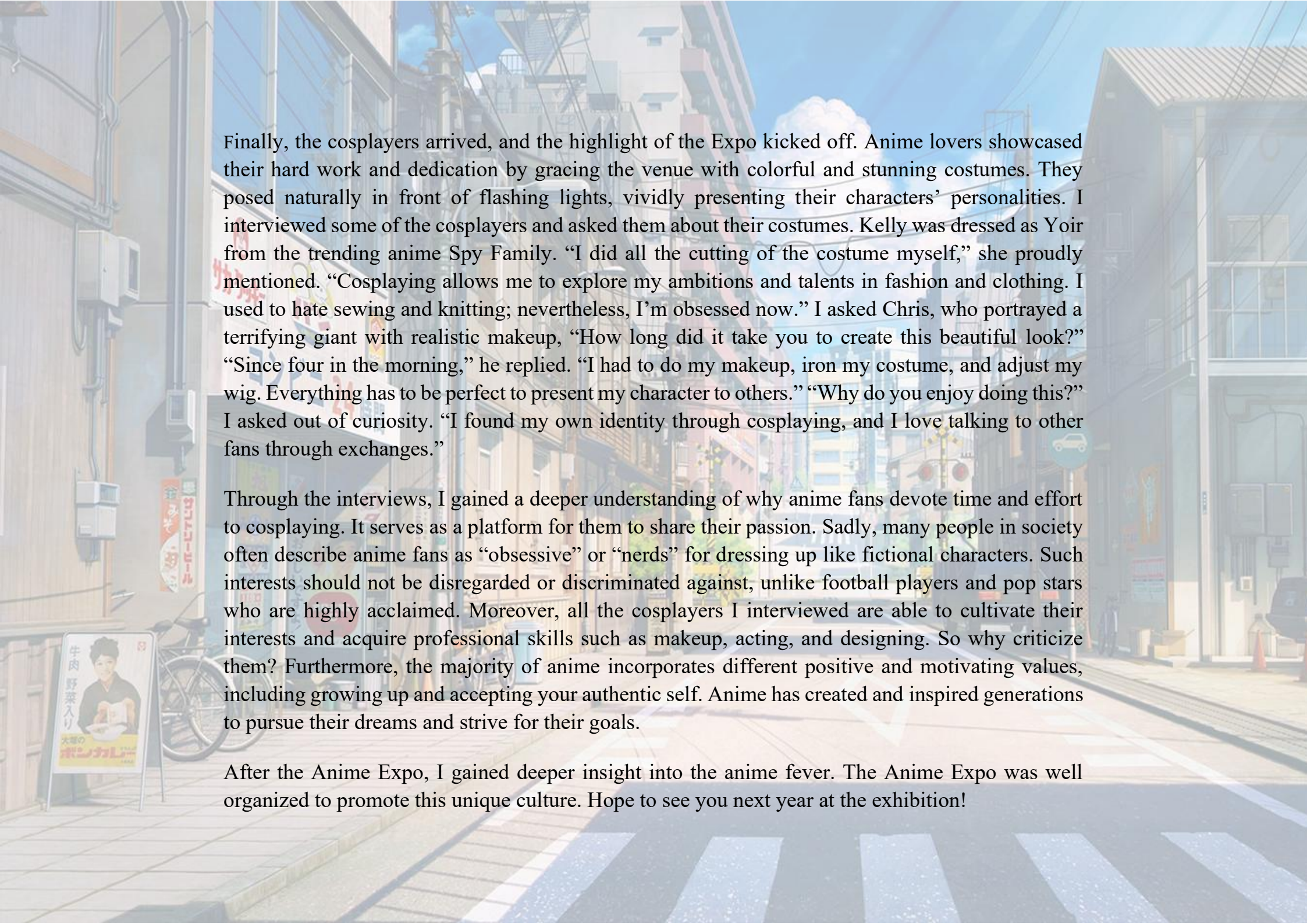


The Anime Fever

The highly anticipated Anime Expo was held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre last weekend. It is Hong Kong's biggest anime, manga, and video game exhibition, where people can share their mutual interests and joy. As a certified anime geek myself, I seized this opportunity to attend the event, where I conducted rewarding interviews with people dressed in cosplay, which will be further revealed in this article.

I arrived at the Anime Expo early in the morning. By the time I got there, many people had already flocked to the Expo, showing their support for this great event. As I entered the Exhibition Hall, I saw countless enthusiastic fans purchasing manga and merchandise from various stalls. There were so many mangas on display, even those with less popularity. The genres of anime ranged from romance to comedy and from psychology to horror. I was amazed by the astonishing diversity and enormous amount of anime as I walked through the stalls. No matter how picky you are as a reader, the mangas there would eventually satisfy your desires. I observed people buying merchandise, including costumes, stationery, and key rings. I spotted an exclusive model from the classic anime Naruto, which I had longed for. I assumed it would be priced astronomically; on the contrary, it was reasonably priced with a discount! Consequently, I purchased it without hesitation.

After my exhausting shopping haul, I reluctantly left the anime section and went to the video game exhibition. People from around the globe came to promote their video games, hoping to attract new players. The creativity of the games was truly beyond imagination. I was especially fascinated by the combination of history and culture in the games. For instance, there was a Viking game from Norway that caught my attention. The game was so detailed that it provided deep insight into Viking history along with an exciting storyline. I was really impressed by how people incorporated their deep-rooted culture into games, promoting cultural heritage in such an engaging way.



Finally, the cosplayers arrived, and the highlight of the Expo kicked off. Anime lovers showcased their hard work and dedication by gracing the venue with colorful and stunning costumes. They posed naturally in front of flashing lights, vividly presenting their characters' personalities. I interviewed some of the cosplayers and asked them about their costumes. Kelly was dressed as Yoir from the trending anime Spy Family. "I did all the cutting of the costume myself," she proudly mentioned. "Cosplaying allows me to explore my ambitions and talents in fashion and clothing. I used to hate sewing and knitting; nevertheless, I'm obsessed now." I asked Chris, who portrayed a terrifying giant with realistic makeup, "How long did it take you to create this beautiful look?" "Since four in the morning," he replied. "I had to do my makeup, iron my costume, and adjust my wig. Everything has to be perfect to present my character to others." "Why do you enjoy doing this?" I asked out of curiosity. "I found my own identity through cosplaying, and I love talking to other fans through exchanges."

Through the interviews, I gained a deeper understanding of why anime fans devote time and effort to cosplaying. It serves as a platform for them to share their passion. Sadly, many people in society often describe anime fans as "obsessive" or "nerds" for dressing up like fictional characters. Such interests should not be disregarded or discriminated against, unlike football players and pop stars who are highly acclaimed. Moreover, all the cosplayers I interviewed are able to cultivate their interests and acquire professional skills such as makeup, acting, and designing. So why criticize them? Furthermore, the majority of anime incorporates different positive and motivating values, including growing up and accepting your authentic self. Anime has created and inspired generations to pursue their dreams and strive for their goals.

After the Anime Expo, I gained deeper insight into the anime fever. The Anime Expo was well organized to promote this unique culture. Hope to see you next year at the exhibition!