

(RE) EXPLORING REPRESENTATIONS
OF BRITISH MASCULINITY
In 1950s [Fashion] photography

Learning Objectives

1 EXPLORE the key theme of the lecture: **Masculinity (Reeser,2023 and Deslandes,2021) and Myth (Barthes,1957) Haute Couture and Haute Culture (Bourdieu,2020)**

This lecture will cover Gender as a Performance (Butler 1970) Dressed Embodiment (Hesselbein, 2021) and Archetypes (Braam & Dhoest,2022) (Barry et al, 2020) in relation to ideas surrounding [Fashion] photography and male models of the 1950s (Deslandes 2021) linking these to wider sociopolitical events in Britain during the 1950s and 1960s building on (Barthes, 1957), (Fuhg, 2020) and Bourdieu (2020).

2 INTERPRET this in the context of the **1950s** in images of Robin Tattersall through the aforementioned lenses through **visual analysis** of a selection of period advertisements.

3 CREATE a short reflective document of your ideas surrounding masculinity in the 1950s and be able to **Define ideas** surrounding **Masculinity** studies in relation to the aforementioned.

1950s overview

Post-war era and strong sense of nostalgia for the past, Military styles remained popular such as short haircuts.

1950/1951 Popularisation of Brylcreem and Hair Grooming products

1953 death of King George VI and new Queen there was a renewed in the activities of the aristocracy and Country Homes

Mid-1954 End of rationing

1955 Golden Age of Travel and the Jet-Set so called “Riviera culture” (Fuhg, 2021)

1956/7 Introduction of the idea of Male Beauty and male beauty products

1958 Popularisation of Television presenters

1959/ 1960 Further youth cultures developed and people were moving into a new decade (Fuhg, 2021)

Second Edition

Masculinities in Theory

An Introduction

Todd W. Reeser

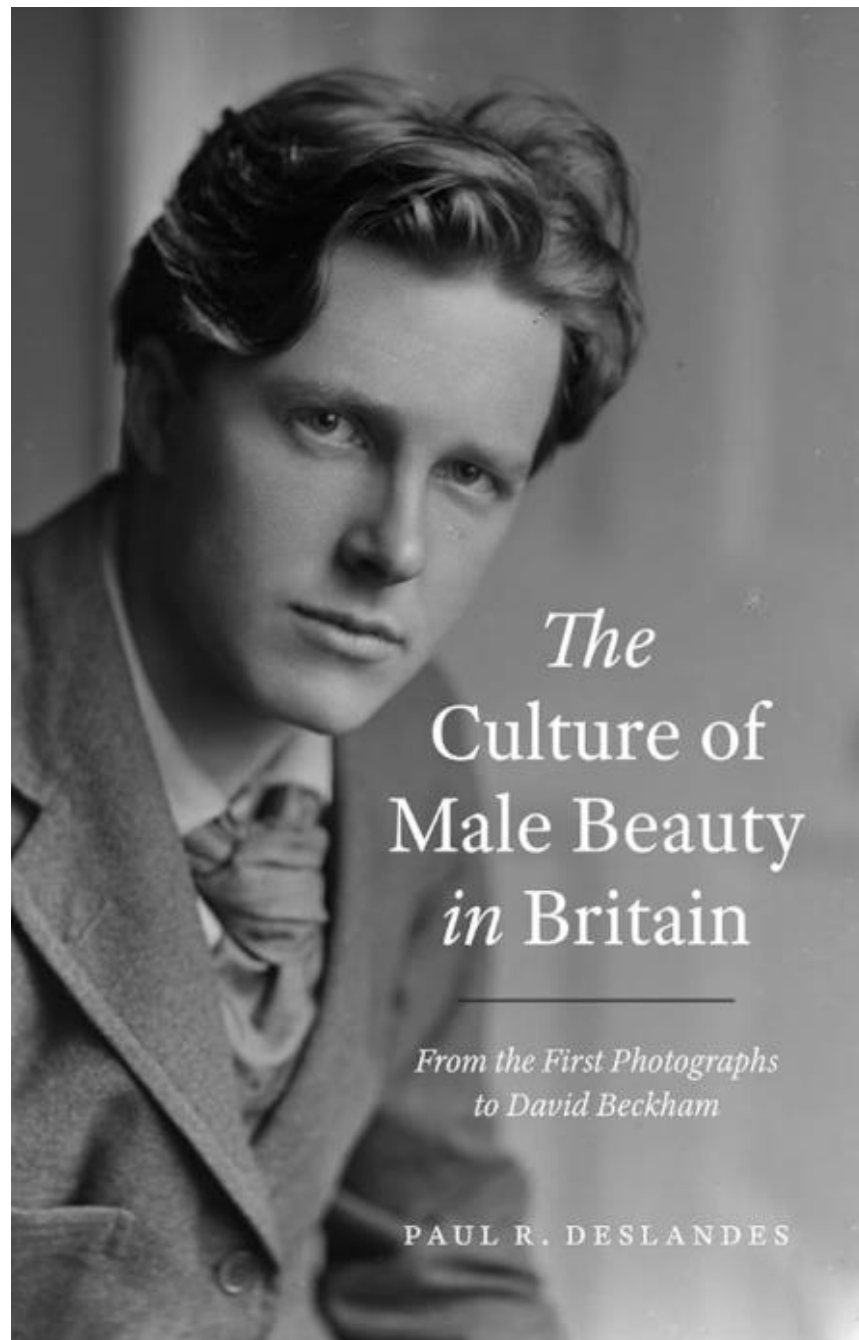


WILEY Blackwell

The Culture of Male Beauty in Britain

*From the First Photographs
to David Beckham*

PAUL R. DESLANDES



- For women there was a new haute couture scene with designers like Givenchy, Balenciaga who went against the New Look created by Dior which had an old-fashioned corset design with an Edwardian wasp waist silhouette (Although this look remained popular to the mid-1950s) but also a new readywear market (ready to wear)
- For Men tailoring gained new significance: there were both strong Neo-Edwardian and dandy influences which were echoed in one of Britains first and largely forgotten youth culture: “Teddyism” as the decade progressed looser and baggier cuts. This lecture will also explore the re-emergence and significance of the textile industry and textile importation.
- New Travel called for a new type of wardrobe, men started wearing shorts, looser fabrics such as linen became popular yet the idea of Sunday-best and Couture remained relevant in this context as a display of wealth.

Think about a 1950s man

- What kind of clothes does he wear?

- Fabrics

- Cut

- Style

-

- What kind of haircut does he have

- Does he wear a hat and if so which kind

-

- What kind of income does he have?

- high/low

-

- What personality qualities does he possess

- How does he interact with the same and opposite gender (presentation thereof)

Recap gender as a construct

Judith Butler and others argue that gender is **performative**, constantly adaptable, and not a fixed nor biological aspect of a person (Biology=**SEX**).

The core idea is that gender is a **set of actions or in Butler's own words a performance. Clothes, location and hair/makeup** play a huge part within this.

Hesselbein (2021) looks at certain '**bodily actions**' such as posing or walking as a key part of gender performance. Hesselbein argues that the catwalk is an example of **dressed embodiment**. This term defines the **interplay between social factors, political factors, fashion, dress, body movements** that go into the performance of gender. **The dressed body becomes a socio-political landscape.**

The way individuals **enact** their gender identity is dependent on the context and can change based on both personal or societal goals.

Versions of Masculinity

- Masculinity as assemblage (Coulling, 2022)
- Assemblage meaning a collection of things
- Masculinity as both qualities and associated actions
- Masculine **archetypes** (Reeser,2023) are often present
- in [fashion] advertising
- This is explored in the work of (Kreigsberg and Sceulovs, 2024) and (Brajato and Dhoest,2022)
- Archetypes and stereotypes often overlap (Barry et al, 2019) but are slightly different.

Archetypes and Stereotypes

- Theories of archetypes, such as Carl Jung (1959) argued that there was a “collective unconscious” that masculinity and femininity **overlap** “so that even males had an “anima” within them and females an “animus”.
- (Barry et al,p.227) (Trigger warning: this source contains material surrounding mental health and triggering topics)
- Yet in the advertising practice we see that there are clear defined roles and archetypes that the men fit some are listed by Brajato and Dhoest:
- **through persistent style modes, which increasingly stabilized and codified male aesthetics with archetypes that include the jock, the nerd, the worker, the rebel, the hunter, the dandy, and so forth.**
- Stereotypes include for example man being the protector of the woman

DESLANDES on male models (2021)

- Deslandes examines the multiple didactic functions that male models served during 1950s [fashion] images
- To reinforce heteronormative gender roles
- To literally follow the male models gaze onto the female model and her fashions
- Not intended to be objects of the female gaze (this can be disputed)
- To reinforce ideas around travel and middle class lifestyles
- Reinforce British fabric industries, haircuts and the popular look for men
- 'Fame' of certain male models also plays into these didactic functions

Edwards and New Terminology

- Edwards (2003 and 2023) defines many types of men in advertising
- Old Man (pre-feminist and smartly dressed 1950s American post war consumerist) New Lad (hypersexual man mid 1960s onwards) New Man (1980s model who shows off his body around other men which often leads to a reverse male gaze) Man about Town (fashionable and well-groomed man in the nineties)
- The 'old' post-war consumerist and 'man about town' well groomed man are the closest but do not accurately define the man that Paul Deslandes observes to serve a heterosexual and didactic function in the background of women's fashion images in the 1950s. He is RATHER the Man in the Background

'Old versions of Masculinity'

- Post-war nostalgia
- for past fashions (Edwardian) & the pastoral. The physical landscape of Britain also gained a new significance. As did Pastoral based art of the past (think Gainsborough, Constable etc)
- “to a new age of choice and plenty, there was simultaneously a parallel feeling that the nation was in decline and being economically outstripped by its international competitors.” (Black and Pemberton, 2017)”
- Savile Row gained a new significance with the newfound wealth of the middle classes as well as a slight growth in the textile industry. British made products gained new significance in the post war era but slowly got overtaken by european made examples.
- Renewed interest in Aristocracy this included their sports, sports such as hunting were also carried out for necessity (food)

Fig.2



Fig.1



The New Movie, Edwardians,
1

Last of the Teddy Girls, Ken Russel, 1955



Fig.3



Fig.4

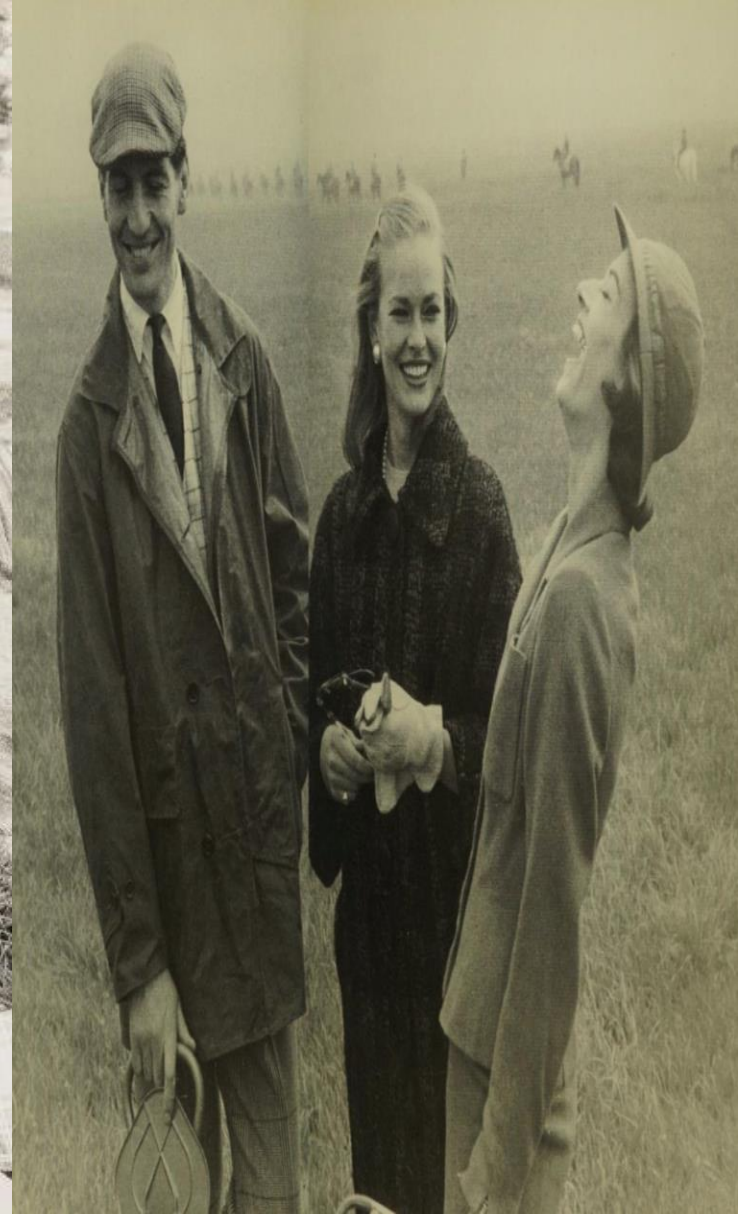


Fig.5

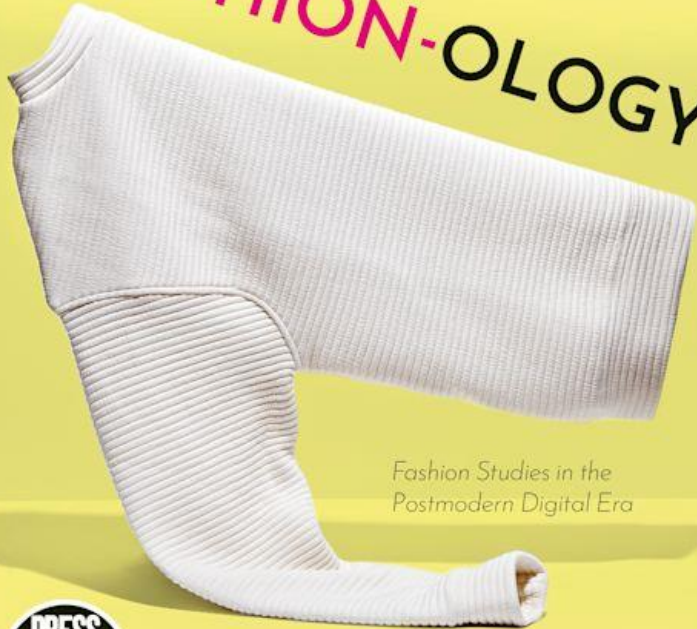
'New versions of Masculinity'

- The Jetset is a social group of wealthy individuals who have the agency to travel to certain social occasions
- This included new Beachwear to accommodate the warmer climate and imported fabrics such as linens and Houndstooth from France.
- France and the Riviera became popular destinations (**FUGH, 2021**)
- 1956/7 saw an emerging male beauty industry building on the popularity of haircare and beauty products that emerged earlier in the decade
- Pierre Bourdieu's idea of **HAUTE COUTURE AND HAUTE CULTURE**

THIRD EDITION

YUNIYA KAWAMURA

FASHION-**LOGY**



*Fashion Studies in the
Postmodern Digital Era*



BLOOMSBURY



Fashion Theory

A Reader

SECOND EDITION

EDITED BY
MALCOLM BARNARD

ROUTLEDGE STUDENT READERS



LIZ TREGENZA

WHOLESALE COUTURE

London and Beyond,
1930-70

BLOOMSBURY

Sunday best and Luxury wear

- The practice of dressing up related to putting on 'Sunday best' clothes, which were kept for attending church. The gaps in the social hierarchy were blurred, people of all classes mixed there. Kawamura considers that leisure and high-class garments go hand in hand. The unblemished and spotless shows that someone does not have to work and is therefore upper class.
- Fuhg (2021) considers that the notion of occasion wear and Sunday best extends into holiday wear. People want special clothing to wear on their holidays as a signifier of their personal wealth. France was a fashionable place to visit and people wanted to look fashionable.



Fig.6

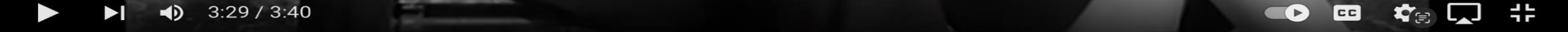


Fig.7



Fig.8

The Elegant Male (1957)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMDHwgBLOA4>

Male models & Fame

- Robin Tattersall (1931-)
- He was arguably the first true male model
- At that time in New York, the top female models were getting \$75 an hour, whereas the top men only \$55. So Robin thought that as he had just arrived, his rate should probably only be \$45 to which model agency owners, Eileen and Jerry Ford responded: “No! For you, we will charge \$65 so you will be the highest paid male model in the world, and therefore never stop working!” (Paviour-Smith,2022)
- This quote was written about Tattersall's work with Richard Avedon and he appears in one of Avedon's most famous works
- Tattersall appeared in a handful of newspaper articles and would have been known within his circles

Barthes' Myth

- Roland Barthes' Mythologies was one of the first texts to critically reflect on post-war popular culture (Huppertz, 2011,p 85)
- Written in 1957 Barthes argues that **mass culture is a myth**
- Mythologies explores how all things combine to show us that the status quo is how things should be and we are encouraged to conform within this reality.
- [Fashion magazines] play a part in the creation of this myth
- This sentiment is echoed in the work of McDowell (2019)
- She argues that [fashion] and interior magazines form dreamscapes this could also verge into the idea around Simulacra (Baudrillard, 1981)

Deciphering Myths & the Myth of the Country House

- “To decipher a myth, one simply needs to reflect over the form and meaning as read in relation to the context in which they were generated and communicated.”
(Hammouri, 2020)
- Most of the Countryhomes that appear in the background of [Fashion images] had entered the national trust by the time Norman Parkinson (1913-1990) had photographed them.
- there was pride in our national heritage and the idea that the nation had been fighting for monuments such as these and the society, history, and beauty they represented.
- Yet those who had had a negative experience of the houses in the war (either for the associated memories of conscription or the enmity they felt having seen the wealth of the elite compared to their own circumstances), may have felt entirely ambivalent as to the fate of these houses.
- Given the political environment and the landslide Labour election victory in 1945, the mood had also changed to one much less sympathetic to the preservation of the old order and their trophies - Matthew Beckett (Founder of Lost Heritage)

HAUTE COUTURE AND HAUTE CULTURE

Readywear vs Couture

- Susan Small took Couture designs and turned them into readywear
- Veblen in 1889 coins the term "conspicuous consumption"
- Expensive items are a display of wealth and boost the esteem of the owner as well as their social status
- The middle classes could not afford true couture so wanted high quality and British Made Imitations- Couture for the middle classes was something aspirational
- Impulse is a big part of conspicuous consumption this links to Barthes idea of Myth being linked to the idea of an immediate first encounter

Seminar (10 minutes)

- Touch is related to experiencing the world in its immediacy, not something we usually associate with museums. Touch therefore opens up the museum as an institution, to begin to engage more fully with the lived experience in the world around it, while delivering a critically important social function.(Chatterjee, 2020,p.285)
- Good Practice when handling paper objects
- Wash your hands and avoid using hand cream and hand sanitiser
- do not lick your fingers when turning pages
- avoid leaning on or touching the document, use a paper marker to follow the text (National Archives)

“Robin Tattersall the handsome young man you can spot in the **background** of fashion pictures.”
(Tudor, 1957,p.6)

Roger Clive Kemp writes “I am a male model, **the man in the background of the fashion picture in a women’s magazine.**”
(Kemp,1960, p.6)

MAN IN THE BACKGROUND



● DOCTOR ROBIN

DURING the party round I met male model **Robin Tattersall**, the handsome young man you can sometimes spot in the background of fashion pictures opening car doors or handing champagne to girls in slinky gowns.

He has been doing the same in Paris for a magazine. But it will probably be his last modelling stint.

In a fortnight's time Robin, 6ft. 3in. tall, married and keen rugger man, who started modelling to help finance his medical studies, becomes a house surgeon at St. George's Hospital, London.

“I'm not sorry to be giving it up,” he told me. “I have been doing it for three and a half years.”

Reed Photographic Research Collection

- A private **Welsh** collection
- Accessible to the public via social media @reedphotographicresearch, reedphotographicresearch.com (soon) and via appointment.
- Reflects concept of 'Art in Wales' as an emergent area of study
- Specialist knowledge in the work of a range of British photographers as well as British Fashion models
- including Cecil Beaton, Patrick Matthews, Norman Parkinson and Welsh photographer Angus McBean.
- the latter has a huge collection in Aberystwyth University and work in the National Library of Wales collection

Activity 1 Archival Practice (10 minutes)

- Look at the original copies of Vogue
- Read the extract about the working practice of Norman Parkinson
- Arrange the images into the suitable categories of older and newer versions of masculinity and observe what archetypes and stereotypes Tattersall is displaying
- discuss why they belong to these categories

Activity 2 (5 minutes)

- Complete the reflective document
- Think about a 1950s relative
- If you cannot think of one you could use a well-known actor or male model
- Write about how they adhere to the versions of masculinity discussed in the lecture
- Secondly think about what kind of man would not be represented and why

- **RACIAL**
- **ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL**
- **CULTURAL**
- **INNOVATION**
- **POLITICAL**

=EXTERNAL (gender presentation)

R.E.C.I.P=E

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Image references

Figure 1. Ken Russel (1955) The Last of the Teddygirls. ‘Teddy Girls: The Style Subculture That Time Forgot’, *Another Magazine*. Available at: <https://www.anothermag.com/fashion-beauty/8064/teddy-girls-the-style-subculture-that-time-forgot> (Accessed: 01 November 2024).

Figure 2. Norman Parkinson (1950) The New Mayfair Edwardians. Sothebys, sothebys.com. Available at: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2020/the-ginny-williams-collection-photographs-online/the-new-mayfair-edwardians-peter-coats-william>

Figure 3. Norman Parkinson (1950s) *Lot 5 Couples in the Woods: Three Advertising Portraits* [silver gelatin print] Forum Auctions, forumauctions.com. Available at: https://www.forumauctions.co.uk/component/com_bidding/id.59005/layout/details/view.timed/ (Accessed: 25 October 2023)

Figure 4. Norman Parkinson (1957) Lot 51 Robin Tattersall and Pagan Grigg for The Best of Scotland [silver gelatine print] Artsy.net. Available at: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/norman-parkinson-robin-tattersall-a-group-of-three-portraits> (Accessed: 14 November 2024)

Figure 5. Norman Parkinson (1956) A loud haha [from a page in Norman Parkinson’s autobiography Lifework pp.102-103.] Internet Archive, Achive.org. Available at: <https://archive.org/details/lifework0000park/page/102/mode/2up> (Accessed: 14 November 2024)

Figure 6. Norman Parkinson (1956) Experimental advertising for the Susan Small Fashion Brand via the J. Walter Thompson Advertising agency depicting Dorian Leigh and Robin Tattersall at the ‘Hotel de Bretagne’ , possibly the Hotel de Paris in Monte Carlo [silver gelatine print] Private Collection of Joanna Reed (Acquired: 11th September 2023)

Figure 7. Norman Parkinson (1956) Yardley Advertisement depicting Dorian Leigh and Robin Tattersall in Menton, France [silver gelatine print] Private Collection of Joanna Reed (Acquired: 11th September 2023)

Figure 8. Norman Parkinson (1956) Yardley advertisement depicting Dorian Leigh and Robin Tattersall at the ‘Hotel de Bretagne’ , possibly the Hotel de Paris in Monte Carlo [silver gelatine print] Private Collection of Joanna Reed (Acquired: 11th September 2023)