

Comparing modern fashion to fashion of the past



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Comparing Modern Fashion Design to Fashion Designs of the Past Modern fashion and fashions of the past are as different as night and day. The two are controlled by two main things; style and a person's place in the world (their finances). Today's basic wardrobe will consist of whatever clothing a person needs for work (a suit or nice dress, uniform, or work clothes), clothing for going out (party dresses, suits, etc.), clothing for sleeping or lounging, and clothing for when you are just living (tees, jeans, sports attire, etc.).

For the purpose of this comparison, the fashion of the Victorian period will be used.

The Victorian wardrobe consisted of clothing for the day and clothing for sleeping. Many times the undergarments would be used for both purposes. The designs of the fashions of today are very different from the designs of the past. Rather than having a few pieces of clothing for the entire year with the addition of a wrap for warmth in the winter, entire wardrobes are seasonal with one wardrobe for warm temperatures and another for the cool seasons. The designs now are basic with additions of ruffles, ribbon, pleats, and other things to decorate the basic items.

An example would be the basic a-line dress for a girl. An a-line is a shift dress. It buttons at the shoulders and gradually increases its width to form a bell shape. But this basic shape is used by many children's clothing designers. They make it their own by what they added to it.

Accessories are used, but they tend to add to the style of the garment rather adding bulk. The Victorian period used many elaborate ways of expressing

themselves through their fashion. The women wore dresses that consisted of many yards of fabric covering them from neck to floor and from shoulder to wrist.

Under these dresses were many slips, hoops and petticoats. The dress was adorned with vests, waist lets, large pleated collars, high, stiff hoods and trains.

There were, also, pleats, ruffles, tapestries, etc. everywhere to adorn the clothing of the rich. Metals were even used to protect the soldiers of the armies. Elaborate hairdos and hats adorned the heads of men and women alike.

Britches were added for men allowing more ease of movement. All of these excesses were only afforded by the royalty and wealthy. During this period, a number of pieces of clothing were used as accessories.

Many times, two or three vests were worn over a shirt to signify a man's place in the world. Or a dress would be layered many times with skirt over skirt over skirt to show the wealth that a woman's family possessed.

All of these layers would be of different expensive materials such as silk, tapestry or leather. Today, fashion is, still, about making it your own. But it seems that the emphasis has gone from covering the body to uncovering as much as possible. Much less material goes into a piece of clothing these days.

And accessories can appear expensive and actually be from your local department store.

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As man traveled and explored the world, more raw materials and more advanced ways of processing were learned by the merchants. Fashion become more colorful and the fabric used were of a better quality. Silks were imported. Jewels and embroidery were added to embellish the clothing. Due the cost of the silk, jewels, and embroidery, only the rich and powerful could afford such items.

This started the difference between the clothing of the rich and the poor. The poor of the Victorian period were much like the poor in past generations. Their clothing was just that, clothing to cover the body.

There wasn't fashion to it. The poor were forced to wear the fabrics that could be crudely made in their region.

Even though many of the poor began to work in the sweat shops and factories of this time, they did not have the resources to afford the finer silks and tapestries. Their clothing consisted of rough cotton fabric or wool with little to no color or adornment. Today, fashions, still, separate the classes, but more by price and brand name than appearance. There is not a lot of variance between a tee shirt bought at Wal-Mart and one bought at Macy's.

Many of the basics are made in the same factories overseas. The designs can be very similar with the only difference being how they are embellished and the name on the label.

Also, many fashion houses or designers will have a small logo that will be placed on the item to show that it is their product. These are the items that are desired by the fashionistas. Today, many will not eat and will save every

penny to have the latest handbag or heels. As a person studies the fashions of eras past and present, the differences are very prominent.

Fashion's progress will be both admired and appreciated.