

Conspicuous and Authentic: Fashion Blogs, Style, and Consumption

Prepared for ICA 2011, Boston, MA

WORKING PAPER. Feel free to cite but please check for updated versions at <http://www.tiara.org/papers.html>

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Abstract:

Fashion blogging is an international subculture comprised primarily of young women who post pictures of themselves, swap fashion tips, sell vintage clothes, and review couture collections. As such, these women participate in the global flow of consumption while simultaneously producing fashion media which is read worldwide. Fashion blogging exemplifies a type of "conspicuous consumption" which is less about signaling free time and more about signifying "style" which is presumed authentic and personal. In this paper, I explore how fashion bloggers are complicating theories of conspicuous consumption and information flow. The types of interactions with luxury, mass-market, and secondhand goods that bloggers value are those that simultaneously embrace sped-up fashion cycles and resist "top-down" fashion journalism. Identity presentation online through the use of consumer goods cannot simply be explained by current theories of the conspicuous. I outline three refinements to conspicuous consumption theory that can help explain these dynamics. First, incorporating audience theory; second, emphasizing motivation and using ethnographic methods to uncover this; and third, looking at status as specific and located rather than global.

Introduction

Fashion blogging has grown considerably over the last five years, and as its readership has grown, so has its influence. The most famous fashion bloggers, such as Tavi Gevinson and Jane Aldridge, are courted by designers and receive invitations to fashion shows, free clothes, and opportunities to collaborate with fashion brands. Magazines like *Lucky* and *Elle* feature fashion spreads inspired by and starring fashion bloggers. The bloggers behind *The Sartorialist*, *What I Wore*, and *Facehunter* have published books of their photographs and commentary. As the benefits accruing to successful fashion bloggers mount, more women—fashion bloggers are

virtually all women, plus a few gay men—are starting fashion blogs. The Independent Fashion Bloggers coalition has more than 3,000 members, and held its second annual conference in New York City during Fashion Week, featuring the designers of cult label Proenza Schouler as keynote speakers. Fashion bloggers hold meetups and “tweet ups” in cities around the world. There are fashion bloggers in virtually every city in the United States.¹

Fashion bloggers are both producers and consumers of fashion content. Most obviously, they participate in the global flow of consumption by buying goods (clothes, shoes, accessories, makeup, etc.), writing blog posts, and taking photographs which promote “fashion” as a concept. Elizabeth Chin argues that consumption is not limited solely to buying and selling, but is a larger social process which includes thinking about goods, talking about purchases, collecting objects, imagining fantasy purchases, and a diverse array of other activities, ideas, and engagements with objects (2001, 7). Fashion bloggers display a diverse and complex range of engagements with “fashion,” “style,” “design” and “beauty” through their blog content and the clothes that they wear, purchase, and comment on—whether luxury, mass market, or second-hand. While on one hand, the rapid spread of trends and ideas through the blogosphere fuels “fast fashion,”² the strong belief in personal, authentic style espoused by fashion bloggers, and the popularity of clothing swaps, thrift stores, “remixing” and other practices that fall outside of the fashion industry, provides an alternative to the model of consumption modeled in the mainstream fashion press.

To understand this complexity, I draw from Thorstein Veblen’s theory of *conspicuous consumption*. Veblen argued that ostentatious practices such as excess servants, elaborate

¹ I have interviewed fashion bloggers in Nashville, Raleigh/Durham, Boston, and Washington DC, and have been able to find a plethora of fashion bloggers in every city I’ve visited.

² Fast fashion refers to the speeding-up of trend cycles, exemplified by cheap, trendy clothing stores like Forever 21, H&M, and Zara.

hairstyles, and frivolous hobbies demonstrated the wealth and free time available to the socially privileged (1899). Today, the term is more frequently used to indicate a purchase that signals a high-status position, often a luxury branded good such as an automobile or handbag. Fashion blogging is a clear display of consumption to an audience, with the intention of portraying one's personal style. Outside of a fairly small range of "luxury" fashion bloggers, most bloggers are not signaling wealth (or free time, although blogging is time-consuming)³, but creative expression and originality. The indication of individual identity through the curation and display of clothing and accessories is in keeping with the ethos of social media, which emphasizes "authenticity" above all (Marwick 2010). Thus what is being indicated is a quality that is mythologized as an innate talent, signaled through the display of consumer goods. In this paper, I use ethnographic work with fashion bloggers in four US cities and observation of fashion blogs to argue that current theories of "conspicuous consumption" are insufficient to explain the complexities of online displays of consumption given the norms and affordances of social media.

Conspicuous Consumption

Since Veblen theorized conspicuous consumption in the 19th century, economists have defined conspicuous consumption as purchasing goods for reasons beyond their use value.⁴ This view demonstrates the somewhat obtuse nature of economic models, as postmodern theorists have discussed extensively how consumer goods are used for identity expression and status display far beyond any practical value (Baudrillard 1998; Hebdige 1979). Anthropologists have further analyzed how consumption is inscribed and bounded by social and material conditions (Chin

³ Furthermore, "free time" is less a status symbol than it was in 1899.

⁴ Veblen's theory specified consumption that is extravagant and wasteful, to indicate the economic means of the consumer. The term has morphed into indicating any form of consumption that is non-utilitarian or "ceremonial" in nature (Ackerman 1997; Campbell 1995). In this paper I use conspicuous consumption to indicate consumption practices that relate to the increase of local or global status (Schor 2007).

2001). In other words, how people consume goods is deeply influenced by their environment—can they afford to buy a designer outfit, and if so, do their peers see this as impressive or *déclassé*? Moreover, how goods are *read* is also highly dependent on context. Renée Richardson Gosline’s research on counterfeit luxury goods has found that people base their assessments of whether a luxury purse is genuine or not on the person carrying it (2009).

Sociologists and economists have attempted to clarify the specifics of conspicuous consumption beyond its everyday sense. Colin Campbell argued that the theory can be interpreted in two main ways: determining whether consumption is conspicuous is either dependent on the consumer’s motive or intention to increase his or her status, or that the outcome of the consumption successfully increased status (1995). This vagueness makes conspicuous consumption difficult to leverage with precision. Furthermore, theories of conspicuous consumption have failed to interrogate the meaning of *conspicuous*. What constitutes conspicuousness? Is it something that can be seen? Talked about? Photographed? Economic theories typically presume neighborhoods, peers, or other types of co-located relationships—Veblen referred to “fellow men.” But consider the celebrity relationship with a luxury brand. Celebrities are valuable commodities for brands as their endorsement can create trends and spur sales. Brands explicitly hire celebrities for advertising campaigns and product placement such as red carpet outfits. Very few people will actually see Angelina Jolie wearing a Versace dress at the Oscars. However, millions will see pictures and videos of the event, making the outcome of this act of consumption extremely conspicuous. But if conspicuous consumption is determined by the consumer’s motive for displaying the good, it is impossible to know what a celebrity’s motivation is for wearing a particular outfit without candid interview data.

Despite the analytic vagueness around “conspicuous consumption,” there is a trend towards mediating and publicizing consumption practices online, as demonstrated by social shopping sites (Groupon, Pinterest), product review sites (GoodReads, Amazon), product bookmarking services (Kaboodle, Polyvore), fashion, design, gadget, food and lifestyle bloggers, and so forth. Conspicuous consumption is a potentially useful theoretical concept for evaluating both the intent behind such consumption and how it is interpreted by networked audiences.

Fashion bloggers provide an interesting case both for clarifying some of this vagueness and extending theories of conspicuous-ness to mediated realms. Personal style bloggers dress specifically to display their acts of consumption to a networked audience. Like celebrities, they display consumption through photographs and videos, which are viewed by many more people than in person. Moreover, the wide readership for these blogs indicates that the outcome of such consumption is to increase their pecuniary status in the eyes of the audience. But unlike celebrities, they are accessible. In fact, a key differentiation between bloggers and celebrities is that bloggers are available to an audience and interact with their readers (Marwick and boyd 2011). This ideal is common to social media which follows a many-to-many model of content transmission rather than the one-to-many model of broadcast media (television, radio, print media). Fashion blog readers extend this further by evaluating blog quality based on the “realness” of the blogger and the authenticity of her personal style.

Method

A fashion blog is, simply, a blog about fashion. While there are thousands of fashion blogs, they can be crudely divided into three categories. Personal style bloggers post pictures of themselves and their outfits. Curated fashion blogs resemble industry or fan blogs, and comment on couture collections (or their Target equivalents), review products, and monitor trends. Street style blogs

contain photographs of stylish people snapped on the street. There are thousands of variants within these three categories and countless more devoted to specific slices of the fashion/beauty industry (nail polish, petite clothing, dressing modestly). Although I have interviewed a variety of fashion bloggers and a few design and lifestyle bloggers, this paper focuses primarily on personal style bloggers.

The data for this paper comes primarily from interviews with 30 fashion bloggers from four US cities: Nashville, Raleigh/Durham, Washington DC, and Boston. Bloggers were found through search engines, links on blogrolls of other bloggers, directories on sites like IFB (Independent Fashion Bloggers) and Chictopia, and referrals from other bloggers. Each interview took place in person and took from 45 minutes to two hours. The interviews were semi-structured and all bloggers filled out an identical questionnaire. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded using an emergent coding scheme in Atlas.ti. I also attended events with fashion bloggers in the Boston area such as meet-ups and clothing swaps. Data was also collected from more than one hundred fashion blogs read through Google Reader for a period of six months. Fashion bloggers vary in their sense of aesthetics, style, body type, socio-economic class, ethnicity, background, and so forth, but most are women.⁵ All bloggers interviewed for this project were female, and ranged in age from 15 to mid-50s.

Engagement with Consumption

Fashion bloggers often shrug off their own actions as “narcissistic,” “shallow,” or “silly,” but most of them have a complex and nuanced engagement with fashion and consumption. Alli XT, a mid-20s white woman from Connecticut, describes herself as an eco-feminist, and she’s clearly

⁵ There are several high-profile male fashion bloggers such as Scott Schuman of *The Sartorialist* and Bryan Grey-Yambao of *BryanBoy*, but most fashion bloggers are women in their 20s and 30s.

thought deeply about the ethics of her engagement with fashion and style. She resolved to wear solely second-hand and thrift store clothing for all of 2010, and used her blog to be accountable. Alli does not wear fur or leather and feels strongly that the fast fashion cycle of retail is harmful for the planet. For her, blogging is a way to distinguish fashion from, as she puts it, “the notion that you have to be wealthy, white and thin to look more presentable.” She distinguishes blogs from traditional media for precisely this reason:

Alli: I consume blogging because it's not traditional media, and I feel that I can tune out some of the messages that, if I were watching TV, would just be there in my face constantly.

Alice: Like what?

Alli: I guess, you know, in terms of if you watch TV, you're just bombarded constantly with reaffirmations of some of the things that blogging goes against. Which is... you need push-up bras and spandex to look beautiful, you need to be way thin. You need to lose weight, lose weight, lose weight. You need the latest, most expensive, the made in China and mass produced wares. You need to stand out, but stand in at the same time.

Alli's blog is partially a demonstration that it's possible to dress in thrift store clothing and still look pulled-together. She clearly loves the aesthetics and creativity involved in fashion, but opts-out of the prevalent fast fashion mentality for political reasons, primarily issues of sustainability and environmentalism. Alli engages with fashion while resisting conventional modes of consumption.

Samantha Chu is a sassy and politically aware 20-something native Bostonian. Despite growing up in a working-class environment, her elite liberal arts education and employment at exclusive design firms has inculcated her into upper-class norms. She speaks eloquently about the classist nature of style and taste:

Samantha: I think that a good thing that's happening with fashion blogging is almost that people get to come out of the woodwork who love fashion. And I tried

to talk about this with the girls, the fashion bloggers. I'm like, do you understand what I'm saying? But I feel like maybe they're beyond it, maybe they don't even think this politically about it. Because they just really enjoy the art of dressing and don't really feel as much anger about it. I think I just have an issue with class anyway, so probably it's just like fired up with the idea of fashion and class. I want to show that people can enjoy dressing and don't have to spend a lot of money. One thing that I always think is like, I get something, I find it at the Goodwill and I lie and say it's vintage. I just say it's vintage. It's like a blanket term.

Alice: Do you think our ideas of what is good taste are class-based?

Samantha: I think they're learned, and I just think that sometimes it's difficult because I want to have good taste, but then I came into working at Schumacher [designer furniture store] and I'm like, "That's a nice couch, " and my co-worker was like, "Don't say couch! It's sofa!" You have to learn these things! I don't know! And then, don't say curtains. He's like, "It'll be curtains for you!"

Alice: What are you supposed to say? Drapes?

Samantha: You have to say drapery, window treatments.

Bourdieu's argument that taste is a set of class norms inculcated through socialization is illustrated here (1984). Samantha did not grow up using terms like "sofa" and "window treatments," so she must explicitly learn them to occupy an upper-class subjectivity. Surrounded by designer furniture and handbags at her places of employment, she bemoans how these goods are available only to the very wealthy:

Sometimes I just feel like...I've just always felt like you have to grow up around these nice things in order to appreciate them. How do you even know how to appreciate them? And then working at Louis Vuitton now, it's like, this bag is good, these bags never go on sale. These bags hold up over time. They just have a heritage, and so does Schumacher, where things are meant to last. They're meant to be heirloom pieces, you're meant to pass them down to your children. But poor people can't do that. People who can't afford it cannot do that. So part of me just gets...I just get angry because I want that for everybody. I wish everybody could have that luxury of passing things down to their children, like having nice things and having that quality and understanding what quality even means.

In her blog, *A Glimpse of Glamour*, Samantha makes explicit choices to counters these assumptions around style and quality. She features Asian and Asian-American models and

designers to challenge the normativity of whiteness, such as the fetishization of French culture by fashion bloggers. She shops discriminatingly at discount stores like TJ Maxx to obtain goods that she considers quality at low prices and features them in photographs. And like many other bloggers, she emphasizes the skill of “styling,” or putting clothes together in stylish and creative ways to create certain moods or aesthetics. Still, she struggles with her desire to analyze class critically and still participate in fashion structures. She told me, “I feel like I have a strange, I’m in a strange predicament in terms of class. Because I want to be around fashion, but sometimes I feel like in order to get near fashion, I have to take all these weird, uncomfortable feelings I have about class with them.” Samantha demonstrates many of the unspoken assumptions about taste and flow of capital that underlie the global fashion industry, but are rarely—if ever—talked about in mainstream fashion media. Having a blog allows Samantha to engage with fashion in a critical way that helps her to work out some of her discomfort.

Lora and Josh are a couple and artistic partnership who collaborate on Lora’s fashion blog, *In Bug’s Drawers*. They work diligently on producing beautiful and unusual photographs. Lora conceptualizes the photo shoots and chooses the costumes, which are primarily vintage clothes. She and Josh scout locations around the DC area, Lora models, and Josh takes photographs. She describes their artistic process:

Lora: Remember that one post we did. We did this post called “Red Rubber Ball.” It was recent. And my mind works, I like come up with most of the story-like ideas. He does sometimes, but, my mind works really weird. We were just getting up early. We stayed up all night. This is what we do. We tend to stay up all night long and take pictures like at six in the morning and go back to bed because we’re so sporadic with things.

Josh: We’re night people anyway.

Lora: Yeah, we’re night people. But we stayed up all night. I was like, “I’ve got to go take these pictures of this jumper I had.” I was thinking of where I wanted to take them. The park down the street was the fastest easiest way to go since I

wanted to go back to sleep. And I thought of the circle in the concrete, and I was "you know, that reminds me of a ball." I was thinking of my outfit, how childish it kind of looked. How about if we find real fast a store a red rubber ball. From there it spiraled to thinking about the song. That's how my mind works sometimes. I'll just think of things real fast. Other times I'll plan it out.

Although Lora and Josh both consider *In Bug's Drawers* to be a fashion blog, their emphasis is clearly on artistry. Lora said, "The role of fashion? Really there's not much of a role, I don't think, other than what I want to wear that day." She wears primarily vintage clothing from the 1940s through 1970s and attempts to create a mood and an image by using clothes as costumes. On the other hand, both Lora and Josh recognize the political point of view behind the blog:

Josh: Every time you buy something that's old, that's one less thing that you buy that's been manufactured in a way that's harmful, you know what I mean? And then this morning, we're writing out your questionnaire and she's like, "What if we did a feminist type focus?"

Lora: It really is, what I thought I'd do now is on my blog, I've got these posts that are feminist focused. Like, "What is Beauty?" post that I do.

Alice: What are your "What is Beauty" posts?

Lora: I have this real big passion about beauty and how it's represented in our society right now. I was telling him about, if the fashion industry today took over blogs, I don't know if I would exist. Just because I'm not stereotypically beautiful, I don't look a certain way.

Lora falls into the pantheon of feminist artists who use self-portraiture to comment on fashion and gender, such as Cindy Sherman and Nan Goldin. While she recognizes that blogging has made her pay more attention to her style and spend more money on clothing, she is almost entirely uninterested in mainstream trends or the fashion press. Instead, she frequents eBay, vintage clothing stores, and thrift stores to find eclectic and unusual looks. Rather than attempting to make Lora look "beautiful" in a mainstream sense, Lora and Josh create strong and evocative photographs by using dramatic settings and props like creepy vintage Halloween masks. Although Lora does participate in fashion consumption by thinking about, purchasing and

styling clothes, she operates almost entirely outside of mainstream cycles of consumption and enjoys fashion for reasons other than trends and conformity.

The Value of Authenticity

Many bloggers emphasized the value of authenticity in determining the quality of a fashion blog. Bloggers position the genuine in opposition to mainstream fashion blogging, which they criticize for not featuring “real women” or affordable clothes. Katy Rose, for example, says “I want them [bloggers] to be someone I could see on the street and be able to relate to in that moment. And not like a model in a magazine. That's what makes blogging different from a magazine.”

Authenticity also implies access. DC blogger Lisa says that a good blogger is “really, just an accessible blogger who answers reader questions, or will answer your tweets. I think that goes a long way too, because it's more than just runway models and fashion shoots. It's a real person who cares about the trends and their readers, too.” Finally, the importance of an authentic personal style that is not overly influenced by trends or sponsors came up in many interviews.

Julie from the popular New England blog *Orchid Grey* commented:

I think it's important to have that authenticity. And the reason why I really love blogs, I love magazines but I really love reading blogs because it's coming from a specific person, it's someone's unadulterated point of view from their world. So I think it's really interesting to see that, and see how they read the same article in *Vogue* or whatever magazine as I did and they put a totally different spin on whatever fashion spread that they were inspired by, or what they were drawn to. So when someone is writing honestly about themselves and their sense of style, I think that's really interesting. And I think it's important as well. There's something that's going to come out of this movement. I'm not really sure what it is, but it's something that's happening that's important. People aren't just turning to magazines, and television, and movies, and what's being told to them that's in style, they're really finding it for themselves. And I think that's something that's really different that maybe we haven't seen before.

Julie contrasts real, individual style with that of magazines and television, which are seen by many bloggers as pushing mindless consumption and trends rather than what fits an individual aesthetic (and, important to many, an individual's body type).

Authenticity is not an absolute quality, but a social judgment that is always made in distinction to something else (Grazian 2003). In this case, the “authenticity” of individual style is contrasted to the market-driven, mainstream fashion press. This authenticity is viewed as something innate, as if having good style is intimately tied to one's identity and individual sense of self. Zoe, a 15 year old from the suburbs of Nashville, showed up to our interview wearing a sequined top, flared floral skirt, textured tights and purple platforms; she says her schoolmates mostly wear jeans and t-shirts. She said, “I think fashion is a creative expression.” Amy, a working-class Bostonian, told me, “I always liked fashion but I've never realized how creative I can really be with it. It just helped me to really express that about myself.” Style and self-expression through fashion, to many bloggers, is a creative, artistic act that speaks deeply to their sensibilities.

These understandings of the authentic speak deeply to cultural theories of people using consumer goods to symbolize or mark identity and affiliation (Featherstone 1991; Douglas and Isherwood 1978; McCracken 1988). But they also speak to the *conspicuous* nature of conspicuous consumption. Fashion bloggers are taking pictures of themselves for other people to see: they assume an audience. They are consuming—in different and often “resistive” ways—in order to demonstrate a sense of expression, creativity, and personal ethics to their readers, to produce a certain impression. As I mentioned in the introduction, the belief that a good social media user is accountable and accessible to the audience is widespread through Web 2.0 culture (Marwick 2010; Marwick and boyd 2011). A fashion blogger should not only be authentic in her

style (and by proxy her consumption) but in her availability and interaction with her audience. Thus the *conspicuous* aspect of consumption is absolutely central to the value placed on the authentic in fashion blogging.

Retheorizing the Conspicuous

Given this importance, how do we re-theorize the concept of conspicuous consumption to be useful to analyze acts of consumption, widely conceptualized, that are mediated and made visible through social media? First, *conspicuous* must be re-thought to encapsulate audience theory rather than simply co-presence. Bloggers overwhelmingly cited other fashion blogs as their primary inspiration for fashion rather than the people in their social circle or neighborhood. Some, like Zoe, the stylish suburban teenager, dress in a way that is considered peculiar by her peers. But even given mediated interactions that are available to a theoretically “global” audience, the people who actually read a particular blog post, the people imagined by the blogger to read her blog, and the people that she actually *knows* read a blog comprise three entirely distinct spheres. Given that social media intrinsically assumes an audience, perhaps the conspicuous-ness can be in the affordance of the software through which consumption is demonstrated. Taking self-portraits and storing them on a private, secure server is different from displaying pictures on a publicly-available Facebook profile, even if nobody views either besides the photographer.

Second, the problem defined by Colin Campbell in Veblen’s original theory remains salient. Is consumption conspicuous if it is *intended* to produce increased status, or is it conspicuous if it *has* produced increased status? The problem with the first definition, as I argued earlier, is that ascribing motivation to consumers is extremely difficult. I think, however, this is

more of a methodological issue than it is a theoretical one. I think conspicuous consumption must be located in intention, as individual interpretation of any act is so wildly individual and specific that it would be almost impossible to determine whether anything at all was, indeed, “conspicuous.” For example, I might buy a fur coat with the goal of impressing other people. If virtually nobody I encounter is impressed by this fur, and indeed my status decreases as a result of wearing an ethically problematic garment, I have clearly not achieved my goal. However, my original act of consumption was, I believe, still conspicuous. Similarly, if I throw on an old dress that is interpreted by someone I pass on the street as a valuable vintage piece, my status may have increased in her eyes, but the intent of my consumption was *not* conspicuous. Methodologically, it is necessary to take an anthropological approach in order to determine this motivation, which becomes even trickier when we consider the inherent inaccuracies in self-reporting. Taking this approach will require some methodological experimentation.

Finally, while Veblen emphasized “pecuniary status,” in order to make conspicuous consumption useful we must decouple status from wealth. Status is a local phenomenon rather than a global one—in other words, subcultures and communities have specific status markers that do not necessarily transfer to the general public.⁶ The fashion bloggers interviewed for this article are not trying to create an impression of wealth, but authenticity and a creative, personal style.⁷ Their acts of consumption are undertaken with these goals in mind. If conspicuousness is linked to a more general understanding of local status, the community under scrutiny must be evaluated to determine its valued objects and practices.

⁶ Of course, there are certain things that are considered high status across populations, such as a Harvard education or an expensive sports car.

⁷ Some fashion bloggers are, of course, attempting to appear very wealthy through their display of designer goods. I hope to research this subculture in the future.

Conclusion

Fashion blogging is often dismissed as superficial or narcissistic. At the same time, it is a genre of blogging that is rapidly growing as other genres are diminishing in popularity. It is also a site of great creativity and productive energy that is populated primarily by women. Obviously, the disparagement of fashion blogging, and fashion in general (especially by the usually celebratory tech press), is influenced by its status as a highly feminine genre. In the United States, there is a lengthy history of viewing the female consumer as silly, careless, and wasteful (Kroen 2004).

Many women, however, critically interrogate their own interactions with fashion and consumerism, from members of explicitly subcultural movements like punk rock, eco-feminism and fat-positivity to online communities that focus on thrift, de-cluttering or social responsibility. This is demonstrated by the host of creative consumptive practices that fashion bloggers engage with, from “remixing” clothes (combining clothes one already owns in new ways), to swapping (often through the mail), to wearing the same dress every day for a year (the Uniform Project), to making one’s own clothes, to thrift or discount shopping. Even entirely mainstream fashion bloggers primarily consume in order to convey a sense of personal, creative style rather than mindlessly aping trends or displaying wealth.

The increasing online mediation of consumer practices requires a re-configuration of the theory of *conspicuous consumption* in order to take into account complex dynamics of status, audience, authenticity and the architectures of social technology—the very concepts complicated by social media. In this piece, I outline three changes to conspicuous consumption theory that can make it useful for analyzing online consumption. First, incorporating audience theory; second, emphasizing motivation and using ethnographic methods to uncover this; and third, looking at status as specific and located rather than global. In this way, conspicuous consumption

can be used both to analyze the use of consumer goods as symbolic markers for identity work, and the range of consumer actions that take place in mediated environments.

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