

## GROUPWORK : our clothes can express our opinions

### DOC A :

#### Fashionable rebellion : tignons

By the time the Spanish took over the **Louisiana colony** in 1763, there was an established community of free Black people who lived and worked in the territory. The free Black people of Louisiana occupied an undefined position in colonial society. They were not under the control of the laws governing slavery, but they were also denied all the rights and privileges that came with being white.

The Spanish government wanted to more clearly define the place of the free Black community of Louisiana to prevent people of color from becoming too powerful. One major concern was that free Black women were too beautiful, and too many white men were attracted to them. In 1786, the governor of Louisiana proclaimed that all free Black women must wear *tignon* to make them different from white women. *Tignon* were head scarves typically worn by enslaved women to keep their hair up while they worked. By requiring free Black women to wear the same hair covering, the governor was marking them as related to enslaved women rather than white women. He was also forcing the women to cover their hair, which was considered one of their most attractive features.

The free Black women of Louisiana were more than up to this challenge. The *tignon* was widely adopted in accordance with the law, but women used colorful, expensive fabrics and tied them with ornate knots. They also decorated them with feathers and jewels. Instead of being a signal of the inferiority of free Black women, it became a mark of their beauty, wealth, and creativity, a subtle rebellion against a colonial government that wanted to keep them down.

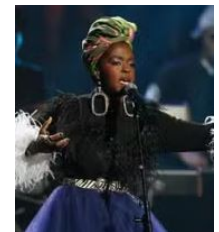
<https://wams.nyhistory.org>



Adolph D. Rinck :  
Woman In Tignon - 1844



Alicia Keys - 2016



Lauryn Hill - 2025

### DOC B :

Expressed through clothing, hippie culture and individuality secured itself an important place in fashion history. As a symbol of the non-violent ideology, hippies dressed in colorful clothes, bell-bottom pants<sup>1</sup>, tie-dye<sup>2</sup> patterns, paisley<sup>3</sup> prints, and black armbands<sup>4</sup>. Clothing and fashion were a big part of Hippie's self-identification.

Those pieces of clothing and staples of appearance symbolize life, love, peace as well as their disapproval for the war and the draft<sup>5</sup>. The wearing of black armbands represented mourning<sup>6</sup> for the mourning of a family friend, comrade, or team member that died in the Vietnam War. Furthermore, bell-bottom pants represented defiance against society's standards. Hippies promoted natural beauty standards, with long hair styled with flowers. Although the Vietnam War did not end until 1975, the anti-war movement made hundreds of young Americans participate in a non-violent social movement that promoted resistance to war.



Hair at Golden Gate Theatre, San Francisco. 2010 ph © Joan Marcus

[www.thecollector.com](http://www.thecollector.com)

1. pantalons à pattes d'éléphant – 2. technique that colours some portions of fabric more deeply than others – 3. a fabric with colourful and curved figures – 4. bands of cloth you can wear around your arm – 5. the system that forces you to join the army in the event of war – 6. when you feel sad because sb has died





In the United States, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s sparked<sup>1</sup> a renewed interest in African American identity and pride. As part of this movement, the Black Panthers emerged as a revolutionary organization advocating for black empowerment and social justice.

Fashion played a significant role in the visual identity of the Black Panthers, with members often sporting distinctive clothing and accessories that reflected their political beliefs and cultural heritage. One iconic fashion statement associated with the Black Panthers was the black leather<sup>2</sup> jacket, which became a symbol of resistance and solidarity.

The Black Panthers also embraced traditional African clothing, such as dashikis and kente cloth, as a means of reclaiming their cultural roots and asserting their identity in a predominantly white society. These

garments<sup>3</sup> served as symbols of pride, dignity, and resistance against racial oppression.

Similarly, in South Africa, the anti-apartheid movement of the 20th century saw fashion used as a form of resistance against racial segregation and discrimination. The African National Congress (ANC) and other anti-apartheid organizations encouraged supporters to wear traditional African attire, such as dashikis, as a symbol of solidarity and defiance.

The dashiki, a loose-fitting tunic adorned with vibrant colors and intricate patterns, became a powerful symbol of African pride and resistance to colonialism. By wearing dashikis, activists sought to reclaim their cultural heritage and challenge the oppressive policies of the apartheid regime.

[www.fashionology.in](http://www.fashionology.in)

1. provoked – 2. material made from animal skin – 3. clothes

The women's liberation movement used fashion as a way to subvert<sup>1</sup> society's ideals about what women could wear, look like, and achieve. It was the topic of objectification and unattainable beauty standards for women that inspired the Miss America Protest of 1968, where women's liberation activists demonstrated at the headquarters of the Miss America Pageant<sup>2</sup> in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Protesters dumped items they believed were forced on women to maintain peak femininity — like bras, lipstick, stockings, and girdles<sup>3</sup> — into a trash can.

[www.teenvogue.com](http://www.teenvogue.com)

1. criticise –  
2. beauty contest –  
3. body shapers

