

**Battle of the Styles**

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20th Century Dress

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The evolution of fashion dates back centuries, and each one has left an imperative mark on what fashion continues to be to this day. The 20th century, to be more specific, included a huge ray of new trends and styles that were never seen before. The rebellious flappers of the 1920s influenced shortening the hemlines of women's dresses. Coco Chanel is credited for the Garcon style, also known as women's menswear, in the 30s. Mary Quant made mini skirts a thing in the 60s, Vivienne Westwood introduced the Punk style in the 1970s, and the list goes on. The Preppie, Hippie and Grunge trends also began to circulate throughout the 20th century, and each had its own social and political framework that contributed to its growth in popularity.

The word "preppy" came from preparatory schools wealthy kids would go to before attending college in the very early part of the 20th century. These kids would wear loafers, cable-knits and oxford shirts (Figure 1) to school (Leary, 2017). Later on in the 1950s, preppy became very closely associated with sailing, fencing, lacrosse and rugby (Leary, 2017). Equestrian clothing, stripes and nautical themes also began to see a demand throughout the United States (Leary, 2017). The trend is known for being neat, crisp and classic (Time Magazine, 1980). Although Perry Ellis and a few other designers contributed to the preppy style, Ralph Lauren greatly popularized the preppy trend in the 1980s. Lauren had blazers that retailed \$480 and silk pants selling for \$175 (Time Magazine, 1980). Alicia Silverstone influenced the increase in preppy fashion after the movie *Clueless* premiered. Her modern approaches to preppy style were different and made a lasting impression.

The 1960s became the first time haute couture designers were not innovators of growing trends. Hippies and youth began to inspire fashion trends even for luxury fashion houses, one of

the most prominent examples of the trickle up theory. Hippies typically wore their hair super long and wore bright mixtures of ethnic and vintage clothing (MFA, 2013). Jimi Hendrix, was one of the many icons who connected to this trend during the time period (MFA, 2013). Hippie culture is known for its adopted vibrant fashions “inspired by contemporary psychedelic Pop art, nature, fantasy, and ethnographic art” (MFA, 2013). Barry and Yosha Finch’s women jacket (Figure 2) made in 1970 is a great representation of this. Hippies chose to wear this apparel to demean capitalists who instead wore pinstripe suits and button-down shirts (Snodgrass, 2014). Fringe vest and overalls also became popular attire for Hippies as they were expressing their compassion for poor American Indians (Snodgrass, 2014). Giorgio di Sant’angelo, who was Italian fashion designer, definitely utilized the growing trend and contributed to hippie fashion immensely.

Grunge fashion became popular in the 1990s. The term “grunge” however had been around since 1972 and then reappeared in the 80s when Seattle sound, a mix of heavy-metal, punk, and rock and roll became popular (Price, n.d.). Rock bands like Nirvana and Pearl Jam began to influence fashion magazines and their pages became full of leather jackets, wool sweaters and flannel shirts (Marin, 1992). The trend even began to influence the movie industry as the movie Singles, which featured grunge, premiered at the end of 1992 (Marin, 1992). Not long after this Marc Jacobs became known as “the guru of grunge” (1992). Jacobs took the position as creative director for Perry Ellis in 1988. In 1993 his Spring/Summer show for Ellis included a series of garments (Figure 3) which were inspired by the movie. Plaid-printed silks were renovated from second hand flannels and lumberjack thermals were visualized in cashmere (Madsen, 2013). Even Kurt Cobain’s, guitarist for Nirvana, floral granny dress was transformed

into a floaty chiffon and paired with duchesse-satin Converse (Madsen, 2013). Still, there was way more to this new trend than just distressed jeans and baggy t-shirts. Grunge fashion was essentially created by Generation X. These youth used fashion as a reflection of their frustration with the 80s economic boom (Davis, 2019). Many of them disagreed with capitalist ideologies and noticed how it was affecting society (Davis, 2019). Generally they felt like the economy was devaluing humans by means of social classes and nine to five jobs (Davis, 2019). This generation also experienced a combination of sadness, disconnectedness and loneliness, while also struggling with self expression (Price, n.d.). Grunge fashion became their new voice, and they were subconsciously screaming rebellion.

The Preppie, Hippie and Grunge trends continue to be huge parts in fashion today. It is hard to determine which one of these trends have had the biggest effect on contemporary fashion because they each remain profitable in the market. It generally comes down to what the consumer prefers. Are they more comfortable in a fitted blazer or tie dyed sweats? I have seen an equal number of all three trends while riding the train and shopping in stores. Grunge is my favorite of the three however. I have always loved how edgy a leather jacket can make an outfit and how big combat boots contrasted with a mini skirt can change the dynamic of dress. My favorite go-to jacket (Figure 4) is actually one inspired by this trend. The fact that I can pair it with a pair of leather pants and achieve a really rebellious look, or even a flowy chiffon dress to make a boring outfit more stylish is one of my favorite things about it.



(Figure 1) 1980 Ralph Lauren Shirt

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O366398/shirt-ralph-lauren/>



Figure (2) Barry and Yosha Finch for the Chariot, Womens Jacket

<https://www.mfa.org/media/slideshow/9025>



(Figure 3) Look 50 in Perry Ellis 1993 Spring RTW Collection

<https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-1993-ready-to-wear/perry-ellis/slideshow/collection#50>



(Figure 4) Grunge Example from My Closet

## Outline

Preppie	Hippie	Grunge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1970s/80s</li><li>• Ralph Lauren/Perry Ellis/Bauhaus(early 20th century)?</li><li>• Cher</li><li>• Preparatory Schools, Ivy Leagues</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1960s</li><li>• Yooshi Leegar/Yves Saint Laurent</li><li>• The Beatles, Jimmy Hindrix</li><li>• Capitalist ideologies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1990s</li><li>• Perry Ellis? Marc Jacobs/Gianna Versace/Alexander McQueen</li><li>• Nirvana/Pearl Jam</li><li>• Concerts?</li></ul>

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Figure 1. <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O366398/shirt-ralph-lauren/>

Figure 2. <https://www.mfa.org/media/slideshow/9025>

Figure 3.

<https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-1993-ready-to-wear/perry-ellis/slideshow/collection#50>

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