A Study on Violation in Gangster Fashion

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I . Introduction

Since the end of the 20th Century, violence and brutality in mass media such as movies, television, music videos, computer games and the internet has rapidly increased. As the previously latent violence and drug problems became more prominent in the social environment and in various media, gangsters were imbued with characteristics from melancholy to self-destruction.

Gangsters are cruel and outrageous professional criminals. The term 'gangster' was used to designate the movie genre characterized by battles between east coast gangsters. An 'anti-social' and 'immoral' gangster image is often transmitted to the mass population through newspaper accounts. Since the latter half of the 1900s, the gangster image has been more frequently dealt with in music videos and fashion photographs. As mass media has changed the gangster image through the use of entertainers and comic elements, audiences have become desensitized to violence and have come to consider violence as the easiest way to solve problems. Moreover, audiences come to admire gangsters and imitate gangster characters who perform acts of violence.

A gangster's violence is present in every aspect of his identity, including his class, race and gender. Gangsters, criminal groups formed in the urban slum; transcend their poor and low-class identity through conspicuous consumption of status, loyalty, and wealth obtained through violence and criminal behavior. Immigrant gangsters who lived in a reality of poverty and/or unempolyment, sought ways to both imitate the mainstream dress code, and violate it by changing it and making it their own.

In preceding studies about gangsters, Cho(1997)[1] explains the characteristics of the gangster genre movies, Chung(2000)[2] regards gangsters' fashion as an representative example which reflects men's floating gender identity and Kwoun · Yang(2001)[3] and Lee · Chung(2002)[4] regard gangster fashion as one of the subculture style groups and connect it to hip-hop or rap music style. Gangster fashion forms gangster identity and acts as a means to violate mainstream values. However there have been very few

studies done on gangster fashion; more studies from historical, sociological and cutural points of view are needed.

Gangster image, reflecting the instability surrounding violence and corruption, has been represented in both street fashion and catwalk fashion. Therefore this study attempts to define what various gangster fashions are, to review the process of how gangster fashion has been formed and to investigate how it has become a device to reflect gangsters' anxiety which results from living in violent and degenerated surroundings.

The purpose of this study is to research how gangsters transcend their class, race and gender identities through various media such as movies, music and magazines, as well as to define what types of gangster fashion feature the theme of violation(of mainstream values, of bodily integrity, etc.), using the transdisciplinary method which extensively considers various discourses of class · race · gender identity, of social problems and of media culture.

II. Gangster Fashion and Subculture

1. Gangsters in the early 20th Century

Late in the 19th century, Tammany Hall, a New York gang, was expanding its power in cooperation with the east coast New York gang organizations of the Dead Rabbit and the Whyos. In the 1890s, criminal Mafia based in Sicilia made the first steps in America as a result of large immigration from Italy[5].

This gangsters' life, usually consisting of running illicit prostitution rings, bribery, racketeering and murder, was made known to the public through crime-related news reports and later was shown in movies. As a term, 'gangster' has been interpreted as one of the movie genres since 1930s. In the early years of the 20th century, most gangster movies were melodramas which contained romanticized images of gangsters far from the reality of organized criminals who lived in the slums.

From a historical, sociological and economic point of view, the Great Depression which started from a crash of a the new york stock exchange was a very shocking event for most Americans. Before that time, people felt secure about their economic and social stability and held a belief in the mythological "American dream"; however this mythology collapsed due to the great depression and there grew a distrust of nation and government. The atmosphere of the country was cynical and anti-social, causing the dark gangster genre to take a new turn and gain in popularity[6].

「Scarface(1931)」is a representative gangster movie of the 1930s. Paul's costume of a double-breasted suit with exaggerated lapels and a hat pulled down over one eye

set a fashion for gangster-style clothes, which were popular particularly among young and working-class men; this fashion style was the first indication that the lower classes were not following the dress patterns of the upper-class[7].

2. Gangster and Subculture

Subculture style entered the mainstream in the 1940's, with the advent of new forms of media. In particular, styles which came from underprivileged and low-class social groups gained prominance and widespread popularity[8].

These new influences brought "revolt into style", rebelling against the accepted good taste and stylishness of mainstream culture. They gave rise to the 'Teddy boy'<Fig.1>, 'Punk'<Fig.2> and 'Skinhead'<Fig.3> styles whose identities were violent, destructive and anti-social.

Between 1954 and 1956 the British press was filled with reports and comments on street muggings, vandalism and race riots carried out by 'Cosh-boys'-so called because of their favoured weapon the cosh; cosh boys indulged in violence and crime, and usually wore Edwardian style clothes[9], which in turn gave rise to a nickname, the 'Teddy boys'[10].
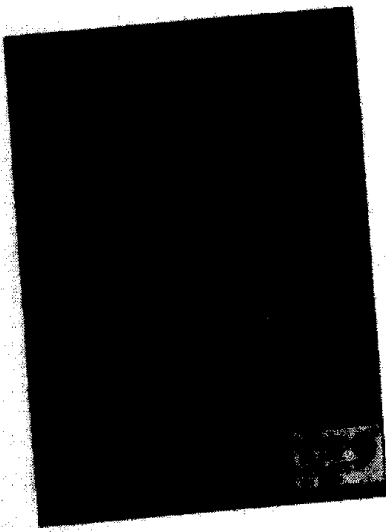
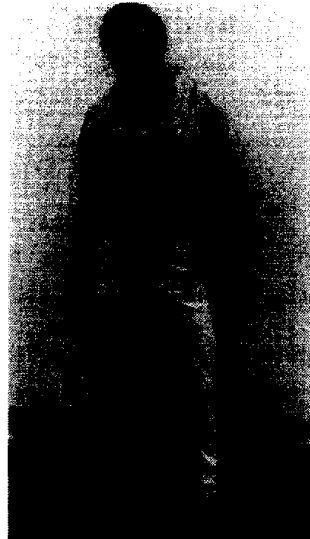Fig. 1 Teddy boy, Street   Fig. 2 Punk, i-D,   Fig. 3 Skin Head, i-D, p. 513.
Style p. 37.   p. 8.

By the 1960s, the 'Skinhead' style showed up as a rejection of 'Mod' which was a working class style at that time. Skinheads, who were involved in violence, used clothing styles to express their alienation and frustration. Most Skinheads grew up with a bad home background, thus they couldn't get a regular education. They felt a sense of alienation and it turned into a sense of oppression[11]. This alienation and

oppression brought a collectivization, which worked as a self-defense mechanism. Skinheads had a sense of superiority as whites, a collective and masculine self-consciousness, and were characterized by a short hair style.

Hebdige divides subculture groups featuring violent gang styles into Teddy boys Skinheads, Punks and so on[12]. Subculture categorized by Hebdige speaks for white juvenile vagrants but it excludes the black youth culture; therefore it didn't consider the aspect of racial resistance to dominant values. It confined the discussion to primarily economic motivations for resistance against the propertied class.

3. The Afro-American gangster

Africans came into the western society when western countries from Europe colonized Asia and America in the early 17th century. Afro-Americans started out as slaves, and have lived a marginalized existence characterized by abject poverty, and have lived in situations surrounded by violence and drug use, ever since. They have attempted to improve their situation, and conscious resistence to white oppression led to movements of black nationalism and radicalism[13].

African identity displays features of 'assimilation' to the white mainstream and also 'black nationalism'. We can divide afro-american identity into a desire to show assimilation with white mainstream culture and a desire to show off their separate identity as afro-american. The former tries to show their white-oriented identity by imitating costumes like the zoot style[14] and caribbean style, while the latter establishes their own costume identity by making a typical afro-american style through black nationalism and radicalism.

Black culture has produced very important works in diverse areas of art including film, music and theatre, and has been a tool to express experiences of resistance and struggle[15]. In particular, rap music has been a strong political means to present afro-americans' anger against increasing oppression and an inability to climb the social ladder. Afro-Americans wander over streets full of crime and drugs, delivering radical messages with words of abuse and violence arguing riots and an overthrow of the system, as well as positive messages calling for themselves to wake up, and for peace[16]. Rappers make their clothes express their identity and thus represent resistance.

III. Gangster fashion and media

Media culture, as a dominant culture, has replaced forms of high culture that have been central in people's cultural interests and influence. Images presented by media influence our minds and behavior by provoking sympathy with our experiences

and emotions[17].

People identify with characters presented by the media, simulating the character's costume and behavior. Media culture of movies and music can change the bad image of gangster violence usually regarded as 'amoral' into a positive image, leading to imitation of gangster fashion and style.

1. Gangster movies

Engelmeier said "movies are moving fashion magazines, therefore the movie costume has the characteristic to make audiences be able to capture the hero or heroine's costume from the entire silhouette to partial details according to the angle and the movement of cameras although clothes on the magazine could show just a part of the costume depending on how a model poses for a camera. These merits can easily make movie costumes high-lighted and assist unique and outstanding costume or accessories to be accepted by the public as a temporary fashion, fad"[18].

Costume in movies impresses a spectator by recreating a character in the movie, presenting the theme and background of a movie and showing the development of the story. Besides, it implicates a moral and religious idea within the movie, an artistic tide, and political and economic situations. It can capture the characters' clothes from an entire silhouette to partial details according to the angle and movement of cameras. Therefore it is easily accessible to spectators, causes new temporary fashion styles in clothing and accessories, which in turn make the movies more valuable.

Though there were lots of movies about men, new movies cause from detective stories popular among the lower classes that were quite different from former ones in form and content[19]. Gangster movies are one genre of 'film noir'[20] and are characterized by nihilism and decadantism.

As Heard said 'Changes happen first in clothes and then move inside', sometimes it is appearance that affects character and personality, not vice versa. Gangsters in the movies emphasize their appearance; their clothing functions not only to indicate to the audience that the character is a gangster, but to indicate the success of the character by how closely his dress conforms with the image of an 'ideal' gangster.

Heroes in the movies figuratively climb the social ladder through clothes. In other words, the way to change from a street tough to a successful gangster is through acquiring valuable and luxurious clothes.

2. Gangster Rap

Afro-Americans have struggled with poverty, drugs and violence since they started their lives in America as slaves due to continuous discrimination by the whites

against the blacks. The whites' segregation made afro-americans want to rebel against their poor surroundings and inferior conditions in which they lived. In the 20th century, afro-americans set out to fight for their human rights and livelihood, and expressed a resistance against national policy and society[21]. The war against public racial segregation and discrimination was started in the 1950s. In the 1960s, Martin Luther King's peaceful nonviolent black movement and the 'black power[22]' human rights movement were representative resistances against discrimination[23]. These resistant consciousness established the identity of afro-americans through black racialism and radicalism.

Afro-American culture often confronts oppression and is a way to express an experience of resistance and fight; it has produced very important works in the arts such as movies, music, plays and so on[24].

In particular, Hip-hop has appealed to people as black music full of resistance, and has become popular with the media. Hip-hop includes graffiti, sampling, dancing and rap. Rap music originated in the black ghettos of the states where there was serious discrimination against afro-americans. Rappers express the anger of afro-americans who live in bad circumstances of unemployment, crime, drugs and city violence.

Gangster rap is a specific style of Hip-hop, the text of which includes the superiority of gangs, fighting among them, and in most cases a rapper himself as a gangster. The music of gangster-rappers like Scooley D., N.W.A. and Public Enemy critique society and argue that they are the best through very insulting remarks. Public Enemy expresses an agitative and intellectual message, as if they were not a rap group but an army for racial equality, and N.W.A. shows alienation, anger, and their lives and dreams unpolitically.

Gangster rappers' fashion plays a role in showing off a resistant world view and group identity consciously; gangster rappers make an effort to show anger and resistance against the mainstream culture by introducing a style, material, color or accessory which violates the ruling class aesthetic.

IV. Types of gangster fashion

The desire to create new rules and to break free from social and moral restraints has always had a strong fascination. For the gangster who gains his status and value through violence, consuming fashion can assuage the monotony of existence, the pressures of work and the alienating effect of anonymous urban life. Gangster fashion is a distinctive visual style, signaling directly the anger and alternative loyalty of

groups who, on the outside, seem contained and controlled. Groups who felt disenfranchised from mainstream culture, and therefore from any real possibility of gaining status or power, turned to visual codes that would give them some control of their identity and would express their sense of alienation in a direct and confrontational way[25]. Namely, The gangster subversely uses fashion as a device for visualizing their power not only to reflect the crooked character of capitalism in contempt of the morality of the rich but also to look away from it.

The transformation and rearrangement of meaning is what differentiates subculture from mere youth culture and consumption[26]. This concept is developed in reference to the anthropological them bricolage, as used by Levi-Strauss. Translated into ordinary language, bricolage means taking bits from one place and putting them together to create a new meaning[27].

This study defines the gangster fashion style not as a subculture style but as a fashion style which expresses the gangsters' identity through movies, music and fashion, and influences the populace to appropriate the gangster clothing types to create new fashion. This study examines the expression of rebellion in fashion by categorizing it with images of self-consciousness, violence, play, and illusion.

1. 'Self-conscious' gangster fashion

A self-conscious image of the gangster is visualized through conspicuous and destructive consumption based on a gangster's status and wealth obtained through violence and crime. The self-conscious gangster fashion is explained by Simmel's 'trickle-up' theory and Veblen's 'conspicuous consumption' theory explaining that clothes are a way to show social status. Gangsters show off their status and wealth by wearing self-conscious clothes, in the same way that the new rich wear expensive accessories and clothes and think much of upscale brands.

This self-conscious gangster fashion has been necessarily used in the gangster movies about conflicts among groups and stories of legendary gangster bosses who were popular among the people. This social ascent is again clearly signalled through costume. As 'the most reliably consistent trait of movie gangsters was their sartorial progression from dark and wrinkled nondescript clothing to flashy double-breasted, costume-tailored striped suits, with silk ties and suitable jewellery, the transition point from petty hoodlum to successful mobster is often the acquisition of a new wardrobe[28].
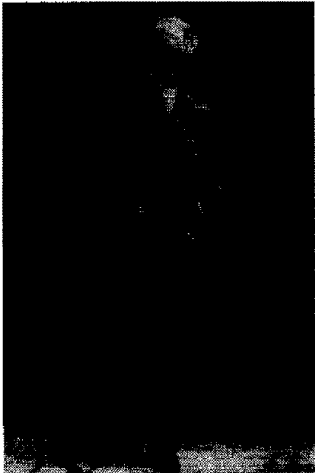
Gangsters' clothes and fashion in well-known gangster movies in the 30s' like 『Public Enemy(1934)』and 『Scarface(1932)』, typically play a role in showing success and rise from third-rate gangs. Gangsters present their advancement of status from a street tough to a successful gangster member by wearing new clothes. They wear clothes in which we can recognize them as gangsters, such as a dark or striped

double breasted tailor-made suit, a silk tie, a fedora, a trench coat and so on<Fig.4>. The clothes make the gangster icon together with a car, a gun and a cigar. The black gangsters' self-conscious fashion represents a high-class-oriented desire to show off, and an appearance of assimilation with the white mainstream too<Fig.5>.

However, since narcissism and consumerism have been female characteristics traditionally, women are portrayed as extravagant people and as a means to show off men's wealth[29]. The <Fig.6> shows it well; the gangsters are holding suitcases, probably carrying money, guns or drugs, and are escorted by women, maybe girlfriends. In contrast with the gangsters in black suits, white shirts and ties, the women wear expensive furs, dresses and accessories of splendid materials.

This self-conscious gangster fashion contrasts with the traditional idea that "there is no fashion for men". However, the gangster fashion plays a role as a working dress consisting of a shirt, trousers and a jacket, with a slight variation in ties and hats, quite different from the splendid fashion of women.

<Table 1> Self-Conscious Gangster Fashion

Intrinsic value	Represented by conspicuous consumption based on status and wealth gained through violence and crime.
Fashion Characteristics	Gangster Icons include a double-breasted suit, a tailor-made suit, a silk tie, a fedora, a trench coat and so on.
<fig. 4> Paul Muni, 『Scarface(1932)』	<fig. 5> 'Once upon a time', Arena, 11, 1992.	<fig. 6> Gangster Image, Look at Me, p. 34.

2. 'Comic' gangster fashion

The comic image can be explained as the deconstruction of the mythological gangster. In the self-conscious style, the gangster displays his suddenly acquired

wealth and power by consuming expensive clothes. In the comic style, he consciously deconstructs threatening and authoritative gangsters' icons. The comic gangster appears in movies, in which we follow the story of a man's career as a gangster; his initiation as a gangster is symbolized by the acquisition of new clothes, and the end of his gangster career is likewise indicated by discarding said clothes. The comic gangster also appears in gangster rap, in a form of exaggerated fashion which gives an impression of ludicrousness or mockery.

The first form of deconstruction is shown in 『Goodfellas(1990)』. Henry gained a silk dress shirt, an extravagant suit and accessories when he became a gangster and acquired his wealth. This shows that he identifies conspicuous expensiveness of dress with his newly acquired power and wealth. Conspicuous consumption and restless change tend to prevail in gangster films amongst gangsters on the make, where clothes are what makes a gangster a 'real' gangster. On the other side, the deconstruction of clothes symbolizes a gangster's loss of wealth and status, as well as their declining status. When Henry was a successful gangster he wore luxurious clothes but he conceals his existence as a gangster at the end of the movie and he emphasizes this by changing his clothes to casual wear.

The second self-conscious deconstruction of threatening and authoritative gangster's icons is shown in films such as 『Pulp Fiction(1994)』, and 『Leon(1994)』. Jules and Vincent took off their black clothes and changed into t-shirts and short pants in 『Pulp Fiction』<Fig.7> and Leon wore a wool skull-cap (instead of a fedora), an oversize coat and a white cotton t-shirt in 『Leon』<Fig.8> contrary to the stereotypical gangster represented by a fitted suit. As Tarantino comments 'What's interesting is how they(Vincent and Jules) get reconstructed.....their suits get more and more fucked up until they're stripped off and the two are dressed in the exact antithesis'[30]. This deconstruction of gangster icons destroys the masculine gangster image, moves audiences to laughter and reflects the virtual loss of wealth and power acquired by violence.
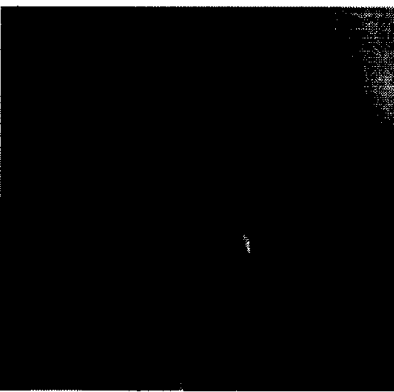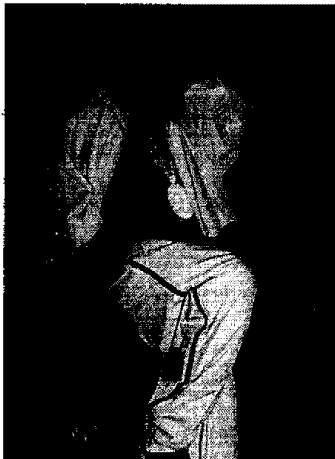
One aspect of the complexity of the gangster figure is that much of the time his masculinity is directly measured by his narcissism. The smarter the clothes, the more dangerous the man, and the more damaged the clothes, the more vulnerable the man[31].

The 'comic' gangster fashion can be found in gangster rappers' clothes. The gangster rapper Public Enemy shares the same name with a famous 1930s gangster movie, but they wear a tall hats, and tramp-like sport wear inappropriate for a violent gangster image. This unrefined kitsch fashion represents comic style by mixing inharmonious styles like elegant and casual, or sportive and classic, using strange materials and proportion or layering various items. The <Fig.9> shows a gangster rapper in yellow and blue clothes and wearing a clock as a necklace; these clothes represent one's playful instinct harkening back to the infant mind.

A gangster's success is symbolized by a gangster's appearance and self-display. Therefore a gangster's masculinity is expressed through his narcissism about clothes and appearance. To destroy the dress of a narcissistic hero symbolizes a gangster's destruction and emphasizes his weak masculinity.

As a result, a gangster's wealth and power is shown through refined fashion, and damaged fashion reveals a gangster's weakness. Thus the comic gangster fashion is explaind by deconstructing the self-conscious gangster fashion.

<Table 2> Comic Gangster Fashion

Intrinsic value	Displays his suddenly acquired wealth and power by consuming expensive clothes or to deconstruct threatening and authoritative gangster's icons consciously.
Fashion Characteristics	A skull-cap, oversize coat or t-shirt, contrary to gangster stereotype; or rapper's kitsch fashion style.

<fig. 7> Jules & Vincent, 『Pulp Fiction(1994)』	<fig. 8> Leon, 『Leon(1994)』	<fig. 9> Gangster Rapper 'Public Enemy'

3. 'Violent' gangster fashion

As subculture groups with specific fashion identities were established with the influence of television, movies and newspapers, violent subculture groups appeared based on prostitution, blackmail and murder.

These include Teddy boys<Fig.1>, whose culture was violent and destructive, and who participated in violent race riots, Punks<Fig.2> who resisted capitalism and the wealthy with funny costumes, and Skinheads<Fig.3> who appeared in the 1960s in reaction to the Mods, who themselves came from a traditional working class, and displayed alienation, violence, and the break-down of community in their style. Teddy boys were oriented to social upgrading through the wearing of suits, while gangsters

with Punk and Skinhead styles expressed their violent identity through fashion more concretely.
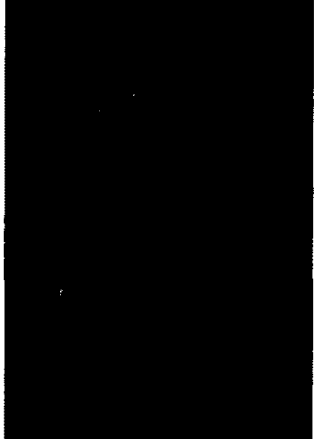
'Punk' fashion is a street fashion which overthrows the existing idea in beauty that clothes should be beautiful and neat[32]. As Hebdige says in his book, ˹The Meaning of Style˺, 'beneath the clownish make-up there lurked the unaccepted and disfigured face of capitalism...a divided and unequal society was being eloquently condemned'[33]. It expresses resistance and refusal to conform, with clothes such as pants of rubber and plastic, shirts of plastic and nets, suspender pants, artificial leather, torn t-shirts and shirts bearing provoking or nonsense slogans. The violence of Punk is represented by razors, old bolts, rings, pins, chains and piercing, garishly unnatural make-up and body exposure, and accessories like leather bracelets with metal studs and belts.

Skinheads appearing from the mid-60s' showed a pessimistic and violent character. They wore boots with studs on the bottom and metal ornaments on the top, discolored jeans, union shirts without collars and a very short or totally bald hair style, which violates the aesthetic of the mainstream.

While Hebdige's argument that 'Punk' expresses the white young vagabonds' challenging the values of the dominant class doesn't consider black youth culture, rappers also show their resistance by cutting their hair like Skinheads. That is, black rappers go bald to express resistance against the dominant culture as well as to express black superiority, much like Skinheads expressing white superiority.

Gangster rappers who were in a prison wore prison uniforms for moral reasons in the early 90s'. Public Enemy wore work clothes as a sort of uniform<Fig.10>. N.W.A. wore clothes inspired by prison uniforms, as well as chain necklaces<Fig.11>. Chains were used by whites to confine black slaves, and rappers use them to express their resistance and recollect their history of slavery and ongoing repression. They express their resistance through violence and insubordination, represented by the tattoo. In his major work on body art, Thevoz states that tattooing is one of the ways that marginalized people "speak": "tattooing is in fact often resorted to by those who cannot easily express themselves in words, who confusedly feel themselves the victims of the logo-centric order and react spectacularly by infringing the cultural principles of body integrity"[34]. Of late, the tattoo has become a part of the anti-cultural temporary fashion of day, and this tattoo use is exclusively used by outsider groups like Punks and anti-cultural groups including professional criminals, reckless drivers, drug addicts and prostitutes who all get tattoos[35]. Gangster rapper Shakur of 2pac carved the letters of 'outlaw' into his arm, a term meaning a hooligan or the man who doesn't keep laws', which shows his extreme resistance<Fig.12>. The tattoo emphasizes this character not only with the resistance of the tattoo itself and but also with the meaning of the letters.

<Table 3> Violent Gangster Fashion

Intrinsic value	Insults the aesthetic consciousness and morality of the dominating rich.
Fashion Characteristics	A destructive and deconstructive style represented by razors, old bolts, rings, pins, chains and accessories like leather bracelets with metal studs and belts, piercings, and garishly unnatural make-up and body exposure.
<fig. 10> Gangster Rapper, 'Public Enemy'	<fig. 11> Gangster Rapper, 'N.W.A.' <fig. 12> Gangster Rapper, '2pac'

4. 'Heroin chic' gangster fashion

Drugs are connected with gangsters through drug smuggling and drug traffic, and gang organizations are often hotbeds of crime. The prevention of drug abuse and the eradication of drug addicts and drug crimes became one of the most important problems in modern society. Although drugs are a major means to obtain wealth for gangsters, they weren't represented in media because they were regarded as immoral and illegal things.

After the 1960s, drug-associated issues became more open as a result of interaction with the life style of young people who abused drugs and expressed their sense of alienation. This latent culture of violence and drugs was transmitted to the public when Bob Richardson produced photographs on the subject of suicide and disappearing youth culture.

Recently, while young adults' drug use and crime has decreased, juvenile drug use and crime has increased. Thus fashion magazines which use heroin-related images in commercials, present an image of heroin addiction that is glamourous and sexy[36].

Heroin chic, glorifying drug abuse and raising issues about attitudes to drugs in art and popular culture, representatively describes a gangster image as an image of escapism and nihilism by retreating from conventional morality and conventional beauty.

These 'heroin chic' gangsters are characterized by drug-induced glassy eyes, a hazy-stare
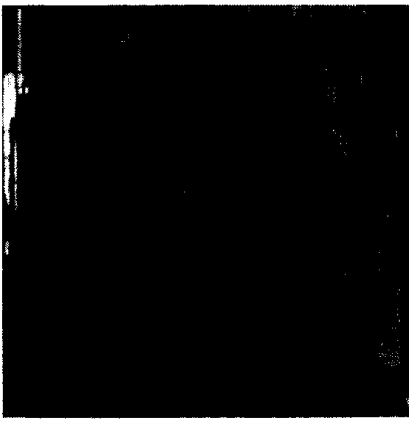
and disordered dress such as a shirt with buttons unfastened and disheveled hair<Fig.13>.

Gangsters seek more extreme experiences that give them a feeling of control over their bodies through the adornments of piercings, tattoos or scars that defy restrictive definitions of beauty. Tattoos became a part of an anti-social fad and were exclusively used by outsiders, including resistant subculture groups consisting of professional criminals, reckless youths, drug addicts and prostitutes. <Fig.14> shows a man exposing the half of his body tattooed on and wearing a bracelet made of leather and metal accessories. The drug addicted man is staring hazily. By exposing men's bodies men become objects of a woman's gaze.

<Fig.15> shows a smoking black gangster figure, a periphrastic expression of a drug taker. He wears a working style jumper and a cap and has a haggard, unshaved face with shadowed eyes. His appearance reflects a sense of alienation in urban life and the dark and poor gangsters' life.

Gangsters take drugs to have hallucinations which enable them to forget the reality that they are in a dark and poor condition. 'Heroin-chic' gangster fashion shows how gangsters violate their physical integrity through injecting drugs, tattooing images on their skin, and cutting themselves. These activities, in addition to giving them control over their bodies, also provide a strong endorphin rush. Their clothing is disordered and in poor condition, indicating neglect.

<Table 4> Heroin chic Gangster Fashion

Intrinsic value	Escapes from the reality that they are in a dark and poor condition by taking drugs to have hallucinations which enable them to forget real existence.	
Fashion Characteristics	Disordered dressing ways, a syringe, tattoos and scars and poor clothes.	
<fig. 13> Heroin Chic Image	<fig. 14> Fashion Theory, vol 1, issue 1.	<fig. 15> i-D, p. 192

V. Conclusion

Since the end of the 20th century, violence and brutality in mass media such as movies, television, music videos, computer games and the internet has rapidly increased. Therefore it is inevitable that fashion reflects both the real violence and the described violence in the newspapers, on television or in the movies.

Gangsters shown an 'anti-social' attitude and tend to violate a conventional value system. Gangster fashion started with aspirational "dressing up" items like a double-breasted suit which became popular when it showed up in 1930s' gangster movies and then was extended to the violent subculture styles of Teddy boys, Skinheads, Punks and gangster rappers.

Gangsters' violence is present in every aspects of their identity including class, race and gender. Gangsters from urban indigent areas violate class identity when they display suddenly acquired wealth such as clothes. Gangsters, mostly consisting of afro-americans and immigrants, seek not only a passive way to imitate dress codes of white mainstream society, but also an active way to violate them by establishing their own identity, like what gangster rappers are doing. In addition, gangsters violate gender identity by becoming narcissistic, a trait which is stereotypically female, while at the same time maintaining strong masculine traits such as violence and a desire for power.

Gangster fashion becomes a visual expressive tool to construct and directly express gangsters' desire to rebel against social and moral oppression and to escape from it through various fashion images which incorporate anger, frustration, rebellion and destruction.

This study attempts to categorize the violation shown in gangster fashion into 'self-conscious', 'violent', 'comic' and 'heroin chic' styles and to investigate gangster fashion's expressed aspects in reflecting anti-social, damaged and unstable characteristics.

1. The 'self-conscious' gangster fashion is represented by destructive and conspicuous consumption of status, loyalty, and wealth obtained through violence and crime. A fedora, a trench coat, a black or dark colored double-breasted suit, a white dress shirt, a sword, a gun, and a cigar, worn as devices to identify the wearer as a gangster, are items forming the self-conscious image.

2. The 'comic' gangster fashion can be explained with methods of deconstruction of the mythological gangster. At first, the gangster displays his suddenly acquired wealth and power by consuming expensive clothes. Next, he consciously deconstructs threatening and authoritative gangster icons; this desconstructive gangster fashion consists of an unsuitable sized coat, a skull-cap, and/or a t-shirt different from the gangster's iconographical fashion. The comic gangster fashion is also shown in

gangster rappers' kitsch style clothes.

3. The 'violent' gangster fashion is associated with young men's subcultural fashion styles such as Punk, Skinheads or gangster rap, the members of which consider themselves as alienated and deprived. It is expressed through body piercing, bricolage, garishly unnatural make-up and body exposure.

4. The 'heroin chic' gangster fashion reflects gangsters' drug abuse and addiction caused in part by their poor and alienated urban life and their desire to escape from reality. The 'heroin chic' image is expressed as a pleasure-seeking decadent image of indulging in drugs and an image of poor means and health.

Consequently, gangster fashion not only has had the earlier function to admit a wearer into a specific social and cultural group, but also has been increasingly examined for anger, frustration, rebellion and destruction in the various fashion types. Gangster fashion has become a device to express gangsters' desire to rebel against social and moral oppression and to escape from it.

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5) Gerald, M. P.(1977). The Rise of The American Gangster Film, 1913-1930. p. 14.
6) Cho. op. cit., pp. 14-15.
7) Maria, C(1997). Men's Fashion at the twentieth Century. NY: Costume & Fashion Press. p. 59.
8) Hebdige, D.(1983). Posing.....Threats, striking...poses: youth, surveillance, and display, in Gelder, K. & Thornton. S.(eds)(1997). Resistance Through Rituals, London: Hutchinson. p. 404.
9) After the World War II, the tailors of Savile Row-the traditional, typically conservative arbiters of British upper-class, male dress style-produced a more flamboyant line of menswear which came to be known as 'Edwardian' because it harked back to the golden age of Edward VII. jackets in this style were single-breasted, long, fitted and often featured velvet trim on the color or cuffs. The were worn with narrow trousers and fancy broadcade waistcoat.(Ted, P.(1994), Street Style, London: Thames and hudson, p. 33.)
10) Maria, C. op. cit., p. 54.
11) Kwon, Yang. op. cit., p. 65
12) Hebdige, D(1981). Subculture: The Meaning of Style. London: Routledge, p. 63.
13) Brinkley, A., Hwang, H(trans.) (1998). The history of Americans 3. Seoul: Bisul, pp 226-227, 256-258.
14) Zoot style is a upward street fashion worn by African- and Mexican-Americans who couldn't have social and economic benefit in the 1940s. Zoot suit is composed with

sky-blue pants thirty inches a angle-narrowed down to twelve inches at the bottom, a long coat that shoulder padded and waist pinched and flared out below the knees, a broad-brimmed hat and golden chain accessories. The zoot suit, with its extravagant use of expensive fabric and its luxurious accessories, loudly proclaimed the message: 'I've got it made'.(Polhemus, T. op. cit., pp. 17-19.).

15) Kellner, D., Kim, S.& Chung, J.(trans.) (1997), Media Culture. Seoul: Saemulgyul, p. 288.

16) Global Music Video. 1997(3), p. 202.

17) Kellner, D. op. cit., p. 36.

18) Engelmeier, R., Engelmeier. W. P.(1990), Fashion in Film, Prestel-Verlag, p. 7.

19) Fiske, J.(1989). Understanding popular culture, Urwin Hyman, p. 35.

20) Film Noir is a movie characterized by low-key lighting, a bleak urban setting, and corrupt, cynical characters. Film Noir usually describes a hero or notorious rascal's life which can't be away from crimes and corruption.

21) Cohn, J., Yun, H(trans.)(1978). Jesus and black revolution. Seoul; Chungsa, p. 82.

22) A movement among Black Americans emphasizing racial pride and social equality through the creation of Black political and cultural institutions: "Black Power... calls for black people to consolidate behind their own, so that they can bargain from a position of strength" (Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, http://www.yourdictionary.com).

23) Brinkley, A. op. cit., pp. 226-227.

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31) Chung, op. cit., p. 34.

32) Steele, V.(1997). Anti-Fashion: The 1970s. Fashion Theory, 1(3), p. 40.

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34) Thevoz, M.(1985). The Painted Body : The Illusion of Reality. NY: Rizzoli. pp. 76-77.

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36) The President made the critical remarks in a speech following a New York Times story on "heroin chic" and the lethal overdose of fashion photographer and heroin addict Davide Sorrenti. Sorrenti, 20, died of a heroin overdose in February. A promising fashion photographer, he was well-known for his photographs of seemingly strung-out heroin-addicted models. The "heroin chic" look had been popular in the 1990s, but was passing and with Sorrenti's death, it may come to an end. The expose of the "heroin chic" phenomenon in the New York Times article said the trend is over (Spindler, A., "A Death Tarnishes Fashion's 'Heroin Look'", New York Times, May 20, 1997, p. A1).