africans before the Second World War. The *swaartgevaar* or "black peril" anxieties of the early years of the Union did not easily escape the minds of White South Africans, and the rise of the eugenics movement kept fears fresh about racial degeneration.[43] By the late 1920s and 1930s, newspapers and parliamentary debates featured increasing calls from White South Africans for legislation to officially segregate their neighborhoods and workplaces.[44] Though this chapter is focused on identifying the predominate attitudes and stereotypes of Coloured South Africans, the Meyer case affords the opportunity to contextualize those stereotypes within White anxieties about miscegenation, poverty, and struggles among the races—a

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[43] For more on "black peril," see Timothy Keegan, "Gender, Degeneration and Sexual Danger: Imagining Race and Class in South Africa, ca. 1912," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27, no. 3 (September 2001).

[44] Ian Goldin has written on similar calls for segregation during tense economic times in the 1890s: "Coloured Identity and Coloured Politics in the Western Cape Region of South Africa," in *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, ed. Leroy Vail (London: James Currey, 1989), 247.

struggle in which Whites were the minority, and Coloureds a smaller minority still.

Respectability and Degeneration

As part of her preoccupation with Annie Meyer, the Board's visitor laid out a plan of action to save the girl from herself. The visitor suggested Annie, "should have decent, neat and tasteful clothes and so add to her respect and to attract respectable company."[45] Young Annie also needed the guidance of a mature woman, "someone to advise her, especially on matters pertaining to sex. At present the sex element appears to predominate and Annie should be shewn (sic) that there are other more important sides to a woman's life. It is imperative that she should make new and good friends."[46] The Coloured company Annie kept was clearly not suitable from the perspective of the visitor, but the substance of "respectable company" and "good friends" was left implicit. The members of the Board would have understood the visitor's meaning; respectable company in interwar Cape Town meant company that was educated, employed, polite, and, above all, White. The visitor's report focuses only on Annie and her family, but the message comes through that anyone who freely associated with Coloured men, and in fact being a Coloured man, was not respectable.

Respectability is an ideal, one that is imagined at different times for different goals. In his history of Sophiatown, David Goodhew notes that while the ideal can be difficult to define, respectability is an important part of South

[45] AAP, Board of Aide, 26.
[46] Ibid.

African popular culture:

> What writers mean by respectability varies, but the concept does contain a fixed core. There is a stress on economic independence, on orderliness, cleanliness, and fidelity in sexual relations. This is often, though not always, linked to religion. Belief in education as a beneficial force is strongly present. Respectability could also be defined negatively: as implying hostility to alcohol (or at least excessive consumption of alcohol), gambling, sexual unions outside of monogamy, and a lack of religious devotion. Thus respectability was contrasted with what was considered rough.[47]

For the purposes of this study, several particularities can be added to Goodhew's working definition. A person's respectability could be judged based on physical appearance, accent and elocution, the job one held, and the company one kept. In the South African context, a strong argument can be made that perceived racial purity factored into a person's respectability as well. For Annie Meyer and her Coloured companions, their respectability was jeopardized by the sexualized nature of their observed relations.

The judgment contained in the visitor's report concerning Annie conveys a mix of worry and contempt. After glossing over the lack of interest displayed by Annie's mother and father in the failings of their household, the visitor focuses her attention on Annie's need for help:

> Some of Annie's friends are coloured (so assert the neighbours). Annie appears to be losing her sense of social distinction. She is prone to friendships with coloured bus drivers and likes going for rides with them. Is fond of smoking cigarettes when these are given her. She has very few clothes and the couple of dresses she possesses are on the daring side. The girl is shy of decent people and generally quietly disappears making it difficult to get her into conversation. Past Std. V. [passed the primary education] At school, but left long ago. On one occasion when the family was visited by a student of Stellenbosch University Annie was busy ironing a dress

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[47] David Goodhew, *Respectability and Resistance: A History of Sophiatown* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), xviii.

> in the company of a young man who appeared to be coloured. Both were laughing and talking and generally flirting with each other. Annie has many potentialities, but her nature, character and manners have been ruined through circumstances. Her mode of speech is very ordinary with a Malay accent.[48]

The visitor's concern for Annie goes beyond the Meyer family's poverty. The concern is also not simply about Annie's economic future or physical well-being. The visitor's concern flows from the common belief in racial degeneration through association and, especially, sexual intermingling of the races. The contradiction in the visitor's charitable intentions is that she believes Annie and the Meyer family could be uplifted to a respectable standing; Annie's Coloured boyfriends were a lost cause and merited no concern from the Board of Aide, despite living in the same conditions as the Meyer family.

Political elites and academic experts spurred on the fear of racial degeneration through miscegenation by promoting a localized brand of Social Darwinism that encouraged Whites, both Afrikaans- and English-speaking, to unite in a common cause of nation building. As the politics of White supremacy in the Union intensified during the 1930s and political elites sought to lift "poor whites" out of poverty and into respectability, many experts attributed the cause of their poverty to racial mixing. As Saul Dubow writes, "The danger of racial mixing was particularly acute because it operated in the private arena as well a the public domain; it linked anxieties relating to sexuality, the family and the individual with the broader concerns of race."[49] Because the Board's visitor suspected Annie Meyer of having sexual relationships with Coloured men, the

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[48] AAP, Board of Aide, 23.

[49] Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 181.

visitor also assumed that Annie had no loyalty to her own race and certainly did not understand the consequences her actions could reap for her entire family. Were Annie to bear a child through one of her liaisons, any economic gains made by the Meyer family would be for naught. The taint of "mixed blood" would be enough to unravel any air of respectability the family could muster.

The visitor felt free to ignore the plight of Annie's Coloured neighbors because of a conviction that racial degeneration was a permanent condition, one that led to poverty, disease, and criminality. Those who engaged in interracial relationships were dangerous, and their offspring (understood to be Coloured) represented the harsh consequences of not following racialized South African society's boundaries. For Whites, participation in an intimate relationship with a non-White "was the clearest testimony of… lack of racial loyalty."[50] Experts contended that for Coloureds, who were the perceived products of miscegenation, life at the margins of respectable society was all that could be obtained. Even the president of the South Africa Association for the Advancement of Science viewed Coloured people with contempt and tried to bolster his opinions with "facts." In a series of articles and addresses in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Professor H. B. Fantham decried the Coloured peoples' lack of intelligence, their poor physical development, and "unstable temperament."[51] These negative social qualities were accepted as evidence of racial degeneration amongst Coloured people and served

[50] Susanne M. Klausen, *Race, Maternity, and the Politics of Birth Control in South Africa, 1910-1939* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 20.

[51] Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*, 136.

as warnings to the "pure" races. The mixing of blood outside of one's own race could, like a disease, ravish the body and spirit of the race as a whole.[52]

Stereotypes and Segregation

The stereotypes that informed the Board visitor's anxieties about mixed-race relationships and Coloured South Africans were not new in the 1920s and 1930s. Several scholars have pointed out that powerful stereotypes about Coloured South Africans were popular in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Vivian Bickford-Smith, for example, finds that early stereotypes about Coloured South Africans most commonly targeted Malays, and that those stereotypes accused Malays "of making Cape Town both an immoral and dangerous place for English habitation" and "of running the brothels and *shebeens* of the city."[53] Bickford-Smith goes on to suggest connections between negative stereotyping of Coloured South Africans and economic depression. During the depression of the 1880s, an intensified White supremacist sentiment in the Cape encouraged the "social separation" of all the races in addition to the already established

[52] See Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Rutledge, 1995), 47. McClintock outlines the connections between degeneration and contagion in Victorian thinking. She also notes the "Victorian paranoia about boundary order," arguing that whites in South Africa and elsewhere obsessed over one's place in the racial, colonial, class, and gendered order of society. Knowing one's place and helping to maintain the boundaries for others were crucial social functions for respectable members of society.

[53] Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice, 1875-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 71. See also: John Western, *Outcast Cape Town* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 15-25. Writing about Coloured communities on the Cape Flats during the 1980s, geographer John Western outlined several common features of White stereotypes about Coloured South Africans: history of possession by Whites, "bastardy," drunkenness, musicality, hopelessness/powerlessness, White sentimentalism for "childlike" qualities, criminality and violence, and licentiousness. These were also common elements of stereotypes dating back to the first half of the twentieth century, though it is not an aim of this project to trace the origins of prevalent stereotypes.

segregation in most official institutions.[54] Decades later, similar perceptions of threats posed by Coloured South Africans encouraged many government officials and their White supporters to call for increased segregation in neighborhoods and public institutions.

Public calls for segregating Coloureds from Whites often framed the case in terms of being the best-case scenario for both groups. For Whites, families like the Meyers would be able to live next to more respectable White families and would face less competition for access to employment and education. Likewise, Coloured communities would be able to thrive without having to compete, often at a disadvantage, with White neighbors. A deputation to the Cape Town City Council claimed, "Separate residential areas would remove all causes of racial strife and an atmosphere of peace and goodwill would be created. By working out their own salvation in separate areas the coloured people would overcome their inferiority complex and cultivate an atmosphere of respect."[55] Proponents of segregation argued that physical separation of the races was the only way Coloured South Africans would ever brush off the negative effects of their own racial degeneration. Almost no one suggested racial equality, even if separate, but the idea that Coloured South Africans could reinforce their intermediate social ranking—favored by Whites as more "civilized" than other Black South Africans—was always implied. As one White commenter suggested, "If the coloured people were given their own areas, where they could have their own places of amusement, shops and playgrounds, they would be saved and uplifted, and

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[54] Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, 91.

[55] *Cape Times*, 23 June 1938. Similar arguments persisted until the passage of the apartheid-era Group Areas Act in 1950.

become better men."[56]

Though calls for segregation were sometimes pitched as profitable for all races, others focused on the dangers of not committing to segregationist policies. Lecturing at Oxford in 1929, the South African statesman Jan Smuts suggested that segregation was in the interests of both White South Africans and Black Africans, while Coloureds were cast as the specter awaiting both races if they did not develop separately. Smuts told the audience, "The mixing up of two such alien elements as white and black leads to unhappy social results—racial miscegenation, moral deterioration of both, racial antipathy and clashes, and to many other forms of social evil."[57] The implication here is obvious, that Coloured people were a mistake from South Africa's past that needed to be avoided in the future.

Amidst the intensifying racialization of South African politics, the government convened a commission to clarify the factual and fictional understandings of Coloured South Africans' political, economic, and cultural standing within the Union. After three years of testimony and research, the commission published its findings in 1937. The unprecedented attempt to define and characterize "Coloured" for official purposes presented demographic information from the four provinces of the Union, laid out testimony from employers and community leaders, and detailed many of the social problems facing Coloured communities. However, the members of the commission remained divided over how best to define "Coloured"—half the members refused

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[56] *Cape Times*, 24 August 1938.

[57] J. C. Smuts, *Africa and Some World Problems: Including The Rhodes Memorial Lectures Delivered in Michaelmas Term, 1929* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1930), 93.

to accept a "type definition" even existed[58]—and many of the report's descriptions are either ambiguous or essentializing.

The commission resorted to describing certain "classes" of Coloured people, divided roughly along socio-economic lines but also based on perceived degrees of respectability. As noted before, class and respectability could not always be separated during this period. The commission's first class is an "undesirable class" of the unemployed, the criminals, the "skolly boys," the drunkards, and the *dagga* smokers.[59] The middle class included day laborers, factory workers, and domestic workers. The commission describes this class as having the most contact with Whites and also the most likely group to try to "pass" for White. Finally, the third and most respectable class included Coloured teachers, artisans, skilled tradesmen, and the few Coloured professionals. The commission lamented that the first class seemed to, "colour European public opinion regarding the whole Coloured community," while the third class remained unfamiliar to many Whites.[60] Apparently, the problems faced by many Coloured South Africans when competing for employment, housing, education, and political rights became one of branding; Whites saw only a sliver of Coloured life through the courts, the bars, and the streets of South Africa, but that sliver was taken as representative of the Coloured community at large. The fact that most Whites had little to no personal contact with Coloured South Africans outside of relationships with employees also suggests the degree to which Cape

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[58] U. G., No. 54, 1937, 10.

[59] "Skolly" refers to young Coloured boys and men who acted as gangsters in the cities. Chapter Four will detail how the "skolly" became a particular form of deviant masculinity associated with Coloureds. Skollies were not to be respected but at the same time demanded respect. *Dagga* is the South African colloquial term for marijuana.

[60] U. G., No. 54, 1937, 16.

Town and other areas were already segregated socially without the impetus of legal codes.[61]

Testimony collected by the commission reveals two major trends in White perspectives of Coloured South Africans. The first portrayed Coloureds as degenerates and inherently weak in body and mind. This characterization can usually be traced back to the first class described by the commission. For example, the commissioners noted, "Among the very poor there is a class in which the father tends to shirk the responsibilities of parenthood more readily, especially where the children are the result of sexual intercourse of the casual nature. In many cases he is apt to spend an excessive amount on drink…."[62] In addition to domestic problems, the commission also heard testimony from employers about the risks involved in hiring Coloured men. A report from the Cape Town electricity department gave the opinion that the general physique of Coloured men was "not too good" and that "the Coloured worker apparently does not concern himself overmuch about efficiency, being more concerned with getting in a day's work with the minimum of exertion."[63] Through these testimonies, there is official confirmation of prevailing stereotypes of Coloured South African men as absentee fathers, drunkards, and lazy and incompetent workers.

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[61] Vivian Bickford-Smith was one of the first historians to cultivate this line of thinking, rejecting the sanitized portrayal of "Cape liberalism" and a lack of segregation in the Cape before apartheid.

[62] U. G., No. 54, 1937, 19.

[63] "Electricity Department report," evidence presented to the Cape Coloured Commission, May 1935, Source: 3/CT, Vol: 4/1/11/400 Ref: G18/7, Western Cape Archives and Records Service, Cape Town.

The second trend found in the testimony is one of patriarchal White stewardship of Coloured South Africans. Many White professionals believed that, given the opportunity and resources, Coloureds would be able to attain a level of respectability they had yet to develop on their own. The commission received reports regarding the improvement of educational and economic opportunities for Coloureds and eventually recommended, "that the ultimate aim to which Coloured education should be directed, be conceived in terms of physical, mental and moral discipline."[64] The commission's proposal that Coloured education be steered away from vocational training and be brought more in line with the curriculum for White students suggests that there was an ideal educational model in the minds of the members of the commission. For elites in South Africa and throughout the British Empire, formal education was often the first step in crafting young, respectable, and masculine citizens.[65] If Whites offered a section of the Coloured population the same chance, the commission believed an attitude of political and cultural allegiance to the young Union would be reinforced amongst Coloured South Africans as well.

The contradictions as to whom or what was responsible for the plight of most Coloured South Africans can be found throughout the report, as well as in memoranda of testimony not published in the final report. Some of the commissioners and respondents suggested that White discrimination was to

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[64] U. G., No. 54, 1937, 166.

[65] It should be noted here that there was one Coloured member of the commission, Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman. However, much of Abdurahman's political career was spent arguing for equal opportunity and legal status between Coloureds and Whites. For a discussion of education and White masculinity in South Africa, see Robert Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal, 1880-1920* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2001). Also, in the context of settler Australia, Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity, 1870-1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001).

blame for Coloured poverty and degeneration, but even when Whites were asked to shoulder the blame, they were asked politely. From one memorandum:

> The attitude of the European can be broadly characterized as one of support and patronage, occasionally degenerating into offensiveness. The assumption of superiority is galling, and a definite inferiority complex has resulted among the Coloured people. There is no doubt that considerable kindness and respect is shown by certain members of all sections in the European community, these being regrettably outweighted (sic) by the other section of the European opinion.[66]

Here, the respondent first suggests that most Whites supported Coloureds with a sense of patriarchal custodianship, but then quickly claims that prejudice was the dominant White opinion. The commission presented similar contradictions, including one relating to Coloured teachers, who formed a large section of the Coloured middle class.[67] While first declaring that school managers found that most Coloured teachers performed satisfactorily, the commission also reported that, "a fairly large percentage of replies stressed the 'laziness and lack of discipline' of Coloured teachers, and a few their 'lack of background.'"[68] The contradictory and ambiguous nature of the commission's report only served to muddle the empirical information contained therein, and likely reinforced many of the stereotypes prevalent among the White political elites who read the findings. The commission did not advocate for segregation, but many of the Whites who gave testimony did.

The Board's visitor who called on the Meyer family clearly held many of the prevailing perceptions that the commission recorded several years later. The

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[66] AAP, "Memorandum Submitted by Bishop D. H. Sims: Questionairre [sic] D., Social, Moral and Psychological" (ca. 1937).

[67] See Mohamed Adhikari, *"Let Us Live for Our Children:" The Teachers' League of South Africa, 1913-1940* (Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1993).

[68] U. G., No. 54 , 1937, 162.

visitor concluded her report on the Meyer family with a "Suggested Method of Treatment," a series of recommendations the visitor believed would improve the lives of Annie and her relatives. The Meyers needed to be relocated to better housing, needed to associate with better neighbors, and the children needed to attend better schools. The visitor also reported that "the biggest obstacle to rehabilitation" was the family of an unnamed daughter older than Annie. This daughter was married to a Mr. Ford, a man the visitor had "reason to believe" was Coloured. The visitor saw the Ford family as a drain on the Meyers because the eldest daughter and her husband, though they had children of their own, were both unemployed and sought assistance from Annie's parents.[69] By removing the Meyers from their mixed-race neighborhood and setting up barriers to contact with the mixed-race Fords, the visitor hoped the Meyers could achieve a new level of respectability and comfort. In short, the visitor advocated for segregation as a "treatment" for her "poor white" subjects.

Racial Mixing in the Public Imagination

Though the commission's report is still the most comprehensive source for stereotypes and attitudes about Coloured South Africans before the Second World War, the report was not meant for mass consumption. Very few South Africans outside of the government and academic circles would have read the commission's findings. Indeed, most White South Africans' perceptions of Coloured South Africans came from their limited interactions with Coloureds and from portrayals in popular media. Next to newspapers, one of the most

[69] AAP, Board of Aide, 23-26.

proliferate sources was the work of South African author Sarah Gertrude Millin. Beginning in the 1920s, Millin published a series of novels and works of nonfiction that dealt with race relations and, often, with the consequences of miscegenation. Millin was widely read in South Africa and abroad, and she served as an un-credentialed expert on the threat of mixed race relationships and the repercussions that they could bear. Historian Ian Goldin notes that when the Minister of Interior introduced the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act in 1949, Millin was cited as one of the influences for the legislation.[70] Her writings have become essential sources of contemporary understandings of Coloureds as dangerous and degenerate.

Millin was the daughter of Eastern European Jewish immigrants to South Africa. One biographer, Martin Rubin, suggests that her family's lack of familiarity with issues of race before arriving in South Africa may have nurtured a sense of misunderstanding and even distrust of Black South Africans.[71] Rubin claims that her family's Jewish background would have informed their opinions of mixed race relationships. The closest parallel a young Millin and her parents would have had would be marriages between Jew and gentile, an act they may have "regarded with distaste and fear."[72] These early anxieties about racial mixing demonstrate that Millin was certainly not the progenitor of stereotypes about Coloured people, but rather that she herself heard and accepted many of the

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[70] Ian Goldin, *Making Race: The Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1987), xviii. Goldin also writes, "As V. February has shown, Sarah Gertrude Millin perhaps more than any other individual popularised stereotypes of Coloured identity."

[71] Martin Rubin, *Sarah Gertrude Millin: A South African Life* (Johannesburg: A. D. Donker, 1977), 19.

[72] Ibid.

negative assertions about Coloured origins, Coloured capabilities, and the menace of mixing blood. J. M. Coetzee has written that Millin's ideas and writings were born from a complex of "blood, flaw, taint, and degeneration."[73]

Millin's most successful work was *God's Stepchildren* (1924),[74] a best-seller in South Africa and the United States that traced several generations of a family born from the illicit relationships of a European missionary and a member of his "Hottentot" congregation. The originator of Millin's fictional family tree, the Reverend Andrew Flood, is portrayed as a deeply flawed man, obsessed with his own legacy but lacking any real ability. When a young White woman in Cape Town rebuffs his affections, Flood returns to the veld and his remote mission station as an unstable man. He decides almost overnight to marry one of the local women to whom he has been ministering, even over the objections of his closest colleague. This second missionary, and Millin in her narration, refer to Flood's deed as a sin, an affront to the holy order of things as opposed to the natural.[75] Flood, by virtue of his race and his religious conviction, is supposed to be above succumbing to his natural instincts and able to control his inhibitions. By rejecting reason and following his impulses, Flood dooms his "Coloured" progeny to lives of "suffering for the sin of their mad ancestor."[76]

The final character in *God's Stepchildren* is meant to be the most tragic and the most familiar to Millin's readers. Barry, the Rev. Flood's great-great-

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[73] J. M. Coetzee, *Writing White: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 138.

[74] For a more detailed analysis of how miscegenation is used in South African literature, see Peter Blair, "That 'Ugly Word:' Miscegenation and the Novel in Preapartheid South Africa" *Modern Fiction Studies* 49, no. 3 (Fall 2003).

[75] Rubin, *Sarah Gertrude Millin*, 80.

[76] Ibid. Rubin suggests that Millin adopted her notion of miscegenation as a sin from the prevailing doctrine of the Dutch Reformed Church, which observed a strict color bar.

grandson, comes of age during the First World War. Barry senses from an early age that there is something wrong with him. He, "feared his blood… He felt himself to be different. He had the contempt for black blood which is one of the nails in the cross that the black-blooded bear."[77] Again, Millin presents Coloured blood or ancestry as a sort of contagion that afflicts all those who carry it. When Barry finds himself on the battlefields of Europe during World War I and too frightened to perform his duties, Millin suggests that Barry, a closet Coloured, was never up to the task to begin with: "He had tried telling himself to be white, he had besought God for strength—nothing helped."[78] That serving one's country in times of war was seen as a masculine, patriotic duty would not have been lost on Millin's White readers, both Afrikaner and Briton alike. Thus, Barry's—and by extension, all Coloured men's—inability to perform when the bullets flew hit at the core of what it meant to be a South African man. Much of the stereotyping contained in Millin's writing follows suit by suggesting Coloured people and those who freely associated with them were inherently incapable of achievement, prosperity, and respectability.

Millin's most popular work of nonfiction, *The South Africans* (1927), held steadfast to the equation of "Coloured" with "mixed race." In an attempt to explain the racial order of contemporary South Africa to a foreign audience, Millin outlines the cultural, political, and economic standing of different sections of the population. "Poor whites" make an appearance, with Millin positing, "A poor white is someone of European extraction who cannot support himself

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[77] Sarah Gertrude Millin, *God's Stepchildren* (New York: Boni and Liveright, Inc., 1924), 249. Here, Millin uses "black" to mean non-White/non-European.

[78] Ibid., 270.

according to a European standard of civilisation, who cannot keep clear the line of demarcation between black and white."[79] For Millin, "poor whites" were poor by their own faults and lived dangerously close in relation to Coloureds. In defining "Coloured" for her foreign audience, Millin focuses on their miscegenetic origins and corresponding inferiorities. Using "Coloured," "Eurafrican," and "half castes" interchangeably, Millin disparages Coloured South Africans as "the fruit of the vice, the folly, the thoughtlessness of the white man."[80] She also suggests that every Coloured man aspired to be White. All those who could pass did so. As for the remainder:

> They are, many of them, astonishingly capable with their hands; they make good carpenters, mechanics, servants. But it has not yet happened in the history of South Africa that a really coloured man, a man so dark that he could not, even by a general conspiracy of evasion, pass as white—it has not yet happened that such a one has distinguished himself in any branch of achievement whatsoever. No Cape coloured man has risen to high rank in commerce, art, science, the professions, or politics.[81]

This statement, of course, ignores reality. Though small in number relative to the rest of the population, there were Coloured doctors, lawyers, city council members, priests and imams, businessmen, artists and musicians. Several Coloured political organizations, the African People's Organization most prominent among them, agitated for equal rights with Whites. Millin ignored these Coloured people, and chose to keep her readers ignorant of them as well.

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[79] Sarah Gertrude Millin, *The South Africans* (New York: Boni and Liveright, Inc., 1927), 172. Millin suggests that one-tenth of the Union's White population fell into the category of "poor white."

[80] Ibid., 205. Millin ascribes the line of thinking that Whites were ultimately responsible for Coloured origins to the "Nationalist formula."

[81] Ibid., 213.

It is impossible to know if the young woman who visited the Meyer family was familiar with work of Sarah Gertrude Millin. We can say with some certainty that the visitor was conversant in the political and cultural justifications for White South Africans' anxieties about miscegenation. Many of those anxieties were rooted in popular understandings of eugenics and race science. While it is within imagining that the visitor, a student of Stellenbosch University, studied eugenics and racial theory, it is more likely that she developed her anxieties about miscegenation through popular sources—editorials in local newspapers, speeches and debates reported from Parliament, political campaigns that sought to bolster White support by promising to suppress Coloured competition, and published literature like Millin's. Even though Millin herself was not trained in any official capacity to explain the theories behind eugenics, her personal understandings of racial order and fears of degeneration, "made eugenist ideas accessible."[82] If the visitor was not influenced by the stereotypes contained in the works of Millin and her peers, it can be assumed that many other South Africans were.

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The stereotypes contained in government reports and popular media can be understood as attempts by Whites to exclude Coloureds from any sense of national community in the young Union. That national community, according to Whites, was composed of respectable citizens, more often men than not. White men held ideals of athleticism, bravery, education, moralism, and prosperity that found their embodiment through "manliness," or a respectable masculinity.

[82] Jeremy Creighton Martens, "Conflicting Views of 'Coloured' People in the South African Liquor Bill Debate of 1928" *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 35, no. 2 (2001): 333.

Stereotypes of Coloureds highlighted the inverses of those qualities: weakness, cowardice, ignorance, debauchery, and poverty. Following this line of thinking, the national community was, as its most essential quality, White. Coloureds, as members of a different race, were left outside of participation in the official and cultural functioning of the Union, and Whites often employed questions of masculinity as the metric to prove Coloureds were not worthy.

Conclusion

In August 1932, the White students of Stellenbosch University received their own visitor. Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, a medical doctor and the president of the APO, addressed the audience to voice his concerns about the relationships between White and Coloured South Africans. Contrary to the Board visitor's opinion, Abdurahman argued that it was not racial intermingling that degraded White families like the Meyers. Likewise, Coloured South Africans were not inherently degenerate. Abdurahman pleaded with the White students, "The outstanding fact of the non-European's position is that your ancestors have driven us into it, are keeping us there, and your elders are heaping further humiliations daily upon us."[83] He continued with an astute observation of the connections between the White elite's proposed uplifting of "poor white" families and the ramifications for their Coloured neighbors. He told the students, "Your elders have formed yourselves into a white autocracy—self-exclusive, self-sufficient, pretending that they are protecting the interests of South Africa and imagining that they are guarding your future by suppressing the non-

[83] *Cape Argus*, 4 August 1932.

Europeans."[84] Finally, Abdurahman used his platform to soundly reject the degrading stereotypes about his fellow Coloured South Africans. Rather than the lazy, drunken, promiscuous, and degenerative leeches that many White South Africans perceived them to be, Coloured South Africans expected, "no favours, no props, but only the due recognition of citizen rights with all the attendant duties and obligations, and to participate in proportion to their capacity in common with other citizens in the benefits which South Africa holds out it its people."[85]

Coloured women, too, urged Coloured men to shape up and live respectable lives. The wife of one APO branch leader argued that it was as much a woman's duty to cultivate respectable masculinities as it was a man's. She believed that Coloured women, "should let the world know that in this fight the women are going to stand side by side with [Coloured men], and not sit quietly down when their husbands and sons were being humiliated."[86] Another editorial from the women's auxiliary of the APO implored young Coloured women to keep a watch over their male counterparts. The editorial asked, "Why is it that [young women] do not encourage the young men to become worthy citizens? …To them as the future mothers of our race, I say, 'You ought to insist on your male friends taking some interest in the political welfare of our people.'"[87] Though Coloured women clearly invested energy and intellect into the cultivation of respectable masculinities, their voices are all too often missing from the historical record.

Abdurahman's speech, to the very student body from which the Board's visitor came, suggests that Coloured South Africans were not only aware of the

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[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] *A.P.O.*, 19 June 1909.
[87] *A.P.O.*, 28 February 1920.

damaging effects pejorative stereotypes had on their communities, but that they actively strove to dispel those stereotypes and argue for a respectable image of Coloured citizenship. For example, a young Coloured student writing for the Livingstone High School magazine decried the popular association of alcohol and sex with Coloured masculinity: "There are certain of our supposed intellectuals who count it as honourable to enumerate their feats in handling the beer and wine bottle and their acquaintance with a certain type of woman classed as degraded and disease spreading."[88] That a Coloured youth felt compelled to comment on the affairs of "our supposed intellectuals" is telling of the contempt many Coloured men, young and old alike, felt for their peers who conformed to negative stereotypes.

In order to argue for a racially inclusive nation-state, as far as it pertained to them, Coloured men had to quash many of the stereotypes White South Africans deployed. Coloured counterpoints often began where the White stereotypes ended: masculinity. Abdurahman, speaking to Whites as though their understanding of the nation-state was but a delusion ("pretending… imagining"), argued for many years that Coloured men were just as worthy of the vote, of participation in municipal and national government, of full service in the military, and of the respect of their White peers. But to really convince anyone, Coloured men as a whole had to overcome the obstacles between their understandings of their masculine obligations and Whites' perception that Coloured men would always fall short. The young student cited above was but

[88] Franklin P. Joshua, "Physical Education," in *Our Christmas Number: Livingstone High School Magazine* (1939).

one voice among many speaking to both his Coloured community and the Whites who cast aspersions from on high. He wanted to be respected, and he wanted his fellow Coloured men to deserve to be respected. The following chapters will demonstrate that the young student's voice was not the first, nor the last, to challenge Coloured stereotypes through the lenses of masculinity and respectability.

Chapter Two

Marshaling Manhood: Declarations of Loyalty and Masculine Citizenship through Two World Wars

In Cape Town, where the mountains
Soar, mist clad, from the wave,
The Cape Corps draws that manhood
Which Cape Town always gave.
Left—Right—Left—Right…

From the vineyards and the wheatfields
Which deck the western plain
The Cape Corps gathers manhood
When Duty calls again.
Left—Right—Left—Right…

From busy towns along the Reef,
Built by men from gold,
The Cape Corps claims the manhood
Of Soldiers, new and old.
Left—Right—Left—Right…[89]

South Africans' experiences during the two world wars illustrate the importance many placed in the masculine ideals of loyalty, bravery, and physical endurance. Coloured men hoped to prove their devotion to the Union and thereby earn greater rights through service in the Cape Corps, the unit reserved for Coloured enlistees. In the lead-up to the First World War, many Coloured political elites entreated Coloured men to set aside their grievances with the government and make their case for expansion of rights by proving their masculine worth through military service. Political leaders and veterans made similar calls at the start of the Second World War, but many Coloured men also loudly dissented. They suggested that Coloured men gained little in the interwar

[89] *Cape Standard*, 7 January 1941. Excerpted from "Fall In, The Cape Corps," a poem submitted to the paper by an unknown author.

years and should not be so eager to enlist for unequal service only to return to the unequal society in which they struggled. By considering Coloured men's motivations for joining the Cape Corps and the public debates about whether or not they should do so, this chapter aims to highlight the critical importance of military service in South African conceptions of masculinity and racial hierarchies.

The construction of the military as an inherently masculine institution served as an important framework through which South African men articulated their performances of masculinity, both aspirational and realized. Many Coloured men saw military service as the key to earning recognition from the government that they were worthy of voting rights, the full rights of citizenship, and access to the same opportunities as White men. The ideals drilled into soldiers mirrored the ideals of hegemonic South African masculinity. Like the ideal man, soldiers were trained to be loyal, brave, physically robust, protective of the vulnerable but capable of restrained violence, and obedient to authority. Commanders discouraged soldiers from proliferate drinking, obscenity, and sexual activities. In contrast to civilian life, though, military service was subject to rigid instruction and severe punishment for deviancy from the soldierly/masculine ideals.

Coloured men's articulations of militarized masculinities did not emerge from an historical vacuum, but rather were interpreted from early interactions with White soldiers and settlers from across the British Empire. This historical context is important to understand before considering Coloured men's perceptions of military service. At the turn of the century, men from around the Empire cultivated a militarized masculinity that suited the colonial context in

which many of the men lived and fought. White settlers in South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand believed their experiences in rugged landscapes with threatening "natives" produced new masculine ideals that challenged the refined Victorian gentleman so highly regarded in England. For settlers, their masculinity needed to be as much utilitarian as idealized. Athletic men would be physically fit and adept at the manual labor needed to build new countries. Educated men would understand their place in the world and the relationship of the colonies to the metropole. Brave soldiers would be able to defend their homes and communities against threatening "natives." All of these traits combined to ensure that settler men could not be characterized as second class. By the time those White settlers were prepared to assert their independence through nationalist movements, their settler masculinities came to define the nationalist masculinities as well.

Nationalism, along with colonialism and imperialism, were conceived of as masculine enterprises. It was men who would go out and do the work of building a new nation because it was men who possessed the qualities. This was as true in South Africa as it was in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Joane Nagel, for instance, notes that while women were often included in nationalist discourse, "the real actors are men who are defending their freedom, their honour, their homeland and their women."[90] Nationalist projects are so intertwined with masculinity that nationalist discourse and masculine discourse are almost indistinguishable. Nagel points to terms like "patriotism," "duty,"

[90] Joane Nagel, "Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 2 (1998): 244. Nagel notes that in the U.S., no one has been more readily identifiable with the masculine nationalist project than Theodore Roosevelt, who personified the cowboy, the soldier, the entrepreneur, the statesman, and the educated elite.

"courage," and "bravery" and claims that the, "'microculture' of masculinity in everyday life articulates very well with the demands of nationalism, particularly the militaristic side."[91] Historical evidence supports the conscious association of masculinity, militarism, and the making of national identities, at least among White men.

Helen Bradford observes that in recollections by Afrikaner men of the South African War, the British waged a "War on Women" through their destruction of farms and deployment of civilian concentration camps. For the men who rode with the Republican commandos, the war was an affirmation of masculinity; Boer and Afrikaner men were fighting to protect their women, their children, and their lands.[92] The South African War, or the *Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*[93] for Afrikaners, marked a seminal moment in the creation of an Afrikaner national identity. Afrikaner political elites celebrated the valor of the commandos and memorialized the sacrifices of Afrikaner women, declaring that the Afrikaner nation was forged in the fire of war and mud of the concentration camps.[94] In a demonstration of the racialized nature of hegemonic masculinity, memorializations and much of the historiography of the war throughout most of the twentieth century portrayed the conflict as a "White Man's War," ignoring contributions by the hundreds of thousands of African, Coloured, and Indian

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[91] Ibid, 252.

[92] Helen Bradford, "Gentlemen and Boers: Afrikaner Nationalism, Gender, and Colonial Warfare in the South African War," in *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902*, ed. Greg Cuthbertson et al. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 38.

[93] In English, "Second War of Independence," noting that the Afrikaner Republics had already fought a war against the British in 1880-81.

[94] See, for example: Marijke du Toit, "The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: *Volksmoeders* and the ACVV, 1904-1929," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, no. 1 (March 2003): 158-159.

participants, both men and women.

Coloured men were also able to see that the connections between violence, especially that kind sanctioned during wartime, and hegemonic masculinity were widely acknowledged. Many communities the world over conceived of preparations for violence in the form of military training, cadet programs, martial sports, and physical training as cultivating boys for manhood. It should not be claimed that violence is an essential feature of masculine practices, but the common relationship is undeniable. Robert Morrell contends that, "Violence was then seen as a common denominator, something that united men across race and class and was therefore, even if not stated explicitly, hegemonic."[95] Morrell and his coauthors write specifically about South Africa, but the ubiquity of violence within conceptions of masculinity is exemplified in histories of Dominion soldiers, African American men, and the so-called "martial races" around the globe.

Incorporating military training into everyday life proved popular among many settler populations. Saul Dubow describes the production of "dominion nationalisms" or in the South African example, "South Africanism," that aims to unite White settlers against potentially threatening outsiders.[96] In Australia, for instance, the national cadet program was implemented both to train boys as patriotic citizens and to produce a ready-made defense force or draft pool in case

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[95] Robert Morrell, et al., "Hegemonic Masculinity: Reviewing the Gendered Analysis of Men's Power in South Africa," *South African Review of Sociology* 44, no. 1 (2013): 8.

[96] Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, Sensibility and White South Africa, 1820-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), vi. Dubow argues that dominion nationalisms and South Africanism were not defined by racialism; South Africanism designed to unite Afrikaans speakers and English speakers through patriotism, while class interests and scientific racism were cited as motivations to divide the population along racial lines.

Australia mobilized for war. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, government officials promoted the cadet program as a way to imbue boys with masculine characteristics like loyalty, obedience, physical fitness, and patriotism.[97] The program did not always achieve its intended goal. In the race to contribute troops during the First World War, Australian officials decided to avoid conscription in favor of a volunteer force. Bart Ziino notes that in interviews about men's decisions to enlist or stay home, men often cited conflicting masculine obligations that weighed on them heavily. For many men, "the appeal to take up arms conflicted with the immediate requirement to put food on the table."[98] The interests of the state, summed up as patriotism, and the conflicting interests of individual men as heads of their families demonstrates the fluid, if not contradictory, nature of conceptions of hegemonic masculinity.

The ideals of hegemonic masculinity in settler colonies and post-colonies have historically been conflated with White masculinity, but men of subordinated races have also responded to militaristic conceptions of masculinity. In the United States, African American men saw military service during the First World War as a potentially life-changing enterprise. African Americans and Coloured South Africans share many historical parallels, including their minority status and racial oppression at the hands of an intolerant White supremacist regime.

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[97] Craig Stockings, "A Survey of Military, Educational and Community Expectations of the Cadet Movement in Australia, 1866-2006," *Australian Journal of History and Politics* 53, no. 2 (2007): 239.

[98] Bart Ziino, "Enlistment and Non-Enlistment in Wartime Australia: Responses to the 1916 Call to Arms Appeal," *Australian Historical Studies* 41 (2010): 222. Ziino argues that the celebration of martial masculinity in Australia increasingly contradicted the conception of the ideal man as a breadwinner and provider for his family. Perhaps ironically, many men favored conscription so that the individual choice to enlist or not was taken out of their hands and instead rested with the state.

The army provided a job and produced respect. According to Chad Louis Williams, "In large part because of its historical connection with emancipation, donning the uniform carried a measure of honor and status prestige… The opportunity for travel, adventure, and, possibly, the emotional rush of combat appealed to young black men seeking to affirm their manhood."[99] African American men also saw the war as an opportunity to express their citizenship through the masculine duty of service. Though mostly confined to segregated labor units under the command of White officers, African American soldiers did participate in combat. Their successful performance confirmed popular ideas of black men as inherently suited to violence. Coloured men shared many of their motivations with African Americans, but Whites in South Africa did not interpret Coloured masculinity as particularly equipped for military service.

Around the world, men of dominant races described subordinated men as belonging to martial races. White Americans saw African American men as violent, physically robust, and easily trainable. Those perceptions imbued African American men with many of the characteristics of a martial race. Other examples include the Apache, the Gurkhas, the Highlanders of Scotland, and the Sikhs. In New Zealand, European settlers wrote of the Maori as a warrior race. As early as the 1860s, British soldiers fighting against the Maori communities described Maori men as naturally suited for warfare and favoring death over defeat. The biological attributes for Maori warriors allowed Pakeha and British men to assert their dominance, even in defeat, by claiming that European soldiers represented

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[99] Chad Louis Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 60.

the highest level of training and order in combat, while martial races represented the highest expression of natural instinct.[100] At the start of the First World War, Pakeha and Maori leaders both invoked the martial race myth to recruit Maori men for service. Pakeha officials hoped to use Maori men to fill labor and reserve units, and Maori M.P.s and other political elites encouraged Maori men to draw on their warrior heritage to prove their worthiness of equal citizenship.[101] Maori men's deployment of the myth to bolster their political cause fed on the popular relationship between masculinity and nationalism, specifically a citizen's duty to fight for his country. The martial race myth allowed Maori men to access a masculine role of soldier that might have otherwise been denied to them had Pakeha men not previously characterized Maori as perfectly suited to combat.

In South Africa, White settlers and colonial officials most commonly applied the martial race myth to Zulus. The British in particular portrayed Zulu men as warriors trained from birth, and the martial race myth alleviated bruised egos after the British defeat at the Battle of Isandlwana in 1879. In a period in which many British believed that men in the colonies were degenerating from a lack of civilization, war against supposedly inferior communities provided succor and an avenue for masculine development.[102] Combat against martial races like the Zulu was the apex of masculine development through warfare, and a defeat in battle—as long as the war was ultimately won—tempered masculine fortitudes. This line of thinking also supported claims by settler men who fought indigenous

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[100] Franchesca Walker, "'Descendants of a Warrior Race:' The Maori Contingent, New Zealand Pioneer Battalion, and Martial Race Myth, 1914-19," *War & Society* 31, no. 1 (March 2012): 8.

[101] Ibid., 12.

[102] Catherine E. Anderson, "Red Coats and Black Shields: Race and Masculinity in British Representations of the Anglo-Zulu War," *Critical Survey* 20, no. 3 (2008): 25.

communities that they lived on the literal front lines of masculine development.

British and other White settlers pointed not only to Zulu men's performance in battle as evidence of their martial masculinity, but also the prominence of stick fighting among Zulu boys and young men. Many White observers believed that stick fighting readied boys for combat from the time they were young enough to take a blow. However, recent studies have contradicted that evidence by instead arguing that stick fighting represented the Zulu commitment to domestic masculine duties. Zulu boys learned to protect their wealth, in the form of cattle, by training to ward off predators and raiders. Benedict Carton and Robert Morrell also point to the predominantly defensive strategies of successful stick fighting and the social condemnation of excessively brutal attacks.[103] In the years after the suppression of Zulu sovereignty and the elimination of the *impi* system, British and South African observers retrospectively framed stick fighting as evidence of the former Zulu savagery and militancy.

The preservation of stick fighting into the early twentieth century prepared young Zulu men for lives of labour. Pointing to Whites' common reference to African and Coloured laborers as "farm boys" and "mine boys," Carton and Morrell question, "With such emasculating paths to maturity, entrenched by settler power in the twentieth century, it is surprising that Zulu men are still spoken of preternatural warriors."[104] For White South Africans, the persistence of

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[103] Benedict Carton and Robert Morrell, "Zulu Masculinities, Warrior Culture and Stick Fighting: Reassessing Male Violence and Virtue in South Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38, no. 1 (March 2012): 32.

[104] Ibid., 34. Interestingly, European men and White settlers in the colonies often consciously held up sports and hunting as explicit methods of training boys to be masculine and

the Zulu martial myth served their assertion that strict controls were necessary to civilize Zulus and other Africans. Whites' begrudging respect of Zulu warriors acknowledged an adherence to masculine qualities, but denied that martial races represented any sort of masculine ideal.

The circulation of popular discourse linking masculine achievement and wartime activities was not lost on Coloured men in the early years of the Union. They already claimed a long history of military service, including in the nation-defining South African War. The two world wars provided a context in which Coloured men articulated their own visions of masculine duty to the nation and their families. Those visions often paralleled much of the global discourse outlined above, but Coloured men also recognized the precarious conditions under which they tried to define their own masculine ideals. Their status as members of a subordinated racial minority allowed for comparisons with other groups like African Americans and Maoris, but there were no martial race myths about Coloureds. In fact, many White South Africans believed a contrary myth that Coloured men were ill suited to combat and instead naturally conditioned for hard labor. By drawing on their histories of service in earlier conflicts and staking a claim to full citizenship in the future of the Union, Coloured men debated how their roles in the two world wars would help them achieve their political and social aspirations.

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soldierly. However, very few martial race myths existed about White communities, and the few that did exist mostly referred to romanticized histories. See, for example, R. Blake Brown, "'Every Boy Ought to Learn to Shoot and to Obey Orders:' Guns, Boys, and the Law in English Canada from the late Nineteenth Century to the Great War," *The Canadian Historical Review* 93, no. 2 (June 2012): 198-201.

A Brief History of Coloured Servicemen

Most historians trace Coloured men's earliest military ventures to service in the Cape Mounted Rifles during the nineteenth century. The unit was sometimes referred to as the Cape Corps and earned mixed reviews from British officers over the course of the century. Historian Peter Warwick points out that early in the British administration, Coloured soldiers deployed along the eastern frontier and garnered strong praise from their commanders. However, once the British stabilized the frontier and race relations within the Cape degenerated, Coloured soldiers began to desert and, in at least one case, even mutinied.[105] By the late nineteenth century, the British forces no longer employed Coloured soldiers in any regular capacity, though many Coloured men labored for the colonial administrators and officers.

At the start of the South African War in 1899, both sides vowed to keep Black combatants out of the conflict. Almost immediately, though, Black combatants and non-combatants alike joined in the war on both sides, serving in a variety of capacities. Most Blacks were attracted to the British cause due to harsh, racist treatment in the Republics of the interior, though many Coloured and African men served as laborers and *agterryers*[106] for the Republican commandos. Black men hoped that if the British successfully subdued the Republics, "Cape liberalism" in the form of the non-racial franchise would become law throughout South Africa. One typical statement of loyalty proposed

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[105] Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 11-12.

[106] Afrikaans for "after rider" or auxiliary. *Agterryers* looked after horses, carried supplies and arms, and reloaded weapons in the midst of combat. Many worked on the farms and mines of the Republics.

that, through the war, "everything will be done in these Colonies to secure liberty and freedom for all civilised people, and that every opportunity will be given to the uncivilized to raise their status and come within the ranks of Her Majesty's civilised subjects."[107] Many Coloured men saw themselves as already civilized, but thought those among them who were not could only be improved through British administration. However, not everyone believed loyalty expressed through military service was a precondition of the benefits of citizenship. One Coloured man from Salt River declared, "The coloured man is promised equal rights here, and is told to shout hurrah for a flag. I would rather have less loyalty and more equal rights."[108]

Beyond the grand political aspirations of combatants and laborers during the war, many Coloured men saw service as both respectable and a way to shift the racial hierarchies of their daily lives. In his narrative of the Coloured spy Abraham Esau, Bill Nasson demonstrates the ways in which Coloured (and African) men used the war as a context in which to flip power relationships, portraying themselves as powerful and worthy citizens of the Empire and their Boer opponents as members of a backward race worthy of derision.[109] Coloured scouts, for instance, sometimes refused to accept the passes of White men at border crossings, insulting the racial order of the day.[110] Many Black men served with distinction and earned praise from the Imperial authorities, but Afrikaners' political successes in the negotiations for Union assured that "Cape liberalism"

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[107] *South African News*, 8 January 1901. Letter from a delegation of prominent Coloured men from the Cape Colony.

[108] *South African News*, 22 May 1901.

[109] Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War: A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 31.

[110] *South African News*, 6 August 1901.

remained confined to the former Cape colony. Coloured men continued to agitate for expanded rights through both promotion of and resistance to service in the military.

Coloured men recognized the failures of Cape liberalism in the years following the 1910 Union, but the 1914 Afrikaner rebellion and the beginning of the Great War in Europe presented new opportunities to assert their loyalty and express their dissatisfaction with White supremacy. After resisting early calls for the formation of an all Coloured Cape Corps, the Union government relented in 1915. About 25,000 Coloured men volunteered and served in several theaters including East Africa, Egypt, Palestine, and France. Coloured soldiers balked at having to serve under White officers, many of whom were Afrikaners, but also never allowed their loyalty to the Empire to be questioned.[111] Two Coloured armed infantry battalions of about 7,000 men fought in East Africa under the command of White British officers, but most Coloured men served as unarmed laborers and drivers. Coloured men's demonstrated their devotion to duty again during the Second World War, serving with the Cape Corps, artillery units, and South African air forces. This chapter will illustrate the divergent portrayals of Coloured loyalty, patriotism, and masculine duty between the two wars.

With the Cape Corps through the Great War

In the early years of the First World War, Coloured men wrote of military service as an opportunity to perform the masculine roles ascribed to all men of

[111] Bill Nasson, "Why They Fought: Black Cape Colonists and Imperial Wars, 1899-1918" *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37, no. 1 (2004): 61-62. In contrast, other colonial battalions of Black soldiers were recognized as part of the regular British Army with the same status as White South African, Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand units.

the Union who hoped to call themselves citizens. Publicly, Coloured men's motivations for serving largely revolved around masculine ideals of loyalty, duty, and equality. Soldiers and political elites described their goals for service through a predominantly White, Western articulation of masculinity. They believed men should be loyal to their families, their communities, their country, and their Empire. Loyalty predisposed men to perform their duty to defend the Empire against any threat, even if the threat was not immediate to their personal lives. Particularly relevant to Coloured men in South Africa was the belief that military service was a great equalizer; if Coloured men performed their military duties with distinction, they would be perceived as equal to all other men in the Empire when it came to the rights and privileges of citizenship.

The most vocal proponents of Coloured men's service in the war were Abdullah Abdurahman and his allies in the African Political Organisation.[112] Shortly after the start of armed conflict in Europe in July 1914, the APO offered to coordinate the recruitment of five thousand Coloured volunteers. In its initial press release, the APO Executive called on its constituency to set aside popular grievances with the Union government and prioritize demonstrations of loyalty:

> For the present we must endure our domestic burdens in solemn silence, and, by offering to bear our share of the responsibilities, prove that we are not less worthy than any other sons of the British Empire…And no doubt every man will approve this action.[113]

The APO's offer of troops and the related political goals of Coloured men were not conceived of as generic demonstrations of blind loyalty. Rather, Coloured

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[112] The organization changed its name to the African People's Organisation in 1919. The acronym APO should not be confused with *A.P.O.*, the stylization for the organization's newspaper.

[113] *A.P.O.*, 22 August 1914.

political elites like Abdurahman believed demonstrations of loyalty would be necessary to support claims to equal rights with Whites after the war. Even in the early stages of the conflict, APO supporters saw the end of the Great War as an opportunity to, "go ahead once more, with renewed vigour, and, we hope, with better prospects of achieving our end—freedom and justice."[114] The government politely rejected the APO's offer and denied any plans to allow Coloured men to serve, citing the 1912 Defence Act that prohibited Black soldiers from ever being used against Whites.

The APO's expressions of loyalty coincided with the traitorous rebellion of former Republican officers of the South African War and several thousand Afrikaner men disgruntled over poor access to land and loans. In late 1914, following the Union's commitment to the British cause in the war, the rebels mobilized in the Western Transvaal, the Northern Cape, and in the borderlands with German South-West Africa. The rebellion was quickly suppressed and the Union's military refocused its attention toward the Germans to the north. The APO hoped government leaders would interpret the contrast between Coloured loyalty and the treasonous attitudes of some Afrikaners as a sign that Coloured men deserved to be fully integrated into the normative views of citizenship and nationhood.[115] The Teachers' League of South Africa, the largest Coloured professional association and a close ally of the APO, claimed its membership represented an ideal pool from which to draw Coloured men to defend the Union. Challenging the common racialized narrative of loyalty and citizenship, the TLSA

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[114] *A.P.O.*, 5 September 1914.

[115] Gavin Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall: A History of South African "Coloured" Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 85.

boasted that, "Had the services of the Coloured Afrikander and the Natives been accepted, in our teachers the Government would have found and excellent and loyal body wherewith to commission the Coloured battalions. The fact that not a single Coloured teacher has gone into rebellion shows that our teaching profession is loyal to the core."[116] In terms of being judged as men, Coloured men were well versed in the languages and practices of masculinity that celebrated loyalty to cause of one's country as essential. Indeed, if Coloured men hoped to check popular stereotypes that cast derision on their masculine identities, military service—especially in wartime—was a necessary element toward establishing a common masculine identity with men of other races.

Besides couching its overtures to serve in terms of loyalty, the APO also made hearty appeals to its readership's sense of duty. By the time the government relented to offers for Coloured volunteers, many Coloured men had been thoroughly imbued with declarations that each one of them owed service to the Union and the Empire. The APO held that military service was not simply a masculine obligation, but a privilege. Shortly after the government's announcement, the APO rejoiced that, "At last the Coloured people will be afforded the opportunity to take their proper place as a people in the fighting line of the Empire… What nobler duty is there than to respond to the call of your King and Country?"[117] There is at least some evidence that Coloured volunteers took the message of duty to heart. One letter to the *A.P.O.*'s editors asserted, "I hope that we will not shirk duty. None are too poor to do our bit in whatever sphere of

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[116] *The Educational Journal*, May 1915. For more on the TLSA, see Mohamed Adhikari, *"Let Us Live for Our Children:" The Teachers' League of South Africa, 1913-1940* (Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1993).

[117] *A.P.O.*, 18 September 1915.

life we follow."[118] Like loyalty, Coloured men interpreted duty as an important task to be performed regardless of race. They could not leave the defense of the Empire to their White counterparts and still call themselves men of South Africa.

Several obstacles stifled enlistment numbers once recruitment for the Cape Corps began in September of 1915. Coloured political elites did their best to cast a positive light on the less-than-ideal conditions facing Coloured servicemen, but their anxieties are clear in statements concerning the use of White officers and the stipulations for Coloured volunteers. Abdurahman and other political leaders had hoped the prominent Coloured men might be commissioned as officers, but those hopes were never likely to come true. Instead, the APO tried to convey to its readers a positive outlook on what was certainly a product of the government's White supremacy. The command of White officers was something to be celebrated, the APO claimed, because, "unless the Europeans have faith in our men, they would not be so eager to lead them."[119] That statement was probably made both to satire the racist perceptions of many of South Africa's military commanders, and to credit the Coloured men prepared to execute the masculine duty regardless of the circumstances.

The APO expressed its unhappiness with the government's condition that all Coloured volunteers not have dependents, as well. The dilemma highlights an important dichotomy in masculine obligations. Many Coloured men felt it was their duty to go off to war for their country and the Empire, but the government was not willing to supplement the costs of replacing soldiers' domestic

[118] *A.P.O.*, 2 October 1915.
[119] *A.P.O.*, 18 September 1915.

obligations to children and other family members. Noting that most Coloured men of enlistment age had dependents of some form, the APO lamented that, "There is no doubt that the full complement will be raised, but unfortunately the stamp of man will be somewhat lower than what it would have been if that impossible proviso had not been an essential condition."[120] Unlike their White Australian counterparts mentioned above, the APO and much of its constituency viewed military service and domestic duties as congruent—not conflicting—masculine responsibilities. The devotion and hard work that made Coloured men good sons, fathers, and husbands exemplified qualities that also made good soldiers.

Despite the pro-war fervor common in the pages of the *A.P.O.*, there is some evidence of dissent. Potential Coloured volunteers were discouraged by the government's racist rationale for initially refusing to commission the Cape Corps, and more were disgruntled by the rejection of Coloured men with dependents once the formation of the Cape Corps was announced. The dissatisfaction is apparent in one letter to the editor:

> When we come to what may be described as the sense of National obligation, except for the most menial positions, the Coloured man is told he must stand aside, and in proportion to his intelligence he is made to feel that in his own country he is more alien than the alien; he must accept the insult with gratitude. He may wish to do something more than drive a mule, in defence of his flag: he is Coloured, and therefore disqualified. If he were an Indian, or a Maori, or even a Zulu, he might stand a better chance. He may help to produce the wealth of the country, he may be exposed to the same fell disease or accidents as the white man: he is Coloured, and his compensation, if any, must be graded accordingly.[121]

This dissenter and many like him interpreted the government's White

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[120] *A.P.O.*, 30 October 1915.
[121] *A.P.O.*, 5 September 1915.

supremacist policies as not only attacks on Coloured South Africans as an oppressed race, but also as an affront to Coloured men's abilities to perform the gendered roles required of them under hegemonic definitions of masculinity.

In the years immediately following the war, the *A.P.O.* exhibited the contradictions between what Coloured men hoped to achieve through their military service and the racial discrimination Coloured South Africans continued to face. Political elites, Coloured and White alike, praised Coloured men's record during the war as exemplary, but that praise failed to translate into real political or economic gains for Coloured communities. Still, Coloured men held up their military accomplishments as evidence of masculine and patriotic identities that were to be respected. Though Coloured South Africans reveled in the honors bestowed upon the men of the Cape Corps, their disillusionment with the promises of a more equal society after the war could be seen even before all the men had been discharged.

In the first year of peace, Coloured political elites were eager to capitalize on the sacrifices made by the men of the Cape Corps. In preparations for parliamentary elections in early 1920, the APO was sure to emphasize the role Coloured men played in fighting for the Empire. Recognizing that the Allies had held up democratic ideals as reasons for the war, the APO remarked that, "Our own Cape Coloured Corps gained honour and distinction on many a battlefield. Hence we might justly ask what is to be our reward? Are we to be treated as unworthy of civil and political rights, as outcasts, as helots?"[122] The APO also challenged the government to do its duty with regard to promises made to

[122] *A.P.O.*, 1 August 1919.

Coloured veterans. The Allies had spoke of a new, more equal society following a victory, and Coloured soldiers and their families were impatient to see the change.[123] Declarations from the newly formed League of Nations were fodder for APO essays as well. Acknowledging that, "political freedom is so wrapped up with social progress and material and moral well being," the APO argued that the Coloured communities' expressions of patriotism and loyalty throughout the war made them eligible recipients of any fruits of the new world order. Coloured political elites stuck to grand statements of equality, however, and Coloured veterans' voices are mostly silent in the historical record.

By the following year, APO disillusionment with hopes for political rewards following the war was common. The *A.P.O.* lamented that, "the services rendered by the flower of coloured manhood" were being ignored by White politicians when it came to expanding the franchise and ending other forms of racial discrimination.[124] Those services rendered were cited as rebuttals to instances of injustice through the Union. In one example, a story about Coloured South Africans being forced off the sidewalks in Pretoria drew the ire of many commentators. The chairman of the Pretoria APO branch noted that even Coloured veterans were being disrespected, despite their meritorious record.[125] It was clear that the government and White South Africans generally had no intentions of alleviating the racial discrimination faced by Black South Africans, even in the atmosphere of goodwill immediately following the armistice.

If the few years after the war disappointed Coloured South Africans, the

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[123] *A.P.O.*, 15 August 1919.
[124] *A.P.O.*, 28 February 1920.
[125] *A.P.O.*, 10 July 1920.

ensuing two decades presented few reasons to remain optimistic that change could come. Coloured men faced competition on the labor market from White men and, increasingly, African men who were moving closer to the urban centers. The government's efforts to alleviate poverty mostly focused on the "poor White" segment of the population, though Coloured families shared many of the same living conditions and economic obstacles. By the mid-1930s, Parliament was seriously considering bills that would strip Coloured men of the franchise in the Cape and outlaw interracial marriages, a prohibition many Coloured South Africans perceived as a direct insult to their supposed miscegenetic origins. When war loomed once again, many Coloured men reacted with tempered expectations and a new resolve to prove their masculine worth.

Second Chances in the Second World War

As tensions heightened in Europe during the 1930s, the Cape press engaged in heated discussions about what, if any, role Coloured men should play in the seemingly inevitable conflict. Some maintained that Coloured men should be willing to serve again, but only under certain conditions. Other Coloured men claimed that this war was not theirs to fight, and after so many broken promises after the Great War, new promises sounded hollow. As public discussions of war preparations intensified, many Coloured commentators urged their peers not to forget the lessons of the last war. The men of the Cape Corps had served honorably, but had gained little more than recognition in name only.

As early as 1937, some Coloured men offered up their services in the form of a reformed Cape Corps should the Union enter another global conflict.

Aligning with much of the political rhetoric emanating from Black South African political organizations at the time, offers of service were conditioned on recognition of equal citizenship. Reflecting on the Cape Corps' history, the editors the *Cape Standard* declared that, like their White peers, Coloured men, "without exception have a pride in being true South Africans and should occasion arise would not hesitate to take up arms in defence of their country."[126] The question of arms training was an important distinction for many Coloured men in terms of gaining equal recognition as soldiers, citizens, and men. Another editorial asked whether or not Coloured men would be armed to defend, "our homes, our families and our community," situating Coloured interests in war preparations as equal to that of men throughout the Union and the Empire.[127] Through that lens, Coloured men's motivations for offering up service must be interpreted as much through domestic masculine obligations as through political aspirations. Coloured men were asserting their equality on masculine grounds as well as racial grounds.

In early 1939, a debate amongst readers of the *Cape Standard* highlighted feeling of dissent and pro-war fervor within Coloured communities. The exchange began with a young Coloured man from Salt River who challenged the notion that Coloured men were duty bound to military service in defense of the Union. Acknowledging that a citizen's masculine roles included that of a soldier, the young man asked, "But are we citizens? Do we enjoy the privileges of citizens? We

[126] *Cape Standard*, 22 February 1937.
[127] *Cape Standard*, 20 September 1938.

are not and we realise it."[128] The young man asserts that masculine duties did not exist in a vacuum but were meant to bestow some benefits upon those who executed their duties. A relationship was meant to exist between men and their country. Instead, this young man identified the dichotomous relationship between gender and race in 1930s South Africa. Coloured men were expected to perform all the masculine duties of citizenship, but they were receiving little from the White supremacist government in return.

Several other correspondents bolstered the argument that Coloured men deserved equal treatment in the army and at home if they should serve again. A veteran of the Great War argued that Coloured men had earned the right to be commissioned as officers, and with, "their European brothers dodging their Defence Force responsibilities whenever they can," Coloured men who wished to volunteer deserved their country's respect. [129] Another correspondent recommended that Coloured men should wait for the government to make the first concession in terms of offering equal rights at home. Instead of going off to war, "Soldiers are needed without uniforms to fight for our right[s] here in our very midst."[130] A correspondent from Wynberg was equally blunt, encouraging other young Coloured men to avoid service so long as the color bar existed. As loyal as Coloured men were to their communities and their country in theory, they were not willing, "to lay down our lives in defence of a 'White South Africa.'"[131] The onus was on White men in the government and the military to identify with Coloured men on equal footing.

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[128] *Cape Standard*, 17 January 1939.
[129] Ibid.
[130] *Cape Standard*, 24 January 1939.
[131] *Cape Standard*, 31 January 1939.

Not all public opinion opposed Coloured men's participation in the war. A respondent to the dissenters in the *Cape Standard* accused the men of cultivating an inferiority complex and defeatist attitude. Much like many of the proponents of the Cape Corps in the Great War, this young man advanced the idea Coloured men had more to gain through military service than if they stayed home. After the war, Coloured men would possess a new physical and mental discipline that would equip them for their struggles against White supremacy. According to this proponent of service, "this South Africa is our land, our home and our heritage; to live for, to fight for and, if necessary, to die for."[132] Without denying the proliferation of racialized legislation and rhetoric from Parliament, this young Coloured man was still willing to put country before self as a man loyal to his country.

While the *Cape Standard* commonly featured the voices of those disillusioned with military service as a means of achieving racial equality, the competing weekly *The Sun* often printed editorials and statements from those who wished to toe the government's line. After the Union declared on September 4, 1939 its intention to enter the war on the side of the Allies,[133] *The Sun's* editorial board encouraged Coloured men to do their part. The editors published a front-page feature that contextualized Coloured men's service as part of the global struggle against fascism. Coloured South Africans had grievances to be

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[132] *Cape Standard*, 7 February 1939.

[133] Members of Parliament fiercely debated whether to enter the war along with the rest of the Dominion territories or to declare neutrality. For a history of these debates and the political divides between Afrikaans- and English-speaking White South Africans during the war, see Patrick Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika: The Impact of the Radical Right on the Afrikaner Nationalist Movement in the Fascist Era* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1991) and his article, "Fascism, the Third Reich and Afrikaner Nationalism: An Assessment of the Historiography," *South African Historical Journal* 27, no. 1 (1992): 113-126.

sure, but *The Sun* stressed that fascism trumped the racial grievances of minorities and oppressed peoples everywhere.[134] An editorial published at the end of the month urged the government to accept Coloured men's offers of service to support the war effort and to provide Coloured men the opportunity to stand, "together with the races of the earth."[135] The contrast between opinions of military service in the *Cape Standard* and *The Sun* revolves around the loci of conflicts. The *Cape Standard* printed mostly opinions opposed to non-conditional service alongside articles about local disputes over racism, crime, the economy, and politics. *The Sun* contained similar coverage but reasoned that world events in general, and the war in particular, superseded local matters.

At times, critics of opponents to Coloured men's service suggested those opponents were more interested in dodging their duties as citizens than advocating for pacifism or racial equality. At a monthly meeting of the Cape Literary and Debating Society, one veteran of the Cape Corps and proponent of Coloured service challenged his opponents by asking whether they believed racial equality was more likely to be achieved under the acting South African government or under the rule of a fascist dictator.[136] The implication here is that some Coloured men, especially the well educated and English-speaking elites, still perceived the government as a potential broker of racial advancement as long as certain standards were met. Opponents insisted that Coloured men had already met standards of citizenship, most notably through prior military service. In another instance, a letter writer accuses "European" Communist agents of

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[134] *The Sun*, 8 September 1939.
[135] *The Sun*, 29 September 1939.
[136] *The Sun*, 3 November 1939.

fomenting dissent amongst Coloured men in order to subvert Coloured men's claims to loyalty to the Union. According to this writer, after Coloured men's decades' old declarations of loyalty, "if we to-day refuse our aid, we will not be doing ourselves any good, for we shall indirectly be supporting both Dr. Malan and his Nationalist Policy and the Communist Party."[137] In other words, Coloured men had no choice but to serve their country in wartime if they hoped to improve their political standing. If Coloured men remained at home, White politicians would seize the moment to impugn Coloured men's declarations of loyalty. Their well-cultivated discourse of masculine citizenship would be for naught.

As the war intensified and the government once again relented on its pledge to enlist only White troops, discourse amongst Coloured men shifted from if they should serve to how best they could contribute. Recruitment for the Cape Corps and other Coloured auxiliary units began in May 1940. Within weeks, Coloured men of all political stripes demanded admittance to armed combat units. Incredulously, one group declared, "We can't all be drafted to supply and transport units. There are tens of thousands of us—good fighting stock—and combatant units should be formed immediately."[138] A letter to the editors of *The Sun* questioned whether the government would treat Coloured men the same as other soldiers, especially considered the risks required as part of military service. The peril was colorblind, and "the Coloured man soldier will be called upon to face the same dangers and sacrifices as the white soldier on the field of battle.

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[137] *The Sun*, 15 December 1939. The juxtaposition of the Nationalists with Communists seems at first contradictory, but much of the political writings published in *The Sun* supported Jan Smuts and his United Party allies. Thus, both the Nationalists and the Communists represented challenges to the status quo: a governing party that made frequent overtures to Coloured political elites.

[138] *Cape Standard*, 11 June 1940.

There will be no discrimination, every man will have a man's job to do, therefore every man is entitled to expect 'to be treated as a man.'"[139] These statements represent a central frustration among Coloured men during wartime: the White supremacist regime in South Africa emasculated Coloured men based solely on their race regardless of masculine ideals they touted and their commitments to duties as husbands, fathers, neighbors, and citizens.

In contrast to recruitment during the First World War, military officials and the press struck an obviously domestic tone when trying to attract Coloured volunteers. Recruitment advertisements published in the *Cape Standard* and *The Sun* targeted married, employed men and prominently featured the rates of pay and dependent allowances. The new recruiting strategy relied on the discourse of respectable masculinity cultivated by Coloured political elites and their adherents. For instance, one advertisement targeting married men promised both adventure and the opportunity to protect the Union as equal citizens. The advertisement asked, "What are *you* doing to help defend your own freedom

Figure 1: Recruiting advertisement published in *Cape Standard*, 13 May 1941. Courtesy National Library of South Africa.

MARRIED MEN

What about separate holidays this year?

NORTH Africa for you
SOUTH Africa for your Wife!

The Cape Coloured troops have been *specially commended* by the High Command for their gallantry and endurance during the advance in East Africa. These men have won undying honour for the Cape. Why not join them up North and help to *swell* that fame?

What are *you* doing to help defend your own freedom and possessions? Join the other fellows up North who are helping to make South Africa safe to live in.

Anti-Aircraft is thrilling, fascinating work. Join to-day, and don't be diverted from your purpose. Tell the Recruiting Officer that it is the *Anti-Aircraft* you want to join.

RATES OF PAY

A SINGLE MAN STARTS AT 2/3 PER DAY, WITH FREE FOOD, FREE QUARTERS AND FREE UNIFORM.

A MARRIED MAN GETS AN *EXTRA* ALLOWANCE OF 2/6 PER DAY.

JOIN THE CAPE CORPS FOR SERVICE WITH ANTI-AIRCRAFT UNITS

Cape Corps Office,
Old Drill Hall, Darling Street.

[139] *The Sun*, 21 June 1940.

and possessions?"[140] The implication that Coloured men had both freedom and property to defend is interesting—racial discrimination and poverty were everyday experiences for Coloured South Africans—but those words were most likely meant to situate Coloured men's motivations for enlisting as similar to those of White men.

Figure 2: Recruiting advertisement published in *The Sun*, 7 August 1942. Courtesy National Library of South Africa.

Other recruiting advertisements highlighted masculine duty while omitting racial differences with the hopes of building concord for the war effort. One advertisement pictured an empty desk with a note reading, "Joined Up!" The text explained that the new enlistee left his job and is, "doing a man's job because it has to be done, because not doing it would be the end of all the decent things he believes in and because he is not the man to leave it to *other* men to risk death fighting for HIS home and family

[140] *Cape Standard*, 13 May 1941. Full text of the advertisement: "Married Men: What about separate holidays this year? North Africa for you, South Africa for your Wife! The Cape Coloured troops have been *specially commended* by the High Command for their gallantry and endurance during the advance in East Africa. These men have won undying honour for the Cape. Why not join them up North and help to *swell* that fame? What are *you* doing to help defend your own freedom and possessions? Join the other fellows up North who are helping to make South Africa safe to live in. Anti-Aircraft is thrilling, fascinating work. Join to-day, and don't be diverted from your purpose. Tell the Recruiting Officer that it is the *Anti-Aircraft* you want to join. Rates of Pay: A single man starts at 2/3 per day, with free food, free quarters and free uniform. A married man gets an extra allowance of 2/6 per day." Italics in original.

and country."[141] The message overtly played on the masculine duties of taking care of one's family and loyalty to one's country, but no distinction was made concerning race. Another advertisement distinguished between Coloured men and their White peers, but portrayed their goals in contributing to the war effort as one and the same. "Hold on, Springboks—We're Coming!" urged the advertisement, while noting that winning the war took precedent over other issues.[142] The advertisement pictured a group of smartly dressed men—apparently Coloured, considering the target audience of the publication—taking an oath at an enlistment office while White artillerymen fire their guns in the background. The expression of unity as men is important and reflects Coloured political leaders' assertions that Coloured men's abilities to live up to the obligations of citizenship eclipsed racial differences.

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[141] *The Sun*, 7 August 1942. Full text of the advertisement: "OUT. Will be back at? He had a good job, excellent prospects, a home and growing responsibilities. He liked to play too, and to be comfortable after a good day's work…*just like you!* One day he went out, for an indefinite period. Like you, he had to make sacrifices—but he made them. He's doing a man's job because it has to be done, because not doing it would be the end of all the decent things he believes in and because he is not the man to leave it to *other* men to risk death fighting for HIS home and family and country. Are you going to leave him to finish the job alone? Join in and fight. We've GOT to WIN THE WAR. Join in—Join up!" Emphasis in original.

[142] *The Sun*, 31 July 1942. Full text of the advertisement: "Hold on, Springboks—We're Coming! We're a bit late, we know, but we have always been with you in spirit—we'll soon be with you in reality. Recent events have brought home to us the fact that winning the war and winning it quickly is all that matters. We'll be with you to a man. We've Got to Win This War. Join in—Join up." Emphasis in original.

Recruiting strategies and wartime propaganda aimed at White audiences emphasized racial differences among the troops if they acknowledged race at all. Suryakanthie Chetty notes that the government produced films to encourage White men to enlist but only showed Black men as anonymous laborers without describing Black servicemen's roles. Recruitment advertisements for White men relied on masculine tropes, as well, but for often highlighted comparisons of military life with masculine leisure activities. For instance, one recruitment poster described a "Springbok Army of Sportsmen" alongside a photograph of rugby icon Danie Craven.[143] The government and military made little effort to portray racial unity or similar masculine duties amongst men of different races in recruiting White men because White men's masculine identities were closely tied to their position at the top of the hegemonic gender hierarchy.

Figure 3: Recruiting advertisement published in *The Sun*, 31 July 1942. Courtesy National Library of South Africa.

[143] Suryakanthie Chetty, "Imagining National Unity: South African Propaganda Efforts During the Second World War," *Kronos* 38 (2012): 110.

Conclusion

In July 1942, *The Sun* featured a front-page article describing the reception of a unit of African American troops in Australia. The article relied on reports from the American press that the people of Australia, "long known as a 'white man's country,' cheered and applauded" as the African American men came ashore.[144] The anecdote is brief but represented a chief aspiration of Coloured men. The scenario of a subordinated racial minority being celebrated as heroes by a White population committed to racial distinctions resonated as familiar, both close to home and universal. If African Americans, a community for whom Coloured South Africans held a great affinity, could achieve acceptance through military service in the global defense of freedom, surely Coloured men could achieve the same.

Two years into Coloured men's service in the war, the conflicts within their communities about the ultimate objective still raged. The old guard of political leaders continued to urge Coloured men to fight for the status quo in South Africa as a better alternative to the fascist ideologies of Germany and Japan. Booker Lakey, a prominent member of the National Liberation League, bluntly stated, "By fighting, we are assisting to preserve the rights we still enjoy…we are fighting to maintain a system, which in spite of its weaknesses, will continue to give us the opportunity of improving our condition."[145] The status quo of racial hierarchies and hegemonic masculinity inherently tied to Whiteness had not waivered since the beginning of the war. Even with concessions like the commissioning of Black

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[144] *The Sun*, 10 July 1942.

[145] *Cape Standard*, 6 January 1942. The National Liberation League was co-founded by the daughter of Abdullah Abdurahman, Cissie Gool.

men as officers and non-commissioned officers, the White government never relinquished White men's ultimate superiority: a Government Gazette posting clarified that if the scenario ever occurred, a White private would have command over a Black non-commissioned officer.[146] Still, many argued that Coloured men should be proud of the fulfillment of their masculine duties regardless of its impact on political goals. For instance, A. J. Desmore, a veteran of the Cape Corps in the First World War and political organizer, commended Coloured South Africans for supporting the war because, "they had postponed their own struggles for the attainment of the most elementary rights of democracy."[147] Desmore and those like him reasoned that Coloured men should be celebrated for their actions in the war regardless of their ultimate contributions to racial equality at home.

Other Coloured men remained unconvinced. In a rebuttal to Booker Lakey's essay, a dockworker named Saul Martens contended that the White supremacist regime in South Africa was no better than the fascism promoted by the Axis powers. Martens presented a laundry list of grievances including the franchise being limited in terms of race and sex, poor access to land and capital, and the expense of formal education for Black South Africans. For him, the Second World War was not an opportunity to change Coloured men's prospects. As a veteran, Martens lamented that, "during the last Great War I joined the Cape Corps because our leaders promised Heaven after the war. I still have not got

[146] *Cape Standard*, 3 February 1942.
[147] *The Sun*, 3 July 1942.

even the first installment of Heaven. I am not going to be caught again."[148] This sort of back and forth among Coloured men was common and not limited only to discussions of military service. Political leaders routinely asked Coloured men to prove their loyalty, their bravery, their physicality, and their respectability just once more in return for promises of impending rights. Refutations came in the form of Coloured men asserting that their ideals and actions made them men equal among all others in the Union, the Empire, and the world. They believed they should not have to prove their masculinity simply to satisfy White men who deprived them of rights and opportunities.

Coloured men's motivations and apprehensions regarding military service aligned with many African troops' goals during the two world wars. African communities weighed their potential gains and losses when choosing sides in European conflicts. During the First World War, East African communities like the Luo and the Nandi offered large numbers of troops in service to the British with hopes of improving their strained relationships with the colonial authorities.[149] In French colonies during the Second World War, the Free French authorities promised privileges like the right to vote and access to French legal system if local men volunteered instead of waiting for conscription. More important according to many veterans was the exemption from forced labor conscriptions once they had performed their duties.[150] The similarities between

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[148] *Cape Standard*, 13 January 1942.

[149] Edward Paice, *World War I: The African Front* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2008), 159.

[150] Nancy Ellen Lawler, *Soldiers of Misfortune: Ivoirien* Tirailleurs *of World War II* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), 54. Lawler suggests that many potential volunteers may not have been aware of the promise of expanded rights until they were already in the service, but those rights justified the choice to volunteer in the minds of many men.

Coloured men and African men elsewhere on the continent demonstrates the life-changing qualities many men believed accessible through military service. The expansion of rights and improvements in quality of life were tangible benefits that bolstered the masculine ideals expressed in calls to serve.

Chapter Three

"We Have Material Second to None:" Competing Against the Color Bar and Ideals of Masculinity in South African Sporting Cultures, 1936-1960

On June 25, 1937, Coloured sports fans exploded with joy at the news that Joe Louis had claimed the world heavyweight title from James J. Braddock. Writing of the son of sharecroppers, *The Sun's* headline declared: "Coloured King of the Fistic World."[151] Louis was the first African American champion since Jack Johnson in 1910, and Coloured boxing fans embraced both as heroes. One letter to the editor of the *Cape Standard* told his community, "We must remember that the 'Brown Bomber' is a Coloured man, and that he has again placed us on the 'boxing map' since the mighty Jack Johnson gave up the heavyweight crown… I think every Native and Coloured man should raise his hat to him and hold high hopes for his future."[152] Louis' popularity among Coloured South Africans largely stemmed from his bouts against White opponents, especially the German Max Schmeling. Press coverage of Louis' fights against Braddock, Schmeling, Billy Conn, and others framed the contests as battles between racial torchbearers. The highly racialized context permitted even apolitical Coloured sports fans to recognize Louis and other contemporary Black athletes as contradictions to the White supremacy that permeated South African sporting cultures.

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[151] *The Sun*, 25 June 1937. Louis held the heavyweight title from 1937 to 1949, longer than any other heavyweight champion.

[152] *Cape Standard*, 6 September 1937. Louis' boxing nicknames included the "Brown Bomber," the "Detroit Destroyer," and the "Dark Destroyer."

Sporting cultures provided contexts in which men judged their peers in terms of physicality, competitive worthiness, fair play, and commitment to task and team. Sports also provided important spaces for men to develop close fraternal bonds. Teammates trained together, played together, won and lost together, and often were friends outside of their teams. Sports like boxing, rugby, track and field, and weightlifting exemplified the masculine qualities of strength, physical endurance, speed, and discipline. Other popular sports like cricket promoted gentlemanly competition rather than physical dominance. In South Africa, and indeed in many other countries, rules that divided competition along racial lines had the effect of racializing masculine ideals as well. According to the hegemonic racial hierarchies of South Africa, the British Empire, and the United States, White men were better suited to govern, lead the economy, and represent their countries and communities in sporting arenas than were representatives of other races. Men subjugated further down the racial hierarchy nonetheless saw themselves as worthy competitors and sought to test their own masculine mettle through sports.

The sporting culture of South African men proved to be a strong counterpoint to prominent stereotypes about Coloured men. White authors like Sarah Gertrude Millin and other contemporary sources like the 1937 report of the Cape Coloured Commission described Coloured men as cowardly and physically inferior weaklings.[153] Millin, for example, used one of her fictional characters to

[153] The Cape Coloured Commission's findings were published as U. G., No. 54, 1937, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1937). For example of Millin's work and descriptions of Coloured stereotypes, see, *God's Stepchildren* (New York: Boni and Liveright, Inc., 1924) and *The South*

proclaim, "too often they were small and vicious, and craven and degenerate."[154] For many Coloured men, sports seemed to be an obvious realm in which they could prove their masculinity. They believed success through vigorous training regimens, victory in competitions, and even the fostering of respectable fan bases for local and national teams would earn them access to the fraternity of masculine respectability guarded by South Africa's White elites. Coloured sportsmen recognized the great importance White South Africans placed in sporting culture as a means of inculcating masculinity, citizenship, and respectability among their boys and young men. Coloured men shared those values and hoped to convince Whites to accept their commonalities.

This chapter is, in part, an attempt to situate Coloured sporting cultures into that historiography by demonstrating that conceptions of masculinity expressed through competition transcended racial boundaries and appealed to Coloured men in ways similar to White men. Historians have invested a great deal of energy into the study of sports and their importance to White men of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This historiography of White sport, especially within the domain of the British Empire, emphasizes the common core values Britons, Australians, Pakeha (White New Zealanders), and White South Africans believed inherent to competition. Christopher Merrett describes the commonality as White men assuming that, "their self-perceived moral ascendancy, heightened integrity and superior biological characteristics endowed them with a fitness to

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Africans (New York: Boni and Liveright, Inc., 1927). Both works were widely read in South Africa and the United States, as discussed in Chapter One.

[154] Millin, *God's Stepchildren*, 251.

rule others. All these qualifications were summarised by prowess at sport."[155] White men living in different racial contexts fit sporting discourse to their own purposes. As Martin Crotty notes, Australians of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries believed the aim of sports, "was to ensure that the elites of Australia [i.e., White Australians] were worthy of their position, and would be men who would guarantee against decline, both physical and moral, in the colonies…Amidst fears that colonial climate has a tendency to produce unmanly boys, sport was advocated as a safeguard against effeminacy."[156] Among the smaller Pakeha population of New Zealand, contact sports forged a sense of community and belonging among the isolated men. Jock Phillips goes so far as to suggest that the contact inherent in rugby may have contributed to the sport's popularity beginning in the late nineteenth century:

> This was a society where there was a shortage of women, and where those who did marry very rarely did so before their late twenties. It was also a world where men were thrown together for long periods in intense relationships but where the taboo on homosexuality was strong. One possibility is that men starved of physical contact with other human beings were able to find it in rugby. This is not to say that the game was latently homosexual. It is simply to claim that most human beings need the affirmation of touching other people, that colonial men often could not obtain that affection from women and turned for support and intense fellowship to other men, and that rugby provided one place in which the tensions of their situation could be relieved. Men could quite legitimately touch each other—and they did so not merely in the scrum but also once the game was over.[157]

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[155] Christopher Merrett, *Sport, Space and Segregation: Politics and Society in Pietermaritzburg* (Scotsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 12. Merrett notes that, "The literature of the time used words and phrases such as 'British manhood,' 'fighting spirit,' 'fair play' and 'hearty good fellowship.'"

[156] Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity, 1870-1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 57-58. The text in brackets is my clarification of the racial emphasis.

[157] Jock Phillips, "The Hard Man: Rugby and the Formation of Male Identity in New Zealand," in *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*, John Nauright and Timothy J. L. Chandler, eds. (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 75.

Historians of sport throughout the British Empire have rightly highlighted the values and relationships shaped and reshaped through competition.[158] Those sporting values translated into the societies in which the competitors lived and reflected the societies' values regarding race and gender in the realms of competition. Sports were not merely about recreation, but rather created a sphere in which racial and gender hierarchies could be both reinforced and challenged.

White South African men, like their counterparts throughout the British Empire, relished in popular sporting events like rugby, cricket, and boxing. Sports and physical education were increasingly seen as important developmental tools in White schools in order to raise responsible citizens who embraced toughness and fair play. Rugby became an entrenched element of Afrikaner masculinity during the inter-war period.[159] Robert Morrell points to an idealized vision of rugby as racially exclusive to Whites, especially among the White settler communities of Natal and the Northern provinces. Though soccer had initially been popular among the English-speaking settlers, it "became emblematic of threatening, socially integrative forces within society" as more and more Africans picked up the game.[160] White settlers, regardless of background,

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[158] See John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986); Dominic Malcolm, *Globalizing Cricket: Englishness, Empire and Identity* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); J. A. Mangan, *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society* (New York: Routledge, 2013) and *"Manufactured" Masculinity: Making Imperial Manliness, Morality and Militarism* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Erik Nielsen, *Sport and the British World, 1900-1930: Amateurism and National Identity in Australasia and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and Brian Stoddart and Keith A. P. Sandiford, eds., *The Imperial Game: Cricket, Culture and Society* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

[159] Robert Morrell, "Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, no. 4 (Dec., 1998): 617.

[160] Robert Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal, 1880-1920* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2001), 91.

rallied around rugby in particular as a racially exclusive marker of White sporting masculinity and respectability.

White South Africans built their association of rugby with masculinity on foundations laid in Britain and carried into the colonies by White settlers. Timothy Chandler and John Nauright note that the sport fit with ideals of muscular Christianity articulated around the turn of the nineteenth century. In addition to being respectable members of their families and communities, men were expected to be physically dominant over the Empire's conquered peoples. As an expression of physical masculine endeavor, rugby, "offered opportunities for struggle and sacrifice, required strength and hardiness, and in the process, it was argued, produced heroes and hearties."[161] Both Afrikaans- and English-speaking White men engaged with the sport as a testament to their own strength and as a way of cultivating camaraderie.

By the 1940s, though, Afrikaner nationalists deployed rugby culture as representative of the Afrikaner masculine ethos. Albert Grundlingh argues that Afrikaner elites, and especially those associated with Stellenbosch University, developed a subculture, "in which enthusiasm for rugby as an Afrikaner male activity was equated with robust patriotism to the exclusion of other contending, and perhaps more threatening, world-views."[162] Coloured men called out the

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[161] Timothy J. L. Chandler and John Nauright, "Introduction: Rugby, Manhood and Identity," in *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*, John Nauright and Timothy J. L. Chandler, eds. (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 6.

[162] Albert Grunglingh, "Playing for Power? Rugby, Afrikaner Nationalism and Masculinity in South Africa, *c.* 1900-*c.* 1970," in *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*, John Nauright and Timothy J. L. Chandler, eds. (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 182. Robert Archer and Antoine Bouillon, when considering why Afrikaners were particularly interest in rugby's political symbolism, argue, "It is a sport ideally suited to 'ideological investment' and the Afrikaners, who considered themselves to be a civilizing elite, a pioneer people conquering barbarism, recognized

Afrikaners' exclusionary dominance as nothing more than poor sportsmanship. The sports editor for *The Sun*, writing about the Springboks' insistence on playing a segregated New Zealand side, reminded White South Africans that, "It must always be borne in mind that any team that leaves these shores is more than only a group of players—they are emissaries of goodwill and friendliness from one people to another."[163] The Afrikaner nationalists' claim to rugby as an Afrikaner sport represented a new division amongst the sport's players and fans, but racial segregation was hardly new to the pitch.

White South Africans' insistence on racial segregation in sports dates to the earliest years of organized play in White-dominated Southern Africa. Since institutions like schools, the military, and civic organizations were strictly segregated, the close relation of sports to those institutions resulted in segregated sporting organizations. White settler schools in the Cape and in Natal encouraged or required their male pupils to participate in sports clubs. Men in military service organized games and tournaments to pass the time and demonstrate their manly bravado amongst their fellow soldiers. Neighborhood teams competed against one another in urban centers like Cape Town. By the last decade of the nineteenth century, South Africans who were excluded from the "White" and official clubs organized separate sporting and recreational associations: the Western Province Coloured Rugby Union in 1886; the Coloured Young Men's Christian Association in 1895; and the City and Suburban Rugby Union in

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an image of their own ideology in its symbols," in *The South African Game: Sport and Racism* (London: Zed Press, 1982), 66.

[163] *The Sun*, 17 July 1936.

1898.[164] In the context of Cape Town and the wider Cape region, members of these sporting association often self-identified as "Coloured," fitting themselves into an intermediate position within the hegemonic racial hierarchy.

Coloured men accepted sporting culture as productive of a communal spirit, as well. They believed that, "Every member of any team soon learns that the team is the main thing, and that all his skill is of no use unless used as the food of his team. Team games also bring out the spirit of comradeship."[165] Although historians have explored the ways in which sporting cultures compared between Whites and Africans, the ways in which Coloured sporting cultures factored into those interactions has been largely ignored.[166] This chapter amends that omission by illustrating how Coloured athletes and fans perceived themselves as part of South African and global sporting cultures.

Sporting competitions presented arenas for possible challenges to the racial order, primarily in the United States and the British Empire outside of South Africa. In cases where no color bar existed, White men faced potential

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[164] The early organization of sporting associations for South Africans barred from "White" clubs, and that process' place within the racial and class contexts of Southern Africa, has been well documented. For the relationship between racial identities and segregated sports, see Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice, 1875-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 149-150. The authoritative text for the history of rugby in South Africa is Albert Grundlingh, André Odendaal, and Burridge Spies, *Beyond the Tryline: Rugby and South African Society* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1995). The authors describe the formation of "Coloured" rugby clubs as a response to enforced segregation in "White" clubs beginning with page 27. For a general history of the organization of "Black" sporting organizations in Cape Town and the social divisions between various clubs and sports, see David R. Black and John Nauright, *Rugby and the South African Nation: Sport, Cultures, Politics and Power in the Old and News South Africas* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 48-49.

[165] *The Sun*, 26 May 1933.

[166] For the ways in which White and African sporting cultures influenced each other, see Alegi, *Laduma!*; Chris Bolsmann, "White Football in South Africa: Empire, Apartheid and Change, 1892-1977," *Soccer & Society* 11, nos. 1/2 (Jan. 2010): 29-45; and Peter Alegi, *African Soccerscapes: How a Continent Changed the World's Game* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010).

humiliation at the hands of superior athletes from supposedly inferior races. Competitions took on broader social meanings when they were promoted as battles between the races. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, a string of White athletes competed under monikers like the "Great White Hope," expressing their perceived status as defenders of the White race.[167] The African-American heavyweight Jack Johnson's thrashing of Jim Jeffries in 1910 is certainly the most famous example. Almost three decades after the bout, the *Cape* Standard's resident "physical culturist," Andrew M. Marcus, remembered Johnson as, "the greatest defensive-fighter boxer of all time." Marcus went on to declare that, "No other fighter ever equaled Johnson when it comes to taunting men with the tongue while the battle is waging furiously in the ring."[168] Johnson's bravado in the face of racial denigration was a large part of his popularity among Black people around the world. Ignoring the obvious privilege and economic superiority connected to their position within this racial framing, White men portrayed Black athletes as threats to a vulnerable White community.

These "threats" often achieved hero status within the Coloured communities of South Africa, who questioned any White South African's claim to championship as long as Whites refused to compete without the restriction of the

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[167] Phillip J. Hutchison, "Usually White, but Not Always Great: A Journalistic Archaeology of White Hopes, 1908-2013," *Journalism History* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2014): 234. Hutchison notes that while convention holds that the moniker "Great White Hope" is often associated with Jim Jeffries and his fight with Jack Johnson in 1910, "Great White Hope" was actually applied by journalists beginning in the 1960s when writing of the Johnson vs. Jeffries bout. "White hope" was used beginning in at least in the early nineteenth century to refer to anyone or anything that offered relief or hope to a public. Jeffries fought as "hope of the white race" and "White man's hope." None of the five White boxers who faced Johnson in 1909 (the year after he claimed the title from Canadian Tommy Burns) were called "White hopes" by the press. Hutchison's exploration of the historical lexicon regarding White boxers who fought Black boxers is important to demonstrate both that the racial discourse was not new in the early twentieth century and that the discourse was reimagined throughout the century in different contexts.

[168] *Cape Standard*, 11 October 1938.

color bar. By claiming athletes like Joe Louis and Jesse Owens as "Coloured," Coloured South Africans projected themselves into a global community resistant to White supremacy. Coloureds saw similarities in their plight and that of African Americans in particular due to shared histories of slavery and their status as relatively small racial minorities in their respective countries.[169] Coloured men who hoped to get their shot, too, could share in Louis' victories against White opponents. Just as Coloured men identified with Louis, so too did White men cheer on successful White boxers like Max Schmeling and Jim Braddock. In the months leading up to Louis' first fight with Schmeling in 1936, *Die Burger* questioned whether Louis was a great fighter or if boxing as whole was of lesser quality.[170] *The Sun*, in turn, mocked the competing paper for questioning Louis because he was, "idolized by the great American public." *The Sun* playfully applied the title of "white hopes" to Schmeling and Braddock, though the editors clearly believed Louis would prevail.[171]

Boxing offers the most obvious examples of sporting challenges to racial hierarchies on an international stage. Like rugby, participants and fans of the sport imbued boxing with widely accepted social values. In the colonial context, boxing "resonated with the gendered logic of the white man's burden," encouraging White men to prove both their civility and their rugged dominance

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[169] See George M. Frederickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study of American and South African History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), xviii; and Robert Vinson, *The Americans are Coming! Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012), 90.

[170] *Die Burger*, 8 May 1936.

[171] *The Sun*, 15 May 1936.

of their subjected neighbors.[172] Unlike most other sports, professional White boxers commonly faced Black opponents most often personified by African Americans or West Indians. South African boxing associations kept their members racially segregated, but any champion could claim internationally recognized titles. This fact, along with boxing's strict gender segregation and supposedly "authentic" nature, made boxing unique among masculine sports. Patrick McDevitt argues that,

> Boxing allowed civilized English and Australian men to compete with American fighters or fighters of color regardless of nationality and demonstrate not only their capacity for utilizing violence to achieve their goals, but also display their superior technical skills by virtue of their systematic training and fighting methods. These differences, in conjunction with issues of imperial and racial rivalry, made boxing an important arena of the contestation for the meaning of manhood in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras.[173]

Most likely due to their minority status, White South African boxers were not as keen to compete against boxers of color as were their English and Australian peers.

Boxing remained a segregated sport in South Africa and even for South African boxers competing abroad, while media coverage of the exploits of boxers like Jack Johnson, Henry Armstrong, and Joe Louis were strictly censored. That censorship did not hamper African American athletes' popularity among Coloured men through. For example, one man anticipated Louis' rematch with

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[172] Theresa Runstedtler, "White Anglo-Saxon Hopes and Black Americans' Atlantic Dreams: Jack Johnson and the British Boxing Colour Bar," *Journal of World History* 21, no. 4 (2010): 661.

[173] Patrick F. McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity, and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 60. McDevitt notes that, "Games playing as defined by English rules and standards set the British and their subjects apart from effeminate continental Europeans, subjugated Africans, and effete Asians, and provided a forum for intra-imperial communication between the metropolitan center in England and the colonial periphery, as well as between the peripheral nations themselves," Ibid., 2.

Billy Conn by groaning, "As usual, our Film Board of Censors will ban the film of the fight, but they cannot stop me from listening to the American broadcast in the early hours of the morning. If I cannot see the contest, I can at least hear the thuds."[174] This man was most likely not alone in sitting around his radio to listen to far away fights, as evidence by the consistent coverage of African American athletes in the Coloured press.

White South Africans' insistence on segregated sporting competitions highlighted a stark contradiction in White supremacist ideologies. While White boys and men were meant to learn how to be better citizens—and indeed better men—through competition, most believed that Black boys and men did not benefit in the same ways. In 1939, the Mayor of Cape Town, W. C. Foster, encouraged a group of Coloured boxers by telling them the sport would, "assist materially by teaching co-ordination of brain and muscle, in rehabilitating the Coloureds."[175] Foster's perspective reflected common assumptions among Whites that Coloureds lacked inherent mental and physical capacities due to origins in miscegenation, but the curse of "mixed blood" could be lessened through rehabilitation. As shown in Chapter One, the mayor would have been able to draw on an array of scholarly studies in scientific racism and popular literature to support is stance. Though White men claimed superiority over men of other races by nearly every measure, they were not willing to put that claim to the test in

[174] *Cape Standard*, 29 January 1946. The second Louis and Conn fight was the first World Heavyweight Championship to be televised.

[175] *Cape Standard*, 14 February 1939. Foster was speaking before the Western Province Amateur Boxing Championships Tourney, and he also referred to Joe Louis' upcoming title defense in March.

sporting competitions. Defeat was too great a risk to the hegemonic racial hierarchy at the heart of South African society.

Coloured men seized on this weakness. When government officials prevented Australian Aboriginal boxer Elley Bennett from entering South Africa to fight Vic Toweel, editors of *The Sun* pounced. Toweel, a bantamweight, was South Africa's first world champion and claimed he was willing to fight Bennett, but *The Sun* wondered, "what would happen if a couple of Negro boxers begin knocking at the door. What will happen if Toweel does not want to defend his crown outside of Johannesburg?"[176] Whites' insistence on segregated sports had another important implication: South Africans' recognition of successful athletes as heroes and role models became racially segregated, as well.

Like their White peers, Coloured men took great pride in their athletic prowess and sporting achievements. Success on the pitch, in the ring, and on the track warranted praise from their friends and neighbors, celebration in the press, and personal pride in the face of popular stereotypes that cast Coloured men as physically inferior. While pursuing acceptance into the dominant political culture of their nation, Coloured men looked abroad for influences on their physical culture. They shared in the victories of popular African American athletes and scoffed at instances of discrimination in international competitions, including the South African bar against Coloured athletes on national teams. Indeed, Coloured athletes believed that sports served a greater cause by forging common bonds with athletes of other colors and exposing the weaknesses in arguments

[176] *The Sun*, 9 February 1951. Ironically, the press sometimes referred to Toweel as a "white Henry Armstrong," referring to the African American champion of a generation earlier.

championing White supremacy. One writer challenged his peers to stop attending White rugby matches at Newlands in favor of Black matches on the Cape Flats. After attending a friendly match in Langa, the writer wonder,

> Does the average Non-European sports fan know just how high is the standard of play produced by his own class of people on the playing fields? Has he seen the Bantu player in action on the sports field? Maybe the average man and woman do not know about these things; they appear to strangers in the land of their birth, dead alike to the achievements and accomplishments of their own people, and a knowledge of the sterling efforts that is [sic] occurring every-week on the playing fields of Non-European sport. But it does make one think and wonder when you see the crowded trains of Coloured male sporting fans.[177]

The allure of matches at Newlands was likely due to the high quality of play rather than the fact that the players were White, though this sports writer contends that quality play existed outside the bastion of White clubs. Coloured men wanted recognition that they were up to the masculine challenge of competition and, if given the opportunity, could best all challengers, including Whites. The sports editor for *The Sun* contested White supremacy in sport by arguing that, "we have never yet been called upon to prove our ability against the Europeans, etc., or to test their superiority. Consequently, the latter falls away."[178] By putting their bodies on the line, Coloured men sought greater acceptance into the hegemonic political culture of South Africa by virtue of their physical equality.

In the years after the 1936 Summer Olympic Games in Berlin, Coloured journalists and sports fans increasingly questioned the rationale of excluding African, Coloured, and Indian athletes from South Africa's national teams. Many

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[177] *Sporting News*, 11 June 1949. The writer notes that a large crowd of Coloured women attended the match in Langa.

[178] *The Sun*, 14 October 1932.

Coloured athletes, they argued, were capable of competing on an international level and had earned the right to represent their country. If Coloured athletes were found wanting, it was only because the government and national sporting boards denied them funding, facilities, and the freedom to compete against all challengers. One correspondent noted that Coloured pitches were often sloped, uneven, or bare dirt, and lamented that, "All these disadvantages keep us back from our real standard of play locally."[179] Several Coloured athletes found international success, though they were forced to compete under foreign flags or with private financial backing.

Perhaps owing to their intermediate racial and cultural status, Coloured athletes embraced a range of popular sports that did not always translate across the racial boundaries between Black and White. Newspapers aimed at Coloured audiences included reports about "upper class," typically White-dominated sports like cricket, tennis, field hockey, and lawn bowling, as well as the working-class favorites of rugby, soccer, and boxing. As Peter Alegi notes, many Black South Africans rejected sports like tennis for their perceived effeminacy while favoring sports like soccer as "the public display of manly grace."[180] Though not uniform in their opinions of the masculine appeal and respectability of all sports, Coloured athletes and fans displayed interest in a diversity of sports perhaps as an attempt to capitalize on the popular cultures of the majority Black Africans and the politically dominant Whites.

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[179] *The Sun*, 4 November 1938.

[180] Peter Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004), 36.

The "Black Flashes" and the Brown Bomber

The racially charged athletic competitions of the late 1930s captivated Coloured sports fans. They were thrilled not only by the athletes' feats of strength, speed, and endurance but also by their shattering of the myth of White invincibility. Coloured men were not blind to the narrative of White supremacy as a myth, but their lack of opportunities to compete directly against White South Africans eliminated any chances to prove their own equality or superiority. Coloureds began to draw comparisons between South Africa's brand of White supremacy and the rise of Nazism in Hitler's Germany during the 1930s. For instance, in the debate about whether or not to support the Allies in the Second World War, one proponent accused his detractors of "indirectly supporting…Dr. Malan and his Nationalist Policy," and thinly veiled association of the National Party with the Nazis.[181] Two international mega-events served to highlight Coloureds' cries of foul. First, the Olympic Games held in Berlin during August 1936 were heralded as the greatest showcase of athletic talent up to that time, and Hitler had boasted of his Aryan athletes' dominance long before the games began. And second, a little more than a month before the Olympics, Germany's Max Schmeling smashed the rising star of the African American boxer Joe Louis against the ropes. Coloured fans waited in earnest to see how African American athletes would respond.

The sports pages of *The Sun* on August 7, 1936 offered a look into Coloured pride and anxieties over the international performances of African American athletes. "With the eyes of the whole world focused upon the Olympic

[181] *The Sun*, 15 December 1939.

Games…" one story began, "it is gratifying to note that Coloured athletes, in the persons of the American Negroes, are making history…" The writer relayed the feats of Jesse Owens, Ralph Metcalf, and Cornelius Johnson while carefully noting the futile efforts put up by South Africa's White competitors. "Grimbeek, the best sprinter for the Union, was drawn next to Owens in the second round of the 100 metres and was left standing by the 'Black Flash' at 20 metres," *The Sun* crowed.[182] Coloured sports fans' favoring of the African American athletes was obvious, while they offered little more than ridicule for their White countrymen. The American "Black Flashes," claimed as Coloured themselves by Coloured South Africans, served as a bit of retaliation for Coloured (as well as African and Indian) exclusion from the South African Olympic delegation.

The same writer for *The Sun* was not so confident in his reporting of Louis' defeat at the bruising hands of Schmeling. The writer wondered, "What was wrong with Joe Louis on the night he met Schmeling?" Suggesting that it was unbelievable to boxing fans, and especially to the Coloured and African fans who had placed their hopes in Louis' corner, the writer hinted at a conspiracy. He noted that witnesses said Louis, "was not himself when he stepped into the ring, and the subsequent shellacking he received at the hands of the German definitely proved to the thousands of Louis fans that something was wrong with the Negro hope."[183] The contrast of Coloured joy brought on by the success of the "Black Flashes" compared to the confusion and anxiety expressed at the loss of the "Brown Bomber" demonstrates the great interest with which Coloured fans

[182] *The Sun*, 7 August 1936.
[183] Ibid.

followed African American sportsmen. While the Olympic Games would not be held again until 1948 due to the Second World War, Coloured supporters rekindled their love for Louis over the next two years.

By 1938, talk of looming war in Europe canvassed South African newspapers, and Schmeling became emblematic in Coloured minds of the White supremacist regime in Germany. Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, has cast the fight as a battle of opposite races.[184] The rematch offered Coloured fans satisfaction in knowing that Louis could retain his title and reclaim his honor. They feared, however, that another loss would cement White supremacist determinations that Coloured athletes did not belong in the same arenas with White champions. The fight also demonstrates the international appeal of boxing as a cultural microcosm: Coloured South Africans placed their hopes for racial salvation in an African American poised to fight a White German supported by the Nazis. Local race relations and international politics were set to collide in the ring.

One June 24, 1938, the front page of *The Sun* declared, "Joe Louis Batters Schmelling [sic] Into Submission." The fight, which was contested two nights earlier in New York, ended in a decisive first-round knockout of Schmeling. Other headlines from *The Sun* professed, "The German Fails to Land a Punch," and "Heil Herr Joe!"[185] The Coloured press and sports fans celebrated Louis' title defense as a victory for Coloured men everywhere, though their anxiety at Louis' potential defeat was not lost on correspondents. A writer for the *Cape Standard*

[184] *The Sun*, 1 July 1938.
[185] *The Sun*, 24 June 1938.

noted that, "had the result been otherwise, there is every possibility that there would have been outward signs of national regret."[186]

As much as Coloured South Africans saw Louis' victory as a sporting success, they also recognized the importance of Louis' win as an embarrassment for White supremacy and Nazism. After casting the fight as a racial battle, the Coloured press proclaimed, "Schmelling [sic] and Herr Goebbels Silenced."[187] One Coloured-Indian man remembers how his family in Cape Town followed the success of Louis:

> The part we liked best was how "the mad man Hitler" had announced to the world that no black man could ever beat Max Schmelling, because of the superiority of the Aryan race. Daddy could barely contain himself as he told us how the Brown Bomber smashed "the Great Aryan" into defeat in just 124 seconds of the first round on the night of June 22, 1938. "People were still finding their seats and already the fight was over, and the world danced," he would laugh uproariously.[188]

Footage of Louis' fights were banned for Coloured, African, and Indian audiences in South Africa, but the Coloured press and radio reports continued their celebrations of Louis' feats throughout the 1940s. Louis' service in the United States Army during the Second World War only solidified his iconic status as a masculine representative of the struggles against racism and fascism. *The Sun* remembered Louis' career by proclaiming that, "Joe is as proud of his title as the Coloured race is of Joe," and referred to the "Brown Bomber" as the "Finest Ideal

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[186] *Cape Standard*, 28 June 1938.
[187] *The Sun*, 1 July 1938.
[188] Mohamed F. Carim, *Coolie, Come Out and Fight! A South African Memoir of Love, Courage and Journeys to a Better Place* (Johannesburg: Porcupine Press, 2013), 33. Carim also tells how one "enterprising backyard brewer" in his neighborhood sold her home-brew concoction as "Joe Louis Punch," 35.

of Coloured Manhood."[189] African American athletes became the standard by which Coloured sports fans and promoters measured their own athletes' potential.

Coloured boxers who demonstrated any competency in the ring drew comparisons to Louis. One boxer, "Gorilla" Thompson, was promoted for a time under the moniker "Shade of Joe Louis."[190] Another Coloured boxer, Sonny Thomas, encouraged Coloured boys to draw inspiration from the American champion. Through his work with the St. Alban's Amateur Boxing Club, Thomas trained, "Budding 'Joe Louis's.'"[191] Coloured track and field promoters held up the successes of the "Black Flashes" as attainable goals, especially given the right support. After witnessing an athletic competition held at Green Point Track in Cape Town, one spectator noted, "We have material second to none. We have many a potential Jesse Owens, Tolan or Johnson. I would like to see a Coloured South African team competing at the Olympic Games."[192] By adopting African American athletes as their own, Coloured South Africans claimed an idealized form of athletic masculinity that challenged White scrutiny on international stages. Although Coloured men were denied recognition of their athletic masculinity by the White supremacist regime in South Africa, they viewed African American heroes perhaps as legitimate torchbearers for Coloured masculinity abroad.

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[189] *The Sun*, 10 March 1944.

[190] *Cape Standard*, 6 September 1938.

[191] *Cape Standard*, 4 July 1939. Sonny Thomas was the Non-European South African Lightweight Champion for several years during the late 1930s and 1940s. He was a Cape Town favorite and there was some public momentum to try to fund an international tour for him.

[192] *Cape Standard*, 25 July 1944. Reference here to Eddie Tolan, the African American sprinter who set multiple world records at the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles and the 1935 world championships in Melbourne, Australia.

Coloured Springboks and Maori All Blacks

While African American athletes figured prominently in Coloured men's sporting imaginations, South Africans had very few interactions with American athletes when it came to team sports. In terms of rugby, for instance, South Africa's biggest rivals were Great Britain and, more pertinent in Coloured arguments about interracial sports, New Zealand. The South African Springboks and New Zealand's All Blacks exchanged touring teams every few years beginning in 1921 and were usually evenly matched. While Coloured men largely cheered for South Africa's national team, they also took notice of the racially inclusive All Blacks and the sporting prowess of New Zealand's Maori athletes. If New Zealand could consistently field one of the best rugby sides in the world, feature Maori players, and compete with South Africa, Great Britain, and Australia, what sporting argument could White South Africans make to not give Coloured rugby players a try?

Coloured sports editors made the case early on that White South Africans who supported the color bar in rugby lacked credibility and sportsmanship. During the preparations for the Springboks' 1937 tour of New Zealand, the South African Rugby Board sparked controversy by suggesting that the Springboks would not play a New Zealand side that included Maoris. The sports editor for *The Sun* cried foul and suggested that the SARB harbored ill will toward the Maoris following the Springboks' embarrassing defeat against an all-Maori team in 1921. "In the first place, the Springboks refused to meet the Coloured team, but in the end capitulated," the editor remembered, "and took their defeat in such an

unsporting spirit that the whole tour was marred by their untoward conduct."[193] Though the SARB did not officially tell the New Zealand Rugby Football Union that the Maoris were not welcomed opponents, many fans believed the NZRFU wished to avoid any unpleasantness and conceded.

Seizing upon the successes of Maori rugby, Coloured men hoped to mirror their example and at least compete, through an all-Coloured team, against the All Blacks during the planned tour of South Africa in 1940. The 1940 tour was not to be as the Second World War subsumed sports in importance, but the Coloured attraction to the Maoris resumed once a 1948 tour was announced shortly after the war. A front-page story in *The Sun* quoted a New Zealand sports writer who argued that if the All Black side did not include Maoris, it could not be considered as truly representative.[194] This logic meshed with Coloureds' arguments for inclusion on the Springboks. Pointing to the Maoris' and Coloureds' recent service in the war, the editors of the *Cape Standard* argued for the inclusion of Maoris and Coloureds on the national sides in another way. "[The] view that if they were good enough to fight alongside white South Africans, they must be good enough to play rugby with, is one that has been expressed time and again by prominent Non-Europeans," the editors concluded, though they remained convinced that the color bar would be upheld.[195] The editors' cynicism proved founded, as the All Blacks' Maori players stayed home.

After the tour, Coloured sportsmen and political elites lambasted White, and especially Afrikaner, rugby fans. They noted that at one of the test matches

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[193] *The Sun*, 17 July 1936.
[194] *The Sun*, 30 August 1946.
[195] *Cape Standard*, 30 August 1946.

played at Ellis Park in Johannesburg, the White South African fans booed the All Blacks and threw bottles on the field. In a contemptuous explanation of why Whites reacted to the All Blacks in this way, the editors of *The Torch* quipped, "They are Christians. They are Calvinists. They are democrats. They hate all the right people: Kaffirs, Hottentots, Coolies, Communists, Jews, Atheists and anyone who makes them look silly in the eyes of Non-Whites."[196] The potential of the New Zealand team to defeat the White Springboks created a no-win situation for White South Africans according to *The Torch's* Coloured editors. Though the Springboks proved victorious, they had played an All Blacks side that was missing some of its key players in the persons of Maoris. Had the Maoris been allowed to compete, the outcome might have gone the other way.

One of the major goals outlined by promoters and sports editors within the Coloured press was the inclusion of Coloured rugby players on the national Springbok team. The obstacles to that goal were formidable. Coloured challenges to the White social convention of rugby as a White sport met with stiff resistance. However, Coloured rugby supporters built on a long history of organized competition in the Cape to make their case for inclusion. In the last years of the nineteenth century, two separate Coloured rugby unions were organized along predominantly religious lines. The Western Province Coloured Rugby Football Union and the City and Suburban Rugby Union, the former composed of mostly Muslim players and the latter mostly Christians and non-Muslims, dominated Coloured newspapers' sports pages through the 1960s. The religious division

[196] *The Torch*, 1 August 1949. *The Torch* was the official organ of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), an amalgamation of black protest organizations.

reflected the diversity of Coloured identities, but also points to stark divisions between people who claimed those identities. Where religion, language, and even physical appearance divided communities, popular pastimes and gender ideals could unite. Black and Nauright explain that for Coloured rugby players and fans, the sport,

> emerged as a manly and character-forming game among Cape Town's elite Coloured schools, developing from the influence of British missionaries combined with the hard realities of everyday life in the cramped areas of District Six and the Bo-Kaap. The notion of respectability was a strong influence on the urban African elite; however, in Cape Town this was also infused with concepts of respectable behaviour and self-discipline that stemmed from Muslim culture and the teachings of the *Koran*.[197]

Some team names, like Progress, the Universals, and the Arabians, conveyed images of muscular Christianity or muscular Islam that many of the players hoped their competitive spirits would nurture. Others teams hoped to strike a more intimidating posture with names like Hotspurs and Pirates. The representative Western Province team of the WPCFRU was particularly feared because of its players' reputations for rough play and intimidating tactics before, during, and after matches. Though Coloured and White players and fans perceived the sport's social value and masculine worth in similar veins, the White South African Rugby Board refused to allow interracial teams or competitions regardless of the quality of Coloured players.

Coloured rugby organizations pressed their case in the late 1930s, perhaps encouraged by the international successes of the African American and Maori

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[197] David and Nauright, *Rugby and the South African* Nation, 48. Black and Nauright point out that most of WPCFRU's players came from the inner-city, working-class neighborhoods of District Six and the Bo-Kaap, where men often had to develop physical toughness in order to survive harsh living and working conditions. Players in the CSRU came from more middle-class areas like Wynberg and Claremont where living conditions were more forgiving.

athletes. One fan asked, "Will we ever speak of a Coloured Springbok Rugby Team in Future?" He noted that the quality of Coloured rugby had improved over the years, giving a subservient nod to the notion that, "the European has taught and the Coloured has learnt… We are proud of our Springboks, but when will our European rugby enthusiasts be proud of us as far as the game of rugby is concerned?"[198] This fan also pointed to the popularity of White rugby among Coloured fans, naming several famous White players such as Danie Craven and Philip Nel, while clearly hoping that Coloured players would someday be listed among the pantheon of Springbok greats. Other fans were not so conciliatory toward the SARB's insistence on racially segregated competition. The sports editor of the *Cape Standard*, writing in the 1938, lambasted critics of interracial sports after an M.P. responded to news of Coloured rugby and soccer touring teams by suggesting that competition with Whites would, "undermine the social bar which exists in South Africa." The editor commented on the M.P.'s remarks, "white South Africa has not much to be proud of when national sport must also have a colour bar."[199] Coloured challenges to White championship status became more common and aggressive in the following decades.

In the winter of 1939, a representative national Coloured rugby team toured South Africa playing local clubs and provincial representative teams. The Coloured press noted that the quality of play was excellent and suggested that many of the players could hold their own with the best South Africa could offer. After a close victory over the Griqua team, one sports editor remarked on the

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[198] *The Sun*, 4 November 1938. From a letter to the editor from a William Scheepers.
[199] *Cape Standard*, 27 September 1938.

players' physiques and described them all as the, "fine, robust type of athlete, fit representatives of South Africa's national game."[200] The Coloured national team went undefeated on its tour, besting even the formidable Western Province representative team—though many of the province's best players had been chosen for the national team. As perhaps the most obvious claim to their worthiness to play on the Springboks, the Coloured players wore the Springbok green and gold colors. The Coloured men who organized and played for the touring team fostered no inferiority complex.

"The Fair Name of Sport" and the Olympic Games

The 1948 All Blacks tour coincided with two other important developments in South African sporting history. First, the election of the Nationalist Party on its apartheid platform put Coloured, African, and Indian citizens on alert that more segregationist legislation was imminent; they could expect further barriers to inter-racial competition as well as obstacles to access to facilities and funding. Secondly, the first Olympic Games since Berlin were staged in London, and Coloured athletes hoped to represent the Union on the same standing as White athletes. The South African Olympic Games Association allowed only White athletes to compete under the Union flag, but Coloured hopes were not completely dashed.

In October 1946, *The Sun* featured a front-page story of a potential Coloured Olympian. Ron Eland, a young teacher and weightlifter from Port Elizabeth, had consistently broken the British Empire's lightweight record in the

[200] *The Sun*, 7 July 1939.

three Olympic lifts during practices. He had just failed to officially break the record in front of a crowd at a health and strength demonstration, but *The Sun* reported that his supporters were still confident that, if given the chance, Eland would bring home a gold medal. Eland apparently tipped the scales at only 140 pounds, but could lift an aggregate of 685 pounds in the press, snatch, and jerk. Under the tutelage of another former South African record holder, Milo Pillay, Eland was expected to dominate at the South African Olympic trials and was a lock for the Union's delegation to London.[201]

However, in early 1948, *The Sun* reported that Eland, denied a place on the South African team, had received sponsorship to travel to England for training and to compete in the London Olympics under the British flag. Eland's status as an Olympian, even if he was competing for Great Britain, represented the highest international sporting achievement yet attained by a Coloured South African. Many Coloured men supported Eland's choice and saw the potential for social change to follow his successes. If Eland were to medal in the Games, "it would represent a forceful argument for a more lenient and tolerant attitude on the part of our European sport authorities towards Coloured sportsmen aspiring to international honours."[202] *The Sun*, the *Golden City Post*, and other media celebrated Eland and followed his story closely. Eland's performances, which, "he did with ease and grace and without unduly exerting himself," drew comparisons with the African American lightweight boxer Henry Armstrong.[203] They also praised Eland primarily as a credit to his country, claiming any success he had in

[201] *The Sun*, 11 October 1946.
[202] *The Sun*, 28 May 1948.
[203] *The Sun*, 11 October 1946.

London added, "laurels and lustre to the fair name of sport in South Africa."[204] Without the powerful Coloured lifter, South Africa's Olympic delegation was inadequate. His supporters declared, "It should be clear to everybody that the team finally selected to represent South Africa will most probably be the best as far as European sport is concerned, but not the best as far as South African sport is concerned."[205] Eland embodied the argument of equal abilities and national pride many Coloured men had deployed to argue for social and political acceptance as men and against the stigma of stereotypes based on race.

Eland's Olympic venture ended in unfortunate circumstances. On the day of competition, Eland was hospitalized with appendicitis. However, he was able to complete one of the three required lifts before he withdrew from competition. Already recognized as a national hero by Coloured men at home, the South African *Sporting News* also noted with pride that Eland had finished ahead of his White South African compatriot in the one event he was able to finish.[206]

The histories of the "Black Flashes" and Ron Eland supported Coloureds' claims that they were up to the Olympic challenge. In the run-up to the 1956 Games, the *Golden City Post* reported that Black boxers would potentially be allowed to participate if they qualified.[207] For his part, Eland told the *Post* that he believed if South Africa would not allow Black athletes to compete under the Union flag, then those athletes should pursue possibilities of competing for other countries. "There should be no bar to prevent any athlete from representing his country at sport," Eland argued, though he expressed concerns about the cost and

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[204] *The Sun*, 28 May 1948.
[205] *The Sun*, 19 March 1948.
[206] *Sporting News*, August 1948.
[207] *Golden City Post*, 13 March 1955.

bureaucratic logistics of Coloured athletes heading overseas.[208] *Drum*, the *Post's* sister publication, agreed with Eland and claimed the law and Olympic rules were on their side.[209] By barring everyone except White athletes, South Africa ran the risk of expulsion from the International Olympic Committee. Furthermore, the press contended, the South African team would be stronger with the inclusion of all athletes. While most South African sporting organizations did not include formalized color bars in their constitutions, the social color bar was strictly enforced. Only White athletes were selected for the 1956 South African delegation, and all national teams continued to accept only Whites. As a result of White South Africans' refusal to integrate its national sporting organizations, all South African athletes were excluded from Olympic competition beginning with the 1964 Games in Tokyo.

Conclusion

By incorporating the international examples of African Americans and Maoris, Coloured imaginings of championships and masculine respectability proved they were not confined by the localized cultivation of racial segregation in sports. As African Americans and Maoris proved that they were consistently of championship caliber, Coloured South Africans too claimed again and again that they could compete with anyone. They tried to pique the imaginings of White South Africans along the way. Imagine a Coloured boxer of the status of Louis heaping praise upon the South African boxing culture.

[208] *Golden City Post*, 8 May 1955.
[209] *Drum*, May 1955.

Imagine an integrated South African Olympic team sweeping events at Rome in 1960, at Tokyo in 1964, or perhaps at a games staged in the Union itself. Imagine a truly representative Springboks side pounding away against the formidable front of the All Blacks, both Maori and Pakeha. In Coloured imaginations, the possibilities were endless.

For many Coloured men, competition in sports complemented a constellation of masculine roles as part of their citizenship in the Union. Coloured men held the franchise against several attempts to remove them from the voters' roll—a feat not accomplished until the Nationalist Party succeeded in 1956. Coloured men celebrated their military service in the Cape Corps through two world wars. And Coloured men presented themselves as devoted to their families, their churches and mosques, their jobs, and the education of their children. Sports served as a palpable manifestation of Coloured masculinity that illustrated both their physical and intellectual contributions, whether real or potential, to South Africa.

Coloured men's interest in White culture may seem contradictory in the sense that Coloured men sometimes mocked White failures and often ridiculed White South Africans' as poor sportsmen. However, Coloured support for national teams like the Springboks is better understood as a reflection of the inclusivity and broad appeal of sporting culture. Coloured South Africans opposed White supremacy, not White athletes and teams. The Coloured press recognized White athletes as superior athletes because of their training and facilities, but they refuted any idea that race was a contributing factor. Indeed, most petitions from Coloured athletes and fans asked to be

included with Whites as equals. The international examples with whom Coloured men identified broadened their voice and situated them within an international discourse of masculine ideals juxtaposed against racial discrimination.

Chapter Four

"Good Human Material Badly Handled:" Making Boys into Men in the Shadow of Cape Town's "Skolly Menace"

In 1937, the Cape Town press was engrossed by declarations that a "skolly menace" had taken over the city. The *Cape Times* and *Cape Argus* identified District Six as the hotbed of skolly activity, the hornets' nest from which criminal activity emanated throughout the surrounding neighborhoods. In this tense atmosphere, a letter to the editors of *The Sun* called for reason in the face of the racialized sensationalism surrounding the so-called menace. "Scrutineer," as the paper identified the letter writer, contended that all communities suffered from crime, and that criminals could not be attributed to any one race. He objected that, "A most surprising failure of all these expressions of opinion is that practically everyone has arrived at the conclusion that these skollies are the scum of the Coloured people."[210] "Scrutineer" also worried about several of the proposed remedies, dismayed that some commentators were, "even going so far as to advocate lynching and other forms of punishment of the Middle Ages."[211] However, the public commentary regarding skollies in the late 1930s implied that these particular delinquents were, without exception, Coloured. The skolly menace was a persistent fear of Capetonians, seizing headlines well into the 1950s. By engaging with the racialized discourse surrounding the menace, this chapter argues that Coloured South Africans approached solutions to

[210] *The Sun*, 2 July 1937. The issue features both "Scrutineer's" letter to the editor and an editorial responding to coverage of the skolly menace in the White press.

[211] Ibid.

delinquency and stereotypes regarding skollies as ways of reforming performances of masculinity among Coloured youth.

Until the 1930s, the term "skolly" had been most often used in reference to loafers in working-class neighborhoods, those teenagers and young men who were endlessly encamped on the street corners.[212] Anxieties shared by Coloureds and Whites alike about a growing skolly menace endowed the term much more sinister connotations. Those same teenage boys and young men now terrorized passersby with knives and threats of violence. They harassed and, sometimes, raped women. They smoked *dagga* and drank to excess. In 1932, an article in *The Sun* admitted that, "We are all aware of the many temptations placed in the way of our growing lads… The devil's trinity of temptations, dagga, drink and dice assail the poorer class of working lads in the slum districts."[213] This article expressed a worry over the youths' futures rather than a fear of the youths' actions. The skolly menace marked a shift from the public perceiving skollies as do-nothings towards perceptions of skollies as dangerous, hyper-masculine threats to society.

The caricature of the skolly meshed neatly with popular stereotypes about Coloured men—that they were lazy, drunkards, sexually deviant, and prone to violence. One White academic claimed that those who wished to help Coloured youths had to recognize that circumstances for the youths in question could be described as, "abandoned by his parents, or his parents are divorced or separated, or the father is a drunkard, or the mother is a drug addict, and the family life is

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[212] In *The Brotherhoods: Street Gangs and State Control in Cape Town* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1984), Don Pinnock suggests that "skolly" is most likely derived from the Dutch "*schoelje*," meaning "scavenger." See page 24.

[213] *The Sun*, 26 August 1932.

broken up."[214] That depiction of Coloured families was not backed up by evidence but reflected a common narrative. In the face of these stereotypes that damned Coloured racial and masculine identities, skollies presented a threat bigger than petty crime and physical violence. Commentators saw the debates about how to deal with the skolly menace as a contest over what it meant to be a young Coloured man.

Fears of violent, deviant, and racialized bodies are not confined to historical portrayals of skollies in Cape Town. Even in South African history, easy comparisons can be made with the *tsotsis*, mining compound gangs, and the ducktail gangs of the 1950s. The young, urbanized African men of Johannesburg known as *tsotsis* imitated American gangster styles in many ways but also earned prestige through assaults and violence.[215] In the mines of the Rand, African and White men organized themselves into gangs for protection and to violently impose their while on opposing groups. Keith Breckenridge has written of the mining compound gangs as fraternal organizations competing over the racial composition of masculinity.[216] Katie Mooney, too, has linked deviant juvenile appearances and actions to White youths, an important intervention in the South African historiography that focuses primarily on the relationship between crime and Black communities.[217] The comparative historiography for skollies makes

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[214] D. M. Buchanan, "Programme for Coloured Progress," *Race Relations* 9, no. 1 (1942): 51.

[215] Clive Glaser, *Bo-Tsotsi: The Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935-1976* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2000), 71.

[216] Keith Breckenridge, "The Allure of Violence: Men, Race and Masculinity on the South African Goldmines, 1900-1950," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, no. 4 (Dec. 1998): 673.

[217] Katie Mooney, "'Ducktails, Flick-Knives and Pugnacity:' Subcultural and Hegemonic Masculinities in South Africa, 1948-1960," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, no. 4 (Dec. 1998): 756-757.

poignant the claims by Coloured South Africans that they were unfairly singled out in relation to youthful deviancy.

Globally, the parallels between skollies and other disparaged groups of young, racialized men are also numerous. Community leaders and governments most often identified youths as particularly troublesome in times of social uncertainty, especially in post-war contexts.[218] Fears of the skolly menace, for instance, peaked during an economic depression and at times in which the White supremacist government was trying to consolidate political powers in the hands of Whites. Talk of the menace also coincided with increased reports of crimes as measured in official statistics, but the press and general public usually relied on anecdotal evidence to convey their worries.[219] It is important to understand skollies and other deviant Coloured youths as part of global anxieties about how to control and, if possible, rehabilitate idle, threatening youths. White fears of menacing black bodies were commonplace throughout the British Empire and the United States, finding manifestation in violence, legislated segregation, and

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[218] See Nicolas Argenti, *The Intestines of the State: Youth, Violence, and Belated Histories in the Cameroon Grassfields* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Andrew J. Diamond, *Mean Streets: Chicago Youths and the Everyday Struggle for Empowerment in the Multiracial City, 1908-1969* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Elspeth Grant and Paul Sendzuik, "'Urban Degeneration and Rural Revitalisation:' The South Australian Government's Youth Migration Scheme, 1913-14," *Australian Historical Studies* 41, no. 1 (Mar. 2010): 75-89; Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds. *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London: Routledge, 2006); Eric C. Schneider, *Vampires, Dragons, and Egyptian Kings: Youth Gangs in Postwar New York* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Jonathan Swainger, "Teen Trouble and Community Identity in Post-Second World War Northern British Columbia," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 47, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 150-179; and Xueguang Zhou and Liren Hou, "Children of the Cultural Revolution: The State and the Life Course in the People's Republic of China," *American Sociological Review* 64, no. 1 (Feb. 1999): 12-36.

[219] Increasing reports of criminal activities like armed robberies, rape, assaults, and public drunkenness were included in sources like S. W. Lavis, "Some Adverse Social Conditions of the Coloured People and Their Effects," a Paper Read at the National Convention of the Cape Coloured Commission, Cape Town, July-35, 1938; *The Sun*, 17 December 1954; and *The Sun*, 6 April 1956.

the criminalization of black masculinities. As R. W. Connell contends, the problem is not one left behind in history. In many post-colonial countries, White men continue to dominate the legal systems through the police, courts, and prisons; despite their status as racial minorities, both African American and Aboriginal men are overrepresented in the U.S. and Australian prison systems, respectively.[220] By understanding White South Africans' fears of young Coloured men, whether skollies or not, the skolly menace can be understood through the lens of a racialized masculine hierarchy.

Young Coloured men were certainly not the only youths to engage in violence and other deviant activities. Yet, the caricature of the skolly became representative of all Coloured men in a way that ducktail gangs and other expressions of deviancy among White youths never did. Skollies' use of violence alone is not enough to explain the discrepancy. As noted in Chapter Two, demonstrations of violence were and are an essential element in expressions of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity in twentieth-century South Africa demanded that violence be wielded with restraint and only under specific circumstances, such as in times of war.[221] Importantly, racist discourse in South Africa and elsewhere also held that Blacks were not individuals, but rather component members of the racial group. An individual could not be understood outside of his race, and each individual member came to represent his race as a

[220] R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 75.

[221] Robert Morrell, et al., "Hegemonic Masculinity: Reviewing the Gendered Analysis of Men's Power in South Africa," *South African Review of Sociology* 44, no. 1 (2013): 8.

whole.[222] Hegemonic masculinity allowed White men to see themselves simply as men, but Coloured men could not separate themselves from their racial identities. White South Africans painted all Coloured men with the narrow brushstrokes of the skolly type; they portrayed all Coloured men as violent, sexually deviant, and addicted to alcohol and *dagga*. The equation of Coloured masculinity with the skolly type meant that the press' obsession with the skolly menace beginning in the 1930s drove a struggle on the part of Coloured South Africans to redefine Coloured masculinities in the popular imagination.

Associations of idle youths with threatening masculine behaviors were also not unique to South Africa and the discourse of the skolly menace. By following a discourse in English papers roughly contemporary to the skolly menace, Kate Bradley notes that local and national perspectives of juvenile delinquency varied greatly. The national press in England latched on to crime statistics, stationed reporters at courts, and emphasized crimes committed by juveniles, no matter the frequency. The readership of the national papers would have been much more diverse in terms of class affiliations, political attitudes, and experiences with youths and crime. Alternatively, the local press in London's East End paid little attention to juvenile crime, instead favoring coverage of what the reporters and editors deemed more important issues. For readers in the East End, for example, petty crime was a common occurrence and not something that warranted extra attention. Still, the intensified national coverage during the 1940s and 1950s gave

[222] This idea is perhaps articulated best by Marlon Ross in, "An Anatomy of the Race Icon: Joe Louis as Fetish-Idol in Postmodern America," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 109, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 284.

the English public an overall impression that juvenile crime was on the rise.[223] While the disparity in perception in Bradley's study revolves around national and local perspectives, the skolly menace is best understood as emanating from a disparity in racial perspectives. The skolly menace was first reported in the papers with predominantly White readerships, but the discourse quickly shifted to Coloured newspapers and commentators.

Another parallel can be seen in the fears about delinquent boys in post-war Munich. Martin Kalb describes boys who had lost their families during the war, either due to death or separation, as living in misery—that is, without food, shelter, or adult supervision. The local government and press quickly equated boys living in misery to boys acting in delinquency and warned local residents about associating with the large numbers of unaccompanied minors who flooded the city in the late 1940s and early 1950s. As a solution, local politicians and charitable groups encouraged institutionalized solutions in the forms of boys' clubs or the penal system to deal with the perceived threat.[224] Kalb argues that though the fears of delinquent youth may have been unfounded, the press drove a discourse that demanded action. Eager to prove themselves as a community reborn from the ashes of a crisis, the "respectable" members of Munich used new institutions to demonstrate that they could solve their own problems and rebuild

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[223] Kate Bradley, "Juvenile Delinquency and the Public Sphere: Exploring Local and National Discourse in England, *c.* 1940-1969," *Social History* 37, no. 1 (February 2012): 26-27; 32. Bradley devoted considerable research to exploring criminal records from her period of inquiry to investigate whether or not a rise in juvenile crime actually occurred. She concludes that the public discourse is more likely a result of changing statistical measures of juvenile crime and new reporting priorities in the national newspapers rather than rampant crime committed by youths. Bradley's methodology applied to the issue of the skolly menace would be a fruitful path for research exploring empirical evidence of the association of Coloured youths with crime.

[224] Martin Kalb, "'The Youth is a Threat!' Controlling the Delinquent Boy in Post-WWII Munich," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 6, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 263.

a thriving community. This chapter will illustrate a similar intent on the part of the Coloured press and community leaders in Cape Town to both define the skolly menace as a legitimate problem and to promote adequate solutions.

As eager as the press was to debate the causes of the skolly menace in the late 1930s, associations of Coloured men with crime was nothing new. Ian Goldin notes that in the 1890s, frequent stories in the *Cape Times* and *Cape Argus* of Coloured criminality served to further animosities between laborers of different races and, in effect, ethnicized crime.[225] Coloured men were most often associated with public drunkenness, pickpocketing, muggings, and fighting in the streets. Robin Hallett writes of similar coverage of crimes in the years following the South African War. In 1906, a series of riots involving predominantly young Coloured men dominated the headlines of the *Argus* and the *South African News*.[226] The press referred to the young men as hooligans—equally derogatory but racially neutral compared to skolly. The press described the hooligan riots as mindless acts of mob violence and paid little attention to the economic grievances made by the unemployed participants.

Some White elites hailed the expansion of racialized criminal laws and segregation as the means through which to suppress crimes committed by Coloured South Africans. One study on "Native Policy" in the Union lamented the fact that Coloured men were excluded from the pass laws even though the proportion of criminal convictions was higher among Coloured men than their

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[225] Ian Goldin, "Coloured Identity and Coloured Politics in the Western Cape Region of South Africa," in *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, ed. Leroy Vail (London: James Currey, 1989), 247.

[226] Robin Hallett, "The Hooligan Riots," in *Studies in the History of Cape Town*, vol. 1, ed. Chris Saunders (Cape Town: History Department, University of Cape Town, 1979), 53.

African peers. Ifor Evans, the study's author, questioned, "If the prevention of crime be a major object, the distinction is hard to justify."[227] The White press generally agreed that high levels of crime in Coloured communities indicated too light a hand wielded by the government. The *Cape Times* celebrated a statement by a recently elected M.P., Johannes Conradie, claiming that further segregation in urban areas would help both White and Coloured South Africans. He reasoned that since Coloured South Africans had not been granted the opportunity to develop their own communities, young men were left to support themselves through "skollywork."[228] As the Administrator of the Cape Provincial Municipal Association, Conradie told one audience that, "I see no reason at all why the coloured, if assisted in the beginning by a sympathetic local authority, should not be a perfectly happy community… To-day the great majority of coloured people live in crowded slums where they deteriorate physically and mentally."[229] These paternalist arguments framed the problem of skollies as both one of Coloured deviancy and a failure of White benevolence.

By the 1940s, the menace was a highly politicized issue. Coloured political and professional organizations railed against the equation of Coloured masculinity with criminality, though most acknowledged that crime was a serious threat in working-class and poor neighborhoods. The strains of the Second World

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[227] Ifor L. Evans, *Native Policy in Southern Africa: An Outline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 38. Evans was a British academic, but his book reads as a report on the effectiveness of "native policies" and recommendations for improvement. The implications of improvements on "native policy" were further segregation, criminalization, and preferential economic policies for White landowners and businessmen.

[228] *Cape Times*, 24 August 1938. J. H. Conradie was later Speaker of the National Assembly and Judge President of the Supreme Court in South Africa's administration of South West Africa.

[229] *Cape Times*, 5 April 1938.

War—absent men, influxes of sailors and soldiers, and commodity shortages—intensified fears of a crime wave against the vulnerable population. In particular, the blackouts stoked fears of skollies lurking in the dark. In October 1942, *The Sun* featured a front-page story explaining the increase in skolly attacks during the blackouts, especially in areas like District Six and Windermere. The story warned that, "Night after night assaults take place, many of which never reach the ears of the police, and in some areas assaults have been so numerous that people do not attempt to venture into the streets at night time."[230] The story implored the community to unite to combat criminals and refute the growing reputation of Coloureds as inherently criminal.

A conference of the National Liberation League the following month concurred, claiming that Coloured South Africans in Cape Town and Durban were in fact the primary victims of skollies and needed to be protected from the worst amongst them.[231] To alleviate the perceived threat of skollies, at least some citizens and officials believed they could protect communities while aiding the war effort. The Defence Liaison Committee of Cape Town suggested that the police round up all skollies, along with prostitutes, bootleggers, and vagrants, and relocate them to work camps for reform.[232] The relocation program never came to fruition, but it demonstrates the extremes which city officials and community leaders considered to allay public concerns over the menace.

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[230] *The Sun*, 30 October 1942.

[231] National Liberation League of South Africa memo, 2 November 1942. The NLL was a predecessor to the Non-European Unity Movement with a primarily Coloured membership.

[232] Defence Liaison Committee memo, "Measures for Dealing with Shebeens, Brothels and Skollies in the City Area," August 1942. The Defence Liaison Committee was a group of community leaders and municipal officials who coordinated black outs, fire control, and civilian lookouts during the Second World War.

The skolly menace developed into such a popular concern that Parliament convened an investigative commission to explore the causes and possible solutions to the crisis. The editorial board of *The Sun* believed the commission would help reduce White South Africans' fears, but told its readers that the true root of skollyism rested in White suppression of Coloured labor and increased competition with African workers for even the most menial of jobs. Cynically, the board noted that, "it is for the European to say what is to be the Coloured man's destiny."[233] Once the commission released its report in early 1944, the *Cape Standard* rejected the findings as arbitrary and inaccurately shifting the onus for crime on Coloured men. The editors proclaimed that, "skollies are made, not born," and blamed the White supremacist government for its role in producing skollies. "The State is capable of providing the facilities for the turning out of soldiers," the editors wrote, "it is also capable of that lack of responsibility which finds fruition in the gross degeneration of the defenceless, exploited class—black and white. Then, and only then, do we have skollies."[234] The *Standard* lambasted the commission's recommendations to censor films, prohibit the importation of American comics, and increase police activities in poor neighborhoods as efforts to eliminate symptoms rather than the disease.

Much of the concern during the early reporting of the skolly menace can be understood through the broader social concern about degeneration of youths in the lower classes. As seen in Chapter One, politicians were eager to separate the plight of "poor whites" from the dangers of racial mixing. That project was not

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[233] *The Sun*, 10 December 1943.
[234] *Cape Standard*, 1 February 1944.

new in the 1930s, and proposed remedies had been recycled in the press and government circles as far back as the 1870s. As Sarah Duff points out, much of White South Africans' anxieties about the "poor white" problem after Union were linked to earlier worries about rural White children's access to education.[235] By 1930, the government was committed to uplifting "poor white" children through compulsory education. The government expended nearly a third of the Union's budget to finance White schools and other educational programs. The findings of the 1932 Carnegie Commission on the "poor white" problem encouraged the government that its strategy of increasing "poor white" children's access to education, and the quality of that education, was significant in alleviating poverty and racial degeneration.[236] The government paid little attention to the correlation between Coloured children's lack of access to education and the skolly menace, but the disparity was not lost on Coloured South Africans.

For teachers and their supporters, the obvious solution to the skolly menace was the implementation of compulsory education for Coloured youths at the same standards enforced for White youths. The editors of the *Cape Standard* encouraged readers to agitate for the establishment of more government schools, noting that "civilian cures" to the skolly menace had so far failed.[237] The Teachers' League of South Africa, representing hundreds of Coloured teachers, also claimed that the skolly problem could be solved through compulsory education that took Coloured youths off the streets and kept them in the classroom as long as

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[235] S. E. Duff, "Saving the Child to Save the Nation: Poverty, Whiteness and Childhood in the Cape Colony, *c.* 1870-1895," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (June 2011): 231.

[236] E. G. Mahlerbe, *Report of the Carnegie Commission of Investigation on the Poor White Question in South Africa*, vol. 3 (Stellenbosch: Pro-Ecclesia Drukkery, 1932), 50.

[237] *Cape Standard*, 18 January 1937.

possible. The organization complained, "The absence of compulsory education for non-Europeans has given rise to the hooligan or skolly problem and we are blamed for these uneducated hooligans and told that they are our people."[238] The president of the TLSA went so far as to posit that compulsory education would reduce the number of skollies by seventy-five percent in five years.[239] The Cape Coloured Commission leant its support to compulsory education for Coloured youths too, noting that the caricature of the skolly had become representative of all Coloured men in White minds. The Commission strongly emphasized the role of moral and physical discipline in education and stressed the urgency of the need in Coloured communities.[240] If the government viewed compulsory education as the key to uplifting "poor white" children, then Coloured leaders argued it could have the same impact on the youths who were susceptible to becoming skollies.

Some Coloured observers rejected the idea that a menace or crime wave existed, instead suggesting a sensationalist plot to increase racial antagonism during hard times. The *Cape Standard* argued that stories about a skolly menace or crime waves coincided with labor shortages on farms in the rural Cape. According to one account, "grim and pitiful stories are told of the horrible crimes

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[238] *Cape Standard*, 25 October 1937.

[239] Ibid.

[240] U.G., No. 54, 1937, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1937), 166. The commission, when describing the division of the Coloured population into three classes, defines the lowest class as, "those constituting what might be termed the undesirable class comprising the 'skolly boys' (often habitually armed with knives or razor blades), the habitual convicts and ex-convicts, the drunkards, the dagga-smokers, and the habitual loafers. In actual fact this class is not representative of the Coloured as a whole, but is sometimes apt unduly to colour European public opinion regarding the whole Coloured community. They are creatures of conditions in a similar way as are the slum and criminal elements of all the great cities of the world, though the incidence of these conditions may vary," 16.

they commit; a sorry tale of drunkenness, *dagga*-smoking, shebeening, knifing is repeated with all its sordid details." The editors of the *Standard* lamented that that tale had been repeated so often over the years that it had become second nature for South Africans to associate Coloured masculinity with the caricature of the skolly. The term skolly described race in a way that hooligan had not. The editors also refuted the notion that, "the existence of skollies is further evidence of the innate 'moral weakness' of the Coloured man—the same type of 'moral weakness' which is supposed to make Coloured workers more fond of liquor than other workers."[241] In their mind, skollies were just another stereotype in the litany of supposedly deviant masculine Coloured traits.

The leaders of the Non-European Unity Movement decried the press' obsession with the skolly menace as playing into the hands of the Minister of Native Affairs. The NEUM campaigned for equal rights from a non-racial standpoint, and counted among its leaders Abdullah Abdurahman's daughter, Cissie Gool. During NEUM's 1945 conference, the members declared the ideas of a skolly menace akin to rumors of, "an uncontrolled influx of Native labor."[242] Both were seen as scare tactics meant to stir up racial tensions and keep political organizations from cooperating in protests for labor rights and against the pass laws. Both caricatures also highlighted key masculine stereotypes for members of both races, with Coloured men most often stereotyped as criminals and African men most often stereotyped as pre-conditioned laborers prepared to work for less. Through its commitment to non-racialism, NEUM's rejection of the racist

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[241] *Cape Standard*, 18 September 1945.
[242] Non-European Unity Movement, "Minutes of the Fourth Unity Conference" (1945), 21.

skolly stereotype also had the effect of defending expressions of masculinity that were disparaged along the lines of racism.

Whether or not the skolly menace truly existed was largely a moot point, but the effect of discourse surrounding the menace spurred Coloured communities to act with regard to idle youths. Perhaps the activity that garnered the most support was the organization of boys' clubs and recreation organizations. Boys' clubs were already popular sources of entertainment and education for boys of all races and classes in South Africa (and in much of the Western world). The crisis of masculinity captured in the discourse surrounding the skolly menace encouraged community leaders to reconsider the role that boys' clubs played in the promotion of hegemonic masculinity. Boys' clubs offered hope that deviant expressions of masculinity could be stamped out during youth and that adult men would serve as masculine role models for youths in need of guidance.

Boys to Men

Amidst the discussions about the legitimacy of the skolly menace was a debate about what to do with skollies or, more precisely, what to do with Coloured teenagers and young men who had few prospects in life. Some commentators believed the key was to reach Coloured youths before their idle hands got the best of them. Besides the calls for compulsory education for Coloured children, private organizations played a key role in guiding youths toward respectability. In the decade after Union, Coloured political and educational leaders worried about poor Coloured children succumbing to the

baser instincts of the lower classes. An *A.P.O.* editorial from 1913 praised the efforts of the White leaders of the St. Andrews Gymanasium in Newlands. Following a demonstration of the Coloured gymnasts' abilities, the editors reminded the *A.P.O.'s* readers, "that nearly all these lads were recruited just a little over five months ago from those who would have drifted into the hooligan class."[243] Poverty was not the only correlate to crime within the Coloured community. Teachers' organizations argued that just as the government mandated compulsory education for White students in order to reduce the number of "poor whites," so too should they make education compulsory for all South Africans. Compulsory education would allow at-risk youths to be, "converted into capable workmen and good citizens."[244] The TLSA and its allies believed that education would lead to less unemployment among Coloured boys and young men.

By the 1930s, community leaders accepted boys' educational and recreation institutions as the best means by which to uplift Coloured boys. In 1933, Bishop S. W. Lavis described hooligans and other notorious "lads and young men" as "good human material badly handled."[245] Youth advocates echoed Lavis' claim as they organized boys' clubs and recreation organizations to try to keep boys off street corners and in schools. Following a rash of reported knife attacks in the city center, a letter to the editors of the *Cape Standard* called on boys' clubs to reach out not only to respectable boys, but also to pique the

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[243] *A.P.O.*, 6 December 1913.
[244] *The Educational Journal*, August 1915.
[245] S. W. Lavis, "The Social Progress Among the Coloured People," in *Report of Proceedings, First National Coloured-European Conference* (Cape Town: Atlas Printing Works, 1933), 57.

interests of the "hooligan type."[246] The White government could not be depended on, the letter continued, so it was up to Coloured advocates to take care of their own youth. Responding to similar public sentiment, organizers developed boys' clubs to mirror masculine institutions and activities like the military and sports clubs.

Scouting served as a model for many Coloured boys' clubs, especially because of its commitment to discipline and reflection of an orderly, militaristic lifestyle. Though the South African Boy Scouts largely refused Coloured members, Black alternatives included the Pathfinders, the Church Lads' Brigade, and the Muslim Lads' Brigade. As early as the 1920s, the Muslim Lads' Brigade earned praise for its efforts to prevent hooliganism. *Moslem Outlook* complimented the Brigade for, "training out lads in habits of self-respect restraint and discipline; and thus keeping them off the streets to sweep the too numerous class of hooligans."[247] The organization's Christian counterpart received a similar glowing review from a former Governor of Rhodesia, who noted that the Church Lads' Brigade had, "achieved its object in promoting discipline, self-respect and other qualities that made for true Christian manliness." The governor asserted that, "if courtesy was practised by all Coloured boys, there would be no skollies," as a result of the efforts of various Scouting organizations.[248] Scouting represented a particular form of adherence to hegemonic masculine ideals. While learning to be industrious, self-supporting, and loyal, boys also learned to follow

[246] *Cape Standard*, 28 June 1937. Letter to the editors from C. V. Nelson.
[247] *Moslem Outlook*, 3 July 1926. Punctuation errors in original.
[248] *The Sun*, 15 September 1944. Speech made by Sir Herbert Stanley on the 50th Anniversary of the Cape Town Regiment.

social norms.[249] Scouts were rewarded for following strict guidelines and completing set tasks, not innovating or standing out from the group.

Similar to proponents of Scouting, some South Africans believed military training could eradicate the perceived skolly menace, especially with the outbreak of the Second World War. One series of letters to the *Cape Standard* argued for the army to accept skollies as recruits and, "to make good citizens out of them." The writers' reasoned that, "the very fact that physical and military drilling will develop them, will prove that they are not really a bad lot."[250] With the announcement of the formation of a Junior Cape Corps in 1942, some pundits saw an opportunity to reform even the youngest skollies. The Junior Cape Corps was meant to prepare youths not yet old enough to enlist for military service through a series of camps and physical activities.[251] A Coloured sergeant in the Cape Corps wrote to express his support for the junior auxiliary, proposing that, "'Skollyism,' among other very sickening and retrogressive factors, will be gradually eliminated, and the principles of worthy citizenship will be inculcated in its place."[252] Even after the war, proponents of militaristic solutions saw Coloured veterans as an important resource in the fight against crime. One Cape Corps veteran promoted the idea of a permanent juvenile camp on Robben Island run by veterans in order to instill army discipline in convicted skollies. The camp was not the end game, and one man argued that, "once these delinquents had received a thorough manual training they should be given employment by the

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[249] Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity, 1870-1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 198.

[250] *Cape Standard*, 17 December 1940.

[251] See U. G. 28—'44, *First Annual Report on the Work of the Coloured Advisory Council for the Period 1st April, 1943, to 31st March, 1944* (Cape Town: Cape Times Limited, 1944), 22.

[252] *Cape Standard*, 17 November 1942. Letter to the editor from Sgt. J. S. Jacobs.

State or private enterprises."[253] In terms of representing a masculine ideal into which skollies might be transformed, Coloured veterans served as the obvious example.

Proponents of organized sports and recreation clubs also heralded their successes in preventing boys from becoming skollies. One observer noted that, "games, exercises, boxing, wrestling…have converted many probable 'skollies' into well-behaved boys who have begun to experience the pleasure and anticipation of becoming a respected champion."[254] Promoters of these clubs suggested that the rise in skollies was due to a lack of recreational activities available to Coloured boys. At the opening of the Garden Village Junior Recreation Club in 1938, a local councilman argued that Coloured boys who were left to wander in the streets ran the risk of being identified as skollies. The councilman told the audience that, "It is because the boys have no place to go, that they have to loiter in the streets and are classified as 'skollies.'"[255] Recreation clubs and sports teams offered a safe haven for respectable boys and a chance of redemption for those who were most vulnerable the skolly lifestyle. Athletic training and commitment to a team also gave boys goals to strive toward and a social network of likeminded youths and mentors. Participation in these clubs enabled youths to see a clear progression toward the fraternal communities of adult teams, as discussed in Chapter Three.

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[253] *The Sun*, 5 December 1947. The years immediately following the war saw the rise of organized gangs in Cape Town's working-class neighborhoods, especially the Globe Gang in District Six. In the late 1940s and 1950s, skollies and gangs were often discussed as one and the same.

[254] *Cape Standard*, 29 November 1938.

[255] *Cape Standard*, 22 February 1938.

Other organizations claimed progress in fighting skollyism by providing youths with moral and physical guidance. The Eoan Group, where groups of Coloured girls and women received training in singing and dancing beginning in the early 1930s, opened its door to boys and men in 1946. The leaders of the Eoan Group viewed their work as complementary to the many physical culture clubs, and thought instruction in handicrafts and arts would attract a broader array of youths than physical activities alone.[256] The Liberman Institute adopted a similar well-rounded approach, sponsoring Scouting troops and sports teams while also offering art classes, literary clubs, and the largest "non-European" library in South Africa.[257] The diversity and cooperation displayed by various Coloured boys' clubs makes clear the public opinion that the skolly menace represented too significant a problem to be solved by one approach alone.

While some Capetonians believed the skolly menace could be solved through reform efforts, others proposed a heavy-handed approach. Anxious citizens called for the organization of vigilante groups, cooperation with police forces, and harsh penalties for convicted skollies. Following a particularly hectic holiday season, several residents of Walmer Estate suggested the establishment of a Vigilance Committee, "drawing its material from the many wrestling and boxing clubs in Cape Town and suburbs, to assist the police in the difficult task of keeping law and order among the riff-raff of the Coloured population."[258] Those

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[256] *Cape Standard,* 5 July 1946. Headline reads: "Eoan Extends Activities to Boys: Possible Skolly Problem Solution." For more on the Eoan Group, see Hilde Roos, "Remembering to Forget the Eoan Group: The Legacy of an Opera Company from the Apartheid Era," *South African Theatre Journal* 27, no.1 (2014): 1-18. Roos also assisted filmmaker Aryan Kaganof in the making of a documentary about the Eoan Group entitled *An Inconsolable Memory* (2013).

[257] *The Sun*, 22 June 1945.

[258] *Cape Standard*, 25 January 1937.

who supported the suggestion hoped to make a distinction between the "riff-raff" and the respectable members of the Coloured communities. Others balked at the idea, asking if the enlisted wrestlers and boxers were expected to, "try their hand at knocking the ruffians about."[259] Some even suggested that the state be responsible for meting out violent punishments on those skollies who physically harmed others. In a man-on-the-street interview series in the *Cape Standard*, one respondent claimed that, "Where one has inflicted pain on innocent people, he should receive a dose of the cat 'o nine tails. This is the only language they understand. It is only since the cat has been abolished that knifing has been so prevalent."[260] By promoting strict punishments for skollies, Coloured South Africans demonstrated a fear of crime and respect for law common to communities throughout the country. They hoped skollies would be dealt with in the same ways as all criminals, not through means specific to any one race. Coloureds who perceived themselves as respectable aimed to portray skollies as an aberration within Coloured communities rather than representative of young Coloured men.

Sensationalizing Skollies and Gangs in the Post-War Period

The public discourse of the 1930s and 1940s framed a dichotomy between young boys' potential for respectability and young boys' potential for deviancy. By the 1950s, public discourse shifted to a sensationalized vision of crime, skollies, and organized crime in the form of gangs. The young criminals were seemingly

[259] *Cape Standard*, 1 February 1937.
[260] *Cape Standard*, 8 May 1945.

everywhere. The discourse captured the public's new perceptions of young deviant men as part of the increasingly urban Black population as well as the criminalization of Black lives under apartheid law. Skollies and other gangsters were cosmopolitan and well known in their communities, but also represented fears cited by White supremacist politicians in their implementation of apartheid. Under the new political regime, the skolly menace represented more than the individual degeneration of impoverished and ill educated boys. The press used the skolly menace to illustrate both reasonable fears of crime in cities as well as lively new identities that existed in defiance of White supremacist repression.

New mediums went into publication during the decade seeking to capture the modern identities of Black South Africans. Most popular among those new sources were *Drum* and its sister publication, the *Golden City Post*. Writers for both magazines were fascinated by deviancy in South Africa's cities, and sweeping exposés about crime in District Six were common features. For instance, George Manuel, a former editor of the *Cape Standard*, weighed in with a long-form story on how skollies and the rise of gangs in the 1940s changed the respectable image of the District. Criminals had taken their toll on Coloured communities, Manuel wrote, "The gangs, criminals and the Cape counterpart of the Tsotsi of the Rand—the skollies do exist and at regular intervals their nefarious activities make the lives of the rest of the community a misery."[261] Manuel also described how boys as young as ten were addicted to *dagga* and packs of young men raided weddings, forced women to dance with them, and

[261] *Drum*, February 1952.

threatened anyone who intervened with broken glasses.[262] Though the writers of *Drum* seemed dismayed by the violent behaviors of skollies and other gangsters, the magazine fell well short of outright condemnation. Pieces like Manuel's combined nostalgia for simpler times with a scapegoating of new urban identities. The discourse of earlier decades in which the press and other observers attempted to explain the causes of skolly activities faded away.

Drum often described gang life with a tacit respect, though did not go so far as to grant that gangs were respectable. In one instance, the magazine quoted one chivalrous Globe member as saying, "we taught many an erring husband a lesson that his marriage vows were to be respected; we returned many a prodigal son to the bosom of his loving family; we helped boys just 'out' on to their sometimes still crooked feet."[263] This sense of masculine duty contrasts sharply with much of the mindless violence usually described in other outlets. Other forms of deviant masculinities were also spotlighted through *Drum*, including *tsotsis* in Johannesburg and gangsters from American movies.[264] The magazine's frequent coverage of gang life, whether in the form of skollies or something else, gave the impression to readers that young, urban masculinities were defined by criminality.

That characterization of urban youths' masculinities may not have been a far departure from lived experiences. Don Pinnock, for example, notes that in the

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[262] Ibid. Feature published under "Cape Crime: District Six is Doomed."

[263] *Drum*, April 1954.

[264] Lindsay Clowes, "Masculinity, Matrimony and Generation: Reconfiguring Patriarchy in *Drum*, 1951-983," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34, no. 1 (March 2008), 186. Mac Fenwick has also written about *Drum's* contrasting presentation of men's and women's sexualities and masculinities associated with gangsters in "'Tough Guy, Eh?' The Gangster-Figure in *Drum*," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22, no. 4 (December 1996): 617-633.

1940s, many of the Globe Gang's members had experiences in the masculinized institutions of the military or the prison system.[265] Young men learned to thrive in both institutions through demonstrations of bravery and violence, as well as adherence to strict social hierarchies. Once outside, young men could also wear their status as veterans or former inmates as badges of distinction that situated them in relation to other men in their communities. Gang affiliations also served as important social networks for Coloured (and other Black) men who often were alienated from urban social institutions considered respectable. As Denis-Constant Martin suggests, gangs' popularity can be understood as respectably conceived masculine clubs, but with deviant execution:

> In the beginning, gangs were one form of organisation of young men belonging to the poorest strata of Cape Town society. They had limited access to education, little entertainment and were objects of scorn. They found compensation in their comradeship, in their common fantasies of status, wealth, prestige and freedom nourished by American movies, and also in the transgression of official rules. These gangsters of the early twentieth century, and of the period between the wars, are frequently portrayed as 'nice kids' who stole but never from members of their community, and who fought but would interrupt a brawl to help a young girl or old lady carry her shopping home safely. They were outcasts with a strong code of honour and did not use firearms.[266]

In the 1950s, *Drum* described gangsters as less wayward choirboys and more unpredictable playboys.[267] Skollies and other gangsters came to be defined by

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[265] Don Pinnock, "From Argie Boys to Skolly Gangsters: The Lumpen Proletariat Challenge of the Street-Corner Armies in District Six, 1900-1951," *Studies in the History of Cape Town* vol. 3, Christopher Saunders and Howard Phillips, eds., (Cape Town: History Department in Association with the Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1980), 157.

[266] Denis-Constant Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past to Present* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999), 43. Martin also notes that, "Nostalgic books about old-time Cape Town and District have given that link [between gangs and the *Kaapse Klopse*] a romantic aura."

[267] *Drum*, February 1952 and April 1954.

their independence and defiance of hegemonic gender roles rather than their bending of the rules for communal protection.

The press' role in popularizing the image of skollies and gangsters in Cape Town cannot be understated. At the end of May 1955, the *Golden City Post* comfortably declared, "Cape Gets Reputation for Violence!"[268] The *Post* did not explain the sources proliferating that reputation, but the magazine and similar publications are the likely culprits. In the weeks leading up to the declaration, the *Post* ran long stories describing gangs' penchant for "gate-crashing," explaining that in one instance skollies stabbed a groom to death at his own reception and departed another only after, "grabbing and kissing half the women present."[269] Another feature described the exploits of the Casbah Kids, who were District Six's most notorious band of pickpockets. After detailing the sort of racket run by the Kids, the *Post* warned its readers, "Stop them while they are operating on a victim, and you are likely to get six inches of steel pierced into your side."[270] The magazine did not specialize in hard news, but the Cape's reputation for violence grew nonetheless. The gangs' infamy grew right alongside sales of publications that regularly featured tales of crime and deviancy.

The Sun also changed its temper toward the skolly menace in the 1950s but adopted a more conservative tone than *Drum*. While *The Sun* attempted to shift the conversation from one of hysteria to one of contextualized nuance during the 1930s and 1940s, headlines and front-page features from the 1950s fed into the narrative of intensifying crime waves terrorizing Capetonians. In fact,

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[268] *Golden City Post*, 22 May 1955.
[269] *Golden City Post*, 10 April 1955.
[270] *Golden City Post*, 8 May 1955.

The Sun even described the existence of skollies as institutionalized, dubbing it "Skollydom" and calling for Skollydom to be crushed.[271] Several front-page features throughout the 1950s proclaimed rising crime rates in Coloured neighborhoods like District Six, Woodstock, and Walmer Estate. The editors also adopted a more direct tone, telling their readers, "these miscreants should be ruthlessly wiped out."[272] Part of the shift in *The Sun's* coverage could be explained by a change in ownership in 1950, and the new owners and editors may have wanted to boost sales.[273] After all, the skolly menace had already proved to be a popular topic in the last two decades and a popular attraction in *The Sun's* competitors.

A significant lacuna in the press' coverage of skollies and gangs during the 1950s is proposed solutions to the problem. Most observers agreed that something needed to be done, but much of the public discourse of the 1950s lacked suggestions such as boys' clubs, affiliations with military organizations, or equal policing. While discourse in the preceding decades described skollies and gangs as anomalous to everyday life in Coloured communities, by the 1950s organized crime and ordinary violence were accepted as established facets of life in the city. The sensationalism in discussions of deviant young Black men dominated press coverage and much of the public discourse on youths' masculinities. The preponderance of the skolly and gangster images ensured that

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[271] *The Sun*, 10 March 1950.
[272] *The Sun*, 17 December 1954.
[273] Les and Donna Switzer, *The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho: A Descriptive Bibliographic Guide to African, Coloured and Indian Newspapers, Newsletters and Magazines, 1836-1976* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1979).

associations of young Coloured men with criminality persisted throughout the apartheid era.

Conclusion

Observers of the skolly menace recognized that the problem was as much a crisis in masculinity as it was racial condescension. Proponents of improved education and the establishment of boys' clubs were arguing for expanded access to institutions used to inculcate hegemonic masculine ideals in much of the Western world. Like those Coloured men who called for the integration of the military and sporting culture, Coloured South Africans who suggested schools and boys' clubs could be cures of deviant masculinity had in mind an ideal of masculinity rooted in respectability and citizenship. The skolly menace symbolized a departure from that masculine ideal that was embodied in the caricature of young men on the streets. Coloured adherents to the hegemonic masculine order found the skollies useful for their own purposes; they argued that skollies could not represent Coloured masculinity because skollies were not born skollies. Young men learned to enact gender roles either through respectable institutions or deviated from normative gender roles because they lacked experiences in those institutions.

In stark contrast to Whites' assertions that Coloured men were predisposed to criminality, some Coloured men asserted that Whites were to blame for the skolly menace. Refusing to accept the idea that Coloured men were solely responsible for policing their own, the editors of the *Cape Standard* took the White supremacist regime to task. Skollies represented, "the result of the

system applied against the Coloured South Africans. The Europeans themselves are to blame to a large extent for the existence of the skolly."[274] Through this assertion, the editors meant that the government forced young Coloured men into lives of crime by denying them education and employment in the same way that the government provided for Whites. In assigning blame to White South Africans, Coloured men articulated their recognition of the hegemonic masculinity that predominated. White men embodied an ideal held up as citizenship; skollies represented the antithesis. Some in the Coloured community suggested that the skolly menace symbolized fear-mongering politicking at its worst. Rather than integrate public institutions and spaces, White politicians and newspapers deployed the skolly menace to justify continued segregation. The editors of *The Sun* pondered, "[The term skolly] is employed so freely by folk with an anti-colour bias that one begins to wonder whether half of them know what it means."[275] The menace's popularity as a topic for editorials and letters to editors indicates that Coloured South Africans were aware of skollies as greater threats to their political rights and social standing than to their physical wellbeing.

Coloured South Africans generally held themselves responsible for dismantling barriers asserted by White supremacy. Despite widespread acceptance of hegemonic masculine ideals and practices, Coloured men did not simply measure themselves against White men. Often, they challenged White South Africans to acknowledge that their Coloured compatriots faced an uphill battle while upholding the same standards of masculinity, respectability, and

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[274] *Cape Standard*, 7 January 1941.
[275] *The Sun*, 29 November 1940.

citizenship. For instance, following a government proposal to censor American films that portrayed violence, sex, and gangsters in response to the skolly menace, one Coloured man claimed White South Africans remained willfully ignorant of the true causes of the menace. "Junius" claimed that censorship would not, "solve the skolly question if there is any such question in existence. We firmly believe that such a banning and exclusion of non-Europeans from cinemas is not going to take the place of providing more educational facilities, social amenities, play grounds, open parks, the economic betterment, and the unemployment question."[276] In other words, Coloured boys needed access to the institutions and resources that would make them South African men. Junius encouraged Black South Africans to set aside their differences to work toward a more equal society, one that would mean the measure of masculinity was not first and foremost determined by race.

By the 1950s, the skolly menace demonstrably lost much of its political connotation and took on less nuanced depictions of violence and poverty. Those depictions still proved popular topics in the press and mediums of public discourse, and present-day explorations of violence in Cape Town have followed suit. The South African and international media alike remain fascinated with gangs and violence in the poorest parts the city. And while plenty of studies correlate violence, drug use, and other gang activity on the Cape Flats with deplorable living conditions and poor access to social institutions, today's headlines are as sensationalized as those in the 1950s. A quick review of recent coverage includes headlines such as, "Cape Town: Most Violent City in Africa

[276] *Cape Standard*, 14 March 1944.

Struggles with Entrenched Gang Culture," "Gangs in Cape Town: A Daily Dance with Death," and "The Cape of Bad Dope: Gang Warfare is Out of Control—And Set to Get Worse as a Key Leader Leaves Prison."[277] Recent coverage reflects the city's historical reputation as a violent place—dating at least to the mid-1950s, as the *Golden City Post's* coverage demonstrates. But the new media coverage of violence and gangs in Cape Town omits much of the history covered in this chapter, including the discourse of the skolly menace. Instead, most articles refer to forced removals under apartheid as a root to gang violence in the twenty-first century.

Recent coverage of violence and organized crime perpetrated by Cape Town's youth continues old associations of Coloured masculinity with criminality. While the apartheid racial label is gone, and in fact many South Africans strongly object to racial labels altogether, references to the "coloured" or "mixed race" population of the city are common. More directly, typical stories about gangs and violence often focus on spaces such as Lavender Hill and Manenberg, both Coloured areas under the apartheid regime. [278] A

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[277] Cath Everett, "Cape Town: Most Violent City in Africa Struggles with Entrenched Gang Culture," *International Business Times*, November 25, 2014, accessed March 3, 2015, http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/cape-town-most-violent-city-africa-struggles-entrenched-gang-culture-1476375; Glynnis Underhill, "Gangs in Cape Town: A Daily Dance with Death," *Mail & Guardian*, August 23, 2013, accessed March 3, 2015, http://mg.co.za/article/2013-08-22-gangs-in-cape-town-a-daily-dance-with-death; Mike Cohen, "The Cape of Bad Dope: Gang Warfare in South Africa is Out of Control—And Set to Get Worse as a Key Leader Leaves Prison," *The Independent*, September 19, 2013, accessed March 3, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/the-cape-of-bad-dope-gang-warfare-in-south-africa-is-out-of-control--and-set-to-get-worse-as-a-key-leader-leaves-prison-8827661.html.

[278] See John Western, *Outcast Cape Town* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 150, for a discussion of the ways in which Coloured South Africans have historically embraced a pride in their locative identities, first in places like District Six and the Bo-Kaap, and later expressed identities based on their associations with different locations on the Cape Flats. John Edwin Mason has also written about a specific example in cultural affiliations with

sensationalized feature in the South African edition of the aptly titled *Vice* named these areas, "the Meth-Riddled Murder Dens of Cape Town."[279] Instead of illustrating the young men's modern look and penchant for hard drinking, new coverage is rife with descriptions of gang tattoos and the preponderance of *tik* (a form of methamphetamine) on the Flats. The new attention paid to gangs correlates their violence and other criminal activity with poverty, but the old tropes of the skolly menace are recognizable.

The long life of stereotypes about Coloured men's criminality is a testament to the consistency of hegemonic masculinity in South Africa. The traits of hegemonic masculinity have remained largely stable through stark shifts in political and cultural currents in South Africa during the twentieth century. Normative men were and are educated, employed, heterosexual, and loyal to their country. They enjoy sports and the *braai*. They are devoted family men and committed to the improvement of their communities. They obey the law and abhor violence. Public discourse and perceptions uphold those values, but lived experiences both in history and in the present demonstrate diverse performances of masculinity. The sensationalism derived from the discourse of the skolly menace illustrates the power of those who represent hegemony to silence those who represent deviancy. Indeed, the term skolly has not disappeared and is still

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Manenberg in, "'Mannenberg:' Notes on the Making of an Icon and Anthem," *African Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 32.

[279] Matthew Brown, "Cruising the Meth-Riddled Murder Dens of Cape Town," *Vice*, August 23, 2013, accessed March 3, 2015, http://www.vice.com/read/cruising-through-cape-towns-townships-with-the-citys-specialised-drug-unit. Brown's article incorrectly defines "coloured" as the South African label for anyone not born of two White parents, but identifies several men throughout the article as Coloured.

directed toward any young Coloured man who appears threatening.[280] This history begs the question of how skollies perceived themselves as men, as members of their communities, and as representative of a Coloured identity.

[280] Steffen Jensen, *Gangs, Politics, and Dignity in Cape Town* (Oxford: James Currey, 2008), 2.

Chapter Five

The "'Twilight' Life in South Africa:" *Moffie* Masculinity and Respectability in Cape Town, 1930-1960

In early January of 1940, a "Coloured Student" of Cape Town wrote to the editor of the *Cape Standard* to voice his concerns over the festive activities of his neighbors. One of the issues that concerned him most was an advertisement for a "Great Coon and 'M' Concert." Cynically, the man explained how he pondered over the meaning of the "M." He explains,

> Then it dawned upon me. Moffie. I almost turned sick with disgust. A Moffie Concert. To think that people (that they are my people makes me more disgusted) could sink low as to organize these people, who should be in a hospital or some similar place away from the public, into a source of entertainment is terrible. They are sexually abnormal—hermaphroditic—in a pitiable condition, physically and mentally; the very thought of them should be repulsive to all but the scientist. I ask you, what type of mind has the person who organises these people—who uses this abnormality to furnish amusement for the public? And what type of mind has the person who patronises these concerts? If these 'Moffies' are not really sexually abnormal, then they as imitators are worse than the genuine hermaphrodite.[281]

The animosity and frustration with which the man writes reflects not only a distrust and moral aversion to "*moffies*," but also an embarrassment that his people—the Coloured communities of South Africa—willingly accepted association with such objectionable behavior. The man represents one side in an energetic debate amongst Coloured men over the place of homosexual and transgendered members of their communities. Tensions peaked when *moffies* were most visible, especially as flamboyant leaders of New Year's Carnival troupes, or *Kaapse Klopse*. The *Klopse* themselves were points of contention in

[281] *Cape Standard*, 9 January 1940.

public conversations about respectability and masculinity. *Moffies* were rarely given the platform to speak for themselves, and almost certainly not before the 1950s. Coloured men's hetero-normative discourse about sexuality and masculinity demonstrates their divided feelings both over definitions of respectable masculinity and the racial divisions within South Africa at a critical period of racial segregation.

The term "*moffie*" is as contentious as it is ambiguous. Etymologically, the word may have several origins including "mophrodite," an antiquated synonym for hermaphrodite. Another likely origin comes from Cape Town's sailors and dockworkers who derided "delicate, well-groomed youngsters" as "mophies."[282] For most of the word's history, it has been used as a derogation of homosexual, transgender, transvestite, and effeminate men. Most commonly, it is associated with the working-class Coloured communities of Cape Town, though there has been some interchangeability in terms of class and race. More recently, some gay men living in and around Cape Town have appropriated "*moffie*" much in the fashion of "queer" in the United States or Great Britain, but that process is ongoing.[283] Though the term has lost much of its pejorative connotation, it is still denigrating when deployed by homophobic minds. The term is used here cautiously but purposefully to capture historical experiences of homophobia, hetero-normativity, and tolerance of diverse gender and sexual roles within Coloured communities in the mid-twentieth century.

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[282] Shaun de Waal, "Etymological note: On 'moffie,' in *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*, Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1995), xiii.

[283] Pierre De Vos, "On 'kaffirs,' 'queers,' 'moffies,' and other hurtful terms," *Constitutionally Speaking*, February 26, 2008, http://constitutionallyspeaking.co.za/on-kaffirs-queers-moffies-and-other-hurtful-terms/

The association of *moffies* with the Coloured communities of Cape Town serves both to highlight White South Africans' perception of Coloured South Africans as sexually deviant and to create space for debates about sex and gender within Coloured communities. When Whites thought of Coloureds and sex, most conjured ideas of miscegenation and degeneracy. The political focus on "poor whites" during the 1930s emphasized isolating Whites from Coloureds and Black Africans to avoid mixed-race sexual relations. Coloureds were presented as the potential negative result of such relationships, and Whites pointed to high instances of venereal disease and single mothers within Coloured communities as evidence.[284] By the late 1940s, Nationalist politicians maneuvered public opinion in favor of prohibiting mixed-race marriages and amending the Immorality Acts to prohibit all interracial sex.

Men in politically dominant roles have regulated sex and gender norms through both social and official measures as a means of enforcing access to status and securing White men's place at the top of social, political, and economic hierarchies. Homosexuals, "hybrids," and other men who personified "deviant" forms of masculinity consistently suffered in the lower ranks of those hierarchies once their race, sexuality, or gendered performances conflicted with those in power. Bans on interracial sex and marriage, polygyny, and homosexual sex were common throughout the colonized world, a testament both to rigidly defined social norms in those environments and the prevalence, real and perceived, of those relationships. In her seminal reading of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*

[284] U. G., No. 54, 1937, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1937).

through the lens of empire, Ann Laura Stoler contends that miscegenation created a population of the "enemy within." Writing of Eurasians, Indos, and mestizos—all populations that share much in common with Coloured South Africans—Stoler asserts that they were, "those who might transgress the 'interior frontiers' of the nation-state, who were the same but not quite, potentially more brazen in making their claims to an equality of rights with 'true' Europeans, but always suspect patriots of colonial rule." Because Whites perceived "mixed" communities as both subversive and contagious, those same communities were positioned to claim a cosmopolitan status emphasizing cultural affinities across borders and a universal humanity.[285] That social position was dangerous, but was not one men claimed arbitrarily. Communities like the Coloureds of South Africa needed both to pronounce their status as respectable citizens of the nation and the world while at the same time denouncing members within their ranks who threatened that status. Coloured elites felt that *moffies* threatened Coloured social standing within South Africa and hampered Coloured men's claims to respectable ideals along the lines of those accepted by White South Africans.

An important conceptual framework for understanding the constellation of masculine relationships within South African society during the twentieth century is provided by R. W. Connell and her conception of hegemonic masculinity. In an attempt to articulate the relationships between competing and complementary expressions of masculinity, Connell posited a social hierarchy of masculinities in which hegemonic masculinity held the highest position.

[285] Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's* History of Sexuality *and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 52.

Hegemonic masculinity, briefly, is the culturally dominant and public form of masculinity held up as ideal. Often, the socially, politically, and economically dominant class of men claims to exemplify that ideal, while other times hegemonic masculinity is represented through fictional and mythical characters or men who have achieved what most would consider unobtainable—think Hercules, Prince Charming, or Muhammed Ali. Crucially, hegemonic masculinity in South Africa during the twentieth century was exclusively heterosexual. According to Connell, "the most important feature of contemporary hegemonic masculinity is that it is heterosexual, being closely connected to the institution of marriage; and a key form of subordinated masculinity is homosexual. This subordination involved both direct interactions and a kind of ideological warfare."[286] While direct interactions involving homophobia certainly took place in the Coloured communities of South Africa, what is better documented in sources like the *Cape Standard*, *Drum*, and the *Golden City Post* is the sort of ideological warfare described by Connell.

The discourse of hetero-normativity among Coloured elites beginning in the 1930s highlights Coloured men's tenuous positioning along the hierarchy of South African masculinities. In racial terms, White men occupied the highest position, followed by Coloured, Indian, and African men. An asterisk could be placed next to Coloured men's position considering men in positions lower on the hierarchy criticized Coloured men for their "mixed race" status. White hegemonic masculinity was defined as much by racial purity as by heterosexuality, and racial

[286] R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 185-186.

purity held traction among subordinated masculinities, too. Under these terms, *moffies* personified a particularly complex subordinated masculinity: from the perspective of the hegemonic masculinity, *moffies* were of an inferior race; from the perspective of other racially subordinated masculinities, *moffies* were part of impure race; and from the perspective of most of the masculine ideals held up by South Africans from all races, *moffies* were homosexual or effeminate men whose masculine status suffered as a result. The conceptual exclusion of *moffies* from the hegemonic masculinity of South Africans did not always translate to historical experience, though, and the South African press captured several discussions about if and how *moffies* fit in with other South African men, Coloured or otherwise.

When framing the discourse about *moffies* in the mid-twentieth century with Connell's conception of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities, an important distinction clarifies the historical significance of *moffies*' gender identities. In Connell's original conception, hegemonic masculinity is constructed in contrast to several subordinated masculinities.[287] In South Africa, White men defined and most often embodied hegemonic masculinity due to their grasp on political power and ability to control other men's practice of masculine activities. Coloured men, as members of a persecuted racial group, occupied a position of subordinated masculinity on the gender hierarchy, with lesser strata determined by class, education, religion, and other social markers. South African men of all races struggled to situate *moffies* within that gender hierarchy because rather than representing a lower stratus of subordinated masculinity, *moffies* more

[287] R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power*, 183.

appropriately represent a subversive masculinity. As opposed to the subordinated masculinity that supported the ideals and practices outlined in hegemonic masculinity, *moffies* rejected those ideals and practices outright in favor of effeminate ideals and practices. Conflict arose through observers' insistent recognition of *moffies* as men and their failure to come to terms with why those men refused to conform to normative gender roles.

Moffies and the Kaapse Klopse

Beginning in the years between the end of the South African War in 1902 and Union in 1910, elite Cape Town businessmen organized parades of neighborhood troupes to celebrate the *Tweede Nuwe Jaar*, or Second New Year. The date of the main events, January 2nd, reflected the day slave owners granted their slaves a day off after the festivities (and labor) of the New Year holiday. Almost all of the participants were Coloured Capetonians, a significant portion of whose shared heritage in slavery and labor is perhaps a more important communal identity than any racial signifier. Celebrations of the *Tweede Nuwe Jaar* date back to the mid-nineteenth century, and blackface and minstrelsy were incorporated in the 1880s following the tours of several American minstrel troupes. In the twentieth century, participants referred to themselves as "coons" or minstrels, and the celebrations were heralded as the "Coon Carnival" or "New Year's Minstrel Parade." More generally, neighborhood troupes were known as *Kaapse Klopse*, Afrikaans for "Cape Clubs."

Klopse were organized in most of the predominantly Coloured neighborhoods such as District Six, the Bo-Kaap, and Salt River. Prominent

businessman and not-so-prominent gangsters sponsored the *Klopse* by paying for costumes, instruments, club halls, and refreshments on the days of performances. Most of the participants were working-class—butchers, bricklayers, garage hands, and delivery boys—and the *Klopse* were inherently masculine.[288] Only men and boys (or women disguised as men) marched with the *Klopse*, and costumes often represented masculine imagery such as soldiers, devils, and American cowboys. The exception was the participation of *moffies* often dressed as women. Carmen Miranda was a popular choice for impersonation beginning in the 1930s.

For some, the participation of *moffies* in the New Year's celebrations was simply an extension of the deviant forms of masculinity already sanctioned, either explicitly or implicitly, by the *Klopse*. The choice of costumes and character impersonations for many *Klopse* celebrated fantastic representations of fierceness, savagery, barbarism, and marginality from around the world. Troupes dressed as pirates, Zulu warriors, and British soldiers. The Americans troupe, organized by a West Indian immigrant, paraded as "Red Indians." One reporter noted that, "Owing to the disguise offered by the mask, the 'Americans' are popular with the respectable type of young man… On my way home I could not help imagining a few scalps hanging from the waist of one of those big fellows wearing a grinning mask."[289] The reporter's suggestion that the troupe's popularity was dependent on its members' anonymity is telling. The *Klopse* were in part a celebration of deviancy, but it was not meant to be representative of everyday life. In that sense, the *moffies* were an exception to the satire and

[288] Shamil Jeppie, "Popular Culture and Carnival in Cape Town: the 1940s and 1950s," in *The Struggle for District Six: Past and Present*, eds. Shamil Jeppie and Crain Soudien (Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1990), 80.

[289] *Cape Standard*, 15 February 1938.

impermanence of the festive season due to their everyday visibilities in their communities.

Moffies only seem to have attracted widespread public attention beginning in the late 1930s. Drag troupes like the African Star Moffie Company and the Coming Star Moffie Concert Party toured Cape Town and Johannesburg, entertaining audiences of both Coloureds and Whites. While the *Cape Standard*, for instance, presented several reviews of so-called "*Moffie* concerts," the press generally offered high praise for the shows while offering little judgment toward the entertainers themselves.[290] These same *moffie* troupes often participated in the *Klopse* parades around Cape Town. Following one *Klopse* performance in Maitland in 1939, *The Sun* described the Coming Star's performance as, "a jumbled programme of songs and steps, some sort of ballet and acrobatic turn, and a Russian dance."[291] Rather than antagonistic toward the *moffies*, the press seemed confused if anything. If Coloured men harbored strong feelings about *moffies* or their performances, they did not make their feelings public in this context.

At about the same time, *moffies'* participation in the *Klopse* became a major point of contention among those men who participated in the New Year's festivities, both as troupe members and spectators. *Moffies'* association with the *Klopse* dated to the reorganization of the carnivals in the 1920s after the first carnival was held in 1906. As Bett Pacey acknowledges, "female impersonators" participated as *Klopse* members throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s with

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[290] See *Cape Standard*, 7 June 1937; *Cape Standard*, 10 January 1939; and *Cape Standard*, 18 July 1939.

[291] *The Sun,* 13 January 1939.

little fanfare. Women almost certainly dressed in male clothing in order to participate during this time, as well.[292] *Moffies* usually performed as *voorlopers*, though their position at the head of the troupes during parades sometimes contributed to confusion about the *moffies* being in charge of the troupes. It is not until the late 1930s that newspapers included criticism of the *moffies* in their letters to the editor alongside complaints about the *Klopse* and other morality issues such as drinking, promiscuity, and threats to Coloured family life.

The *Klopse* were prevalent sources of discord in the debates about Coloured respectability and masculinity. For Coloured elites, the *Klopse* represented an embarrassing spectacle that only confirmed White suspicions of Coloured foolishness, jollity, and drunkenness. One student from Wynberg wrote, "We think back on headlines and mottoes: 'Better facilities for Coloured people;' Away with slums;' Equality with the Europeans,' etc., and every year all those who hope to see the Coloured people economically, socially and culturally improved receive the disappointing and disillusioning reply FROM THE COLOURED PEOPLE THEMSELVES in the form of Coon and Moffie festivals."[293] Many other commentators shared that sentiment of shame. One visitor from Kimberley mused, "As a visitor to the Cape I once had the misfortune to witness one of these barbaric and guttersnipe exhibitions, and I never want to see one again. If ever I felt ashamed of being a Coloured man, it was on that day."[294] In addition to the outwardly ridiculous performances, it was popular knowledge that many troupes were associated with the gangs that plagued

[292] Bett Pacey, "The Emergence and Recognition of Moffies as Popular Entertainers in the Cape Minstrel Carnival," *South African Theatre Journal* 27, no. 2 (2014): 119.

[293] *Cape Standard*, 9 January 1940. Punctuation errors and emphasis in original.

[294] *Cape Standard*, 23 January 1940.

Coloured neighborhoods like District Six. For instance, Denis-Constant Martin notes that when crowds gathered in Hanover Street they would cheer on the Pennsylvanian Darkies with cries of, "Here come the Globies!"[295] The cheer referenced the Globe Gang, whose members made up a significant portion of the Pennsylvanian troupe during the 1950s. For many Coloured men, the *Klopse's* performance of frivolity and association with gangsterism were exactly the public images of Coloured masculinity that needed to be overcome.

Among those Coloured men who opposed the *Klopse*, *moffies* were often cited as one of the prime targets for reform. "Coloured Student," for instance, wondered why his community chose to celebrate *moffies* while White men did not. Rhetorically, he asked, "Have they not also sexually abnormal people? Yes? Why, then do they not give expressions to their happiness as we do?" The man's answer: race-pride. He declared, "They [Whites] think more of themselves than we do of ourselves…It gives them a satisfying feeling of superiority over us."[296] "Coloured Student" was not alone in lamenting *moffies'* connections to othering impressions of Coloured men. Indeed, by the mid-1950s, *moffies'* participation in the *Klopse* divided the organizers of the New Year's parades. The director of the Western Province Jubilee Carnival Board, J. W. G. Allen, condemned the "female impersonators" as "untraditional, 'foreign' and distasteful." In Mr. Allen's view, *moffies* only contributed to the perception of the *Klopse* as commercialized, immoral, and "damaging to the dignity of the Coloured people."[297] In spite of the

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[295] Denis-Constant Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past to Present* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1999), 43.

[296] *Cape Standard*, 9 January 1940.

[297] *Golden City Post*, 1 January 1956.

opposition, *moffies* continued to parade with *Klopse* troupes, though their presence remained (and remains) controversial.

Not all South Africans opposed the *Klopse*, of course, and participants celebrated the clubs as important sources of social uplift. One participant, Solly Sahabodien, told *Drum* that clubs helped the ill and unemployed among their ranks with money from shared funds. Sahabodien also claimed that women supported their sons and husbands as participants because, "it keeps us away from drink and [sin]."[298] Furthering the anomalous character of the *moffies*, Sahabodien noted that, "It is not our custom to display our women in the streets. Many of us are Malays." Rather, the *Klopse's* masculine character permitted men to, "make time once a year to relax and holler while wifey looks after the dignity at home."[299] *Moffies* contradicted the exclusion of women in the *Klopse* by adding feminine representations to the spectacle of Carnival while cisgendered men enjoyed each other's masculine company, albeit with approval from their wives.

"There is a 'Twilight' Life in South Africa

Though the *Klopse* and New Year's festivities remained the most visible stages for *moffies* in public life, a series of exposés in *Drum* and the *Golden City Post* thrust groups of *moffies* into the limelight during the 1950s. The magazines regaled their readers with titillating stories of *moffie* life and sexual deviancy. The authors' tones were often mocking or sympathetic, casting the *moffies* as people

[298] *Drum*, January 1953.
[299] Ibid.

in need of pity. The *moffies'* biographies echoed many of the negative stereotypes associated with Coloured men and their families. Several of the *moffies* described domestic abuse, heavy drinking, association with gangs, poverty, and lives of isolation from their communities. Many Coloured men could likely identify with the difficult experiences of the subject *moffies*, but the authors seemed more interested in portraying the *moffies* as anomalies rather than members of the wider community of South Africans who faced discrimination under the White supremacist regime.

The *moffie* narratives featured in *Drum* and the *Golden City Post* cannot be taken as representative of the lives of homosexual, transgender, and transvestite Coloured men during the 1950s. As Dhianaraj Chetty notes, the subjects of the articles, "were often the most outrageous and celebrated of Cape Town's coloured moffie drag queens."[300] Besides the entertainment value of the *moffie* narratives for the magazines' readers, the longevity of the audience's attention is noteworthy, too. As Pacey posits, "It must also be remembered that this was during the restrictive apartheid years and perhaps the idea of the *moffie* subculture defying the laws—in other words, containing an element of subversion—resonated with a readership already subjected to severe discrimination and stringent censorship."[301] Still, the stereotypical elements of the *moffie* narratives are valuable for illustrating the ways in which South Africans participated in a discourse of hetero-normative respectability. For many South Africans, *moffies* could not have been respectable members of their

[300] Dhianaraj R. Chetty, "A Drag at Madame Costello's: Cape Moffie Life and the Popular Press in the 1950s and 1960s," in *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*, eds. Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1994), 116.

[301] Pacey, "The Emergence and Recognition of Moffies," 116.

communities because they did not embody masculinity and only impersonated femininity.

Heaped on top of their deviant gender and sexual roles, *moffies'* identities as Coloured added an element of racial stigma that barred acceptance into the hegemonic gender order. To borrow and turn a phrase from Mohamed Adhikari, *moffies* were not black enough or white enough, nor were they masculine enough or feminine enough.[302] For cisgendered and heterosexual Coloured men, maintaining the status quo—that is, *moffies* as deviant anomalies—was important if they ever hoped to transition from subordinated and marginalized members of the gendered order. *Moffies* and some other Coloured South Africans may have been interested in challenging the government in its conception of social norms, but most South Africans expressed the desire to control the terms on which those in power judged their communities. The tightening of apartheid laws and the intensification of racial scrutiny applied to Coloureds during the 1950s provoked a widespread response of highlighting the anomalous nature of *moffies* rather than their everyday presence in Coloured communities.

Drum's first story concerning *moffies*, published in the January 1954 issue, was a look at the *moffie* drag and burlesque shows of Cape Town. According to *Drum*, the most famous troupe leader was a man named Joey Felice, or Madame Costello, as Felice was known on stage. Madame Costello was at the head of, "a troupe of brilliant Coloured female impersonators" who performed in the style of the Folies Bergère, the famous nineteenth-century

[302] Mohamed Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 14-15.

Parisian opera house.[303] The drag troupe was popular and seemingly respected as performance artists. Though Joey Felice and the other men in his show may have been homosexual or transgendered, their status as performers—and the ambiguity their performance afforded them—spared them from much of the homophobia expressed toward *moffies* who were not performers.

Other vignettes from *Drum* and the *Golden City Post* express disdain and confusion for the *moffies*, who occupied what both publications at times described as "twilight lives." The choice of word is clear: twilight implies an ambiguous status between two stark contrasts. For the magazines' readers, *moffies* would evoke identities between White and Black, man and woman, and masculine and feminine. The authors also meant to convey ambiguous feelings about *moffies*' respectability. The men featured in the vignettes express feelings easily recognized for most Coloured men: concerns about poverty and finding work, longing for inclusion, and appreciation for friends. At other times, however, the authors link *moffies* to the worst representations of Coloured men. The subjects are portrayed as sexually deviant, heavy drinking, and sometimes associated with criminality. The authors' use of ambiguity and marginality in their descriptions of the *moffies*' lives do not entirely separate the subjects' masculinities from that of normative Coloured men but rather provide insight into the practices and ideals of a subordinated masculinity in historical context.

One of the ways in which the authors of the *Golden City Post* narratives framed their subjects as deviant was by labeling the stories as confessions, as though the men were confessing to crimes or sins. The first "moffie confession"

[303] *Drum*, January 1954.

ran on January 15, 1956. The introduction to the story leaves little room for guessing as to the author's feelings about the *moffies*, and the reader is meant to experience only curiosity, pity, and disdain:

> There is a "twilight" life in South Africa where it is neither day nor night, and where those who dwell in it walk a divided part. They are the much-abused "Moffies" of the Coloured community. Most Coloured people look upon the "Moffie" with contempt and derision. Ribald laughter and coarse jokes are the sad lot of the "Moffie," for that is how he is usually greeted when he appears in the street…The permanent "Moffie"—and he hates the name—is not to be confused with the amateur or professional actor who may happen to do female impersonations on the stage and is not necessarily abnormal. The actor goes through his act as a piece of carefully devised theatricalism, the "Moffie" became all the uncomparable (sic) longing in his being demands womanhood though he has a man's body. They lead a lonely and bitter life. Their only constant companions, their own kind—their only solace, what they find at the bottom of a bottle. Too often they face the danger of becoming drink sodden wrecks who burst into tears at the slightest provocation. For them there is no normal life. They are burdened with the body of a male but with all the feelings and mannerisms of a female and scorned by both sexes. In an attempt to become a woman they will go to all extremes, do the works of a woman, wear a woman's clothes and even "get" a man.[304]

The author makes a distinction here between *moffie* performers, who were acceptable because of their ambiguous portrayal of deviant gender and sexual roles, and "permanent" *moffies*, who were recognizable homosexuals and transgendered men. The *moffies*' effeminacy and sexuality were seen as afflictions alongside alcoholism. The passage ties *moffie* identity to a Coloured racial identity, as well.

A week after the first *moffie* confession, an editorial introduction in the *Post* adopted a more neutral or even sympathetic tone. Rather than condemning or mocking *moffies*, the editors claimed that they were doing their part to inform the public about the less fortunate in their midst. The editors hoped readers

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[304] *Golden City Post*, 15 January 1956.

would consume the stories, "not for entertainment and secret amusement, but as a lesson in social conscience."[305] The confession that followed, as told by "W. W." or "Gina Lollobrigada (sic)," reveals much about popular perceptions of masculine practices and how they related to femininity. Gina related that she was an awkward youth who had trouble fitting in with other boys while at school: "As a child I was sensitive and I still am. While at school my main interest was in the art classes. I never took part in the rough play of the other boys." Gina told the readers that after she did not grow out of "a phase," her parents beat her and eventually kicked her out. She found support through a generous benefactor and found community through theater, assuming the names "Yvonne de Carlo" and "Lollobrigada." Gina also reveals that she had sexual relationships with other men, preferring the, "clean, muscular, outdoor type." One man in particular had captured Gina's heart, and Gina clearly performed the feminine role in their relationship. Though not jealous when her lover took on other "girlfriends," Gina admits to receiving beatings for talking to other men because her lover, "is a real man."[306]

Gina's confession illustrates what was expected of Coloured men in mid-century Cape Town, as well as what would have drawn negative attention. Her love for art and theater conflicted with what boys and men were expected to

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[305] *Golden City Post*, 22 January 1956.

[306] Ibid., For discussion of the subjects of the *moffie* confessions, I have adopted the gender pronouns used by the subjects themselves in their narratives. Though the assumption is that the subjects were anatomically male, they lived lives as feminine members of their communities and often referred to themselves and their peers as "girls." This narrative, entitled "A Moffie's Love Life," and the other *moffie* confessions published by the *Golden City Post*, all had semi-anonymous by-lines. W. W. and later H. K. and H. B. apparently refer to the subjects' birth names, but the *Post* deemed it appropriate to withhold their full names. This speaks to a likely anxiety about revealing the subjects' true identities for fear of persecution. Identifiable only by their "stage names," the subjects would have been known personally only by those who most likely were aware of the *moffie* shows and hangouts before the publication of the confessions.

appreciate, namely rough play and outdoor activities. Interestingly, Gina successfully performed practices and traits that other men found attractive in women, both as a performer and as a romantic consort. She notes that she earned the nickname "Yvonne de Carlo" because of the way she moved her hips while on stage, and also attracted attention with her body during performances with a *Klopse*. Her lover's actions also reveal the normative ideal of women (or those who embodied femininity) being submissive to men (or those who embodied masculinity).

The other *moffie* confessions carried by the *Post* exhibited commonalities among the *moffies*. All discussed unhappy childhoods and confusion about their gender roles. They told of violent fallouts within their families, with one *moffie* writing that her parents tried, "to beat this so-called 'devil' out of my system."[307] All of the *moffies* who "confessed" to the *Post* had an association with what they called the theater, performing in *moffie* concerts and "drag" shows. The *moffies*' interactions with their boyfriends also reveal an ostensible contradiction within South African hegemonic masculinity during the twentieth century. The men who were romantic consorts of *moffies* embodied practices that were normatively masculine and even perceived their relationships as between a man and woman.

At the end of the *moffie* confessions series, the *Golden City Post* included a confession from a *moffie's* boyfriend. The man, who identifies himself only as V. F. and does not name his lover, writes that he first met *moffies* while attending a *moffie* concert. He began his account with a declaration of his heterosexuality, claiming, "I am not 'queer' myself, as the number of girls who have been my

[307] *Golden City Post*, 5 February 1956.

partners can testify." The man also expressed appreciation for his lover's feminine beauty: "She was dressed in a blue gown and her dark hair and fair features formed a beautiful picture…I felt that I had to protect her from the world."[308] The man's assertion that he was not "queer himself" was most likely a widely accepted claim. In these narratives and in South African society, it was the feminine *moffies* who were seen as sexually deviant. Historian George Chauncey writes of a similar lack of "hetero-homosexual binarism" in the United States during the same period.[309] Sexual deviancy was ascribed to men who acted feminine or who solicited sex with other men—the men who responded to such advances were generally regarded as heterosexual so long as they followed hegemonic masculine ideals and practices. In this case, V. F.'s masculinity most likely earned him recognition as a respectable man in the eyes of the readers, while his lover's identity as a *moffie* would have denied her that same respectability.

Drum deployed "*moffie*" to identify another Coloured Capetonian who did not conform to normative gender roles for an April 1956 story about a Wynberg gangster named Gertie Williams. Williams was born female but lived as a man. *Drum* described Williams as a "he-baby" and a "twilight darling" who, "has to prove her 'manliness' all the time, and that means scrapping with the roughest Cape Town can give." Like the *moffies*' confessions, *Drum* salaciously detailed Williams' love affairs with members of the same sex, though she performed the masculine role in her relationships with girlfriends. Williams also took on jobs

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[308] *Golden City Post*, 11 March 1956.

[309] George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 13.

common to other Coloured men, including working as a caddy, a groundsman, a fisherman, and a bricklayer.[310] For the readers, Williams story would have resonated as a common narrative about Coloured masculinity with a fantastic character (or caricature) at its center.

Most of the discourse about *moffies*' participation in the *Klopse* came from within the Coloured community, while the *moffie* stories in *Drum* and the *Golden City Post* were also produced and consumed by Africans. The process of South African men of all races measuring themselves against other men cannot be separated from the increasingly racialized politics and social stratification of South Africans between 1930 and 1960. The *moffie* stories were popular because race and gender were popular topics of conversation and protest. Race and gender also framed the ways in which men and women defined themselves within their social networks and exclusive to those networks. As the government entrenched White supremacy through the expansion of apartheid law, the hegemonic racial and gender hierarchies of South Africans became more complex to navigate.

Race and Sexuality in 1950s Cape Town

In 1959, the *Golden City Post* published a series of articles drawing stark contrasts between the lives of Coloured *moffies* and "White Moffies." The first article in the series claimed that although White and "Non-White" *moffies* sometimes attended the same parties, the lives of White *moffies* centered on high society and respectable company. While the Coloured *moffies* from the

[310] *Drum*, April 1956.

confessions series were often alcoholics and associated with criminals, the White *moffies* were dressmakers and art brokers for the wealthy of the city. Many of the White men married women "for the sake of convenience" and "the 'upper crust' meet often at lush sprees at which champaigne and caviare (sic) is the order of the occasion."[311] The *Post* also alleged that Cape Town had become the center of gender and sexual diversity for the country by the late 1950s, and White *moffies* were moving to the region as an alternative to places like Johannesburg.

In keeping with the sensationalized fashion of the earlier *moffie* stories, the *Golden City Post* included bits of criminality in their discussion of White *moffies*. White *moffies'* crimes appeared mostly nonthreatening. One story dealt with the case of a White man who was arrested for appearing in public dressed as a woman. As a dressmaker, the man claimed in court to have clothed wives of MPs and other members of high society. The man had also registered under the Population Registration Act as a woman.[312] A front-page story featured a claim by a White woman that an underground *moffie* "empire" had kidnapped her husband and forced him to live as a *moffie*. The *Post* rejected the woman's claim and suggests instead that, because the man was well known, he was most likely already homosexual but kept his sexuality secret from his wife and public circle.[313] These stories contrast with the crimes committed by Coloured *moffies*, most often in the form of gang activities like fighting and use of illicit substances.

When White *moffies* spoke through the *Golden City Post*, they asserted both their masculinity and their respectability within the community in ways the

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[311] *Golden City Post*, 14 June 1959.
[312] *Golden City Post*, 3 August 1959.
[313] *Golden City Post*, 30 August 1959.

Coloured *moffies* never do. In a letter that the *Post* called the, "strangest message of all," a White *moffie* defended himself and his peers against persecution and accusations of criminality and pedophilia:

> I am a homosexual. I presume you would call me a Moffie…But I don't wear feminine attire. I don't wear cosmetics. The idea of having to wear women's clothes and make-up is utterly appalling to me. I am extremely masculine and very few normal people know that I am a 'queer'…I cannot abide the type of male who minces around the streets, wearing makeup. Why not leave us alone…We harm nobody. I do not interfere with children (as very few true homosexuals do) and I have lived a clean and respectable life…God made us all in the same way. Treat us as human beings and not as freaks who belong to a circus.[314]

Unlike the Coloured *moffies*, this White man saw himself as a man and perceives no contradiction between his masculinity and his homosexuality. The persecution the man faced is evidence of a wider rejection of the compatibility of masculinity and homosexuality, an historical testament to Connell's description of hegemonic masculinity as normatively heterosexual. The *Post* casually dismissed the man's statements, claiming a psychologist would diagnose this man and his peers as both mentally ill and capable of (though unreceptive to) being "cured."

The reporting differences found in *Drum* and *Golden City Post* stories concerning *moffies* reflect both the magazines' authors and readers' historical perceptions of race. The magazines had the largest readership of any publications targeted toward Black audiences. The authors were mostly Africans, but Coloured writers and photographers like Jackie Heynes and Richard Rive also worked for the magazines. The disparity in presentation of subordinated Coloured masculinities versus subordinated White masculinities can perhaps be explained by the popular racial stereotypes commonly employed during the 1950s. Older

[314] *Golden City Post*, 6 September 1959.

stereotypes of Coloured men had tied sexual deviancy and other questions of morality to Coloured South Africans' supposed origins in miscegenation. Following the implementation of the Population Registration Act in 1950, and the creation of "Coloured" as one of the four official racial identities, Coloured identity assumed greater ambiguity and stigma as an undefinable identity.

The press, including *Drum* and the *Golden City Post*, commonly reported on South Africans who were "reclassified" from White to Coloured or from Coloured to African. After the Population Registration Act of 1950 went into effect, *Drum* recounted one probe in Johannesburg: "Last week was one of bitter family anxieties and mishaps which marked the beginning of a major social upheaval."[315] Coloured also served as a catch-all category for the government, which assigned the race to anyone who was not obviously White, obviously African, or obviously Indian. Popular stereotypes about a person's behavior were tied to those racial identities. In consideration of the *moffies*, the authors of the narratives and their readers would have perceived the Coloured *moffies*' struggles with domestic violence, alcoholism, and crime more as symptomatic of their race than of their sexual or gender roles. As for the White *moffies*, the *Golden City Post* made it clear that its authors were not surprised to discover White *moffies* among the respectable elite of Cape Town. White *moffies*' racial identity most likely shielded them from much criticism or skepticism about their moral standing outside of their sexuality.

[315] *Drum*, 21 August 1955.

Conclusion

The emergence in the late 1930s of a discourse on *moffies'* respectability, and the persistence of that discourse in the following decades, can be tied to the increasingly racist legislation proposed and passed by the White supremacist government. As has been discussed in earlier chapters, racist discourse and discussions about Coloured gender roles and sexual activities intensified in the 1930s, especially following the publication of the Cape Coloured Commission's report in 1937. Members of Parliament introduced bills during the decade that would have outlawed interracial marriage, interracial sex, and stripped Coloured men of the franchise, though none succeeded in passing. Considering that elite Coloured men responded to such proposals with declarations of Coloured respectability and rejections of Coloured caricatures like the *skolly* and the loafer, it is logical that *moffies* garnered some attention due to their visibility and association with "Colouredness."

Two other historians of gender and sexually diverse (GSD) communities during this period have demonstrated a departure from a permissive urban environment during the early decades of the twentieth century to a period of intense scrutiny of homosexual activities following the Second World War. In *Gay New York* (1994), George Chauncey argues that by the 1920s, gay men in New York forged social networks manifested in the streets, private apartments, bars, and cafeterias of working-class neighborhoods.[316] Like in South Africa, there were laws against homosexual acts, but they were rarely enforced. Matt Houlbrook paints a similar picture of London during the first half of the

[316] Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 2.

twentieth century and notes that gay culture cannot be separated from distinctly urban cultural conditions. Large social networks were possible only because of the larger populations present in cities. Spaces that were distinctly open to gender and sexual diversity were created because there were enough spaces in the homes, bars, cafés, and leisure halls to accommodate people of diverse social backgrounds.[317] But just as urban centers like New York, London, and Cape Town were accommodating to gender and sexually diverse cultural networks, they were also places of conflict over if and how homosexual, transgender, and transvestite men belonged within the broader social order of the city and the nation.

The years after the Second World War witnessed a new conservative social order in many countries, and GSD communities faced persecution and discrimination. In South Africa, proponents of apartheid systematically deconstructed spaces open to diverse communities. Spaces like District Six in Cape Town and Sophiatown in Johannesburg were bulldozed and residents moved to racially segregated townships further from the town centers. District Six symbolized the best and worst of Coloured masculinity. Political and cultural elites like Harold Cressy and Richard Rive called the neighborhood home, while the press and White politicians demonized the space as a hotbed of gangsterism and sexual degeneracy. Following the implementation of apartheid laws in the 1950s and plans to remove residents of District Six under the Group Areas Act, Coloured elites made their case for political rights by showcasing respectability similar to the ideals held by White elites. They argued that District Six, as a

[317] Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), 264.

predominantly Coloured neighborhood, was not inherently bad or even representative of Coloured South Africans as a whole. Rather, the skollies and *moffies* received an inordinate amount of attention and depicted other Coloured men in a bad light.

The association of *moffies* with urban spaces and a Coloured racial identity is significant for two reasons. First, *moffies'* status as an urban group highlights the importance of urban social networks for constructing politically salient gender norms. The cultural exchanges common in cities like Johannesburg and especially Cape Town, with its busy port, meant urban South Africans were aware of changing trends in transnational popular culture and politics. South African men consistently measured themselves against what men in other countries were doing in terms of sports, warfare, education, and political achievement. Manly heroes were known around the world and men drew inspiration regardless of the heroes' nationality. For *moffies*, these urban cultural exchanges were just as important in cultivating their own gendered identities. Instead of recognizing Joe Louis, Jesse Owens, or Langston Hughes as cultural icons, *moffies* identified international embodiments of femininity as their gender touchstones. This practice is identifiable in the names many *moffies* adopted when they performed on stage: Yvonne de Carlo, Gina Lollobrigida, and Carmen Miranda. Thus, urban spaces as gender and sexually diverse spaces were both local and global. Homosexual, transgender, and transvestite men knew where to go to be safe and to be in the company of those like them, and they also looked outward for examples of popular gender ideals to emulate. The city was at once both rigidly

defined in racial and gendered terms, and fluid to the influences of new people and ideas.

Second, *moffies'* ambiguous identities were tested through both racial and gender lenses as the South African government increasingly obsessed over classifying the population. The National Party's implementation of apartheid laws in the late 1940s and early 1950s created new obstacles to free expression of gender practices and claims to respectability. Perhaps the most restrictive law with regard to gender identity was the Population Registration Act of 1950. Most infamous as the statute that required all South Africans to register with the government on the basis of official racial categories, South Africans were also identified by sex. The government's insistence on clear categories of identification conflicted with the flexible identities South Africans constructed for themselves. Individuals faced the possibility of having their racial status changed, and families were sometimes separated along racial lines.[318] Just as apartheid administrators struggled to define "Coloured" as a racial category, and those who identified themselves as Coloured struggled to define their racial identity on their own terms, *moffies*' ambiguous gender identities would have tested the limits of the Population Registration Act. Apartheid laws reflected the interconnectedness of racial identities and gendered practices. Laws prohibited interracial marriages and interracial sex with different consequences for men and women, and men were required to carry passbooks while many women were not. *Moffies*

[318] *Golden City Post*, 21 August 1955. One story told about a man who had identified himself as Coloured and served with the Cape Corps being reclassified as African, though all of his sons and his wife maintained their Coloured identity. He and his wife agreed to divorce so that his wife could marry another Coloured man.

undermined these formal and social condemnations of their racial and gender identities while asserting their worth to their communities.

Coloured men articulated the discourse about *moffies*' respectability, or lack thereof, in the same terms that defined common practices and ideals of masculinity. Men were supposed to be rugged, loyal, athletic, educated, and heterosexual. In the eyes of Coloured elites and the others who crafted this discourse in the popular press, *moffies*' effeminacy precluded them from activities like sports, military service, manual labor, and normative family life. Those same elites' equation of masculinity with respectability denied positive social standing to those who did not conform to normative gender practices. This discourse also reflected a claim by men like "Coloured Student," who decried the acceptance of *moffies* in his letter to the editor, to represent the genuine Coloured identity in contrast to the common racial stereotypes and caricatures proliferated by Whites. That project of exclusion through denunciation not only solidified racial ideals created by the White supremacist regime—that is, men in their own image—but also denied a voice to the non-conformists outside of the normative racial and gender orders.

Conclusion

In 1954, a young Richard Rive began a relationship through letters with the African American writer Langston Hughes. Rive was not yet the renowned author of later years and he sought Hughes' advice on writing, networking, and negotiating a world that increasingly seemed smaller. Noticeably absent from Rive's letters are a focus on political activism. He relayed information about police crackdowns and race relations in South Africa only insofar as he believed Hughes would find the details interesting. He proposed that he and Hughes exchange ideas about issues of race, but that was not his primary goal in corresponding.[319] Instead, Rive offers a glimpse into the everyday life of a young, educated Coloured man in 1950s Cape Town.

Rive presented himself as self-aware and self-assured, a man who felt perfectly comfortable intimating personal feelings with a celebrity of Hughes' stature. He wrote of his writing habits, but also of popular culture among Black South Africans. He critiqued *Drum* for publishing short stories of the "Hollywood boy meets girl type," a less than credible venue for his own writing.[320] Rive eventually relented and wrote for *Drum* and the *New Age*, a fact he

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[319] Richard Rive, *From Richard Rive to Langston Hughes, 24 July 1954*, letter, from Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, *Yale Collection of American Literature: Langston Hughes Paper*, http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3555640 (accessed 17 March 2015). Richard Rive is best known for his novels *Emergency* (1964) and *Buckingham Palace: District Six* (1986). Along with Alex La Guma and James Matthews, Rive represented a group of writers born in District Six who often symbolize a "Coloured" literary tradition.

[320] Richard Rive, *From Richard Rive to Langston Hughes, 22 November 1954*, letter, from Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, *Yale Collection of American Literature: Langston Hughes Paper*, http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3555641 (accessed 17 March 2015).

acknowledged after Hughes sent him a copy of *Jet*.[321] As a young writer, Rive hoped to work and study abroad. He asked about the potential of attending a World Congress of Black Writers and the possibility of studying in the United States.[322] These bits of Rive's letters situate Rive and Hughes as peers—Black writers who lived under White supremacist regimes, yet overcame discrimination to produce for cosmopolitan audiences.

Rive's letters also contain musings on how men of his age occupied themselves in Cape Town. Rive fancied himself a superior athlete, touting his habit of studying for exams all night and spending his few breaks to practice hurdles. He lamented that if sports were not segregated, "I might have represented South Africa as a quarter miler at the Olympic and Empire games" and claimed the moniker the, "tan streak from the Cape vineyards."[323] Rive noted that he was not alone in his love of competition. Men of all races in South Africa spent their holidays playing sports and hiking, fishing, and swimming. Facetiously, Rive told Hughes that two crazes controlled the minds of South African men: the suppression of Communism and rugby.[324] In closing, Rive commented on an enclosed portrait of himself. His humor came through again, asking Hughes, "Received my photograph? Disappointed? I am not exactly Rock Hudson but the photographer tried his best."[325]

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[321] Richard Rive, *From Richard Rive to Langston Hughes, [1955]*, letter, from Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, *Yale Collection of American Literature: Langston Hughes Paper*, http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3528208 (accessed 17 March 2015).

[322] Ibid. Rive later earned a Master of Arts from Columbia University, as well as Doctor of Philosophy from Oxford University.

[323] Ibid.

[324] Ibid.

[325] Ibid.

As historical evidence, Rive's letters to Hughes are remarkable for more than their banter between two literary heavyweights. Rive projected himself into the world, asserting his cosmopolitan identity by claiming a friendship with an African American author half a world way. He was keenly aware of the world in which he lived, both locally—he joked that Cape Town was "more British than Britain"—and globally.[326] He thought about his actions, professionally and personally, as being performed on international stages: writing for internationally known publications, inquiring about attending an international conference of Black writers, competing in the Olympics. Rive was certainly affected by White supremacy in South Africa, but he did not seem preoccupied with discrimination or activism.

We should not understand Rive's cosmopolitan identity as a product of his education or status as a writer. Instead, Rive reflects the cosmopolitan identities cultivated by many South Africans during the twentieth century. Much of the literature on Coloured identities and histories has been confining in terms of their geographic scope. This study, too, is heavily Cape-centric, but it is important to recognize that that single region did not exclusively shape historical Coloured experiences. Historians have long acknowledged the ways in which conceptions of race through White supremacy and Pan-Africanism transcended national boundaries.[327] Gender offers a complementary window into those multiple scales of Coloured identities.

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[326] Ibid.

[327] See George M. Frederickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) and the responses to Frederickson in *Beyond White Supremacy: Towards a New Agenda for the Comparative*

Chapter One links South Africans' anxieties about gender and sexual norms to an international discourse of scientific racism and the South African government's policies regarding "poor whites." By following a charitable organization's case study of a young, "poor white" girl named Annie Meyer, the chapter demonstrates the ways in which Coloured South Africans were often marginalized as targets for government and philanthropic relief. The case study also illustrates the ways in which White South Africans demonized Coloured men as the vectors through which "mixed race" immorality and degeneracy spread. Chapter One also introduces many of the common stereotypes about Coloured men and the sources—official and popular—by which those stereotypes proliferated. By connecting South African discourse about racial degeneration to gender identities, this first chapter lays a foundation on which the following chapters explore the ways in which Coloured men performed masculinity locally and globally.

Chapters Two and Three explored the ways in which Coloured men expressed common masculine ideals with Whites and then performed those ideals in public yet exclusive domains. Military service offered Coloured men the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty as citizens, bravery as men, and a physical robustness in contradiction to many popular stereotypes. Coloured political elites, especially in the lead up to the First World War, encouraged their constituents to fulfill their masculine duties of service to the Union and defense of their families and homes. Coloured men largely bought into this rhetoric and

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Histories of South Africa and the United States (London: University of London, School of Advanced Study, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1997).

enlisted in the Cape Corps by the thousands, but disillusionment with failed political goals after the war created a more cynical debate when calls came to enlist for the Second World War. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Coloured men consented that they still owned a masculine obligation of military service, but critics of the government also noted that military service should have bestowed masculine privileges of citizenship.

In Chapter Three's coverage of South African and Imperial sporting cultures, Coloured men used public displays of athleticism to claim equality with White men in both moral values and physical quality. Those claims to sporting and masculine equality were showcased most prominently through international sporting events in which race held center stage. Coloured South Africans praised African American athletes like Joe Louis and Jesse Owens—even claiming shared racial identities with them—for defeating White South African, German, and American athletes. The Coloured press used African Americans' victories to challenge popular conceptions of White supremacy at home. For example, Coloureds celebrated Louis' defeat of the German Max Schmeling as a blow to White supremacy and an example of Coloured sporting potential. Coloured South Africans also challenged White sporting masculinity by juxtaposing claims of White supremacy with White athletes' refusals to compete against Black competitors. Rugby, a sport wildly popular among Coloureds and Whites alike, was a common realm of dispute over White supremacy and sporting equality, as were debates about integrating South Africa's Olympic delegations.

Coloured South Africans also looked inward to express and reinforce normative conceptions of respectable masculinities. Chapters Four and Five

represent examples of Coloured South Africans debating remedies to public performances of deviancy in the forms of skollies and *moffies*. Chapter Four, for instance, examines Coloured responses to the so-called "skolly menace," a succession of crime wives and intensifying violence perpetrated by young Coloured men from the late 1930s into the 1950s. Editors and letters from newspapers' readers argued that the Coloured community could not be singled out for crime or other actions of deviant youth. Observers suggested that idle or troubled youth could be shaped into respectable young men through education, boys' clubs, physical culture clubs, or military-style discipline. When talk of the menace did not abate after the Second World War, the Coloured press made skollies synonymous with the gangs that controlled much of neighborhoods like District Six. Coloured South Africans who thought of themselves as respectable worried about the effect the public's fascination with skollies and gangsters would have on claims of propriety and political equality.

At about the same time, Coloured South Africans waged a similar debate about the place of *moffies* in respectable society. *Moffies* represent an important divide between public and private performances of gender and respectability. During the first half of the twentieth century, there is very little discourse surrounding gender and sexually identities in general. However, when *moffies* stepped into the public sphere as performers or the subjects of press coverage. Some Coloured men rejected *moffies* as part of a pantheon of deviant Coloured men that also included skollies and the *Klopse* troupes. In the 1950s, a series of "*moffie* confessions" published in *Drum* and the *Golden City Post* connected several *moffies*' lives to popular associations of Coloured men with violence,

drunkenness, and poverty. This dissertation argues that Coloured anxieties about *moffies* can be explained at least in part by a struggle to situate *moffies*' gender identities in the hierarchy of South African masculinities. Rather than holding up masculine ideals, the *moffies* looked at international examples of feminine beauty and grace like Gina Lollobrigida.

Scholars and popular media alike often portray Coloured racial identities as something peculiar to South Africa, and especially the Cape. Like the Cape Flats crime exposés discussed in Chapter Four, most international media coverage of Cape Town includes obligatory explanations that, "In South Africa, 'Coloured' means…" or "Unlike in the rest of the West, coloured does not refer to…" Travel guides for Cape Town and South Africa continue to casually define Coloured as referring to "South Africa's mixed race population." It is not just foreign observers that reinforce the Cape/Coloured connection. In 2011, for example, then African National Congress spokesman Jimmy Manyi sparked a race row after announcing that the Western Cape had an "over supply" of Coloured people and they should consider spreading out across the country.[328] Coloured is an identity necessarily connected to place, as Zimitri Erasmus and others have posited.[329] However, Coloured identities historically have not been constrained by place.

This project forcefully demonstrates the ways in which Coloured South Africans imagined themselves as members of global communities. Actions that

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[328] "Manyi 'Over-supply' of coloureds in Western Cape," *Mail & Guardian*, February 24, 2011, accessed March 19, 2015, http://mg.co.za/article/2011-02-24-coloureds-overconcentrated-in-wcape-says-manyi.

[329] Zimitri Erasmus, ed., *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: New Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town* (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2001), 13-28.

other historians have described as assimilationist when viewed through the lens of race become relational when viewed through the lens of gender. While racism excluded Coloureds from power, assertions of masculinity forged common bonds across race and space. An up-and-coming Coloured boxer from District Six could imagine himself the equal of a world-renowned African American boxer from Detroit. An idealistic Coloured volunteer from the wine lands could find common cause on the battlefield with White soldiers from Australia and Maori soldiers from New Zealand. A Coloured father on the Cape Flats could worry over the condition of his children's school just as a White father in the Southern Suburbs did the same. The stereotypes about Coloured men obscured these experiential connections, but the connections were not broken. Stereotypes were and are particularly popular within the specific context of White supremacist South Africa, but South Africans did not live only within those contexts. As Denis-Constant Martin writes in relation to the production of music at the Cape, "the underprivileged victims of racism and apartheid were not imprisoned in their townships and cut off from the rest of the world, but very much attuned to it, in contact with its most modern and creative fields."[330] South Africans also drew on their modernity and creativity in the ways in which they related to others in their immediate lives and in their imagined communities.

Popular media continues to propagate stereotypes tied to Coloured gendered and sexualized identities, as well. Many of the most widely shared now relate to Coloured women. Columnist Kuli Roberts was fired after joking that

[330] Denis-Constant Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Somerset West: African Minds, 2013), 117.

Coloured girls have a propensity for sex: "…you will always be assured of a large family as many of these girls breed as if Allan Boesak sent them on a mission to increase the coloured race," and "Which other race do you know that is more obsessed with *naai masjiene*? Oh, and I don't mean sewing machines."[331] The content of stereotypes about Coloured South Africans may have changed (though only slightly), but the process of othering Coloureds based on racial, gendered, and sexualized portrayals continues. One way of limiting the power of those stereotypes to divide and alienate South Africans is to explore and disseminate the histories of those stereotypes.

An exploration of Coloured gendered identities, both as they related to hegemonic ideals and in the subversive ways in which they undermined those ideals, allows us to see Coloured South Africans as broader in scope than just Cape Town and the Cape. As this project has demonstrated, Coloured South Africans did not conform their identities to the racialized social categories of White supremacist regimes. Coloured men enjoyed their neighborhood sporting clubs, but also reveled in competition on the biggest stages. They joined the Cape Corps to support their families and to join a global fight against oppression. They saw their fight against crime and immorality as the same fights waged by all communities. Gendered identities served as inclusive social identities opposed to

[331] Retha Grobbelaar, "Kuli Roberts' column scrapped after outcray," *Times Live*, Febrary 28, 2011, accessed April 24, 2014, http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2011/02/28/kuli-roberts-column-scrapped-after-outcry. Allan Boesak is a prominent minister in the Dutch Reformed Church and a founding member of the United Democratic Front. Roberts' reference to *naai masjiene*, or sewing machines in Afrikaans, is a sexualized denigration of Coloured women. *Naai*, as slang, also roughly translates as "fuck," playing on a joke about Coloured women working on their *naai masjiene* late into the night.

the divisive—and oppressive—racial identities imagined and resisted by South Africans.

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