The Eoan Group and the Politics of Coloured Opera in Apartheid South Africa

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ABSTRACT

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The Eoan Group, founded in 1933 in Cape Town, was South Africa's first and only all-coloured opera, dance and theatre company. Its 1956 production of *La Traviata* was the first opera produced by non-white people in South Africa, and initiated an operatic career that spanned twelve opera seasons and ten operas. The group was under the administration of white directors and received funding from the apartheid government. In return, they agreed to honour the regime's racial laws by performing for segregated audiences. Their acquiescence to segregation and their complicity in the promotion of apartheid ideology caused political problems: they were ostracised by their own community and boycotted by members of the white and coloured racial groupings. After the group's operatic activities came to a permanent halt in 1980, their history sank into obscurity, despite their importance in the establishment of an operatic culture in the country. The memorialisation of South Africa's cultural-political past continues to maintain a binary of complicity and resistance, with those who are remembered grouped neatly into either of these categories. These labels, however, do not map tidily onto the Eoan Group, with its bewildering narrative of self-empowerment-through-collusion. Consequently, their story presents a problem for the writing of South African music history.

Drawing extensively on material from the Eoan Group Archive, this dissertation considers the socio-political ambiguities of the Eoan narrative from musicological and post-colonial theoretical angles, to show how the group's operatic activities disrupted the cultural and material determinism of apartheid's racialised ideology. It calls for a disavowal of the Manichean ethics by which subaltern agency is measured, and proposes instead a turn to Njabulo S. Ndebele's 'politics of the ordinary'. From the sonic and material residue of the Eoan Group's productions, this project forges a newly conceived decolonial writing of apartheid operatic history.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements **v**

Preface **vi**

List of Figures **vii**

Introduction
Writing History **1**

A Brief History of the Eoan Group 4

Opera in South Africa 13

Chapter Outline 21

Chapter 1
Colouredness and Context **27**

The Coloured Stereotype 32

An Intermediate Race 40

Segregationism and Separate Development 48

Racial Legislation and the Eoan Group 58

Chapter 2
Voice **61**

Songs Worth Singing 62

Voice Theory 72

Eoan's Voices 83

Voice Culture 88

Placing Voice 93

Chapter 3
Productions **101**

The Italian Tradition 102

Sophistication On-Stage and Off: *La Traviata* and *La Bohème* 104

'Really Just Dark Europeans': Claiming Whiteness 121

Othering the Orient: *Madam Butterfly* 123

Forgetting: The Politics of the Stage 127

Chapter 4
Complicities and Transgressions **133**

Complicity Against Resistance 134

Complicities 135

Coloured Cultural Uplift 136

Coloured Culture 144

State Sponsorship 147

Segregation 159

Conclusion
The Politics of the Ordinary **173**

Marginality 174

Space and the Problem of Place 177

Binaries 181

The Politics of the Ordinary 184

Agents and their Intentions 194

Future Prospects 197

Bibliography **201**

Archival Sources **216**

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Preface

This project draws extensively on primary source material from the Eoan Group Archive, housed at the Documentation Centre for Music (DOMUS) at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. The archive has not yet been catalogued. As a result, no clear referencing system exists for documentary citations. For the sake of clarity, this project references archival materials as follows: [Author], 'Name of Document', [Date], [Source], Eoan Archive Box Number: [Eoan Archive Folder Number], where information between square brackets is optional, eg.:

> Southern-Holt, Helen. 'Brief outline of Eoan's Dramatic, Dancing and Musical Activities'—Meeting of the National Council of Women of South Africa, 11 September 1947. 37:300.

Where no author is specified, listings are by document name, except in the case of correspondence, programmes, permits, advertisements, and seating plans, which are listed by document type. Some archive boxes contain no folders; in those cases, the in-text citation specifies '(no folder)', but the bibliography provides only a box number, eg.:

> Programme. *Gems from the Operas*, 4 August 1973. 61.

Private collections that form part of the archive have neither box nor folder numbers. Instead, they are listed by the name of the collection as it appears in the archive, eg.:

> Advertisement. 'Be right for every … Fashion Occasion', in Programme, Opera and Ballet Season, March 1958. Copies from Mrs. Ruth Fourie.

I have chosen to preserve original orthography as far as possible, except where the retention of typing or punctuation errors would hamper reading or cause embarrassment. This has resulted in some variability in the typesetting of documents and phrases. Likewise, the Eoan Group administrators named documents inconsistently over the years. Consequently, slight variations in bibliographic listing may occur, eg.: 'Advance Press Publicity, 1974 Season'. 6:46; 'Advance Publicity, 1962 Opera Season'. 82:632; and 'Advance Publicity Information, Fourth Opera and Ballet Season, 1960'. 2:10.

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

List of Figures

Figure 3.1

Act II, Scene 2 from *La Traviata*, 1956, reproduced in Programme, *La Traviata*, 22 April – 2 May 2004, 61 (no folder) 106

Figure 3.2

Vera Gow as Violetta in *La Traviata*, reproduced in Programme, *La Traviata*, 1971, 100:770 106

Figure 3.3

'Photographs of *La Traviata* at La Scala', Act II, Scene 2, 29:200 108

Figure 3.4

La Traviata, 1965, photo by Cloete Breytenbach in *Eoan: Our Story*, 128-9 108

Figure 3.5

Advertisement for Parisian Furriers, in Programme, Opera and Ballet Season, March 1958, Copies from Mrs. Ruth Fourie 112

Figure 3.6

Advertisement for Morris Oxford, in Programme, 1956 Arts Festival, 29:200 114

Figure 4.1

Programme for *Rigoletto*, 1971 Republic Festival, 61 (no folder) 151

Figure 4.2

Programme for *La Traviata*, under the distinguished patronage of The Honourable Marais Viljoen, Minister of Coloured Affairs, 14 March 1967, 61 (no folder) 151

Figure 4.3

Permit No. 26690 in respect of Green/Sea Point Civic Centre, 11 April 1973, 16:114 161

Figure 4.4

Green and Sea Point Civic Hall Seating Plan, *La Traviata*, 5 March 1975, 9:61 165

Introduction

Writing History

Imitation whites. That was how, in September 2005, South African Minister of Arts and Culture, Pallo Jordan, described black South Africans singing opera.[1] In a country still reeling from the devastation of centuries of racial oppression, Jordan's comments sounded a simultaneous call for the liberation of black South Africans from an inherited cultural hierarchy that placed European forms at the top, and a narrow-minded endorsement of apartheid ideology's crude conflation of culture with race. His attitude, thereby, neatly captures the continued challenges faced by South Africa's Western art music practice and education in coming to terms with its colonial heritage and in claiming for itself a place in decolonial modes of artistic citizenship. This dissertation provides a historical perspective on the ambiguities that inform Jordan's dismissal of black opera in South Africa. Tracing the political narrative of one opera group in apartheid South Africa, it seeks to articulate and negotiate the various injustices, compromises, and blemishes that punctuate the history of non-white operatic activity in the country.

The first non-white company to produce opera in South Africa was the Eoan Group, a troupe of so-called 'coloured'[2] performers who staged elaborate productions of canonical Italian

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[1] 'What tends to happen in South Africa is that when people are speaking about opera they are speaking about European opera, and what it entails is usually teaching African kids to imitate Italians. What's wrong with the way Africans sing? Why should you teach them to sing like Italians? To make them into imitation whites—and poor imitations as well?' (Jordan, 2005, cited in Hilde Roos, 'Opera Production in the Western Cape: Strategies in Search of Indigenization', PhD Dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2010, 27).

[2] In post-apartheid South Africa, the use of racial terminology codified and endorsed by the oppressive regime is a controversial matter, and one that has no easy solution. The continued use of apartheid-era language serves to sustain semantically a system that has been discredited in every other way. Simultaneously, however, it remains impossible to write about this system without invoking the categories upon which it relied for its implementation and preservation. Under apartheid, the categories of black, white, Indian, and coloured, determined every aspect of a person's social, political, and cultural life. Ignoring these terms, therefore, also amounts to a tacit disavowal of their pervasiveness, and of the fact that they profoundly shaped (and, in South Africa's continued racially unequal society, still shape) individual and collective experience. I therefore choose to use these terms, but I do so invoking Jacques Derrida's notion of writing '*sous rature*' (cited in Nina Eidsheim, 'Voice as a Technology of Selfhood: Towards an Analysis of Racialized Timbre and Vocal Performance', PhD Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2008, 210). The term, translated directly as 'under erasure', refers to the dilemma of

operas between 1956 and 1975. Motivated by an aspirational impulse that was itself a product of the colonial civilising mission, the group's operas represented a bewildering politics of self-empowerment-through-collusion. Due to a number of politically compromised decisions, they were deemed complicit in the advancement of apartheid's oppressive ideology, and became the subject of social and historical ostracisation. Despite their importance in the establishment of operatic culture in the country, the Eoan Group remained, until recently, absent from South African music history.[3] However, the discovery in 2006 of the group's archive prompted an awakening of interest in the group and their role in local opera production. Since the transfer of the Eoan Group Archive to the Documentation Centre for Music (DOMUS) at the University of Stellenbosch,[4] engagements with the group's history, spearheaded by Hilde Roos, have proliferated.[5] To date, however, the narrative of political compromise that accompanies the group's operatic history has not been explicitly interrogated.

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the linguist who has to rely on language to communicate the impossibility of communication through language (ibid.). For Derrida, the only way around this impasse is to write under erasure—to question each concept as it is used, to break the unfamiliar down into the familiar, just to disavow this break. In other words, writing under erasure is to write at the limits of language.

[3] See Roos, 'Remembering to Forget the Eoan Group—the Legacy of an Opera Company from the Apartheid Era', *South African Theatre Journal* 27(1), 2014a, 1-18, for an overview of references to the Eoan Group in existing scholarship.

[4] The archive was transferred to DOMUS in 2008, as part of a permanent-loan agreement between the Eoan Group board and DOMUS. For an account of the circumstances surrounding the discovery and transfer of the archive, see Eoan History Project, *Eoan: Our Story*, Johannesburg: Fourthwall Books, 2013, xiv-xvi.

[5] The most important recent publication on the Eoan Group is, no doubt, *Eoan: Our Story*, a collection of extracts from interviews conducted between 2009 and 2010 with former members of the group. Describing itself as 'a history filled with impressions, emotions, opinions and facts, distorted by the effects of time on human memory but also informed by the sensibility that hindsight brings' (ibid., x), the book offers a series of recollections, rather than a critical study of the Eoan Group's past. It is accompanied by a film, *An Inconsolable Memory* (Aryan Kaganof (dir.), 2013), which weaves archival footage of the group's performances, and Cape Town's District Six area, with filmed extracts from the interviews conducted for the book. *An Inconsolable Memory* contains, arguably, a greater degree of editorial intervention than *Eoan: Our Story*, since the film is punctuated by texted directorial interpolations, such as 'let us not begin at the beginning, nor even at the archive, but rather at the word memory…', and 'Civilization is knowing how to relate things: to not forget things'. The film's focus is therefore clearly upon the navigation of simultaneously proud and shameful recollections, rather than the codification of a framework through which to interrogate and negotiate these ambiguities. The Eoan History Project—a group of authors and interviewers who collaborated on realising the Eoan book and film project—were under the leadership of Hilde Roos. Roos herself was the first person to work systematically through the Eoan Group Archive, and she has published extensively on both the archive and the group's history. See Roos, 'Eoan—Our Story: Treading New Methodological Paths in Music Historiography', *Historia* 60(2), 2015, 185-200; Roos, 'Remembering to Forget'; Roos, 'Probing the Boundaries of Opera as Notated Practice in South Africa:

Situating a thorough examination of documents contained in the Eoan Group Archive[6] within a broader set of post-colonial, historical, and musicological paradigms, this project seeks to formulate a theoretical apparatus with which to apprehend the ambiguous politics that underpins (and undermines) Eoan's operatic achievements. It reconstructs the aims and aspirations that informed the group's activities, investigates the material and sonic manifestations of these endeavours, and interrogates the physical and ideological strictures the group had to overcome to realise their ambitions. The dissertation does not give a comprehensive, linear account of the history of the Eoan Group, nor does it seek to situate them chronologically within a broader history of South African opera production.[7] While the introduction does cover both these narratives briefly, the accounts provided are not designed to be exhaustive; instead, they are intended as background material against which to read subsequent theoretical considerations of political, ideological, and musical aspects of the Eoan Group's operatic activities. Future chapters will lift out individual details from the group's history, and use them to inform general conclusions about aspiration; voice; the writing of apartheid history; and the politics of racially marked operatic performance in an oppressive society. Nonetheless, this remains primarily a historiographical work. It interrogates the influence of political ideology on the writing of music histories; and asks what work such histories are required to do. Additionally, it argues for a shift of focus away from grand narratives of political domination and resistance, and towards subaltern histories characterised by ambivalence, contradiction, and compromise.

The Case of Eoan', *Muziki* 11(2), 2014b, 79-88; and Roos, 'Indigenisation and History: How Opera in South Africa Became South African Opera', *Acta Academica* Supplement 1, 2012, 117-55.

[6] I undertook three extended visits to the Eoan Group Archive in November-December 2014, March-April 2015, and May-June 2015. During this period, I worked through the whole archive, which comprises roughly 10 000 documents.

[7] For a detailed chronology of the Eoan Group's activities, see Chapter 2, 'Archival Secrets: Constructing the History of Eoan', in Roos, 'Opera Production', 75-152; and for a history of opera in South Africa, see Chapter 1 of the same source (ibid., 20-74).

A Brief History of the Eoan Group

The Eoan Group was founded in 1933 by Helen Southern-Holt, a British-born philanthropist living in Cape Town.[8] Envisioned as a welfare organisation for the city's so-called 'coloured' population, the group started with lessons in elocution, literature, and drama, taught by Southern-Holt herself.[9] In 1934, classes in dance, deportment, and physical education were added, and with the arrival of Southern-Holt's daughter, Maisie, from England in 1935, these activities expanded into a fully-fledged dance section.[10] In 1939, a choir under the direction of Miss B. Brock initiated the musical activities for which the group would receive such acclaim in later years.[11] Southern-Holt claims that she recognised '[the coloured people's] talents and evident desire for development', and that 'the background of all [her] experience among them' inspired her to '[take] a decision and [become] the Mother and Founder of a future cultural group'.[12] This

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8 Roos confirms that little is known about Southern-Holt's personal history (Roos, 'Opera Production', 75). A promotional booklet celebrating the Eoan Group's activities until 1938 and outlining its plans for 1939, describes her as 'one who loved and understood the Coloured people of South Africa, and who for seven years had worked among them, sharing their troubles and hopes and distresses, and becoming intimate with the real fibre of the people' (*The Eoan Group*, booklet, probably 1938, 1:4). Southern-Holt possibly penned these words herself. Secondary sources, in turn, describe her variously as 'a social worker' (Lucy Faktor-Kreizer, 'From Latvia to South Africa', in *The World of South African Music: A Reader*, ed. Christine Lucia, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 147-51, 149); 'a benevolent white woman' (David Bloomberg, *My Times: The Memoirs of David Bloomberg: Man of the Theatre, Lawyer, Businessman and Former Mayor of Cape Town*, Simon's Town: Fernwood Press, 2007, 24); 'an English businesswoman involved in social work who had emigrated to South Africa three years before' (Denis-Constant Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa*, Cape Town: African Minds, 2013, 122); and 'an affluent white Cape Town resident and a largely unsung heroine of cultural development in South Africa' (Michael Green, *Around and About: Memoirs of a South African Newspaperman*, Cape Town: David Philip, 2004, 51). Archive documents portray a profoundly religious woman (see, for instance, Southern-Holt, 'Kenilworth, Monday', Letter and Prayer from Helen Southern-Holt to Joseph Manca, undated, 40:317) with an unwavering commitment to altruistic ideals: '[O]ur outlook […] is guided by this great Law—the Law of mutual Service. We know that what ever [sic] we give in that spirit must bear fruit—whether in our time—or later—for it carries with it part of ourselves—the sharing of our lives—our spirit.' (Southern-Holt, 'Outstanding Eoan Achievements', *The Sun*, 22 October 1948, Merle Falken Scrapbook).

9 *The Eoan Group* (booklet, 1:4) describes the group's 1933 activities as 'Work among the poor; speech-training; poetry-reading; [and] play reading'.

10 Southern-Holt, 'Brief Outline of Eoan's Dramatic, Dancing and Musical Activities'—Meeting of the National Council of Women of South Africa, 11 September 1947, 37:300. Maisie took over the group's dance section, and enrolled her best ballet students in Royal Academy exams, for which she travelled with them to London (ibid.).

11 *The Eoan Group* (booklet, 1:4) and Southern-Holt, 'Brief Outline', 37:300.

12 Ibid., original capitalisation.

'cultural group' was to summon a new future for Cape Town's coloured citizens: 'the dawning of a new cultural expansion'; the beginning, in other words, of a fully 'civilised' life.[13] Southern-Holt hence chose the name 'Eoan', derived from the Greek, *eos*, for the group:

> On my programme, as I sat planning, I wrote 'Eos' the beautiful Greek word meaning Dawn—Eos … Eoan … pertaining to the Dawn. And so I named the new group Eoan, in the consciousness that through its illumination the Coloured People could realise the dawning of a new cultural expansion in themselves, and a new understanding of well-being, physical and mental for their race. [14]

During its first decade, Eoan staged regular showcases of its activities, including plays,[15] dance pageants,[16] percussion demonstrations,[17] and open-air physical education displays.[18] From its inception, the group evidently placed great emphasis on public performance, specifically with the purpose of raising funds for its charitable work,[19] and to instil discipline and perseverance in participants.[20] Under Southern-Holt, performances retained a degree of anonymity, with individual participants' names omitted altogether from advertisements, programmes, and reviews.[21] This policy was maintained in accord with the group's principle of communal service: 'To unite in brotherhood to serve the best aims of the Group, forgetful of the personal self'.[22] The initial years of Eoan's activities therefore demonstrate a distinctly community-orientated

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13 Helen Southern-Holt, 'Brief Outline', 37:300. The colonial ideals of civility that underpinned the Eoan Group's policies and activities will recur as a critical refrain throughout this thesis, and will be treated explicitly in Chapters 2 and 4.

14 Ibid., original capitalisation.

15 The group's first full costume play, Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775) was staged in 1936 (*The Eoan Group*, booklet, 1:4).

16 A 'Coloured Dance Display', accompanied by the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra, was presented at Cape Town City Hall in 1937, followed by another in 1938 (ibid.).

17 'The Percussion Band, composed of boys and girls from the age of four to fourteen years […] in November [1938] made its first public appearance with every success' (ibid.).

18 The first open-air display was held on 26 December 1938 (ibid.), and by 1940 these demonstrations had grown to include 1000 children from around the Cape Peninsula (Roos, 'Opera Production', 76).

19 '[T]he popularity of the Group increased on the concert platform where much good work was done in aid of charities' (*The Eoan Group*, booklet, 1:4).

20 'Regular rehearsals, the hard work behind a production, produces a responsible individual and character is thereby strengthened. Many of course fall by the way, but those who stay and who are drawing others to their circle are pioneers in a cause that will help them build up for a better future.' (Southern-Holt, 'Brief Outline', 37:300).

21 'The players were anonymous, and this anonymity is maintained throughout the Group' (*The Eoan Group*, booklet, 1:4).

22 Ibid.

ethos, firmly embedded in ideals of social concern and self-denial. Joseph Salvatore Manca's arrival in 1943 as the group's new choir director, however, signalled a gradual shift away from this approach and towards a more individualised attitude of personal achievement.

Southern-Holt invited Manca to become the Eoan Group's choir conductor when Miss Brock's 'many activities' forced her to resign.[23] At the time, the choir had 20-30 members.[24] Under Manca, it quickly expanded, and by 1947 boasted a membership of 'nearly 150'.[25] Manca, the South African-born son of Sicilian parents,[26] was an accountant in the City Treasurer's Department of Cape Town,[27] and had an intense passion for music.[28] An amateur composer and conductor,[29] Manca's involvement with the Eoan group initiated a proliferation of choral activities, starting with the production of numerous oratorio[30] and light operettas.[31] In 1955, Manca proposed a bold undertaking: the presentation of a full 'all-Coloured Arts Festival'[32] in 1956, organised, administered, and performed by the Eoan Group. The festival was to serve as a stage for the group's charitable endeavours, with an exhibition of members' handiwork (including a 'photographic exhibition', a 'poster exhibition', and a 'floral arrangement competition'[33]) and a 'massed physical education display'[34] showcasing their non-theatrical activities, while performances of *Elijah*; the musical comedy *Zip Goes a Million*;[35] Elmer Blaney Harris's play,

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[23] Southern-Holt, 'Brief Outline', 37:300.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Roos, 'Opera Production', 76.
[27] 'Dr. Joseph Manca', in Programme, Sixth Opera Season, 1965, 14:97.
[28] '[Manca] is a chartered accountant by profession, and music is his all-absorbing hobby' ('Success of Visiting Eoan Group Stems from Selfless Mutual Endeavour', *Natal Mercury*, 4 August 1960, 30:208).
[29] Manca composed music for an operetta, *San Maratto* [sic], in 1932 ('Joseph Manca', in Programme, 1956 Arts Festival, 29:200).
[30] British composer Martin Shaw's *The Redeemer* was performed with organ in 1946, and again as a costumed 'passion play' in 1949; the group later produced Felix Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (1953) and George Frederick Handel's *Messiah* (1954) ('History of the Eoan Group', in ibid.).
[31] *A Slave in Araby*, (Alfred J Silver and Stanley Guise), produced in 1949; *Hong Kong* (composer unknown) in 1950; *The Maid of the Mountains* (Harry Graham and H. Fraser-Simson) in 1951; *The Gipsy Princess* (Emmerich Kalman) in 1953; and *Magyar Melody* (Eric Maschwitz, George Posford and Bernard Grun) in 1954. These productions were all accompanied by the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra (ibid.).
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Book and lyrics by Eric Maschwitz, music by George Posford; this was the South African premiere of this work.

Johnny Belinda; a children's performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*; and a dance production featuring classical ballet, Greek dancing, national dances, 'etc.',[36] would demonstrate members' theatrical talents in the months of April, May, June, and August. Manca's most ambitious initiative, however, was undoubtedly his plan to produce a full Italian opera with Eoan singers and dancers in March of the same year. For this endeavour, he chose Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata*, and over the course of a year, he taught the singers the opera's words 'syllable by syllable',[37] and helped them to learn its music by rote.[38]

The first performance of *La Traviata* on 10 March 1956 in Cape Town City Hall was an overwhelming success. Described, afterwards, by producer Alessandro Rota as 'a miracle',[39] the production demonstrated levels of artistic skill and musical accomplishment that many white South Africans had thought impossible among members of the coloured race.[40] Manca expounded enthusiastically on the triumph of the Eoan Group's *La Traviata* in a letter to Harold Rosenthal, editor of the British magazine, *Opera*:

> This Coloured Premiere of La Traviata was the greatest musical success Cape Town has ever witnessed and caused a furore among the local musical circles. Ever since the first night, the whole city has been talking […] History was created in more than one sense. Not only was this the first Coloured performance in the world of a complete Italian Opera, but all […] booking records were broken. All performances were 'sold out' before

[36] 'History of the Eoan Group', Programme, 1956 Arts Festival, 29:200.
[37] 'Sacrifice, Hard Work Behind Eoan Group's Opera Success', *Daily News*, 9 August 1960, 30:208.
[38] Some uncertainty exists about the extent of Eoan members' musical literacy. While some former members claim that numerous Eoan singers had at least a basic understanding of notation (see 'Girl Who Thrilled Durban Audiences', *Daily News*, 16 July 1965, 60:494a), others concede that the group had very limited capacity to read music, and that efforts to enhance their knowledge of staff notation met with little interest (see Eoan History Project, *Eoan: Our Story*, Johannesburg: Fourthwall Books, 2013, esp. 82-4 and 90-1). The group's publicity material emphasised their lack of musical training, as in '1965 Opera Season Advance Press Publicity', 15 February 1965, 2:10: 'It is almost incredible that here are artists who have never seen Italian Opera, have a limited or no knowledge of music, have not had vocal training and cannot speak the Italian language and yet are able to perform opera of a high standard'.
[39] 'At the end of the opening night's performance, Mr. Rota was called on to the stage and during his short speech on that most memorable occasion, made this historical statement: "Ladies and Gentlemen, you have to-night not only heard and seen an excellent performance of Verdi's immortal opera "La Traviata" but you have also witnessed a miracle". This was widely reported and received due importance in the local press.' ('1965 Opera Season Advance Press Publicity', original emphasis).
[40] *Die Burger*'s music critic, Emol (identified by Roos as Afrikaans critic Charlie Weich (Roos, 'Opera Production', 83)), for instance, exclaimed that he 'would not have believed it if someone had told [him] beforehand what [he] would see and hear on Saturday night' [*As iemand my haarfyn sou vertel het wat ek Saterdagaand sou sien en hoor, sou ek hom nie geglo het nie*] (Emol, '*Kaapse Kleurlinge Voer Italiaanse Opera met Groot Welslae Uit*' [Cape Coloureds Perform Italian Opera With Great Success], *Die Burger*, 12 March 1956, Ruth Fourie Newspaper Cuttings).

> the rise of the curtain on the opening night. Altogether, nine performances were given, all playing to packed houses, and thousands of people were unable to gain admission. […] The results have surpassed all expectations, and the Eoan Group is now looking forward to a proper 'Opera Season' when it is hoped to give several operas.[41]

Whether this performance of *La Traviata* was in fact the first ever complete, Italian staging of the work by a non-white cast cannot yet be established with absolute certainty. A number of opera companies consisting (in part or entirely) of non-white members existed in the United States at the end of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, but their performance histories, due to the geographical dispersal and occasional destruction of their archives, cannot be pieced together with certainty. The National Negro Opera Company, for instance, produced *La Traviata* in English in 1943 and 1944 with Lillian Evanti in the title role, however it is not clear if they ever attempted an Italian production, nor whether they had to rely on white singers to complete their casts.[42] The Theodore Drury Opera Company, active in New York City between 1900 and c.1915, also regularly performed European operas, and had a repertoire including Verdi's *Aïda*, Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*, Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, 'and the like'.[43] No existing studies of the group's activities make mention of a production of *La Traviata*, but based on their known repertoire such a choice would not have been entirely unlikely. Whether these operas were performed in English or Italian, however, is not clear, and unlike the Eoan Group, the company employed white singers to fill some roles.[44] Given that the term 'coloured' held a very specific meaning in South Africa at the time,[45] Manca's statement was true from a semantic perspective at least.

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[41] Correspondence, Joseph Manca to Harold Rosenthal, 2 April 1956, 29:200, original capitalisation.
[42] See Karen M. Bryan, 'Radiating a Hope: Mary Cardwell Dawson as Educator and Activist', *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 25(1), 2003, 20-35; and 'Appendix A: Selected Events and Productions of the NNOC', *National Negro Opera Company Collection*, Washington: Music Division, Library of Congress, 1993, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/music/eadxmlmusic/eadpdfmusic/mu2005.wp.0031.pdf, accessed 13 April 2017.
[43] Elise K. Kirk, *American Opera*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001, 186.
[44] Kristen M. Turner, 'Class, Race, and Uplift in the Opera House: Theodore Drury and his Company Cross the Color Line', *Journal of Musicological Research* 34(4), 2015, 320-51; Doris E. McGinty, 'Drury, Theodore', in *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, 2nd edn., vol. 2, eds. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 449-50.
[45] This will be discussed at length in Chapter 1.

The Eoan Group's first 'proper opera season', advertised as the 'Second Opera and Ballet Season',[46] took place two years after the 1956 Arts Festival, and again featured *La Traviata*, along with Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*.[47] In 1959, a third opera season saw the addition of Verdi's *Rigoletto* to performances of the group's existing repertoire,[48] and in 1960 the fourth opera season featured *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème*, as well as a newly created ballet, *Pink Lemonade*; former member Johaar Mosaval travelled from London to dance the main role in this work.[49] Between June and September 1960, the group also undertook the first of two national tours, presenting opera seasons in Port Elizabeth, Durban, and Johannesburg. Reviews and official reports collected in the archive indicate that this venture was an enormous success from both a musical and a financial point of view.[50] In 1968, Manca remembered the group's first nationwide triumph with customary hyperbole:

> The tour lasted for three months from June to September where the Eoan Group played to absolute capacity houses, making a deep impression on the citizens of these cities. People queued night and day and houses were sold out long before the seasons opened thus proving that South Africa is an opera loving country.[51]

After the success of 1960, the group took a year-long break in public performance. During this time they prepared for their second Arts Festival, which ran between March and November 1962.[52] As with the first Arts Festival, a range of productions were staged, including 'grand

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[46] Programme, Opera and Ballet Season March 1958, Copies from Mrs. Ruth Fourie.
[47] Ibid.
[48] This time, *Cavalleria Rusticana* was presented as one half of a double bill, of which the other half was a ballet created by the group, called *Pastorale* (see Henry Duthie, 'Eoan Group "Rigoletto" and "Traviata" Go on Next Week', *The Cape Argus*, 20 March 1959, Ruth Fourie Newspaper Cuttings).
[49] 'Advance Publicity Information, Fourth Opera and Ballet Season 1960', 2:10. Mosaval, celebrated as one of the group's early success stories, was dancing with the Royal Ballet Company at the time. *Pink Lemonade*, choreographed by another former Eoan dancer, David Poole, was based on Mosaval's early life in the Cape Town community of District Six. The composer of the music is unknown (Roos, 'Opera Production', 89).
[50] See, for instance, 'Port Elizabeth Acclaims Eoan Group *Rigoletto*', *Cape Times*, 6 July 1960, Ruth Fourie Newspaper Cuttings; '*Puik Eoangroep Met Vier Operas in Durban*' [Splendid Eoan Group with Four Operas in Durban], *Die Natalier*, 29 July 1960, Ruth Fourie Newspaper Cuttings; 'Hail, the Conquering Eoans Come!', *Golden City Post*, 21 August 1960, 101:772s; and 'Advance Publicity, 1962 Opera Season', 82:632. Documents relating to the group's first South African tour are collected in Eoan Archive box 31, folders 208-11.
[51] Manca, 'Historical Overview of Eoan's Activities from 1933-1968', 60:494c.
[52] Programme, Eoan Arts Festival, 1962, Copies from Mrs. Ruth Fourie.

opera',[53] ballet,[54] 'oratorio',[55] drama,[56] 'children's operetta',[57] and an operetta—Johann Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus*, which was performed in October and November 1962, and remained the group's only non-Italian operatic venture.[58] 1963 and '64 were again used to prepare for a significant project: another opera season and tour of South Africa in 1965, during which three new operas, Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*, and Bizet's *Carmen* (performed in Italian translation) were featured alongside *La Traviata* and *La Bohème*.[59] While the tour again received critical acclaim, it was a financial failure.[60] The losses incurred during this costly endeavour contributed directly to the group's decision at the end of 1965 to apply for financial assistance from the Department of Coloured Affairs.[61] Crippled, financially, by their 1965 tour, the group was unable to present an opera season in 1966; instead, it staged a state-sponsored production of *La Traviata* as part of the government's Republic Festival, organised to celebrate the fifth anniversary of South Africa's independence from the British Crown.[62] In September 1967, Eoan presented its seventh opera season with *La Traviata*, *Madam Butterfly*, and *L'Elisir d'Amore*.[63] That

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[53] This year, the programme included *La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, and the group's debut of Puccini's *Madam Butterfly* (ibid.).
[54] A new ballet, *The Square*, was created for the group, again with Johaar Mosaval dancing the lead. According to Roos, *The Square* was the first 'complete full-length indigenous ballet composed by a local composer for a local ballet group in South Africa' (Roos, 'Opera Production', 96). Set to music by South African composer Stanley Glasser, the story was a depiction of gang life in District Six (ibid.), and was conceived and choreographed by David Poole ('David Poole', in Programme, Eoan Arts Festival 1962, Copies from Mrs. Ruth Fourie).
[55] Verdi's *Requiem*, which was described in publicity information as an oratorium (ibid.).
[56] The Arts Festival programme does not specify the title of the work(s) produced, but indicates merely that performances were to take place in August at Cape Town's Little Theatre, and that the producer was to be Robin Malan (ibid.).
[57] *The Travelling Musicians* by Martin Shaw and *Alice in Wonderland*, described in the Arts Festival programme as having been composed by Harvey Paul (ibid.). I have been unable to trace the existence of such a work; it is possible that this was an erroneous reference to Harvey B. Gaul, the composer of *Alice in Wonderland: A Musical Play in Three Acts* (1912).
[58] *Die Fledermaus* was performed in English and was 'based on the Sadlers Wells [sic] version' ('Advance Publicity, *Die Fledermaus*, 1962', 82:632).
[59] The tour took place from June to August 1965, and included Johannesburg, Durban, East London, and Port Elizabeth (Manca, 'Historical Overview of Eoan's Activities from 1933-1968', 60:494c).
[60] 'Regrettably, in spite of the great artistic success of this tour, financially it proved to be a loss—a most inexplicable fact' (ibid.).
[61] Minutes of the Special General Meeting, 9 November 1965, 37:300. The group's reliance on financial support from the Department of Coloured Affairs, renounced in 1957, but reclaimed from 1966 onwards, will be treated extensively in Chapter 4.
[62] Correspondence, Ismail Sydow to N.B. Hyles, 20 August 1966, 85:684. The group's participation in the 1966 and 1971 Republic Festivals will be examined in Chapter 4.
[63] 'Three Operas for New Eoan Season', *The Cape Argus*, 5 September 1965, 86:685.

same year, the group also produced its first Broadway musical, the South African première of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*[64] Despite criticism of the fact that performances were completely segregated,[65] the production was a success.[66] More musicals followed, with Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific* in 1968,[67] and *Carmen Jones* (original music by Bizet and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II) in 1970.[68] Illness and insufficient preparation forced the group to cancel its planned 1968 opera season a week before the opening night,[69] leading to further financial trouble.[70] The operas intended for this season, Verdi's *La Traviata*, *Il Trovatore*, and *Rigoletto*, and Gioachino Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, were instead presented during the group's eighth opera season, which took place in October and November 1969.[71] For its ninth opera season in 1971, the group added Ruggiero Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* to its repertoire,[72] and they again participated in a government-sponsored Republic Festival, this time with a production of *Rigoletto*.[73] *I Pagliacci* was to become the last new work produced by the group: they did not premiere any further works at their final two opera seasons in 1974 and 1975, opting instead to revive *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for one,[74] and *La Traviata* for the other.[75] The reduction in full productions did not, however, necessarily entail a decline in public performance: from 1969, the group regularly

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64 Programme, *Oklahoma!*, 19-28 January 1967, 101:770.
65 Eleven performances for the white public were staged at the Alhambra Theatre (a whites-only venue) between 19 and 28 January, while coloured audiences were given the opportunity to attend the musical at the Luxurama Theatre (a 'coloured' venue) on 31 January and 1 February ('Advance Press Publicity, *Oklahoma*', 85:669). See 'Oklahoma Race Bar Criticized', *The Cape Times*, 26 January 1967, 85:682.
66 See '*Oklahoma*, 1967' [Review], untitled, undated, source unknown, 99:766; and 'Eoan Group's Natural Charm in Pleasant *Oklahoma*', *Cape Argus*, 20 January 1967, 99:768.
67 Directed by David Bloomberg, who in his memoirs recounts this production with great fondness (Bloomberg, *My Times*, 24-30).
68 Programme, *Carmen Jones*, 1970, 100:770.
69 Correspondence, Manca to Mr. Jan Luyt, Town Clerk, 25 September 1968, 36:283.
70 A loss of R10 000 in pre-box office expenditure plunged the group back into debt (ibid.).
71 '1969 Opera Season Advance Press Publicity', 10:68.
72 The other works featured were *Rigoletto*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and *La Traviata* ('Eoan Group are Tuned Up for Opera Season', *Cape Argus*, 16 October 1971, 101:772s).
73 Programme, 1971 Republic Festival, 61.
74 Advertisement, 'Eoan Group March 1974 Season: Opera, Ballet & Concerts', 6:46; and 'Advance Press Publicity, 1974 Season', 6:46.
75 'Splendid Verdi', *Cape Argus*, 28 February 1975, Gerald Samaai Scrapbooks 2. This year, the group also toured abroad to participate in the 1975 International Festival of Youth Orchestras and Performing Arts, held in London and Aberdeen in August (see, for instance, Correspondence, Sydow to Mrs. Joyce Bryer, Secretary General of the International Festival of Youth Orchestras and Performing Arts, 20 March 1974, 53:436).

presented operatic variety concerts under titles such as *Opera for All*,[76] *A Night at the Opera*,[77] and *Gems from the Operas*.[78] These recitals were tremendously popular, and due to their relatively small production cost, were used to ensure the group of some much-needed income.[79]

Eoan's financial problems were to become a significant factor in the group's eventual demise. Unable to meet administrative and production costs, they relied increasingly on financial assistance from the government's Department of Coloured Affairs.[80] In return, they agreed to stage special performances at state officials' request,[81] advertised themselves as valuable propaganda for the apartheid project,[82] and acquiesced with segregationist legislation.[83] This mutualistic relationship between the government and the Eoan Group caused friction with anti-apartheid activists,[84] and led to a crippling boycott of the group's activities by a significant number of coloured people.[85] Shrinking audiences, dwindling membership,[86] a breakdown of leadership initiated by Manca and chairman Ismail Sydow's departure from the group in

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[76] Correspondence, Sydow to N. Wheeler, 9 April 1973, 16:113.

[77] Hans Kramer, 'Eoan Group's "Night at the Opera" Delights the Ear and Eye', *Cape Times*, 19 March 1969, Gerald Samaai Scrapbooks 2.

[78] Programme, *Gems from the Operas*, 4 August 1973, 61.

[79] 'It would […] seem that "Opera for All" has a wide appeal and that the cost of production is low. […] I do suggest […] that "Opera for All" be exploited to the full' (Correspondence from W.M. Bisset, Honorary Secretary of the Eoan Group Trust, to Manca, 20 October 1969, 53:439).

[80] Apart from the annual grant, which had grown from R2 000 in 1966 (Correspondence, J.R. Young, Department of Coloured Affairs, to Sydow, 2 August 1966, 33:231) to R35 000 in 1971 (Correspondence, Sydow to Department of Coloured Affairs, 18 January 1971, 1:1), the group regularly approached the Department of Coloured Affairs for additional funding to cover its financial shortfalls (see, for instance, Correspondence, Manca to Commissioner for Coloured Affairs, 23 April 1970, 10:72; and Correspondence, Sydow to Department of Coloured Affairs, 18 January 1971, 1:1).

[81] As in the case of both Republic Festivals.

[82] See, for instance, 'Advance Publicity, Eoan Group 1962 Arts Festival and Future Activities', 32:219.

[83] As in the presentation of separate performances of *Oklahoma!* for white and coloured audiences, mentioned above.

[84] Captured most succinctly in a letter from the South African Coloured People's Organisation, which congratulates the group on its 1956 *La Traviata*, before expressing fierce criticism of their decision to stage a special performance for government officials at the Minister for Coloured Affairs' request (Correspondence, South African Coloured People's Organisation, to 'Dear Friend', undated, 29:200).

[85] See, for instance, 'Minutes of the Special General Meeting, 9 November 1965', 37:300: 'The great lack of support given us by our community is notoriously well known. Appeals for funds fall on deaf ears; members of our teaching and professional section not only do not support us, but openly oppose us in our voluntary labours for the advancement of our people.'

[86] Membership numbers had declined from 1 920 in 1960 to 370 in 1973 ('Commission of Inquiry into Matters Relating to the Coloured Population Group: Memorandum on Cultural Matters Relating to the Coloured Population Group', 9:59).

November 1977 and March 1978 respectively,[87] and mounting hostility and in-fighting between members,[88] led to the suspension of the group's operatic activities in 1980.[89] The 'glorious days of Grand Opera'[90] had come to an end. Soon, the Eoan Group's proud operatic past had faded from South African music history.[91]

Opera in South Africa

No comprehensive account of the history of opera production in South Africa has yet been produced. Hilde Roos, noting 'the absence of any attempts, comprehensive or otherwise, in this field of local music historiography',[92] initiates a first such venture in the opening chapter of her doctoral dissertation on operatic indigenisation in the Western Cape. Due to archival constraints,[93] however, she concedes that her approach is not comprehensive, and that it opts

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87 Bruce Heilbuth, 'The Eoan Group, is this the End?', *Scenaria* June/July 1978, 60:494f; and 'Minutes for the Executive Committee Meeting, 29 March 1978', 37:300.
88 As demonstrated in 'Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, 11 October 1979', 23:167.
89 The Artistic Report for 1980 lists various plans for 1981, including a performance of Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, a Gilbert and Sullivan production (*The Gondoliers*), and a number of one-act operas. No evidence exists in the archive to indicate that any of these plans came to fruition (Peter Voges, 'Artistic Report, November 1980', 45:352).
90 Ibid.
91 Even the Eoan Group itself seems to have forgotten its operatic past. The group still exists, but its focus has shifted to providing dance classes for children living in the majority coloured township of Athlone. In 2011, it launched a professional contemporary dance company, named the Eoan Group Theatre Company. Hilde Roos observed in 2010 that the Eoan Group's website (www.eoangroup.co.za) provided a history of the group, in which no mention whatsoever was made of its former operatic endeavours (Roos, 'Opera Production', 109 n.160). Recent attempts to access this website have been unsuccessful—it no longer seems to exist. At present, the Eoan Group's only online presence is a Facebook page, which describes them as a 'nonprofit organization in Athlone, Western Cape, South Africa'. In the 'About' section of the page, the following appears: 'The Eoan Group School of Performing Arts was established in 1933 by a British immigrant, Helen Southern Holt [sic] for the mixed community in District Six. Based at the Joseph Stone Auditorium in Athlone since 1968 [sic], the Eoan Group offers training in Classical ballet, Modern dance, African contemporary, Hip Hop, Belly dance, Dramatic Arts and Music to all aspiring performers from the ages of three and older.' Apart from this historically inaccurate description, the Facebook page contains news and important notifications for parents regarding the activities of the group's dance school ('Eoan Group', *facebook*, https://www.facebook.com/eoangroup/, accessed 24 November 2017).
92 Roos, 'Opera Production', 21.
93 Of which the most pressing are the geographic dispersal of sources, and the erratic nature of record keeping in South African archives (ibid.).

instead to construct in broad strokes a chronology based mostly on secondary sources.[94] Roos's history nevertheless provides valuable context within which to situate the Eoan Group's activities, and to evaluate their relative importance for the development of opera in South Africa.

Roos observes that traces of opera performance in the Cape exist from 1802, when Charles Coffey's ballad opera *The Devil to Pay* was staged by musicians from the English garrison, and that this early endeavour was followed by relatively regular productions of light French and English opera throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.[95] The introduction of 'serious' opera commenced in the 1860s, when touring companies such as the Carl Rosa Group and Signor Calli's Italian Opera Company started visiting the country. These groups brought the first performances of Italian opera to South African audiences, with evidence existing of performances of Verdi's *Il Trovatore* in Durban (1870) and Johannesburg (1889); *La Traviata* in the Eastern Cape (1873-4); Bellini's *La Sonnambula* in Durban (1876); and Puccini's *Madam Butterfly* and *Aida* in Cape Town (1912).[96] While a local production of Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz* was performed by Cape Town's 'All the World's a Stage' theatre group in 1831,[97] it was an isolated endeavour: the first significant local productions of opera in Cape Town only occurred in 1933, when the South African College of Music (SACM) staged student productions of Domenico Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, and Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* in 1934.[98] After the establishment of the University of Cape Town's University Opera Company in 1951, and its Opera School in 1954, the city suddenly experienced 'an explosion of opera productions

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[94] Ibid., 13. Some of these sources, like Jacques Philip Malan's *South African Music Encyclopedia*, 4 Vols., Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1979-1986, and Jan Bouws's *Die Musieklewe van Kaapstad 1800-1850: En Sy Verhouding tot die Musiekkultuur van Wes-Europa* [The Musical Life of Cape Town 1800-1850: And Its Relationship with the Musical Culture of Western Europe], Cape Town: Balkema, 1966; and *Solank Daar Musiek Is: Musiek en Musiekmakers in Suid-Afrika (1652-1982)* [As Long as there is Music: Music and Musicians in South Africa (1652-1982)], Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1982, have largely been discredited due, firstly, to a proliferation of factual errors, and secondly because of their collusion with apartheid ideology and funding structures (Roos, 'Opera Production', 23, 26, 29 and 72).
[95] Ibid., 28.
[96] Ibid., 31-3.
[97] Ibid., 35.
[98] Ibid., 37-8.

unequalled to this day'.[99] This operatic eruption was both enriched and democratised by the Eoan Group's regular contributions from 1956 onwards.[100]

In the country's other metropolitan centres, similar production patterns occurred: Durban's opera audiences relied on visiting troupes for serious fare, while their own Amateur Operatic Society, founded in 1886, focused on productions of operettas by Gilbert and Sullivan until the 1960s.[101] Johannesburg's operatic culture similarly hinged on overseas companies, until the efforts of a local music lover, John Connell, established regular local productions from 1925 onwards.[102] Connell's labours bore striking resemblance to those of the Eoan Group in Cape Town: for his annual opera seasons, which by 1950 consisted of an average of nine to ten operas per year, Connell managed all directorial, technical, and administrative responsibilities, without reimbursement. Thanks to his efforts, Johannesburg audiences had the opportunity to attend Gounod's *Faust*, Bizet's *Carmen*, Verdi's *Il Trovatore* and *Aida*, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and Léhar's *Die lustige Witwe*, amongst others.[103] Connell also played an important part in the proliferation of Afrikaans operatic translations during the 1940s and 50s. While the first opera to be performed in Afrikaans was a 1940 Stellenbosch production of Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*,[104] it was Connell's efforts towards the end of the decade that helped to establish Afrikaans operatic translation as a viable artistic enterprise.[105]

The South Africa of the 1950s was evidently not an operatic *tabula rasa*: audiences had opportunities to experience works from the Western canon, sometimes even in local translation.

[99] Ibid., 38.
[100] Non-white citizens could not attend performances by white companies such as the University Opera Company, nor could non-white singers participate in these productions. The Eoan Group therefore contributed to the spread of operatic experience among the city's racially disenfranchised population.
[101] Roos, 'Opera Production', 41-3.
[102] Ibid., 44-5.
[103] Ibid., 45. Like the Eoan Group, Connell received a small grant from the local government to help with the cost of mounting his productions.
[104] Ibid., 49-50.
[105] Connell produced a combined English and Afrikaans version of Bizet's *Carmen* in 1946, followed by an Afrikaans production of *Tannhäuser* in 1948, and Mozart's *Zauberflöte*, also in Afrikaans, in 1950 (ibid., 50).

And while these productions were not always of consistent quality,[106] they did contribute to the establishment of basic operatic literacy among white, urban South Africans. Exposure remained limited, however, and was shaped predominantly by the inclinations of music-loving amateurs like Connell in Johannesburg and Manca in Cape Town. In 1963, however, the apartheid government introduced structures that enabled a professionalisation of operatic activity in the country, when it established four Performing Arts Councils, one in each of the provinces of the Republic.[107] Generously funded by the state,[108] these councils offered secure, professional careers to local musicians, dancers, and actors. They also had access to state-of-the-art, purpose-built facilities,[109] and could afford to bring well-known guest artists from abroad.[110] Again, however, these organisations and the benefits they carried were reserved for whites. Non-white artists, in contrast, continued to make do with under-resourced, amateur endeavours. They remained reliant on the charity of others, or were forced to make political compromises in order to obtain minute, but crucial, financial and infrastructural support from the state.[111] However, despite its

[106] Ibid., 45.
[107] These were the Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB), the Performing Arts Council of Transvaal (PACT), the Natal Performing Arts Council (NAPAC), and the Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State (PACOFS) (ibid., 49).
[108] In 1969, for instance, CAPAB received R700 000 from the government, while the Eoan Group received R5 000 (ibid.).
[109] As an example, CAPAB's home, the Nico Malan Theatre Complex (renamed in 2001 to Artscape), was completed in 1971 at a cost of 11 million Rands, and was fully subsidised by the government (ibid., 123).
[110] The cultural boycott instituted against South Africa during the 1980s, however, proved to be a significant obstacle to the Arts Councils' attempts to import directors, producers, conductors, and singers for their productions. The relative scarcity of experienced local producers and singers, and the constitutional restriction on employing non-whites, no matter how experienced, to fill these positions, caused profound logistical problems for the Performing Arts Boards (ibid., 57).
[111] Limited information is available on non-white Western art music organisations in apartheid South Africa, but brief mentions in unexpected places attest to their existence. Es'Kia Mphahlele, in 'Alternative Institutions of Education for Africans in South Africa: An Exploration of Rationale, Goals, and Directions', *Harvard Educational Review* 60(1), 1990, 36-48, for instance, mentions the African Music and Drama Association, based at Dorkay House, Johannesburg, in the 1960s and early 1970s; the Ionian Choir and the Symphony Orchestra established and led by Dr Khabi Mngoma; the Funda Arts Center, also in Johannesburg, 'where theatre, music, graphic and plastic arts, and photography are taught'; and the Federated Union of Black Artists (FUBA), which, under the direction of poet and novelist Sipho Sipamla, 'has been teaching the fine arts, music, dance, and theater' (42-3). Christopher Cockburn writes about the Johannesburg African Music Society, a choir of black singers that produced annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*, in 'Discomposing Apartheid's Story: Who Owns Handel?', in *Composing Apartheid: Music For and Against Apartheid*, ed. Grant Olwage, Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008, 55-77; and Daniel Magaziner, in *The Art of Life in South Africa*, Athens, OH.: Ohio University Press, 2016, 33, describes cultural critic and prize-winning author Walter Nhlapo's appraisal of 'black theatre and music across the 1930s and 1940s', in which he expressed a preference for 'opera and classical music', and a belief that '[the

politically compromised history, the unmistakeable racial bias in its institutional support, and its close association with 'white settler culture and […] Afrikaner nationalist arrogance',[112] South African opera did not perish along with the apartheid regime. Instead, Roos observes that 'new opera composition has experienced an unprecedented upsurge over the past two decades in South Africa'.[113] Additionally, it continues to thrive in non-traditional forms among the country's disenfranchised communities: in predominantly black urban townships and residential areas, opera has become a significant feature of solo and choral singing, while for coloured minstrel groups participating in Cape Town's New Year's Day Festivities,[114] solo arias and massed choir numbers are repertoire staples.[115] Since the desegregation of theatres, companies, and training facilities, black and coloured singers have also embraced newly available educational and performance opportunities; a number of these artists have gone on to forge international careers.[116] Indeed, South African composer and scholar Neo Muyanga agrees with Roos that opera has become a significant local culture in its own right—no longer tainted by its white supremacist past, it now exists as an indigenous musical form.[117]

South African opera scholarship is experiencing a concomitant expansion, with a proliferation of work on post-apartheid compositions and productions.[118] Apart from Roos's

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mastery of] modern European-derived culture […][was] the lodestar of individual success'. Fiction by black authors also explored the politics of Western music education for blacks, as in Njabulo Ndebele's short story, 'The Music of the Violin', in *Fools and Other Stories*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983, 124-51, which recounts the experiences of a young black boy who is forced to learn the violin by his aspirational parents, both of whom work for the apartheid government. The fact that the writing of influential authors like Ndebele and Mphahlele ('Grieg on a Stolen Piano', in *In Corner B*, Johannesburg: Penguin, 2006 [1967], 103-24) treats Western art music as a typical component of black life under apartheid suggests that citizens engaged with this music to a greater extent than is intimated by existing research.

112 Roos, 'Opera Production', 72.

113 Ibid., 13.

114 Known, variously, as the Coon Carnival, the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival, the *Kaapse Klopse*, or *Tweede Nuwejaar* (Second New Year); see Denis-Constant Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town: Past to Present*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1999.

115 Roos, 'Opera Production', 14; Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa*, Cape Town: African Minds, 2013, 127-8; Donato Somma and Neo Muyanga, '"The Musical Thread": Neo Muyanga on Opera and South Africa', *African Studies* 75(1), 2016, 74-97.

116 Of these, the most significant are sopranos Pretty Yende, Pumeza Matshikiza, and Noluvuyiso Mpofu, tenor Levy Sekgapane, baritone Njabulo Madlala, and bass-baritone Musa Ngqungwana.

117 Somma and Muyanga, '"The Musical Thread"'.

118 See, for instance, Mareli Stolp, '*Van Opera tot "Politopera"? Nuwe Strominge in Suid-Afrikaanse Operakomposisie en -Resepsie*' [From Opera to "Politopera"? New Developments in South African Opera Composition and Reception], *Litnet Akademies* 13(1), 2016, http://www.litnet.co.za/van-opera-tot-

work, however, no attempts have been made to come to terms with the country's operatic past. This neglect is doubtlessly a result, at least in part, of the archival constraints mentioned earlier, which, combined with a broader disciplinary disinterest in amateur opera production,[119] would render such work time-consuming, costly, and unattractive for funders. Another explanation, no less plausible, however, relates to the fact that South Africa's operatic history is one of compromise. Under apartheid, the production of opera, whether by black, coloured, or white citizens, was part of a state-administered cultural apparatus designed to regulate, exploit, and manipulate people's yearning for rich artistic lives. The costs involved in staging opera, and productions' reliance upon knowledge and infrastructure reserved in South Africa for the enfranchised minority, meant that no aspiring opera performer could entirely avoid aligning themselves with the dominant white elite—if not for its money or its theatres, then for the expertise of its trained musicians, and for the benevolent support of its audiences. Even if this did not directly entail compliance with apartheid legislation—as in agreeing to perform for segregated audiences—it did require artists to play to apartheid ideals of white cultural superiority. Opera in apartheid South Africa, in other words, signalled political collusion.

The ethical predicament facing those who wanted to support the Western cultural endeavours of non-whites, whether as participants or as audience members, did not go unheeded

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politopera/, accessed 25 November 2017; Innocentia J. Mhlambi, 'The Question of Nationalism in Mzilikazi Khumalo's *Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu* (2002)', *African Cultural Studies* 27(3), 2015, 294-310; and 'Embodied Discordance: Vernacular Idioms in *Winnie: The Opera*', *African Studies* 75(1), 2016, 48-73; Naomi André, '*Winnie*, Opera, and South African Nationhood', *African Studies* 75(1), 2016, 10-31; Naomi André, Donato Somma, and Innocentia J. Mhlambi, '*Winnie: The Opera* and Embodying South African Opera', *African Studies* 75(1), 2016, 1-9; Donato Somma, '"Just Say the Words": An Operatic Rendering of Winnie', *African Studies* 75(1), 2016, 32-47; Somma and Muyanga, '"The Musical Thread"'; Sheila Boniface Davies, '"So Take this Magic Flute and Blow. It Will Protect Us as We Go": Impempe Yomlingo (2007-11) and South Africa's Ongoing Transition', *The Opera Quarterly* 28(1), 2012, 54-71; Santisa Viljoen and Marita Wenzel, 'The Same, Yet Different: Re-Encoding Identity in *U-Carmen eKhayelitsha*', *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa* 13(1/2), 2016, 53-70; and Andrew Olsen, 'Mozart's African Jacket: *Die Zauberflöte* and its Localisation in *The Magic Flute* (Impempe Yomlingo)', *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa* 9(1), 2012, 67-80.

[119] To date, only two English-language monographs on amateur opera have been published. They are John Lowerson's *Amateur Operatics: A Social and Cultural History*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005, which focuses on amateur opera activities in England; and Dennis Clarke, Cyril Kelleway, and Joan Butler's *A Troupe of Strolling Players: The Perkel Opera Story—On the Road with a D.I.Y. Touring Opera Company*, Auckland: C. Kelleway, 2004, which recounts the activities of the Perkel Opera Company between 1974 and 1990.

during the apartheid period. A newspaper article titled 'Actors and Apartheid', for instance, reflected upon the matter as follows:

> The cruel dilemma in which opponents of segregation find themselves is whether to accept the benefits of segregated institutions or to reject them on stern principle. We can understand and sympathize with the cultural non-White whose aversion to apartheid is so strong that he cannot bring himself to attend segregated performances. He must follow the dictates of his conscience, and should be respected for doing so. But there is a broader view which compels even greater respect—the view that the liberating power of culture can exert itself even in a segregated audience, and that the sense of human brotherhood can be communicated even in a building which denies it.[120]

Here, the conscientious objector to apartheid segregation is at an impasse: if she refuses to attend a segregated performance, she robs herself of 'the liberating power of culture'; if she attends, she tacitly endorses the very system she seeks to oppose. Another article, published a week later in the same newspaper, captures this dilemma even more succinctly, when it asks whether it is 'necessary for [the non-white], on a stand of principle, to cut himself [sic] off from everything artistic and educational just because he can't sit next to some White person?'.[121] The assumption, here, that 'everything artistic and educational' would necessarily be associated with whiteness is, of course, a telling revelation of the author's own assumptions about race and human advancement, but the keenness of their observation remains indisputable: regardless of which option they chose, apartheid's dissenting subjects were forced into a compromise. This was, evidently, a matter that preoccupied supporters of the arts.[122] Yet, post-apartheid literature has paid scant attention to these anxieties and their effect on both white and non-white modes of artistic patronage and participation during apartheid. The result has been not only the neglect of

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[120] 'Actors and Apartheid', *Cape Times*, 2 March 1961, 32:219.

[121] 'Conflict on Theatre Apartheid', *Cape Times*, 9 March 1961, 32:219.

[122] The same is no doubt true for participants in and supporters of sport under apartheid. While much has been written about the South African sports boycott (see Douglas Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, London: Frank Cass, 1998, for a comprehensive account), however, I have been unable to find evidence of any work on the compromises made by those who chose to participate despite segregation. Booth's 'Disentangling Race: Re-Narrating Apartheid Sport?', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33(15), 2016, 1866-83, reads the activities of those who participated in government-sanctioned 'mixed sport' events as themselves indicative of an alternative form of political resistance. This article may signal a turn in apartheid sport historiography towards the experiences of those who did not fall neatly into the political categories of resistance or compromise.

South Africa's operatic past, but a broader academic generalisation of apartheid history, by which the complexities of artistic citizenship under the oppressive regime have been collapsed into unidimensional, racially overdetermined stereotypes.[123] Such views do not only lack sophistication, they also contribute to a continued, crude oversimplification of the oppressed subject's emotional and cultural life. As a result, Daniel Magaziner argues, they extend, symbolically, the socio-political violence of the oppressive regime:

> Generations of activists, artists, scholars, and others have condemned apartheid's violence and urged resistance. Yet the term *apartheid* itself continues to do tremendous violence to those who lived under that system: when we invoke the word […] it becomes too easy to sit back, satisfied that we know the whole story. But even those who lived it and fought righteous struggles against the apartheid system can claim only an imperfect knowledge of what it meant to live in that time and place. Broad sociological claims produce similarly partial truths […] and all obscure other truths, about the decisions with which people were presented, about the opportunities they seized, and about their exertions for better and more meaningful lives.[124]

For Magaziner, existing apartheid historiography tells only one part of the story of life under apartheid, due to its continued reliance on this very notion of apartheid as an organising principle for political and historiographical thought. People's 'exertions for better and more meaningful lives', though contoured by apartheid, fall outside this telling of history, because they are not direct enactments of a politics of resistance or collaboration. It is not enough to cluster these individual experiences with dominant perspectives on life under the oppressive regime, since such a critical sleight of hand re-enacts the disenfranchisement performed by apartheid law. As an alternative, Magaziner invokes Catherine Burns's conception of 'post-anti-apartheid' historiography,[125] to 'account for the past in ways less beholden to the politics of bygone times,

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[123] Allyss Angela Haecker, for instance, claims that 'During apartheid, white South Africans demonstrated a preference for Western European art music while black South Africans showed a preference for traditional African music. While Western European art music was typically an appeal to European ethnicity and heritage, traditional African music began to symbolize a social consciousness—namely, a vehicle for resistance and protest. African music represented a shared sense of community that spurred an awareness which, in turn, provided an environment for black South Africans to display political and cultural resistance to apartheid' (Haecker, 'Post-Apartheid South African Choral Music: An Analysis of Integrated Musical Styles with Specific Examples by Contemporary South African Composers', DMA Dissertation, University of Iowa, 2012, 9).

[124] Magaziner, *Art of Life*, 5. My thanks to Jonny Steinberg for drawing my attention to this monograph.

[125] Burns, 2007, cited in Magaziner, *Art of Life*, 9.

more sensitive to the "complexity" of the past beyond the limits of the "struggle"'.[126] Magaziner's detailed study of the Ndaleni Art School—a state-administered teacher training college that prepared black educators to teach the Bantu Education art syllabus—signals a first turn towards such a 'post-anti-apartheid' account of cultural life under apartheid.

This dissertation, in its efforts to think through the ambivalence of state-sponsored coloured musical life, has taken great inspiration from Magaziner's work. A fundamental methodological difference, however, separates the two texts: *The Art of Life in South Africa* lets its material 'speak for itself'. Despite extensive authorial framing, it opts to present archival particulars and extracts from interviews with minimal theoretical intervention, thereby allowing the reader to encounter the work either as a 'neutral' historical account, or as a prompt for further critical reflection. My work, in contrast, seeks to develop the critical tools with which to come to terms with the ambivalences drawn out in such complex historical narratives as that of Ndaleni and Eoan. In a sense, then, it explicitly undertakes the work Magaziner's monograph hopes its reader will do in private. As a result, this dissertation balances a comparatively limited archival perspective with considerable attention to various theoretical models derived from post-colonial, voice, and opera studies. Avoiding both a strictly chronological approach and the work-based model still favoured by the majority of musicological historiography, I choose, rather, to construct each chapter upon a socio-political or musical aspect of the group's narrative, from which, in turn, a broad range of critical angles may arise. As such, the various sections of this text are organised around questions of coloured identity; voice and agency; productions, materiality, and agency; and political complicity and its counterpart, transgression.

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[126] Ibid. This statement strikingly resembles Njabulo S. Ndebele's observation, penned some 15 years earlier, that 'In the world of fashion, beauty contests, sports, of "the first African this … the first African that", of organised crime, we have social data of tremendous significance. […] We must begin from the social fact of these data rather than from a moralistic or radical idealism which wishes that people were better than they actually were, without accepting the responsibility of beginning with and from what they actually are' (Ndebele, 'Actors and Interpreters: Popular Culture and Progressive Formalism', in *Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Essays on South African Literature and Culture*, Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006 [1991], 75-97, 94).

Chapter Outline

Given the complexity of racial discourse in apartheid South Africa, and especially the ambiguities associated with coloured identity, Chapter 1 starts by clarifying key political and historical questions regarding apartheid law and racialisation. It pays particular attention to the marginal status of coloured people under apartheid, and examines the impact of such marginality upon the construction of a racial grouping described as falling 'in between' South Africa's white and black populations. Drawing on recent work by Zimitri Erasmus and Mohamed Adhikari, Chapter 1 traces the development of 'colouredness' as both a social and a political identity, and investigates the impact of various approaches to coloured identity construction upon the characterisation and stereotyping of this multifarious group of people in apartheid and post-apartheid discourse. The issue of coloured cultural aspiration—identified especially by Adhikari as a pervasive feature of this racial grouping—interacted in often bewildering ways with the segregationist policies of the apartheid regime. Chapter 1 considers in some detail the nature of such interactions, and sets the scene for a closer inspection of the Eoan Group's unique navigation of the pitfalls of marginality, racial ambiguity, and artistic ambition. The ambivalence of coloured identity showed up the physical and ideological fault lines that punctuated South Africa's segregationist political and cultural geographies, and fractured the orthodox conflations of race, place, class, and culture that sustained apartheid ideology, and which will inform discussions in chapters 2, 3, and 4.

Apartheid historiography, as outlined above, remains largely determined by the racial and political categorisations perpetuated by the apartheid system. Existing histories, especially in music studies, often map uniform socio-cultural narratives uncritically onto seemingly homogeneous identity categories, thereby maintaining a crude, politically instrumentalist reading of black and coloured citizens' cultural endeavours. While the paucity of scholarship on ambiguous moments in apartheid's musical history runs as a critical thread throughout this dissertation, Chapter 2 takes up this issue directly. It starts by considering in greater detail the memorialisation of the apartheid struggle and the shaping of South African history as nation-

building projects that privilege certain voices and certain songs—deeming certain songs 'worth singing', and others not. Examining existing accounts of the 'sounds of apartheid', this chapter shows that these narratives collude in the exclusion of marginal voices and experiences, such as those of the Eoan Group. In other words, current scholarship on the songs and sounds that punctuated apartheid's socio-cultural milieu serves to deny the voices of those who existed at the peripheries of conventional political life. This, in turn, functions as a disavowal of political and historical agency.

Taking up Amanda Weidman's call for a consolidation of theoretical understandings of voice as political agency with investigations of vocal materiality, Chapter 2 interpolates a metaphorical reading of the silencing of Eoan's historical voice with a critical engagement with the actual operatic voices of the group's singers. It weighs the philosophical conviction that the voice possesses a degree of agency—the voice 'acts', claims Michelle Duncan—and asks for whom the voice acts, who acknowledges this action, and whether such an action is capable of transcending the unequal geography within which it sounds. For the Eoan Group, their physically audible voices did not translate into political agency. Throughout the chapter, this contradiction challenges existing voice theories' construction and defence of the voice as a site of political empowerment. Instead, the group's vocal training, their emulation of a 'European' sound, and the conditions of their audiences' endorsement, will be shown to have participated in a simultaneously oppressive and liberatory social and sonic exchange, which, while incapable of transcending the geo-political determinism of apartheid law, destabilised notions of physical, racial, and cultural marginality. As such, the politically compromised and historically disempowered voices of the Eoan Group are shown to represent a crucial aspect of subaltern vocality: the inability to overcome the material inequalities of place. While the encultured articulations of the vocally trained subaltern serve to estrange the colonial civilising mission from itself, they nonetheless remain conditioned by and complicit in the very system they disrupt.

If the operatic voices of the Eoan singers represented a mode of sonic emulation, the physical settings within which they sounded drove this aspirational objective to an extreme. The

Eoan productions were characterised by a material extravagance designed to sustain the group's claims that they performed in the 'true' Italian operatic tradition. Costumes and scenery for their first production of *La Traviata*, for instance, were based explicitly on production photographs from La Scala in Milan. These Italian emulations enabled the group to claim a degree of authority and professionalism it had otherwise been denied by the apartheid regime. Chapter 3 examines the Eoan productions in close detail to show exactly how they reproduced an imagined Italian operatic tradition on-stage, and focuses on set designs, props, costumes, and souvenir playbills to reconstruct both the material characteristics of the operas, and the socio-economic reality they sought to invoke. The imagined Italianate realism of the Eoan productions was foreign to the singers who, as coloured citizens under a racially oppressive regime, could themselves not have known the luxury and grandeur they savoured on-stage. The operas thus produced moments of estrangement by which the coloured singers distanced themselves from their own racial sphere, in order to forge a closer affinity with what was imagined to be a white, European reality. Reception documents, which posited perceived similarities between Eoan members and Italians, show that the group's claims to an Italian heritage destabilised the stereotyped constructions of the coloured race, and encouraged a mapping of Italian racial and cultural identity onto coloureds. While this enacted a problematic alignment with widespread assumptions of European—and, by extension, white—cultural superiority, it simultaneously enabled Eoan members to de-link, temporarily, from the iniquities of coloured existence under apartheid.

In the Eoan productions, the operatic stage became a site for both compromised aspiration and liberating artistic citizenship. Yet, it remained tied to the unequal power structures that informed performance and patronage: while the operatic performance itself entailed an excess of sound and sight, it also involved the 'blacking out' of what lay beyond the stage. Thus, an intricate interplay that both exposed and obscured race was effected on the operatic stage. Chapter 3 reads the Eoan stage in this light as a locus for the 'forgetting' developed by Edward Said in his late work. The Eoan group's emulation of operatic Italy by means of visual opulence,

along with their 'European sound' explored in Chapter 2, is hence shown to effect a displacement of racially determined reality.

Chapters 2 and 3 make explicit the simultaneous subversion and reinscription of apartheid narratives regarding white cultural superiority, racial determinism, and material deprivation enacted by the aesthetic and musical features of the Eoan Group's operatic endeavours. Chapter 4 situates these aspects within a broader socio-political discourse engaged with the group's navigation of the physical and economic restrictions that characterised the lives of racially marked subjects under apartheid. As shown already in the chapters on Eoan's voices and productions, the group's ideology was closely aligned with the colonial civilising mission. Advertising itself primarily as a project engaged with the social and cultural 'uplift' of the coloured community, it was complicit in a discourse of coloured cultural inferiority. In Chapter 4, the Eoan Group's espousal of dominant views regarding the South African racial hierarchy, and their endorsement of a civilising teleology, are shown to have informed their participation in apartheid propaganda, both nationally and abroad. Concomitantly, however, their involvement in celebrations of white state power also signified a shrewd instrumentalisation of their own activities, in order to obtain the necessary funding and permits to continue their work. Their complicity in the advancement of state ideology therefore served to defy the material deprivation enacted by apartheid law. Additionally, their operatic activities enabled Eoan members to claim for themselves privileges of movement, infrastructure, and recognition they would otherwise not have enjoyed. While adhering to apartheid legislation (demonstrated by segregated seating plans and permits issued by the Department of Coloured Affairs), the group also undermined the geo-politics of apartheid discrimination by inhabiting white spaces. Their operatic activities granted them the freedom to enter white areas and to perform on white stages, thereby initiating an exchange across the boundaries of race and class. Though appearing to support, ideologically, the oppression of non-white South Africans, these collusive moments simultaneously opened new avenues for the subversion of apartheid segregation, and to initiate interracial exchange in a political environment determined to prohibit it. Chapter 4's self-consciously post-colonial reading

of this exchange shows how the Eoan group's complicit actions transgressed and destabilised apartheid's logic. It furthermore acknowledges that the group's complex interchange between collusion and subversion signals a need for an interpretation of the politically burdened musical moment in terms that are not determined by these binary categories.

The Conclusion takes up Chapter 4's call for an alternative conception of the politics of the Eoan Group's operatic activities, and turns to Njabulo S. Ndebele's formulation of the 'politics of the ordinary' for a solution. For Ndebele, South Africa's struggle resides not only in the theatres of protest and punishment, but also in ordinary people's attempts to claim voice and presence in a society where the margin remains invisible. The continued adherence of political and historical thought to the categories of complicity and resistance therefore serves to reinscribe apartheid's oppressive model, and continues to strip the majority of disenfranchised citizens of agency and self-determination. In response, Ndebele proposes that constructions of history and culture in post-apartheid South Africa should turn from the ideology of nationalist memorialisation towards quotidian narratives that subvert instrumentalist attitudes to race and cultural practice. Political agency, in this formulation, does not adhere neatly to the Manichean ethics of complicity and resistance. Instead, it resides messily in the hopes, disappointments, aspirations, sorrows, compromises and, occasionally, challenges, of those seeking to fashion meaningful lives from a regime determined to strip them of their humanity. Reading the Eoan operas as an enactment of Ndebele's politics of the ordinary, the Conclusion shows that the group's particular mode of artistic citizenship opened up the possibility of imagining a politics undetermined by the binaries of collusion and transgression. Thus, it proposes that a newly conceived decolonial writing of South Africa's apartheid operatic history can emerge from the material residue of the Eoan Group's narrative of marginality.

Chapter 1

Colouredness and Context

In the South African context, 'coloured' as an identity construct denotes a very particular set of meanings. Unlike most other parts of the world, the term is popularly used in South Africa to refer specifically to people of mixed racial ancestry, rather than to those who are black.[127] Zimitri Erasmus and Mohamed Adhikari agree that coloured people are generally perceived to be the descendants of 'colonial encounters between colonists (Dutch and British), slaves from South and East India and from East Africa, and conquered indigenous people, the Khoi and San',[128] as well as 'a range of other people of African and Asian origin who had been assimilated in Cape colonial society by the late nineteenth century'.[129] The result has been that a group of phenotypically enormously diverse people have been grouped under the designation of 'coloured', based on the perception of a hybrid racial heritage.[130]

Apart from a distinctly racialised implication, however, 'colouredness' also denotes a loose set of social, cultural, and political markers which have accumulated under the aegis of South Africa's colonial, post-colonial, apartheid, and post-apartheid histories. As a complex and highly unstable identity configuration, the notion of 'the coloured person', whether considered

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127 Mohamed Adhikari, 'Introduction: Predicaments of Marginality: Cultural Creativity and Political Adaptation in Southern Africa's Coloured Communities', in *Burdened by Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa*, ed. Mohamed Adhikari, Cape Town: UCT Press, 2009, viii-xxxii, viii.
128 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*, ed. Zimitri Erasmus, Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2001, 13-28, 21.
129 Adhikari, '"God made the white man, God made the black man…": Popular Racial Stereotyping of Coloured People in Apartheid South Africa', *South African Historical Journal* 55(1), 2006, 142-164, 143.
130 The phenotypical hybridity of coloured people has been described by Denis-Constant Martin as comprising 'all shades of skin colour, ranging from the very fair to very dark amongst them, as well as various types of phenotypical features combining Asian, African and European traits' (Martin, 'What's in the name "Coloured"?', *Social Identities* 4(3), 1998, 532-540, 523). Similarly, Mohamed Adhikari (2006) quotes Kole Omotose (2002) as describing coloured people's skin colour—arguably the most important of phenotypical features—as varying 'from charcoal black to breadcrust brown, sallow yellow and finally off-white cream that wants to pass for white' (Omotose 2002 in Adhikari, '"God made the white man"', 143). Adhikari further notes that 'the attribute of racial hybridity is virtually inherent to the concept of Colouredness in the popular mind' (ibid., 151).

racially or culturally, remains nearly impossible to write about without a thorough explication of its heterogeneous, ambiguous, oppressive, and often contradictory nature. Given the significance of the concept of colouredness to this thesis, the current chapter provides an overview of coloured identity, both as understood in current academic discourse, and as constructed in the colonial and apartheid imaginaries. It also offers an outline of the apartheid legislation under which these coloured racial identities were forced to coagulate.

The coloured population group is a relatively small minority within South African demographics. According to the most recent census,[131] there are approximately 4.6 million coloured people in South Africa today, constituting 9% of the country's total population.[132] This proportion has remained relatively stable throughout the twentieth century, with Adhikari observing that the coloured population never exceeded 9% of the country's total population.[133] Their small number, combined with limited political and economic power, has rendered them a marginal group within South African society.[134]

Despite this minority status, colouredness has received some scholarly attention. Adhikari points out, however, that 'much of what has been written is polemical, speculative, poorly researched, or heavily biased'.[135] He identifies four broad classes within which writing on coloured history, culture, and identity can be categorised, namely an 'essentialist school', an 'instrumentalist school', a 'social constructionist school', and a nascent school conceptualising coloured identity 'as a product of creolisation'.[136] The essentialist school, which according to

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[131] The most recent South African census was conducted in 2011. I quote the 2011 census figures, rather than calculating contemporary estimates based on projected population growth.

[132] Statistics South Africa, *Census 2011 Fact Sheet*, 1, accessed 20 December 2016. http://www.statssa.gov.za/census/census_2011/census_products/Census_2011_Fact_sheet.pdf.

[133] Adhikari, '"God made the white man"', 144.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2005a, 33; Adhikari, 'From Narratives of Miscegenation to Post-Modernist Re-Imagining: Towards a Historiography of Coloured Identity in South Africa', in *Burdened by Race*, 1.

[136] Adhikari, 'From Narratives of Miscegenation', 7-16. Note that in Adhikari's earlier (2005) publication, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community*, he does not yet identify creolisation as a paradigm in scholarship on colouredness, presenting instead the essentialist, instrumentalist and social constructionist schools as comprising the sum total of coloured scholarship.

Adhikari has been 'by far the most common approach in historical writing about coloured people',[137] regards coloured identity as containing a racial essence associated specifically with hybridity. In other words, the essentialist school deems colouredness to be a biologically determined racial category, the product of interracial sexual encounters. A number of texts—both those engaged specifically with 'the coloured question',[138] and those that merely mention coloured people as part of broader South African social history—can be grouped under this paradigm.[139] The instrumentalist school considers coloured identity to be 'an artificial concept imposed by the white supremacist state and the ruling establishment upon an oppressed and vulnerable group of people as an instrument of social control'.[140] Adhikari traces the development of this conceptual category to the beginnings of the radical movement in coloured politics in the 1940s and 1950s,[141] and argues that it reached its summit as part of the non-racialist movement of late apartheid and early post-apartheid discourse. Refusing the imposed racial differentiation between black and coloured identity, instrumentalists view colouredness as a political construct devised by the apartheid government to support its 'divide and rule' tactics.[142] Instrumentalists 'share the essentialist premise that Coloured identity is something negative and undesirable but

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[137] Ibid., 7.

[138] I take the expression from William M. Macmillan's *The Cape Coloured Question: A Historical Survey* (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1927), one of the earliest academic studies to engage with the issues of coloured history and the political future of coloured people within South Africa. The expression 'the coloured question' remains pervasive in South African political parlance, and makes fairly regular appearances in the media. For recent examples, see lovejozi.com, 'The Coloured Question', *The Culture Review Magazine*, 17 August 2016, http://culture-review.co.za/the-coloured-question (accessed 22 December 2016); Carla Bernardo, 'The ANC, the Cape, and the "Coloured" Question', *Mail and Guardian*, 1 July 2015, http://mg.co.za/article/2015-07-01-the-anc-the-cape-and-the-coloured-question (accessed 22 December 2016); and Gushwell Brooks, 'Coloured Question: the Answer Lies in a South African National Identity', *Daily Maverick*, 30 July 2015, https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2015-07-30-coloured-question-the-answer-lies-in-a-south-african-national-identity/#.WG99prZ95AY (accessed 22 December 2016).

[139] These include Macmillan's *The Cape Coloured Question*; Christian Ziervogel's *Brown South Africa* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1938)—the first history of the coloured people to be written by a coloured person; J.S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937*, London: Longmans, 1939; A.J. Venter, *Coloured: A Profile of Two Million South Africans*, Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1974; Gideon S. Were, *A History of South Africa*, London: Evans Brothers, 1974; Vernon February, *Mind Your Colour: The 'Coloured' Stereotype in South African Literature*, London: Kegan Paul, 1981; and Richard van der Ross, *The Rise and Decline of Apartheid: A Study of Political Movements Among the Coloured People of South Africa, 1880-1985*, Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1986.

[140] Adhikari, *Burdened by Race*, 11.

[141] Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 45.

[142] Adhikari, *Burdened by Race*, 11.

blame it on the racism of the ruling white minority',[143] and generally advocate identification with the wider racial grouping of 'black South African'.[144] For Adhikari, the problem with both the essentialist and the instrumentalist schools of thought, however, is that they 'deny coloured people a significant role in the making of their own social identities'.[145] As an alternative, he proposes the social constructionist approach, which admits the structural actuality of coloured identity, while also acknowledging the agency of coloured people in the inscription of their own identity:

> [Social constructionism] emerged from the latter half of the 1980s onwards in response to the inadequacies of both the essentialist and instrumentalist approaches. The basic assumption of this genre is that coloured identity cannot be taken as given but is a product of human agency dependent on a complex interplay of historical, social, cultural, political and other contingencies. It is neither ordained by God nor a product of nature as essentialists imply, nor is it a device conjured up by the machinations of white supremacism as instrumentalists argue. The creation of coloured identity is also taken to be an ongoing, dynamic process in which groups and individuals make and remake their perceived realities and thus also their personal and social identities.[146]

143 Adhikari, 'Contending Approaches to Coloured Identity and the History of the Coloured People of South Africa', *History Compass* 3(1), 2005b, 1-16, 10.

144 Examples of texts that adopt this paradigm are Maurice Hommel's *Capricorn Blues: The Struggle for Human Rights in South Africa*, Toronto: Culturama, 1981; Gavin Lewis's *Between the Wire and the Wall: A History of South African 'Coloured' Politics*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1987, and Roy du Pre's *Separate but Unequal: The 'Coloured' People of South Africa—a Political History*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994. Adhikari points out, though, that Du Pre's book shifts ambiguously between the essentialist and the instrumentalist views, even though 'the latter […] is dominant and is his intended standpoint' (Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 57).

145 Adhikari, *Burdened by Race*, 15.

146 Ibid., 13. Adhikari locates his own work within this paradigm. To this, I propose to add Ian Goldin's *Making Race: The Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa*, Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1987; and Grant Farred's *Midfielder's Moment: Coloured Literature and Culture in Contemporary South Africa*, Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 2000. Denis-Constant Martin's early essay 'What's in the Name "Coloured"?', also seems to position itself within the social constructionist paradigm, arguing that '[A] group of human beings was defined and nominated by governmental decree. Members of this designated group invented specific life-styles which gave form, content and substance to otherwise scattered pockets of people. Invented life-styles and traditions helped bond the group into a community allowing outsiders to this invented community to identify it as a singularly different entity within the mosaic of South African populations. The combination of partly representing the designs of a racist state and partly being the product of a self-invented singularity renders the issue of a "coloured culture" problematic' (524). His later work, however, stresses the creole character of coloured culture and identity (see Denis-Constant Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Identity and Politics in South Africa*, Cape Town: African Minds, 2013). Outside of the specifically South African context, James Muzondidya's *Walking the Tightrope: Towards a Social history of the Coloured People of Zimbabwe*, Trenton, NJ.: Africa World Press, 2005 also occupies a social constructionist position.

Social constructionists therefore recognise that the concept of 'the coloured race' exists, whether or not it can be traced to a biological or a political origin. What is more important to them is that this concept is not merely imposed upon a group of passive recipients, but rather that those who are grouped under its label actively participate in co-opting and filling the concept with meaning.

Sharing much of the critical position of social constructionists, the emerging conceptualisation of coloured identity as a product of creolisation draws on postmodern and postcolonial theory to trace the power relations embedded in the process of identity inscription:

> Coloured identities were formed in the colonial encounter between colonists (Dutch and British), slaves from South and East India and from East Africa, and conquered indigenous people, the Khoi and San. This encounter and the power relations embedded in it have resulted in processes of cultural dispossession, borrowing and transformation. The result has been a highly specific and instantly recognisable cultural formation—not just 'a mixture' but a very particular 'mixture' comprising elements of Dutch, British, Malaysian, Khoi and other forms of African culture appropriated, translated and articulated in complex and subtle ways. These elements acquire their specific cultural meaning only once fused and translated.[147]

Zimitri Erasmus, whose edited volume *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: New Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town*[148] is the first to adopt the creolisation paradigm, argues that coloured identity is a consequence of cultural creativity which took shape within frameworks of colonial and white supremacist rule. Defining creolisation as 'cultural creativity under conditions of marginalisation' and 'the construction of an identity out of elements of ruling class as well as subaltern cultures',[149] she holds that the marginal position of those identified as coloured enabled them to construct a cultural identity self-consciously reflecting the disjointed socio-political sphere within which they found themselves:

> Coloured identities were constructed out of fragmented cultural material available in the contexts of slavery, colonialism and cultural dispossession. This leaves their constructed and composite historical nature always evident and their dislocation always present. These are identities produced and re-produced in the place of the margin.[150]

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[147] Erasmus, *Coloured by History*, 21.
[148] Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2001.
[149] Ibid., 16.
[150] Ibid., 22-3.

Like social constructionists, Erasmus acknowledges that apartheid played an important part in the creation of racial identities—including (and perhaps especially) coloured identities—but that these identities are not merely apartheid labels. Instead, they are 'made and re-made by coloured people themselves in their attempts to give meaning to their everyday lives'.[151]

The difference between social constructionism and creolisation theory remains as yet relatively unclear. Adhikari suggests that Erasmus's approach 'may be seen as social constructionism informed by a particular theoretical perspective',[152] but Christopher J. Lee argues that Adhikari's work occupies a 'diametrically oppos[ite]' position to Erasmus's 'anti-racial cultural argument'.[153] While Lee does not sufficiently clarify his contention, he criticises Adhikari for insufficient engagement with broader manifestations of coloured culture and a dearth of theoretical substance.[154] It may therefore be that the real difference between the social constructionist and creolisation approaches lies in the varying degrees of importance ascribed to cultural artefacts and practices, and to the theoretical paradigms within which they locate themselves.

As signalled above, of Adhikari's four approaches to coloured identity, the essentialist school has been most pervasive throughout twentieth-century studies of colouredness. It is also the paradigm that dominated apartheid discourse and informed the political consolidation and legislative regulation of the coloured racial grouping. The rest of this chapter will therefore consider the nature of the apartheid government's essentialist approach to coloured identity; coloured people's own complicity with this characterisation; and the particular ways in which it interacted with apartheid law and ideology.

The Coloured Stereotype

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151 Ibid., 16.
152 Adhikari, *Burdened by Race*, 16.
153 Christopher J. Lee, 'Voices from the Margins: The Coloured Factor in Southern African History', *South African Historical Journal* 56, 2006, 210-18, 215.
154 Ibid., 210, 212.

As established at the opening of this chapter, the term 'coloured' is popularly used specifically to refer to people of mixed racial ancestry. Adhikari, in a number of his works, refers to a joke that, in various configurations, acknowledges Jan van Riebeeck as the father of the coloured people.[155] This joke reflected a widespread belief, even among left-wing intellectuals, that the coloured racial category was a direct product of illicit sexual relations between European settlers and various non-white people at the Cape, and that it therefore stemmed directly from the European colonisation of South Africa:

> [E]ven an ultra-left wing Coloured intellectual such as Kenneth Jordaan, a leading member of the Trotskyist Fourth International Organisation of South Africa, writing in 1952, accepted that Jan van Riebeeck was the 'father of the Cape Coloured people'. (K. Jordaan, 'Jan van Riebeeck: his place in South African history', *Discussion* 1(5), 1952, 34.) The *Torch*, the mouthpiece of the Non-European Unity Movement, the most prominent of the Marxist liberatory organisations to gain support within the Coloured community, also accepted that the Coloured people 'arose as a result of the glandular carelessness of Van Riebeeck and his men' (*Torch*, 3 March 1947).[156]

The illicit nature of the sexual relations that were perceived as being responsible for the birth of the coloured race has marked the identity as illegitimate. Adhikari observes that 'the idea that at its very genesis the Coloured people had been conceived in "sin" contributes to the notion […] that Coloureds are somehow defective and form a special breed of lesser beings'.[157] The 'sinfulness' or even criminality of such conception has made its way into broader South African

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155 In one version, the coloured race is said to have emerged nine months after Van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape, while another describes black and white people to have been made by God, but coloured people to have been made by Van Riebeeck. See, for instance, Adhikari, 'God, Jan van Riebeeck and the Coloured People: The Anatomy of a South African Joke', *Southern African Discourse* 4, 1992, 4-10; Adhikari, '"God made the white man"'; and Adhikari, *Burdened by Race*. Jan van Riebeeck (1619-1677) commanded the initial Dutch settlement at the Cape in 1652, and is regarded as the founding father of the South African colony. Adhikari observes that 'one of the most basic "facts" drummed into children in school history lessons in apartheid South Africa was that Van Riebeeck's landing marked the start of South African history proper and of civilized life in the sub-continent' ('"God made the white man"', 148-9).

156 Adhikari, '"God made the white man"', 151. Similarly, Christian Ziervogel in *Brown South Africa* deems Jan van Riebeeck's landing at the Cape to be the 'beginning of brown South Africa' (6), while a September 1974 memorandum of protest against forced removals from District Six, signed by Rev. J.F. Forbes of Zonnebloem College, and 'four other people/groups', states that 'coloured South Africans are the only ones who cannot be traced back to an overseas country of origin […] The origin of our people cannot be traced to before 1652' (cited by Christiaan Beyers, 'Identity and Forced Displacement: Community and Colouredness in District Six', in *Burdened by Race*, ed. Adhikari, 79-103, 85).

157 Ibid., 158.

social discourse, as demonstrated by Sarah Gertrude Millin's characterisation of coloured people as 'God's step-children',[158] or by Winnie Mandela's 1991 claim that 'the Coloured people came about as a result of white men raping black women'.[159] These assertions capture the deep discomfort and disapproval with which the cross-racial illegitimacy of the coloured people has been received. Such negative reception is especially evident in various scholars' recourse to the concept of miscegenation, as opposed merely to 'mixture' or 'hybridity', when discussing the origins of the coloured race.[160]

Miscegenation and its concomitant association of 'mixed blood' has been heavily stigmatised throughout Western society.[161] Such stigma not only had an impact on racial legislation and ideals of ethnic purity in apartheid South Africa (to be discussed further on in this chapter), it also resulted in the assignation of a range of negative stereotypes to coloured people. The widespread idealisation of 'pure blood', both in animals and in humans, along with the moral degeneracy associated with being a miscegenated, 'half-caste', or even 'bastard' people,[162] shaped a pejorative discourse of colouredness espoused not only by white racists but internalised also by coloured people themselves.

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158 Sarah Gertrude Millin, *God's Stepchildren*, London: Constable and Co., 1924. Millin's novel traces the spiritual and moral effects of mixed-bloodedness on the various generations of the Flood family, after the patriarch, the Reverend Flood, marries a Khoi woman.

159 Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 26. Winnie Madikizela Mandela, former wife of Nelson Mandela, is regarded in her own right as a hero of the anti-apartheid struggle.

160 Compare, for instance, Vernon February's and Zoë Wicomb's employment of the notion of miscegenation in their discussions of the inscription of coloured identity as shameful and undesirable. February states that 'the history of what is now known in South Africa as the "Cape coloured", is one of miscegenation over a period of three hundred years' (February, *Mind Your Colour*, 12), thus providing an ostensible motivation for the negative coloured stereotypes he investigates throughout his book. Wicomb is more explicit in her articulation of the indignity inherent in the notion of racial hybridity: 'Miscegenation, the origins of which lie within a discourse of "race", concupiscence, and degeneracy, continues to be bound up with shame, a pervasive shame exploited in apartheid's strategy of the naming of a Coloured race, and recurring in the current attempts by coloureds to establish brownness as a pure category, which is to say a denial of shame' (Wicomb, 'Shame and Identity: The Case of the Coloured in South Africa', in *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid, and Democracy, 1970-1995*, eds. Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 91-107, 92).

161 Robert Young, in *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), provides the most thorough theoretical account to date of the fascination and repugnance of miscegenation within colonial society. See also J.M. Coetzee's 'Blood, Taint, Flaw, Degeneration: The Novels of Sarah Gertrude Millin', in *White Writing: The Culture and Letters of South Africa*, ed. J.M. Coetzee (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), for a perspective specific to South Africa.

162 Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 51.

Adhikari argues that miscegenation was seen to be the cause of several undesirable characteristics associated with physical and moral weakness.[163] These purportedly inherent traits included 'supposed propensities for criminality, gangsterism, drug and alcohol abuse, and vulgar behaviour',[164] as well as 'being physically stunted, lacking in endurance, and naturally prone to dishonesty, licentiousness and drink'.[165] To this, Erasmus adds 'immorality, sexual promiscuity, illegitimacy, impurity and untrustworthiness'.[166] Echoing Wicomb, she asserts that '[b]eing coloured is about living an identity that is clouded in sexualised shame and associated with drunkenness and jollity'.[167]

These types of depictions of coloured people abound throughout South African literature and public discourse. Vernon February traces the stereotypes associated with coloured people to some of the earliest literature produced in what was later to become the Afrikaans language. In his discussion of C.E. Boniface's 1832 play, *De Temperantisten*, February argues that 'one is already confronted with that quality of "smelling strangeness" clinging to people of colour in South African literature'.[168] He tracks a fairly continuous tradition in the literary treatment of coloured people from this work to Afrikaans literature of the early twentieth century, and states that '[b]y

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163 Ibid., 14, 24; Adhikari, '"God made the white man"', 155.
164 Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 14.
165 Ibid., 24.
166 Erasmus, *Coloured by History*, 17.
167 Ibid., 14. Alcoholism is especially pervasive as a coloured stereotype. Adhikari cites two popular apartheid-era jokes that neatly capture the linking of colouredness with a weakness for drink: firstly, 'What is the coloured people's contribution to philosophy?' was answered with 'I drink, therefore I am.' And secondly, the expression 'as drunk as…?' was held for completion with 'a coloured teacher'. Amongst other things, this joke demonstrates that even highly educated and 'respectable' coloureds were believed to be bound by an inescapable racial destiny of alcoholism (Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 197).
168 February, *Mind Your Colour*, 23. The play, which according to February is the first dramatic work in Dutch-Afrikaans, tracks attempts by the Temperance Society to ban the use of liquor at the Cape, and already espouses early stereotypes of Khoi people as drunken buffoons. Farcical scenarios abound, especially when the main Khoi characters, Manus Kalfachter, Klaas Galgevogel, Piet Dronkelap, and Griet Drilbouten, take abstinence oaths while drunk. Even the naming of the characters reflects popular stereotypes: Klaas Galgevogel's surname translates as 'gallows bird', referencing Khois' supposed criminal tendencies, while Piet Dronkelap's surname literally means 'drunkard', again reinforcing the image of alcoholism. A troubling instance of the physical ridicule levelled at indigenous African peoples by Dutch and English colonists is represented by the naming of Griet Drilbouten: her surname literally means 'jiggling buttocks', reflecting colonial men's fascination with the steatopygia widespread among Khoi women.

the time the "bruinman"[169] proper enters the Afrikaans novel of the second Language Movement (1903-1925) […] "coloureds" would only perform a functional role within the compass of the following syndromes: the labour syndrome, the comic syndrome, the Bacchus syndrome, the incarceration syndrome, the loud-mouthed and the bellicose syndromes'.[170] February contends that, in general, 'writers portray the "Hottentot"[171] characters as carefree, comical, witty, loud-mouthed, fond of liquor, and prone to fighting easily. And these characteristics are just as neatly attributed to the present-day "Cape coloured" in Afrikaner critical assessments'.[172] As a case in point, he cites Colonel J.H. Vorster, district police commander of the coloured township of Athlone, who was quoted in the *Cape Herald* of 23 November 1976 as stating that 'the Coloured man is *by nature* [sic] lazier and more work shy than the Bantu'.[173] This statement reflects the extent to which literary depictions of coloured people accurately captured assumptions held by the racist apartheid public, and the way in which racial determinism dominated South African discourse throughout the twentieth century.

Racist judgments of colouredness were not espoused by whites only. Coloured people themselves were acutely aware of stereotypical assessments of their race, and often acknowledged the perceived veracity of these tropes by condemning supposedly characteristic behaviour, and

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169 '*Bruinman*' translates literally as 'brown man', and is another appellation for coloured people. Adhikari observes that 'the symbolism of referring to Coloured people as "brown" neatly captures th[e] intermediate status [of coloured people in South Africa's racial hierarchy]' (*Not White Enough*, 10). The hierarchical composition of South Africa's racial landscape will be considered later in this chapter.

170 February, *Mind Your Colour*, 35. The Second Language Movement referred to here was an effort to have Afrikaans recognised as an official language of South Africa. It followed upon the First Language Movement (1875-c.1899), which was engaged with spreading awareness about the existence of Afrikaans as a widely spoken language, and one with significant literary potential. According to J.C. Kannemeyer, the members of the First Language Movement could also be regarded as the first true Afrikaner nationalists (Kannemeyer, *Die Geskiedenis van die Afrikaanse Literatuur 1* [The History of Afrikaans Literature 1], Pretoria: Academica, 1984 [1978], 50-1).

171 *'Hottentot'* is a derogatory term for a coloured person, which refers supposedly to the indigenous people who occupied the Cape area when the Dutch arrived in 1652. Elizabeth Heath argues that the appellation is derived from an old Dutch expression, '*hotteren-totteren*', which means to stammer or stutter. This was presumably a reference to the sound of the Khoi language, which is characterised by clicks (Heath, 'Hottentot', in *Africana: the Encyclopedia of the African and African-American Experience,* 2nd edn., eds. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Available at *Oxford African American Studies Centre*, http://www.oxfordaasc.com/article/opr/t0002/e1923 (accessed 22 January 2017)).

172 February, *Mind Your Colour*, 26.

173 Ibid., 167. 'Bantu' was one of the official terms used by the apartheid government to refer to black people.

urging especially the coloured working class and coloured youth to behave with greater respectability.[174] As recently as 2002, Phillip Williams, president of the Gauteng Khoi-San Tribes Youth Council, propagated a view of coloured people informed by apartheid-era stereotypes:

> European immigrants conquered the minds of the Khoi-San to the extent that they suffered from poor self-esteem and had an identity crisis. Khoi-San Africans are misled into focussing on their Eurocentric heritage and 'coloureds' lack a serious sense of creativity, spending most of their time anxious, highly stressed and mostly drunk—with devastating consequences. The 'coloured' suffers from self-hatred and therefore engages in self-destructive behaviour […] We continually divorce ourselves from our African mother and cling to our European father.[175]

While Williams attributes negative coloured behaviour to the psychological effects of colonial domination, rather than to a set of biologically determined characteristics, he nonetheless depicts the entire coloured race as a homogeneous, drunken mass in crisis, thus reinforcing stereotypes dating to the apartheid era. Additionally, his emphasis on coloured people's 'Eurocentric heritage', and the destructive effects caused by 'cling[ing] to' this legacy, alludes to a negative discourse surrounding miscegenation which, although different to that of racialists, also condemns the perceived consequences of racial mixing.

Williams's assessment of the problem of the coloured 'identity crisis' does, however, highlight a feature of colouredness that has been identified as ubiquitous by various scholars and political commentators. It concerns the close alignment of coloured people with a prized European heritage. According to Adhikari, early twentieth century coloured intellectuals ascribed

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174 An official communication issued by the Federal Coloured People's Party in 1965, for instance, reads as follows: 'we implore Coloureds, especially relations of the *dagga*-smoker and other interested parties, to pay urgent attention to the moral demise of the Coloured youth' [*Ons maak 'n ernstige beroep op Kleurlinge, veral verwante van die dagga-roker en ander belangstellendes, om hulle dringende aandag aan die morele verval van die Kleurlingjeug te gee*] (Federal Coloured People's Party, Transvaal Division, 'Brochure on Coloured Politics', June 1965, in Pierre Hugo, *Quislings or Realists? A Documentary Study of 'Coloured' Politics in South Africa*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1978, 287-96, 294. *Dagga* is a South African term for cannabis.). Similarly, the *Educational Journal*, the official organ of the Teachers' League of South Africa—a professional association representing coloured teachers—acknowledged that coloureds were regarded as 'a backward, lazy, debased people for whom it was better to build strong jails' (*Educational Journal*, February 1936, cited in Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 83), and expressed its shame at 'Coloured hooligans and loud vulgar Coloured girls who perturb our streets, parks, public gardens, foreshore, trains etc.' (*Educational Journal*, September 1921, cited in ibid.).

175 In *Sowetan Sunday World,* 15 December 2002, cited by Michael Besten, '"We are the original inhabitants of this land": Khoe-San Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', in Adhikari, *Burdened by Race*, 134-55, 148-9.

to a 'progressionist' evaluation of their race, whereby coloured people were seen as 'backward', but in the process of developing towards a fully civilised state represented by Western culture.[176] The civilising impulse, clearly inspired by an internalised colonial discourse, encouraged an affiliation with white culture and values, and the denial of those aspects of their racial identity that threatened coloureds' assimilation into dominant society:

> Their assimilationism, together with the insecurities engendered by their intermediate status, meant that in daily life the most consistent—and insistent—element in the expression of Coloured identity was an association with whiteness and a concomitant distancing from Africanness, whether in the value placed on fair skin and straight hair, in the prizing of white ancestors in the family lineage, or in taking pride in the degree to which they were able to conform to the standards of Western bourgeois culture. This 'white-mindedness', as one commentator referred to it, could give rise to a sense of shame with regard to any personal associations with blackness or an aggressive bigotry towards Africans.[177]

Coloured people's closeness to the 'white race' was also emphasised in official discourse at various times during the apartheid regime. In a speech at Smithfield in November 1925, for instance, Prime Minister J.B.M. Hertzog (1924-9) asserted that coloured people 'belonged to a section of the community closely allied to the white population […] fundamentally different from the natives. He [sic] owes his origin to us and knows no other civilization than that of the European […]; [he] even speaks the language of the European as his mother-tongue'.[178] February summarises Hertzog's position—one which, he asserts, persists in Afrikaner attitudes towards coloureds throughout the twentieth century—as follows: 'the "coloureds" are of us, speak our language, have our culture, are Western by any standards, but different only in that they are darker'.[179] Some 36 years later, in 1961, Deputy Minister of Coloured Affairs P.W. Botha, in an address to the Union Council for Coloured Affairs, adopted an almost identical position to

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[176] Adhikari, *Burdened by Race*, 9-10.
[177] Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 11. It must be emphasised that the assimilationism identified by Adhikari also manifested in various attempts to elevate morally, culturally, and economically the coloured working class. Numerous activities of the Eoan Group formed part of this empowerment project, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.
[178] Cited in February, *Mind Your Colour*, 7.
[179] Ibid. Similar arguments formed part of the promotion and reception of the Eoan Group's opera productions, and will be considered in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

Hertzog's, when he declared that 'unlike the *bantu*, the coloured is like the white, Western in lifestyle and makes use of the two official languages of the country. Since time immemorial the two groups have maintained a close affiliation; they have much in common and are therefore dependent upon one another. And yet, they also possess their own uniqueness.'[180]

In 1976, a 'Commission of Inquiry into Matters Pertaining to the Coloured Population Group', colloquially known as the Erika Theron Commission,[181] found that there was no identifiable 'coloured culture' which could be differentiated from that of whites,[182] and concluded that 'one should stop viewing the Coloured population as a community which is culturally different and which can be culturally distinguished from the White population'.[183] Despite these widely rehearsed arguments, however, coloured people remained disenfranchised within the South African socio-political landscape. Their own attempts to emphasise their Western heritage and to assimilate into the white community bore few political fruit, and were occasionally met with ridicule:

> [Criminologist Geoffrey Cronje] argued that [coloureds] lacked a sense of their own separate identity as well as an 'own' social set of ordering principles, and that the problems experienced by them—immorality and alcoholism—were a direct result of their attempts to lead their lives like 'Westerners' (whites). Their problem was that they did not want to be non-whites, and that they were not whites. They were in a position 'between heaven and earth, neither fish nor fowl, between the tree and the bark. No wonder the coloured soul was in a state of perpetual conflict.'[184]

Despite their opposing political positions and the temporal distance that divides them, Cronje's statement bears a remarkable resemblance to the declaration by Williams cited above. In both,

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180 [*Anders as die Bantoe, is die Kleurling soos die blanke Westers in leefwyse en maak ook hy van die twee amptelike tale van die land gebruik. Van oudsher is die twee groepe in noue voeling met mekaar, het hulle baie dinge in gemeen en is hulle daarom van mekaar afhanklik. Maar tog besit hulle ook hul eie andersheid.*] P.W. Botha, 'Address to the Union Council for Coloured Affairs', 28 March 1961, in Hugo, *Quislings or Realists?*, 51-5, 51. Botha later became the last prime minister and first state president of South Africa, in 1978 and 1984, respectively.

181 After the chair of the inquiry, Erika Theron.

182 'Among the Coloured communities there is essentially no other culture than that of the Afrikaans-or-English-speaking Whites' (Theron, *Verslag van die Kommissie van Ondersoek na Aangeleenthede Rakende die Kleurlingbevolkingsgroep*, 1976, cited in February, *Mind Your Colour*, 9).

183 Ibid.

184 Cronje, 1947, in Aletta J. Norval, *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse*, London and New York: Verso, 1996, 92. Cronje advanced these arguments in a book titled *Regverdige Rasse-Apartheid* (1947), in which he advocated the absolute separation of the races as the only viable solution to the problems of racial mixing and racial conflict.

coloured attempts to nurture a close affiliation with their perceived European ancestry are described as the cause of social problems such as alcoholism, and of a state of psychological perplexity. Cronje's account, however, goes further in capturing the intermediate position of coloured people within South Africa's racial demographic: 'neither fish nor fowl, between the tree and the bark', coloured people found themselves hovering uncomfortably between white and black.

An Intermediate Race

Adhikari identifies the in-between status of coloured people as a core characteristic in the construction of coloured identity,[185] and observes that it forms part of an experience of the South African racial hierarchy 'as a three-tiered system in which Coloureds held an intermediate position between the dominant white minority and the large African majority'.[186] Erasmus similarly acknowledges a hierarchical organisation of races within South Africa's demographic:

> Coloured identities are formed in the context of racialized relations of power and privilege. They are not 'merely different' but are formed in hierarchical relation to both white and black African identities; they are experienced and constructed as less than white and better than black. On the one hand, the meaning of being coloured is shaped by the lived experiences of white domination (Erasmus 2000b). On the other hand, it is shaped by complicity with these racist discourses through its creation of an inferior black African Other as one of its 'constitutive outsides' (Laclau 1990, 9) and complicity with the exclusion and subordination of black Africans.[187]

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185 Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 10. Adhikari identifies four key features of coloured identity, namely marginality, assimilationism, an intermediate status, and the association of negative and derogatory stereotypes. (See Adhikari, Chapter 1: 'Continuity and Context: An Overview of Coloured Identity in White Supremacist South Africa', in *Not White Enough*, 1-32; Adhikari, 'Predicaments of Marginality', in *Burdened by Race*, viii; and Adhikari, '"God made the white man"'.) While my own discussion of coloured identity is not formally organised around these four categories, they remain easily identifiable within the content of this chapter. For a direct application of Adhikari's categories to the case of 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(1), 2014a, 1-18.

186 Ibid. Elsewhere, Adhikari argues that apartheid ideology itself promoted the 'perception of humanity as consisting of a racialised hierarchy ranked in terms of the degree to which people conformed to the somatic and cultural norms of western Europe and its diaspora' (Adhikari, *Burdened by Race*, xiv). The contradiction between this position—probably informed by colonial civilising attitudes—and the apartheid government's later celebration of ethnic authenticity and traditionalism is striking.

187 Erasmus, *Coloured by History*, 24.

The significance of Erasmus's description of racial hierarchy in South Africa is, firstly, that it does not historicise this configuration, but instead recognises its persistence in the post-apartheid dispensation; and secondly, that it identifies the reverse of coloured people's compulsive alignment with white culture and identity, namely an almost forceful distancing from and disdain for blackness.

Various scholars have identified racism towards black people as a widespread occurrence amongst coloured people.[188] Such prejudice cannot safely be ascribed to a single cause, but Adhikari's argument that the hierarchical organisation of South African race classes played a fundamental role in coloured attitudes toward black people helps to identify one of its most significant contributing factors. Adhikari proposes that the expression of a separate coloured identity was informed by an effort to claim and retain a position of privilege relative to Africans.[189] Coloured South Africans' close affiliation with whites generated hopes of assimilating into the politically dominant society, however these expectations were increasingly thwarted in the face of escalating oppression and disenfranchisement.[190] The majority of coloured people's decision to defend those rights and privileges granted to them as a result of their perceived connection with white South Africans is therefore not surprising.[191] By consistently underlining their closeness to the white race and their distance from blackness they hoped to avoid what seemed to be the inevitable alternative: demotion to the political status of Africans.[192]

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[188] See, for instance, Adhikari, *Burdened by Race*; Erasmus, *Coloured by History*; Roos, 'Remembering to Forget', 15.

[189] Adhikari, *Burdened by Race*, xiii.

[190] Deborah Posel, in 'Race as Common Sense: Racial Classification in Twentieth-Century South Africa', *African Studies Review* 44(2), 2001a, 87-113, observes that some social mobility across race classes was possible, especially in the early years of the segregationist regime (97). Chapter 4 attends to this matter in greater detail.

[191] Adhikari argues that coloured people claimed 'a position of relative privilege to Africans on the basis that they were "civilized" and partly descended from European colonists' (Adhikari, *Burdened by Race*, xi). The rights they enjoyed as a result of this 'position of relative privilege' included limited voting rights, preferential consideration for vocational work in the absence of qualified white candidates (known as the Coloured Labour Preference Area Policy, and applicable only to Cape Town), the right to buy hard liquor, and exemption from pass laws.

[192] 'The original motivation behind the expression of a separate coloured identity, and the most consistent dynamic behind its subsequent assertion under white supremacist rule, was to claim and protect a status of privilege relative to Africans. First prize for the coloured elites of southern Africa would have been acceptance into the dominant society, even if only on the basis of individual merit. Since white racism

Coloured people's defence of their relatively privileged status within the South African political landscape introduces a troubling aspect of their participation in apartheid South Africa's governing ideology and legislation, namely their complicity with racial segregation. Classifying coloured people's politics as characterised by 'pragmatism and opportunism',[193] Adhikari emphasises that '[t]hey often exploited, supported and sometimes even demanded segregatory measures where these were seen to be to their advantage'.[194] A striking example of this is to be found in a 'Brochure on Coloured Politics' issued by the Federal Coloured People's Party's Transvaal division in June 1965:

> We therefore *reject* emphatically any liberal or integrational policy from any political party or group in the Republic. We *accept* the policy of separate development as the only principle upon which each population group in the country can come unto its own and whereupon a future for the Coloured *volk* can be built by the Coloured *volk*. We are prepared to co-operate with the current National Government, because we have been shown and convinced that the government will help separate ethnic groups in South Africa and even in Africa to develop, so that they will eventually be able to help themselves. This government must remain in office if the different ethnic groups in the Republic want to endure.[195]

While the Federal Coloured People's Party with its radically right-wing politics[196] obviously represents an extreme example of coloured support for segregationism, it neatly captures two underlying factors informing their acquiescence with such policies, namely a desire for

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ruled out any such accommodation, the coloured communal and political leadership successfully claimed second prize, an intermediate standing in the society that privileged coloured people over Africans. The greatest threat they perceived to their communities' well-being and future was for coloureds to be relegated to the status of Africans in the eyes of the white supremacist state.' (ibid., xiii).

193 Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 18.

194 Adhikari, *Burdened by Race*, 13.

195 [*Ons* verwerp *dus van harte enige liberale of integrasiebeleid van enige politieke party of groep in die Republiek. Ons* aanvaar *die beleid van afsonderlike ontwikkeling as die enigste beginsel waarop elke bevolkingsgroep in die land tot sy reg kan kom en waarop 'n toekoms vir die Kleurlingvolk deur die Kleurlingvolk, gebou kan word. Ons is bereid om met die huidige Nasionale Regering saam te werk omdat ons getoon is en oortuig is dat die regering aparte volksgroepe in Suid-Afrika, en selfs volke in Afrika, wil help om te ontwikkel sodat hulle later hulleself sal kan help. Hierdie regering moet bly staan as die verskillende volksgroepe in die Republiek wil bestaan.*] Federal Coloured People's Party, Transvaal Division, 'Brochure on Coloured Politics', in Hugo, *Quislings or Realists?*, 290, original emphasis.

196 In the same brochure, they emphasise that '[t]he [Federal Coloured People's Party] is strictly conservative and does not tolerate any form of liberalism, which is the precursor to communism' ([*Die* [*Federale Kleurling-Voksparty*] *is streng konserwatief en duld geen vorm van liberalisme, wat die voorloper van kommunisme is, nie*], ibid., 291).

'development', and a concern with the continued existence of the coloured people as a distinct ethnic identity. Their objective, not merely to claim for themselves the best possible opportunities within a contracting horizon of political and cultural rights, but at a more fundamental level to ensure the survival of the community into which they had been thrust by racist ideology, placed coloured people in an ambiguous position. Such ambiguity, argues Shula Marks, 'has been the price of survival in a contradictory world'.[197]

The ambiguity of the coloured position in apartheid South Africa was directly related to the contradictions inherent in official attempts to solidify the idea of 'the coloured race'. In a social sphere increasingly determined by the regulation of rights according to race, the classification and coagulation of racial identities were essential to the successful realisation of apartheid ideology.[198] Authorities were therefore forced to develop a system of classification that would ascribe a positively identifiable racial identity to each South African citizen.[199] To this end, the Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950 was developed and formally implemented on 7 July 1950. According to this act, each South African citizen was to be assigned a uniformly binding racial classification under the categories of white, coloured, and native.[200] These classifications were to be preserved on identity documents carried by individuals, as well as on a centralised, national population register—'a comprehensive database in which the racial identity of all citizens could be crosschecked against a battery of information about their access to work, social services, accommodation, taxation, marital status etc [sic] to ensure that all of these facets of everyday life were appropriately racially bounded and monitored.'[201]

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[197] Shula Marks, 1986, cited in Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 96.
[198] The specificities of apartheid legislation's regulation of individual rights will be discussed later in this chapter.
[199] For a detailed discussion of the escalating need in early apartheid South Africa for a clear and authoritative racial classification system, see Posel, 'Race as Common Sense'.
[200] Union of South Africa. 'Population Registration Act (Act No. 30 of 1950)', in *Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1950*, 275-99, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/90/Population_Registration_Act_1950.pdf, accessed 10 January 2017.
[201] Posel, 'What's in a Name? Racial Categorisations Under Apartheid and their Afterlife', *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* 47, 2001b, 50-74, 54.

Deborah Posel points out that the Population Registration Act's means of racial classification were controversial for adopting a 'flexible, elastic approach'[202] to racial classification, rather than a strictly biological attitude.[203] Rather than implementing an 'objective and impersonal'[204] classification founded on the basis of mixed blood, the new law gave official weight to social readings or racial difference, incorporating the lifestyle and social context of a person as determinants of their race.[205] This assignation of racial identity, based not only on physical factors but also on society's *perception* of a person's race, is clearly demonstrated by the Act's definitions of the three official categories within which people could be classified:

> A white person is one who in appearance is, or who *is generally accepted as*, a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, *is generally accepted as a Coloured person*.
> A native is a person who is in fact or is generally accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa.
> A Coloured person is a person who is not a white person nor a native.[206]

According to this explanation, citizens' racial identity, at least in the legislative realm, was a combination of vague physical and social markers. The result was a piece of legislation that based racial classification on what Posel, following Paul Gilroy, calls a 'bioculturalist mix', aligning 'readings of bodily difference closely with differences of class, lifestyle, and general repute

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202 Ibid., 55.
203 Ibid.; and Posel, 'Race as Common Sense'.
204 Posel, 'What's in a Name?', 55.
205 Ibid. Posel argues that the state's preference for a social, rather than biological, approach to racial classification served also to protect the interests of white South Africans: 'Although popular discourses of race were shot through with notions of "blood"—"pure" races being "full-blooded"—the daily lived experience of race derived from the ordinary, immediate experience of how people looked and lived. "Full-bloodedness" was a *metaphor* for racial purity rather than a literal statement of its preconditions. Indeed, with many supposedly "white" South African families having distant, or not so distant, histories of intermarriage across color lines, the issue of descent was often a discomforting one, and not considered the most appropriate basis on which to defend white privilege' (Posel, 'Race as Common Sense', 94, my emphasis).
206 Union of South Africa, 'Population Registration Act', 277, my emphasis. A later amendment to the Population Registration Act, known as Proclamation 123 of 1967, added a further definition of the coloured category: 'The Cape Coloured Group shall consist of persons who in fact are, or who, except in the case of persons who, in fact, are members of race or class or tribe referred to in paragraph … are generally accepted as members of the race or class known as the Cape Coloured' (cited in February, *Mind Your Colour*, 5). February describes this definition as 'probably one of the greatest legal and linguistic tautologies' (ibid.), an evaluation with which I am compelled to agree.

(loosely subsumed under the rubric of "culture")'.[207] Thus, the very means by which racialism in South Africa was to be solidified already carried within itself a degree of indeterminacy.

Arguably the greatest ambiguity within the Population Registration Act's racial terminology is to be found in the explanation of the category of 'Coloured' as 'a person who is not a white person nor a native'. Erasmus reads in this definition terms of '"lack" or taint', of '"remainder" or excess', and a classification of colouredness as 'a residual identity'.[208] Described negatively in terms of what it was not, the coloured race became the receptacle for all that did not fit neatly within the existing categories of black or white. As a result, it was never quite clear exactly what, or who, a coloured person actually was. Thiven Reddy expands upon the notion of residue when he argues that the coloured racial category functions as a 'home' for 'the unclassifiable—the Other—which resists the discourse but also functions to give the classificatory system its very meaning'.[209] The coloured category, in other words, functioned as a repository for those racial identities that threatened to undermine the neat distinctions drawn between black and white, thereby performing a vital function in safeguarding the logic of apartheid's divisive ideology.

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[207] Posel, 'What's in a Name?', 53. The extent to which any aspect of a person's history or lifestyle could be deemed a relevant 'cultural marker' is demonstrated in a survey on race relations in South Africa published in 1968: 'A man who looks White, and is readily accepted by the community as being White, for example, could be refused registration as such if many years previously he attended a Coloured school, or if a large proportion of his friends were Coloured, or if he had not rejected and forsaken all family members who were not classified as White' (Muriel Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1967*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968, 22). Horrell further outlines a number of 'new tests' implemented in race classification under the Population Registration Amendment Act, No. 64 of 1967, which include the following: '[a person's] habits, education, and speech and deportment in general shall be taken into account'; and 'the person must be generally accepted as White in the place where he is ordinarily resident, is employed, mixes socially with other members of the public, and in his associations with the members of his family and other persons with whom he lives' (ibid., 24). The horror meted out by the Population Registration Act, manifesting in the separation of families where one parent and one child, or one child only, for instance, were classified as belonging to a different race to the rest of the family, or instances where children were denied entry to schools due to discrepancies between their phenotypical features and their lifestyle, are described in Horrell's report under the heading 'Some cases of extreme hardship caused by population registration' (ibid., 20-22).

[208] Erasmus *Coloured by History*, 17 and 19.

[209] Thiven Reddy, 'The Politics of Naming: The Constitution of Coloured Subjects in South Africa', in *Coloured by History*, ed. Zimitri Erasmus, 64-79, 68.

One of the most striking semi-official articulations of coloured people's residual status within South Africa's racial demographic was given by former first lady Marike de Klerk in a 1983 interview with the *Sunday Tribune*:

> … they [Coloureds] are a negative group. The definition of a coloured in the population register is someone that is not black, and is not white and is also not an Indian, in other words a no-person. They are the leftovers. They are the people that were left after the nations were sorted out. They are the rest.[210]

De Klerk's description of the coloured group demonstrates exactly the extent to which colouredness was characterised as simultaneously excess ('they are the leftovers') and lack ('a no-person') in popular discourse. The ambivalence of such portrayals affected not only the political treatment of coloured people, but also their self-understanding and identity construction. Although a product of apartheid ideology, coloured people's contemporary considerations of their own racial identity still reflect the notion that it is somehow an assembly of excess and lack, as demonstrated by the common post-apartheid expression 'first we were not white enough, now we are not black enough [to benefit from the political dispensation]'.[211] Both too dark and too light, too European and not European enough, the coloured population group views itself as consistently falling between the dominant racial groups of South African society. The impact of such an awareness upon coloured self-perception is reflected poignantly in a poem titled 'Neither-Nor' by Barbara Fortuin, a former member of the Eoan Group:

> The child in between—that's me
> Neither black nor white
> Always neither nor—am I
>
> Where do I belong
> To whom?—
> My heart longs to just—belong

210 De Klerk, 5 February 1983, cited in Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 13. Indians were recognised as a separate 'Asian' racial category in 1961. De Klerk was married to Frederik Willem de Klerk, who served as the South African State President from August 1989 to May 1994. At the time of the interview cited here, F.W. de Klerk was serving in Parliament as Minister of Internal Affairs.

211 Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 176. The pervasiveness of this trope within post-apartheid coloured thinking has been significant enough for Adhikari to derive the title of his monograph on coloured identity construction from it.

I so wish I was not
The child in between
Nor the child of—neither—nor

My very soul is pulled apart
Always—do I—don't I
Can I—can't I

At the beginning of my life
I am neither, nor
In death I am neither, nor

Dear God in your mercy—I know
I am holy [sic] yours
Never Neither—nor—either—or.[212]

Fortuin's poem articulates the distress experienced by the coloured person ('My very soul is pulled apart') as a result of their confusion, not only about their own racial identification, but also about what they are and are not allowed within this classification ('Always do I—don't I/ Can I—can't I'). Taking refuge in religion, the poem's speaker acknowledges that their bewilderment regarding rights and entitlements, appropriate behaviour, and cultural belonging can only be resolved by God, thereby highlighting the perceived impossibility of a reconciliation between colouredness and South Africa's political reality. In this way, Fortuin's poem captures what according to Aletta J. Norval was to become 'the Achilles' heel of [apartheid South Africa's] Nationalist politics', namely coloured people's 'irrepresentability within the discourse of nationhood and its concomitant territoriality'.[213]

Norval identifies the core of apartheid ideology as a preoccupation with 'difference', and a determination to contain such difference within a coherent political grammar.[214] To this end, apartheid ideologues conceived of a social, cultural, and political regime structured around separation or, more forcefully, segregation. The politics not only of racial, but also linguistic, cultural, and class difference, informed a scheme by which the identities imposed by the oppressive state on its subjects became the deciding factor in how, and where, South Africans

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212 Barbara Fortuin, '"Neither-Nor", 1977', 22:160, original orthography.
213 Norval, *Deconstructing*, 193 and 189.
214 Ibid., 10.

were allowed to live, and with whom they were allowed to mix. It was a system that relied on fixed identities, and on clear boundaries between them. Due to its racial and cultural ambiguity, colouredness exposed the limits of such logic, and confounded the legislative correlations between race, space, language, and class created by the state's policies.[215]

Segregationism and Separate Development

On a practical level, the apartheid project played itself out in the form of a range of legislative measures designed to keep the different racial and ethnic groupings of South Africa apart. Additionally, it bestowed certain rights upon some, while depriving others of the same. Thus, the basis of apartheid can be argued to rest on two fundamental concepts: segregation and domination. However, while this summary makes the regime and the tenets upon which it was constructed seem relatively simple, its reality was far more intricate.

Norval traces the advent of apartheid thinking to the 'poor white problem' facing the South African government after the second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).[216] The final phase of

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[215] Michele Ruiters identifies these legislative correlations in 'Collaboration, Assimilation and Contestation: Emerging Constructions of Coloured Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', in *Burdened by Race*, ed. Mohamed Adhikari, 104-133, 110, and argues that they continue to inform contemporary configurations of racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa.

[216] The information given here is a summary of Norval's account of the origins of apartheid ideology in the devastation felt by the Afrikaner *volk* after the Anglo-Boer War, as presented in chapters 1 and 2 of *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse*. Norval's approach, which understands apartheid to have been a direct extension of the Afrikaner *volk*'s need for self-definition and self-preservation, is but one of several explanations of the origins of apartheid ideology to have been advanced by South African and international scholars. Of these, the most salient are Patrick Furlong and Hermann Giliomee's controversial work, which locates the advent of apartheid thought in German fascism (Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika: The Influence of the Radical Right on the Afrikaner Nationalist Movement in the Fascist Era*, Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1991; and Giliomee, 'The Making of the Apartheid Plan, 1929-1948', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29(2), 2003, 373-92); Saul Dubow's understanding of apartheid as inspired primarily by scientific racism (Dubow, 'Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of Race', *The Journal of African History* 33(2), 1992, 209-37; and Dubow, 'Racial Irredentism, Ethnogenesis, and White Supremacy in High-Apartheid South Africa', *Kronos* 41(1), 2015, 5-25); and Dan O'Meara's Marxist reading of the regime, which identifies apartheid as an economic project designed to accumulate South Africa's wealth in the hands of the white Afrikaans minority (O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-1948*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). In Norval's work, the seemingly disparate paradigms that underpin these scholars' arguments are brought together to promote an understanding of apartheid as a complex interaction between economic, religious, racial, and nationalist ideals; it therefore presents a more nuanced explication of the genesis of apartheid thought.

the British siege, developed under the military command of Lord Kitchener and known as the 'scorched earth policy', had razed to the ground the farms that formed the economic life-blood of the predominantly agrarian Boer-*volk*, and the Boers' surrender to the British on the 31st of May 1902 had left the fledgling *volk* in a state of psychological despair.[217] Destitute Afrikaners, unable to return to their farms, flocked to the cities where they joined the poor, unskilled labouring class. Living in appalling conditions, often in mixed neighbourhoods; possessing few, if any, marketable skills; and subject to the humiliation of continued colonial rule, the white Afrikaans speaking community was caught in a process of socio-economic rupture.[218] In response, the Afrikaans elite embarked upon a mission to address the problem of white poverty; to elevate economically, culturally, and morally the Afrikaans working class; and to consolidate a unified Afrikaner *volk*.[219] The process by which this was to be achieved was one of ethnic and racial differentiation.

It is important to acknowledge, argues Norval, that there was no unified Afrikaner community in place before 1948,[220] and that part of the apartheid project was precisely the construction of such a community.[221] This is significant, since it sheds light on the particular nature of exclusions operated by Afrikaner nationalist ideology. English-speaking white South

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217 For two excellent and exhaustive accounts of the Second Anglo-Boer War, see Denis Judd and Keith T. Surridge, *The Boer War: A History*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2013; and Bill Nasson, *The Boer War: The Struggle for South Africa*, Stroud: History, 2011. For a specific account of the aftermath of the war, and its impact on Afrikaner economics and morale, see Albert Grundlingh, 'The Bitter Legacy of the Boer War', *History Today* 49(11), 1999, 21-5.

218 An address by D.P. van Huyssteen, delivered at a congress on the 'poor white question' held in Kimberley in 1934, for instance, lamented the state of the Afrikaner *volk* as follows: 'In the life of our people, walls are torn apart and are in ruins; they call out to be rebuilt. Thousands live in poverty, in misery, in pitiful conditions, and there is degeneration in all areas of life, social, moral and spiritual' (D.P. van Huyssteen, 1934, cited in Norval, *Deconstructing*, 12).

219 The *Volkskongres oor die Armblankevraagstuk* [Congress on the Poor White Question], held over 2-5 October 1934 in Kimberley, organised by the Dutch Reformed Church, and attended by leading Afrikaner politicians (including Hendrik Verwoerd who was later to become the Prime Minister of South Africa and is widely regarded to be the 'architect of apartheid') and various government officials, represented an early venture by the Afrikaans elite to identify the causes of socio-economic problems faced by the white Afrikaans working class, and to propose practical and ideological solutions to these problems (Norval, *Deconstructing*, 17-19).

220 1948 was the year in which the Afrikaans minority *Nasionale Party* [National Party] was elected into power, thereby marking the official start of the apartheid regime.

221 Norval, *Deconstructing*, 13.

Africans, for instance, were until the 1950s regularly referred to within official discourse as belonging to a different race than Afrikaners.[222] The main object of differential legislation was, however, not the English population, since they could easily be distinguished from the Afrikaans *volk* on the basis of language. Instead, Norval points out that Afrikaans-speaking coloureds were regarded as the main threat to white Afrikaner separatism, and were therefore the primary racial grouping targeted by segregationist legislation:[223]

> [Coloureds] represented a limit case to the logic of apartheid. The 'coloured community' had never been clearly differentiated from the 'white' community. To a large extent, they shared a culture, religion and language with the Afrikaner population. They had voting rights in the Cape Province, and were not subjected to legislation as a group under segregation. But […] the process of reconstituting an Afrikaner *volk* during the 1930s and 1940s also entailed an exclusion of coloureds who previously might have considered themselves to be Afrikaners, a purification of the Afrikaans language, as well as attempts to restrict the absorption of middle-class coloureds into the white community.[224]

The apartheid authorities' insistence on articulating a distinction between the white and coloured Afrikaans communities, even where such a distinction appeared artificial, can be traced back to the fear of miscegenation discussed earlier in this chapter. Indeed, Norval argues that the Mixed Marriages Act 'is logically and symbolically at the very heart of apartheid policy', insofar as 'apartheid was concerned with the maintenance and protection of the "white race"'.[225] She continues as follows:

> The legislation on mixed marriages, immorality and population registration formed the basis of a philosophy that saw 'racial purity' as a virtue. On this view, the maintenance of racial purity required legislation for it could be preserved only if there existed a generalized 'heightened racial consciousness'.[226]

[222] Ibid., 9 and 44.
[223] Ibid., 125.
[224] Ibid., 127.
[225] Norval, *Deconstructing*, 125. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act No. 55 of 1949 was one of the first pieces of apartheid legislation to be passed. It prohibited marriages between members of the European and non-European races, and was commenced on 8 July 1949 (Union of South Africa, 'Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (Act No. 55 of 1949)', in *Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1949*, 614-16, http://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/DC/leg19490708.028.020.055/leg19490708.028.020.055.pdf, accessed 10 January 2017).
[226] Ibid. The legislation on immorality referred to here was formalised first in the Immorality Act of 1927, which prohibited intercourse between white and black South Africans, and later in the Immorality Amendment Act (Act No. 21 of 1950), which substituted the word 'native' (referring only to black citizens) for the word 'non-European', thereby prohibiting 'illicit carnal intercourse' between white people

Considering the supposed 'moral decline' of the urbanised Afrikaner working class, it is perhaps not surprising that apartheid authorities did not rely on a purely moralistic justification for the ideal of 'racial purity'. Instead, it presented a combination of practical and religious reasoning to defend their efforts to keep the different racial and ethnic groupings of South Africa apart. The first of these revolved around the by now familiar argument that racial mixing caused conflict.[227] Further practical justifications included that 'most coloured [and black] people lived in overcrowded, unhygienic conditions that needed to be eliminated in accordance with the dictates of public health policy and principles of modern urban planning',[228] and, finally, the argument that 'acculturation, taking place as a result of contact, could only produce perverse and fraudulent beings', thus leading to 'a degeneration of morals, instability, a loss of principles and an increase in crime rates'.[229] This final practical justification is particularly striking considering that the colonial civilising mission which preceded the apartheid regime was very closely informed by notions of elevation through acculturation. In apartheid discourse, conversely, we encounter the directly contradictory argument that acculturation produces inferior human beings. The difference between the oppressive force of British imperialist ideology and that of the apartheid regime thus becomes strikingly clear: while the former was concerned with shaping the world in its own image, the latter was preoccupied with differentiating its own image from that of the rest of the world.

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and any non-white person, including coloureds, Indians, and people of any other Asian descent (Union of South Africa, 'Immorality Amendment Act (Act No. 21 of 1950)', in *Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1950*, 217, http://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/DC/leg19500512.028.020.021/leg19500512.028.020.021.pdf, accessed 10 January 2017).

[227] '"Mixed" residential areas were said to be the "deathbeds of the European race" and had to be unscrambled to prevent a bloodbath which would follow inevitably from racial friction' (Norval, *Deconstructing*, 130). Similarly, T.E. Donges, the Minister of the Interior, confirmed that the Group Areas policy was 'designed to eliminate friction between the races' when he introduced the bill into parliament in 1950 (cited by Henry Trotter, 'Trauma and Memory: The Impact of Apartheid-Era Forced Removals on Coloured Identity in Cape Town', in *Burdened by Race*, ed. Mohamed Adhikari, 49-78, 52).

[228] Trotter, 'Trauma and Memory', 52.

[229] Norval, *Deconstructing*, 147. Carina Venter, in 'A Catalogue of Seepage: Apartheid's Political Grammar, Afrikaans Music Historiography and Early Afrikaner Nationalism', *SAMUS: South African Music Studies* 36/37, 2017 [forthcoming] shows how apartheid-era musical discourse echoed broader white anxieties about racial mixing and its concomitant associations with perversion, fraudulence, and shame.

Apart from practical justifications for racial segregation, a number of apartheid intellectuals[230] also crafted a religious argument in close keeping with the official Calvinist policy of Christian National Socialism.[231] Relying on the theological account of Babel, *volkere* and nations were held to be 'organic creations of God':[232]

> A conception of God as Hammabdil, the Great Divider, was the nodal point […]: just as God separated light and dark, heaven and earth, so did He ordain the separation of one nation from another. [J.D.] du Toit drew two conclusions from this, namely that what God has joined together, no man should separate, and that which God has separated, no man should join together. From this it followed that the unity of the *volk* had to be protected. […] Du Toit and other Calvinist intellectuals asserted that there could be no *gelykstelling* (equalization) and no *verbastering* (bastardization) of *volkere*.[233]

In arguing that the separation of racial and ethnic identities had been ordained by God, the apartheid state not only claimed endorsement from the highest of all possible authorities, it also asserted a religious imperative for what was to become the defining feature of 'grand apartheid':[234] the policy of separate development.

The apartheid government's separate development policy argued that each ethnic grouping in South Africa should be allowed to develop 'along its own lines', in other words, according to some biologically pre-determined cultural trajectory. As the 'senior White trustee of

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230 Including J.D. du Toit (better known as the Afrikaans poet Totius), H.G. Stoker, L.J. du Plessis, and H. du Plessis. Norval describes these figures collectively as 'the Scripturalists at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education' (Norval, *Deconstructing*, 67). She traces their reasoning, and especially that of Stoker, to Abraham Kuyper's notion of 'sovereignty of spheres', developed in opposition to the French Revolution and the spread of liberal secular ideals. According to Kuyper's sovereignty of spheres, 'different domains of existence were to be regarded as separate from each other, while nevertheless subject to the ultimate authority of God', thus justifying 'the separation of church and state, as well as the separation of peoples into different nations' (ibid., 68).

231 The apartheid regime was supported by Afrikaans religious institutions, most notably of which the Dutch Reformed Church. Resources exploring the relationship between apartheid and religious doctrine within South Africa include Johann Kinghorn and C.F.A. Borchardt, *Die NG Kerk en Apartheid* [The Dutch Reformed Church and Apartheid], Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1986; J.A. Loubser, *The Apartheid Bible: A Critical Review of Racial Theology in South Africa*, Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1987; and Martin Prozesky (ed.), *Christianity Amidst Apartheid: Selected Perspectives on the Church in South Africa*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990.

232 Norval, *Deconstructing*, 69.

233 Ibid., 69-70.

234 Grand apartheid was the name given to apartheid ideology and legislation of the 1960s and 1970s, which solidified the absolute segregation of the races on a mass scale; the confinement of black people to self-governing ethnic homelands; and the formalisation of the notion that all ethnic groupings should develop 'along their own lines' (Richard T. Schaefer, *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society* Vol. I, London: SAGE, 2008 83).

the native',[235] it was the white Afrikaner's responsibility to curate and facilitate such development, by granting 'natives' the means by which to advance independently, but simultaneously by supervising these advances. Officials therefore argued that non-white South Africans needed physical locations, basic infrastructure, and local governance to enable them to follow their own developmental trajectories away from the influence of the white race. As part of this policy, an extensive project of geographical segregation was launched throughout the country.

Of the apartheid government's segregation laws,[236] arguably the most significant was the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950. Assented to on 24 June 1950, re-enacted in 1957 and 1966, and amended multiple times until its final repeal in 1991,[237] the Group Areas Act formalised the reservation of urban residential and business areas for members of certain races. Combined with legislation securing specific rural areas for occupation by members of different black ethnic

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[235] This expression was used in articles 14 and 15 of the official *Christian National Education* policy, and reprinted in *The Educational Journal* of the Teachers League of South Africa as part of a justification for the adoption of the official educational system of the apartheid government in coloured schools: '(a) God has willed separate nations and peoples and has given each separate nation and peoples its vocation; (b) Each nation has its own unique identity or *eiesoortigheid*; (c) Every nation is different and has its own alien identity or *andersoortigheid*; (d) The education of the "native" is to be firmly grounded in the philosophy of the Whites, especially of the Boer nation as the senior White trustee of the native' (*The Educational Journal* October to November 1976, cited in February, *Mind Your Colour*, 240).

[236] These included the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, 1953, which legislated the racial segregation of public premises, vehicles and services; the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, the Coloured Persons Education Act of 1963, and the Indians Education Act, 1965, which together provided for the racial segregation of primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions; the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, 1949, and the Immorality Amendment Act, 1950, discussed above; and a number of acts linking certain races with specific geographical areas of South Africa, including the Native Trust and Land Act, 1936, the Natives Resettlement Act, 1954, the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act, 1959, and the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act, 1970 (see 'The History of Separate Development in South Africa: Apartheid Legislation 1850s-1970s', *South African History Online*, last updated 11 April 2016, http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/apartheid-legislation-1850s-1970s, accessed 10 January 2017, for a detailed list of apartheid segregation laws). An enormous number of sources on apartheid and its separatist ideology exist. Of special relevance to the matter of segregationist legislation and administration, are Roger Omond, *The Apartheid Handbook*, 2nd edn., Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986; David M. Smith, *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa*, London: Routledge, 1992; and Ivan Thomas Evans, *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

[237] The Group Areas Act No. 41, 1950, was amended by Parliament in 1952, twice in 1955, in 1956 and 1957. It was repealed later in 1957 and re-instituted as the Group Areas Act, 1957. This version of the act was amended in 1961, 1962, and 1965, and was repealed in 1966 to be re-enacted as the Group Areas Act, 1966. The 1966 Act was amended in 1969, 1972, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1979, and 1984, before it was finally repealed by the Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act, 1991. The frequency with which the Group Areas Act was revised may serve as an indication of the importance it held for the apartheid government, while also reflecting the increasingly rapid socio-political changes occurring in the country as apartheid policy and resistance to it intensified.

groupings, it promoted a spatial politics that was to have a profound impact on all South African—white, black, and coloured—lives.

The Group Areas Act decreed that 'the Governor-General may, whenever it is deemed expedient, by proclamation in the [*Government*] *Gazette* (a) declare that as from a date specified in the proclamation […] the area defined in the proclamation shall be an area for occupation by members of the group specified therein; or (b) declare that, as from a date specified in the proclamation, the area defined in the proclamation shall be an area for ownership by members of the group specified therein'.[238] A 'group', for the purposes of the act, meant 'either the white group, the coloured group or the native group', while a person who was not a member of the group specified in the Governor-General's declaration, was known as a 'disqualified person'.[239] In terms of the Group Areas Act, therefore, only members of certain races were allowed to live or own property in particular sections of cities and towns. According to Norval, this act 'extend[ed] the principle of residential segregation to its ultimate conclusions'.[240] The scope of this segregation is evident in the fact that the division of the population did not stop merely at the three categories of white, coloured, and 'native', but went further by grouping members of these racial identities into ethnic subgroups, each of which would eventually be allocated to a certain area:

> The 'coloured' group was divided into three such subgroups on 30 March 1951: the Indian, Malay and Chinese groups. Similarly, Africans were divided into special groups of Pondo, Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho peoples, foreshadowing the declared policy of the government to divide all urban locations into 'ethnic wards'.[241]

From the increased fracturing of the South African populace into smaller and smaller subgroups, an impression of apartheid ideology's almost fanatical preoccupation with 'purity' can be

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[238] 'Group Areas Act No. 41, 1950', in *Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1950*, 407-67, 415, http://blogs.loc.gov/law/files/2014/01/Group-Areas-Act-1950.pdf, accessed 10 January 2017.
[239] Ibid., 409.
[240] Norval, *Deconstructing*, 130.
[241] Ibid.

gained.[242] The extent to which this fixation penetrated people's existence is evident from the fact that it permeated such aspects of everyday life as transport, entertainment, and even communications: separate radio stations were established for the different black ethnic and linguistic groups in South Africa (all grouped together under the umbrella organisation of 'Radio Bantu'), and laws were implemented to prohibit the broadcast of material from 'other' ethnicities on any one radio station.[243] Musical recordings, for instance, were not allowed to contain lyrics which mixed the different languages spoken in South Africa.[244] To the apartheid government, cross-cultural contact was evidently something to be proscribed down to the minutest details of people's lives.

As with other matters regarding coloured identity and citizenship, the question of coloured separate development complicated the implementation of segregationist policy, and led to several inconsistencies that destabilised the coherence of the apartheid system. Problems with coloured segregation were largely tied up with questions of heritage and place. Black ethnic groups could arguably be tied to specific geographical locations within South Africa based on

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[242] An important source on the Group Areas Act dating to the period of its implementation is Alan Paton's *The People Wept: Being a Brief Account of the Origin, Contents, and Application of that Unjust Law of the Union of South Africa Known as the Group Areas Act of 1950 (Since Consolidated as Act no. 77 of 1957)*, Natal: Alan Paton, 1958. See also Laurine Platzky and Cherryl Walker, *The Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985. This book is a condensation of a five-volume report titled *Forced Removals in South Africa: Volume 1-5 of the Surplus People Project* (authored and published in 1983 by the Surplus People Project in Cape Town), which detailed the magnitude, nature, and effects of South Africa's forced removals programme.

[243] 'A revised Broadcast Act was passed in 1960, which created a Bantu Programme Control Board and planned an expansion of radio services for Africans. On 1 January 1962, Radio Bantu, incorporating Radio Zulu, Radio Sesotho, Radio Lebowa, Radio Tswana [and] Radio Xhosa was launched, to which Radio Venda/Tsonga was added in 1965. By the end of the 1960s Radio Bantu broadcast in seven languages on full-day schedules.' (Martin, *Sounding the Cape*, 224). See also Charles Hamm, *Putting Popular Music in its Place*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, especially Chapter 10, '"The Constant Companion of Man": Separate Development, Radio Bantu, and Music', 210-48.

[244] For more on South African broadcasting laws, see Hamm, '"Constant Companion"'; Michael Drewett, 'Exploring Transitions in Popular Music: Censorship from Apartheid to Post-Apartheid South Africa', in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Censorship*, ed. Patricia Hall, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, 593-608; and Liz Gunner, 'Wrestling with the Present, Beckoning to the Past: Contemporary Zulu Radio Drama', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26(2), 2000, 223-37. For a comprehensive investigation of media and censorship in apartheid South Africa, see Peter D. McDonald, *The Literature Police: Apartheid Censorship and its Cultural Consequences*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

their linguistic-cultural heritage,[245] thus facilitating the creation of 'homelands' designed to become ethnically segregated, self-governing black states within the regions of the original 'tribal' territories.[246] Coloureds, however, did not have a historical 'coloured territory',[247] nor did they practice a single, homogenous cultural, religious, or linguistic tradition.[248] Norval observes that it was therefore virtually impossible to establish a 'separate nationhood', as directed by separate development policy, for the coloured population.[249]

Despite the incommensurability of the coloured racial grouping with segregationist ideology, coloured people were still subject to forced removals. Even though no historical homeland existed to which the apartheid government could banish them, coloureds were displaced from their urban places of residence into settlements at the outskirts of towns and cities.[250] In Cape Town, prior to forced removals, racial integration between white and coloured

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245 Crudely, their 'tribe'. The Xhosa tribe, for instance, ostensibly originated along the east coast of South Africa, Zulus hailed from the north-eastern coastal region, while Venda were from the north-western part of the country, along the border with Botswana.

246 The homelands, also known as 'bantustans' and 'black states', were intended to become autonomous nation-states which existed completely independently from South Africa, with self-sustaining socio-economic and political systems. Approximately 3.5 million black South Africans were forcefully moved to the homelands. In 1970, with the implementation of the Black Homeland Citizenship Act No 26 of 1970 (later renamed the Black States Citizenship Act, 1970), all black people in South Africa were allocated citizenship of one of the homelands, and stripped of their South African citizenship. This applied even to those black South Africans who lived in urban townships for purposes of employment, thus turning them into aliens who could only live and work in South Africa 'proper' with special permission, and robbing them of citizenship rights. By the time the Black States Citizenship Act was repealed in 1993, ten homelands existed, namely the Transkei (for the Xhosa), Ciskei (also Xhosa), Boputhatswana (Tswana), Venda (Venda), kwaZulu (Zulu), Lebowa (Pedi), Kangwane (Swazi), QwaQwa (Sotho), Gazankulu (Tsonga), and kwaNdebele (Ndebele). ('The Black Homeland Citizenship Act of 1970', *South African History Online*, last updated 22 May 2014, http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/black-homeland-citizenship-act-1970, accessed 10 January 2017).

247 Norval, *Deconstructing*, 192.

248 Denis-Constant Martin comments as follows on the diversity of the coloured group: 'Attributed physical, social, religious or linguistic features masquerading as markers of differentiation bind them to, rather than distinguish them from, the South African population as a whole: as a matter of fact, we find all shades of skin colour, ranging from very fair to very dark amongst them […] Though many live in extremely poor conditions, we find a middle class and intellectuals among them. They are either Christians or Muslims. Many consider Afrikaans as their first language, while the majority is bilingual, and in some families only English is used' (Martin, 'What's in the name "Coloured"', 523). Indeed, it is impossible to speak of a single unified coloured race or identity, since it encapsulates numerous distinct and even contradictory practices, traditions, and identifications. Within this thesis, therefore, it is important to acknowledge that references to 'coloured people' as a group invoke the apartheid classification of the coloured race as a single political entity.

249 Norval, *Deconstructing*, 189.

250 Adhikari estimates that over 500 000 coloureds were forcibly relocated under the Group Areas Act ('Contending Approaches', 3).

(and, to a lesser extent, black) people within mixed neighbourhoods abounded. District Six, Bo-Kaap, Woodstock, and Observatory had majority coloured populations, but Indians, immigrant European Jews, Africans and some white English and Afrikaans people also lived there. Relatively equal numbers of white and coloured residents occupied the areas of Simon's Town, Goodwood, Lansdowne, Claremont, Diep River, and Wynberg, while a smaller number of coloured people lived in the mainly white neighbourhoods of Rondebosch, Sea Point, Mowbray, Kirstenbosch and Kirstenhof.[251] After the passing of the Group Areas Act in 1957 a zoning process started, by which regions were evaluated before being declared as white or coloured areas. Over the course of the next three decades, every area of Cape Town, excluding a small portion of Woodstock,[252] was zoned for occupation by a single race. By 1979, over 150 000 coloured residents had been removed from their homes in the city to townships on the Cape Flats,[253] a large, barren area some 20 km southeast of the city centre.

Forced relocations caused enormous socio-economic difficulties for coloured and black Cape Townians. The townships of the Cape Flats were overcrowded, possessed little infrastructure, and were unsuitable for agricultural development, even on a small scale. They were located on sandy, infertile land plagued by strong winds and regular flooding, especially during the damp winter months. Residents lived in poor conditions, far from their places of work in the city centres, and unable to provide for themselves by means of subsistence farming. The resulting problems of poverty, ill-health, and crime, therefore became an everyday reality for those who lived in these areas.[254] Apartheid-era forced removals not only impacted on where people could live, but also on the quality and scope of their social and cultural lives. Confined to racially determined locations marked by a plethora of social concerns, coloured people were forced to

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[251] Henry Trotter, *Removals and Remembrance: Commemorating Community in Coloured Cape Town*, MA Dissertation, Yale University, 2002, 5-6.

[252] This part of the city was the only area to remain a 'controlled area', in which different races were allowed to live side-by-side, but only upon the acquisition of official permits. ('Cape Town the Segregated City', *South African History Online*, last updated 23 February 2016, http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/cape-town-segregated-city, accessed 12 January 2017.)

[253] Trotter, *Removals and Remembrance*, 9.

[254] Shamil Jeppie, 'Cape Town Fringe', in *Cape Town Fringe: Manenberg Avenue is Where It's Happening*, ed. David Lurie, Cape Town: Double Storey Books, 2004, 9-17, 9 and 12.

build new communities from the remains of a fractured sense of belonging, and to find an identity that could bind together the multiple distinct groups thrust together under the idea of 'colouredness'.

Racial Legislation and the Eoan Group

For the Eoan Group, the Group Areas Act had devastating consequences. After District Six was declared a whites-only zone in 1966, they were forced to find a new home. Granted a piece of land by the Cape Town Municipality,[255] and with financial assistance from the national government and two private donors,[256] the group built a new arts centre in Athlone, one of the Cape Flats townships zoned for coloured occupation. This new facility, named the Joseph Stone Auditorium, was less central than the group's previous headquarters in the city centre. The increased distances members had to cross in order to reach the Joseph Stone caused severe financial and scheduling complications for most.[257] Additionally, the removal of coloured people from certain areas of residence, and the restriction of access to facilities in these areas, forced the Eoan Group to shut down a number of its localised branches, thereby leading to a reduction in most of its welfare projects and dance classes.[258] The geographical problems created by the Group Areas Act especially affected women, who were forced to travel long distances after dark, in areas that were known for criminal activity:

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[255] 'Minutes of the 32nd Annual General Meeting', 29 September 1966, 1:3.

[256] The South African Government contributed R120 000; the Bernard van Leer Foundation gave R34 000; and the Joseph Stone Foundation gave R100 000 (ibid.).

[257] 'Now, with the centre at Athlone, Eoan Group members have to catch trains and sometimes two to three buses to bring them from the outlying housing schemes to Athlone. These heavy costs of transport are a great drain on members of the Coloured Community with the ever rising cost of living […] The shift of the Coloured population from the centre of Cape Town and its perimeter has greatly affected not only the increase of Eoan Group membership, but also created tremendous handicaps for the Coloured Community with regard to after-working-hours activities' ('Guidelines for Memoranda on Cultural Matters', 5, 23:169).

[258] In 'Guidelines for Memoranda on Cultural Matters', 23:169, the group reports that they had been forced to shut down their 'Mens' and Boys' Club', their debutante balls, their annual bazaar, and a number of branches providing dance classes. While the group had 21 branches in 1952, by 1971 only five of these remained (Correspondence, Ismail Sydow to Department of Coloured Affairs, 18 January 1971, Annexure A, 1:1).

> Here I have to say with much sorrow that our Branches are finding almost insurmountable handicaps and difficulties in trying to keep alive the important work of the Group due to the continued shift of the population coupled with the great dangers of pupils' mothers having to go out at night to attend their meetings. Also there is a great and sad lack of suitable venues for training, recreation and fund raising activities.[259]

As such, the apartheid government's sponsorship of the Eoan Group's endeavours was undermined by its enactment of a set of laws that made it impossible, from an infrastructural point of view, for the group to continue its work unhindered. This underlines the incommensurability of the state's support of the Eoan Group with its own segregationist policies: given that apartheid was a regime founded on ideologies of racial and cultural separation, the government's investment in Eoan's Western artistic efforts was paradoxical. This was the result not only of conflicting attitudes regarding the coloured people's relationship to the white race, as outlined above, but also due to profound uncertainties regarding the nature and content of coloured heritage. In arguing for the development of each ethnic group along its own cultural lines, authorities were confronted with ambiguity regarding what exactly 'coloured culture' actually was. The implications of this uncertainty will be discussed in Chapter 4, as part of an examination of those aspects of the Eoan Group's activities that contributed to a destabilisation of apartheid ideology.

The assortment of meanings carried by the coloured identity, its disparate origins, and the various ways in which it manifested, was to become one of the debilitating dilemmas faced by the apartheid government.[260] In effect, as Norval argues, the '"supplementary" status [of the coloured population] created the possibility of disarticulating the very logic of social division instituted by apartheid'.[261] Thus, the problem of 'coloured culture' became one of the most important social aspects to undermine apartheid. In the ideology of separate development, the oppressive South African regime already carried the prospect of its own demise. Before this could pass, however,

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[259] Veronica Allen, 'Chairman's Report for the Financial Year 1976-1977', 5:32.
[260] Norval, *Deconstructing*, 189.
[261] Ibid.

millions of coloured and black South Africans first had to live through a dehumanising system which reduced them to nothing more than the colour of their skin.

This chapter has shown how the ambivalence of skin colour, and its concomitant associations of history, heritage, and culture, had a profound impact on the formation of notions of colouredness. It has argued that the idea of a 'coloured race' influenced the construction of segregationist ideology, and that this grouping served simultaneously as a key originary feature, and as one of the elements informing the eventual demise of the apartheid regime. Through the close interlacing of race with place, the politics of twentieth-century South Africa constructed narratives of belonging informed not only by socio-political and economic alignments, but also by geographical groupings. In this thesis, therefore, the conflation of race, place, and culture will become a key critical element. Coloured people's ability to transgress the often porous boundaries—whether cultural, geographical, or racial—between white and coloured, will become a significant feature of the Eoan Group's activities, and will inform discussions of their productions, their sound, and of the various ways in which they managed to transgress the apartheid confines that tied them.

Chapter 2

Voice

In 2007, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), a Cape Town-based Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO),[262] launched a community project titled 'Songs Worth Singing, Words Worth Saying'. Aimed at disenfranchised Cape Town youth, it comprised a series of music and poetry workshops that culminated in public performances by the pupils of 'songs considered as "classics" of Cape Town' and readings of poetry written for or during the workshops.[263] The project was designed to 'heal the wounds of the past' and to facilitate reconciliation, by promoting understanding of the multiple cultural identities of the Western Cape, and by drawing them together.[264] For Denis-Constant Martin, the 'Songs Worth Singing, Words Worth Hearing' project represents the 'most important initiative aiming at recovering and uncovering Cape Town's musical past as completely as possible'.[265] The resulting publications—an e-Songbook, CD and DVD recording of the public presentations—provide insight into the types of music included in this 'complete' reconstruction of Cape Town's musical past: it presents Khoisan bow music (performed by Khoi Khonnexion), an African lullaby and an initiation song, a medley of *ghoemaliedjies* and *moppies* characteristic of coloured New Year's celebrations, Cape jazz, and choral renditions of spiritual and political songs dating from the anti-apartheid struggle. Statements by participating facilitators, including important jazz musicians from the apartheid

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[262] The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation was launched in 2000, 'in the wake of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC]' ('Vision and Mission', *IJR: The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation*, 2017, http://www.ijr.org.za/about-us/, accessed 27 November 2017). 'The aim was to ensure that lessons learnt from South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy were taken into account as the nation moved ahead' (ibid.). It is not clear what the exact structural relationship between the IJR and the TRC is, but the institute's founder, Charles Villa-Vicencio, was the TRC's National Research Director, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who chaired the TRC, is the IJR's patron. The institute's programmes focus on justice, reconciliation, advocacy, and research across the African continent ('Programmes', ibid.).
[263] Denis-Constant Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa*, Cape Town: African Minds, 2013, 306.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Ibid., 305.

era, reveal an underlying naiveté in the project. Trumpeter Ian Smith, for instance, claimed that 'there has never been any musical apartheid in [Cape Town]', while fellow trumpeter Duke Ngcukana agreed that 'colour was never an issue' among musicians.[266] Such declarations reveal the 'Songs Worth Singing' project to have been fundamentally skewed in favour of a romanticised view of Cape Town's (and wider South African) musical culture as inherently democratic. As a result, the moral and structural complexities of cultural survival under the repressive apartheid regime were obscured in favour of a monolithic perspective on the arts, exacerbated by the exclusion of other musical styles that may have been (or still be) practiced in Cape Town and beyond.

The exclusions enacted by the 'Songs Worth Singing, Words Worth Saying' project are most strikingly codified in the project's title. In the confirmation that certain songs are worth singing, the phrase tacitly suggests that others are *not*. Likewise, language can be relegated to the categories of 'worthy' or 'unworthy', based on a set of values determined by the project's underlying directive of 'reconciliation'. Hence, the title emphasises the reduction of the domain of both the 'sayable' and the 'singable' to that which is deemed worthy of promoting reconciliation, and excludes moments of ambiguity or subversion.[267] As a construction of Cape Town's musical past, 'Songs Worth Singing, Words Worth Saying' points to a project of selective memorialisation representative of a broader trend in writing on South Africa's apartheid music history.

Songs Worth Singing

An enormous amount of research has been dedicated to the study of musical practices under the apartheid regime. The scope of such scholarship is immense, and includes examinations both of

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266 Ibid., 307.
267 Judith Butler (*Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, New York and London: Routledge, 1997) conceives of the 'domain of the sayable' (133) in relation to patterns of censorship. I shall return to her work later in this chapter.

explicitly resistant music cultures (such as struggle songs, jazz, and white Afrikaans protest music)[268] and of the quotidian patterns of musical performance and consumption that formed part of the politicised regimes of survival practiced by South Africa's disenfranchised people.[269] The magnitude of this body of work bears evidence to the importance of music in composing apartheid history.

As demonstrated by the titles listed above, music functions as a powerful representative not only of the struggle against apartheid, but also of life under the regime. Together with other forms of cultural expression such as theatre and literature, music was used both as a popular tool to mobilise resistance, and as a means of claiming communal identity under a system that endeavoured to rob people of their personhood. Shirli Gilbert comments that

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[268] On struggle songs, see for instance Shirli Gilbert, 'Singing Against Apartheid: ANC Cultural Groups and the International Anti-Apartheid Struggle', in *Composing Apartheid: Music for and Against Apartheid*, ed. Grant Olwage, Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008, 155-184; Ian Kerkhof, 'Music in the Revolution', *Keskidee: A Journal of Black Musical Traditions* 2, 1989, 10-21; Christopher Ballantine, 'Music and Emancipation: The Social Role of Black Jazz and Vaudeville in South Africa Between the 1920s and the Early 1940s', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 17(1), 1991, 129-52; H.Q. Kivnick, *Where is the Way: Song and Struggle in South Africa*, New York: Penguin, 1990; A.B. Pollard, 'Rhythms of Resistance: The Role of Freedom Song in South Africa', in *'This is How We Flow': Rhythm in Black Cultures*, ed. A.M.S. Nelson, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999, 98-124; Frank Tenaille, *Music is the Weapon of the Future: Fifty Years of African Popular Music*, Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 2002; Michela E. Vershbow, 'The Sounds of Resistance: The Role of Music in South Africa's Anti-Apartheid Movement', *Inquiries Journal* 2(6), 2010, http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/a?id=265, accessed 19 September 2017; and Lee Hirsh's film *Amandla! A revolution in Four Part Harmony*, Santa Monica, CA.: Artisan Home Entertainment, 2003. On jazz, see Christopher Ballantine, *Marabi Nights: Jazz, 'Race' and Society in Early Apartheid South Africa*, Scottsville: University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2012; Gwen Ansell, *Soweto Blues: Jazz, Popular Music and Politics in South Africa*, New York: Continuum, 2004; and Chatradari Devroop and Chris Walton, *Unsung: South African Jazz Musicians Under Apartheid*, Stellenbosch: SUN Press, 2007. White Afrikaans protest music is considered in such publications as Michael Drewett, 'Satirical Opposition in Popular Music within Apartheid and Post-Apartheid South Africa', *Society in Transition* 33(1), 2002, 80-90; Drewett, 'Battling over Borders: Narratives of Resistance to the South African Border War Voiced through Popular Music', *Social Dynamics* 29(1), 2003, 26-47; Albert Grundlingh, 'Rocking the Boat? The "Voëlvry" Music Movement in South Africa: Anatomy of Afrikaans Anti-Apartheid Social Protest in the Eighties', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37(3), 2004, 483-508; Pat Hopkins, *Voëlvry: The Movement that Rocked South Africa*, Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2006; and Maria Suriano and Clara Lewis, '*Afrikaners is Plesierig! Voëlvry* Music, Anti-Apartheid Identities and Rockey Street Nightclubs in Yeoville (Johannesburg), 1980s-90s', *African Studies* 74(3), 2015, 404-28. These lists are by no means exhaustive.

[269] These include, amongst others, Veit Erlmann, *Nightsong: Performance, Power, and Practice in South Africa*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996; David B. Coplan, *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre*, London: Longman, 1985; Z.B. Molefe and Mike Mzileni, *A Common Hunger to Sing*, Cape Town: NB, 2010; Lara Allen, 'Kwela's White Audiences: The Politics of Pleasure and Identification in the Early Apartheid Period', in *Composing Apartheid*, ed. Grant Olwage, 79-97; Christopher Cockburn, 'Discomposing Apartheid's Story: Who Owns Handel?', in *Composing Apartheid*, ed. Grant Olwage, 55-77; and Christine Lucia (ed.), *The World of South African Music: A Reader*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005.

> asserting culture [under apartheid] was a rebellious act of asserting national identity and refusing colonised status. A democratic and expressive 'people's culture', in other words, was not something that would come after liberation, but was an essential psychological requirement for *achieving* liberation.[270]

For Gilbert, the assertion of culture was a rebellious act because it asserted a specifically *national* identity. In other words, cultural expression was not about asserting individual identity as a means of claiming agency within the dehumanising circumstances of apartheid; rather, it was about unifying individuals into a collective that could resist the divisive politics of the regime, and about preparing for the nationhood of 'the people'. In this formulation, therefore, we encounter an embedded link between culture and nationalism: those assertions of culture that contributed to 'national identity' were recognised as part of the 'democratic and expressive people's culture'.[271] Memorialising apartheid's music in post-apartheid South Africa functions as an extension of the process of musical nation-building that was initiated during the struggle. This forms part of the broader project of memorialisation, ongoing since 1994, which according to Chris Saunders has been not only about remembering the struggle, but also about nation-building.[272] Remembering, and in many instances commemorating, the past hence acts as a catalyst for a unified national identity.

In keeping with the title of the IJR project, the nation-building ideal of the memorialising agenda has led to the construction of an apartheid soundtrack that privileges certain songs (and sounds) over others. Specifically, sounds that are consistent with the construction of a unified national identity have taken priority in the writing of apartheid history. Nowhere is this as evident as in Lee Hirsh's *Amandla!: A Revolution in Four Part Harmony*, an award-winning film about the relationship between music and political resistance in South Africa.[273] *Amandla!* (isiNguni for

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[270] Gilbert, 'Singing Against Apartheid', 172, emphasis in the original.
[271] This is a familiar model, especially in narrations of nineteenth-century German identity, as shown by Alexander Rehding in *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
[272] Chris Saunders, 'Memorializing Freedom Struggles', *Safundi* 9(3), 2008, 335-42, 338.
[273] The film won numerous South African and international awards, including the Best South African Film Audience Award at Encounters South African International Documentary Festival (2002); a Golden Satellite Award for Best Motion Picture, Documentary, at the Satellite Awards (2004); and the Audience Award and Freedom of Expression Award at the Sundance Film Festival (2002).

'power') focuses on liberation songs and their role in the struggle against apartheid. For Hirsh, the role played by these songs was important enough to deem the overthrow of the apartheid regime 'the first revolution to be conducted in four-part harmony',[274] suggesting that music alone was responsible for political change in South Africa. Such a view promotes a reductive perspective on the struggle, which, as Ingrid Byerly observes, 'fail[s] to recognize the complexity of the revolutionary process'.[275] Furthermore, it propagates a monolithic view of the political and musical life in which disenfranchised South Africans partook. Creating the impression that 'singing against apartheid' was the only option open to non-white citizens, *Amandla!* effectively erases alternative modes of existence under the regime, and appears to endorse the view that only certain types of music qualified as valid sonic representations of apartheid life.[276] While Michela Vershbow contends that Hirsh's film 'provide[s] a window into a world that the apartheid regime hid so well',[277] *Amandla!* in fact serves to conceal this world even further by focusing on spectacularised performances of opposition. These protests, with their excesses of sound, movement, and violence, were arguably only the most visible aspects of the anti-apartheid struggle, and obscured the intricate patterns of survival traced by those existing behind the screens of smoke, dust, and noise.[278]

Amandla!'s depiction of musical life under apartheid points to a widespread impulse in both public and academic memorialisation to group apartheid-era social and cultural practices under the labels of 'resistant' or 'oppressive'. The result is a curation of sounds into what

[274] Hirsh, 2002, cited in Vershbow, 'The Sounds of Resistance'.
[275] Ingrid Byerly, 'Decomposing Apartheid: Things Come Together: The Anatomy of a Music Revolution', in *Composing Apartheid*, ed. Grant Olwage, 255-80, 261. Lindelwa Dalamba ('Disempowering Music: The *Amandla!* Documentary and Other Conservative Musical Projects', *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies* 13(3-4), 2012, 295-315, 307) further notes 'the incongruity […] suggested by a revolution in four-part harmony, a consequence of musical colonialism'. Hirsh seems to overlook this paradox altogether.
[276] Dalamba argues that '*Amandla!* […] reduces the many roles that music may take up in disenfranchised communities to a disempowering mythology that romanticizes and essentializes the past as "a simple dichotomy between apartheid and resistance"' (Dalamba, 'Disempowering Music', 309).
[277] Vershbow, 'The Sounds of Resistance'.
[278] Njabulo S. Ndebele writes on the spectacularisation and 'obscene social exhibitionism' of the anti-apartheid struggle in 'The Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Some New Writings in South Africa', in *Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Essays on South African Literature and Culture*, ed. Njabulo S. Ndebele, Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006 [1991], 41-59, 41.

Christopher Cockburn calls 'two unified and opposed categories—stories told in black and white'.[279] Within these categories, the instrumentalisation of music as a tool of oppression or of resistance persists. Writing about the Cultural Wing of the African National Congress, Gilbert describes the resistance movement's promotion of culture as 'a weapon in the struggle for national liberation'.[280] For culture to fulfil this role, however, it had to observe a specific set of paradigms:

> It was widely agreed [within the ANC] that the ideal art was not elitist or exclusive, but was intimately connected with 'the people'. Its purpose was not only to portray their plight—according to artist Thami Mnyele, this isolation was the theme of 'defeatist' township art—but to articulate their 'hopes and aspirations', to encourage commitment to the struggle, and to promote the affirmative values of a democratic South Africa. The kind of art that provided mere entertainment for the masses was also considered unacceptable: truly revolutionary art served to educate, awaken political consciousness and galvanise people to action. Finally, art was a vehicle for condemning the regime and informing the world about apartheid.[281]

The ideals informing this perspective on 'acceptable' art appear to have spilled over into the writing of apartheid history. Narratives are employed to depict unequivocal defiance, and to portray an image of absolute politicisation of all aspects of life. In order to preserve this unified (and romanticised) perspective on the struggle, only those voices that sustain such a politicised impression can be allowed to sound within its constructed narrative.

Mark Malisa and Nandipha Malange, in 'Songs for Freedom: Music and the Struggle Against Apartheid',[282] give an overview of the powerful role various styles of music played in the struggle against apartheid, and draw attention to genres such as reggae that remain neglected by scholarship. Revealing their own ideological position, they comment on recent controversies in South Africa surrounding the singing of protest songs dating to the anti-apartheid struggle:

> 'Dubul' ibhunu' [translated popularly as 'Shoot the *boer*'], made popular during the height of the guerrilla warfare, for example, has been recently associated with hate speech … Likewise, 'Umshini Wami' ['Bring me my machine gun'], a song that President [Jacob]

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279 Cockburn, 'Discomposing Apartheid's Story: Who Owns Handel?', 56.

280 Gilbert, 'Singing Against Apartheid', 172.

281 Ibid.

282 In *The Routledge History of Social Protest in Popular Music*, ed. Jonathan C. Friedman, New York: Routledge, 2013, 304-18.

> Zuma used as a rallying call for his presidency, has almost been taken off the airwaves in South Africa. There seems to be a deliberate and systematic silencing of the songs of freedom, all in the interest of national healing and reconciliation. It is as if to have reconciliation and healing, those who fought apartheid have to forget their story, their songs. Indeed, at the birth of the post-apartheid dispensation, intellectuals like Njabulo Ndebele and Albie Sachs began to critique the role of art and culture in national struggle and debate, concluding that 'our members should be banned from saying that culture is a weapon of struggle'.[283]

For Malisa and Malange, the suppression of certain songs constitutes a project of forgetting, motivated by an interest in nation building. By implication, the anti-apartheid struggle is directly mapped onto these songs, so that their silencing results in the erasure of memory. While I do not wish to oppose their criticism of the protest song controversy, I am struck by the impression that they view culture as static: as fragments of a monumentalised political struggle, these songs represent 'the right side' of the ethical binary, thereby insulating them from reinscription and social change, and rendering them unambiguously 'good'.

Their subsequent tacit condemnation of Ndebele and Sachs augments the impression that they argue for an understanding of culture as unequivocally politically aligned. Incorrectly attributing Sachs's recommendation to Ndebele, Malisa and Malange omit both the context and the qualifying statements surrounding Sachs's words. The quotation they present as a critique of 'the role of art and culture in national struggle and debate', was actually part of an address titled 'Preparing Ourselves for Freedom', delivered by Sachs at an in-house ANC seminar in Lusaka. Sachs called for 'a five-year moratorium on the saying "culture is a weapon of struggle"', since it had '"impoverish[ed]" art, "narrow[ed] down" themes, "extrud[ed] all that is funny or curious or genuinely tragic", and "shut out" ambiguity and contradiction, effectively trapping a nation in "the multiple ghettoes of the apartheid imagination"'.[284] Shirli Gilbert expounds Sachs's view:

> In explanation, he gave his impressions of the current state of ANC art: it confined itself to a narrow range of politically acceptable themes ('fists and spears and guns'), portrayed the anti-apartheid struggle in simplistic terms of good and evil, and shunned nuance and ambiguity for 'solemn formulas of commitment'. He insisted, however, that the very

[283] Ndebele, 1989, quoted in Malisa and Malange, 'Songs for Freedom', 306.
[284] Sachs, 1989, cited in Vilashini Cooppan, 'National Literature in Transnational Times: Writing Transition in the "New" South Africa' in *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*, eds. Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005, 346-69, 367 n.26.

> power of art lay in its capacity to expose complexity and contradiction; furthermore, the ideal art 'is that which bypasses, overwhelms, ignores apartheid, establishes its own space'.[285]

Malisa and Malange interpret Sachs's comments as a criticism of the role played by the arts in the struggle against apartheid. Instead, I suggest that his statement reflected disapproval of the monolithic and utilitarian alignment of culture with crude political binarism.[286] For Sachs, there was certainly a place for culture within political struggle, however, that was not to be its only place. It also had a role to fulfil in exposing the contradictions that characterised the daily struggle for existence, and the desire to transcend the boundaries enacted by the oppressive regime. Malisa and Malange, however, appear to argue for a more radical conception of culture as always participating in a politics of opposition—if not in the present, then as part of the memorialisation of a politicised past.

The curation of the 'people's soundtrack' of apartheid has thus far been more closely aligned with the views of Malisa and Malange than with those of Sachs. While numerous authors have published investigations of apartheid-era music cultures and practices not directly related to protest songs,[287] they remain beholden to the political binary of South Africa's past. This binary is drawn along the boundary of a notion of difference that finds itself in direct opposition to the white political centre of apartheid South Africa, and is characterised by traits that emphasise the subjects' distance from the oppressive norm. These include, in various combinations, exile, protest, blackness, jazz, and/or the articulation of an explicit politics of resistance (as

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[285] Gilbert, 'Singing Against Apartheid', 155.

[286] Although Sachs was specifically addressing the ANC and its cultural vision, his paper points to a wider concern with the political nature and potential of art in society. In his reflection on the impact of his paper (Sachs, 'Afterword: The Taste of an Avocado Pear', in *Spring is Rebellious: Arguments About Cultural Freedom*, eds. Ingrid de Kok and Karen Press, Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1990, 145-48), for instance, he observes that 'Preparing Ourselves for Freedom' is concerned with the question, 'What does it mean to be a South African?', and argues that '[t]he artists, more than anyone, can help us discover ourselves. Culture in the broad sense is our vision of ourselves and our world' (ibid., 146). 'Ourselves', in his paper's title, hence does not only refer to ANC members, but to South African society as a diverse whole.

[287] These include Ballantine, Ansell, Devroop, and Walton on jazz; Erlmann on *isicathamiya*; Coplan on township music; Carol Ann Muller (*Musical Echoes: South African Women Thinking in Jazz*, Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 2011) and Molefi and Mzileni on black female singers; and Allen on Kwela.

exemplified, for instance, by the white Afrikaans *Voëlvry* movement).[288] Such scholarship therefore reveals the fetishisation of a form of otherness defined by opposition—if not politically, then racially. In turn, the musical lives of those who fall outside of the perimeters of this fetishised difference remain silent within surveys of South Africa's musical-political past.[289] For this reason, the South African political sound world consists of a number of firmly established voices, while the ambivalent sounds of the margin remain muted. Among these muted voices can be counted the black singers of the Johannesburg African Music Society (JAMS), who staged annual performances of Handel's *Messiah* under similar circumstances to the Eoan productions,[290] and the Eoan singers themselves. Unlike the Eoan Group, JAMS did not endure ostracisation by its own community,[291] most likely because they did not receive funding from the apartheid government. However, like the Eoan Group, their tale remains largely ignored

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[288] The *Voëlvry* (meaning 'outlawed' or 'free as a bird') movement was a musical resistance project developed by a group of young, white Afrikaans musicians, including André Letoit, Johannes Kerkorrel, James Phillips, and Bernoldus Niemand. They took their particular style of Afrikaans rock to white campuses and venues around the country to raise awareness among Afrikaans youth about the iniquities of the apartheid regime, and to protest against conscription. For more on the movement, see Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, and Grundlingh, 'Rocking the Boat?'. Koos Kombuis (the pen name of André Letoit) published a memoir of the movement titled *Die Tyd van die Kombi's* (The Time of the Mini Buses) in 2009 (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau).

[289] Three important texts that look beyond these boundaries have been published in the last ten years. These are Grant Olwage's edited volume *Composing Apartheid* (2008), which includes chapters on black choral performances of Handel's *Messiah* in Johannesburg (Cockburn, 'Discomposing Apartheid's Story') and on white art music composer Arnold van Wyk (Stephanus Muller, 'Arnold van Wyk's Hands', 281-99); Christine Lucia's *The World of South African Music* (2009), which includes a section on 'Apartheid and Musicology', with contributions such as J.J.A. van der Walt and G.G. Cillié's 'Aspects of Afrikaans Music' (90-2), W.S.J. Grobler's 'The FAK and Afrikaans Music' (106-107), and 'Opera Houses in South Africa' by Jacques Malan (125-28); and Denis-Constant Martin's investigation of musical creolisation in Cape Town (*Sounding the Cape*, 2013), which provides a comprehensive survey of Cape Town's musical legacy, ranging from indigenous practices to Western art music, and including brief discussions of coloured musical activities viewed as compromised under apartheid, such as *Klopse* and the Eoan Group operas.

[290] The JAMS performances, like the Eoan performances, were obliged to be presented to segregated audiences, and enjoyed enthusiastic support from white patrons. The history of this group, which comprised members of a number of black church choirs from the townships around Johannesburg, has also been neglected. Christopher Cockburn included information on them as part of his doctoral dissertation tracing the performance history of the *Messiah* in South Africa (see Christopher Cockburn, 'The Establishment of a Musical Tradition: Meaning, Value and Social Process in the South African History of Handel's *Messiah*', PhD Dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2008), and published a chapter touching on the ambiguities surrounding their performances in Grant Olwage's *Composing Apartheid*. I have been unable to find other secondary sources on these performances.

[291] Cockburn reveals that singers, despite receiving some criticism for engaging in 'the colonialists' culture', were generally celebrated in their communities, while the performances themselves were surrounded by a 'discourse of achievement' ('Discomposing Apartheid's Story', 76). The performances eventually came to an end, not because of boycotts or a lack of support, but due to difficulties in finding a suitable venue and in obtaining the necessary permits from the apartheid government.

in recent apartheid memory. It would therefore be irresponsible to ascribe the Eoan Group's acceptance of state funding as the only reason for their omission from struggle discourse. Instead, it appears that both these groups remain excluded from the apartheid soundtrack because they undermine the easy binary of racially marked cultures sounding for or against the oppressive regime.

The inclusion of certain musical cultures in constructions of apartheid history signals an 'envoicing' of these styles and their practitioners by those responsible for the curation of the past. Acknowledgement, here, serves as a metaphorical 'granting-of-voice' to those responsible for the recognised sounds—an admission of power and legitimacy within a contested historical and political context. In this reading, 'voice' signals agency and power, a mapping acknowledged by Amanda Weidman as salient within anthropological categorisations of subjectivity and representation.[292] Weidman, following Steven Feld and Aaron Fox, observes that the notion of 'having a voice' in common parlance already indicates the voice's status as 'a key representational trope for social position and power'.[293] Being granted metaphorical voice implies being granted agency, subjectivity, and citizenship; the right 'to speak, or sing, for the nation'.[294]

In turn, the denial of voice, effected through a refusal of acknowledgement, amounts to the disavowal of agency. Such denial plays out in official histories through the exclusions they perform: when an event or person is not deemed worthy of being remembered—when a song is unworthy of being sung—it falls short of that which is considered admissible to history, and is effectively relegated to the shadows of illegitimacy. For Judith Butler, this amounts to a form of functional censorship designed to contribute to the process of nation-building:

> [T]he restriction of speech is instrumental to the achievements of other, often unstated, social and state goals. One example of this includes a conception of censorship as a necessary part of the process of nation-building, where censorship can be exercised by marginalized groups who seek to achieve cultural control over their own representation and narrativization. […] Another example is the use of censorship in the codification of

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292 Amanda Weidman, 'Anthropology and Voice', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43, 2014, 37-51, 38.
293 Feld and Fox, 1994, cited in Weidman, 'Anthropology and Voice', 38.
294 Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, 14.

> memory, as in state control over monument preservation and building, or in the insistence that certain kinds of historical events only be narrated one way.[295]

Butler states that the silencing of certain sounds signifies a form of control over self-representation and over the representation of history. While she observes the ability of marginalised groups to exercise such control, however, she acknowledges that such self-determination, if achieved at all, is hard-won. Observing that 'the conditions of intelligibility are themselves formulated in and by power', Butler points out that censorship itself is a privilege accessible only to those already endowed with agency and legitimacy.

South African musical-political historiography, as shown above, follows a distinct set of parameters for granting legitimacy. Both the Eoan Group and JAMS transgressed these strictures by crossing the boundaries of political difference: while racially 'other', they engaged in cultural forms associated with the reviled centre. As a result, they have been denied a place in apartheid's music history; effectively denied a voice. Yet, during apartheid these voices were highly audible. They rang out, both physically and metaphorically, into a milieu eager to recognise them and grant them legitimacy. Acknowledgement in this instance, however, did not translate to agency. The producers of these sounds did not possess (or gain) the conventional power accorded voice. Thus, they continue to confound theories of vocal power.

Amanda Weidman proposes the concept of 'voicing' as a tool to 'help to break down the dichotomy often drawn between "having a voice" and being silent or silenced by suggesting ways to interpret voices that are highly audible and public but not agentive in a classic sense […], including voices that sing rather than speak'.[296] Voicing, then, becomes a measure of distinct, but disenfranchised, sonic presence. However, for Weidman, voicing cannot begin to account for the unique and bewildering politics sounded out by marginal voices unless it moves beyond the metaphorical understanding of voice 'as a key representational trope for social position and

[295] Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 132. Where Butler refers to 'speech' I opt to substitute 'voice'—while her work is specifically engaged with linguistic expression, I believe that many of her arguments can be extended to include non-linguistic vocal expression.
[296] Weidman, 'Anthropology and Voice', 43.

power'[297] to include the 'more sonically and linguistically focused study of actual voices and vocal practices'.[298] She maintains that 'attending to voice in its multiple registers gives particular insight into the intimate, affective, and material/embodied dimensions of cultural life and socio-political identity'[299] and calls, therefore, for a linking of these distinct planes of theorisation in scholarly assessments of voice. This chapter heeds that call: by bringing a metaphorical conception of vocal power into conversation with the material voices of the Eoan singers, it seeks to come to terms with the contradiction between their physical audibility and their political silence.

Voice Theory

Vocal materiality—the physical, living production of voice—politicises vocality by invoking the bodies of those that sound. Contrasting materiality with widespread assumptions of vocal ephemerality, Michelle Duncan, for instance, speaks of the presence of voice as a 'corporeal unconscious', a 'spectre that haunts with vocal residue'.[300] For Duncan, the sounding voice is undeniably and irresistibly present; it hence also claims presence—and, by extension, subjectivity—for its producer. This presence or subjectivity, Duncan continues, is both physical and social: voice situates the body within a 'body politic', and it leaves 'material remainders' on both.[301] Such an understanding of voice—as capable of altering its physical and social environment (the environment of the body politic)—assumes that voices always sound into malleable spaces, worlds open and eager for sonic inscription by their interlocutors. The body

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[297] Feld and Fox, 1994, cited in Weidman, ibid., 38.
[298] Ibid.
[299] Ibid.
[300] Michelle Duncan, 'The Operatic Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16(3), 2004, 283-306, 303-4. Elsewhere, Duncan compares the materiality of voice to water: 'Because voice is both abstract and material, it conveniently accommodates a task that is both elusive and concrete. Voice is like water, a material that can be held in hand, but never held fast. In its magical fluidity, voice is inextricably bound up with the condition of language, and yet it is something more than language that is impossible to pin down or to control' (ibid., 285 n.8).
[301] '[V]oice leaves material remainders. Aural spectacle echoes from beyond the beyond as opera's spectre, a spectre that haunts with vocal residue. […] Performance remains […] remain in the fabric of the body/body politic like a corporeal unconscious' (ibid.).

invoked by Duncan's description of vocal materiality is therefore always already one capable of effecting change; of claiming agency; of impressing itself upon its environment. Voice, for Duncan, is always agentive.

Yet, as the preceding evaluation of apartheid's voices has shown, not all voices possess agency: the disenfranchised voice, even when sounding at full volume, often rings into a vacuum. The 'corporeal unconscious' of the powerless voice is no more than a shadow of and upon its producer's body. In Duncan's formulation of vocal materiality, such a voice is therefore immaterial—it disappears the moment it sounds, and the empowered sphere carries on as before, unaware of the call it has ignored. The problem with such a formulation is evident: if materiality belongs only to those voices that already possess political enfranchisement, the possibility of acknowledging the marginalised voice as sounding subject is foreclosed. As Weidman's formulation of 'voicing' suggests, in contrast, disenfranchised vocality does possess its own measure of presence, yet it is not a presence that can be quantified as 'effect', or 'residue'.

The disenfranchised voice, capable of claiming sonic presence while simultaneously unable to escape disempowerment, is a matter with which existing voice scholarship has not yet come to terms. This is, as this chapter will show, essentially a problem of the nature of the materiality accorded voice. Conceiving of voice as spatially constituted, theorists invoke tropes of interaction, exchange, and mutuality that attribute a kind of floating authority to sonic expression: perpetually on the move, the voice seems to transcend the hierarchical organisation of physical geographies. Yet, while the topological nature of sonic emission strongly invokes abstract conceptions of space,[302] the rest of this chapter will show how the locatedness of the voice, the body producing it, and the one to whom it addresses itself, have a profound impact on the construction and realisation of agency. If vocal materiality and embodiment are truly to inform theoretical and philosophical constructions of vocal authority, voice scholarship therefore has to turn its gaze to place, in favour of space. Only a conception of vocal materiality that can take into

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302 Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006, 72. I return to the spatialisation of voice further on in this chapter.

account the physical distribution of hierarchies of power would be able to account for subjugated voices as physical emissions.

Existing tropes of vocal theorisation are informed by what Weidman identifies as 'two powerful ideas about voice [bequeathed to us by] Western metaphysical and linguistic thought'. The first is 'the idea of voice as guarantor of truth and self-presence', while the second argues that 'the sonic and material aspects of the voice are separable from and subordinate to its referential content or message'.[303] Here, understandings of the relationship between voice and body, voice and language, voice and the other, and voice and rationality, are subsumed into two basic conceptions of speech and subjectivity: firstly, that sonorous speech signifies authentic selfhood, and secondly that vocal sonority itself does not necessarily entail intelligibility (and, therefore, subjectivity).

Notions of voice as signifying presence are widespread throughout literature on both music and language, or more specifically, song and speech. For Steven Connor, 'voice cannot not be thought of in relation to the idea of presence, since, as Walter Ong suggests, "manifestation of personal presence is not something added to voice. Voice is not peopled with presences. It itself is the manifestation of presence".'[304] Wayne Koestenbaum, similarly, acknowledges that 'in Western metaphysics […] voice accords presence',[305] as does Adriana Cavarero when she writes that 'the voice belongs to the living; it communicates the presence of an existent in flesh and bone'.[306] Cavarero's statement further reflects the particular nature of the presence accorded by voice: rather than merely confirming that the subject exists in an abstract sense, the sounding

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303 Weidman, 'Anthropology and Voice', 39. Lawrence Kramer observes that these two paradigms originate in Derridean metaphysics and Lacanian psychoanalysis respectively. For Derrida, the voice is 'a medium of self-presence', while Lacan (and later Slavoj Žižek and Mladen Dolar) 'regards voice as a drive-invested object' (Kramer, 'The Voice of/in Opera', in *On Voice*, eds. Walter Bernhart and Lawrence Kramer, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014, 43-55, 50). While I acknowledge the Derridean and Lacanian origins of these theses, this chapter opts to focus on the way they have been taken up in contemporary voice discourse.

304 Steven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 24.

305 Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire*, London: Poseidon, 1993, 155.

306 Adriana Cavarero, *For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, tr. Paul A. Kottman, Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2005, 177.

voice signifies presence as physical, as embodied. As such, it confirms the nature of existence as physically—and sonically—situated. The authentic subject cannot comprehensively be represented by the 'written voice'[307] since the written voice does not capture the embodied nature of subjectivity. Cavarero captures this understanding of the relationship between sounding voice and material presence best when she follows Italo Calvino in arguing that 'a voice means this: there is a living person, throat, chest, feelings, who sends into the air this voice, different from all other voices […] A voice involves the throat, saliva. When the human voice vibrates, there is someone in flesh and bone who emits it.'[308] In other words, the most authentic subject is the one that is sonically, and therefore by extension physically, present.[309] Yet, even as Cavarero acknowledges that the sounding voice signifies embodied presence, she displays a curious disregard for the situatedness of embodiment: 'there is a living person', she states, 'there is someone in flesh and bone'. She does not, however, stipulate where this 'there' might be. Instead, she invokes a floating corporeality that remains unbounded by the limitations of location. The 'living person', out of sight, but within earshot, could be anywhere: as long as she remains out-of-place, literally 'displaced', she can claim the authority of being heard. Dis-located vocality, as will be shown later, invokes notions of 'deterritorialization' and 'interactive space'[310] to claim universal agency for voice. It remains, however, an agency that breaks down when confronted with the hierarchical organisation of physical bodies within material geographies.

Cavarero's evocation of the 'living person', the 'throat, chest […] saliva […] flesh and bone' involved in producing voice draws attention to voice theory's increasing preoccupation with the body. 'Speech', writes Cavarero, 'is always a question of bodies, filled with drives,

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[307] Brigitte Stougaard Pedersen, 'Voice and Presence in Music and Literature: Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*', in *On Voice*, eds. Walter Bernhart and Lawrence Kramer, 117-28, 122. Pedersen writes that 'the spoken voice is connected to an expression of presence, while the written voice is connected to absence'. She hence situates presence in sonority, rather than language.
[308] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 4.
[309] Importantly, Pedersen argues that it is exactly this privileging of sounding voice as representative of true subjectivity that Derrida opposes in his theorisation of voice as self-presence: 'In Derrida's reading, phonocentrism [the authenticity discourse of the physical voice] resulted in a widespread conception in Western thought of the spoken voice as more authentic than the written' (Pedersen, 'Voice and Presence', 122).
[310] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 204.

desires, and blood. The voice vibrates, the tongue moves. Wet membranes and taste buds are mixed up with the flavour of the tones'.[311] For Cavarero, the body impresses itself sonically upon vocal emission by drawing attention to the embodied nature of vocal production. It reminds both speaker and listener that the making of the voice involves tongue, teeth, and flesh as much as it involves thought, and that these corporeal apparatuses impact upon what is heard, as much as the mind does. Indeed, the impact of the body upon the voice is such that stereotypical assumptions regarding the types of voice that should emanate from specific types of bodies have to a large extent become normalised.[312] Voice, with its reliance on the body, is therefore understood to be presupposed or overdetermined by the body from which it sounds. Mladen Dolar, however, inverts the physical determinism of the voice when he summarises the relationship as follows: 'There is no voice without a body, but yet again this relation is full of pitfalls: it seems that the voice pertains to the wrong body, or doesn't fit the body at all, or disjoints the body from which it emanates'.[313] This discrepancy between voice and body—what Dolar calls a 'pitfall'—suggests a disavowal of the body by the voice: a freeing of sonority from the determinism of the physical.[314]

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311 Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 134. This physicality of vocal production also informs Roland Barthes's conception of the vocalising body—what he refers to as 'grain', or 'the body in the voice' (Barthes, 'The Grain of the Voice', in *Image, Music Text*, tr. and ed. Stephen Heath, London: Fontana, 1977, 179-89.) For a critical consideration of the significance of Barthes's 'grain' for musicology, see Jonathan Dunsby, 'Roland Barthes and the Grain of Panzéra's Voice', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 134(1), 2009, 113-32.

312 The most pervasive of these, of course, being voices associated with racialised and gendered bodies. See, for instance, Suzanne G. Cusick, 'On Musical Performances of Gender and Sex', in *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, and Music*, eds. Elaine Barkin and Lydia Hamessley, Los Angeles: Carciofoli Verlagshaus, 1999, 25-48; Nina Sun Eidsheim, 'Voice as a Technology of Selfhood: Towards an Analysis of Racialized Timbre and Vocal Performance', PhD Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2008; Eidsheim, 'Marian Anderson and "Sonic Blackness" in American Opera', *American Quarterly* 63(3), 2011, 641-71; and John Baugh, 'Linguistic Profiling', in *Black Linguistics: Language, Society, and Politics in Africa and the Americas*, ed. Sinfree Makoni, London: Routledge, 2003, 155-68.

313 Mladen Dolar, *A Voice*, 60.

314 The disembodiment of the voice enacted by physically discrepant sonority is perhaps nowhere as palpable as in opera, where trouser roles and castrati, amongst others, disrupt traditional constructions of the vocalic body. See Michal Grover-Friedlander, 'Voice', in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, 318-33, 323. The term, 'the vocalic body', was coined by Steven Connor to refer to vocally constructed physicality—the notion that the voice evokes more closely the physicality of the role, rather than the player: 'The vocalic body is the idea […] of a surrogate or secondary body […] formed and sustained out of the autonomous operations of the voice' (Connor, *Dumbstruck*, 35). The simultaneous determinism and displacement of the corporeal in vocal emission—the notion that the voice is both the sonic image of *and* a stranger to the body from which it sounds—has had an especially profound impact upon the ideals of 'voice culture', to which this chapter will return.

Stanley Cavell, conversely, believes that a singer 'has a unique body that cannot be detached from her voice', despite the fact that the voice is experienced as disembodied within the character it sings into being.[315] It is not the body from which the voice emanates that seems incongruous, but rather the body that should be simulated by it. The voice hence remains 'essentially unaffected by the role'—a perpetual stranger to the subject it seeks to fabricate.[316] So fundamental does Cavell believe the link between voice and singing body to be that he refers to the operatic voice as 'the grandest realization of having a signature'.[317] This suggests that the operatic voice functions as the most direct manifestation of a singer's uniqueness; the true expression of her essence. Carolyn Abbate similarly identifies essence in the singing voice (what she calls the 'human harp'), since it 'refer[s] faultlessly to the creature-object that produces the sound, to its (to his, or her) essence'.[318] In both Abbate and Cavell's formulations, the musicality of the voice engaged in the act of singing is important. It foregrounds the sound of the voice—its melodiousness, the sensuous rhythm of its enunciation—above the semantic content of what it expresses, thereby drawing attention to the vocalising subject ('the creature-object that produces the sound'), rather than her words.[319]

The distinction drawn here between the sound of the voice and its linguistic content is fundamental to voice theory, and especially to those scholars who view the voice as what

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[315] Grover-Friedlander, 'Voice', 324.

[316] Stanley Cavell, *A Pitch of Philosophy: Autobiographical Exercises*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 137.

[317] Ibid., 144.

[318] Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, 57.

[319] Duncan develops Abbate's recognition of the 'embodied voice within the live performance of a work' (Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, x) in her call for greater awareness within opera studies of 'opera's material' (Duncan, 'The Operatic Scandal', 286). For Duncan, '"real" voice, "real" music, "real" body' (ibid.) are all inextricably tied to the physical presence of the singer on stage—a presence that is constructed as 'scandalous' in its carnality, and which gets ignored in favour of a focus upon the voice as disembodied, a product of the text, rather than the body: 'Despite the central role of the singer's body in the production of opera and the production of voice, opera studies persists in thinking of voice as extra-corporeal. Carnal voices are either lacking or absent, marked by what they do not do, operative through failure or negativity, or envisioned as supra-objects that are off the scale, excessively loud (and thus impossible to register or to be perceived as material) and potentially 'violent'. As for the body of the singer, opera studies has tended to ignore it altogether unless it possesses currency as the object of desire or of a fetish' (ibid., 285).

Lawrence Kramer calls 'a drive-invested object'.[320] Whereas metaphysical approaches regard the voice as a function of language—existent only inasmuch as a linguistic subject claims presence—understandings of the 'object voice' view voice as both prior to and beyond language. Dolar, for instance, asserts that the voice 'appears to mean more than mere words',[321] thus exceeding language and approaching transcendence.[322] He calls this passage beyond *logos* the 'danger of the voice',[323] while Cavell refers to it as 'a mad state'.[324] Duncan argues that the 'the force of vocal resonance does violence to […] the absolute sovereignty of language'.[325] This she calls the 'scandal' of the voice. Cavarero similarly declares that 'the voice stands in opposition to language',[326] and that it 'subvert[s] the normative system of language'.[327] Tellingly, Cavarero also invokes Barthes and his formulation of the grain of the voice to show that the voice undermines language. She writes that 'for Barthes, […] the drives of the body, of which the voice is an expression, makes the voice ideal for subverting the order of language and thus of politics'.[328] For Cavarero, it is clearly the fundamental link between voice and body that renders the voice antithetical to the systematisation of language. This link further also awards voice its status as representative of uniqueness,[329] a uniqueness that stands in opposition to the repeatability of language:

> [T]he voice—as it is studied from the perspective of language, and especially from the perspective of language as a system—becomes the general sphere of sonorous articulations where what is not heard is, paradoxically, the uniqueness of the sound.

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320 Kramer, 'The Voice of/in Opera', 50. As mentioned above, Kramer refers here specifically to Žižek and Dolar, following Lacan.
321 Dolar, *A Voice*, 31.
322 '[The voice] seems still to maintain the link with nature, on the one hand—the nature of a paradise lost—and on the other hand to transcend language, the cultural and symbolic barriers, in the opposite direction, as it were: it promises an ascent to divinity, an elevation above the empirical, the mediated, the limited, worldly human concerns. This illusion of transcendence accompanied the long history of the voice as the agent of the sacred, and the highly acclaimed role of music was based on its ambiguous link with both nature and divinity' (ibid.).
323 Ibid., 44.
324 Cavell, *A Pitch*, 144.
325 Duncan, 'Operatic Scandal', 291.
326 Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 132.
327 Ibid., 199.
328 Ibid., 198-9.
329 '[U]niqueness resounds in the human voice; or, in the human voice, uniqueness makes itself sound' (ibid., 177).

> Language insofar as it is a code, whose semantic soul aspires to the universal, renders imperceptible what is proper to the voice. […] Even those theories that focus on the corporal aspect of the voice—the hot rhythms of its emission, the pleasure of the throat and saliva—the plurality of unique voices still does not emerge as a matter worthy of note.[330]

Although Cavarero conceives of the voice as subversive of language, she does not regard it as resistant to speech. Indeed, for Cavarero, 'the voice is sound, not speech; but speech is its essential destination'.[331] Speech, in Cavarero's understanding, is 'not simply the verbal sphere of expression; it is also the point of tension between the uniqueness of the voice and the system of language'.[332] Here, then, we find a contrast between that which is recognisable because it is 'universal'[333]—language—and that which is recognisable because it is unique—voice; a contrast that culminates in speech. Cavarero's distinction between body, language, voice, and speech seems to be an extension of Dolar's argument that 'the voice ties language to the body'.[334] Whereas Dolar's formulation, however, betrays an assumption that all vocal emission would necessarily be linguistic, Cavarero's conception of speech as something approaching language, but without necessarily reaching it, leaves room for non-linguistic vocal expression. Elsewhere, however, Cavarero states that it is only the human voice (as opposed to all voices, both human and animal) that can acquire uniqueness.[335] Despite her professed resistance to the systematisation of language, Cavarero's anthropocentrism suggests that she ultimately conceives of speech in linguistic terms. It is, after all, only formalised language that distinguishes human

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[330] Ibid., 9-10, 11. Elsewhere, Cavarero writes that '[t]he voice […] is always different from all other voices, even if the words are the same' (ibid., 3).
[331] Ibid., 12; repeated on 209.
[332] Ibid., 14.
[333] I place 'universal' between inverted commas because no language, of course, is universal. Instead, 'universal' here refers to the fact that language is systematic and therefore reproducible.
[334] Dolar, *A Voice*, 72. He further writes that 'the voice stands at a paradoxical and ambiguous topological spot, at the intersection of language and the body […] What language and the body have in common is the voice but the voice is part neither of language nor of the body' (ibid., 73).
[335] 'The voice never comes from an object, nor is it addressed to an object. Rather, the voice […] subjectivizes the one who emits it, even when it is an animal. […] [B]ut it is only as human that the voice comes to be perceived as unique. […] The ear, its natural destination, perceives this unique sound without any effort, no matter what words are spoken. No matter what you say, I know that the voice is yours.' (Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 177.) Cavarero does not address instances of vocalisation that could disrupt this model of uniqueness, such as imitation or mimicry. Her philosophy of voice seems to be constructed for an idealised world in which politically disruptive or resistant vocal practices would be unnecessary. I shall return to this observation.

from non-human communication. Cavarero's de-linking of speech from language therefore fails in her privileging of the human.

Despite the failure of her 'politics of vocal uniqueness' to overcome logocentrism, Cavarero's formulation of the voice as destined towards speech remains useful. An important aspect of her argument that speech functions as the final destination of voice is the emphasis it places on vocality as relational: the voice only reaches its final destination when it is tamed into speech.[336] Here, speech, even when non-linguistic, implies firstly systematisation, and secondly a will to communicate—a will to reach out to a recognising (and recognisable) recipient. 'Destined for the ear of another', she writes, 'the voice implies a listener—or better, a reciprocity of pleasure'.[337] By positing that the voice is simultaneously destined for both speech and ear, Cavarero metaphorically equates these concepts, suggesting thereby that speech is itself constituted by the ear. In other words, speech is only speech when it is directed at a listener—again, when it tries to communicate. Even when this listener is none other than the self producing the voice—the ear is there to hear oneself speak, Derrida claims[338]—the emission carries within itself the certainty that it will be heard.

The relationality of voice as argued by Cavarero presumes that the desire to be heard translates into insistence: the sounding voice cannot be ignored, it impresses itself irresistibly upon the ear.[339] Controlled by sound, the ear, a compulsive listener, is powerless to escape the claim staked upon it by voice. This formulation curiously resembles Duncan's description of the materiality of the voice with which this section opened: it assumes an acoustic sphere unguardedly open, vulnerable even, to all that wants to leave a trace. Such an understanding strips the world into which voices venture of all power, granting instead ultimate agency to the

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[336] 'In the etymology of the Latin *vox*, the first meaning of *vocare* is "to call" or "invoke". Before making itself speech, the voice is an invocation that is addressed to the other and that entrusts itself to an ear that receives it. […] The voice is always *for* the ear, it is always relational' (ibid., 169).
[337] Ibid., 7.
[338] Cited in ibid., 178.
[339] 'The emitted voice always comes out into the world, and every ear within earshot […] is struck by it. The ear is an open canal; it can be surprised from anywhere at any moment. It is always cocked to a sonorous universe that it does not control' (ibid.).

sounding voice. Yet, we remind ourselves, this is an illusion; agency is not a necessary condition of sounding.

Mladen Dolar presents arguably a more balanced perspective on the authority of the voice. Acknowledging that being listened to does entail submission by the listener to the voice,[340] he nonetheless confirms a simultaneous submission by the speaker to her listener:

> The voice as authority is only one part of the story. On the other hand it is also true that the sender of the voice, the bearer of vocal emission, is someone who exposes himself, and thus becomes exposed to the effects of power which not only lie in the privilege of emitting the voice, but pertain to the listener. The subject is exposed to the power of the other by giving his or her own voice, so that the power, domination, can take not only the form of the commanding voice, but that of the ear […] By using one's voice one is also 'always-already' yielding power to the Other; the silent listener has the power to decide over the fate of the voice and its sender; the listener can rule over its meaning, or turn a deaf ear.[341]

For Dolar, vocal emission signifies privilege, but it is a contingent privilege; it depends as much upon the listener as the speaker. The listener has the power to deny the speaker's voice (to 'turn a deaf ear', or to 'rule over its meaning'). Simultaneously, vocal emission signals surrender of power—self-exposure—by the speaker to the listener, in which the listener is given a glimpse of the speaking subject's secret interior: not only the secrecy of hitherto voiceless thought, but also the secrecy of stomach, lungs, throat, vocal cords, and mouth. These organs, the 'undisclosed and structurally concealed interior'[342] from which the voice originates, represent the fragile core of the vocally empowered subject, and are revealed through the mechanics of vocal production, thereby rendering the speaking subject exposed. Navigating such vulnerability, the subject's emission is concurrently transformed into 'an appeal, a plea, an attempt to bend the Other',[343] a request to be

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340 'Listening entails obeying; there is a strong etymological link between the two in many languages: to obey, obedience, stems from French *obéir*, which in turn stems from Latin *ob-audire*, derivative of *audire*, to hear; in German *gehorchen*, *Gehorsam* stem from *hören*; in many Slav languages *slušati* can mean both to listen and to obey; the same goes apparently for Arabic, and so on. Etymology offers a hint of an inherent tie: listening is 'always-already' incipient obedience; the moment one listens one has already started to obey. […] There is something in the very nature of the voice which endows it with master-like authority' (Dolar, *A Voice*, 75-6).

341 Ibid., 80.

342 Ibid., 70.

343 Ibid., 80.

heeded. Even a command is simultaneously also an entreaty. For communication to work, therefore, the simultaneity of power and submission represented by the speaking voice would have to be in balance. In itself, the granting of authority to the voicing subject (the 'envoicing' of the subject) is not enough; for such authority to be effective, it requires the listener reciprocally to embrace the voice revealing itself.

The theories of vocal transmission outlined above represent an idealised configuration in which the speaker and the listener encounter each other from a position of equality. 'Voicing', on the other hand, recognises that such egalitarianism rarely occurs in a politically asymmetrical world; it therefore requires an investigation of the processes and structures that underpin listening, just as much as it requires an examination of speaking, or sounding. Indeed, Laura Tunbridge observes, 'to write about voice is to write less about what is heard than how we listen'.[344] For Tunbridge, in other words, the sound of the voice is predominantly created in the ear. Grant Olwage concurs when he argues that 'instead of the colour of the voice, we might speak about the colour of the ear'.[345] Coming to terms with the materiality of the voice hence also entails coming to terms with the subjectivity of the listener. The retrospective reconstruction of material, or rather, physical voices in text reveals the political or ideological perspective from which the author writes. Nowhere, arguably, is this as clear as in reception documents of publically sounding voices such as those of singers and orators. These documents, which include reviews and advertisements, provide valuable insight not only into what voices sounded like, but also into how they were perceived; in other words, they reveal the socio-political spheres into which these voices sounded, and the impact of these spheres upon the way the voices were heard.

In Weidman's call for a linking of the metaphorical and the material spheres of vocality, she does not mention the role played by listening. Yet, the metaphorical agency (or power)

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[344] Laura Tunbridge, 'Scarlett Johansson's Body and the Materialization of Voice', *Twentieth Century Music* 13(1), 2016, 139-52, 150.
[345] Grant Olwage, 'The Class and Colour of Tone: An Essay on the Social History of Vocal Timbre', *Ethnomusicology Forum* 13(2), 2004, 203-26, 217.

granted the sounding voice is, as argued above, as much a function of the ear as the mouth. The transition made by the voice from physical sound to metaphorical authority hence involves aurality. For this reason, listening should not be overlooked when bringing material and metaphorical understandings of the voice into dialogue with each other. Rather than approaching listening in the abstract, however, I shall in the following section use the ways in which the Eoan voices were heard as a material illustration of the politics of listening. Using reviews and other reception documents from the Eoan Group archive, I shall investigate how the voices of the Eoan singers were heard, and ask what this reveals about the singers' voices, about the political agency they did or did not claim, and about the sphere into which they sounded.

Eoan's Voices

The archive contains numerous accounts of individual voices, both by critics and by admiring audience members who relayed their private preferences, criticisms, and expectations in letters to Joseph Manca. Hence we know, for instance, that Ruth Goodwin's voice was heard to possess 'a clear, silvery quality' with 'excellent' inflection and a 'considerable' dynamic range.[346] For Jan C. Lewis, her singing matched (and even outshone) that of Maria Callas.[347] Vera Gow's voice was also compared to Callas's, for its 'pulsating, almost hard, but never ugly, quality in the lower part of her voice', which combined with 'a throbbing, thrilling quality in the higher dramatic registers'.[348] Winifred du Plessis possessed a 'silver thread running throughout all registers'[349] of

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[346] 'Eoans Made their Debut a Feast for Opera Lovers', *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 August 1960, 101:772p.
[347] 'As a matter of interest, we heard a recording of Maria Callas the other day, singing a well-known aria from "Traviata" [sic]—I can't remember the title; while her voice control is well-nigh perfect, and her ability to reach the top notes is outstanding, she lacked all the emotional power of Ruth Goodwin; one felt that she was more interested in displaying her artistry than in portraying the character', Correspondence, Jan C. Lewis to Joseph Manca, 12 Oct 1960, 31:210.
[348] 'Vera Gow Excels in an Enjoyable *Trovatore*', *The Cape Argus,* 24 October 1969, Ruth Fourie Newspaper Cuttings.
[349] *Haar mezzo-voce en pianissimo is verruklik. Verder is haar tegniek van so 'n gehalte dat die stemkleur in al die registers dieselfde is. Dit klink soos 'n silwerdraad wat dwarsdeur al die registers gespan is* ('*Eoan-Groep se* La Traviata *'n Belewenis*' ['Eoan Group's *La Traviata* an Experience'], undated, source unknown, 93:756).

her 'light, smooth and sometimes wonderfully limpid' soprano,[350] while Patricia van Graan, for her listeners, had 'what may be described as jewelled tonal ability',[351] and sang with 'great clarity, purity and sweetness'.[352] Freda Koopman had a 'small, mellifluous and totally unforced'[353] voice, while mezzo-soprano Sophia Andrews was lauded for her 'full-hearted singing lined with organ tones'[354] and her 'rich, dramatic, warm top notes',[355] but also for the 'lovely gloss' of her voice, which she used 'to full advantage'.[356] Hers was 'a warm, golden mezzo which is well trained'.[357] Another mezzo-soprano, Josephine Liedemann, sang 'with lyrical clarity'.[358]

Of the men, Lionel Fourie had a 'rich and mellow' voice, with a 'range which takes him up to the realms of tenors with the greatest of ease, and at times down to the deep, resonant timbre of a bass'.[359] It was 'a voice which would do justice to the Italian stage itself'.[360] Apparently this was a view shared by Italian listeners who, according to one critic, compared Fourie to Tito Gobbi.[361] Tenor Joseph Gabriels, in turn, was described as resembling Mario Lanza,[362] and had a 'strong, though sometimes rather obviously untutored tenor' which 'rang clear and nearly always true'.[363] A number of men were described as having small or light voices. These included James Momberg ('His is not a big voice, yet without ever forcing it, his tenor—light and pleasant—coped very well indeed'),[364] Gerald Samaai ('In him, the group has a fine light tenor, whose clear

350 Lewis Sowden, 'A "Traviata" of Irony and Enjoyment', undated, source unknown, 60:494a.
351 'Eoan Group—Con Amore', undated, source unknown, Gerald Samaai Scrapbooks 2.
352 Geoffrey Tansley, 'Eoan Group Do Well in *Carmen Jones*', undated, source unknown, 60:494.
353 'Opera', *The Argus*, 30 October 1971, Gerald Samaai Scrapbooks 2.
354 Sowden, 'Two Voices Make *Il Trovatore*', undated, source unknown, 93:756.
355 'Vera Gow Excels in an Enjoyable *Trovatore*', Ruth Fourie Newspaper Cuttings.
356 '[*Sophia Andrews se*] *mezzosopraan besit 'n lieflike glans wat sy tot die beste benut*', ('*Eoan-groep se* La Traviata *'n Belewenis*', 93:756).
357 'Splendid "Butterfly" by Eoan Group', *The Cape Argus* 15 September 1967, 86:685.
358 'Eoan Group—Con Amore', Gerald Samaai Scrapbooks 2.
359 'Baritone Gives Great Performance in Verdi's *Rigoletto*', *Daily News*, 2 August 1960, 30:208.
360 Ibid.
361 'Lionel Fourie, Eoan Group baritone, whose performance in "Rigoletto" last night moved several Italians to say: "Without doubt, the equal of Tito Gobbi"' (ibid.).
362 'Rather like Mario Lanza in both voice and stature, [Joseph Gabriels] repeatedly brought the house down with both solos and duets' ('It was Magnificent, Mr. Manca: Come again', *Sunday Tribune*, 7 August 1960, 30:208).
363 'Miraculous Eoan Group Production', undated, source unknown, Ruth Fourie Newspaper Cuttings.
364 'Soprano Rose to Great Heights in her Tragic Role', *The Cape Times*, 18 September 1967, 86:685.

and flexible voice copes well'),[365] and Martin Johnson ('Although his is a smallish voice, it carried well').[366] Gerald Samaai further had 'well-placed, crystal clear high notes',[367] while Ronald Theys had a 'strong and well-modulated voice' which occasionally 'rose to surprising largesse',[368] and Cecil Tobin had a 'beautiful baritone, delivered with superb ease and control'.[369]

The metaphors and likenesses suggested in these evaluations are telling. When critics likened the Eoan singers to the most illustrious operatic stars of the era—Maria Callas, Mario Lanza, and Tito Gobbi—the comparisons arguably revealed more about the listeners than the voices. It is, after all, unlikely that a single amateur opera group would contain within its ranks four voices of the likes of some of the most legendary singers of all time. And indeed, listening to Eoan recordings, one cannot help but conclude that the group's critics were kind in ignoring the many missed notes, suspicious intonations, and vocal cracks that punctuated their performances. Yet, equating these very obviously amateur vocal displays to the sounds that enveloped the professional stages of Europe was more than mere kindness; it was also a statement on the social, economic, and cultural setting from which these critics listened. Each reference to a famous opera singer was also an acknowledgment that the commentator *knew* this singer: knew what she sounded like, knew that she was special, and knew the cultural capital conveyed in recognising her. The comparisons with famous opera singers therefore served as a means for listeners to claim operatic knowledge, and with it, a certain level of sophistication.[370] It meant that they had refined tastes, and that they had the economic resources to cultivate these tastes, either by buying imported recordings of distinguished singers, or by travelling abroad to witness their

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365 'Eoan Group Premiere of Rossini's *Barber* Sparkles and Delights', *The Cape Times*, 27 October 1969, Gerald Samaai Scrapbooks 2.

366 Ibid.

367 '[Gerald Samaai] *se goed geplaaste, klokhelder* [literally, 'clear as a bell'] *hoë note het indruk gemaak*' ('*Eoan-groep se* La Traviata *'n Belewenis*', 93:756).

368 '*Hier is 'n sterk en goed gemoduleerde stem wat soms tot verrassende grootsheid gestyg het*' ('*Sangers Skitter in* Rigoletto' [Singers Sparkle in *Rigoletto*], *Die Burger* 22 October 1971, Gerald Samaai Scrapbooks 2).

369 'This was Opera at its Very Best', *East London Daily Dispatch*, 10 August 1965, Gerald Samaai Scrapbooks 2.

370 The association in apartheid South Africa of opera with sophisticated, elite white culture will be explored in full in Chapter 3.

performances.[371] The critics' (and audience members') endorsements of the Eoan Group hence served as a means to establish themselves as musically sophisticated.

Apart from confirming the audience's operatic expertise, evaluations of the Eoan voices also revealed much about the codification of culture, colour, and civility in (white) South African society at the time. Descriptions of the 'silvery', 'bejewelled', 'clear', and 'rich' qualities of various voices evoke imagery of rare, precious metals, gemstones, and ornaments. These voices, according to critics, were not only brilliant, but also valuable and highly refined. This view was further supported by countless remarks on the quality of the group's training: Vera Gow's voice, for instance, was 'quite exceptional—and quite exceptionally trained',[372] while Winifred du Plessis's technique was 'of such quality that the colour of the voice remains the same in all registers'. Even the chorus as a whole was lauded for the level of refinement it displayed when a critic observed that '[t]hey are not professionals, but ordinary men and women of the Coloured community whose innate sense of musical expression has been *developed and polished by dint of hard and prolonged practice* in this one of the most difficult forms of the vocal art'.[373] The sophistication of the 'polished' voices of the Eoan singers bore testimony to hard work and a high level of accomplishment which stood in stark contrast to the stereotypes of laziness, drunkenness, and artlessness associated with colouredness at the time.[374] For critics, these 'ordinary men and women of the Coloured community' were exceptional not necessarily because their singing was remarkable, but because they managed to overcome the biologically determined defects of their race. Training, hence, bore testimony to hard work, but also to discipline, control, and restraint.

The disciplined nature of the group's singing—its restraint and control—was another

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[371] Mrs Margie Byrd revealed that the Eoan Group's *Rigoletto* was better than she had heard in Rome (Correspondence, Margie[?] Byrd to Joseph Manca, 10 August 1960, 31:210), while Jan C. Lewis declared that none of the 'several operas' he had seen 'performed in England by professional companies […] approached the standard of the Eoan Group' (Correspondence, Jan C. Lewis, 31:210). Gerald H. Sharpe, ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, wrote to the *Natal Mercury* to indicate that he had 'heard opera in various parts of the world and must truthfully say that the singing and stage artistry of this group are of a much higher class than might have been expected'; he predicted 'greater things for them in the future' (Sharpe, 'High Praise', *Natal Mercury* 8 August 1960, 30:208).
[372] 'Vera Gow Excels in an Enjoyable *Trovatore',* Ruth Fourie Newspaper Cuttings.
[373] 'The Eoan Group', *Natal Mercury*, 3 August 1960, 30:208, emphasis my own.
[374] See Chapter 1.

trope in its reception. Critics repeatedly commented on the vocal control exhibited not only by soloists, but also by the chorus. In May Abrahamse critics heard, for instance, a 'pure and firmly disciplined soprano',[375] while Winifred du Plessis's voice was described as 'a voice with few equals—pure, beautifully controlled, and wonderfully expressive'.[376] In the same review, Cecil Tobin was praised for delivering his 'beautiful baritone' with 'superb ease and control'.[377] The chorus, in turn, was described as follows: '[M]uch of the Eoan Group's success is due to the chorus. I have seldom heard such a well-disciplined body of singers. They cannot be faulted.'[378] The restraint identified in the vocal control and discipline of the Eoan singers further related to a broader discourse of 'good taste' upon which critics eagerly seized.[379] In comedy, in seduction, and in death, the singers were praised for exhibiting taste and restraint. Vera Gow's Leonora, for instance, was praised for carrying the group's 1969 production of Verdi's *Il Trovatore* 'from the calm of her first great aria to the final scene where she dies with restraint, and credibility'.[380] The group's production of Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* of the same year evidently displayed similar fine judgement:

> Cecil Tobin, an Eoan stalwart, showed his experience as Doctor Bartolo, and with Jacobus Erasmus as Don Basilio, whose 'La Calunnia' aria came off well, was responsible for much humorous sideplay which, however, was never allowed to get out of hand. It was broad, to be sure, but always in good taste and therefore aroused much laughter from the audience.[381]

Even in roles that perhaps called for greater abandon, critics remarked on the refinement with which characters were portrayed. In the group's 1965 *Carmen*, for instance, both Patricia van Graan as Micaela and Vera Gow as Carmen were described as exhibiting singular sophistication in their portrayals. While Van Graan was reproached for failing to capture the naïve simplicity of

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375 'What a Fund of Talent There Is!', *Argus*, 11 March 1960, Ruth Fourie Newspaper Cuttings.
376 'This was Opera at its Very Best', Gerald Samaai Scrapbooks 2.
377 Ibid.
378 'It was Magnificent, Mr. Manca: Come again', 30:208.
379 The relationship between restraint and good taste was not unique to South Africa. Katherine Bergeron, in *Voice Lessons: French Mélodie in the Belle Epoque*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, writes extensively on the French emphasis on vocal restraint (both spoken and sung) at the turn of the twentieth century.
380 'Vera Gow Excels in an Enjoyable *Trovatore*', Ruth Fourie Newspaper Cuttings.
381 'Eoan Group Premiere of Rossini's *Barber* Sparkles and Delights', Gerald Samaai Scrapbooks 2.

the innocent peasant girl Micaela, Gow was praised for a Carmen that was 'commendably free from the vulgarity that so often mars the characterisation'.[382] Another critic described the portrayal as follows:

> Vera Gow makes a captivating Carmen. She has the appearance; she has the spirit; and she has a voice with both ring and fire in her contralto notes. In the upper register it becomes seductive rather than inflammatory, which means that neither the 'Habanera' nor the 'Ramparts of Seville' is naughty enough, but each is provocative. She remains a charming Carmen throughout.[383]

From the reviews cited above, 'good taste' in apartheid South Africa evidently carried a very specific set of connotations: 'calm', 'restraint, and credibility', as in Vera Gow's depiction of Leonora's death, and in Cecil Tobin's and Jacobus Erasmus's 'humorous sideplay' which was 'never allowed to get out of hand', were obvious factors, as was the sophistication that freed Gow's Carmen from 'the vulgarity that so often mars the characterisation'. These assessments reveal a conservative moral code at work, in which women were expected to remain refined, even when their roles called for the opposite. In addition, the critics' praise of restraint reveals an aversion to the histrionics and spectacle not only of uninhibited death but also of unconstrained humour. While the streets and pavements of apartheid South Africa reverberated with unbridled oppression and resistance, its theatres were expected to remain sites of discretion. Eoan's voices—restrained, calm, and palatable—represented time-out-of-time, place-out-of-place; a different history to the one playing itself out in voices crying for freedom.

Voice Culture

The voices of the Eoan singers, with their cultivation, discipline, and training, embodied a history wrought by the colonial civilising mission, one which impressed itself upon the sounds made by

382 'Singers Meet *Carmen*'s Problems Head-on', undated, source unknown, 93:756.
383 'At the Opera: *Carmen*', undated, source unknown, 93:756.

its subjects through the efforts of 'voice culture'.[384] Recalling, in 1947, the 1933 founding of the group, Helen Southern-Holt writes as follows:

> My first desire in giving help to the coloured community was to start classes for clear, articulate speech. Having had to engage coloured workers as well as European, I knew from experience that the mass of Coloured boys and girls entering the labour market were ill-equipped, and had not the power of the spoken word to aid them.[385]

For Southern-Holt, Cape Town's coloured people had to be taught to speak 'properly' in order to enable them to fulfil their social duty as productive, employable citizens. Her classes in enunciation were therefore not so much about upward class mobility as they were about preparing her students to become responsible, industrious, and decorous members of the working class. They were not taught 'clear, articulate speech' to empower them, but rather to appease the ears of those who had to listen. Ironically, this very project—a linguistic civilising mission designed to keep coloured people in their place (albeit to render them more productive within this place)—eventually produced the circumstances in which they were granted their operatic presence. Yet, even their operatic sounds were scrutinised according to the tropes that underpinned civilised vocal production: comments on clarity and purity, we have already seen, were pervasive. In addition, another evaluation identified by Grant Olwage as characteristic of voice culture, namely the ability to sing softly,[386] made repeated appearances in Eoan singers' critical reception.[387] The Eoan Group's voices were palatable to their audiences, it seems, because they conformed to conventional standards of vocal civility.

Voice culture, or the training of voices along linear models of civilisation, was part of a

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384 This term, adopted by Grant Olwage in his work on black choralism in South Africa, originated in nineteenth century England, where the emergence of the middle class saw a concurrent rise in vocal pedagogy. See Olwage, 'Class and Colour', 206.

385 Helen Southern-Holt, 'Brief outline of Eoan's Dramatic, Dancing and Musical Activities'—Meeting of the National Council of Women of South Africa, 11 September 1947, 37:300.

386 'On the continuum of Victorian vocal sound, […] soft-singing taught and indexed good, pure tone' (Olwage, 'Class and Colour', 212).

387 'As the profligate duke, Gerald Samaai rose to the occasion in a role that really calls for a bigger voice than his. But who cares if his B Flats fail to shatter the house lights when he sings his pianissimos so exquisitely?' ('Opera', *The Argus* 30 October 1971, Gerald Samaai Scrapbooks 2); '[Winifred du Plessis *se*] *mezzo-voce en pianissimo is verruklik*' [Winifred du Plessis's mezzo-voce and pianissimo are exquisite] ('*Eoan-Groep se* La Traviata *'n Belewenis*', 93:756).

process of social elevation—found not only in Britain, but also in France, the United States,[388] and colonial South Africa[389] —designed to discipline subjects into respectable, conforming citizens. Katherine Bergeron, writing about voice culture in late-nineteenth century France, summarises the logic of this educational project when she writes that the mouth, 'fount of oral purity and discipline', was regarded 'alongside the school, as a powerful instrument of national culture and one of France's most civilizing natural resources'.[390] In other words, the voice became a site for regimens of civility and control. Scott Carter, likewise, observes that 'by focusing on the body as a transformative site for cultural and social progress, vocal pedagogues argued that proper training would lead to the improvement of national vocality and the formation of an ideal national subject'.[391] He quotes Richard Cone, a self-proclaimed American 'voice master' and author of *The Speaking Voice: Its Scientific Basis in Music*[392] as follows: 'As a rule, the voice is, more than anything else, the revealer of the presence or absence of culture'.[393] Cone's statement reveals that vocal quality at the turn of the twentieth century was seen to 'disclose an individual's, or a nation's, character', and 'provided a metric by which social progress might be judged'.[394] If a nation wanted to unite its citizens under a banner of discipline, respectability, and progress, it had to start with their speech.

To a greater extent than in Britain or France, voice culture in the American sphere also took on a distinctly racialised character:

> For authors of voice culture texts, racialized voices represented an increasingly diverse

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388 For sources on British voice culture, see Olwage, 'Class and Colour'; Connor, *Dumbstruck*, 332-3; and K.C. Phillipps, *Language and Class in Victorian England*, New York: Blackwell, 1984. On French voice culture, see Katherine Bergeron, *Voice Lessons*; and Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen*. For voice culture in the United States, see Scott Carter, 'Forging a Sound Citizenry: Voice Culture and the Embodiment of the Nation, 1880-1920', *American Music Research Center Journal* 22, 2013, 11-34. For a general overview, not determined by geographical parameters, but focused specifically upon singing rather than speaking, see John Potter, *Vocal Authority: Singing Style and Ideology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

389 Olwage, 'Class and Colour'. Perhaps most evident in the black choirs established at mission stations across the country from the 1890s onwards, it was also the ideal that underpinned Helen Southern-Holt's decision to establish the Eoan Group.

390 Bergeron, *Voice Lessons*, 83.

391 Carter, 'Sound Citizenry', 29.

392 Richard Cone, *Speaking Voice*, Boston: Evans Music Company, 1908.

393 Ibid., 114, cited in Carter, 'Sound Citizenry', 11.

394 Ibid.

> population that posed a tangible threat to the project of creating a sound body politic. The voices of this mass populace, it was feared, would soon overwhelm civic discourse and undermine the attempt to forge an ideal vocal aesthetic. Vocal training offered an inoculation against such degeneracy. […] By correlating self-discipline with vocal expression, voice-culture authors suggested that by scientifically training the body and, in turn, vocal expression, one could literally sing the progress of American civilization.[395]

In Carter's observation, the voices of racially marked Americans endangered the construction of a well-ordered and unified body politic. These mutinous voices stood for a 'racial degeneracy'[396] at odds with the regimes of discipline enacted upon American bodies and minds, since they sounded from the gloom of primitive, 'unruly flesh'.[397] Conversely, the voices that rang from the studios and laboratories[398] of vocal pedagogues had 'a pure tone [which] suggested more than a vocal ideal and signified, instead, a notion of racial purity embodied by Western European definitions of whiteness'.[399] Voice culture was therefore not merely about acquiring the articulation of a preferred class, but also about affirming a form of virtue that challenged the depravity of blackness; it served to distinguish the racially marked Other, and to distance the self from him. The person who could discipline her voice could no doubt also discipline her body.

Voice culture, as a disciplining process that literally and figuratively shapes both the voice and the body producing the voice,[400] draws into question established theories about the agency of the voice. When Michelle Duncan invokes J.L. Austin's 'performative utterance' to assert that voice—both in speaking and in singing—has the capacity to act,[401] she neglects the fact that the voice is also acted upon: not only by the singer or speaker using the voice in certain ways, but also by a society that deems certain vocal practices more desirable than others. The agency of the voice is constructed, both metaphorically and sonically, by the power relations between those

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395 Ibid., 25.
396 Ibid., 21.
397 Ibid.
398 Vocal pedagogy was, in its early days, regarded as a science. See, for instance, chapters 2 and 3 of Bergeron's *Voice Lessons* for a captivating account of the various experiments and technologies employed by scientists preoccupied with voice production.
399 Carter, 'Sound Citizenry', 21, after Pasler, *Composing the Citizen*, 255.
400 Eidsheim, for instance, shows that 'the way the voice is daily used, as any everyday physical activity, is discernable in the body' ('Voice as a Technology', 35), and hence that vocal training—through repetition—not only changes the voice, but also the vocal apparatus.
401 Duncan, 'Operatic Scandal', 289.

who sound and those who (don't) listen. Simultaneously, these very power relations produce the voice: they mark it, shape it until it is recognisable, and amplify or stifle it at will. This is true not only for voices in general, but also (and especially) for operatic voice. The operatic voice is arguably the ultimate manifestation of vocal discipline. Plied over decades of training, it is a product of artifice upon which the mark of the teacher rests as plainly as the work of the student.[402] Hence, when Cavell proclaims that 'surely the operatic voice is the grandest realization of having a signature',[403] thereby classifying the operatic voice as a direct manifestation of a singer's identity, he overlooks the mediated nature of such a voice. It is a product not only of the singer's individuality, but also of a set of ideals shown by Eidsheim to include adherence to certain national 'schools of singing',[404] ideals of how certain visual markers (including race) should translate sonically,[405] and notions of what constitutes an aesthetically 'pleasing' sound.[406] To varying degrees, these ideals are all socially produced. When the teacher shapes the voice she leaves not only her own signature, but the signature of a society that has produced a very specific conception of what certain voices—including operatic voices—*should* sound like. The signature we hear, therefore, is to a large extent that of the cultural community in which the singer's voice was 'raised'.

As a signature that is not completely and directly *of* the individual from which it emanates, the operatically trained voice can become estranged from the body that produces it. Even while the voice is a direct product of the body, and even while it leaves its own mark on the body from which it emanates, it does not represent this body. This stands in marked contrast to Wayne Koestenbaum's assertion that 'the operatic voice is the furious "I"-affirming blast of a body that refuses […] compromise'.[407] If anything, the operatic voice, with its extensive training and

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402 Eidsheim, 'Voice as a Technology'.
403 Cavell, *A Pitch*, 144.
404 Eidsheim refers specifically to the German, Italian, French, and Slavic schools of singing, and characterises them as follows: 'the German school sounds hard, heavy and less flexible than the Italian; the French school sounds lighter and brighter than both the Italian and the German; and the Slavic school sounds darker and heavier than the German school' ('Voice as a Technology', 189).
405 Ibid., 36-47.
406 Ibid., 38.
407 Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat*, 155.

shaping, represents an absolute form of compromise. When, as shown above, voice theory claims that the operatic voice accords presence, we are compelled to ask what type of presence, *whose* presence, is accorded. This is not the presence of the uncompromised 'I' of the operatic singer, but rather the compromising presence of a Western aesthetic ideal. Opera's vocal disembodiment is not merely a result of Connor's 'vocalic body', but rather of the inescapably socialised and encultured nature of both the voice and the body from which it emanates.

The Eoan Group's voices hence became sonic markers of the society within which they sang. Their particular voice culture project situated them historically, as bearers of a civilising discourse increasingly at odds with the cultural and political configuration of South Africa.[408] As the word 'culture' suggests, however, voice culture does not only situate voices historically, but also geographically. Originally used in Anglo-Norman exclusively to refer to the action of tilling, or cultivating land,[409] culture carries an indissoluble etymological bond with soil, land, and place. The 'cultured' voice is hence representative not only of a society that is profoundly historicised, but also unavoidably 'placed'.

Placing Voice

Existing voice theories betray a preoccupation with the spatiality of voice. Pondering the voice's requirements of acoustic space, its simultaneous movement towards and away from both speaker and listener, and its adaptability to the environment within which it sounds, scholars have come to acknowledge that '[t]he voice stands at a paradoxical and ambiguous topological spot'.[410] At the basis of this topological ambiguity is an understanding of the voice as dynamic, rather than static; it moves through space:

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[408] As will be shown in Chapter 4, the politics of civility advocated by black activists at the beginning of the twentieth century had by the 1950s to a large extent been replaced with black consciousness models.
[409] 'culture, n.', *OED Online*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, June 2017, www.oed.com/view/Entry/45746, accessed 8 October 2017.
[410] Dolar, *A Voice*, 73.

> Whether it is spoken, sung or expressed in a text, the voice performs a movement. It seems to have the specific aim of sharing this movement, this action, no matter whether the voice presents itself as fragile and intimate or powerful and strong. […] The voice—in an intentional aesthetic relation—reaches out for its listener.[411]

For Pedersen, the motion of the voice is an essential property. In its fundamental yearning for a listener, it precludes the possibility of immobility.[412] Hence, voice cannot exist outside of space. As Steven Connor acknowledges, 'the voice always requires and requisitions space, the distance that allows my voice to go from and return to myself.'[413] The movement of voice within space, for Connor, serves to situate the subject in relation to her environment, not only physically, but also socially. 'The very possibility of a world of coming and going', he writes, 'the fact that I am able to learn that my voice both comes from me and goes from me, may be programmed in part by the exercise and experience of my voice. This is to surmise that the voice is not merely orientated in space, it provides the dynamic grammar of orientation. […] The voice establishes relations of facing and frontality'.[414] For Connor, the voice, moving both from and toward the sounding subject, places this subject at the centre of a space that can only come into being as a result of her own sonic emission. Yet, it is a space that is pliable—it is shaped not only by the properties of the vocal sound, but also by the social and historical powers that render that voice acceptable and, hence, audible. Speaking about the spatiality of the voice, Connor hence coins the term 'vocalic space': 'I mean to signal with this term the ways in which differing conceptions of the voice and its powers are linked historically to different conceptions of the body's form, measure, and susceptibility, along with its dynamic articulations with its physical and social environments'.[415] The idea of vocalic space posits the voice 'as the mediation between the

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411 Pedersen, 'Voice and Presence', 119.

412 For Lawrence Kramer, the compulsive movement of voice becomes a defining feature of opera: '[W]andering voice is the trope for opera […] itself' (Lawrence Kramer, *Opera and Modern Culture: Wagner and Strauss*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, 225). Kramer identifies voice as the medium through which opera builds a relationship between the sublime and 'the regime of the norm' (ibid.), thereby locating the 'wandering voice' in aesthetic, or symbolic, rather than physical, space. Yet, the image of wandering, with its suggestions of ambling, non-directed movement, remains powerful when considering the voice as a topological construct: it emphasises drift, rather than goal-directed travel.

413 Connor, *Dumbstruck*, 5.

414 Ibid.

415 Ibid., 12.

phenomenological body and its social and cultural contexts'.[416] For Connor, 'vocalic space' is important because it serves to locate the nexus between sound, sight, and society, which renders the voice comprehensible, and hence containable. In vocalic space, the physical body confronts its context, and translates this encounter into voice. Since any such confrontation between self and setting involves a relation, distribution, or, sometimes, exchange of power, it is therefore in essence always political. Within vocalic space, the voice is an audible manifestation of this encounter, and can therefore always be heard as empowered. However, the real power of each voice resides in whether its particular configuration of vocalic space has the capacity to impress itself upon its spatial-temporal context—whether it has the capacity to become norm.

Cavarero circumvents the problem of the norm-alisation of vocalic space—the problem of its contingency upon social and historical context—through what she calls 'the phenomenon of deterritorialization'.[417] Describing deterritorialisation as 'the concept of a local without territory', Cavarero seeks to locate politicisation within the nomadic subject. For Cavarero, the subject, like the voice, moves, and her politics moves with her. The voicing subject, in other words, rather than being located in political space, creates political space for herself with every vocal emission:

> The phenomenon of deterritorialization, beyond liquidating the nation-state, in fact allows for an elaboration of the concept of a local without territory. […] [A] concept of this sort can be traced back to Arendt's reflections on the territorial inconsistency of the political space. Indeed, at stake is the basic principle of politics that Arendt understands as interaction and the sharing of a common space that is generated by interaction itself. The in-between regards a space, not a territory. Politics takes place, but it is not a place. 'Wherever you go, you will be a *polis*,' says Arendt, citing a famous sentence that bears witness, according to her, to the way in which for the Greeks the political consists in a space created by acting and speaking together 'which can find its proper location almost any time and anywhere' (Arendt, *Human Condition*, 198). The *polis*, according to Arendt, is not physically situated in a territory. It is the space of interaction that is opened by the reciprocal communication of those present through words and deeds. In the era of globalization […] this interactive space could therefore be called an absolute local [*locale assoluto*], 'absolute' because freed of the territoriality of place and from every dimension that roots it in a continuity. The absolute local is thus the name of a taking-place of politics that has no predefined borders, nor any fixed or sacred confines. It is not a nation, nor a fatherland, nor a land. It extends as far as the interactive space that is

[416] Ibid.
[417] Cavarero, *For More than one Voice*, 204.

> generated by reciprocal communication. It is a relational space that happens with the event of communication and, together with it, disappears. The place and the duration are contingent and unforeseeable.[418]

Polis—city, 'cosmos',[419] divine totality—is, for Arendt, not physically located, but enacted. Each reciprocal interaction involving the emission and reception of voice, in other words, creates a political space characterised by agency, presence, and power. As Cavarero observes, Arendt draws her conception of *polis* from a Greek ideal that located 'the political' in 'a space created by acting and speaking together'. This configuration of *polis* erroneously assumes the location of 'the political' to be a space, rather than a place—a denial of the physicality that underpins any conception of 'the local'. As Enrique Dussel has argued,[420] 'acting and speaking together' is itself contingent—it cannot, as Arendt argues, 'find its proper location almost any time and anywhere'. Returning to the origin of *polis* as centre of Empire, and, by extension, centre of the world, Dussel points out that *polis* itself refers to that which is inside the city walls.[421] The 'free man', the one who is allowed to speak, is the one located inside *polis*; outside the city walls, the barbarians remain silent—reduced to 'nonbeing, nothing, barbarity, non-sense'.[422] The political power endowed, according to Arendt, by the reciprocal communication of *polis* therefore already assumes the inside-ness of all who seek to participate. It assumes that 'acting and speaking together' always has the ability to occur unhindered—that the *polis* has no outside. In other words, Arendt's floating *polis*, what Cavarero calls the 'absolute local', ignores the fact that all interaction is by definition also always *placed.* Indeed, as Cavarero points out, Arendt's *polis* is 'not physically situated in a territory'; it is abstract space, severed from physical context.

To conceive of *polis* as space independent of place—to propose the absolute local as a viable political construct—is itself a problematic extension of the privilege assumed by those already in possession of voice. 'Abstract spaces are naïve nonconflictual unrealities', writes

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418 Ibid., 204-5.
419 Enrique Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, tr. Aquilina Martinez and Christine Morkovsky, Maryknoll, NY.: Orbis, 1985, 5.
420 Ibid., 5-6.
421 Ibid., 4-6.
422 Ibid., 4. See also J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1980.

Dussel;[423] '[t]he space of a world within the ontological horizon is the space of a world center, of the organic, self-conscious state that brooks no contradictions—because it is an imperialist state'.[424] Space, in other words, that can conceive of itself as absolute, as not-placed, is itself a manifestation of deafening voice—voice that obscures place by drowning out direction and by presenting itself as omnipresent, roaming, uncontainable, and unavoidable. This is a voice that cannot comprehend margins, because it does not know any itself. It is theory that severs itself from the confines of place, and propounds a notion of the vocalising subject as always-empowered, as agent. This apparently liberating turn is deceptive: granting agency to those who already have it, it blanks out the disempowerment of those who find themselves excluded from the supposed universality of space. It views the subject as independent of place, because in its understanding of the universe, all subjects are free to move, and hence to claim presence. It is, in other words, vocal theory of and for the centre.

Apartheid, like most oppressive states, did not allow for such a de-linking from place. On the contrary, at its very core it was preoccupied with defining, delimiting, and restricting places and people's movement within them.[425] Cavarero's conception of the absolute local—of the politicised citizen whose envoicement occurs free from the constraints of territory—therefore cannot account for apartheid's subjects, who remained incapable of dis-located being or interaction. Every 'interactive space' sought out by the person living under apartheid was from the outset overdetermined by the geo-politics of the regime's physical locations. Voice, in this configuration, entailed place.

The place from which the Eoan Group 'voiced' (to return to Weidman's conception of 'voicing' as non-agentive vocal emission), was located at the margins, both physically and metaphorically. Physically confined to the outskirts of Cape Town, and racially confined to the peripheries of both whiteness and blackness, the coloured members of the Eoan Group

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423 Dussel, *Philosophy*, 1.
424 Ibid.
425 See Chapter 1.

embodied marginality. Their voices, however, impressed themselves upon the physical and cultural centres of apartheid territory: engaged in the production of 'white' music,[426] in white theatres, in white areas. In Cavarero's codification of vocal agency, the Eoan Group's vocalisations should have constituted an absolute local: their voices sounded, and their audiences responded, hence suggesting reciprocal communication. Yet, this political interface did not translate for the singers into agency, or into full citizenship of the *polis* it supposedly enacted. Space, here, remained disempowered by the marginality—the locatedness—of its subjects.

Returning to the fundamentally 'placed' nature of voice culture—its location not only at a specific point in time (history), but also at a certain point in the world (geography)—we understand that existing voice theory remains unable to account for the subject who adopts a voice other than her own, especially when that voice is the voice of the master; of the centre. Voice theory remains disempowered by its preoccupation with space at the expense of place. The voices of the Eoan singers represent a case in point. Sounding from the margins of apartheid's physical and cultural locations, their operatic emissions disrupted the reinforcement of racially-determined silencing. Yet, their voices simultaneously surrendered to a civilising discourse rooted in European cultural supremacy. Neither collusive nor resistant, and yet both, they sounded out what Lazarus calls the 'marginal subject of the colonial encounter'.[427] Lazarus describes the marginal subject not as one who is powerless or disenfranchised, but rather as one who exists 'on the edge of the frame' of both colonialism and anti-colonial nationalism.[428] This is therefore not a voiceless subject, but rather a subject whose voice sounds in counterpoint to the established voices of the *polis*. In a context where the political inscription of the subject acts as the source of both her oppression and her resistance, the disruption of such inscription can be subversive. The coloured operatic voice does more than disrupt, however. It displaces to the extent that

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426 Inasmuch as opera was equated with civility, and civility, in turn, with whiteness.
427 Neil Lazarus, *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 134.
428 Ibid., 135.

coordination breaks down, leaving both the sounding and the listening subject adrift—unmoored from ears and eyes, from self and from other.

The result of the Eoan Group's embrace of voice culture, we learn from reviews of their performances, was that they sounded 'European'. This evokes Homi Bhabha's quintessential colonial subject: the 'reformed, recognizable Other, […] a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite'[429] (or rather, as he puns later, 'almost the same but not white').[430] Bhabha's colonial subject, Lazarus points out, is the product of mimicry.[431] She emerges from the repetition of colonial articulation, while simultaneously upholding the difference that separates her from the culture she copies. The result, Lazarus argues with Benita Parry, is a doubleness of enunciation: 'when the scenario written by colonialism is given a performance by the native that estranges and undermines the colonialist script'.[432] In the Eoan voices, this doubleness sounds as an ambivalent performance of the colonial script of voice culture. Their closeness to the European vocal ideal exceeded their racial difference, thereby estranging the colonial civilising mission from itself. The result is an incoherence of colonial articulation: it is never quite clear who was acting upon whom. At the same time as being products of an oppressive system, the voices of the Eoan singers undermined the markers of racial difference upon which the system relied. Close enough to be deemed complicit, too far ever to belong, their voices could not be contained within either of the dominant discourses of the apartheid system. Thus, they overthrew the easy binary of social identities produced by the politics of oppression. Simultaneously, however, they remained beholden to a geo-politics in which the spatial manifestation of vocality remained disempowered by apartheid's borders. Their vocal emissions sounded out the problem of marginal agency, in which utterance itself, even as it constitutes space, cannot overcome place.

The voices of the Eoan Group were produced by apartheid, and were completely governed by it. Yet, they were simultaneously separate from it. By sounding out a politics of

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429 Bhabha, 1985, quoted in ibid., 133.
430 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 2004 [1994], 128.
431 Lazarus, *Nationalism and Cultural Practice*, 133.
432 Parry, 1987, quoted in ibid., 134.

empowerment-through-compromise, they embodied Amanda Weidman's notion of 'voicing'. They carved out the possibility of taking pleasure in the emission itself—enjoying voice for voice's sake, delighting in sonic excess. If the operatic voice, in this case, did not manifest Abbate's, Koestenbaum's, or Cavell's 'presence', it also did not surrender to absence. While their voices did not signal political agency in the traditional sense, the Eoan Group's singing enacted a moment of sounding-from-the-margins in which marginality was destabilised even as it determined the parameters of enunciation. Following Albie Sachs, we can argue that they 'bypass[ed], overwhelm[ed], ignore[d] apartheid, establish[ed] [their] own space'.[433] Thereby, they exposed the complexity and contradictions of voice, claiming for them Sachs's 'ideal art':[434] an art of absolute compromise.

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[433] Sachs, 'Preparing Ourselves', in *Spring is Rebellious*, eds. Ingrid Kok and Karen Press, 19-29, 21.
[434] Gilbert, 'Singing Against Apartheid', in *Composing Apartheid*, ed. Grant Olwage, 155.

Chapter 3

Productions

> The production of opera has never been about performing a musical work on stage only, but also about performing a highly contested social arena.[435]

While the Eoan Group succeeded to 'establish their own [vocalic] space'[436] within the racially overdetermined acoustic sphere of apartheid South Africa, Chapter 2 showed that their voices could not overcome the unequal geo-politics within which they sounded. Their undeniable sonic presence did not translate into political agency; instead, the singers' voices signalled a form of sonic compromise representative of the politics of voice culture. In this, they represented not only a history marked by the civilising impulse of colonialism's professed altruism, but also a contemporary preoccupation with the locatedness of this culture: situated at the southern tip of the African continent, they invoked an idealised north by sounding 'European'. This European link, Chapter 3 will show, was further emphasised and exploited by the physical aspects of the Eoan Group's productions. The visual features of the Eoan operas can be read not merely as physical settings for the singers' voices, but as symbolically charged sites of interaction and association between the players and their public. In their design and direction, the productions sought to construct a direct hereditary link with an imagined European operatic tradition, thereby to situate the coloured members of the group within idealised whiteness.[437] Bound, inescapably, by the material boundaries of apartheid's racial classifications, the Eoan Group's operas created an alternative, 'white' reality on stage, hence prompting a symbolic displacement of colouredness,

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435 Vlado Kotnik, 'The Adaptability of Opera: When Different Social Agents Come to Common Ground', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 44(2), 2013, 303-342, 303.
436 Albie Sachs, 'Preparing Ourselves for Freedom', in *Spring is Rebellious: Arguments About Cultural Freedom*, eds. Ingrid Kok and Karen Press, Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1990, 19-29. See Chapter 2 of this dissertation.
437 It is difficult to separate European and white from each other in the context of apartheid South Africa. Even in the racial nomenclature of the time, the two concepts were conflated, with whites often referred to in official documents as 'Europeans'.

while reinscribing whiteness as the site of enfranchisement. Thus, the 'Italian tradition' emulated in the group's stagings both influenced and reflected the political implications of their productions.

This chapter turns to the material aspects of Eoan performances, including props, sets, and costumes. It shows that the physical dimensions of the group's productions summoned a class-based racial discourse strongly aligned with the politics of coloured aspiration discussed in Chapter 1,[438] and that they sought to transcend colouredness by evoking sophisticated, white worlds for the Eoan singers and their audiences to inhabit.

The Italian Tradition

'Tradition' was a recurring trope throughout the group's performance career. In publicity material for Eoan opera seasons, great care was taken to emphasise their fidelity to an Italian operatic heritage. Advance press material for the group's 1965 season, for instance, points out that 'the operas are being presented in the <u>true</u> Italian operatic tradition',[439] while Joseph Manca's essay, 'Introduction to Opera', reproduced in Eoan production programmes throughout the 1950s and 60s, emphasised that the group's members were 'singing and acting in the true tradition of Italy, the country of the birth of Opera where it has become part of the natural life of the people'.[440] Calls for public and governmental financial support also stressed the group's claims to an Italian tradition,[441] and descriptions of production designs underlined their authenticity.[442] Yet, it remains unclear what, exactly, the Eoan Group meant when it referred to a true Italian operatic tradition.

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438 And to which Chapter 4 will return.
439 '1965 Opera Season Advance Press Publicity', 15 February 1965, 2:10; original emphasis.
440 'Introduction to Opera by Joseph Manca', 28:194.
441 See, for instance, 'Eoan Group Call for Financial Support by Subscription', 20:140: 'It was the music section that first aroused world-wide interest in the activities of Eoan, by its presentation of Italian Opera, sung in the original language and performed in the traditional Italian manner'.
442 The advance publicity for the 1962 Opera Season, for instance, states that 'special period furniture has been designed and made, adding authenticity to the production [of *La Traviata*]', while the costumes for a production of *Madam Butterfly* during the same season were described as follows: 'Special new costumes have been designed and made, no expense has been spared in their creation, which is as authentic as is possible to make' ('Advance Publicity, 1962 Opera Season', 82:632). See also publicity material for the

The publicity material for their first venture into Italian opera provides an initial insight into the group's conception of 'the Italian tradition' when it describes the scale of their production of *La Traviata*:

> This will be a full-scale production with all the tradition, costumes, scenery, ballet etc. demanded in the recognised presentation of Italian Opera. The number of performers taking part is over 80 strong, including Principals, Chorus and Ballet Dancers.[443]

Here, the 'recognised presentation of Italian Opera' is described as demanding 'tradition, costumes, scenery, [and] ballet'. What exactly 'tradition' signifies is left to the reader's discretion, but given that aspects of staging such as costumes, décor, and dancing are specified separately, it is possible that the word here refers to the pomp and circumstance popularly associated with opera-as-event: the lush surroundings of the theatre; the often unspoken codes guiding audience behaviour; and, of course, a live orchestra.[444] This explanation diverges significantly from that proposed by Philip Gossett, who acknowledges that '"tradition" [is] a concept whose meaning remains elusive',[445] but goes on to define 'traditions of musical performance' as 'places in an opera where conductors or singers at some moment between the composition of the work and the present have altered or modified the printed musical text, for whatever reason, and where the changes introduced have been accepted by other performers, sometimes being passed on from one generation to the next'.[446] Nowhere in the Eoan Group's references to 'tradition' are there allusions to scores, texts, conductors, or even composers. The myth of authorial intention, or of an academically grounded turn to historically informed performance practice, therefore, cannot apply to their particular brand of 'tradition'. Elsewhere, however, Gossett ruminates on a notion

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1969 season: 'SCENERY: Mario Bierti, the Italian scenographer, has designed the décor […] in the traditional Italian style' ('1969 Opera Season Advance Press Publicity', 10:68, original orthography).

443 'The Eoan Group Arts Festival: Introductory Remarks by Joseph Manca', 1956, 1:4.

444 Eoan productions were all accompanied by the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra (later called the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, and currently known as the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra), a body of white musicians. For Eoan performances the orchestra was conducted by Joseph Manca.

445 Philip Gossett, 'Critical Editions and Performances', in *Verdi in Performance*, eds. Alison Latham and Roger Parker, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, 133-44, 134.

446 Ibid., 140.

of 'Italian operatic tradition' more closely resembling that of the Eoan group when he suggests that a widespread idea existed well into the twentieth century that 'safe and predictable' productions were part of a continuous tradition of Italian opera:

> Despite occasional incursions and provocations […] most performances of the basic Italian repertory—particularly in Italy itself—were safe and predictable. They told the story (sometimes well, sometimes poorly), and they presented it in recognizable, basically naturalistic settings. Just as musicians lived under the illusion that the scores from which they were performing had roots in a continuous tradition that transmitted accurate and authentic texts, so too did audiences believe that the essential conventions of staging and set design had been passed down from generation to generation.[447]

This sense of 'pastness', of being heirs to what had become before, relates to Gabriele Dotto's discussion of operatic transmission, in which 'tradition' suggests the assumption of a direct heredity from the original to the (re)production.[448] The Eoan group's productions exactly matched Gossett's description: they were safe, predictable, conventional, and naturalistic; they traced a lineage from Italy to Eoan. The group's promotion of an 'Italian operatic tradition' was hence both functional and affective: it created a European affiliation for the Eoan members. Nowhere was this sense of 'tradition'—this naturalism and convention—clearer, perhaps, than in their productions of *La Traviata*.

Sophistication On-Stage and Off: *La Traviata* and *La Bohème*

The Eoan group's first *La Traviata* opened in Cape Town City Hall, conducted by Joseph Manca, and with a cast consisting entirely of Eoan members. Sopranos May Abrahamse and Ruth Goodwin alternated in the role of Violetta, while tenor Ron Thebus sang Alfredo. Germont was sung by baritone Lionel Fourie and Annina by Linda Rinquest. In the role of the doctor, bass Robert Trussell made his debut. The chorus was drawn from the Eoan Group Adult Choir, and

[447] Gossett, *Divas and Scholars: Performing Italian Opera*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, 452.
[448] Gabriele Dotto, 'On "Traditional" Performance', in *Verdi in Performance*, eds. Alison Latham and Roger Parker, 151-56.

the second-act ballet was performed by members of the Eoan Group Ballet.[449] This first operatic endeavour by the group already began to foster what was to become a reputation for spectacle and glamour: enormous effort went into creating a visually arresting display, and members were implored to contribute to the production what they could. Stage furnishings were borrowed from Eoan singers,[450] and costumes were handmade by a group of volunteers known as the 'Eoan Group Sewing Women'. The final result was one of unprecedented splendour in the eyes of the group's audiences.[451]

Photographs and costume lists of the 1956 *La Traviata* attest to evening gowns in rich fabrics, gloves, fans, cloaks, evening suits, military uniforms, full livery, canes and hats.[452] Men and women, principals and chorus, all were dressed in splendid finery. Figure 3.1 provides a glimpse of the grandeur with a photograph of Act II, Scene 2 from the 1956 production. The sick Violetta, played by May Abrahamse, is seated, with a concerned Dr. Grenvil (Robert Trussell) and Flora (Edna Herman) tending to her, while Arthur Ackerman's Baron Douphol hovers in the background. Each is clothed in elaborate period costume—the women in shining dresses with wide skirts and extravagant necklines, the men in military suits or evening attire, complete with ornate cravats. Of all the costumes for *La Traviata*, however, Violetta's dress for the first act remains the most celebrated. An elaborate affair of layer upon layer of opulent white frills cascading from a jewelled bodice elegantly framed by off-the-shoulder puffed sleeves and long white evening gloves, rounded off by a florid tiara and a fan made of a single white ostrich feather, the gown itself became a minor celebrity in Cape operatic circles (figure 3.2).[453]

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[449] 'The Eoan Group Arts Festival: Introductory Remarks by Joseph Manca', 1:4.
[450] A list of stage properties for the production names members who had indicated that they could provide certain of the items, such as a sofa from Mrs. Jansen, and four champagne buckets from Mrs. Cooke ('Eoan Group Arts Festival: Stage Properties, *La Traviata*', 29:200).
[451] *Die Burger*'s music critic, Emol (identified by Hilde Roos as well-known Afrikaans critic Charlie Weich (Roos, 'Opera Production in the Western Cape: Strategies in Search of Indigenization', PhD Dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, 2010, 83)), for instance, postulated that the production's costumes were 'of the most beautiful and glamorous [he] had ever seen' ([*Die kostuums was van die mooiste en deftigste wat ek al ooit gesien het*] 'Kaapse Kleurlinge Voer Italiaanse Opera met Groot Welslae Uit' [Cape Coloureds Perform Italian Opera With Great Success], *Die Burger*, 12 March 1956, Ruth Fourie Newspaper Cuttings).
[452] '*La Traviata* Costumes, Principals', 82:632; '*La Traviata* Costumes, Chorus', 82:632.
[453] Photograph with caption, Vera Gow in *La Traviata*, reproduced in Programme, *La Traviata*, 1971, 100:770.

Figure 3.1: Act II, Scene 2 from *La Traviata*, 1956, reproduced in Programme, *La Traviata*, 22 April - 2 May 2004, 61 (no folder). Reproduced with Permission.

Figure 3.2: Vera Gow as Violetta in *La Traviata*, reproduced in Programme, *La Traviata*, 1971, 100:770. Reproduced with Permission.

The group's stage designs were as elaborate as their costumes. A set of picture postcards in the Eoan Group Archive explicitly connects their first production of *La Traviata* with La Scala.[454] In Folder 29:200, which contains various documents pertaining to the 1956 *Traviata*, a double A4 folio with four photographs attached to it is to be found. A handwritten heading reads 'Photographs of *La Traviata* at La Scala'. Each picture gives a complete view of the stage for a different scene from *La Traviata*, thereby showing the complete scenery and staging for one of the theatre's productions of the opera. It is not clear what year these photographs date from—they contain no information that could put a specific date on the production, except for the listing of Gino Marinuzzi as conductor, which indicates that it predated his death in 1945.[455] The extent to which the pictures from La Scala served as direct inspiration for the Eoan Group's stage design becomes evident when comparing Act II Scene 2 from the two productions. A photograph by renowned South African photographer Cloete Breytenbach, reproduced in *Eoan: Our Story* (figure 3.4),[456] shows an almost identical set construction for the Eoan production as in the La Scala photograph of the same scene (figure 3.3). In both pictures, the back wall of the stage is turned into a grand entrance consisting of three elaborately decorated arches arranged at slight angles. The elevation of the singers in the Milanese picture suggests a similar set of three steps as is visible in the Eoan photograph, while both productions are lit by ornate chandeliers. Despite the evident fact that the Cape Town City Hall stage for which the Eoan sets were

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454 The group was clear about the fact that it aspired to the image of La Scala. In advance publicity material for its 1962 opera season, for instance, the following statement appeared: 'Ambition: The Eoan Group not only intends to maintain its already high standard of opera presentation, but to raise it to further heights, and in this season it is doing its best to give Cape Town opera as it is done at "La Scala", Italy' ('Advance Publicity, 1962 Opera Season', 82:632). See also Correspondence, Manca to Ian Bernhardt, 24 May 1961 (33:226): 'I can assure you that we are saving no expense in presenting these three Operas [sic] [*La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, and *Madam Butterfly*] on the same scale as is done at La Scala in Italy'.
455 Information on the photographs reads as follows:
Teatro Della Scala Stagione A. XXI
Scene Di O. Grandi Dipinte Da G.R. Santoni E A. Molinari
Direttore Allestimento Scenico Nicola Benois
Maestro Concert, E Dirett.: Gino Marinuzzi
Atto I [and Atto II Quadro I; Atto II Quadro II; Atto III]
Regista: Giuseppe Marchioro
Coreografa: Regina Colombo
Stab. Fot Crimella - Milano
456 Eoan History Project, *Eoan: Our Story*, Johannesburg: Fourthwall Books, 2013, 128-9.

Figure 3.3: 'Photographs of *La Traviata* at La Scala', Act II, Scene 2, 29:200. Reproduced with Permission.

Figure 3.4: *La Traviata*, 1965, photograph by Cloete Breytenbach in *Eoan: Our Story*, 128-9. Reproduced with Permission.

designed was significantly smaller than that of La Scala, the Eoan scenographer even managed to place a table and a chandelier in almost exactly the same location stage left as it appears in the picture from La Scala.

A productive comparison can also be made between the Eoan Group's *La Traviata*, and the 1950/51 production featuring Renata Tebaldi—the last La Scala production of the same opera to embrace the elaborate designs of earlier presentations.[457] While the photographs from this production are by no means identical to those of the Eoan Group, the same extravagance and attention to detail are evident in both. Significantly, the next production of *La Traviata* at La Scala, featuring Maria Callas in the 1954/55 season, already started to explore a simplified aesthetic. Costumes were slicker—no more hoop skirts—and even the elaborate staging seemed sparser. David Levin notes this change at La Scala in the mid-1950s, when he follows Wolfgang Willacheck in arguing that 'the practice of directoral interpretation first arrived on the operatic stage in Italy on 28 May 1955, the date of the premiere at La Scala of Luchino Visconti's production of *La Traviata* starring Maria Callas'.[458] The Eoan Group's *La Traviata* therefore adopted a 1940s/early 1950s La Scala aesthetic, just as La Scala itself was parting from it: while significant change was occurring on the stage of Eoan's favourite paragon, the group itself opted for the tried and trusted. Even when Eoan's *La Traviata* was redesigned in 1962, it retained the same elaborate, detailed staging as the previous design.[459]

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457 Pictures available as part of La Scala's online archive, accessible at http://www.teatroallascala.org/archivio/risultatoggetti.aspx?lang=en-US&uid=13fe989c-9d7d-40c9-bf29-f5d5adec1416&objecttype=fotografie&pagesize=9&page=1#. ('Historical Archive', *Teatro Alla Scala*, Teatroallascala.org, accessed 29 February 2016).

458 David J. Levin, *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky*, Chicago, Il.: University of Chicago Press, 2007, 49 n.34.

459 The 1962 redesign of *La Traviata* did not differ significantly from the 1956 version, as becomes evident when comparing décor lists for the two productions: the cast seems to have shrunk slightly—down from four dozen to thirty-two—and they were not allowed as much to drink: whereas the 1956 production allowed for 11 bottles of champagne in Act I, the 1962 production only included three. Additionally, in 1962, scenographer Mario Bierti made some furniture specifically for the opera, rather than borrowing the majority of items from group members, as in 1956. The nature of props included on-stage for the two productions, however, differs negligibly. See 'Eoan Group Arts Festival: Stage Properties, *La Traviata*' [1956], 29:200; '*La Traviata* Stage Properties' [1962], 34:248; and '1962 Arts Festival Furniture to be Made, RE: Opera Season', 82:693.

Detail was, indeed, a striking feature of Eoan's operatic aesthetic. A props list for Act I of *La Traviata*, for instance, reveals a preoccupation with the minutiae of staging that strongly evokes the naturalism referred to in Gossett's description of conventional Italian productions:

> Act I
> 2 Long Trestle Tables
> 5 Small Tables
> 1 Sofa
> 7 Chairs (Golden) for Principals
> 30 Chairs for Chorus (Ornate)
> 2 Large Table Cloths for Trestle Tables
> 5 Table Cloths for Round Tables
> 4 Dozen Serviettes
> 4 Dozen Knives
> 4 Dozen Forks
> 4 Dozen Plates
> 4 Champagne Buckets
> 1 Full Bottle Champagne for each performance
> 10 Empty Champagne Bottles
> 4 Dozen Champagne Glasses
> 7 Table Chandeliers with 3 Candles in each
> 1 Larger Table Chandelier
> 1 Large Crystal Chandelier Hanging from the Ceiling
> 1 Large Mirror
> 6 Fruit Holders
> 12 Serving Trays
> 6 Dozen Artificial Flowers
> Strings of Garlanded Flowers for attaching to the Table Cloths
> 1 Large Basket for Flowers at Centre Back Stage[460]

In the realm of theatre studies, Andrew Sofer defines props as 'discrete, material, inanimate object[s] that [are] visibly manipulated by an actor in the course of performance'.[461] For Sofer, therefore, stage props have to perform a functional role in the dramatic action. From this perspective, very few of the items on the Eoan list could be classified as props: it is doubtful that the entire cast would have sat down to a meal on-stage, or, indeed, sat down at all, thus making it unlikely that each of the 30 chairs or four dozen serviettes, for instance, would be 'visibly manipulated by an actor in the course of performance'. In Sofer's terms, then, these objects

460 'Eoan Group Arts Festival: Stage Properties, *La Traviata*', 29:200.
461 Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003, 11.

would have been little more than 'onstage items'.[462] But, Sofer acknowledges, 'no recognisable object arrives on stage innocent'.[463] And indeed, these seemingly superfluous objects can be argued to have carried greater weight than the mere evocation of a distant operatic convention. When Sofer's performatively anchored approach is exchanged for a materialist paradigm,[464] the significance of the multitude of articles on Eoan's *La Traviata* stage is revealed to reside in the 'historical, cultural, and ideological baggage [they bring] on stage with them'.[465] Each carefully selected item represented a broader network of values which in apartheid South Africa were intimately connected with the realities of race and class. The elaborate luxury depicted on-stage was, to a large extent, foreign to the Eoan singers in real life. Classified coloured, they lived under an oppressive regime that exiled them to the literal and figurative back streets of poverty and proletarianism. The sumptuous dining, luscious settings, and glittering finery they savoured on stage would therefore have been known to them only through depictions in the media of a world of privilege from which they were excluded by their racial status. From a position of racial, cultural, and economic disenfranchisement, the specificities of Eoan's staging summoned a larger framework of symbolic economies in which luxury signalled whiteness.

The grandeur evoked on-stage clearly referenced a lifestyle reserved for the affluent classes of white South Africa. That these individuals were perceived to be the main supporters of Eoan's operatic endeavours was reflected explicitly in the advertising published in the group's performance playbills. Promoting a variety of luxury goods, from fine silverware[466] to delectable liquors,[467] these insets not only targeted a public of privilege and sophisticated taste, but also

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462 Ibid.
463 Ibid., 17.
464 As favoured, for instance, in Richard Paul Knowles, *Reading the Material Theatre*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; and Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass, *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
465 Sofer, *Stage Life*, 11.
466 'Spilhaus specialise in the importation of the finest "silverware" [sic] and the most exquisite bone china and porcelain' (Programme, Opera and Ballet Season, March 1958, Copies from Mrs. Ruth Fourie).
467 'Good Old Chateau, the Aristocrat of Brandies' (Programme, 1956 Arts Festival, 29:200).

projected these qualities onto the audience.[468] Significantly, images included in the advertisements invariably depicted white figures savouring their merchandise: an advertisement for Parisian Furriers (figure 3.5), for instance, depicts an elegantly dressed white woman and a picture of the Eiffel Tower alongside text advising its audience to 'Be right for every … Fashion Occasion [sic]. Nothing—but nothing is so "right" for all social events as fur—especially if it's a fur creation by the masters, Parisian Furriers; who are so aptly called the acknowledged leaders of fur creations.'[469] For Parisian Furriers it was evidently of little concern that few of the performers in whose playbill they promoted their creations would have occasion to frequent the types of social events that required fur (and not only due to South African weather), or, indeed, to buy such pieces. In the political economy of apartheid South Africa, the fur, the Eiffel Tower, and the white skin of the woman represented a network of privilege beyond the reach of the coloured singers of the Eoan Group.

Figure 3.5: Advertisement for Parisian Furriers, in Programme, Opera and Ballet Season, March 1958, Copies from Mrs. Ruth Fourie. Reproduced with Permission.

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468 Mark Gauntlett argues that theatre programme advertisements 'work to confirm the reader's membership of a group whose social standing and cultural disposition place him or her above the everyday and the common' (Gauntlett, 'Theatre-going, Theatre Programmes, Tourism', *Australasian Drama Studies* 22, 1993, 113-27, 115). Little has been published on the significance of theatre playbills and the advertising included in them. Apart from Gauntlett's article, which focuses on the programmes distributed at three different Shakespeare productions in Australia, two studies engaged with the content, layout, and commercial concerns of American theatre playbills have appeared (see Marvin Carlson, 'The Development of the American Theatre Program', in *The American Stage*, eds. Ron Engle and Tice L. Miller, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 101-14; and James Harbeck, 'A Case Study in the Pragmatics of American Theatrical Programs', *Semiotica* 118(3/4), 1998, 215-38), as has one study preoccupied specifically with playbills for Norwegian productions of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (Lars August Fodstad, 'Refurbishing the Doll's House? The Theatre Programme as Paratextual Trace', *Ibsen Studies* 6(2), 2006, 149-87).

469 Programme, Opera and Ballet Season, March 1958, Copies from Mrs. Ruth Fourie, original orthography.

A figure who did drape herself in fur was the woman gracing the full-page Morris Oxford advertisement in the 1956 Arts Festival Programme (figure 3.6). Coiffed and bejewelled, she smiles on the arm of a man in evening attire. They have 'arrived', the advertisement proclaims—presumably at the opera, judging by the words 'A fine performance…' arranged along the top of the page—but also in life:

> You have arrived … relaxed, and at ease; proud of the envious glances your Morris Oxford has attracted; secure in the knowledge that its dignified lines and its spacious and elegantly finished interior, ensure you an extra confidence on these occasions …[470]

Arriving was evidently something that came naturally to white people: they did so confidently and with ease. The dignity and elegance ascribed to the car were clearly intended also for the couple in the picture. Again, this advertisement celebrated a way of life that was reserved in South Africa for those who possessed the dignity and elegance of white skin.[471] The advertisements echoed the grandeur depicted on stage and naturalised it. As Mark Gauntlett observes, 'the theatre programme […] advertises and points towards the authenticity of what is to be experienced'.[472] Here, what was to be experienced was not only the authentic production of Italian opera, but also an authentic reconstruction of the world of privilege and grandeur associated with both opera and whiteness. The playbill commercials espoused a world of affluence and privilege that was both real *and* imaginary: real for the white elite that frequented the Eoan Group's operas, and

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470 Programme, 1956 Arts Festival, 29:200. According to Gauntlett, '[w]ordplay and punning […] are a popular strategy […]: they operate, like the visual affirmations of glamour, to confirm the reader's membership of an exclusive group, but they also flatter the reader's cultural competency' (Gauntlett, 'Theatre-going', 116).

471 *Where* these individuals arrived was, of course, also significant. An advertisement in the 1958 programme for the Grand Hotel on Adderley Street invited audience members to the 'Florentine Grille. Cape Town's most luxurious air-conditioned Grill Room; beautifully decorated in the "old new" look, and featuring magnificent copies of the Florentine Old Masters. Renowned for the excellence of its service and cuisine.' (Programme, Opera and Ballet Season, March 1958, Copies from Mrs. Ruth Fourie.) In segregationist South Africa, the Grand Hotel and its Florentine Grille would have been out of bounds for all coloured people except staff. Here, again, we encounter the promotion of a world from which Eoan Group members were physically excluded, but into which they sought to incorporate themselves through their productions.

472 Gauntlett, 'Theatre-going', 125.

imaginary for the singers who interacted with this world on stage. Hence, the staging served both to alienate and to unite: the elaborate detail of their productions—simultaneously denoting realism *and* fantasy—supported the inhabiting of a white world by the coloured bodies of the Eoan singers.

Figure 3.6: Advertisement for Morris Oxford, in Programme, 1956 Arts Festival, 29:200. Reproduced with Permission.

Sofer argues that 'arbitrary objects', those excessive articles known as 'onstage items', serve to disrupt the bond between the world created on-stage, and the context within which the theatrical event operates:

> Surreal or arbitrary objects have neither use-function nor construable plot function; they are just *there*, pointing to themselves rather than to an external referent. Found only on the stage (or in a museum exhibition), arbitrary objects sever the link between stage-world and real world. Because of this, they are semidecorative and often divorced from narrative altogether.[473]

For Sofer, non-functional objects—those that do not count as props—dissolve the connection between stage and life because they serve no real-life purpose. 'Pointing to themselves', there just for the sake of being there, they emphasise both their own artifice, and the artifice of their staged environment. In the case of the Eoan Group's productions, however, the opposite seems to be true. As demonstrated by the class-based racial discourse evoked in the interaction between the stage objects and the world of privilege projected onto the white audience, the self-referentiality of the Eoan staging served to *create* a link between stage-world and real world, albeit not a world that was real for the Eoan members: while their stage experiences arguably did not constitute a sense of reality for the performers, they were designed to propel them into a world normally reserved for whites.

The sophistication attributed to the Eoan audiences by the playbill advertisements served a further purpose: claiming for its public distinction and class, the group constructed an audience that could award their productions with recognition. Such an audience was knowledgeable, privileged, and above all, white; their recognition was hence infused with an imagined authority that could grant the Eoan singers what their productions evoked: membership of a European pedigree. The group's description of *La Traviata* cited above shows that the evocation of an imagined Italian heritage depended for them not only on the extravagant spectacle of 'costumes, scenery, ballet', and a cast of 'over 80 strong', but also on the audience's recognition of this affiliation. Substituting 'recognised' for 'traditional'—the term usually employed in this particular clause (as in 'performed in the traditional Italian manner')[474]—suggests some slippage between the two concepts in the Eoan imaginary. Tradition was, evidently, closely intertwined with

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[473] Sofer, *Stage Life*, 24.

[474] 'Eoan Group Call for Financial Support by Subscription', 20:140.

recognition: unless a production was recognised as embodying a certain sense of Italianicity, it could not claim to belong to the Italian operatic tradition. It was therefore necessary to construct an audience that could acknowledge the Europeanness of the productions, both as a result of being European (white) themselves, and because they were intimately familiar with the elite world of Italian opera, itself represented by expensive clothing, travel abroad (Parisian Furrier's Eiffel Tower), and refined artistic tastes (the 'magnificent copies of the Florentine Old Masters' at the Grand Hotel).

In addition to the group's staging and playbill advertisements, the South African media did much to contribute to the construction of such a sophisticated public. A newspaper review of an Eoan performance of *Il Trovatore*, for instance, described its reception as follows:

> 'Grand Opera' quotes the poster outside the Durban City Hall and grand opera it certainly was last night at the Eoan Group's brilliantly mounted production premiere of 'Il Trovatore' [sic]. Here was opera presented in all its traditional spectacle, colour and breathtaking drama—a fact well marked by the tremendous La Scalaish ovation accorded the principals at the conclusion of last night's memorable performance.[475]

In describing the ovation as 'La Scalaish', the critic ascribed an Italianate sophistication, not only to the production and its singers, but also to the audience. The recognition of quality reflected a certain cultural achievement from those who received the Eoan offerings. Only an operatically erudite audience, after all, would be able to recognise quality opera and applaud in the manner of La Scala. Hence, the review generated an environment supportive of the myth of tradition: by creating a public that could resemble Milanese opera-goers, the figurative scene was set for a recognition of the Eoan efforts as evocative of La Scala.

Even more valuable than the applause of the 'normal' South African public, however, was the endorsement of Italian audience members. Newspapers eagerly seized upon positive reactions from Italians as confirmation of their own evaluation of the productions' quality. A particularly charming example was published in Port Elizabeth's *Evening Post*:

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475 'Grand Opera it Certainly Was', undated, source unknown, 60:494a.

> Cries of 'Excellente' and 'Magnifico' burst from Italians in the audience. And curtain call followed curtain call. […] Italians who saw the first two operas gave them rave ratings. The Italian accents, they said, were faultless, and the acting better than many an oversea [sic] professional company. 'To think they have captured the whole spirit of our Italian opera—this, I think, is truly marvelous', exclaimed one.[476]

The Italian audience members' comments on the singers' 'faultless' Italian accents point to the enormous effort that went into producing the Eoan operas in Italian. Manca taught his singers the Italian libretti 'syllable by syllable' over the course of several months,[477] while translating general ideas to enable them to follow what they were singing about.[478] The quality of the group's Italian, however, was not necessarily always as 'faultless' as their Italian audiences claimed. Tenor Ronald Theys, for instance, recalls an entirely different linguistic standard:

> Now I listen to a few recordings … to the Eoan Group chorus. Goodness, it was not so good, because we were the first coloureds who sang, you understand, the people went crazy! They sing in Italian, we just sang 'tomato', 'cucumber, tomato', you know, things like that instead of Italian words. Sometimes when we went touring in the more outlying areas, then they say the people are singing opera, and we want to show that we can talk Italian. So we just say a short line from *Traviata*. Then they say: 'Wow, those *hotnotte*[479] can talk Italian nicely!'[480]

Theys's anecdote reflects the extent to which the singers' 'Italian accomplishment' was a performance: far from authentic renderings of Italian texts, they undermined these texts by substituting them with familiar terms. While this was a humorous intervention born of necessity, it may also be read as a unique distortion of the Eoan productions' imaginary Italian authenticity

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476 'People Flock to the Italian Operas by the Eoan Group', *Evening Post*, 6 July 1960, 101:772p. See also 'Baritone Gives Great Performance in Verdi's *Rigoletto*', *Daily News*, 2 August 1960, 30:208, in which a picture of Lionel Fourie is accompanied by the following caption: 'Lionel Fourie, Eoan Group baritone, whose performance in "Rigoletto" last night moved several Italians to say: "Without doubt, the equal of Tito Gobbi."'; and 'Eoan *Rigoletto* Superb', undated, source unknown, Ruth Fourie Newspaper Cuttings: 'The Italian Consul-General, Dr. Achille Ragni, said that the Eoan Group's production of Verdi's *Rigoletto* in the City Hall, Cape Town on Saturday night was "superior, superb, and beautiful".'

477 'I taught them syllable by syllable the language pronunciation. Since then the opera section has grown until we are now touring South Africa for the first time.' (Joseph Manca, quoted in 'Sacrifice, Hard Work Behind Eoan Group's Opera Success', *Daily News*, 9 August 1960, 30:208)

478 An article about soprano May Abrahamse reveals the singers' efforts to become familiar with the Italian libretti: 'It took most of the cast some time to get used to the Italian language. "But I think we are quite at ease singing in Italian now," said Miss Abrahamse. […] "We were given the English translations, so have an idea what we are singing about at the proper times"' ('Cheque Room Girl is Eoan Group Opera Star', *Talk of the Times*, April 1956, 29:200).

479 Derogatory term for coloured people, derived from '*hottentot*'.

480 Ronald Theys, in *Eoan: Our Story*, 163.

to fit more comfortably within the singers' own South African context. Whether or not the group's Italian accents were in actual fact immaculate was, however, obscured by the Italian audience members' confirmation that they were. The 'whole spirit of […] Italian opera', here, resided as much in the audience's perception of this spirit, as in the group's enactment of it. For South African newspaper critics, the ultimate authorities on Italian opera would have been Italians. Nobody would have been more capable than them of recognising 'the Italian operatic tradition'. Their approval therefore not only awarded value to the Eoan productions, but also indicated that the rest of the audience—who similarly endorsed the performances—knew how to recognise real, quality Italian opera.

Non-Italian audience members also claimed operatic knowledge for themselves in letters of appreciation to the group. Here, they commented on how the Eoan performances compared to productions they had seen in Europe and beyond. Margie Byrd, for instance, revealed that the Eoan Group's *Rigoletto* was better than she had heard in Rome,[481] while Jan C. Lewis declared that none of the 'several operas' he had seen 'performed in England by professional companies […] approached the standard of the Eoan Group'.[482] Gerald H. Sharpe, ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, wrote to the *Natal Mercury* to indicate that he had 'heard opera in various parts of the world and must truthfully say that the singing and stage artistry of this group are of a much higher class than might have been expected'; he predicted 'greater things for them in the future'.[483] While it is unclear which productions and companies these audience members were referring to in their comparisons, it is evident that they represented a privileged class: they had the financial means to travel abroad and to attend opera around the world; they could recognise and endorse, for they had the right kind of knowledge, acquired through exactly those material privileges referenced on the Eoan stage and targeted in the production playbills. This was not opera 'for everybody', but opera for the elite—an elite

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481 Correspondence, Margie[?] Byrd to Manca, 10 August 1960, 31:210.
482 Correspondence, Jan C. Lewis to Manca, 12 Oct 1960, 31:210.
483 Sharpe, Gerald H., 'High Praise', *Mercury*, 8 August 1960, 30:208.

depicted on stage in *La Traviata*.[484]

Even when the group's choice of opera did not allow for *Traviata*-esque depictions of grandeur, an aesthetic of excess was still pursued. A list of stage properties for the group's 1965 production of *La Bohème*, for instance, demonstrates a similarly lavish approach, covering page upon page of both essential and seemingly superfluous props:

Act I

i. 1 Candlestick with candle on dresser
ii. 5 books on dresser
iii. 1 shirt, 2 pairs socks, hanging on line
iv. 3 plates on dresser
v. 2 knives and 2 forks on dresser
vi. 4 glasses on dresser
vii. 1 bottle water on centre table
viii. 1 newspaper on bed
ix. Inkwell and quill on centre table
x. Great number of sheets of writing paper on centre table
xi. Flint on centre table
xii. Candlestick with candle for Mimi
xiii. Key for Mimi
xiv. Coins for Schaunard
xv. Bottle wine for boy porters
xvi. Bundle firewood for boy porters
xvii. 2 Parcels food for boy porters
xviii. Paint brushes, colours, palette for Marcello
xix. Painted canvas for Marcello
xx. Mahl stick for Marcello
xxi. Apples to be used as food
xxii. Poker and small shovel for fire place
xxiii. 1 Spirit lamp

Furniture

1 table; 2 stools; 1 easel; 1 dresser; 2 chairs; 1 iron bed with two pillows, sheets, blankets and mattress.

Act II

1. On Secondhand Stall: 1 French Horn, Old Jacket; Books Old Kettle; Old birdcage; Old, out of fashion dress.
2. In window of milliner's shop: 2 ladies' hats; Mimi's pink bonnet' all hats on milliner's stands.
3. Sweet vendor's tray (like ice-cream and sweet trays of bioscope usherettes): with different assorted packets and loose sweets.
4. Another vendor's tray containing fruit.
5. Cart (very small handcart) containing a few toys. The cart is adorned with ribbons and paper flowers.
6. Seven ordinary plastic plates—1 plastic roast chicken or duck. 2 big plastic plates. 3 bottles wine. 7 glasses. 7 forks and 7 knives. Apples to be used as food. 2 Menu cards for waiters.

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484 This point will further inform a discussion in Chapter 4 of Manca's references to 'the snob element'.

2 Serviettes for waiters.
7. 1 round hat box, 3 big parcels, for Alcindoro.
8. 1 bundle of 3 books for Colline.
9. Baton for Policeman.
Furniture
1 big table for 5 people. 1 small cafe table. 7 chairs. 2 white tablecloths.

Act III
1. 8 corn brooms
2. 7 food baskets
3. 6 milk cans
Furniture
1 bench; 1 charcoal burner; 3 stools

Act IV
Same as Act I—plus—
1. Bread for Schaunard
2. Parcel with herring for Colline (imitation)
3. Mimi's pink bonnet for Rodolfo
4. Musetta's big ribbon for Marcello
5. Muff for Musetta
6. Earrings for Musetta
7. Little bottle of medicine for Marcello
8. Little spirit lamp
9. Small pot.[485]

The careful counting out of the books on the dresser—five to be precise—the inclusion of a Mahl stick, sheets for the bed, a plate and cutlery for each person, regardless of whether they are going to be used or not. Such excess resembles neither the *Regietheater* that was starting to pervade professional stages across Europe at the time, nor does it suggest the austerity identified by John Lowerson in post-war amateur opera in the United Kingdom.[486] If anything, the detail and extravagance of the Eoan stage probably lends itself most intuitively to comparison with small, provincial Italian opera houses, which according to Gossett still betray a preference for

[485] 'Eoan Group: Property List: Opera: La Boheme [sic]', 1965, 89:729, original orthography.
[486] John Lowerson, *Amateur Operatics: A Social and Cultural History*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005, 123. Little has been published about amateur operatic practice worldwide, and none in South Africa, where many archives remain inaccessible, lost, or destroyed. Even professional opera productions in South Africa before 1994 have received scant scholarly attention, making comparisons between the Eoan Group and other companies nearly impossible. In addition, comparisons between the Eoan Group and other companies—both in South Africa and abroad—are complicated by the fact that Eoan does not lend itself to easy categorisation as either amateur or professional. While the singers received no reimbursement for their performances, the management of the group clearly aspired to professionalisation, repeatedly launching plans to establish a full-time opera company, orchestra, and music school.

conventional, naturalistic stagings of standard Italian operatic repertoire.[487] Again, this suggests that the Eoan Group adopted an Italian way of doing things, thereby hinting at a direct link with an 'Italian tradition'. The lavish spectacle of their performances hence not only inserted the singers into a privileged white world, but purchased for them a status resembling that of 'honorary Italians'.

'Really Just Dark Europeans': Claiming Whiteness

The public eagerly promoted the perception of a close kinship between coloured people and Italians. An appreciative audience member, for instance, described such a connection in a letter to the *Sunday Express*:

> This operatic achievement affirms a hitherto unsuspected affinity between Table Bay and the Bay of Naples—the shores of both, it seems, resound to natural, instinctive song. Even the olive tint of those Cape complexions seemed nothing more than a Neapolitan floridness.[488]

Proceeding from the 'operatic achievement' of the Eoan Group to a reassessment of their skin colour, the critic here suggests that the group's operatic activities not only summon an Italian musical tradition, but indeed that they signal a hereditary relation between coloureds and Italians. As reductive as it seems, this was not an entirely unusual view. Indeed, Joseph Manca himself commented as follows upon coloured people's 'natural flair for music, rhythm and normal [sic] harmonies':

> They [coloureds] are really dark Europeans. Their way of life is Western. Their religion is Christian. They live like us. They think like us.[489]

[487] Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 452. Again, it is difficult to comment in greater detail upon the potential similarities between these productions since, as Gabriele Dotto observes, opera scholarship betrays a preoccupation with 'unusual', rather than conventional, productions: '[T]he commonplace is rarely recorded for posterity: it is the unusual or the curious, the exceptional or the difficult that tend to be immortalised in books or museums' (Dotto, 'On "Traditional" Performance', 152).
[488] 'Operas Worthy of Italy', *Sunday Express*, 21 August 1960, 30:208.
[489] 'Servants, Teachers in Eoan Group Cast', *Daily News,* 12 August 1960, 30:208.

Beyond suggesting that coloured people were not really as distinct from whites as apartheid ideology claimed, Manca's comments propose that his coloured singers were genetically predisposed toward Italian opera. Italians, located in the south of Europe, were themselves 'dark Europeans'—their 'Neapolitan floridness' hardly distinct from 'the olive tint of those Cape complexions'. It was therefore only to be expected that the 'dark Europeans' of southern Europe and the 'dark Europeans' of southern Africa would share an operatic affinity. Here, a conflation of two groups of 'others' (Italians as Europe's other, and coloureds as the other of whites), located in two versions of 'the south', is naturalised. Both Italians and coloureds displayed a 'natural flair for music, rhythm and normal harmonies', which found expression in 'natural, instinctive song'. Eoan's decision to perform Italian opera was, hence, racially and culturally appropriate. The invocation of Italy here is crucial: both European *and* other, Italy functioned as an ideal intersectional nexus between Manca's white 'us' and coloured 'them'. White South Africans claimed the same European background that belonged to Italians, while coloureds appeared to share Italians' cultural traditions and biological markers. Italy, hence, became the socio-cultural ideal under which whites and coloureds could claim a common heritage. A similar sentiment surfaced in critic Lewis Sowden's review of *La Traviata*, titled 'A "Traviata" of irony and enjoyment':

> The Eoan Group comprise Coloured people presumably developing along their own lines. And what do they develop? They show an extraordinary interest and capacity in Italian opera, in a sense the most sophisticated of the arts, thus staking their claim to belong to us, our culture and our future—as assuredly they do.[490]

Rather than concluding that Italian opera was evidently not the preserve of whiteness, Sowden determined that the Eoan Group's predilection for 'white art' demonstrated that coloured people belonged to the white race. Surely, Sowden suggests, it is their inherent whiteness that guided the Eoan Group's path of cultural development in the direction of Italian opera, 'the most sophisticated of the arts'. Attempts such as these to express admiration for the achievements of

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[490] Sowden, 'A "Traviata" of Irony and Enjoyment', undated, source unknown, 60:494a.

the singers therefore served instead to signify a condescending hierarchy of racial accomplishment, and to reinforce the belief that anything worthwhile could only be produced by those who shared or had access to an inheritance of European sophistication. Simultaneously, they traced a 'natural affinity' between coloureds and Italians, which powerfully endorsed the group's own claims to an Italian operatic tradition. As such, the Eoan productions constructed for the coloured members of the group an affinity with whiteness.[491]

The construction of a hereditary link between the coloured singers of the Eoan Group and their white audience members relied on more than just the identification of similarities between Eoan and Europe; it also required the group to differentiate itself from that which was not considered European or, by extension, white. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the group's production of Puccini's *Madam Butterfly*, first staged as part of the 1962 Opera Season.

Othering the Orient: *Madam Butterfly*

The most striking feature of the Eoan Group's preparation for *Madam Butterfly* was the extreme lengths to which they were prepared to go in order to get hold of 'authentic' costumes. At first, they hoped to import them, approaching Mr. A. Kavalsky in Cape Town with a list of complete costumes they wished to obtain.[492] The list, compiled by Gregorio Fiasconaro, was very specific in its requirements:

> Costumes required for the opera 'Madame Butterfly'
> Butterfly: Act I: Kimono (Furisode) of orange decorated with white lotus flowers, embroidered in gold and bound with a gold obi—for the wedding ceremony she covers this with a large robe (uchikake) of white with orange lotus flowers.
> At the end of the act she changes into a simple gown of pure white satin with big

[491] This strongly evokes Kristen M. Turner's observation in 'Class, Race, and Uplift in the Opera House: Theodore Drury and his Company Cross the Color Line', *Journal of Musicological Research* 34(4), 2015, 320-51, that white critics seemed to respond to 'a "whiting" effect that the act of singing European works had on their perceptions of the performers' (347). Turner also refers to James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, in which the main character pacifies his (white) beloved's misgivings about an interracial union 'by performing the works of Chopin, Beethoven, and other European masters on the piano', thus rendering his blackness 'inaudible' (347).
[492] Correspondence, Manca to A. Kavalsky, 14 February 1961, 33:224.

sleeves—wig with ceremonial ornaments—parasol—fan—white socks (tabi)—sandals
Act II & III: Lavender kimono with large designs of light blue—black obi.
Suzuki (Butterfly—servant) Act I: Navy-blue kimono and black obi with white designs
Act II: Light-blue kimono with white and red designs—light green obi—wig—socks—sandals.
Goro (marriage-broker: (Nakodo)): Reddish-brown kimono over apple-green trousers—socks—sandals—fan
Prince Yamadori: Rich costume?? Possibly in black and gold
Imperial commissary: Complete costume in deep-red
Shinto Priest: Complete costume
Bonze Priest: Complete costume
The official registrar: Complete costume

Chorus
Two Butterfly Servants: Complete costumes
Butterfly's Mother: (elderly lady, not rich): Complete costume—tone colour, blue and yellow
Butterfly's Aunt (old lady): Complete costume—tone colour, black and red-brown
Butterfly's Cousin (your lady): Complete costume—tone colour, brick red and white
Butterfly's Girl Friends: Twelve complete costumes—tone colour, pale lavender and chartreuse
Butterfly's Men relatives: Six complete costumes of black oriental dress suits.

Complete costume should include: Parasols (for the ladies), wig, sandals, socks, fans (for the ladies).[493]

In the letter, Manca suggests that they would be prepared to compromise: if they could, at least, get the complete outfits of Butterfly, Prince Yamadori, the Imperial Commissary, Shinto Priest, Bonze Priest and the Official Registrar, they would settle for having the other costumes made in Cape Town, if the material was available.[494] While the group's efforts to obtain real, Japanese costumes may have represented their commitment to producing as 'authentic' a production as they possibly could, it also suggested that the group had to import costumes from elsewhere because they did not possess the authority to design and produce them themselves. Far from being an admission of inadequacy, however, such an acknowledgement would have confirmed that the Eoan Group were *different* to the foreigners they were to depict on stage. In other words, it represented an act of demarcation, by which the Eoan Group distinguished themselves from the ethnic Other. They could not make these costumes, because they did not know enough about non-European people and culture.

493 Ibid., original orthography.
494 Ibid., 1.

Film footage of the Eoan Group's *Madam Butterfly* shows that, in the end, Fiasconaro and Manca had to settle for something far removed from their original conception.[495] Evidently unable to import original kimonos, either from Japan or from European theatre workshops, they were forced to have the costumes made in Cape Town with whatever suitable fabric they could find. The result was much less of a unified colour scheme than originally proposed; some of the costumes look like they had been made of curtaining, covered in elaborate floral designs or candy-coloured stripes. This tumultuous explosion of colours and patterns, however, was cleverly offset by a simple stage design in the form of a Japanese folding screen, which did not need to be changed throughout the production.

The folding-screen-set still incorporated raised platforms, partitions, and covered areas that lent a three-dimensional aspect to the scenery. Its restraint and relative lack of adornment, however, stood in stark contrast not only to the ebullient costumes, but also to the settings of the other works featured in the 1962 season.[496] One cannot help but wonder to what extent this simple aesthetic was designed to reflect the essence of simplicity, serenity, and decluttered physical and psychic habitat that was routinely projected onto Japanese people by the Western imaginary.[497] While the austerity of this set could have been an economic measure, it seems unlikely given the costs the group were prepared to incur for the importation of authentic

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[495] Film, *Madam Butterfly*, 1967, 99:767.

[496] These were *La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, and the group's first production of Johann Strauss's operetta *Die Fledermaus*.

[497] Sheila K. Johnson, in *The Japanese through American Eyes*, Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1988, provides documentary evidence of attitudes towards Japan from the late nineteenth century until the 1970s. During the 1950s and 1960s, images of Japanese equanimity seemed to dominate. Bosley Crowther, reviewing the Japanese film *Gates of Hell* in the *New York Times* (14 December 1954), for instance, referred to a 'most magnificent flow of […] serenity; the very essence of ancient Japanese culture' (cited on p.96); John Martin, also in the *New York Times* (28 February 1954), wrote that 'everything is characterized by delicacy and proportion' (cited on p.97); and the *New York Times Magazine*, in a generous review of the Japanese house at the Museum of Modern Art published on the day of its opening to the public (20 June 1954), commented that 'the empty rooms have a luxury of space and an uncluttered serenity' (cited on p.97). James A. Michener's *Sayonara*, also published in 1954 and described by Johnson as 'perhaps the single most influential book about Japan during the 1950s and 1960s' (*Japanese through American Eyes*, 82), promulgated similar views of the Japanese, captured perhaps most explicitly by a Tokyo curator's words to Major Grover, the novel's protagonist: 'We are a very subtle people.' Throughout the novel, Major Gruver comments on the smallness, cleanliness, and bareness of Japanese rooms and people (James A. Michener, *Sayonara*, London: Mandarin, 1954, 182).

costumes, as well as the elaborate nature of the other productions that formed part of the season. Instead, the *Madam Butterfly* set design, like the production's costumes, suggests that practicality was ancillary to the evocation of a convincing image of Japan.

Watching the highly stylised movements of the Eoan singers upon the *Madam Butterfly* stage, with their small, rapid steps, exaggerated, circular hand gestures, and affected curtsies, it is difficult to avoid the impression that the performers were enacting an imagined orientalised other against which to set their own 'coloured otherness'. The Eoan Group's Japanese figures were studied imitations inhabiting a stereotyped physical space; they enacted before the eyes of their white audience an image that had been projected onto Japan by the West, turning it into a caricature of itself. Unlike the naturalism of the group's Western settings, the *Madam Butterfly* stage was explicit in its artifice: the folding-screen set did not change between acts, thereby highlighting the fact that it was not an accurate reconstruction of physical space. Similarly, the elaborate costumes, despite not being authentic Japanese imports, emphasised the exoticism of the scenes and reinforced the aesthetic distance between South African reality and operatic artifice. Here, no white world was evoked and inhabited by coloured bodies; instead, white stereotypes of a non-white sphere were adopted and perpetuated. By imagining Japaneseness in the same way that it was imagined by the West, the Eoan Group confirmed that it shared the same assumptions and values as those underpinning European treatments of the Other, and thus that it considered itself more closely related to West than to East.

This reading of what happened on-stage can be extended to a consideration of footage of what happened beyond the stage. The film provides several glimpses of the audience arriving before the start of the production—white people through the whites-only entrance and into the whites-only foyer, and coloured people through the non-whites' entrance, past the non-whites' cloakrooms, and into the hall. In the film, the whites-only foyer is shown to have been elaborately decorated with flowers and Japanese style arches. It is as if the production spills over into the foyer, creating a subliminal connection between the coloured performers on stage and the white audience members. By means of a subtle breaking down of the fourth wall, the white

audience was welcomed into the fold and made to feel part of the production. Already united as they were by the stereotypes they collectively projected onto the Japanese characters portrayed on-stage, the coloured singers and the white audience members were further joined by their implied co-inhabitation of the exotic world suggested by the décor.

Ralph P. Locke, in *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections*,[498] follows Pierre Leprohon in arguing that exoticism ('*esotismo*') 'can help an individual—the creative artist but also a member of the audience—to achieve liberation from the constraints of his or her own culture and upbringing'.[499] In Locke's formulation, exoticism functions as a site of escape *from* constricted Western reality (considering that Locke deals exclusively with exoticism in Western art music) and *into* the liberty, autonomy, and adventure of the Orient. The Eoan Group's *Madam Butterfly*, however, suggests a different kind of flight. Here, the coloured singers did not escape into Butterfly's Japan—one depicted in any case as restrained, sparse, and tragically governed by strict social convention—but, rather, into the world of their white audience, where they, too, were at liberty to exoticise Japan, and to construct stereotypes of non-European Others. It was in this white world, already fashioned in their other productions as one of splendour, freedom, and sensual pleasure, that they could stage their own emancipation. Fleeing into whiteness, they could forget race.

Forgetting: The Politics of the Stage

This reading of *Madam Butterfly* initiates a broader understanding of the Eoan stage as a space in which racial divisions were drowned out. Former member Peter Voges remembers the feeling of being transported beyond the politics of colour during Eoan productions:

> You come through the station and you come through the non-white exit and you head into a white theatre which is in a white area. And the audience is white, but you can't see them, because when you look into the lights you don't see an audience. There is no

[498] Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
[499] Ibid., 26.

> contact between you and the people because the theatre is not built that way, for backstage visitors. Strange situation of coming in, all the workers, like the doorman and the costume people are all whites. The stage hands and the stage manager is [sic.] white. But somehow in your time, the time that you are there in your dressing rooms, wonderful dressing rooms with lights and things like that, you lose it. You get transported away. After the performance little mini vans line up and has a number on it, and if it is your number it is going to Wynberg. You get in and go back to the coloured area and you go home […] Most of them did it quite successfully, there was not much of a struggle among coloured people. We came to accept things. It was sort of, '*Ag, nou ja, wees nou die minste*' [Ah well, just give in].[500]

Voges's poignant reference to the literal blanking out of the whiteness of the audience suggests that the stage became a site for the temporary forgetting of a racially organised reality. It became the location in which direction, containment and designation were at their most unstable. The Eoan singers performed for an audience whose whiteness became invisible, while impressing themselves physically, visually and sonically upon one of the hearts of white culture: the white stage.

My use of the concept of 'forgetting' follows Edward Said, who articulated it in his late work as possibly the only way to overcome political conflict and displacement.[501] Forgetting, for Said, is not an act of avoidance or amnesia, a desperate denial of an unbearable reality, but rather, as James Currie explains, 'an act of substitution'.[502] The currency in which an oppressive reality is measured is not denied, but pushed to the margins in favour of an alternative form of immersion in the world. Significantly, audiences and critics alike viewed this forgetting to be initiated particularly successfully through the medium of Italian opera. Boris Canin of the South African National Concert Agency, for instance, wrote as follows to Manca in anticipation of the 1956

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500 Cited in *Eoan: Our Story*, 35.

501 Edward Said, *On Late Style*, London: Bloomsbury, 2006.

502 'As I will be understanding it here, forgetting is not an embarrassing oversight (as in "I forgot your name") or, tragically, the varying degrees of amnesia, a pathological inability to remember. Nor is it a practice of avoidance whereby we carry on as if normal while consciously circumventing some potentially disturbing and disruptive thing—such as when we try to avoid the livid gaze of the homeless person on the subway […] If we have forgotten, then things, at least while we forget, do not remain the same, since forgetting is a kind of act of substitution rather than the creation of an unacknowledged lack. We get caught up by means of excitations into something else, the mass and force of which, by means of a kind of physics of human attention, pushes our previous forms of inscription toward certain peripheries from which they can no longer so easily fully constitute our being as normally they do. To the degree that forgetting proves that what we had been beholden to is not all (since we can become consumed by something else), forgetting can produce acts of negation' (James Currie, *Music and the Politics of Negation*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012, 149).

production of *La Traviata*:

> May I express the very best wishes for the forthcoming Eoan Group Festival. The presentation of Verdi's immortal masterpiece 'La Traviata' [sic], will not only fulfil a psychological need in the visual, and aural beauty it offers; but this great musical drama, which will be produced in the true Italian Tradition, provides the essential balance between ordinary practical life, and the fantasies, unexpressed imagery, and dreams, inherent in every human being, black or white. It sublimates the three primary emotions of love, hate and fear.[503]

Canin's opinions resemble remarkably closely Manca's own view that '[t]he emotional appeal of the human story is greatly heightened through the power of lyric drama, and the splendour of grand opera can produce in audiences, exalted moods, flights of imagination, laughter and tears, perhaps more than any other form of art'.[504] Ideas of escape, forgetting, and unity, for Manca and Canin, come together in the Italian operatic tradition.

The ideal of operatic forgetting was facilitated, in the case of the Eoan productions, by the fact that the group sang in Italian. Apartheid, beyond being a set of laws, was also a semiotic project, spoken and enforced by means of an increasingly rigorously defined set of linguistic terms. As a language in which these terms did not exist, at least not with the same oppressive designations, Italian signalled yet another avenue by which to distance the singers and audiences from the reality of South African racialism.[505] Had the Eoan Group presented their operas in translation—a practice that was not unusual in South Africa at the time[506]—their productions would arguably been more closely involved in a localising project, thereby serving to incorporate operatic culture into the local musical fabric, and situating the group more firmly within the South African socio-cultural sphere. Their use of Italian, conversely, facilitated their adoption and reproduction of an authentic European ideal. Singing in Italian, the Eoan members claimed for themselves an affinity with Europe's 'other south', and sought to transcend, momentarily, the

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503 Correspondence, Boris Canin to Manca, 3 March 1956, 29:200.
504 'Introduction to Opera by Joseph Manca', 28:194.
505 Melinda Boyd endorses this argument when she writes that 'the foreign language of opera can and does eliminate differences of class and race' (Boyd, 'The Politics of Colour in Oscar Hammerstein's *Carmen Jones*', in *Blackness in Opera*, eds. Naomi André, Karen M. Bryan, and Eric Saylor, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012, 212-35, 221).
506 See the Introduction to this dissertation.

geo-political determinism of their race.

While the forgetting enacted on the Italian operatic stage may seem to have implied a kind of democratisation for the Eoan singers, it is important to remember that these performances remained contained within an unequally configured site of sonic and scopic power. The coloured singers, stepping into the spotlight, moved from the periphery into centre stage, a position of visibility and audibility, thus assuming the authority of those who have the right to be heard and seen. Yet this authority remained subject to the indistinguishable white audience members who had the power to permit the coloured presence on-stage, to applaud, and to endorse. Thus, the scopic power of the stage succumbed to a whiteness rendered invisible, in fact, being blacked out, by its position in the audience. Frances Henry and Carol Tator observe that the eyes of the white audience, ever vigilant, even when watching in appreciation, could simultaneously reinforce and neutralise the agency of the coloured singer on stage, thereby revealing such agency to be no more than a construct:

> The importance of the white gaze—the way white people and especially elites perceive people of color—is that it allows one social group to control social spaces and social interactions of all other groups. In this way, blacks and other racialized groups can be rendered visible and invisible at the same time under the gaze of a music director, producer, or a white audience.[507]

Both visible and invisible, granted presence only inasmuch as they pleased the white gaze, the singers of the Eoan Group enacted a disavowal of their colouredness in order to be seen. Yet, the renunciation of race was also liberatory; it allowed for a fleeting negation of the existing order, producing thereby what Currie calls 'unintended moments of grace'.[508] In this sense, the Eoan Group's coloured opera can be described, following Judith Butler, as a 'performative contradiction':

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507 Frances Henry and Carol Tator, 'Constructing Operatic Racism in Postmodern Cultural Studies', in *Opera in a Multicultural World: Coloniality, Culture, Performance*, eds. Mary I. Ingraham, Joseph K. So and Roy Moodley. New York and London: Routledge, 2016, 237-46, 241. This analysis of the power structures that underpin the exchange between visibility and gaze complements strikingly Chapter 2's discussion of vocal authority and its contingency upon the listener.

508 Currie, *Music and the Politics of Negation*, 149.

> [S]ubjects who have been excluded from enfranchisement by existing conventions governing the exclusionary definition of the universal seize the language of enfranchisement and set into motion a 'performative contradiction' claiming to be covered by that universal, thereby exposing the contradictory character of previous conventional formulations of the universal. This kind of speech appears at first to be impossible or contradictory, but it constitutes one way to expose the limits of current notions of universality, and to constitute a challenge to those existing standards to become more expansive and inclusive.[509]

While Butler speaks specifically of speech acts, her argument lends itself to transposition onto the cultural 'language of enfranchisement'—in this case represented by opera. In apartheid South Africa, whiteness, that ultimate exclusionary 'universal',[510] governed the socio-cultural terms of enfranchisement. The Eoan Group's fluency in opera, therefore, could only be explained by claiming that they were 'covered by that universal'; in other words, by claiming that they shared a hereditary relationship with Italy, and therefore by extension with whites. Of course, given the narrative of miscegenation that characterised popular perceptions of colouredness at the time,[511] it was not difficult to imagine for the Eoan singers a European inheritance. However, it required a shift in the evaluation of such 'mixed' racial ancestry, transforming it from a source of shame, to a site for cultural inclusion. This did not serve to undermine the power of whiteness. If anything, the Eoan Group's performances served to reinforce it. They constructed a world of white privilege, and inserted themselves into it: the extravagant grandeur of *La Traviata*; the excessive props of *La Bohème*; and the fetishized exoticism of *Madam Butterfly* all underscore an affiliation between the coloured members of the Eoan Group and their white public.

In the Eoan productions, both on-stage and off, in programme advertisements and audience reception, the white world was constructed as one of glamour, magnificence, luxury, and leisure. Yet, the excess and ostentation suggested in the group's production inventories is

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[509] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, New York and London: Routledge, 1997, 89-90.

[510] This is itself a contradiction in terms: whiteness is, of course, far from universal. However, it functioned in apartheid South Africa (as in the majority of colonial and post-colonial spheres) as a collective default, determining the limits of political, cultural, racial, and linguistic possibility. As the standard by which all aspects of social, economic, and political life were measured, it did, indeed, function as a universal.

[511] See Chapter 1.

simultaneously tempered by the very quotidian nature of the lists. Borrowed furniture; 'good, ordinary wood […] stained and varnished to look like [antiques]';[512] a plastic roast chicken or duck: these items somehow undermine the magic of the stage, turning it into lists of everyday objects and simulacra. While the Eoan Group's props supposedly conjured a world of which the singers could not otherwise be part—a material abundance they could not possess—the sheer excess of everyday goods with which they populated their stages simultaneously destabilised their operatic escapism, and situated them within the inglorious reality of operatic labour; of making something out of nothing. Approaching whiteness, they became the others of themselves. Yet, they remained beholden to the ordinary stuff from which they sought to build their white fantasies: they could never quite enter the idealised world of luxury they emulated. Instead, they remained caught between empowered whiteness, and the mundane actuality of disenfranchised coloured life.

The Eoan Group's evocation of an imagined Italian tradition 'accumulate[d] the force of authority through the […] citation of a prior and authoritative set of practices'.[513] Echoing the authoritative practices of whiteness suggested in the sophistication of *La Traviata* and the othering of the Orient in *Madam Butterfly*, the group sought to claim for themselves a European heritage designed to disavow the material and political deprivation of colouredness. On stage, the singers could enact a reality both overdetermined by and yet completely independent of the parameters of race. Thus, the 'Italian operatic tradition' functioned as a site of escape, forgetting, and unity for the Eoan Group, while simultaneously reinforcing whiteness as the site of enfranchisement.

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[512] '1962 Arts Festival Furniture to be Made RE: Opera Season', 82:693.
[513] Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 51.

Chapter 4

Complicities and Transgressions

The Eoan Group's acceptance of and adherence to existing structures of (white) privilege and (non-white) deprivation served to reinscribe and perpetuate the racial hierarchy upon which apartheid dogma was constructed. Their operatic activities hence seemed to promote the very system that subjugated them. Such participation in the normalisation of apartheid ideology signalled political collusion, an impression that was further compounded by the group's material collaboration with the government of the time. The alliance between Eoan and the apartheid government manifested in the form of financial and infrastructural benefits for the group, and propaganda for the state. In this chapter, the Eoan Group's collaboration with the apartheid regime will prompt an interrogation of the charge of complicity that has haunted the group throughout its 83-year existence. Taking as a starting point Sean Jacobs's statement that 'there must be more productive ways to think about those who were compromised under apartheid',[514] this chapter seeks to initiate an interrogation of alternative critical approaches to the lives and actions of those who occupied ambiguous political positions under apartheid. It considers instances of both complicity and resistance in the Eoan Group's archive, and shows how these moments signalled an occupation of the apartheid landscape that simultaneously underscored and exceeded this reality. Enacting a mode of social and cultural being that imagined, temporarily, an alternative to the racially overdetermined iniquities of apartheid life, the Eoan Group both reinforced and transgressed the material and racial borderlines of the regime. As such, they claimed a political agency that cannot be contained within existing understandings of collusion or transgression.

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514 Sean Jacobs, 'How do we Talk About the Memory of Apartheid', *Africa is a Country*, 16 October 2014, http://africasacountry.com/2014/10/how-do-we-talk-about-apartheid/, accessed 3 October 2016.

Complicity Against Resistance

Post-1994 South Africa has seen numerous efforts to celebrate those who fought in the struggle against apartheid, and to grasp the actions of those who promoted its oppressive ideology. Arguably the most important of these endeavours is the historic Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which conducted a series of hearings between 1996 and 1998.[515] In Volume 1 of its report, under the heading 'Responsibility and Reconciliation', the Commission calls for recognition of the '"little perpetrator" in each of us', arguing that 'it is only by recognising the potential for evil in each one of us that we can take full responsibility for ensuring that such evil will never be repeated'.[516] This statement forms the basis for Mark Sanders's *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* (2002), in which Sanders identifies a 'folded-together-ness in human being' by virtue of which we are each complicit in the struggle of the other:

> one's human-being is folded together with the other, the human-being of the other, and that other is the stranger [...] [I]n the most basic sense, ethics is a relation to the other.[517]

For Sanders, resistance to apartheid is born from recognition of this complicity that already renders each of us responsible for the fate of the other, and which should make us unwilling to be an accomplice in gross injustice meted out against this other.[518]

Taking complicity as a basic facet of resistance, as indivisible from the fact of being human in an anthropocentric world, it follows that the binary of complicity versus resistance by

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515 The TRC was formed in 1995 as a judicial body that invited testimony from both victims and perpetrators of apartheid violence, with the purpose of promoting national healing and forgiveness, and to expose the gross human rights violations committed under the regime. For more on the TRC, see Claire Moon, *Narrating Political Reconciliation: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Lanham, MD.: Lexington Books, 2008; Deborah Posel and Graeme Simpson, *Commissioning the Past: Understanding South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2002; Brandon Hamber and Steve Kibble, *From Truth to Transformation: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa*, London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1999.
516 South Africa, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998, cited in Mark Sanders, *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid*, Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 2002, 3.
517 Sanders, *Complicities*, 125.
518 Ibid., 4.

which apartheid history is measured is false. Fiona Probyn-Rapsey describes this embeddedness of complicity and resistance as 'the capacity of complicity to disorient and unsettle [which] also constitutes its political agency'.[519] She continues that 'complicity can disable oppositional conviction oriented critique because of the complex interrelationships it brings about, the feeling of not being able to move because of the ramifications of always treading heavily in the problem itself, rather than stepping beyond it.'[520] Probyn-Rapsey therefore concludes that complicity itself forecloses the possibility of a binary politics of dissent when considering responsibility and reconciliation.[521] She views this as indicative of the importance of rethinking 'complicity as a methodology [and] as a practice and theory of ethical engagement'.[522] Using Probyn-Rapsey's notion of 'complicity as methodology', this chapter demonstrates how the Eoan Group's actions enacted the indivisible nature of the resistance-complicity relationship, and argues for an understanding of political agency in which these compromised terms make way for disorientation and instability.

Complicities

The Eoan Group's activities can be deemed complicit in three distinct capacities. The first refers to the charge often levelled at the group of fostering 'coloured culture', and the group's own claims to and celebration of 'coloured cultural progress'. From this, a second area of complicity arises, exemplified by the Eoan Group's representation of their activities as valuable propaganda for the apartheid state, and hence worthy of government funding. This led to a close, albeit ambiguous, relationship between the group and the Department of Coloured Affairs which, however, was not unconditional: in return for its support, the apartheid regime expected the

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519 Fiona Probyn-Rapsey, 'Complicity, Critique, and Methodology', *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 38(2), 2007, 65-82, 79.
520 Ibid.
521 Ibid., 68.
522 Ibid., 65.

Eoan Group to adhere to its ever-changing segregation laws, forcing Eoan members into the third area of complicity raised by this study: that of racial separation.

Despite the fact that they often spill over into each other, I shall treat each of these categories separately, as sites of both complicity and resistance, before drawing general conclusions regarding the possibility of developing an alternative political epistemology through which to read these events.

Coloured Cultural Uplift

Mohamed Adhikari identifies one of the characteristics of coloured identity as 'a desire to assimilate into the dominant society'. However, this assimilationism, he argues, 'was less an impulse for acculturation than a striving on the part of the coloured people for acknowledgment of their worth as individuals and citizens and acceptance as equals or partners by whites'.[523] In other words, their aspiration, for Adhikari, was not to be seen as 'white', but to be seen as human—different but equal. Hilde Roos agrees:

> Striking here is Adhikari's qualification that this is not an impulse towards the adoption or assimilation of white culture […] but rather a striving towards acknowledgment of acceptance as equals in white society. This distinction is important in the interpretation of Eoan's story as their pursuit of excellence should, in my view, be read primarily in the context of proving their worth as artists and not as trying to buy into white favour by performing opera and/or ballet.[524]

A subtle contradiction emerges here, in the distinction between 'striving towards acknowledgment or acceptance as equals in white society' and 'buying into white favour'. In the context of apartheid, acknowledgment of equality by whites, had it been possible, would have been a manifestation of 'white favour'. Reaching a high standard of performance and thereby showing their worth as individuals and artists could therefore be read as a tacit appeal for an

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[523] Mohamed Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2005, 8.

[524] Hilde Roos, 'Remembering to Forget the Eoan Group—The Legacy of an Opera Company from the Apartheid Era', *South African Theatre Journal* 27(1), 2014a, 1-18, 13-14.

acknowledgment of humanity bestowed upon the coloured subaltern through white benevolence.

This reading is reinforced when considering other spheres of coloured life upon which the Eoan Group aimed to leave its mark. As a welfare organisation, the group was, naturally, concerned with the physical wellbeing of its members. However, the most striking feature of the group's rhetoric from its inception onwards, is a preoccupation with the moral life of coloured citizens. A description of the circumstances surrounding the 1933 founding of the Eoan Group proclaims that 'the foundations of the group were laid in these early years, and an important part of the educational activities was focused on tidiness, good manners, obedience, love of truth and beauty, and the perseverance upon which the success of any endeavour depends'.[525]

Almost fifty years later, the same rhetoric appears in an address by then-chairperson Veronica Allen:

> We must remember we are a school of CULTURE and EDUCATION where basic principles have to be inculcated and whereupon our children must build for the future […] [I]t must be remembered at all times that our members' behaviour must be excellent and of the best. We must be living, walking Eoan members. People must be able to brand us, saying there go Eoan's people, always polite, always respectful and proper, at all times and on all levels.[526]

This concern with moral character spilled over into the work of the music section. A document in Joseph Manca's handwriting in which the virtues of various members are considered before their inclusion in a planned touring company, lists the vices of a number of candidates under the heading 'Remarks'. One soprano, for instance, is described as an 'agitator', while another is deemed 'Not so OK. Not good influence'. The most damning verdict is on a tenor, who is

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[525] Programme, 1956 Arts Festival, 29:200.

[526] *Ons moet onthou ons is 'n skool van KULTUUR en OPVOEDING waar basiese prinsiepe vasgelê moet word en waarop ons kinders moet bou vir die toekoms […] [A]ltyd moet onthou word dat ons lede se optrede altyd puik en van die beste moet wees. Ons moet lewende lopende Eoan lede wees. Mense moet ons kan brandmerk en sê daar gaan nou Eoan se mense, altyd beleefd, altyd eerbiedig en ordentlik, ten alle tye en op alle vlakke.* ('V. Allen Chairman's [sic] Report', 15 June 1980, 4:29, original capitalisation) No adequate English translation exists for '*opvoeding*' as a concept: the word refers to a person's moral education, including the exhibition of good manners and refined taste. Its designation is similar to that of 'upbringing', however without the necessary connotations of childhood or home signalled by the English term.

branded a 'hypocrite' and a 'liar'.[527] Similarly, a letter informing members of their admission to the Eoan Group choir outlines a number of behavioural expectations, showing how seriously the group was concerned with obedience, moral rectitude, and sobriety:

> It is of course understood that to be a member of the Eoan Group in the first instance you must be of good character both morally and otherwise. On no account will drunkenness be tolerated.
>
> You are further warned that on the first occasion you misbehave such as:—
>
> xxiv. Being under the influence of liquor.
> xxv. Being disloyal to the Eoan Group.
> xxvi. Being continually absent from rehearsals.
> xxvii. Being disrespectful to your Directors, your Teachers, Leaders or to each other.
> xxviii. Using bad language at rehearsals, performances etc.,
> xxix. Refusing to obey instructions.
> xxx. Abusing any privileges you may from time to time enjoy in the Group.
> xxxi. In general, bring discredit to the Eoan Group and Coloured Community as a whole.
>
> Your membership of the Eoan Group Music Section will immediately cease no matter what part you play, whether Principal or Chorus member.[528]

Drunkenness was evidently of great concern to the group. Manca, for instance, is also known to have written to reception committees requesting them to ensure that no alcohol is served to members of the group.[529] This may be, partly, out of respect for the fact that some of the members were Muslim; however, it is more likely due to stereotypical associations of coloured people with alcoholism and delinquency in the popular white imagination.[530]

The preoccupation with 'good character' displayed throughout the group's history indicates both an assimilation of Western ideals of civilised behaviour, and a desire to be regarded as 'upstanding citizens'.[531] This reasoning is especially deployed in appeals for greater government support, as in this extended extract from a letter from Manca to the Secretary of the Western Cape Regional Welfare Board:

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527 'Eoan Group Meeting: Minor Principals and Chorus Touring Company', 7 Feb 1961, 33:224. Remarks have been anonymised.

528 Correspondence, 'Eoan Group', undated, signed by Joseph Manca, 33:225.

529 See, for instance, Correspondence, Manca to R.S. Caliste, 14 April 1975, 14:99: 'Should you decide to give a party for the Eoan Groupers, your organisers and interested friends (Press included), will you please see that NO ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR IS SERVED' (original emphasis).

530 See Chapter 1.

531 The concern with civilised behaviour in a musical context evokes strongly Chapter 2's discussion of the ideals of physical virtue fostered by the 'voice culture' project.

a. Music Branch. The Music Branch of the Eoan Group is well-known for its performances of classical music, Italian Operas, and Musicals. Here, people in full-time daily employment meet to learn the art of singing and to show their talent. This form of activity is their 'hobby' and the welfare aspect of this work is very important in that a well-disciplined channel is provided for their surplus energies. In other words, they are not tempted to devote their free time to activities which can be and are considered anti-social. 'Idleness is the parent of all vice'. So by the opportunity given to its members, the Eoan Group is also doing welfare work by keeping the members of the community busy and apart from raising the standard of living apprediation [sic] in the family itself, it is making an important contribution to the welfare of the community as a whole. Better citizens are being created resulting in a better standard of social life and activity.
b. Ballet Branch. This particular section of Eoan Group activities deals with training in the art of Ballet in all its forms. Here again, the comments which appertain to the Music Branch also relate to the Ballet Branch. 'The Devil finds mischief for idle hands' but he is thwarted by the fact that many young talented people are too busy with their welfare and cultural development to listen to him.[532]

Corinne Sandwith reads strategies of assimilation and the 'performance of a "civilised self"'[533] as an important site of political discourse in the early twentieth century, especially in the Western Cape. Tracing shifting strategies within the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM),[534] she juxtaposes a respectability politics practised by an older generation of political elites in the 1920s and 30s with the more radically oppositional conduct favoured by younger coloured and black intellectuals from the 1940s onwards. According to Sandwith, early twentieth-century black and coloured political intellectuals 'sought gradual incorporation into the dominant political and economic order through careful assimilation to [sic] the standards of a "superior" European civilisation'.[535]

Sandwith's reading of the politics of early twentieth-century respectability relates closely to Adhikari's classification of the assimilationist impulse of coloured identity. In both

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[532] Correspondence, Manca to Secretary of Western Cape Regional Welfare Board, 28 March 1973, 41:327.
[533] Corinne Sandwith, 'Civility in Question: Cultural Debates in the Non-European Unity Movement', in *World of Letters: Reading Communities and Cultural Debates in Early Apartheid South Africa*, Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2014. Originally published at http://www.kznhass-history.net/seminars/sandwith/2011, accessed 27 April 2015.
[534] The Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) was a Trotskyist organisation formed in 1943. It opposed the apartheid government through a policy of non-collaboration, and called for a political approach of non-racialism. After splitting in two in 1957, the organisation went into decline. See Baruch Hirson, 'A Short History of the Non-European Unity Movement, an Insider's View', *South African History Online*, 14 July 2014, http://www.sahistory.org.za/organisations/non-european-unity-movement-neum, accessed 6 October 2016.
[535] Sandwith 'Civility in question', 5.

interpretations, the coloured subject views the embrace of the European civilising mission, advanced with such enthusiasm in late nineteenth-century colonial South Africa, not as an act of submission to dominant ideals, but as a strategy of self-empowerment. Unlike Adhikari, however, Sandwith adds a further political dimension to this reading by considering the urgency with which this ideal was promoted and, later, opposed. She observes that 'the demand for visible "progress" and "advancement" took on a particular intensity in the face of dominant (white) opinion which could see little of value in a "backward race", a group of people viewed as "little better than an aggregate of immoral, or at best, amoral creatures addicted to drink, dagga and dice"'.[536] The acquisition of a level of 'European civilisation' was therefore urged as a crucial condition for political engagement between the black majority and the white ruling class.

As South Africa's racial politics became increasingly hostile to black and coloured citizens, a younger generation of non-white political elites (variously referred to in Sandwith's article as the 'young radicals' and the 'young upstarts'[537]) rejected this reasoning, firstly for its obvious futility, and secondly for its acceptance of a Eurocentric racial hierarchy.[538] In their espousal of a more radical and oppositional attitude to political engagement, these activists were, however, forced to consider 'the social function of colonial education and […] claims for cultural access and inclusion'.[539] Their own frequent celebrations of and references to Western canonical works of art and literature show that their rejection of the respectability politics and racial hierarchy entrenched in the Victorian civilising mission did not entail a wholesale disavowal of Western culture and education. Sandwith remarks on displays of English linguistic

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[536] *Sun* 25 October 1940, quoted in ibid., 8-9.
[537] Ibid., 11; 25; 28.
[538] Ibid., esp. 2 and 15. Sandwith, who in her evaluation of the shift from respectability to radicalism, focuses especially on trends in the Western Cape, identifies these activists as members of the Workers' Party of South Africa (WPSA), the New Era Fellowship (NEF), and the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). These political organisations, based in and around Cape Town, and comprising a predominantly coloured membership, were active from the mid-to-late 1930s onwards, and became the political and intellectual homes of radical activists who objected to the moderate position held by the Teachers' League of South Africa—a coloured organisation that advocated a politics of civility. The 'young radicals' included prominent political figures of the 1940s, '50s and '60s such as Ben Kies, Goolam Gool, Jane Gool, Edgar Maurice, Kenny Jordaan, and A.C. Jordan (whose son, Pallo Jordan, is quoted in the introduction of this dissertation).
[539] Ibid., 3.

accomplishment by Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) intellectuals, and on a practice of informing discussions of contemporary political events with references to such canonic texts as Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*.[540] This display of Western cultural accomplishment betrays the internalisation of the perceived superiority of imperial cultural forms. Presenting their analyses of South African events through Western canonic texts not only revealed that their own systems of political knowledge were dominated by the residue of an imperial education, but the ebullience with which these activist-scholars flaunted their Western intellectual fluency could be seen as a desire to show the racially marked self as 'just as good as the (white) other':

> The virtuoso performances of Western linguistic and cultural accomplishment, establishing both the bounds and bonds of an imagined political community, were in themselves an assertion of the claim to Western culture, an exemplification of both the 'mastery of form' and 'the deformation of mastery' […]. As instances of 'civilised display', however, there is little to distinguish these outward marks of cultural competence from the conscious performance of 'civility' which dominated the political agendas of aspirant community elites.[541]

A clear likeness exists between the claims for European culture made by both the radical and the conservative political elites of pre-1980s Western Cape, but Sandwith identifies a key difference in their approach: while both groupings called for the right to participate in, and have full access to, Western cultural products, the former called for an emancipatory educational model based on 'unrestricted access, a relationship to knowledge based on an authoritative "reader" and a habit(us) of questioning and suspicion'.[542] Thus, while Western culture was to be embraced, its value was not to be taken as unequivocal. This claim for the democratic distribution of access to cultural forms therefore challenged the pervasive conflation of culture, race, and nation which arguably informed the South African government's 'separate development' policies, while calling for a critical attitude to the ostensibly universal truths contained in these cultural products.[543]

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540 Ibid., 25-6.
541 Ibid., 26.
542 Ibid., 21-2.
543 Ibid., 22.

As already established in the previous two chapters, the Eoan Group's activities, especially in opera, vigorously advanced the first aspect of this call for cultural access by undermining the conjugation of cultural ownership and race. The critical attitude towards notions of Western cultural superiority called for by non-white intellectuals and activists was, however, completely absent from their discourse.

A refrain that emerges throughout the Eoan Group Archive is the phrase 'the cultural progress of the coloured community'.[544] It was the catchphrase used to promote the activities of the group with the government, the press, and the public, and appeared in all official documents, including funding applications, reports, press releases, minutes of meetings, and even personal correspondences of the executive committees of both the group and the Eoan Group Trust.[545] The Eoan Group believed, and did its utmost to convince others, that its essential task was to promote the cultural development and 'upliftment' [sic][546] of the coloured people. This aim in itself does not necessarily imply the internalisation of a cultural hierarchy with Western artistic practices at the top, however a number of documents in the archive reveal that an unquestioning acceptance of the superiority and desirability of European cultural forms underpinned the Eoan Group's cultural teleology.

In the programme for their very first production of *La Traviata* in 1956, a statement by Joseph Manca reveals the extent to which Western cultural development had been romanticised by the group:

The presentation of 'La Traviata' is the dawn of a new era for the Coloured people in

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544 'Advance Press Publicity, 1974 Season', 6:46.

545 See, for instance, Programme, 1956 Arts Festival Programme: '[T]here is no doubt that musical history will be made […] with the performance of "La Traviata", when it will be recorded for all time that here in Cape Town, the Coloured people passed their first international milestone in their march of endeavour for both social and educational upliftment [sic]' (29:200); 'Minutes of the Special General Meeting, 9 November 1965': 'It must be definitely remembered that we are a Welfare and Cultural organization established for the progress and uplift of our community' (37:300); '1965 Opera Tour Johannesburg Season, Advance Publicity': 'Our work is for the progress and cultural uplift of our people' (42:338); Correspondence, Manca to The Members of the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, 14 November 1969: 'Your support given me over the many years during which I have had the pleasure in being closely associated with you, has encouraged and stimulated me in my efforts for the uplift and cultural progress of our lesser privileged citizens' (36:283), etc.

546 'V. Allen, Chairman's [sic] Report 1976-1977', 5:32.

> their endless striving and unquenchable thirst for the higher things of life—an era of knowledge and culture hitherto unknown. This introduction into the magical world of opera, apart from its entertainment value, which is incidental to the real purpose of this venture, is the Coloured people's first intimate contact with one of the highest forms of musical arts—an unforgettable baptism at whose font new horizons appear on the educational landscape of the Coloured people's activities while new vistas of beauty are painted on the artistic canvas of their cultural progress.[547]

This production, Manca argued, was not just a performance of democratic access to cultural forms until then prohibited to non-white citizens; it was a first step towards an elevated (and, by implication, civilised), life. Striking is the recourse to metaphors of spirituality ('baptism', 'font'), nature ('landscape', 'horizons'), and the visual arts ('painted on the artistic canvas of their cultural progress'). Here, indeed, are 'the higher things of life', essential to spiritual fulfilment, yet far removed from the everyday experiences of the urban poor whose leisurely enjoyment of nature and the fine arts would have been restricted by their own material circumstances. Revealing, also, is the implicit distinction between 'them' and 'us' maintained in Manca's statement. It says something, perhaps, about the driving force behind the Eoan Group's romanticisation of European culture (first Helen Southern-Holt, now Manca), while drawing attention, yet again, to the civilising impulse behind the group's activities.[548]

The rhetoric of cultural advancement employed by the Eoan Group also promoted a class consciousness echoed in Sandwith's perusal of the respectability politics of the non-white political elite of early-twentieth century Western Cape. A number of documents addressed to the Department of Coloured Affairs refer to the eradication of the 'skolly menace' in the townships,[549] while Manca unashamedly requested concert promoters to play on the 'snob value'

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[547] Programme, 1956 Arts Festival, 29:200.

[548] The parallel with the story of the first production of Oscar Hammerstein's *Carmen Jones* is striking: publicity officers for the musical played up the amateur and working class status of the African-American cast, thereby exploiting a very specific agenda identified as follows by Annegret Fauser: 'In this story *Carmen Jones* became an embodiment of the "American Dream" through the Pygmalion plot of its cast, awkwardly combining the notion of racial and social uplift and all-American inclusiveness with one of white patronage and control' (Fauser, cited in Melinda Boyd, 'The Politics of Colour in Oscar Hammerstein's *Carmen Jones*', in *Blackness in Opera*, eds. Naomi André, Karin M. Bryan, and Eric Saylor, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012, 212-35, 226). In both instances, the artistic and social uplift of the coloured singers is regarded as a manifestation of both white superiority and benevolence.

[549] See, for instance, 'Guidelines for Memoranda on Cultural Matters', 23:169. 'Skolly' is an Anglicisation of an Afrikaans word ('*skollie*') used to describe lower-class petty criminals and troublemakers.

of Eoan productions, both in publicity and ticket prices.[550] In his correspondence with members of the Coloured Affairs Department, he made sure to point out that Eoan performances were attended by 'the better type of person',[551] possibly to strengthen his arguments for access to whites-only performance venues. While this chapter will return to the question of physical access to white areas, the ideological implications of such statements bear striking resemblance to the class consciousness expressed by conservative black and coloured activists such as George Golding, who repeatedly appealed to the South African government that 'the "better class" of coloureds […] who had "reached the stage of development which is on a par with that of the average European", could be admitted to "European status"'.[552]

Again, it becomes clear that the Eoan Group was not as concerned with a democratisation of European cultural forms as it was with the preservation of a civilising mission itself founded on discriminatory models of class and race. The acquisition of Western culture was regarded not merely as a means of advancement in a Western-dominated world, but indeed as a means of 'becoming European'—if not in race or name, then at least in social status. Roos and Adhikari's readings of the Eoan Group's assimilationism specifically, and that of the coloured racial grouping more broadly, are therefore called into question by the contradiction between appeals for cultural access, and discrimination based on class and race.[553] A further contradiction arises when the politics of 'coloured culture' enters the discussion.

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[550] In a letter to R. Loder of Johannesburg, Manca asks 'are we having the "snob" audience for the first night at three and two guineas?' (Correspondence, Manca to R. Loder, 8 July 1960, 31:211), while in a letter to Mrs. E. Colley, organiser of an Eoan opera season in Port Elizabeth, he suggests 'that as far as possible you play on snob value' (Correspondence, Manca to E. Colley, 22 December 1959, 31:209).
[551] Correspondence, Manca to P. Richardson, 19 May 1973, 16:116.
[552] Golding, n.d., cited in Sandwith 'Civility in Question', 9. According to Sandwith, George Golding was the headmaster of a local primary school in Cape Town, editor of *The Sun* newspaper, and one-time Chair of the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC), a government-sponsored body of coloured advisors to the white-led Coloured Affairs Department (ibid, 40 n.6).
[553] The Eoan Group did also practice a politics of racial discrimination, not allowing black people to become members (see, for instance, 'Eoan Group Constitution as Amended on 8th December 1970, and Further Amended on 23rd March 1976', 22:157: 'Ordinary membership of the Group shall be open to male or female members of the non-white racial groups of the Republic of South Africa with the exception of the Bantu group'). This, however, was at the behest of the apartheid government and its insistence on total separation of the races, as discussed in Chapter 1.

Coloured Culture

The latter years of Eoan's operatic activities increasingly saw the charge of 'coloured culture' levelled at the group. This accusation seemed to stem from the group's participation in cultural activities promoted by the apartheid government, and was regarded as the reason for escalating boycotts against the group by the coloured community. A 1980 report by Eoan member Royston Stoffels titled 'Reasons why the Eoan Group is no longer a viable arts project', summarised the situation as follows:

> 1. Eoan is synonymous with 'Coloured Culture'
> 2. 'Coloured Culture' is a political offspring of the government of the day.
> 3. The young people do not identify themselves with a politically cultivated culture.
> 4. The history of the Group is riddled with the organisation's acceptances of this phenomenon, i.e. being a showpiece of 'coloured culture'
> 5. The stigma is indelible because the present generation have been schooled into rejecting Eoan.
> 6. The scholars who attend at present, often have to keep their membership a secret for fear of victimisation from fellow students and also staff.[554]

Stoffels's report does not clarify exactly what 'coloured culture' is, apart from the fact that it was sponsored by the state. Indeed, confusion about what the term meant was expressed by members of the group. In a meeting convened to discuss Stoffels's report, one member declared that he 'did not understand the words "Coloured Culture", when doing Italian opera it's Italian Culture, when doing *Ipi Tombi* African culture', while another suggested that 'the only way to rise above "Coloured Culture" [is] to aim for higher standards in everything we do'.[555] Members therefore were not sure which aspect of their activities was deemed to be particularly coloured, or whether the charge referred specifically to the standard of their productions.

The term 'coloured culture' seems to spring from the apartheid government's investment in the policy of separate development, in which the unique cultural practices of each of the ethnic

554 Royston Stoffels, 'Reasons Why the Eoan Group is No Longer a Viable Arts Project', 1980, 4:29, original capitalisation.

555 'Minutes of General Meeting, 1 June 1980', 4:29.

groupings in South Africa were encouraged as a means of keeping the races apart.[556] It is hence not clear how the Eoan Group's productions of Italian opera—widely regarded as a white art form[557]—could have been 'coloured culture'. The ambiguity of the term was demonstrated in a debacle initiated by a 1979 report compiled by Gordon Jephtas, then artistic director of the group. In the report, Jephtas called on the Eoan Group specifically, and on the coloured community at large, to 'develop authentic coloured attitudes':

> Mr. Jephtas stresses in his report the need for coloured people to stop imitating whites and instead to become self-reliant, developing a way of life peculiar to themselves. 'We must begin to look at our own history, our own culture and our own neighbourhood. We must develop authentic coloured attitudes. We must have pride and see beauty in our colouredness'.[558]

The report, which was leaked to the press, caused a furore, while also drawing attention to appropriate modes of engagement with the enforced separation of the races. Jephtas, evidently drawing on black consciousness models, condemned the aspirational impulse of the Eoan Group. In a telephone interview with Afrikaans newspaper *Die Rapport*, he elaborated on his views as follows:

> For many years coloureds have been trying to imitate whites and trying to be white. They relax their hair and apply skin-whitening lotions, but they'll remain coloureds. […] Coloureds' body type is so different to that of the white people they try to imitate on a daily basis. For this reason everybody wants to dance Swan Lake like the dancer with the long white legs. But most of the time they can't do it properly … their buttocks are too low and their legs are too short.'[559]

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556 For more on separate development, see Chapter 1.

557 Julius Eichbaum and Henning Viljoen, 'Opera in South Africa - Where are We Going Wrong?', *Scenaria* 78, July 1987, 23-24, 62 (no folder): 'At a time when other fields of the performing arts, particularly drama, are showing every sign of involving people of other race groups, opera remains almost the exclusively sole preserve of the White South African community.' See also Pierre L. Van Den Berghe, *South Africa: A Study in Conflict*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965, 38, and 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 and Kegan Paul, 1953, on the conflation of European culture with whiteness in early apartheid South Africa.

558 Aneez Salie, 'Coloured Shock in Secret Eoan Report', *Cape Herald*, undated, 67:511.

559 *Dis nou al jare dat die Kleurlinge die witmense probeer naboots en probeer wit wees. Hulle ontgolf hulle hare en smeer room aan om wit te wees, maar Kleurlinge sal hulle bly […] Kleurlinge se liggaamsbou is so anders as dié van die witmense wat hulle in elke opsig probeer nadoen en naleef. Om dié rede wil almal ook mos Swan Lake dans soos die danseres met die lang wit bene. Maar hulle kan dit die meeste van die tyd nie behoorlik doen nie … Hulle sitvlakke is te laag en hul bene is te kort.* (Gordon Jephtas, cited by Conrad Sidego, '*Julle is Sommer Vrek Lui!*' [You are Bloody Lazy!], *Rapport*, 11 November 1979, 67:511).

The irony of Jephtas himself having made a successful international career as an opera repetiteur—itself by no means part of 'authentic colouredness'—is of course not lost. What is more striking, however, is the call for a separate coloured culture at a time when the group was indeed plagued by the very accusation of 'coloured culture', something of which Jephtas, as Eoan's artistic director, would not have been unaware.

Returning to the apartheid government's policy of separate development, it seems that Jephtas's advocacy of 'authentic coloured attitudes', and his comments on the biological traits that rendered coloured people unsuitable for Western cultural practice, were more in line with cultural segregationism than were the operatic activities of the group. Indeed, if anything, the Eoan Group undermined notions of racially determined culture. The term 'coloured culture' therefore seemed to have had less to do with the notion of separate cultures for separate races, than it did with the availability, distribution, and acceptance of state sponsorship, a charge to which the Eoan Group had to plead guilty on all accounts.

State Sponsorship

By 1956, when it presented its first Arts Festival, the Eoan Group was receiving funding from the Department of Coloured Affairs.[560] Following unhappiness about the group's acceptance of state funding,[561] they decided not to reapply for a government grant in 1957. Between 1957 and

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[560] A letter to the Department of Coloured Affairs, dated 23 February 1956, applies for a contribution of £1 000 towards the costs of the 1956 Arts Festival. This 'special grant' was to be 'in addition to the annual grant from your Department, which is devoted to the ordinary running costs of the Eoan Group' (Correspondence, A.A. Jansen, Principal, Eoan Group, to The Commissioner of Coloured Affairs, 23 February 1956, 1:4). I have been unable to find documents in the archive specifying the amount of the annual grant received from the Coloured Affairs Department until 1956.

[561] See, for instance, Correspondence, South African Coloured People's Organisation to 'Dear Friend', undated, 29:200: 'In spite of official silence, it was rumoured for some time that your group was financially supported by the Government through the C.A.D [Coloured Affairs Department]. However, Dr. Du Plessis now appears to be sufficiently bold as to have arranged for the Group to put on a 'Europeans Only' show […]. People can also conclude, therefore, that the Eoan Group supports Apartheid. […] The eyes of the world are on you, and we can safely say that all advanced and progressive people bowed their heads in shame when you performed followed [sic] the footsteps of your slave forefathers.'

1964 the group managed to stay afloat with only an annual City Council grant of R2 000, small donations from private individuals and organisations, and their box office income. However, by 1965 the group's financial situation had deteriorated to such an extent that it faced closure if a drastic solution could not be found.[562] The members voted to approach the government for financial assistance.[563] After their first application, the group was awarded a grant-in-aid of R2 000 by the Department of Coloured Affairs.[564] By 1989, when they finally decided no longer to apply for state financing,[565] this grant had grown to an annual sum of R35 000. In addition, the Department of Coloured Affairs regularly awarded the group additional funding to cover shortfalls on productions or tours, thereby effectively becoming Eoan's sponsor.[566]

The group took great care to acknowledge the support received from the Department of Coloured Affairs. Minutes of meetings conducted throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s indicate that the Department was thanked at almost every gathering for its interest and assistance in the affairs of the group.[567] Similarly, production programmes thanked the government for its financial support.[568] The Eoan Group was evidently not embarrassed about the funding it received from the Department of Coloured Affairs, and was eager to maintain a positive relationship with government officials. Members of the Administration for Coloured Affairs

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562 'Minutes of Special General Meeting, 9 November 1965' (37:300) shows that the group had a bank overdraft of approximately R35 000, overhead charges of R11 000 and an additional annual shortfall of approximately R6 000.

563 'Minutes of Special General Meeting, 9 November 1965' (37:300) where the vote was taken reports as follows: 'The proposal [that the Eoan Group approach the government and re-apply for an annual grant] was unanimously adopted with the exception of one member, Mr. James Rhoode of Lansdowne Branch, who wished to have his vote against the motion recorded'.

564 Correspondence, J.R. Young to Ismail Sydow, 2 August 1966, 33:231.

565 See 'Eoan Group Resolution', 25 February 1989, 49:386: 'The Eoan Group resolves on this 25th day of February to free itself from dependence upon Government aid and in future not to apply for nor accept funding from the Dept. of Education & Culture (House of Representatives).'

566 A letter from the Commissioner for Coloured Affairs to Eoan Trust Chairman L.C.V. Walker indicates that the government did not necessarily award these additional grants happily: 'I should again point out that the Administration [of Coloured Affairs] does not have at its disposal unlimited financial resources. It is, therefore, a sine qua non that the Eoan Group itself should undertake its affairs within its financial limits and it should not rely on the Administration to meet its shortfall' (Correspondence, Administration of Coloured Affairs to L.C.V. Walker, 23 March 1972, 13:96, original emphasis).

567 See, for instance, 'Minutes of the 32nd Annual General Meeting', 29 September 1966, 1:3; 'Minutes of the 33rd General Meeting 1970', 2:8; 'Minutes of the 34th Annual General Meeting', 29 February 1972, 13:93, etc.

568 Programme, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *I Pagliacci* 1971, 100:770; Programme, *Carmen Jones* 1970, 100:770; Programme Eighth Opera Season 1969, 100:770; Programme, 1956 Arts Festival, 29:200, etc.

regularly received special invitations to performances,[569] and at the opening of each production season lists of government dignitaries expected to be in attendance were sent to the press, along with requests for these persons to be photographed in the foyer.[570]

Likewise, the government eagerly capitalised on its investment in the Eoan Group. Shortly before the first Eoan Arts Festival in 1956, Dr I.D. du Plessis, Commissioner for Coloured Affairs, wrote to Manca with a request that the group put on a special performance of *La Traviata* for government officials.[571] Du Plessis argued in his letter that the performance 'will give representative members of the European community the chance to see what splendid work is being done by the musical section of the Eoan Group […] and will, I know, enhance the reputation of the Coloured community in the cultural sphere in a way which no other single achievement has done'.[572] Despite his wheedling tone, Du Plessis indicated that refusal was not an option by firmly closing his letter with 'As regards suitable dates, should your decision be favourable, I should like to suggest March 20th'.[573] The group complied with this request, and on 20 March 1956 presented a special performance for distinguished members of the national government,[574] much to the vexation of the local political left.[575] Furthermore, the group

[569] See, for instance, Correspondence, Sydow to Tom Swartz, 26 June 1972, 6:44: 'EOAN GROUP OPERATIC CONCERT: SATURDAY, 5TH AUGUST 1972. In connection with the above, the Eoan Group extends to Mrs. Swartz and yourself and members of your Executive Committee a warm welcome to attend. For this purpose, the Eoan Group is reserving a BAY for your use […] A similar type of invitation has been extended to Mr. and Mrs. F.K. Gaum and his guests and a Bay [sic] is also being reserved for his use.'
[570] See, for instance, Correspondence, Manca to The Editor, *Cape Times* Social Page, 21 July 1970, 10:66: 'FIRST NIGHT "CARMEN JONES" TUESDAY 28TH JULY, ALHAMBRA THEATRE. I attach a list of the dignitaries and important persons who will be attending the performance at the Alhambra Theatre on Tuesday 28th July. The Eoan Group would esteem it a great favour if you could arrange for photos to be taken in the foyer.'
[571] Correspondence, Commissioner for Coloured Affairs to Manca, 7 January 1956, 1:4: 'In view of the very great importance of the Eoan Arts Festival this year, I should like you to arrange an evening on which my Division could invite Their Excellencies the Governor General and Mrs. Jansen, members of the Senate and House of Assembly, of the Diplomatic Corps and others to a performance of *La Traviata*.'
[572] Ibid.
[573] Ibid.
[574] 'A special evening was given which was attended by the leading authorities of South Africa—the Governor-General, Members of the Cabinet, Full Diplomatic Corp [sic], Members of Parliament, Senators, etc.' (Correspondence, Manca to H. Rosenthal, 2 April 1956, 29:200).
[575] See, for instance, the letter from the South African Coloured People's Organisation quoted above, and an article titled 'The La Traviata Affair', which appeared in *The Citizen*, 31 March 1956: '[T]he most smarting humiliation to date […] was the special performance of La Traviata for South African prominent racialists. People who publically spit in the faces of the artists, […] who at this very moment trampling

acknowledged the involvement of the government in its special Festival Programme, indicating on p.5 that the entire festival was 'Under the Distinguished Patronage of His Excellency the Governor General Dr. The Hon. E.G. Jansen' [sic].[576]

After this initial performance of acquiescence by the Eoan Group, the stage was set for numerous state-commissioned performances. In 1966, the group participated in the first Republic Festival organised by the government to celebrate the fifth anniversary of South Africa's independence from the British monarchy.[577] 1971 saw the 10th anniversary of the same event, and again a Republic Festival was organised, again with the Eoan Group's involvement. On this occasion, however, a separate programme of festivities for coloured people was organised by the Department of Coloured Affairs, and it was as part of this series of events that the Eoan Group presented six performances of *Rigoletto* at the Joseph Stone theatre (figure 4.1).

A report on the 1971 Republic Festival sent to Ismail Sydow, Chairman of the Eoan Group, by the Commissioner for Coloured Affairs lists the following events: a flag parade led by the President of the Republic and Mr. T.R. Swartz on 21 May, rugby matches on 15 and 29 May, a youth rally combined with parades by the South African Police Service, the Prison Service, and the Coloured Police Corps on 22 May, performances by Griqua and Christmas Choirs on 23 and 30 May respectively, and a schools' programme on 26 May which was followed by a display by the South African military. Apart from these events, all of which took place at the Athlone stadium, the Eoan Group's performances of *Rigoletto* and one performance of an unspecified ballet took place in the Joseph Stone theatre, where the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) symphony orchestra also presented a performance. Additionally, a number of concerts featuring the South African Choral Council, the Cape Malay choir, a combined Festival choir,

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[sic] under foot the last vestige of their political rights, to these the Eoan Group are "thrilled" to give a special place of honour during the performance of "La Traviata". To our shame, not one of the artists walked off the stage in protest against this outrageous insult' ('The La Traviata Affair', *The Citizen*, 31 March 1956, 29:200).

576 Programme, 1956 Arts Festival, 29:200.

577 Due to financial issues the group was forced to cancel all productions in 1966, except for their Republic Festival performances of *La Traviata*, which were funded by the Coloured Affairs Department. See Correspondence, Sydow to N.B. Hyles, 20 August 1966, 85:684.

Figure 4.1: Programme for *Rigoletto*, 1971 Republic Festival, 61 (no folder). Reproduced with Permission.

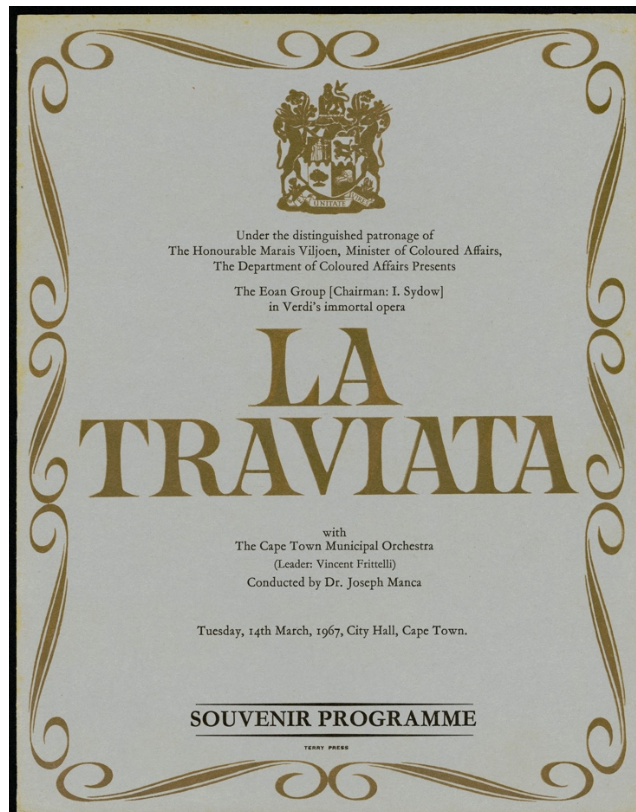

Figure 4.2: Programme for *La Traviata*, under the distinguished patronage of The Honourable Marais Viljoen, Minister of Coloured Affairs, 14 March 1967, 61 (no folder). Reproduced with Permission.

and the South African Police Orchestra, were presented in the Luxurama theatre—a coloureds-only venue in Wynberg.[578]

The list of events that formed part of the coloured people's Republic Festival reflects a dual political agenda operated by the government. Firstly, the parades and performances by national security forces—the police, the military, and the penitentiary—were ostentatious displays of state power evidently designed to inspire awe and obedience. Simultaneously, however, inclusion of the coloured community in state-sponsored celebrations would have created the illusion of being able to participate as full citizens. The programme's promotion of coloured cultural activities likewise seemed to signal the state's recognition of the legitimacy of these activities within officially endorsed pageants, and, indeed, helped to cement the political idea of a racially determined coloured community even more concretely. Yet, emphasis on dignity and good behaviour shows the extent to which this validation was infused with expectations of civility and control. [579]

The tension between expressive freedom and discipline implicit within the festival recalls the concept of 'limited release' developed by Peter Stallybrass and Allon White in relation to the carnivalesque.[580] Stallybrass and White engage specifically with carnival as a state-sanctioned site of transgression, where so-called 'low culture' imitates, satirises, and opposes the culture of the powerful elite. While the Eoan Group's operatic performances by no means transgressed 'high culture', presenting instead earnest performances thereof, we may find theoretical common

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578 '*Verslag: Republiekfees* (*Wes-Kaapland*)' [Report: Republic Festival (Western Cape)] 1971, 39:316.

579 A message by T.R. Swartz, chairman of the executive of the Public Committee for the Coloured Community, reflected as follows on the poise with which celebrations were expected to be conducted: 'This is the year of the Republic Festival! We commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Republic of South Africa. All festivities should reflect a dignity appropriate to the occasion. The Eoan Group is **eminently** suited to erecting this atmosphere. It is, therefore, a great joy to know that the Group will present an opera at the Joseph Stone Centre during the Festival week' ('Message by T.R. Swartz, Chairman of the Executive of The Public Committee for the Coloured Community', in Programme, 1971 Republic Festival, 61 (no folder), original emphasis), while the Commissioner for Coloured Affairs' festival report patronisingly commented on the good behaviour of coloured festival-goers: 'The beautiful behaviour of old and young at all events and in all places deserves special mention' [*Die mooi gedrag van groot en klein by alle geleenthede en op alle plekke verdien spesiale vermelding*], '*Verslag*: *Republiekfees* (*Wes-Kaapland*)', 1971, 39:316.

580 Peter Stallybrass and Allon B. White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University Press, 1986, 13-14.

ground between their work and Stallybrass and White's carnivalesque by considering the concept of 'transgression' as used by these authors. They draw their definition of transgression from Barbara Babcock's 'symbolic inversion':

> 'Symbolic inversion' may be broadly defined as any act of expressive behaviour which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values and norms be they linguistic, literary or artistic, religious, social and political.[581]

The symbolic inversion of the coloured Republic Festival, and of the Eoan performances specifically, stems from the state's endorsement of coloured citizenship within the strictly bound parameters of official celebration. This enabled entry into a previously white cultural and political sphere. What was, however, a once-off occasion for most of those participating in the Republic Festival, was experienced by the Eoan Group every time they entered the world of European opera. Such symbolic inversions, also described by Max Gluckman as 'rites of reversal',[582] performed an alternative to the cultural status quo, even as they were endorsed by the state. Yet, these same disruptions were controlled in such a way that they never actively undermined state power. In this sense, then, the 'limited release' permitted by the Department of Coloured Affairs served to strengthen the established political order. The government's endorsement of the Eoan Group's activities, like its performances of coloured citizenship at the Republic Festival, sublimated the discontent of a disenfranchised people and inculcated and naturalised their subordination.

Further to the sublimation of discontent, the Eoan Group's performances were useful to the South African government for their propaganda value. In 1967, for instance, the Department of Coloured Affairs again commissioned the group to produce *La Traviata*, and as with the first Republic Festival (and the special performance of 1956), a large number of government officials attended (figure 4.2).

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581 Barbara Babcock, 1978, cited in Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics*, 17.
582 Max Gluckman, 1965, cited in Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics*, 13.

An article in *Alpha* from April 1967 reported on the occasion:[583]

> On March 14 of this year a thousand dignitaries, including members of the diplomatic corps and senior officials of the South African Government, attended a performance of the opera "La Traviata" presented by the Department of Coloured Affairs. The Secretary for Coloured Affairs, Mr. D.J. Bosman, was the host and the presentation was made under the patronage of The Honourable Marais Viljoen, Minister of Coloured Affairs. […] In his welcoming address, the Minister emphasised the financial awards, guidance, and advice provided by his department to the coloured population, in order to promote cultural matters. His department welcomes the positive support of voluntary organisations like Eoan as valued allies in this regard.[584]

Viljoen's claim that the Department of Coloured Affairs was the driving force behind coloured cultural endeavours, and that organisations such as Eoan just provided welcome assistance, signalled a strategic inversion of the real order of initiative and support, and demonstrated the government's shameless co-option of the Eoan Group's efforts for its own political-ideological purposes. 'Official' performances such as these were openly used by the Department of Coloured Affairs to promote the impression among foreign officials and white citizens that the South African government had a benevolent attitude to its coloured subjects. Hilde Roos points out that 'during the height of the apartheid era the Eoan Group was often paraded by government propaganda as an example of "how good coloureds can be" in their bid to legitimise the apartheid policy of "separate development"'.[585] These performances were therefore not only a ruse behind which to hide the mistreatment and domination of subjects, but also an advertisement for the integrity of the apartheid project.

The success of the Department for Coloured Affairs' propagandistic promotion of the Eoan Group, at least amongst some white audience members, is reflected in reception documents in the group's archive. In a letter to Manca dated 12 October 1960, Jan C. Lewis reflects on the Eoan Group's capacity to foil mounting international criticism of South Africa's

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583 *Alpha* was a monthly journal published on behalf of the Department of Coloured Affairs.
584 [*In sy welkomswoord dié aand het die Minister gewag gemaak van die finansiële toekennings, leiding en raad wat sy Departement die Kleurlingbevolking bied ter bevordering van kultuursake. Sy Departement verwelkom die positiewe bystand van vrywillige organisasies soos Eoan as waardevolle bondgenote in hierdie opsig*], '*La Traviata*', *Alpha* 5(4), April 1967, 16-18, 62 (no folder).
585 Roos, 'Remembering to Forget', 15.

political conditions:

> [I]f the South African Government subsidised the Eoan Group to tour every country in the world, our country would have no enemies, and would enjoy the goodwill of all peoples. The power of music far exceeds that of any politician or ambassador.[586]

Similarly, Helen Edwards wrote to Manca on 21 March 1969 to describe the projected benefits of taking her two British guests to see an Eoan performance:

> I do endeavour to present a true image of conditions in South Africa, and I sincerely feel that […] enabling these two English ladies to see for themselves what, under European guidance, the Coloured people can accomplish, will I am sure make a great impact on them and impress them far more than any words of ours. […] I feel sure they will prove good ambassadors for our country, and help, on their return, to dispel some of the ignorance and prejudice abroad. Only those who have SEEN for themselves can correct the distortions of the English press and T.V. which we also in Rhodesia have suffered so badly from.[587]

An exchange between Hebe Cassab, representative of International Theatre Relations – *Organizzazione per l'incremento di rapporti artistici internazionali* (INTHER),[588] and the Cultural Attaché for the South African Information Service (Miss J.C. Coertze), shows that the political expediency of using the group as ambassadors for the apartheid system even reached official government discourse. In a letter dated 20 June 1959, Cassab tried to convince Coertze (and 'through [Coertze] the South African Government') of 'the value of sending a Group such as the Eoan to Europe'.[589] She writes as follows:

> South Africa is today very much in the Universal Public mind, and unfortunately the public whom one would want to convince only get a very vague, narrow and erroneous view point which is given to them through a biased press. We cannot unfortunately bring all of Europe to South Africa, but we can take some of South Africa to Europe, and prove to them that whites, coloured and African work together, that the development of each Group is appreciated, praiseworthy, and it is through understanding and co-operation that Italian Opera is sung in Italian by the Eoan Group in South Africa.[590]

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586 Correspondence, Jan C. Lewis to Manca, 12 October 1960, 31:210.
587 Correspondence, Helen Edwards to Manca, 21 March 1969, 36:283, original emphasis.
588 I have been unable to find any additional information on this organisation, or on Hebe Cassab. The only other archival document relating to them is a letter from Hebe Cassab to Joseph Manca in which she indicates that she has enclosed a copy of her letter to Coertze, and asks for the estimated cost per Eoan Group opera production. It is not clear whether Manca responded with the required information. (Correspondence, Hebe Cassab to Manca, 22 June 1959, 32:218.)
589 Correspondence, Hebe Cassa[b] to J.C. Coertze, 20 June 1959, 32:218.
590 Ibid.

So great did Cassab believe the potential political benefit of such a visit to be that she proposed that the South African Government charter an official airplane to send the group to Rome in 1960:

> I feel that this sum [estimated at £12,500] is negligible in considering the vast sums being spent on printed matter which only reaches a very small and particularly select community: this, however, is South Africa in lights, this is South Africa in Italian Opera, competing in this the greatest field of Opera, this is South Africa to prove to the world that the peoples of this country are working together and not in opposition to each other.[591]

The Eoan Group itself was also attuned to the benefit the South African government could derive from letting the world see 'South Africa in lights', and used this knowledge to leverage additional funding and support. Echoing the sentiments expressed in Hebe Cassab's letter, the group made repeated public appeals to the state to fund an overseas tour:

> It is felt that South Africa could have no better 'show window' [sic] than by presenting the Eoan Group in Europe and Great Britain, thus showing to what extent South Africa has culturally progressed. Its very appearance would silence the many critics of South Africa and have much more propaganda value than the publication of thousands of magazines and pamphlets. The South African Government should not lose this opportunity of [sic] sponsoring the Eoan Group and making possible its overseas visit, and an appeal is made to those in authority, to South African Commerce and Industry and to the Government itself to see that the Eoan Group's ambition to tour overseas is made a reality.[592]

When, in 1975, the group's dream to perform abroad was finally realised, this rhetoric abounded in all correspondence and press releases. Newspapers were informed that 'this is an epoch-making event of historical importance to our country especially in view of our esteemed Prime Minister's efforts to establish better understanding of our country and closer relationships with all the countries in the world';[593] the mayor of Cape Town, David Bloomberg, was assured that 'the value to South Africa of this proposed visit […] in its fight for détente, better understanding

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591 Ibid.

592 'Advance Publicity, Eoan Group 1962 Arts Festival and Future Activities', 32:219. See also 'Eoan Group Planning Second SA Tour and Visit to Britain', *Cape Argus*, 16 February 1961, 2:6, amongst others.

593 Press Release, 15 July 1975, 21:151.

in human relationships cannot be measured in financial terms' [sic];[594] and the Department of Coloured Affairs was advised that 'the Eoan Group feels that the successful outcome of this venture would be of great importance to South Africa, as our visit and performances would be the "SHOP-WINDOW" to the world of what is being done for the cultural advancement of the Coloured Community'.[595] The apartheid government was eventually convinced of the value of the group's tour, and by April 1975, Sydow could report that the Department of Coloured Affairs had agreed to meet the financial shortfall of the tour, under the condition that the group approach as many other potential funders as possible.[596] In the end, the government's grant-in-aid covered the bulk of the group's tour expenses.[597]

Eoan's alignment with the apartheid regime's propaganda project did not only play out in international terms. Correspondence between W. Murray Bisset (director of the Eoan Group Trust) and N.B. Hyles, the Regional Representative of the Department of Community Development,[598] cites the 'obvious value [of the Eoan Group] in the wider public relations field to demonstrate the progress that is being made to develop the talents of this section of the community' in an appeal for the government to assist in establishing a new cultural centre for the group after the rezoning of District Six.[599] Similarly, Sydow, in applications for permits to

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594 Correspondence, Sydow to His Worship the Mayor, 30 June 1975, 24:174.

595 'Guidelines for Memoranda on Cultural Matters: Other Matters', 23:169. In this particular document, the voice of Dr Carel de Wet, then South African Ambassador to the United Kingdom, added weight to the group's claims: '[Dr. de Wet] promised that he himself would do his utmost to assist the Eoan Group in England as he felt that this was a magnificent golden opportunity for our country to show what was being done for the cultural development and advancement of our Coloured Community'.

596 Correspondence, Sydow to L.C.V. Walker, 28 April 1975, 24:174.

597 See '*Pa se Dogter Sit Agter Eoan Group se Triomf*' [Father's Daughter is Behind Eoan Group's Triumph], *Rapport Ekstra* 21 September 1975, Amanda Botha Scrapbooks 1973-1976. The group itself managed to contribute approximately R15 000 towards the tour budget of R45 000, and they approached the Municipality of Cape Town for a grant-in-aid of R5 000 (Correspondence, Sydow to The Secretary, Divisional Council of the Cape, 9 June 1975, 24:174).

598 The Department of Community Development was established in 1961 with the mandate of managing all administrative matters related to the Group Areas Act, including planning and administration of zoning, permit applications, and development of local government in Coloured and Asian areas. The Department of Community Development formed part of the office of the Minister of Coloured Affairs, Community Development and Housing (Patricia Johnson-Castle, 'Timeline of the Group Areas Act and Selected Related Pieces [of] Legislation', *South African History Online*, last updated 28 January 2016, http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/timeline-group-areas-act-and-selected-related-pieces-legislation, accessed 6 October 2016).

599 Correspondence, W.M. Bisset to N.B. Hyles, 2 August 1966, 11:75.

perform in whites-only venues, regularly invoked the 'prestige' that would be brought to the Department of Coloured Affairs through their support of the Eoan Group, especially as a result of performances in white theatres.[600]

The benefits of promoting itself as coloured cultural propaganda for the state therefore stretched beyond financial considerations for the group, to include otherwise inaccessible privileges of movement and infrastructure. In effect, then, the group became a promoter of the apartheid regime in order to buy itself liberties denied by this very regime—liberties of movement, of cultural expression, and of human dignity. At the same time as upholding an oppressive state, they enabled themselves to imagine and even occasionally inhabit an alternative. Achille Mbembe argues that this ambivalent political behaviour is characteristic of the 'postcolonised subject':

> In short, the public affirmation of the 'postcolonized subject' is not necessarily found in acts of 'opposition' or 'resistance' to the *commandement*. What defines the postcolonized subject is the ability to engage in baroque practices fundamentally ambiguous, fluid, and modifiable even where there are clear, written, and precise rules. These simultaneous yet apparently contradictory practices ratify, de facto, the status of fetish that state power so forcefully claims as its right. And by the same token they maintain, even while drawing upon officialese (its vocabulary, signs, and symbols), the possibility of altering the place and time of this ratification.[601]

For Mbembe, the postcolonised subject's ratification of fetishized state power is not simply or necessarily a collusive performance of subjection, but rather an ambiguous moment in which agency can be claimed. The official symbols of the oppressive state are co-opted by the postcolonised subject as a guise under which to enter a different place and a different time, thereby undermining the very boundaries to which she is held. This equivocality is especially evident in the case of the Eoan Group, who with their enthusiastic reinscription of narratives of state power (both by means of propagandistic rhetoric, and by participating in official state

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[600] See, for instance, Correspondence, Sydow to N. Wheeler, 9 April 1973, 16:113; Correspondence, Sydow to N.B. Hyles, 20 August 1966, 85:684.
[601] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, 129.

celebrations such as the Republic Festivals) claimed for themselves an alternative to dominant (and dominated) modes of coloured existence under apartheid.

State support, however, did not come cheaply. The 'clear, written, and precise rules' in Mbembe's discussion manifested for the Eoan Group as a set of conditions attached to government funding, which dictated that their audiences had to be segregated. A list of 'conditions on which grants are awarded to voluntary organisations' accompanied letters from the Department of Coloured Affairs confirming funding for the Eoan Group. Clause 17 on the list provided detailed parameters regarding the racial composition and arrangement of audiences:

> Clause 17: No mixed audience of Europeans and Non-Europeans shall be permitted. The following exposition has been accorded to this clause:—
> i. An audience should be either European or Non-European.
> ii. In special circumstances, an audience could consist of Europeans and Non-Europeans, provided:—
> (a) a specific section of the seating accommodation in the hall is reserved for Europeans and another section for Non-Europeans; or
> (b) the floor of the hall is reserved for the one group and the gallery for the other.
> iii. Where the seating accommodation is arranged in accordance with (ii)(a) or (b) above, separate entrances for the two groups should be provided.
> iv. The conditions apply to any hall irrespective of the ownership thereof.
> v. Generally a Non-European group may perform to a European audience in a generally accepted European area. Conversely a European group may play to a Non-European audience in a generally accepted On-European [sic] Area. Exemption from this clause may be granted in cases where the Department is satisfied that good reason exists for doing so.
> vi. <u>Prior approval must be obtained for any departure from rules (i) and (v) above.</u>
> Clause 18. The Department further reserves the right to impose any other conditions in respect of grants as may in its discretion be deemed necessary.[602]

Segregation

The segregation of audiences stipulated in Clause 17 corresponds to restrictions postulated by permits issued to the group to perform in certain venues throughout Cape Town and the rest of the country. These permits, in accordance with the Group Areas Act,[603] granted the Eoan singers

[602] See, for instance, Correspondence, J.R. Young to Sydow, 2 August 1966, 33:231, original orthography.
[603] For more on the Group Areas Act, see Chapter 1.

the right to appear before white people, to access whites-only theatres, and, on certain occasions, to welcome coloured audience members into whites-only locations, or to share venues with white patrons (see figure 3). The conditions under which such permits were issued are almost identical to Clause 17 of the above document, specifying that audience members had to occupy separate areas within theatres, or that members of different race classes had to attend performances on different nights, thus resulting in complete segregation.[604]

Figure 4.3, a permit issued for the Eoan Group's 1973 Opera Season in the Green and Sea Point Civic Centre, shows the extent to which members of the different races were forcefully kept apart: not content with separate blocks of seating, the Group Areas permits sought to control the minutiae of concert-going life, dictating segregated entrances, exits, box offices, cloakrooms, and refreshment facilities. This accorded with the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, 1953, which decreed that members of different race groups were not allowed to share public spaces or use the same amenities.[605] The objective of the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, like the Group Areas Act, was to thwart interracial contact 'as far as possible'.[606]

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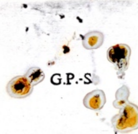
604 Permit 27177 for Stellenbosch Town Hall, 24 July 1973, 16:116, for instance, authorises two completely segregated performances by the Eoan Group 'subject to the conditions that: (a) (i) on the 23rd November, 1973, on occasion of the presentation for a White audience, the Coloured artistes of the Eoan Group, as the only Coloureds, occupy the Stellenbosch Town Hall; and (ii) the Coloured artistes and the White audience shall at no stage mingle socially; and (b) on the 24th November 1973, only members of the Coloured group shall attend the concert', while Permit 24893 for Cape Town City Hall, 9 October 1972, 13:85, sanctions coloured audience members 'to occupy together with Whites on the 20th & 25th November, 1972, on the occasion of an operatic concert organised by the Eoan Group', with the provision that '(a) Separate entrances, exits, ticket boxes and toilet facilities shall be used by Whites and Coloureds; and (b) the seats allocated to Coloureds attending the Municipal Symphony concerts shall be used by the Coloureds attending these concerts'.

605 'Any person who is in charge of or has control of any public premises or any public vehicle, whether as owner or lessee or whether by virtue of his office or otherwise […] may […] set apart or reserve such premises or such vehicle or any portion of such premises or such vehicle or any counter, bench, seat or other amenity or contrivance in or on such premises or vehicle, for the exclusive use of persons belonging to a particular race or class.' (Union of South Africa, 'Reservation of Separate Amenities (Act No. 49 of 1953)' in *Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1953*, 328-29, available at https://blogs.loc.gov/law/files/2015/11/Reservation-of-Separate-Amenities-Act-49-of-1953.pdf, accessed 30 October 2016.

606 'Focal points of contact should be eliminated as far as possible', *Summary of the Group Areas Act 1950*, 5, cited by Joline Young, 'How the Group Areas Act Shaped Spaces, Memories and Identities in Cape Town', *South African History Online*, last updated 24 June 2016, http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/how-group-areas-act-shaped-spaces-memories-and-identities-cape-town, accessed 30 October 2016.



Republiek van Suid-Afrika
DEPARTEMENT VAN GEMEENSKAPSBOU

Republic of South Africa
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

G.C.188

PERMIT

(Uitgereik kragtens artikel 21 van die Wet op Groepsgebiede, 1966 (Wet No. 36 van 1966)).
(Issued in terms of section 21 of the Group Areas Act, 1966 (Act No. 36 of 1966)).

26690

Lêer No.
File No. 32/1/4405/69

1. Uitgereik aan
Issued to THE TOWN CLERK, CAPE TOWN.

2. Ten opsigte van die grond of perseel
In respect of the land or premises GREEN / SEA POINT CIVIC CENTRE

3. *(a)* Doel waarvoor uitgereik
Purpose for which issued to enable the Coloured members of the Eoan Group to present operatic productions to an audience of Whites and Coloureds for their operatic season of 1973.

(b) Onderworpe aan die voorwaardes
Subject to the conditions

THAT (a) Separate entrances, exits, ticket boxes and toilet facilities shall be used by Whites and Coloureds;

(b) Separate seating accommodation, designated as per submitted plan, shall be allocated to Whites and Coloureds; and

(c) No social mingling shall be allowed between Whites and Coloureds.

4. In die geval van 'n verkryging van onroerende goed of die okkupasie van grond of 'n perseel verval hierdie permit as die betrokke onroerende goed nie verkry of die grond of perseel nie ingevolge die permit geokkupeer word binne .... maande vanaf die datum hiervan nie.
In the case of the acquisition of immovable property or the occupation of land or premises this permit will lapse if the immovable property concerned is not acquired or the land or premises occupied in terms of this permit within .... months from the date hereof.

Gemagtigde Uitreikingsbeampte
Authorized Issuing Officer.

Datumstempel/*Date Stamp.*

Figure 4.3: Permit No. 26690 in respect of Green/Sea Point Civic Centre, 11 April 1973, 16:114. Reproduced with Permission.

As discussed in Chapter 1, restrictions on contact between the races, as decreed by the Group Areas Act, the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1955 and others, may have stemmed from fear of 'contamination' caused by interracial exchange, or by allowing non-white people into white areas.[607] A 1973 letter from H.G. Heugh, Town Clerk, to the Regional Representative of the Department of Community Development, reflects on such fears while appealing to the government to allow the Eoan Group to appear in Green and Sea Point Civic Centre. Due to renovations to Cape Town City Hall, the Eoan Group was no longer able to present operas there, and had to find another venue in the city that complied with a range of requirements, including easy access to local transport, suitable stage and dressing room accommodation, and of course the separate facilities required by law if they were to perform for coloureds and whites at the same time. Green and Sea Point Civic Centre, although not ideally located, was deemed the only suitable venue for occupation by the Eoan Group.[608] Obtaining a permit for the group to perform in this hall, however, required special intervention by City officials. Whereas the group had previously successfully applied for its own permits to other venues, it seems that some unhappiness about the entry of coloured people into the Green Point area made it necessary for the Town Clerk to intervene with a missive of his own:

[607] Compare, also, Stallybrass and White's description of this fear when they discuss the 'promiscuity of public space' in *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. They quote Mrs. Van Zutphen van Dedem, who in her book on *Goede Manieren* [Good Manners] wrote that 'The "more refined person" was to avoid even "the slightest contact, so far as possible, with the bodies and garments of other people, in the knowledge that, even greater than the hygienic danger of contamination, there is always the danger of contact with the spiritually inferior and the repugnant who at any moment can appear in our immediate vicinity, especially in the densely populated centres of the cities, like germs in an unhealthy body"' (Mrs. Van Zutphen van Dedem, 1928, cited in Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics*, 136).

[608] The 'Chairman's Report to be Submitted to the Eoan Group's Executive Committee at its Meeting on Wednesday 31 January 1973', 17:117, bemoans the additional distance that singers and audience members would have to travel to reach the hall, and the relative inaccessibility of the venue: 'Most of our people have to travel by bus and train; whilst the City Hall is close to the station and to the official bus terminus, the Centre is far removed from these facilities.' This document also provides a detailed account of the circumstances surrounding the renovation of the City Hall, the perceived betrayal of the group by Cape Town City Council in robbing them of the only suitable venue for their activities, the alterations to the hall which prohibited further operatic productions, and the sense of despair which engulfed the group following 'the removal of the last and only one amenity the Coloured Community enjoyed in the heart of our City of Cape Town' (ibid.).

> As regards the two points of possible objection which you put to me during our discussion of this matter, I would say that the attendances of Non-Whites at performances of the Eoan Group would have no effect whatsoever on the entry of Non-Whites into the Sea Point area, which I understand has been the subject of complaint to your Department. In the first place the Green and Sea Point Hall is on the outskirts of Sea Point and is situated on the Green Point Common where there are no residences. In the second place the problem at Sea Point appears to be mainly domestic servants and their cohorts. The relatively few Non-Whites who attend performances of the Eoan Group are cultured, respectable people, who are able to pay the comparatively high prices for seats and who go home immediately after the performance. There could be no possible accentuation of the conditions which you mentioned to me. The second point which you referred to was the possibility of the Eoan Group playing to White audiences only. Such a proposal would put the Eoan Group in an awkward position and cause animosity towards the Group from the Coloured community. While the group can play to a mixed audience, albeit with only a limited number of seats available to Non-Whites, honour is satisfied and resentment is avoided.[609]

Heugh's appeal neatly captures a number of the issues this chapter has dealt with thus far. Firstly, the issue of class comes to the fore when he mentions that the coloured people who attend the Eoan performances are 'respectable people, who are able to pay the comparatively high prices for seats', as opposed to the 'domestic servants and their cohorts' who are, by implication, disreputable and poor, and therefore the cause of all problems in the Green Point area. Again, it becomes clear how the so-called 'better class of coloured' is deemed worthy of greater state benevolence, while the rest of the coloured community is worthy only of appeasement, in order to avoid 'animosity' and 'resentment'. The irony of such a position is absolutely glaring, considering that some of the Eoan Group members themselves were of the same working class as Heugh's 'domestic servants and their cohorts', and indeed, that some of them worked as domestic servants themselves.[610]

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609 Correspondence, H.G. Heugh to Regional Representative, Department of Community Development, 14 February 1973, 6:46.

610 Sophia Andrews, for instance, was in domestic service before becoming a sewing machine operator in a factory ('The Wayfarer's Talk of the Day: Watching from the Wings: An Opera in Rehearsal', *Daily News,* 28 July 1960, 30:208). Soprano Patricia van Graan also worked in a textile factory ('*Bedags Gewone Mense, Saans Engele*' [Ordinary People by Day, Angels by Night], *Die Byvoegsel tot Die Burger*, 22 March 1969, Copies from Mrs. J. Liedeman), while tenor James Momberg was a janitor in the Cape Town City Hall ('Cape Town Cleaner Has Tenor Role', 14 July 1965, source unknown, 60:494a). A newspaper article reported that Joseph Manca, during the Eoan Group's 1960 tour of the Republic, reflected as follows on the different social classes represented by the singers: '[Mr. Joseph Manca] told the Rotary Club of North Durban luncheon yesterday that members of the opera cast varied in private life from house servants to school teachers. […] Coloureds, like Whites, had their class distinctions, but these were left behind when they entered the Eoan Group' ('Servants, Teachers in Eoan Group Cast', *Daily News*, 12 August 1960, 30:208). The class-based discourse that surrounds the Eoan Group's activities, and broader interrogations

Secondly, this extract demonstrates how the Eoan Group's espousal of apartheid rhetoric gave them a slight amount of leverage where matters of segregation were concerned. The Department of Coloured Affairs' use of Eoan as evidence of 'how much is being done for the coloured community', forced it to protect the status of the group within the coloured community as far as it possibly could. Thus, where feasible (within the scope of apartheid law), it was compelled to yield to the Eoan Group's requests for racially mixed audience access to white venues in order to avoid coloured hostility towards the group.[611]

The separation of races within performance venues required rather complex audience arrangements, as revealed by surviving seating plans for some of the group's productions. A seating plan for a performance of *La Traviata* at Green and Sea Point Civic Centre on 5 March 1975 (figure 4.4) shows the allocation of space according to race: the gallery was completely reserved for white patrons, while coloured audience members were relegated to the first five seats of each row of the stalls. The remaining seats were reserved for white occupation. Performances in the Green and Sea Point Civic Centre therefore allowed 119 seats for coloured people per performance, and 601 seats for whites. A similar seating arrangement was followed for performances in Cape Town City Hall prior to 1973.[612]

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of the politics of coloured aspiration, show that, contrary to Manca's claim, class was only momentarily left behind—if it was suspended at all—during the group's performances.

[611] This argument does not necessarily apply throughout. For instance, in 1966 the government saw no problem in refusing permits for coloured people to attend performances of *Oklahoma!* in the whites-only Alhambra Theatre in Cape Town, arguing instead that the same production could be moved to the Luxurama Theatre for coloured audiences (Correspondence, Regional Representative, Department of Community Development to Sydow, 22 September 1966, 86:684). Similarly, in 1965 in Johannesburg, a permit to allow coloured audiences to the Civic Theatre was refused. The Department of Community Development argued that coloureds could attend performances in the Coronationville Hall, despite numerous letters explaining the unsuitability of this venue for operatic performance (Correspondence, Secretary for Community Development to Manca, 7 May 1965, 84:684). During the same tour, a similar situation arose in Port Elizabeth when the Department of Community Development refused a permit for coloured audiences to attend performances in the Opera House, citing lack of availability of separate facilities for coloureds (Correspondence, Secretary for Community Development to Manca, 20 July 1965, 83:646a). The leverage enjoyed by the Eoan Group was therefore always circumscribed by the arbitrary application of apartheid law, and the group remained beholden to the whims of white bureaucrats.

[612] See 'Chairman's Report to be Submitted to the Eoan Group's Executive Committee at its Meeting on Wednesday 31 January, 1973', 17:117: 'Provision [in the Green and Sea Point Civic Centre] was possible for the Coloured Community to occupy one section of the seating on the same pattern as in the City Hall.'

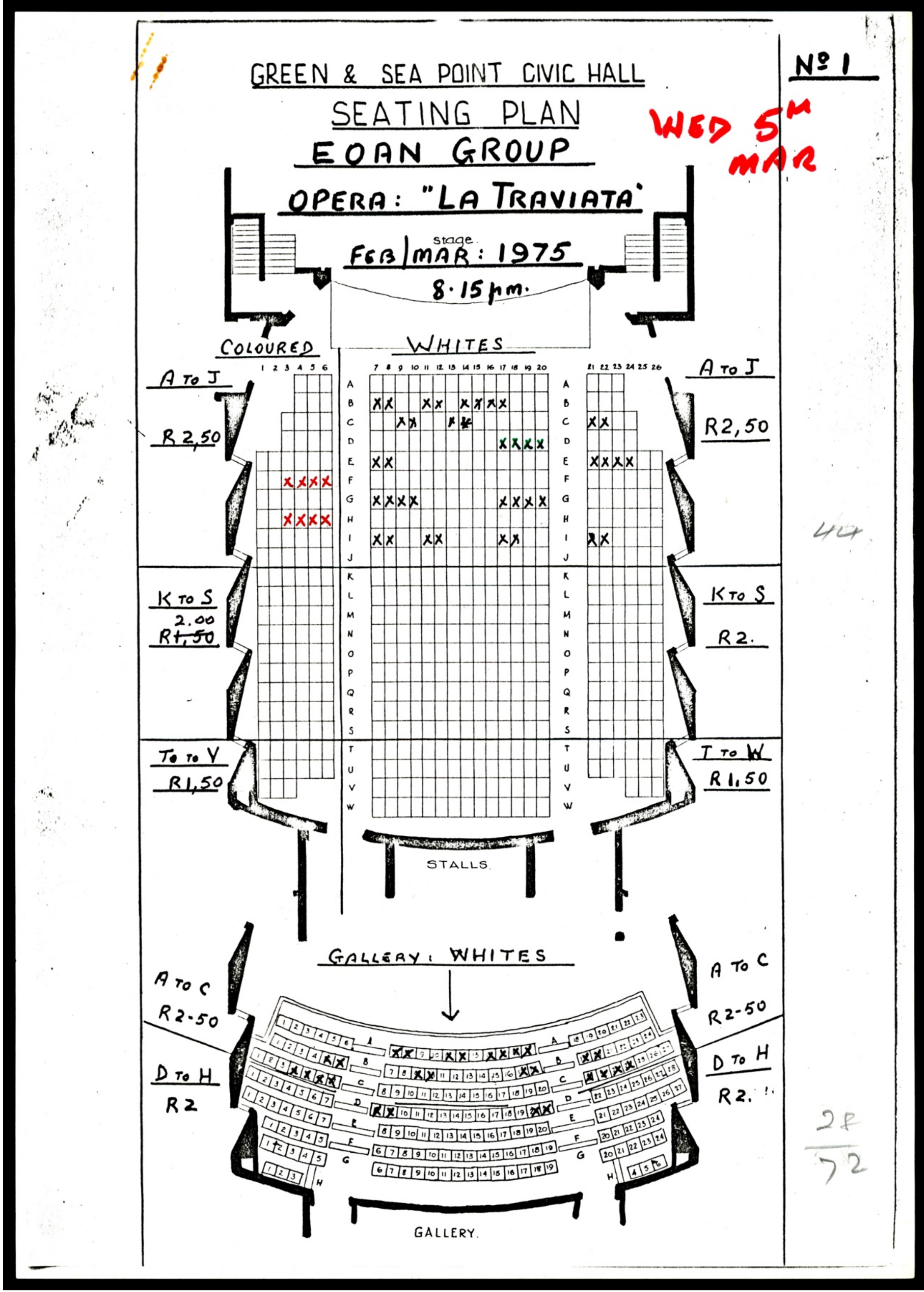

Figure 4.4: Green and Sea Point Civic Hall Seating Plan, *La Traviata*, 5 March 1975, 9:61. Reproduced with Permission.

This seating plan glosses in a strikingly material way the apartheid preoccupation with place, space, class, race, and containment. We see, literally, coloured people *put in their place*, and assigned a position at the margin of the audience. Simultaneously, however, we understand that these seating plans could not separate the races completely. They could not contain the performative inhabitation of space—the glances, the shared applause, the movement of the senses across the boundaries of skin and race. These implicit interactions, characteristic of the physical sharing of space, destabilised the limits to which apartheid legislation confined the bodies of its subjects, both white and non-white. Thus, despite the best efforts of segregationist specifications, the Eoan performances generated points of contact between members of the coloured and white race groups.

The 'points of contact' between white and coloured people generated by the Eoan performances can be read as part of Emily Beausoleil's wider discourse of exchange initiated by theatrical performance. Beausoleil argues that artistic performance has a special capacity for creating 'multiple points of contact'. She explains that the 'excess and absence' of the aesthetic encounter, augmented by the particularly embodied nature of its sonic and scopic forms, can provoke the audience member to respond in unusual, even seemingly 'irrational' ways:

> The 'concrete relational density' of artistic performance's polyphony and the great pressure this creates of, to borrow Altieri's phrase, 'the whole on the particular' can generate intensive affective encounters that move beyond, between, and beneath habitual patterns of interpretation and response; this is, as many theorists have argued, an inherently democratic moment, in which our 'partitions of the sensible' are dissembled and we may 'figure the newly thinkable'.[613]

When considering Beausoleil's description of performative points of contact, the cross-racial interaction enabled by the sharing of physical theatrical space gains an additional dimension: the dimension of affective exchange. In this moment, the unification of the audience before non-rational, embodied, and non-verbal affective display facilitates a democracy of response and interpretation, thus creating the possibility of 'the newly thinkable'—the possibility of that which

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[613] Emily Beausoleil, 'Political Actors: Performance as Democratic Protest in Anti-Apartheid Theater', in *Doing Democracy*, eds. Nancy S. Love and Mark Mattern, 257-85, 267.

cannot yet be communicated by language or by law: in this case, the possibility of a mode of social and cultural being not determined by race.

This hybrid moment of segregation and interaction strongly evokes Homi Bhabha's notion of the 'third space of enunciation'.[614] For Bhabha, socio-cultural encounters between individuals and collectives have the potential to produce displacements within standard social organisation by creating spaces in which the binary separation of identities and ideologies is disrupted. These encounters are as much productive as they are produced: simultaneously an effect of a certain social structure, and effecting an alternative to this structure, the hybrid encounter becomes an enunciative moment, in which an alternate reality comes into being as a result thereof. This is the 'third space of enunciation'. The profoundly destabilising nature of such an encounter veritably 'undoes' the familiar configuration of space and delimited dwelling, thus reconfiguring experience as unfamiliar and saturated with possibility. Bhabha's conception of the third space of enunciation, however, perches ambiguously between the abstract and the actual. Fredrik Fahlander, for instance, argues that it is not necessarily clear what 'space' signifies in the context of Bhabha's third space theory, and that it 'seems evident that Bhabha's concept of third space […] primarily signifies a virtual space'.[615] Despite his invocation of metaphors of physical territorialisation—borders, locations, and in-betweens—Bhabha articulates an abstract actuality that does not seem to translate into the physicality of geographically situated dwelling. His discussion therefore contradicts itself by using locational metaphors to invoke abstract and dis-located space, and to promote an understanding of interaction and exchange as severed from the materiality of place.

Denis-Constant Martin, in his book on music-making at the Cape, does not perceive a disjuncture between Bhabha's invocation of 'space' and his use of metaphors related to place. Indeed, Martin criticises Bhabha's 'overuse of spatial metaphors (space, in-between, interstices,

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614 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, 2004 [1994], 54.
615 Fredrik Fahlander, 'Third Space Encounters: Hybridity, Mimicry and Interstitial Practice', in *Encounters|Materialities|Confrontations: Archaeologies of Social Space and Interaction*, eds. Per Cornell and Fredrik Fahlander, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007, 15-41, 24.

borders)' for 'always enclos[ing] the cultures they study within delineated spaces, surrounded by borders'.[616] This criticism suggests that Martin understands the categories of place and space to be one and the same, or, at least, that space, in his opinion, is as materially triangulated as place. For Martin, Bhabha's so-called 'spatial' metaphors indicate closure and locatedness—stasis as opposed to mobility—in a way that 'undermine[s] the very ideas of complexity, fluidity, interrelation, intermixture, overlapping, or intersubjective experiences they pretend to promote'.[617] He goes on to argue that 'spatial metaphors of culture imply boundaries and separations, not continuity (of cultural relations and interactions) and similarities (of cultural practices and value systems). Tying culture to space […] refers back to a conservative idea of culture linked to territory and the people who inhabit it.'[618] I am bound to disagree with Martin that Bhabha's use of metaphors indicating physical locatedness translates to a preoccupation with the material boundaries that determine cultural interaction. While Bhabha's metaphors do seem to 'locate' culture within delineated physical, social or ideological places, his invocation of space as a fluid, abstract category detaches his discourse from the boundaries and prohibitions of unequal physical geographies.

Martin articulates a desire for a 'conceptualisation of the intertwined, the enmeshed, and the intermixed nature of culture, construed as a combination of connections, continuous interactions and innovations'.[619] Such an ideological project resembles undeniably Bhabha's theorisation of the third space as a site that is not given, immutable or self-contained, but rather constantly in exchange and under construction. The crucial critical objective that underpins both Martin's and Bhabha's readings is the notion of hybridity (for Bhabha) and mixing, or 'creole' (for Martin). In both their approaches, the coloured subject of South African race discourse represents a hybridity that somehow has the potential to overcome the material iniquities of

[616] Denis-Constant Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa*, Cape Town: African Minds, 2013, 58.
[617] Ibid.
[618] Ibid.
[619] Ibid.

apartheid life, by virtue of its abstract, spatially conceived fluidity and continuity.[620] Zoë Wicomb observes in Bhabha's 'ontological leap from the mytho-geographical'[621] a displacement of lived experience by 'an aesthetics of theory':

> How, one is tempted to ask, do people who live in communities inhabit, spookily and precariously, a rim of inbetween reality? Symbolically, of course, and therefore […] in silence […]. Surely relegation to such a space relies on an essentialist view which posits a 'pure' reality that is experienced in the space inhabited by the racially pure.[622]

Here, Wicomb deconstructs devastatingly the abstraction and negation of the lived experience of colouredness enacted by Bhabha's notion of hybridity and Martin's insistence on cultural fluidity. In each of these formulations, she argues, there is no room to conceive of colouredness as inescapably *placed*. Always drifting between the localised realities of 'pure' identities, the spatialisation of hybridity signifies a rupture—a violent denial of the unequal physical dimensions that underpin (and, often, undermine) cross-racial interaction and exchange.

Given that both identity and culture are inescapably overdetermined in the apartheid context by the regulation of a disparately configured geo-politics, the necessity for a theoretical apparatus that integrates culture with place is incontestable. While Bhabha's invocation of locational metaphors seems to herald such a methodology, the third space ultimately fails to deliver on its promise, surrendering instead to an idealised perception of cultural exchange as always equal; always free from its own discursive sites. In this, the third space of enunciation resembles strikingly Cavarero's notion of deterritorialisation, critiqued at the end of Chapter 2. In both these formulations, interaction is perceived to signify a de-linking from *polis* as a place made up of privileged sites and disenfranchised margins. The Eoan Group's activities show that such a model cannot hold, since it fails to account for the material ways in which apartheid law

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[620] See Bhabha, *Location*, 13; and Martin, 'Part Two: The Dialectics of Separation and Interweaving', in *Sounding the Cape*, 101-356.
[621] Zoë Wicomb, 'Shame and Identity: The Case of the Coloured in South Africa', in *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid, and Democracy, 1970-1995*, eds. Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 91-107, 102.
[622] Ibid.

determined the locations of the group's performances and the physical organisation of their audiences; in short, it fails to account for segregation.

While the cross-racial interaction enacted by the Eoan Group's operas can be seen to summon the notions of exchange and disruption propounded by third space theory, they therefore simultaneously undermine Bhabha's utopian construction of these moments as free from the political subjugation and physical inequality that contoured material life under apartheid. Indeed, the group's very appearance in specific *places* (white theatres in particular) served to highlight the iniquities of the socio-political system. In a review of Eoan's performance of *La Traviata* in the Johannesburg Civic Theatre in 1965, Lewis Sowden reflects on the way in which the Eoan Group showed up the paradoxical faultlines of apartheid thinking:

> It was impossible to listen to this 'Traviata' without reflecting on the absurdity and shame of such a segregated performance. Shame on us Whites; shame on our sick and haltered society; shame on our cock-eyed view of life that permits this to happen without a protest and a clamour.[623]

Sowden's expression of shame seems to be the result of having encountered the coloured other as equal, and of confronting the incongruity of apartheid's politics of colour. His statement recognises that the separations commanded by the apartheid system are nonsensical and shameful. Here, the group's appearance serves forcefully to wrench the subject back to the system that forecloses the realisation of a possibility for equal exchange. This generates the potential for critical engagement both with the system, and with the self implicated in this system. Helena Grehan, following Raimond Gaita, argues that the shame generated by such experience is fundamental to fellowship and community.[624] Invoking Emmanuel Levinas, Grehan characterises shame as 'centrally concerned with the responses of the subject to the other', thus bringing to the fore the question of 'responsibility for the other […] as the subject reckons with him/herself'.[625] The shame generated by geo-politically conditioned cultural interaction thereby becomes itself a

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623 'A "Traviata" of Irony and Enjoyment', Lewis Sowden, undated, source unknown, 60:494a.
624 Helena Grehan, *Performance, Ethics and Spectatorship in a Global Age*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 65-6.
625 Ibid., 65.

moment of possibility—the possibility for community. In a political system that barred community formations across racial lines, such fellowship, or even just the potential for it, already signified a disruption of the status quo.

For Stallybrass and White, 'the history of political struggle has been the history of the attempts made to control significant sites of assembly and spaces of discourse'.[626] Apartheid law, with its regulation of social and spatial interaction, was unequivocally focused on regulating and restricting sites of cross-racial assembly and discourse. An opportunity for such community as described above, in which the white patron does not merely view the coloured singer as spectacle, but is also forced to acknowledge the question of his/her own responsibility towards this 'sounding other', therefore creates a new discourse in contradiction to the apartheid script. Here, the privileged site of Western culture—the white theatre—functions as the locus of a disruption of apartheid hierarchies of visual and sonic legitimacy, awarding the coloured subject an opportunity to transform the segregated audience into a space of interracial response and responsibility. Thus, the Eoan Group and their audiences disrupted the 'nucleus of material and cultural conditions which regulate[d] what may and may not be said, who may speak, how people may communicate and what importance must be given to what is said'.[627]

That this interaction happened within the hallowed settings of celebrated public theatres is not insignificant. Members from South Africa's different race groups did have opportunities to interact elsewhere,[628] however the so-called 'prestige'[629] of the Eoan venues lent these contact

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626 Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics*, 80.
627 Ibid.
628 Streets, for instance, were not segregated, so white people did occasionally encounter non-white people with the necessary passes on the roads of whites-only areas. See the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, which indicated that public premises did not include 'a public road or street' (Union of South Africa, 'Reservation of Separate Amenities Act', 328). Lara Allen's 'Kwela's White Audiences: The Politics of Pleasure and Identification in the Early Apartheid Period', in *Composing Apartheid: Music for and Against Apartheid*, ed. Grant Olwage, Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008, 79-97, gives a fascinating account of interactions between black pennywhistle players and white listeners in streets and public parks, and the apartheid police's attempts to control this.
629 See, for instance, 'Chairman's Report to be submitted to the Eoan Group's Executive Committee at its meeting on Wednesday 31 January, 1973', 17:117, in which Green and Sea Point Civic Centre is described as a 'prestige venue', and 'Press Statement: Johannesburg Performances at Alexander Theatre', 31:211, in which the Eoan Group defends its decision to perform for segregated audiences by arguing that Alexander Theatre, which agreed to accommodate the group under the provision that they do separate

points a significance not readily accorded other exchanges between whites and coloureds. Here, 'place' again acquires a significance obscured by invocations of the abstract politics of space. The Eoan Group's curation of interracial contact within the white centres of apartheid, in locations signifying white cultural exceptionalism and administrative power, rendered these venues somehow permeable, and undermined the forbidding hierarchy of apartheid's discursive sites.[630] Following Stallybrass and White, the Eoan Group could therefore be argued to have carried 'the promise of politically transformative power'.[631]

In this reading, 'politically transformative power' is not only located in the heroic and remarkable efforts of those fighting the apartheid system from within an idealised discourse of resistance. Of course, these struggles, in their own way, upset the apartheid hierarchy of sites of discourse by elevating those important locations of struggle memory—the street, the township, the school, the grave—to venerated stages upon which the spectacle of embattled exchange played itself out. By hosting apartheid struggle, these 'low' places, the contaminated sites of poverty and oppression, were symbolically elevated to revered sites of disruptive power. The Eoan Group, conversely, questioned the perceived whiteness of apartheid's symbolic venues, thereby deposing these locations from their exclusive and exclusionary status, and opening them as sites of exchange between white and coloured. Such interference with the regulated logic of apartheid's ordering of physical and socio-cultural locations, however, could only occur under the damning guise of political collusion. In this, the Eoan Group's activities simultaneously disrupted and reinscribed apartheid logic: their politically compromised promotion of colonial respectability politics; their adherence to apartheid law; and their participation in government propaganda

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performances for coloureds and whites, was a 'proper theatre' with 'the best available conditions'.

630 Performances in venues associated with local and national government, such as the City Halls of Cape Town, Durban, Stellenbosch and Bloemfontein, and the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg, especially imply an inhabitation of the symbolic heart of apartheid authority. Christopher Cockburn makes a similar point when he describes the 'symbolic value' of performances of Handel's *Messiah* by the Johannesburg African Music Society in the Johannesburg City Hall, in 'Discomposing Apartheid's Story: Who Owns Handel?' in *Composing Apartheid*, ed. Grant Olwage, 54-77, 72.

631 'Only a challenge to the hierarchy of *sites* of discourse, which usually comes from groups and classes "situated" by the dominant in low or marginal positions, carries the promise of politically transformative power' (Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics*, 201).

simultaneously contained the potential for coloured agency. They enacted a mode of dwelling contoured but not determined by race, and eluded the politics of polarity by which subaltern subjectivity is measured. Their destabilisation of the ethical binary of complicity and transgression, and their invocation of an alternate reality free from these strictures, did not, however, amount to a disavowal of the penury of apartheid law. Instead, the Eoan Group operas looked both toward and away from the material deprivation of racially marked life under the oppressive regime. Their split perspective generated a sense of bewilderment that continues to defy the standards by which political thought measures its subjects. As such, they created the possibility to begin to think of agency as legitimised not only by grand acts of resistance, but also by the small disruptions to be found in beauty, joy, and pride. It is to a critical-theoretical appraisal of this alternative form of political agency that the Conclusion now turns.

Conclusion

The Politics of the Ordinary

> There is no unearned heroism here; instead there is the unproclaimed heroism of the ordinary person.[632]

On 21 March 1960, the South African Police Service opened fire on a peaceful protest against the country's pass laws in the Transvaal township of Sharpeville.[633] They killed 69 people. Some 1300 km to the south, in the Cape Town settlement of Langa, a similar protest was also met with police violence. Three people were killed and 29 wounded.[634] That night on Cape Town City Hall stage, 12 km to the west of Langa, the Eoan Group performed *La Bohème* as part of its Fourth Opera and Ballet Season.[635] While the country burned, the Eoan Group conjured fanciful extravaganzas for their privileged patrons, in halls insulated from the iniquities of apartheid life.

Retrospectively, the jarring disparity between the voices raised in song on the City Hall stage, and those raised in protest on the city's streets, captures strikingly the tensions that run throughout the group's narrative; tensions that have likewise marked this project in palpable ways. Not only do the preceding chapters reflect on the incongruity of a group of people

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632 Njabulo S. Ndebele, 'The Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Some New Writings in South Africa', in *Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Essays on South African Literature and Culture*, Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006 [1991], 41-59, 55.

633 Sharpeville is a township on the outskirts of Vereeniging, an important industrial city in Gauteng. Before 1994, the area formed part of the Transvaal province.

634 The Sharpeville massacre, as the events of 21 March 1960 came to be known, marked a turning point in South Africa's political history. Following the police killings, protests swept through predominantly black settlements around the country, leading the South African government to declare a State of Emergency on 30 March 1960. The United Nations Security Council summoned a special session on 30-31 March to discuss the massacre, and on 1 April passed Resolution 134, condemning apartheid law and calling for it to be abandoned. As Tom Lodge (*Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre and its Consequences*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 229) observes, the Sharpeville massacre became a 'global media event', which focused worldwide attention on South Africa's oppressive racial policies. This, in turn, had a profound impact on the international advancement of the anti-apartheid movement. 21 March is now celebrated in South Africa as Human Rights Day. For a detailed study of the massacre and its aftermath, see Lodge, *Sharpeville*.

635 Advertisement, Eoan Group Fourth Opera and Ballet Season, *The Cape Times* 21 March 1960, on microfilm BZA 82/56, Special Collections, University of Cape Town Libraries. My thanks to Clive Kirkwood for his assistance in obtaining this document.

seemingly disengaged from the realities of their own oppression, they also engage with the bewilderment that arises when aspiration is sanctioned as a function of racial pride. Throughout, the key concern has been how we may begin to come to terms with these dissonances in ways that are both responsible and productive. Along the way, a number of central themes have developed, and it is worth turning to them once more before suggesting tentative solutions to the epistemological questions raised by a critical consideration of the Eoan Group's activities.

Marginality

Already in Chapter 1 the marginal nature of colouredness as a racial grouping during apartheid became clear. Perched uncomfortably between whiteness and blackness, it existed at the boundaries of both—a residual identity, 'the leftovers', as Marike de Klerk described them.[636] With the relative privileges granted by the government, coloured experiences of apartheid differed from those of the black majority. Yet, as Christopher J. Lee acknowledges, 'the themes found within their […] histories are not marginal issues. Indeed, experiences of "hope", "fear", "shame", "frustration", "ambiguity", and "marginality" itself are not unique to Coloured history'.[637] Coloured people, despite—and sometimes because of—their location at the peripheries of racially determined social and political life in South Africa, confronted sets of challenges that situated them firmly within the material and affective worlds of the country's oppressed. It would therefore be irresponsible to discount as incidental to broader discourse the unique place from which coloured people experienced apartheid. Instead, their position may be understood, following bell hooks, as a site for the shaping and formation of what she calls a 'radical perspective',[638] not only on oppression, but also on resistance.

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636 De Klerk, 5 February 1983, cited in Mohamed Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community*, Athens, OH.: Ohio University Press, 2005, 13.
637 Christopher J. Lee, 'Voices from the Margins: The Coloured Factor in Southern African History', *South African Historical Journal* 56, 2006, 201-18, 217.
638 bell hooks, 'marginality as site of resistance', in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. Russell Ferguson, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990, 341-43, 342.

For hooks, the marginal subject occupies an ambiguous position of both belonging and not belonging: a kind of invisible visible, perceptible only insofar as it supports the smooth functioning of the 'main body'.[639] Crucially, hooks recognises that such marginality does not only play out socially or politically, but that it also manifests materially, in the physical organisation of unequal geographies. She recounts the physical movement of the marginal subject as follows:

> *As black Americans living in a small Kentucky town, the railroad tracks were a daily reminder of our marginality. Across those tracks were paved streets, stores we could not enter, restaurants we could not eat in, and people we could not look directly in the face. Across those tracks was a world we could work in as maids, as janitors, as prostitutes, as long as it was in a service capacity. We could enter that world but we could not live there. We had always to return to the margin, to cross the tracks, to shacks and abandoned houses on the edge of town.*[640]

The marginal subject in hooks's account is also a located subject: living on the 'other side' of the railroad tracks, she can cross into the centre, but only on the condition of her return. That she can work—as maid, as janitor, as prostitute, 'as long as it [is] in a service capacity'—is not a privilege, but a necessity; her labour is a requirement for the smooth functioning of the centre, a centre of which she is not part.[641] Given the socio-economic configurations of both patrimonial and late capitalism, the marginal subject described by hooks is not a rare figure; instead, she represents a globally exploitative labour market.[642] From an economic perspective, the entire working class is marginal. This in itself implies a certain universalisation of experience: marginality is a generalisable condition, since it applies to exploited labourers around the globe.

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[639] 'Being in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body', ibid., 341.
[640] Ibid., original orthography.
[641] 'Our survival depended on […] an ongoing private acknowledgement that we were a necessary, vital part of that whole', ibid., 341.
[642] The most significant recent source on late capitalism and its role in inequality is Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, tr. Arthur Goldhammer, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014. Piketty's account of economic inequality focuses on Europe and the USA, and hence largely neglects the exploitative labour practices fostered by and perpetuated beyond colonialism. For a trenchant critique 'from a political economy perspective based in developing economies', see Tidings P. Ndhlovu, 'Reflections on Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*: Inequality, Sustainable Development and Power Relations', *Journal of Green Economy and Development* 1(1), 2015, 13-24. On patrimonial capitalism, especially as both a function and a product of colonialism, see Mounira Maya Charrad and Julia P. Adams (eds.), *Patrimonial Capitalism and Empire*, Bingley: Emerald, 2015.

Yet, the marginality ascribed to the Eoan Group, and to the coloured racial grouping as defined by apartheid law, is also marked by characteristics that distinguish it from the experiences of South Africa's disenfranchised black majority. Chapter 1 discussed some of these, including the fiercely debated issue of coloureds' affiliation with the white race; the reservation of certain types of semi-schooled labour for coloured workers; and coloured people's presumed lack of historical connection to a specific territory in South Africa. All of these features served to differentiate the marginal position occupied by coloureds from that of blacks. The Eoan Group's experience of such marginality was additionally complicated by the fact that they crossed the border from the periphery into the centre not only for the sake of labour, but also for non-economic purposes. It would be easy to refer to their musical activities simply as entertainment, to claim that they moved from periphery to centre for leisure, but that would be to ignore the complex nature of what they engaged in: while the Eoan operas did indeed serve as entertainment, it is not always clear whom they counted as entertainment for. The group's musical pursuits were not mere amusement. Indeed, as Joseph Manca reminded singers and audience members, the operas' 'entertainment value' was 'incidental to the real purpose of this venture, [which was] the Coloured people's first intimate contact with one of the highest forms of musical arts—an unforgettable baptism at whose font new horizons appear[ed] on the educational landscape of the Coloured people's activities'.[643] Engaging in activities aimed both at diverting and educating singers and their audiences, the Eoan Group hence distorted the boundary between leisure and labour, and undermined the economic instrumentalisation of the marginal subject's passage into the centre. This experience of marginality was conditioned by the inessential nature of their movements: as operatic performers, the Eoan singers did not cross the tracks in order to 'earn their keep'; instead, their movements were the product of a degree of creative agency not accorded the labourer who has to uphold the smooth functioning of the centre in order to ensure her own survival. Whereas hooks's marginal subject could merely look

[643] Programme, 1956 Arts Festival, 29:200, original capitalisation. See Chapter 4.

upon the intimate workings of the centre ('We looked both from the outside in and from the inside out'[644]) without ever participating in more than a service capacity, the Eoan Group enjoyed the illusion that its members shared in the spoils of centrality.[645] They could inhabit the centre as artists, rather than labourers.[646]

Like that of hooks, however, the Eoan singers' passage into the centre was always temporary. At the end of each performance, they would have to return to where they came from.[647] The rules and restrictions that determined their movements ensured that their escape from a position of marginality was never complete: the imminence of return conditioned every imagined break with the periphery. Their existence was, in other words, fundamentally shaped by their locatedness. It is this inescapable mindfulness of location—of the physical coordinates that steer the journey from, to, and between centre and periphery—that robs the marginal subject of the luxury of rejecting place in favour of space.

Space and the Problem of Place

The preceding chapters considered the work of scholars who come to terms with social and cultural encounters by invoking space as an abstract category that lends itself to non-binary

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[644] hooks, 'marginality', 341.

[645] Judith Butler calls such an ambivalent mode of centrality 'the performative contradiction': '[O]ne who is excluded from the universal, and yet belongs to it nevertheless, speaks from a split situation of being at once authorized and deauthorized […]. The failure of the norm is exposed by the performative contradiction enacted by one who speaks in its name even as the name is not yet said to designate the one who nevertheless insinuates his or her way into the name enough to speak "in" it all the same' (Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, New York and London: Routledge, 1997, 91). For more on the performative contradiction, see Chapter 3.

[646] Indeed, as Peter Voges remembered in Chapter 3, the labour distribution in white theatres occasionally effected an inversion of traditional roles: 'Strange situation coming in, all the workers, like the doorman and the costume people are all whites. The stage hands and the stage manager is [sic] white.' (Voges, cited in *Eoan: Our Story*, Johannesburg: Fourthwall Books, 2013, 35.) Chapter 3 investigates how this transgression of the 'normal' distribution of apartheid labour and patronage contributed to the Eoan Group's enactment of an imaginary inhabitation of whiteness. From a Marxist perspective, of course, artistic activity also amounts to labour. My use of the term here, however, refers specifically to apartheid South Africa's racialised system of reservation and distribution of semi- and unschooled labour (see Chapter 1). I conceive of labour in this context as an activity in which the subject engages to ensure her economic survival, in other words, for which she gets paid.

[647] See Voges's striking description of the movement to and from white theatres cited in Chapter 3.

configurations.[648] These theorisations, as I have shown, have accounted for displacement—both of subject and of discourse—by conceiving of modes of being not determined by the materiality of physical location. As Peter Stallybrass and Allon White acknowledge, however, 'discursive space is never completely independent of social place'.[649] Both the upholding and the transgression of cultural identity, discourse, and exchange, are determined by their locatedness: the significance of each category or its transgression is conditioned, literally, by where it takes place. This is especially true for the marginal subject, who must remain alert, constantly, of where she is, of where she is allowed or supposed to be, and of the distance between these sites. The marginal subject's identity, we saw above, is inextricably bound up with place.[650] From this perspective then, displacement, supposedly a transgression of the geographical coordinates that determine sociality, remains incapable of relinquishing place altogether. Displaced subjects—literally, people-out-of-place—remain beholden to the sites from which they retreat or are excluded and towards which they advance.

The fundamentally *placed* nature of the marginal subject is especially relevant for considerations of the political agency ascribed to voice. As we concluded in Chapter 2, vocal power, or its lack, is determined by the physical territory within which the voice sounds. The marginal subject sounding within the centre may be heard, but the audibility of her emissions does not necessarily or automatically translate to political agency; a phenomenon that Amanda Weidman refers to as 'voicing'.[651] Conversely, the same vocalisation may carry great agentive weight when sounded at the margin. As Judith Butler observes, 'the utterance does not have the

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648 See, for instance, Steven Connor's arguments about 'vocalic space' and Adriana Cavarero's invocation of the 'absolute local' in Chapter 2, and Homi Bhabha's theorisation of the 'third space' in Chapter 4.

649 Peter Stallybrass and Allon B. White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986, 80.

650 'Place […] allows for a conceptualizing of identity as something that is situated and that marks a location of political agency, but that is at the same time never completely stable or identical to itself: identity has a place, but this place is always under contestation, never guaranteed. Places change and so do the identities associated with them' (Esther Peeren and Silke Horstkotte, 'Introduction: The Shock of the Other', in *The Shock of the Other: Situating Alterities*, eds. Esther Peeren and Silke Horstkotte, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007, 9-22, 11).

651 Amanda Weidman, 'Anthropology and Voice', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43, 2014, 37-51, 43. See Chapter 2.

same meaning everywhere'.[652] Place affects vocal agency. This conclusion contrasts with Adriana Cavarero's argument that vocal emission effects 'deterritorialisation'—a de-linking from place, which she describes as 'an elaboration of the concept of a local without a territory'.[653] For Cavarero, voice exists in space, rather than place; by compelling interpersonal exchange, it brings into being an abstract '*polis*' that moves with the speaking subject, thereby freeing the voice from the physical coordinates within which it sounds. This, as we saw in the conclusion to Chapter 2, is a naïve and even utopian view, which fails to take into account the unequal geographies within which voices speak (or are silenced).

A similar critique may be levelled at Homi Bhabha's account of the 'third space of enunciation'.[654] Bhabha's third space, introduced at the end of Chapter 4, serves to theorise the hybrid moments that come into being as a result of socio-cultural encounters between individuals and collectives at opposite ends of the oppressor/oppressed dichotomy. These interactions, Bhabha argues, disrupt stable identities and ideologies, thereby producing moments of flux, in which familiar configurations of social and cultural space are disrupted. The third space hence suggests a temporally, rather than geographically, located site of defamiliarisation and possibility. It exists at the borders of and in the gaps between existing binary identity formations. While the third space, thus described, appears to be a wholly abstract concept, Bhabha cloaks his theorisation in physical metaphors: he speaks of in-betweens, interstices, and borders, all of which function within an understanding of culture as 'located'.[655] Indeed, 'the location of culture', Bhabha's metaphors suggest, is not merely definable in the abstract; it can also be materially triangulated. The third space hence appears to refer to the mobile force that shifts between different localised positions: the movements between established sites of cultural identity, production and interaction. Yet, with the invocation of space, rather than place, Bhabha denies

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652 Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 91.
653 Adriana Cavarero, *For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, tr. Paul A. Kottman, Stanford, CA..: Stanford University Press, 2005, 204. See Chapter 2.
654 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, 2004, 54.
655 Ibid. See Denis-Constant Martin's critique of Bhabha's use of physical metaphors, and my evaluation of the problems with Martin's position, presented in Chapter 4.

the territorial determinism that shapes cultures, and that impacts upon people's power to engage with them. While socio-cultural exchange does indeed produce hybridity, such hybridity remains conditioned by the hierarchies that shape interaction in the first place: each exchange hence entails an engagement with 'where the subject comes from', even as it seems to enact a displacement of such origins. In this sense, then, 'place'—there where the subject originates, and to which she will return—serves to politicise Bhabha's utopian account of hybridity and exchange as equal and dis-located. Bhabha's choice to name his enunciative site the 'third space' suggests that he is not unaware of the impossibility of transcending originary (first and second) identities altogether; yet, his term also suggests a detachment of the hybrid moment from the geo-politics within which it plays out. The third space seems to exist somewhere outside of the binaries that determine political life—unmoored from and heedless of the politics of place.

Space, in this critique of Bhabha, should not be seen as oppositional to place. If anything, Bhabha's third space theory, when disassembled into its constituent parts, shows the interdependence of these two categories: place, as a located ontological state, succumbs to a destabilising movement that invokes space. Space, in other words, suggests an expansion of or victory over the boundaries of place. But this victory is illusory, for every space remains conditioned by the individual power structures that inscribe and are inscribed by physical geographies. Transcendence, as an ideal, looks both from and towards place: the moving body cannot escape the irresistible draw of gravity; the foot cannot, for more than a moment, escape the ground. 'Where are you?', we ask. 'I am here,' the subject says; I am not-there; I am temporally and physically located. I am placed. But 'here' may also move: many places may be 'here'. In other words, 'here' is simultaneously stable and variable, both place and space. It is not only an experience, a product of habitation; it is also a physical set of coordinates and contours that determine the nature of 'here-ness'. 'Here' as phenomenological category is thus a product of being located: it is a product of being in one place, rather than another. In this interaction between space and place, it is important to acknowledge the primacy of place over space. Of course, each place is also inscribed with meaning through inhabitation—the spatial politics of

movement do have an effect on locatedness as a social phenomenon, and produce multiple ways of forging meaning from the same place—but the idea that 'place' comes into being as a result of inhabitation ('this place exists because I am here'), where inhabitation summons spatialised concepts of socialisation, history, consciousness, and movement, is itself an extension of a colonial fantasy whereby countries, or places, came into existence as they were discovered by the agents of empire. Place, 'conceived as multiple, shifting, and invariably relational',[656] hence exists as a primary determinant for the dynamics of both conquest and exchange. Bhabha's articulation of the third space will therefore only function as a feasible critical tool for the assessment of politicised hybridity once it also takes account of the specificities of physical location.

Despite its problems, the third space metaphor could, however, be stretched to refer to the different ways in which socio-cultural engagement are perceived to play out within politically fraught milieus. Very simply, the first and second spaces implied by the existence of a third space could refer to the binary categories of complicity and transgression, while the third space would refer to a mix of the two. In other words, the ambiguous activities of the Eoan Group—simultaneously complicit *and* transgressive—would be classified as third space acts. Such an unsophisticated model does little to enrich our understanding of these subject positions, but it does draw attention to the fundamental dualism upon which Bhabha's third space theory is based: the third space can only exist if it follows upon a 'first' and a 'second' space, the primacy of which persists undisputedly. It therefore remains incapable of dismantling the crude binarisms that underpin our understandings of politics, identity, and culture, and lapses instead into yet another dialectical model of socio-political agency.

Binaries

[656] Peeren and Horstkotte, 'The Shock', 11.

To a large extent, the work in this thesis has been informed by a number of binary constructions that continue to determine the political lives of the past and how we think through them today. At the core of this set of polarities is the opposition, mentioned above, between complicity and resistance. As shown already in the Introduction, and reiterated especially in Chapters 2 and 4, this Manichean dogma shapes fundamentally the ways in which apartheid memory and its impact on contemporary society are negotiated. However, beyond the central critical concern of the complicity/resistance binary, to which I shall return, numerous other dualisms suffuse, often in bewildering ways, the preceding chapters' engagement with the Eoan Group and their activities. These include the racialised conceptions of black and white (Chapter 1), inside and outside and their concomitant categories of margin and centre (Chapters 1, 3 and 4), voice and silence (Chapter 2), real and imaginary (Chapter 3), quotidian and remarkable (Chapter 3), agency and paralysis (Chapter 4), and European and non-European (Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4). In each instance, an analysis of the Eoan Group's operatic activities—from material, sonic, and ideological points of view—showed how these classifications collapse when confronted with the ambivalence of the physical and cultural modes of racially determined dwelling into which the group was forced by its circumstances. Unable to account fully for the Eoan members' simultaneous inhabitation of each of the oppositions outlined above, these binaries exposed their own inadequacy in coming to terms with ways of being that both exceed and fall short of their formal parameters. Understanding, as this thesis does, the Eoan Group and its activities as occupying a multiple state of being that could be described as 'both *and* neither' (both black *and* white, and yet neither; both marginal *and* central, and neither; both envoiced *and* silent, and neither, and so on), reveals the need for a critical apparatus free from these restrictive dichotomies.

Ashraf Jamal sounds a call for precisely such an apparatus in *Predicaments of Culture in South Africa*, when he argues for a complete renunciation of the binaries that determine existing models for theorising political and social histories.[657] Describing the aim of his book as 'none other than

[657] Ashraf Jamal, *Predicaments of Culture in South Africa*, Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2005.

the decolonisation of the mind and the liberation of the social and cultural imagination',[658] Jamal draws extensively upon the work of such diverse thinkers as Bhabha, Theodor Adorno, Albie Sachs, J.M. Coetzee, and Njabulo S. Ndebele, to propose a 'post-dialectical moment in cultural expression'.[659] For Jamal, the continued political and social legacy of apartheid is its coercion of people into taking a collusive or resistant position—they were never allowed 'just to be'. Instead, every moment of being was forced into a political act. This is the result of the colonial system.[660] Thinking in terms of complicity or resistance, Jamal argues, is therefore to reinscribe the legacy of colonialism:

> neither colonialism, nor what is *loosely called* apartheid, are objects. These systems of oppression are embattled processes, ceaseless actions, which are sustainable to the precise degree to which they continue to interpellate, psychically subject, and reduce to victimhood, all those within its orbit of influence. Any critique defined by and founded within the system of colonialism and its surrogate, apartheid, is, by this means, over-determined by allegiance and/or refutation.[661]

Recognising the procedural nature of apartheid (and its parent, colonialism), Jamal argues that an adherence to the terms in which this system was articulated entails its preservation. The critical vocabulary scholars use to manage an engagement with both history and the present serves only to reinscribe apartheid as a process by rendering it a sustainable rubric for action and appraisal, since the neat dualism of complicity and resistance is itself a product of the oppressive regime. By organising their ethics, actions, and histories according to these categories, decolonial and anti-apartheid thinkers therefore remain beholden to the very system they seek to dismantle. From this, a question arises: 'how to bypass, overwhelm, and ignore oppression, and, in so doing, create an other space for thought and creativity'.[662] In other words, Jamal asks how we are to move

[658] Ibid., xii.
[659] Ibid., 3.
[660] 'In repressing the heterogeneous complexity of life, colonialism instituted a culture of guilt and shame, fear and denial, anger and suspicion. Today these pathological traits continue to mark and mar all attempts to create a celebratory cultural and social imaginary' (ibid., 37).
[661] Ibid., 40.
[662] Ibid., xiii.

beyond the binaries that both perpetuate and are perpetuated by coloniality and its sway over socio-political and cultural life.

Turning to Bhabha's third space, Jamal identifies a 'strain of thinking and being that is informed by an eschewal of the pronominal and by the reflexive and intuitive embrace of the agency of the irrational, a-significatory, a-categorical, or magical',[663] one which, in Bhabha's words, allows us to 'elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves'.[664] Yet, as both Chapter 4 and this conclusion have shown, Bhabha's third space creates no more than the illusion of escape from dialectical models of inside and outside, centre and periphery, and complicity and resistance. Instead, it accepts these boundary positions as the parameters between which to locate fluid actuality—what Jamal calls a 'continuum'.[665] Indeed, Jamal's reference above to 'agency', and Bhabha's juxtaposition of 'others' and 'ourselves', reveal the tacit inscription of binary thinking that underpins both their understandings of the third space.

Far more useful for the development of a critical model free from colonial dualisms is Jamal's invocation of Ndebele's 'politics of the ordinary'. Jamal identifies in Ndbele's work an attempt to articulate a productive alternative to 'the closed epistemological structures of South African oppression'.[666] Like Jamal, Ndebele recognises that 'the challenge [of the South African revolution] is to free the entire social imagination of the oppressed from the laws of perception that have characterised apartheid society'.[667] For Ndebele, however, a de-linking from colonial binaries does not reside in the spectacular ambiguity of the hybrid, but rather in the apparent simplicity of the everyday.

[663] Ibid., 39.
[664] Bhabha, *Location*, 39.
[665] Jamal, *Predicaments*, 39.
[666] Ndebele, cited in Jamal, *Predicaments*, 34.
[667] Ibid. Elsewhere, Ndebele writes that 'the problem is to be located in the nature of South African oppression and how its unabating pervasiveness has induced, almost universally in the country, a distinctive manner of thinking about the socio-political realities, an epistemology in which reality is conceived purely in terms of a total polarity of absolutes' (Ndebele, 'Rediscovery', 60). In response to this condition, he asks, 'How do we free ourselves from notions of culture that are tied to the ethos of oppression?' (Ndebele, 'Towards Progressive Cultural Planning', in *Rediscovery*, ed. Njabulo S. Ndebele, 117-28, 121).

The Politics of the Ordinary

In 'The Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Some New Writings in South Africa', Ndebele states that 'the most outstanding feature of South African oppression is its brazen, exhibitionist openness'.[668] He argues that both domination and resistance in the apartheid sphere have taken on a spectacular character that highlights violence, misery, exploitation, and its opposite, namely 'all-encompassing privilege':

> Everything in South Africa has been mind-bogglingly spectacular: the monstrous war machine developed over the years; the random massive pass raids; mass shootings and killings; mass economic exploitation the ultimate symbol of which is the mining industry; the mass removals of people; the spate of draconian laws passed with the spectacle of parliamentary promulgations; the luxurious life-style of whites: servants, all encompassing privilege, swimming pools, and high commodity consumption; the sprawling monotony of architecture in African locations, which are the very picture of poverty and oppression.[669]

Ndebele contrasts such 'obscene exhibitionism'[670] with the everyday experiences of those 'always trying and struggling to maintain a semblance of normal social order'[671] under the oppressive regime; a dichotomy he frames as the opposition between the 'spectacular' and the 'ordinary'.[672] The spectacular, Ndebele argues, comprises no more than the 'surface symbols of the South African reality', symbols of 'either good or evil, or, even more accurately, symbols of evil on the one hand, and symbols of the victims of evil on the other'.[673] As such, the spectacular reduces to anonymity the complexity of human experiences of oppression, rendering instead two homogeneous masses in conflict. Identifying in the spectacular a reductive approach to struggle ('it keeps the larger issues of society in our minds, obliterating the details'[674]), Ndebele observes

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[668] Ndebele, 'Rediscovery', 41.
[669] Ibid.
[670] Ibid.
[671] Ibid., 55.
[672] Ibid., 53. I shall return to the binary thinking that underpins Ndebele's casting of the ordinary as oppositional to the spectacular.
[673] Ndebele, 'Turkish Tales and Some Thoughts on South African Fiction', in *Rediscovery*, ed. Njabulo S. Ndebele, 17-40, 28.
[674] Ndebele, 'Rediscovery', 49.

that it creates a false sense of solidarity by rousing the passions of its audience; 'it calls for emotion rather than conviction'.[675] The struggling subject, in this formulation, is hence no more than a product of the commanding mechanics of tyranny. Such an attitude strips the subject of agency in precisely the same way as the oppressive system, thereby becoming 'grounded in the very negation it seeks to transcend'.[676]

The writing of apartheid history betrays a preoccupation with Ndebele's notion of the spectacular.[677] Historians, engrossed in the monumental spectacles of protest and punishment enacted by apartheid, continue to venerate the principal players of these theatres of abjection, betraying thereby a colonial obsession with heroism that echoes the Western idolisation of the figures of the Romantic genius and the imperial explorer. In contrast, Ndebele pronounces the need for a political discourse grounded in people's daily struggles for survival and humanity under apartheid's oppressive regime. He argues that 'the ordinary day-to-day lives of people should be the direct focus of political interest because they constitute the *very content* of the struggle, for the struggle involves people not abstractions'.[678] The 'new society'[679] envisioned by political scholars, critics, and activists, should therefore not be one of ideas; instead, 'that newness [should] be based on a direct concern with the way people actually live'.[680] For Ndebele, in other words, struggle is not about heroic displays of resistance and conflict, but rather about the quest for survival marked by suffering, joy, compromise, and, occasionally, resistance. It encompasses the full spectrum of life under apartheid, thereby acknowledging the politics of

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675 Ibid. The full quotation from which these statements are cited reads as follows: 'The spectacular documents; it indicts implicitly; it is demonstrative, preferring exteriority to interiority; it keeps the larger issues of society in our minds, obliterating the details; it provokes identification through recognition and feeling rather than through observation and analytical thought; it calls for emotion rather than conviction; it establishes a vast sense of presence without offering intimate knowledge; it confirms without necessarily offering a challenge' (ibid.).
676 Ndebele, 'Turkish Tales', 28.
677 See Chapter 2.
678 Ndebele, 'Rediscovery', 57.
679 Ibid.
680 Ibid.

struggle as concerned with both the local and the transnational, both individuals and societies.[681] Graham Pechey understands such an occupation with the ordinary as calling for 'a post-heroic culture of irony […] preoccupied not with the polar conflicts of "the people" versus "the state" but with textures of life which have eluded that epic battle and have grown insouciantly in the cracks of the structures that South Africa's fraught modernity has historically thrown up'.[682] In other words, the ordinary is concerned with people's attempts to forge meaningful lives under a system that denied their humanity.[683] It is a rhetorical turn, a trope, a sense of humour, and also the most basic level of human care and empathy: a claiming of the values that have been denied by apartheid.

Daniel Magaziner, in *The Art of Life in South Africa*, engages with exactly these textures of life, growing in the cracks of apartheid structures.[684] As noted in the Introduction, Magaziner's monograph signals a first historiographic attempt to come to terms with South African lives that fall outside the narrative troughs of solidarity and compromise, but which remain nonetheless circumscribed by the political moment in which they played out. Writing about the Ndaleni Art School, a state-administered teacher training college that prepared black educators to teach the Bantu Education art syllabus, Magaziner rejects the 'zone of the overtly and explicitly political'[685] imposed upon narrative lives by the apartheid regime and its remainders. Instead, he asks whether it is possible to conceive of modes of existence that renounce a rubric of political authoritarianism and opt instead for creative and meaningful alternatives:

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[681] Jamal, *Predicaments*, 86: 'The ordinary […] resists being co-opted by the counter hegemonies of empire *and* nationalism. […] [T]he ordinary and the everyday is a localised and transnational cultural (and non-cultural) concern.'
[682] Graham Pechey, 'The Post-Apartheid Sublime: Rediscovering the Extraordinary', in *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid, and Democracy, 1970-1995*, eds. Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 57-74, 57.
[683] '[O]ur literature ought to seek to move away from […] the obvious existence of oppression. It exists. The task is to explore how and why people can survive under such harsh condition. The mechanisms of survival and resistance that the people have devised are many and far from simple. The task is to understand them.' (Ndebele, 'Appendix: NOMA Award Acceptance Speech', in *Rediscovery*, ed. Njabulo S. Ndebele, 159-61, 160).
[684] Daniel Magaziner, *The Art of Life in South Africa*, Athens, OH.: Ohio University Press, 2016.
[685] Ibid., 21.

> [S]cholars who consider the later twentieth century have too commonly relegated satisfaction, happiness, and intimacy to the zone of the overtly and explicitly political, as if the only kind of love possible was revolutionary love, the only sort of friendship that of comrades in the struggle, and the only betrayals were those of confederate by confederate. But what of different sorts of confederacies, fashioned not in the racial enclave but by transgressing the boundaries between race and location? What of community born not in the choice of whether to conform, collaborate, or rebel but instead in the choice to subject oneself to the regime of the wholly different authority—in this case, art?[686]

Satisfaction, happiness, and intimacy—the stuff of Ndebele's ordinary—should not instinctively be consigned to the political. To do so serves merely to reinscribe a system that sought to strip its subjects of that which made them human.[687] Instead, Magaziner argues, we should look for 'different sorts of confederacies', those that inhabit the world in ways that transgress or deny the rigid regulation of physical, social, and cultural geographies. For the Ndaleni students, such a confederacy was fashioned through government-promoted art education. For the Eoan Group, it happened through state-sponsored opera. In both cases, however, the unconventional pattern of occupation enacted by artistic activity remained conditioned by a set of rules: Magaziner refers to 'the regime of the wholly different authority—in this case, art'; an observation that summons strikingly Chapters 2 and 4's engagement with the regimes of vocal and behavioural discipline to which the Eoan singers were subjected. The creative subjects of the Eoan Group and the Ndaleni Art School, while nominally free from the political strictures of their time, were not anarchists. They did submit to rules, however these were not the rules of conventional political engagement. Far from shirking all constraints and refusing the systemic nature of social and

[686] Ibid.

[687] Magaziner's comment on the politicisation of human emotion is not a novel observation. Already in 1998, André Brink similarly described the silencing of a-political modes of human existence in writings on apartheid: '[T]he very urgencies of a struggle against apartheid encouraged the imposition of other silences […] and produced a sense of priorities which made it very difficult for writers […] to write about certain very ordinary human situations (like a love relationship without direct political connotations) without inviting accusations of fiddling while Rome burns, of suppressing more 'urgent' issues, of avoiding 'reality', or of self-indulgence' (Brink, 'Interrogating Silence: New Possibilities Faced by South African Literature', in *Writing South Africa*, eds. Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly, 14-28, 15). Despite Brink's celebration in 'Interrogating Silence' of a new awareness of the necessity to write beyond these binaries, we still find in 2017 that engagements with such 'human histories' remain few and far between. Significantly, Ashraf Jamal identifies the most important work to narrate such a history as J.M. Coetzee's *The Life and Times of Michael K*, a novel published already in 1983 (Jamal, *Predicaments*, 8).

cultural community, they instead sought to forge meaning from the control exercised over subaltern bodies and lives. As Magaziner observes, 'by subjecting themselves more completely to coercive ideological regimes—both apartheid and art education—some South Africans were able to transcend what we know of their history to find beauty, solace, and community within the ugliness of their times'.[688] Theirs was a different take on freedom.

The idea that a more thorough subjection of the self to the oppressive regime could hold significant benefits is succinctly summarised by Alain Badiou in his treatment of the 'reactive subject'.[689] In a detailed discussion of the Roman slave revolt led by Spartacus in 73 BC (also known as the Third Servile War), Badiou seeks to come to terms with the ontological position of those slaves who opted not to align themselves with the Spartacan army, and chose instead to remain loyal to their masters. Knowing that an alternative to enslavement, namely freedom, was possible, they nonetheless distanced themselves from the struggle that could realise it. J.P.E. Harper-Scott observes that for Badiou such dissociation from mutiny functioned as an act of self-preservation: '[A] conservative response to the revolt under Spartacus is to extinguish the present with the double justification that, first, such rebellion leads to a bad end (the Appian Way lined with crucified slave corpses), and, second, that the Romans will surely allow some small improvement in conditions anyway, as a beneficent response to the conservative's measured behaviour'.[690] The conservative slave knows that participation in the Spartacan revolt would lead to certain death. He also knows that he would be rewarded by his master for nonparticipation. As such, his abstention from struggle is not a function of passivity, but instead a rejoinder against the dangerous process of imagining an alternative present. Hence, Badiou casts him as the 'reactive subject'. While the reactive subject negates the possibility of freedom (what Badiou calls

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[688] Magaziner, *Art of Life*, 20.
[689] Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, tr. Alberto Toscano, London: Continuum, 2009, esp. 54-8. My thanks to Emily X.X. Tan for drawing my attention to Badiou's formulation of the 'reactive subject', and to J.P.E. Harper-Scott's musicological application of these terms.
[690] J.P.E. Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 164.

the 'Evental trace'[691]), he 'nevertheless still *produces* something, "a measured present, a negative present, a present "a little less worse" than the past, if only because it resisted the catastrophic temptation which the reactive subject declares is contained in the event"'.[692] This present—not quite freedom from slavery, but certainly better than both death and what slavery looked like before—is an extinguished present,[693] a present that simultaneously denies *and* enacts an alternative to the former state of enslavement. It is a present fashioned from compromise.

While the Eoan members and the Ndaleni students did not necessarily explicitly renounce struggle, their compromised activities very closely resembled the extinguished present enacted by Badiou's reactive subjects. Choosing to submit to the structures proscribed by apartheid law, they generated from 'the ugliness of their times'[694] a meaningful present—'a present "a little less worse" than the past'. The extinguished present, here, substitutes the spectacles of protest, punishment, and death for the quotidian victories of being allowed, metaphorically, to eat from the master's table: of being given the tools to create something beautiful; of being permitted to live creatively. The extinguished present, in other words, is the present of Ndebele's ordinary.

Badiou's formulation of the reactive subject and the extinguished present however still accepts the binary organisation of resistance and compromise. Whether or not the reactive subject's position is productive, it remains inescapably cast as collusive; likewise, the extinguished present, despite its undeniable value for the individual, cannot escape its antithesis to the Evental trace. Again, human possibility is reduced to a choice between reaction or cooperation,[695] thereby gesturing back towards exactly that colonial over-determination of subaltern subjecthood

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691 Badiou, *Logics*, 50.
692 Badiou, cited in Harper-Scott, *Quilting Points*, 164, original emphasis.
693 Badiou, *Logics*, 55.
694 Magaziner, *Art of Life*, 20.
695 Badiou does, however, posit a third mode of subjecthood, namely the 'obscure subject'. This is the subject who actively resists—works against—the realisation of both the faithful subject's Evental trace and the reactive subject's extinguished present. The obscure subject, instead, desires a return to the old; to a past he deems to be universal and unitary. See Badiou, *Logics*, 60-62. I neglect this third option here because it functions as the opposite of possibility—its very essence is the *impossibility* of an alternative present.

Ndebele seeks to avoid. Perhaps this is an inevitable condition of Western philosophy, especially in its attempts to come to terms with the histories of its own victims. Alternatively, it may be a function of the fact that even such a decolonial formulation as 'the ordinary' is no more than a binary condition: it exists as one side of the dichotomy between the spectacular and the everyday.

Ndebele seems strangely oblivious of the fact that his rejection of the complicity/resistance dualism simply substitutes one set of opposites for another. In this new binary, both oppression and resistance ('evil' and 'the victims of evil', in Ndebele's words[696]) map onto the spectacular, while 'the ordinary' represents what Ashraf Jamal calls 'a civil society'.[697] The opposition, here, is hence between tyranny and democracy, between domination and egalitarianism. Ndebele's formulation of the spectacular/quotidian model thus serves merely to reorient the divisive paradigm through which political citizenship is understood—it is a recalibration of the post-colonial compass, rather than its annulment.

The problem of the binary distinction between quotidian and spectacular lies, perhaps, in the homogeneity Ndebele ascribes to each of these terms. Protest, for Ndebele, always represented 'obscene exhibitionism', as did the excesses of white privilege. Yet, the oppressive regime also served to normalise these spectacles of wealth and abjection: in apartheid South Africa, the spectacular was itself a version of the ordinary—exhibitions of violence and entitlement had become quotidian. In turn, the everyday routines of work, leisure, satisfaction, and survival, which for Ndebele invariably signified the ordinary, found themselves under threat. As a result, any 'maint[enance] of the semblance of a normal order' had become a feat of extraordinary resourcefulness and resilience. In essence, then, the systematic spread of apartheid served to interpolate the commonplace and the remarkable—each agentive moment became both, and by extension, neither. Graham Pechey captures this complex entanglement when he argues that 'it is at the heart of the ordinary that the extraordinary is to be found'.[698] In other

[696] Ndebele, 'Turkish Tales', 28.
[697] 'The valorisation of the ordinary supposes a post-imperial and post-national logic, a logic which, against these competing and collusive powers, calls for a civil society' (Jamal, *Predicaments*, 86).
[698] Pechey, 'Post-Apartheid Sublime'.

words, the extraordinary and the ordinary are not binary opposites, but are contained within each other: attempts to forge meaningful lives under terrible conditions may themselves be constructed as heroic and spectacular; conversely, the normalisation of protest and struggle as ontological states under apartheid imbued these arresting displays with mundaneness. The extraordinary therefore does not sublate the ordinary; instead, it captures—fleetingly and insufficiently—the indissoluble interpenetration of apartheid South Africa's spectacles with notions of the everyday. As such, it complicates Ndebele's conception of the ordinary, without suggesting a methodological solution to the perplexing ambiguity of this epistemological category.

Magaziner invokes precisely such an amalgamation of the ordinary and the extraordinary when he describes the magnificent art works created by Ndaleni students out of waste materials, scrap paper, 'broken pottery, rags, cigarette boxes and toilet rolls',[699] and even sheep droppings.[700] 'At first glance you think that only the best oils, poster paints and watercolours have been used to create the pictures,' a journalist visiting the Ndaleni School in 1968 wrote, 'but when you draw nearer, you see that they are composed of shoe-polish, stones, shavings, matches and grass seeds stuck to the paper with gum'.[701] Limited by their circumstances, the Ndaleni students transformed the material trappings of their everyday lives into works of art, thereby revealing that the quotidian carries within it the potential to become astonishing. As argued in Chapter 3, the Eoan Group's productions enacted a similar blurring of the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary: Georgian tables 'made of good ordinary wood which can be stained and varnished to look like old furniture';[702] chain mail styled from starched hessian;[703] a 'plastic roast chicken or

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[699] Magaziner, *Art of Life*, 166.
[700] 'Esther Nopece, from Ngcobo in the Transkei […] needed green, so she used what was at hand. "The sheep dung being wet, I ground it to make perfectly a fine paste. To this paste I added egg and started to paint … it was just the Green I wanted." […] Unlike wood and paint, sheep dung was abundant in many areas—where there were sheep and initiative, there could be green. Ndaleni's students disciplined themselves to speak in the voice of the possible: whether in potsherds, used railway sleepers, cannibalized sculptures, or feces' (ibid., 167).
[701] Margaret Leefe, quoted in ibid., 166.
[702] '1962 Arts Festival Furniture to be Made RE: Opera Season', 82:693.
[703] Guard's Costume, *Il Trovatore*, 97 (no folder).

duck'.[704] Under the stage lights, each of these straddled the boundary between banal and remarkable. Perhaps the most striking enactment of this interaction between the ordinary and the extraordinary can be found in Gerald Samaai's account of tenor James Momberg's dual role as both janitor at Cape Town City Hall and principal singer of the Eoan Group:

> He says: 'I've got a chap there, by the name of…,' and he gives the person's name, and he knows who he was referring to. 'In the day he polishes the floors of the City Hall. Night time he sings the leading role.' And that was the truth, because I knew Jimmy [Momberg] personally. During the day he works for the city council, and tonight he sings the lead role. And we always used to joke among ourselves and say to him: 'Jimmy, you really polish up that front part nicely, not so, because you're standing there tonight!'[705]

James Momberg, simultaneously subaltern and star, got to know his place on the Eoan stage as both a cleaner and a singer, both an ordinary worker and an operatic figure. Neither of these identities mapped neatly onto either the spectacular or the everyday, for they were contained within and conditioned by each other: without the one, the other would have lost much of its meaning.

The relationship between ordinary and extraordinary in operatic materiality and performance is not unique to South Africa. Every stage sees the translation of productions from mundane lists to magical sets; the transformation of singers from regular labourers to heroic protagonists. Likewise, every piece of art was once no more than a set of materials. What makes the Eoan Group's operas and the Ndaleni students' works special, therefore, is not their simultaneous embodiment of these states; instead, it is the specific time and place in which they did it. As Magaziner observes, 'apartheid was no abstraction';[706] indeed, it was a set of physical and social structures that directly determined where and how people could create. Art, in this

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704 'Eoan Group: Property List: Opera: La Boheme [sic]', 1965, 89:729.
705 [*Hy sê:* 'I've got a chap there, by the name of…,' *en hy noem die persoon se naam, en hy weet toe na wie hy verwys.* 'In the day he polishes the floors of the City Hall. Night time he sings the leading role.' *En dit was die waarheid, want ek het vir Jimmy [Momberg] persoonlik geken. In die dag werk hy vir die City Council, en vanaand sing hy die hoofrol. En ons het altyd gespot onder ons en sê: 'Jimmy, daardie voorste gedeelte polish jy beter, nè, want jy staan mos daar vanaand!'*] Gerald Samaai, cited in *Eoan: Our Story*, 42, translation supplied.
706 Magaziner, *Art of Life*, 206.

setting, may hence be understood as 'apartheid in one of its manifest operations […] [a] creative practice conditioned by what was possible then and there'.[707]

For the Eoan Group, apartheid was empty halls, segregated seating plans, performance permits, the destruction of District Six, and the fear of attending rehearsals at the Joseph Stone theatre due to the threat of gang violence. These circumstances cannot be detached from Eoan's operas, yet they were also not the decisive features of the group's productions. Instead, the spectacles of rejection, segregation, destruction, and fear yielded to a reality where, for once, they were but a side-show. They surrendered to the politics of the (extra)ordinary. The Eoan Group, turning away from fixations upon suffering and performances of power, sought for themselves an aesthetic world in which these realities temporarily faded away. Thus, they could imagine a sphere neither constructed by, nor productive of colonial categories of spectacular conquest, abject domination, feeble collusion, or heroic resistance. The group's politics of the ordinary produced an alternate reality that played out in counterpoint to the reality with which it seemed to be complicit. They showed that quotidian lives, simultaneously ordinary and extraordinary, have the potential to enact a mode of being the politicisation of which is produced in its very refusal to be co-opted into the strictures of conventional political thought. This is not a disavowal of political responsibility; instead, it is a renunciation of the terms in which such agency is allowed to be articulated.

Agents and their Intentions

At various conference papers I delivered on the ambiguous politics of the Eoan Group, colleagues, audience members, and other interested parties asked about the singers' intentions: did they intend to resist the status quo; did they intend to collaborate; did they intend to imagine or enact an alternative to the closed structures of apartheid? My answer, consistently, has been

[707] Ibid., 14.

that they merely wanted to sing. Practically, this is true. Theoretically, however, it may seem like an evasion. Nonetheless, after the previous section's thorough examination of the politics of the ordinary, the pertinence of such a response may be clearer.

The question of intentionality is itself an extension of a binary politics overdetermined by the ethics of collaboration versus defiance. Whether a subject intends to collude or resist becomes a matter of concern only when these options are accepted as the only viable alternatives available to her. When the politics of the ordinary therefore maintains that it is not only possible but also necessary to think beyond such a binary understanding of apartheid life, it hence renders the question of intentionality irrelevant—a false question. The inexorable desire for accountability enacted by resistance culture collapses when resistance itself no longer exists as a necessity. Reaction becomes a fallacy. Instead, the focus shifts to the decisions subjects make within a milieu where their oppression has become naturalised—to the negotiations they initiate to forge meaning from an unbearable reality. Whether such meaning is retrospectively understood to have contributed (or to continue to contribute) to the dismantling of the oppressive regime is irrelevant, since the dismantling of the system is not a feature of the subject's present. Jamal summarises this tension between the present-ness of the subject's 'non-reactive' position and the posterity of the scholar's interpretation in a discussion of Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*: 'K's non-reactive and post-dialectical stance [is] a stance which at no point is defined as self-reflexive or auto-intellective, since it cannot be known to the one who enacts it, but only to the one who exists at the interpretive margins'.[708] For Jamal, neither K's disengagement from apartheid's politics of complicity and resistance, nor the subversion of such binary politics (effected by K's disengagement), should be understood as self-conscious or intentional. A present that exists outside of the status quo can, after all, only assess retrospectively its relationship with that status quo. The co-optation of the ordinary into a colonially produced ideal of transgression can therefore only occur with the help of hindsight. In

[708] Jamal, *Predicaments*, 8.

the present, wanting to sing signals neither an adherence to nor a rejection of the apartheid regime. It is no more than it is: a desire to sing.

The rejection of intentionality should, however, not be allowed to extend into a disavowal of agency. The Eoan members, in their production of experiences that played out beyond the false dichotomy of political engagement, remained agents: within the strictures of their reality, they continued to make decisions and to act upon them. They travelled, returned, hoped, despaired, sang, remained silent, transgressed, and colluded. Theirs was a different agency to that normally ascribed to the politicised subject, for they engaged differently with the time and place of the present. Even while their songs did not grant them political agency in the traditional sense—did not grant them 'voice', as discussed in Chapter 2—they sounded out alternative modes of interaction.

A significant detail with which this dissertation has not engaged is the fact that some Eoan members did actively resist or criticise the group's complicity with the apartheid government. Minutes for the Special General Meeting held on 9 November 1965, at which the decision was passed to reapply for a grant from the Department of Coloured Affairs, notes for instance that 'the proposal was unanimously adopted with the exception of one member, Mr. James Rhoode of Lansdowne Branch, who wished to have his vote against the motion recorded'.[709] Another singer, Cedric Hess, refused to participate in the 1971 Republic Festival,[710] while O.W. Newman objected to the group's participation in Stellenbosch's Third Centenary Festival in 1979. Newman raised his concerns in a letter to the group's Executive Committee:

> As a member of the Eoan group I feel it my duty to inform you that I am not happy with the decision taken earlier this year, to take part in the 3rd Centenary Festival at Stellenbosch. My reasons are as follows: As Stellenbosch citizens, we were one of many

[709] 'Minutes of Special General Meeting, 9 November 1965', 37:300.
[710] Each Eoan member had to sign a contract committing themselves to participation in the Republic Festival. The contract read: 'I, the undersigned … hereby promise and undertake to: 1. Sing and perform the role assigned to me in the operas to be presented by the Eoan Group for the 1971 Republic Festival. 2. Attend regularly and punctually all rehearsals for coaching and training me for the role I have accepted to sing and perform, and 3. Continue with my Voice Production classes as arranged for me.' The contract bearing Hess's name is unsigned, with a note reading 'Not prepared to take part in Festival' appended at the bottom ('Opera Season: 1971 Republic Festival, "I, the undersigned Cedric Hess"', 28:195).

> families who had to vacate our homes due to the law of separate development and were thus not regarded as full citizens of our hometown. Secondly, I do not see how I as an individual could sincerely participate in such an event, and I think it applies to many, if not all our members.[711]

At least one member, Andrew Mackrill, left the group 'chiefly on matters of principle'.[712] Significantly, Mackrill's departure was the only instance of criticism that prompted any noteworthy reaction: a letter from Joseph Manca to Mackrill claims that Manca's 'one great regret is and has always been that you [Mackrill] decided to dissociate yourself from active participation in the Group's activities'.[713] Beyond acknowledging that Mackrill 'may have reasons'[714] for this decision, however, Manca does not interrogate the matter further. Instances of individual resistance to the group's political compromises were, therefore, met with indifference, a fact that may have contributed to the paucity of such protestations.

In my work, I have opted not to engage with these isolated voices of dissent, choosing instead to treat the group as a self-styled non-political unit.[715] This decision to collapse individuals into an undifferentiated collective closely resembles, I confess, apartheid's own reduction of people to homogeneous hordes, stripped of individual will and agency. Yet, the alternative—a continued fragmentation of apartheid histories until each discrete subject tells a history of her own—would be untenable in a project seeking to come to terms with the activities of a collective. My hope remains that future work on apartheid and its subjects will continue to evolve more elegant and responsible critical devices with which to navigate the tensions between the individual and the body politic.

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[711] Correspondence, O.W. Newman to the Executive Committee, 12 June 1979, 44:346.

[712] Correspondence, Andrew Mackrill to Joseph Manca, 13 July 1955, 1:3. Mackrill specifically names the association of the Eoan Group with the Department of Coloured Affairs as a significant factor in his decision to distance himself from the group: 'People are suspicious of the ties existing between this Department and Eoan. People are also beginning to become increasingly worried … Nobody trusts the Coloured Affairs Department of the Nationalist Government. Nobody!! That Department is a wolf in sheep's clothing' (ibid, original emphasis).

[713] Correspondence, Manca to Mackrill, 12 July 1955, 29:201.

[714] Ibid.

[715] 'Eoan Group Constitution as Amended on 8th December 1970, and Further Amended on 23rd March 1976', 22:157.

Future Prospects

Apart from Eoan members' opposition to certain decisions, several additional issues relating to the group warrant further interrogation. Of these, arguably the most important is the gender relations enacted within and around the group. Evidence points to patriarchal and even forcefully misogynistic attitudes held by the majority of its male members,[716] while the distribution of labour within the group was distinctly gendered.[717] This simultaneously echoed *and* contrasted with the public's veneration for Eoan's female stars—a veneration that was punctuated by a focus on these singers' domestic roles as wives and mothers.[718] While critical engagement with the complex interaction between opera and gendered cultures has proliferated in recent years,[719] a study of the unique dynamics of the Eoan Group may help to shift the academy's focus from a preoccupation with works and productions, towards the lived experiences of those who are required to negotiate these fraught structures on a daily basis. This is especially true for amateur

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716 Compare, for instance, a letter from Ailie F. Gillies to Manca, dated 23 December 1960, in which she describes two prominent male members' violent and threatening behaviour towards her (Correspondence, Ailie F. Gillies to Manca, 23 December 1960, 40:321); or 11 male members' petition to have Mrs. Henkel included in the 1960 tour group because of 'her motherly care and sympathetic understanding of the needs of the boys at performances, apart from "making-up" and taking care of their personal belongings in the dressing room' (Correspondence, F. Forgus to Manca, 5 May 1960, Petition About the Inclusion of Mrs. Henkel in Tour Group, 30:208).

717 Women worked as administrative assistants, seamstresses, hostesses, wives, and mothers. The group's constitution stipulates a similarly gendered distribution of welfare activities: 'men's and boys' clubs for the purposes of training or in any other activity, ladies' and girls' clubs for the teaching and practice of sewing and other domestic arts' ('Constitution as Amended 23 March 1976', 22:157).

718 See, for instance, 'Will Lovely Vera Gow's Children Take After Their Mum?', *Star Parade*, undated, 101:772s; 'A Housewife and Mother', Picture Caption, *Mercury* 26 July 1960, 30:208; and 'Beef Éclat', *Star*, 26 August 1960, 101:772s, which shares a favourite recipe of Ruth Goodwin's with the caption 'When Ruth Goodwin, leading soprano in the Eoan Group, is not singing, she is busy housekeeping. She has a three-and-a-half-year-old son and a passion for pot plants. Step is a universal favourite and here is her simple variation of the usual grills and fries'.

719 The list is virtually endless, but some texts that pursue this line of inquiry are Susan McClary, *Georges Bizet, Carmen*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; Carolyn Abbate, 'Opera, or the Envoicing of Women', in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth Solie, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, 225-58; Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality and the Mystery of Desire*, London: Poseidon, 1993; Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia J. Smith (eds.), *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, New York, NY.: Columbia University Press, 1995; Catherine Clément, *Opera, or, the Undoing of Women*, London: Tauris, 1997 [1988]; Mary Ann Smart (ed.), *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000; and Naomi André, *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Early-Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

companies—still a neglected concern in opera scholarship—where singers' dual identities as both envoiced subjects and silent workers impact particularly profoundly on the power dynamics navigated by female members. Significantly, a study of the gender configurations that underpinned the Eoan Group's activities and reception will also form part of a growing body of scholarship seeking to come to terms with the dark underside of South Africa's masculinist political history, in which the struggle for racial equality simultaneously participated in the systematic oppression and exploitation of women.[720]

Another thread that ran throughout both the Eoan Group's history and South Africa's broader socio-political organisation was religion. As seen in Chapter 1, white Afrikaans bureaucrats framed apartheid as a natural state of affairs, ordained by God. Rhetorics of faith—and Christianity in particular—permeated social discourse at all levels, public and private, national and local. In the Eoan Group, religious tropes were equally ubiquitous: members were consistently urged to make the most of their God-given talents;[721] the glorification of God was regularly described as one of the main purposes of the group's activities;[722] Joseph Manca claimed that the group prayed together at the start of every opera season;[723] and whenever the group faced financial or political difficulties, members were beseeched to turn to the Lord and ask for his assistance.[724] An interrogation of the religious dynamics that underpinned the group's affairs, especially considering that many of its members were Muslim, and the interaction of such

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[720] See Shireen Hassim, *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006; Goolam Vahed, 'Women and National Liberation in South Africa: An Oral History Perspective', *South Asian Diaspora* 7(2), 2015, 129-47; and Redi Tlhabi, *Khwezi: The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2017.
[721] See, for instance, Correspondence, Manca to Mackrill, 12 July 1955, 29:201: 'I feel like you, like me, have a duty to the people in that God has blessed us with certain talents which we must give to the people for their enlightenment, education and enjoyment.'
[722] As in 'Minutes of the 32nd Annual General Meeting', 29 September 1966, 1:3: 'May God accept the dedication of all our works both past, present and future to His greater Glory', original capitalisation.
[723] 'We never commence a season unless on the opening night, a quarter of an hour before the curtain rises, prayers are offered asking God to bless our performances' ('Servants, Teachers in Eoan Group Cast', *Daily News*, 12 August 1960, 30:208).
[724] 'Difficult times lie ahead for us and we all must be prepared to weather the oncoming storm. We must once again place our complete faith in the all Merciful God' (Ismail Sydow, 'Chairman's Report, Minutes of the 34th Annual General Meeting', 29 February 1972, 13:93).

spiritual self-stylisation with dominant South African religious discourses, may further serve to complicate the already perplexing relationship between the Eoan Group and the apartheid state.

Beyond these socio-political concerns, the Eoan Group's individual productions warrant further specifically musicological scrutiny. Details of staging, direction, and singing in each of the ten operas in their repertoire should be interrogated both on their own terms, and also in dialogue with broader amateur operatic trends around the globe (and especially in Italy, given the group's self-professed affinity with this nation's operatic culture). The tensions that arise from Eoan's staging of orientalist fantasies—touched upon in Chapter 3—also merit more extensive treatment: not only *Madam Butterfly*, but also *Il Trovatore*, *Carmen*, and *La Traviata* should be considered. To this repertoire can also, then, be added the operas the group intended but never managed to produce, especially *Aïda* and *Porgy and Bess*. While these works did not become part of Eoan's repertoire, the fact that Manca was eager to produce them may reveal much about his own attitude towards the racial configuration of the group. Further works that shed instructive light on the group as a racialised socio-cultural configuration are the musicals they produced alongside their operas, namely *Zip Goes a Million* (1956) *Oklahoma!* (1967), *South Pacific* (1968), and *Carmen Jones* (1970). While these productions are omitted altogether from my thesis, they remain crucial for developing a nuanced understanding of how the group viewed, negotiated, and publically represented its own project of racial acculturation and education.

Since the Eoan singers' first, joyful steps onto the Cape Town City Hall stage, opera has become an increasingly popularised and politicised marker of South African musical identity. For musicians and scholars alike it remains vital to come to terms with the ambivalent history that underpins this proud, newly indigenous musical tradition,[725] a history in which the Eoan Group played a crucial role. Further investigations not only into Eoan's politics, but also into its productions, its members, its reception, and its interactions with other musical organisations of

[725] The notion of opera as indigenous South African musical tradition is developed especially by Neo Muyanga, and is informed by his critical work on the pervasiveness of opera in black townships. See, for instance, Donato Somma and Neo Muyanga, '"The Musical Thread": Neo Muyanga on Opera in South Africa', *African Studies* 75(1), 2016, 74-97.

the time (significantly, the Cape Municipal Orchestra and the Cape Performing Arts Board, CAPAB) will enrich our understanding of how South Africa came to adopt the operatic form as a decolonial cultural product, despite its undeniable links to an oppressive Western heritage. With its rejection of the binary configuration of political agency—itself a colonial inheritance—the Eoan Group signalled a first turn towards a de-linking from colonially overdetermined modes of artistic citizenship. Performing a bewildering drama of compromise that enabled them to flood the barren, white apartheid space with the excess of their coloured operatic presence, the Eoan Group successfully showed how the bargains struck in an everyday quest for cultural and civic legitimacy can function as extraordinary sites of politicisation.

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