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THE INFLUENCES OF CELEBRITIES ON FASHION TRENDS AND CULTURE

What and Why:

I have chosen this area because I'm very interested in how celebrity influences fashion and culture. Throughout history the clothing worn by celebrities has had major influences on everyday fashion trends and has effected cultural change. Earlier in history, for example the 1940-1960's, a more moral and elegant dress code was acknowledged; however, as time evolved and people became more intellectual about the materials which could be put to good use, designers from the 1970's onwards began to incorporate these materials in their designs.

New fashion was introduced regularly which again was an ongoing discourse and people had become more accepting as 'class' was everyone's aim. Designers such as Calvin Klein, Prada, Gucci, Louis Vuitton choose high profile celebrities and shower them with gifts of designer clothing and accessories. This intense form of 'free' advertising, has a tremendous impact on the behaviour of consumers, particularly younger consumers, who are heavily influenced by today's celebrity culture. This in turn impacts significantly on society.

Furthermore, celebrity fashion has played a role in local and international cultural change. These fashion trends have had both positive and negative influences on society. Economically, fashion trends play a major role in domestic industries; therefore sales and prices are continually affected. This of course can have a major, positive boost for all industries, however, it can also have negative impacts on local producers and sellers, as many consumers cannot keep pace with these constantly changing fashion trends. Aspects of this may also negatively influence cultural roots. As Australia and the world is a multicultural universe, religious and cultural views on the everyday, local fashion are regularly neglected by brand designers, due to high sales being involved. However, this should be considered when appropriating designs according to society and its cultural population, as this would ensure that domestic industries have a boost in sales which produces a stronger economy.

In addition, the international fashion industry includes pop artists and famous people, who parade new styles and designs. This can be a positive factor of the fashion world, because again it increases its economic status. Unfortunately, it can also play a negative role, as people who see models in these new trends want to emulate them, but they cannot afford designer clothing, which may affect their social status. More significantly, celebrity has become an international product and this means that whatever a celebrity chooses to wear may lead to far-reaching consequences. For example, the US and the UK frantically expound their new and updated fashion trends on a day-to-day basis in order to sell their products internationally to young men and women.

Culturally, celebrity fashion can influence younger people, in particular, to buy and wear certain styles of clothing and even specific brands. The negative effect is two-fold in that local attire, which may often be of cultural or religious significance, is forsaken for the uniformity of the latest fashion trend created by these modern pop-culture idols, and the decline in demand for local products may impact severely on local producers.

HOW??

The majority of my research will be based on a thorough literature review of this topic. To begin with, I will collect background information from texts which focus on the historical influences of celebrity fashion trends in various countries. Initially, I will focus on the larger, long-standing fashion houses, such as Chanel, as their designs have been worn and promoted by celebrities for decades. This information not only comes from texts, but also from websites of fashion houses themselves and fashion design journals.

Following this, I intend to concentrate on the period from 1960 to the present day, as I believe celebrities have had the most significant influence on fashion trend in this period. Most information comes from fashion and design journals, magazines and documentaries. In addition, I will source information about the influence of specific celebrity fashion icons from various countries, from online and hard copy newspapers and magazines, as well as documentaries.