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### Gold: More Than Just a Standard

Humans, always the social creatures adorning themselves with varied materials. Within the societies these humans have created to signify stature, pedigree, and wealth. Both men and women decorate themselves with silks, golds, and jewels. Till this day we continue these traditions that started centuries ago. As fashion evolves quicker and quicker the idea of tradition blending with new concepts of fashion has brought about a whole new notion of what jewelry is and can be.

The wearing of jewelry dates to over a millennium. Thousands of years before the advertising came along. In the 1940's men and women would wear precious stones, gold and a plethora of distinguishable items across their bodies. When the advertising boom accrued more gendered jewelry was being pushed on to consumers. The whole outlook on what was fashion in jewelry was completely different for men and women. As the double band became popular for husband-and-wife advertisers worked to produce more manly jewelry, as the consumption of feminine jewelry continued to thrive.

Gold is the standard. It has always been implied that gold is one of the most precious metals we have today. Gold cost about eighteen hundred dollars per ounce (*24k gold prices per ounce today*). Which is not cheap in this day in age. Gold jewelry is understood to be fine jewelry, and the higher the gold content of the gold alloy, the better. Although artisanship has some role in appraisal, the materials still make the object what it is (Oakley, 2017). The use of gold has been something that determines stature to money, the more you had gold the richer you were. Gold holds the monetary value through the centuries.

So, when I picked my gold ring for this project and the research, I had done. I realized that gold jewelry had been so divide within these last few generations. The ring was originally a male bracelet purchased in the early 90's that was reworked into a ring after I had acquired a piece of it. I had

inadvertently taken what was considered male jewelry and made a feminine ring out of it. I consider it more of a feminine ring since the ring wraps around my finger in a very delicate way, there is a triangle that is part of the pattern of the ring that if you bump into something it will move and that to me gives it more of a delicate feel. To me this ring had brought together a symbolism I needed at a crucial time in my life and a continuation of that since then, strength, perseverance, and love. My father died in a tragic fire in 2007 and the piece of bracelet was one of the few remaining items that survived. Being able to create a piece that represented him in a completely new way from a person who loved me to a ring that was forged to represent the person who it belonged to the person it was passed down too. So, blending what was a male bracelet to what I consider a feminine ring, creating what today we would consider as gender fluid jewelry years before there was an actual gender fluid jewelry.

There is a psychology about jewelry you must think about that was set up when consumerism became more prevalent after the second world war. Since gold has always been the standard there is an innate association with value. The more we have the more value it will have and that's not just in today's world it's always been like that. We can go back to any point in time and gold would be coveted. Now a days it is common for anyone to have gold jewelry. Gold Jewelry is an important part of human culture. Gold jewelry being aesthetically pleasing and its power to call out human attention, it symbolizes many things that we prefer using symbols to describe – sexual appeal, birth, unavailability, status (2021). I believe since gold jewelry has many avenues for the wearability of the jewelry itself

Jewelry has come such a long way from the double band for men and women. Used in everyday fashion in today world to express something about themselves, whether it be a minimalist set of earrings or a couple of gawdy bracelets regardless of gender. The jewelry can be very telling of the wearer. Some people feel empowered by what they put on helping individuals to differentiate themselves from others and to develop their personal brand. The rarer the jewels used, the more appeal they have. Considered armor, always making people feel more confident in themselves, more of who they know themselves to

be. Jewelry can be the statement piece to bring everything together. As fashion continues to blend genders and the norms more men are stepping out from the mundane and bringing jewelry to the fore front. We have signers like Lenny Kravitz who has been known since the early 90's to incorporate jewelry into most of his outfit on or off the carpet to Timothee Chalamet wearing large pieces of jewelry to different red carpets. The whole tradition of women being the only ones who wear jewelry has really gone out the window, the blending of jewelry is kind of indicative of what we are seeing more of in men now a days. There seems to be more vulnerability and more of a connection with the feminine energy that has been able to be translated into pieces of jewelry.

Having personal experience in the era of a bit of a more gawdier look in the early 2000's things have changed so much within the last 20 years, more specifically in the last 2 years having to deal with pandemic and how many things including purchasing of jewelry became a nonexistent thought. Looking back on the early 2000's everyone was purchasing the Tiffany bracelets and spending an exorbitant amount of money. For an 18-year-old at that time that was a must have, now it seems much more niche. Which is interesting to think about since back then most jewelry was still made mainly for women, because even today most jewelry places yes will have items for men the more unique and better quality does come from small business where women's jewelry can be bought so cheaply at almost every store then can purchasing clothing at.

Jewelry is a powerful statement to have. Whether it be a millennium ago, the 90's or today, for men or women or an emotional attachment or even a monetary one. It has a hold on our cultures that have been brought down from generation to generation, adapting and recreating itself. The evolution of gold jewelry can go side by side of the evolutions of humans. The fluidity of gold itself to be so many things, bringing together so many things is a cultural staple that maybe goes unnoticed in the day-to-day life. But when you take a step back and look at the bigger picture you can see how gold has weaved its way in and out of our lives for as long as the metal has been known to be around.

## References

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