

Study of the Strategies for the Digital Communication of the Manchu Costumes under the Theory of Media Extension

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Abstract: As one of the important components of the material civilization of the Chinese people, the Manchu costumes once had a profound impact on the development of the later dress culture. However, with the development of the society and the evolution of the media, the elements of traditional Manchu costumes gradually disappeared from public view. The increase of the personalized needs and the improvement of aesthetic idea of people have promoted to the popularization of McLuhan's media extension theory. Thus, it is particularly important to find an effective way for the digital communication of the Manchu costumes combining with the currently prevailing virtual reality technology and the media extension theory.

Introduction

The costumes of the 56 different nationalities in China constitute the splendid costume culture of the Chinese people. Especially, the traditional Manchu costume organically sets inheritance, imitation, innovation in one. Thus it is an important content of the national unity, national fusion, and national reference of the contemporary Chinese people[1], and the material embodiment of the profound connotation of the Chinese civilization. However, due to evolution of the medium, the change of society, and the speeding up of the modernization, the charms of the traditional Manchu costume gradually disappeared in daily life. In order to inherit the Manchu traditional costume which is an important material cultural property, the digital communication and protection of the connotation of the traditional Manchu costumes combining with virtual reality technology can yet be regarded as a right choice.

Origin of the Manchu costume culture

There is a large number of historical data about the Manchu culture in China. Among them, records, the information about the Manchu costume has important cultural value and historical value[2]. Generally, the Manchu costume is not strange for many people. Especially, under the impact of a large number of domestic TV shows about Qing Dynasty in recent years, the Chinese people will connect the elements of the Manchu costumes such as the Qitou(a kind of hair style), mandarin jacket, and flowerpot shoes. However, the real traditional Manchu costumes are different from those people learn in life. Although the Manchu only has a history of 400 years, their ancestors have a history of 4000 years. Tracing back, it can be learned that the development of the Manchu costumes

is like a curve changing from flourish to decadence and the its cultural connotation also has changed.

The embryonic stage of the Manchu costumes. As early as the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, the earliest ancestors of Manchu, the Sushen nationality, were living in the Songhua river basin in China. Affected by the productivity and geographical environment, they all made a living by fishing and hunting, and their costumes made up of the fur of the wild animals were only used for heat preservation. Starting from the Sushen nationality, the Manchu has changed for many times, from the Yilou(an ancient nationality in the eastern Han dynasty), the Wuji (an ancient nationality in the Wei and Jin dynasties), the Mohe(an ancient nationality in the Tang dynasti) to the Nvzhen (an ancient nationality in liao and Song dynasties. The costumes of the Nvzhen fully reflect the characteristics of Manchu as a nomad, such as the zuoren(a kind of costume), and the horse-hoof sleeve. This period is the embryonic stage of the Manchu, during which the fusion of Manchu and Han was proceeding. At this period, the productivity and national culture of Manchu have certain development, but on the whole, the living environment of people and clothing design are still relatively backward.

The maturity and development stage of the Manchu costumes. The Qing dynasty is the mature stage of the development of Manchu costumes, and it also is the heyday of the feudal autocratic system. During the Kangxi period and the Qianlong period which are known as the "Kang-Qian flourishing age", the Manchu costume system was continuously improved. Moreover, the Qing Dynasty implemented the eight banners system, and anyone enrolled into the banner was called the banner people. During this period, the costumes were characterized by the banner style. The women all rolled up their hairs with a big twist, dressed the robes with decorative patterns, and a waistcoat with cloud pictures, and matched the red arched shoes. Those were the typical Manchu costumes for the women. During the Jiaqing and Daoguang periods, the Manchu costumes had experienced certain reform, especially reflecting in the increase of the adornment of on the women costumes. In the late Qing dynasty, the Manchu dress system had already been mature except for changes of the clothing style. At that time, it was common that spare cuff was sewed in the gusset, which on the one hand was the symbol of the status and position of the wearer, and on the other hand was the manifestation of the closed and traditional Qizhuang(women's dress of the Manchu). The whole process of the development of the costumes in Qing dynasty shows that Manchu costumes has experienced the rise and fall, just like a curve. The Manchu costumes vividly reflects the development level of the productivity at that time, and promote the social civilization and progress [3]-1.

The dilution and reform period of the Manchu costumes. The modern cheongsam emerged after the Xinhai revolution, and developed in the 1920s. Its golden age is between the 30s and the 40s. During this period, the cheongsam constantly drew lessons from the western culture in the fabrics and design, which made the women wearing cheongsam become a beautiful scenery line in the stage of world clothing culture. By the end of the republic of China, the cheongsam was more and more widely used. Since it has a larger fusion and adaptability compared with other clothing, it becomes the most common customer accepted by the women at all levels of society at that time.

However, when the cheongsam was popularized around the world as the national dress and when the Chinese people were happy for the new styles of cheongsam were favored by various countries, those national tradition sand national spirits left behind by the ancestors are neglected. Until now, the existing situation of the traditional Manchu costumes in folk is worrying.To inherit and carry forward the traditional Manchu costume culture, make the Manchu traditional culture survive for a long time in the future, the effective protection and communication of the traditional Manchu costume culture are imperative.

Application of the media extension theory in the digitization of the costumes

In the book, *Understanding Media: the Extension of Man*, McLuhan puts forward that the medium is the extension of man. He thinks that any medium is no other than the expansion and extension of the feelings and the sense organs of man: the text and print media is the extension of visual ability, the radio is the extension of the auditory ability, the television is the integrate extension of vision, hearing and touch[4]. Needless to say, medium is the extension of the sensory system of man. This theory is commonly reflected in every aspect of life, and can be widely used in various fields.

The famous French writer, Anatole France once said that: "if I could select the books among those in the world one hundred years after my death, I will neither choose novel, nor choose a historical book similar to novel. My friend, I will only choose a fashion magazine without hesitation to have a look at the woman's clothing one century after my death. These clothes can show me the future of human civilization, and tell me more things than any philosopher, novelist, prophet and scholars can tell me." [3]-2. It's truly that costume has a strong visual impression. It helps people appreciate the development of human civilization in the form of a visual symbol. This cultural form with profound connotation bears the human civilization, and bring visual impact and enjoyment.

Based on the media extension theory of McLuhan, in the process of the digital communication of the Manchu costumes, the integrating point between digital media and traditional culture can be found[5], so as to achieve the goal of indirectly disseminating the culture of traditional Manchu costume.

The measures for the digital communication of the traditional Manchu costumes

Currently the digital technology is developing rapidly, and the method of reproducing the traditional culture through the new media has become the main one in the domestic and international cultural communication. The virtual reality technology connects the virtual space in the computer with the people in real life, thus integrating the various senses of the body to realize interaction experience. Therefore, the 3d modeling technology and virtual reality technology can be used to make the connotation of the costumes perceptible from multiple aspects including visual sense, auditory sense, tactile sense, realize connotation of the dress is perceived, realize interaction between hands and virtual environment from the body to imagination, thus building up perception experience of people for the whole virtual space and then forming the comprehensive sensory quality [6].

First of all, the application of the 3d modeling technology. In order to virtually represent the development process of the traditional Manchu costumes and make the public have an understanding of the Manchu costume culture and effectively disseminate it, it is suggested to adopt the 3d modeling technology to establish the virtual Manchu costume to show scenes and characters on the basis of collecting various data and systematic carding of the development process of the Manchu costumes. In this way, the Manchu costumes at different periods can be shown through the dress of characters, thus enabling the audience to understand the development process and culture connotation of the Manchu costumes through observing the dress of people at different periods.

Secondly, the realization of the function of virtual roaming. The integrated and interactive languages of the new media art becomes more and more prominent, which guides new orientation of the communication and display of the cultural heritage[7]. The adoption of the unity3d technology realizes virtual scene roaming. People can realize random roaming in the computer screen through the mouse clicking, and the ASDW keys or the direction keys can be used to control man

walking[8], as if entering the virtual world. Thus the participators can have a more in-depth understanding and contact with the Manchu costumes. In addition, texts and sounds can also be added in the system to enrich the visual and auditory effect of the participator, so as to achieve a better sensory experience.

Finally, the completion of the somatosensory interactive operation. With the increase of the aesthetic idea of the mass and the personalized demands, the word "interaction" gradually comes into the view of the public in recent years, and the well man-machine interaction technology has already become a real future[9]. Considering from the perspective of human nature, the somatosensory devices also can be accessed to the virtual roaming, namely the kinect. The users only need to stand in front of the screen, use the kinect camera to capture the human movement, and complete the instructions in the virtual scene in accordance with the corresponding gestures. This kind of method can improve the user's degree of participation, make the experience more interesting, help people understand the traditional Manchu costumes in relaxing activities and indirectly promote to the transmission.

Summary

As Kruger said: "if virtual reality is just a technology, you won't be heard so much about it."Indeed, virtual reality is not only a kind of new technology, it has created the human body and new experience of perception which not only affects the perception and understanding of mankind for the world, but also change the understanding of the real world [10]. As an important part of Chinese civilization, the Manchu costume should not be gradually buried in the process of historical development by the times. In the current world, the new media technology is changing and developing rapidly. The adoption of the virtual reality technology can realize the digital display of traditional Manchu costume culture and enhance the audience's sensory experience, thus playing an important role in communicating and protecting the Manchu costume culture. It can be expected that the traditional Manchu costume will come back to daily life in new ways and with new experience.

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