

Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty

Volume 7 Number 1

© 2016 Intellect Ltd Book Report. English language. doi: 10.1386/csfb.7.1.109_5

BOOK REPORT

GARY WATT

University of Warwick

Dress, Law and Naked Truth: Some further coverage

The theme of this issue of *Critical Studies in Fashion and Beauty* draws in part on a conference held at Cardozo Law School, New York, entitled *The Laws of Fashion: Between Transgression and Compliance* (26 April 2016). For this issue, I have been invited to address the conference theme from the perspective of the arguments set out in my book *Dress, Law and Naked Truth: A Cultural Study of Fashion and Form* (Watt 2013). I will be concerned with ‘transgression’ and ‘compliance’, but also with the ‘between’. To this end, my focus is on questions of political and practical import, although the book itself is also concerned more broadly with the philosophical and anthropological claim that ‘dress is law’. In that regard, it is revealing that the words ‘dress’ and ‘rex’ share the same etymological root—sense of order by rule, by which I mean order achieved through compliance with formal strictures and constraints along regulatory lines.

Staying with etymology, it should be noted that the word ‘transgression’, which means to ‘step across’, is especially pertinent to the concerns of my book. Dress, perhaps especially dress in the form of clothes, is obviously a threshold phenomenon that lies in the space ‘between’ the inner and the outer, or the private and the public. I argue that dress shares this liminal status with other cultural forms such as law and architecture. Even today, the civil orders of dress, law and architecture join forces at the threshold of the door to the private *domus*, insofar as we feel compelled to dress somewhat differently within the home from the way we dress outside of it. ‘Stepping across’ the threshold from home to the public street with unkempt hair, slovenly dress or indoor wear such as house slippers, would, for many of us, be a transgression we would seek to avoid. Many, I expect most of us, instinctively prefer to comply with the dress code when on public display. It goes without saying that in a society where the code is to go clothed, very few of us would choose to step across the threshold completely naked. To escape the house in the event of a fire or other emergency does not count, for in that case there is no choice. Or, to put in another way, the dress code is acknowledged to include exemptions in cases of emergency.

This point about thresholds emerged in an interesting way in England recently when a number of national papers reported that some parents in the north-east of the country had been wearing pyjamas and house slippers when taking their children to school and even when attending school meetings. The principal of the school had written to all parents requesting that they should ‘take the time to dress appropriately in day wear’ when bringing their children to school, on the grounds that

it is important for us all to set our children a good example about what is appropriate and acceptable in all aspects of life, not only from the point of view of their safety and general well-being, but also as preparation for their own adult life.

(Bloom 2016)

When the principal writes of ‘daywear’, she presumably means normal (by which I mean typical) ‘outside daywear’. The principal’s letter is an entirely standard instance of a civil authority requesting compliance with one of the norms of civil society. Unsurprisingly, some parents made a point of turning up in pyjamas simply to demonstrate their resistance to this particular principal’s authority to make the request in the first place. With mind-boggling reasoning, one of the parents is reported to have admonished the principal personally for wearing high heels on the grounds that she was already a tall woman.

Perhaps princes, like school principals, are especially exposed to censure on grounds of dress code precisely because they tend to promote such codes in their words and deeds. Even Prince Harry was recently accused of under-dressing when he attended an event for D-Day veterans with his shirt collar open and without a tie. He was apologetic, but might have claimed, like Shakespeare’s

King Henry 'Harry' V that princes are 'the makers of manners' and therefore 'cannot be confined within the weak list of a country's fashion' (Shakespeare 2003–2016b: *Henry V* act 5 scene 2).

Cultural precedents for the concentration of the civilizing forces of dress, architecture and law at the threshold are ancient. The two primary literary sources that bring us the story of the prehistoric flood – the biblical Book of Genesis and the Epic of Gilgamesh – both emphasize the ways in which these three forces operate in concert. In the biblical account of Adam and Eve, their transgression of God's law results in their being clothed and expelled from the architectural bounds of the garden: law, dress and architecture combined. In the Epic of Gilgamesh, which is recorded in humanity's earliest surviving physical document of a literary narrative, Enkidu (an archetypal hairy and unclothed Wildman) is civilized through a process of dress (including the cutting and grooming of his hair) as preparation for his entry within the architectural bounds of the city. Having crossed the threshold into the polis newly groomed and dressed, he then stands within it as an embodied form of natural law in defiance of the tyranny of King Gilgamesh. As I explain in *Dress, Law and Naked Truth*, Enkidu had declared in advance that he would 'change the way things are ordered' (Gilgamesh 1: 222). His resolve to do so is confirmed with righteous anger when he hears that King Gilgamesh intends to exercise *droit du seigneur* (the feudal right to have sexual relations with the bride of a vassal on her wedding night). The threat of impending abuse is reported to Enkidu in the familiar metaphorical language of nuptial dress: 'for Gilgamesh, the king of Uruk, the centre of political power, / the veil will be parted' (2: 156–57).

Enkidu is true to his destiny and true to his word. His first action following his entry into Uruk is to step forward in the street to block the path of Gilgamesh. Then 'Enkidu with his foot blocked the door of the wedding house, / not allowing Gilgamesh to enter' (Gilgamesh 2: 111–12). The tyrant Gilgamesh was not permitted to transgress by taking a 'step across' the threshold of law, of dress (as represented by the newly dressed Enkidu) and of the architecture of the home. We will see that the fundamental cultural combination of these three civil orders continues to play out in interesting ways in the current context of international migration – especially as it concerns the migration of religious law and religious dress – across the physical and virtual borders between states.

In *Dress, Law and Naked Truth*, I treat dress, clothing and fashion as distinct but overlapping concepts. Dress is the general social code or norm of ordering bodily appearance, whereas clothing is a sub-set of dress involving the covering of the body with cloth. Shaving or applying make-up are therefore examples of dress that do not involve clothing. Fashion is a concept that cuts across the categories of dress and clothing, for it describes particular modes of dress or clothing. Crucially, 'fashion' (again the etymology holds a clue) is a mode of forming the public or social 'face'. Clothing is an especially intriguing form of dress because of its undeniably signal capacity for covering up the human bodily form (other forms of dress such as tattoos, make-up and jewellery typically cover-up to a lesser degree, and some forms of dress, such as shaving, involve a dis-covering rather than a

covering). *Dress, Law and Naked Truth* focuses upon two modern cases above all, both of which concern dress or undress as it relates to clothes. The first case is that of the covered or veiled face; the second is that of the naked body. Each becomes interesting where its mode of dress is displayed in public. The book looks in particular at the clothed faces of ‘veiled’ Muslim women and at the unclothed male body, especially that of Mr Stephen Gough – the United Kingdom’s so-called ‘naked rambler’ (Finkelstein 2015) – who has been repeatedly imprisoned for refusing to comply with injunctions requiring him to wear clothes in public.

I was made to reflect again upon these two core cases on a recent visit to the bookshop of the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. In the poster section, two postcards especially caught my eye (see Figure 1). I bought one of each. Almost the entirety of one of the postcards is given over to the black bottle-like form of a person entirely covered apart from a narrow slit open at the eyes. The eyes themselves, indicated by two black dots, peer out from the narrow parting in what appears to be the customary Islamic face-covering known as niqab. Above the image in letters outlined in red is the banner: VOTEZ POUR MOI (Vote for Me). The other postcard, which was on display nearby, is a black-and-white photograph of an unclothed Caucasian man wearing only black socks and shoes. He is standing with statuesque assurance in frontal half-profile on an otherwise deserted Metro platform directly under the station sign: LIBERTÉ. The juxtaposition of the two images displayed together is intriguing, but the pairing is in no way inconsistent or lacking integrity from a point of view widely held in France. The pairing has integrity in terms of French art and equally in terms of French politics. In terms of art, the pair are examples of art forms in which the French have a long and famous tradition: cartoons (*bandes dessinées*) and black-and-white photography, respectively. In terms of politics, the image of the covered body, which we must presume is that of a Muslim woman, is securely within the French secular tradition of satire against religion in public life. The satirists of the magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, now famous for all the wrong reasons, locate themselves at the extreme end of that tradition. The image of the naked man under the sign of LIBERTÉ is also alluding to core values of La République française. It can even be interpreted as a modern and humorous iteration, or reconfiguration, of the figure of Marianne – the female personification of the Republican values of ‘Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité’. Her face appears today in the logo of the government of France, but in earlier artistic renditions she was often shown bare-breasted or with one breast bare and one breast covered; so *between* clothed and unclothed.

The combination of text and image on the two postcards is perfectly indigenous to France and to French social and political culture. So much so that when I imported the two postcards into the United Kingdom it felt a bit like smuggling contraband. The frisson of transgression that I felt in buying and transporting those postcards across the border was a forefeeling of a more interesting sensation: the unease I now feel about displaying the postcards on the wall in a university office. Am I permitted to do so? Can I display the cards – perhaps adjacent to each other – in full view of any



Figure 1: 'VOTEZ POUR MOI' © Jaques Lenep – éditions klet & ko – www.kletandko.be / 'LIBERTÉ' © Janol Apin – éditions lacarothé.

student or member of staff who might enter my office? Would it be a transgression to display them? If so, is it transgression against UK national law, against the university's rules on respect, against my own sense of the social code of dress, against my own sense of fairness or against something else? What compliance is demanded of me, if any, and by whom? If I put the postcards up and the university demands that they be taken down, should I comply? I cannot promise that there are simple solutions to such questions, but by the end of this article I hope to have outlined an approach to addressing them and at least to have indicated the sort of issues that are at stake.

I now want to identify two loci of transgression that might usefully be kept distinct for purposes of discussion, which is not to presume that they can be kept strictly distinct in fact. The first locus is that of national jurisdiction: the space of the sovereign nation state. In the capital of France, where since April 2011 it has been illegal for citizens to wear face coverings in public (CNRS Editions 2010), a bookshop in one of the major art galleries is perfectly at liberty to sell a postcard with a legend that implicitly challenges the notion (amongst many others) that a niqab-wearing Muslim woman might reasonably seek citizens' votes in an election. The other locus is the border between nation states, which includes the alien space that the migrant might seek to import from one state to another. If I put up the postcards in my office, it might be that I am attempting in a small way to erect an alien (French) space in my local (English) jurisdiction. (I have argued along these lines in my 2012 article 'Comparative law as deep appreciation'.) Such an attempt to import an alien jurisdiction may or may not be justified from the individual's point of view, but it is surely fundamentally transgressive from a political and constitutional point of view (Watt 2012).

In the book, I consider the case of Mr Stephen Gough as being in the first locus, that of the nation state. Mr Gough insists that it is his natural state to live without wearing clothes and he believes that it is his natural right to present himself naked in public places. The case of the veiled woman in France could also be regarded in this way as being an instance of an individual's fit within the society of a nation state, but it could also, equally, be regarded as a dress code that has been imported from one jurisdiction to another. Certainly, the niqab-wearing woman who flies from Saudi Arabia to the United Kingdom and remains 'veiled' on the streets might be considered, by some, to have imported an alien code of dress. Although, from her own perspective she might of course, like the naked man, be making a free and personal decision to dress differently without reference to the rules and customs (costumes) of Saudi Arabia.

The immigration border of a sovereign state is equivalent to the gate of the ancient polis. It is something like the skin of the state. As such, it is a defining locus for the demonstration of civil order through dress. No wonder, then, that uniformed guards police the border, and that people passing across the threshold are scrutinized in every aspect of their physical appearance. The nature of dress as law comes to the fore at the geographical threshold of the state. Susan Ireland makes the point that when people 'migrate from one country to another, they are faced with the question of

how to fit in and must decide which aspects of their culture of origin to keep' (Ireland 1998: 454). We do not expect to export our national laws when we travel to foreign jurisdictions, so are we obliged to export our domestic dress code? At least one leading Islamic jurist has gone so far as to say that Muslim women should positively abide by local rules if the removal of the veil poses no threat to their wellbeing. In a lecture delivered in New Zealand, Dr Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadr stated that '[f]or women living here, it's not a Koranic obligation. They should follow the law of the land' (Steward 2011).

In my book, I argue that where a nation's laws give us freedom to fashion ourselves – whether we wish to go naked or veiled – it is incumbent upon us to find a comfortable fit. This does not mean that we should find the easiest fit – one so loose that we lose sight of our own shape or lose all sensible contact with the norms of the society in which we live. Rather, it means that we should feel the pressure of the fit so that society is allowed to shape us a little, even as we require society to accommodate us.

Today, speaking of the UK context, choice of dress is not restricted by formal rules. If we wish to adorn ourselves in public in nothing but purple silk (or, subject to such procedural impediments as arrest for breach of the peace, nothing at all), nothing but our purse and peer pressure can stop us. In terms of modes of dress, we are all monarchs now. It is therefore incumbent upon us to govern ourselves with respect for others. A monarch's freedom should not be turned into a tyrannical (I mean unlimited) imposition of our choice upon our fellow citizens.

With these thoughts in mind I will now refer to two fascinating cases – complementary and contrasting – that have arisen since the publication of *Dress, Law and Naked Truth*. The first is the decision to cover up the nudity of certain public statues in Rome on the occasion of a visit by the Iranian prime minister. The second is the decision of female tourists in Iran to publish 'selfies' in which they are shown in public places removing the hair-covering headscarf that Iranian law requires them to wear in public.

As to the first case – the covering of the statues in Rome – *The Guardian* newspaper opens its coverage under the banner 'Rome spares Iranian president's blushes by covering nude statues', with the observation that 'Italian officials keen to spare the Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani, any possible offence on his visit to Rome covered up nude statues at the city's Capitoline Museum, where Rouhani met Matteo Renzi, the Italian prime minister' (Kirchgaessner 2016). It concludes with the statement that

It was not the first time that Renzi – a Florentine who is usually a proud advocate for Italy's rich cultural heritage – has sought to be culturally sensitive in a high-stakes meeting. In October, a cordon was placed around a nude statue by the American artist Jeff Koons during a visit to Florence by Renzi and Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, the crown

prince of Abu Dhabi. It was noted at the time that another sculpture – Michelangelo's *David* – remained uncovered throughout.

(Kirchgaessner 2016)

The headline in *The Telegraph* newspaper is, on the face of it, more critical of the prime minister's decision, reporting as it does that there is '[a]nger in Italy after authorities cover up nude Roman statues of goddesses so as not to offend Iranian president' (Squires 2016). *The Telegraph's* reporter identifies a financial motive for the gesture: '[w]ith Italian businesses signing deals worth around 17 billion euros with Iranian companies, much was at stake and Rome was anxious not to offend the sensibilities of Hassan Rouhani' (Squires 2016).

The Guardian's reference to 'sparing blushes' echoes the same phrase as used by Italian media to describe the coverage of the October visit to Florence (Anon. 2015). The blushing metaphor speaks of one of the major challenges in diplomatic encounters between nation states, which is the challenge of 'saving face'. The covering of the Capitoline statues represents a sort of state-level exercise in self-fashioning. In a diplomatic move to avoid confrontation between its face and the face of the Iranian president, the Italian state chose to efface its own external form. One wonders if an alternative to covering up the naked statues would have been to cover the face of the visiting president, thus concealing any actual blushes that might erupt.

That comment is only silly on the outside. At its heart there is a serious question – which is to ask whether it is incumbent upon the host nation to cover over its nudity or whether it is incumbent upon visitors to redress their own critical perspective. The point can be argued both ways. Suppose it is my habit to live unclothed within the confines of my own home; I might nevertheless be inclined to clothe myself when receiving visitors. On the other hand, if my clothes-free state is a point of principle with me I should expect a visitor to my accommodation to visit me on my terms. Surely, advisors to the president of Iran should have told him that 'when in Rome' one should (to paraphrase the old saying) 'view as the Romans view', but perhaps the Italian decision pre-empted that possibility.

We might sympathize with those who are outraged by the diplomatic decision to cover up the naked statues, yet outrage should be tempered by the thought that Italy has its own tradition of covering up the nudity of art displayed in public. Only a couple of hundred years ago Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, which now reclines in all its naked splendour in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, was modestly concealed behind a sliding wooden panel. Perhaps that was fair enough when one considers that the painting was originally a private gift from a husband to his young wife. To display it publicly might have been equivalent to the twenty-first century transgression of leaking a 'sex tape' or 'selfie' that was intended for private viewing. However that may be, there is an undeniable tradition in Italian art of covering nudity. Michelangelo's *David*, mentioned earlier, was revolutionary not just

because of its exceptionally (perhaps uniquely) exquisite quality, but because, by referring back to the nude statuary of antiquity, it broke with the tradition in Roman Catholic art of depicting David clothed. Even Donatello's sculpture of David, said to be the first freestanding nude male since antiquity, had gestured to clothing by adorning David with a fashionable hat and boots.

Statues aside, public nudity is sometimes promoted on the ground that it is natural. Stephen Gough, the so-called 'naked Rambler', has always claimed that he is doing what comes naturally, and that the artificial and unnatural thing to do is to cover our naked bodily form with fabrics. Of course, in one sense it is perfectly true to say that the naked state really is a state *au naturel*; literally, since we are born naked it is our native state to wear no clothes at all. We also know that adults who are native to certain cultures prefer to dress in ways that do not involve covering with cloth. It cannot be denied that nudity is literally native and that to be unclothed can be culturally natural. From this it follows that clothing can certainly be considered unnatural in that basic sense. But what of that? As I argue in my book, the real question is not whether it is natural to *clothe* but whether it is natural to *dress*, and to that question we get a very clear answer. Insofar as humans are civilized social beings, it appears from all experience that it is in our very nature to dress. We may debate the source, forms and functions of the apparently innate habit of dress in human civil society, but there is no doubt that for whatever reason the habit is in one sense a perfectly natural one. No doubt it is artificial and perhaps it is even conditioned in us from generation to generation, but we have been able to say at any given time in human social history that to dress is within our natures as human social beings. It is natural in the simple but significant sense that it comes naturally to us. We nearly all of us do it, and we have nearly all of us nearly always done it. It is my argument that the habit of dress is natural in the way that the habit of law is natural. This does not mean that dress and law are not artificial constructs made by human hand and mind, but it does mean that dress and law are natural in the sense that it is in our social nature to fabricate such things.

Two fascinating cases have arisen since the publication of *Dress, Law and Naked Truth*. The first was that Stephen Gough was imprisoned again, this time for breach of an Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBO). This means that at the time of writing he has spent most of the last decade in prison, although the latest report is that he has not only been released from prison but has for the time being made the concession of wearing clothes in order to care for his elderly mother. It does seem somewhat strange that Mr Gough should be imprisoned when, without putting too fine a point on it, the marble penis of Michelangelo's *David* – covered only in the sense that Michelangelo did not comply with the Jewish practice of circumcision – has always been proudly and publicly displayed at the epicentre of European artistic culture. For most of its history the original statute or its substitute has stood in the public square of the Piazza della Signoria, Florence. There is no place more central to the artistic culture of the European Renaissance than that.

The problem for Mr Gough is that his nudity is an uncompromising threat to the very idea of order. Dress is order, and in a culture where the order of dress takes the form of clothes, public nudity may be perceived as an assault upon the very core of the civilizing project. Whether the authorities are right or wrong to imprison an individual who transgresses in this way is a matter on which opinion varies. While sympathetic to Mr Gough's point of principle, Daniel Finkelstein wrote in *The Times* newspaper on 23 December 2015: 'The naked truth is this man must be locked up'. Finkelstein's argument is that overt defiance of a legal injunction cannot be permitted to go unpunished. There is, strictly speaking, no law against public nudity in England and Wales, but an injunction or order made against Mr Gough himself operates regardless of general legal prohibition. The injunction is not a law of general application but a judicial decree that imposes a direct personal prohibition on the individual subject to it. Having said that, Mr Gough's defiance infringes more than a mere personal injunction. By going unclothed in public, he is striking at a law that nearly every member of society chooses to obey regardless of sanction – the law of dress. Not the law of clothes, I should stress again, but the law of dress. For good or ill, dress has been a socially accepted – indeed a society-defining – distinction between human civil society and brute or wild animal existence since at least as far back as related forms of order and rule, such as architecture and law. It is my belief that when modern lawyers talk of the technicalities of injunctions and of competing human rights this is nothing more than a rhetorical mode by which uniformed and costumed legal authorities dress up a fundamental and largely unconscious sense – an ancient cultural sense – that norms of dress, no less than law, are necessary to our sense of civil order and must be upheld.

To say that the law and order of dress in the form of clothes goes to the very core of the western cultural ideal might seem at odds with the resplendent nudity of Michelangelo's *David*, but to invoke a distinction made by Kenneth Clark, *David* is not naked – he is nude (Clark 1956)¹. In fact, 'he' is not a he but an 'it'. *David* is not a human being but an exceedingly well-dressed block of marble. He is an architectural adornment originally intended to ornament the cathedral in Florence but eventually destined to be the focus of a great architectural piazza and ultimately the key feature of a purpose-built architectural space within the Galleria dell'Accademia. Michelangelo's uncompromisingly unclothed *David* is perfectly respectable because it is perfectly orderly. It confirms the point to observe that another celebrated unclothed male figure of the Renaissance – Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* – represents the human form conceived architecturally, as the reference to Vitruvius indicates. *Vitruvian Man* is dressed or ordered in the architectural frame of a circle and rectilinear ruled lines.

The second case that has arisen since the publication of my book, concerns what we might call the public 'bareheading' of female foreigners in Iran. The BBC website reports that '[w]earing the hijab is a legal requirement for women in Iran. But a controversial Facebook campaign is calling on female tourists visiting the country to post pictures of themselves removing the garment' (BBC

1. Quoted from the A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC in 1953.

Trending 2016). The article claims that the campaign is the work of an online movement calling itself 'My Stealthy Freedom', and that 'its latest request comes in response to the plight of a group of female crew members at a French airline'. Air France has recently resumed flights to Tehran with the lifting of a European embargo, and some of the female crew objected to an internal memo that had required them to wear a hair-covering headdress when disembarking the plane in Iran. Presumably, it is not that the modern Marianne objects to wearing a covering on her head (the original, revolutionary Marianne was usually depicted wearing a cap or headscarf) but that she does object when her employer, responding to the laws of a foreign state, imposes a dress code upon her. On the evidence of Facebook, a number of foreign females in Iran are demonstrating their solidarity with the crew of Air France (and with like-minded women of Iran) by photographing the moment in which they strip off their headscarves in public. This performative act of transgression or non-compliance is an almost perfect counterpart to the act of covering up the statues on the Capitoline. If the statues were to come to life, Pygmalion-like, they would perhaps throw off their 'Iranian' coverings in solidarity with the Air France flight crew. It certainly seems the height of unjustified intrusion to employ the state apparatus to force conformity with a statutory code of dress, but for critique to be balanced between East and West it should be borne in mind that most western states require women to cover the tops of their torsos in public places as readily as the Iranian state insists that women cover the tops of their heads. It might also be contended that a western woman who refuses to respect the clothing constraints of a state in the Middle East cannot reasonably complain when a woman visitor from the Middle East refuses to comply with an un-clothing code required by law in a western state, such as France. Reasonableness is the point. As stated earlier, we should all of us seek to achieve a reasonable fit between our own costume and the custom of the society in which we find ourselves. What is clearly most unreasonable is the excessive fervour that Iran's so-called morality police have recently shown in enforcing the dress code, seemingly in response to the Facebook campaign. How appropriate that Facebook should be the forum in which women are choosing to express their refusal to comply with suppressive codes of dress. Social and cultural life depends upon free encounters between the public face of one individual and the public face of another. Faces on Facebook may be disguised by profile pictures or they may be presented covered in make-up, tattoos, metal piercings or cloth. What Facebook stands for is nothing like naked truth, but something like free and unfettered performance.

The argument of my book is that dress is in a rich and complex way equivalent to law and order, but I want to conclude by posing an antithetical question: 'If dress is not equivalent to law and order, then what is it?' Perhaps the answer is that dress is performance pure and simple. Shakespeare's famous claim that the acts of a human life are divided into 'seven ages' began with the observation that '[a]ll the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players' (Shakespeare 2003–2016a: *As You Like It* act 2 scene 7). In his book *The Seven Ages of the Theatre*, Richard Southern wrote that

the first historical phase in the nonlinear evolution of theatre was ‘the presentation of the costumed player; or the player’s presentation of his costumed self – costumed so as to act as some other self’ (Southern 1962: 32). Perhaps, then, we dress not out of compulsion but because we naturally play this way. Perhaps dress is an art of expression by which we fashion our faces for public performance within our nation state and at the border between one state and another. The costumed and uniformed officers of the law may be performing too. It is notable that the fifth ‘age’ of Shakespeare’s seven ages is that of ‘the Justice’, who is said to wear his ‘beard of formal cut’. The playwright noted that law is formally dressed even down to the hairs on the face that it fashions for public view. Perhaps dress is just a sort of theatrical performance, but the fundamentally perplexing fact is the universality of the practice. It is customary amongst us to adopt a costume of some sort, involving cloth or otherwise. Indeed, our communal habit of fashioning a public face – of wearing a public persona or mask – borders on compulsion. Dress might be all about the ‘show’, but it is because dress is law that the show must go on.

Acknowledgement

The author is grateful to Simona Laghi of L’Università degli studi Roma Tre for alerting him to press reports of the statues on the Capitoline in Rome.

References

- Anon. (2015), ‘PM covers nude statue to spare Sheikh’s blushes’, *The Local it*, <http://www.thelocal.it/20151007/renzi-covers-nude-statue-to-spare-sheikhs-blushes>. Accessed 7 May 2016.
- BBC Trending (2016), ‘Tourists join bareheaded protest against Iranian clothing laws’, *BBC News*, 9 April, <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-35988134>. Accessed 7 May 2016.
- Bloom, Adi (2016), ‘Don’t wear pyjamas to school, headteacher tells parents’, *Times Educational Supplement*, 27 January, <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/dont-wear-pyjamas-school-headteacher-tells-parents>. Accessed 28 June 2016.
- Clark, Kenneth (1956), *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- CNRS Editions (2010), ‘La loi sur le voile integral’, 14 September (Loi no. 2010–1192, le Sénat français), <http://www.cnrseditions.fr>. Accessed 28 June 2016.
- Finkelstein, Daniel (2015), ‘The naked truth is this man must be locked up’, *The Times*, 23 December, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4648118.ece>. Accessed 28 June 2016.
- Ireland, Susan (1998), ‘Writing the body in Marlène Amar’s *La Femme sans Tête*’, *The French Review*, 71: 3, pp. 454–67.

- Kirchgaessner, Stephanie (2016), 'Nude statues are covered at the Capitoline museum in Rome', *The Guardian*, 26 January, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/26/rome-spaes-iranian-presidents-blushes-covering-nude-statues>. Accessed 10 May 2016.
- Shakespeare, William (2003–2016a), *As You Like It*, <http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org>. Accessed 28 June 2016.
- Shakespeare, William (2003–2016b), *Henry V*, <http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org>. Accessed 28 June 2016.
- Southern, Richard (1962), *The Seven Ages of the Theatre*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Squires, Nick (2016), 'Anger in Italy after authorities cover up nude Roman statues of goddesses so as not to offend Iranian president', *The Telegraph*, 26 January, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/12122665/Anger-in-Italy-after-authorities-cover-up-nude-Roman-statues-of-goddesses-so-as-not-to-offend-Iranian-president.html>. Accessed 10 May 2016.
- Steward, Ian (2011), 'Take off face veils, says leading Muslim scholar', *Fairfax NZ News*, 6 August, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/5403349/Take-off-face-veils-says-leading-Muslim-scholar>. Accessed 7 May 2016.
- Watt, Gary (2012), 'Comparative law as deep appreciation', in P. G. Monateri (ed.), *Methods of Comparative Law*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Press, pp. 82–103.
- Watt, Gary (2013), *Dress, Law and Naked Truth: A Cultural Study of Fashion and Form*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Gary Watt has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as the author of this work in the format that was submitted to Intellect Ltd.

Copyright of *Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty* is the property of Intellect Ltd. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.