

Fig 1. Morris, Kaleigh. "Paisley 1960s Velveteen Jacket Accession# 1997.01.005", 24 Sep. 2019. Picture taken at the Fashion Research Collection,



PEACOCK REVOLUTION

By Kayleigh Morris
MA Fashion Student

November 13, 2019

The artifact that I researched in the Toronto Metropolitan University Fashion Collection is a 1960s velveteen paisley blazer. The most notable aspect of the blazer is the paisley pattern, which is still extremely vibrant, mainly dark blue with accents of green, red and beige. The history of the pattern paisley is inspired by Indian design, in the 1960s men's fashion was often inspired by other cultures (Hrynyk 88). This use of other cultures was to create the individuality of western white men (Hrynyk 88). Along with seeking individuality, another theme of men's fashion in the 1960's was mental liberation, this is represented by the velvet fabric used to make the jacket because velvet was seen as a more showy and theatrical fabric (Hrynyk 77).

The interior of the jacket is lined with a white synthetic silk. There are yellow stains in the under arms on the lining and a brown stain on the right side of the lining. The stains suggest the garment was often worn but since there is little other damage to the garment it was well kept. The blazer is single breasted with two fastening buttons. The buttons are white and most likely made of mother of pearl. The top button is sewn on with a different thread suggesting it had fallen off and was reattached. There are pockets on each hip and one on the chest. The hip pockets are covered by a flap. Each pocket has a leather piping detail and is lined with blue silk. The blazer is tailored with no additional reinforcements or padding, and meant to emphasize a slim waist, all of which is in line with emerging trends in the 1960's as fitted jackets came into style (Kutulas 171).



Fig. 2. John F. Kennedy in a two buttoned suit, which was his preferred style. "John F. Kennedy's Ivy League Style" *BAMF Style*, 22 Nov. 2013, <https://bamfstyle.com/2013/11/22/jfk/>.

This blazer is representative of a change in men's fashion that took place in the 1960s. During this time, men abandoned the men's standards of dressing and adopted a new, more expressive style (Hrynyk 77, Kutulas 168). This instant in time, when men began wearing colourful, form fitting and androgynous clothing, is known as the peacock revolution. (Hrynyk 77). Before this revolution many men had very little input in their dress, in most circumstances their clothing would have been selected by their wife or mother and what was found to be stylish consisted of mainly grey baggy suits (Kutulas 168). There are several explanations which as to what led to such a swift change in men's fashion. This essay will explore what the influences were that led to such a dramatic shift in men's fashion and how this shift challenged typical gender norms in North America.

There were many factors that lead to the radical change in men's fashion. One of the main inspirations for working men in the 1960's came from men influential men both from America and Europe. In 1961 president John F. Kennedy was elected, he chose to wear more form fitting, and tailored suits to flatter his athletic figure (Hill 85). Reminiscent of the paisley blazer, Kennedy also preferred to wear a suit jacket with two fastening buttons because this gave the jacket a deeper V.



Fig. 3. The Beatles dressed in bright colors, representative of the peacock revolution. "The Beatles at Abbey Road Studios." *Newsweek*, 14 May 2017, <https://www.newsweek.com/2017/05/26/beatles- Sgt-peppers-lonely-hearts-club-band-paul-mccartney-john-lennon-george-608717.html>.

Other influential men were the British pop stars that became popular in America in the 60s, most notably the Beatles, who brought with them new ways of dressing (Hill 93) The Beatles often wore heeled shoes, tailored suits, skinny ties, although suits were seen primarily as men's wear, during this time it became more common to see women in pants and pant suits (Morin 3). The Beatles also often wore gender-less and feminine style accessories such as scarves and neckless, which inspired and influenced men in North America.

Subcultures also played a large part in the revolution, using media to bring attention to themselves, and these subcultures eventually became mainstream (Morin 4). Subculture stemmed from the youth's urge to distance themselves from their fathers (Morin 4). During the 1960's, the baby boomers became teenagers, generating a large group that was creating their own individuality. An example of an influential subculture is The Mods. Emerging in the early 1960s, The Mods were what Britain's working-class teenagers called themselves (Hill 92). They kept themselves well groomed and wore colorful, tight clothing (Hill 92).



Fig. 4. A group of teenagers that portray themselves as mods. "Mods from Peckham (south London), 1964" *Peacock Revolution: American Masculine Identity and Dress in the Sixties and Seventies.* London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2018.

The change in men's fashion challenged gender norms in North America because it blurred the lines between men's and women's dress, while women began wearing pants, men began experimenting with feminine clothing. An extreme example of men's dress venture into women's styles is the mini skirts, designed by French designer Jacques Esterel (Morin 2). Although not many men would have worn mini skirts, celebrities like Mick Jagger were seen performing in a skirt which set an example for men across the country to expand in other ways into more feminine wear (Hill 95). It became common for men and women to shop for each others' clothes and eventually companies began manufacturing certain clothing to not be gender specific (Hill 125). The best example of this was the trench coat that in the 1960 was designed the same for both men and women (Hill 125).

In conclusion, the paisley jacket in Toronto Metropolitan University's collection is a representation of the peacock revolution that took place in the 1960s because of its design. The vibrant colors and fit of the jacket are reminiscent of this era. The main pattern of paisley is representative of East-Asian fashion being used by western culture to create mens individuality and the velvet fabric represented the mental liberation that men experienced during this time. The condition of the jacket is a testament to how men valued fashion and their clothing during the peacock revolution. The shift in men's fashion, during this revolution, was influenced by many factors and created a culture that allowed both men and women to experiment with dress. The peacock revolution was instigated by the teenage baby boomers urge to seek individuality and separateness from their parents. It was also inspired by various influential men around the world as well as the growth of subcultures and the media. The revolution also challenged gender norms because it was fashionable to wear gender neutral clothing. The instances that took place during the peacock revolution that allowed men to experiment with challenging genders norms had a positive influence that is visible even today.



Fig 5. Paisley painted sneakers inspired by the jacket in Toronto Metropolitan University's fashion collection. Morris, Kaleigh. "Paisley Sneaker", 11 Nov. 2019.

CREATIVE COMPONENT

For the creative component i wanted to embody the theme that the peacock revolution has effected fashion today. I chose to do this by painting a pair of sneakers with a pattern inspired by the jacket in Toronto Metropolitan University's fashion collection. Sneakers are currently a large aspect of today's culture and i felt they were a good representation of fashion today. The painting I did these shoes was inspired by the paisley of the blazer. The pattern and color scheme was drawn for the main textile of the blazer. The black and white area represent the mundane style of men dress that preceded the 60's and the colorful area is representative of the revolution over taking that.

The painting was done using Angeles Paint, this is a brand of acrylic paint made to be used on leather. it has elastic properties and is there for commonly used to customize sneakers as it can move with the shoe, where other acrylic paints would crack. The shoes were prepared for the paint by first removing to finish with acetone, the sole of the shoes were then taped to avoid getting paint on them, tape was also used to create the line between the colored and black and white side. The designed was painted on the whole shoe first is black, then half was filled in with red, navy blue, green and gold to emulate the jacket.



Fig 6. Angelus Painted used on the shoes.

WORKS CITED

Hill, Daniel Delis.. "The Peacock Revolution." *Peacock Revolution: American Masculine Identity and Dress in the Sixties and Seventies*. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2018. 85-172. Dress and Fashion Research. Bloomsbury Fashion Central. Web. 11 Nov. 2019

Hrynyk, Nicholas. "Strutting Like a Peacock: Masculinity, Consumerism, and Men's Fashion in Toronto, 1966-72." *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'Études Canadiennes*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2015, pp. 77 -102 Web. 11 Nov. 2019

Kutulas, Judy. "Dedicated Followers of Fashion: Peacock Fashion and the Roots of the New American Man, 1960-70." *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture* 5.2 (2012): 167-84. Web. 11 Nov. 2019

Morin, Alice. "The Fashion of the 1960s. A New Power Shaping the American Image." *Usabroad Journal of American History and Politics*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2018. 1-13 Web. 11 Nov. 2019