Foolishness of Fashion

Popular brand names such as [Gucci](http://www.gucci.com/main.html), [Prada](http://www.prada.com/), [Fendi](http://www.fendi.it/), [Diesel](http://www.diesel.com/), [Dolce & Gabbana](http://www.dolcegabbana.it/), [Roberto Cavalli](http://www.robertocavalli.net/), [Pucci](http://www.emiliopucci.com/flash.html), [Chanel](http://www.chanel.com/), [Valentino](http://www.valentino.it/), [Christian Dior](http://www.dior.com/), [Jean Paul Gaultier](http://www.jeanpaul-gaultier.com/vf/Home/default.htm), [Yves St. Laurent](http://www.ysl.com/), [Versace](http://www.versace.com/), [Armani](http://www.giorgioarmani.com/), [Hugo Boss](http://www.hugo.com/), [Hermes](http://www.hermes.com/), [Nina Ricci,](http://www.ninaricci.fr/) [Sonia Rykiel](http://www.soniarykiel.com/), [Vivienne Westwood](http://www.viviennewestwood.com/) and many more, have caused many an uproar in households where the amount of pocket money and desire for brand names were incompatible.

But where did this fascination with brand names start?

Fashion is the way in which we express ourselves and display our social standing to the world. For politicians and celebrities, it could indicate to the world that they have achieved greatness, and because of their own cleverness, they can afford to wear brand names. In some cases, as with Lady Gaga, it also displays a certain sense of stupidity in search of attention. Think of her meat dress…. Listening to the Fashion Police on TV, one can almost assume that the weirder the apparel, the more intelligent and braver the wearer and the designer. Like modern art, modern fashion sometimes challenges us to understand and accept new concepts.

For teenagers, this can be a minefield. Although the likes of Justin Bieber and Selena Gomes appeal to the very young, and are not too extreme to follow in fashion, the Rihannas and the Gagas could become a problem if taken too seriously. What looks great on a runway or red carpet could be ridiculous if worn to a school function. Most brand names, such as Nike, Levi and Baby Phat offer us wearable clothing at a cost. Their clothes are middle of the road and most dads would be happy to see their daughters and sons in a pair of Levi’s (not the ripped ones though), but would balk at the cost. For them, a pair of Mr. Price denims would do the trick, and Woolies are much better quality and would last longer!

This is not a new area of dispute. These same parents drove their parents to the brink of insanity with their pleas for CAT boots and Levi jeans. And the generation before that, it was miniskirts and gelled hair. Remember the low rise jeans and open midriffs of a while back?

Most teenagers would settle for a few pieces of brand name clothing in their cupboard, but would then fall into the next trap: fake or “fonkong” clothing and accessories from China. Although these are cheap and almost, but not quite, the real thing, the real cost of these clothing is more devastating than they could know. Fake brands are illegal and some of them use forced child labour to manufacture these clothes and accessories.

Fake goods are marketed with ingenious names: Ballstar instead of Allstar, Abcids for Adidas, Polystation for Playstation, FTZA for Fila, Nire instead of Nike, Fuma instead of Puma and Sonia instead of Sony. There is even a fake goods mall in China! I also found a German company that specializes in packaging and marketing fake brands on the Internet.

Maybe we should concentrate on individuality and incorporate our personal sense of fashion into our daily wear, whilst relying on a few choice pieces to carry us through. So by all means, buy a pair of Levi jeans or those Gap shorts, but bear in mind that the clothes do not make the man, or woman!

Shakespeare already commented about the foolishness of fashion in Much Ado About Nothing:

“I have known when he would have walk'd ten mile afoot to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new doublet”