

Design Expressions in Forms of Contemporary Hair Style in Collections between 1995~2004

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the hair styles featured in the collections from S/S season of 1995 to F/W season of 2004 both qualitatively and quantitatively by using content-analytical methods. This study was able to form a classifying system that divides hair styles into those artificial and those natural through systematic and scientific research. The resulting system, in turn, broadened the basis for understanding modern fashion and hair style expressions. In addition, by analyzing design-related characteristics, certain expressive techniques employed, and trends in detail, this study contributed to establishing the hair styles, which form part of socio-cultural phenomena, as an academic subject.

Key words : hair style, collection, artificial form, natural form, content analysis.

1. Introduction

The arts of today are characterized by deluge of genres. There is no single trend or style that stands out; rather, the concept of arts is being expanded by phenomena of combining or deconstructing traditional genres with various avant-garde movements and experiments. All this can be explained by a single keyword: post-modernism¹⁾. The post-modernist trend has exerted great influence on the recent fashion world, resulting in mixture of various and complicated styles at once. Reflecting the social trends, fashion today does not seem to have a single model that

can be easily singled out²⁾. Hair styles reflect socio-cultural characteristics just as their counterparts in fashion do. Today's hair styles can be characterized by their variety in types and decorativeness, flaunting its pluralistic and eclectic styles ever.

Hair styles, compared with clothing, are more expressive of the wearers' individual characteristics, easier to change, and form a bodily expression that controls the overall outlook of the wearer. Such attributes of hair styles increase their significance in fashion. One's appearance is a nonverbal language for communication; one's face is his ID card³⁾ and most important code that delivers overall impression to others. Thus,

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¹ T. Polhemus, *Street Style*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 131.

² Textile View Magazine, "Generation Y: the Treasure Hunters," (Winter, 1999), Issue #48.

³ Yong-jin, Cho, *Face: Korean Features*, (Four Seasons, 2000), 34.

it is crucial to expand understanding of, and analyze hair styles that greatly influence the look. However, extremely few studies have been conducted in this field, and there is no study that approached hair styles as part of socio-cultural movements from a post-modernist perspective, which governs today's society. Therefore, it is significant to study hair styles as a comprehensive product of socio-cultural influences of the era by analyzing their expressive techniques from a designer's point of view, and by probing how hair styles constitute a part of post-modernism today.

The objective of this study is to analyze the hair styles featured from the collection of S/S season in 1995 to F/W season of 2004 and make connections between post-modernism and hair styles as a social trend.

II. Theoretical Background

1. Understanding Post-Modernism

Post-modernism, an important trend of thoughts and ideas that emerged at the end of the Second World War and fully blossomed in the 1970s-1980s⁴⁾, is defined by its undefinability. Obscurity and multi-perspective complexity are the two major characteristics of this movement that encircle all areas of modern society. Nevertheless, it is the definite '-ism' that governs today's arts, from architecture to visual art, to sculpture, and to fashion. Post-modernism, which started out as a challenge against civilization and science that dictated human life as absolute principles, was indeed defiance against structuralism and consolidation of belief in humanity to improve⁵⁾. It is further characterized by the disbelief in the indicative function of languages; doubt about human subjectivity and individual

ego; dynamic relationship between text and the reader; and resistance toward abstract systems and comprehensiveness⁶⁾. F. Jameson understands post-modernism as a movement that consists of 'the death of the subject' and 'heterogeneous mimicry'. The death of the subject here refers to deconstruction of the boundaries between the essence and appearance; truth and false; and the meaning and the symbol, all of which had been considered to form individual subjects prior to the arrival of post-modernism. His concept of heterogeneous mimicry means imitating or mixing styles that are meaningless by themselves. J. Baudrillard shared a similar viewpoint on post-modernism: he defines the movement as 'simulacra', as its products are copies without the original copy playing around in a space governed by symbols after the loss of the subject. He further explained post-modernism as the current culture built on the fragments of the past, playing with the ruins of the past.

In other words, post-modernism, by its definition, defies originality due to the loss of the subject. It resists elitist, hierarchy-oriented modernism and denies the modernist artistic values. However, post-modernist expressions are often mistaken with the avant-garde versions of modernist ones, because they both deconstruct the aesthetic space to combine the pieces in an unfamiliar way. Examples of such activities include free collages that use pieces and miscellaneous fragments of the past and borrowing quotations and copies without definite meanings or orders.

Therefore, it can be safely argued that post-modernism is a culture of quotational, interactive texts rather than a culture of pure creativity⁷⁾. It lacks subjectivity; defies all forms; and most of all, resists aesthetics.

⁴ Wook-Dong Kim, *Post-modernism and Arts*. Cheong-ha, Prologue (1991).

⁵ J. Habermas, *30 Excerpts from Art Critiques*, trans. by Ycong-Cheol Lee. (Seoul Joong-ang Daily, 1987): 164-165.

⁶ Wook-Dong Kim, *Post-Modernism and Post-Structuralism*, (Mincum Press, 1996): 38-55.

⁷ J. Story, *Cultural Studies and Cultural Theories*, trans. by Park, Mo, (Modern Cultural Studies, 1999): 242-244.

2. Hair Styles

Most of studies on hair styles have evolved around analyses of the repetitive emergence of the hair length, width, and height in association with facial shapes⁸⁾. Other studies concerned the changes and restorations of hair styles shared in certain minority groups⁹⁾ and others involved analyzing three elements of hair designs shapes, texture, and color and suggesting new design solutions¹⁰⁾. However, studies on the hair styles that have emerged in the post-modern era are extremely few, and there is no study that proposed an analysis frame for hair style characteristics and forms. This study, therefore, was conducted in order to provide a theoretical analysis frame for hair styles that assists analyzing the hair shapes of the post-modern era systematically and scientifically.

The form in a hair style refers to the spatial attribute of the hair that is instinctively recognized, regardless of its position or direction¹¹⁾. In the post-modern era, the change in the perspective on, and demystification of the body¹²⁾ has caused discussions on various shapes that differ from those in the focus of the silhouette-oriented discussions of the past.

The forms in this study are classified into natural forms and artificial ones according to the analysis frame proposed herein.

A natural form is a state of the hair that is not treated with special styling techniques, leaving the cut or wave-treated hair loose and natural. Depending on the outline of the form, natural forms can be categorized into Round, Bell, Oval, Triangle, and Combined¹³⁾. Artificial forms are made by exaggerating the hair form

and/or adding decorativeness to it. The exaggeration here refers to exaggerating the hair form by using the wearer's own hair or adding hair-like materials. Decorative effects can be achieved by adding non-hair materials, such as hats, hair-bands, bandanas, and veils. In order to analyze the forms in hair styles, they will be categorized into natural ones and artificial ones at first. Natural forms will be analyzed in terms of circular, bell-like, oval, triangular, and mixed forms, whereas the artificial forms will be discussed in terms of form exaggeration and object addition.

III. Study Procedure and Methods

This study intended to analyze the hair styles featured in collections from S/S season of 1995 to F/W season of 2004 in terms of statistical frequency and design changes by period by using the analysis frame suggested in <Table 1>.

The hair works of designers who have been studied in more than five essays of the eighteen essays on post-modernism submitted for masters' and doctoral degrees were selected as the objects of the analysis in this study. The twelve designers selected finally include A. McQueen, C. Dior, C. Lacroix, C. D. Garçons, H. Chalayan, I. Miyake, J. Galliano, J. P. Gautier, Moschino, R. Gigli, V. Westwood, and Y. Yamamoto. Specific data pertaining to the works of these designers were obtained from the websites at <http://www.firstview.com> and <http://www.style.com> that feature fashion magazines such as *Collection*, *Gap*, *Collezioni*, *Vogue*, and *Elle*.

For selection of the data, a total of 1,610

⁸⁾ Ju-Yoon Lee, "Analysis of Changes in the Hair Styles of the 20th Century." (Master's thesis, Chungnam national University, 1995).

⁹⁾ Chong-Ja Lee, "Analysis of Hippie Hair Styles as Shown in Hippie Fashion," (Master's thesis, Jung-ang University, 2002).

¹⁰⁾ Suk-Hyang Jeong, "Study on Development of Up hair style Designs," (Master's thesis, Catholic University of Daegu, 2002).

¹¹⁾ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹²⁾ Min-Ja Kim, *Peeping into the Clothing Aesthetics Lecture on Clothing Aesthetics II*, (Gyomun Press, 2004), 81.

¹³⁾ *Hair Sculpture Ladies*, *Op. cit.*, (1994), 16.

〈Table 1〉 Theoretical Analysis

Form	Meaning	Kind
Natural form	A form without any artificial touch, which is easy to see the cut line	Round
		Bell
		Oval
		Triangle
		Combined
Artificial form	Artificial touch Decorative trend Model trend	Exaggeration
		Object addition

photographs were collected from two periods, december 18, 2003 through December 23, 2003 and July 1, 2004 through July 5, 2004, respectively. These photographs are results of avoiding overlapping of the same hair styles and makeup styles. The collected 1,610 photos were classified according to their design trends by four fashion, hair, and makeup professionals. In order to identify and analyze the post-modernist expressions in those hair and makeup styles, the photos were selected over three processes as well. In the first selection process, three fashion, hair, and makeup specialists, including the author of this paper, selected photos that exhibited post-modern characteristics discussed in Chapter 2. The selected 515 hair style photos and 556 makeup photos as a result. In the second, a different group of four fashion, hair, and makeup specialists that did not include the author of this paper selected 465 hair photos and 571 makeup photos. In the third selection process, conducted by both groups of hair, makeup, and fashion experts that participated in the previous processes, saw selection of 459 hair photos and 556 makeup photos after examining the photos previously selected. The analysis of those data was conducted using the content analysis method. Developed to identify

elements of 'who delivers what to whom how' and 'what are the effects of the delivery' that are the essential characteristics of communication, the content analysis method examines the content of communication objectively, systematically, and qualitatively¹⁴. It is also a method of analyzing messages objectively, systematically, and qualitatively¹⁵, and the most frequently used scientific method in message analysis¹⁶.

The content analysis method, as discussed here, has been traditionally associated with analyzing messages in communications systematically, objectively, and qualitatively. However, as the academic focus shifted from the message contents to its technical analysis, the method has come to be viewed as a tool to resolve theoretical and methodological problems, and is being applied to a variety of study objects as the scope of communications studies has expanded. The content analysis method is also frequently used in analyzing data consciously obtained from conferences, open-answer questions, discussions, and so forth¹⁷. The content analysis is mainly divided into a qualitative analysis and a quantitative one¹⁸. A qualitative analysis involves codifying the content by subject and contextualizing the overall flow and/or ingre-

¹⁴ B. Berelson, *Content Analysis of Communication Research*, (New York: Free Press, 1952), 18.

¹⁵ J. B. Paoletti, *Content Analysis*, (C. T. R. I., 1982): 16-17.

¹⁶ R. Budd, R. Thorp and L. Donohew, *Content Analysis of Communication*, (New York, Macmillan, 1967), 71.

¹⁷ In-seob Song, *Research Methodologies*, (Yeongji Press, 1997), 103.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.

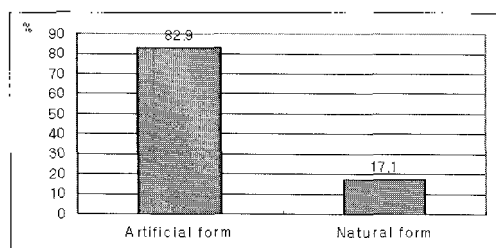
dients. A quantitative analysis refers to converting the collected data into numbers, and mainly relies on statistical handling of data¹⁹.

Hair styles, as part of fashion, are a type of human communication that delivers various messages. Thus, it is appropriate the content analysis method to analyze those messages, and conducting both quantitative and qualitative analyses of hair style expressions is anticipated to overcome the limits imposed by such analyses.

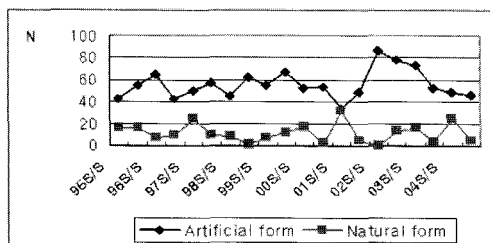
IV. Design Trends in Contemporary Hair Styles

The findings of classifying the hair styles featured in the fashion collections over a ten-year period from 1994 through 2004 are shown in <Fig. 1> and <Fig. 2>.

As shown in <Fig. 1>, more than a majority of the hair styles featured (82.9%) exhibited artificial



<Fig. 1> Natural/Artificial Form.



<Fig. 2> Seasonal Various Expressions.

forms. <Fig. 2> shows that artificial forms formed a majority of the trends from the mid-1990s through 2002, marking a peak in the S/S season of 2002, after which, the artificial forms gradually disappeared after the season. Exaggeration of the hair using hair-like materials and decorating it with ostentatious accessories and jewelries came back and reached their heights in 2002. This may be attributable to the fact that multi-ethnic and global concepts flooded to generate diverse hair styles after the reign of minimalism, oriental abstractness, and naturalistic modes that briefly dominated the post-9/11 era.

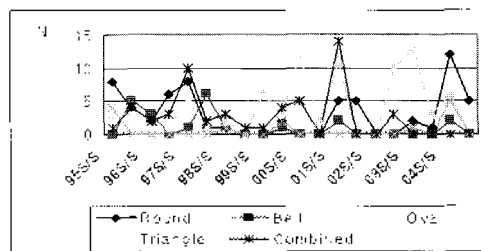
1. Natural Forms

Natural hair style forms refer to untouched, loosely hair styles without artificial decoration or treatment. Such styles help understand the hair-cuts, which govern the overall hair forms. The results of analyzing these natural hair style forms are shown in <Fig. 3> and <Fig. 4>.

<Fig. 3> shows the most frequently used natural forms, i.e. oval (35.2%) and circular (27.0%) forms, followed by mixed (23.0%), bell-like (9.1%), and triangular (5.7%) forms. The patterns of usage of these forms did not hint at any periodicity as shown in <Fig. 4>.

1) Circular Forms

The hair-cuts that produce circular hair style forms usually feature the uniform style with mainly short and evenly cut hair length²⁰ and



<Fig. 3> Natural Form.

¹⁹ Seon-hee Chac, *Conceptual Approach to Re-establishment of Research Methodologies in Social Sciences*, 34(5), (1996) 285. C. Glesne & A. Peshkin, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: an Introduction*, New York: Longman Publishing Group, re-quoted, (1992).



〈Fig. 4〉 Lacroix 95S/S.



〈Fig. 5〉 Garçons 01S/S.



〈Fig. 6〉 Gaultier04S/S.

the head-like style with short nape and a sense of elongatedness on the top.

〈Fig. 3〉 shows that the circular forms are used as commonly as the mixed forms. 〈Fig. 4〉 shows that the emergence of circular forms in fashion is quite irregular, repetitively appearing and disappearing. However, the circular hair styles of the 1990s and those of the 2000's are remarkably different from each other in terms of the cut finishes and colors. Circular forms have become more diversified and magnified than their counterparts in the 1990s in terms of colors in the post-2000 years due to the excitement and expectations of the new millennium.

2) Bell-like Forms

A bell like haircut features the overall hair length gathered at one point around the head to convey a sense of weight. In addition, it exhibits round-finished top and the gathered end of the hair strands. This specific cut line is often referred to as the solid style²¹⁾, and it seeks to exhibit variations using the overall length changes and bangs. As shown in 〈Fig. 3〉, only 9.1% of the overall natural hair styles feature bell-like forms, which has re-appeared and disappeared repeatedly without regularity as shown in 〈Fig. 4〉. 〈Fig. 8〉 and 〈Fig. 9〉 show a typical characteristic of the bell-like cuts: extreme straightness that conveys a sense of strength and power at the end of the hair. The solid cut often expresses mystical, intelligent, and stiff atmosphere



〈Fig. 7〉 Yamamoto 96S/S.



〈Fig. 8〉 Gaultier 01S/S.



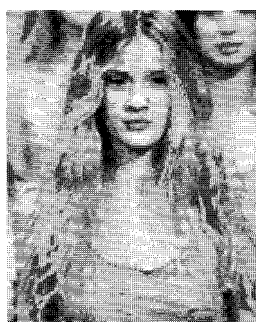
〈Fig. 9〉 Galiano 97F/W.

²⁰ In general, the uniform cut features a hair length that is even overall and does not convey a sense of weight. The uniform hair styles exhibit textures that show the overall ends of the hair strands, scattered over the curved surface of the skull.

²¹ The solid cut features a hair length that tends to lengthen upward. When brushed, solid hair is organized into one point.



〈Fig. 10〉 Lacroix 95S/S.



〈Fig. 11〉 Miyake 00S/S.



〈Fig. 12〉 Westwood 03.

and is better suited to straight hair than to wavy one. 〈Fig. 10〉 shows a solid type of the bell like forms that heavily organizes the overall hair by braiding the hair with varying details.

3) Oval Forms

〈Fig. 3〉 shows that the oval forms are the most commonly used natural forms (35.2%), which appear throughout every season and period evenly as shown in 〈Fig. 4〉.

The oval forms generally features long hair-lengths that tend to elongate from the top to the nape. The overall outlines of these forms show the round finished top and layered cuts in the bottom to control the overall weight of the hair. The oval forms pursue variations by adjusting the hair lengths, bangs, and textures.

4) Triangular Forms

As shown in 〈Fig. 3〉, the triangular forms are not the most commonly noted hair styles in

fashion (5.7%). Triangular forms are featured only slightly and intermittently without much variation throughout the period (see 〈Fig. 4〉). The triangular forms feature hair-lengths that concentrate the weight at the bottom of the hair, and the weighted bottoms of the hair are textured to bloat them. Meanwhile, the top of the hair is closely pressed against the skull to contrast the bloated bottom in terms of volumes. In general, triangular forms feature waved bottoms and waveless tops.

5) Mixed Forms

〈Fig. 3〉 shows that the mixed forms occupy 23.0% of the overall natural forms without regularity or periodicity throughout the period (as shown in 〈Fig. 4〉). The mixed forms often combine various other forms, including the circular, bell-like, oval, triangular forms and so forth.

〈Fig. 16〉 features a hair style with asymmetrical triangular form between the right and the left.

〈Fig. 17〉 shows a hair style that has expressed the nape part long by combining the circular and oval shapes and the top part cut in uniform layered style. 〈Fig. 18〉 shows a hair style whose left part is bell-like and the rest is oval.

2. Artificial Forms

Artificial forms are created by exaggerating the hair or adding decorative materials. These forms can be grouped into exaggerated hair using hair-extensions, etc. and the decorated hair using various accessories and jewelries. The re-



〈Fig. 13〉 McQueen.



〈Fig. 14〉 Moschino.



〈Fig. 15〉 McQueen 95S/S.



〈Fig. 16〉 McQueen 97S/S.



〈Fig. 17〉 Lacroix 01S/S.

sults of classifying artificial forms as such are shown in 〈Fig. 19〉 and 〈Fig. 20〉.

As shown in 〈Fig. 19〉, around 60% of artificial hair style forms used hair exaggeration, whereas around 40.0% used decorative materials. Looking into the patterns of artificial hair forms, hair exaggeration is more frequently used than hair decoration, although the proportion between the two methods has become more of equal from the S/S season of 2000 through the F/W season of 2002 (see 〈Fig. 20〉). Also to be noted is a strong tendency of adding decorative materials

to the hair in the S/S season of 1997. Overall, hair exaggeration is still dominant.

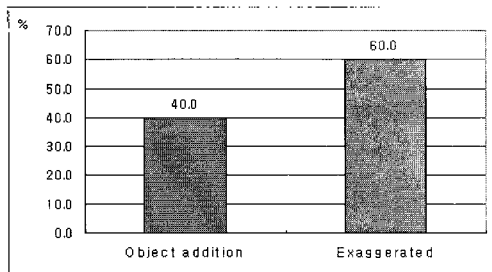
1) Form Exaggerations

Form exaggeration refers to distorting or exaggerating the hair style forms by using the wearer's own hair or wig or any other hair-like materials instead of hair ornaments. Exaggeration is often characterized by their defiance against anticipation: they reflect the diverse and complicated fashion expressions of the post-modern era. 〈Fig. 20〉 shows that the form exaggerations of the hair have been used frequently and regularly throughout the indicated period.

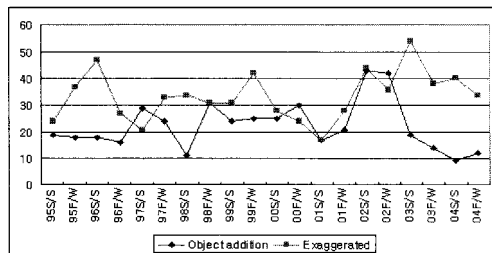
As discussed earlier, form exaggerations of the hair tend to distort the natural head and hair shapes. They distort the head and hair sizes out of proportion in most cases, and some change the original directions: they geometrically shape the hair to be oriented either sideways or upward against the law of gravitation. Of course, the most frequent type of hair exaggerations is exaggeration of the size. In terms of the specifics, hair exaggerations tend to concentrate on expressing various textures and geometrical shapes than the hair colors.

2) Addition of Hair Ornaments

The ornaments added to the hair are the decorative materials that are not usually worn in the common hair styles, and are mainly categorized into accessories and objects. 〈Fig. 24〉 and 〈Fig. 25〉 show the examples of such classification.



〈Fig. 18〉 Artificial Form.



〈Fig. 19〉 Seasonal Various Expression.



〈Fig. 20〉 McQueen 96S/S.



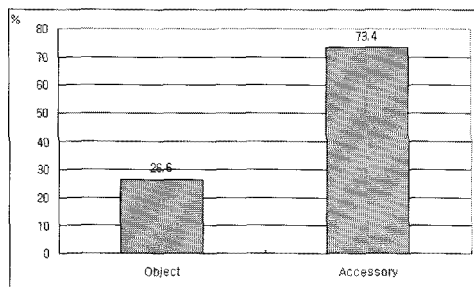
〈Fig. 21〉 Lacroix 98S/S.



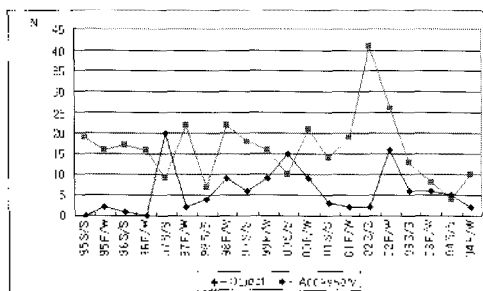
〈Fig. 22〉 Garçons 04F/W.

As shown in 〈Fig. 24〉, fashionable accessories (73.4%) are used much more frequently than abstract objects (26.6%) in hair decoration. However, 〈Fig. 25〉 shows that the usage of the objects briefly increased in the S/S season of 1997 and the S/S season of 2000, although accessories usually took the dominant side overall.

(1) Usage of Objects



〈Fig. 23〉 Object Addition.



〈Fig. 24〉 Seasonal Various Expression.

An objet refers to an item used for purposes other than the original one, and may include such natural items as rocks, shells, and wooden pieces²². In other words, objets are items that are used as creative ornaments outside the scope of their original purposes and/or intended functions. Objects form a great way of overcoming the limitations of certain materials in producing a new type of beauty. Objects used to decorate hair styles can be classified into plant ones, animal ones, and mechanical ones. Plant objects include leaves, flowers, and stems. Animal objects include animal figurines, feathers, and horns. Mechanical objects are usually motivated by the mechanical civilization, and often utilize the daily articles and wastes that symbolize modern life. As shown in 〈Fig. 26〉 and 〈Fig. 27〉, usually artificial and imitation plants are used as plant objects, distorting the original shapes, functions, and purposes of real plants. Contrary to the untouched natural concepts, these plant objects are sumptuous and florid, exaggerating and distorting the original plant shapes.

The animal objects shown in 〈Fig. 28〉 and 〈Fig. 29〉 are generally used to decorate the facial features of the models using certain body parts of animals without specific reasons or meanings. By using items that are not likely to be used for normal hair style expressions the limits of creativity can be overcome. Figures 30 and 31 also show mechanical objects without the original functions and purposes of machines.

²² H. Rasmusen & A. Grant, *Sculpture from Junk*, (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1967), 7.



〈Fig. 25〉 Miyake 98F/W.



〈Fig. 26〉 Miyake 02S/S.



〈Fig. 27〉 Galiano 96S/S.



〈Fig. 28〉 Westwood 04F/W.



〈Fig. 29〉 Chalayan 98F/W.



〈Fig. 30〉 Dior 01S/S.

Styles expressed using these objects are ground breaking and futuristic in general, unlike hair decoration using other types of materials.

(2) Usage of Accessories

Accessories used as ornaments for hair styles include hats, hair bands, bandanas, veils, and so forth. These accessories may be unchanging in terms of their types, but their shapes, sizes, forms, and how to wear them have undergone many variations over the ages.

Unlike in the past where hats, veils, and bandanas were used as symbols of authority, power, sexuality, and rituals, these accessories these days are used to maximize chaotic and undefinable attributes of fashion today by mixing and matching all the design and decorative elements available without any specific reason or intended functions. These accessories have been traditionally used frequently to emphasize fashion even since the old times, but they are

much diversified and vary in terms of details in today's post-modern fashion trends.

V. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study analyzed the hair styles featured in collections from the S/S season of 1995 to the F/W season of 2004. The research method used was the content analysis method, composed of both qualitative and quantitative analyses. This study sought to build an analysis frame based on the preexisting studies and analyze the hair styles contextually and technically by using the photos.

This study generated numerous findings. First, it established an analysis frame that can be used to analyze the design elements of hair styles, especially the hair style forms. Second, this study proved hair styles to be part of the post-modern trends and to form a minor socio-cultural phenomenon by themselves. Thus, this study has en-

larged the basis for understanding today's fashion by conducting a systematic and scientific study on a long-neglected study subject, i.e. hair styles, and also contributed to conceptualizing hair style expressions and overall aesthetic ideas. In addition, this study also provided a new systematic frame for hair designs by outlining general expressive techniques, trends, and specific details reflected on hair styles. Furthermore, this study contributed to establishing hair styles as part of the socio-cultural phenomena of today by providing both qualitative and quantitative analysis results that help to understand hair styles more generally and specifically at the same time.

More studies should be conducted on elements of hair styles other than designs so that the design trends of hair styles can be generalized sufficiently for academic and commercial use. Also, more analyses of postmodernist clothing in general should be conducted through the researches on the relations between hair styles and clothing.

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