A Study of Fashion Style of American Sub-Cultural Style in the Late 1980s Expressed in Stage Costumes of Musical ‘Rent’

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Abstract

This study, being focused on the stage costumes of the musical 'Rent' set in New York's East Village in the late 1980s, aims to analyze the features of stage costumes in the musical and to understand the features of sub-cultural style at that time through a comparative analysis of the fashion style and sub-cultural style in the 1980s. Research was performed based on research-related books, papers, internet and DVD of 'Rent' performed in 2008. In American society In the late 1980s, the economy was in recession due to 'de-industrialization' and also society became increasingly polarized. Through the features of sub-culture and the musical 'Rent' with the same code, the deduction of the features of the fashion style and sub-cultural style in the late 1980s, was thought to be available and that was the reason why this musical was selected. In the 80s' fashion, the diversification and individualization showed up such as Manish Look, Yuppie. Punk. Postmodernism, androgynous look, Japanese Look, Ethnic Look, etc. Also, Postmodernism dominated the fashion trend in the 1980s. Sub-cultural style could be classified into New Romantics, Indie, Kids, Goth and Psycho Billy in the early 1980s, Labors and Pevsner Look in the mid-1980s and Grunge, Raga Muffin, Cyberpunk and Techno in the late 1980s. Musical 'Rent', in positive perspective, has dealt with distress and conflict, such as drugs and homosexuality, among American youth against a backdrop of New York's East Village on Christmas Eve in 1989. As for the features of the stage costumes of the main characters, Roger expressed the combination of Punk and Rockers, Mark expressed Casual and Mimi expressed the relaxed Pevsner, Techno and Cyberpunk. Morin wore Hippie and Pevsner, Benny wore Sportive looks and Wear. Angel’s female costume was various kitsch, Joan expressed psychedelic and Body-Conscious and Collins wore Late Rocker Billy style. As a result of the analysis of the stage costumes of the main characters, the characters expressed the various sub-cultural styles since 1990s. This is a supermarket of styles where the adjective styles are mingled together not as a language, in other word, the styles were borrowed through individual philosophy and views, and even its meanings were expressed, in other words, it could be classified as a tendency of the individualization of style. In conclusion, the stage costume of musical 'Rent' represented a variety of sub-cultural styles since 1990s depending on individual philosophy and view. Even though they express the features of the contemporary era, but the stage costume cannot hight this strongly, so the design of stage costume, that expresses the features of the contemporary era more easily and explicitly, will become a detonator of the performance in the future.

국문초록
본 연구는 1980년대 후반의 뉴욕 이스트 빌리지를 시대적 배경으로 하는 뮤지컬 '렌트'의 무대의상에 초점을 맞추어 그 속에 나타난 무대의상의 특징을 분석함과 동시에, 1980년대 패션 및 하위문화 스타일과 비교 분석함으로써 당시 하위문화스타일의 특성을 파악하는데 연구의 목적이 있다. 연구는 관련 서적, 논문, 인터넷, 2008년 뮤지컬 '렌트' 공연 DVD를 중심으로 연구하였다.

1980년대 후반 미국의 사회는 '탈산업화'로 경제가 침체되었고, 사회는 점차 양극화가 되어갔다. 이런 열악한 상황의 하층민들 사이에서는 마약, 에이즈, 동성애가 남녀 모두에게 확대되었다. 이렇게 나타난 당시의 하위문화적 특성과 그 코드를 가진 뮤지컬 '렌트'를 통해 1980년대 패션과 하위문화 스타일 특성 도출이 가능하다고 생각되어 이 과정을 진행했다.