

The Reconstruction and Re-Popularization of Hanfu Culture - Hanfu Cross-dressing Videos on Tik Tok

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Abstract: *Hanfu*, based on Chinese traditional clothes, is reconstructed and re-popularized through Chinese younger generations' practice, which forms the new *Hanfu* culture. This study mainly focuses on *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos posted by *Hanfu* bloggers on Tik Tok that are normally viewed by young people, especially women. Taking two *Hanfu* bloggers-Chu Qi and Sen Shang as examples, this paper provides a thematic analysis on the content of the *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos by examining the clothes and make-up, the settings and props, etc. Consequently, from the perspective of performance theory, this research combines *Hanfu* with social media, and attempts to discuss how the *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos build a new *Hanfu* culture and have influenced the public's perception and imagination of *Hanfu*.

Keywords: cross-dressing, Tik Tok, *Hanfu* cultural, performance, social media

1. Introduction

Featured a loose Yi ('upper garment') with sleeves, a skirt-like Shang ('lower garment'), and a belt sash decorated with jade, Chinese traditional clothes are originally only exhibited in museums or films. However, since the beginning of the 21st century, an increasing number of China's younger generations have been interested in these traditional clothes from books, video materials and archaeological artefacts, resulting in the restoration of these clothes, which have become known as *Hanfu*. Indeed, the Chinese academic scholars have differed in the definitions of *Hanfu*. Wang Furong suggested that *Hanfu* is an abbreviation for "traditional Han Chinese clothing"[1]. Zhou Xing argued that the concept of "*Hanfu*" was not commonly used in ancient times and that the term "*Hanfu*" is traditional clothing imagined by participants in the *Hanfu* movement [2]. Yang Na points out that the concept of "*Hanfu*" mainly originated from discussions among netizens. "Hanfu" has not yet been recognized by Chinese officials, and the term has not even been listed in major Chinese dictionaries [3]. This paper disclosed that *Hanfu* is constructed by the cultural practices of contemporary youth in the Internet era and reflects the youth's imagination of ancient Chinese clothing based on contemporary culture. They not only create their subculture but also express their aesthetic interests by consuming it.

The *Hanfu* groups and the *Hanfu* industry growing gradually during the last two decades. From 2015 to 2020, the sales scale of China's *Hanfu* market rose significantly from 190 million yuan to 6.36 billion yuan, with nearly 50% of *Hanfu* consumers owning 2-4 sets of *Hanfu* in 2021[4]. Behind these figures is the sudden popularization of *Hanfu*. These academic questions are required

to be answered. What are the factors that drive the consumers to buy and use *Hanfu*? Why is *Hanfu* being taken seriously and successfully entering the lives of the youth? The development of *Hanfu* over the past 20 years has been closely linked to the Internet and social media, represented by Weibo and Tik Tok, which have become the main ways for nearly 60% of consumers to access information about *Hanfu*. *Hanfu* bloggers use social media to popularize *Hanfu* culture and showcase *Hanfu* outfits to the viewers. The number of videos about *Hanfu* on social media is huge and diverse, with videos of *Hanfu* cross-dressing attracting wide viewers and becoming one of the most popular types of videos due to the strong contrast between the before and after of the cross-dressing. The viewers watch the performance of *Hanfu* bloggers on social media and interact with them through comments. Therefore, this paper selects *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos posted by *Hanfu* bloggers on the Tik Tok as the research objects. The *Hanfu* bloggers are quite strong performers, both before and after the cross-dressing, and the videos contain elements such as clothes, makeup, settings and props and so on. Therefore, using Goffman's performance theory as a theoretical framework, this paper attempts to explain how *Hanfu* bloggers build *Hanfu* culture and influence the viewers' perception and imagination of *Hanfu*.

2. Literature Review

2.1. New Hanfu Culture

Chinese clothing in ancient Chinese texts refers primarily to a concept of clothes that distinguishes it from that of other ethnic groups. However, traditional Chinese clothing is discontinued because 1) the policy that the Qing Dynasty's authorities made significantly changed the clothing trend of Han Chinese people, and 2) the clothing of the Chinese people has been influenced by Western aesthetics in recent centuries. Therefore, an online article called *The Lost Civilization - Han Chinese National Clothing*, emerged on the Ship's Military Forum in 2002, prompting people to think - what exactly is traditional Chinese clothing? In 2003, a *Hanfu* Lover gained widespread attention when he took to the streets in the clothing of the Han Dynasty. Since then, the *Hanfu* movement has been launched in China as well as overseas. Taking advantage of the development of the Internet, the term "*Hanfu*" has become more widely known and appears more frequently in everyday life. Its representational culture has become more diverse, creating new concepts and imaginations in the minds of people.

This paper sorted the literature about *Hanfu* research in the last fifteen years, and taking 2015 as the dividing line, the earlier studies focused on the ethnicity of *Hanfu*[5], the aesthetic of *Hanfu*'s forms[2], and the relationship between the *Hanfu* movement and the Internet[6]; the latter studies looked deeper at the relationship between *Hanfu* and youth subculture[7], gaming in the *Hanfu* groups[8], *Hanfu* styles[9] and commercial value[10]. Yang Xue suggested that *Hanfu* was an "invented tradition". In the context of youth culture and post-modern consumption, *Hanfu* has become a cultural product for the young generation to express their sense of consumption, highlight their aesthetic taste and achieve a sense of identity and belonging[11]. This paper argues that after 20 years of development since the beginning of the *Hanfu* movement in the early twenty-first century, *Hanfu* has been reconstructed into popular culture through the practice and dissemination of Chinese young generations and is inextricably linked to mass consumption. This is also the main reason for the shift in emphasis in *Hanfu* research.

The spread and consumption of *Hanfu* have been made possible by the development of the Internet. Initially, *Hanfu* lovers were active in websites created by like-minded companions. It is a niche group orgy. The advent of mobile electronic devices and software has led to *Hanfu* lovers taking root in online forums, Baidu postings, microblogs and QQ group chats. As these platforms have lower barriers to entry compared to websites, the *Hanfu* culture has seen a new wave of spread

and development. In recent years, the globalization of social media has resulted in another shift in the carrier of *Hanfu* culture, such as Tik Tok, Quick Worker, Little Red Book and Bilibili, which became the main battlefields for the dissemination of *Hanfu* culture. Meanwhile, due to the commercial and youthful nature of these social media platforms, *Hanfu* culture is gradually being constructed into popular culture and is mainly consumed by the younger generations. The changing carriers of social media have played an important role in the spread of *Hanfu*.

3. Social Media

Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allows the creation and exchange of User Generated Content[12]. Because of the advancement of mobile networks, the presentation of social media has changed from text-based to graphic to video-based. Around 2015, the rise of short-form video applications like Tik Tok and Quick Worker led to a shift in social media from being dominated by long-form videos to short-form videos.

The short videos capture many viewers with short content satisfying people's need for entertainment in a fragmented time. Meanwhile, the low barrier to entry and the concept of the users as creators (UGC model) make short video production dynamic. In terms of the content of short videos, Urakami claimed that new videos are recommended based on user information or previous viewing history to motivate users to continue watching videos [13]. And mobility, ubiquity and ease of use have made VS-SN one of the most popular social networks for young people. Kaplan pointed out that short videos usually contain some commercial advertisements, which represent corporates' images [12]. In terms of viewer groups, Xu Xi believed that the audience for short videos is mainly young people and more than half of them are women and single people [14]. In terms of interaction logic, Li Jing regarded short videos as a third space [15]. It was a fusion of the virtual and the real, where the perceptions, consciousness and ideas of short video producers were loaded in, making the video content an emotionally directed text that sought the "empathy" of the viewers to build a common community. The short length of Hanfu cross-dressing videos on social media, usually under 30 seconds, leads to a low viewing cost for the viewers. These videos are often accompanied by symbolic *Hanfu*-themed clothes and makeup, to create a space for "empathy" and imagination. In addition, these videos are often watched by women, who have more time and money at their disposal, and are more aesthetically demanding than men.

Short videos can convey a variety of media symbols, including text, images, sound and scenes in a very short period. Zhang Shiwen divided the symbols conveyed by short videos into three categories: memetic linguistic symbols; scenic visual symbols; and the production of persona symbols [16]. The videos about Li Jiaqi, in which the words "all girls", "this is too good", and "just by it" have become symbols that represent Li Jiaqi. And Li Ziqi's videos pay much attention to the construction of scenes, mostly in the countryside, farmhouses and fields where the pace of life is slow. Li Jiaqi and Li Ziqi's "personas" are constructed through their personal "performances", forming fixed imaginations and concepts in the minds of the viewers. *Hanfu* bloggers who post short videos about *Hanfu* on short video platforms fall into two main categories, those who are Netflix-style *Hanfu* models and those who promote *Hanfu* culture. The former is mainly to attract viewers by posting videos to showcase *Hanfu* and other products, such as *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos; the latter is mainly to promote knowledge about *Hanfu* and to spread the culture embedded in *Hanfu* to more people [17]. This paper focuses on the former *Hanfu* bloggers, who create *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos through clothes, makeup and settings. The contrast between the pre-and post-dressing of the *Hanfu* bloggers in the video also invariably builds the viewers' perception of the performers' personas. *Hanfu* bloggers mainly publish their Hanfu cross-dressing videos on Tik Tok, which is one of the most influential short video platforms in the world, with 500 million daily

active users worldwide. Tik Tok has wider viewers than other platforms, therefore, this paper chose it as the research object.

4. Self-presentation

In the book *Self-Presentation in Everyday Life*, Goffman introduced the concept of self-presentation and described that human interaction is a process of self-performance [18]. There are rules and requirements in the context of social interactions that affect the presentation of people's images. Impression management is the most central part of Goffman's views, of which the important concepts are the social front and the personal facade. The former refers to the set in the performance and the latter refers to the appearance and demeanour of the performers, the elements of which affect the expectations of the performance in the minds of the viewers. Thanks to the popularity of the Internet and the mass availability of social media, real-life self-performances have made the transition to the virtual world. As Hogan claimed, the self-presentation of users in social media is closer to an exhibition, with users designing and constructing individual images through selfies and vlogs and selectively displaying the information they want to exhibit [19].

Self-performance is usually seen in the virtual world - social media - where, through electronic devices such as mobile phones, and means such as likes and comments and pop-ups, the performer and the viewer can interact, building a context of social interaction. Research on the relationship between self-performance theory and social media is well established nationally and internationally, encompassing social platforms like Facebook [20], Instagram and Tik Tok. Some social issues have also been the subject of social media attention, such as women bloggers challenging mainstream norms of femininity through Instagram. Lupinetti, Victoria M. examined the lives and experiences of amateur female figure competitors who represented themselves and their interests in fitness via photographs on Instagram [21]. He found that training and sharing their fitness journey with others on Instagram contributed to the overall sense of identity as women. Even though the female figure competitors strayed from traditional social prescriptions of femininity and beauty, they complied with the prescriptions of the bodybuilding culture. However, only Lian Tang and Chen Yiwang's article examined both *Hanfu* and social media. They qualitatively analyzed how the *Hanfu* videos on Tik Tok have influenced foreigners' perceptions of *Hanfu* from the perspective of intercultural communication, without applying any theoretical frameworks [22].

The acknowledgement of *Hanfu* was initially founded by officials and related experts, however, the major difference was made by self-energized media practitioners. With the rise of the social media platforms, a huge amount of *Hanfu* bloggers emerged, by posting videos and interacting with their viewers, they significantly put a huge impact on *Hanfu* culture, which also directly contribute to the gradually acceptant and aesthetical foundation of *Hanfu* culture among the viewers. But how exactly did *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos influence the viewers? What impact will this perception put on *Hanfu* culture? To better answer these above questions, this paper adopted Goffman's performance theory because i) it has strong suitability and could provide a well-recognized theoretic framework and ii) plentiful valuable researches were already reviewed by peers so it can provide a full-fledged research foundation.

5. Methodology

5.1. Research Design and Data Collection

This paper adopted a qualitative analysis method and took the *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos on Tik Tok as the research objects. The bloggers who post *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos are all *Hanfu* models, so this paper queries the list of the most popular *Hanfu* models in 2021 and selected the top ten as the targets of research [23]. These ten *Hanfu* models have registered accounts and posted

videos on Tik Tok, and all have more than one million followers. Five of the *Hanfu* models have mainly posted *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos on their Tik Tok accounts in the past two years. Among the five *Hanfu* models, Chu Qi and Sen Shang are most famous. The former has the largest number of followers, reaching 8.949 million, and his pre-dressing bald image is more recognizable than other male *Hanfu* bloggers, with a stronger sense of contrast before and after cross-dressing. While the latter as a female *Hanfu* blogger with a very classical temperament, creates all her *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos alone, which are highly serialised, such as restoring the images of ancient Chinese women. Therefore, the *Hanfu* and make-up in her videos are more distinctive and professional than those of other female *Hanfu* bloggers. To sum up, this paper selects Chu Qi and Sen Shang's *hanfu* cross-dressing videos as research samples.

The most important feature of *hanfu* cross-dressing videos is the "change", which means the model appears in regular clothes without make-up before the cross-dressing, however, after that, *hanfu* bloggers appear in *Hanfu* with delicate make-up. In addition to the *Hanfu* and make-ups worn by the *Hanfu* bloggers, the settings and props, as well as the post-editing, are also important features of a *Hanfu* cross-dressing video. *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos are normally very short, around 30 seconds. The *hanfu* bloggers usually appear in scruffy, unkempt images before the cross-dressing, holding props to make corresponding movements, and the moment of the cross-dressing is dominated by movement transitions, which play a natural transition effect.

6. Data Analysis

This paper provides a thematic analysis of the content of the *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos by examining the clothes and make-up, the set props, the characterization of the performances and the editing techniques. Firstly, from two perspectives: "persona builds the image of *Hanfu*" and "*Hanfu* + social media: a consumption practice for young people", this paper analyzes how Chu Qi meets the viewers' expectations and imaginations of the characters and how *Hanfu* culture is reconstructed, therefore becoming a consumption practice for Chinese young people to express their aesthetic. Secondly, for Sen Shang's *hanfu* cross-dressing videos, this paper focuses on how Sen Shang takes control of the interpretation of *Hanfu* culture to convey her imaginations of *hanfu* to the viewers, as well as the diversity of *Hanfu* culture reflected in her classical make-up. Finally, by observing the comments of the viewers in the comments section of the *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos posted by these two *Hanfu* bloggers, this paper examines the impact of the Hanfu bloggers' performances on the viewers and whether the viewers accept the Hanfu bloggers' understandings of Hanfu and the future of the Hanfu.

7. Findings

7.1. The Persona Builds a Three-dimensional Image of Hanfu

As a clothing prop, the Hanfu helped Chu Qi transform from a bald and ordinary man to an ancient-style beautiful man. Conversely, Chu Qi gave the *Hanfu* a connotation of "exquisite", "gorgeous" and "ethereal". All of Chu Qi's *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos began with a scruffy appearance of a bald head, wearing a plaid shirt. As the voice-over and his movements progressed, the video changed to show Chu Qi who was dressed in exquisite *Hanfu* and wearing delicate make-up, finally resulting in the image of a beautiful man in the Chinese ancient style. It is concluded that Chu Qi always appeared in a fixed, realistic and ordinary appearance before the cross-dressing, and the image Chu Qi presented after cross-dressing was diverse and delicate, which deepened the viewers' perception of Chu Qi's real appearance and enhanced the sense of contrast after the cross-dressing. Consequently, the bald image before the cross-dressing had become a symbol that can replace Chu Qi, and the label of a bald but beautiful man can often be seen in the

comments section of videos.

The other elements of the cross-dressing videos such as the settings, props, editing techniques and performing acting were also essential for Hanfu bloggers to build personas. A complete Hanfu cross-dressing video was often a sudden shift from an everyday familiar scene such as a bedroom or living room to another scene due to the performers' actions. This transition was achieved by relying on currently sophisticated editing techniques, such as action point editing. The individual performances of the *Hanfu* bloggers were also crucial. For instance, Chu Qi's highly personal performance was to appear in a scuff image with dumb eyes, suddenly transforming into a character from a novel or film drama as he leapt, spun his fans, or turned around. After the transformation, Chu Qi's eyes were not as dull as before, with a pair of eyes that were either smiling or sad so that convey to the viewers a certain emotion about the characters. The third space of emotional connection was formed, where the viewers empathized with the characters played by Chu Qi and became emotionally invested in him. Props were particularly important in the moment of cross-dressing, as they played a role in the natural transitions, fitting the characters and adding to the atmosphere of the videos. For example, when Chu Qi imitated the classic character of Li Bai, before the cross-dressing he was holding a paper cup and was about to drink water, while he was holding a wine jug and pouring wine after the cross-dressing. The similar movement but the change in props made the transition very natural and the jug fitted the image of Li Bai as a 'wine immortal'. Meanwhile, the act of drinking directly from the jug added an ethereal connotation to the videos.

Chu Qi's cross-dressing characters were mainly divided into two types, one from novels, for which readers had a lot of room for imagination, and one from anime and film dramas, for which the characters not only had pictorial prototypes but also enjoyed great popularity and wide viewers. In terms of characters in novels, Chu Qi imagined their appearance and clothes based on textual descriptions and his understandings; As for characters in anime and film dramas, Chu Qi focused on imitating the characters through clothing and make-up reproduction because their appearance had been visualized. Specifically, the characters in the novel were very various, ranging from gods and demons to Taoist priests and scholars, with an oriental metaphysical dimension. Chu Qi chose the clothes and make-up of the characters to suit the imagination of most viewers, while also adding his perceptions of them since the characters depicted in the novel did not exist in the real world, and the readers had a general but incomplete picture of these characters. For instance, the make-up of his character Phoenix had a frontal inlay, which was a feature of classical Chinese make-up. In contrast, restoring characters in anime and film dramas imprisoned Chu Qi's secondary creations. This was because to meet the viewers' expectations of a character in a film or TV series, Chu Qi had to choose make-up and clothes that matched the prototypes as closely as possible, as well as performing actions.

Most viewers subconsciously accepted Chu Qi's persona, which also built an image related to Hanfu. Therefore, Hanfu was combined with the Hanfu blogger's three-dimensional persona. The sets and props, as well as Chu Qi's performing acting, successfully build his "bald but beautiful" persona, indirectly creating a three-dimensional image of *Hanfu*.

7.2. Hanfu + Social media: Young People's Consuming Practices

The commercialization of *Hanfu* was an important driving force for its gradual development from a niche hobby to a national craze. In the process of Hanfu's commercialization, it had become a consumption practice for young people to express their aesthetics.

Since the discontinuity of *Hanfu* culture, the public considered *Hanfu* as ancient Chinese relics, which were excavated by professional archaeologists and then put into museums for preservation and exhibition. The existence of *Hanfu* as a cultural relic was educational, serious and orthodox, but inaccessible. However, a few lovers who dressed in *Hanfu* opened people's eyes to another

possibility for clothing, and the emergence of social media accelerated the spread of *Hanfu*, which also led to its commercialization and productization. So *Hanfu* is no longer a relic, instead, it exists as a commercial product and has become an item available for everyone. After the commercialization of *Hanfu*, the significance of *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos is, 1) to show how *Hanfu* can be worn, to convey the *Hanfu* culture and to imagine the life of the ancients, and 2) the commercial value of *Hanfu* itself, which is turned into a background and prop for products advertising.

The low threshold of social media and its huge user groups had made it increasingly commercially valuable, and the *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos on Tik Tok were no exception. By the 14th of July 2022, Chu Qi had posted a total of 409 videos on Tik Tok, of which 329 were *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos, and of this number, 87 videos contained advertisements, accounting for about 1/4. Most of the types of products presented in the advertisements were beauty or skincare products, this was because one of the keys to the *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos was the change in make-up. From a face without make-up to a beautiful look, skincare and beauty products played a big part. *Hanfu* bloggers used and recommended beauty or skincare products during the pre-dressing period and presented a beautiful image after cross-dressing. The performing actions of the *Hanfu* bloggers, the accompanying sets and props, and the editing techniques made the viewing experiences extremely real [24]. These products were used to recreate the image of the characters in the viewer's mind to make the viewers imagine that "wearing the *Hanfu* and using the products to complete this make-up will transform them from ordinary people to ancient beauties or beautiful men-just like the *Hanfu* bloggers". Taking the example of a Chinese brand's red-crowned crane-themed eyeshadow palette, Chu Qi performed an anthropomorphic representation of a red-crowned crane, and the shot was given more of Chu Qi's eyes and the red mark in the middle of her forehead - the effect achieved after using this product. Currently, the *Hanfu* in the video is no longer traditional Chinese clothing, but a prop for the character's make-up, actions and storyline, which conversely demonstrates the commercial value of *Hanfu*.

The viewers of short videos are mainly younger generations, and the main viewers of *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos are often women, who need skincare, and make-up and have an interest in *Hanfu* culture. Thus, both *Hanfu* and cosmetic merchants converge on *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos, where *Hanfu* is reconstructed, and its original seriousness and orthodoxy are erased and consequently fused with commercial advertising. *Hanfu* eventually develops into pop culture, which becomes a consumption practice for younger generations to express their aesthetics.

7.3. A Diverse Hanfu Culture

Although the cross-dressing videos of Chu Qi and Sen Shang were almost indistinguishable in form, there was a fundamental difference between the images of *Hanfu* displayed. This was attributed to the different origins of the characters performed by Chu Qi and Sen Shang, the former coming from contemporary pop culture and the latter taking from ancient Chinese female figures such as Li Qingzhao and Xie DaoYun. So, the persona of Chu Qi was more popular with the public in the modern aesthetically dominated society of today, while Sen Shang's highly serialised video contents resulted in the establishment of a persona of classical beauty, which presented the classical aesthetic, allowing viewers to see another aesthetic possibility.

Before *Hanfu* becomes popular, people's imagination of *Hanfu* came partly from orthodox historiography and popular cultures, such as costume dramas and online novels, which were secondary creations of the imagination of ancient people's lives and clothes. Because popular culture had wider viewers and had been popular for a longer period, it had a deep-rooted influence on people's imagination of ancient life and clothes. Therefore, Chu Qi, who played the role in the films, TV series, and Internet novels, was more in line with the public's understanding of ancient

clothes. While popular culture was being commercialized by capital, for example, the make-up and clothes of current ancient Chinese TV series are gradually becoming modern assembly line work - patterned make-up, simple hairstyles and white garments, which led viewers to be aesthetic fatigue and turn to new aesthetic preferences. Compared with the clothes and make-up of film and TV series, Sen Shang's videos always recreated the image of the characters in the ancient paintings as closely as possible and in line with the aesthetic of the corresponding dynasties, such as the E Huang make-up of the Wei and Jin dynasties, the San Bai make-up of the Song dynasty, the curved dress of the Han dynasty, and the Ma Mian skirt of the Ming dynasty. Sen Shang's extreme restoration of the images of ancient Chinese women was a challenge to the capital product of the ancient Chinese TV series. She uploaded her *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos to Tik Tok, representing diverse *Hanfu* images and another possibility for ancient Chinese TV series' clothing, which forced investors in film and TV series to focus on the compatibility of the characters with the make-up and clothes. So *Hanfu* bloggers have created a diverse *Hanfu* culture through their cross-dressing videos.

7.4. Right of interpretation of Hanfu culture

The social media UGC model allowed for extremely low barriers to content creation on the platform. As one of the genres of Tik Tok videos, the creators of *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos were of varying standards and distinctive styles. All these *Hanfu* bloggers were creating relevant content with their understanding of *Hanfu*. Among the vast number of short videos, Sen Shang had been able to stand out from many peers is contributed to the following two reasons: i) Her *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos were unique in that the characters she played were famous and well-known in history, such as Li QingZhao; ii) Sen Shang's classical temperament and appearance made her a perfect fit for these characters. Currently, Sen Shang has 1,612,000 Tik Tok followers, which makes her an important part of the *Hanfu* cultural circle.

The *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos posted by Sen Shang on Tik Tok were an imagined interpretation of *Hanfu* culture. The fact that viewers gave Sen Shang comments of approval while watching her performance indicated their subconsciously acceptance for Sen Shang's interpretation of Hanfu culture. For example, Sen Shang referred to the image of Li Qingzhao in an ancient painting, not only to recreate the costume and make-up but also to resemble the movements and mannerisms. This extreme demand for restoration was hidden behind the performance, and the viewers were able to appreciate her pursuit of perfection, and therefore considered Sen Shang's portrayal of Li Qingzhao to be highly authoritative. In addition to the caustic demands of perfection, a major reason for Sen Shang's access to the cultural interpretation of *Hanfu* was the discontinuity of *Hanfu* culture. Attribute to the changes in clothing during the Qing Dynasty and in recent centuries, *Hanfu* had gradually disappeared from people's lives. Virtually, except for the archaeological community and related lovers, almost no one focused on the *Hanfu* and the culture behind it. Since a large population knew about Li Qingzhao's appearance and clothing through texts or ancient paintings, Sen Shang has considerable space for restoration in the selection of video materials. As Sen Shang was familiar with the clothes and make-up of various Chinese dynasties, she added her understanding of *Hanfu* and make-up to the ancient paintings to create the videos. It is argued that Sen Shang expressed her understanding of Hanfu culture to the viewers in the name of restoration. Although her understanding might deviate from the real historical Hanfu, the viewers were not clear about what the real historical Hanfu image was. Consequently, Sen Shang can guide the aesthetic inclination of the viewers, as well as held a certain degree of power over the interpretation of *Hanfu* culture.

7.5. The Future of Hanfu: Integration into Daily Life

Hanfu bloggers presented their vision of *Hanfu* and ancient life to the viewers through delicate *Hanfu*, make-up and heartfelt performances, but did the viewers fully accept their imaginations? Indeed, in the comments section of Chu Qi's and Sen Shang's *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos, most viewers were complimentary, and believed that the characters played by these *Hanfu* bloggers were good interpretations of their imagination of the characters. However, there were a few voices that could not be ignored, such as those who disliked the eyebrows of the Tang Dynasty ladies that Sen Shang had restored by referring to "Lady with Flower Pin". It was visible that the viewers did not blindly accept the aesthetic of the *Hanfu* bloggers. The conflict between the *Hanfu* bloggers and these critics reflected the difference between ancient and modern aesthetics. Social changes over the last century had led to a gradual westernization of the aesthetic of Chinese young generations. In recent years, the trend towards diversity and individuality had led to a revival of *Hanfu*, but it had also inevitably been met with scepticism. Although *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos basically fulfilled the young people's imagination of *Hanfu*, there was still a long way to go before *Hanfu* becomes a public consumption practice because of the aesthetic differences between the past and the present.

Therefore, the public's imagination of *Hanfu* have to be transformed once again: from a refined and performance item to a simple and unpretentious everyday outfit. Thus, *Hanfu* can try to integrate with modern aesthetics and therefore into people's daily lives. There are a great number of *Hanfu* bloggers who apply themselves to mixing and match of *Hanfu*. They post mixing and match of *Hanfu* videos and pictures on a daily basis, and share their knowledge of matching tips with their viewers, which can simultaneously enrich the content of *Hanfu* culture and broadened the imagination of *Hanfu* among people.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper examined *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos on Tik Tok from the perspective of performance theory, focusing on the re-popularization and re-construction of *Hanfu* culture, and how *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos have influenced the public's perception and imagination of *Hanfu*. The *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos of Chu Qi and Sen Shang were selected as the subject of study among the many *Hanfu* bloggers on Tik Tok and were analyzed thematically. In terms of the reconstruction of *Hanfu* culture, this paper argues that the bloggers in the *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos have succeeded in establishing a unique persona and constructing a diverse and three-dimensional image of *Hanfu* due to the huge contrast between before and after the cross-dressing, and social media has contributed to the popularity of *Hanfu* culture. Firstly, the clothing, make-up, settings, props and performing actions in the cross-dressing videos help the *Hanfu* bloggers to achieve the above-mentioned sense of contrast, in which the *Hanfu* as a prop enters the public's eyes and is given a meaningful image by the *Hanfu* bloggers that match their persona, indirectly constructing a three-dimensional image of *Hanfu*. Secondly, although the format of *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos on Tik Tok is similar, there are clear differences in the persona images portrayed by different *Hanfu* bloggers. The cross-dressing videos of two *Hanfu* bloggers, Chu Qi and Sen Shang, portray the personas of a bald but beautiful man and classical beauty respectively, showing a diversity of *Hanfu* styles. Last but not least, social media provides a third space for empathy between *Hanfu* bloggers and viewers, and it has become a carrier for *Hanfu* bloggers to construct *Hanfu* culture, as well as a key battlefield to influence viewers' perception and imagination of *Hanfu*.

Concerning about how *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos have influenced the public's imagination and perception of *Hanfu*, this paper suggested that the phenomenon of *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos with advertisements has commercial attributes - *Hanfu* is branded as 'commercial' and transformed into a

consumption practice for young people to express their aesthetic; After the discontinuity of *Hanfu* culture, *Hanfu* bloggers have taken control of the interpretation of *Hanfu* culture to some extent, choosing the *Hanfu* clothes that fit the characters' performances according to their aesthetic, which in turn influences the viewers' aesthetic inclination towards *Hanfu*.

Although this paper focused on the study of *Hanfu* cross-dressing videos, there is a lack of analysis of individuals' actual perceptions and imaginations of *Hanfu*. Thus, more detailed data are required for future research. Also, this paper believes that the future study of *Hanfu* should be to integrate into daily life and become a popular choice of clothing for outfits. However, more empirical evidence still needed to disclose the factors that influence the acceptance of *Hanfu* in everyday life?

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