

On the Enlightenment of Costume Culture Communication to the Revival of Hanfu

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Abstract:

Chinese dress culture is still in the revival stage, and the revival of Chinese dress, as one of the important symbols of Chinese civilization, is an inevitable trend in history. Cosplay is a kind of performative activity similar to role-play that Japan proposed, and in recent years, its international influence has gradually expanded. Based on the widespread cosplay culture in the world, this paper analyzes the problems of the revival of Hanfu culture from the perspective of cosplay culture dissemination. This paper argues that the cultural dissemination of Hanfu has the problems of “racial orientation” caused by the traditional class system and sectarian thinking, the problem of wearing Hanfu, which is too cumbersome, and the difficulty of promoting Hanfu due to the backwardness of its dissemination method. All these problems can be addressed by disseminating cosplay culture, characterized by high flexibility, strong inclusiveness, and great commercial value. Based on this, this paper puts forward the following suggestions: first, the revival and development of Chinese traditional dress needs to be innovative, integrated, and moderately adjusted to meet the current market demand. Secondly, break the antagonism between traditional and popular culture and promote Hanfu culture to the general public through modernized marketing and lifestyle. Thirdly, through daily wear, Hanfu culture will return to life as it was before.

Keywords: Cultural renaissance; cosplay; cultural transmission; Chinese clothing

1. Introduction

With the vigorous development of China’s economy, there has also been a growth in its people’s cultural awareness and confidence. This confidence is reflected in economic construction and technological progress and the emphasis and revival of traditional culture. However, the issue lies in the fact that Hanfu, as a cultural gem and an important part of the national costume of China, has been marginalized in modern times for an extended period. It wasn’t until 2003, when Mr. Wang Letian publicly walked into the city dressed in Hanfu, that not only did he break the long silence of Hanfu culture since the Qing Dynasty’s ‘hair-cutting and dress-changing’ order, but he also symbolized the revival of this culture in the 21st century. Mr. Wang’s actions attracted widespread public attention and media coverage, sparking an interest in traditional clothing and Chinese culture among the people [1]. From its initial conception as an idea to real garment wearing and then flourishing into a cultural industry trend through digital media, Hanfu culture has been reinterpreted by designers, spread via online communities and various platforms, and

even presented on the international stage, engaging a large number of young participants and garnering their support. As a mark of cultural expression and personal identity, Hanfu has gradually risen within China, and it has also captured the attention of overseas Chinese and foreigners interested in Chinese culture, making an unexpected return to people’s lives and visibility. This phenomenon represents the combination of cultural heritage and innovation and the embodiment of national confidence and respect for tradition.

Within a broad cultural context, “Cosplay” (the art of role-playing) meticulously constructs specific character images through visual symbols such as clothing, accessories, and props. Many cosplayers seek a detached identity redefinition in this cultural practice to counter traditional patriarchal culture. The origins of Cosplay culture can be traced back to the religious rites of ancient Greece, and more specifically, it began with Disney’s promotion of role-playing. This culture is characterized by three distinct dimensions: first, it provides cosplayers with a means to resist patriarchal oppression and explore and affirm personal identities [2]. Second, it creates a community envi-

ronment that values inclusivity and the principle of equality. Third, it shows a relentless pursuit of innovation and creativity. Today, Cosplay culture has penetrated globally, creating a vast realm of cultural influence. In comparison, Hanfu culture's global impact seems limited. Therefore, based on the high inclusivity of Cosplay popular culture and the flexibility of its systems and rules, combined with the characteristics of Hanfu culture itself, this paper will seek to create a grand blueprint for the inheritance and revival of Hanfu culture within this framework.

Hence, the research theme of this paper is to use the cultural characteristics of cosplay as a foundation to reflect on the existing development bottlenecks of Hanfu culture and to deduce methods for its modern revival.

2. Diversifying Cosplay Pop Culture

2.1 Digital Commerce in Cosplay Culture

Cosplay as a cultural phenomenon has created a diverse business ecosystem in the digital world that closely integrates online marketplaces and e-commerce, social media marketing, virtual product creation, and digital content sharing. First, for the cultural phenomenon of cosplay, online marketplaces and e-commerce are the foundation of the cosplay digital business ecosystem. Cosplay enthusiasts can purchase various products Through various e-commerce platforms, from costumes and props to cosmetics. As the market matures, these goods cover everything from finished products to customized products and even include digital models and 3D printed files to meet different demand levels. In addition, with the development of virtual reality technology, virtual cosplay merchandise, such as virtual costumes and accessories, is becoming popular in games and online communities, further expanding the scope of e-commerce [3].

2.2 Cosplay Culture in the New Media Era

Secondly, social media has also become the main platform for Cosplayers to showcase their work, and it is also an important part of the corporate marketing strategy. Cosplayers have built a huge fan base through multiple social platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube and interact with fans through these platforms. Businesses and brands see this influence and use viral marketing to promote their products or services by sponsoring or partnering with Cosplayers. Cosplayers, meanwhile, can fund their creative activities through fan tips, advertising revenue, and membership subscriptions.

With the development of technology, cosplay has expanded from real life to the virtual world. Cosplayers and designers use VR, AR, and 3D technologies to create three-dimensional avatar costumes and digital models that

can be used in personalized virtual experiences or sold as a personalization element in games and social platforms, creating new revenue models [4].

Meanwhile, cosplay's digital content creation and sharing play a major role in social media and online communities. Cosplay photography and video production have become marketable products, and content such as tutorials, online workshops, and live streams of production progress has provided Cosplayers with new sources of income and enhanced their connection and influence with fans worldwide [5].

Integrating these four points results in an all-encompassing digital business model incorporating online retailing, social media interactions, virtual goods, and content creation and sharing. This ecosystem creates rich interactions and value transformation possibilities for creators and consumers, as well as the products and services offered by businesses. As technology advances and social media platforms evolve, the digital business model for cosplay continues to evolve, providing a steady stream of business opportunities for the players involved.

3. Importance of Hanfu Culture and its Development

3.1 Brilliant History of Chinese Dress Culture

Hanfu culture reached its peak during the Tang and Song dynasties, and the origin of the Hanfu can be traced back to the Han Dynasty; since the Tang Dynasty, Hanfu clothing has become the daily clothing of the people's life, forming what is known as the "Tang Clothing" today. Compared to the past, the Hanfu of the Tang Dynasty was much looser, with both men's and women's clothes consisting of a coat and a jacket, and with pants for men and skirts for women. Women's Hanfus were slimmer than men's to show off the curves of women's bodies. The choice of fabrics in the Tang Dynasty was also more abundant and diverse. Still, it was mainly silk and veil, these high-grade fabrics with various colors, which showed the prosperity of the Tang Dynasty's economic and cultural strength [6]. Hanfu costumes are mainly in the lapel, cuffs, neckline, and other parts of the body. The types of decorations are diverse; there are embroidery, gold and silver, and other choices so that the costumes look more gorgeous. Hanfu culture had a breakthrough in the Tang Dynasty;. However, the development of Hanfu was interrupted in the Yuan and Qing Dynasties, in the Ming Dynasty and the contemporary era, it continued culture and glows with a new luster. Hanfu culture has a strong vitality and inclusiveness, so the development and breakthrough of Hanfu culture is an indispensable part of the traditional Chinese cultural heritage.

3.2 The Twists and Turns on the Road to Revitalization of Chinese Costume

China's traditional dress, the Hanfu, underwent suppression under Manchu rule, and its continuity was forced to be interrupted for more than two centuries with the promotion of modern and endless forms of dress, such as the Zhongshan suit and the suit. It wasn't until recent times that Zhengzhou's Wang Tianle once again stepped into the public eye in Chinese dress, reviving the long-lost Chinese dress culture and once again igniting the attention and enthusiasm of the media and the public.

In the process of revitalizing Hanfu culture, a Renaissance-like speed has erupted around its development, with the formation of cultural groups discussing Hanfu, commercial performances, theme parties, and other forms of activities [7]. However, amid this renaissance, the challenges facing Hanfu have also become apparent, the first of which is the debate over the "definition of hanfu" - what is the real hanfu? This involves an important choice: restoring the historical Hanfu or revitalizing its cultural spirit. The pursuit of restoration requires in-depth research by archaeologists and textile experts. However, with the evolution of the times, people's demands for clothing have evolved into a reflection of beauty, individuality, and faith. In this view, the revival of Hanfu should preserve the key cultural elements while integrating and innovating them, rather than adhering to the rules and letting the traditional dress become an obstacle to innovative thinking and modernization [8].

4. Enlightenment for the Revival of Chinese Clothing

4.1 Breaking Down the Barriers to Wearing Hanfu

The cumbersome form of Hanfu has become a major obstacle to the revival of Hanfu. In ancient times, the Hanfu dress was worn and had to pay attention to, take the head-dress ordinary people could only take "a scarf," while the status of officials could take a "crown," which is a symbol of status [7]. Hanfu's clothing accessories also need to be unified style; silk Hanfu often also needs to be equipped with jade and silk weaving scented pouches and other pendants; ordinary coarse cloth made of clothes can not even wear accessories. Nowadays, people's clothing habits have changed dramatically; clothing not only represents a person's status but also the pursuit of individuality, fashion career, and clothing is also extremely focused on comfort and nature; therefore, in the present day, breaking the barriers of Hanfu wear, wear diversification [9].

In elite culture, cultural heritage and innovation are im-

portant ways to maintain social status and express personal taste. Although Hanfu, as a symbol of excellent traditional Chinese culture, caters to the elite's pursuit of cultural depth and historical heritage, the revival of Hanfu should not just stay in elite culture. Still, it should also go into popular culture [10]. Hanfu culture-related investors can establish some Hanfu-themed cafes, bookstores, and other retro cultural spaces in the city, which can not only provide Hanfu fitting and photo opportunities but also become a place for the general public to show their cultural interests and communicate in Hanfu - for example, many cultural salons in Beijing have intellectuals in Hanfus. Many cultural salons in Beijing, host lectures and exhibitions in which not only costumes but also ideas and knowledge about philosophy, art, history, etc. are exchanged. It is also possible to integrate Hanfu clothing into games and other digital media; for example, Yuan Cosmos culture, as a representative of a new type of game, can be completely integrated with Hanfu culture and be further integrated into Hanfu culture by letting the characters in the game wear Hanfus, and by letting players make Hanfus on there in the game, and so on.

4.2 Revitalization of Chinese Dress

The wearing of Hanfu has also gradually moved from parties and festivals to daily life. Some Hanfu enthusiasts wear Hanfu on formal or semi-formal social occasions to show their taste for deep understanding of and high respect for traditional culture, such as wearing Hanfu on marriage ceremonies and wearing Hanfu on graduation ceremonies at universities, which are examples of the symbiosis between Hanfu and elite culture in modern life [11].

This revival of Hanfu culture also responds to the call for cultural self-confidence at the national level. In many national cultural festivals and international exchange activities, Hanfu is often presented as a representative of Chinese culture, such as the Beijing World Horticultural Expo and the Shanghai International Art Festival. In the international arena, Hanfu is often presented as a representative of Chinese culture. On the international stage, Hanfu has become a display of the fusion of the essence of traditional Chinese culture and modern civilization and meets the demand of the elite class for the expression of national and ethnic identity in the international exchange of culture.

On the road to the Hanfu revival, in addition to solving the problems of production complexity and guarding against nationalistic tendencies, the practicality of life of costumes should be emphasized [12]. The key to the revival of Hanfu lies not in the beauty or symbolism of the costume itself but in its application and popularization in

modern life. Hanfu should belong not only to professional researchers but also to everyone in daily life, thus attracting more groups to try to closely integrate Hanfu into the daily culture of contemporary society.

5. Conclusion

This study introduces the topic by examining the critical challenges in the revival of Hanfu culture through its distinction from the cosplay popular culture. It gleans insights for rejuvenating Hanfu and postulates that such a revival necessitates the reduction of cultural barriers associated with Hanfu, the abandonment of elements within traditional culture that hinder the propagation of popular culture, thereby enabling the masses, particularly the youth, to effortlessly embrace and comprehend the cultural essence of Hanfu. This understanding may kindle an interest and thus marshal the vigor of a new generation for the resurgence of Hanfu.

In this digital era, with an ever-changing international landscape where Western nations still predominate in media and public discourse, it is paramount for Hanfu culture to achieve successful transcultural and transnational dissemination in the current milieu. Analysis of the reasons behind the popularity of cosplay culture and the limiting factors of Hanfu culture reveals that the international propagation of Hanfu culture harbors tremendous potential for expansion and latent possibilities, both presently and in the future. Articulating China's narrative effectively while adhering to the Hanfu cultural standpoint and establishing our distinctive Hanfu cultural framework remain pivotal and the prime focus of efforts towards revitalizing and disseminating Hanfu culture.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally, and their names were listed alphabetically.

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