

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

Faculty of the Humanities
University of Cape Town
2017

***Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine
Identity***

Lesiba Mabitsela (MBTLES007)

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
award for the degree of Masters in Theatre & Performance

University of Cape Town

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

Abstract

In a continent built on competing patriarchal cultures and traditions, the Eurocentric perspective is dominant. The suit/blazer has become a symbol of morality, power, and class that has centred its position via the violent legacy of colonialism and slavery or as Edward Said defines these legacies, via notions of “cultural imperialism”.

The purpose of this paper is to inquire whether an aesthetic change from this ideological legacy would ultimately lead to a change in African masculine embodiments.

The research identifies and applies multiple references from different applications of embodied resistance: sartorial displays, fashion design, drapery and theories around the gendered body and its relation to clothing for such a purpose – performed here as ‘methods of undress’.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

Introduction	5
Research Methodologies	10
Sartorial Display as a Method	12
The Dandy and his Appropriation of ‘Black’ Stereotypes	13
Sartorial Resistance in the Far East.....	18
Conceptual Frames	20
Undress as a form of Resistance	20
Gender as a Construction.....	27
<i>Black Tie – An Alternative Store Opening</i>	36
<i>VET [ting] MEN</i>	41
Conclusion	46
Appendix	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY	67

Introduction

A lack of clothing among colonized individuals has connoted primitiveness and savagery since at least the seventeenth century. While the sculptures and the statues of ancient Greece that celebrated the heroic, naked male body were, and often continue to be, read as the pinnacle of civilized aesthetic, the unclothed African, Australian, Aboriginal, Pacific Islander signified rather an absence of civilization. This seeming paradox is worth our attention for what it tells us about colonial perspectives. The vexed and ambivalent state of nineteenth-century attitudes to the unclothed body makes the Victorian era particularly interesting for the study of nudity (Levine 2008, 190).

Historian Phillipa Levine espouses this notion in *States of Undress: Nakedness and the Colonial Imagination*, discussing the complex aesthetic politics surrounding the clothed and unclothed body during the nineteenth century. By pulling from multiple discourses within fine art, anthropology and science, Levine maintains that colonial obsessions with the African body and indigenous garb provoked on-going discussions about human difference, evolution, and the nature of civilization, defining each of her inquiries as instances or states of undress (Levine 2008, 191).

Levine states that definitions of what qualify as clothing or the clothed from the unclothed varies from culture to culture and from era to era and that these clashes in values had ramifications for the colonies of the British Empire, influencing both cultures and traditions through missionary interventions (Levine 2008). Fine art often promoted and praised images of the 'European nude' through sculpture and paintings whilst the nude body of the colonial other was represented through scientific photography¹, often in an inhumane manner (Morell 2005, Levine 2008). Levine concludes that the naked body (which forms part of a theory she classifies as a state of undress) became a useful tool against colonial rule, citing Mohandas Gandhi's "wearing nothing but a loincloth amongst colonial diplomats in Western suits" as a moving political display (Levine 2008, 211). My particular interest in looking at the performative aspects of 'undress' as a form of resistance against a

¹ This was done through the use of anthropometric photography which was seen as an aesthetic characterized by a white backdrop and tools used to measure the naked bodies of native Indian and African citizens. This style of photography was calcified within scientific photography to classify racial differences between subjects of the British Empire (Levine 2008, 201-204).

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

Eurocentric form of masculine representation, is best represented in a dialogue between Gandhi's radical display and the tailored men's suit.

This topic has enjoyed a fair amount of attention and a longer history of inquiry as Levine herself illustrates, citing Adeline Masquelier's *Dirt, Undress and Difference: Critical Perspectives on the Body's Surface* – a collection of essays which takes a critical view at body politics, cross-cultural differences and meanings associated with cleanliness, and the unclothed body. In her investigation of this ideologically contested site or surface, Masquelier in turn refers to the work done by art historian Anne Hollander and art critic John Berger, both of whom have written extensively on European obsessions with the body in fine art. Hollander approaches the idea of attire and masculinity more broadly by discussing the development of the modern suit and the aesthetic value of draped figures in Western art, highlighting how drapery of cloth, exposed bodies, and their relations, can be defined in philosophical terms as a state of undress (Hollander 1972, 1975, 1994).

From a local perspective, Cheryl Stobie describes South African poet Makhosazana Xaba's retelling of journalist and author Can Themba's *The Suit*, published in 1963 (2017, 1). The suit, already loaded with violent notions of patriarchy, is further troubled by its solitary presence. The act of undress, portrayed by the presence of an unknown man's misplaced suit, leaves Philemon's adulterous wife Nandi with the burden of shame as she is forced to engage with the figureless suit as a guest in their home, even in the presence of visitors. Her 'punishment' leads to her eventual suicide. Stobie posits that Xaba shifts the ideas of masculinity through two alternative accounts of the story, *Behind the Suit* and *The Suit Continued: The Other Side* (Stobie 2017, 1). Both treatments by Xaba offer queer, alternative subplots to the story, acting as examples of resistance and metaphorical states of undress against a perceived hetero-patriarchy (Stobie 2017, 1).

Australian Trevor Lovett discusses a different form of the suited body and the performance of masculinities, by speaking to the relationship between school uniforms and identity formation in the sphere of 'white, working-class baby-boomer males' in Australia (Lovett 2013, 1). Lovett insists that the indoctrination into certain types of masculinity is probable when a boy is given his new high school blazer

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

marking this instance as a pivotal moment in passing the vetting period (ibid). The young boy wearing a garment which follows the same manufacturing process and stylistic qualities of a tailored military suit assimilates into the social game and becomes aware of its semiotic displays of power (Lovett 2013, 2). Through this example, I recognise that these coded messages, similarly represented by embroidered scrolls and braiding around the collars and cuffs of school blazers, highlight a resemblance to images of a decorated soldier. I also note that clothing is, and can be used as an aspirational tool, can have the potential to aid the performance of masculinities, and can be used for the purpose of gaining access to potentially inaccessible spaces.

The example of passing a vetting period, and the acquisition of a suit or blazer could be explored through the lenses of both queer and performance studies, as behaviours akin to queering the body by the adornment of the body through costume. This suggests a ritualized process of becoming similar to initiation ceremonies where boys become men. I explore the academic fields of performance, dress, and queer studies a little further in this paper.

Lovett cites gender theorists Judith Butler and Raewyn Connell to confirm his understanding of a relationship between school clothing and masculine forms of identity through sports colours and academic achievements (Lovett 2013, 3-6). Whilst this may be the case for young Australians, it is also important to take note of very similar colonial hangover, of the violent, and often hidden, semiotics of patriarchy embedded within the 'positive' image of suited African men. This leads me to the title of my research. Starting with an introduction into the study of gender as construction (as Lovett has done), I briefly touch on studies on masculinities, addressing the problematics of the contested site of my research – the dressed and undressed African male body.

I begin this paper with scholarly research primarily located in masculinity studies, including a phenomenological foundation, or grounding in the relations between the constructions of gender, power and ways of being, drawing on the work of Judith Butler, Pumla Gqola and Michel Foucault. The masculine (and clearly, gendered) enactment of power is one that African feminist and historian Gqola suggests to have

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

been influenced by violence experienced during Colonialism and Apartheid, and continues as legacies of war (Gqola 2015, 41). Gqola argues that these legacies have shaped contemporary African masculinities in the everyday (ibid). What Gqola suggests has been previously addressed by Robert Morrell, editor of *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (2001), Professor Kopano Ratele in *Liberating Masculinities* (2017), and Connell and James Messerschmidt's seminal work, *Hegemonic Masculinities: Rethinking the Concept* (2005), as debunking the myth of a stereotyped male figure and understanding the incoherence of a particular idea of 'man'. What these scholars propose is that notions of masculinity present themselves as historically constituted, multi-layered performances, which abide by variable sets of rules and are governed by variable locations.

In addition, I discuss Edward Said's views on cultural imperialism so as to translate the ironies within the construction of masculine identities through a post-colonial frame. I elaborate on this understanding with a brief case study on how the fashion narrative has been owned by Western powers. Fashion theorist and sociologist Hiroshi Narumi makes an example in this regard of how the Far East is exoticized through Orientalism (Narumi 2000, 311-313). I discovered that there were many similarities to that effect within black culture in the diaspora, in many ways a cross-pollination of influence spanning both the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Monica L. Miller's seminal publication *Slave to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity* (2009), details the history of black dandies and the formation of sartorial resistance, sparked by the Harlem Renaissance and other black liberation movements. Lastly, I draw on the example of Sédar Senghor's use of the performative act of undress, with the image of Senghor undressing his suited figure acting as a metaphor of resistance against colonial entrapments.

In this thesis 'states of undress' have been explored here in two different applications. The first application looked at how colonial scars are reopened in the contradictions of modern forms of black, male, masculine representations, presented in a traditional theatrical sense in my performance titled *'Black Tie – An alternative Store Opening'* (2017). In this performance the suit was deconstructed and displayed as a costume in the theatrical setting of the 'fashion show'. The suit became the catalyst to illuminate the violence behind its perceived image of affluence and power.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

The second application looked into how the use of drapery (serving as both non-functional and functional aesthetic distinctions in the appearance and construction of male and female garments), is also defined as undress. The vocation of constructing particular garments via tailoring is gendered, and mimics Butler's reflections on gender as a construct. The design of a stiff, structured aesthetic is mostly associated with the construction of suits and with a particular type of masculine performance – Eurocentric, heterosexual, power-laden, at times violent, and often militaristic. In this thesis I explore how the performance of black African masculinities could alter if there was an ideological and conceptual shift in how suits are designed, constructed and therefore presented. I have visited examples in the archive of fashion design to derive this question, particularly Bonnie English's *Japanese Fashion Designers: The Work and Influence of Issey Miyake, Yoji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo* (2011) and their influence on Western clothing traditions and silhouettes in the 1980s. In order to understand the complexities and entanglement of the above provocations, I decided to construct alternative suits made with the exact same materials traditionally associated with suits. These alternative garments are however, non-form fitting, heavily draped, and worn in the everyday as acts of sartorial resistance.

Research Methodologies

This is firstly an auto-ethnographic study and secondly, the study seeks to enquire whether the suit is a historically gendered artefact that is at once ideologically and inherently complicit in the performance of violent masculinity based on its design and construction. In addition, the study questions the position of the suit in our contemporary imaginations. If text-based research has for some time been privileged as the only form of method to use in research (Conquergood 2002, 149), then this particular research in theatre and performance studies serves as an alternative method of study. Ways of knowing should not be limited to the mind or the deception of sight, privileging of text, economic wealth, technological advancements and imperial knowledge over embodied experiences, oral histories and local interests (Conquergood 2002, 146; Kershaw and Nicholson 2011, 215). This is affirmed by critical performance ethnographer Dwight Conquergood (taking his lead from Foucault) who argues that 'subjugated knowledge' promotes the notion that multiple spaces where different ways of knowing apply, such as local, regional, vernacular, and native knowledges (Conquergood 2002, 146). These factors are often considered at the bottom of the hierarchy, its rejection and erasure stems from its supposed illegibility (ibid).

From a methodological perspective, Conquergood critiques the dilemma of this removed approach of academic studies, mockingly utilising the image of an "alien ethnographer, who stands above [or] behind the people uninvited, and peers over their shoulders to read their texts, like an overseer or a spy" (Conquergood 2002, 150). This example is, in his opinion the imbalance of power that privileges the intruding anthropologist and his exotic perceptions (Carrier 1992, Conquergood 2002, Narumi 2000). Conquergood suggests that ethnographers should employ an attitude of deep introspection, or as critical performance ethnographer D. Soyini Madison would have it, some deep "hanging out" (Conquergood 2013, 10, citing Madison 2012, 20). This is done by critically examining one's own experience within the world in which the study is located.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

I have used three approaches to build my argument. Firstly, I adopt text-based research on military attire and masculine performance as associated with the development of the suit, blazer and related hierarchies. Secondly I use a performance-based inquiry into how missionary and colonial activities reinforced those notions of Western masculinity as outward cultural symbolism. Lastly, I look at whether changing the properties of the suit's design and construction can cultivate a re-imagining in African male masculine behaviours. By using an alternative history and ideology within the manufacturing process (compared to the existing Eurocentric model), I aim to interrogate the possibility of reimagining African masculine embodiments. This final inquiry recognises the political power of clothing and the ways in which, when draped onto the body, the sartorial can become a powerful research methodology.

I believe that this methodology – the making and wearing of clothing – 'suits' the notion of performance studies and the phenomenological experiences of the body. Through the insertion of my own body in the research act, I perform and understand how multi-layered and multi-disciplined my existence is (Soyini-Madison 2014, 11; Parker-Starbuck, J. and Mock, R. 2011, 225). The layers of my existence are constituted by my own presence as a black African male, and wearing a Western suit (as a black African man), becomes an embodied experience. As a fashion practitioner committed to decolonising forms of African male aesthetic representation, the experience simultaneously presents itself as a self-critical contradiction. This contradiction and experience comes from the lived and everyday experience, one which is at times similarly or partially shared by others (Parker-Starbuck, J. and Mock, R. 2011, 225-227).

Garments are a non-textual but legitimate form of knowledge that can be further used as a tool to analyse sites of performance, in this case where the suit and contemporary black masculinities and forms of representation are historically and continually negotiated and constructed.² These sites can be found in the mundane,

² Conquergood criticizes the 'entrenched' historical segregation between 'intellectual labour and manual labour' the former represented as, "*privileged professional-managerial class* consisting of scholars and theorists whilst the latter consist of "*those who work with their hands, who make things*" and who most likely represent the majority - also known as the 'artist' (Conquergood 2002, 153)

but can also be heightened and extended to the theatrical arena of the fashion show where the scene is aestheticised to add to a heightened theatrical experience. My background in garment construction and fashion design was beneficial in this research and has allowed me to bridge divided knowledge systems, particularly in terms of my own cultural knowledge engaging with inherited social knowledge and imposed Western ideologies – what Conquergood would identify as the multiple fabricated spaces brought about by imperial or colonial rule (Conquergood 2002).

Sartorial Display as a Method

I draw on the legacies of forms of sartorial resistance and embodiment. Sartorial display acts as a form of performance, but also as a subversive behaviour. Queer theorist Bryant Keith Alexander identifies this as 'passing' (Alexander 2014, 113-126). Forms of resistance were practiced in the Harlem Renaissance and in Sophiatown during the apartheid era in South Africa. In addition, I offer an alternative example to the draped figure of Gandhi as another form of knowing, resistance or reimagining through dress and seen through a performative lens called 'passing'.

Alexander, who follows in the same performance studies tradition as Conquergood and Madison, draws extensively from his own experiences as a gay African-American. His positionality bridges the gaps between the historically segregated social structures of racial, economic and sexual prejudices, as he attempts to deconstruct the notion of 'passing' as a performative act of negotiation (Alexander 2004, 379). Passing can be enacted through juggling the masks of representation of class, sexuality, location and race through a continual process of performance in the everyday. In *Passing, Cultural Performance and Individual Agency: Performative Reflections on Black Masculine Identity*, Alexander speaks of 'passing' as a negotiation in performances of black masculine identities, mitigated from both outside and within one's own race ((Alexander 2004, 379). Passing becomes the necessary tactic against white racial prejudice, while simultaneously becoming a threat to masculine stereotypes within black masculine cultural norms (ibid.).

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

In recognising instances of my early childhood, as a precursor to this auto-ethnographic study, I remember the awkward negotiations of my own black experience. I am able to draw on the moments where I managed to find myself somewhat assimilated as a 'member' into a specific type of masculine performance, and a sense of acceptance based on sports achievements represented by the scrolls on my school blazer, in much the same way that Lovett has identified (Alexander 2004, 380). I however now attempt to claim a new masculine identity. My aspirations are now an outward display of power, of escaping the constraints of a now strange black masculine experience. In this research I explore what it means to conform to the 'jock', 'token' or 'coconut' stereotypes whilst aspiring to 'whiteness'. I perform in such a manner, understanding that 'passing' is a cunning tactic around the confinements of abjection (Alexander 2014, 113; Parker-Starbuck, J. and Mock, R. 2011, 225).

As much as I present this case as a form of conforming or mimicry, I also recognise and consider the stringent rules or code of conduct written within institutions of education and by extension corporate culture. One could say that in some instances one is not presented with a choice on what to wear or how to perform. Therefore, I would like to perform one such example, where choice seems to be displayed. Situated within the context of black masculinity, Alexander defines choice as the 'conscious and unconscious choice' to cross and deconstruct restrictive social borders (Alexander 2004, 394).

The Dandy and his Appropriation of 'Black' Stereotypes

In an essay from 1896 entitled *Dandies and Dandies*, the quintessential decadent dandy Max Beerbohm declared (that) the power of dandyism lies in its status as a creative, self-defining art form that can have multiple social and political targets or themes... dandies come in different forms and are visible and visual signs of the working out of a number of social problems or challenges ... dandies are best known not only as snappy dressers, but also as beings whose self-presentation identifies them as outrageous From its beginnings and certainly now, dandyism functions

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

as a symptom of changing social, political, cultural and economic conditions (Miller 2005, 7).

Cultural historian Monica Miller aptly explains in the above quoted section, how the dandy is able to use sartorial display as an example of resistance akin to Alexander's exploration of the performative act of passing. Miller explores how black individuals used dress as a tool for social mobility. Figures that came to represent the civil rights movements and the elegance of black culture reminiscent of Apartheid's Sophiatown were often suited. Miller states that the effect created by dandy-like individuals were both constructed and performed as,

... embodied, animated sign systems that deconstructed given and normative categories of identity (elite, white, masculine, heterosexual, patriotic) and were re-performed in a manner more in keeping with their own, often-avant-garde visions of society and self (Miller 2009: 10).

Whilst dandyism represents a form of dress-up or re-dress, the performance ultimately exposes in visual terms the legacy of slavery and neo-colonial ties. Closer to home, the dandy is recognised within displays of the Sapeurs of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and their South African counterparts, known as the Swenkas. The Swenkas regularly participate in highly skilled competitions which take the form of a hybrid of fashion show and performance using a series of dance movements and poses whilst showing-off their well put together outfits (The Swenkas 2004). These 'dandies' now find themselves loosely reincarnated in a contemporary South African youth culture known as l'zikhotane, infamous for burning expensive clothes and bank notes as a game of sorts, or anarchy, in a display of social prowess.

Even though some cultures still associate interest in dress as a feminine vocation, many non-Western cultures practice distinct sartorial or adornment traditions which call into question the gendered politics of dress, representation and performance. So in addition to my high school uniform, replete with decorated blazer, the preferred styles of young male Xhosa initiates, known as *Amakrwala*, aesthetically display their newly found status of manhood (within the first year of their circumcision), in a style more aligned to the masculine identity of a British dandy (Mhlahlo 2009, 75).

Sociologist Andile Mhlahlo draws on French ethnographer Arnold Van Gennep's three phase model of the initiation ritual to describe the Xhosa male 'rites of passage' rituals. The maternally attached young Xhosa boy is taken away from his mother and transformed through an initiation process into a paternally associated young man (Mhlahlo 2009, 39) The rite of passage involves the removal of clothing, the adoption of a hide or blanket, the burning of these transition items, circumcision, and teachings on how to become a well-mannered man. Mhlahlo lists these practices, like Van Gennep, as processes of separation, transition and incorporation (Mhlahlo 2009, 39).

British ethnographer, Victor Turner on the other hand, who has scaffolded on Van Gennep's model, applies a broader concept or understanding that applies to all forms of cultural performance or narratives around the world. This includes cultural performative practices in Western civilisations ignorantly thought not to be defined under the stereotypes of 'ritual', which are usually associated with animal behaviour or traditional spiritual beliefs of 'native citizens' and are said to be lacking the sophistication of a civilized religious vocation (Turner 1980, 161).

Turner terms these cultural performances as social dramas that follow a four-stage model: breach, crisis, redress and reintegration or recognition of schisms (Turner 1980, 149; Avorgbedor 1999, 152; Schechner 2002, 75-76). These four stages are worthy of some attention here. A breach is when a particular event or person threatens the normal ritual of ordered life or as performance ethnographer Richard Schechner (who worked with Turner to further develop this concept) would suggest, destabilizes traditional social units such as family, corporation, community, nation (Schechner 2011, 75). The crisis widens the breach, which could result in public displays of equally threatening and escalating successive crises. The redressive action is the process of mitigation, dealing with the crisis through collective resolution or healing.³ Reintegration is the process through which the resolved crisis is reintegrated back into the pre-existing social unit. Where this process fails, a schism occurs which either renews the cycle of crises, or the fracture is set indefinitely

³ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa is an example of a redressive act, as it sought to heal the social and political ruptures of apartheid.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

(Schechner 2011, 75; Schechner 2014). Whilst Van Gennep's model aptly defines the stages in rites of passage, Turner's social drama is more effective when applied in political narratives (Turner 1980, 152).

As with the example of Ghandi and Senghor, Nelson Mandela as a young Xhosa graduate is told to wear a jacket, shirt, long trousers, hat and formal shoes for a period of six months⁴ to complete his initiation in what I would suggest is an act of incorporation. Mandela's appearance at the Rivonia trial in 1964 wearing traditional Thembu attire, as opposed to the suits he was accustomed to wearing, represents a schism, a denial of the law in which he would be judged.⁵ Mandela displayed what anthropologist and cultural theorist Mary Douglas refers to as the supernatural or spiritual acts which defy ritual and conscious effort in her seminal text, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966).

In other words, danger exists within individuals who represent a disorder of ritual or order. In the case of Mandela's transgression of the legal ritual where the formal Eurocentric approach to dress such as a suit and tie is expected at court hearings, his act of 'undress' is as seen as disorder, an insult to an imposed colonial and Apartheid authorities. Mandela derived his power from his position within a liminal state, as one found himself between two states of being and on the margins of an imposed social structure. Through his choice of dress, he showed that he was able to live between being a qualified lawyer and a traditional Xhosa man (Douglas 1966). In this moment as in the other examples shared, Alexander's notion of passing is applied and used as an effective tactic, liberating the abject body. What becomes apparent is the negative portrayal following this scene, of what Turner's model would suggest as the reaggregated cultural performer, the 'black' dandified figure or as Walter Benjamin would suggest the victim of a Fascist society⁶ (Turner 1980; 1982).

Whilst Miller identifies the 'black dandy' as a subversive character, her suggestion acknowledges the resulting ramifications of degrading stereotypes introduced by

⁴ Mhlahlo has written a more detailed account on the stages of Xhosa initiation where dress code and masculine performance are discussed.

⁵ Zolani Ngwane writes in about this example in an article published in 2014 by the Mail and Guardian titled *'When Mandela Wore Skins of Tradition'*

⁶ See W. Benjamin *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* which influenced John Berger's writing.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

white performers dressed in outrageous outfits and blackened faces often performing caricatures of derogatory fictional shows such as Thomas Dartmouth Rice's comic *Plantation Dandy* (Miller 2005, 96-97). Jim Crow re-subverted the image of the black dandy and replaced it with the comedic images of the *Minstrel*, *Black Face* or *Uncle Tom* (Miller 2005, 96-97). The move for black emancipation received a certain blow through black individuals who benefitted from these comedic portrayals that contributed to problematic class distinctions within black communities. African Studies professor Kevin Gaines explored the class divisions within African-American communities, with one such case being between the Southern states and their more bourgeois cousins in the Northern states of America (Gaines 1993, 344-351). Gaines informs us of how black artists, in pursuit of higher political and class status, contributed towards and entrenched derogatory stereotypes represented by 'Black Face'. Gaines makes an example of this pursuit by analysing American poet James D. Corrothers,

Along with [other] leading figures ... Corrothers endorsed in his autobiography, prevailing bourgeois notions of character and morality, widely believed to be the sole possession of whites: the work ethic, an affinity for the attributes of civilization, patriarchal authority, and chastity. Generally, uplift ideology protested the disfranchisement, segregation, and violence wielded against black Americans, but it was also a reaction to the cultural dimensions of white supremacy - the minstrel stereotypes that saturated American journalism and popular culture throughout the period. (Kevin Gains 1993, 344 -47).

In other, words whilst passing may display a cunning tactic; this tactic has its limits and may also become a liability. While the suit becomes a colonial construct that has become socially accepted as the *only* symbol of prestige, masculinity, power and mobility, it also becomes a stealth-like cloak which aids the practices of passing. In wearing the suit, I yield to the "horrors of racial subjectivity", as I now represent the 'coon-like' stereotype that Gaines points to.

Whether it is on school grounds, in the office, on stage or as a cultural practice, donning a suit or blazer has been translated as a socially accepted embodied behaviour, and for many has become the singularly, socially accepted symbol of

masculine power. Although social acceptance cannot be guaranteed for all black men who wear suits, the suit or blazer aids in the idea that it can. In wearing the suit on the 'black body', I explore the forms of dandified expression, layers of undress, or resistance that can challenge what seems to be a sacrifice of the black body, when the suit contributes towards its own 'destruction' (Butler 1989; Foucault 1980).

The suit appears to be the predominant symbol of the dandified male figure. If one had to attempt to deconstruct this image, it would be hard to ignore that the Eurocentric view of dandyism as a performative practice, silences many other instances of its application. Much like the African continent, Western influences threatened to intervene in Japanese sovereignty. The countries move to rapidly modernise during the Meiji Restoration in 1868 meant that their cultural values came under attack (Haruhara 2015). Coincidentally much of the forms of resistance displayed during this time through the use of garments would later appear to be reincarnated by three influential Japanese fashion designers discussed in the following chapter.

Sartorial Resistance in the Far East

Samurai dandies during the Edo Empire in Japan were known for their variety of elaborately decorated and well-crafted swords and accessories which they would wear with items from their personalized wardrobe to suit the occasion.⁷ Yoko Haruhara mentions that this was a cultural practice described as being “analogous to the emphasis Western dandies of the same era placed on elaborate clothing and decorative embellishments” (2015). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the samurai dandies too, had been threatened with colonialism and the influence of the West. In retaliation, the self-consciously unfashionable Sōshi of the Meiji period in Japan, deliberately wore torn clothing, “tattered or ripped Kimono’s [complete with] tucked up sleeves, long hair and a club” in hand, contributing greatly towards a rugged, masculine identity to match their violently emphatic⁸ patriotism (Karlin 2002, 59). This was done with the purpose of rejecting the “frivolity and superficiality”

⁷ See Yoko Haruhara's article written for *The Japan Times* titled *The Edo Samurai knew how to look Sharp*

⁸ I personally identify these politically savvy young men, some of which were “former samurai” or sons of farm migrants, to the contemporary exploits of the Economic Freedom Fighters (Karlin 2002, 58).

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

inspired by the “European dandy as a model of sophistication and style” for an increasingly bourgeois masculine identity (Karlin 2002, 41; English 2012, 18).

This is important if Miller suggests that Max Beerbohm’s analysis of the power inherent in subversive sartorial strategies of the dandy lies “in its status as a creative, self-defining art form that can have multiple social and political targets or themes” (Miller 2009, 7). If this is correct, then what is important about this knowledge becomes apparent when one realises that a Western suit is not integral to the practice of dandyism, neither is the specifics of a certain colour way of coat or length of pants. It liberates the practice of dandyism from the grip of Western knowledge and cultural achievements. Therefore, if *sartoriality* – not the suit – is the weapon of choice in the quest towards liberation from historical masculine performances, then is it possible that performing methods of undress (the removing of colonial aestheticism, the wearing of unstructured garments) as a performative, and therefore an embodied experiment may have the required effect towards destabilising the existing masculine power structure in much the same way as Gandhi did with *Khadi*? If Butler and Foucault suggest that gender is historically constituted, then masculinity, in its corporeality as stated above, seems to be produced by historical convention. How then does this affect the gestures of everyday life, when the design and ideology in which masculinity is ‘dressed’, changes?

Cognisant of the role that clothing has played throughout multiple histories I have sought to approach this research using design, styling and clothing construction as an ‘anti-disciplined’ approach to performance studies as Conquergood would suggest (Kershaw and Nicholson 2011, 3). By understanding the notion of the civilised masculine figure vested in the construction of the suit, I aim to subvert notions of gender and race as a decolonial tool of resistance. The following political figures show how sartorial forms of expression, whether it be through passing or resistance, have been communicated.

Conceptual Frames

Undress as a form of Resistance

Kwame Nkrumah (see fig.13) Léopold Sédar Senghor, Nelson Mandela and Mohandas Gandhi have used both the tactic of dress and undress to evoke powerful statements towards liberation. The latter, advocated for self-governance and self-reliance (referred to as *Swara*). Gandhi indicated the capacity of philosophic, religious and politically motivated resistance via the non-violent, everyday display inherent in the wearing of the *khadi*. The garment represented a form of undress, suggesting a move towards self-purification away from former colonial rule and calling for a more unified community despite class or religious differences (Joshi 2002, 42; Levine 2008, 211).

Similarly, Leslie Rabine makes us aware of the intimate relationship with the Western suit by Senghor, Senegal's first democratically elected president, evident in his poems and photographs. Rabine suggests that whilst the suit is designed and constructed to enclose itself around the contours of Senghor's body, it also makes itself unnoticeable (Rabine 2013, 178). The suit inherently becomes naturalized as a sort of second skin like a glove to hand, naturalizing the meaning of class, gender, and colonial dominance, invisibly woven into its positive moral meanings (Rabine 2013, 178).

Senghor expressed his deepest solidarity in their 'suffering' as free labour, as the pay for their services was the uniform used at war (Rabine 2013). Senghor's writing made many references to the performative act of removing or 'undressing' the body of its colonial trappings (ibid.). Rabine states that the image of the undressing soldier Senghor speaks of in one of his poetic works titled, *Black Hosts*, becomes a process that transforms Senghor into a mythical figure (ibid.). In this case, the naked body does not become a site of lack, but a sign of a new beginning, as a united, independent Senegalese nation (Levine 2008). Conceptually, performative acts of undress, as practiced by these political figures, have been used to critical effect. One recent example includes how this was explored during the Fees Must Fall protests in South Africa (2016). As a non-violent act of spectacle, three young women removed

their tops and bra's to protest against the heavily armed South African police service (Levine 2008, Apter 2002).

Clothing has played a large role throughout history as a tool to express defiance or to usher in a process of breaking boundaries, but also as the site for negotiating and re-imagining identities. Therefore, undress, as a continuity of dress, in this research is not only a performative gesture of removing clothing, but a tool influencing the construction or deconstruction of specific gendered identities, and the performance of those genders. Undress is defined here as possessing the ability to trouble and disrupt Western conventions surrounding gendered forms of representation, contributing towards a decolonisation of masculine identities, a notion that has already been explored by Japanese fashion designers over three decades ago.

Japanese Designers

The disruption of Western dominance in fashion was sparked by the pioneering Japanese designers Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo of Comme Des Garçons in the last half of the nineteenth century. This disruption was primarily enacted through a deconstruction of conventional tailored garments, a rejection of the "sexual nature" of Western aesthetic dress (English 2011, 44). Its impact on Western fashion ensued, when the legendary Italian designer Giorgio Armani made a lasting contribution to the legacy of tailoring, by making "fluid and disciplined masterpieces of understatement – white shirts, jackets with narrow lapels, narrow shoulders, three buttons and trousers [...] tight to the knee and resting on well polished black shoes" - many call this technique 'soft tailoring' (English 2011, 51). English illustrates how this influence happened:

Yamamoto and Kawakubo went one step further. Quite literally they deconstructed the traditional Western business suit. They started with elimination of the padded shoulders, which had been seen as the litmus test of the male physique. By changing proportions and volume, their aim was to make suits and jackets lighter and more comfortable [...] Their asymmetrical cut created a 'visual imbalance', sleeves lengthened and trousers shortened [...] These 'redefined' male clothing forms were first revealed in [Armani's] autumn/winter 1985-6 collection, featuring 'unstructured' mens clothes with baggy, pleated trousers – a draped look – that approximated Turkish harem pants[...] the male silhouette [had] changed dramatically (English 2011, 52).

English suggests that this challenged the look of the Western business suit and all its implied meanings of corporate and commercial success (English 2011, 43). Japanese designer Yamamoto⁹ instead remarks on the futility and lack of creativity in clothing production caused by classic distinctions between mens and womens fashion, and was said to confuse many Western observers with his commentary around the parody of gendered European clothing for women. (English 2011, 53).

The most interesting observation I made during this process of re-imagining the technical rules that constitute the physical and “abstract” spaces in which clothing production exists, is (as the Japanese designers did) in my attempt to use as much cloth as is possible to make a garment so as to allow for the folds and weight that drapery requires. This image is in sharp contrast to the idea of suits, (and many other items of clothing today) that are made to fit the body as closely as possible, due to the dominance of Eurocentric ideologies and aesthetics. It is then no surprise that the drapery, asymmetric shapes and androgyny of designers such as Miyake, Kawakubo and Yamamoto were framed as ‘un-wearable’, ‘radical’ or ‘un-orthodox’ by European observers (English 2011).

Drapery

To get a better understanding of how ‘material’ is presented on male bodies, and how this is ideologically charged, one would have to look into the history of drapery in European history. These ideological characteristics of the design of the modern suit, also influenced the amount of fabric cast away as *off-cuts*.¹⁰ In order to make a three-dimensional garment from a flat rectangular piece of fabric, one would have to cut out jigsaw-like pattern pieces from the desired cloth (See fig. 10). If one had to remove those pieces, then what would remain behind is the negative space in between the cut-out pattern pieces. If it were not for these pattern pieces that contain shaping mechanisms to assist garments to cling to the contours of the body, we would have to drape the piece of cloth in its entirety around our bodies, tucking and

⁹ I have had to limit my writing on the influence of Japanese designers despite my absolute respect for the contribution Rai Kawakubo and the team she spearheads, known as Comme Des Garçons, which to be fair deserves far more than a small mention.

¹⁰ The pieces of fabric that remains after the cutting process usually cast aside as un-usable.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

tying ends where necessary, so that it eventually stays on the body. The way in which a *kanga* is worn, as tied over one shoulder, offers an example of this. Chinua Achebe makes reference to this in his book titled *Things Fall Apart* (1959):

The next day, the men returned with a pot of wine. They were all fully dressed as if they were going to a big clan meeting or to pay a visit to a neighbouring village. They passed their cloths under the right arm-pit, and hung their goatskin bags and sheathed machetes over their left shoulders (Achebe, 1959, 41).

Achebe draws us to understand that there is more than one aesthetic influence to male representation. The general fit of the garments and feeling on the body creates interesting bodily experiences that in some form or manner could be philosophically interpreted from a Western lens too. Hollander draws our attention to European history and art where we find associations to vulnerability and divinity, as well as victimisation if we look at undressed bodies and the use of drapery (1975, 158 - 159). Drapery in European art found its routes in late Roman sculpture ironically around the very same body which would eventually influence the tailored suit (Hollander 1975, 2). It is through the arts, where it is suggested that drapery or voluminous clothing came to represent the religious and mythical divinity, which also played an inspirational role in Neo-Classical ideology (Hollander 1975, 2; Berger 1972).

Japanese designer Miyake describes the ancient Japanese concept, *Má*, which he claims "is the central concept of space between the body and the cloth" (English 2011, Nii 2005). The concept of *Má* derives its technique and influence from sixteenth century Chinese art, where much greater compositional emphasis was placed on negative spaces and the implied beauty of the natural world (English 2011, Yoshida et al. 1980, 17-18). In a seemingly subversive or disruptive approach, Miyake translates this ethos into clothing, introducing concepts such as A Piece of Cloth (A-POC), which is achieved through creating a garment from one piece of minimally cut fabric that creates an interesting *Má* or space between the body and cloth (Nii 2005). Because each person's figure is different, the *Má* is unique in each instance, creating an individual form (Nii 2005).

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

Whilst the suit is usually created for one person and tailored to their specific body type, the concept of *Má* allows for a democratization of dress, where one fit applies to many body types that can be worn in many different ways. This concept also speaks to the 'undress' that Sènghor advocates, namely drapery and flexibility, here translated into political freedom and a break from ideas of hierarchy (See fig. 11). Performative acts of undress, in these ways explored as either fashionable, political or religious, are both defiant and symbolic. American historian Anne Hollander suggests that the more significant clothing is, the more meaning is attached to its absence and the more aware we become of the generated relations between the two states (Hollander 1972).

Absence can also be observed around the body's memory. For instance, it is the notions we take for granted, of symmetry, comfort, confidence and safety that could be translated as conservative or rather, safe. For many these characteristics stabilise the definitions of masculinity, as Hollander points out,

In general, men of all ages do not want to give up the habit of fixing on a suitable self-image and then carefully tending it, instead of taking up all the new options. [...] the fear of the wrong associations was the strongest male emotion about clothes, not the smallest part being fear of association with the wrong sex (Anne Hollander 2015, 5).

Hollander highlights the difficulties in removing or 'undressing' the suit and its masculine underpinnings. This could be translated into a sort of Stockholm syndrome¹¹ which becomes an impediment to the dream of reform and decoloniality. In other words, even if the African continent is theoretically free from colonial rule, African forms of masculine representation, on current observations, are even more deeply shackled to the Eurocentric idea of masculinity than originally thought (Butler 1988, 530). The reluctance to change highlights the conditioned and continued stereotypes that need to be challenged. This construction furthermore lends itself to how one perceives another, and how one is perceived in turn. Said gives us an insight into this understanding via the construct of cultural imperialism.

¹¹ I use this term loosely to express the psychological ramifications of colonialism where the colonised or oppressed positively identifies with their oppressor.

Cultural Imperialism

In a paper titled *Fashion Orientalism and the limits of Counter Culture*, Hiroshi Narumi defines Said's theory on 'Orientalism' as a form of cultural domination by Western powers who due to their former (and in many aspects current) colonial rule have been constantly involved in the objectification and the exoticisation of the non-West (Narumi 2000, 312-313). Narumi applies this theory to propose his own theory on the continued objectification of the 'Orient' by the Western fashion industry as a form of 'fashion Orientalism' (Narumi 2000, 313). Narumi suggests that fashion Orientalism seeks to foreground, "Euro-American aestheticism as the standard, and represents other cultures as the exotic [with the purpose of demonstrating its] civilised difference and superiority" against other cultures (Hiroshi Narumi 2000, 313).

The military uniform, suit or blazer, in this study, becomes that symbol of modern civilisation. The 'exotic' takes up the forms of identity that do not fall in line with the traditional or conventional application of a Western masculine figure. This 'exotic' could be the wearing of a blanket over a suit, or the resonance of preceding ceremonial milestones as displays of manhood. Another aspect of the 'exotic, though not always identified, is the body of an 'other' – for example, differences in the levels of melanin in our genes or sexual differences, subsume black, feminine or queer people, as part of a global society known as 'the other' (Butler 1982, 42-44; Carrier 1992, 197).

The combination of black bodies and the suit transforms African men into an exotic hybridized picture. This includes the contemporary fashion industry's obsession to pair dark-skinned models with bright, exotic colours. Fashion orientalism often finds itself ironically perpetuated in the gaze of the very people it seeks to exoticise (Narumi 2000, 320). This gaze is also reminiscent of missionary and European scientific expeditions, known to sexually exoticise black bodies through undignified means (Gqola 2015; Levine 2008; Morrell 2005). Missionaries instilled beliefs of shame and impurity onto the partially covered bodies of native African societies, an aesthetic which was presented as normal (Levine 2008, 191; Woodward 1996, 95).

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

In fact, Western clothing would later be used to identify newly-converted African subjects as a sign of their belonging (Woodward 1996, 96).

It requires an ideological shift and understanding of how gender has been materially constructed, and thereafter used as a material display of power. It is also necessary to discuss how the Western suit has been used as a symbol in terms of power and affluence. The following section explores how these sartorial displays are intrinsically associated to the performance of violence and rivalry, mitigated by heroic patriotism and economic success. The thesis thus looks at the suit and its military associations and the ways in which these influenced African masculine embodiments, as displays of masculine prowess, which Gqola defines as a militarised ideology (Gqola 2015, 60).

Gender as a Construction

The work of both Butler and Gqola was consulted in exploring notions of constructed masculinities, in particular how masculinity exists as a performance. Much of Butler's work has helped to establish the groundwork for this thesis. An investigation of how masculine performance manifests in multiple forms of behaviour and distinction is also necessary, and as such this research investigates the suit as an object imbued with masculine ideals of being. An investigation into the introduction of the suit into Africa is required too, to understand the importance of military impulses and impact in the cultivation of the quintessential and supposedly supreme, Eurocentric male identity.

The Masculine Consumer

Brent Shannon, a scholar in consumer sciences, focuses on culture in Victorian Studies. Shannon suggests that masculinity within the male middle-class was not as rigid as is suggested within the general assessments of Victorian standards of manhood, as fashion also became a tool of subversion in defiance of highly rigid ideals of masculine identity (Shannon 2004). In *ReFashioning Men: Fashion, Masculinity, and the Cultivation of the Male Consumer in Britain, 1860 – 1914*, Shannon explains how merchants actively looked to instil male interest in fashion and material consumption by manipulating the everyday act of shopping and by creating gendered stereotypes to encourage male customers to embrace the idea of consuming clothing.¹² Whilst men would earn the title of being good rational consumers, who asserted their masculinity through focused and assertive shopping, women were deemed difficult and irrational at the site of material goods, trying on everything but never committing to a purchase (Shannon 2004).

Shannon expands further how sport and military associations to masculinity arrived with the advent of advertising early in the nineteenth century (ibid.). British advertisers idealised the image of 'the soldier fighting on the frontlines for his country

¹² For example, the male consumer enjoyed shopping in an environment with neat, simple displays of a few spot-lit items, spending as little time as possible in the shop. Women were apparently compulsive shoppers, "kleptomaniacs" and enjoyed spending long hours deciding what to purchase from a large table of cluttered items (Shannon 2004).

as a characteristic shared by the ever-committed athlete on the sports field, marrying sports and the military [to] create an ... intoxicating concoction of competitive patriotism (Shannon 2004, 602-606). Advertisers often relied on the image of the 'unchallenged', all-conquering soldier in far-off exotic lands, as an exhibition of British Imperial might (Shannon 2004, 605). It was during this time that khaki¹³ would make its entry as the perfect masculine material, and the colour of choice for both the British army and the exotic locales of its empire (Shannon 2004, 605-606).

Writing on men's fashion in an online fashion publication, *New Republic*, Hollander maintains Shannon's assertion that men's clothing had hardly gone through many changes since the nineteenth century (Hollander 2015). Apart from subtle changes to tie widths, types of feathers in hats and the weaving technique of white shirts, increased attention into whether one is wearing a 'double-or-single-breasted cut, sports jacket and slacks or suit, shoes with plain or wing tip', has mostly been the concerns of the modern man (Hollander 2015). Hollander maintains that the aesthetic origin of the suit finds its influence on early Greek and Roman sculpture (Hollander 1972, 159), suggesting that the bourgeois suit became the single signifier of men's seriousness, substance, integrity, honesty and rationality and by extension dominance (Hollander 1994, 4-91).

Hollander offers a detailed account of how by the mid-eighteenth century male bodies "encased themselves with tight overlapping layers of ill-fitting coats, waistcoats and breeches that were shaped to the body and matched with a white shirt or 'chemise'¹⁴ (Hollander 1972, 159; Hollander 1975, 208). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, trousers and the technical abilities of tailoring evolved in line with new Utopian ideals of the Greek and Roman body (Berger 1972; English 2011, 52; Hollander 1972; Hollander 1975, 208). What this suggests is that dominance is reflected in the structure of the garment, and only by extension, in the physicality of the body.

¹³ This is the start of camouflage as a fashionable trend in my opinion - khaki was first introduced by the British army during the Boer war. Its tough rugged fabrics and shades of colour (which were meant for tactile advantage during war) soon found its way into male fashion. See Shannon 2004, 605-606)

¹⁴ Anne Hollander states that the smock also known as a chemise for women and shirt for men became an early 'universal' under garment along with the corset at a later stage. It usually came in white and used as an undergarment. It had a symbolic meaning as well signifying the humility of nakedness.

It is through this analysis that one starts to see the cultivation of certain conventions in consumption, associated behaviours and, in many instances, ways of being. Butler's understanding of how gender is constructed finds its validation in this regard; masculine performative behaviours have been cultivated around acts of material consumption (rational, sensible and always in control), manipulation of rivalries through sports and the military. Looking further afield at another account of masculine cultivation in Senegal, the suit was embraced on two accounts: through military uniforms and through its liberation leaders. The visual symbol of power (the Western style formal jacket) is in this case, transferred from one powerful institution to yet another (Hart 1997, 146).

The Military Uniform in Africa

The influence of the military suit on the African continent would come with European colonization. Many across the newly divided continent such as the French-Senegalese army known as the *Tirailleur Sénégalais* were conscripted into the armies of their new masters during the First World War, at times unknowingly volunteering, to be used as mercenaries, cheap labour or more abruptly as soldiers regarded merely as material to be expended in war (Rabine 2013, 178). The importance of the fitted uniform, including three-piece suits worn by returning scholars from abroad (who often became newly sanctioned political leaders of liberated African colonies), was its ability to be understood as an outward embodied symbol affecting and subverting the existing pre-colonial masculine social structures in Africa and the diaspora (Rathbone 2013, 122). Members of the same societies came to adopt the new clothes, replacing existing social hierarchies and creating completely new additions such as trousers (now representing adulthood), a complete uniform for those who have completed their rites of passage and the stripes and badges usually reserved for Western military ranking, now representing Senegalese families and social hierarchies (Rathbone 2013, 115).

There are many similarities across diverse African masculine cultures where the above is reflected. The 'othering' gaze, as a stylized, gendered performance is what

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

the school blazer, the military uniform,¹⁵ and the corporate suit has and continues to communicate (Hollander 1972, Butler 1988). Male fashion and military uniforms often influenced each other in medieval Europe (Kannik 1968). In addition, militarised ideology can be found far away from the trenches of warfare. Much like Lovett's understanding of how school blazers offer young men the opportunity to gain 'membership' into a highly guarded ranking system, the influence of the military uniform in Africa through colonialism and the cultivation of the British masculine consumer in the late 19th century, lives on as a form of toxic masculinity or as Gqola's militarised ideology.

In her book, *Rape* (2015), Gqola claims that the trauma of missionary activity, scientific expeditions, colonialism and thereafter Apartheid, have ushered in a legacy of a hyper-masculine 'militarised ideology' in South African men, and suggests that this has contributed towards a legacy of socialised violence (2015, 60). Gqola uses sociologist Jacklyn Cock's idea of a militarised ideology to outline the pervasive nature of this violence, which makes its way into social aspects of academic, business and non-governmental sectors including in cultural spaces, linguistics, entertainment industries and government institutions (2015, 61). A watershed moment in understanding masculinities in South Africa was marked by the Jacob Zuma rape trial¹⁶ which split public opinion on the meaning of 'culture' and what constitutes rape within South Africa (Gqola 2015, Ratele 2001, Morrell *et al.* 2012). Zuma's political affiliation with the ANC, as well as his position as a well-off traditional Zulu man, imbued him with both a sense of authority and violence (Ratele 2012, 53). His ascendance to the highest office of South Africa without any formal education earned him praise amongst many disadvantaged citizens of South Africa, who viewed him as the embodiment of an African man (Ratele 2012, 53). Unlike Mandela's sartorial undress at the Rivonia Treason Trial, Zuma is dressed in a suit in his trial at court, breaking into a performative gesture of defiance, and parading his military credentials in singing the now famous struggle song '*Umshini wam*'.

¹⁵ Military uniforms, a relatively new introduction to male adornment in the context of history, became formalized after the Thirty Years War during the 17th century (Kannik 1968). Originally meant to distinguish friend from foe, early forms of uniformity were explored through the wearing of colour coded sashes, 'surcoats' worn over armour and novel trinkets worn on clothing not much different from those worn by civilians (Kannik 1968).

¹⁶ The highly publicized and polarizing trial of former president Jacob Zuma who was accused and acquitted of raping the woman commonly referred to as Khwezi in 2006.

In a reading of Zuma's actions, I am drawn to two separate yet similar instances. Lovett cites Conell's (2009) reading of a 'disproportional location of power ... [which] dominated most facets of social life during the post-war II period in Australia' (Trevor Lovett 2012, 5). This disproportion was typified by Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies who authorised Australia's entry into World War II (ibid.). Menzies, in armoured double-breasted suits, visually affirmed the country's masculine social and cultural identity (Lovett 2012, 5). Tailored clothing provides the constant and immobile tactile reference for the whole surface of the body at once making cloth and body one entity (Hollander 1975, 184). I feel that this speaks directly to Gqola's theory of an idealised masculine identity that tends to cloak itself behind the pragmatic qualities of discipline and outward manifestations of order (Gqola 2015, 61). The suit and its 'performance' become a convention, one that Gqola and others suggest is interwoven into social spaces within South Africa as a violent, hyper-masculine display of being (Gqola 2015; Morrell et al. 2012, 20; Ratele 2008, 27). Gender is the social form of communication, usefulness, worth, honour and pride. The statesmen described in this study each exert their political authority and power through their mode of dress, often coincidentally following traumatic periods in their country's respective histories (Roach-Higgins & Eicher 1992).

These examples make evident that within the suit lies a masculinity that idolises military authority, interwoven into the shared make-up of military uniforms and suits. The suit has gained its power largely due to the influence of the military violence and colonial rule. Butler refers to this sense 'as stylistics of existence' (1988, 521). Butler suggests that gender is in part, a historical performative characteristic, which has been politically and systematically inscribed onto the human body (ibid). In *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution* Butler suggests that these characteristics are outwardly displayed in gestures and ways of being, citing writer Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex* (1946) as evidence of gender as "a packaged, commodified, human, cultural construction or in this case 'product'" (1986, 39). According to Butler we do not become a particular gender until we come into contact with established customs and norms of identification (ibid). These norms are hostile to negotiation, are accepted as normal, and are invested into by an unassuming society, so much so that personal feelings of disappointment and discontentment are present when one is accused of not performing manhood or womanhood properly (Butler 1986, 39-

41). Butler suggests that de Beauvoir and Foucault both argue that systems of oppression exist usually as a result of complicated material origins, such as the influence of colonial power or popular taboos (Butler 1986, 41).

In his essay titled *The Subject and Power* (1982), Foucault suggests that much of his work has been to show where, within our culture, human beings have been used or constructed as subjects in the display of power. Foucault suggests that the value of a human subject is placed in relation to what they do, or their unique qualities which are in turn attributed to a complex ranking system of influence or access, in other words, of power (Foucault 1982, 778). In assessing this theory of observed power, one has to adhere to what Foucault terms the 'conceptual needs', in which an historical awareness is needed so as to relate to our present circumstances and the realities with which we are dealing (ibid). With regards to the case studies of this thesis, power is associated with military and colonial institutions.

The suit remains despite changing faces of leadership. Political changes however, do not fully guarantee a process towards decolonising, or states of being that are less violent. I argue that whilst Butler is concerned with an existential understanding of gender, outside of human convention (and which at the same time informs real life gender-power relations), Foucault makes one aware of the suit as a site of inherent power, as it holds the symbolic signifier of power.

The Critique

It would be naïve for anyone to suggest that the general scholarly writings on masculinities seem to be primarily associated with violence, I argue that there is an overwhelming amount of literature (particularly from a feminist activist lens or method of inquiry), that paint a picture of a toxic masculinity. Men in particular are seen as the problem (Cornwall 1997, 8; Ratele 2008, 25). Whilst there exists intersectional¹⁷ factors that should be analysed in approaching the study of masculinities, it would seem that the assertions implied from a feminist lens have largely been conducted through the "interplay between sex, race, and class [with a disregard for] the

¹⁷ There are layered conditions (Colonialism, Racism, Patriarchy etc.) with which masculinities in South Africa including the larger parts of Africa are experienced; I loosely flirt with Kimberlé Crenshaw's criticism of Western Feminism's limited scope in contextualising and responding to the under-privileged black woman's experience.

generational criterion” of causes to masculine performance (Broqua & Doquet 2015, 10).

Gender theorist Dr Marie-Paul Ha’s critique refers to the resource material used in the arguments against imperialism or anti-resistance discourse, and the apparent contradiction to the contrapuntal methods one should employ in research of such a nature (1995, 156). Ha suggests that Said is seduced by the political impulses behind Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and C.L.R. James' *The Black Jacobins* (1938), without specifying a particular field in Western scholarship to which he compares such texts. Ha laments Said’s failure to widen the scope of his literary sources, suggesting a superficial approach to the concept of anti-imperial resistance; in other words, limiting himself to works by intellectuals who have written and hold discourse in a language introduced through imperial rule, which in itself is contradictory to decoloniality (Ha 1995, 156).

Seen from another perspective, and though they do not directly cite Said in their paper *Culture and Imperialism*, Julianne Burton and literary critic Jean Franco suggest that,

... though terms like ‘cultural imperialism’ and ‘cultural dependency’ need re-examination, the instrumental use of the media in implanting imperialist values cannot be dismissed (1978, 7).

This quotation is pivotal if we are to understand the pervasive nature of the fashion industry and how media translates this messaging into the lives of men with aspirations of respectability, affluence, high society and lavish lifestyles. Ha’s critique that decolonisation may just be a process of dilution or reclaiming of historical and intellectual property is relevant here. I recognise that if there is a symbolic act in embodying the sartorial image of a suited man (which has by now been co-opted into the canon of modern African life), then there should be an equal opposite, which would act as a catalyst that seeks to reinvent forms of representation in African masculinities.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

There is too Cornwall's assertion that "there are many ways of being a man" (Cornwall 1997, 11). As Butler and Cornwall explain, men also experience social pressures to conform to the dominant customs and norms of 'being' a man (Butler 1986, 1988; Cornwall 1997). Transgressors of the dominant version of being a man are subject to discrimination, and therefore they may have to negotiate their identities as acts of 'passing' to gain membership into the dominant systems (Alexander 2004, Lovett 2012). This membership may also be represented in outward symbolic gestures, such as honours blazers and double breasted suits. In many ways the construction of the suit and its introduction into African forms of taste and being, is to some extent a symbolic process of buying into the image; an act of intent, mimicry or reintegration following a crisis to gain membership or to 'pass' (Alexander 2004; Lovett 2012; Schechner 2011; Schechner 2014; Turner 1980).

Feminism's early Eurocentric perspectives did not take into account the seemingly un-relatable phenomenon of the oppressed, which included not only men, but non-European women too (Cornwall 1997, 9; Broqua & Doquet 2015, 3; Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger 2012, 12). It would seem that a large proportion of feminist study has considered the problem of men and not masculinity *per se*, finding ways to analyse, deconstruct and eventually transform the largely accepted notions of a hegemonic kind of masculinity. This contrasts with a more nuanced study of acknowledging forms of masculinities, and then pruning that which has become "cancerous" (Cornwall 1997, 10; Ratele 2008, 20). In addition academics such as Ratele, Morrell and Gqola respectively, have factored the historical, political and cultural conditions of South Africa in their assessment of South African masculinities and gender-based violence.

It is with this understanding around dress and masculinity that I sought to create two performance pieces, *Black Tie – An Alternative Store Opening* and *VET [ting] MEN*. Text based research, newspaper clippings and topics on social media platforms such as Twitter informed the conceptual and historical narratives for the performances whilst self-reflexive mental notes and everyday experiences informed the gestural enquiry of the body. This included how a man sits in public with or without a suit, how one feels in a suit, how one is treated whilst wearing a suit and so forth. These

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

alternative sources of re-imagining masculinities via the dressed body were conceptualised from African literature, Gandhi's use of *khadi*, the influence of Japanese aesthetic values on Western design, and broader investigations into the ideological, political and aesthetic resistance to Western aesthetic values.

Black Tie – An Alternative Store Opening

Concept

Black Tie – An Alternative Store Opening was originally performed in Cape Town at 6 Spin Street for the ICA Live Art Festival 2017 and at The Slave Lodge Museum on a separate occasion in the same year. The piece was conceptualised with the help of Richard September. The performance space was set up to resemble a fashion show with seating arranged opposite each other creating a fashion ramp around the existing contours of the room for the performers to follow similar models on the catwalks of Paris Fashion Week. An arrangement of dining tables and chairs were setup in the middle of the room and draped with excessive amounts of fabric off-cuts.

Audio

I started the show walking to a slow steady rhythm, with the use of frankincense and a self-fashioned Thurrible providing a sonic and resonate backdrop to the beginning of the performance, which found its inspiration from annual observations of Good Friday Mass (see fig. 5). Along with the periodic and aesthetically sought after chimes of metal against metal, caused by the performative dispersing of frankincense, an adaptation of the ‘The Wood of the Cross Triduum’ usually observed during the Good Friday veneration procession, was sung as follows,

***This is the Wood of the Cross,
on which hung the Saviour of the World,
Come let us Worship!***¹⁸

A slight change to the wording of this hymn during the performance was made. By replacing “Wood” with “Wool”, reference was made to the wool used for traditional tailoring and the making of imported blankets that were constructed to resemble blazers in the performance. A second change of wording replaced the “Cross” with the “Cloth”. The hymn was sung as follows,

¹⁸ (Repeated three times as the cross is brought up the aisle to the front for veneration.) See, “*This is the Wood of the Cross Triduum Good Friday Veneration Procession Chant*” - (Mary, 2010)

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

Is this the Wool of the Cloth?

On which hung the Saviour of the World,

Come let us Worship!

The fashion show progressed to variations of Johann Sebastian Bach's Toccatta and Fugue in D Minor as a sound-scape, whilst the performers made their way around. Towards the closing stages of the performance, a medley of sound extricated from a pornographic film¹⁹ would serve as a deliberate disruptor to the overall performance. This sound was slowed down to a deep masculine sounding moan, which was then juxtaposed with sounds of whipping, reminiscent of 'popular' media exposures of the legacies of colonialism and slavery.²⁰ The sounds of ecstasy were continued against a backdrop of Roman soldiers humiliating the messiah.

Video

Following the hymn, a video montage was played highlighting the suit, and its perceived affluence, through a video of a tailor in the process of making a blazer.²¹ The elderly man meticulously guided us through the different stages of making the blazer before the video progressed using well-known celebrities in television adverts, paid for by well-known clothing and alcohol brands. A seemingly vulnerable white woman was repeatedly the object of the suited white male's desire. The overall sense of the narrative played out as the performed protection of the white woman from the threat of miscegenation.

¹⁹ The digital references include; 'Noe Milk serves her Curvy Venezuelan Body for Latin Stud Nacho' sourced from fapality.com/9823/, the latter ironically titled, 'Black Bodybuilder Mistress Kelli Provocateur punishes her White Slave' sourced from fapality.com/5346.

²⁰ The digital references include; the television adaptation of 'Roots: The Saga of an American Family by American author' Alex Haley directed by Mario Van Peebles and Bruce Beresford, the other being the Steve McQueen directed, '12 Years a Slave' which was an adaptation of the original memoir written in 1853 by Solomon Northup and edited by David Wilson.

²¹ To explain a little further, tailoring remains the domain of men who have a strict dress code of a collared shirt, waistcoat and tie, whose job it is to: methodically construct a suit for affluent men using all sorts of hand stitching and padding techniques, giving volume to the chest and shoulders whilst making sure that the trousers and sleeves are at the right length. Tailoring trade does not consider itself within the business of fashion unlike haute couture where overall wearing women comprise of a large part of the production process.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

This became interestingly symbolic as not only did the construction of the suit signify a construction of the body, the art of tailoring became a pseudo-stylizing art form of a patriarchal, hetero-normative masculine identity and the remains of a trade that is “deeply gendered” (Hollander 1994, Rabine 2013).

Performers²² in order of appearance:

Lesiba Mabitsela

Abdul Dube

Godfrey DeSylva

Michael Jacobs

Sizo Mahlangu

During the show, each performer possessed an item or object that referred to colonial or religious influences on African customs or material consumptions. I possessed the Thurrible, the second model carried a rose, the third produced coins from his blazer’s pockets, and the last model held a SeSotho translated bible²³ recognised by its pink and black exterior.

The performers progressed, walking as if in a fashion show breaking conventional practice in maintaining eye contact with the seated observers and occasionally interacting by touching hands or sitting next to audience members. Some members of the audience found it uneasy to keep eye contact with the models, often shying away whilst others challenged us, giggling through the scenes where we were partially dressed. Audience expressions changed throughout the performance. In addition, some walked out as the soundtrack intensified.

²² Three of the performers personally identified as homosexual. In many ways I felt that we all represented varying degrees of masculinity.

²³ I found that the most intimate discussions around performances of masculinities occurred within the conversations between us. One of the performers felt a sense of anxiety when tasked to work with Christian symbolism as his father is a practicing pastor. I felt an instant connection as I too grew up as an altar server in the shadow of my father who was a well-known figure in the church. Ironically these experiences were called upon for the next performance performed as my final show titled VET [ting] MEN.

Costume:

A single exposed arm in one of the costumes set the tone for the show and was intended as a reminder of King Leopold II's violent legacy over the Congo, home to the Sapeurs of the Democratic Republic of Congo (see fig. 1 - 6). The irony in this image was explored further by creating blazers and skirts made from blankets and pleated Tartan respectively. The 'misplaced' sleeve was used as an improvised jockstrap which evoked the loincloth made from a jacket sleeve and shoulder pad traditionally used to enhance the masculine features in tailored jackets. The objects were then embellished with old military badges, Highland war trinkets and Catholic rosaries (See fig. 6).

The costume confronts the preferred British suit styles of Amakrwala, displaying their newly-found status of manhood. There appears to be a sense of passing, achieved through a masculine identity more aligned to the cultural values of British Imperialism and socialised militarism. The blankets worn on top of suited young initiates by the Basotho added an 'exotic' flair with reference to the appropriation of this draping by internationally acclaimed fashion houses²⁴ and used as an example of a hybridized global culture.

The use of the black noose (See fig. 4), ropes and knots are disguised as fashion accessories²⁵, yet also allude to slavery, as well as sadomasochism. Cape Town's own legacy with slavery is expressed through the specific site of Church Square, and on a separate occasion, at The Slave Lodge Museum.

Audience

There was a sense of discomfort in the scene: firstly, because convention is broken when models return the gaze during the fashion show, secondly, a sexual convention of the male gaze on women is subverted. The women in the audience also exhibited displeasure at the explicit soundscape. The audience was not only challenged by this constructed phallic representation of a penis, but also at the

²⁴ The French company Louis Vuitton who make luxury goods have for some time now been accused of culturally appropriating these blankets and selling them off at exorbitant prices.

²⁵ I was surprised to receive offers for purchase of the nooses as fashion accessory after the show given the context of the performance

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

thought of being caught looking. The gaze invited the audience members to objectify and sexualise the masculine body. The power of othering associated with objectification and perception was subverted. The black male body, which became visibly vulnerable, was represented as a martyr carrying a burden which simultaneously *enslaves him*.

Documentation:

Forms of documentation were done through photographic imagery and video, some of which have been supplied in the appendix. A recording of BLACK TIE performed at the Slave Lodge Museum was also created for the purpose of investigating audience engagement and engaging with the performance from a first-person perspective. The video can be viewed online with virtual reality goggles.

I was also fortunate enough to have permission to include an interview written by Valeria Geselev for Artthrob (an online publication interested in Southern African contemporary art), which offers an interesting perspective of the encounter from a viewer's perspective. This can be viewed in the appendix. The article including all other supporting material is also included in the appendix.

VET [ting] MEN

Concept:

The name VET [ting] Men is derived from the word VETEMENTS, which means 'clothes' when translated from French, and which is also the name of a popular contemporary French, conceptual fashion brand. The title then encapsulates how 'masculinities' are drilled into men. The process of this transformation (suggestive of a crucifixion) has been likened to Jesus Christ who bears the weight of colonial violence and exploitation. In this performance, Christ is represented by Owen Manamela-Mogane, as the messiah. The performance was conceptualised around the Via Dolorosa, known in its contemporary form as The Stations of the Cross a ritual that as a Catholic, I was repeatedly exposed to.

Via Dolorosa loosely translated from Latin means 'Way of Grief', 'Way of Sorrow', 'Way of Suffering', or simply 'Painful Way'. The original procession consists of nine stations. A further five were later added, to make fourteen stations. A fifteenth station is practiced by some Christian denominations. The Via Dolorosa was originally practised at specific sites in Jerusalem, the areas are the stations represented by shrines or statues symbolic of Jesus' journey to Calvary where he was crucified. Nine of those stations are site specific, whilst the other five take place within a Church.

VET [ting] Men took place as a religious procession in The Company Gardens, in Cape Town. The procession was deconstructed by mostly using pre-selected statues of white colonial leaders such as Jan Smuts and Cecil John Rhodes interspersed with non-figurative 'statues' as replacements for the symbolic stop-overs in the original Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem. The route was planned as follows:

1st station: Jesus is condemned to death - The Company Gardens.

2nd station: Jesus carries his cross - The statute of Jan Smuts in the Company Gardens.

3rd station: Jesus falls the first time - The Cecil John Rhodes statute in the Company Gardens.

4th station: Jesus meets his mother - The statute of Mary in the Company Gardens.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

5th station: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross - The Arch for Arch in the Company Gardens.

6th station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus - The Slave Lodge.

7th station: Jesus falls the second time - The Slave Lodge

8th station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem - The Slave Lodge

9th Station: Jesus falls the third time - The statute of Governor Willem Adriann van der Stel.

10th Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments - The Old Slave Tree plaque.

11th - 15th Station: The Crucifixion to The Resurrection - 6 Spin Street (Black Tie is performed here).

Audio:

The soundscape was provided live through call and response amongst performers, performers running through rugby drills and the sound of the trailer loosely inspired by a VETEMENTS window display (See fig.18), which was moved around by Owen.

Audience members received a booklet representing church service programmes with poems and readings from Léopold Sédar Senghor replacing the usual procession scriptures and homilies. Our pastor, played by one of our models read from this text, regularly requesting a response from the audience.

Performers²⁶:

Lesiba Mabitsela

Owen Manamela-Mogane

Mlondi Dubazane

Lulamile Nikani

Thabiso Nkoana

Ofentse Letebele

Sizo Mahlangu

²⁶ The biggest challenge happened behind the scenes where a large group of men had to be managed. I found that I had to attend to forms of masculine approaches whilst negotiating rules and responsibilities between those considered feminine and those considered masculine. This happened during rehearsals. I had to reprimand one of my actors against the use of homophobic language towards another member. He later apologised for his actions. I also experienced this process in matters of age. I would often allocate a leader that the group respected to run drills and mostly took the advice of the eldest member in the group as my second pair eyes.

Godfrey De Sylva

Michael Jacobs

With Owen playing the Messiah and the four models from Black Tie acted as altar servers and preacher, the remaining performers Mlondi Dubazane, Lulamile Nikani, Thabiso Nkoana became the enforcers of masculinity (See fig. 17). This was done through characterising them as a team of first team rugby scholars, who would routinely charge into rugby formations, sometimes at the surprise of the audience members, passing the loaded giant 'trash bags' between them. Their purpose was also to bully and prod at our Messiah, as the soldiers did to Jesus Christ.

Costume

Besides the use of existing garments from the Black-Tie performance, school uniforms and scrum-caps usually used to protect the heads of rugby players were used (See fig.14). The goal of the garments was to represent 'undress' by creating unique garments, to be worn at the end of the show. The fabric choice became an understated sign of conventional masculinities, as I had used suiting to make the garments – a fabric specially preferred for creating suits.

To measure the differing aspects of these garments accurately, I had to style myself as a dandy, to see how wearing a suit would affect me and others in the everyday. At the same time, it was a chance to conduct introspective research. I created a spontaneous social media experiment called @KEEPIT_ITSUITSYOU (See fig. 6) where I wore a suit or blazer complete with shirt and tie every Monday during the months of August and September. For this experiment, I uploaded regular photographs of myself and friends posing with a suit on, as I interacted with normal life. The purpose was to be able to record the comments of friends and strangers reacting to my dandified, suited performance.

At the end of most days where the suit was worn for instance, I noticed a lifting off of a weight as I undressed, and had a stiff back as I embodied this persona. For a while I enjoyed the level of access and attention it afforded me. At times, but not before too long, I grew tired of it. This was in stark contrast to the treatment I received in

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

wearing alternative garments. These garments, created as an alternative to the standard Western suit, included aesthetic features such as drapery as an experiment to break ideas of a masculine performance. The process was not just to test how one engaged with masculine perceptions, but to also engage with different ways of being through the performative gestures of dress and undress.

Concurrently, I went about creating my deconstructed/alternative suit styles. The process of producing these alternative garments is best represented for purpose of easy understanding like the building of a house. Blue-prints for garments were conceptualised that best reflected the idea of deconstruction, drapery and undress (See fig 15). These blue-prints had to be cut out into pattern pieces then constructed into three dimensional mocked-up's or armatures (See fig. 16). Once the desired effects were achieved the garments were then sewn and recreated in the fabrics of choice. There was in total, roughly twenty different garments made. This was a long consuming process that required labour in the studio and the University of Cape Town's costume department daily.

In the case of the bodily experiences of these garments, the asymmetry and experimental process of making the garments lead to constant shrugging of the shoulders once worn, as there was now a lack of symmetric balance. I was also aware of my body and its process in putting garments on - my body had to orient itself in ways dissimilar to a suit (See fig. 11). This includes what is being displayed underneath the draped section as a friend of mine's one greatest concern and reason for not wanting to wear my clothes despite his support was that he did not want to wear items which for him was regarded as a 'crop-top', and which involved issues of representation which came into conflict with his religious beliefs. This was not the case with Godfrey and Owen (See fig. 12,) and the latter who came back to me with news of being referred to as "looking regal".

Exposed body parts such as the stomach in the case of the crop top created a change in masculine experience through a lack of uniformity and within body temperature too (See fig. 12). Confidence is one aspect affecting performative bodily sign systems such as posture. This could depend on the weather and pre-existing ideas associated with conventional examples of gendered clothing. If the suit is

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

regarded as somewhat of a second skin, as suggested in this research, then how does personal space become affected, like movement, hugging, dancing, and caressing, even fighting? Is there the same attraction towards a suited figure as opposed to one drowned in metres of drapery?

Audience

Audience members were rather reluctant to participate in the call and response process of the procession, despite having had the use of the programme which I printed for them with instructions and poems. This persisted until a few members in the group took the lead to respond which ultimately encouraged others. The other tool we used to draw the audience in was using small prayer candles. These candles were required to be lit at a stage in the performance until the end. There were reported scenes of normal bystanders involving themselves in this process by helping with sources of fire (lighters) when the flames went out.

Documentation:

Beyond the use of photographic stills and video, other forms of documentation were sought after. Social media became an interesting platform, for example, as I used the platform to create and record comments and photography of a fake INSTAGRAM account titled @KEEPIT_ITSUITSYOU. I predominantly operated the account from INSTAGRAM, which I linked to my FACEBOOK account. I also used WHATSAPP as a medium.

Conclusion

This dissertation has explored the origins of how suits and blazers infiltrated the everyday in Africa through gendered ideals of masculinity, whether through acts of war, business or cultural traditions. I have also shown how history, especially colonialism, manifests understandings of dominance and displays of power that are politically and militarily communicated.

Theoretically it would seem that wearing the military uniform or a suit suggests an embodiment of a tough and serious exterior. This has been cultivated and performed in the everyday, such as in shopping and aesthetic taste. The choices in colour, the over-competitive nature of sports rivalries, as well as a display of loyalty, belonging and allegiance to a uniformed identity typified by nationalism, all contribute to the understanding and 'normalisation' of these suited ideals. Alexander helps to identify this notion from a performative lens as *Passing*.

The notion of passing, posited by Alexander, is explained and applied in this study. Within cultural studies this subversive tactic is rooted within the 'abjection' of black experience, in which black people 'pass for' white or through some other means to gain some of the privileges of 'whiteness' by virtue of their proximity to it. I argue that this proximity is explicitly expressed through a deliberate effort to style one's self through clothing and other means relating to the affluence of a Eurocentric, male privilege. Education, wealth, and property are some of the characteristics that relate to these sartorial expressions and linked to the constructed beliefs around suited male figures. 'Passing' is also recognised here, as a tactic born out of survival, specifically as it is framed and applied within sartorial display and representation of self, as referred to by Conquergood as radical acts.

The thesis is a self-reflective study, which invites the processes of auto-ethnographic methodologies to enquire into the terrain of personal lived experiences by metaphorically cloaking oneself within one's own social, racial, cultural and psychological modes of being. Gender and queer studies added to the theoretical basis towards understanding the notion of role-playing, as performing the 'other' has often been the difference between life and death.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

Masculine embodiment does not start with the final product (the suit or blazer) and its interaction in the everyday, but with its production, as well as its distribution to the public by way of public imagery (such as the media) and through actual physical interactions. The historical conditioning of the suit or blazer (as Foucault and Gqola would suggest), is as important in this inquiry into masculinity. Within the suit there lies a vast amount of information about how trade, war, religion, traditions and colonialism have contributed to multiple, entangled notions of masculine performance. Clothing, or costume as a by-product of fashion, also helps us visually understand how history has changed over time, in maybe more ways than words alone. This is because clothing allows us to physically and visually track how technology evolves alongside shifts in morality and power struggles.

My study into the use of alternative everyday clothing (including garment design and finishes) as resistance to European aesthetics, does not come without their own faults. I do not want to romanticise the aesthetic values of untidiness and anti-fashion movements, as many other violent masculine expressions of embodiment have sought to do. Instead, I have offered an alternative, embodied series of engagements, practices and performances that begin to rehearse alternative modes of being 'masculine' in a decolonised, less stereotyped, and re-imagined African body.

I conclude knowing that the work does not end here as forms of hypermasculinity are so ingrained in the fabric of a globalised, 21st century society that it manifests in many ways beyond that of sartorial displays. This is however, at least a study from the perspective of garments, their design and their wearing, that I hope will encourage more studies of this nature in the future. In addition, I am encouraged that my efforts in this study, can help find and support new ways of knowing, that are not always represented in academic institutions.

Appendix



Figure 1 Black Tie - An Alternative Store Opening (2017) - Mid-Semester Performance. Image courtesy of Neo



Figure 2: Black Tie - An Alternative Store Opening (2017) - Mid-Semester Performance. Image courtesy of Neo



Figure 3: Black Tie - An Alternative Store Opening (2017) - Mid-Semester Performance. Image courtesy of Neo Mokgosi



Figure 4: Black Tie - An Alternative Store Opening (2017) - Mid-Semester Performance. Image courtesy of Neo

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity



Figure 5: Black Tie - An Alternative Store Opening (2017) – *Top Billings* invasive camera man. Image courtesy of Neo Mokgosi

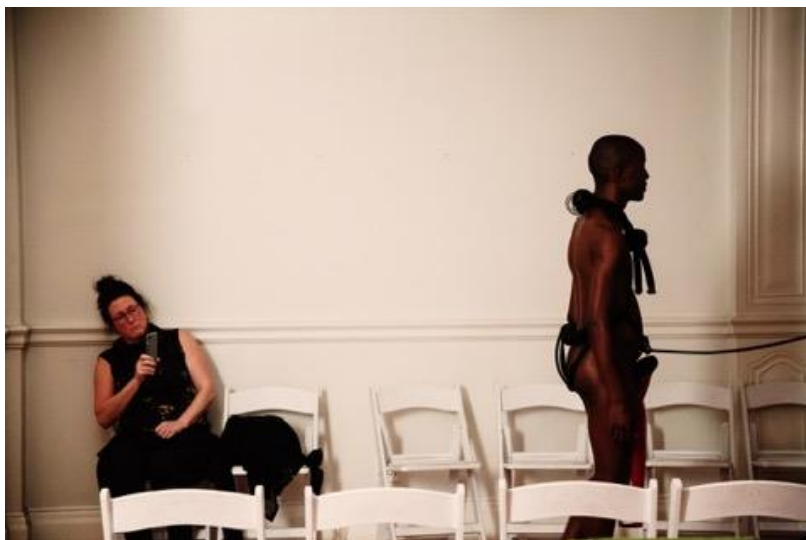


Figure 6: Black Tie - An Alternative Store Opening (2017) – Social Media as a great medium of documentation. Image courtesy of ICA

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

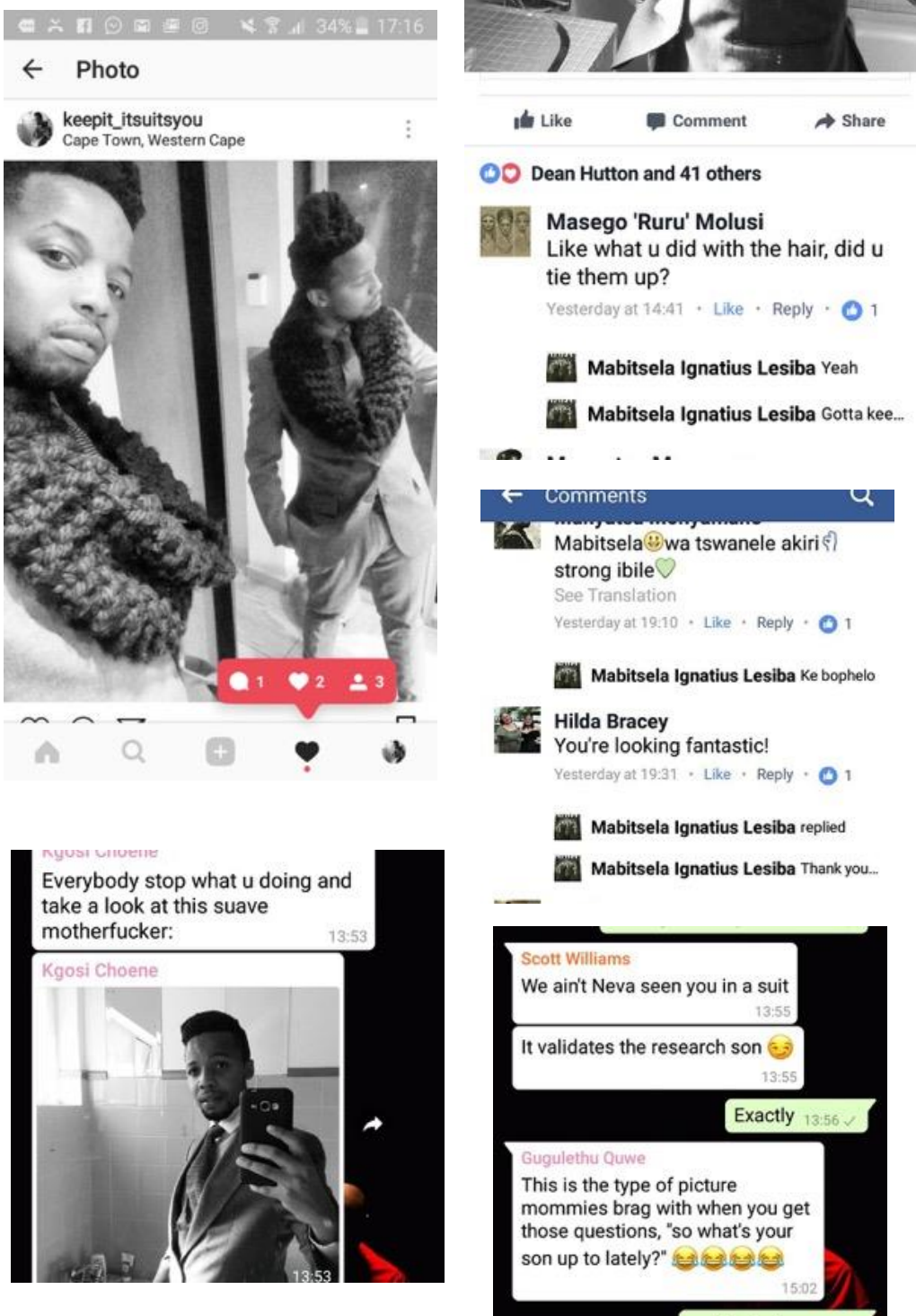


Figure 7: *KeepIt_ItSuitsYou* was a Performance piece conducted every Monday for the months of August and September 2017. A suit was worn on these days to research the effects of wearing suits. Images were shared over social media platforms INSTAGRAM and FACEBOOK and WHATSAPP.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity



Figure 8: VR Recording transporting observers to the performance. Image courtesy of Lesiba Mabitsela

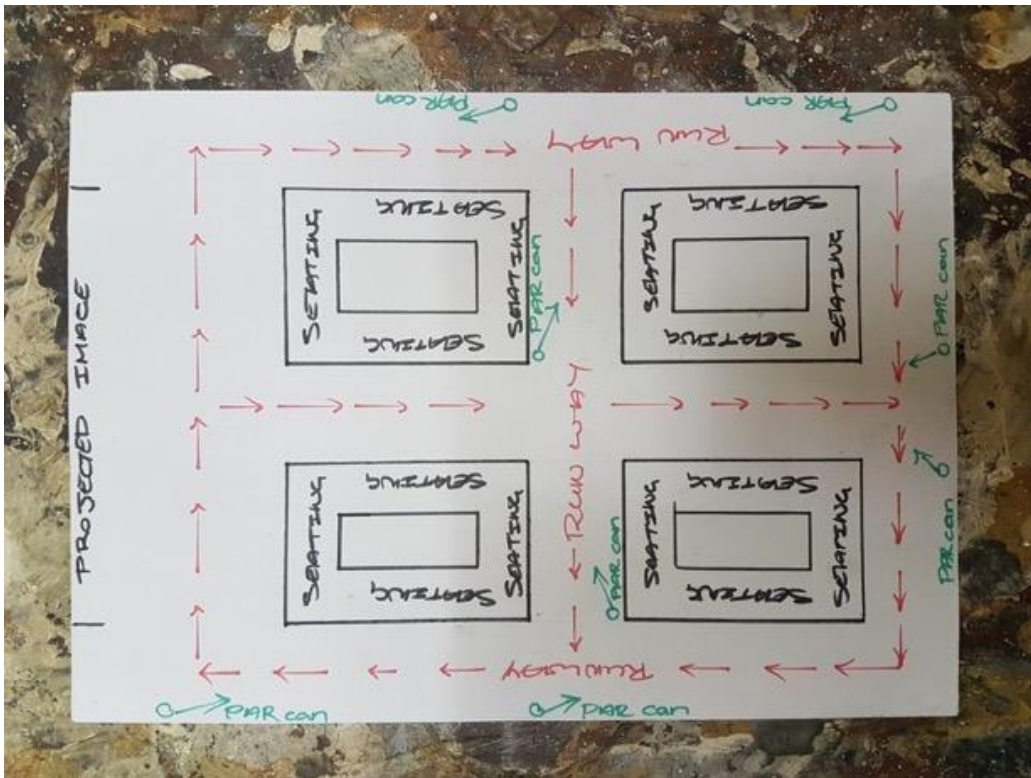


Figure 9: Black Tie - An Alternative Store Opening (2017) – Slave Lodge floor plan. Image courtesy of Lesiba Mabitsela

CHAPTER VI

The Lounge Jacket

THE lounge jacket is undoubtedly the most widely worn one at the present time, either as part of a suit or as an "odd" garment. It is capable of many variations in general styling—such as number of buttons, number and type of pockets, shape of fronts and width of collar and lapels. And, of course, it can undergo various modifications in length, general size and shape. For consideration in this chapter on the making of the lounge, it has been decided to take a style which is likely to remain in favour for quite a long time.

We shall deal with the button-two model, mainly, but references will be made to the button-three style also. Each will be assumed to be modelled on what would be called moderate lines, with reasonable shaping at the waist and with a certain amount of "chest" judiciously effected.

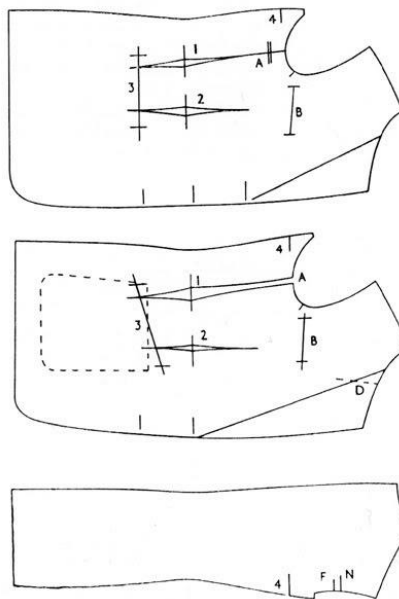
Pattern Parts

We will start at the very beginning of things and take a look at the pattern parts, as the cutter would have them on his board.

Diagram 59—The upper drawing here shows the forepart pattern of a lounge jacket, styled for the button-three front. There is an under-arm dart (1), a front dart (2); the pocket (cross or side pocket) level is indicated by 3. At 4 we have a balance mark, which will coincide with a similar one on the back. This is the side-seam position. Sometimes the under-arm dart is terminated at about 1" below the base of the scye, as denoted at A. The outside breast pocket level is shown by B.

On the middle drawing there are certain style differences to be noted. Again we have a lounge forepart pattern, this time with the button-two styling and with a little more cut-away to the front. The two darts are shown by 1 and 2; in this case the under-arm dart (1) is left open at the top (A); this is often done when it is required to give a little more "hip room" to the garment. At 3 we have the mark for a slanting type of pocket—a frequent feature nowadays. Also indicated on this drawing are the outlines of a patch pocket (see dash-lines). This type of pocket is mostly adopted for the so-

called "odd" garment, or sports jacket. The side-seam balance mark is again seen at 4 and the outside breast pocket level is marked by B. Letter D denotes the position of what is termed a gorge dart, sometimes adopted, but not so frequently now as at one time.



DIA. 59

The bottom drawing shows a typical lounge jacket back pattern. Notice the balance mark at 4, to match that on the forepart in the same position. N marks the normal, or standard, sleeve pitch position for the hindarm (or rear) part of the sleeve; F denotes a lowered pitch mark, often referred to as the "fashion" pitch. Full details of these pitches are given in the section of this chapter

Figure 10: Instruction for the making of the Tailored jacket

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity



Figure 11: Alternative school uniform transforms into multiple looks. Image courtesy of Lesiba Mabitsela

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity



**Figure 12: Alternative school uniform transforms into multiple looks. Crop top
Image courtesy of Lesiba Mabitsela**



Figure 13: Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972) in *Kente* cloth (the multi-coloured cloth has since become the national symbol of Ghanaian society), M.S. in Educa. 1942, A.M. 1943, receiving University Citation (University of Pennsylvania: University Archives Digital Images Collection, URL: <http://hdl.library.upenn.edu/1017/d/archives/20030131003>)

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity



Figure 14: VET [ting] MEN (2018) – *Rugby School Boy Aesthetic*. Image courtesy of Neo Mokgosi

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity



Figure 15: Costume for VET [ting] MEN (2018) –*pinstriped Aesthetic*. Image courtesy of Lesiba Mabitsela



Figure 16: Costume for VET [ting] MEN (2018) –*cut pieces*. Image courtesy of Lesiba Mabitsela

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity



Figure 17: Costume for VET [ting] MEN (2018) –*Enforcing masculinity*. Image courtesy of Neo Mokgosi

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity



Figure 18: VETEMENTS window display Citation: Dazed Digital URL: www.dazeddigital.com/fashion/article/36844/1/vetements-chooses-old-pile-of-clothes-for-window-display

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

12/13/2018

Ha! Ha! I Know Who You Are; Beneath Those Fine Clothes: The Art of Lesiba Mabitsela

ARTTHROB_

FEATURE REVIEW NEWS ARCHIVE WHERE WE'RE GOING SHOP SEARCH



Ha! Ha! I Know Who You Are; Beneath Those Fine Clothes: The Art of Lesiba Mabitsela

Lesiba Mabitsela

By Valeria Geselev
March 17, 2017

*"I get up in the morning
and dress up like a gentleman –
A white shirt, a tie and a suit."*

With this dressing up ceremony Mxayisemi Oswald Mthali begins his poem *Always a Suspect*, which describes an ordinary day of a black man in the streets of apartheid South Africa, constantly suspected as intruder or as a criminal.

*"Ha! Ha! I know who you are;
beneath those fine clothes
ticks the heart of a thief?"*

Mthali sharply points out the role that 'a tie and a suit' plays in local socio-political dynamics, where millions of men have to navigate minefields of false assumptions.

<https://arthrob.co.za/2017/03/17/ha-ha-i-know-who-you-are-beneath-those-fine-clothes-the-art-of-lesiba-mabitsela/>

1/5

Formatted: Font: (Default) Arial, 12 pt

Figure 19: *Ha! Ha! I Know Who You Are; Beneath Those Fine Clothes: The Art of Lesiba Mabitsela* (1/5) Performance review article by Valeria Geselev courtesy of Artthrob_

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

Formatted: Font: (Default) Arial, 12 pt

Lesiba Mabitsela, *Black Tie Store Opening*, 2016.
Performance: 6 Spin Street, Cape Town, 24 February. Image: Neo Mokgosi

Fifty years after the poem was written, apartheid was replaced with democracy, yet both the suspicion and the suit maintain their roles. This reality inspires the 'born free' artist Lesiba Mabitsela to investigate the politics of the suit and the tie in the South African context. The promising young artist is diving deep into the meanings of male fashion in the post-colonial environment, using both academic research and art practice.

"I research how men take fashion as a tool for social mobility. African slaves took clothing in order to be considered as fully human. If you are looked at as being savage, the first point of becoming civilised is clothing. I study the characteristics embodied in the suit, which becomes a symbol of masculinity."

He first developed an interest in the theme when studying fashion design at Tswana University of Technology. "There is too much European influence in African fashion in the first place. World fashion swallows native clothing and makes you think that Western fashion-making is universal and superior. I was hoping that by the end of that degree I will come up with a range of clothing that reflects production techniques that are of African descent. My approach was very naive."

After working in the fashion industry for a while, he is back in academia, as a Masters fellow of UCT Institute for Creative Arts. In the meantime he was warmly received as performance artist in the Cape Town public art circles. His reception on the streets of Cape Town was quite the opposite. "Coming from a protected space in Joburg to Cape Town I experienced myself as 'just a black person'. This is the worst place to discover that you are black."

A good window into his thesis was provided in an installation he created for the 2017 JCA Live Art Festival, presented in late February at 6 Spin Street restaurant in Cape Town. Under the title *Black Tie Store Opening* Lesiba brings together fashion design and performance "to address issues of de-coloniality and memory in our everyday existence."

Entering the space just in time, I take a seat and watch two video screens playing a cheerful video of a tailor working on garments. As anticipation builds up, the video is replaced with fast edited black and white imagery of gentlemen from film noir and Dolce & Gabbana ads. The soundscape is replaced with disturbing sounds of beating slaves, smacking women, sex. Together the audio-visuals mix violence with

Lesiba Mabitsela, *Black Tie Store Opening*, 2016. Performance: 6 Spin Street, Cape Town, 24 February. Image: Neo Mokgosi

<https://arthrob.co.za/2017/03/17/ha-ha-i-know-who-you-are-beneath-those-fine-clothes-the-art-of-lesiba-mabitsela/>

2/5

Figure 20: *Ha! Ha! I Know Who You Are; Beneath Those Fine Clothes: The Art of Lesiba Mabitsela (2/5)* Performance review article by Valeria Geselev courtesy of Artrrob_

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

12/13/2018

Ha! Ha! I Know Who You Are, Beneath Those Fine Clothes: The Art of Lesiba Mabitsela

Formatted: Font: (Default) Arial, 12 pt

consumerism, linking rape to sports cars, slavery to perfumes, high heels to torture.

A model comes into the space, walks between the four rows of chairs where audience is seated. The setting resembles a fashion show. Unlike the Men Fashion Week, the model is intimately close to us, the audience, without the distance usually created by a stage. This allows seeing the details of his garment, and also the details of his body. He is not trying to look happy or sexy, he doesn't smile or try to please us, he walks like a ghost, as if unaware of us looking at him. That is until the model occasionally creates long eye contact with an audience member, breaking another convention of the fashion world. The power structure of the gaze is disrupted.

"I reference a fashion show, which is a place of performance, where we model human beings. The audience in fashion shows also performs, a social performance, like who sits in the front row."

What looks from first glance as big earphones resting on his neck, is actually a neatly tied black rope, throwing me into connotations of suicide or lynching execution. In his hands is a bible. He is dressed in a long and elegant skirt, which turns out to be a half-skirt when I see his back. He wears a one sleeve jacket, with no shirt underneath.

My mind drifts to our conversation, when Lesiba mentioned how in his search for African fashion-making, he finds beauty in fault and mistakes. "The Sotho blanket is a good example. The red mark on it was originally a fault. We like faults. It's not the perfection that we like or find aesthetically beautiful, but also the non-perfection. It's a different way of appreciating things."

"Decolonizing is almost seen as anti-defacing. My process is like a design protest: rejecting or unlearning all the stuff that I've learned and trying new methods. It is harder than you think, somewhat impossible. It's like unlearning English or writing a curriculum in isiZulu – and still following an English structure. I take a blanket, that represents something traditional, but shape it so it fits into the European mould and look of a suit. Is that adding to the canon of global fashion, what European fashion does to any form of native clothing?"

As for the black tie which is mentioned in the performance title, he says "Calling it a store opening leaves space for irony – what does the black tie mean? The noose becomes our black tie. The more we go into that world, we kill our Africaness, for lack of an alternative, adequate and equivalent name." He mentions that just across the road from the show venue, Church Square, was a site of slave trade and a graveyard.

After the first model finishes his long and tense walkabout, Lesiba himself comes out, almost naked. He too has a black rope tied around his neck. He wears a golden jock strap with long and heavy tube of grey blanket fabric hanging between his thighs. Here it is, the missing sleeve! In his hand is frankincense in a thurible, used in Catholic churches. He hums "come let us adore him". I feel uncomfortable when he creates striking eye contact. I am considering whether to look away or smile, but neither feels right, so I hide into my notes and my camera for the rest of the show. As his bare and oily behinds face me, I can't help but checking them out. Now I remember that he said before the show that it will be provocative. He makes himself vulnerable. To speak honestly about masculinity does require a metaphoric undressing. As much as it is social, it is highly personal.

Lesiba Mabitsela, *Black Tie Store Opening*, 2016. Performance: 6 Spin Street, Cape Town, 24 February. Image: Neo Mokoena

"When you talk about masculinity, the discussion is highly sexual from the get go. I explore how masculinity performs. In your quest of becoming a man you are confronted with contradicting images: men going to the mountain, then assuming the identity of a man as the colonial figure, the master. How does the suit dictate the way you are treated? How does it say what type of a man you are? We still see ourselves as half men. My father is Phasi but he doesn't identify as Phasi in the traditional sort of way. He is Roman Catholic. My brother and I never interacted with our cultural traditions."

Between the rows of seats are tables with messy piles of leftover fabric. These are usually hidden in the studios and workshops, away from the consumers, but here they are placed in the centre of the space.

"I want to discuss off-cuts, like 'negative space' in visual art. The idea of waste becomes important – what do we cut away from blackness?"

<https://artthrob.co.za/2017/03/17/ha-ha-i-know-who-you-are-beneath-those-fine-clothes-the-art-of-lesiba-mabitsela/>

3/5

Figure 21: *Ha! Ha! I Know Who You Are; Beneath Those Fine Clothes: The Art of Lesiba Mabitsela (3/5)* Performance review article by Valeria Geselev courtesy of Artthrob_

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

Formatted: Font: (Default) Arial, 12 pt

12/13/2018

Ha! Ha! I Know Who You Are, Beneath Those Fine Clothes: The Art of Lesiba Mabitsela

After Lesiba finishes his round, three almost naked models walk out towards us with similar jock straps and similar misplaced sleeves turned mega-dicks. Here the black rope motif is taken one step further – the three are tied to each other, with unavoidable reference to slave chains. Or perhaps an BDSM foreplay? I recognise scenes from the Stanley Kubrick's erotic film 'Eyes Wide Shut'. More horror sounds beat us from the speakers.

I ask Lesiba how does he define himself, coming from fashion design and now working in arts. "It's a power thing to separate art and design. Fashion designers haven't been considered as artists. Fashion is perceived as superficial thing, mass produced products. Yet pictures in Crazy Store are called art. We need to embrace change and interdisciplinarity. I was questioned if I am an artist, people like calling me a designer. I call myself an interdisciplinary artist".

After experiencing this installation, I admit he takes this definition very seriously – playing almost with every medium possible: he sings, performs, designs, sews, edits video and sound. He also masters the art of moulding audience participation. At that point I realise the clever manipulation curated by Lesiba (with the help of Richard September) – he uses us, the audience, as part of his installation. In my head I compliment him for a brilliant engineering of audience – when we are sitting around, not in one group, the power of our gaze is divided and conquered by the artist. That's how he manages to make us feel embarrassed when we are sitting dressed and he walks around almost naked.

The setting allows us as audience members also to see each other, our facial expressions are awkward, unpleasant and disturbed, like witnessing an accident. To the sound of moaning, with an ass in your face, you make an eye contact with a familiar face sitting across the room – will you smile and gesture a 'hi' like in any other cultural event?

Signalling the end of the show, all the models come out walking faster than before, throwing another reminder to a fashion runway. When they finally disappear, the video fades away, but the sound remains. Whether it is a technical error or intentional choice, it wisely prevents the customary applause from cutting the strong sensation of the performance.

I sit there wishing my man was there to see it. After about twenty minutes, the video returns towards what looks like a second round of the performance. I'm very happy when my wish is fulfilled and my man walks into the space and sits next to me. Not long into the show, he is chosen by the first model, for the long eye contact treatment. I notice how embraced he is, and I can't wait to see his response to the jock strap. He doesn't give me the satisfaction, and walks out.

<https://arthrob.co.za/2017/03/17/ha-ha-i-know-who-you-are-beneath-those-fine-clothes-the-art-of-lesiba-mabitsela/>

4/5

Figure 22: *Ha! Ha! I Know Who You Are; Beneath Those Fine Clothes: The Art of Lesiba Mabitsela* (4/5) Performance review article by Valeria Geselev courtesy of Arttrob_

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

12/13/2018

Ha! Ha! I Know Who You Are; Beneath Those Fine Clothes: The Art of Lesiba Mabitsela

I stay alone for the whole second round, feeling disappointed. Maybe the multi-layered critical content that Lesiba has crafted gives me intellectual pleasure, but is too much for the men who this work is really about.

Filed Under: Design, Fashion, insight, Performance Tagged With: JCA Live Art Festival, Institute for Creative Arts, Lesiba Mabitsela

0 Comments artthrob.co.za

Login

Recommend Tweet Share

Sort by Best

Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS

Name The
First
of
Remembrance
as
Be the first
comment
The
Wash
of
Fleeting
Settlements
Mazzone

Fragments

Subscribe

Add Disqus to your site

Related Stories

About | Advertise | Contact

Copyright © 2018 - ArtThrob

Steen Barrett Web Development

Formatted: Font: (Default) Arial, 12 pt

Figure 23: *Ha! Ha! I Know Who You Are; Beneath Those Fine Clothes: The Art of Lesiba Mabitsela (5/5)* Performance review article by Valeria Geselev courtesy of Artthrob_

Bibliography

- Broqua, C. & Doquet, A., 2013. Examining Masculinities in Africa and Beyond. *Cahiers d' études Africaines*, (53), pp.1-32.
- Burton, J. & Franco, J., 1978. Culture and Imperialism. *Latin American Perspectives*, 5(16), pp.2-12.
- Butler, J., 1988. Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. *The John Hopkins University Press, Theatre Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4, pp.519-31.
- Butler, J., 1989. Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions. 86(11).
- Butler, J., 1999. *Gender Trouble*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge.
- Connell, R.W. & Messerschmidt, J.W., 2005. Hegemonic Masculinity. *Gender and Society*, 19(6), pp.829-59.
- Conquergood, D., 1991. Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics. *Communication Monographs Vol. 58*, pp.179 - 195.
- Conquergood, D., 2002. Performance Studies - Interventions and Radical Research. *The Drama Review*, 46(2), pp.145-56.
- Conquergood, D. & Johnson, E.P., 2013. *Cultural Struggles: Performance, Ethnography, Praxis*. Michigan: University of Michigan.
- Cornwall, A., 1997. Men, masculinity and 'gender in development'. *Gender and Development*, 5(2), pp.8-13.
- Derricourt, R., 2011. *Inventing Africa: History, Archeology and Ideas*. Pluto Press.
- English, B., 2011. *Japanese Fashion Designers: The Work and Influence of Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo*. London: Berg publishers.
- Fanon, F., 1986. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Pluto Press.
- Foucault, M., 1982. The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), pp.777 - 795.
- Gaines, K., 1993. Assimilationist Minstrelsy as Racial Uplift Ideology: James D. Corrothers' Literary Quest for Black Leadership. *American Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp.341 - 369.
- Geselev, V., 2017. Ha! Ha! I Know Who You Are; Beneath Those Fine Clothes: The Art of Lesiba Mabitsela. *Artthrob_*, 17 March. p.3.
- Gqola, P.D., 2015. *Rape: A South African Nightmare*. Johannesburg: MF Books - Joburg.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

- Ha, M.-P., 1995. Review: Culture and Imperialism by Edward Said. *Research in African Literatures*, 26(1), pp.154-57.
- Hall, S., 1978. Marxism and Culture. *Radical History Review*, 18, pp.5 - 14.
- Hall, S., 1992. What is the "Black" in Black Popular Culture? In Wallace, M. & Dent, G. *Black Popular Culture*. Seattle, United States of America: Bay Press. pp.20-32.
- Hart, J., n.d. In *Borrowed Power*.
- Haruhara, Y., 2015. *The Edo samurai knew how to look sharp*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/culture/2015/06/30/arts/edo%ADsamurai%ADknew%ADlook%ADsharp/#.V2aOzDvB97IU6/6> [Accessed 22 September 2016].
- Hollander, A., 1972. Fashion in Nudity. *The George Review*, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp.642 - 702.
- Hollander, A., 1975. *Seeing Through Clothes*. London: University of California Press.
- Hollander, A., 2015. *New Republic*. [Online] Available at: https://newrepublic.com/article/121239/anne-hollander-mens-fashion?utm_source=social&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=sharebtn [Accessed 18 September 2017].
- Johnson, E.P., 2013. Introduction. In Conquergood, D. *Cultural Struggles*. University of Michigan. pp.1 - 14.
- Jorgensen, K.E., 2014. *Sapologie: Performing Postcolonial Identity in the Democratic Republic of Congo*. Toronto: Submitted to OCAD University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Masters of Arts in Contemporary Art, Design and New Media Histories.
- Joshi, D., 2002. *Gandhiji on Khadi*. Mumbai: Gandhi Book Centre.
- Kannik, P., 1968. *Military Uniforms in Colour*. London: Blandford Press.
- Karlin, J.G., 2002. The Gender of Nationalism: Competing Masculinities in Meiji Japan. *The Society of Japanese Studies*, pp.58-61.
- Kuitert, W., 2014. Japanese Art, Aesthetics, and European Discourse: Unraveling Sharawadgi. *International Research Centre for Japanese Studies, National Institute for Humanities*, p.89.
- Levine, P., 2008. States of Undress: Nakedness and the Colonial Imagination. *Victorian Studies Vol. 50 No. 2*, pp.189 - 219.
- Lovett, T., 2012. "What the Blazers"? The effect of cultural symbols on classic identity and learning outcomes. *Journal of Educational Enquiry*, 12(1), pp.1-14.

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

- Madison, D.S., 2013. *Critical Ethnography: Methods, Ethics and Performance*. Northwestern University: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Mary, B.A., 2010. *This is the Wood of the Cross Triduum Good Friday Veneration Procession Chant*. [Online] Available at: <https://youtu.be/D1zZECPEPLs> [Accessed 17 October 2017].
- McKenzie, J., 2016. *Design Lab & The Democratization of Digitally | Jon McKenzie | TEDxUWMadison*. [Online] Available at: <https://youtu.be/YmYgTy2VkBUE> [Accessed 06 October 2017].
- Mhlahlo, A.P., 2009. *What is Manhood? The Significance of Circumcision in the Xhosa Initiation Ritual*. Master of Philosophy in Community and Development. Cape Town: University of Stellenbosch University of Stellenbosch.
- Miller, P.M.L., 2009. *Slave to Fashion*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Morrell, R., 2005. Men Movements and Gender Transformation in South Africa. In Ouzgane, L. & Morrell, R. *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the late nineteenth century to the present*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan; University of Kwazulu-Natal Press. pp.283-88.
- Morrell, R., Jewkes, R. & Lindegger, G., 2012. Hegemonic Masculinity/Masculinities in South Africa: Culture, Power, and Gender Politics. *Men and Masculinities*, 1(15), pp.11-30.
- Munoz, J., 2009. Cruising Utopia. *The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, pp.97 - 113.
- Narumi, H., 2000. Fashion Orientalism and the Limits of Counter Culture. *Postcolonial Studies*, pp.311-29.
- Rabine, L.W., 2013. Photography, Poetry, and the Dressed Bodies of Leopold Sedar Senghor. In Soyini Madison, D. & Hansen, K.T. *African Dress: Fashion, Agency, Performance*. A&C Black. pp.171-85.
- Ratele, K., 2006. Ruling masculinity and sexuality. *Feminist Africa*, (6), pp.48-64.
- Ratele, K., 2008. Studying Men in Africa Critically. In E. Uchendu, ed. *Masculinities in Contemporary Africa*. 1st ed. Dakar: Imprimerie Saint-Paul. pp.18-.
- Rathbone, K., 2013. Dressing the Colonial Body: Senegalese Riflemen in Uniform. In Soyini Madison, D. & Hansen, K.T. *African Dress: Fashion, Agency, Performance*. A&C Black. pp.111 - 123.
- Schechner, R., 2012. *Performance Studies: An Introduction - Performativity*. [Online] Available at: <https://youtu.be/Wm3kvxRFS58> [Accessed 06 October 2017].

Performing Methods of Undress towards a Re-Imagined African Masculine Identity

Shannon, B., 2004. ReFashioning Men: Fashion, Masculinity and the Cultivation of the Male Consumer in Britain, 1860 - 1914. *Indiana University Press*, pp.597 - 630.

Unsworth, A., 2017. Blanket Rule: The Story of the Basotho Blanket weaves together Victorian England, Italy, an African Kingdom - and Rinderpest. *Lifestyle Magazine*, 22 January. pp.6 - 7.

Wacks, D.A., 2006. Reconquest Colonialism and Andalusí Narrative Practice in the Conde Lucanor. *Diacritics: Theories of Medieval Iberia*, pp.87-103.

Woodward, W., 1996. The Petticoat and the Kaross: Missionary Bodies and the Feminine in the London Missionary Society, 1816 - 1828. *Kronos: South African Histories*, pp.91-107.

Yoshida, M., Earle, J.V., Katsumie, M. & Lehmann, J.-P., 1980. *Japan Style*. Tokyo, NY, San Francisco: Kodansha Pblr.

Ziff, B. & Rao, P.V., 1997. Introduction to Cultural Appropriation: A Framework for Analysis. In Rao, B.Z.a.P.V. *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. pp.1-30.