

Midterm Essay

David Bautista

Dr. Nazanin Munroe

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The zoot suit was a suit that had a high waisted, wide legged, tight cuffed, and pegged trousers along with a long coat that had wide lapels and wide padded shoulders. The suit was made to have more room to move than an ordinary suit. The suit was made during the 1930s and worn by men all throughout the 1930s and 1940s until the early 1950s. The zoot suit was made in Chicago. The suit was first made popular by jazz bands. The suit was then popularized by jitterbug couples. Jitterbug couples wore the zoot suit because it was loose and not tight, and it was easier to move around in. Also, the zoot suit wouldn't rip on the seam like the traditional suit. Other than it being used to do the jitterbug, men wore the suit because they could wear accessories with it. The suit mainly attracted minority men from working class neighborhoods (Gregory, 2016).

The zoot suit was a significant garment because the garment created controversy. The suit started out being worn by a small group of men like jazz groups and such, then it started being adopted into people's ordinary wardrobe. It got so mainstream that the suit eventually became known as a sign of crime because of gangbangers wearing it. This was one of the theories that the Zoot Suit Riots started. The Zoot Suits Riots took place in 1943 and lasted for ten days. The riots took place in Los Angeles and it was just military employees and sailors going around LA with weapons into restaurants, bars, and public gathering areas, and just beating anyone that was wearing a zoot suit or anyone of skin color. According to Gerber (2018), one of the theories that started the riots was that the Mexican American gang, the *pachucos*, started the riots because of an attack they supposedly did on military employees, which took place a week before the riots. Another theory was that the riots was created by the LAPD to distract the public from an ongoing trial on a fellow officer. Along with those theories on how it started, some people are

claiming that the riots were a way for white people to perform racist acts. Without a doubt the zoot suit was significant its time.

Fast forward to 2020, there is still controversial issues within the fashion industry. One of them is animal rights, animal rights is the idea of animals having more worth than being useful to humans. People believe that animals should not be killed, harmed, or treated inhumane for consumer goods. An example of this is with Canada Goose. People are protesting at Canada Goose stores because animal cruelty actions trapping, skinning and ultimately killing coyotes for their fur to use on the hoods of their jackets, not only is it coyotes, Canada Goose also uses geese in their jackets (Watling, 2019). The way people support this movement is by not wearing any Canada Goose jackets and wearing skinned coyote customs to show others what it's like. In some cases, the protests for this movement do get violent at some points - like protesters getting into altercations with people wearing Canada Goose jackets - and sometimes it doesn't. This issue and the zoot suit can compare to each other. One way is the main issues being focused are the acts of inhumanity that happened or is happening. I feel that both styles send a clear message.



Figure 1

Zoot Suit

2002.160a-j

metmuseum.org



Figure 2

Protesters outside the Canada Goose store in London

peta.org.uk

## Bibliography

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