


Tropical Whites: Hegemonic Masculinity and Menswear at the Crossroads of Australia and Asia, 1900–1939

Melissa Bellanta  and Lorinda Cramer 

ABSTRACT

This article explores the social and gender history of 'tropical whites' – all-white men's suits worn with pith helmets in tropical societies colonised by European powers – between c.1900 and 1939. Focusing on two northern Australian ports with multiple connections to Asia, the article shows that tropical whites helped to sustain inequities of race, gender and class in the colonial tropics. The fashion did this by helping to produce hegemonic masculinity in the region. Tropical whites served this function by symbolising racial whiteness and imperial mastery, but also because of their material dimensions: who made and maintained them, and the bodily influence they exerted on their wearers. Underlining the embodied dimensions of hegemonic masculinity, the article explores the multidimensional relationship between menswear and power in the Australian tropics; at the same time showing that racially subordinated men transformed aspects of the fashion for their own ends.

After living in tropical Australia in the 1920s, the novelist Xavier Herbert drew on his experiences to write *Capricornia* (1937), a provocative work exposing the violent racism and snobbery of white Australians in the multiethnic north.¹ One of the novel's early chapters told of two brothers arriving in Port Zodiac, a fictionalised version of Darwin in the Northern Territory.² The Shillingsworth brothers had come from south-eastern Australia to work as clerks in the northern public service. A chapter entitled 'The Psychological Effect of a Solar Topee' described what happened once they changed into tropical dress shortly after arriving in town. The Shillingsworths swapped their suits of blue serge for white linen and their felt hats for 'solar topees', Herbert wrote – misspelling *sola topi*, a pith helmet originating in British India. They then experienced a bodily thrill of self-importance as they donned their new outfits.³

The Shillingsworths were initially disappointed to discover that they needed a new wardrobe. It was not just that their southern suits and hats were too hot for the sultry climate. In Port Zodiac, public servants not dressed in white were thought 'ridiculous'

Cultural sensitivity warning: Readers from Australia's First Nations – particularly those from the Djugun and Yawuru nations – are advised that this article contains two images of people who have died. Both images was taken in Broome in c.1910, and appears as Figures 1 and 11, respectively.

by their peers.⁴ Yet the men's disappointment turned to delight when they realised that government clerks in the north had more buying power and cachet than those in the south. In the tropics, any public-service position was prestigious. The services of the town's many Chinese tailors were also so cheap that the brothers could afford a suite of made-to-measure garments. Like countless men arriving at tropical colonial ports – men of European birth or descent disembarking in Batavia (now Jakarta), Singapore, Colombo, Calcutta (now Kolkata) and elsewhere – the brothers cast aside their old attire and paraded about like potentates 'in all the glory of new starched white linen clothes'. The finishing touch was a 'solar topee' – because 'a topee is more a badge of authority than a hat', the narrator explained.⁵

Our discussion is animated by preoccupations similar to Herbert's in 'The Psychological Effect of a Solar Topee'. We focus on the relationship between menswear and power in the port towns of Darwin and Broome between 1900 and the Second World War. Informed by the work of scholars who highlight the active role played by objects in social processes, our discussion will show that men's white suits and *sola topis* helped sustain the sharp inequalities in northern Australian society, and by implication also in other tropical colonies where this clothing was worn.⁶ While these inequalities had as much to do with colonialism, race and class as with gender, we argue that the best way to understand the role of tropical whites in sustaining inequity is to see these items of dress as an aspect of what the sociologist Raewyn Connell would call the 'hegemonic masculinity' in the region.

For Connell, hegemonic masculinity is the form of gender most valorised and empowered in patriarchal societies in a particular historical era. Hegemonic masculinity is the mode of manhood that most effectively enabled men as a sex to dominate women. It also places those who successfully aligned themselves with it in a position of dominance over others practising alternative ways of being a man.⁷ By choosing the term 'hegemonic', Connell has signalled an interest in the range of 'cultural and psychological' pressures and everyday practices that help to elevate this particular mode of manhood over other possibilities.⁸ Hegemony refers to dominance achieved more through consensus than compulsion. People acquiesce to hegemonic dominance not so much because they feel brutally compelled, but rather through force of habit, because they view it as natural or right, are unable to imagine alternatives, or suspect that resistance would be futile.

White menswear played such an important role in northern Australian port towns because it formed part of the suite of cultural and psychological pressures and mundane practices that co-opted individuals either to conform to the hegemonic masculinity in the region or to define their own enactment of gender in relation to it. During the first four decades of the century, the dominant masculinity in the north was an imperious white masculinity. Embodied by senior government figures and employers of non-white labour, such men projected an aura of 'natural' authority. Wearing immaculate white suits and *topis* was a means through which this mode of manhood acquired the imprimatur of rightness or naturalness. It was buttressed by force of habit at the same time.

There were three key ways in which white suits and *topis* helped to achieve the dominant masculinity just described. The first related to symbolic properties: a *sola topi* was a 'badge' of imperial mastery and authority, as Herbert put it. The whiteness

of a tropical suit also symbolised racial whiteness and superiority to the labouring class. These observations highlight a point made by Connell in an article revisiting her concept of hegemonic masculinity, co-written with fellow sociologist James Messerschmidt in 2005. The processes through which a man comes to dominate all alternative configurations of gender are always ‘mutually conditioned’ by practices relating to other power structures, Connell and Messerschmidt noted.⁹

In the tropics, the structures of power grounded in colonialism, race and class were impossible to separate from those relating to gender. The gender historian Mrinilini Sinha observed something similar in her work on British India. The masculinity most dominant in the region was ‘constituted by, as well as constitutive of, a wide set of social relations’, she concluded.¹⁰ During the period and place under consideration here, the distinctions between coloniser and colonised, between white and non-white, were even more important than the distinction between man and woman. This was evident in the labour necessary to produce and maintain immaculate white tropical menswear. In the context of the Australian north, that labour was carried out predominantly by male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servants and Asian tailors and laundry-workers, rather than by daughters and wives.

Material factors were crucial to the ways in which white menswear helped to produce hegemonic masculinity in the Australian north. Such factors included the work involved in the manufacture and upkeep of tropical whites and the expense this entailed. Materiality was further evident in the influence that white suits and tops exerted on their wearers, affecting their psychology and how they carried themselves. Since our approach is more influenced by studies of material culture than cultural semiotics, we are most interested in these two aspects of tropical whites’ materiality. These focii matter not only because the material domain is crucial to power relations, but because far too few of the historians who have invoked or criticised Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity have paid attention to its material aspects.

In 2004, the British historian John Tosh lamented the fact that most gender historians either debating or working with the concept of hegemonic masculinity treated it as if it comprised only of representations and norms relating to masculine ideals.¹¹ Connell has herself been keen to dispel the misconception that hegemonic masculinity is a phenomenon confined to the symbolic domain. She and Messerschmidt insisted on the significance of ‘body practices’ when reappraising the concept.¹² For this reason, it is perhaps surprising that Connell has said little over the years about the role played by fashion and consumption as components of hegemonic masculinity. By revealing the degree to which white menswear helped to produce the dominant mode of manhood in the early twentieth-century tropics, the following discussion fleshes out this aspect of Connell’s concept. It also more broadly illuminates the historical relationship between ‘tropical whites’ and power.

Why Darwin and Broome?

At first glance, Darwin and Broome may seem curious places in which to consider the relationship between dress, masculinities and power in ways that have broad applicability within gender studies and social history. Outside their sphere of influence, both towns were considered remote backwaters during our period of interest. Situated on the country of the Larrakia, Djerimanga and Kingarakan peoples, Darwin (formerly

Palmerston) was established by the colony of South Australia as the administrative centre of its Northern Territory in 1869. Over following decades, the town became a launching point for gold-miners heading inland, a site for exporting live cattle to Asia, and a hub for the pearling and trepang industries – the latter a delicacy favoured in China.¹³ While Darwin's boosters hoped it would become the 'Singapore of Australia', its population was tiny and contracted over time.¹⁴ When South Australia handed control of the Northern Territory to the Australian government in 1911, Darwin had only 1,387 residents, 1,006 of which were men.¹⁵

Emerging as a port servicing the pearling industry in the 1880s, located on Djugun and Yawuru country in the Kimberley region of northern Western Australia, Broome's population was more difficult to determine, given its reliance on short-term indentured Asian labourers. While the census of 1911 recorded 866 permanent residents (596 of them male), information compiled by Western Australia's Aborigines and Fisheries Department that year indicated that 2,245 male Asian labourers employed in the region's pearling industry were headquartered in Broome.¹⁶

Though the populations of Darwin and Broome were small, their location at the crossroads of Australia and Asia make them revealing places in which to consider issues relating to masculinity, race, colonialism and power.¹⁷ Both ports were geographically closer to Timor than any Australian city. They were also connected to Asia via multiple steamship routes. The towns' demographics reflected both this connection to Asia and their location on First Peoples land. We have noted the 1911 figures indicating that the majority of Broome's residents were born in Asia. In Darwin, almost a third of the population recorded in the same year were described as 'Chinese', with 27 per cent as 'European', and 22 per cent 'Aborigines' – the term then used by officials. The remaining categories of any numerical significance were 'Japanese', 'Filipino', 'Timorese' and 'Malay'.¹⁸ Darwin's population became increasingly Europeanised over the following decades, but the proportion of residents of First Nations and Asian descent continued to be far larger than in more southerly regions.¹⁹

The high proportion of Asian immigrants in Darwin and Broome owed much to the pearling industries' reliance on divers and crew from Japan, the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies and the British Straits Settlements.²⁰ Other industries had also attracted Asian workers to Darwin and surrounding country in the Northern Territory. Indentured Chinese and Indian workers had first arrived in the Territory in the mid-1870s. Some worked as labourers to build public infrastructure, others on pastoral properties and mining fields or as domestic servants. Chinese retailers and entrepreneurs followed in their wake, some successfully applying for naturalisation before the federal government began instituting its racially restrictive 'White Australia' immigration regime in 1901.²¹ Asian labourers continued to work for pearling fleets under a special exemption granted to the industry that allowed pearlery to recruit Asian labourers on three-year indentured contracts, many of which were renewed several times.²²

The exceptional nature of the pearling industry gestures towards what the historian Julia Martinez has said about the Australian tropics: namely, that two different forms of colonialism were awkwardly intertwined there. The first was a settler colonialism that relied on immigrants of European descent seizing possession of Indigenous land and asserting their right to occupy the country. The second was a colonialism evident throughout much of the tropics, in which European powers sent representatives

to rule over the local population and profit from its resources. Rather than claiming permanent possession of the land itself and either killing or driving away its original inhabitants, participants in this second form of colonialism aspired to be lords of a tenanted realm.²³ Australian settler colonialism relied on a masculinised and egalitarian rhetoric that centred on the ruggedly ordinary European settler who prospered through grit and toil. Tropical colonialism, on the other hand, relied on an elitist rhetoric that vaunted the superiority of ‘civilised’ Europeans. It centred on the official or company executive who commanded retinues of ‘native houseboys’ and indentured labourers. Since Darwin’s and Broome’s elites tended more towards the culture of tropical colonialism than its Antipodean settler variant, their masculine ideals and practices were somewhat at odds with those of their southern counterparts.²⁴

The contending forms of colonialism and multiethnic populations in Darwin and Broome make these towns productive focal points for historians interested in the relationship between masculinities and power. Apart from anything else, thinking about Darwin and Broome highlights the need to consider overlapping patterns of hegemonic masculinity operating at different geopolitical levels – a point to which we return. A range of photographs and interviews conducted for local oral history projects also exist in relation to these townships, making it possible to conduct a multifaceted investigation of historical white menswear. Our discussion draws on a dataset we compiled of 200 photographs of men dressed in tropical whites.²⁵ These images offer valuable insights into sartorial detail and the bodily performances in which men engaged when wearing this clothing – even if only when posing for a photograph. We also draw on twenty oral history interviews: ten relating to Broome and ten Darwin, most by long-term residents of European heritage, but some of Chinese or Sri Lankan (formerly known as Ceylonese or Sinhalese) descent.²⁶ Combined with memoirs, biographies, newspaper advertisements and journalistic reports on visits to Darwin and Broome, these sources shed further light on the significance of white menswear at the crossroads of Australia and Asia.

The dominant forms and meanings of white tropical menswear

In an interview conducted in the 1980s, the former Darwin resident Ray Tyrrell described his experiences of arriving in the town as a young man in 1928 in terms uncannily similar to the fictional Shillingsworths in *Capricornia*.²⁷ Tyrrell had previously been a bank clerk in south-eastern Australia, but moved north to work for his uncle Victor Kepert. Known as a ‘pearling master’ – a coveted title in the northern port towns – Kepert owned seven pearling luggers and commanded a workforce of roughly fifty indentured Asian labourers. While Tyrrell went to work in Kepert’s office, these labourers fished for pearl shell (and, when they were lucky, pearls) in the Arafura, Banda and Timor Seas, some working as crew and others as deep-sea divers.²⁸ As the producer of raw materials for pearl-shell buttons and jewellery, the pearling industry was closely connected to the fashion industry, making it fitting that Tyrrell’s first memories of Darwin were of clothes.

Tyrrell was met by Emile Laponia, the manager of his uncle’s pearling fleet, when he disembarked from his steamer on Darwin’s wharf. If he had not already realised that his blue suit and felt hat were inappropriate for the local fashion and climate, Laponia quickly pointed it out. ‘The first thing we’ve got to do of course is get you

some suitable attire', he told Tyrrell. Next morning, Laponia took Tyrrell to Fan Chong Loong's, a tailoring and clothing store in Darwin's Chinatown, where the staff fitted him for a new wardrobe. On Laponia's advice, Tyrrell ordered a 'white coat and long trousers', and a pair of white shorts as daywear. For evening socials and dances, he ordered black trousers with a stripe down the side, a little 'dickie' white jacket 'like waiters sometimes wear', a 'high collar and low collar, bow tie and peaked collars'.²⁹ The result was a suite of clothes of 'very, very good quality, measured and hand-made', Tyrrell recalled. As with the Shillingsworths, the finishing touch was 'a pith topee helmet, because many, many men wore pith helmets up there in those days'.³⁰

Historians exploring how European colonists in the tropics related to dress have long suggested that their subjects sought clothes that invested them with an air of imperial authority. The field of imperial tropical medicine influenced what clothing acted in this way. Emerging to further the cause of European empire in the tropics, the practitioners of this branch of medical science were convinced that the 'European races' were biologically susceptible to sunstroke and disease in equatorial zones. They thus required special clothing and health regimens if they were to assert their dominance.³¹

The clothing recommended for the tropics changed over the years. The sola topi, cholera belt and spine pad were all variously promoted. So was flannel underwear, red garments and others made from a patented fabric called 'solaris'. Eventually, however, light-coloured cottons – khaki for the most active, rugged purposes, but most preferably white – were favoured over other textiles.³² The British Navy's introduction of a white tropical uniform in 1877 was one marker of this growing belief that white garments were best suited to European bodies in hot and humid climates.³³ White suits were in fact already widely worn by Europeans in many tropical colonies by then. In a memoir of his experiences in Singapore after arriving from England in 1864, for example, the clerk-turned-lawyer Charles Burton Buckley recalled that it was the custom for British gentlemen to go out to dinner and dances dressed all in white.³⁴

Numerous photographs of British and Dutch men wearing white suits appear in Claire Lowrie's exploration of the interconnected cultures of domestic service across Singapore, the Dutch East Indies and the Australian north in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁵ Since white garments and topis were recommended for racial reasons, it is not surprising that these items came to be regarded as badges of racial whiteness as well as of empire – all the more so because of the easy allusive slippage between white cloth and the so-called white race. In British India, the sola topi became so redolent of racial whiteness and mastery by the early 1900s that any Anglo-Indian *not* wearing one was regarded as a potential race traitor by their peers.³⁶

That the pith helmet possessed racialised meanings in the Australian north is apparent from Figures 1 and 2. Taken at Broome Gaol by the commercial photographer E. L. Mitchell in *c.*1909, Figure 1 captures prison staff dressed in white sola topis and khaki uniforms, facing a line of bare-chested Aboriginal men wearing grubby shorts.³⁷ Dramatically depicting the criminalisation of north-western Australia's First Peoples, this photograph also attests to the racial and settler-colonial meanings symbolised by the sola topi in the region. The topi signified the might of the colonial state and intimations of empire invested in the wardens; a stark contrast to the bare heads of prisoners in their half-dress. Figure 2 reinforces?? this point. Taken in the 1920s, the photograph records the Broome pearler Captain Louis Goldie aboard his lugger with



Figure 1: E. L. Mitchell, 'Aboriginal Prisoners at Broome Gaol', c.1909. State Library of Western Australia: BA1200/258. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

members of his Asian crew. Since none of the crew wear a hat, Goldie's pith helmet clearly possessed racial overtones.

While the sola topi symbolised many of the same meanings in Broome and Darwin as it did in other Indian Ocean colonies, its racial symbolism was not as intense in northern Australia as in other parts of the tropics. This was largely because working-class men of European birth or descent rarely if ever wore pith helmets in Darwin and Broome. Some middle-class white men also preferred other headwear such as boaters or other wide-brimmed hats. White suits were thus a more important symbol of racial whiteness than pith helmets in northern Australia. A reporter from a more southerly newspaper emphasised this after visiting Broome in 1910. 'Although outnumbered perhaps ten to one by the mixed coloured races ... [whites] are the lords, the dictators and the rich men of Broome', the reporter began. 'Cliques exist, but the cosmopolitan white duck suit, worn by the chap who drives a cart as well as the pearl-buyer with 100,000 pounds behind him, covers up outward differences of social status'.³⁸

The reporter was right that all-white garb was widely worn by men of European birth or descent in the north, but wrong to suggest it concealed class distinctions. Only an outsider could have formed this view. For insiders, the small details of a suit's fabric, cut, condition and accessories revealed information relevant to the class of the wearer, his likely form of work, income and social capital. For a start, white drill came in finer grades and was thus more prestigious than duck cottons or linens.



Figure 2: Captain Louis Goldie and his unnamed crew, c.1925. Broome Historical Society, 2006.553. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

White footwear also looked more stylish with an all-white suit than its less-expensive-to-maintain black counterpart. The same applied to pearl-shell buttons. As a Perth journalist visiting Broome in 1910 noted, the local tailor Wing Hing Loong charged different prices for his white jackets depending on whether they had pearl-shell buttons or less expensive cloth-covered ones.³⁹

Given that an elaborate social stratification was evident in Australia's northern port towns, it is reasonable to expect that their inhabitants drew fine-grained social inferences from tropical menswear. Magistrates and senior public servants shared the top rung with local executives of the British Australasian Telegraph Company

and large pastoral companies.⁴⁰ In Broome, the same applied to the most successful pearling masters.⁴¹ Further down the hierarchy ranged professionals such as doctors and lawyers, ordinary public servants, less successful pearlmen, small business owners, the managers of pastoral properties and pearling fleets, bank clerks and other office workers. White labourers, Asian labourers and First Nations people were relegated in that order to the lowest social echelons. Asian businessmen such as the Sinhalese jeweller Danta Narayana Janis and Japanese entrepreneur Murakami Yasukichi (both residents of early twentieth-century Broome and pictured in Figures 7 and 9) occupied a more ambiguous position in the hierarchy. This was evident, among other things, in their adoption of immaculate white suits discussed below.⁴²

Though working-class men of European descent also wore white suits, their outfits tended to be cheaper in quality and show greater signs of wear than the clothes of non-labouring men. Writing of his father Leo Gugerl, a low-paid ‘pearl-opener’ based in Broome during the 1920s, biographer Michael Gugerl noted that white labourers employed in the pearling industry changed their white suits up to three times a day during the periods they were not sea. Leo Gugerl and his colleagues spent a considerable portion of their earnings on laundry bills trying to keep up ‘a standard of accepted dress’ at such times. Their suits still became ‘stained after a lot of use’, however, and would thus have been easily distinguishable from the constantly renewed attire of the region’s male elites.⁴³

When it came to the cut of all-white tropical suits, three types of jackets were commonplace. The first two were tunics of military inspiration, single-breasted and buttoning to the neck. The most widely worn was the kind displayed by the two standing men on the left and right in Figure 3, a photograph taken in 1919 of the Darwin Advisory Council, newly appointed advisors to the Northern Territory’s Administrator.⁴⁴ These representatives of hegemonic masculinity were wearing what was usually simply referred to as a jacket ‘in the tropical fashion’: a tunic sporting either a stand-up collar (like these men) or a detachable choker collar fixed with buttons or studs at the throat.⁴⁵ There were usually one or two pouch pockets at the breast and two more just below the hips.

The second style of tunic was the patrol jacket. The man standing in the middle and another sitting on the far right of Figure 3 wear this style, but more elegant examples appear in a studio portrait taken of four Broome men in 1914 shortly before they left for the First World War (Figure 4). The forerunner of what was later known as the safari jacket, the patrol jacket had double box-pleated flap pockets at the breast, and further pouch pockets at the hip. While these were worn across the tropics, they were more fashionable in Broome than Darwin. This was chiefly because they were most popular among Broome’s pearling masters, many of whom had backgrounds as merchant marine officers.⁴⁶ The first style of tunic outlined above was also widely worn by officers in the merchant marine in the same period.⁴⁷

The third kind of jacket commonly worn as daywear was the sac coat. ‘Sac’ was the Australian term for what was elsewhere called sack and lounge jackets. In interwar Australia, the term referred to a lined single-breasted jacket fastened with two or three buttons, sporting notched lapels.⁴⁸ In addition to those worn by three of the men in the front row of Figure 3, examples of white sac coats appear in Figure 5. Taken in Darwin in the 1920s, the group of men in this photograph were almost entirely clad in

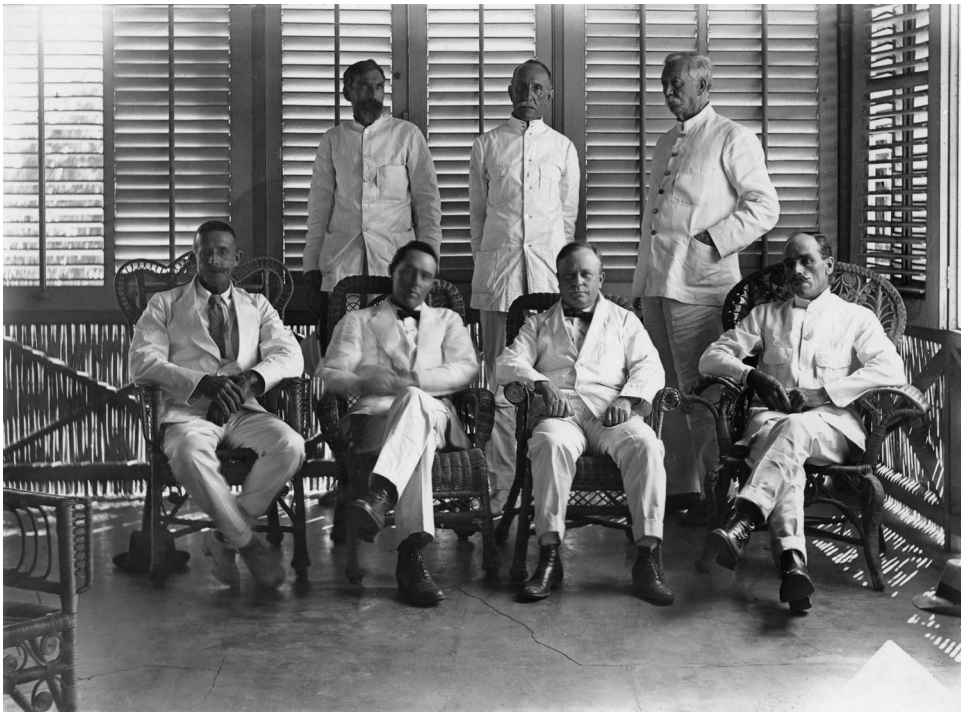


Figure 3: 'Darwin Advisory Council', 1919. State Library of South Australia, B22007.

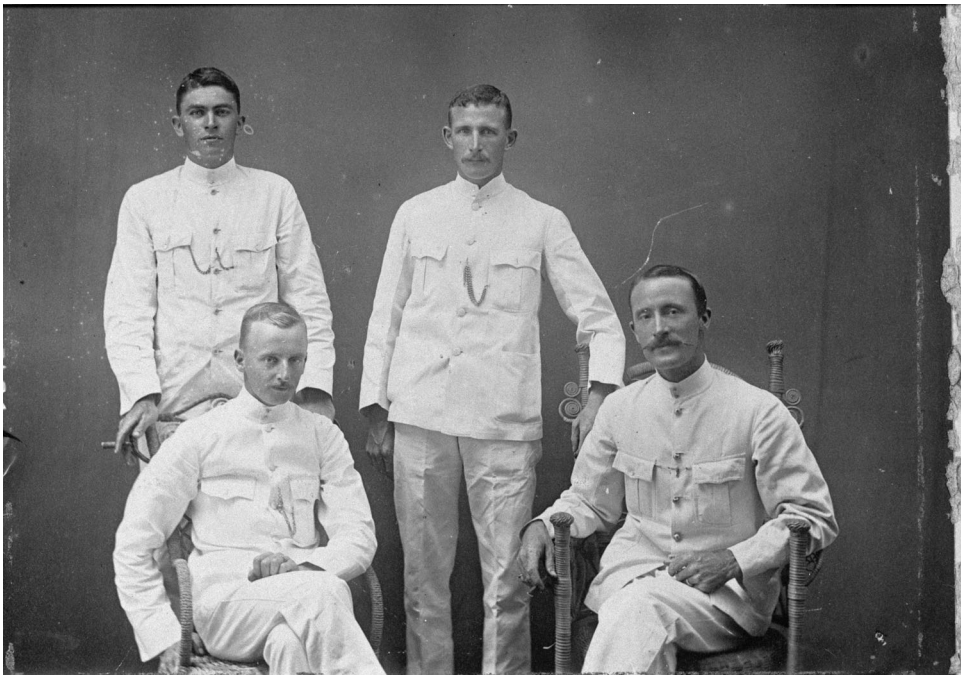


Figure 4: 'Four Soldiers', c.1914. State Library of Western Australia: Broome Historical Society Collection of Photographs, 0662044D.



Figure 5: ‘Robert Monteith Left Front Row With a Group of Men’, Darwin, c.1920. Northern Territory Library and Archives Service (NTLAS): Robert Monteith Collection (RMC), PH0858/0071. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com)]

drill suits, white collared shirts, black neckties and black lace-up shoes. When it came to formal evening wear, white Darwin men wore the outfits displayed in Figure 6. Comprising black trousers, a white shirt with a high or wing-tipped detachable collar, and white waist-length mess jacket (called a ‘dickie’ jacket by Tyrrell in his oral-history interview), the dress of the men in this photograph passed as full evening dress across the colonial tropics by the 1910s.⁴⁹

The starched collars worn by men in versions of the dress featured in Figure 6 were crucial to what qualified this outfit as formal evening wear. According to Tyrrell, whenever he and his associates went to a dance, they took along three stiff white collars to change as each wilted from sweat and humidity.⁵⁰ White menswear was thus steeped in connotations of racial whiteness, authority, social prestige and in some cases formal protocol. This symbolism helped to create the hegemonic status of an imperious white masculinity in the region, most convincingly embodied by senior government figures and employers of non-white labour. Yet the role that this dress played as an aspect of hegemonic masculinity in the north did not owe entirely to this symbolism. White suits, shirts, collars, topsis and shoes also contributed to the dominance of this masculinity because their manufacture and upkeep relied on the racialised labour, economic conditions and colonial structures to which we now turn.



Figure 6: Men Wearing Tropical Evening Dress. Though these men have added cardboard top hats and canes in order to perform in amateur theatricals, the rest of their outfits were standard male formal wear across the Indian Ocean tropics at the time. ‘Robert Monteith Left Front Row With a Group of Men’, Darwin, c.1920. NTLAS: RMC, PH0858/0071. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

Material dimensions of tropical whites: labour conditions, expenditure and psychosomatic effects

When Albert Chan looked back at his life as a boy in Darwin during and shortly after the First World War, he recalled having to spend time after school learning to sew buttonholes and make pairs of shorts on a sewing machine. Born in Darwin in 1915, Chan was named Chin Shue Ming, but later Anglicised his name. His father was also born locally. The family ran the tailoring shop Wing Chong Sing in Darwin’s Chinatown in the 1920s, specialising in ‘suits – tropical gear – mainly white’.⁵¹ Decades later, Chan could still remember what they had charged for these suits in his boyhood: ‘only about one [Australian] pound four shillings’, the rough equivalent of \$2.40, or with inflation, \$86 today. Chan also recalled that the head tailor ‘was only getting about six pounds a month’.⁵²

Like the many Chinese tailors with shops close to the port in Singapore in the same period, the employees of tailor-shops like Wing Chong Sing made white suits for passengers of steamships as well as for residents.⁵³ The steamships habitually stopped at Darwin’s wharf *en route* to Asia, allowing passengers to disembark and put in orders for tropical wear. Shortly after Japanese forces bombed Darwin in 1942, a writer thus

lamented that one of the scenes now obliterated was that of the ‘spry little tailors of Yam Yan and Wing Chong Sing [who] could make the sweating tourist a set of six immaculate white drill suits, of exquisite stitching and excellent cut, while the ship was in port between morning and midnight’.⁵⁴ The relative cheapness of these suits, combined with the need to produce them at speed and the amount of competition among rival businesses, led to gruelling labour for little pay. That tailoring services were so cheap was partly because of racist recruitment decisions that reduced the range of work available to Asian Australians in the tropics. Exquisitely stitched made-to-measure suits were much less affordable in the Australian south, where the economy was more diverse and residents of Asian descent a smaller proportion of the populace.

Former Darwin resident Chin Mook Sang remembered this relentless labour. Born in Darwin in 1902, Chin worked for a local tailoring business during his teens and early twenties. Like Chan, he mostly made or altered white menswear. After eight years, he left the tailor-shop to start a vegetable delivery business, supplementing his income by peddling chocolates at the Star Picture Theatre and football. He never regretted the move. ‘I get 70 pound for 3 years, solid year, no holiday, 7 o’clock I start work up to 12 o’clock at night. Only 6 to 7, one hour’s spell’, Chin recalled of his tailoring years.⁵⁵ One-time Broome resident George ‘Tom’ Law added to this impression in a short reminiscence of his time working for the West Australian Bank in the town during the 1920s. ‘I arrived at night and at 7 a.m. next morning, one Weng Seng was on the doorstep to measure me for suits’, Law remembered.⁵⁶

The laboriousness of washing and ironing white menswear featured in the memories of other long-time residents of northern Australia. Looking back at the laundry business that they owned in interwar Darwin, Myrtle and Charlie Houg On recollected that sometimes they did not finish ironing until after two in the morning. In order to boil their customers’ clothes, they had to cart well water and heat it in a copper.⁵⁷ These memories complement the description of a journalist visiting Broome in 1914. ‘Do the Chinese ever sleep?’, this journalist asked. Stroll through the Chinese quarter of Broome or Singapore ‘at any hour of the night or early morning, and by the always-open windows of [a] laundry or tailor’s shop you can see drowsy Chinamen ironing or sewing’.⁵⁸

When she looked back at her life in Broome after marrying the manager of a pearling fleet in 1937, the former teacher Margaret (‘Pat’) de Castilla similarly recalled the labour of laundering white drill suits. No wife of a middle-class man would have washed or ironed herself in earlier decades. Such labour was regarded as demeaning to white women, if not also hazardous to their health in the tropics. Nor did single men do their own washing if they could afford not to. When de Castilla’s husband Jock had started out as a clerk for the West Australian Bank after the First World War, he had given his suits to the local ‘dhobi-man’, an Indian term used to refer to the employees of Broome’s Chinese and Japanese laundries. The price of doing so was steep – about a third of his salary – but single men of his station felt they had no choice but to bear this impost in order to maintain their position and socialise in the town. Jock de Castilla soon went to work for the pearling master, Captain Ancell Gregory, and felt the pinch along with the rest of those employed in the industry when it was badly hit by the Great Depression. By the time of his wedding, his income had fallen so low

that it was less than what his wife had earned as a single female teacher – hence her labours washing and ironing his suits.⁵⁹

Laundering white suits was laborious as the uncovered red-dirt roads and pathways in Darwin and Broome quickly rendered them unfit for wear. In Broome, the water was also ‘extremely hard’ and stained clothes red. ‘The best way to keep things white was to collect rainwater which had to be carried in buckets and boiled in coppers’, Pat de Castilla recalled.⁶⁰ Yet she did not carry out the heaviest of this labour herself. Even lower middle-class families of European descent could afford to pay Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in the interwar years to cart buckets, chop wood, heat coppers, hang clothes on the line and so forth. These men provided the same domestic labour for business-owning residents of Asian descent. ‘Pay’ is too generous a term, because the men performing these tasks received scant remuneration. In Darwin, Aboriginal servants of either sex received two shillings a week plus clothes, far less even than the six shillings a week paid to female servants categorised by racist officials and laws as ‘half-caste’.⁶¹ In Broome, government legislation only required employers to provide board, clothing, and just enough money to go to the pictures and buy tobacco and sweets each week.⁶²

Before the *Immigration Restriction Act* came into force (1901 in Western Australia, and 1911 in the Northern Territory), Chinese, Indian or Malay servants had been mostly responsible for the upkeep of white menswear. The Ceylon-born jeweller Thomas Bastian (initially Tudagala Badalge) Ellies later recalled that the pearling master Ted Hunter had once employed a Malay servant to ‘blanco’ multiple pairs of his white shoes every night. This allowed Hunter to change into freshly whitened footwear at intervals during the day.⁶³ Long after such servants were forced to return to Asia, businesses run either by Asian immigrants who had achieved naturalisation before the enforcement of the ‘White Australia’ policy or their descendants continued to do the work of keeping the towns’ tropical menswear white.

Such practices add extra dimensions to the power expressed whenever a man went about clad in white in the sticky heat and red dust of northern Australian port towns. A white outfit helped to create the hegemonic masculinity that emerged from the intersection of gender, racial, colonial and class dynamics in the region because its wearer possessed the authority to (among other things) command people’s labour: sometimes a wife’s, but more often that of non-white men. The power differential was greatest between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men working as domestic servants and their employers clad in well-laundered made-to-measure white suits, given that most of the former had to settle for second-hand clothes provided by their employers.⁶⁴ The material difficulties of maintaining white cloth and shoe-leather in the tropics was thus integral to the prestige they bestowed on their wearers, and the thrill of empowerment they allowed some to feel.

The young single men who had others to do their laundry could enjoy extra pastimes. After his arrival in Darwin from Adelaide in 1928, former postal service worker Charles Wilson recalled that he had lived in a dormitory with other postal employees. In addition to a Chinese cook, Ah Suey, who fed them, the men had an Aboriginal servant, Nim, who cared for their clothing. Nim ferried their white suits and evening dress to and from the Chinese laundry each week. He washed their other clothes

himself – ‘our football clothes’, and ‘the socks and the underwear and all that’ – leaving Wilson and his friends free to do as they pleased after hours.⁶⁵

The idea that objects ‘implicitly condition human actors’ to such an extent that they are ‘the primary means by which people are socialised as social beings’ has long been studied by scholars of material culture.⁶⁶ Of all forms of material culture, dress is arguably the most influential in this regard. Clothing is what the anthropologist Terence Turner has called the ‘social skin’: the key medium through which individuals make their bodies socially acceptable to others, and in the process align themselves with social mores.⁶⁷ Fashion theorist Joanne Entwistle has similarly described the ‘embodied practice’ of dress as one that ‘works on the body which in turn works on and mediates the experience of self’.⁶⁸ This was the insight that struck Herbert in ‘The Psychological Effect of a Solar Topee’. Though he was writing in the 1930s, he anticipated what scholars of material culture have since said of dress: that it informs how social actors orient themselves to their surroundings, and consequently how they experience, understand and carry themselves. ‘Since no normal humble man can help feeling magnificent in a brand-new suit of clothes’, Herbert wrote of the Shillingsworths, ‘it is not surprising that those who don a fresh suit of bright white linen every day should feel magnificent always’.⁶⁹

Tropical whites as an agent of hegemonic masculinity

When Tosh criticised the degree to which historians had overlooked the material dimensions of Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity, one of his hopes was that more attention would be given to labour, the operation of institutions, relationships, rituals and everyday life in the historiography of masculinity. Only when historians stopped ‘subordinat[ing] practice to representation’ would they be in a position to fully explore the potential of Connell’s ideas, Tosh explained, producing richer understandings of masculinities and the gender order over time.⁷⁰

Connell had made a similar suggestion when reappraising the concept with Messerschmidt. Together they reasserted some aspects of hegemonic masculinity that Connell had first developed twenty years earlier, but set aside or added new detail to others. In restating the importance of embodiment to hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt called for more exploration of the ways in which ‘body practices’ constituted or otherwise affected hegemonic masculinity, noting how often this aspect of the concept was missing from relevant studies or critiques.⁷¹ Though cultural and gender historians are now paying much more attention to bodily practices and material culture than was the case when Connell and Messerschmidt published their reappraisal, the need for more studies exploring the material dimensions of hegemonic masculinity persists, notably including studies attentive to dress.⁷²

Connell and Messerschmidt also introduced greater complexity to Connell’s original theorisation of hegemonic masculinity in other ways. Significantly, they rejected Connell’s initial suggestion that a single pattern of hegemonic masculine practice operated across the globe in a given historical period. Connell and Messerschmidt were now of the view that three overlapping patterns of hegemonic masculine practice could be broadly identified in any site of analysis, each operating at a different geographic scale. The first emerged out of ‘face-to-face interactions’, the second was forged through ‘society-wide’ institutions and discourses operating at a colonial or

national scale, and the last sat in a 'global' context, one they defined as a transnational or transcolonial domain.⁷³ Each of these patterns shared common features, but either competed with each other to the extent that they differed or combined in site-specific ways.

Connell and Messerschmidt's recognition that different iterations of hegemonic masculinity overlapped and competed in any given locality complements what Martinez has said about the different colonialisms in the Australian tropics. The settler and tropical colonialisms that awkwardly coexisted in the north each broadly aligned with overlapping patterns of hegemonic masculinity there. Settler colonialism aligned with a pattern of masculine practice forged chiefly at the national level, tied to rhetoric and institutions based in the cities of south-eastern Australia. This masculinity valorised the supposedly ordinary white breadwinner who supported political policies aimed at making Australia a 'white man's country'. This man was typically married and relied on the unpaid labour of his wife and children at home.⁷⁴ Tropical colonialism, on the other hand, aligned with a pattern of masculine practice that combined local and global factors. Some of these factors had developed at an interpersonal level in the northern port towns. Others operated across the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean worlds as a result of trade and the operation of empire. Each of these overlapping local and global patterns of hegemonic masculinity validated a born-to-rule sensibility in which elite settlers and imperialists exerted mastery over non-European underlings. This mastery was most obvious in the reliance on domestic servants, typically racially subordinated men, to carry out labour within the home.

Marriage was less important to the hegemonic masculinity prevalent in the tropics than it was to the one predominant in the Australian south. This was partly because of the demographic imbalance between the sexes and partly due to the fact that many men lived in the north during their youth and moved elsewhere to settle down. Hence, much more of the domestic labour in the tropics was provided by servants than wives.⁷⁵ These observations further illuminate the role of menswear in sustaining specific gender and racial inequities and the colonialisms to which they were related in Australia. While the settler-colonial mode found expression in ready-made serge suits cared for by wives, the tropical-colonial mode materialised in tailor-made whites primarily cared for by dhobi-men and 'houseboys'.

These observations about the role of prevailing fashions in producing different forms of hegemonic masculinity help to illustrate the significance of the ritual through which men fresh to the tropics visited the local Chinese tailor and emerged with a new wardrobe. Those who replaced their dark ready-made clothes for tailor-made white suits and tops were unwittingly acknowledging the local pre-eminence of a masculinity closer in form to the imperial manhood valorised in European colonies in tropical Asia than to the mode of settler-colonial manhood predominating in the Australian south. Substituting one set of clothes for another helped to socialise these newcomers into the hegemonic masculinity most prominent in the equatorial zone.

White menswear and racially subordinated men

While we have focused on the dress of men of European descent thus far, they were not alone in wearing tropical whites. As the photographs below indicate, some non-white men also adopted the fashion for white drill or duck suits: chiefly small businessmen



Figure 7: Portrait of S. K. Dean (left), D. N. Janis (right), Members of Janis' Family, and Ted and Lydia Morris, c.1910s. Broome Historical Society: Morris Collection, 2003–1469. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

from various Asian backgrounds. An example of this may be seen in a studio portrait taken in Broome during the 1910s (Figure 7). In this photograph, the Sinhalese men Janis and Simon Karlos Dean – partners in a jewellery business and pearl lugger operating off the Western Australian coast – pose with Janis' family. Ted and Lydia Morris, a couple of European descent, also appear in the portrait.⁷⁶ All sitters wear spotless white clothing, with Janis and Dean in tunics and matching white trousers, and Morris (a small-time pearler who became a baker) in a sac suit and bow-tie.⁷⁷

While Figure 7 is unusual in that it apparently records friendly relations across the 'colour line', there are many photographs depicting Asian-born men dressed in tropical whites in Australian collections. Our photographic dataset includes 40 such images, but an uncounted number of others are attached to applications submitted to immigration authorities under the terms of the 'White Australia' policy. The racist immigration regime required non-white residents to apply for an exemption if they wanted to return to Australia after travelling abroad. Two examples of portraits submitted with such applications appear below. The first is of Louey Ling Tack, a licensed pearl dealer and general merchant in Broome (Figure 8). The second is of the photographer, merchant, pearler, entrepreneur and inventor Yasukichi (Figure 9).⁷⁸

For their photographs, Tack and Yasukichi dress in white tunics with choker collars adorned with lustrous pearl studs. Tack added a watchchain from which a decorative fob and a large pearl hung. It is not surprising that Asian-Australian businessmen chose to wear white suits of this kind for official portraits. Nor is it surprising that men such as Janis and Dean would dress similarly when at work or socialising with European associates. Since the ability to enforce normative practices



Figure 8: 'Certificate Exempting From Dictation Test – Louey Ling Tack', 1928. National Archives of Australia (NAA): K1145, 1928/39. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]



Figure 9: 'Certificate Exempting From Dictation Test – Yasukichi Murakami', 1910. NAA: K1145, 1910/203. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

on subordinated or marginalised groups is crucial to Connell's conceptualisation of hegemonic masculinity, one would expect Asian men of a certain income and standing to have tailored themselves to the prevailing masculine fashion in this way. As Connell and Messerschmidt noted, however, subordinated peoples do not simply submit wholesale to hegemonic practices. Rather, they do so selectively and tactically, trying to maximise their agency and to find ways to express alternative ways of being in oppressive circumstances.⁷⁹

Numerous fashion scholars have demonstrated how dress is one way in which subordinated peoples negotiate a place for themselves in societies marked by striking inequities.⁸⁰ In her study of interwar California, for example, the historian Mina Roces shows that male Filipino migrants working as agricultural labourers ‘used dress and consumption practices to fashion new identities that rejected their working selves as a lower-class [and ethnically] marginal group’.⁸¹ These men commissioned tailor-made suits similar to those worn by Hollywood stars. Some styled themselves with a rebellious flamboyance and engaged in womanising and gambling in their free time. Others were abstemious in their habits, dressing with an impeccable chic rather than dangerous flair.

In the Australian tropics, racially subordinated men such as Janis, Dean, Tack and Yasukichi wore immaculate white suits at strategic moments in what might be regarded as a local version of respectable chic. Like the Filipino Californians that Roces writes about, however, these men asserted their own ways of being even as they conformed to dominant expectations about what a self-respecting man should wear. On this point, it is telling that Tack and Yasukichi both sported haircuts more popular among men of Japanese or Chinese descent than those of European heritage. By wearing their hair very short, the length tapered almost to baldness around the ears and neck in an early twentieth-century version of what is now known as a ‘fade’, these men were arguably signalling a sense of belonging and taste distinct from their European counterparts.

Scattered sources from the early twentieth century record a distinctive modulation of tropical white fashion among Filipino labourers employed in the pearling industry. The ‘Manilamen’ in question had apparently developed their own variant of dangerous flamboyance: white suits adorned with gold sovereigns instead of buttons, with knives concealed about their persons should the need to assert themselves arise.⁸² It is possible that one of these suits was worn by the man standing on the left in Figure 10, a portrait of five unnamed Asian men now forming part of assorted historical photographs of Broome taken or collected by the photographer, Reginald Bourne. This man teamed a white sac suit, incorporating a single-breasted cutaway jacket adorned with what might be gold sovereign buttons, with an open-necked shirt with long angular collar. While it is difficult to be certain, the stiffened brim of this man’s hat crossed with leather straps suggests that he was wearing a sola topi pushed back on his head and sharply angled to one side. If this was the case, it would appear that he had transformed this badge of whiteness and colonial authority into an item of subaltern glamour.

The oppressive settler-colonialism at work in northern Australia meant that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men were more restricted than all others when it came to consumption and dress.⁸³ The only such men who wore white tended to be domestic servants whose employers had given them the clothes. Some wore white garments to the cinema of a Saturday night, dressing up in ‘swank’ combinations of second-hand clothes.⁸⁴ Others were like the unnamed man employed in the household of the Broome doctor Graeme Blick, photographed in Figure 11 below. Joined by three other servants – two Aboriginal women and a male Japanese cook – the man in this image appears to have dressed in a uniform provided him by the Blicks: a white tunic with black trousers. Tellingly, however, both this man and one of the women beside him had customised their clothes in a distinctively Australian First Nations style fashioned



Figure 10: ‘Five Men; Three Seated; Near Wooden Table With Decanter’, 1920s. Western Australian Maritime Museum: Bourne Collection, MHL535.

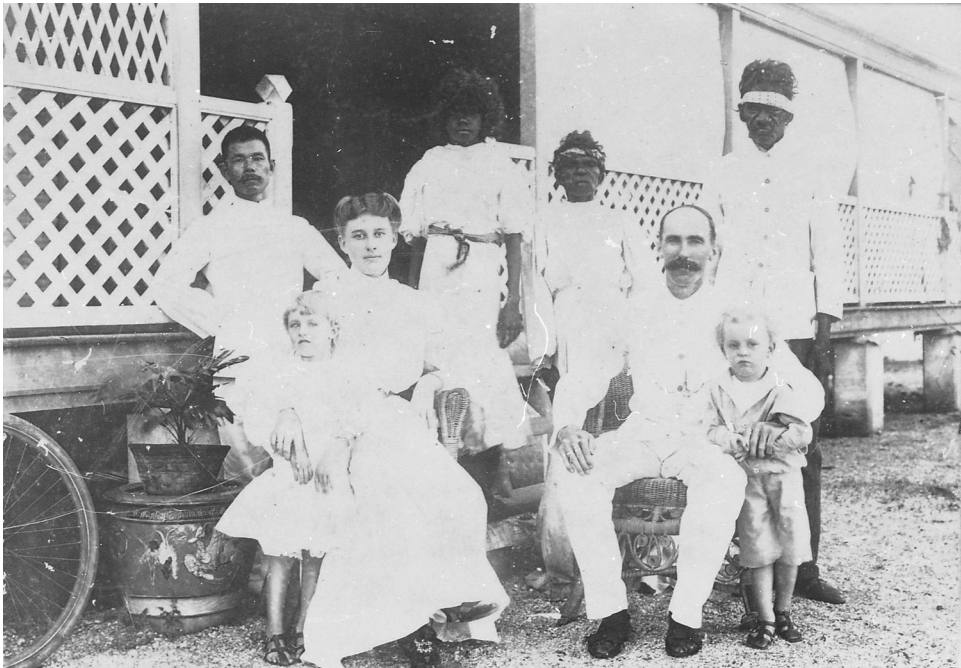


Figure 11: Three unnamed First Nations servants and a Japanese cook with Dr Graeme Blick and family, c.1900–1910. Broome Historical Society.

from the limited materials at hand. Each tied a strip of cloth around their forehead in an updated version of the headbands formerly made of woven plant fibres or hairstring.⁸⁵

During his time in interwar Darwin, Herbert experienced the feeling of white tropical menswear firsthand. He was aware that made-to-measure clothes and topis encouraged European wearers to tailor themselves to the fantasy of the White Man endowed with a special facility for Civilisation and Command. Herbert did not simply conform to this fantasy himself, however, any more than men such as Janis and Yasukichi meekly submitted to racialised inequalities of power. Each man instead sought to negotiate his own relationship to the dominant fashion and the masculinity it helped produce.

Even more than Herbert, we have sought to highlight the multidimensionality of white menswear while critically investigating its relationship to masculinity and other dynamics of power. We have done this by considering the fashion's cultural meanings, but further by exploring the labour practices, bodily behaviours and psychosomatic experiences it encouraged or sustained. In so doing, we have sought to reveal how certain fashions act as agents of hegemonic masculinity. This is an important finding given how seldom scholars have recognised and explored the material dimensions of Connell's concept, with particularly scant attention paid to the role of dress. We have also noted that the members of marginalised groups engage strategically with dominant fashions in menswear. More might be said on this topic: as the range of fashions displayed by the men in Figures 7 to 11 suggest, doing justice to the dress practices of racially subordinated men in the Australian north would require an article of its own. Whether they did so consciously or not, however, men such as Tack and Yasukichi recognised the active role played by dress in the social distribution of power. These men accordingly sought to harness the power of tropical whites for their own ends to the extent that their political and material constraints allowed.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Australian Research Council (DP190103341).

Open access publishing facilitated by Australian Catholic University, as part of the Wiley-Australian Catholic University agreement via the Council of Australian University Librarians.

Notes

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2. Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia: A Novel* (1938; repr. New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1943), pp. 10–28.
3. On the history of the sola topi: E. M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c.1800–1947* (2001; repr. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), pp. 89–91; Francis A. de Caro and Rosan A. Jordan, 'The Wrong Topi: Personal Narratives, Ritual, and the Sun Helmet as a Symbol', *Western Folklore* 43 (1984), pp. 233–48.
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7. Connell has developed this concept over time, chiefly in: R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, The Person and Sexual Politics* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987); R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed. (1995; repr. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005); R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept', *Gender & Society* 19 (2005), pp. 829–59.
8. These observations are made on the basis of Connell's approach to hegemony in the works cited above in n. 7, but also in her earlier work on class, including: R. W. Connell, *Ruling Class Ruling Culture: Studies of Conflict, Power and Hegemony in Australian Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 205–22, here p. 207.
9. Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', p. 848.
10. Mrinalini Sinha, 'Giving Masculinity a History: Some Contributions from the Historiography of Colonial India', *Gender & History* 11 (1999), pp. 445–60, here p. 446.
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13. Claire Lowrie, *Masters and Servants: Cultures of Empire in the Tropics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 16–20, 26.
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22. Ganter, *Mixed Relations*, p. 66; Mary Albertus Bain, *Full Fathom Five* (Perth: Artlook Books, 1983), pp. 103–6.
23. Martínez, 'Asian Servants', pp. 227–43.
24. Again, this characterisation comes from Martínez and Lowrie: see n. 17 above.
25. We compiled this dataset from photographs taken in Darwin and Broome between 1900 and 1939 in the collections of the State Library of Western Australia, Western Australian Maritime Museum, Broome Historical Society, Northern Territory Library and Archives Service, State Library of South Australia, National Library of Australia and additional images reproduced in: Susan Sickert, *Beyond the Lattice: Broome's Early Years*, 2nd ed. (Broome: Back Room Press, 2003); Noreen Jones, *No. 2 Home: A Story of Japanese Pioneers in Australia* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2002). Our aim was to produce a representative sense of male dress by featuring men from a range of ethnic groups and social classes in different settings (streets, jetties, workplaces, homes, ceremonial events and social gatherings), and combining both staged and impromptu photographs. We also looked at portraits supplied by Darwin and Broome men to immigration authorities under the White Australian Policy, now held by the NAA.
26. The Broome interviews were conducted by Chris Jeffery as part of the Battye Library Oral History Project in the 1970s and 1980s. They are available as digitised recordings in the collections of the State Library of Western Australia: Everett Bardwell, 1978, OH327; Margaret de Castilla, 1977, OH250; William Bastian

- Ellies, 1977, OH263; Nita Haynes, 1977, OH206; Rupert Knight, 1977, OH303; Phyllis McDaniel, 1977, OH263; James Milner, 1978, OH302; Catherine Norman, 1977, OH326, Charles Talboys, 1978, OH326; John Secombe, 1977, OH253. The Darwin interviews were conducted by a range of interviewers in the same period and are available as transcripts in the collections of the Library and Archives Northern Territory, NTRS226: Albert Chan, 1984, TS376; Sang Mook Chin, 1983, TS92; Shu Ack Fong, 1979, TS210; Charlie and Myrtle Houg On, 1979, TS246; Les Liveris, 1979, TS81; Robert Steele, 1982, TS711; Edna Tambling, 1979, TS125; Ray Tyrrell, 1984, TS 394; Charles Wilson, 1982, TS550; Les Liveris, 1979, TS81.
27. Ray Tyrrell, Transcript, pp. 1–48.
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 41. Bain, *Full Fathom Five*, pp. 223–63.
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 44. 'The Northern Territory', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 6 March 1919, p. 6.
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 52. Chan, Transcript, p. 6.
 53. Examples of trade in white tropical menswear to which Chinese tailors in Singapore contributed may be found in the two white drill tunics worn between c.1919 and 1954 by Captain Basil Helm. These tunics

- have labels indicating that they were respectively made by the Singapore tailors Hee Kee and Chee Sum: White Cotton Drill Uniform Jackets, 0049705 and 00049707, ANMM.
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 70. Tosh, 'Historical Masculinity', p. 52.
 71. Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', pp. 851–2. An example of a critical evaluation of the concept of hegemonic masculinity that missed its material dimensions may be found in an article published in this journal by British historian Ben Griffin in 2018. Griffin argued that hegemonic masculinity had an 'ontological problem' in that that it consisted only of idealised representations and norms about manhood rather than something that individuals practiced in their everyday lives. This argument could only be sustained by overlooking what Connell and Messerschmidt said about the significance of 'body practices', and indeed the case studies of hegemonic masculinity at work that Connell had provided in publications during the 1990s: Ben Griffin, 'Hegemonic Masculinity as a Historical Problem', *Gender & History* 30 (2018), pp. 377–400, here pp. 387–8.
 72. This is not to say that there are no historical explorations of the relationship between masculinity, dress and power. Diverse examples include: Kelly Olson, *Masculinity and Dress in Roman Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2017); Beverly Lemire, "'Men of the World": British Mariners, Consumer Practice, and Material Culture in an Era of Global Trade, c.1660–1800', *Journal of British Studies* 54 (2015), pp. 288–319; the contributions of Susan Vincent, Jessica P. Clark and Matt Houlbrook to Hannah Greif, Jane Hamlett and Leonie Hannan (eds), *Gender and Material Culture Since 1600* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
 73. Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', p. 849.
 74. Marilyn Lake, 'White Man's Country: The Transnational History of a National Project', *Australian Historical Studies* 34 (2003), pp. 346–63.
 75. Lowrie, 'White "Men"', p. 48.
 76. 'Alleged Receiving of a Pearl', *Broome Chronicle*, 19 June 1909, p. 2; 'A Lugger Wrecked', *Broome Chronicle*, 4 February 1911, p. 2.
 77. Alfred E. ('Ted') Morris first appeared in the Broome listings of the *Western Australian Post Office Directory* (WAPOD) in 1907 described as a pearler, but was listed as a baker in 1915. See *Wise's WAPOD*, digitised by the Broome Historical Society: <https://broomemuseum.org.au/research/wise/>, accessed 15 May 2021; see also Melissa Miles and Kate Warren, 'The Japanese Photographers of Broome: Photography and Cross-Cultural Encounter', *History of Photography*, 41 (2017), pp. 3–24, here pp. 10–11.
 78. Sickert, *Beyond the Lattice*, pp. 62–4; 152–5, 198–9; Jones, *No. 2 Home*, pp. 132–42; Bain, *Full Fathom Five*, pp. 300–18.
 79. Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', p. 847–8.
 80. For example Sophie White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Grace Karskens, 'Red Coat, Blue Jacket, Black Skin: Aboriginal Men and Clothing in Early New South Wales', *Aboriginal History* 35 (2011), pp. 1–36; Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance During World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); contributions by Blanca Tovia and Barbara A. Sommer

- to Mina Roces and Louise Edwards (eds), *The Politics of Dress in Asia and the Americas* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2007).
81. Mina Roces, 'These Guys Came Out Looking Like Movie Stars: Filipino Dress and Costumer Practices in the United States, 1920s–1930s', *Pacific History Review* 85 (2016), pp. 532–76, here p. 533.
 82. Anderson, 'The Role of Aboriginal and Asian Labour', p. 27. A reference to Filipino pearling labourers being given 'coat-buttons made of sovereigns and half-sovereigns' as a form of hush-money regarding another's criminal behaviour appeared in criminal-court evidence reported in: 'The Broome Murder', *West Australian*, 10 November 1905, p. 2. See also a reference to an Asian diver wearing a white coat adorned with sovereigns in: O. H., 'Our North Ports', *Western Mail*, 26 January 1907, p. 43.
 83. On the curtailment of Aboriginal people's freedoms in Darwin and Broome see: Martinez and Lowrie, 'Colonial Constructions'; Sarah Yu, 'Broome Creole: Aboriginal and Asian Partnerships Along the Kimberley Coast', *Queensland Review* 6 (1999), pp. 59–73; Julia Martínez, 'When Wages Were Clothes: Dressing Down Aboriginal Workers in Australia's Northern Territory', *International Review of Social History* 52 (2007), pp. 271–86.
 84. Martinez and Lowrie, 'Colonial Constructions', pp. 311–12.
 85. On hairbands in some northern Aboriginal Australian dress practices: Phillip Jones, 'Aboriginal Dress in Australia: Evidence and Resources', in Margaret Maynard (ed.), *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion*, vol. 7: *Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands* (Oxford: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), pp. 17–26.

Melissa Bellanta is an Associate Professor of Modern History in the Australian Catholic University's School of Arts. She is a social, cultural and gender historian with interests in material culture, fashion, the history of emotions and masculinities, particularly in late nineteenth and twentieth-century Australia. She is the chief investigator of an Australian Research Council Discovery project on the social history and global dimensions of menswear in twentieth-century Australia. Her book *Larrikins: A History* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2012) won the 2013 Ernest Scott Prize. She has edited collections for *Fashion Theory* and *Journal of Australian Studies* and has published her work widely in international and Australian journals including *Gender & History*, *Journal of Victorian Culture* and *Australian Historical Studies*.

Lorinda Cramer was a Postdoctoral Research Associate on the ARC Discovery Project 'Men's Dress in Twentieth-Century Australia: Masculinity, Fashion, Social Change' at the Australian Catholic University between 2019 and 2022. A social, cultural and dress historian, her background as a museum curator underpins her research incorporating material culture and a close reading of 'things'. She is author of *Needlework and Women's Identity in Colonial Australia* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020). Her journal articles in *Cultural and Social History*, *Gender & History*, *Australian Historical Studies* and *Journal of Victorian Culture and Fashion Theory* explore the gendered dimensions of dress and textiles, alert to what worn, everyday dress might reveal about daily experiences.