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History of British and Russian fashion

Some people say they don't care about fashion and their appearance. However, we can't just throw fashion out of our lives. Fashion is an indicator of changes. Whenever there are changes in the world in a certain period of time, we can also observe changes in the fashion. Following fashion helps to keep up with these changes. It also helps to distinguish cultural features.

The purpose of my essay is to tell about the history of the development of Russian and British fashion.

Historically, the difference of English costume was a mix of two collars in the same dress: the milling machine and at a high frame collar, had characteristics of double semicircles. Costumes of noble people were decorated with pearls, lace, openwork and other things. In England of the 19th century, fashion changed its direction because of queen Victoria, who was in love with French style. In Victorian era England experienced a period of economic growth and industrial revolution, to resemble progress, fashion became simpler and more functional. The silhouette of the dress began to resemble an hourglass. Hat was an essential part of every women wardrobe. The second half of 19th century an umbrella became an important piece of costume. It was needed to protect skin from the sun, and preserve its paleness.

As for the Russian people, drastic changes in fashion appeared at the Peter I era, 16 – 17 centuries. Russian nobles were wearing foreign dresses. The purpose of that was strengthening of Russia's position in the eyes of foreign merchants and politicians. But soon it was strictly forbidden. Russia tried to be independent of European countries, including their fashion standards. In the 19th century there was a start of the fashion for dresses of rectangular silhouette with strongly overestimated waistline. Dresses became more and more practical, narrow and short. Due to the art spreading in the early 20ies, clothes were designed to be elegant. By the mid 70-ies tall, slender figures were in fashion. But due to Slavophiles movement, which happened in the middle of 19th century, Russian fashion has strongly rolled back to the pre-Peter I era. It was very simple wear without any additional details.

In the early twentieth century, English costume consisted of a jacket and skirt. There was a popular "S" shape of a female figure, which could be achieved by wearing corset. Due to World War, fashion began to change. Women were making short haircuts, and wearing male clothes, in order to master the male – dominated professions. In the 50ies – 60ies there was a boom of fashion, which we consider now as traditional business style. The modern English fashion of the 21st century is focused on realization and expression of people. Modern English fashion consists of lace tights, rough boots, shoes, classic suits and so on. The main idea of English clothing is combination of different eras. It embraces traditional thinking, uncommon appearance and self-expression.

In Russia because of WW2, fashion was temporarily forgotten. People needed more comfortable and functional clothes, which were comfortable for constant movement. For that reason, style became extremely simple. After war, during 60ies, fashion became to rebirth. Casual style began to break through to the masses. The most popular patterns were polka-dot, stripes, cages. Checked shirts and dresses were quite common among soviet people. People, who were interested in more complex and detailed clothes wore gloves, flat shoes, high heels, different kinds of small purses and so on. These types of clothing emphasized intelligence and nobility and were more usual among high society. Hats varied from style to style of each person, but the most popular headdress was a beret.

In the 21st century Russia acquired its unique and distinguishable style. It is completely different from those times of the World War. Russian fashion became more experimental, colorful and diverse.

London is considered to be one of the birthplaces of fashion. For British people, fashion – is something rooted and common. Even though some people say that fashion is not important, most of them wear clothes, that suit them. While in Russia you can't clearly see that most people bothered by

their look. Due to cultural peculiarities and influence of the World War, people became accustomed to simple and colorless clothes.

In St. Petersburg and Moscow fashion is more overall, than in provincial towns.

To recapitulate I would say that fashion in Britain and Russia is not the same. England has always been a stable power on the political arena. And its fashion suits it very well, in Britain we can see a symbiosis of traditions and modernity. While in Russia the situation is exactly the opposite. Due to the isolation of Russian people and their unwillingness to be the center of attention, people dress the way they feel more comfortable, and not the way fashion dictates.

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