

A BAD REP

Students discuss the stigma around buying fake clothing

BY HANNAH LEE AND SHARJEEL RAHMAN

At one point in time, counterfeit designer goods were looked down upon. Buying fake brand-name clothing or accessories was often associated with a try-hard attitude and an empty pocket. However, with the increasing popularity of streetwear, more students have been purchasing fake designer clothing to show off their favorite brands without having to pay large sums of money.

Cheap alternatives to clothing from popular brands such as Supreme, BAPE and Gucci are made available on websites that sell near-perfect replicas. Taobao, a Chinese website similar to eBay, has many of these items available for purchase. MVHS alumni Winston Lee and Victor Yin said that being able to purchase fake clothing is convenient on a low budget.

"I'm literally just broke," Lee said. "The only way you [can get] these [real] clothes is [by purchasing] them from resellers who mark up a lot. If you do purchase from them, all you're doing is padding their pockets, so you might as well buy fakes."

While purchasing cheaper replicas may be a practical option for students, senior Noah Youngs explained how, depending on students' motivation, buying fake clothes can be seen as shameful by those who regularly purchase authentic clothing.

"If you're trying to pull [fake clothing] off as real and make people think it's real, it's messed up," Youngs said. "If you tell everyone it's fake, then it's [all] good."

Onbirback shared similar sentiments. He believes claiming fake clothing as authentic is equivalent to pretending to be someone else.

"If you tell people it's fake, it's not really embarrassing to have fake clothes," Onbirback said. "If you're trying to act like it's real, I mean, just get the real thing. When people act like it's real, I frequently get a bad impression [of them]."

Although he believes that it is not a big deal to purchase fake clothing, Onbirback explained that he would never purchase these items himself.

"The real thing is just too expensive. But I don't want to get exposed [for wearing fake clothing], so I don't purchase fake clothing," Onbirback said. "When you actually get it legitimately, you feel more accomplished."

Unlike Youngs and Onbirback who believe that it is acceptable for students to wear fake clothing as long as they own up to it, senior Manu Hundal is strongly against replicas, regardless of whether students acknowledge its authenticity or not.

"Why would you waste your money on fake stuff when you can buy the real thing?" Hundal said. "To the people who buy fake clothes, like come on, why do you have to do that?"

Often times, students unintentionally purchase fake clothing. Websites such as Grailed and some Facebook groups for buying clothes allow anyone to resell their authentic brand name clothing. Platforms such as these are favorable to students who have a hard time purchasing designer clothing from the official websites due to the short supply. Brand name clothing typically sells out very quickly because of the high popularity of the items.

While these platforms allow students to purchase rare designer clothing, sellers can scam the buyers by selling a replica piece of clothing that looks extremely similar to the authentic item. Sophomore Evan Yu explained how he has been scammed by sellers passing fake clothing off as the real design.

"Sometimes these sellers will trick you by posting pictures of the authentic clothing, but when you get it in the mail, you'll be like, 'what the heck,'" Yu said.

Hundal, who has also witnessed sellers scamming others into purchasing fake clothing, described their actions as unethical and disreputable.

"People who sell fakes as real, that's pretty funny," Hundal said. "If [someone] sells it to the wrong person and [on] the wrong day, he's going to get it, these people aren't playing. If [someone] spends [a lot of] money and finds out it's fake, that's a pretty [bad] move."

Because it can be easy to get scammed, Yu shared some of his tips for distinguishing dupes and real brand name clothing. According to Yu, there are some key differences between the authentic and fake items of clothing.

"The tags are different. The quality of the real clothes is just so much better," Yu said. "The actual clothing might be significantly more expensive, but I would say it is definitely worth the extra money."

Regardless of people's opinions, fake clothing proves to be a popular option for students like Lee and Yin because of its affordability.

"You can either buy a real Supreme hoodie, or a fake Supreme hoodie and a lot of food for the same price," Yin said. "Clearly the latter is the better option." 

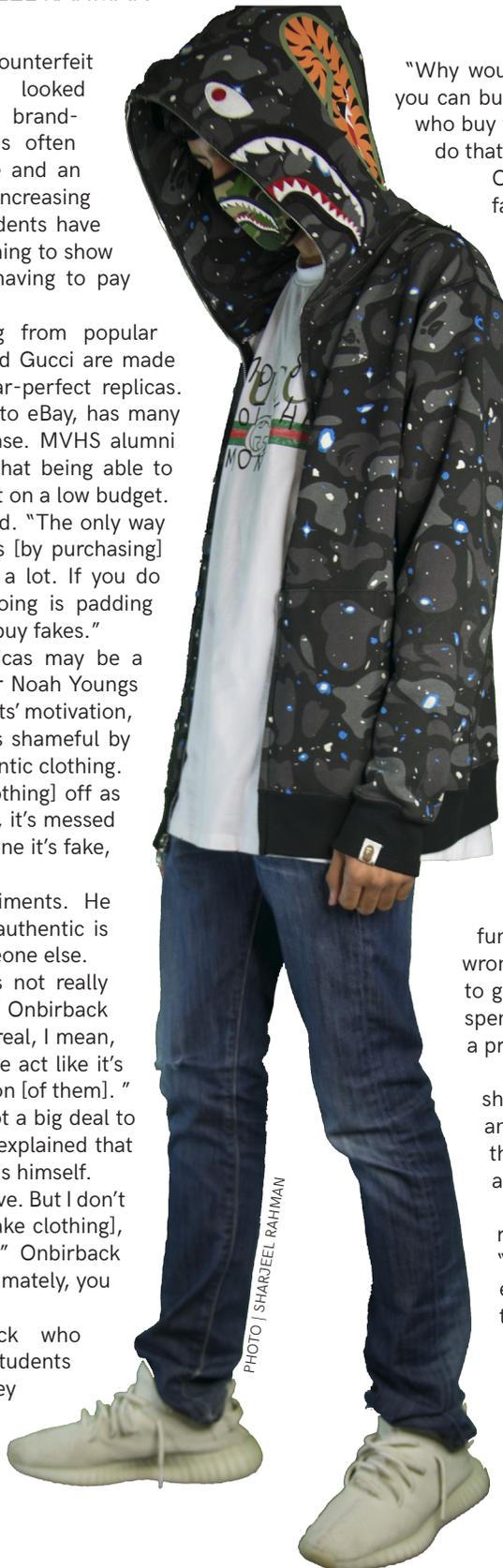


PHOTO | SHARJEEL RAHMAN