

# Tie-dyed Fashion Appeared in the American Women's Costume

## -A Quantitative Analysis -

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The appearance of ethnic costume, especially oriental costumes, in the 1960's was usually explained with a countercultural movement by youth in the earlier reports. Moreover, this countercultural use of orientalism in the sixties was known to be originated in the "hippie" movement. Fashion styles with tie-dyed patterns originated in the Orient were discussed as one way of expressing the youthful uprise. Previous studies on this subject have been performed mostly by using qualitative analysis on related literatures. Therefore, this study attempted to investigate the extent how this tie-dyed fashion style of the youth counterculture was appeared also in the mainstream and high fashion by using a content analysis method.

The fashion magazines were chosen to collect the data- "Vogue" for high fashion and "Mademoiselle" for mainstream fashion. The frequency of appearance of tie-dyed clothes was counted with predetermined categories. The content analysis categories consisted of four groups- (1) clothing items, (2) materials, (3) tie-dyeing techniques and (4) designers and manufacturers. The unit of analysis was a single costume style illustrated or described in an advertisement. All issues covering the time period from 1965 to 1975 were used to collect the data.

The results of the study indicated that tie-dyed styles were found in American fashion during the period between 1969 and 1971 and the peak appearance of overall tie-dyed fashion was noted in 1970. Though, the peak appearance of tie-dyed styles was shown in different times for the mainstream and high fashion- it was in 1969 for the

mainstream fashion and 1970 for the high fashion. A variety of tie-dyed items, 18 different items, were noted. The rank order of the five most frequent items were scarf, dress, pants, shirt/blouse, and t-shirt and these items consisted about 73% of the total items. Many different materials were used for tie-dyed costume and about 70% of these items were made of cellulosic materials including rayon (42%) and cotton(35%). Silk and some synthetic fabrics like nylon, suede, and acetate/rayon blend were also found, but the percentage was low when comparing to cellulosic fibers. Seven different tie-dyeing techniques were found and they include tying, stitching, pleating, wrap-and-tie, decoloration, block application, and combination. It was also found that tie-dyed fashion was expanded into the high fashion in this period and some of the high fashion designers incorporated various tie-dyed styles in their collection. In the mainstream fashion, less number of the designers were found.

As a conclusion, the results of the study supported the idea that fashion change during this period accompanied a concurrent change in social environment. The time of strong influence of youth subculture and its interest in the oriental culture was concentrated in the United States during the late sixties and this corresponded to the time of popularity of tie-dyed fashion styles observed in the women's mainstream and high fashion. These new, unconventional tie-dyed styles reflected the social disturbance or confusion in the late sixties which altered the lifestyles of individuals across many social strata.