

Mimesis, Clothed in Violence

Otto von Busch

Parsons School of Design

For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from common human burdens; they are not plagued by human ills. Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence.

—Psalms 73:3–6, New International Version

Fashion is a mimetic phenomenon. It thrives in the pleasures and desires of imitation. As sociologist Yuniya Kawamura notices in her book *Fashionology*, early sociologists, such as Veblen, Tarde, and Simmel, all regard fashion as a “concept of imitation.”¹ Even if their specific theories differ, Veblen, Tarde, and Simmel saw fashion as an imitative “flow” most dominantly from the superior to inferior, and this became known as the “trickle-down” theory. Even if these ideas have been complemented by many other sociological, psychological, and communicative models, imitation is a central trope in the analysis of fashion, yet little attention has been put to the microdynamics of imitation. Or to put it more poignantly, little attention has been put to the human price of the

Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture, Vol. 25, 2018, pp. 79–94. ISSN 1075-7201.
© Michigan State University. All rights reserved.

process of trickle-down, to the fact that rivalry, exclusion, and bullying play a part in the demarcation between fashionable and unfashionable, or to the fact that the distinction between “in” and the “out” is as much conceptual as social and spatial. Using the mimetic theory of René Girard may help put a spotlight on this dynamic and put scapegoating as a central trope in the othering of the style and person who is considered “out”: an aesthetic form of scapegoating. As will be made explicit, the ambiguous meanings and significations of dress act as a perfect alibi for such rejections and violence, as the “shallowness” of fashion makes it much harder for the victim to point toward the transgression and retaliate.

The argument follows this trajectory: The first section introduces the reader to some of the basic dynamics of fashion, and the following section ties fashion to the pleasures of mimesis as the third section examines more around the competing forces of rivalry, envy, and status anxiety as played out in fashion. The fourth section examines in more detail how fashion becomes an interface that facilitates bullying and how fashion becomes an aesthetic form of Girardian scapegoating. In the final discussion we see how the “shallowness” of fashion allows bullying in the realm of dress to often go unnoticed.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BASIC DYNAMICS OF FASHION

Fashion is per definition a social phenomenon. We desire to be popular and beautiful and surround ourselves with popular and beautiful people, and fashion can be seen as a materialization of the current desires. However, in a poignant observation, fashion journalist Susanne Pagold argues for a more simple formula to describe the essence of fashion: “to dress like everyone else, but before everyone else.”² Following this, fashion can never be totally unique, or experienced in isolation; it cannot be private. Yet we habitually speak of fashion as an individual style, a kind of mind trick that also reinforces the idea of the fashion subject who can forge his or her own luck. Yet this is not only typical of fashion, but the cult of the individual is part of the narrative of our time. The signifying goods are all the more available through cheap and accessible “fast” fashion, as well as through copies, but the positional competition intensifies. Social position is more a zero-sum game than we like to think; for every “in” there is an “out.”³

But as Pagold also highlights, fashion is a race; it is about being an “early adopter,” and as such, fashion may act as a central arena for our current culture

of competition where the prime insult of our time is to be a “loser.” As we present an idealized version of ourselves online, we build on expectations that our social lives should be more like those portrayed by others, thus building an arms race in loneliness veiled under aestheticized community. The struggles of the individual to escape being a “loser” may seem remote from the daily life of fashion. But as argued by Bourdieu, “Fashion is the latest fashion, the latest difference,”⁴ something also supported by Barthes.⁵ As such, fashion is the latest distinction between winners and losers.

In one of his texts on fashion, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman notes that fashion is in itself a “perpetuum mobile” driven by our desires for differentiation and uniformity, but also by the competition producing loser and winners.⁶ In this culture, you are only worth as much as you seem to be worth, and we do not share a common trajectory towards a better future with society-at-large. Instead, “Progress . . . has moved from the discourse of shared improvement to that of individual survival. . . . ‘Progress’ appears in the context of the avoidance of being excluded.”⁷ As we hunt for new distinction and a new edge over our peers in order to keep up with the rest, we are drawn into a hedonist cycle of continuous hunting for the new, never satisfied with what we acquire. Indeed, as soon as we have acquired the goods, the sought difference has already lost its significance: “Once started, tasted and savoured, the hunt (like all other drugs) becomes an addiction, compulsion and obsession.”⁸ As Bauman would have it, hunter and hunted merge into one fearful and perpetually chasing endeavor for the next thing. Indeed, the very essence of a “passion for fashion” is a drive propelled by the aesthetics of continuous anxiety, a fear of being excluded, ignored, forgotten. We desire fashion in the shadow of fear, the fear of not keeping up and thus becoming a “loser.”

THE PLEASURES OF MIMESIS

Fashion may be the archetypical phenomenon of mimesis, as it is both apparent (we see when it happens and can touch the materiality of the new garment) and also slightly irrational and hard to defend from a purely functional perspective (there is no functional “reason” why I suddenly am folding up my jeans). Girard does not discuss directly the phenomenon of fashion at length, but instead uses it as reference to general trends or style, consumption, or thinking, whereas his triangular model of desire and mimesis highlights how the same dynamic saturates human relations.⁹

As Girard posits, mimetics are part of any social relationship, but our modern times are wrapped in the delusion of “negative imitation” where subjects try to define a form of unique individuality by repeatedly denying their mimetic desires.¹⁰ Palaver points out this dynamic in his analysis of Girard’s ideas, and especially how advertising and fashion overlap in today’s culture as they both promote differentiation under the illusion of facilitating the subject to “become original.”¹¹ By buying into advertising and fashion the consumer is drawn into a double bind:

The consumer is supposed to believe that possession of the advertised product will guarantee the exceptional uniqueness embodied by those who model it. Only after purchasing the product can human beings escape the mundane horde. However, this promise remains steeped in contradiction, for imitation and originality are mutually exclusive. Only by imitating the desire of our original models—the heroes of advertising—are we able to enjoy the pleasure of an autonomous existence.¹²

As noted earlier, many early sociologists put imitation as a central trope in fashion. For example, in his early writings on fashion, Simmel points toward how the dynamics of fashion are defined by the sartorial demarcations between “us” and “them.”¹³ Simmel highlights how these power dynamics fuel the slave-like condition of fashion for the masses—“the leader” [*der Fuhrende*] and “followers” [*der Gefuhrte*]¹⁴—but Palaver also points toward Simmel’s awareness of how group dynamics also foster an illusory rebelliousness, which Simmel playfully calls a “club of club-haters” [*Verein der Vereingegner*].¹⁴

Simmel’s theory of fashion overlaps in many ways with that of Tarde. What Tarde called “rays of imitation,” Simmel sees as imitative chain events. Tarde’s “rays” radiate throughout the social body, sweeping through in trends, much like waves or energies. As Tarde suggests, we “tend to follow (and imitate) those we love, those in whom we put faith and hope, and those whom we idolize and take glory in their fame as much as those whom we fear.”¹⁵

Mimesis is part of the essential metabolism of fashion, and on an abstract scale, Simmel and Tarde highlight how there can be no imitation of consumption patterns without an original event, for example, the launch when the goods become available. The launch of the new season in fashion traditionally happens on the catwalk, but today we see evermore elusive and mystical “drops” in subcultures and edgy brands. Even if the “seasons” in fashion are no longer connected to the natural seasons, the metabolism of the fashion lifecycle remains basically the same: The launch is the arrival of spring, the Dionysian festivity of renewed energy, and finally, as the trend passes, the sales become the ritual

sacrifice and inevitable “death of fashion.”¹⁶ This type of metabolism in fashion also resonates with an interesting overlap between the ideas of ritualist expenditure and violence of Bataille and Girard.¹⁷

But the cyclical metabolism also affects our relations to our bodies and the bodies of our peers, and as Girard has pointed out that we are all “mild bulimics” trying to control our own metabolism and weight, influenced by our social surroundings.¹⁸ At its extreme, this metabolism of life and death comes to define the victim, as the anorexic’s “radical freedom is synonymous with her enslavement to the opinion of others. . . . To understand desire is to understand that its self-centeredness is indistinguishable from its other-centeredness.”¹⁹ Thus, what may seem to be a metabolism of the phenomenon of fashion (the life cycles defined by the system) is a metabolism of social relations, a consumption and expenditure of other-centeredness; the ritual sacrifice of last season’s fashion in the sales corresponds with a ritual update of our social and aesthetic relations with our peers.

As so poignantly put by Girard’s triangular model of desire, the workings of desire are not dictated from above in some propagandistic model, but act through a molecular virality: Desire is horizontal more than vertical. Fashion is a desire enacted between peers, through what Sampson calls the “unconscious topologies of social relations.”²⁰ Building on Sampson’s argument, we could imagine fashion being a viral form of aesthetic competition, boosted by cultural amplification of affects,

exercised through the exploitation of the entire valence of human emotion—not just through fear, panic, terror, and fright but via the positive affects that spread through a population when it encounters, for instance, the intoxication of hope, belief, joy, and even love.²¹

As in Girard’s argument of anorexia as a “disease of desire,”²² fads and fashions act upon our bodies as aesthetic competitions, affects carried across the social waves of imitation. Just as we compete in consumption, we compete in hunger and in pleasure. As we are struck by the affect and energy of the new, we can feel the life-affirming energy of social status in our bodies: the thrill and excitement of social advancement and affirmation (even if that excitement is starvation, as in the case of anorexia or bulimia).

The imitative dynamics of fashion are associated with attraction and seduction, as consumers copy their way toward social advancement.²³ Also, such perspectives taint the application of Girard to fashion. For example, Doran points out how fashion designates an extreme form of imitation, and is

a phenomenon that has everyone marching in the same direction. This is why fashion is necessarily ephemeral; only in relatively short cycles can it maintain its dialectical tension between originality and imitation. Unlike traditional societies, in which the models of imitation are immutable and absolute, modern culture presents us with ever-changing models; liberal democratic ideology implies the freedom to choose a new model of behavior or thought – as long as this choice does not threaten the liberal order itself.²⁴

However, what has not been emphasized enough is how the imitative pleasures, affects, and demarcations come at a social price. As imitations “trickle down,” they pull people and relations with them. The thrill of the fad thrives in rivalries as pride and vanity grow into envy and greed, and these emotions are enacted through exclusion, rejection, shaming, and bullying.

RIVALRY, ENVY, AND STATUS IN FASHION

If we want to examine the competitive dynamics of “in” and “out” in fashion we can turn to the opening quote of the famous *Vogue* magazine editor Anna Wintour in the movie *The September Issue*.

“I think that what I often see is that people are frightened of fashion and that because they’re scared of it, or it makes them feel insecure they put it down. On the whole, people that say demeaning things about our world. I think that’s usually because they feel in some ways excluded or not part of the cool group. So as a result they just mock it. . . . There is something about fashion that can make people really nervous.”²⁵

Fashion thrives on vanity, on attention. But we also fear the wrong kind of attention, the rejection that cuts deep into our fragile self-esteem, the side looks and cunning wit of our skeptical peers. Arntzen’s description of fashion as always being “right” highlights how fashion is a symbolic system echoing obscure marks of aesthetic meritism (even as people know money plays a key role in acquiring such status).²⁶ Not only does Wintour put the rejected into a double bind in the quote just provided; if you think bad of fashion, it is simply because you are not cool enough to be part of the “our world.” Wintour also highlights how fear spurs the distinctions within fashion, making some “worth it,” while others are not, and if you are not comfortable with that you are “insecure” and that is why you are not part of the “cool group.” While some aesthetic categories, which pick the “in” from the “out,” may seem arbitrary, the consequences

of these decisions and their chains of action are not, but instead become the motivational foundations for exclusion and rejection, and in this way, fashion plays into a social culture of “fashion supremacy.”²⁷

From Girard’s perspective, desires are not emanating from an autonomous ego, neither do we simply desire others to desire us, but we borrow our desires from others and enact this dynamic as a form of aggression upon others, as Alison also highlights in his explanation of Girard’s model using a fashionable aviator jacket as an example.²⁸ Desire is provoked by the desires from those surrounding us; that is, desire is always part of a triangular relationship or rivalry, between two subjects and an object. This relation is structuring, but also structured by, violence, as we are taught to desire in the zero-sum social game of desire and the prestige won by its acquisition. Desire and aggression act in this triangular shape, much like the classic love triangle in many forms of historical and popular narratives: This is always competitive, violent, thriving on vanity and envy, and in the end, sacrificial.

As Girard notices, “All envy is mimetic, but not all mimetic desire is envious. Envy suggests a single static phenomenon, not the prodigious matrix of forms,” such as where the subject forgets the object that once caused the envy.²⁹ In its dynamic and socially emergent form, Girard’s envy differs from that of Schoeck,³⁰ who sees envy as much more intrinsic or part of a psychological disposition.³¹ We must thus seek the expression of envy in social dynamics and the quest for status. However, some sorts of envy are better than others, and to gain social status requires an active sorting of our envious relationships.

If we would follow Pagold’s definition, the status acquired through being “before everyone else” is simply to be liked by everyone else. This has been a common view within sociology: A person with a lot of connections, at the center of a large network, has many friends and a lot of status. But as sociologist Robert Faris argues, this is only partly true.³² Yes, a popular and well-connected person may have a “connective status,” but this does not make the person part of the elite. Instead, to earn status it is better to have “bridging status,” that is, being a person who has connections through social barriers and keeps these bridges open only to a selected few. Connectivity is ok; exclusivity is better. Social status is in act of bridging “whereby nodes efficiently connect otherwise distal regions of networks.”³³ And such a bridge must not be open to many.

To be inviting and friendly with everyone does you some good, and you may get a lot of “weak ties,” but being selective, exclusive, and manipulative gains you more status. To Faris, these selective processes explain how “seemingly rational, ordinary people routinely engage in harassment, bullying, gossip,

manipulation, ridicule, cliquishness, and ostracism” and also explain why people are not always sociable but strive to uphold networks through “reputational aggression.”³⁴

The exclusive status positions are those that can “bridge structural holes,”³⁵ that bridge over social barriers without undermining the exclusivity between the groups, that is, without letting in “non-elites” (which could undermine the status of one or both groups). “Elite status is maintained through selectivity, not connectivity, and by denying rather than accumulating friendships.”³⁶ And as Faris points out, the elite bridge-builder maintains social barriers by the effective use of reputational aggression:

Rejecting supplicants may increase the attractiveness of the exclusionary group. This is not to say that connections are without benefit, only that the relative costs and benefits shift toward selectivity in such settings. Actors who are able to efficiently bridge much of the network without an excessive number of ties arguably enjoy the benefits of centrality without the costs.³⁷

Rejecting the connection to others must be central practice in maintaining status. And with the “wrong” friends, one may risk the exclusivity of one’s network, and often peers will remind or enforce restrictions. As social hierarchies are fluid, there is a continuous need to uphold their barriers and order. Reputational aggression helps in the selection process, and also in rejecting unwanted social competition (which does not bridge to other elites). Reputational aggression includes “verbal abuse, insults, threats, harassment, ostracism, gossip, manipulation,” and their plights can be “exacerbated when perpetrators are anonymous.”³⁸ The many ways of rejecting unwanted connections increase the attractiveness of the exclusionary group: It is always a matter of bridging with the “right” people.

As Juvonen and Graham suggest, much in resonance with Faris, peer-directed hostile behaviors are robustly associated with social prominence or high status,³⁹ a view also supported in other studies.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Juvonen and Graham posit, there is a positive relation between aggression and high social status. But rejection may not simply be enough to produce status. As a mimetic crisis can only bring a temporary peace, a stigmatization through violence is necessary: to find a scapegoat—and let clothes cover up the violence.

BULLYING AND THE DYNAMICS OF AESTHETIC SCAPEGOATING

Garments are not only off-season or “out”; the wearers are so, too. As something “trickles out” of trend, so does the owner, and this is something not mentioned in the theories of Veblen, Tarde, or Simmel. Fashion is more than the garments; it is a social demarcation and force used against certain people, and the garments are more an excuse for the type of rejection mechanism Faris calls “reputational aggression.”

By being a “shallow” social interface, with its ambivalence and masquerade-like play,⁴¹ fashion is a perfect alibi for the everyday slights, snubs, or insults that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages that Derald Wing Sue calls microaggressions.⁴² As Smith and Redington argues, the sensationalized “rags-to-riches” stories cover for well-intended fashion microaggressions.⁴³ For example, friends may want to “help” with advice such as “why don’t you try to dress more normal?” or “this pattern makes you look slimmer,” or “this is a brand even you can afford,” which reproduces a dynamic of superiority/inferiority between the helper and victim.⁴⁴ Under the pretext of only discussing “shallow” aesthetics of fashion, the aggressor can easily hide behind the ambivalent signals of clothing—“I didn’t mean you, I was only talking about your clothes!”

If we are to employ Girard’s theory of scapegoating, where a mimetic crisis is displaced by turning the built-up tension against a third, a victim, we can come to see how the scapegoat is *someone dressed*. Fashion is an excuse and interface by which the scapegoating can become socially acceptable, and with the scapegoat also a certain style is socially sacrificed. As noted by Girard, the subject may try to hide the mediation toward a state of self-annihilation, veiling the mimetic dynamics behind a façade of feigned indifference or even hostility, yet simultaneously continually reaffirming the mimetic submission and dependence to the model.⁴⁵ Escaping into some form of anti-fashion may signal a feigned indifference, but the exclusionary mechanism still applies in that new subculture: Even punks have leaders and models, and reject those in the group who “sell out.”

The rejection of the scapegoat is the demarcation of a boundary against that person: A symbolic wall has been erected between “in” and “out”—and even if the victim were to change outfit and try to blend in, the signal of submission may only work temporarily (or not at all).

A typical example of this mechanic is the bouncer at a nightclub who upholds the dress code of “no sneakers tonight” but enforces the rule explicitly against people of color or people looking poor (remember, exclusivity needs to be preserved). The bouncer will first refuse to recognize the subject, but as he or

she tries to enter, a dress code violation is pointed to, which becomes an excuse for segregation. Usually the garment in question is ambiguous and some “right” clients may enter, since their sneaker-branded shoes don’t count as sneakers. Even if the victim changes shoes, another detail may be wrong (socks? jacket? no jeans tonight?). The bouncer will have new rules ready to refuse entry, but the scenario might as well have been the table of the “cool kids” at the school cafeteria, the club of the jocks, and so on. The scapegoat is dressed, and both the outfit and the wearer are rejected and in the most violent cases sacrificed, as in the most violent cases of bullying.⁴⁶

In the preceding example, “in” and “out” work as both a spatial demarcation and a social category; to be “in” means to have access to the right people. The boundary the victim tries to cross is a social as much as spatial line; “you can’t sit with us” also means “you will never be one of us.” And the clothes are the vague target onto which the line is drawn. As Shullenberg suggests, the demarcations also move into social media as mimetic conflict intensifies ubiquitous competition, which leads to more arenas for bullying and scapegoating in every social arena. Shullenberger even suggests that the success of social media is an affirmation of Girard’s theories:

Abuse, harassment, and bullying—the various forms of scapegoating that have become depressing constants of online behavior—are features, not bugs: the platforms’ basic social architecture, by concentrating mimetic behavior, also stokes the tendencies toward envy, rivalry, and hatred of the Other that feed online violence.⁴⁷

The use of symbolic demarcation and boundaries becomes even more explicit as the scapegoating dynamic is highlighted in anthropologist David Graeber’s discussion on bullying. As Graeber suggests, when we think of bullying and self-aggrandizing aggression as natural phenomena, and seek connections to our primate ancestors, “the cowards are those who lack a fundamental biological impulse, and it’s hardly surprising that we would hold them in contempt.”⁴⁸ That is, as we seek an evolutionary answer to aggression, we also start to blame the victims for their lack of self-preservation and strength. However, in Graeber’s view, aggression is not an instinct to humans. If we examine human populations, we must see that “the vast majority of human males have refused to spend their time training for war, even when it was in their immediate practical interest to do so.” So instead of seeking the answer to aggression in the depths of man, Graeber asks us to examine the social dynamics that tend to produce violence, or “how we have come to create institutions that encourage such [cruel] behavior and that suggest cruel people are in some ways admirable.”⁴⁹

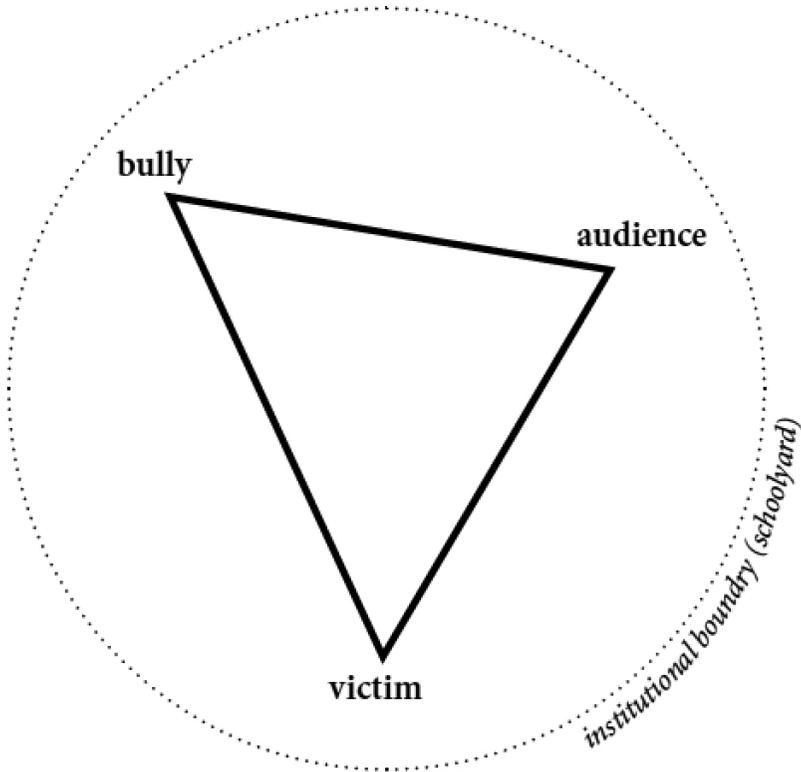


Figure 1. Graeber's model of bullying.

Graeber posits that the seeds of bullying represent an elementary structure of human domination, but that our institutional arrangements serve as techniques designed to amplify such inclinations toward more systematic violence. As Graeber argues, the everyday form of organization of certain bullying-prone environments supports a certain sort of cold-blooded and calculating adult male authority of cruel domination. Indeed, the institutional organization makes harmless conflicts escalate into bullying. The schoolyard, for example, may be the epitome of the bullying arena, and it is arranged in a way to strengthen the school's institutional authority, and the bullying taking place there is part of the experience of a subject being schooled into painful submission (see Figure 1). Bullying is a refraction of the school's authority, and as Graeber points out, it is dependent on stifling the most natural instinct when a child is encountering violence: "Children in school can't leave." The boundary

holds the victim hostage to the intensified violence, and the violence is reifying the hierarchy of the overall environment, culturing pupils into many levels of submission.

But it is important to notice how the schoolyard also exhibits a key component in the art of domination and successful humiliation: the entertainment and reproduction of a complicit audience. They are there not only to tacitly support the bully, but also to make sure the victim experiences a situation where the victim feels “she got what she deserved.” Indeed, “bullies do not, in fact, suffer from low self-esteem, as psychologists so often have repeated, no, instead most bullies act like self-satisfied little pricks not because they are tortured by self-doubt, but because they actually are self-satisfied little pricks.”⁵⁰ Thus, the triangular model of Girard is accompanied by an audience and two boundaries, one symbolic between “in” and “out” of a social group, but also the walls of the social institution, forming the arena that keeps the actors in the coliseum: There is no escape, the violent drama has to take place.

DISCUSSION

As suggested by Harman, fashion can offer room for acceptable deviance, to belong “just enough” not to be excluded.⁵¹ However, several studies have shown how fashion is not only an arena for seduction and celebration, but is as much a representation of conflict and status anxiety.⁵²

When examining fashion as an arena for mimetic desires, scapegoating, and bullying, it is easy to focus on the violence, but as Faris⁵³ and Juvonen and Graham show,⁵⁴ the bully is an entertainer of domination, often the most popular model of the group, and the audience comes to watch a moral drama evolve. Whatever the victim does to defend herself becomes an excuse for what Graeber calls the “deep structure of bullying,” where “bullying creates a moral drama in which the manner of the victim’s reaction to an act of aggression can be used as retrospective justification for the original act of aggression itself.”⁵⁵ If an authority appears to deescalate the conflict, the bully makes the situation appear as if both are to blame, which tacitly consents the aggression of the bully and becomes a way to blame the victim.

As discussed earlier, fashion provides a perfect alibi for the bully’s micro-aggressions or explicit violence, as the perception of fashion being frivolous rejects any serious analysis of its use in deep structure violence. Indeed, few would support the idea that comments about sneakers can be “deep” or “violent.” The ironic tone of the bully also veils the violence, just like the “shallowness”

of fashion acts as an excuse to also helpfully “correct” the style of the victim, which may indeed turn the bullying into an ironic play, which for an uninitiated observer may seem harmless. Using a tone that is still open to challenge, bullies make it look like a game, as they amuse both themselves and their audience. Bullying and shaming is a game, yet the bully, by his very power and his skillful use of the context, is always both rule-maker and rule-breaker. Bullying is entertaining, and the participants often think it is “fun.” The bully never seeks to persuade, but to intimidate and discredit any resistance. If the bully is somehow overpowered there is no victory, only the vacuum of a temporary withdrawal, leaving the audience hungry for the entertainment to start over.

It may be easy to think of bullying as something that “bad” people do, but not only do they feel good about themselves, the audience agrees to what they do too—often reinforcing the feeling of belonging to the right group. Clothes is one of the many ways to show belonging to the group, but also to signal submission to the taste of the group and, indirectly, to submit to the “cool” leader of the group. Pride is their necklace and they clothe themselves with violence.

And anyway, nobody likes a loner, the embodiment of a “loser.”

NOTES

1. Yuniya Kawamura, *Fashion-ology* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 20.
2. Suzanne Pagold, *De Långas Sammansvärjning* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 2000), 8.
3. Fred Hirsch, *The Social Limits of Growth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).
4. Pierre Bourdieu, “Haute Couture and Haute Culture,” in *Sociology in Question* (London: Sage, 1993), 135.
5. Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
6. Zygmunt Bauman, “Perpetuum Mobile,” *Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty* 1, no. 1 (2010), 55–63.
7. *Ibid.*, 59.
8. *Ibid.*, 61.
9. René Girard, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987) 299f.
10. René Girard, *Desire, Deceit, and the Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), 100.
11. Wolfgang Palaver, *René Girard’s Mimetic Theory* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 68ff.
12. *Ibid.*, 69.

13. Georg Simmel, "Fashion," *American Journal of Sociology* 62, no. 6 (1957), 541–58.
14. Simmel, in Palaver, *René Girard's Mimetic Theory*, 72.
15. Gabriel Tarde, *Laws of Imitation* (New York: Henry Holt, 1903), 202.
16. Harald Gruendl, *The Death of Fashion: The Passage Rite of Fashion in the Show Window* (Wien: Springer, 2007).
17. Anthony Traylor, "Violence Has Its Reasons: Girard and Bataille," *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 21, no. 1 (2014): 131–56.
18. René Girard, *Anorexia and Mimetic Desire* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 7ff.
19. *Ibid.*, 17.
20. Tony Sampson, *Virality: Contagion Theory in the Age of Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 6.
21. *Ibid.*, 5.
22. Girard, *Anorexia and Mimetic Desire*.
23. Richard Elliott and Clare Leonard. "Peer Pressure and Poverty: Exploring Fashion Brands and Consumption Symbolism Among Children of the 'British Poor.'" *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 3, no. 4 (2004): 347–59; Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).
24. Robert Doran, "Imitation and Originality: Creative Mimesis in Longinus, Kant, and Girard," in *Rene Girard and Creative Mimesis*, ed. Vern Neufeld Redekop and Thomas Ryba (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 113.
25. *Vogue* editor Anna Wintour cited in the opening credits to *The September Issue*, 2009.
26. Mari Grinde Arntzen, *Dress Code: The Naked Truth About Fashion* (London: Reaktion, 2015).
27. Otto von Busch, "A Suit, of His Own Earning': Fashion Supremacy and Sustainable Fashion Activism," in *The Routledge Handbook of Sustainability and Fashion*, ed. Kate Fletcher and Mathilda Tham (London: Routledge, 2014).
28. James Alison, "René Girard's Mimetic Theory," in *The Joy of Being Wrong* (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 7–21.
29. René Girard, *A Theater of Envy: William Shakespeare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 18.
30. Helmut Schoeck, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour* (Boston: Liberty Press, 1969).
31. Paul Dumouchel, "A Mimetic Rereading of Helmut Schoeck's *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour*," in *The Ambivalence of Scarcity and Other Essays* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014), 109–26.
32. Robert Faris, "Aggression, Exclusivity, and Status Attainment in Interpersonal Networks," *Social Forces*, 90, no. 4 (2012): 1207–35.
33. *Ibid.*, 1208.
34. *Ibid.*, 1207.

35. Ronald Burt, *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).
36. Faris, "Aggression, Exclusivity, and Status Attainment," 1211.
37. *Ibid.*, 1211.
38. *Ibid.*, 1212.
39. Jaana Juvonen and Sandra Graham, "Bullying in Schools: The Power of Bullies and the Plight of Victims," *Annual Review of Psychology* 65 (2014), 159–85.
40. Patricia Adler and Peter Adler, *Peer Power: Preadolescent Culture and Identity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Jennifer Parkhurst and Andrea Hopmeyer, "Sociometric Popularity and Peer-Perceived Popularity: Two Distinct Dimensions of Peer Status," *Journal of Early Adolescence* 18, no. 2 (1998): 125–44.
41. Efrat Tseëlon, *Masquerade and Identities: Essays on Gender, Sexuality and Marginality* (London: Routledge, 2001).
42. Derald Wing Sue, *Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestations, Dynamic, and Impact* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2010).
43. Laura Smith and Rebecca Redington, "Class Dismissed: Making the Case for the Study of Classist Microaggressions," in *Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestations, Dynamic, and Impact*, ed. Derald Wing Sue (Hoboken: Wiley, 2010), 269ff.
44. Otto von Busch and Ylva Bjereld. "A Typology of Fashion Violence," *Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty*, 7, no. 1 (2016): 89–107.
45. Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*.
46. Robin Kowalski, Susan Limber, and Patricia Agatston, *Cyberbullying: Bullying in the Digital Age* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).
47. Geoff Shullenberger, "Mimesis, Violence, and Facebook: Peter Thiel's French Connection," *The Society Pages*, August 13, 2016, <https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2016/08/13/mimesis-violence-andfacebook-peter-thiels-french-connection-full-essay>.
48. David Graeber, "The Bully's Pulpit," *The Baffler*, no. 28 (July 2015), <http://thebaffler.com/salvos/bullys-pulpit>.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. Lesley Harman, "Acceptable Deviance as Social Control: The Cases of Fashion and Slang," *Deviant Behaviour* 6 (1985): 1–15.
52. Rebecca Arnold, "Heroin Chic," in *Fashion Theory* 3, no. 3 (1999): 279–96; Rebecca Arnold, *Fashion, Desire and Anxiety: Image and Morality in the Twentieth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001); and Malcolm Barnard, *Fashion as Communication* (Oxford: Berg, 2002).
53. Faris, "Aggression, Exclusivity, and Status Attainment."
54. Juvonen and Graham, "Bullying in Schools."
55. Graeber, "The Bully's Pulpit."

OTTO VON BUSCH is associate professor in Integrated Design at Parsons School of Design, The New School in New York. He has a background in arts, craft, design, and theory, and many of his projects explore how fashion designers can engage participants to reform fashion from a phenomenon of dictations, anxiety, and fear, into a collective experience of empowerment and liberation.