

designer ‘absorb[s] ... into the medium of fashion’, all the while ‘using the methods of the global fashion industry’ (p. 108).

Although ‘conceptual’ designers make ‘abstract or indirect references to African locations and histories’, many of them – Lamine Kouyaté, Themba Mngomezulu, Sakina M’Sa, Strangelove – working with recycled Western clothing, also ‘evoke cultures and places’ (p. 156, 133). In fact, for Rovine, their ‘recycled clothing as fashion goes a step further, employing the products of the West itself to dramatically challeng[e] ... the “flow of fashion time”’ (p. 203).

Throughout *African Fashion, Global Style*, Rovine demonstrates that African designers can innovate and ‘create localities’ because they use their garments for ‘storytelling’ (p. 209). While her own book reciprocates this act by telling the story of African fashion, the almost forty pages of endnotes tell a parallel and equally fascinating story of Rovine’s research journey. Through these notes, we can trace the outpouring of energy with which she ‘followed African fashion design from Bamako to Timbuktu, from Accra to Cape Town, and on to Paris, New York, Niamey, and elsewhere, interviewing designers from Kenya, Cameroon, Tunisia, and other countries’ (p. 23). The notes log visits to out-of-the-way archives and an intense engagement with art history and fashion studies.

Topping all this, Rovine includes dozens of high-quality photographs – some by herself, many others involving permissions from a dizzying array of archives and photographers. *African Fashion, Global Style* tells a double story: one about how to recognize the innovations of African fashion, the other about the epic journey of an intrepid scholar. Having woven this vast, disparate experience into a meaningful whole, Rovine achieves two advances for fashion writing. While convincing readers to share an ‘appreciation’ of all the ways in which African designers innovate, the book never falls into the promotional discourse of generalities about Africa Rising. Despite its immensity of scope and detail, the book never fragments into anecdote. Having successfully redefined fashion innovation, Rovine sets a new standard for fashion studies, whether Western or African.

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Karen Tranberg Hansen and D. Soyini Madison, *African Dress: fashion, agency, performance*. London: Bloomsbury Academic Press (hb £60 – 978 0 85785 380 6; pb £25.99 – 978 0 85785 381 3). 2013, 224 pp.

This book presents original and empirically rich research on clothing with a strong focus on West Africa. The book combines contributions by younger scholars and by more established anthropologists, and all contributions are well written and offer vivid images of dressing practices. In her introduction, Karen Tranberg Hansen sets out the key reasons why dress studies are so important in anthropology. First, clothing is a means of mediation between the individual and society. Second, dress has a double function: it changes the body and supplements it. And third, clothing can be found in an endless number of different contexts.

The book is divided into four sections, shifting from a focus on the individual experience to more general meanings of clothing in the public sphere. Parts I and II deal exclusively with female dress in Nigeria, Togo, Ghana, Senegal and Mauritania, whereas Part III describes male costumes from Senegal, Mali, Niger and Kenya. Part IV does not address actual practices of clothing but

rather media representing fashion and clothing, with case studies of men and women from Senegal, Mali, France and the US.

Part I begins with a chapter by Misty Bastian on appropriate dressing for festivities in Southern Nigeria, which illustrates both the importance and the limits of attaining social acknowledgement through clothing. Nina Sylvanus's contribution explores the increasing availability of cheap Chinese fabric, which means that *Visco Dutch* wax is no longer a widely acknowledged marker of prestige. This development is a challenge for upper middle-class women in Togo, but it is also an indicator of the impact of global flows of goods on the social order. In a discussion of Ghanaian branded T-shirts, distributed for free at festivities organized in honour of specific chieftaincies, Lauren Adrover suggests that there is no uniform evaluation of the impact of global brands. While some chiefs consider such T-shirts inappropriate, it is difficult to organize feasts without sponsorship.

Part II starts with a discussion of *bazin riche*, a costly fabric used by women in Dakar, by Kelly Kirby. Referring to Deborah Heath's 1992 article about clothing and heteroglossia, Kirby nonetheless interprets the fabric as part of a hierarchy of cloth. Katherine Wiley's chapter on Mauritania explores the veil as central to women's national and religious identity. However, its meaning is not only related to its costliness, but also to the motifs printed on the cloth. The veil is also the focus of Elisha Renne's chapter on Northern Nigeria, where increasing pressure on women to wear the veil or even the niqab raises the question of how clothing relates to women's intentions. Instead of fashion, the current veiling practices could also be considered as 'anti-fashion'. In this context, clothing does not primarily enable social interaction but defines its limits.

Part III of the book begins with a report about the military uniform of the so-called *tirailleurs sénégalais*. Keith Rathbone argues that the willingness of young men from West Africa to join the French army during World War I reflected a widespread appreciation of the uniform. However, methodologically, the author fails to acknowledge that those who survived are likely to represent their choice as positive. This chapter is followed by Victoria Rovine's contribution on the lavish dress of Malian migrants, who return home wearing djellabas richly decorated with motifs from their host country, Ghana. Dealing with the stylish outfits of those younger men (and women) who can afford expensive clothing in Niger's capital Niamey, Adeline Masquelier returns to the importance of cost. The efforts of those who wish to create the impression of affluence suggest that self-fashioning is hard work, but it is also an expression of fun and creativity. Tina Mangieri's chapter explores the dress choices of Kenyan Muslim men, whose religious identity can be expressed both through clothing with a transnational element and through more distinctly local Islamic styles, and asks to what extent the freedom to choose between different styles is a male affair.

Part IV of the book, entitled 'Transculturated bodies', moves away from actual clothing and refers instead to historical documents and mediated representations of clothing. Leslie W. Rabine's discussion of a private collection of photographs by Léopold Senghor suggests that there is little overlap between the concept of Negritude he championed and his personal attire of mostly white or greyish suits. Bennetta Jules-Rosette makes a similar argument about Josephine Baker's dancing costume. This is a legitimate approach to the study of public appearances and their meaning to the public, but it is limited by the fact that we learn little about Baker's personal intentions and the limits of her agency when she was a popular dancer in 1920s France. A similar simplification of the semiotics of clothing occurs in the chapter by D. Soyini Madison, who describes the outraged reaction to the so-called 'Obama dress', showing the US president's image, worn by Victoria Rowell in 2009. Rowell's refusal to talk about the designer was an

attempt to refocus the debate on the message of her robe. However, Grant McCracken's 1990 book *Culture & Consumption* has convincingly argued that messages transmitted by clothing have a limited reach. Therefore, it might be misleading to equate language and clothing.

These conceptual issues call for an extended discussion about a potential theory of dressing, which is not realized in the book. Therefore, its value lies primarily in the richness of the contributions and the fresh insights into African societies through different dressing practices and a wide range of meanings of clothes.

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Shobana Shankar, *Who Shall Enter Paradise? Christian origins in Muslim Northern Nigeria, c.1890–1975*. Athens OH: Ohio University Press (hb US\$80 – 978 0 8214 2123 9; pb US\$32.95 – 978 0 8214 2124 6). 2014, 240 pp.

Shobana Shankar's *Who Shall Enter Paradise?* provides a study of Protestant Christian evangelization in the Muslim region of Nigeria through the colonial and early independence eras. Unlike most previous studies of Christianity in Nigeria north of the Niger-Benue, where the focus is on Christian conversion among traditionalists, Shankar concentrates on the stories of Muslim people who decided to become Christians. This differs from previous studies also in that she builds her narrative not on church records and government archives, but upon first-hand accounts such as autobiographies, memoirs and oral interviews. These sources allow Shankar to reconstruct the evolution of Christianity in the region as a minority religious experience. As much as the sources permit her, she further tries to refine her investigations towards a consideration of African women and their lives as Christians in a Muslim world.

Who Shall Enter Paradise? offers a potentially groundbreaking approach to researching the history of Christian evangelization in Africa. Rather than try to understand developments from the perspective of governments, mission societies, African communities or religious leaders, Shankar grants all these things space only as background to a narrative about the growth of a religious status, that of Christian in a Muslim world. Her idea has both cultural and social implications. Islam, as defined by Muslim clerics, is the normative cultural experience in the world she constructs. In this intellectually sophisticated world, command of Arabic and the teachings of the prophet Mohammed set the standard for cultural authority. But the arrival of Europeans and 'boko' – a term that means 'book' or written language, but was used to represent all forms of Western knowledge from written English to technology to medicine – created for all Africans, Muslim clerics included, a potential competing standard of cultural authority. To the extent to which Shankar writes about politics, it is about how men with political power – i.e. British colonial authorities, Muslim rulers, Christian missionaries – sought to control and exploit the authority of 'boko' among African people, always, as she illustrates, with mixed results. Shankar is more interested, however, in showing how people without political power used Western knowledge as a tool for creating and maintaining the religious status of Christian. She dedicates one chapter to a discussion of Ethel Miller, a fundamentalist feminist evangelist who fearlessly rode her bicycle across the countryside, visiting potential converts. A second chapter adds to her earlier research on medical missions in