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A Fashion Idol in Fashion History: Elvis Presley

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Abstract

Fashion has been constantly changing and evolving throughout history. Depending on the social, cultural, economic and technological factors of societies, it has transformed into different styles and trends in different periods over the centuries. One of the elements that play an important role in the transformation of the fashion world is celebrities and idols. Since time immemorial, famous names in music, cinema, sports and many other popular fields have influenced large masses in society with their styles and clothing preferences. Famous artists and musicians have brought new trends to fashion with their stage performances, films, concerts, music videos and many similar events, and some of them have been referred to as idols in fashion.

Elvis Presley, who was known as the King of Rock'n Roll in the 1950s, was imitated among young people in those years with his unique style and hairstyle. Elvis Presley's clothes, stage shows and style have a significant impact on fashion history. The shiny and stony clothes he often used have been an important part of the men's fashion industry. The impact of Elvis Presley's clothes on the fashion world is not limited to that period thanks to his popularity and iconic image. The influence of idols has a great importance

in fashion history. Many celebrities like Elvis Presley inspired the society with their clothes and styles and played an important role in the transformation of the fashion world.

The objective of this study is to analyze Elvis Presley's stage costumes in order to elucidate the fashion trends and sartorial styles of the era. A qualitative research methodology was adopted, structured within the framework of a case study design. The research population comprises male singers who achieved fame in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. For the sample selection, the typical case sampling method was employed. In this context, Elvis Presley was included in the sample due to his representation as a quintessential figure, both in terms of his career and his iconic stage costumes. This research aims to investigate the correlation between Presley's attire and the dominant clothing styles of the 1950s, ultimately positioning him within the broader context of fashion history.

Keywords: 1950 Fashion, Elvis Presley, Stage costume, Fashion idol, Music.

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Introduction

Fashion is a vibrant world through which we reflect our individuality. It allows us to incorporate all our desires into this colorful realm. At the same time, fashion serves as a form of communication. Throughout the history of fashion, many fashion icons can be identified. In this study, the biography, career, and stage costumes of Elvis Presley, who is recognized as a fashion icon in fashion history, are examined.

Throughout his artistic career, Presley garnered significant attention for his diverse sartorial choices and simultaneously faced criticism due to his defiance of cultural and societal norms. This research will illustrate how personal clothing styles and fashion can evolve independently of these norms and attain acceptability. This perspective underscores the significance of the study. The research emphasizes the importance of freely expressing fashion irrespective of factors such as gender, belief, socio-cultural structure, race, economy, and social status. Presley is recognized as the initiator of the androgynous fashion trend. His use of colors, patterns, and embellishments challenged conventional perceptions of gender-specific clothing, thereby indicating the potential for similar shifts in fashion thought and showcasing fashion's boundless nature. The study also explores how Presley's fashion perception during his era influenced clothing trends and how these influences are reflected in his garments.

To this end, the study addresses the following objectives:

- To identify the characteristics of men's clothing in the 1950s,
- To examine the influence of art movements from the 1950s and 1960s on fashion,
- To analyze Elvis Presley's biography and the characteristics of his clothing between the years 1950 and 1960.

This study employs a qualitative research model, structured according to a case study design. The population of the research consists of male singers who were famous in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. To determine the sample, the typical case sampling method was applied.

Elvis Presley

Presley has established his name among countless other artists whose legacies remain indelible in music history. The artist's uniqueness is primarily attributed to his pioneering of a new musical style, his striking appearance, his timeless songs, and his compelling character (www.axe.com/tr, 2023).

In the early hours of January 8, 1935, Gladys Presley gave birth to twin sons in a two-room shotgun house in Tupelo, Mississippi. Elvis Aaron Presley was born healthy; however, his identical twin, Jessie Garon,

was stillborn. Despite being a typical working-class family with limited means, Presley's family always believed their sons were special and consistently did their utmost to provide everything their children needed (Vymazalova, 2018).



Figure 1. Elvis Presley

<https://www.google.com/search?q=elvis+presley>

In 1946, while his mother Gladys was considering buying a guitar instead of an expensive bicycle for Elvis's birthday, she could not have anticipated that her son would become one of the greatest artists of all time. The first guitar, which Presley received from his mother, became the most meaningful gift of his artistic life. In 1948, before moving with his mother to his father's place in Memphis, Presley bid farewell to his classmates with the song "Leaf on a Tree," marking his first performance with the guitar (www.biyografi.net.tr, 2022). Elvis graduated from the workshop section of Humes High School in 1953 and subsequently worked as a truck driver for Crown Electric Company. In 1954, he made his first professional recording of the rhythm-and-blues song "That's All Right, Mama" with guitarist Scotty Moore and bassist Bill Black. Rising rapidly, he signed a recording contract with RCA by late 1955 and a management contract with the shrewd, tough, and perfect manager Tom Parker in 1956 (Jackson R., 1987). In November 1956, he starred in the film "Love Me Tender" for Twentieth Century Fox, marking the first of over thirty films he would make and propelling him to become one of the highest-grossing stars in the film industry by the early 1960s. Drafted into the U.S. Army in March 1958, Presley continued to release records during his two-year service. After his discharge in March 1960, he shifted his focus from live performances to Hollywood music (Inglis, 1996).

Elvis Presley is not typically associated with the 1960s. Instead, he is most often recognized in relation to the decades immediately before and after

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this period. Cultural critic Greil Marcus refers to the years 1960-1967 in Elvis's career as a period of decline. During these years, Presley's musical creativity nearly ceased, with live performances being replaced by low-budget films. However, this does not imply that Elvis had no influence on popular culture during this period (Holdeman, 2007). The artist produced works across various genres, from church music to popular styles and from Rock 'n' Roll to Blues. Despite having experienced immense fame, wealth, and accolades during his lifetime, Presley's notoriety has not diminished over the years since his death. Tribute contests are held worldwide, websites and fan clubs have been established, and he has been featured in numerous radio and television programs and documentaries (tr.wikipedia.org, 2023). Although the importance of his Southern heritage has long been recognized, the complex connection between his career and Southern roots has received little attention. This study investigates how this identity has influenced every stage of Presley's career. Elvis Presley's career can be divided into three stages, each represented by a distinct image. Each image is encoded with a specific musical style, fashion style, and performance area (Doll, 2016).

1950s Clothing Fashion

The concept of fashion has been a continuously evolving phenomenon, shaped by various factors throughout history. Economic, sociological, musical, artistic movements, cinema, and political influences have all contributed to the evolution of fashion, with designers responding to these factors by creating collections that reflect them. At times, the reactive movements of youth have also inspired designers and impacted the fashion industry (Öztürk & Polat, 2014). Clothing fashion encompasses the use of garments produced in diverse forms, colors, styles, and fabrics, which individuals employ to construct social or personal identity. The expression and formation of social or personal identities are facilitated through appearances that align with contemporary fashion trends (Busch, 2017).

The post-war period was characterized by a resurgence in clothing fashion. During this time, people were in a state of recovery and optimism, which significantly influenced their clothing choices. To escape the psychological impact of the war, there was a notable shift towards more vibrant and extravagant clothing styles. Additionally, the changes in women's social roles and expectations after the war had a considerable impact on fashion. Women who ventured out of their homes began to adopt more stylish and refined attire.

In contemporary times, popular music—an essential element of popular culture—has significantly influenced fashion, with its impact being particularly pronounced during the 1950s. The connection between

popular music and fashion has remained culturally significant from that era to the present day (Ertürk, 2011). In the 1950s, certain Hollywood films created a substantial impact on youth, leading to the emergence of a style that many young people subsequently emulated; this phenomenon is referred to as the "worker rebellion myth." Characters in these films were often portrayed wearing black leather jackets, t-shirts, and blue jeans (Figure 2). These films effectively captured the frustrations of working-class youth, causing audiences to identify with the characters and adopt their fashion choices (Göksel, 2007).



Figure 2. 1950s Men's Clothing

<https://www.google.com/search?&li=y%C4%B1llar+deri+ceket+modas%C4%B1>

Starting in the 1950s, various youth subcultures and countercultural groups emerged, distinguished by their deviation from mainstream fashion. Young people not yet integrated into the workforce were unable to afford the expensive garments dictated by centralized fashion with their modest allowances. These subcultures, which often arose in the suburbs of metropolitan areas, were typically composed of marginalized, minority, immigrant, and working-class youth. In the 1950s, fashion associated with groups such as the Teddy Boys, Mods, and Hell's Angels became prominent. By the 1970s, the punk and hippie movements also gained global recognition for their anti-fashion aesthetics (Pektaş, 2008).

Subcultural groups have significantly influenced the evolution of fashion trends, often challenging the established norms of the fashion industry. Each group introduced new perspectives through their unique

use of materials, cuts, and combinations. The impact of these subcultures led to an increased prevalence of relaxed and unconventional clothing styles.

A major factor in the prominence of print designs in textiles during the 1950s was the widespread adoption of film printing techniques. This method allowed designers to experiment with new forms and engage in more innovative work by facilitating the use of a broader range of colors, reducing stencil costs, and enabling larger scale prints (Figure 3). As a result, the pace of change in fashion accelerated, even with fabrics of limited meterage (Gür Üstüner, 2017). The fashion industry experienced a revival with the use of high and medium-quality fabrics such as taffeta, nylon, wool, leather, and synthetic silk, coupled with vibrant colors and patterns (clothingandfashion, n.d.). The 1950s are particularly noted for the extensive use of synthetic fabrics. The term "nylon" eventually became synonymous with nylon stockings due to their increased popularity. Additionally, fibers similar to nylon, such as Dacron, Terilen, and Rayon, were developed (Alpan, 2005).



Figure 3. 1950s Clothing Fashion

<https://www.google.com/search?q=1950%27s+fashion&tbm>

While clothing forms in the 1950s were relatively consistent, variations in materials, colors, patterns, and embellishments enhanced the sense of diversity. For women, this period emphasized femininity, with garments complemented by elegant and refined accessories, including shoes and jewelry (Figure 4).

In the 1950s, the shirtwaist dress became emblematic of American women's fashion. This garment was characterized by its streamlined and sophisticated appearance. Henry Rosenfeld provided a diverse range of styles and fabrics, catering to various tastes and budgets. Elizabeth Hilt was responsible for

designing shirtwaist dresses for Rosenfeld. The collars were meticulously constructed, and each design featured distinctive details, resulting in dresses that appealed to a broad audience. In his Spring/Summer 1951 collection, Rosenfeld introduced an array of models (Fogg, 2014).



Figure 4. Elizabeth Hilt, Spring/Summer Collection for Rosenfeld, 1951

Fogg, 2014, s. 329

One of the most prominent features of women's fashion in the 1950s was the sailor collar. Skirts were typically full and midi-length, with petticoats worn underneath both for evening and daytime wear. This was especially true for circle and flared skirts. Blouses and shirts were generally tucked into the waistbands of skirts, often complemented by belts. Daytime attire was characterized by a more understated approach, whereas evening wear featured more elaborate designs (Yilmaz, 2011). In the 1950s, women's clothing was noted for its elegance, sophistication, and classic style. Key elements included pastel shades, floral patterns, lace, ruffles, delicate accessories, voluminous skirts, makeup, curled hairstyles, and gloves, all of which underscored women's femininity. The fashion and clothing styles of this decade were well-aligned with the social and cultural norms of the period.

1950s Men's Clothing and Characteristics

In the 1950s, men's fashion exhibited distinct characteristics, notably in European and American styles. European fashion featured broad-shouldered silhouettes, while American fashion introduced wide

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lapels, slim-fit trousers, long shirts worn over trousers, and vibrant colors. This era marked a transition from traditional to sporty attire. The influence of film icons such as James Dean and Marlon Brando (Figure 5) popularized leather jackets and blue jeans, while Edwardian elegance continued to be a prominent feature among the British (Ünal, 2015).



Figure 5. Marlon Brando, From the Movie 'The Wild One', 1953
Fogg, 2014, s. 342

Post-1950s, Western fashion and lifestyle began to influence the Soviet Union. Bartlett's concept of "daily fashion" evolved in line with contemporary trends. However, access to Western fashion in stores was limited, and local production was generally unfeasible. At this time, fashion items were often regarded with suspicion as potential instruments of ideological influence (Himam, 2015).

The influence of Western culture significantly transformed men's fashion, leading to the introduction of new trends. Key among these was the adoption of suits and ties, reflecting the broader impact of American culture through television, film, and music industries.

The clothing choices made by filmmakers for young actors played a central role in shaping these trends. Items such as short, zippered bomber jackets—named after the jackets worn by American aviators during the war—T-shirts, durable work boots, and

blue jeans became emblematic. This combination of rugged, durable, and functional clothing, initially associated with labor, established a distinct template for post-war men's fashion (Fogg, 2014). The use of double-breasted blazers became more prevalent, with accessories like ties, bow ties, and pocket squares becoming common. Overcoats, noted for their length and double-breasted design, emerged as a staple of men's outerwear, while fedoras were widely worn. Tailcoats were preferred for formal evening wear (Yilmaz, 2011). Denim blue jeans, initially designed as workwear for miners, farmers, and cowboys, gained widespread popularity among American youths in the 1950s, in part due to their association with rugged individualism rather than mere work attire (Sweeney, 2002).

The 1950s embraced a youthful, energetic, and modern approach to men's fashion. Influenced by artists, television programs, and film actors, young people, particularly those drawn to rock'n'roll music, favored slimmer and darker-colored clothing (Figure 6).



Figure 6. 1950s Men's Leather Jacket and Jean Fashion
<https://www.carlthompson.co.uk/1950-in-britain>

Among the notable fashion styles of the 1950s was the Preppy (Ivy) Style (Figure 7). This style, rooted in Ivy League tradition, featured classic garments such as navy blazers with gold buttons, khaki or chino trousers, Oxford button-down shirts, loafers, and rep ties, distinguishing itself from other men's fashion trends (Risinger, 2016). Men's fashion in the 1950s was notably influenced by Italian styles, characterized by elegant and modern cuts that produced softer silhouettes. The European Cut, introduced by the Rome-based firm Brioni, gained significant popularity among film stars and American men (Fogg, 2014).



Figure 7. 1950'ler Preppy (Ivy) Styles
Fogg, 2014, s. 308

The 1950s can be remembered as a period marked by a return to traditional styles in men's clothing. With the end of World War II, men's fashion began to move away from the restrictions imposed by the war, leading to the emergence of a more relaxed and comfortable style. The fashion trends of the 1950s continue to exert occasional influence on contemporary men's fashion.

Art Movements of the 1950s

During the 1950s, the art world saw the emergence of several influential movements, including Neo-Dada, Pop Art, and Space Age explorations. By the 1960s, movements such as Op Art and Minimalism came to the forefront. This era was characterized by the proliferation and impact of a range of significant and diverse artistic trends. In examining fashion history, it becomes evident that the cuts, colors, and designs of garments during this period were notably influenced by these art movements.

The influence of the Pop Art movement on fashion is prominently reflected in the works of designers such as Yves Saint Laurent, Emilio Pucci, Christian Dior, and Gianni Versace. This movement has notably impacted the application of vibrant color palettes, including tones like black, blue, red, green, yellow, and orange, as well as the incorporation of printed fabrics (Kalebek et al., 2022: 14, 15).

Conversely, the Space Age movement manifested in fashion through the utilization of white and silver tones alongside innovative polyester fabrics. The designs frequently employed bright colors and sharp-edged prints, prominently featuring geometric forms characterized by contrasting color schemes and varied scales (Uslu, 2011, pp. 45, 46).

The Op Art movement had a significant influence on designers such as André Courrèges, Mary Quant, Pierre Cardin, Paco Rabanne, and Richard Anuszkiewicz. Garments characterized by geometric

patterns in black-and-white or gray-and-white were produced, often utilizing plastic materials to create striking visual effects. Furthermore, the incorporation of wavy and graphic designs added a three-dimensional quality to fabrics. As the movement evolved, the color spectrum broadened, with the effects of this trend being evident in jackets, trench coats, skirts, and dresses (Gezicioğlu & Uslu, 2019: 1553-1557).

In the context of Minimalism's impact on fashion, designers have distanced themselves from the notion of "dressing to attract attention," opting instead for a more simplified aesthetic. This movement has foregrounded garments characterized by monochromatic designs. Instead of vibrant colors and intricate patterns, pastel shades or monochrome palettes of black and white have been favored. The designs typically feature straight cuts and loose silhouettes that do not closely adhere to the body. Notable designers such as Tom Ford, Jil Sander, Helmut Lang, Calvin Klein, Martin Margiela, and Shirin Guild have drawn inspiration from the Minimalism movement (Kumaş Şenol, 2018: 438, 439).

Neo-Dada Movement

Neo-Dada can be described as an art movement that developed in New York following the 1950s. It was spearheaded by Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. During the 1950s and 1960s, Neo-Dada encompassed young artists in New York who employed mixed media, found materials, ready-made objects, and elements of humor. The period of greatest influence for the Neo-Dada movement was between 1953 and 1965. Artists associated with this movement created anti-aesthetic works using collages and assemblages composed of found objects, similar to the Dada movement (Sülün, 2021).

The classification of the Neo-Dada movement has expanded to include Pop Art artists, Situationists, and Nouveau Réalistes, thus moving beyond a single group. Artists within this movement produced works that attracted media attention and were accessible, using diverse materials independent of specific artistic trends. In contrast to the complex philosophy of abstract art, Neo-Dada works featured humor and immediately recognizable imagery that required subtle intellect (Aktan, 2005). Neo-Dada artworks engage with life in two distinct ways at the perceptual level. Firstly, the viewer is transformed into an active participant, integrating the experience of viewing with the process of production. Secondly, the processes used in the creation of the artwork are directly derived from everyday life. Although the term Neo-Dada, which emerged in the late 1950s, has not been consistently applied, it has served to describe the period bridging Pop Art and Abstract Expressionism (Taşçılar, 2023).

This movement, prominently represented by artists

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such as Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, catalyzed a significant transformation within the art world. Neo-Dada also left a distinct mark on the fashion industry, prompting designers to critically examine traditional fashion paradigms and to pursue innovative and unexpected designs. By challenging the boundaries of material usage in art, the Neo-Dada movement inspired fashion designers to incorporate unconventional materials into clothing and accessories. The introduction of materials such as plastic, metal, and recycled substances has led to the emergence of new forms of expression within the fashion realm. Notably, designers in the 1960s embraced this ethos, effectively transforming clothing design into a medium for artistic experimentation. This movement became a source of inspiration for designers to transcend conventional boundaries, resulting in the creation of bold and innovative designs. Consequently, it elevated fashion from a mere wearable commodity to a powerful vehicle for social critique, humor, and artistic expression. The spirit of Neo-Dada, characterized by its boundary-pushing ethos and its ability to transform the mundane into art, continues to resonate in the fashion world, inspiring contemporary designers to this day.

The Pop Art Movement

Pop Art emerged in England in the mid-1950s, initially catalyzed by an artwork created by British artist Richard Hamilton. Unlike traditional art movements, Pop Art does not correspond to a specific style but represents a discourse that found its own expression during its time. The term “pop” in Pop Art refers to certain superficial phenomena within society (Yavuz, 2007). Between 1955 and 1965, the Pop Art movement developed concurrently but independently in both America and England. This movement began as a response to the perceived institutionalization of traditional art, and its reactionary stance persisted throughout its evolution (Avcıoğlu Kalebek, etc., 2022).

Pop Art is characterized by an approach adopted by young artists in reaction to Abstract Expressionism. These artists employed visual culture tools such as advertising, packaging, and newspapers to create images of consumer products and popular culture icons. The movement is noted for its use of bright colors and large-scale works (Hüsem, 2017). Pop Art gained significant attention in the latter half of the 1950s. The extensive use of vivid colors and the incorporation of deformed, curvilinear lines became integral elements of the hippie culture (Yapıcı, 2005). The movement, prominently associated with artists such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Claes Oldenburg, redefined the boundaries of art by placing elements of everyday life—such as advertisements, comic strips, and celebrities—at its core. The audacious, vibrant, and ironic nature of Pop Art

exerted a profound influence on the fashion industry, compelling designers to develop works that are not only extraordinary and playful but also innovative. Within this context, Pop Art has emerged as a significant aesthetic movement in fashion, serving as a crucial medium for critiquing consumer culture and addressing pertinent social issues. Its legacy continues to inspire contemporary designers to explore the intersections of art, fashion, and society.

Space Age Movement

The Space Age represents a significant period characterized by humanity's exploration of the universe, scientific research, and the investigation of the possibility of living in space. This era, which began in the mid-20th century and continues today, introduced a futurist aesthetic in fields such as interior design, product design, and fashion. In 1961, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human to travel to space, and the same year saw French fashion designer André Courrèges debut the mini skirt (Mehrali, 2015). In the latter half of the 1960s, space travel and the moon landing had a profound impact on daily life, leading to the creation of films about space exploration and the development of interior designs and products inspired by the Space Age concept. In fashion, this influence was reflected in the use of white and silver colors, as well as new polyester fabrics. Designs often featured sharp lines, bright colors, and geometric patterns, employing both large and small geometric forms with contrasting colors (Usluca, 2011). The space race also led to significant changes in fashion and design. Traditional uses of materials—such as metal for cutlery, plastic for picnic items, and paper for writing—were challenged and redefined with the advent of space exploration. Consequently, materials ranging from plastic disks to paper and PVC to leather were utilized in clothing production (Yetmen, 2011). The Space Age, which began in the late 1950s, marks a period during which humanity took significant steps towards exploring outer space. This excitement resonated profoundly in the 1960s, influencing both scientific advancements and popular culture. The landmark event of human beings setting foot on the Moon, advancements in space technologies, and the rising popularity of science fiction narratives catalyzed substantial transformations within the fashion industry. The Space Age movement cultivated a fashion aesthetic characterized by brightness, futurism, and innovation, representing modern technology and scientific discovery.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the influence of the Space Age led to the increasing popularity of plastic and synthetic materials in fashion. Designers drew inspiration from space suits, incorporating these durable and flexible materials to infuse fashion with a more experimental and innovative approach.

This movement facilitated the creation of designs that were both stylish and functional, as synthetic fibers allowed for greater versatility in fashion design.

Op Art Movement

The Op Art movement is distinguished by its use of optical illusions designed to prompt viewers to remain attentive. These works are intended to have psychological effects and stimulate intellectual engagement. In two-dimensional graphic arts (such as prints, paintings, patterns, graphic design, and photography), the content often appears to be merely extensions of two dimensions (length and width). However, these works provide viewers with an experience of spatial illusion (Uğur, 2019). During the early 1960s, the movement of simple geometric patterns emerged as a new artistic trend known as Op Art. Typically, works in this movement are created in black and white to generate illusionary effects (Zanker & Walker, 2004).

Historically, the development of Op Art can be traced back to the Impressionists and their exploration of light and color. Impressionist artists used figures and often conducted experiments with light and its reflection on objects. The primary characteristic of Op Art is its ability to produce images that convey the sensation of movement without actual motion. This involves the repetition of simple elements, the use of complementary colors, the exclusion of perspective tools and spatial ambiguities, and the creation of direct perceptual appeal without reliance on symbolism or associative meanings (Humphrey, 2008). The Op Art movement rapidly transcended the confines of the art world, exerting a profound influence on the fashion industry. Merging with the pop culture and libertarian spirit of the 1960s, Op Art heralded a new era characterized by graphic patterns, stark black-and-white contrasts, and optical illusions, particularly evident in fabric designs. The impact of Op Art on fashion extended well beyond the 1960s; geometric patterns and optical illusion-based graphics have resurfaced repeatedly in the fashion landscape over the decades.

Contemporary designers continue to draw inspiration from the aesthetics of Op Art, incorporating this style into their collections. This resurgence is particularly prominent during periods marked by a revival of minimalist and futuristic fashion, where the influence of Op Art remains evident. Thus, Op Art has not only redefined the visual language of fashion but has also established a profound and enduring impact that continues to resonate with designers and consumers alike.

Minimalism Movement

Minimalism has been an art movement since the 1960s, initially in painting and sculpture, and la-

ter extending to architecture, music, and literature (Karaca, 2020). This movement is characterized by achieving the most functional result with minimal materials, emphasizing simplicity and economy. Minimalism favors restraint and avoids ornamentation and excessive decoration. The aim of minimalists is to use materials with minimal alteration, preserving their essential qualities (Kültür, 2022).

One of the most notable figures in minimalist art is Dan Flavin. In minimalist works, industrial materials are commonly used in simple, volumetric, and geometric forms. Many minimalist artists have employed materials such as steel, wood, fire bricks, artificial foam, and copper plates in their creations. Minimalist art, with its focus on design, introduces a measured, precise, and systematic approach (Or Bayram, 2002). Minimalist artists use a restricted palette of colors and materials, reducing the number of elements as much as possible. The term “minimalism” emerged in the early 1960s as a reaction to Abstract Expressionism, representing a new form of abstraction in sculpture and painting (Stepaniak, 2018). Minimalism, which gained prominence in the mid-20th century, represents a radical departure from excessive ornamentation, instead advocating for the seamless integration of simplicity, clarity, and functionality in fashion design. This movement promotes a design philosophy centered around reductionism, where embellishments are minimized, and a focus is placed on clean lines, understated elegance, and a refined aesthetic. By distancing themselves from elaborate decorations, complex patterns, and ornate details, minimalist designers employ streamlined silhouettes and neutral color palettes to create designs that are both visually and functionally harmonious.

In minimalist fashion, each garment is designed with a meticulous attention to balance, ensuring that functionality and aesthetics coalesce in a cohesive manner. The emphasis is placed on the practicality, wearability, and longevity of the design, aligning beauty with simplicity and high-quality craftsmanship. Minimalist design principles challenge conventional notions of luxury by presenting an alternative that celebrates restraint, precision, and the intrinsic value of materials. This movement has left a lasting impact on contemporary fashion, influencing not only the creations of modern designers but also the broader cultural landscape's understanding of fashion as a medium of both expression and utility.

Elvis Presley's Clothing Characteristics

Elvis Presley was a seminal figure in 1950s music, noted for his pioneering role in blending fashion and music. As the first to bridge these two realms, Presley's distinctive style—characterized by flashy pants and embellished shirts—set new trends, influencing the fashion of the 1960s youth, as exemplified by the Beatles. Additionally, the fashion of the 1970s was

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impacted by films such as Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (Alpan, 2005).

Elvis Presley is widely regarded as one of the most influential pop culture icons of the 20th century, making a significant impact not only through his musical achievements but also through his distinctive sartorial choices. The garments donned by Presley not only encapsulated the fashion trends of his era but also played an instrumental role in shaping the visual identity of rock 'n' roll. His style evolved into a symbol of rebellion and innovation, ultimately elevating him to the status of a fashion pioneer. The characteristics of Presley's attire encompass a diverse range, including stage costumes and everyday clothing, thereby reflecting the cultural zeitgeist and the dynamic trends of the time. This duality of his persona as both a musician and a fashion icon underscore the interconnectedness of music and style in the broader context of 20th-century popular culture. Throughout his career, Presley was renowned for his bold and innovative style. His colorful and extravagant outfits, though unconventional for the era, gained widespread acceptance and increased influence. His approach underscored the significance of boldness and originality in fashion, challenging the norms of his time. Presley's hairstyle also drew considerable attention and was widely emulated.

Presley's unconventional image resonated strongly with the youth of the 1950s, who admired his collared shirts, black leather jackets, and patterned shirts. His influence led to the popularity of tight jeans, floral-patterned shirts, and clothing adorned with slogans. This period also saw the decline of layered petticoats previously worn by girls (Altınay & Yüceer, 1992).

The impact of Presley's style extended beyond his contemporaries, shaping popular culture and influencing women's fashion as well. His distinctive approach inspired many to adopt similar styles in their own fashion choices.

Presley's provocative dance style and unique clothing combinations made him a source of inspiration for the younger generation, yet also elicited concern from critics and conservative groups. Criticized by churches and conservative individuals, Presley earned the moniker "Elvis the Pelvis" and faced accusations of undermining societal and cultural values. His use of pink jackets and his distinctive dance moves prompted debates about gender norms in fashion, making him a focal point of criticism. This period may also represent an early step towards the concept of gender-neutral fashion (aposto.com, 2021). In the 1960s, Presley's floral-patterned shirts in the film *Blue Hawaii* contributed to the popularization of floral patterns in men's fashion. His style was subsequently adopted by renowned brands such as Dior, Prada, Saint Laurent, and Gucci. Discussions about Presley's appearance and musical influence

are a common aspect of fan discourse, with descriptors like "Elvis the Pelvis" reflecting the ongoing analysis of celebrity images (Duffett, 2011).

Presley's contributions to 1950s fashion were significant. His clothing choices, hairstyle, and innovations in youth fashion had a profound impact on the fashion trends of the era (Figure 8). His stage performances, featuring embellished jumpsuits, colorful or patterned shirts, and glittering pants, were particularly noteworthy.



Figure 8. Men Influenced by Elvis Presley's Style

<https://www.demon-media.co.uk/2020/01/30/a-fashion-movement-teddy-boys-and-the-importance-of-the-teddy-girls/>

Elvis Presley gained prominence in the music world during the 1950s and 1960s. Beyond his musical achievements, Presley became a significant icon in fashion, symbolizing a unique style. His influence extended beyond music, leaving a notable mark on fashion with his distinctive clothing choices. Presley utilized elements of color and embellishment traditionally associated with women, challenging and attempting to dismantle these gender-based fashion norms. His impact on fashion remains evident today, continuing to inspire designers, fashion professionals, and artists. Presley's style endures as a source of inspiration and influence within the fashion industry.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research model and is structured according to a case study design. The fundamental characteristic of qualitative case study research is the in-depth investigation of one or more cases. In this context, the factors affecting a particular situation (environment, individuals, events, processes, etc.) are examined holistically, focusing on how these factors influence the situation and how they are affected by it (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). The population of the research consists of male singers who gained fame in America during the 1950s and

1960s. The typical case sampling method was employed to determine the sample. When researchers aim to work on a new application or innovation, they can select the most typical case(s) from a range of situations to study (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

In this regard, Elvis Presley has been included in the sample of the study as a typical example due to his career and the stage costumes he used. Many male singers who were popular in America during the 1950s and 1960s left significant marks in the music world. Some notable figures from this period include:

1950s:

1. Elvis Presley: Known as the King of Rock 'n' Roll, Presley gained immense popularity with hit songs such as "Hound Dog," "Heartbreak Hotel," and "Jailhouse Rock."

2. Frank Sinatra: Gaining fame in the 1940s, Sinatra remained one of the prominent figures in the music world throughout the 1950s. His songs, including "Fly Me to the Moon," "My Way," and "Strangers in the Night," were very popular.

3. Buddy Holly: Recognized as one of the pioneers of rock 'n' roll, Buddy Holly is known for songs such as "That'll Be the Day" and "Peggy Sue."

4. Chuck Berry: Another legend of rock 'n' roll, Chuck Berry made a significant impact with songs like "Johnny B. Goode" and "Roll Over Beethoven."

5. Little Richard: Famous for his energetic performances and groundbreaking rock 'n' roll songs, Little Richard's tracks such as "Tutti Frutti" and "Long Tall Sally" have become iconic.

1960s:

1. Bob Dylan: One of the most influential singer-songwriters of the 1960s, Dylan is known for his evolution from folk music to rock. "Blowin' in the Wind" and "Like a Rolling Stone" are among his most famous songs.

2. Ray Charles: Known as the father of soul music, Charles gained fame with songs like "Georgia on My Mind" and "Hit the Road Jack."

3. Sam Cooke: A revolutionary figure in soul music, Cooke is recognized for songs such as "A Change Is Gonna Come" and "You Send Me."

4. James Brown: A pioneer of funk and soul music, Brown made a significant impact in the 1960s with songs like "I Got You (I Feel Good)" and "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag."

5. Otis Redding: Another major figure in soul music, Redding is known for songs like "Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay."

These individuals represent only a portion of the singers who left a significant mark on the American

music scene during the 1950s and 1960s. Among them, Elvis Presley, selected through the typical case sampling method, forms the subject of this research, which is limited to Elvis Presley. The data for the study were collected and analyzed using document analysis methodology. In qualitative research, this method is utilized in situations where direct observation and interviews are not feasible, or to enhance the validity of the research. It can be employed independently or in conjunction with other methods (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

Findings

Iconic Costumes and Analyses of Elvis Presley

This study focuses on the analysis of five iconic costumes of Elvis Presley, which are believed to have had a significant impact on fashion. While analyzing these outfits, images found in the digital environment were used. Analyses were made based on the parts visible in these images. The analysis commenced with a fabric examination, followed by an assessment of patterns and embellishments on the garments. The analysis was conducted in a sequence from the inside out, starting with upper garments and moving to lower garments, and concluded with an evaluation of the shoes. Additionally, the study examined whether these costumes were influenced by contemporary artistic movements, and relevant observations and comments on this topic were included.

Pink Jacket

Elvis Presley first wore the pink jacket (Figure 9) on June 5, 1956, during his early career on the Milton Berle Show, attracting significant attention with his outfit (www.elvis-history-blog.com, 2010). Due to the unavailability of the back view of the jacket, the analysis focuses solely on the front view, with the back details inferred from researchers' opinions. The jacket is designed in a regular fit and is made from a pink cotton fabric with a white checkered pattern. It features a classic men's collar and broad shoulders. The jacket lacks darts or pleats and fastens with a single button. On the front, there is an appliqué pocket on the left side of the chest, while two large flap pockets are placed symmetrically towards the hem. The pocket placement follows the pattern of the fabric. Three decorative buttons are present at the cuffs. The jacket's length reaches the hip level. Given the regular fit, it is assumed that the back center is seamed and lacks darts or pleats.

Presley typically paired this jacket with a white shirt featuring a black collar or entirely black shirts, along with black trousers. This jacket was frequently worn during Presley's early performances. Although it initially faced mixed reactions due to its color, it later became a source of inspiration for many. Elvis Pres-

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ley emerged as a source of inspiration for the youth, characterized by his distinctive attire and provocative dance movements, while simultaneously becoming a point of contention for adults and critics. The conservative factions and the church, opposing both cultural and social norms, derogatorily referred to him as “Elvis the Pelvis.” Through his clothing choices, he became an artist who critically interrogated the gender roles of his era. Notably, during his appearance on the Milton Berle Show, where he donned a pink jacket, he was subjected to questions such as, “Do men wear pink? Do they dance suggestively?” Despite the extensive criticism he faced, Presley continues to exert a significant influence as a fashion icon to this day (<https://aposto.com>, 2021).

It is speculated that Presley’s pink jacket was influenced by the bright colors associated with the Pop Art movement of the era.



Figure 9. Pink Jacket

<https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/gallery/2018/aug/23/fit-for-the-king-elvis-presleys-fashion-legacy-in-pictures>

Gold Suit

Elvis Presley first wore the Gold Suit on March 28, 1957 (<https://elvisbiography.net>, 2017). Although the exact number of times he wore this suit is not precisely documented, it is known that it appeared in several of his projects. Due to the lack of a rear view, the analysis is based solely on the front view of the suit. Known as the Gold Lamé Suit (Figure 10), this outfit features a shiny, metallic gold fabric, as indicated by its name. The original model of the suit includes a shirt in the same color; however, Presley is known to have worn shirts of different colors in various appearances. The shirt is presumed to have a

regular fit. The suit jacket is regular cut and has a shawl collar. The width of the shawl collar is estimated to be six cm. The shoulders are broad, and the jacket fastens with a single button at the front. The jacket includes darts on the front and two side pockets, as well as a decorative pocket on the left side of the chest.

The cuffs of the jacket are double. The trousers are loose-fitting with a straight leg cut. The outfit is completed with gold-colored shoes, which feature a short heel, pointed toe, and bow. A bow tie is used as an accessory. The Gold Suit is distinguished by its bright embellishments, including silver stones. These embellishments are applied to the collar, front closure, sleeves, and pocket openings of the jacket, as well as the side seams of the trousers. Gold and silver threads are used in the stitching.



Figure 10. Gold Suit

https://www.facebook.com/elvis/photos/elvis-gold-lam%C3%A9-suit-was-featured-on-the-cover-of-his-1959-album-50000000-elvis-/10160242349943792/?_rdr

Elvis Presley’s gold ensemble is regarded as one of the most iconic stage outfits in music history. At that time, no other artist had donned such a flamboyant costume. The bright gold costume worn by Elvis on stage has become one of the defining elements that solidified his title as the “King.” This outfit is also viewed as a precursor to the bold and innovative designs characteristic of 1950s rock ‘n’ roll fashion. The gold costume exemplifies how stage artists can expand their stylistic interpretations and enhance their performances through clothing.

The Gold Suit is notable for its color and decorative elements. It was designed to highlight Presley's charismatic stage presence and make a strong impression. As one of the symbolic examples of Presley's iconic style, this suit holds a significant place in music history, much like many of his other outfits. Furthermore, the suit reflects the influence of the Space Age period, likely inspired by the colors and materials associated with that era.

Red Suit

Elvis Presley wore the Red Suit (Figure 11) during a television show performance of the song "Teddy Bear" in 1957 (<https://ew.com>, 2022). In this outfit, the shirt is made from white and red satin, while the trousers are likely made from red cotton fabric. The analysis of this suit is based on available front-view images, as no rear view is available. The shirt is constructed from two-tone satin in a regular fit. The collar is wide and made from red satin, featuring white floral embroidery. The front of the shirt is yoke-detailed, made from red satin, with similar white floral embroidery on the yoke. The shirt fastens with buttons and includes a pocket on the chest with a red bias trim. The shirt does not have darts or pleats. The model is long-sleeved, with sleeves made from two-tone satin, including white satin up to the elbows. The cuffs, extending to the elbows, are made from red satin and feature white floral embroidery. Each cuff has five buttonholes, with buttons covered in red satin. Based on professional training and experience, it is anticipated that the back of the shirt is also yoke-detailed. The trousers are a regular fit with a straight leg cut, featuring a zip closure. The belt width is estimated to be four cm, with four belt loops (two at the front and two at the sides) secured with red buttons. It is assumed that there are also four belt loops at the back. The front of the trousers features two diagonal decorative pockets, with white bias trim on the pocket edges. White bias is also sewn along the side seams of the trousers, and there is a decorative pocket on the back, with white bias trim on the pocket edges.

Elvis Presley completed the outfit with burgundy pointed-toe, short-heeled shoes and a white satin cravat. Like his other outfits, this suit is distinct in its fabric, color, and embellishments, aligning with Presley's iconic stage style. The suit reflects the influence of the Pop Art movement, evident in the choice of vibrant red and floral motifs.

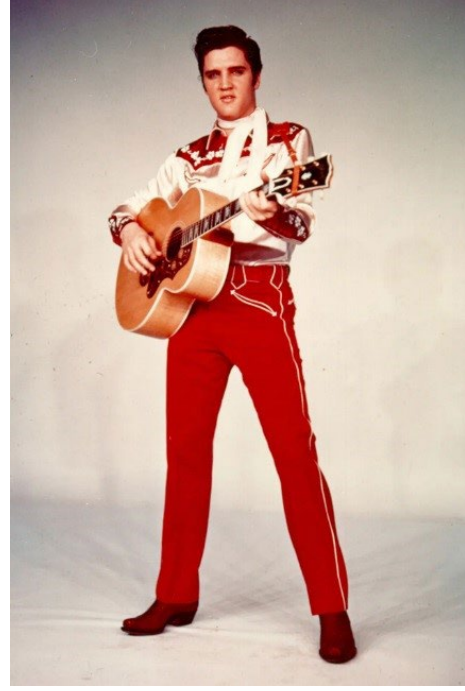


Figure 11. Red Suit

<https://www.thesun.ie/travel/8172455/elvis-presley-apartment-memphis>

Denim Suit

Elvis Presley first wore this denim suit (Figure 12) in 1958 during the filming of the music video for "Jailhouse Rock." (www.youtube.com, 2010). Since there is no image of the back of the garment, the analysis was conducted based on the front view. As indicated by its name, the suit is made of denim fabric. Presley wore a shirt underneath the suit, likely made of cotton with horizontal black and white stripes, presumed to be of a regular fit. The shirt features a classic men's collar crafted from black fabric, with a simple button and buttonhole closure. Care was taken to ensure the alignment of the stripes on the shirt.

The jacket is tailored in a regular fit and features a stand-up collar. The front closure consists of five buttons, with white buttons and buttonholes stitched using white thread. The sleeves are constructed in two parts. The jacket is free of darts or shaping seams, and its length reaches the hip line. On the left front side of the jacket, some numbers are appliquéd at chest level. The pants are also designed with a regular fit and a straight-leg cut. They include a waistband, estimated to be four centimeters wide, and are fastened with a single button and zipper.

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There are side pockets on the front of the pants.

The decorative stitching on this suit was done by hand using a topstitching technique. On the jacket, a single row of this stitching was applied around the collar, while on the shoulder and sleeve seam lines, it was applied in two rows. It's estimated that the same decorative stitching was used on the inside of the front cover, approximately eight centimeters in from the edge. It is estimated that the sleeve cuffs had similar stitching five centimeters above the cuff. The hem of the jacket also includes this stitching, one centimeter above the edge. On the pants, the wide topstitching, done in white thread, is present on the pocket openings, fly, inseams, and side seams. The black and white striped pattern of the shirt reflects the influence of the Op-Art movement, while the fabric and monochromatic design of the denim suit demonstrate the influence of Minimalism.



Figure 12. Denim Suit

<https://www.alamy.de/elvis-presley-mit-jailhouse-rock-musikfilm-1957-koloriertes-foto-image456628192.html>

Black Leather Jacket

Elvis Presley first wore this leather jacket and pants ensemble (Figure 13) in 1968. He initially sported this outfit during a television program and later wore it at a concert in Las Vegas (www.rollingstone.com, 2017). The primary material of Presley's outfit is black leather, which provides a sturdy, durable, and striking appearance. The outfit consists of a leather jacket and leather pants, embodying the Rock 'n' Roll style and conveying a powerful stage presence.

Both the jacket and pants are tailored in a slim fit. The jacket features a wide, upright collar and is darted at the front. Large, flap-covered pockets are positioned at chest level. The hem of the jacket includes a belt, estimated to be 3 cm wide, and the

jacket is fastened with two buttons and buttonholes located at the belt. The sleeves are constructed in two pieces, with a single button closure at the cuffs. The back of the jacket includes both a yoke and darts. The pants are designed with a straight leg cut and fastened with a zipper and a button at the waistband. Darts are present on both the front and back of the pants, and the waistband is estimated to be 4 cm wide. Seams run along the crease lines, and two large appliqué pockets are featured on the back.

Presley complemented this Rock 'n' Roll ensemble with leather bracelets, metal accessories, and large rings. In contrast to his other costumes, which were often made of colorful fabrics with sparkling stones and embellishments, this outfit's design emphasizes Presley's stage presence. The influence of minimalism is evident in this outfit, with its simplified form, material, and color choices.



Figure 13. Black Leather Jacket

<https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/mehmet-ali-cicekdag/gercek-kral-elvis-presley,45622>

Conclusion

Fashion reflects changes in people's clothing styles, preferences, and trends. The factors that determine fashion have evolved over time, influenced by societal values, technological advancements, economic conditions, and cultural interactions. After World War II, the 1950s witnessed a revival in fashion, with a shift towards more feminine and elegant styles. The end of wartime restrictions led to a departure from simple designs to the prominence of luxurious and elaborate details. Accessories also gained significant importance during this period. The fashion industry of the 1950s was notably influenced by film stars and artists, leading to the spread of new clothing styles to broader audiences.

Fashion allows us to express our personality, colors, culture, beliefs, values, dreams, and many other aspects of ourselves. It enables us to add our unique touch to various aspects of life and reflect our inner selves. Fashion provides choices that allow us to showcase our individuality and make selections that are distinctly our own.

Elvis Presley's fashion sense challenged the social norms of his time and inspired the youth with a bold and innovative style. Young people emulated his look, leading to a wave of freedom and originality in fashion. Presley's clothing also marked a revolution in gender roles. While most men of that era favored traditional, more restrained clothing styles, Presley's daring attire represented the beginning of a new approach in men's fashion (<https://saatolog.com.tr/>, 2022). His influence extends beyond his era, with elements such as high-waisted pants, leather jackets, and slim-fit jeans remaining popular today.

This study examined five of Elvis Presley's outfits. The first, a pink jacket, captured the attention of young people at the time. Influenced by the pop-art movement, this plaid-patterned pink jacket was one of Presley's early garments reflecting the concept of genderless fashion.

Another notable outfit is the gold suit. This suit was designed under the influence of the space age fascination of the period, which significantly impacted fashion trends at the time. The color and metallic finish of the fabric used in Presley's suit evoke the space age influence. The suit features matching shiny embellishments applied to the collar, closure, pocket openings, cuffs, and side seams of the pants. The red suit is one of Presley's most eye-catching outfits in terms of color and detailing. Made from satin and adorned with embroidered floral patterns, it reflects the concept of genderless fashion. The use of red and floral motifs in this outfit is associated with the pop-art movement. It is complemented with a white satin scarf and maroon, short-heeled shoes.

Presley's denim outfit merges minimalism and op-art influences. The black and white striped shirt represents op-art, while the simplicity of the denim suit showcases minimalism. This outfit contrasts with Presley's typically vibrant and extravagant attire, highlighting a more understated style.

Lastly, Presley's leather ensemble epitomizes his "King of Rock" persona. The form-fitting jacket and pants reflect his powerful stage presence. This leather suit demonstrates minimalism in both color and fabric, with the black leather highlighting a minimalist aesthetic.

In addition to his musical career, Presley had a significant impact on the fashion world, leading the way for youth freedom and self-expression through clothing. His bold and attention-grabbing outfits deviated from the era's conventional styles, featuring loose-fitting, glamorous, and vibrant garments. Slim

pants, wide-collared shirts, colorful suits, and striking jackets became his signature. Presley's influence on fashion extends beyond his time, with his impact still felt today. His entire wardrobe is displayed in London, and his Memphis home, Graceland, has been converted into a museum showcasing his belongings (<https://www.graceland.com/epm>, 2024).

Elvis Presley's style has emerged as a pivotal source of inspiration, transcending his own era to influence subsequent generations. His stage outfits have become iconic symbols of rock 'n' roll music, and even today, numerous artists and designers continue to draw inspiration from his distinctive clothing choices. Presley's audacious and unique aesthetic epitomizes a fashion paradigm that challenges conventional boundaries.

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