

**DRESSING RACE: CLOTHES, IMMIGRATION
AND YOUTH IDENTITIES IN BRITAIN 1965-1972**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis will explore the role race plays in conceptions and performances of British identity by using clothes as a source. It will use the relationship between the body and clothes to argue that cultural understandings of race are part of the basis for meaningful communication in dress. It offers a new understanding of identity formation in Britain and explains the complex relationship between working-class youth-subcultures and Post-War Immigration.

The thesis consists of three case studies of the clothes worn by different groups in British society between the period 1965 and 1972: firstly a study of Afro-Caribbean migrants to the UK, secondly the South Asian Diaspora in the UK, and finally the Skinhead youth-subculture. It will argue that race is discursively constructed in Britain by rendering physical differences of the body culturally intelligible through clothes. The white body is the site where British identities are formed, giving the white body the power to define and categorise other bodies in Britain during this period. The cultural medium of dress plays an important part in defining and making race real, structuring everyday life and identities in British society.

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I have consulted recordings of oral testimony held by the British Library and quoted some very short extracts. This source has been duly attributed at the appropriate points. I have, however, been unable to locate the respective copyright owners. I hope that the individuals involved would have no objection. In addition other short extracts from interviews published oral-history collections have been used and attributed. If any rights holder with material in this thesis wishes to withhold permission for use of these short extracts, could they please contact the University of Birmingham eTheses Repository administrators via ubira@lists.bham.ac.uk.

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RACE AND THE CLOTHED-BODY IN BRITAIN 1965-1972

Introduction

Historians and Sociologists over the past forty years have struggled to unpick the dynamic and complex relationship between Post-War Black and Asian Commonwealth Immigration and the Working-Classes, in particular the links between post-war youth subcultures and race is one area where structural understandings equating race with class have failed to engage fully with immigrant and youth identity formation in Britain.¹ The two subjects though can help illuminate each other: the period from the late 1960s saw both the 1968 and 1972 Commonwealth Immigrants Act being passed and the mass, sudden influx of East-African and Ugandan Asians that added to the national immigration debate. Likewise this period also saw the flourishing of one of the most famous and controversial characters in contemporary British history: the Skinhead. A comparative and cultural analysis between the two subjects can help understand how each group understood and performed ideas about race. Using clothes, a key part of the visual identities of migrant and youth identities, offers a way through the theoretical understandings of the clothed-body to see how physical differences are rendered culturally intelligible as 'race'.² Scholarship by Monica Miller, Shane & Graham White and Emma Tarlo explore how clothes work with understandings of race to make the body culturally intelligible and how

¹ For a fuller critique of structural understandings of youth culture and race see: Huq, Rupa, *Beyond Subculture: Pop, Youth and Identity in a Post-Colonial World*, London, 2004, pp. 10-11.

² For the importance of clothes to immigrants groups see: Breward, Christopher, & Crang, Philip & Crill, Rosemary (eds.), *British Asian Style: Fashion and Textiles, Past and Present*, London, 2010, pp. 9-11. See also Tulloch, Carol, *Black Style*, London, 2004, pp. 86-9.

definitions of race structure the everyday.³ Such an analysis can be used to understand race in contemporary Britain and address three key areas of scholarship: firstly how white racial identities inter-link with the defining of aliens through race in state policies; secondly to what degree Black and Asian migrants were able to control and negotiate identities of race in Britain; and finally through youth-culture that racial identities based on physical characteristics are central to understanding the culture of contemporary Britain.

Understanding the racial identities of Britain based in the white body can contribute to how immigrants were constructed as racial subjects through state policy. These state/political histories are useful in understanding how black and Asian immigrants were constructed racially but not how 'white' Britain understood itself and constructed its own racial identities: John Solomos and Bob Carter with Clive Harris & Shirley Joshi used the nationality and immigration acts to argue that British immigration policy was structured round race, directly excluding non-whites from full citizenship.⁴ This view has been challenged by Randall Hansen arguing that commitment to liberalism within institutions, produced racialised understandings within British national belonging and political thought.⁵ Kathleen Paul has also argued the understandings of race in the Immigration and Nationality Acts must be

³ Tarlo, Emma, *Clothing matter: dress and identity in India*, 1996 pp. 1-6; & White, Shane, *Stylin': African American expressive culture from its beginnings to the zoot suit*, London, 1998; & Miller, Monica, *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity*, Baltimore, 2009, pp. 11-19.

⁴ See Solomos, John, *Race and racism in contemporary Britain*, Basingstoke, 1993, pp. 57-8; see also Carter, Bob & Harris, Clive & Joshi, Shirley, 'The 1951-55 Conservative Government and the Racialisation of Black Immigration', *Policy Papers in Ethnic Relations*, No.11, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick, 1987.

⁵ Hansen, Randall, *Race and immigration in post-war Britain : the institutional origins of a multicultural nation*, Oxford, 2000, pp. 246-8.

seen within wider, non-formal notions of citizenship and belonging.⁶ The degree debated in these scholarships is how much these acts foster 'Nationalism beyond the Nation State' and how policies reflect racial identities at a provincial and local level.⁷ Exploring how clothes require the body underneath for specific identities can illustrate that a white body is required for full 'first degree' access to British national identities and explain how migrants were automatically made non-British subjects.

How the body is transformed into a raced subject through clothes will explore the ways in which migrant communities negotiated and actively contested ideas of race in Britain through their bodies. This analysis understands race as a 'floating signifier' that uses physical differences to construct specific forms of cultural knowledge.⁸ Avtar Brah's work, transforming the scholarship on the area by using her own experiences of the Asian Diaspora in the 1970s and 1980s, explores how race is actively constructed on the body and how trans-national Diaspora identities exist in multiple, overlapping states that changed traditional ideas about national belonging.⁹ Stuart Hall's work has pioneered the way in which British national life actively constructs itself around race through culture: using his own experience of the politics and study of race and society in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s, and reflecting on his own Diasporic upbringing, he argues that difference is a key characteristic of modernity and British identities.¹⁰ Hall's work also suggests that culture is a key site for Diaspora communities to take control and define themselves within dominant

⁶ Paul, Kathleen, *Whitewashing Britain: race and citizenship in the postwar era*, London, 1997, pp. xv, 13.

⁷For 'Nationalism beyond the Nation State' see: MacPhee, Graham, & Poddar, Prem (eds.), *Empire and after : Englishness in postcolonial perspective*, New York, 2007, pp. 1-3.

⁸ Hall, Stuart, Media Education Foundation (1997), *Race is a Floating Signifier* [PDF Lecture Transcript], available http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/407/transcript_407.pdf (accessed 01/09/2012). p. 15.

⁹ Brah, Avtar, *Cartographies of Diaspora : contesting identities*, London, 1996, pp. 6, 9.

¹⁰ Hall, Stuart, 'Whose heritage? Un-settling "the heritage", re-imagining the post-nation', in Littler, Jo (ed.), *The Politics of Heritage: Legacies of Race*, London, 2005, pp. 24-6.

definitions of race, providing the means to negotiate identities based in the body at different moments for different purposes.¹¹ Looking at how clothes transform the body into a racial subject that are actively negotiated by marginal groups will explore how the body exists within multiple, contradictory and overlapping states that are used and deployed by migrants through dress to make sense of and fix the self at different times and purposes.¹²

Finally working-class youth-cultures can explain how modern racial 'white' identities in Britain are the assumed natural norm that, while not identifiably white, rests in the cultural properties of the white body as an 'ordinary' racial identity. Traditional scholarship on youth culture and race used the theoretical tools of the 1970s: Dick Hebdige's famous study, exemplary of the use of Structural Marxism by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies to explore the political potential of culture, explained the relationship as white youths, partly in alliance with migrants and using elements of black culture, challenging the dominant social order through 'semiotic guerrilla warfare'.¹³ Paul Gilroy though identified, in responding to the popular and national rhetoric of Thatcherism and popular notions of island belonging fostered around race in the 1980s, that structural and other left-leaning forms of then contemporary Marxist analysis failed to fully come to terms with complexity of racial discourse and social formation in Britain.¹⁴ In particular Gilroy highlighted the shortcomings of understanding race solely through relative position to capital in a given socio-economic structure, prevalent in previous studies of race in the 1970s and

¹¹ Hall, Stuart, 'Minimal selves', in Gray, Ann & McGuigan, Jim (eds.), *Studying Culture: An Introductory Reader*, London, 1993, pp. 134, 136.

¹² Colley, Linda, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, Yale, 1992, pp. 6-8.

¹³ Hebdige, Dick, 'Reggae, Rastas and Rudies: Style and the Subversion of Form', CCCS Occasional Stencilled Papers, 24, 1974, pp. 54, 57; & Hebdige, Dick, *Subculture: the meaning of style*, London, 1979, p106.

¹⁴ Gilroy, Paul, *"There ain't no black in the Union Jack": the cultural politics of race and nation*, London, 2007, pp. 29-31.

1980s, to develop a basis for collective action for the left and the need to understand race separately to class.¹⁵ However contemporary ethnography, building on the work of the CCCS, on working class youth-culture by Simon Jones, Les Back, Vron Ware and Anoop Nayak use youth culture and the body to explore how race is articulated and made within highly localized, narrow urban spaces.¹⁶ Racial identities are localised versions, articulating macro identities and culture within specific social and historical contexts.¹⁷ This ethnographic approach can be applied to the history of youth-subcultures to see how clothes are used to create and perform ‘ordinary’ racial identities based in the physical characteristics of the white body. ‘

Three case studies about the clothes of Caribbean migrants, the clothes of the South Asian Diaspora and finally the Skinhead subculture will answer these questions. The examination of Caribbean and South-Asian dress cultures will explain how they are circumscribed with racial identities of ‘black’ and ‘Asian’ in Britain which are then remade and deployed by themselves, while the Skinhead phenomena will argue that ‘ordinary’ racial identities are built and located on the white body. Clothes transform the body into black, Asian and ‘ordinary’ racial bodies. These identities are actively constructed and contested through the clothed-body on multiple axes, taking global flows of culture and commerce and transforming it into their own through their bodies. Race is constructed and understood in Britain through making the physical properties of the body intelligible through encoded knowledge in dress.

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 24-34.

¹⁶ Jones, Simon, *Black culture, white youth: the reggae tradition from JA to UK*, Basingstoke, 1988; & Back, Les, *New ethnicities and urban culture: racisms and multicultural in young lives*, London, 1996, p. 97.

¹⁷ For a micro study of localised racism see: Nayak, A, ‘Ivory Lives’: Economic Restructuring and the Making of Whiteness in a Post-industrial Youth Community’, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6, 2003, pp. 305-325.

Theory in Practice: The Clothed-Body

All three case studies use the relationship between the body and dress to unpick racial knowledge of wider society knowledge by understanding race is a central element for generating meaning in dress. The remaining chapter is divided into two halves: the first part will establish what role the clothed body plays in cultural identity formation. The insight of ‘the body as culture’ from Susan Bordo and discourse making bodies real and inscribing difference explained by Judith Butler can be tied to the structural semiotic work of Stuart Hall. This relates the raced-body to the structural underpinnings of society as the basis for meaningful communication through clothes. The second half will use this body discourse to analyse the role the body plays in clothes in the late 1960s and early 1970s through two sample publications: British Vogue and Tailor & Cutter. Both publications rely on using race as an organising principle in different ways to generate meaning from clothes and reflect the wider agenda-setting aspects of what can be discussed in dress and sets up a wider study of how ideas of race shape the experiences of migrants and youth-culture in Britain.

Due to the complexity of clothes they are an incredibly rich source to explore infinitely wider structural issues in history, as Ferdinand Braudel explains:

“The history of costume is less anecdotal than it would appear. It touches on every issue: raw materials, production processes, manufacturing costs, cultural stability, fashion and social hierarchy”¹⁸

An analysis of clothes can unpick different historical temporal dimensions as they are all linked together in dress; the structural, the social and the cultural.¹⁹ This requires

¹⁸ Braudel, Fernand, *The structures of everyday life: the limits of the possible*, London, 1981, p311.

historians to use what Cristopher Breward defines as the ‘new cultural-historical approach’ and link micro-histories of dress to wider global historical flows, structures and narratives.²⁰ One aspect of study is how clothes are used in identity formation and how communication is not just about forming statements to others but about making sense of one’s own experiences.²¹ Identity and clothing operates at the points where the personal is linked to the social and vice versa.

What is often the subject of analysis with clothes is the ‘clothed-body’: how clothes give the body a whole set of meanings otherwise unavailable.²² The body is governed by both actual physical differences and cultural understandings of it; Susan Bordo develops a Foucauldian understanding to argue that the body is both physical and cultural form that carries meaning²³ and how “we don’t just see biological nature at work, but values and ideals, differences and similarities that *culture* has “written,” so to speak, on those bodies. What this means is that the body doesn’t carry only DNA, it also carries a human history with it.”²⁴ Clothes play a role in these cultural understandings by linking the body to society: how the ‘strangeness’ of dress links the biological body to the public, making it more than just the physical body with unclear boundaries and multiple selves being expressed in the material medium.²⁵ Clothes can be analysed as the nexus point between the physical and the cultural to explore Gilroy

¹⁹ Braudel’s approach to different temporal dimensions is part of Appadurai’s overview in: Appadurai, Arjun, *The Social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective*, Cambridge, 1986, p. 36.

²⁰ Breward outlines this multi-faceted approach to dress history in: Breward, Christopher, *The culture of fashion : a new history of fashionable dress*, Manchester, 1995, p. 4. Breward expands upon the multi-layered use of dress history in: Breward, Christopher, ‘Cultures, Identities, Histories: Fashioning a Cultural Approach to Dress’, *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 2, 1998, pp. 301-313.

²¹ Davis, Fred, *Fashion, culture, and identity*, London, 1992, pp. 3, 13-14.

²² Entwistle, Joanne, ‘Fashion and the Fleshy Body: Dress as Embodied Practice’, *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 4, 2000, p. 324.

²³ Bordo, Susan, *The Male Body: A New Look at Men in Public and in Private*, 2001, New York, p. 25.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 26.

²⁵ Wilson, Elizabeth, *Adorned in dreams: fashion and modernity*, London, 2009, pp. 2-3.

what identified as how actual phenotype, biological differences surrounding skin colour become marked in the body as race within specific social formations.²⁶ It makes what Joanne Entwistle terms as the 'body-dress dialectic' the focus of study to understand how ideas of race are created in dress, making the body culturally intelligible and socially real.²⁷

Clothes also allow us to see how a visual medium acts as a site where the subjective body interacts and defines other bodies through shared cultural understandings. Ann Brach's explanation that clothes are not the person's identity but a performance of identity that can illuminate the inter-subjective relationship between people in society: it is the medium through which the body is publically made sense of.²⁸ Bordo also highlights the inter-subjective nature of bodies as being governed by, inscribed with and carriers of shared cultural ideas that are negotiated in multiple sites in an ongoing, incomplete process.²⁹ Through clothes the body enters these relationships not voluntarily but automatically, the subject interpellated into a domain through where is it circumscribed with a role and meaning.³⁰ The body and its role in inter-subjective positions and negotiated meanings allow a rare insight into how the body is interpreted and constructed as a racial subject.

In being negotiated on multiple social sites clothes are intrinsically polysemic in what they say, refer and generate meaning from: different readings depend on social structure and specific power relations that dictate preferred decoding. This basis for non-verbal meaningful communication is a crucial aspect of clothes: they are

²⁶ Gilroy, *Aint no Black*, p. 30.

²⁷ Entwistle, Joanne, 'Fashion and the Fleshy Body', p. 327.

²⁸ Brach, Ann Margaret, 'Identity and Intersubjectivity', in González, A M & Bovone, L (eds.), *Identities Through Fashion: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, Oxford, 2012, p. 63.

²⁹ Bordo, Susan, *The Male Body*, p. 27.

³⁰ Calefato, Patrizia, 'Fashion and Worldliness: Language and Imagery of the Clothed Body', *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 1, February 1997, p. 77.

products of a social structure and hierarchy and in turn transmit this structure in cultural form.³¹ The ambivalences of meaning are due to the social and cultural complexity allow for multiple, overlapping and negotiated meanings to exist, yet all operate within a given structure.³² Hall's analysis of relating the structure of society to semiotics provides the framework that a relative position in society dictates the basis for communication in polysemic mediums, both what and how something is expressed.³³ Multiple meanings are not equal and that a position in the social matrix dictates how you decode a message: it is not that a reading could be anything but why readings within a given historical and social context have highly specific discursive limits.³⁴ This links the power to define and set the agenda for what can be communicated and addressed through a shared cultural medium with social position to set race as the basis for what can be communicated in clothes.³⁵ Using Hall's concept of a genre, a required code necessary for meaning generation, points the way of thinking about how bodies are typed or grouped around by race with dominant, preferred readings.³⁶

The structural power matrix of Hall's discourse can be expanded to explain how power controls and disciplines the body through understanding how discourse of the body shapes it materially. Judith Butler understands how discourse makes the body real through the power of language:

“what constitutes the fixity of the body, its contours, its movements, will be fully material, but materiality will be rethought as the effect of power, as power's most

³¹ Barnard, Malcolm, *Fashion as communication*, London, 2002, p. 72.

³² Ibid. pp. 85-6.

³³ Hall, Stuart, *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*, CCCS Stencilled occasional papers, no.7, 1973, p13.

³⁴ Ibid. pp. 13-14.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 15.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 6.

productive effect.³⁷ ... the understanding of performativity not as the act by which a subject brings into being what she/he names, but, rather, as that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains”³⁸

Clothes are the discursive medium through which the body is shaped and controlled and produced as materially and culturally intelligible. Discursive power shapes and makes the body materially real, each utterance and use feeding back into the wider cultural system to produce racial subjects anew.

Specifically Butler identifies ‘uninhabitable’ as a characteristic of body identities relating to differences within a network of power:

“This exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet "subjects," but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject. The abject designates here precisely those "unliveable" and "uninhabitable" zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the "unliveable" is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject. This zone of uninhabitability will constitute the defining limit of the subject's domain.”³⁹

Different groups use race to create uninhabitable zones for themselves that physically different bodies occupy through discourse. Identity formation with race will see how clothes mark and limit the body underneath as being something specific, performed and made through utterances and re-iterations within the materiality of clothes. With Hall’s concepts on genres, body groups or types make real and shape the body underneath. The clothed body can examine how Black and Asian immigrants are

³⁷ Butler, Judith, *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of "sex"*, London, 1993, p. 2.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 3.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 4.

shaped and dictated by naturally assumed identities resting within the white body and, as a result, are made non-subjects. These limits become part of the basis for meaningful communication in clothes, requiring assumptions about what the body can and cannot do, manifesting into specific and overlapping racial groups.

These cultural understandings shape the body underneath and relate to the power structures within society to place individual bodies into distinct yet overlapping body groups, each requiring assumed understandings to generate meaning through clothes. Specifically clothes can show the limits of what can and cannot be done by the body, creating zones of uninhabitability in clothes for certain body types. These intersecting and overlapping body discourses in clothes can explain the role race plays in British identities and identity formation in the time of mass immigration, explaining how belonging to the nation requires a racial identity formed from the body.

The following study will primarily focus on race and its links with class in Britain to understand youth-culture in relation to post-war immigration. However there are significant tensions with gender, highlighted within the wider literature about race, class, gender and the body, due to the fundamental way each is rendered culturally from physical differences of the body.⁴⁰ Gender will be primarily engaged when analysing the dress of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain to show how the physical differences of male/female are understood racially and is an important

⁴⁰ Studies highlighting the link between race, gender and clothes include: Miller, Monica, *Slaves to Fashion*; Buckridge, Steeve O, *Language of dress: resistance and accomodation in Jamaica, 1760-1890*, Kingston, 2004. For a study of the links between race and gender in Britain see: Tabili, Laura, 'Women of a "very low type", Crossing Racial Boundaries in Britain', in Frader & Rose (eds.) *Gender and Class in Modern Europe*, London, 1996, pp 165-190. For the tensions between whiteness and masculinities see: Dyer, Richard, *White*, London, 1997. For a set of case studies exploring how race and gender through clothes at different circumstances see: Eicher & Bubolz, Joanne (eds.), *Dress and ethnicity: change across space and time*, Oxford, 1996.

element in making sense of race in Britain, yet such a study encompassing all three equally and continually is beyond the scope and resources available for this project. The focus instead will be much greater on race and class: this will allow an exploration of how class is understood through race to fully understand how discourses on national belonging interlinks with how Britain makes sense of itself racially and how older class identities become reformed to create an 'ordinary' racial identity within the emerging multicultural Britain. However, it is important to understand that for all case studies race intersects with gender to a large degree and that a lack of engagement or focus on the gender here does not mean it is unimportant in understanding race and the clothed-body in Britain.

These theoretical insights need to be tied to methodological issues of retelling the past through oral and photographic sources. This project will use, or more accurately re-assess, life histories in Britain from migrant and youth culture studies conducted over the past twenty years. Oral history can provide valuable insights as they describe and illuminate what is not part of the traditional historical record, making them highly useful for clothing-history and telling the story of marginal social or cultural groups.⁴¹ However interviewees and narrators are not just retelling the past but also imposing their versions and judgments upon it, connecting subjective experiences to wider social activities of remembering and re-organising the past.⁴² The clothes as described in interviews are less about what was 'actually worn', although the valuable insights of the everyday that oral history opens up is incredibly important, but rather the mechanism by which memory is crafted and structured

⁴¹ Sangster, Joan, 'Telling our stories: feminist debates and the use of oral history', *The Oral History Reader*, London, 1998, pp. 92, 97.

⁴² Thomson, Al, 'Introduction', *The Oral History Reader*, London, 1998, p. ix.

around to understand their life stories and experiences.⁴³ Additionally clothes are the subject of some interviews and thus this imposing of 'clothes as historically important' is made by the historian/interviewer, creating signification and meaning different to the specific socio-historical period.⁴⁴ Despite these issues the potential oral sources and life histories offer this and other projects to re-assess contemporary British history by offering unavailable details and meanings outweighs the potential limitations and problems using them, provided the historian understands and negotiates how narratives are both illustrative of the past and rooted in contemporary memory.⁴⁵

Likewise the photographic sources will also be used as a valuable source for recalling of how something was worn, providing information on context, detail and organisation of outfits, despite also being representative of a particular view of society.⁴⁶ Clothes in photographs are the visual elements a photographer uses to explain and illuminate how they see, organise and impose structure on the world.⁴⁷ Additionally many period photographs help us make sense of our own society and structure how we make histories from photos and today, being both 'of then' and 'of now' dangerously demolishes the gap between the historian and the past.⁴⁸ Even with these limits photos can provide useful empirical evidence for showing both detail and composition of clothes unavailable in other sources to reassess our understanding contemporary history; all be it an empiricism with silent values attached.⁴⁹

⁴³ Taylor, Lou, *The study of dress history*, Manchester, 2002, pp 190-2; Thomson, Al, 'Introduction', *The Oral History Reader*, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Sangster, Joan, 'Telling our stories', p. 89.

⁴⁵ Taylor, Lou, *The study of dress history*, p. 190.

⁴⁶ Burke, Peter, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, London, 2006, p 19.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 19.

⁴⁸ Schwarz, Bill, 'Our Unadmitted Sorrow': the Rhetorics of Civil Rights Photography' *History Workshop Journal*, 17, 2011, pp. 145, 154.

⁴⁹ Ibid. pp. 81-3, 99, 102.

Both sets of sources create new narratives of the past and allow for much greater detail and meaning to be used in an analysis, despite being situated in both a given socio-historical moment and within the contemporary gaze of the historian: unpicking these limits and problems can also provide a valuable methodological lesson for how life histories and photographs anchored around clothing are used to make contemporary history and social-memory. Based on these limitations these sources will be used in a descriptive way, to help establish what and how clothes were worn, and use how memory is made from clothes to attempt to understand how race was negotiated in Britain through clothes.

These life and oral sources though need some grounding and background as to how physical differences of the body are rendered culturally intelligible in Britain at this time. Clothing and fashion publications can provide more grounding as to how clothes work with the body to with regards to race to provide insights not present in oral testimony. This brief overview will provide some context by focusing on just two publications to see how race is a requirement for meaningful communication in clothes for specific social groups: *British Vogue* and *Tailor & Cutter*. Both these magazines are at different ends of the spectrum, one aims to create and disseminate fashion knowledge to the public while the other is the publication of the National Guild of Tailors, until it's folding in 1972, providing technical and professional guidance for a skilled trade. Both publications provide valuable insights about different social significations of the body and how race and the body are constructed from physical differences that are otherwise unavailable for this period from photographs. Sampling both from the mid 1960s to the mid 1970s, and focusing on articles with a focus on either the body or race, allows an insight into how race and

the body are constructed through discourse, linking to wider cultural flows in British society.⁵⁰ With British Vogue it is the white body given privilege as the norm and standard of beauty while with Tailor and Cutter the genealogy of the 'ugly body' is denied the right to inhabit a civilised space. While not an extensive overview these two publications allow an insight into racial-body discourses to see how physical differences beyond skin colour are required to understand race in Britain.

The visual language of photography in British Vogue reveals two insights into the clothed body in Britain in the late 1960s. Firstly that skin colour is not the only required marker of race, but a whole set of other understandings and physical characteristics are required for racialised understandings to come into play, and secondly that the white body is placed as natural, assumed norm that has the characteristics of civilisation encoded onto it. British Vogue had a high circulation rate nationally, both constructing and reflecting the social context of the clothed-body in Britain. The editorship of Beatrix Miller from 1964 to 1980 presided over a significant moment in British Vogue's history: the first ever cover and photo shoot of an 'ethnic origin' model, Donyale Luna.⁵¹ It is important to interpret this milestone not through the lens of assuming the benevolence of the production and editing staff at British Vogue at promoting marginal groups in society, but as succumbing to the international pressure of the civil rights movement was able to exert trans-nationally during this period.⁵² Even so through this period (1966-1972) only two models of non-white skin colour appear: Luna in 1966 and Marsha Hunt in December 1968.

⁵⁰ The sampling process for each was assessing all issues between 1966 and 1973 and selecting pertinent and relevant articles or editorials about how the body is made sense of through clothes or those involving/referring to race directly.

⁵¹ Button, Janine, 'Vogue Timelines', *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 10, 2006, pp. 284; & Joiner, Megan Kathleen, *Minority Presence and Portrayal in Mainstream Magazine Advertising*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Liberty University, 2006, p. 68.

⁵² Cheddie, Janice, 'The Politics of the First: The Emergence of the Black Model in the Civil Rights Era', *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 6, 2002, p. 63.

Their depictions in magazine photo shoots highlights the power of the white body to define and shape other bodies: Donyale Luna has almost the exact same facial features as the other white models and the same physical body shape, the only physical difference is that her skin colour is darker than the other white models on the page.⁵³ Likewise Marsha Hunt's, although having an Afro-style haircut, body shape and features are similar to the normal models.⁵⁴ Their bodies are assimilated into the dominant encodings of the white body, denied any exclusivity on race and can be read as taking both the threat and the otherness away from their bodies.⁵⁵ Within this style of imagery in British Vogue is the encoding that the white body is shaped and controlled by the wearer and not defined at birth or its biological properties. The dominant white bodies have the power to define itself and others around it, making the white body the normal state within British Vogue's photographic language. Models without these features cannot occupy the same space, rendering black and other non-white models non-subjects; the white body has created a zone that other bodies inhabit. Within these encodings skin colour is not just the marker of racial identities but a wider set of physical characteristics are required to generate cultural understandings of the raced body. The clothes in the photo shoots help transform their slightly different bodies to participate in British Vogue's photo shoots.

Taking this for use within wider Britain and the clothed body reveals it is not just skin colour that is the marker of race but a whole other set of requirements involving geographical setting and clothes, are needed to make a racial subject

⁵³ *British Vogue*, 1st March 1966, Cover. A copy of the photoshoot is available online here: Ciao Vogue (2010), *1st March 1966* [online], available: <http://www.ciaovogue.com/2010/07/1st-march-1966-uk-vogue.html>, (Accessed 23/08/2012).

⁵⁴ *British Vogue*, 1st December 1968, p. 42. A copy of the Marsha Hunt shoot is available online: Ciao Vogue (2010), *1st December 1968* [online], available: <http://www.ciaovogue.com/2010/09/december-1968-uk-vogue.html> (accessed 23/08/2012).

⁵⁵ Cheddie, Janice, 'The Politics of the First', p. 65.

intelligible. The white body has the power to dictate readings of other bodies with its physical characteristics the marker of being normal rather than extra-ordinary.

These de-raced bodies should be read against the role of non-European models featured within British Vogue during this period as it highlights how non-white bodies are defined and reduced down to their physical characteristics. These images and editorials within British Vogue should be read within the potentially ironic tone that British Vogue takes within its subjects to create a self-reflexive response in its readership, yet still use wider social attitudes that structures its 'dreamscapes' and using visual vocabulary to communicate with the reader.⁵⁶ The photo shoots for January 1969 'World Issue' plays upon the notions of the 'Orient' as a place of fantasy. The photos depict white models on location around the world in highly staged and picturesque surroundings. In these images the white body occupies a special place that in their highly choreographed outfits they are not, and can never be, of that place, they instead define the surroundings.⁵⁷ Focusing on one article 'Ethiopia, Land of the Tigers' shows two images of the model with non-white bodies: the white body is identified in stark contrast with the other bodies in the picture and reveals the ways in which the non-white body is essentialised into a solely physical being. In one of the images a white-model is surrounded by local women and is effectively being groomed by this group.⁵⁸ The white model stares out with a blank facial expression while the non-European models look down and around onto the physical world. What is important, as much as their roles in the photos are different and the white body placed

⁵⁶ Konig, Anna. "Glossy Words: An Analysis of Fashion Writing in British Vogue." *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 10, 2006, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁷ See: *British Vogue*, 1st January 1969. A copy is available online: Ciao Vogue (2010), *1st January 1969* [online], available: <http://www.ciaovogue.com/2010/09/1st-january-1969-uk-vogue.html> (accessed 23/08/2012).

⁵⁸ See: 'Ethiopia, Land of the Lion', *British Vogue*, 1st January 1969, p. 36. A copy is available online: Ciao Vogue (2010), *1st January 1969* [online], available: <http://www.ciaovogue.com/2010/09/1st-january-1969-uk-vogue.html> (accessed 23/08/2012).

at the centre of privilege, is that all are wearing the same clothes, unsown garments made from highly colourful and intricate patterns. The contrast between the two rests on the understanding of the woman as being white and can never be black, there by choice and able to transform and control her body, looking out into other-worldly matters. The non-European women on the other hand cannot, they are defined by their bodies, the non-white body is reduced down and made physical by being placed in relation to the white body, essentialised as being in that location and role permanently.

Conversely the image on the opposite page to the one previously described essentialises non-whites as physical by reducing them down to their bodies. The image depicts a white model surrounded by bare-breasted and barely clothed native women.⁵⁹ The physicality is further inscribed by the adornment of the body, the Ethiopian women wear necklaces, arm/leg rings and draped skirts while the white model is fully covered up in a tightly cut outfit complete with mask. The image uses the physical differences between people and groups them accordingly and fixes the physical characteristics of the white body as normal. The white body creates a zone which it occupies and never escape, populating this zone with non-white subjects by using cultural knowledge of itself to render these different bodies real.

The surroundings and the images in this shoot highlight what Les Back describes as the 'geography of race' these images locate bodies that are non-white (natural, by birth) as being not of Britain while at the same time constructing the white body as being in exotic locations by choice and enterprise.⁶⁰ While not a universal encoding throughout Britain these images attaches cultural significance

⁵⁹ See: 'Ethiopia, Land of the Lion', *British Vogue*, 1st January 1969, p. 37. A copy is available online: Ciao Vogue (2010), *1st January 1969* [online], available: <http://www.ciaovogue.com/2010/09/1st-january-1969-uk-vogue.html> (accessed 23/08/2012).

⁶⁰ Back, Les, *Out of whiteness: color, politics, and culture*, London, 2002, p. 17.

automatically to non-white bodies and how they are defined by cultural understandings of race.

British Vogue shows how the white body inhabits a special place as normal, shaped and controlled by the person and not defined by birth. Clothes help portray how the white body, or the physical characteristics of the white body, can become anything through clothes except non-white. It makes whiteness a powerful aesthetic property in shaping definitions about race with a strong historical precedence within British visual culture.⁶¹ All meanings in clothes in this photographic language come down to the body and what cultural capital it lays claim to. These images are made within the confines in Britain of interpreting the physical and visual characteristics of the body as culturally intelligible and rendering a zone of uninhabitability based on these characteristics that other non-white and thus non-subjects inhabit. In Britain the white body can be seen having a privileged position in not just defining itself but also has the power to define and make real different characteristics as specific body types.

Tailor & Cutter (T&C) while having a lower circulation than British Vogue allows for a rare insight into how practical and commercial trade elements of the clothing industry link to how the body, race and class is made sense of in Britain. In particular its stance as adding conservative commentary on British society, while not fully representative of wider society, gives an angle to see how conservative attitudes towards race and class involve the clothed-body. As an arm of the National Guild of Tailors and other bodies for primarily menswear tailoring, T&C main aims were to provide guidance on new fabrics, trends and finances for the tailoring industry that

⁶¹ Stephenson, Andrew, 'A keen sight for the sign of the races': John Singer Sargent, whiteness and the fashioning of Angloperformativity', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 6, 2008, pp. 207-9; & Arnold, Dana, *Cultural identities and the aesthetics of Britishness*, Manchester, 2004, pp. 1-3, 103.

was rapidly in decline due to the rise of the ready-to-wear trade.⁶² The aim of instructions, especially the cutting guides provided by Cutter Editor A. Whife, makes clear the role of the tailor: they make and cut clothes for the body.⁶³ T&C allows for two insights into the clothed body in Britain based on its discourses of ‘beautiful’ and ‘ugly’ bodies: firstly the body in being beautiful or ugly limits what clothes can be worn and how the physical characteristics of the body underneath can transform the meaning of clothes. Secondly clothes can represent a triumph of Western progress and racial enhancement by relating how the beautiful body is the reference point to define other bodies.

Between 1967 and 1971 T&C embarks upon an editorial angle based on bodies being either beautiful or ugly allowing the person to look and wear clothes a certain way.⁶⁴ The link between lower social status and inferior genes is naturalised to how clothes are used and can be interpreted from this body:

“The Poor are of tougher stock perhaps, but essentially squatter, more prone to physical deformity ,more inept, more marked by disease and malnutrition over the generations, more used ... less capable of projecting a pleasing image without the assistance of flamboyance.”⁶⁵

The physical characteristics a body has determines what zone it can inhabit through dress and, as with British Vogue, the physical properties of the body help reduce ugly bodies down to their physicality: the ugly body cannot be anything but

⁶² An outline of this survey & response to the decline of the tailoring industry can be found in: *Tailor and Cutter*, 20th November 1970, p. 1030.

⁶³ These guides appear in every single issue of T&C since 1948 in their ‘Cutting Guides’.

⁶⁴ This slant of editorial is repeated over the next few years from 1968 to 1970, issues with it in include: *Tailor and Cutter*, July 14th 1967, p. 886; *Tailor and Cutter*, 5th July 1968, p. 842. Also within editorials and articles in: *Tailor and Cutter*, 19th July 1968, 27th December 1968.

⁶⁵ ‘Editorial: The Ugly People’, in *Tailor and Cutter*, July 14th 1967, p. 886.

itself and marked from upbringing.⁶⁶ ‘Flamboyance’ of dress is linked and interpreted as the wearer trying to overcome his physical, and thus biological, shortcomings; the ugly body versus tasteful has been given a zone for it to inhabit and make real, dress serves to amplify and confirm the reality of the wearer’s assigned properties. Clothes ultimately are marked with phenotype properties akin to race but understood through class.

Clothes can only work with the cultural understandings of the body underneath:

“The Rich were beautiful and the quiet subtlety of the clothes did not distract from the physical perfection that generations of cultured ease had heightened.”⁶⁷

These discourses make sense of physical differences based on class by making them representative of breeding and upbringing: the ‘ugly body’ cannot exist in the same state as the beautiful one. At the same time the power matrix, in the beautiful defining the ugly, helps naturalise the social order surrounding it by linking each to the structure of society. These body discourses can be applied to Britain to show how the white body and identities have gradations defined through physical characteristics which are then explained and essentialised as phenotype properties.

T&C do not limit this to just class based body discourses but race based ones also:

“We only need a study of the various races of homo-sapiens to realise that it is only the primitive who go completely naked.”⁶⁸

This links clothes to the body and how ‘primitive’ types are often defined and limited to their physical body, all readings and understandings are structured around this

⁶⁶ ‘Editorial: The Ugly People’, in *Tailor and Cutter*, July 14th 1967, p. 886.

⁶⁷ ‘Editorial: The Ugly People’, in *Tailor and Cutter*, July 14th 1967, p. 886.

⁶⁸ *Tailor and Cutter*, 27th December 1968, p. 1521.

definition of the body. It also places clothes as the summit of human achievement and culture and a mark of advancement as explicit links are made between medical sciences and beauty and the ability to shape and control the body to create more beautiful specimens.⁶⁹ Using this to explain body discourses in Britain highlights how ‘Western’ or ‘British’ dress is the natural and advanced state for the white body to exist in whereas the raced-body in the same clothes is a progress only attributable to the knowledge of Western science and tailoring. Racial subjects cannot lay claim to this knowledge as their own, they are denied any claim to cultural or physical advancement, always defined by their body. It also places the beautiful body as the natural, supreme state that all other bodies can achieve if shaped in the correct way: the upper-class white body has the power to define bodies without these specific physical characteristics.

Again, as with British Vogue, the tone of T&C must take with a pinch of salt, being dubbed the ‘Tailoring version of the Times’ and being editorial in stance means it is not fully representative of wider views. What is useful, if limited, insight is that T&C makes the link between the body and class so that racial properties are not just defined against non-whites but are internally graded and understood through class as well. Drawing on wider cultural flows and attitudes in Britain T&C shows how racial identities are ascribed to physical body types and then transformed or articulated through dress. Racial identities are not just black, Asian or white but in variations of whiteness relative to social position and class. Yet it also shows how the use of non-

⁶⁹ The full quote of this being: “As soon as any strong cultural force emerges in a tribe or race the tendency is towards aesthetic appreciation sets in. ... but medial science is already helping us towards a time when it will be the exception NOT to be beautiful.”, in *Tailor and Cutter*, 27th December 1968, p. 1521.

beautiful items can ascribe a wearer 'ordinary' or 'non-exceptional' racial status, with the body underneath able to dictate what meanings are decoded from clothes

What both publications highlight is how the white body in this period is able to define other bodies to give access to different meanings in clothes while also making physical differences in the body and clothes culturally intelligible and this knowledge material as well. Both publications also make race and whiteness more complex and dynamic than binary distinctions, with gradations in whiteness being marked in the body through clothes. The white body is identifiable as being de-raced, not governed by biology but by choice. These cultural connotations shape how race is made sense of as essential differences based in the body. What subsequent chapters will develop is how body discourses dictate what bodies can occupy what clothes, which in turn shapes the clothes worn by people. Race is not just skin colour but a set of cultural meanings that are encoded and decoded on bodies through clothes. Black and Asian immigration can develop these understandings to show how their experience in dress is ultimately mediated through powerful definitions of race. Yet fundamentally these definitions are negotiated through dress, not passively accepted but actively constructed within the limits of a material medium.

DRESSING DIASPORAS: THE BLACK & ASIAN CLOTHED-BODY IN BRITAIN 1965-1972

Introduction: Setting and Projecting the Self

Some of the most celebrated imagery associated with the Caribbean and South Asian Diasporas come from the studio photography of the Ernest Dyche from the mid 1940s to the early 1970s: Dyche and his son Malcolm ran a photography studio in Balsall Heath and, until Malcolm's death in 1990, specialised in the photos of migrant communities of Caribbean and South Asian Diasporas.⁷⁰ The images produced are all highly staged and each group uses the portraits to project an ideal image of themselves, using clothes to transform their bodies. Caribbean men often wore finely tailored suits with large shoulders, tapered waists and trousers with multiple pleats tapering down towards the bottom.⁷¹ The Caribbean Women wear dresses that are cut and fitted for their figure, often with colourful prints and fabrics, wearing make-up and styling their hair for the photos.⁷² South Asian men often wore the latest tailoring of the period, be it in the 1950s cut or the early 1970s lines of strong shoulders, fitted jackets and trousers tight at the crotch.⁷³ South Asian women often appeared in

⁷⁰ Courtman, Sandra, 'What is missing from the picture? Reading desire in the Dyche studio photographs of the Windrush generation', *Wasafiri*, 14, 2007, p. 10. See also Campt, Tina, 'Imaging Diaspora: Race, Photography and the Ernest Dyche Archive', *Letters*, 16, 2008, pp. 2-3.

⁷¹ Imagery of Dyche's photography can be found on the Moving Here online archive, including the following pictures: Moving Here (n.d.), *Portrait of a young man*, [online], available: <http://www.movinghere.org.uk/gallery/faces/suit.htm> (accessed 11/09/2012); Moving Here (n.d.), *Man in zoot Suit 1960s or 1970s* [online], available: <http://www.movinghere.org.uk/gallery/style/zoot.htm> (accessed 11/09/2012); Moving Here (n.d.), *Unknown West Indian* [online], available: <http://www.movinghere.org.uk/search/..%5Cdeliveryfiles%5CAMBH%5CDC01%5C0%5C1.pdf> (accessed 11/09/2012).

⁷² See Dyche, Ernest, 'Dyche Plate' in Campt, Tina, 'Imaging Diaspora' p. 5. Also see Moving Here (n.d.), *Dress* [online], available: <http://www.movinghere.org.uk/gallery/style/skirted.htm> (accessed 11/09/2012).

⁷³ For 1950s style see: Moving Here (n.d.), *Pipe Smoker* [online], available: <http://www.movinghere.org.uk/gallery/style/pipe.htm> (accessed 11/09/2012). The Dyche Archive collection DVD at Birmingham Local Libraries and Archive Services has many examples see Ernest Dyche Collection, , Birmingham Libraries and Archive Service, Image Numbers: 0205, 0128, 0237, 0234.

vibrant, colourful and pattern fabrics either in Saris (six-seven feet of fabric folded and draped around the body) or salwaar-kameezes (lightly tailored trouser suits of a tunic and bottoms).⁷⁴ The idealised self-projection in Dyche's portraits relies heavily on the clothes worn: the smartness, neatness, cleanliness and distinctiveness represents a self respect and a demand for dignity within the UK and a means to control their own lives. The Dyche collection has traditionally been analysed within the medium of photography and visual culture of the Black Diaspora but they can also illustrate how clothes were used by Caribbean and South-Asian migrants in Britain to define themselves and fix meanings associated with their bodies.⁷⁵ Photographs tied to oral history can bring new understandings to understand and challenge our view of the recent past by showing how groups, then and now, make sense of their identities in Britain. The clothed-body is incredibly important as it is the way that Caribbean and South Asian bodies were made sense of as 'black' and 'Asian' within Britain, transforming physical characteristics into racial properties. Yet this process was actively contested by Diaspora communities, using clothes to make sense of race and explain their own experiences in Britain. With the clothed-body, Commonwealth migrants engage in the process of forming multiple and contradictory bodies from a single physical entity. Homi Bhabha informs us that in Post-Colonial hybrid cultures, such as Diasporas, aesthetics are important, allowing for what is absent or immaterial to be rendered real and fix meanings attached to the body, choosing the ways in which

⁷⁴ See Moving Here (n.d.), *Asian Portrait* [online], available: <http://www.movinghere.org.uk/gallery/women/portrait.htm> (accessed 11/09/2012); & Moving Here (n.d.), *Mother and Children* [online], available: <http://www.movinghere.org.uk/gallery/faces/mother.htm> (accessed 11/09/2012).

⁷⁵ Doy, Gen, *Black visual culture: modernity and postmodernity*, London, 2000, pp. 204-242.

it can be read and the discursive means to name and produce their body-identities materially.⁷⁶

Multiple bodies for Diaspora communities in Britain reflect how the body is both British and alien simultaneously: they have access to some meanings yet are denied others. It is what Avtar Brah terms the 'racialisation of looks' in Britain to make the body the primary means of identification and reduce all identities down to race.⁷⁷ This chapter will explore how being able to control the material medium of dress, migrant communities were able to define their bodies, yet at the same time were always defined by the body. However migrant communities did not simply accept definitions but used clothes to contest ideas of race daily and now act as the mechanism to understand their own life experiences of race in Britain. This chapter is divided into two case studies to explore the role clothes play in racial identities in Britain. The first will study the Afro-Caribbean Diaspora in the UK and how through clothes they negotiated and created meaning through their bodies based on ideas about blackness; actively constructing their bodies as being Black and British. Secondly the South Asian Diaspora will show how South Asian communities use dress to define gender and through this shape how their racial identities are constructed. Race though the body is a highly contingent yet powerful way of forming identities that becomes central to how these groups make sense of their lives and define their bodies, negotiating dominant readings of themselves through dress. What results is the role the body plays in British identity being transformed to accept non-white identities

⁷⁶ Bhabha, Homi, *The location of culture*, London, 1994, pp. 2, 3, 148.

⁷⁷ Brah, Avtar, *Cartographies of Diaspora: contesting identities*, London, 1996, p. 6.

within Britain and shape the decline in ethnic absolutism by challenging race and defining their own bodies.⁷⁸

Dressing the Black Body in Britain 1965-1972

Black immigrants used dress as the site for identity articulation and self projection and, despite their body being defined as 'Black', take control over their own bodies. Black dress should be analysed with how the black body is used and made sense of in non-high or expressive culture. Kobena Mercer analyses the ways black expression engages with how cinema and the visual arts are encoded with dominant racialised readings of the black community, highlighting that highly sexual characteristics located on the body are central to how these representations work.⁷⁹ Work on Black dress focuses on how the body is styled to claim back some degree of respect and representation: central to this analysis by Mercer and Carol Tulloch is how the biological property of hair has been styled and crafted around racialised notions of beauty and belonging, helping create the body underneath as inherently Black on their own terms.⁸⁰ Carol Tulloch's body of work engages with how black Diasporic forms of dress link with one another and how trans-national and trans-cultural identities of the Black-Atlantic are made real through dress, yet her work fails to come to terms with some of the precise specifics in the Black-British experience and the validity of Black-British cultural expression.⁸¹ However that is not to say

⁷⁸ Hall, Stuart, 'New Ethnicities' in Morley, David & Chen, Kuan-Hsing (eds.), *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, London, 1996, pp. 450-1.

⁷⁹ Mercer, Kobena, *Welcome to the jungle: new positions in black cultural studies*, London, 1994, pp. 72-3. 75, 82.

⁸⁰ Mercer, Kobena, *Welcome to the jungle*, pp. 82, 98, 100, 102-3; & Tulloch, Carol, *Black Style*, pp. 92-3.

⁸¹ Carol Tulloch's work on the whole is an excellent and inspirational set of work - this is excessively harsh judgement, see: Tulloch, Carol, 'Style-Fashion-Dress: From Black to Post-Black', *The Journal of Fashion Theory*, 14, 2010, pp. 273-304; & Tulloch, Carol, *Black Style*, London, 2004.

there was no trans-national expression of black double consciousness in Britain through clothes: visual presentation is both a means then of understanding race and linking local identity formation to wider expressions of blackness, and how imagery is used today to construct and make sense of the black experience globally.⁸² Elements of dress are also similar to those of the African Diaspora in the United States: Tom Wolfe's reporting on 'Radical Chic' in New York in this time period highlights the similar use of tight trousers and African elements configured to represent Black Power within localised social and cultural hierarchies.⁸³ It will be argued that Caribbean dress worked with the body underneath to define itself as respectable and capable of participating in British public life, yet at the same time also black; overlapping meanings are channelled and fixed through clothes. The Caribbean clothed body can only operate with racial ideas in Britain which in turn are defined and worked through clothes, enabling the Caribbean community to construct their own racial identities within a highly restricted framework.

Stuart Hall's work also addresses how the black community created spaces for itself to cope with the racism within Britain and, by using culture, shape the definitions of 'Black' to be redeployed and used differently, reworking racial ideas in the process.⁸⁴ Other Caribbean cultures such as the sound-systems, music, leisure spaces and carnival culture have been used to explore the role race plays in structuring how Caribbean culture in the UK is reworked as a survival mechanism because of

⁸² Schwarz, Bill, 'Our Unadmitted Sorrow': the Rhetorics of Civil Rights Photography', *History Workshop Journal*, 17, 2011, p. 142.

⁸³ Wolfe, Tom, *Radical Chic/Mau Mauing the Flak Catchers*, New York, 1978, pp. 6, 33-4, 130, 134-6

⁸⁴ Hall, Stuart, 'Minimal selves', in Gray, Ann & McGuigan, Jim (eds.), *Studying Culture: An Introductory Reader*, London, 1993, p. 131.

their harsh experiences.⁸⁵ What the following will achieve is a more historical analysis of how the Caribbean community was able to form an identity through clothes based in the commonality of their body being defined as Black. What follows is a set of two examples of how race through clothes is mediated by the Caribbean community in Britain. Firstly, the *West Indian Gazette* explains the importance dress plays in negotiating their bodies in being defined as Black. Secondly, how craft and consumption cultures gave the ability for the Caribbean community to control, a shape giving them distinct visual identities. All these combine to make the Caribbean body in Britain defined as Black, yet an identity and label that is contested and defined as much as possible by the migrants themselves.

Many Caribbean migrants were identified by the clothes that they wore: West-Indian men were the subject of several editorials in *Tailor & Cutter* throughout the first two months on arrival, commenting on the inappropriateness of their tailoring and that the flamboyant suits represent the animal-esque instinct of freed men with a slave past.⁸⁶ While not racist it is a highly racialised understanding about the properties assigned to the body underneath through the clothes, carrying both biological and genealogical based traits. In Britain their bodies were read as those of slaves and former colonial subjects and not as equal citizens. Many Caribbean migrants cultivated a distinct style to control their own body: to some degree they were able to claim their body back.

⁸⁵ Dawson, Ashley, *Mongrel nation: diasporic culture and the making of postcolonial Britain*, Michigan, 2007, p. 85; see also Alleyne, Brian, *Radicals against race: black activism and cultural politics*, Oxford, 2002, pp. 69-75.

⁸⁶ For the inappropriate tailoring on interpretation see: *Tailor & Cutter*, 13th July 1948, p. 513. For the linking of suits with race and slavery see: 'The Psychology of the Zoot Suit', *Tailor & Cutter*, 10th September 1948, pp. 708-9.

The process of self definition and demanding respect through clothes is well illustrated by the publication *West Indian Gazette*; edited by Gloria Jones, which featured extensive adverts for clothing shops and articles on how to wear clothes. The articles and commentary should be read within linking the global with the local: linking the experiences of race in Britain and the politics of Diaspora alongside decolonization and the civil rights movement.⁸⁷ In particular it gave voice to indigenous, parochial life in Britain that did not exist previously and laid the foundations down for further black publications in Britain from the late 1960s onwards.⁸⁸ While not of the direct period studied the *Gazette* remains an invaluable resource for studying the clothes of the Caribbean Diaspora and how important dress was for maintaining self worth and dignity. By being situated in the early 1960s these discourses can serve to explain the black clothed-body in Britain between 1966 and 1972 as the structural elements of dress were present in subsequent years.⁸⁹ The *West Indian Gazette* reveals the role clothes play in negotiating their bodies being defined as black, working with these labels to create an identity that is representative of their experiences.

The adverts in the *Gazette* reveal the importance dress had in self definition; every issue had one advert for West Indian clothes shops and dress agencies highlighting quality and design.⁹⁰ The *West Indian Gazette* had numerous adverts and articles which attest to the belief in Afro-Caribbean respect and the importance of dress for making the 'black' body their own. 'Tropic Ladies & Gentlemen's Outfitter: The Store with Elegance' frequently emphasised the quality of goods they have to

⁸⁷ Schwarz, Bill, 'Claudia Jones and the *West Indian Gazette*: Reflections on the Emergence of Post-Colonial Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 14, 2003, p. 270.

⁸⁸ Benjamin, Ionie, *The black press in Britain*, Stoke on Trent, 1994, pp. 41-2.

⁸⁹ For similarity and continuity of dress in the preceding decade the the images cited in Footnote 71 of this chapter.

⁹⁰ These vary across the issue from front-page adverts like 'Tropic Ladies & Gentlemen Outfitters' to 'Barrie's' in the main spread. Other adverts also include several dress agencies around the country.

offer.⁹¹ Barrie's outfitters for men claimed that 'Only Barrie' can offer you the finest quality cloths tailored to your own requirements' along with 'Your suit made in the latest American or Italian Style by our expert tailors'.⁹² In both adverts elegance is central to what they are selling and that global flows of wider culture give the Caribbean migrants the ability to shape and make their body specific on their own terms.

Yet Arnold's makes different claims to link the styles on offer to global fashion flows and style claiming it 'Caters for American, Italian and West Indian styled suits' while another, Fullerton claims to tailor for 'the West Indian Style'.⁹³ The adverts play on what would appeal to the Caribbean man and what he aspired to dress like as both the quality cloth and the fit of the suit are tremendously important in marinating your sense of respectability. Significance should be noted about the claims for the latest continental and American styles: this period saw the mergence and influence in menswear of Italian tailoring, the American 'Ivy League' look for men, and the general influence of Black America in giving migrants the culture to be proud of their body.⁹⁴ Caribbean men were keen, playing on the appeal of these adverts, to keep up appearances: being able to define the body underneath as respectable and normal was a key part of their consumption culture. Yet these styles were also to do with maintaining their own 'West-Indian' look, combining these influences for their own purposes and styles. Dress is the medium through which their body is made sense of and being able to control its appearance to define their body to a greater degree.

⁹¹ Advert can be seen in : *West Indian Gazette*, Vol 2, No 1, February 1959, p. 1.

⁹² Advert can be seen in : *West Indian Gazette*, Vol 2, No 61, December 1959, p. 3.

⁹³ Arnolds Ad:, *West Indian Gazette*, Vol 3, No 1, January 1960, p3; Fullerton Ad: *West Indian Gazette*, Vol 3, No 1, January 1960, p. 4.

⁹⁴ On Italian/Ivy League Style see: Gorman, Paul, *The Look: Adventures in Rock and Pop Fashion*, London, 2006, pp. 28-9. On being proud of the black body through American culture see an interview with Caryl Philips cited in: Phillips, Mike, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-racial Britain*, London, 1998, p. 12.

There are several editorials and advice columns on the importance of dress and your appearance in England. Gloria Jones herself notes how:

‘The smart appearance of the West Indian woman draws favourable comments from Londoners of whom it was said never used to give anyone a second look. The smart West Indian woman is not only getting second thoughts but also a close scrutiny.’⁹⁵ Caribbean women transform their body into not just being respectful but by the metropole standards ‘well dressed’. Getting a ‘close scrutiny’ means that the attention received on the outfit was read with regards to the body underneath, being a Caribbean woman in London meant being well-dressed was not expected. It highlights how with their body they received a different reading and not the same as the rest of society. It also highlights how Caribbean migrants proclaimed themselves within the urban environment as their identity does not bar them from self-respect and dignity. Ultimately the smartness gave the ability to set how others may read their outfits and what the terms of engagement are, yet this reading always comes down to the body being defined as Black.

In doing so Jones links this self presentation with the dominant readings of the black body, it is the way that the Caribbean population are able to set the terms and construct their own understandings of race:

“I have recently been asked about the grass-skirts worn. I showed absolutely no annoyance since I was correct that the questioner was both untraveled and unread.

Europeans who have appeared in the West Indies will never attempt to make themselves appear foolish. They find themselves surrounded by the well dressed woman.”⁹⁶

⁹⁵ *West Indian Gazette*, Vol3, No 4, December 1960, p. 6.

⁹⁶ *West Indian Gazette*, Vol3, No 4, December 1960, p. 6.

In advocating that Caribbean's take control of dress and self respect she actively challenged native connotations attributed to their bodies in Britain. Clothes for Jones are a means of setting and demanding equality and that the black-body could be defined by itself. Yet Caribbean migrants are forced to play within the rules of being defined as black in Britain, feeding in to how clothes were used to present self respect and challenging these conceptions based on race. The wearing of clothes for Jones addresses the labels assigned to the black body as culturally not advanced, geographically different and limiting. Dress is a powerful tool to challenge these ideas, but the power of race structures how black people address clothes fundamentally: they are always defined as black.

The adverts and commentary explain that self respect through dress and dressing in 'West-Indian style' are essential aspects, yet each plays with how in Britain Caribbean migrants were defined as black. The way in which meaning is generated and decoded from clothes highlights that race and the cultural understandings of the black body, whether it be primitive, ex-slaves, colonial subjects, cool or geographically distinct, are all used to make sense of the Caribbean clothed body. However these meanings are actively deconstructed and used by the community to define themselves and others to contest these meanings and represent themselves, rather than determine the ultimate conditions on which clothes are read. Caribbean clothing was not about subversion of rebellion but about control, dignity and respect, challenging preconceived ideas about the Caribbean body in Britain.

The West Indian Gazette also has sewing machine adverts in every issue attesting to the general use of home-tailoring and alterations within Britain in this

period.⁹⁷ In Jamaica and other West Indian islands there was a vibrant home-sewing culture about making dresses and clothes at home both for the family and the wider community and control the material medium of dress to alter the fit and details of clothes. These oral histories and personal recollections illustrate how modifying patterns gave Caribbeans in Britain the power to deploy specific clothing details and define their own bodies as advocated by the West Indian Gazette. Grace Brown who moved to Reading in the 1960s was taught how to sew and these skills were used in home and community dressmaking in Britain.⁹⁸ These gendered traditions are important as they provide the bridge of continuity in a new land for migrants and the ability to control what elements of host culture to adopt and use.

In landing in Britain their style not only become Caribbean but their own style becomes representative of the Black experience in Britain. Carol Tulloch's ethnographic work is a valuable source for understanding the transition between Jamaica and the Caribbean to the UK for understanding trans-national construction of black identities, yet her work is also useful as a re-reading provides understandings of how the body through clothes is transformed and controlled in Britain using local resources. Anello James brought home sewing cultures from the Caribbean to the UK and used here dressmaking skills to make personalised outfits for herself and the local community:

⁹⁷ From the issues available in the British Library Microfilm Collection every issue has one advert in it for a sewing machine: *British Library Microfilm Collection*, Ref: Mic.B.967.

⁹⁸ Interview with Grace Brown see: Reading & Berkshire Archives (n.d.) *Interview with Grace Brown Immigrants Project* [online], available: <http://www.theimmigrantsproject.org/people/browne/> (accessed 24/08/2012).

‘You used to get your styles out of a magazine in Jamaica and then you used to see nice little styles in there and then I would just sit down and cut out a dress without using a pattern then’⁹⁹

By rejecting paper patterns James was able to fully control the details, fit and overall construction of clothes and be creative rather than be dictated by other designs available through mainstream patterns, giving much greater control over how the dress fitted and represented the body underneath.¹⁰⁰ It also means that the cut of dresses is unique and distinct which enables Caribbean women to control some degree over how they were approached in public life.¹⁰¹ By making it from scratch it meant different influences were selected: Anello used inspiration from TV, to adverts and shops, to create her own unique outfits that could only exist within the confines of the Black experience of Britain.¹⁰² It enabled total control within the economic and cultural confines of Britain to shape what was worn to be exactly what they want. Through clothes Anello reorganised and remade British and global culture in dress through domestic sewing and tailoring techniques for women and men and in remembering the past sewing provides the mechanism to make sense and impose elements of self control and definition to her life history.

⁹⁹ Interview with Anello James (transcript) in: Tulloch, Carol, ‘There’s No Place Like Home: Home Dressmaking and Creativity in the Jamaican Community of the 1940s and 1960s’, in Adamson, G, *The Craft Reader*, Oxford, 2010, pp. 507-8.

¹⁰⁰ For use and importance of sewing patterns shaping the clothes worn see: Hackney, Fiona, ‘Use Your Hands for Happiness’: Home Craft and Make-do-and-Mend in British Women’s Magazines in the 1920s and 1930s’, *Journal of Design History*, 19, 2006, pp. 23-38. See also Burman, Barbara, ‘“What a Deal of Work there is in a Dress!”’: Englishness and Home Dressmaking in the Age of the Sewing Machine, in Coneking, Becky (ed), *The Englishness of English dress*, Oxford, 2002, pp. 79-96.

¹⁰¹ A good photo illustrating distinctive cuts of dresses within mainstream styles: Kenlock, Neil, ‘The Bailey Sisters, London, early 1970s’, in Phillips, Mike (ed.), *Roots to Reckoning*, London, Seed, 2005, p. 86.

¹⁰² Interview with Anello James (transcript) in: Tulloch, Carol, ‘There’s No Place Like Home’ p. 506.

Styles were made on order for the person and were popular as they gave women the ability to have exactly what they wanted and gave Caribbean women the means to have their own body versus buying from the high-street:

“Those dresses were cheaper than the one from the dressmakers. If you went to the store to buy a piece of cloth to make a dress it would cost you more money to go and buy it and make it; but at the same time it was made-to-fit and to look stylish in.”¹⁰³

The ability to control and manipulate the material medium is incredibly important as it dictates what elements of wider culture become inscribed into the body. The fact it looks ‘stylish’ explains how a good appearance is a key quality to black Britain, to look right is essential, yet this is mediated and exists because of how race shapes the black experience. By controlling dress, the body underneath could be assigned some meaning over the dominant definitions, taking some control of their bodies back in public.

Similarly the oral testimony remembering consumption patterns for men’s tailoring illustrates how this control over shaping the body underneath and getting what you wanted was central to how clothes were worn and bought. The big change in Britain was the shift from local tailors to chain tailors:

“No, you have the stores that sell the cloth. You had the tailors. It’s just recently that you can get a suit off the peg but you buy the cloth and go to the tailor.”¹⁰⁴

However this changed to using the mass tailoring chain Burtons:

“How you want your thing to be made. Now you go in a shop and get a suit. There were no Burtons.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Interview with Doncaster domestic Caribbean home sewer (transcript) in: Ibid. p. 509.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with ‘C’, 10 March 1998, Museum of London Oral History Archive (Transcripts), MoL 99.28.

Burtons established by Lithuanian Jew Montague Burton allowed customers to choose the fabric, cut, shaping and detail from a set of options based around standard pattern blocks and then sewn to give the finished garment ¹⁰⁶ Shops like this gave Caribbean men to get the style and cut of suit they wanted, allowing them to maintain styles and looks in Britain to a greater degree. Yet as with sewing patterns this is around making sense of and coming to terms with having a 'Black' body in Britain.

Yet the maintenance of styles reflects how men saw themselves as British but mediated through being defined as Black:

"Oh well, well mostly our...though we were near to America and that but them times was like just ordinary like English cut, English cut ... we were always fussy about our dress, you see, we were always fussy about that, man, when going out well clad."¹⁰⁷

Even in the Caribbean the styles were constructed off 'English' styles; the identifiable styles were actively made by the migrants through their choices. Being 'fussy' highlights how clothes are of central importance to who they were and make sense of their life in Britain. This smartness is a feature of Caribbean dress in Britain and shows a demand for respect and represent aspirations rather than trying to subvert or imitate styles.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Interview with 'C', 10 March 1998, Museum of London Oral History Archive (Transcripts), MoL 99.28.

¹⁰⁶ See the last chapter for an overview of the relative success of Burtons in the 1960s & 1970s in: Sigsworth, Eric, *Montague Burton: the tailor of taste*, Manchester, 1990, pp. 290-293.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with 'C', 10 March 1998, Museum of London Oral History Archive (Transcripts), MoL 99.28.

¹⁰⁸ For images of smart and confident Caribbean migrants by Vanley Burke see: The New Art Exchange (n.d.), *Meaning of Style* [online], available: <http://www.thenewartexchange.org.uk/MeaningofStyle.php> (accessed 23/08/2012). See also: Morris, Dennis, 'Admiral Ken Soundsystem, early 1970's', in Cunningham, Jake (eds.), *Seen blackstyle UK*, London, 2001, p. 34. A video of Dennis Morris discussing his work and similar imagery can be found here: APB Autograph (2012), *Dennis Morris, Growing up Black* [online], available: <http://multimedia.autograph-abp.co.uk/video/38400191>, (Accessed 23/08/2012).

Many of these dress cultures of Caribbean men comes from their homeland where many had seen themselves as ‘more English than the English’, with their dress reflecting that they saw themselves as partly English.¹⁰⁹ Caribbean masculinity is created through consumption to be as British as it can: using Burton’s and by being English rather than ‘American’ or ‘Zoot Suits’ reflects how the Caribbean Diaspora are able to negotiate dominant meanings of English masculinity.¹¹⁰ Tailoring is one of the identifiers of English dress with items being cut and sewn to fit the body, a mark of gentleman.¹¹¹ Yet because they are identified as black as within the system of classification, their body does not have the same cultural capital as the white body. The suits are inherently Post-Colonial, Caribbean colonial masculinities re-made and cast in the metropole within the resources available. Yet rather than being a mix or tradition it is inherently modern, a cut and paste of the available styles to the Caribbean community in Britain. Dress fixes and makes real complex masculinities that are negotiated materially on several fronts around race.

As with home dressmaking, tailoring is also the subject life histories are constructed and narrated around to explain the black experience in Britain, imposing and explaining black double consciousness. Clothes provide the life-histories constructed from memory and experience the means to come to terms being Black and British.

For those remembering their growing up in Britain this existing in contradictory states of the Caribbean body are illustrated by the recollections of ‘P’

¹⁰⁹ Collins, Marcus, ‘Pride and Prejudice: West Indian Men in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain’, *Journal of British Studies*, 40, 2001, pp. 399-401.

¹¹⁰ For an example of such a suit see this photo: Philips, Charlie, ‘Man in a ‘West Indian’ Suit’, late 1960s’ in Philips, Mike (ed.) *Roots to Reckoning: The Photography of Ahmet Francis, Neil Kenlock and Charlie Phillips*, London, Seed, 2005, p. 62.

¹¹¹ On suits and bowler hats see: Collins, Marcus, ‘Pride and Prejudice’, p. 398.

and the strict control of her parents meant she had one clothed body at school and another in home spaces. These memories illustrates the key way in which the black body was negotiated in Britain by the Caribbean community by deploying the specific clothes, created and highlighted by other testimony and the West Indian Gazette , at different times and places:

“... the way we dressed, very Caribbean, very West Indian ... the minute you got in from school you changed your ‘school-clothes’ into you ‘home clothes’; you could not keep it on. You had special clothes for going out and that you could put on at certain times.”¹¹²

The body occupies different spaces at different times mediated through dress. Clothes are used to gain acceptance in school and then the body is transformed back into a self defined Caribbean body.

Many of the clothes ‘P’ wore in this period were chosen by her parents and not in the fashionable styles:

“You couldn’t ask for something in fashion. I wanted a pair of fashionable round shoes, she bought me pointed shoes and I felt dreadful wearing them. There was no negotiation, it was in there for you. In your wardrobe is a blouse, a skirt, a dress; you told what to wear and that was that.”¹¹³

This control reflects how in the West Indian Gazette advice and craft/consumption cultures were a key sphere for self projection yet also how they were forced to negotiate British culture whilst maintaining their own distinct identities. The black body exists in multiple states, both defined as Black and as the site where Caribbean culture is kept alive. Yet these experiences were always mediated by race: in Britain

¹¹² Interview with ‘P’: British Library Sound Archive, Millennium Memory Bank, C900/05049 C1, ‘P’.

¹¹³ Interview with ‘P’: BLNSA, MMB C900/05049 C1, ‘P’.

they were 'black' and they did not have the power to fully challenge this. The Caribbean community is shaped actively by the experiences of race and this culture was shared by others in the community 'P' knew: "my other black friends were going through the same thing".¹¹⁴ The body in Britain is made into an all encompassing identity mechanism that means at different times it is British or part of the community, when at school or in public, and Caribbean when in private, yet at all times it is mediated through the label of being 'black'. Clothes for 'P' are also the means of exploring and understanding how her parents informed her of her dual heritage, of being both black and British, and enabling her to translate her experiences to explain the past and black double consciousness for today.

This identification of the Caribbean body with blackness is central as it structures how dress is used in relation to the body and explains the consumption patterns of the community. Negotiating this label and using clothes to present themselves becomes central to their identity in Britain as it allows them to control how they are perceived in Britain. Yet it also highlights their marginal social position as the black body did not have the power to define itself. Clothes on the other hand can transform and work with these definitions, making control over dress essential. In shaping the material medium, in particular the fit of clothes, the Caribbean community actively create an identifiable black consumer and craft culture in Britain around addressing their bodies in public by the late 1960s. The body is a basis for collective action and the use of dress explains and reveals the hidden role the clothed body had in Black Britain's identity formation.

¹¹⁴ Interview with 'P': BLNSA, MMB C900/05049 C1, 'P'.

Clothing for the Caribbean community served a crucial point in the self definition of themselves as black, but theirs was entirely reliant upon their experiences and understandings of race in Britain. The Post-Colonial nature of their bodies is central, being both inherently British yet also Black at the same time. Multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings inhabit the same clothed body; they exist in two different states at the same time, reliant upon different circumstances and outfits to structure readings. Yet these exists at the same time, connected, contradictory and complex meanings coming into play at different time as being Black denies the full access to British identity. Their body is central to how they make sense of themselves and their experiences. In adopting mainstream cultures and making them their own, , an intrinsically Black-British body was created through creative and consumption cultures in this period. With the body as British they unsettle notions of belonging in Britain based in the body, making their claim to British identity. This construction of their own identity within race highlights how race is a mutable, variable concept that can be negotiated and challenged from multiple positions, yet it also highlights the marginality of the black body in Britain due to race. Yet by working with what they had the Caribbean community were able to some degree to claim back their bodies in British society and actively construct rather than essentialize their culture. Blackness is a malleable construct able to reworked and deployed for different circumstances.

Race, Gender and the South-Asian Clothed-Body

The South Asian Diaspora in Britain used the clothed body to construct gendered identities which fed into how race is constructed and articulated. This process of using the commonality of difference based in the male and female body

explains how race in Britain often structured around understandings of gender: both are required to make sense of the clothed-body as an 'Asian' subject. This case study is in two halves to explore the impact the construction of South-Asian gender has upon race in Britain: firstly through the sari and home-sewing the salwaar-kameezes, South Asian women were able to control and define their bodies, defining how race is interpreted through the differently cut and draped garments worn over their bodies. They actively helped construct themselves as doubly-Oriental, once through the body and once through clothes. Secondly South Asian masculinity reveals how the identification with the male body helps construct their 'manliness' using British consumption cultures, yet are denied the dominant forms of English masculinity despite Englishness being a globally constructed identity. In constructing their own gender roles via dress, race is deconstructed and refigured by the Diaspora, creating new and multiple ways of belonging in Britain through the process.¹¹⁵ Global cultural flows are remade to construct gender which in turn shapes how they are understood racially as 'Asian' in Britain.

The scholarship highlighting the 'invisibility' of South Asian culture in Britain has frequently focused on the evolution of Bhangra music alongside the expressive arts and the transformation of Asian into 'Oriental' motifs used in contemporary British culture.¹¹⁶ This is part of longer narratives of how the exotic was reworked and entered everyday British culture, including dress.¹¹⁷ Parminder Bhachu's work on

¹¹⁵ Hutnyk, John & Kalra, Virinder & Kaur, Raminder, *Diaspora & hybridity*, London, 2005, pp. 16, 32.

¹¹⁶ Kaur, Raminder & Terracciano Alda 'South Asian/BrAsian Performing Arts', in N. Ali & V.S. Kalra & S. Sayyid (eds), *A postcolonial people: South Asians in Britain*, London, 2008, p. 343. On music see: Sanjay, Sharma 'BrAsian Sounds', in N. Ali & V.S. Kalra & S. Sayyid (eds), *A Postcolonial people: South Asians in Britain*, London, 2008, pp. 317-326.

¹¹⁷ A good overview of the influence of Indian dress in Britain see: Breward, Christopher, 'Banyans, smoking jackets & suit linings', in Breward, Christopher, & Crang, Philip & Crill, Rosemary (eds.), *British Asian Style: Fashion and Textiles, Past and Present*, London, 2010, pp. 122-35.

Asian dress in Britain analyses the process of the female Asian body being crafted in spaces of domestic culture and creating truly globalized forms of identities.¹¹⁸ While Bhachu's work is useful for understanding gender within flows of global capital it only offers a limited understanding of how race structures the clothes worn and how the body is made through clothes, requiring a more cultural analysis. Likewise much focus has been on the industrial disputes of the turban to explore the politics of race through dress; this work is important as it highlights the racialised ways in which dress is negotiated but limits itself to the focus on one, intrinsically 'Asian' item rather than how the politics and race is negotiated through the body itself.¹¹⁹ Drawing on this scholarship this chapter will show how South Asian identities in dress rely upon global and colonial forms of knowledge that are shaped by the racialising of the South Asian body as intelligibly 'Asian' in Britain. It will explore how 'the body is the canvas on which race is made' via gender and how the South Asian body is made 'non normal'.¹²⁰

The life histories involving the sari allows an exploration about how South Asian women's dress is always about the body underneath and its transformation through clothes, revealing the ways in which South Asian identity negotiated notions of race via gender, actively constructed by the community. A report in the Guardian in 1975 highlights what it believes to be the importance of clothes to immigrant communities to be the cut of the clothes and the covering of the female body: "The tradition of always covering the legs and wearing a loose top with long sleeves is still

¹¹⁸ Bhachu, Parminder, *Dangerous designs: Asian women fashion the Diaspora Economies*, London, 2004, pp. 3-6.

¹¹⁹ Tarlo, Emma, 'The South Asian Twist in British Muslim Fashion', in Breward, Christopher, & Crang, Philip & Crill, Rosemary (eds.), *British Asian Style: Fashion and Textiles, Past and Present*, London, 2010, p. 63.

¹²⁰ Banerjee, Sikata, *Make me a man! : masculinity, Hinduism, and nationalism in India*, New York, 2005, p. 151; & Modood, Tariq, 'Politics of Blackness and Asian identity', in N. Ali & V.S. Kalra & S. Sayyid (eds), *A Postcolonial people: South Asians in Britain*, London, 2008, p. 67.

maintained, even if the clothes now come from Marks and Spencer. It is unusual for Asian women to wear anything which eclipses their legs.”¹²¹ The interpretation of clothes always relate to the body as being ‘Asian’ and female, even in ‘British’ clothes; both race and gender are required to generate meaning through clothes. Yet this view can be challenged by using oral histories to change our understanding of contemporary Britain and give new voices to add greater depth to the historical picture.

The sari is one of the totemic items associated with the South Asian Diaspora by other groups and used by the community itself to both control and shape the body and make sense of the Asian experience in Britain for contemporary narratives. The ‘Otherness’ of the Sari is highlighted by the focus on it being uncut, making the garment is completely different to Western cut and sewn items of clothing, giving it the textual characteristic of not being definitively un-Western.¹²² Being unsown in British visual culture contexts gives the sari dual meaning in being both classic and barbaric, both states exist within the sari depending on how it is worn.¹²³ The sari allows the Asian female body to be both covered up and, due to the textual difference, on show at the same time.

The transformative power of the sari is illustrated again by a rare insight by cross dressing. ‘L’, going out with an East-African man in the early 1970s remembers how her partners’ mother:

¹²¹ ‘Immigrant fashions’, *Guardian*, 28th Jan 1975.

¹²² Support for this can be found in the same Guardian Article: ‘Immigrant fashions’, *Guardian*, 28th Jan 1975.

¹²³ Doy, Gen, *Drapery. Classicism and Barbarism in Visual Culture*, London, 2002, p. 230.

“... dressed me in a sari; oh my mother would have died if she’d known I was going out in saris. She would have thought it terrible!”¹²⁴

The white body in this case has completely different meaning in a sari in relation to the Asian body. The sari is also the means ‘L’ makes sense of race in the past to explain today how that in South Asian culture “everything is apart ... a different race”.¹²⁵ The sari belongs to Asian culture and can only be worn by Asian women; women of British origin have totally different meanings ascribed to the while wearing a sari. Likewise in being dressed by her partner’s mother it reflects the power of the Asian woman’s body to create the sari as something alien and exotic in conjunction with the unsown nature of the garment. The textuality of the sari in relation to other forms of dress allows it to transform and change meanings about the body underneath: identities around race can be negotiated and transformed through dress. This cross-dressing also reflects that in changing her dress she is inherently changing her gender role as well, both are situated to make sense of the sari in Britain.

This sense of importance is also remembered by those in the Asian community as many women wore the sari at home and Western clothes for work: the clothed-body transforms race through gender.¹²⁶ The sari allowed women to transform their body to represent motherhood and domesticity within their own culture, demonstrating how the sari changes to cope with the experience of race in Britain. Further insights are provided by interviews with children of the Diaspora who associate beauty and power of the mothers and senior female members of the family with the sari and wearing Western clothes meant a full transformation of the body and

¹²⁴ British Library Sound Archive, Millennium Memory Bank, C900/18597 C1, ‘L’.

¹²⁵ BLNSA, MMB, C900/18597 C1, ‘L’.

¹²⁶ Dwyer, Claire, ‘From suitcases to showroom, British Asian retail spaces’, in Breward, Christopher, & Crang, Philip & Crill, Rosemary (eds.), *British Asian Style: Fashion and Textiles, Past and Present*, London, 2010, p. 150

the mother's roles. For 'J' the defining memory of his childhood were his mother and her body being transformed by clothes of a different cut:

"The first time I saw my mother in slacks, it has stayed with me in my head ever since. For any woman who has grown up with the sari, to be defined by the sari, what she must have felt to have removed it and display her form. My first fifteen years are summed up by her taking that sari off and showing her shape."¹²⁷

The Asian female body is covered up and transformed by the sari; wearing fully Western clothes that exposed the shape of the body reveals the way which South Asian identities were built and performed through the body. This reflects how racism is constructed from memory through gender and clothes, imposing a view on the past to illustrate that racism "was constant; there wasn't any day to escape from being different".¹²⁸ In India many women felt that without a sari they were naked, on display and that different sari drapes and folds symbolise different gender roles in society.¹²⁹ In showing their figure through dress many South-Asian women automatically changed prescribed gender roles and transformed the body underneath; the Asian female body is such a powerful site for transformation and that both the physical characteristics of skin and sex can change the meanings of clothes fundamentally.

The cut and sewn nature of 'Western' clothes did not have the same meaning ascribed with the Asian body as it did the white body; while the sari is different the Asian body still defines how clothes were read, as 'R' remembers how:

¹²⁷ British Library Sound Archive, Millennium Memory Bank, C900/00030 C1, 'J'.

¹²⁸ BLNSA, MMB, C900/00030 C1, 'J'. A similar memory is held by Pinnar, interviewed as part of the Sari Story Project; *Bridging Arts* (2012), *Sari Educational Pack* [PDF], available www.bridging-arts.com/file_download/4/sari_education_pack.pdf (accessed 24/08/2012).

¹²⁹ See Banerjee, Mukulika & Miller, Daniel, *The Sari*, Oxford, 2003, pp. 2, 5, 33, 111.

“... if you wear an English dress, nobody will look at you in the same way they do at English girls’ strangely. I started to wear trousers and tops instead of our dress.”¹³⁰

Being Asian meant being different and not the same as ‘British’. Their body, though wearing ‘English’ or ‘Western’ clothes, does not have the same access to the symbolic capital as a white body: it is always different. It also has the power to shape and make the Asian body underneath as ‘British’ but not to the first order of belonging or identity. This focus on the body is highlighted that in Britain ‘R’ thought people would be beautiful because of their white skin.¹³¹ Yet on arrival she was shocked by the white female body being on display with short skirts:

“Skirts, bad to show that much of your legs, that was a bit of a shock. We were all covered up”¹³²

The body is one of the central ways South-Asian identities are recalled today to make sense today of their lives in Britain. It is what Brah identifies as how looks are racialised with racial meanings inscribed and built through the body, yet this process is actively down to how gender in the South-Asian community is performed through dress.¹³³

What the analysis of the sari through a variety of oral sources, each revealing different aspects of the sari, illustrates is how the South Asian clothed-body was ‘Orientalised’ twice, once through the item and again through the Asian body. Using clothes the South Asian body is able to deploy and use the racial characteristics associated with it in different ways for different purposes. Yet in using the sari they are able to control the meaning within a wider system of classification; the Asian

¹³⁰ British Library Sound Archive, Millennium Memory Bank, C900/07111B C1, ‘R’.

¹³¹ BLNSA, MMB C900/07111B C1 ‘R’.

¹³² BLNSA, MMB C900/07111B C1 ‘R’.

¹³³ Brah, Avtar, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, 1996, p. 6.

clothed-body can transform and control how race is constructed in society. Ideas of gender fundamentally structure how unsown garments and South-Asian female bodies are made into 'Asian' subjects in Britain

Using the textuality of their clothes enables South Asian women to transform the body, but the source of these items lies within the South Asian community through craft and consumption cultures. Oral histories about pattern making can explain how the specific characteristics of South Asian dress, highlighted by the Sari testimonies, were made in Britain. These sewing cultures controlled the production of clothes in the South Asian community and ascribe meaning about the identity life-cycle onto dress. The Guardian report highlights in its interviews how many women associate the sari with motherhood and how the clothes worn change the body underneath.¹³⁴ By controlling the construction of clothes the South Asian Diaspora is able to control and shape the body underneath into something specific and make real their gender identities; in doing so the clothes worn are not traditional but inherently modern, forged within Post-War Britain. Remembering dress making and pattern cutting also allows the South Asian community to impose control over their experiences and give agency to their own lives and identities, taking control of their bodies in the histories they have created.

This aspect of tradition and skills being transferred to Britain is a key argument of Parminder Bhachu's ethnographic work on South-Asian Diaspora home sewing and tailoring cultures in the UK. Saris and, in particular, salwaar kameezes, are used for spaces for control and self definition playing on global flows of culture and commerce, making South Asian identities global yet intrinsically shaped by the

¹³⁴ 'Immigrant fashions' Guardian 28th Jan 1975.

experience of being Asian in Britain.¹³⁵ This British aspect gives it key value in disrupting and channelling global capital and cultural flows in Britain.¹³⁶ While Bhachu's work fails to fully analyse the body, her work provides valuable sources for understanding how *sina-prona*, sewing skills, rework the clothes in Britain to reflect and contest the label of Asian-ness through the body, making the sewing machine as a key tool in making and performing South Asian Diaspora gender identities.¹³⁷ In using technology to re-work domestic culture it reflects the inherent 'Post-Coloniality' of South Asian identities in Britain and rather than being about tradition there are, what Aisha Khan identifies about visual identities in the South Asian Diapora, about belief and control over the self.¹³⁸

By controlling the material medium, like the Caribbean Diaspora, South Asian women are able to control and get exactly what they want out of dress. Being able to make something highly specific with its own 'idiosyncrancies' highlights how Asian women through craft cultures there were able to make specific aesthetic qualities that embodied their identities and relationships to others in the community.¹³⁹ This control is essential as it makes the clothes not traditional but inherently modern and shaped by the contemporary constructs of race in Britain. It is this way that they make Bahchu's claimed contribution to processes of globalization. Her work particularly highlights how *salwar-kameezes*, trouser suits, became popular, yet required the skills necessary to make a fundamentally different cut of item in the UK from what was available, this

¹³⁵ Bhachu, Parminder, *Dangerous designs*, pp. 4, 11, 12, 23.

¹³⁶ Ibid. pp. 5-6.

¹³⁷ *Sina-prona*: Ibid. p. 104.

¹³⁸ Ali, Nareen, 'Imperial Implosions', in N. Ali & V.S. Kalra & S. Sayyid (eds.), *A Postcolonial people: South Asians in Britain*, London, 2008, pp. 166-7. See also Khan, Aisha, 'Homeland, Motherland: Authenticity, Legitimacy and Ideologies of Place among Muslims in Trinidad', in van der Veer, Peter (ed.), *Nation and Migration. The Politics of Space in the South Asian Diaspora*, Philadelphia, 1995, pp. 128-151.

¹³⁹ Bhachu, Parminder, *Dangerous designs*, p. 30.

included the use of synthetic and polyester fabrics in salwaar-kameezes.¹⁴⁰ This use of tradition or skills highlights the hybridity of South-Asian dress in Britain, inherently shaped by race and used local resources through their own cultures to negotiate the process.¹⁴¹

Looking at how South Asian men remember consumption patterns in Britain reveals a process of making sense of race through gender via the specifics of clothes similar to women with home dress-making skills. In locating the masculinity on the body sets gender as a primary means of understanding race in Britain. South Asian men did not wear different clothes but the same clothes as other men in society. This has historical precedence as throughout the colonial period Indian men often constructed their masculinity from colonial forms of knowledge.¹⁴² South Asian men constructed masculinities against British self control and civility as natural to create their bodies as muscular, strong and innately masculine.¹⁴³ This meant that many Asian men used 'English' tailored clothes to perform their gendered identity constructed against both South Asian women and British men.¹⁴⁴ This emphasis on English dress and cut was transported over and used by the South Asian Diaspora to

¹⁴⁰ Bombay stores in Bradford sold man-made fabric Asian clothing with patterns and colours for Salwar see: Leeds Costume Gallery, LEEDM.F.1975.17.A-C; for a Nylon sari: Leeds Costume Gallery LEEDM.F.1975.6,9; for a polyester Sari & Blouse: Leeds Costume Gallery, LEEDM.F.1975.68.

¹⁴¹ For pictures of South Asian women wearing salwaar-kameezes in public see: Rano, Majit Singh, 'Family outside their home in Leicester,' in Martin, John & Singh, Gurharpal (eds.), *Asian Leicester*, Leicester, 2002 p25. See also: Photographer's Direct (n.d.), *Asian Women in Balsall Heath* [online], available: <http://www.photographersdirect.com/buyers/stockphoto.asp?imageid=3205701> , (accessed 11/09/2012).

¹⁴² For photos of men wearing similar clothes to mainstream society see: Sykes, Homer, Photo Shelter (n.d.), *Asian men in Hamlet Towers' London* [online], available: <http://homersykes.photoshelter.com/image/I00005YLSYuV01JA> , (accessed 11/09/2012). See also: Photographer's Direct (n.d.), *Asian Men in Balsall Heath, 1970* [online], available: <http://www.photographersdirect.com/buyers/stockphoto.asp?imageid=3205761> , (accessed 11/09/2012). And finally: Manchester Local Archives, Flickr, (2012) '*Taken in 1965 Manchester*' [online], available: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/manchesterarchiveplus/5961257156/in/set-72157626073585254> (Accessed 11/09/2012). For colonial reference: Banerjee , Sikata, *Make me a man!*, p. 2.

¹⁴³ Banerjee , Sikata, *Make me a man!*, pp. 31, 151-2.

¹⁴⁴ Good examples of these can be seen in the Dyche's portrait photography, see Footnote 73 of this chapter.

shop within British tailoring confines to shape their body: South Asian masculine identity built upon previous gendered notions of race located on the body. It is a globally defined identity as South Asian men share the same physical objects to transform their bodies as English bodies:

“But the men’s dressing up, that’s not different: in Pakistan men dress in the English way,”¹⁴⁵

This requirement to perform masculinity shapes men’s consumption patterns in England as they are actively constructed within British male consumption patterns. Many South Asian men in England wore their clothes from local tailors or other tailoring chains and assimilated their dress into mainstream British styles:

“I wore these clothes from Pakistan and then I bought some from around here.

Something’s from different shops. First suit which I bought was about £30, a lot of money according to the wages, but good quality. A quality one.”¹⁴⁶

The importance in quality and the investment highlights how presenting the body is central their identity and how clothes were used by men. This can read down to understanding how race shaped reality and how people acted: by dressing in ‘English Clothes’ many South Asian men were constructing their masculinity as innate and natural in line with how British forms of male dress were naturalised.

‘Mohammed’ from Huddersfield remembers how he just wore ordinary, in fashion clothes:

“I wore what was in fashion, you look back now and think yourself a nutter! That’s how it was, you went along with the flow. Wear trousers and all that.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ BLNSA, MMB C900/07111B C1 ‘R’.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with ‘Ismail’: Asian Voices (2012), *Interview with ‘Ismail’* [online], available: <http://www.asianvoices.org.uk/audios/find/109> (Accessed 24/08/2012).

Asian men based on this and the photos construct masculinity around the dominant models available to them, in this case those offered by the mainstream stores. ‘Going with the flow’ of British dress meant defining the body in relation to British masculinities, imposing gender roles on their lives and making sense of their experiences through tailoring consumption and what they wore. By using clothes South Asian men performed their masculinity and help structure understandings around their body in racial terms through gender, illustrating what Sallie Westwood describes in gender being a primary way South Asian men make sense of the experience of race in this period.¹⁴⁸

This use of mainstream styles is also relevant in the ethnographic work examining the structure of the South-Asian clothing industry in Britain, copying styles directly from leading retailers and re-making them in cheaper materials. In particular copies of trousers were done from outlets like C&A and Marks & Spencers:

“We usually buy a pair of trousers from a large department store and copy them”¹⁴⁹

But as much as these designs originated in British styles, many were re-styled for Asian tastes in Britain.¹⁵⁰ Unlike South Asian women’s dress, men’s dress uses mainstream dress cultures and twists it aesthetically for its own purposes, the fact it is built on to ‘English’ clothes is important as it shows that Asian masculinity uses wider Western cultures to define itself. This also explains how many South Asian men were able to effectively assimilate and wear mainstream styles with little modification or attention to detail as it fitted with preconceived gender identities. This structural

¹⁴⁷ Interview with ‘Mohammed’: Asian Voices (2012), *Interview with ‘Mohammed’* [online], available: <http://www.asianvoices.org.uk/audios/find/106>, (Accessed 24/08/2012).

¹⁴⁸ Westwood, Sallie, ‘Gendered Diaspora: Space, Politics and South Asian Masculinities in Britain’ In van der Veer, Peter (ed.), *Nation and Migration. The Politics of Space in the South Asian Diaspora*. Philadelphia, 1995, pp. 203.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Pakistani Clothing Industry Worker (Transcript), Werbner, Pnina, *The Migration process : capital, gifts and offerings among British Pakistanis*, New York, 1990, p. 60.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Pakistani Clothing Industry Worker (Transcript), Ibid. p. 61.

impact of creating an entire secondary economy based on the cultural requirements of dressing the body reflect the importance of self definition and control defined in relation to dominant norms of masculinity.

South-Asian male identity achieves significance when contrasted with the women; their clothes are draped and folded whereas men's are cut and sewn in 'Western' styles. This transforms the Asian female body into something highly specific and representative of the other while male dress is free but in both cases it is their inherent otherness of the South Asian body that denies them access to the same meanings as white bodies. South-Asian masculinities are defined by their relationship with South Asian women; they are in the same community but occupy completely different zones materially, making the racial decodings based on the clothed-body centred around the binary distinctions of gender.

Gender in the South Asian community is manifest and amplified through the clothed body, in doing so setting the site of engagement for how race and racial identities about the South Asian body underneath are built on. The body can be seen as contributing to Diaspora identities and provide a collective basis for identity and action, the clothed body allows these identities to be made in relation to each other.¹⁵¹ The unsown clothes are not resemblance of the past but intrinsically modern, existing and transformed through the global flows of culture and people in Britain in this period. Clothes have the power to set the meanings about South-Asian bodies around gender and constructed around the dominant readings of the raced body in Britain, as Tariq Modood highlights that regardless of the fixing non-whites will always be perceived as non-normal.¹⁵² These non-normal identities in Britain relate to how

¹⁵¹ Hutnyk, John & Kalra, Virinder & Kaur, Raminder, *Diaspora & hybridity*, p. 59.

¹⁵² Modood, Tariq, 'Politics of Blackness and Asian identity', pp. 66-7.

specific forms of gender are racialised through the different physical characteristics of the body via the gender differences between South Asian men and women. The clothes of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain explain how race shapes and structures the lives of those who settled in Britain, whilst also making their identities real and provides the space where memories can be organised to explain today their experiences of race through gender.

Conclusion: Identity, Dress and the Diaspora Body

The global nature of clothes highlights how the body is re-shaped and reformed to mean something to different groups and generate new ways of belonging in Britain. Both cultures drew upon wider forms of knowledge and culture to remake their bodies in Britain as being both British and 'Other'. It did not subvert or challenge the system as scholars such as Hebdige assert but negotiated its meaning through the daily challenges and performed identities in an ongoing process, asserting a demand for dignity and respect.¹⁵³ Clothes represent how central racial definitions were to shaping how they were understood and the body the site for making them racial subjects in Britain. Yet both Diaspora communities actively played a part in constructing dominant readings of race by setting the terms it is seen in: with Caribbean it is about their black body, while for the South Asian community it is about how their gender roles based on the body come to define their racial characteristics. Both cases are different and reveal the ways in which culture plays a role in shaping bodies into different categories and how memories about the body, and the differences constructed upon it, are reformulated and articulated today through life

¹⁵³ Hebdige, Dick, *Cut 'n' Mix: Culture, Identity and Caribbean music*, London, 2007, pp. 156-9.

histories to make sense of race and racism. Neither group is interpreted the same way through clothes, their meanings negotiated by their actions in relation to the white body and are unable to define themselves. Their identities and experiences in Britain are always mediated by the difference of their respective bodies.

Both these cultures can be seen as contributing to the redefinition of Britishness offered by Empire into a much longer scheme; not by bringing Empire back with them but operating under colonial systems of thought and the cultural knowledge. It validates to some degree Catherine Hall's argument about Britishness in the metropole being defined along racial lines forged by Empire, structuring the processes of thought, making British identities global in scope and normalising power relations in Britain.¹⁵⁴ In this case it is not to 'over-Empire' as Andrew Thompson has warned about when addressing the legacy in an increasingly pluralistic society but to realise that the encoded material-cultures of cutting and sewing Western dress has a truly global story which is then played out in Post-Colonial Britain.¹⁵⁵ It is the Post Coloniality of the Diaspora clothed-body that impacts upon the cultural structures of Britishness and British racial identities. These identities feed into the mainstream culture to help make British identities rely on multiple notions of belonging, disrupting the normal narratives of the island-nation and make their mark in British life through negotiated cultural forms based on how physical difference in the body are interpreted by discourse. While their impact, particularly how South Asian gender helps crystallise race through multiple axes of power, it is important to realise that their bodies only have the power to transform items based around race rather than

¹⁵⁴ See the introductory comments by Hall, Catherine & Rose, Sonya (ed.) *At Home with the Empire*, Cambridge, 2006, pp. 2, 5, 7, 20.

¹⁵⁵ Thompson, Andrew, 'Introduction', *Britain's Experience of the Empire in the Twentieth Century*, in Thompson, Andrew (ed.), Oxford, 2011, pp. 24-31.

challenge race itself. Understanding the how the white body works to locate race onto itself and constructs whiteness within local confines can illuminate the ways in which Black and Asian identities were forced to play and be defined by the ‘ordinary’ body in Britain.

SKINHEADS AND THE 'ORDINARY' BODY

The Skinhead is one of the most enduring folk devils of the post-war period and one of the few characters told in contemporary British narratives that has been overtly white-washed, constructed as the embodiment of a white, male, working class identity. Skinheads make the perfect entry point for understanding how the working classes understood themselves as a 'race apart' and develop what Alastair Bonnet calls an 'ordinary' racial identity based in the physical characteristics of the white body.¹⁵⁶ This chapter will explore two aspects of Skinheads clothes. Firstly that Skinheads' use of American culture illustrates the mechanism of identity formation in taking wider culture and articulating within local circumstances and resources, giving Skinheads the power to define themselves as ordinary. Secondly that Skinhead's relationship with black immigration and culture reveals how ordinary is a racial category that works through the white working-class body, denying those who do not have this body this identity. Building upon the work on the relationship between the two respective groups suggests how working-class racial identities were formed in this period by locating genealogical and geographical traits on the body. It also expands the scope to include a wider range of styles, including the Suedehead style, to reassess the dominant image of the Skinhead during this period and ultimately racial identities of the working class.¹⁵⁷ The symbolic capital available to different groups is ultimately defined by what your body looks like, making race mediated through class a powerful factor in structuring and organising everyday lives in modern Britain.

¹⁵⁶ Bonnett, Alastair, 'How the British Working Class Became White: The Symbolic (Re)formation of Racialized Capitalism', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 11, 1998, p. 319.

¹⁵⁷ Suedehead, so named as the hair grew out longer and hence looked like suede, is a common name used by youths of this time who identified themselves as Skinhead minded but not Skinheads. There is some disagreement on the use of the term, some stating it is what came after Skinhead. For the purposes it will refer to slightly longer hair and smarter dress.

The historiography on Skinheads requires rethinking to understand how they can explain white working-class ordinary identities in the twentieth century. The Skinhead youth-culture (often dubbed ‘original Skinhead’ over subsequent revivalist movements) emerged in Britain in the mid-late sixties and ending in the early seventies.¹⁵⁸ Popularly characterised by photographer Nick Knight and the press they are seen as wearing jeans (worn tight and high with turn-ups), heavy work boots (often, or even solely, characterised as Doctor Martens boots) and white button down shirts.¹⁵⁹ Characterised as a folk devil Skinheads famously caused ‘aggro’, engaging in violence at football matches and directed against the Pakistani community (dubbed ‘Paki Bashing’).¹⁶⁰ Since their emergence and construction as a moral panic youth-cultures in general have analysed by both sociologists and cultural studies academics and these studies can be divided into two chronological periods: structural explanations and cultural explanations. The Skinhead work falls within the older, more limited structural framework. Using the cultural approach with new sources will move away from the image promoted within older work to a more fluid and varied look where clothes are one aspect of a more complex phenomena situated in global identities.¹⁶¹

The structural explanations by sociologists of the Skinhead phenomena used the contemporary structural Marxist theory to relate style with the structure of society and access to resources; this fails to see Skinhead’s identity anything other than a class based identity while also lumping together several characteristics under one

¹⁵⁸ This emergence is described in an oral history interview (cited later on) in: Healy, Murray, *Gay skins: class, masculinity and queer appropriation*, London, 1996, p. 47.

¹⁵⁹ These are famously characterised in this manner in Nick Knight’s book with oral interviews and illustrations: Knight, Nick, *Skinhead*, London, 1982.

¹⁶⁰ Brake, Mike, ‘The Skinheads: An English Working Class Subculture’, *Youth Society*, 6, 1974, p. 193.

¹⁶¹ Huq, Rupa, *Beyond Subculture: Pop, Youth and Identity in a Post-Colonial World*, London, 2004, pp. 10, 13-15.

banner. Mike Brake and John Clarke relate the key characteristics of Skinhead's identity to access to the welfare state and their relationship to the control of production in society.¹⁶² They explain the phenomena not just through class but also as reclamation of traditional working-class life from structural changes, including immigration promoted by a shortage of post-war labour.¹⁶³ This analysis however fails to see beyond class life and romanticises the Skinhead's actions both as inherently political and glosses over the violence, including race related violence, as by products of their fight against the system.¹⁶⁴ It also creates a cohesiveness of what a Skinhead was that goes beyond the sources they use, helping to fix what a Skinhead is from media reports rather than their own empirical work, partly explained by both scholars responding to the construction and popularity of the Skinhead as a folk-devil in the media during their own time period.¹⁶⁵

This overtly structural explanation is used by Dick Hebdige in his famous overview of British subcultures to open up the relationship between black and white youths to suggest black culture provided a resource for white 'symbolic guerrilla warfare', in doing so explaining subcultural style as having political potential similar to other works by the CCCS at the University of Birmingham.¹⁶⁶ However, like Brake and Clarke, Hebdige equates and understands race through class rather than see it as a

¹⁶² Brake, Mike, 'The Skinheads', pp. 194. See also Brake's piece on his structural analysis of youth cultures in general in Brake, Mike, 'Cultural revolution or Alternative Delinquency: an Examination of Deviant youth as Social Problem', in Bailey, Roy & Young, Jock (eds.), *Contemporary social problems in Britain*, Farnborough, 1973, pp. 38-41. Also Clarke, John, *The Skinheads and the study of youth culture*, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies Stencilled occasional papers, SP No.23, 1973, pp. 1, 13-16.

¹⁶³ Brake, Mike, 'The Skinheads', pp. 195; & Clarke, John, *The Skinheads*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁶⁴ This is particularly emphasised in Clarke, John, *The Skinheads*, p. 14.

¹⁶⁵ A full critique of this structural approach to youth subcultures is in: Muggleton, David, *The post-subcultures reader*, Oxford, 2003, pp. 170-175.

¹⁶⁶ Hebdige, Dick, *Subculture: the meaning of style*, London, 1979, p. 105.

complex phenomena requiring its own understanding.¹⁶⁷ The later cultural approaches, focusing on how youths make their identities through interviews and fieldwork rather than via media reports, can be developed and applied to Skinheads to reveal 'ordinary' identities resting in the white body. Simon Jones' work explains how racial boundaries are deconstructed and reconstructed within the local confines of Birmingham. While not on Skinheads his interviews reveal the complex identities youths have in mixed-raced neighbourhoods and that simple stereotyping via a set of characteristics needs to be deconstructed to see how race is made and understood locally between black and white.¹⁶⁸ Both the work of Back and Nayak can be applied in a similar way to see how racial identities in Skinheads are constructed against other, white identities and that the body is the site where these identities are inscribed and performed.¹⁶⁹

Further methodological insights to understand racial identities in Britain can be provided by the emerging field of 'whiteness studies' to explore the complex language and identities involved in youth cultures. In particular they can explore the dynamic relationship between the localised, racial body and wider global flows of culture and economics. Alastair Bonnett's overarching narrative of twentieth century 'ordinary' whiteness can provide key questions to ask of Skinheads to address the racial identity of Britain in relation to immigration.¹⁷⁰ Bonnett suggests that Britain's working-class whiteness was awakened and deployed upon the arrival of post-war

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. pp. 99-103.

¹⁶⁸ The second half of Jones' book 'ethnography' contains some vivid ethnography of white youths using black culture and a coherent, well supported argument on race being made/remade in Birmingham: Jones, Simon, *Black culture, white youth: the reggae tradition from JA to UK*, Basingstoke, 1988, pp. 124-216.

¹⁶⁹ Ware, Vron & Back, Les, *Out of whiteness: color, politics, and culture*, London, 2002, p. 16; Nayak, Anoop & Kehily, Mary Jane, *Gender, youth and culture: young masculinities and femininities*, Basingstoke, 2008, pp. 307-8; Nayak, Anoop, *Race, Place and Globalization*, pp. 10, 75.

¹⁷⁰ Bonnett, Alastair, 'How the British Working Class Became White', p. 317-8; see also Bonnett, A., *White Identities: Historical and International Perspectives*. Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2000, pp. 7-26.

Commonwealth immigrants; it is crucial not to read his argument as Black and Asian immigration causing a white identity to be articulated that did not exist before, but that the working classes Britain 'produced' racism because they saw themselves as ordinary.¹⁷¹ The racial identity Bonnett identifies as 'ordinary' can be applied to Skinheads and that the language of race has not so much replaced class but become intertwined to the point that Stuart Hall makes 'race is the modality that class is lived'.¹⁷² It reflects what Roediger highlights in that the worker's identity, in being labelled a labourer, suggests an incredibly strong racial identity of supposed phenotype qualities and sense of geography and belonging.¹⁷³ Skinheads and the working classes, as Richard Dyer states, make themselves representative of humanity, as the 'ordinary' man, giving them immense power to act in relation to other groups in relation to this collective identity.¹⁷⁴ This addresses the narratives of immigration acts produced by Hansen and Paul as in explaining how, although racist in action, complex white identities set up relations with immigrant communities based on the body differences that denied them full access to British identity of the first order.¹⁷⁵ Strong, coherent, complex and powerful white identities explain the context that Black and Asian identities were constructed against and how race located in the body became a powerful tool for empowerment for these communities. Hall's use of 'black identity' as the basis for political action can be re-thought as being constructed against an immensely powerful white identity.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ Bonnett 'How the British Working Class Became White', p. 319.

¹⁷² Bonnett 'How the British Working Class Became White', pp. 320, 329. Hall, Stuart (ed.), *Policing the crisis : mugging, the state, and law and order*, London, 1978, p. 394.

¹⁷³ Roediger, David R, *Wages of Whiteness : race and the making of the American working class*, London, 1992, p19.

¹⁷⁴ Dyer, Richard, *White*, London, 1997, pp. 2, 9, 12, 14.

¹⁷⁵ Hansen, *Race and Immigration* pp. 246-8; Paul, Kathleen, *Whitewashing Britain: race and citizenship in the postwar era*, London, 1997, p. 13.

¹⁷⁶ Hall, Stuart, 'Minimal Selves', pp. 131-6.

Skinheads develop an ordinary racial identity using clothes and that only works through emphasising the white, young, male body. Those who had a full buzz cut to the scalp were actively showing their skin colour off, their natural characteristic of the white-body: New Society commenting that a Skinhead's hair 'is so short that his scalp is the dominant colour'.¹⁷⁷ Similarly the Sunday Times also highlights this feature of scalp colour with hair 'shaved close to the scalp so that they look like the victims of some sort of vengeful army barber'.¹⁷⁸ Barbers who cut the hair also exclaimed how when cut it revealed 'a pale white scalp'.¹⁷⁹ The use of hair reveals how Skinheads actively exposed their body to naturalise the style and created a limiting zone which the body can inhabit, limiting access to Skinheads identities.

The oral histories undertaken also highlight a key aspect of Skinhead style was the exposing of the body:

"There was this Skinhead guy leant on the carriage door in really tight jeans, quite high up his legs, big boots, huge great bulge in his crotch and short hair;"¹⁸⁰

Similar interviews also list tight jeans and shirts as key components of the style.¹⁸¹ Skinheads make the body a requirement for generating meaning through clothes by emphasising the hair, their lean, tight, young bodies and their skin colour. Making the clothed-body reliant upon the specific physical characteristics Skinheads are able to dictate how that body may be read within wider culture; clothes are the means which

¹⁷⁷ In: 'Puritans in boots', *New Society*, 13th November 1969, p. 762.

¹⁷⁸ A short photo-based article in: *Sunday Times Colour Magazine Magazine*, 30th September 1972, p. 14.

¹⁷⁹ BBC clip of Skinheads available online: Curtis, Adam, BBC Archive (2012), *The Terrifying Gangs of England* [online], available: http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/adamcurtis/2011/08/the_terrifying_gangs_of_englan.html (accessed 23/08/2012).

¹⁸⁰ Interview with 'Mike' (extract): Healy, Murray, *Gay skins*, pp. 64-5.

¹⁸¹ This is highlighted in multiple comments in oral histories: David Scoular and Mike Dow in Healy, Murray, *Gay Skins* pp. 66, 72. See also Interview with Skinhead (extract): Marshall, George, *Skinhead Bible: The Spirit of '69*, Lockerbie, 1994, p. 8.

Skinheads set the terms of how their body relates to other bodies in society. By making it about the body underneath it gives the white body power to define the clothes on top with specific social, geographic and biological knowledge about the wearer.

Establishing a visual ethnography of what was worn shows both the variety but also the specifics of Skinhead and suedehead identity up and down the country and highlights the potential photographic sources have in re-assessing both academic study of the area and the limited ways social memory constructs contemporary British history. The image of the Skinhead in popular culture has been shaped by the imagery of 'boots and braces' in public places, a classic example being Terry Spencer's image in 1969 which features Skinheads walking past a group of Hippies in Trafalgar Square.¹⁸² Here the look is tight jeans rolled up to expose the boots/large footwear and held up with braces, this is worn with a button-down shirt (often proclaimed to be white) and a crombie overcoat (often a black wool coat with covered button front, $\frac{3}{4}$ length with breast pocket and two side pockets).¹⁸³ Skinheads created a highly specific visual identity that used the body underneath so that the ultimate sense of belonging was mediated by the young, white male body. However this image also needs to be challenged to a more varied look up and down the country dubbed 'suedehead' style. Often outfits consists of trousers tapered at the bottom and finishing over the ankle to expose the footwear with a greater range of footwear being worn yet predominantly

¹⁸² This famous image by Terry Spencer has been featured extensively in books on the subject, the original is held and accessible at: *Museum of London Collections & Archives*, Photograph Collection, Terry Spencer Collection, IN7444.

¹⁸³ Images of this can be found in 'Puritans in boots', *New Society*, 13th November 1969, p276; Marshall, George, 'Group of Skinheads' (Photo), in *Skinhead Bible: The Spirit of '69*, Lockerbie, 1994 p. 6, 10; Plate one, in Murray, Healy, *Gay skins: class, masculinity and queer appropriation*, London, 1996. On white button-down shirts see: McGuire, Pete & Doyle, Pat & Daniel, Susie, *The Paint House: words from an East End*, Harmondsworth, 1972, p. 11.

brogues and loafers.¹⁸⁴ This is worn with a wider range of patterned shirts from gingham checks and tartans to stripes, all with a button down collar, often worn with a plain jumper or cardigan alongside with a wider variety of outerwear including sheepskin jackets.¹⁸⁵ While a more varied look it is still highly specific with a limited range of items and how they are worn. What is crucial as well is that hair, while not scalp-short is short, neat and styled. The narrow choice limits the zone for the body to inhabit, giving them the power to define themselves and how their identities are addressed through the physical appearance of the clothed body. The important point is how photography can help transform our view and understanding of what a Skinhead is by providing more detail than before and provide the exact composition that outfits were worn, highlighting the value photography has in reassessing the recent past.

The clothes can be unpicked to see how they represent a process of the “ordinarisation” of culture, taking symbols and transforming them, giving them the power to define themselves and their bodies as well. These symbols are made ordinary by the positioning and use in relation to the white, young body to articulate and define a working class identity. The oral and life histories of Skinhead clothes allows us to see how their situated experiences remade global culture to articulate a local identity and the value of using oral sources to challenge common understandings of social groups in contemporary British history. Within this wider range of clothes

¹⁸⁴ See Picture in *Daily Mirror*, 4th October, 1969. See also: Manchester Local Image Collection, Manchester Local Archives (n.d), Unknown Photographer, ‘Moss Side Youth Club 1972 [online], available: <http://images.manchester.gov.uk/web/objects/common/webmedia.php?irn=56203&reftable=ecatalogue&refirn=31114> (Accessed: 23/07/2012).

¹⁸⁵ See picture of ‘Kevin’, in Gorman, Paul, *The Look: Adventures in Rock and Pop Fashion*, London, 2006, p. 98. A good example of this style can be seen in a photo of two Skinheads outside an employment agency in Birmingham see: Hallett, George, ‘Unemployment Agency early 1970s’, Ref MS 2449/A/2/44, *George Hallett Collection*, Birmingham Local Library and Archives Services.

worn, American culture surprisingly supplies a large amounts of memories that structure how Skinheads' and Suedeheads's dress aesthetics are recalled:

“In this country working-class people don't take things from the middle classes, they take it from America and then they twist it around.”¹⁸⁶

A case study of two items, the longwing brogue and a brief study of the button down shirt can show how American items were used by British use as a pool of symbols to cultivate an ordinary identity as within a British context these clothes gave them the difference for them to fill and use for their own purposes. However these were not seen as American and fits into how masculinity is policed and defined through those in the local community: in making their bodies relate to each other they are able to create their identities as 'ordinary'.

“We was obsessed with anything American, Some of the Lads would go to Austin's in Regent Street getting American imported suits ... We may not have been able to afford them, but we busted balls getting the money for them, I spent a week's wages on my first Royals.”¹⁸⁷

Another Skinhead describing influences at the time:

‘Another one was Lee Marvin in the film *Point Blank* wearing a suit and Royals’¹⁸⁸

What Lee Marvin actually wears in this film is a pair of Florsheim Imperial Longwings, a classic American shoe.¹⁸⁹ What is important with the Longwing Brogue is that it highlights three characteristics of Skinhead and Suedehead style that

¹⁸⁶ Interview with 'James' (extract) in: Hewitt, Paolo, *The Soul Stylists: Six Decades of Modernism – from Mods to Casuals*, Edinburgh, 2000, p. 89.

¹⁸⁷ 'Lattsye', Style Forum (2/15/2011 at 5:26pm) Post 1748, Traditional Skinheads [online], available: http://www.styleforum.net/t/89027/mod-to-suedehead/1740#post_4161049 (accessed 24/8/21012) . Ex-Skinhead Chris Brown also remembers a similar experience of Austins: Brown, Chris, *Bovver*, London, 2002, p. 40.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with 'James' (extract) in: Hewitt, Paolo, *The Soul Stylists*, p. 93.

¹⁸⁹ Information of the Florsheim Imperial Brogues & the Loake Royal and lasts see Marsh, Graham, *The Ivy Look: Classic American Style*, London, 2011, pp. 38-9.

explains how ordinary identities were formed: firstly the act of translation from America to Britain is done in relation to the local resources available; secondly that the specific details are defined against other styles and thus other bodies in society; and finally that these shoes were about belonging to a local group.

Firstly, demonstrated by the testimony above, is how an American shoe got 'translated' into local terms. While the shoe was American 'Royals' are a style of shoe made on a similar last (shoe shape) and similar details to the Florshiem Longwing by Loake and other British shoe makers in Northampton.¹⁹⁰ An American style is interpreted through what was available to Skinheads and the mass production of shoes within Britain. Yet the main emphasis of this translation is that the shoes are expensive; they have taken something and re-made it with an item of particularly high economic value (i.e. costing a week's wages). This value gives the shoe some commitment to buying and wearing, allowing Skinheads to control access to their bodies by shaping it with a relatively rare but attainable item.

The high cost of the shoe though gains significance through the details of the shoe in relation to other shoes in society. They have a similar aesthetic to other Skinhead shoes but have details not on other brogues in Britain; having the right look was essential:

"Another example, the classic Skinhead brogue was the American long wingtip ...

One has to get the look right or it becomes nothing."¹⁹¹

The specific details gave the shoe immense symbolic power to be identified as 'one of the gang':

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 40.

¹⁹¹ 'Lattsye', Style Forum (2/15/2011 at 5:26pm) Post 1782, Traditional Skinheads [online], available: http://www.styleforum.net/t/89027/mod-to-suedehead/1770#post_4178097 (accessed 24/8/21012).

“When I first saw a pair of wing tip Royals (aka Longwing brogue), I was shocked because I'd been told I was being taken to this shop where the smartest dressers went. Up to that point, fashionable meant dainty and petite, but these shoes were awkward looking with great big soles and heels. They were ugly but I also recognized they were beautiful. They were outrageously expensive too, six plus quid, a week's wages for lots of men. The shoes turned me on it; was such a clean and beautiful look.”¹⁹²

With the shoes' specific details, the rim around the shoe, the thick soles, the thick leather, Skinheads were able to use an expensive item to shape their body underneath as ordinary as their identity versus 'English' brogues is defined by other bodies in society. Ordinary being neither not upper or middle class appropriation but creating their own culture from different sources within their own worlds; the big clunky and detailed shoes represent the ordinary in relation to the rest of 'dainty feet' society. By being mediated by the dress and thus bodies of mainstream society Skinheads are, through the item specifics and using their bodies, actively making themselves as ordinary made sense of the economic and social resources available to them.

A similar example can be seen in the button down shirt as being both specific in detail to make the body underneath working-class and ordinary. Another American item, it played on British stiff collars with a soft, unlined collar attached to the shirt with two buttons.¹⁹³ Skinheads highlight this item as intrinsically British and local being interpreted through available items as Ben Sherman, Brutus and Jaytex brands of clothing.¹⁹⁴ The item details in Britain allowed Skinheads to have whatever

¹⁹² 'Kevin' remembers his youth in his essay: Rowland, Kevin, 'The Great Lost Look', in Gorman, Paul, *The Look: Adventures in Rock and Pop Fashion*, London, 2006, pp. 98-100.

¹⁹³ For a history of the British shirt in relation to American 'soft' styles see: Gorman, Paul, *The Look*, pp. 28-9.

¹⁹⁴ Oral testimony on button down shirts, including brands shirts include: Brown, Chris, *Bovver*, p. 40; Marhsall, George, *Spirit of 69*, pp. 19-21; Hewitt, Paolo, *Soul Stylists*, pp. 92, 103.

meaning they chose to associate with it as it was so specific it gained immense textual difference from other shirts worn in Britain during this period.

Although these items might be seen as American in origin, but to the Skinheads they were not, they represented something about their own lives and often gained reference through others in their immediate circles; their bodies gained the power of 'ordinariness' by being defined with others in their local community:

"I think that one of the most important influences, though, was *each other*. Speaking personally, even though I might have been wearing clothes with a distinctly American style, and buying some of them from a shop which specialised in American gear ."¹⁹⁵

"... I think a heck of a lot of kids didn't actually *realise* that they were American clothes. ... they looked different, harder, sharper, English!" I think that sums it up."¹⁹⁶

Masculinity was mediate by immensely local circumstances and the shared experiences of these youths:

"We would all be looking at what each other was wearing, and we would comment on a new colour gingham shirt or Harrington jacket as we all liked wearing the same sort of thing,"¹⁹⁷

Skinheads were cultivating a style made from global cultural flows within the confines of their masculinity to articulate an ordinary identity, using the commonality of the white young male body and wider culture that gains significance from its relative position to mainstream British culture. Items like this highlight how for many

¹⁹⁵ 'Man of Mystery', Style Forum (4/7/2011 at 2:27am), Post 2243, *Traditional Skinheads* [online], available: http://www.styleforum.net/t/89027/traditional-Skinheads/2235#post_4330340 (accessed 24/8/2012).

¹⁹⁶ 'Man of Mystery', Style Forum (5/22/2011 at 5:48am), Post 2853, *Traditional Skinheads* [online], available: http://www.styleforum.net/t/89027/traditional-Skinheads/2850#post_4497605 (accessed 24/8/2012).

¹⁹⁷ Interview with 'Mark': This Is Leicestershire (2012), *Lost Tribes of Leicestershire* [online], available: <http://www.thisisleicestershire.co.uk/Lost-Tribes-Leicestershire-Skinheads/story-12065834-detail/story.html> (accessed 24/08/2012).

if you had the look, or had access to it, you had the means to adopt this identity and gain this body.

These items represent through the aesthetic qualities as being 'English, but better English', as being ordinary clothes for their area. You could have access to this identity if you bought the gear and wore it in a particular way and shows how powerful those in the community were in shaping what was worn; it a local sense of togetherness, ordinary is located and explained if reference to their friends and not larger national or communal structures. These symbols make the wearer's body ordinary and only explained by their 'ordinary' locality, geography and place in society. Ordinariness is created and then inferred onto the body. This racial identity is also formed against other white, British, racial identities, entering dialogue through the same medium of dress in forging a dress aesthetic within wider forms of race and belonging.

The American symbols interpreted through their own gaze give Skinheads the power to control and define themselves within the process of marking boundaries for themselves and others. While the white body is used the question they are identifying themselves as 'white' is neither directly answered nor addressed in oral histories available. Such claims about being 'white' can often conflate class and race together, putting what Eric Arneson defines as 'words into the mouths of historical actors'.¹⁹⁸ It is as much the implied assumptions of a white racial identity that are tied to the visual and physical properties in body that are used by Skinheads in wearing specific outfits. In the face of immigration the overt nature and use of the bodies allows an insight into

¹⁹⁸ Arneson, Eric: 'Whiteness and the Historians' Imagination', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 60, 2001, pp. 4, 29.

potential mechanisms in which identities were formed and articulated in the face of immigration and the requirements for national belonging.

“Why should we be tolerant to people that THEY have invited to the county? We didn’t invite them. Like when we talk to the black man, they say “your ancestors put my ancestors to slaves”/ My ancestors was most probably starving ‘ungry, worse than the slaves ... dying.”¹⁹⁹

However, many of these youths did not identify themselves as overtly white or racist; whiteness is not a unifying or sole element of Skinhead style but rather one element, coming into to play in different social spaces and different times. Furthermore whiteness was not a universal, defining meaning for all Skinheads, conversely many wore and remember the clothes with no association to race or racism:

“We were never racist. How could we be? We had West Indian friends within the scene, who I’m still friends with 40 years on.”²⁰⁰

This analysis and set of conclusions should not be taken or applied to see Skinheads as right-wing entryism or a political strand as they are often remembered by in contemporary narratives, more a set of cultural symbols used to make sense of their world both then and now.²⁰¹ Also the previous quote demonstrates the multicultural roots of Skinhead and an important part in developing ways of belonging in a multi-racial society: Skinhead style is a manifestation of new identity processes in Britain, making and defining the self through overlapping racial groupings due to post-war immigration.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with a Skinhead (extract) in: McGuire, Pete, Doyle, Pat & Daniel, Susie, *The Paint House* p. 69, 71.

²⁰⁰ Interview with ‘Mark’: This Is Leicestershire (2012), *Lost Tribes of Leicestershire* [online], available: <http://www.thisisleicestershire.co.uk/Lost-Tribes-Leicestershire-Skinheads/story-12065834-detail/story.html> (accessed 24/08/2012).

²⁰¹ This right-wing entryism view is very prevalent in Murray Healy’s account of gay Skinheads: Healy, Murray, *Gay Skins*, pp. 1-3.

Many of the clothes were also worn, as shown previously, by Caribbean immigrants in the UK, and often cited as a style inspiration to the Skinhead look. This relationship with black culture though is not equal: 'blacks' do not have the same access to white masculinities. As with perceived qualities of American culture it was the vulgar, powerful and ordinary aesthetics that Skinheads saw in black culture that also provided the resources for race to be made and defined within the locality.

"The Black Lads around our way in the late 60s was called Rudies, They looked at themselves as Rude Boys, I suppose from their rude Boy attitude, Just like our so called Skinhead attitude. ... Some of my Black mates who would knock around with us would dress the same as us. Just like some White lads who hung around with

Blacks dressed like rude Boys.²⁰²

Yet this is not to say the two co-habited an easy space together - race was the dividing line; Black clothed-bodies are allowed to inhabit the same masculine spaces within these localities and race is remade in the locality and in reference to their own terms. It highlights how the white body has the power to define itself and define others through its physical characteristics. It is how this is used that explains that while not 'racist' in any sense the Skinhead's identity was highly racialised with race based knowledge about both themselves and Black migrants

"That is so funny romancing Black and White youth getting on famously, it was not that simple around our way. There was mixing but often it would come to blows, a couple occasions it was open Warfare, Black lads would come into our clubs no problem, but soon as they moved onto a white girl it would often kick off."²⁰³

²⁰² 'Lattsye', Style Forum (2/15/2011 at 5:26pm) Post 1635, Traditional Skinheads [online], available: http://www.styleforum.net/t/89027/traditional-Skinheads/1635#post_4132021 (accessed 24/8/21012).

²⁰³ 'Lattsye', Style Forum (5/19/2011 at 4:47pm), Post 2826, *Traditional Skinheads* [online], available: http://www.styleforum.net/t/89027/traditional-Skinheads/2820#post_4489894 (accessed 24/8/21012).

As soon as they see themselves as equal, especially with women, black youths have overstepped the boundary and Skinheads police this with violence and their own masculinity. Neither groups can cross the gap, they will always be defined by their bodies; the black body is defined culturally by the white body and the physical characteristics of the body are key elements of identity formation in this period and representative of how Skinhead's emergence is due to, rather than in spite of, multicultural Britain. Race is defined here as a distinct line between the two through the clothed body in zones of occupation, black can exist in that space as white but this hyper-masculine nature also makes them a threat.

The power dynamics are also revealed as black men are allowed access to a hyper-masculine identity, similar to hyper-ordinary masculinity, but denied full access because of their skin colour.. The power lies in Skinheads and white ordinary identity being able to define and policy itself, a pool of ideas to draw and perform from that they have created from their own lived-worlds. In terms of clothes Caribbean men have access to the hyper-masculine dress but not the ordinary identity underneath. How Skinheads wore their clothes rests upon the physical properties of the young white body underneath making it the basis for belonging to the community. The limits of masculinity are placed on the body underneath and are performed through dress.

In marking out black youths as Rude Boy's, or Rudies Skinheads are actively constructing a racilaised understanding of the black body as natural and cool:

“In fact, many of the skins early fashion were plagiarised from their teenage black counterparts. Pork-pie hats and tight fitting mohair suits with trousers finishing just above the ankle had long been a favourite with the ‘rude boys’ back in Jamaica.”²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴ Brown, Chris, *Bovver*, p. 27.

“We loved the rude boys and wanted to be like them. They had attitude. They made us want to look better. We were working class and wanted to be like they were.”²⁰⁵

Many young men felt attracted to black culture as it offered white people to use black culture as ‘cool’ and innately masculine, like themselves. This is a racialised understanding of culture and the body: black not just as cool but as the ‘raw material’, ‘natural’ and ‘hard’. White on the other hand, while being ‘hard’ and masculine’ is seen as parasitic, unoriginal, preying on other cultures. It highlights the boundary play in that the shared symbols used highlight how in wearing and acting black, white youths can never be black. They understand themselves as natural and ordinary, de-raced but still based in the body, whereas black culture is always associated with the body and their skin colour. The power of their body means that Skinheads are always identified through the white body. Race is made and understood through the local experiences and circumstances.

The ordinary white male body becomes a naturalised way for some Skinheads to think about themselves their culture and their immediate world. They also control the symbolic capital within Britain as on a cultural level they able to define and control the lives of others. In locating on the body, something fundamental, makes race and the symbolism around it important for shaping and structuring Britain. Body capital though highlights that despite the racial identities performed here class is central to how the body works and makes sense of itself in specific experiences. However the two must be seen together, working-class identities cannot be explained without specific ordinary racial discourses based in their bodies. Class mediates and dictates how race is understood and performed through clothes, in this case as

²⁰⁵ Interview with Mark: This Is Leicestershire (2012), *Lost Tribes of Leicestershire* [online], available: <http://www.thisisleicestershire.co.uk/Lost-Tribes-Leicestershire-Skinheads/story-12065834-detail/story.html> (accessed 24/08/2012).

ordinary, local and within the immediate confines. Ordinary racial identities reflect how the white body is central to wider British culture as the varying characteristics of the white body are needed to make sense of Skinhead identities. Through the fit and specifics of clothes their bodies are made 'ordinary 'by being placed within a social matrix that ascribes properties of the white body through dress. Skinhead's racial identities are actively constructed against wider identities based in the white body. This textuality reveals how the white body is a central paradigm to how clothes work in this period and reflects the cultural power it has to define others and in that discursive power make it real. In doing so these white body identities shape and make real non-whites as permanently different in this period. By using the body, groups in Britain are able to define those who do not have the required physical characteristics, all understood through the discursive forces of race, gender and class.

CONCLUSION: THE BODY, RACE AND BRITISH IDENTITIES

Race in Britain is defined in a myriad of ways along multiple axes, each overlapping and connecting with the other and testament to the power a floating signifier has to name and make real highly complex and contingent identities. All three groups, Black, White and Asian, are going through incredibly similar processes of forming identities in Britain: negotiating dominant definitions of race through the body and remaking global cultural flows for their own purposes. These insights through are only possible through using oral and life history alongside photography: the details of outfits and the specific attachments used in making sense of the past for today can provide valuable, even if limited by them being situated in socio-historical moments of translation, contributions to understanding our recent past. Returning to the introduction section with the three main points addressed will offer some conclusions upon the nature of British identities brought up through this analysis.

Firstly on nation and belonging in relation to immigration can be explained by the cultural power the white body has in Britain to define and make migrants as non-subjects. Immigrations is understood as a Post-War phenomenon yet there is a significant history of white European immigration into Britain pre 1945, impacting on culture and national identity.²⁰⁶ Rather than suggest this is because Post-War Caribbean and South Asian Commonwealth migration was 'black' or 'Asian', it is because British identifies itself not so much as 'white' but through the white body. Racial discourse is made by categorising and grouping the differences between human bodies mediated by class and gender. The commonality of a white body is an incredibly powerful unifying force that is both collective and layered, defining itself

²⁰⁶ For the whole argument see: Panayi, Panikos. *An immigration history of Britain : multicultural racism since 1800*, Harlow, 2010.

externally and internally. Turning the tables around from how immigrants were defined to how Britons defined themselves helps understand how state actions and policies requires an analysis of how they rely and use 'white' identities to make sense of immigration in multiple racialised ways. The white body being positioned on multiple axes of power gives it the ability to define and make Commonwealth Immigrants racial and non-British subjects.

For the second two areas, immigration and youth-culture, it is important to re-think the roles both play in contemporary British historical narratives of identity. For the Caribbean and South-Asian Diasporas their dress plays an important part in the construction of how clothes are used in Britain and how commerce and culture in the post-modern age has been remade around identity.²⁰⁷ Yet in clothing narratives of Britain both Diaspora groups remain marginalised in both their contribution and the lack of stories told, always made sense of in relation to mainstream British fashion narratives.²⁰⁸ Their contribution, as explained by Stuart Hall, can be seen as dislodging ethnic absolutism and racial identities by remaking and constructing their own identities as told through life histories and photography.²⁰⁹ Diaspora communities create new ways of belonging in Britain with their bodies through dress and their stories and memories provide new ways of understanding British multi-cultural society today. Rather than read through racialised terms as 'cool' or 'traditional', Diaspora dress cultures are distinctly British and only exist because of the specific economic, social and cultural configurations of race in Britain in this period. Using

²⁰⁷ Bhachu, Parminder, *Dangerous designs: Asian women fashion the Diaspora Economies*, London, 2004, p. 5.

²⁰⁸ Particularly relevant comment for: De La Haye, Amy, *The Cutting Edge: 50 Years of British Fashion, 1947-1997*, London, 1998, pp. 11-34.

²⁰⁹ Hall, Stuart, 'New Ethnicities', in Morley, David & Chen, Kuan-Hsing (eds.) *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, London, 1996, pp. 250-2.

the cultural capital available in their bodies is a central part of Diaspora culture and this remaining through the refiguring of life experiences to make race malleable construct whose power lies in its ability to rearticulate itself in face of new challenges and resources that keep it meaningful and useful in Britain.

Finally the white nature of youth-subcultures in Britain reflects an important racial element in contemporary British narratives both in dress and culture. As early as the 1970s Mike Brake had noted how British youths had become some of the best dressed youths in Europe, if not the world.²¹⁰ This marks a moment when British youth-culture becomes valorised as the site of creativity in dress and culture in Britain and is seen today as a valuable cultural export to the contemporary world, from teddy-boys and Skinheads to punk and rave.²¹¹ This raises questions about the role of whiteness and the body to define Britain in the Post-War period and how in contemporary British narratives migrant culture's contribution is marginalised by reforming narratives of belonging around the heritage and culture of the white body. The limiting and singular ways race and the body are used in narratives of identities needs to be challenged to understand how different groups in society take and rework race and nation to celebrate the pluralism and difference in contemporary British narratives.

This analysis also highlights how fundamental class is in shaping and forging racial identities through body capital; race and class need to be understood together and how the physical characteristics ascribe biological and phenotype properties of class. It is the fluidity of meaning in dress that makes it a powerful medium for

²¹⁰ Brake, Mike, 'The Skinheads: An English Working Class Subculture', *Youth Society*, 6, 1974, p. 183.

²¹¹ For a celebration of British youth culture style see: Polhemus, Ted, *Street Style*, London, 2010, pp. 6-8.

forming and challenging ideas about race and class while also making these identities real. Understanding the role the body plays in identity formation can help understand and link race, gender and class together to fully illuminate the interlinking discursive structures in contemporary Britain.

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