INTERPRETATION OF DENIM BY HAUTE COUTURE DESIGNERS

by

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Abstract

This study identified how three high-end couturiers (Dolce & Gabbana, Versace, and Jean Paul Gaultier) incorporate denim in their menswear lines and impose their individual and unique design philosophies or “brands,” defined here as an amalgam of the couturiers’ tangible and aesthetic characteristics. The study chose to focus on denim because of its use in the design and production of jeans, one of the most popular articles of casual wear globally. The study compared the couturiers’ output with similar developments in other luxury brand categories, and combined visual and mathematical analysis to clearly identify the couturiers’ signature designs. Study findings may be useful to future designers creating new products.

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Introduction

This study examines haute couture designers' interpretation of denim from 2007 to 2012, focusing specifically on menswear collections. While there is no common definition for the terms "brand or branding, many fashion observers agree that "any definition should include both tangible and intangible attributes of a product; e.g. both functional and emotional characteristics" (Hauge, 2007, pp. 16-17). The realization of a brand emerges from a process whereby designers attempt to personify their products with ethereal characteristics that primarily function as "market arguments" (Lury, 2004). The process of branding may also be viewed as the language through which different businesses convey their identity. Consequently, this study seeks to determine how fashion designers create uniqueness in their products in order to create a distinct brand identity. The study focuses on the collections of three haute couture designers (Versace, Dolce & Gabbana, and Jean Paul Gaultier) and clarifies how their brand or "aesthetic" identity is established through the design of their denim menswear garments.

Background

Denim has enjoyed an enduring popularity more so than perhaps any other fashion element (Gordon, 1991). Several studies have attempted to provide a history of denim, such as Ian Finlayson's (1990) *Denim: An American Legend*, a historical iconography of denim and Miller and Woodward's (2011) *Global Denim* which includes comprehensive information on denim manufacturing processes and also provides detailed information about its origin and development. While comparable studies look at denim's history and/or manufacturing, it is surprising that scant research has focused specifically on the importance of denim within fashion collections.

This study chose to focus on denim due to its aesthetic appeal and near-universal availability. To reiterate, the study sought to determine how haute couturiers establish their uniqueness and impose their identity and design philosophy in the way they craft their denim.

Denim and the Dressed Body

As Joanne Entwistle (2007) observes, “Dress is the basic fact of social life.” (p. 273) One’s outfit, today more than ever, can embody many different social signs—perhaps even stigmas—that connote many different meanings (p. 273). For example, a person with long hair traditionally has been viewed as a hippy outsider, while a person with a Mohawk haircut, tattoos, and distressed denim tends to represent a more “punk” lifestyle. Today such fashion statements may also reflect an individual who does not need or wish to conform to traditional notions of dress for her/his business and personal affairs. Nonetheless, before the mid-20th century, the meaning of denim alluded to the working-class and only later became a fashion statement.

Denim’s journey from work-wear uniform to its present status as fashion staple marks an era of significant change as to how such garments became fashion items. This research emphasizes the next phase of the journey in which denim moves beyond being a simple fashion staple and is transformed into a global haute couture product. Here, denim enters the couturiers’ realm and adopts a different aesthetic.

Inspiration and Research Questions

The study’s focus on denim was inspired by the author’s review of haute-couture designers’ menswear collections over the last 20 years. Preliminary research revealed that ready-to-wear collections and assorted products relied heavily on denim as a primary textile. The pre-eminence and popularity of denim in haute-couture designers’ ready-to-wear collections is

evident by its regular inclusion in collection reviews and product “look-books,” such as those published online on Condé Nast’s style.com website.

This paper aimed to answer the following research questions:

- How do haute-couture designers implement their design philosophies in their products?
- What factors differentiate denim apparel among various haute-couture brands?
- How can a specific designer’s product be identified without seeing a label or insignia?

The study moves beyond a general understanding of denim and seeks to highlight how current haute-couture designers create unique cuts and denim washes to both popularize and differentiate their brands within the luxury segment.

History of Denim

Denim’s origin can be traced back to 19th-century France; the name “denim” refers to the material’s provenance from Nîmes, its namesake city in southern France, hence from or *de* Nîmes (Sullivan, 2006). Because denim’s sturdy, serge-like material—a durable wool with a twill weave that was ideal for French fishermen—differed from the cotton twill pants worn by workmen in the United States, the newly coined name denim caught on and became popularized. Since its creation, the connotation of denim apparel has expressed many different values. Initially, it personified the spirit of manual labour across the United States, where denim was commonly known as “waist overalls” and used by labourers and so-called blue-collar workers during the mid-19th century who wore it for its ruggedness and durability (Gordon, 1991). “In the early 20th century, denim was widely used by the military during World War 1 and thus became associated with militarism. Denim continued to adapt and change during the post-war years and began to symbolize different messages, be it rebellion, an outlet for personal creativity, fashionable awareness, or generational longing and security”. (Gordon, 1991, p.77)

Denim later became a key element of fashion towards the end of the 1950s, which coincided with the evolutionary phase that connected the modern and postmodern art movement.

The post 1950s can be marked as a time of turmoil and change during which denim entered the realm of fashion. The so-called beatniks represented the first intellectual class who preferred to wear denim, followed almost concurrently by motorcycle enthusiasts known as “bikers.” By the end of the 1950s, Hollywood stars such Marlon Brando and James Dean were featured wearing denim, which in turn influenced numerous rebellious and restless youth to wear this style of trousers now popularly referred to as jeans. Denim’s popularity reached its peak when it was customized and worn by various subcultures in mainstream society (e.g., hippies, punks, rock-stars, and bikers). Its growth and popularity encouraged fashion designers such as Givenchy, Oscar de la Renta, and Versace to introduce denim in their collections. “Designer denim” was soon hyped as being *de rigueur* for high-end fashion consumers, and some upscale boutiques in New York City began selling pairs of custom-made designer jeans for up to five-hundred dollars (Fehr, 1974, p. 55).

Today, most designers as well as menswear labels dedicate a significant part of their collection to denim (Azoulay, 2010). Browsing through fashion stores in New York, Toronto, London, and New Delhi, it is evident that denim’s popularity continues unabated today in the realm of fashion. However, in spite of its global appeal and uniformity, denim still has an inherent, unique feature that underpins this research study; while all denim products may stem from the same cotton fabric, each brand has its own distinct look and feel, and each has been personified in such a way that expresses the individuality of each designer.

Literature Review

Clothing for men is often discussed; however, very little research has considered how to manage their image and present their bodies in society. This under researched area is growing in prominence as men are becoming more fashion forward; as well, the female gaze has begun to emerge more prevalently in society (Frith & Gleeson, 2004, p.42). Hannah Frith and Kate Gleeson's "Clothing and Embodiment: Men Managing Body Image and Appearance" explores the ways in which men's subjective feelings about their bodies influence their clothing practices" (p.42).

The four themes explored by Frith and Gleeson (2004) include: practicality of clothing choices, lack of concern about appearance, use of clothing to conceal or reveal the body, and use of clothing to fit cultural ideals. Using these categories, clothing can be identified as a personal expression of appearance. The added impact of a brand-image and label identity reinforces the consumer acceptance of a brand.

Jeans are traditionally made from denim, which happens to be a heavier weight textile. Structurally, denim jeans have a waist band that holds the waist tighter, emphasizing the "V" shape of a man that enhances masculinity. The rigidity of denim fabric creates a certain stiffness that sticks to the body and restricts fabric movement, enhances the shape of the body and male physique that society has come to expect and emulate (Ege, 2011). The aesthetic of denim is enhanced by "top-stitches," "a shaped crotch," "defined back patch-pocket," "back yoke" and "a defined waist band" (Dant, 2007). In "Consuming or Living With Things? Wearing It Out," Dant (2007) compares denim to sexual aspects by working through parts of denim garment, and its culture, with human body parts and its erotic decorations (e.g., the top-stitch on the front is compared to the sexual organs, side seam as the contour of the thigh). This highlights the

socialized and mythological culture denim has, perpetuating its association as a masculine ideal. Different researchers have identified the “image” of jeans in their own way and have related its aesthetics to varying social factors, specifically its role in defining masculinity (Sassetelli, 2011). Thus a universal appearance of jeans is strongly pictured in every mind due to its specific characteristics. This research further integrates the phenomenon of how haute couturiers add value to this universal shape and impose his/her design philosophy to personify it.

Apart from the research corresponding to the appearance and social outlook of denim, this research emphasizes how denim has been personified by various subcultures throughout history. Denim has been a universal element common throughout each decade over the last 50 years (Miller & Woodward, 2011). There are several reasons for the popularity of denim across different cultures. Research by Frith and Gleeson (2004) suggests that “cultural shifts in the ways men’s bodies are represented lead men to feel increasingly dissatisfied with their appearance” (p.40). The period from the late 1950s has marked the origin of various subcultures like Beatniks, Hippies, Rock and roll, and Punk; thus in the 1960s, denim became the ultimate alternative fashion style: “a classless, cheap, unisex look that stood for, variously, frontier values, democracy, plain living, ecology and health, rebellion a la Brando or Dean, a new interest in erotic the import of the pelvis” (Carnes, 1978, p. 13). “Jeans became the most common anti-fashion denominator among youth because a lot of elements could be associated to denim like memory/nostalgia, a sign of rebellion, as well as a uniform for various countercultures” (Gordon, 1991, p. 35). Various studies have examined the history of denim and its popularity across various subcultures—for example, Valerie Carnes’s (1978) “Icons of Popular fashion” in *Icons of America*; Eve Harlow’s (1973) *The Jeans Scene*; Sharon Rosenberg and Joan Wiener Bardow’s *The Denim Book*; and Beverly Gordon’s (1991) “American Denim: Blue Jeans and

Their Multiple Layers of Meanings,” which demonstrated how denim became the most stable item of unisex mainstream fashion. Some research, such as outlined by Elaine Ratner’s (1985) “Levis” has demonstrated how various denim brands (e.g., Levis, Lee, and Wrangler) have each created a brand identity with their distinct garment features. The latter research provided a framework for the current study, in order to identify how jeans were interpreted and personalized over different periods of time and how fashion labels as well as the designers got involved in making denim.

In the history of fashion brands, designers and manufacturers have always tended to remain anonymous. It was an ill-defined mixture of design, production and availability that established markets. The rise of the industrial revolution in Europe created an increase in demand for products and simultaneously increased competition (Back, 2011). Thus products became a prime area of identification in this era. Acclaimed fashion designers like Charles Fredrick Worth recognized the need to approximate their identity with the products they tried to sell, in order to develop customer loyalty (De Marly, 1980). Development of various mass production techniques in this era of industrial revolution created a challenge to individuality and exclusiveness. “Fashion designers like Charles Fredric Worth, Patou and Balenciaga recognized the need to differentiate their product range, and they sought to do this with exclusivity, price, service and most importantly ‘the look’ to create an identity” (Deslandres & Muller, 1986, p.42). In the 1920s, Coco Chanel created a distinctive example of exclusivity in terms of appearance: “Chanel claimed to have created a look and packaged that look in the image of her cruise-wear and country tweed collection”; which eventually became her signature style and design philosophy (J Fernie, C.Moore, A Lawire and A Hallsworth, 1997, p.152). Similar to Chanel’s signature design style and aesthetic identity, Dolce & Gabbana, Jean Paul Gaultier, and Versace

have established their own distinct design style which justifies their products. Initially this research targeted how these three haute couture designers cultivated their design philosophies and modes of practice to aid in the interpretation of image.

Several attempts have been made to understand the “mythologies” of brands; for instance, Manlow’s (2011) “Creating an American Mythology” dealt with the image created by three big fashion competitors (Tommy Hilfiger, Ralph Lauren, and American Apparel); von Samsonow’s (2009) “Myth of Fashion” explains how a fashion label creates a difference in its image while producing the same product but marketing them in different ways. In a historical context, Gordon’s (1991) “American Denim: The Multiple Layer and Meanings” also explains how denim brands have used advertising strategies to enhance their presence. To date, there is a lack of research that explains how haute couture designers have personified denim with their own design philosophy. This research initially focuses on the design philosophy that distinguishes the look of the products these designers create and then identifies how that distinction influences the denim styles produced.

Methodology

This study's interpretation of denim by Haute Couture designers from 2007-2012 focuses on Dolce & Gabbana, Jean Paul Gaultier, and Versace. These three designers have featured denim apparel consistently as a major part of their menswear collections for the last 5 years (www.style.com). This study has focused on the last 5 years because of the tremendous growth in the inclusion of jeans in designers' menswear collections. In addition to increasing the use of denim as a prime fabric in their products, designers also started referring to themselves as "denim couturiers" in their new ventures that incorporated denim; for example, Versace's line of denim labelled as "Versace Jeans Couture," Jean Paul Gaultier's association with Levis, and the separate line of jeans introduced each year by Dolce & Gabbana. Brands like Armani, DSquared, Hugo Boss, and Dior have also included denim collections within their labels, though not to the same extent as the three brands discussed in this research.

The theoretical framework that guides this research is based on a series of previous studies that focused on the identification of a brand's image. One of the prime research sources has been Veronica Manlow's (2011) article, where she observed how Polo by Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, and American apparel has created their brand's image. Her research is mainly observational and based on product categorization according to specific aesthetic details and material composition.

The initial stage of this research was based on data collection which includes detailed images of entire menswear collections for the last 5 years. Since this research aims to define design brand identity, its emphasis is on understanding the design philosophy of a label and calculates how a label makes a distinct impact in its product's appearance by value addition or 'personification'. The idea of personification has become a prime criterion of distinction for most

of the existing products today. For example, Audi cars' distinct features such as the iconic led headlamps, front grills, and the use of horizontal lines to accentuate car width have aided the automaker's brand recognition (see Figures 1, 2, and 3).¹

Figure 1. Audi's signature design feature: distinct front grill and led lighting.
Source: blueprints.com

Figure 2. Bayerische Motoren Werken's signature design feature: kidney grill, "angel lights," and shark-tail antenna.
Source: blueprints.com

¹ See also <http://www.topcarrating.com/rating.php?brandid=1090> and www.audiworld.com/news/08/audi-design/guidelines

Figure 3. Audemars Piguet watches: exposed machinery with highlighted bolts and rivets on the orbit of the dial.

Source: forbes.com

From cars to watches and from accessories to liquor bottles, each product holds distinct aesthetic value on which the brands create an area of distinction. The shortlisted area that is discussed in this research is luxury haute couture denim. The initial stage of the research was based on data collection; collecting images of three aforementioned designers' menswear collections during the last 5 years. All images were then placed side by side in order to compare and contrast denim and non-denim garments.

In the second stage, denim apparel style-lines were identified and the silhouettes were documented through charting. Simultaneously, material and trims were studied and recorded. The third and the most important category observed through visual analysis was the types of surface finishes used to achieve certain look (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Design philosophy identification process. The images are arranged together and then a gateway sheet used to extract the style-lines.
Source: style.com (yearly menswear collections).

Denim finishes are a critical component to the overall look of the garment. With visual analysis of various denim washes, this third category recorded the range of implementations done to the denim surface to achieve a certain look.

In order to evaluate designers' aesthetic identities the methodology involved a mathematical process that included observing how many times a material, finish, and/or style line had been repeated. This observation table was inspired from acclaimed Spanish chef Ferran Adria's test kitchen's display shelves, where he groups various types of spices and herb families into one category. This display shelf has counters where various herbs are inserted according to their categories and contents (see Figure 5.)

Figure 5. Ferran Adria's herb category display shelf.

Source: bcndesign.narotzy.com

Similarly, the study used a chart that categorized designers' jeans based on their specific characteristics to identify how many times a particular material, finish, or style line was repeated in jeans (see Figure 6).

Collection year	Style lines	Material (type of denim)	Finishing	Trims
Spring summer 2007	a1	b1	c1	d1
Autumn Winter 2007	a2	b2	c2	d2

Figure 6. Chart used to categorize jeans characteristics.

At the end of every season's collection, a conclusion was determined from this recorded data. This chart facilitated identification of certain style lines, finishes, and trims that have been

constantly repeated to achieve a certain kind of look. Mathematically, the commonly repeated elements were recorded to determine which particular style, material, or finish occurred the greatest number of times. The chart provided a means to understand the kinds of looks designers wanted to capitalize on, based on the maximum number of repeats derived from the chart. The mathematical process used in this research was similar to set theory in mathematics, where the union is denoted by “U” of a collection of sets is the set of all distinct elements (Vopěnka, 1979). (See Figure 7.)

Figure 7. Venn diagrams showing union in mathematics set theory. Diagrams show $A \cup B$ (left) and $A \cup B \cup C$ (right) unions.
Source: Vopěnka (1979).

Union in this context means the common factors found within these collections or a set of clothing; for example, a style of beading, or washing of denim.

As demonstrated in the diagrams shown in Figure 7, all the data from the above were then used to prepare the sets. For example [a1Ua2U a (as many number of products in the collection)] and simultaneously the same goes for the other categories like B, C, and D, respectively. This same process was repeated for each of the three designers examined in this study. The conclusion from this process generates a result that filters all the common factors that form the major design philosophies of these three brands. These calculations based on set theory

determine the most common repeated elements and then record the elements to find the prime factor that personifies the design philosophy.

The Creative Project

After analyzing the results derived from the identification of design philosophies, the next step was to develop a set of two to three jean styles representative of each designer. However, these sets of jeans were also inspired by a similar theme, “chemistry,” as defined in the Doneger Group’s (2013) spring 2014 trend forecast:

Chemistry is all about the mix. New and groundbreaking formulas dare to be different. Bizarre combinations and concoctions are loud and riotous. Mad scientists stir up a potent brew of unlikely ingredients. Bold and garish statements deviate from the tried and true. Anything goes in this metropolitan mélange of unlikely pairings. BITTERSWEET mismatches combine opposing ideas to form new ones. Incongruent accents shed new light on old concepts. A REVOLUTION of thinking takes hold and technological advancements and futuristic leanings influence a new uniform code. Sleek and steady, ultra performance materials leap into the next century.)

(as per Doneger forecast Spring Summer 2014)

Design Process

This common theme was divided into subcategories or keywords to simplify the process. “Chemistry” in this context has been divided into several factors: (a) the mix of lines formed by geometric surfaces in the metropolitan landscapes, (b) the abstraction of pure architectural forms to complex surfaces creating different textures, and (c) the curves and twists of lines creating shapes within a shape (see Figure 8).

The design theme followed for these three designers has been constant but they are interpreted according to the mathematical result derived from the conclusions extracted from the

chart. The results of interpretation thus vary, although the theme or the inspiration of the collection remains the same.

Figure 8. Inspiration visual for creative collection.
Source: www.doneger.com

Figure 9. Mood board. Images are created and collected from various sources. Some images are from the architectural blogs, which contains pictures of a collection of renowned buildings like Gaudi's famous church of Barcelona.

Jean Paul Gaultier

Referring to the mathematical equations shown in Figure 7, it became evident that Jean Paul Gaultier follows a very unconventional design philosophy. The role of lines, new structural formation, and asymmetric divisions on planes are the main areas of differentiation in the way he creates in his designs.

The result of the set theory indicated that Jean Paul Gaultier's key design features were his structural variation in silhouettes. Much emphasis was placed on the extension and metamorphosis of shapes, the creation of newer dimensions, and the combinations of two simple forms to create another complex form.

Thus, if considering Gaultier's designs in relation to chemistry, the theme would be "twists in lines and surfaces," inspired by twisted molecular structures and how different molecular lines results in the formation of a bond, and the depths and density of surfaces when exposed to different angles. (See Figures 10 & 11.)

Figure 10. Inspiration visual: Frank Gehry's twisted architecture blog.

Figure 11. Aerial view of a complex city road routes.
Source: Google maps.

Figure 12. Inspiration and conceptual progress: designs inspired by Gaultier.

The colours were extracted from the tonal contrasts of metal and its reflectivity with modern landscapes. The twists in the patterns where two simple planes create a complex plane

act as a canvas from which the actual characteristics of colours in the medium are discovered.

The surface creates the tonal variations coupled with the highlighted stitches.

Figure 13. Inspiration visuals for colour combinations extracted from vintage and rusted metal parts.

Dolce & Gabbana

In terms of shape corresponding to mathematical evaluations in designs, analysis of Dolce & Gabbana presented a more practical and realistic aesthetic in terms of creating conventional shapes. Their uniqueness in terms of design philosophy was their emphasis on a prominent detail that makes their clothes stand out. Various attempts have been made so far to enhance this highlighting factor. All the attempts could be considered as a simple modification of the existing style or highlighting a certain part through detailed magnification.

Thematically, Dolce & Gabbana were inspired by pop movements, street-culture, and music. The main area of differentiation for Dolce & Gabbana was their emphasis on a certain

aspect forming an element of contrast. Considering the other designers discussed in this research, it can be concluded from the mathematical table that Dolce & Gabbana's denim is loud and impactful, most often highlighting trims and eye-catching finishes on plain and simple surfaces to achieve the targeted look.

The theme that is derived from chemistry is the lines formed through a mix of complex geometrical surfaces. This result was more of a visual metamorphosis of lines from a distant view of a complex geometrical compound. Here, the distinct elements become highlighted and the basic forms turn into the structure. The element of emphasis created in this case was the result of a few important lines in the composition. The look appears visually like the lines formed during chemical bonding when two or more molecules combine, which is similar to the appearance of the skeletal structure of a building. Figure 14 illustrates the design variations created by the process.

Figure 14. Inspiration visual: Frank Ghery's architecture blog dealing with shapes. The structural formation is also inspired from molecular bonding taken from Chemistry bonding diagram from the cover page of Organic chemistry.

Figure 15. Inspiration and the conceptual progress: designs inspired by D&G.

The colours selected to craft this collection are mainly neutral shades of metals highlighted and enhanced by shiny metallic trims. Brown, beige, and bronze have been the prime shades used to achieve the look.

Figure 16. Inspiration visual for colour combinations extracted from pop culture.

Versace

An interview with Donatella Versace on style.com 2004 was the stand-by point for this section of the research:

Indeed the Versace style is not about simplicity, minimalism or the understated. It breaks the rules innovatively. Its flash and dash. It's the allure of sexy rock'n'roll-style glamour. It's classic design reinterpreted to bold, modern tastes with powerful color palettes, vampish black and liquid fabrics. The Versace customers are men and women with strong personalities—individuals who are self-assured and confident in the lifestyle choices they make—individuals who appreciate distinction and character. (Tim Blanks: Direct interview with Donatella Versace, style.com 2004)

This study concludes that Versace, in comparison with the other two designers examined in this research, was comparatively vibrant in terms of its personification, with a strong presence and a bold, overall loud design approach. Vibrant combinations of colours, prints, and eye-catching trims appear to be the garments' prime focus. However, considering all the menswear collection images, we can see that minimal variations in terms of creating complex patterns in the silhouette.

According to the theme of chemistry, the Versace collection was derived from abstraction of pure architectural forms to complex surfaces, creating different textures. Printing technology is applied to achieve the look in this range of two jeans. The inspiration of the print is taken from Gaudi's famous church in Barcelona, Spain. Following the design philosophy of Versace, the silhouettes in this range are kept simple and unaltered compared to the other two ranges. The

vibrancy and loud aspect are created through the implementation of the print, and the colours used to build this range are a vibrant tone of white coupled with vibrant grey (see Figure 16).

Figure 17. Simple formed silhouette inspired by Sagrada Família church in Barcelona. Texture inspired from the chemical diagrams from the diagrams of hydro chemistry diagrams from glacier hydrology and hydro-chemistry.

Figure 18. Inspiration and conceptual progress influenced by Versace. Least silhouette manipulation but maximum emphasis on surface decoration.

Figure 19. Colours extracted directly: shades of blues, greys, and vibrant whites.
Source: nterfaceflorblog.com

Manufacturing Process

The manufacturing process for all of these designers' jeans was undertaken in India, in a jeans factory called "Denim Devotee," a small-scale manufacturing plant located near New Delhi that produces garments for major denim brands such as Numero Uno, Spykar, and Benetton India. The location was selected because of its superior research and development team, specifically their development talent in creating newer finishes, dye washes, polishes, printing, and pattern-making. It also has its own recently launched brand that makes limited pieces of hand-crafted, unique denim garments.

The denim used in this collection was sourced from Yogesh Trading Company, the largest group of denim fabric distributors in India, also located in New Delhi. Denim Devotee imports its fabric in collaboration with a mill in Turkey. The trims used in all these jean styles

were partly sponsored by Numero Uno Group, one of the leading denim manufacturers in India. Figure 19 a,19b,19c and 19d shows the various stages of production involved in making these garments. [The following images photographed from the wholesale markets in New Delhi, India and of the manufacturing units of Gurgaon with the permission from the various authorities.]

Figure 20. Gandhi-Nagar clothing market, New Delhi, India (Yogesh Trading Corporation)

Figure 21. Texoco printing division, Gurgaon, Haryana, India.

Figure 22. Sampling at Denim Devotee, Gurgaon, Haryana, India.

Figure 23. Riveting and trim detailing, Govindpuri, New Delhi, India.

Figure 24. Photographs of small sample collections representing design philosophies of: (A) Jean Paul Gauthier, (B) Dolce & Gabbana, and (C) Versace.

Conclusion

The most significant element of this research is the combination of visual and mathematical analysis that clearly identifies the design elements of these three designers. A subsequent aspect is how this information can assist in the creation of new products.

In the initial stages of this project, there were some difficulties in identifying the correct research route to take. The historical journey of denim gave this research a logical direction to study certain factors. Firstly, how denim entered the fashion realm and second, how the various subcultures adopted this item of fashion into their subcultures: for example, punks, beatniks, bikers, and hippies. However, denim was always customized in a certain way making it appear to be personalized (e.g. the denim worn by punks had to have its own appeal compared to the ones worn by bikers or other similar subculture groups). This made all denim look indigenous as it developed its aesthetic appeal to the members of the subcultures who wore it.

The existing research on denim is scarce when aesthetic factors are considered. Thus this research was motivated to judge the social factors which led to identifying the causes behind a certain look, or aesthetic style choice. This study gave insight into the design of jeans from a critical socialistic viewpoint. This increased the scope of the research beyond simple aesthetic characteristics. Not only does the socialistic view increase the range and focus of this research but also addresses numerous other factors. Such as multiple aspects that relates to the aesthetic of jeans, for example the image of a dressed body in jeans, the relationship of jeans and sexuality, and jeans as an element of fashion and anti-fashion.

Apart from the socialistic lens, this study also considered research relating to identity. In this context, identity refers to the image a brand personifies to create its' individuality. Most of the existing research deals with marketing strategy and a consumer perspective, pricing factors

and creating a niche to competitors in the same market space. This study has also examined a variety of products in terms of their composition, finishes, structures as well as other necessary physical attributes. With the individual attention to detail, a distinct similarity of patterns was experienced in the last 5 years of the explored collections.

The method used in this research to evaluate designer's aesthetic identities involved a mathematical process that included observing and identifying visual elements. Organizing the details through a category chart was inspired by Ferran Adria's herb categorizing display case.

The developed observation table was used to identify and record how many repeats of certain elements were found. Following the chart visually, a rough idea was generated which hypothetically created an impression on the specific visual aspects these designers were capitalizing upon in creating their menswear jean collections. The research results were eventually organized in groups of similarity through the implementation of set theory to logically highlight the results.

Although, many designers had been interviewed in the past by various fashion journalists and media experts, their actual design philosophy was difficult to discover and interpret. This was because none of the interviews focused on design philosophies; most were verbal accounts of their current collections. Thus, in this research with the use of set theory (i.e. the mathematical evaluation); the flow of design philosophies is logically proven.

A collection was developed with the extracted results derived from the set theory. This collection was produced to verify whether the results gained from the formulae were successful. The manufacturing process, based upon the discovered attributes of the three courtiers, was carried out in India. This involved several processes from sourcing to production. While producing the collection, it was identified that even the process of production of the jeans was

different for each of the designers, therefore the production would also need to be analyzed and considered as part of the designer's code.

Through this research process, it can be claimed that brands have visual codes and certain identifiable characteristics. The codes and discovered attributes can then be utilized in other designs and outsourced products. Therefore the research parameters outlined above can enhance brand identity, and the itemized characteristics can be incorporated into a wide range of associated products thereby enhancing the profitability of the company.

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