The Difference is in the Detail: Negotiating Black Gay Male Style in the Twenty-First Century
Shaun Cole

Abstract
Drawing upon interviews with British and American men who identify as gay and black, I consider how these individuals negotiate their self-identity as black gay men through their dressed appearance. While acknowledging notions of intersectionality, I explore the ways in which these particular men negotiated their identities within gay and black communities and broader cultures with particular stylistic expressions of fashion-style-dress. I look at these men's experiences of coming out, discovering the gay scene, the influence of existing styles on gay dress, and appearances in work scenarios. Particularly relevant in the interviews were notions of and negotiations between concepts and manifestations of masculinity and macho, camp and effeminacy. Lastly, comparisons are drawn between black and white gay styles to explore the commonalities and differences in gay styles in Britain and America in the twenty-first century.

With the changing position of and attitudes towards homosexuality in the twenty-first century, sexual orientation can be viewed as just one of many subject positions that an individual represents through his dressed appearance. Equally important are age, race, ethnicity, and social class and the ways these intersect. Gay people of color having to negotiate their subject positions, which have always been complex and multiple, is not a new phenomenon. However, historically much research has tended to separate out the issues of race and ethnicity from sexual orientation and vice versa, with much research on black men negating gay men and gay men negating men of color. Texts such as Robert F. Reid-Pharr's *Black Gay Man* (2001) and E. Patrick Johnson and Mae G. Henderson's edited volume *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology* (2005) — and the conference that led to its publication — (to name just two) have tried to redress this separation and address the challenges and importance of the intersection of these subject positions. In his 1994 essay "Some Glances at the Black Fag: Race, Same-Sex Desire, and Cultural Belonging," Marlon Ross proposed "the idea that gays and lesbians constitute a fluid minority, whose particular virtue grows out of the fact that they exist inside of every other culture." [1] This idea influenced my desire to examine how dressed appearance and style are negotiated in the context of intersecting subject positions. In discussing intersectionality, Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge note how "individuals can be seen as having multiple 'subjectivities' that they construct from one situation to the next" and write that the "major axes of social divisions . . . race, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, and age operate not as discrete and mutually exclusive entities, but build on each other and work together."[2] This, what Michael Hames-Garcia (2000) calls the "multiplicity of identities," and how these are presented by black gay men in Britain and the United States through dress choice form my focus in this article.[3]

Arising out of a bigger project analyzing gay men's style in relation to intersectionality more broadly, I draw on a specific element of that research topic. I explore the ways a number of individuals have negotiated their identities within specific gay and black communities and broader cultures and consider both similarities and differences in their adoption of particular stylistic expressions of "style-fashion-dress."[4] Style and clothing choices can signify meanings about the multiple aspects that make up an individual's identity and "*how* one styles, fashions, or dresses the body . . . tells us about everyday processes of subject formation as the interplay between subjectivity and the subject positions people inhabit."[5] Many aspects of style are not a matter of conscious choice but are an expression of the mental structures that unconsciously generate "meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions," what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls the "habitus."[6]

While, historically, texts on men's fashion have noted a particular interest in fashion and appearance by gay men, this had not been dealt with in any serious detailed manner until my 2000 book *Don We Now Our Gay Apparel: Gay Men's Dress in the Twentieth Century*. Subsequently, more research has specifically addressed gay men, fashion, and style (as well as research that has included styled appearance as part of a broader examination of sexual identities and behaviors). However, it still remains an area that is under-researched, particularly from the perspective of intersectionality and multiple-subject positions. My own

research has continued to explore aspects of gay men's style and builds upon the arguments proposed in *Don We Now Our Gay Apparel*, furthering these in relation to hypermasculinity (2008), negotiations of masculinity and femininity (2015), hair (2008), representation of young gay men (2012), and archetypes in pornography (2014).[7] Building on work that has begun to look at gay men's sexuality in relation to black racial and ethnic identity, this article is therefore necessary and timely. It is particularly important in the social and political contexts of the introduction of same-sex marriage in the UK and US, changes to equal rights based on sexual orientation, the Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting, the Black Lives Matter movement, the rise of the right and Trump's populism, and the increase in racial- and xenophobic-related violence in Britain following the Brexit vote.

Feminist scholar bell hooks states that the potential of style to be transformative is "one example of counter-hegemonic cultural practice" and "an insertion of radical black subjectivity."[8] The place of black subjectivity for black gay men and the ideas of challenging hegemonic practices will be considered in relation to my interviewees. In this article, I address ideas of potential difference between black- and white gay styles and consider notions of, and negotiations between, concepts and manifestations of masculinity, macho, camp, and effeminacy. Debates about masculinity and effeminacy have been dealt with in texts in the area of queer-black studies, and some exploration has examined the ways gay men of color have utilized their appearance and dress choices in asserting their subject positions. However, this work is still limited, and, hence, I will focus on the negotiations of a number of black gay men's presentation of their multiple subject positions through their clothing choices.

For this article, I have drawn specifically on interviews with five men who identify as black and gay, of whom three are British and two American.[9] These are drawn from interviews with a broad cross-section of gay men over a five-year period in Britain, America, Australia, and Japan. All participants were openly gay and happy to discuss their sexual orientation, fashion, style, and dressed appearance. During the semi-structured interviews, I asked questions around the individual's own relationship with clothing and dressed appearance in relation to their sexuality. I also asked about how subject positions such as age, race, ethnicity, and social class intersected with sexuality, as well as questions more broadly about gay style, gay men, fashion, and the impact of changing approaches to men and fashion-style-dress.[10] In this article, I refer to those five men by their first names only. However, it is worth noting that, coincidentally, three of the five were named Alex, and, to differentiate, I have added an initial from their surname. Although convention is often to anonymize interview participants, all men I have interviewed who are quoted in this article were happy for me to use their real names.

To supplement and complement these five men's experiences and opinions, I draw upon research conducted by other researchers where dress and bodily appearances have been mentioned, as well as four white gay men and two of the black gay men I had spoken to prior to this phase of research.[11] The research for this article and the interviews that it is based on are part of a larger ongoing project in which I am investigating the ways gay men use their dressed appearance to identify their multiple-subject position within contemporary society.

Considering Race and Sexuality

To contextualize the interviews and methodological approach within this article, I must note that my main previously published work on gay men's dress, *Don We Now Our Gay Apparel*, did deal with issues of the intersection between race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. However, the material was primarily drawn from printed primary or secondary sources, and I only managed to interview two black gay men, one of whom, John, I cite in this article. The other clearly stated that he thought the reason I was having trouble finding black gay male interviewees was that, as black gay men, "you either were primarily gay and you moved in predominantly white gay circles or you were primarily black and stuck with the black community." Eric Darnell Pritchard describes how he personally searched for an answer to not having to "fracture myself being forced to be either black or gay, but not both";[12] while in contemporary theoretical thinking, the traditional either/or oppositional binaries have been replaced by a more fluid and inclusive both/and, where interconnectedness is more important than differences between, although the reality often is still focused upon an either/or, as is evidenced in the following. Retail manager Alex J., born in Doylestown, Pennsylvania in 1986, observed that in Philadelphia there are "groups and pockets of different kinds of gay men and gay black men and . . . you either decided to be black and gay and hang with this crowd or be gay and black and hang with *this* crowd."

Alex J. discussed how he tried to break this distinction and move between both black and white gay communities, always aware of his racial and sexual position. A comparable proposition was put forward by Randall Keenan when he noted that "Too many queer black men and women feel forced to choose whether they are black first or queer first; some even opt to be only one or the other, as best they can."[13] These

statements also echo Marcus Hunter's discovery, through interviews with fifty self-identified black gay men, that individuals downplay particular aspects of their identity over others, specifically "compartmentalizing, de-emphasizing, or de-prioritizing a gay identity." Hunter contextualizes this finding by identifying three models for "expressions of self": "interlocking," where sexuality and race are united in individuals; "up-down," where one identity is prioritized over another; and "public-private," where an understanding of space leads to sexuality as a private identity and race as public.[14] Although Hunter does not reference Erving Goffman's work in his article, a clear resonance exists in the ways Hunter identifies his respondents as behaving differently in spaces that are conceived as public or private.[15]

Black gay men playing down their sexual orientation has perhaps been influenced or impacted by traditional attitudes towards homosexuality within black communities. In their introduction to *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*, Johnson and Henderson note that "homosexuality was effectively 'theorized' as a 'white disease' that had 'infected' the black community."[16] This led to what psychiatrist Frances Cress Welsing established as "the dichotomous identities of race and homosexuality."[17] Thomas P. Duffin's 2016 article "The Lowdown on the Down Low" highlights the complexity of black male sexual identities and same-sex sexual activity. His respondents, all of whom admit to engaging in sexual activity with other men, do not identify as gay nor bisexual but straight and have in various degrees adopted the identity category or description of "down-low" or "DL." For many of Duffin's respondents, "gay" is associated with feminine looks and behavior as well as a passive sexual role.[18] My own 2008 chapter "Butch Queens in Masculine Drag" addressed the ways the emergence of DL identity in black and LatinX clubs in New York and Los Angeles influenced black gay male style through the figure of what has been described as the "Homothug."[19] In light of such attitudes and approaches, Roy, one of my interviewees, who is a model and performer and both cagily and jokingly described his age as "between forty-five and death," emphasized the importance for black gay men as to "how we present ourselves and how we have to make ourselves visible or invisible." Pritchard similarly identifies an oscillation "between invisibility and hyper visibility" that was created for black queer people by "conceptions of race and sexuality."[20]

Coming Out and Finding Gay Styles

In discussing the moment that they realized they were gay, their first engagement with both same-sex sexual encounters and the commercial gay scene (not necessarily the same time and place for any of them), only three of the five primary interviewees discussed the clothing they wore and the impact that "coming out" or discovering the gay scene had on their dressed appearance. Alex J. recalled that the first time he went to a gay club, he was "around sixteen or seventeen" and that

> I tried to look my best . . . I had these jeans from Express that were boot cut, kind of like a medium wash, a little tight fitting but not like girls' jeans or skinny jeans now, and some sort of grey T-shirt that was short sleeved, kind of tight fitted.

He identified how this was somewhat different from his usual appearance in high school, where he wore

> Things that were still like punk, but because of I'm black and the school I was at was predominately white students. I stood out one way or another whether I dressed as a punk or dressed as if I was really gay… A lot of my style choices when I first came out were very much like punk and gothic and black and tight and little T-shirts with like stripes and oversized pants . . . so I was a little weird.

> Thirty-six-year-old, mixed race, illustrator, and university lecturer, Alex M. similarly talked about a punky teenage style.

> I was wearing makeup and wanted to be a glam, weird. My two influences were skateboarding and then kind of glam rock and punk music…. So, I guess I was kind of recognizing as well that weird thing when you're trying to be different as a teenager.

For both Alex J. and Alex M., punk-influenced looks allowed them to stand out and marked their difference both as burgeoning gay men and also as black adolescents within a predominantly white-school and youth environment. This notion of difference in terms of subcultural affiliation and adoption of certain styles of dress has been considered elsewhere in detail for young people more broadly and for black youth in relation to more conventional "black" subcultural styles. It has, however, been considered less in relation to LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) youth and to black youth and punk. Although Alex J. and Alex M.

grew up in somewhat different environments of a lower-middle-class American family and an upper-class "white" English family (with a white English father and black Jamaican mother), what this adoption of punk-influenced style allowed for both was a means of negotiating who they were "becoming." They understood their racial identities and sexual orientation within a predominantly white educational environment.

Thirty-nine-year old American-born product development manager, Alex B.'s subcultural participation reflected his engagement in the gay scenes of Chicago and New York. He came out as gay at fourteen but did not go to his first gay club until he went to university in Chicago in the mid-1990s. While his social group in Chicago was "a mix of gay and everything," he was a "hardcore raver from 1997 to 2001." He described his clothing choices as typical of Chicago's rave music and nightclub scene of this period: "big wide trousers, and maybe a polo, a t-shirt, a hat." After 2002 when he moved to New York, he said he was less influenced by the predominant gay looks at the gay clubs he was going to: firstly, "fashion queens doing Gucci and stuff like that," and, secondly, the "muscly, tank top, jeans." Two white New York-based respondents offered their descriptions of gay looks in gay clubs: thirty-four-year-old fashion academic Mario saw them as "cookie cutter conformity," and twenty-seven-year-old New York nightclub host Joe as the "uniform" of circuit queens.

Instead, Alex B. recalls that he was reading *i-D* magazine and "looking towards London and trying to be more alternative." He noted that, at this point, he also was influenced by the new skinny aesthetic for men, being promoted by designers such as Hedi Slimane, that stood out in Bushwick, New York, where he lived: "Black and gay and wearing skinny jeans, they were like 'who is this guy, what is he doing?'"[21] This look was not exclusive to young black gay men during this period. TJ, a white twenty-seven-year-old New York-based fashion PR described wearing "skinny black pants . . . with a black zip-up sleeveless sweatshirt [and] a leather jacket." In London, nineteen-year-old white fashion-history student, Josh noted a similar combination of "black skinny jeans . . . a vest top and a hoody and then a sleeveless denim jacket over the top." This commonality in style of both black (American) and white (British and American) gay men evidences the way styled identities for gay men are not necessarily nationally located and that a more global aspect to collective styles worn by gay men exists.

Differences in Dressing for Work and Social Life

Each of the five men who form the focus of this article noted how they varied their styles of dress depending on occasion and situation. This, of course, is not unusual for black men or gay men but offers a way of seeing how these five men negotiated their identities and dressed appearance in relation to their occupation and engagement in the broader, predominantly straight and gay, social environments and occasions. As Sophie Woodward has noted in her work on women's wardrobe choices, women "negotiate their bodies, respectability, style, status, and their self-perception" every time they make a decision on what to wear.[22] While Woodward's work is specifically on women, this idea can be applied more broadly to the black gay men featured in this article.

The three Alexes all work in fashion-related careers, and, for them, the differences are subtle. "I do product development so it's been fashion, and I've worked in companies with no dress code," said Alex B. "I wear what I want [mixing] jeans and Doc Martins with [pieces from] designers [such as] Christopher Shannon . . . Neil Barrett, Philip Limm, Korrs, [and] Raf Simmons." In Figure 1, Alex B. wears a blue checked shirt with black jeans. This casual informal style is typical of his work-based choices. Although he is clear about choosing designer items, they are typically not visibly branded but do fit with the relatively slim-cut style that Alex B. favors. This style also references a "Rude Boy" style that Alex B. explained he discovered when looking to London from the United States, which allowed him to dress "fashionably" in addition to a style associated with black-male subcultural style. He also pointed out how he might accessorize his work style with a blazer or silver jewelry if going to the theater or other social event.

Similarly, Alex J. noted how he dressed up his standard work look of a blazer, white button-down shirt, and dress pants, all bought from Theory where he works, by "exchanging the dress pants for skinny jeans" to become, as he says "a mix of the two."

Figure 1 - Alex B. wearing blue checked button-down shirt and black jeans. With permission of Alex B.

Figure 2 - Alex J. at work in Theory in Philadelphia, 2012. Alex J. is wearing slim-cut black trousers and jacket that fit with a contemporary "skinny" boy style, worn by gay men in many urban areas in both the United States and Great Britain. With permission of Alex J.

The photograph of Alex J. (Figure 2) was taken in the dressing room of Theory in Philadelphia, illustrating Alex J.'s typical work style. It is not a style that is specifically "black," he noted, but much more in tune with a fashionable male silhouette worn by men of many racial and ethnic backgrounds. Like Alex B.'s "Rude Boy" version of the slim silhouette, it allows for a fashion-conscious presentation, one that is typical of urban men, regardless of sexual orientation, at the beginning of the second decade of twenty-first century. Alex M. was clear that he did not have "allegiances" to particular brands or styles and that he does not present himself in one particular way repeatedly. Instead, he "flits" between different looks. "I guess I dress in relation to where I'm going," he said, "and I am aware [that] I dress to suit, maybe, the event I suppose." He noted that his upper-class upbringing and schooling instilled in him ideas about the "correct" way to dress. While this remains with him, he does not necessarily feel bound by these rules and, indeed, varies his looks when he is visiting family, going out to the clubs or bars, and at work. He did emphasize that working as a fashion illustrator and university tutor is interesting "because there's no rules." He qualified this with an example of how he self-regulates his appearance when he is teaching, explaining that working with students has meant that his previously "casual" style has become "more sophisticated as there's a sense of authority if you dress up a little more." This links to Foucault's ideas of self-regulation in terms of the disciplined body, regulating appearance in both conscious and subconscious ways, based upon the surrounding environment and observers, in this case for Alex M. and his students.[23]

Like the Alexes, Roy, who works in a fashion-related field as a model and also as a performer, related that these performance-focused occupations impact how he chooses to dress. He recalled in his first job after graduating from art college, at a graphic design company, that, despite being in a creative field, his boss drew attention to his love of "dressing up." He "would say, 'What are you wearing now?' It was literally an Azzedine Alaïa top with jeans and biker boots and . . . with my hair pulled back in a ponytail." Building on these comments, Roy noted that, within his current career as a performer and model, he is now able to "play" with his appearance as he wishes but emphasized that he does not have one particular style. The way Roy dresses and puts together outfits is "always interchangeable and evolving." When asked to elaborate, he compared his "off-duty" look of "jeans or khakis, t-shirt, baseball cap or flat cap" with a more dressed-up fashionable combination, such as what he wore to an LGBTQ event in London in the summer of 2017:

> I put this coat from Louis Vuitton on top of a Dolce and Gabbana gauze, hooded, long, sweater garment, folded into these trousers by Comme [des Garçons], trainers by, I think it was Snow and Rock, something like that. Then the scarf that went around it through the belt loops of the Comme trousers were [sic] Alexander McQueen.

Through his role as a model and his connections with designers, stylists, and other models as well as those in the music industry, Roy is able to leverage his cultural capital to access particular fashion garments that he then puts together in his own way. This differs from how he might be styled when he is working as a model, mixing elements that might be considered more or less masculine or feminine and selecting from both men's and women's designer collections. For the press launch of the 2018 single *Waiting for You to Call* by Horse Meat Disco (for which Roy provided the vocals), he wore a white peak-lapel jacket over a white shirt with a black bow tie and black fedora. In the jacket's top pocket, Julian Ganio, fashion editor-at-large for *Fantastic Man* Magazine who styled Roy's outfit, had placed a brightly colored striped handkerchief to add an elaborate flourish. This elegantly masculine outfit is feminized by both the extravagance of the pocket handkerchief and Roy's pose; he is clutching the opening of the jacket with one hand, while the other is placed on his hip (Figure 3). In the combination of elements, there is a resonance with the outfit Roy described wearing to the London LGBTQ event but a contrast with the hypermasculine presentation in the images taken for the London Full Fetish festival (Figure 4). Roy and thirty-three-year-old British analyst Adam both pay attention to detail and combinations of colors and styles that follows in a long tradition of black male consideration of detail, particularly in contrast to hegemonic white British or American styles, as described by Carol Tulloch and Christina Checinska. These particularities also resonate with Monica Miller's articulation of black Dandy styles.[24]

Figure 3 - Roy, photographed by Claire Lowrie, at the press launch for the single *Waiting for You to Call* by Horse Meat Disco featuring ROY INC. With permission of Claire Lawrie.

Figure 4 - Roy photographed for publicity material for London's "Full Fetish" Festival held in July 2018. Photograph by Chris Parkes. With permission of Chris Parkes.

Of the five key interviewees, Adam is the only one who does not work in a fashion- related occupation. However, he does carefully negotiate his appearance and own awareness of men's fashion trends and personal taste with the requirements of his office-based job at British Airways. At work there is "a general need for trousers and shirts," but he says he makes his "own standard . . . and putting my clothes on prepares me; like one would put on a uniform and think of customers, I think about the spreadsheets." He always wears a tie with "trousers, blazers, waistcoats, leather shoes." He gave an example of how he might subvert the rules: "beige trousers I would wear with a paisley white shirt and a pink tie with a dark-green waistcoat." The exception is on Fridays when he dresses down, dropping the tie and increasing the color and pattern. Adam's awareness of the "rules" of work dress and his subversions through overt use of color and pattern that are permissible in his non-public-facing position at work align with Alex M.'s awareness and self-regulation when teaching.

Each of these men operates an element of agency over their identity by reflexively using their clothing to make statements about who they want to be perceived as, in both individual and different social situations. The negotiations undertaken by these men relate to Katherine Sender's proposal that no one gay habitus impacts individual's choices.[25] They also point towards the multitude of subject positions that factor into the formation of any one individual, which is significant for the underlying argument of this article. Indeed, as Marcus Hunter has observed, there is no one "singular Black gay man."[26]

Camp Versus Butch

Historically, the term "butch" has been applied by gay men to masculine (straight) men seen as desirable. "Post-gay liberation" is the term sometimes applied in a tongue-in-cheek fashion when butch masculine behavior is seen as a "performance." For this article, I use butch as a term that applies to an appearance or behavior that is traditionally seen as masculine. "Camp" is a more complex term in its applications, meanings, and understanding. Traditionally, it has been used by gay men to describe an ostentatious and exaggerated effeminacy or theatrical, extravagant, and effeminate behaviors. Many of the accepted definitions, arising from Susan Sontag's (1964) *Notes on Camp*, highlight a form of self-knowing, stylization, and playfulness that revels in the idea of artifice. As Philip Core, drawing on Jean Cocteau's self-description, noted in the subtitle of his 1984 book, camp is "the lie that tells the truth."[27]

In an interview held in the late 1990s, John outlined how British black gay men in the late 1970s and early 1980s

> were either queens or clones . . . you had those that want to be in a uniform and said "you're meant to be wearing the uniform, if you don't wear the uniform you're not gay" . . . and then those that are going to say "I am me."

Writing in 1994, in relation to the masculinized styles of the gay clone and subsequent military and skinhead looks adopted by gay men, Kobena Mercer observed:

> if the frisson of eroticism conveyed by these styles depends on the connotations of masculine power, then this concerns the kind of power traditionally associated with white masculinity. It is therefore ironic that gay men have ignored this racial dimension.[28]

Adam, Alex J., Alex M., and Roy discussed the ways that they negotiated both camp and butch. Roy noted that, at the time he first discovered the gay scene, he was not drawn to dress in the standardized gay "uniform" of the clone (Figure 5).[29] Instead, he was more drawn to what he saw as "fashionable"; he was perhaps making a similar choice to that of John in stepping aside from standardized white gay styles of the time. John noted that due to forms of racial discrimination within the gay "community"

> black gay men have to change their look in a completely different way because if they start looking like clones, in certain ways it can look ridiculous, . . . [but] being black we can wear much brighter colors, so we tend to wear brighter colors, much better designs sometimes.

This use of color and design by black men relates to Adam's descriptions of his clothing choices and combinations.

After being taken to the London gay leather club Backstreet and being introduced to images by gay illustrator Tom of Finland, Roy began to play with this hypermasculine "clone" look. Based on his reputation as

a chameleon-like dresser on London's gay scene, Roy was invited to be featured in the advertising for London's Fetish Week that took place in July 2018. In Figure 4, Roy's well-developed muscular body is set off by a jockstrap, chaps, boots, cap, harness, gloves, and arm bands, all in black leather. These are all markers of a fetish style featured in many Tom of Finland drawings. Posed on a leather-covered seat and back-lit, his tattoos are prominent on his bare chest and arms. To add to the sense of hypermasculinity, Roy sports a full beard and is posing with his crotch thrust forward and arms crossed above his well-developed and tattooed nipples.

Unlike John, Roy has never felt he had to make a choice between the hypermasculine clone and the more, to use John's words, "queeny" styles. He was quite categorical that he has "never been averse to male or female clothing. I see what I can spin and make it look like a man's clothing. … There's a fluidity in what I think with fashion . . . what I do." In this respect, John and Roy and to a lesser extent Adam, Alex B., Alex J., and Alex M. were, as journalist Emil Wilbekin noted, "walking a fine line between masculine and feminine characteristics."[30]

Figure 5 - Justin Stubbings in typical 1980s gay clone-style jeans, checked shirt, boots, and leather waistcoat in London. Originally published in Shaun Cole, *Don We Now Our Gay Apparel: Gay Men's Dress in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 2000). With permission of Justin Stubbings.

Like Roy, who is completely at ease with the softer, more effeminate aspects of his character and his ability to turn on and off the "camp" as and when he wishes, both in terms of clothing and behavior, so too is Adam quite candid about his own approach and behavior. He said,

> If I'm out and relaxed, you see a camp Adam. Where I think that's the norm. That's what I'd say, anyway. When I'm keeping it all together, I'm not doing it super consciously, but there are some places to be more normal.

He also told me that, when he first came out, one of his school friends noted that he was getting "camper" and that he had "meant it in a negative way," but that "after coming out, I could probably accept I was more camp." Adam was interested in the idea that "camp" is often seen as an "act" and questions whether for gay men they are "turning on the camp or the masculinity?" Thus, for Adam, his "camp" is expressed through his behavior rather than through his dress. What Adam acknowledges is that his clothes are on what is popularly perceived to be the less masculine end of a clothing spectrum:

> I might put a broach on, on a Friday, if I feel a bit vivacious. … What defines it is the types of clothes I wear.

Figure- 6 Adam at work at British Airways, wearing a typical brightly colored outfit consisting of flowered shirt, tweed waistcoat, brightly colored trousers, and patterned socks. Photograph by Nicholas Warner. With permission of Nicholas Warner and Adam.

In Figure 6, Adam poses between the wheels of the aircraft that form a key part of his working life, wearing a similar combination to that described above. His teal tweed waistcoat matches his socks, and the bright orange of his close-fitting trousers is picked out in the floral pattern of his shirt and matching tie. Adam wears his hair in a natural, short Afro that he said resonated for him with his Ethiopian heritage. Adam's choices are informed by his awareness of work dress-code conventions within his company; however, as he is not in a public-facing position, he feels that it is acceptable for him to push those conventions, especially on "dress-down Fridays."

Building on notions of the combination of conventionally masculine and feminine garments in forming an individual black gay (or queer) personal appearance, Ben Barry and Dylan Martin's 2016 article, "Gender Rebels: Inside the Wardrobes of Young Gay Men with Subversive Style," considers the intersection of race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, social class, and occupation in the dressed appearance of a group of young men in Canada. Comfortable with his identity as a gay man and interested in rejecting binary gender divisions, Andre, a thirty-year-old African-Canadian schoolteacher from Barry and Martin's study, draws on his racial heritage and appropriates contemporary black styles, fusing athletic streetwear with "glitzy," "queered"

garments. For example, he combined a Harlem Globetrotters basketball jersey with maroon faux-fur and mesh pants. Aware of the intersections between elements of his identity, he said, "I think blackness and queerness are huge elements, but I think socioeconomic status and class is [sic] a huge part of it too so the three of them collectively and collaboratively influence my choices."[31] The way attitudes towards effeminacy and camp impact individuals is illustrated by one of Pritchard's respondents, Cole, who explained

> I may have feminine qualities about me, and when I do it, I do it in the comfort of my own home or when I'm with my friends. That's fine. I may have my feminine moments, but I know that I'm a man.… I enjoy being a man, first and foremost. [32]

Here, Cole is operating and behaving within Hunter's "public-private" model, restricting his more effeminate behaviors to a private-domestic sphere.

Discussing his observations of black gay style in Philadelphia, Alex J. described "gay black men who dress extremely flamboyantly, extremely tight jeans [and] women's shoes," as well as those in "what you would say was a stereotypical black man's dress [or] oversized T-shirt and baggy jeans," concluding that generally these more effeminate men "are looked down upon." Reflecting on this attitude towards effeminacy, sociologist Peter Hennen noted that broadly within gay cultures and especially on gay social media there is a "repudiation of the feminine."[33] This frequently manifests itself as what Pritchard described as a "familiar refrain, 'no fats, no femmes, no trans,' stated formulaically, though not always in that order."[34] This femme-shaming operates not just in the virtual world but also on the streets and in gay venues. Featured in a 2017 BBC documentary, *Queer Britain: The Search for the Perfect Body*, Jamal, a black gay man who identified as "really feminine," described how he has been frequently femme-shamed, "but still I walk with my head high and I still strut my stuff likenobody's business. …I think of myself as a femme tornado."[35]

The "fine line" observed by Wilbekin and the repudiation of the feminine outlined by Hennen are both visible in two examples described by Alex M., discussing both himself and one of his housemates. He explained how his housemate "is extremely muscly, so he passes off as this quite butch black guy," but that in terms of his clothing choices and behavior he is "quite queer femme and sometimes he'll wear lipstick and a dress" in public, creating a disconnect for some between the muscularity of his body and his behavior. This creates issues for Alex M.'s friend in that he is attracted to "bear-y guys who don't give him the time of day if he looks queer or femme in any way." The "aversion" by some gay men to be perceived as feminine or "camp" also has impacted Alex M.'s experiences on gay social-networking and dating sites. He tells how the attitude of someone he had been talking to changed when he heard Alex M. worked in fashion, as "the idea I might be camp because I work in fashion took the suspense off for him." This was further contextualized in terms of the favoring forms of overt hegemonic masculinity when Alex explained how people were more interested in him on such sites if he put pictures of himself wearing "sportswear and a hoodie."

> People make massive assumptions about who I was and where I'm from. … So, knowing that knowledge I get more attention but it's not authentic. … The whole time I spent on Grindr, what they assume to be black is my class, my sexual role . . . every cliché you could imagine would come out in some way.

Dwight A. McBride investigated the connotations of masculinity and a racialized approach to discussions of attraction and what is considered most desirable within the "gay marketplace of desire." He describes the ways the variables of race, gender affect, body type, age, style, and clothing choice "work to construct and constitute what we come to accept, and in some cases to celebrate, as our value." He particularly noted how American racism affects how both gay white men and gay men of color react and respond to representations of gay men and subsequently to each other.[36] Drawing on his own experiences, the self-described "fat, brown, femme" Caleb Luna noted how "larger cultural systems that inform individual decisions and desires have been sculpted by centuries of intentional privileging of particular bodies and the marginalization of others," where "colonization indoctrinates us into the romantic idolization of thinness, whiteness and masculinity—in ourselves and others."[37]

Personally, Alex M. has been subjected to an experience that Pritchard describes as "confront[ing] regimes of normativity within Black queer digital realms."[38] Alex M. is aware of the desirability of this particular form of gay-masculine style that draws on black-originated streetwear and elements of a now globalized hip-hop culture style but questions its authenticity for him, as this is not the only way he dresses. Inherent in this particular masculine style and self-presentation is perhaps the idea of a "thug"—a form of hegemonic masculinity that two of Pritchard's respondents have noted is overemphasized and celebrated "as

an ideal Black man or a more sexually desirable person inside and outside of Black gay circles."[39] This also links back to McBride's observations of the practices and favored archetypes and stereotypes in the gay marketplace of desire. Mercer remarked that through "collective, historical experiences black men have adopted certain patriarchal values such as physical strength, sexual prowess and being in control as a means of survival," and the "incorporation of 'macho' behavior is thus intelligible as a means of recuperating some degree of power over the condition of powerlessness and dependency."[40]

Muscularity and the Body

Ideals of masculinity within gay culture have been connected to and have drawn upon bodily muscularity and the ideal of the gym-pumped body that may be clad in sportswear or shown off with revealing t-shirts or tank tops.[41] Jason Whitesel points out, the power of this "gay male aesthetic" that "rewards those with a lean, taut, and muscular upper body" is again praised and desired in McBride's marketplace of desire.[42] Alex M., Alex B., and Adam all discussed attending the gym, as they became aware of their bodies and hegemonic gay masculine ideals. Although Roy has an obviously muscular physique, noted above, he did not explicitly talk about going to the gym. They each noted how they might react or respond to this in relation to their body management through gym attendance. "More and more I started going to the gym a year ago, being more aware of my body," said Alex M.; "it's nice . . . being confident in your body." Adam related his gym attendance quite specifically to the London gay scene and his own sexuality:

> Did I go to the gym 'cause I was gay? Probably had lots to do with it. I was doing a lot of clubbing and standing around topless or in vests, and seeing all these men. … I became conscious of my body once I began to see it. … I started to notice my body and other people's bodies.

For Alex B., it was less about "explicitly trying to look good for people" than that he would "rather have a bigger body type than skinny. For my style I thought it worked…. It was about how I looked in my clothes." Alex M., while aware of his own body and gym use, pointed out a difference between people of color and white gay men attending the London Black Pride event in July 2017:

> the white [gay] guys, it was tops off, cargo short things, maybe some designer underwear, and they might be regular bodied, or it was buff muscly guys and they all had their tops off, [but] the black people here, nobody has their top off. You could tell they had beautiful bodies underneath, but it was about a look.

This perhaps contradicts Rashad Shabazz's observation that "embodying gender is key in the performance of black masculinity … and Black men frequently … rely on the body as a way to access masculinity," as the black bodies here are covered, unlike the exposed white torsos.[43] What Alex M. is not explicit about, however, is whether there was an awareness of the body that sat beneath those fashionable clothes and the variety of expressions of style on the people of color attending London Black Pride.

Multiple Black/Gay Styles?

While each of the men I have cited in this article focuses upon the intersectionality of his sexual orientation and racial or ethnic identities, some of what Adam, Alex M., and Roy discussed relates to broader questions of identity and particularly identity as men and as gay men. Roy, who is conscious of his body and has a highly developed gym-physique (Figure 4) that is part of his performative practices as a model and dancer, questions what constitutes masculinity: "all those constraints, whether you're a man, a woman, bisexual, asexual, transgender, . . . how you think and see and approach things in life. … But if you open up your Pandora's Box . . . there shouldn't be [constraints]". Unwittingly drawing on this idea, Alex M. noted that "There's a much bigger range of ways to express yourself" and observed how, at London Black Pride in July 2017, "there were so many gender fluid representations of self, so many people who would totally mix those things up. It's interesting seeing young people do a really proud look." Shabazz has highlighted the importance of gender performance and the ways in which "rituals and acts stylize the body into ideologically constructed notions of gender," something that Alex M. observed and attempted to challenge.[44]

Jamal, featured on episode two of BBC's Queer Britain, described how, despite being "femme-shamed," he invested a considerable amount of time in his appearance, "getting my hair done, spending money on make-up, money on my hair, skin," and wearing "really feminine clothes . . . the tighter, the more revealing the better" (Figure 7). He is adamant in his desire for self-expression despite and against the

hegemonic presentations of style and body within British gay communities, where those considered most attractive are, in his words, "the straight-acting ones."[45] Despite living in an age where gender fluidity is a hot topic and gender expressions and identities are understood to be multiple and fluid, there often is still a reliance on the traditional binarism of gender. Jamal explained how he is asked if he is a "trannie" or a "drag queen," and "you do know you're a boy, right?" emphasizing how, even within London's gay communities, there is a reliance on the equation of men with masculinity and femininity with women. This highlights that feminine men are not desired or made to feel comfortable in their personal expressions in dress. Jamal focused predominantly on his gendered appearance and its relation to his sexuality rather than on his racial identity.

Figure 7 - Self-described "femme tornado" Jamal, wearing black tight jeans, T-shirt and shirt, boots, a fur-trimmed parka, lipstick, and a black baseball cap to hold in place his long purple hair extension wig. The film reveals his exaggeratedly effeminate walk and mannerisms, congruent with his self-description. Screengrab from BBC3 series *Queer Britain*, episode 2, "The Search for the Perfect Body." Transmitted May 14, 2017.

Returning to how black gay men negotiate their multiple subjectivities, during his interview in 1997, John stated: "Black gay men always, even within the gay community, do have discrimination, and so black gay men have to change their look in a completely different way." In some respects, this has changed in the intervening twenty years between John's interviews and my more recent set of interviews; now a broader range of style options are available rather than just the "clone" or the "queen." Individuals can now negotiate their appearances based upon their own self-perception, sometimes fitting a broader acceptable style or creating a more individual appearance that pushes at conventions and stereotypes, as is the case for Roy, Adam, and Alex B. Each of the five main interviewees was highly conscious of his gender as cisgender men and how this impacted the consideration of their masculinity. In relation to this, they considered what being black meant for them and how their British or American upbringings and social class impacted their expressions of sexuality, gender, and race. Also, as gay men, they understood how homosexuality was perceived within both black and white cultures and societies of which they were a part. They found ways to negotiate their dress and behavior to either fit in or to stand out in particular spatial and temporal situations.

Roy believes that, for different sections of the gay black community, "whether African, West Indian, English black or wherever you're from [there are] different styles, and how you apply the styles that you're using . . . depends where you go on the scene." This resonates for Adam, who feels pressure to negotiate his gay and black identities, which come "more from the Ethiopian side [of his family heritage] than from anywhere else. … I watch how I dress when I go out with [my mother] in the community so as not to tarnish her name. I don't mind tarnishing my own name." His experience also relates to ideas of the perceptions of the "naturalness" of homosexuality within Ethiopian culture and traditions, relating back to notions proposed by Welsing and challenged by, amongst others, McBride and Johnson and Henderson.[46] Adam described how he "had a debate outside of a club, with an Ethiopian guy . . . and he asked if I was gay. I said 'yes.' He was terribly confused that an Ethiopian could be gay." Alex M. explained how, despite having a very "white" upbringing, he has "been more aware of being non-white, [but] there's ways people expect me to dress which connect with an urban black man, but that's not my background. I don't speak like that or act like that."

For Alex J., his negotiation of his black, gay, social class, and national identities led him to observe, "I feel like I don't need to dress one way or another to feel like I need to represent myself as gay and black." Reflecting on the history of gay men's relationship with style, both broadly and within certain subjective constraints or communities, Alex B. speculates, "What is gay style, gay fashion? I don't know." Taking up Alex B.'s uncertainty about what constitutes gay style, white New York-based writer Lee was categorical that the fact that he is gay is significant in his choices: "would a straight man wear a Marc Jacobs floral print shirt, white jeans and lime green SeaVees? Perhaps. But when I wear all that, it's definitely a gay look." Also considering what constitutes gay style, Adam observed,

> I think what I'm wearing now, with all its crazy patterns, might have been seen as a gay man's dress-sense. … For me it's an identity. Is it a gay identity? I'm not fully sure. … I think a lot of people would perceive it as gay.

Discussing the styles of dress associated with the global spread of hip-hop culture and its rise in specifically black-oriented gay clubs that have opened in London over the past two decades, black gay British filmmaker and theater director Rikki observed, "the difference is in the details. It's a knowingness of how to put together and those little camp touches that a straight boy wouldn't think of." While each of the men discussed in this section is clear that his style of dress is gay in some ways, they have no consensus on what constitutes a gay style or whether dressing in a particular way is indeed gay style. What can be concluded from these comments and perspectives is that there exists a multitude of ways of dressing as a gay man and as a black gay man in the first decades of this millennium.

Conclusion

When each of the men featured in this discussion dressed and chose their own subjectivities, they set that choice as a "gay" or "black," or "gay black," or "black gay" look and style. The order of these subject positions (and thus their intersections) differs between each of the men, and these subject positions are temporally and situationally contingent. Rikki's explicit identification of attention to detail, something that Tulloch, amongst others, has identified as being a key element in the development of black style-fashion-dress, was mirrored by the five key interviewees.[47] Each of them described details of their dress choices that related to how they saw and wanted to present themselves in terms of sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, social class, and occupation. Even in the interviews, the order in which these were proposed changed, depending upon the particular emphasis of the conversation. Taking Lee, Adam, Alex B., and Alex M.'s questioning of what constitutes gay men's style and what constitutes black gay men's style raises questions about whether it is possible to identify gay styles broadly and black gay styles specifically at this time.

Hunter identified the "negotiations engaged in by individuals who are both racial and sexual minorities," but this identity as a person of color needs to be considered in relation to other aspects of an individual's identity, particularly when considering dress choice and style.[48] Black gay men, those quoted here and more broadly, do not operate in a vacuum in terms of their dress and style; their own and others' attitudes towards race and ethnicity, sex and gender, and the constructions of the masculine and feminine have all had an impact upon black gay men's dress choice, and this is reflected in the experiences of the five main interviewees in this article. For some, the selection of items of clothing, be those designer pieces or more conventional high-street mass-market items, were negotiated in terms of time, place, and space, where occasion or company might impact how they wish to present themselves at that time. The scope of this article allowed for only a small

number of examples and individuals to be investigated, but what the broader research to which this contributes indicates is that there are a multitude of ways in which black gay men can, and do, express their sexual, racial, gendered, social public, and private identities and subject positions in the early part of the twenty-first century.

Acknowledgement

[1] Marlon B. Ross, "Some Glances at the Black Fag: Race, Same-Sex Desire, and Cultural Belonging," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/ Revue Canadienne de Litérature Comprée* 1, no. 1/2 (1994): 196.

[2] Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 124, 4.

[3] Michael R. Hames-Garcia, "'Who Are Our Own People?': Challenges for a Theory of Social Identity," in *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames-Garcia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 120–9.

[4] Carol Tulloch, "Style-Fashion-Dress: From Black to Post-Black," *Fashion Theory* 14, no. 3 (2010): 273–300.

[5] Susan Kaiser, *Fashion and Cultural Studies* (Oxford: Berg, 2012), 31.

[6] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 170.

[7] Work on the subject has mostly appeared in academic journals (although there has been more popular journalistic writing in gay magazines and popular newspapers not mentioned here) and includes the following (in chronological order of publication): Kate Schofield and Ruth A. Schmidt, "Fashion and Clothing: The Construction and Communication of Gay Identities," *International Journal of Retail and Distribution* 33, no. 4 (2005): 310–23; Victoria Clarke and Kevin Turner, "Clothes Maketh the Queer? Dress, Appearance and the Construction of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Identities," *Feminism and Psychology* 17, no. 2 (2007): 267–76; Frances Ross, "Leveraging Niche Fashion Markets through Mass Customization, Co-design, Style Advice, and New Technology: A Study of Gay Aesthetics and Website Design," *Fashion Practice: The Journal of Design Creative Process and the Fashion Industry* 2, no. 2 (2010): 175–98; Philip Warkander, *"This is All Fake, This is All Plastic, This is Me": A Study of the Interrelations Between Style, Sexuality and Gender in Contemporary Stockholm* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2013); Ben Barry and Dylan Martin, "Gender Rebels: Inside the Wardrobes of Young Gay Men with Subversive Style," *Fashion, Style and Popular Culture* 3, no. 2 (March 2016): 225–50; Elyssa Ford, "Becoming the West: Cowboys as Icons of Masculine Style for Gay Men," *Critical Studies in Men's Fashion* 5, no. 1/2 (2015): 41–54; Andrew Reilly and Kimberly A. Miller-Spillman, "Linking Dress and the Public, Private and Secret Self Model to Coming Out," *Critical Studies in Men's Fashion* 3, no. 1 (2016): 7–15; Jimmy Draper and Andrea M. McDonnell, "Fashioning Multiplatform Masculinities: Gay Personal Style Bloggers' Strategies of Gendered Self-representation across Social Media," *Men and Masculinities* 21, no. 5 (2018): 645–64; Stephen Stines, "Clothing Fashion: Uniform Gay Images in Male Apparel," *Critical Studies in Men's Fashion* 4, no. 2 (2017): 129–52.

I have continued to work on the relationship between gay men and style in the following texts: Shaun Cole, "Butch Queens in Macho Drag: Gay Men, Dress and Subcultural Identity," in *Men's Fashion Reader*, ed. Andrew Reilly and Sarah Cosbey (New York: Fairchild, 2008), 279–93; Cole, "Hair and Male (Homo) Sexuality: 'Up Top and Down Below,'" in *Hair: Styling, Culture and Fashion*, ed. Geraldine Biddle-Perry and Sarah Cheang (Oxford: Berg, 2008), 81–95; Cole, "Television's Fashion Gay Teens: Justin Suarez and Kurt Hummel," *Film, Fashion and Consumption* 1, no. 2 (2012): 159–67; Cole, "Costume or Dress? The Use of Clothing in the Gay Pornography of Jim French's Colt Studio," *Fashion Theory* 18, no. 2 (2014): 123–48; Cole, "Looking Queer? Gay Men's Negotiations Between Masculinity and Femininity in Style and Dress in the Twenty-first Century," *Clothing Cultures* 2, no. 2 (2015): 193–208.

[8] bell hooks, *Yearning* (Boston: South End, 1990), 22.

[9] This article draws on research from a bigger project but is a qualitative narrative analysis that focuses on five particular men who identify as black and gay. Creswell has discussed the complex question of "how many

interviewees/participants is enough" and states that a "sample size" of four to five is sufficient in a study of this nature. John W. Creswell, Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2014). The interviewees were found in a variety of ways. Of the five main interviewees, three were recommendations from ex-students who were aware of my research, one was an ex-student whose own academic interests were around sexuality and race, and one I met at a discussion panel and invited for an interview. Other interviewees included in the larger research project were found in similar ways and through a snowballing method with recommendations from previous interviewees. The five main interviewees were:

- Adam (black, British, 33, analyst),interview with author, October 28, 2017.
- Alex B. (black, American, 39, product development manager), interview with author, July 24, 2017.
- Alex J. (black, American, 26, retail manager), interview with author, October 16, 2012.
- Alex M. (black, British, 36, illustrator and university lecturer), interview with author, August 1, 2017.
- Roy (black, British, did not disclose exact age, performer and model), interview with author, August 1, 2017.

[10] As these were semi-structured interviews, questions were not always asked in exactly the same ways, but they did include versions of the following:

- Please describe your style of dress and where you purchase your clothes.
- How does your sexuality influence/ impact your style/clothing choices?
- How does your racial/ethnic background impact your style of dress/dress choices?
- How has ageing impacted your approach to the way you dress?
- How does your dress style differ in different situations, i.e. at work, at home, in gay venues (if you frequent them)?
- How influenced are you by seasonal trends in men's fashion?
- Please describe your observations of gay men's styles of dress in cities where you have lived.
- There has been a lot of discussion around concerns about racism and fat- and femme-phobia on gay social networking sites; could you tell me your thoughts about and/or experiences?

[11] The other interviews I have conducted and that are cited in this article were with the following:

- Joe (white, American, 27, nightclub host), interview with author, October 13, 2012.
- Josh (white, British, 19, student), interview with author, September 20, 2012.
- Lee (white, American, 34, writer), interview with author by email, November 26, 2012.
- Mario (white, Italian-American, 34, fashion academic), interview with author, November 29, 2012.
- TJ (white, American, 27, fashion PR), interview with author, October 13, 2012.

Also included are quotes from an interview I held on July 31, 1997 with John (black, British, 38, performer) as part of my research for *Don We Now Our Gay Apparel* and an informal conversation I had with Rikki (black, British, 34, theater and film director) at the Black Style Conference held at Victoria and Albert Museum London, January 20, 2005. In addition, the following are cited:

- Andre (black, Canadian, 30, schoolteacher), cited in Barry and Martin, "'Gender Rebels,' Inside the Wardrobes of Young Gay Men with Subversive Style," *Fashion, Style and Popular Culture* 3, no. 2 (March 2016): 225–50.
- Cole (black, American, 30s, telemarketer), cited in Eric Darnell Pritchard, *Fashioning Lives: Black Queers and the Politics of Literacy* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2017).
- Jamal (black, British, age and occupation not given), interviewed on *Queer Britain*, "The Search for the Perfect Body," directed by Daniela Carson, BBC3, May 14, 2017.

[12] Pritchard, *Fashioning Lives*, 9.

[13] Randall Keenan, "Identity: A Tricky Animal," *The Advocate*, February 16, 1999, <http://www.advocate.com>.

[14] Marcus Hunter, "All the Gays Are White and All the Blacks Are Straight: Black Gay Males, Identity and Community," *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 7, no. 2 (2010): 88, 85.

[15] The notion of differentials and negotiations between the public and private is a key element of sociologist Goffman's social interaction theory in *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. Using "dramaturgy" as a framework, Goffman described the social processes through which actors execute different performances in front of different audiences. He proposed that the self is constantly created and recreated through interactions with other actors and that the private self is the source of the roles performed publicly. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

[16] E. Patrick Johnson and Mae G. Henderson, "'Quaring/'Quaring' Queer Studies," in *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Johnson and Henderson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 4.

[17] Cited in Dwight A. McBride, "Can the Queen Speak?: Racism, Essentialism, Sexuality and the Problem of Authority," *Callaloo* 21, no. 2 (1998): 373.

[18] Thomas P. Duffin, "The Lowdown on the Down Low: Why Some Bisexually Active Men Choose to Self-Identify as Straight," *Journal of Bisexuality* 16, no. 4 (2016), 484–506.

[19] Cole, "Butch Queens in Macho Drag."

[20] Pritchard, *Fashioning Lives*, 16.

[21] See Jay McCauley Bowstead, *Menswear Revolution: The Transformation of Contemporary Men's Fashion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

[22] Sophie Woodward, *Why Women Wear What They Wear* (Oxford: Berg, 2007).

[23] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Allen Lance, 1977).

[24] Tulloch, "Rebel Without a Pause: Black Street Style and Black Designers," in *Chic Thrills: A Fashion Reader*, ed. Juliet Ash and Elizabeth Wilson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 84–98; Tulloch, *The Birth of Cool: Style Narratives of the African Diaspora* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Christine Checinska, "Stylin': The Great Masculine Enunciation and the (Re)Fashioning of African Diasporic Identities," *Critical Arts* 31, no. 3 (2017): 53–71; Monica Miller, *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

[25] Katherine Sender, "Gay Readers, Consumers, and a Dominant Gay Habitus: 25 Years of the *Advocate* Magazine," *Journal of Communication* 51, no. 1 (March 2001), 73–9.

[26] Hunter, "All the Gays Are White," 90.

[27] Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation and other Essays* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1967); Philip Core, *Camp: The Lie that Tells the Truth* (London: Plexus, 1984).

[28] Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1994), 123.

[29] See Cole, "Macho Man: Clones and the Development of a Masculine Stereotype," *Fashion Theory* 2, no. 2 (May 2000): 125–40.

[30] Emil Wilbekin, "Brothers in Style," *Out* (March 2004), 93.

[31] Barry and Martin, "Gender Rebels," 232.

[32] Cited in Pritchard, *Fashioning Lives*, 199.

[33] Peter Hennen, *Faeries, Bears, and Leathermen: Men in Community Queering the Masculine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 35.

[34] Pritchard, *Fashioning Lives*, 192.

[35] *Queer Britain*, "The Search for the Perfect Body."

[36] McBride, *Why I Hate Abercrombie and Fitch: Essays on Race and Sexuality* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 88–9.

[37] Caleb Luna, 'On Being Fat, Brown, Femme, Ugly, and Unloveable," <http://blackgirldangerous.org/2014/07/fat-brown-femme-ugly-unloveable/>.

[38] Pritchard, *Fashioning Lives*, 193.

[39] Pritchard, *Fashioning Lives*, 199.

[40] Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle*, 137.

[41] See Cole, "Butch Queens in Macho Drag" and Russell Westhaver, "'Coming Out of Your Skin': Circuit Parties, Pleasure, and the Subject," *Sexualities* 8, no. 3 (2005), 347–74.

[42] Jason Whitesel, "Gay Men's Use of Online Pictures in Fat-Affirming Groups," in *LGBT Identity and Online New Media*, ed. Margaret Cooper (London: Taylor and Francis, 2010), 217.

[43] Rashad Shabazz, *Spatializing Blackness: Architectures of Confinement and Black Masculinity in Chicago* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 77.

[44] Shabazz, Spatializing Blackness.

[45] Cited in *Queer Britain*, "The Search for the Perfect Body."

[46] McBride, Why I Hate Abercrombie and Fitch, 203–25.

[47] Tulloch, *Black Style* (London: V&A, 2004); Tulloch, *The Birth of Cool*

[48] Hunter, "All the Gays Are White," 83.