

Fashion's become merely gossip

By Constance Scrafield

I was hanging out with a few ladies at Harmony's earlier this week. We were putting on a bit of a market place for this happy-buy season and we were just wrapping up. One of them, a chemical-free cosmetic rep, had been giving a couple of the others a make over, spreading her product over their faces, outlining eyebrows and eyes, painting their lids red on their lips. The result is always a minor fiction of oneself but harmless enough perhaps, a braver front to the world.

Anyway, amid the packing, preparatory to going home, the talk was, naturally, about fashion, what is in.

'Wait a minute,' says I, 'what is fashion? There is no fashion nearly everyone wears leggings (which they all were). There can't be anything fashionable there what's left?'

They (sort-of) agreed, you know, the way we do when we are not at all sure whether we agree with a new idea or not.

With Instagram and snapchat, can a fashion disappear in 60 seconds? At least, that would explain why we don't know what it is.

Fashion a la internet is obviously a passing fantasy, never to be clearly grasped, never mind waiting a whole year until the fashion gurus have had time to think.

Well, no one thinks any more, in these times of knee-jerk tweeting, making international policy from every country; politicians, world leaders, throwing insults around the world; the diplomats of yore, shaking their heads and queuing up for their dole cheques.

Where were we? ah, yes, fashion, which, of course, cannot simply mean clothing; after all, everything in life is tied to fashion: look at grammar and the death of pronouns. That began years ago, when the worst of teachers told their students that 'Blank and I' is always correct, which it is not: 'Blank [He] and I went ..?' 'He gave tickets to Blank [him] and me.' See?

How could schools teach incorrect grammar? Children are tender and innocent. They believe what they are taught; they deserve correct instruction from well educated teachers. Even when later, when they have the chance to learn better, they struggle to believe it and will, maybe, cling to the errors as a matter of sentimentality.

Back to clothes: the jeans with purpose made crease lines around the knees and the tops of legs. I laughed when I saw them in a Toronto department store, brand new, trying to look old and beaten up, costing a small fortune. Wait a minute, that was a couple of years ago at least; they must long gone by now. Oh, I know, now jeans come with ready made tear lines, sticking to old and beaten up. Aren't those hard to put on, toes catching at every rip, legs freezing when walking along a snow cramped sidewalk...

Fashion is everything. Look at men. They're choosing to buzz not shave, loving that permanent five o'clock - or is it - three day shadow. Enough movies have convinced them it's sexy, manly, how about rebellious? One day that too may fade and the ancient Roman look of crisply clean shaven will come back. Then, from buzz, there's the lumber jack beards, big and bushy: are they meant to be a sign of real manhood or just another fashion?

Words are the fastest moving fashion: what things and people are called. Writers and publishers of dictionaries are going crazy to keep up with the fertile soil of the internet and the creative minds of everybody in the world why, even we coined the expression 'in-person shopping,' a trend we were pushing, in this column recently. How soon and how often will the shifting vocabulary change, we wonder. Perhaps, the fashion of what we speak will, sooner than we would believe, will become a melting pot of languages that no one will entirely understand: Esperanto gone mad.

Actions speak louder than words, they do say, and how about the way people drive nowadays. Time was a cigarette was the big

danger for distracted driving and, no doubt, it is still a problem. Now though, in impaired driving, some of it hard to prove but for the behaviour of the driver, is on the increase. Driving at the speed of racing and, the most intense new danger - hand held devices as distraction are the latest fashions on the roads.

Don't worry, dear police, those of this generation that survive these fashions, will age with the rest of us and driving will take another turn, as computers dictate how fast and where we're all going. Good luck with that.

Well, well, over and above it all, men still wear ties and suits. Those have barely changed for the last century or so: there's consistency for you. Since designers haven't invented anything different or better in all that time, sometimes, men just don't wear ties. They are the crazy, wild, trend setters.