

The Characteristics of Costume Representation in Modern Society

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Abstract—As a representational form of ideology, costumes play an important role in the analysis of modern society and culture. They are one of the important factors for studying characteristics and trends of the times and society. When people study social culture and individual person, clothing, as a representational factor that can be seen through eyes, possesses a variety of non-representational features such as power, class, and politics.

Keywords—costume; representative; ideology; modern society

I. INTRODUCTION

Costume is not only a simple physical function of protecting the body and keeping warm, but also the "symbol" characteristic to express its own property, which is the significance of expressing its own ideological characteristics, and an external appearance of one's ideological characteristics [1]. As an effective social applicability prop, the costume has the function of showing the social-self that a person who wants to. When a person in his cloth is socially standardized and ideologically fixed, the self-expression function of costume representation has absolute characteristics. [2] The costume that people wear is the fastest expression of their worldview, their personality and social status [3].

As a form of representation, costume has changed constantly in the process of human historical development, which is influenced by multiple social factors such as cultural dependence, religious belief and so on [4]. In addition, the coexistence characteristics of the cultural circles of the world and various countries are also reflected through the representation characteristics of costume. It can be understood as a representation of particularity which exists universally in an era and a regional culture [5]. Moreover, the multi-form costume in all cultural circles, such as uniforms, dresses and daily life costume, is a kind of prominent visual imagery factor that expresses personal characteristics, independence and ideology. These costume representation factors can show the dependence and symbolic characteristics of adaptability in a group or company.

II. SOCIAL CULTURE AND COSTUME REPRESENTATION

At the current stage of research, there are many opinions about the origin of clothing. In general, there are three kinds of viewpoints as protective costume, etiquette costume and decorative costume. Moreover, whatever the purpose or function, the costume is often affected by multiple factors such as culture, economy, climate and social environment. At the same time, it is more related to the individual characteristics of people in different regions, different cultural circles, different nationalities, different countries and cities. It is more complicated and profound for the cause of formation, influencing factor and existing reason, especially for the costume with etiquette function and decoration function.

Compared with the period ruled by the traditional ancient aristocracy (royal), costume, the symbol which better represented the standardized political orientation of the modern society, not only showed a distinct identity of political representation, but also had the characteristics of communication. The representational characteristics of the material centralization symbols represented by costume are increasingly evident in the gradually refined carrier objects. Throughout the modern world history, the representation characteristics of costume had gradually shifted from the center of aristocracy (royalty) to the center on popular culture. The characteristic costume, which was the representation characteristics to distinguish different classes of people and manifest the nobility or royalty, had become a historical product abandoned by social development.

As for the comparison between China and European countries, the biggest difference between their traditional costumes was that the Chinese traditional costume emphasized "ideograph" while the European traditional costume emphasized "shape-type". Chinese traditional costume, including the overall garment shape, skirts, costume dispelling, color matching patterns, even hats and shoes and other aspects, had its specific symbolic significance, which had an obvious ideographic nature. Traditional European costume, however, fully demonstrated its phenotypic features by showing body proportions and profiles, including the "appearance" of waist, buttock, chest, shoulder and leg. However, whether it was the Western emphasis on "shape-type" or the Eastern emphasis on

"ideograph", the deep meaning of the representation characteristics contained in costume would be found by the horizontal analysis of Chinese and Western costume.

After the process of world history advanced into the modern society, all the events and things in the process of social and historical development had largely exerted a great influence on the social politics, national and regional culture of all levels, whether it was the industrial revolution representing the rapid development of human productivity, or the unjust wars between imperialist countries that spread all over the world — the First and Second World Wars.

The costume for a society, a country or a nation which has survived for a long time, has a certain representation characteristic formed by the comprehensive influence of its members' physiological quality, culture and education, traditional accumulation and social and historical environment. It is found that the origin of forming a particular dress or a particular kind of uniform is a comprehensive effect under the premise of the specific social culture politics and the historical subject situation. At the same time, the people in their environment, including their people of the nation and their own nationals or residents in a region, will directly affect and react to the costume culture by their own sensitivity, imagination, cultural foundation, artistic accomplishment, aesthetic taste, traditional influence, and the influence factors of social change.

When the leaders of the ethnic minorities conquered the Central Plains regime, their costumes often had the characteristics of wartime, which had expressed their bravery and fierceness and the cultural impact of their own nation. But at the time they seized the Central Plains regime and became the ruler of the new regime, they often tried to absorb the characteristics of Han nationality costumes in order to highlight their political authority and the nobility of the ruling class. Later, when their attention turned to social development and economic construction, their uniforms would usually undergo a series of changes.

Though the origin of the formation, influence and change of costume comes from human beings, the culture, status and ideas are often subtly expressed through costumes, which mean that they are expressed through the representational characteristics. In other words, all costume or people's dressing behavior has an obvious tendency, which is the most direct and basic ideographic characteristics that people could use to satisfy their basic needs, such as physiological needs, psychological needs and social existing needs.

III. COMPARISON OF THE COSTUME REPRESENTATION CHARACTERISTICS IN MODERN CHINESE AND WESTERN SOCIETY

A. *Costume Representation Characteristics in Modern Western Society*

European ready-to-wear costume was a social phenomenon that accelerates under the influence of the "frustration" of the French Revolution and the "trigger" of the industrial revolution. In fact, under the influence of the expansion of the French Revolution in modern years, the

revolution in the field of clothing had also been promoted in the whole Europe. After the ups and downs of the Great Revolution, the "Wang Zheng Retro (the restoration of the monarchy, referring to the return of the monarchy after the collapse of the Republic or other regimes)" had been ushered. Then the ready-to-wear costume which was shown as a new type of costume came into the public vision with the influence of haute couture and the breaking of conventions of department stores. Therefore, it could be said that the ready-to-wear costume was one of the products which was conforming to the trend of times in the modern scientific and technological revolution. Conceptually speaking, it meant freedom and equality; technically speaking, it meant fibers and machinery; culturally speaking, it meant retro and reactionary; socially and economically speaking, it meant that the ready-to-wear costume had become a social representation with distinctive characteristics under the deepen wave of labor division and market competition[6].

The "culotte" was a symbol of the European male aristocracy, which was also pushed into the "revolution" wave after the beginning of the revolution. The "sans-culotte" style of dress was promoted among the revolutionary groups, which was widely used as the costume of the revolutionary class. The non-bourgeoisie, such as the revolutionaries and the peasants who wore loose pants and short sleeves, had become the representative forces of the urban people. Simple costume, which had nothing to do with identity, was the first phenomenon of costume democratization that advocated by the "sans-culotte" group. This was the first compulsory phenomenon brought by the sudden change of political system. At the same time, a new type of costume, which was compatible with the spirit of the times and dicing the label of all classes, had officially entered the stage of history.

If the representation characteristic of European costume was based on the revolution, then the representation characteristic of American costume was to show the characteristics of popular culture. Mods style was a new form of costume inspired by the period of popular culture, mass production culture and consumer culture. It began to spread from the working class at the bottom of society to teenagers and college students in the late 1950s, which swept the world politically and economically. Mods style was a stimulating demand in the mobile, anti-sense, frustrating, exclusive and indifferent urban life, where foreigners were keen to ride speeding motorcycles, wore leather jackets and sunglasses in order to attract attention. In terms of costume, under the female openness and male openness of fuzzy traditional gender concepts, even the social concepts such as gay or lesbian among homosexuals, the hedonistic atmosphere of the younger generation and the loss of humanity in modern society had all been manifested with the impact of costume representation characteristics.

The popularity of Denim began with the working clothes worn by American miners, and had become one of the most popular types of apparel worldwide. Wearing Denim style costume is not affected by factors such as age, gender, race, class and occupation. It had no inevitable relationship with place and season that could be worn as daily costume. Jeans,

one of the most symbolic costumes in the 20th century, did not change dramatically with the sudden change of world pattern and cultural situation after World War II, and basically maintained the original morphological characteristics [7]. Until the late 20th century, fashion designers were still keen on the elements of Denim design all over the world and brought a variety of Denim fashions on the stage every year. Since then, Denim style itself had changed to the symbol of youth culture and popular culture from the early miners' working clothes or uniforms.

B. Costume Representation Characteristics in Modern Eastern Society

Different from the Western society, the Asian cultural circle had another feature. After entering modern society, China had been in a continuing crisis of national survival. Under the pressure of Western imperialist powers and social evolutionism, Chinese intellectuals began to explore the "Road of technological civilization" and "Road of spiritual civilization and material civilization" in the process of China's modernization. As the Western powers forcibly entered, China began to start the "Road of opening up" at the same time, when Western values and lifestyles began to enter the mass society of China together. The "New faction", which was centered by the faction of studying abroad, began to advocate some new style of costume. They showed the connotation of openness and progress, and then several of new costume style appeared in response to the proper time and conditions. During the period of the Republic of China, there were some changes in design and details for male clothing based on the gowns and mandarin jackets, which were the representative style of male clothing in the Qing Dynasty. They began to wear long gowns, mandarin jackets with trousers as a suit. At the same time, silk hat and shiny leather shoes had become the main types of clothing. In the early Republic of China, this mixed style of Chinese and Western dress was the preferred type of male group in the upper class. To a large extent, this mixed Chinese and Western dress style was the concrete manifestation of the political status at that time. Then costume also became an effective expression of political culture and social culture. When we look back at this period of history, it can even be said that the visual impact of costume culture is far greater than the historical events themselves. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, costume representation changed with the continuing effect of the social and political factors, which attributed to the change of the regime and the change of the ruling party. The most representative dressing types of male and female in the Republic of China were "suit" and "cheongsam" which had an obvious "capitalist color". Therefore, they were quickly replaced by "Zhongshan costume", "Lenin costume", "People's costume" and other costume more in line with the current political situation at that time.

As for South Korea, it had always regarded itself as a "White-Clothed Nation" from the traditional culture, while the "White" was not the usual sense of white, which meant to maintain the original color without processing.

After the end of the Japanese occupation period, "White Clothes" (From August 29, 1910 to August 15, 1945, the name of the period when the artichoke was a Japanese colony and accepted Japanese rule, North Korea and South Korea called this period a Japanese emperor (일제강점기), which Japan called it North Korea in the era of Japanese rule), was a symbolic style of traditional culture and nationalism. Korean intellectuals and enlighteners began to appeal "White Clothes" as the appearance of the Korean nation, and to promote "Anti-Colonialism" (탈-식민지) with clothing as a non-verbal form of confrontation. In addition, in the enlightenment movement of national life promoted by the reconstruction of the national movement headquarters (재건국민운동본부) of Korea in modern times, the appearance of reconstructed uniforms was accompanied by the simplification and rationalization of life, as well as the gymnastics reconstruction and cigarette reconstruction [8]. The appearance of reconstructed uniforms was carried out in the context of the development of Korean-made fabrics, the elimination of extravagance and waste, and the vigorous development of the economy. The reconstructed uniforms with the mainly color of grey and brown, became the main work uniforms for male civil servants in the political circles, which demonstrated the deep social characteristics of economic reconstruction and revival at that time.

In addition, in the Asian cultural circle, under the condition of the coexistence of pluralistic religions such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, each religion had exhibited different characteristics of costume. Although in some historical periods, there had been signs of the confluence of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, including some literatures, paintings or grotto arts, which had the brand of Buddhism. However, all the cultural characteristics of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism had their own distinct representational characteristics with their respective representative cultures and achievements, which had reflected their respective religious characteristics and different cultural representational styles. Among them, the "Natural Thoughts" of Taoism and the "Empty Thoughts" of Buddhism which were like the "Temperance" of Confucianism, all had purely ideographic meaning [9]. The costume had many characteristics under the influence of Confucianism's "Temperance Theory", the most representative ones represented the ban of "desire" and "color", which meant the idea of "forbidden color". Taoist robes were worn as regular clothes in daily life although they were the vestments of Taoist, which the Taoist monks often wore. According to Taoist philosophy, the Taoist vestments with the main color of cyan and grey symbolized the ideographic characteristics of the natural order, which were coverall from mountains and rocks to trees and leaf veins. It was in keeping with Taoism's opposition to acts contrary to the laws of nature and its "advocacy of non-action"[10]. As for Buddhism, the representation of Buddhist costumes expressed in the basic spirit manifestations of Buddhism such as self-criticism to comply the times, nothingness and free from vulgarity. Since then, the Buddhist costumes with the characteristics of frugality had been formed.

IV. CONCLUSION

As one of the products of human culture, the commonality and difference among different eras, regions, races and countries can be expressed by costume. Costume, a representation form of ideological characteristics, plays an important role in the analysis of modern society and cultural fields, which is one of the important factors of studying the characteristics and trends of the eras and society.

In summary, on the one hand, costume can be seen through eyes as a factor of representation when studying the social culture and individual people; on the other hand, it also has power, class, politics and other non-representational characteristics itself. In modern society, costume is a form of expression in the cultural composition of different cultural circles, different faith groups and different countries. It is also one of the determinants of the eras and social trends. Therefore, in the case of an in-depth study for a social collective, a cultural circle or a person, we can understand the various non-figurative features of the kernel through the costume representation characteristics elements which can be seen by eyes.

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