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JEWELRY DESIGN: A PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL AND AESTHETIC CHANGES IN THE USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE IN THE 20-21st CENTURY

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Abstract. The study explores the significant impact of adornments in shaping clothing identity, highlighting contemporary jewelry as a distinct manifestation of individual taste in an ever-changing society. Analyzing social changes in the USSR, Ukraine, Bessarabia and Eastern Europe, as well as the disintegration of the USSR, the research reveals the interaction between communist aesthetics and traditionalism, generating innovations in jewelry design. Technological evolution has brought significant changes and the study emphasizes the importance of researching preferences and analyzing contemporary trends in understanding current design directions in jewelry today. The findings reveal that jewelry from the USSR and Europe in the 20th-21st century reflects temporal changes and cultural diversity, marking a continuing transformation and diversity in the artistic expression of contemporary jewelry.

Keywords: *clothing adornments design, cultural identity, contemporary jewelry, jewelry evolution, current trends, innovations, social transformations.*

Rezumat. Studiul explorează impactul semnificativ al podoabelor în conturarea identității vestimentare, evidențind bijuteriile contemporane ca manifestări distincte ale gustului individual într-o societate în schimbare continuă. Analizând schimbările sociale din URSS, Ucraina, Basarabia și Europa de Est, precum și dezintegrarea URSS, cercetarea relevă interacțiunea dintre estetica comunistă și tradiționalism, generând inovații în designul bijuteriilor. Evoluția tehnologică a adus schimbări semnificative, iar studiul subliniază importanța cercetării preferințelor și și analizei tendințelor contemporane în înțelegerea direcțiilor actuale ale designului în bijuteriile prezentului. Concluziile dezvăluie că bijuteriile din URSS și Europa în secolul XX-XXI reflect schimbările temporale și diversitatea culturală, marcând o continuă transformare și diversitate în expresia artistică a bijuteriilor contemporane.

Cuvinte cheie: *designul podoabelor vestimentare, identitate culturală, podoabe contemporane, evoluțiile bijuteriilor, tendințe actuale, inovații, transformări sociale.*

1. Introduction

The adornments, which are the essential components of the costume, highlight its characteristics and their analysis focuses on the integration into the overall costume. Designing and making an adornment involves special attention to the design stage. In contemporary jewelry, design becomes a distinctive expression of individual identity and taste. In a constantly changing world, aesthetics and design in modern jewelry reflect the evolution of society, culture and technology in the 20th-21st century. In the context of the USSR, Ukraine, Bessarabia and Europe, the study focuses on the general principles of aesthetics and design. Major social changes, such as the collapse of the USSR and independence movements in Eastern Europe, influenced artistic expression in regional jewelry. The encounter between communist aesthetics and traditional influences generated innovations and unique reinterpretations in jewelry design.

Moreover, technological developments have also brought about significant changes in the creation and perception of jewelers. Industrial production increased efficiency, but also generated challenges related to authenticity and uniqueness. Designers have navigated between modern technology and respect for artisanal traditions to create jewelry that blends past and future.

Researching the preferences of future wearers of clothing adornments becomes vital in the creative process, and in the context of the cultural diversity of said regions, items must incorporate local sensibilities and appeal to global audiences. Thus, analyzing contemporary trends is crucial to understanding current design directions of contemporary adornments.

The given study aims to reveal the subtle connections between aesthetics, technology, culture and society in the evolution of jewelry in the USSR, Ukraine, Bessarabia, Russia and Europe in the 20th-21st century. By investigating these aspects, the aim is not only to outline a history of jewelry design, but also to understand how it reflects the changes brought about by the passage of time and cultural diversity in a world in constant transformation.

2. Materials and Methods

The study adopts a complex methodology, focusing on careful analysis of the historical and cultural context of the USSR, Ukraine, Bessarabia, Russia and Eastern Europe regions. Primary sources include analysis of historical texts, fashion and jewelry archives, and interviews with jewelers and experts. Assessing the impact of major social changes, such as the collapse of the USSR and independence movements, is based on period documents. The process of interaction between communist aesthetics and traditional influences is investigated through the study of jewelry artwork and regional collections. The analysis of the innovations brought by technological advances is directed towards the literature specialized in jewelry and design, exploring the evolution of materials and techniques. To understand contemporary preferences and trends, market research, surveys and interviews are conducted with modern jewelry lovers.

Outlining the history of jewelry design involves a detailed analysis of the evolution of costume and jewelry during key periods, in collaboration with experts in arts and cultural history.

These methods reveal the fundamental connections between aesthetics, technology, culture and society, thus providing a detailed understanding of the progress of jewelry in the specified area during the 20th-21st century.

3. Results and Discussion

By the end of the 19th century, a reform of the costume was necessary in order to adapt it to changes of living conditions. By adopting some elements from previous styles, a process of simplifying the forms of the female costume was initiated, which ended in the second decade of the 20th century [1, p. 414]. This evolution had a direct analogical impact on stylistic, conceptual and design changes in the field of clothing adornments.

The modern movement ended during World War I. In these years, non-figurative stylistic trends, influenced by the demands of painting and sculpture, such as cubism, futurism, the abstractionism of Piet Mondrian and the Bauhaus school, shaped the new forms of avant-garde jewelry.

In the first half of the 20th century, the development of jewelry art was mainly focused on Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles. During the Art Deco period, jewelry was distinguished by compositions based on the interaction of geometric shapes, preference was given to polished, smooth surfaces, precious metals or steel. Precious stones and diamonds served as a chromatic accent. Diamonds and corals could be combined in a piece of jewelry, regardless of the significant differences in value, the basic purpose being to satisfy the aesthetic requirements of non-figurative styles. During this period, there could be noted jewelry artists such as: Vivien Nilsson, Rene Robert, Raymond Templier, H. G. Murphy, Jean Fouquet, etc. Despite the conflicts and new artistic directions of that period, new styles and directions emerged. Changes in art began in the first decade of the 20th century, bringing new currents such as Fauvism and Cubism. In a tense environment and high creativity, a new type of art was born, with discoveries that later influenced all fields of creation including jewelry.

It was also during this period that Russian jewelers adopted Western European influences, creating their own version of Art Nouveau and reinterpreting early Art Deco. In 1918, the state monopoly on gold mining drastically changed the landscape, and in the 30s production was organized in industrial cooperatives [2, p. 114], focused on export and low costs for the Western European market. However, Western European stylistic influence was limited, and mass production was guided by pre-revolutionary traditions until the 50s [3, p. 112]. The political role of the state was essential in shaping jewelry style, and the art of Europe became the expression of an unofficial culture with international impact. After 1960, jewelry artists around the world sought uniqueness, and in Western Europe they created unconventional conceptual work from precious materials, while those in the USSR, restricted to non-precious materials, had creative freedom. The mentioned period was marked by creative pluralism and subjectivism in jewelry, highlighting that adornments are not limited only to the cultural significance or the social status of the owner [4, p.197]. These decorative items can emphasize and express the individuality of the owner, while also becoming means by which the creator conveys a significant message about his own perception of the world to the public. Under the influence of abstract expressionism, Western jewelry artists have actively adopted unconventional materials and techniques - aluminium, acrylic, galvanoplasty, anodizing. In the 70s, there was an active phase of reintegration of the art of Russian jewelry in the European context, evidenced by the participation in the International Exhibition of Jewelry and Jewelry Art in Jablonec, Czechoslovakia [5].

In the 60s, acrylic captivated Western European jewelers for its ease of processing. Acrylic resin, flexible in modeling and cutting, allows transparency similar to glass, offering

the possibility of coloring in various shades or obtaining an opaque effect. During the 70s, Klaus Buri, who was a German, created promising technocratic compositions from multi-layered and intensely colored acrylic resin. Bakker Gijs and Emmy van Leersum from the Netherlands explored the application of photographic images to plastic using acrylic. For Russian artists, acrylic presented an opportunity in the creation of extensive adornments, not only rich in chromatic and light effects, but also built on the principle of open plastic compositions.

Neoconstructivism began its formation in the second half of the 60s, being marked by a similar strategic approach, but with notable differences in the methods of application. These differences underline the specific features of this current. Friedrich Becker is recognized as a pioneer of neoconstructivism, starting in 1965, creating kinetic jewelry characterized by pure geometric shapes and rigid metallic glow, predominantly in white gold. In the late 60s, artist-jewellers Bakker Gijs and Emmy van Leersum from the Netherlands made an innovative contribution to Western European neo-constructivism, focusing on its application to the human body. At the same time, Russian artist-jewelers were faced with the lack of adequate material and technical infrastructure for kinetic experiments. In their kinetic jewelry creations, they highlighted the concept of plastic interconnection between the jewelry form and the human body. Where for Becker was needed an articulated mechanism, for the Russians Kuznetsov F. and Goncharov F. just the human body was enough, along with its kinetic properties and potential. In the 1980s, Kuznetsov experimented with completely flat shapes of brooches, using only traditional techniques. Thus, he created kinetic jewelry that synthesized the experience of op-art, kinetic-art and neo-constructivism [6, p. 117].

The defining characteristics of the composition in jewelry and costume adornment of the component countries of the USSR in the late 20th and early 21st centuries are influenced by a number of factors, including historical context, social and cultural changes, and developments in jewelry design and production, Table 1.

Table 1

The design of the adornments of the former USSR, at the end of the 20th century, the beginning of the 21st century

Cultural representation	Jewelry often reflects elements specific to the culture and regional traditions of the countries of the former USSR, through the use of local symbols or motifs inspired by traditional art, which can be considered a defining characteristic of the composition.
Use of specific materials	Jewelery can be part of the tradition of using materials specific to the area (precious metals, semi-precious stones or motifs inspired by local history and culture).
Ideological and political influences	During the Soviet period, jewelry was influenced by communist ideology [7, 8], often having propagandistic purposes. After the breakup of the USSR, there was a shift towards expressing individualism and diversity in design.
Adoption of modern technologies	With the transition to the 21st century, jewelers began to adopt modern technologies [9, p.130-149] and innovative approaches in the design and production of jewelry (the use of 3D programs and advanced manufacturing technologies) [10, p.41-44].

Continuation Table 1

Innovations in design	Jewelers in the respective region are exploring more and more shapes, textures and colors, wanting to create distinct artistic expressions and innovative compositions, which is reflected in the diversity of contemporary styles and jewelry [11].
Global influences	Globalization has brought increased diversity in jewelry design in post-Soviet countries. Designers had access to international influences and integrated modern and contemporary elements into their creations.
Eclecticism and individualism	Contemporary jewelry is characterized by eclecticism and individualism, with designers experimenting with various styles and techniques to reflect the personality and spirit of the time in their creations.
Innovation and raw material	Designers have brought a significant change in the selection of raw materials, moving from the traditional use of materials and precious stones to the integration of unconventional materials, including recycled ones or innovative combinations, to give uniqueness to their pieces.

Here, during this transitional period, Soviet jewelry was gradually seen as relics of an earlier historical period starting in 1991. The transformations of the post-Soviet period led to the disposal and extensive export of this jewelry [12]. This action coincided with the emigration of a portion of the population, who perceived them as a universal tool for protecting personal savings in the context of economic uncertainty.

In the composition of adornments from Ukraine and Bessarabia in the period of the 20th and early 21st centuries, there are both common and differential landmarks that reflect the ethno-cultural affiliation, traditions, history and cultural influences of these distinct regions, Table 2.

Table 2

Similarities and discrepancies between Ukrainian and Bessarabian adornments of the 20th and early 21st centuries

CRITERIA OF SIMILARITY Traditional elements	Both cultures often retain their traditional characteristics in the composition of adornments, using complex hand embroidery and detailed stitching, including floral [13], geometric motifs and folkloric symbols with deep cultural meanings, such as protection [14, p.54-57].
Use of local symbols	Traditional Ukrainian and Bessarabian adornments and jewelry integrate symbols specific to the protected region [14, p.59], thus reflecting the cultural identity and history of the community [15, p.78-81]. These symbols include solar, floral and geometric motifs, highlighting the close connection with nature, fertility and agricultural traditions, Figures 1 and 2.
Natural materials	In Ukraine and Bessarabia, adornments traditionally use natural materials: semi-precious stones, silver, wood, leather, wool, silk, emphasizing the connection with traditions and the environment [16, p.66, 10-21].

Continuation Table 2

CRITERIA OF DIFFERENCE Distinct cultural influences	Bessarabian adornments are influenced by ethnic and cultural diversity, including elements specific to local minorities such as Ukrainians, Gagauz, Russians, Bulgarians, etc., Figure 3. Instead, Ukrainian jewelry can be influenced by ethnicities such as Russians, Belarusians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Tatars and Germans.
Region specific styles	Various regions of Ukraine and Bessarabia have their distinctive styles in adornment design. For example, traditional jewelry from the Hitsul area of Ukraine features pendants decorated in complex shapes, such as the Hutsul cross, and coins depicting animals and plants, earrings include inlaid details. In Bessarabia, adornments were characterized by large, decorated pendants, inspired by Balkan and Eastern cultural traditions [17].
Different historical influences	The adornments reflect the historical changes distinctly in the two regions. In Bessarabia, significant ethnic diversity has influenced the adornments in a specific way, while in Ukraine, the history marked by periods of foreign domination and events such as the Soviet period is reflected in certain motifs and styles.
Modernization and contemporary influences	Ukrainian adornments reflect greater regional diversity and contemporary influences from neighboring countries, [18] while Bessarabian adornments retain more conservative traditions and motifs. Both countries highlight a modernization of jewelry design, incorporating contemporary influences, in the context of social and economic changes during the 20 th century and the beginning of the 21 st century.



Figure 1. Ducats. Early 20th century. Museum "Kobzary" T.G. Shevchenko, Ukraine, Cherkasy.



Figure 2. Men's earrings (traditional), 19th-20th century. From the private collection, Moldova.



Figure 3. Bulgarian and Gagauz copper necklaces. Early 20th century. NMENH.

Therefore, the adornments of Ukraine and Bessarabia in the 20th and early 21st centuries embody a subtle balance between tradition and change, presenting common elements that emphasize cultural identity and significant differences that reflect historical details, the distinct ancient and regional influences of each culture.

These complex features highlight the transformations and remarkable diversity of the composition of jewelry and clothing adornments of the post-Soviet countries, representing a rich amalgam of cultural influences and traditions. In a broader context, after the Second World War, jewelry, especially manufactured jewelry, kept the Art Deco features of the 1930s, being unacceptable for a significant part of society, and the need for original and daring concepts was accentuated with lifestyle changes and new artistic trends. For the creation of adornments, there were used: Lucite - plastic derived from acrylic resin in various colors and finishes including Confetti Lucite, the latter being the most popular, often featured elements such as shiny stones, small flowers, shells integrated in transparent plastic, sometimes the bracelets had adornments, cut into its interior and bakelite – plastic in vogue in the 40s and sometimes in the 50s, noted for its uniform color and its gloss being semi-transparent. This contributed to the creation of a bright aesthetic, matching the pastel shades of the 50s.

The gap between the world of jewelry and developments in society became apparent after the outstanding success of the designers at the 1954 London World's Fair, Diamonds International Awards—DIA, De Beers Diamonds became a catalyst for innovation in diamond jewelry design [19, 20 p .5, 20]. The participants, jewelry artists, broke the stereotypes and brought new concepts to the jewelry exhibitions organized in Western Europe and America during the 1950s-1960s, making items based on the projects of outstanding painters of the 20th century such as Pablo Picasso, Alberto Giacometti, Gio Pomodoro, Alexander Calder. Jewellers' experiments, marked by creative freedom and the encouragement of innovation, marked the period, with significant progress in the art of jewelry in the 1960s.

A new direction, known as "high art", or "maestro style" was definitively outlined during this period, promoted among jewelry creators by: Salvador Dali, Charles Rayn, Georges Braque, Yves Tanguy, Man Ray, Max Ernst, etc. This movement brought together avant-garde artists, who transformed jewelry into a work of art, able to coexist with "high art" creations, in exhibitions and museums, thus continuing the tradition started by the modernists. In the 60s, jewelry became the subject of a creative revolution, jewelry artists abandoned the traditional vision, creating "self-sufficient" work in exhibitions and museums. This revolution highlighted creative freedom, non-conformist exploration of materials and an extensive stylistic diversity, from traditional art deco and neo-baroque influences to modernism and new material aesthetics.

But for the mass consumer, textured gold jewelry in shades of pink and yellow, combined with rubies and warm-toned stones, dominated during that period, preferences for mounted pieces. Diversified earrings, from models with pendant designs with pendants, clips, studs were decorated with precious stones, and towards the end of the decade, women chose longer earrings with complex designs and varied colors. Jewelry fashion trends included floral necklaces, bracelets and patterned brooches, while in the 50s, gold chain necklaces and bracelets were all the rage, giving off a bohemian look. Colored jewelry has been valued for decades, and fine stones, such as Aurora Borealis, have been sophisticated alternatives in the absence of sparkles or crystals for evening events. At the same time, fashion houses have developed their own collections, democratizing access to

jewelry originally intended only for the wealthy. With the emergence of plastic beads, the further democratization of jewelry became apparent. The trend towards cocktail jewelry has brought impressive rings such as ballerina, bombe, wired, bypass, made of various materials, reflecting light in various shapes. During the mentioned period, jewelers transcended the usual boundaries of creation, showing their freedom and boldness in the selection of materials, expressive means and plastic and compositional solutions, design. Experimenting with innovative ways of setting and presenting precious stones, they brought about significant changes in the handling of gold, surpassing Art Deco trends. Precious metals became equal partners with diamonds and other precious stones, contributing to the formation of the artistic image and generating developments in the modeling of articles and the diversification of decorative techniques of metals.

In the 80s, some jewelry integrated surrealist concept and in the 90s, some colored jewelry works, such as those created by Peter Chang, revived the colorful magic of Fauvism reflected the dynamic conceptions of the founders of futurism. It is significant that, in the last decade of the 20th century, jewelers gave their works a philosophical meaning, drawing inspiration from the ideas of conceptual art. Bruno Martinazzi, conveyed a sensation and tension in the modern world through his jewelry, marked by the concepts of pop art and classical mythology. In the context of this radical transformation, there was a need to structure the general characteristics of the composition of jewelry and clothing adornments in Europe at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, Table 3.

Table 3

Design in European jewelry from the end of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century in Europe

Cultural diversity	The vast variety of European cultures is reflected in its jewelry by integrating traditional elements and motifs specific to each culture. Adornments inspired by Nordic folklore, Mediterranean influences (Greek, Roman, Spanish, ancient art...), Eastern European influences, exploring ethnic and tribal designs (African, Asian, etc.).
Innovation and experimentation	European designers openly approach innovation and experimentation in composition, integrating unconventional materials, innovative techniques [21, p.7-9], exploring dimensions (MirrAR) [22, p.41-44]. and textures to create unique expressions.
Minimalist and contemporary style	In some areas, there is a preference for minimalist and contemporary design in jewelry, highlighting simple lines and clean unconventional shapes and concepts inspired by modern art.
Regional influences	Jewelry can be influenced by the specific traditions and history of each European region, adding distinctive elements to the composition.
Focus on sustainability	Jewelers from the respective region are exploring more and more shapes, textures and colors, wanting to create distinct artistic expressions and innovative compositions, which are reflected in the diversity of contemporary styles and jewelry.

In the second half of the 20th century, technological advances shaped "high-tech" design in jewelry, generating an increased fascination for minimalist shapes and innovative

techniques. However, the few jeweler-artists have managed to combine tradition with innovation, adapting their creations to contemporary lifestyles. They achieved creative autonomy alongside painters and sculptors, leaving a legacy of success in jewelry art for the new millennium.

Italian jewelry, recognized globally for its outstanding artistic and technical level, reflects the spirit of free imagination, incorporating classical traditions and rich folklore into their works. The composition and decoration of the images reflect a brilliant perception of life, along with the impeccable architecture of the forms. Contemporary jewelers from different regions explore various creations influenced by plastic solutions and innovative décor, drawing inspiration from world folklore and retro historical perspectives. Interpretations of ethnographic, archaeological and historical motifs vary, successfully integrating classical motifs, art deco and historical styles in the context of constructive discoveries and current ecological directions. French designers stand out for simplicity and elegance in their creations, with clear and graceful finishes and shapes.

Swiss jewelers are recognized for the richness of precious stones, approaching polychromy and paying special attention to manual finishing. German jewelry production stands out through innovation and cutting-edge technology, with process automation and the use of modern equipment, but also through high-quality manual finishing in small series and original design, characterized by pure and rigorous forms. Spanish jewelry keeps its orientation towards national traditions, standing out through diverse design, considerable volumes and the richness of color and decor.

This diversity in approaches and techniques in the jewelry industry in Europe has also been influenced by the sampling of global trends in recent fashion, which are oriented towards luxury, femininity and elegance, inspired by the aesthetics of the 50s and 60s. This global influence is especially noticeable in the famous creations of the Harry Winston company [23, p.162, 167], a leader in the jewelry industry, associated with the world of billionaires and movie stars [22]. Harry Winston's significant impact in the processing of diamonds of considerable size has marked the jewelry industry during the last decades. These examples are an illustration of the diversity and complexity of thematic compositions in European jewelry at the end of the 20th century, reflecting a significant evolution according to the historical and cultural context specific to each component country or region. The differences between European jewelry and clothing adornments and those of the component countries of the USSR are manifested in various aspects, such as:

- Ideological influences. Jewelry from the component countries of the USSR may reflect ideological and propagandistic influences, while in Europe, design may be much more free and more diverse due to the different historical context.

- Use of materials. During the Soviet period, access to certain materials and technologies may be limited, influencing the composition of jewelry. In Europe, designers probably had a greater variety of options.

- Craft traditions. Jewelry from the USSR may have had a more pronounced tradition of using traditional crafts, while European jewelry would have focused on exploring a diverse range of techniques and approaches.

- Socio-cultural changes. After the disintegration of the USSR, jewelry from this area had the opportunity to experience a phase of cultural and artistic transformation, possibly reflected in the composition of the new creations.

- Creative freedom. European designers enjoyed a great deal of creative freedom, while jewelers in the USSR likely faced constraints imposed by communist ideology and the regime's authoritarianism.

It is important to understand that these features and differences may vary by country and region in Europe or former USSR countries.

In the first decades of the 21st century, contemporary jewelers explore a wide diversity in the style and design of their works, being influenced both by the search for innovative plastic and decorative solutions, as well as by the inspiration from the elements of world folk art and the retro reinterpretation of history. The diversity of interpretation of archaeological, historical and ethnographic motifs reflects the variability of perspectives of contemporaries, who, spread in various corners of the globe, approach these motifs either through realistic repetition or through free variations of artistic and technical themes of the past. Modern works appear, inspired by the art of vanished cultures, in which classical motifs, Art Deco, the art of ancient Greece, the Renaissance and the Byzantine-Russian style remain significant in the imaginative structure. These influences coexist harmoniously with the constructive innovations and the pursuits of the promoters of the ecological direction.

4. Conclusions

The study emphasizes the importance of defining costume through adornments and recognizes contemporary jewelry as distinctive manifestations of identity in a society of change. Significant social changes and the intersection of communist aesthetics with traditions led to remarkable innovations. Technological advances have brought about significant transformations, and researching preferences and analyzing contemporary trends are essential to understanding current design directions in jewelry today. The evolution of the 20th century and the transition of the 21st century bring increased diversity and continuous transformation of jewelry, reflecting temporal changes and cultural diversity.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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