

SAGA BWOYS AND RUDE BWOYS

MIGRATION, GROOMING, AND DANDYISM

Michael McMillan

A dandy is a kind of embodied, animated sign system that deconstructs given and normative categories of identity (elite, white, masculine, heterosexual, patriotic) and reperforms them in a manner more in keeping with his often avant garde visions of society and self.

Monica L. Miller, *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity*

Dandyism was initially imposed on black men in eighteenth-century England as the transatlantic slave trade and an emerging culture generated a vogue in dandified black servants. The black dandy's appropriation of Western Victorian and Edwardian aesthetics was infused with African sensibilities to create a new character in the visual landscape, identifiable by ironic gestures, witty sartorial statements, and improvisations on existing styles. In a British context there are notable examples of black dandies who have made themselves present where they would otherwise have been absent or erased from the colonial era through the post-colonial period, which was marked by significant post-Second World War Caribbean migration.

Space does not allow an unpacking of black dandy geneologies from the eighteenth century except to say that, as Monica Miller points out in her seminal book *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity*, histories



Three Jamaican immigrants arrive at Tilburg Docks, Essex, June 22, 1948, on board the ex-troopship *SS Empire Windrush*, smartly dressed in zoot suits and trilby hats. *Left to right*: John Hazel, a twenty-one-year-old boxer; Harold Wilmot, thirty-two; and John Richards, a twenty-two-year-old carpenter. Photo: Douglas Miller

and analyses of dandyism in a European context have not explored to any significant extent factual or fictional black dandies.¹ Needless to say, a “racialized dandy” disrupts and subverts the gendered status quo, as he is hypermasculine and feminine. As if to compensate for his emasculation by slavery, he is the “aggressively heterosexual” outsider announcing his “alien status” by clothing his dark body in a fine suit.² In focusing on how Caribbean migrant men and their sons contributed to understanding black dandyism in an African diasporic context, this article will focus on the material culture and performativity of the *saga bwoy* (bwoy as in Caribbean creole vernacular) and *rude bwoy* as markers of sartorial interventions that Eastern Caribbean and Jamaican migrant men were making in the 1950s and the 1960s, respectively, in an attempt to convert absence into presence through self-display.³

Stuart Hall describes the symbolic journey of the diasporic subject as circuitous rather than teleological. He characterizes diasporic subjectivity as a process of *becoming* that involves traveling by another route to arrive at the same place as the original point of departure. This rerouting creates the possibility to retell the past in a new way, which the moment of arrival in the old world (the “mother country” of the British Empire) provided for migrants of my parents’ generation. In this framework, as Hall sees it, identity is a performative process, continually negotiating through a “complex historical process of appropriation, compromise, subversion, masking, invention and revival.”⁴

Style-Fashion-Dress

As Carol Tulloch argues, black style has always “played a starring role” in the development of black culture, embodied in dress, music, language, and mannerisms, yet it remains a “complex commodity” to adequately define.⁵ Being elusively enigmatic, black style is more about who or what expresses style at a particular moment rather than about being cool or being an arbiter of style.

What is suggested here is that style is a process of becoming, which echoes Hall’s conception of diasporic identity as a dialectic between subject positions. This negotiation of multiple subject positions as a means to express emotion through the performance of the dressed body is a form of

entanglement of style-fashion-desire or, to use Tulloch’s triumvirate, “style-fashion-dress.” In this context, *style* constitutes a system of concepts that signifies the multitude of meanings and frameworks that are always the “whole-and-part” of dress studies. Tulloch sees style as agency in the construction of self through the assemblage of garments, accessories, and beauty regimes that may or may not be in fashion at the time of use.⁶ The style of dress worn by black people, where blackness here is culturally, historically, and politically constructed, has had a profound effect on the fashion of street cultures in Britain since at least the 1940s, at the moment of post-World War II Caribbean migration.⁷

I have always been struck by how men and women of my father’s generation were so well dressed in those iconic black-and-white documentary photographs depicting their arrival in their new homeland after a three-week transatlantic journey by sea. With dignity and respectability packed deep in their suitcases, they were formally dressed as a sign of self-respect—with dresses pressed and hats angled in a “universally jaunty cocky” style, in preparation for whatever was to happen next.⁸ Their neatly pressed suits were complemented with white breast-pocket handkerchiefs, polished brogue shoes, white starched shirts with throat-strangling ties, and topped by trilby hats that they set at a cocked angle.

Cool

Within the struggle for meaning over the representation of the black male body, the black dandy operates in the process of becoming in a betwixt-and-between world that is governed by the context of his practice. That context is usually public, and for the dandy, much less the black dandy, the street is his home, where performance is inscribed in his (sometimes her) signifying practices as a “cultural sphere” of representation.⁹ This “is situated entirely on boundaries; boundaries go through it everywhere. . . . Every cultural act lives on boundaries; in this is its seriousness and significance.”¹⁰ The dialectic of that context is symbolically expressed in Hall’s metaphor of *frontlines* and *backyards*. Operating in the public realm, the frontline represents a politicized edge between black culture and white culture; the

backyard is less confrontational, more informal, more complicated—a place where private negotiations might occur.¹¹ Yet the frontline-backyard dichotomy does not quite capture the negotiation between the public and the private realms for the black dandy in his performance.

Daniel Miller's duality of the *transcendent* and the *transient* is useful for unpacking these complex subjective negotiations on an ontological plane.¹² Semiotically, in the diasporic vernacular, the *transcendent* has equivalence in the practice of good grooming as a register of respectability, as in the ethos of paying attention to one's appearance because first impressions matter, which as a sartorial principle resonates across the African diaspora. While good grooming as performance does not reveal all there is to know about black subjectivity, it does reveal the mythic nature of black popular culture as a theater of popular desires.

The *transient*, on the other hand, is registered in reputation, which in the vernacular of African diasporic culture values the public performances of speech, music, dance, sexual display, and prowess. If respectability through the transcendent is more enduring, then reputation is very much more local, ephemeral, and consequently transient as a "highly personalized and self-controlled expression of a particular aesthetic." The dialectic of the transcendent and the transient is that agency through style-fashion-dress can be an agreement to conform and a struggle as "a symbol of transience and disconformities."¹³

The interplay between transcendent and transient sheds light on the "signifying practice," to use Hall's concept, of the black dandy in terms of appearing to be cool.¹⁴ As a mutable concept, *cool* is a state of being, manifested not only in garments worn on the body but also in the walk, posture, and gestures that constitute a performance.¹⁵ In *Aesthetics of Cool: Afro-Atlantic Art and Music*, Robert Farris Thompson associates cool with the Yoruba Orisha deity of Oshun, who signifies beauty apart from other West African associations.¹⁶ Using African trickster figures such as Anansi, the ancient power of Eshu, and the subversive philosophical priorities mandated by the cosmic power of Ashe, slaves incorporated a performance strategy as a mask. The mask is the signifier, while

the masquerade is the signified, which, as a ritual practice from Africa, served to camouflage slaves in plantation society. The masquerade in this masking is the phenomenon of being *cool*. To exhibit grace under pressure, as reflected in personal character, or Ashe, became a means to invert and subvert the brutal oppression of plantation society through imitation, reinvention, and artifice. Thompson's concept of *cool* applies to the self-control of the black dandy's sartorial aesthetics, which exhibits the duality of transcendental balance and transient rebellion in the style-fashion-dress of the black male body.

The Zoot Suit

Throughout the colonial era, and especially during the postcolonial period in the twentieth century, there has been cultural political traffic between North America and the Caribbean within the context of the African diaspora. Because of growing American cultural imperialism, this traffic was often represented as coming from the United States in the forms of music such as jazz, soul, and the blues. But the Caribbean, and particularly Jamaica, has also had a powerful, if hidden, influence on American cultural politics, namely, Harlem Renaissance writer Claude McKay, Marcus Garvey, and DJ Kool Herc, whose sound system played in Brooklyn and is credited as giving birth to hip-hop.

A key aspect of this cultural political traffic was the aesthetic exchange through style-fashion-dress and an article of clothing that would affect men's fashion in the future and become relevant in terms of saga bwoys and rude bwoys: the zoot suit. It was first worn by young African American and Mexican American men in urban areas across the United States as part of a dance cult and to make a political statement and be associated with the representation of social deviant behavior during the 1940s. The zoot suiter spared no expense on garments that were meticulously worn from head to foot. As Holly Alford notes, "The suit came in various colors, such as lime green or canary yellow, and many suits bore a plaid stripe, on hounds-tooth print."¹⁷ Everything was exaggerated with accessories such as a v-knot tie, the zoot chain, tight collar, wide flat hat, and Dutch-type shoes. The zoot suit was part of a total look that not only included the suit, but also hairstyle, gait,

and vernacular language. Slicking back the hair so that it was shiny and smooth was achieved by cutting the hair close or by relaxing or straightening it with a process called congolene, using a mixture of lye, eggs, and potatoes.¹⁸ In fact, in his autobiography Malcolm X recalls how wearing his “conk” hairstyle, associated with zoot suiters and musicians like Little Richard and social deviants like pimps and drug dealers, was a painful experience.¹⁹

How the zoot suit was worn was heavily influenced by the walk or strut, a confident swagger through which the body performed a “transcendental balance and transient rebellion.” Intrinsic to the style-fashion-dress of the zoot suit was *jive talk*, which was used in the African American swing community to detract and sometimes put down the white man. Alford acknowledges that some define *jive talk* as a language intrinsic to the signifying practice of the zoot suit, yet she does not explore it beyond the semiotic meaning of argot.²⁰ Relegating *jive talk* to colloquial slang negates the fact that it is expressed as much through the body as part of an oral tradition such as creole languages in the Caribbean. *Jive talk* and creole languages appropriate a European lexicon with African grammar or rhythm and have been stigmatized through the colonialist lens on creole culture that shaped the racism that characterized slavery.²¹ These expressions provide black people, and provided the enslaved, a secret language and a soft means of resistance in order to subvert the power of the white and colonial elite; as a consequence, they have been demonized as inferior languages. Caribbean poets like Louise Bennett and Edward Kamau Brathwaite have reclaimed Creole as a national language by valorizing its practice within an oral tradition that resists its demonization as an inferior dialect or bastardized pidgin form of the colonial tongue.²²

Across a whole range of cultural forms there is a “syncretic” dynamic which critically appropriates elements from the master-codes of the dominant culture and “creolises” them, disarticulating given signs and re-articulating their symbolic meaning. The subversive force of this hybridising tendency is most apparent at the level of language itself where creoles, patois and black English decentre, destabilise and carnivalise the linguistic domination of “English”—a nation language of the master discourse—through

strategic inflections, re-accentuations and other performative moves in semantic syntactic and lexical codes.²³

The zoot suit for young African American and Mexican American men provided a means of negotiating subject positions in the making and remaking of their identities. From a subcultural perspective, wearing a zoot suit was a rebellion through style against white hegemony, parental repression, and black middle-class conservatism in American society. The suit became a code for criminal male youths, and a rationing order issued in 1942 restricted the suit, along with other goods. Regardless, zoot suiters continued their conspicuous consumption of what has been called *bling*. African American and Hispanics would promenade around town; in 1943, during the Second World War, this attracted negative and violent attacks from Navy servicemen, who went on “zootbeating” sprees. The zoot suit became associated with race riots across the United States at a time when racism was rife and many African Americans and Mexican American felt disenfranchised.

The zoot suit was a refusal . . . of subservience. . . . It was during his period as a young zoot-suiter that Chicano union activist Cesar Chavez first came into contact with community politics, and it was through the experiences of participating in zoot-suit riots in Harlem, that the young pimp “Detroit Red” began a political education that transformed him into the Black radical leader Malcolm X.²⁴

The influence of the zoot suit’s style-fashion-dress migrated beyond the United States to youth cultures that were emerging elsewhere. It would also be acknowledged as the first American suit, informing the aesthetics of style through generously cut and elaborate pin-striped, herringbone, and plaid suits with long, roomy coats and generously cut pleated and cuffed pants.²⁵

Saga Bwoys

The style-fashion-dress of the zoot suit was also evident in the brightly colored, generously cut suits that black men wore in the Caribbean during the 1950s. As with the zoot suit, the flamboyant use of

color and the cut of the suits made in the Caribbean were distinctive: trousers were high-waisted and had low seats and baggy legs that tapered to the ankle and were paired with double-breasted jackets with wide lapels. These *sharp* suits provided a lively contrast to the “endless shades of grey that engulfed ‘never had it so good’ Britain.”²⁶

They set a new pace in picture ties, and “Tropical” lightweight, vanilla-tinted, Scottish tweed or “Rainbow” mohair suits, so devilishly cut by fellow cottage bespoke tailors they appeared to move in rhythm with the wearer’s easy stride. Hats expertly perched on the head completed the look. It was an ensemble so sharp that these purveyors of style appeared to slice their way through the smog of Britain’s major cities. It was a potent, capricious mode of dress worn *en masse* by black, working class immigrants, accompanied by a deep-rooted love affair with hot calypsos, sensuous Latin-American sounds and temperamental jazz. A rhythmic patter laced with fresh, intoxicating words and phrases, was an essential accessory.²⁷

In Eastern Caribbean vernacular, *saga bwoys*, or *sweet bwoys*, were men who combined sartorial originality with ways of walking and talking in conspicuous display.²⁸ To echo the point made by Daniel Miller in his anthropological research in Trinidad, *gallerying*, or promenading, is not so much fashion as style, not simply what is worn but how it is worn, based on the recombining of elements in an individual style that has a transient quality. It is about maintaining a personal reputation for the occasion, the event for the moment. It is therefore ephemeral just like the costumes made for carnival, signifying on something or someone as the performance of style.²⁹ Like zoot suiters, the suits *saga bwoys* wore had full pants that were comfortable and roomy and conducive to dancing to swing, jazz, Latin American music, and calypso.

In his novel *The Lonely Londoners*, Sam Selvon describes the attention to detail that the character Sir Galahad pays in dressing for a date: the cleaning of his shoes with Cherry Blossom until he could see his face in the leather; putting on a new pair of socks with a nylon splice in the heel and the toe; the white Van Heusen shirt; the tie he chooses from

his collection; the big operation of wetting his hair with water, greasing it, combing it, then touching it up with a brush into shape; putting on the trousers with a seam that could cut you; and finally the jacket fitting square on the shoulders. “One thing with Galahad since he hit London, no foolishness about clothes.”³⁰

Supposed predation by black men on white women was another staple image recycled from the ancient lexicon of colonial racism. Those men were linked to the image of the pimp, and whether they were black or white, the women with whom they associated were marked by the taint of prostitution. If the women were unwilling, the men became rapists. If the women were willing, they became the vanguard of racial degeneration.³¹

Then there is Harris:

Harris is a fellar who like to play ladedda, and he like English customs and thing, he does be polite and say thank you and he does get up in the bus and the tube to let woman sit down, which is a thing even them Englishmen don’t do. And when he dress, you think is some Englishman going work in the city, bowler and umbrella, and briefcase tuck under the arm, with The Times fold up in the pocket so the name would show, and he walking upright like life is he alone who alive in the world. Only thing, Harris face black.³²

Harris could be read here as registering a “speaky spokey” sensibility, being more English than the English, a mimic man imitating the mores of the colonial elite. And yet it is Harris who organizes dances that provide a disparate network of West Indians a place to socialize with each other during the late 1950s. We could imagine Harris among a group of West Indian shakers and movers greeting Norman Manley, the Jamaican prime minister, when he visited England in 1958 after the race riots in Notting Hill.

What both Harris and Sir Galahad share as immigrants are aspirational desires in a long process of becoming, becoming settled, and becoming something else in Britain. Moreover, there were many men and women like Harris who, imbued with an English colonial culture, practiced high

standards of sartorial expression and good grooming of their body, as well as social behavior and the presentation of self based on manners and respect. There is a myth that because Caribbean migrants were socially leveled as working class, if not the underclass, they all came from such backgrounds in the Caribbean. Many were in fact highly educated professionals and artisans; regardless, an unspoken moral code existed among them that was based on minding appearances and creating the impression of respectability and reputation that meant they largely knew how to dress. Moreover, as noted in Zimena Percival's film about migrant workers on the London buses, Caribbean drivers and conductors brought a sense of good grooming and sartorial neatness that would eventually be adopted by their English colleagues.³³

Rude Bwoys

Rude bwoy subculture originated in the ghettos of Kingston, Jamaica, coinciding with the popular rise of rocksteady music, dancehall celebrations, and sound-system dances. "They were mostly unemployed and had taken to carrying German ratchet knives and hand guns. They could be anything from fourteen to twenty-five years old and came from all over West Kingston. And above all, the rude boys were angry."³⁴ Young, urban, and frequently unemployed, rude bwoys drew inspiration for their cool and smart style—sharp suits, thin ties, and pork-pie or trilby hats—from American gangster movies, where the aesthetics of the suits worn were influenced by the zoot suit.

The American soul-element was reflected most clearly in the self-assured demeanour, the sharp flashy clothes, the "jive-ass" walk which the street boys affected. The rude boy lived for the luminous moment, playing dominoes as though his life depended on the outcome—a big-city hustler with nothing to do, and all the time rocksteady, ska and reggae gave him the means with which to move effortlessly. . . . Cool, that distant and indefinable quality, became almost abstract, almost metaphysical, intimating a stylish kind of stoicism—survival and something more.³⁵

We can sense the transcendental cool and transient rebelliousness in Hebdige's description. The bad bwoy, pistol-slinging Ivan, played by Jimmy Cliff in the 1972 film *The Harder They Come*, would come to signify the rude bwoy image throughout the African diaspora. The rude bwoy style was also immortalized in ska music from the 1960s onward, with The Wailers' "The Rude Boy" (1964), produced by Clement Dodd, or Prince Buster's "Too Hot" (1967). An archetypal rude bwoy outfit would have a rhizoidal quality about its assemblage, rather than being sourced from one stylistic root. It included a red felt hat, tonic suit, a cotton shirt from Jamaica, a cotton string vest, nylon socks (USA), the loafers, nylon underpants, elastic braces, and a silk handkerchief.

Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* begins to discuss how Jamaican rude bwoy sartorial style, creolized expressions, and blue beat music was adopted by the hard mods (modernists) and skinhead subcultures in the 1960s.³⁶ The spaces where these subcultures encountered each other included the *Ram Jam* club in Brixton, where black and white youth mixed and ska music became associated with violence. Hard mods and skinheads were in awe of what they perceived to be the rude bwoy's style-fashion-dress, as illustrated from a 1964 interview with David Holborne, a nineteen-year-old mod, cited by Tulloch: "At the moment we're heroworshipping the spades—they can dance and sing. . . . We have to get all our clothes made because as soon as anything is in the shops it becomes too common. I once went to a West Indian club where everyone made their own clothes."³⁷ This passion for emulation is further highlighted by Hebdige:

The long open coats worn by some West Indians were translated by the skinheads into the "crombie" which became a popular article of dress amongst the more reggae-oriented groups (i.e., amongst those who defined themselves more as midnight ramblers than as afternoon Arsenal supporters). Even the erect carriage and the loose limbed walk which characterises the West Indian street-boy were (rather imperfectly) simulated by the aspiring "white negroes."³⁸

By the 1970s, skinheads and Aggro boys would become inextricably linked with working-class

conservatism and various far-right political groups such as the National Front. Therefore, when the 2-Tone ska music revival arrived in the early 1980s with bands like The Selector dressed in rude bwoy suits, it served as a reminder that diasporic objects have been fashionable since the 1950s and the birth of rock 'n' roll because, as Van Dyk Lewis argues, “they are self-images of people who are in an unenviable position.”³⁹

The 1970s was the moment of Pan-Africanist radical black politics and the coolest street culture, as exemplified through reggae, sound-system culture, and Rastafarian iconography and vernacular idioms and expressions of Jamaican origin. Since Caribbean migrant communities have always been stereotyped as Jamaican, whether or not that was one's family background, cool-seeking black teenagers went along with the myth.

Many black youth (read, black male overrepresentation) reappropriated the bad bwoy ontology of the rude bwoy in a self-fashioning performative style. A typical outfit was very label-conscious and consisted of a black Kangol hat, Farah trousers, Gabicci cardigans (yardie cardies), and shoes by Bally and Pierre Cardin. Jewelry was central to the style, and thick gold rope chains with Nefertiti heads, cannabis leaves, onyx medallions, and sovereigns were favorite pieces. The term *yardie* derives from the slang name given to occupants of government yards in Trenchtown, a neighborhood in West Kingston. The poverty and crime experienced by many residents led to them becoming known as yardies, a stigma that yardie-style sought to challenge. In fact, during the British media frenzy over Jamaican gunmen committing crimes on British soil during the late 1980s and 1990s, *yardie* became another term used in the relentless demonization of any Caribbean immigrant, much less anyone of Caribbean heritage.

For zoot suiter saga bwoys, rude bwoys, or black dandies the barbershop catered to black males' desire to beautify their hair. Although these men were socially disempowered, the transformative practices of pampering and controlling their hair that took place in this space provided them with a sense of embodied power. Like the black hairdressing saloon, the black barber is a secret-gendered institution where black men chat, joke, share,

unmask, and reminisce as they wait to enter a ritualized intimate relationship with the person who cuts their hair: the barber.

After the obligatory grooming—bath, hair combed, face creamed, and sweet-smelling scents applied, not unlike Sir Galahad—the saga bwoys, young black male teenagers eager to go out *raving*, would be stepping out to a club, a dance with a sound system playing blues music, a party, or a *shebeen* (illegal party) in the rude bwoy casual dress style, as *de rigueur* with the garments and accessories listed above; a neat, short Afro hairstyle; and possibly a Crombie coat in the winter. The attire meant nothing without the swagger of a bad bwoy gait, that is, walking as if you had a loose limp that Hebidge associates with rude bwoys.

Returning to the rude bwoy suit, one owner says that in the late 1970s he would wear it with as much gold as he could afford and that he used gold cigarette paper on his teeth as a cap. This fetish for luxury and opulence bestowed by things shiny and gold echoes the conspicuous consumption of the *sapeurs*—the Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes (Society for the Advancement of Elegant People) centered in Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo—ordinary men who exalt fashion, style, and elegance.

It [sapeur subculture] has strong religious and moral undertones and codes, while at the same time verging on the blasphemous by flouting its unstinting devotion to worldly symbols of money, “bling” and consumerism. It is at once a throwback to colonial patterns of behaviour and conditioning while at the same time signalling a particular post-colonial appropriation of the master's style and manners and “re-mixing them for today's society of the spectacle.”⁴⁰

The performativity and performance of the sapeurs as dandies, at the intersection of the saga bwoys and rude bwoys, embody the sense of aspiring to defiance through grooming and conspicuous consumption in dressing the male body. In diaspora, formation music and sound are central, as Krista Thompson points out.⁴¹ However, Paul Gilroy argues that “master signifiers of black creativity, sound, have been supplanted by eyes and visibility” as ways of seeing and approaches to being

seen.⁴² Relevant here is the term *bling*, in the context of the 1998 hit “Bling-Bling” by rapper B.G. (Baby Gangsta) of the New Orleans-based group Cash Money Millionaires. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *bling* not only as a “piece of ostentatious jewelry,” but also as any “flashy” accoutrement that “glorifies conspicuous consumption.” Bling is not simply about conspicuous consumption; it is also about visual effect, the way light, for instance, strikes the diamond/ice in that necklace or ring to reveal its opulence, and through the optics of shine, blinds the viewer with its visibility/invisibility while simultaneously appearing larger than life.

In drawing this essay to a close it is evident that in their performance of the style-fashion-dress the zoot suiter, saga bwoy, rude bwoy, and sapeurs continually remake themselves not only in terms of blackness as deviance, but also blackness as creativity. This perspective, as proposed by curator Paul Goodwin and cited by Tulloch, opens up what has been termed *post-black*. On this subject, Tulloch quotes Thelma Golden of the Studio Museum in Harlem:

[P]ost-black is a concept that “is not about erasing the past, but to restart and reset, an attitude, a stance, a positioning, a way to enable expansive questioning to see culture in a broader sense. A space in which to look backward in order to look forward.” The unraveling of what post-black means is in its early stages.⁴³

Tulloch goes on to quote Shirley Anne Tate:

We are in a post-Black is beautiful discursive space where “post” points to the waning of old paradigms without their supersession by anything new. As we are still living and developing this space we cannot say what its outcome will be. What we can say though is that the “Black” in Black beauty has become part of the axes of difference which provide overlapping lines of identification, exclusion and contestation over beauty paradigms.⁴⁴

In a globalized postcolonial and neoliberal market society where “beauty paradigms” are often expressed through Western cultural hegemony, it is evident that saga bwoys and rude bwoys, like other black dandies within the African diaspora,

expressed a sense of sartorial freedom, liberation, and rebellion. Through diasporic migration and settlement, the diffusion, aesthetic exchange, and appropriation of their style-fashion-dress reveal dynamic and fresh possibilities for rethinking black masculinities and the performance of the clothed male body in the public domain that still resonate today.

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Notes

- 1 Monica Miller, *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 10.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 11.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 10.
- 4 Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Williams (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 401.
- 5 Carol Tulloch, “Rebel without a Pause: Black Street Style and Black Designers,” in *Chic Thrills: A Fashion Reader*, ed. Juliet Ash and Elizabeth Wilson (London: Pandora, 1992), 85.
- 6 Carol Tulloch, ed., *Black Style* (London: V&A Publishing, 2004), 14.
- 7 Stuart Hall and Mark Sealy, *Different* (London: Phaidon, 2001), 12.
- 8 Stuart Hall, “Reconstruction Work: Stuart Hall on Images of Post War Black Settlement,” *Ten-8*, no. 16 (1984): 4.
- 9 Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (New York: Verso, 1997), 35.
- 10 Deborah J. Haynes, *Bakhtin and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 85.
- 11 Stuart Hall, “Aspiration and Attitude . . . Reflections on Black Britain in the Nineties,” *New Formations: Frontlines/Backyards*, no. 33 (1998): 38.
- 12 Daniel Miller, “Fashion and Ontology in Trinidad,” in *Design and Aesthetics: A Reader*, ed. Jerry Palmer and Mo Dodson (London: Routledge, 1996), 136.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans, and Sean Nixon, eds. *Representation*, 2nd ed. (Milton Keynes: Oxford University Press / Sage, 2013), 237.
- 15 Tulloch, *Black Style*, 12.
- 16 Farris Robert Thompson, *Aesthetics of Cool: Afro-Atlantic Art and Music* (New York: Periscope, 2011), 29.
- 17 H. Alford, “The Zoot Suit: Its History and Influence,” *Fashion Theory* 8, no. 2 (2004): 225–236.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 226.
- 19 Malcolm X with Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Grove, 1965), 155.
- 20 Alford, “The Zoot Suit,” 227.
- 21 R. Mooneeram, “From Creole to Standard: Shakespeare, Language, and Literature in a Postcolonial Context,” in *Cross/*

- Cultures: Readings in the Post/Colonial Literatures in English* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 107.
- 22 See Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry* (London: New Beacon Books, 1984).
- 23 *Ibid.*, 24.
- 24 Stuart Cosgrove, "The Zoot-Suit and Style Warfare," *History Workshop*, no. 18 (1984): 77–91.
- 25 Alford, "The Zoot Suit," 233.
- 26 Tulloch, "Rebel without a Pause," 85.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 86.
- 28 Mighty Sparrow, *Mr. Walker*, 1968 (from the album *Sparrow Calypso Carnival*, Recording Artists, 1968).
- 29 Miller, "Fashion and Ontology in Trinidad," 137.
- 30 Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (London: Penguin Books, 1956), 50.
- 31 Paul Gilroy, *Black Britain: A Photographic Essay* (London: Saqi/Getty Images, 2011), 95.
- 32 Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*, 103.
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