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Chineseness and the Dilemma of Authenticity in Fashion

The creative process of cultural products is an activity which draws on various cultural traditions and benefits from an intercultural experience. Fashion production involves cultural borrowing and demands no essentialism in its creation. That traditional and historical forms of clothes are common ground is the source of inspiration for any designer to work and rework. The re-interpreted and recreated fashion can become any designer's creation and inscription, subsequently undermining the debate on authenticity in fashion. The problematics of depicting 'Chineseness' in non-Chinese created and/or produced Chinese-style clothing is apparent. Yet, it only complicates further when contemporary Chinese designers reinterpret 'Chineseness' in traditional Chinese clothes. The paper discusses authenticity in early 20th and 21st Century reinterpreted Chinese dress through which the construction of 'Chineseness' in Chinese fashion will be examined.