

Research on the Culture of Rice Circle in the Social Media Environment——Taking Micro-Blog as an Example

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Abstract: In the social media environment, the rice circle culture has become a recently emerging social media culture phenomenon, and it is also a kind of network subculture. In recent years, the new fan culture phenomenon represented by the new vocabulary of rice circle and rice circle girls has appeared more in the public view and has gradually been accepted by people. In the Internet environment of maintaining personalized personal hobbies and multicultural development, the rice circle is no longer just a closed circle activity in the way of ' enclosure and self-initiation ', but chooses to constantly break through the circle barriers and cultural boundaries, and present it to the public in a diversified manner. The rice circle culture gradually spreads from the edge of the whole society to the center. It is an urgent problem to be solved to analyze the causes of the drawbacks brought by the rice circle culture, how to realize the cultural break in the future and how to develop the rice circle culture in the future.

1. Introduction

In 2020, ' Rice Circle Girls for China ' has made people's eyes briefly stay on the rice circle culture. In recent years, more and more rice circle and rice circle culture appear in front of people's eyes. Today's idols are different from the ' worship-style chasing stars ' of the post-70 s and post-80 s. They are no longer high on the altar, and their work and life will change accordingly according to the opinions of fans. With the help of social media platforms, fan groups can quickly gather together. They can use powerful forces to give a strong influence to an ordinary person to become an online celebrity or a traffic star, and can also make a person fall overnight. Fans are no longer individuals or communities that are stigmatized and stereotyped by society. The digital media environment and platform can promote the large-scale gathering of fans to be no longer limited by time and space, but become a convenience, which makes fan culture groups such as rice circle show a rapid growth trend, and rice circle culture gradually spreads from the edge of the whole society to the center. This article will start with the social media represented by Weibo, examine the cultural essence of the rice circle with social media as the gathering space, and then explore how fans in the rice circle seek cultural disenchantment, break the circle barriers and cultural circles, and take the initiative to intervene in society in a variety of cultural practices, and thus expand new social identity and cultural space.

2. The essence of rice circle culture

2.1 Digital labor behind the flow

In the digital age, fans, as a group of people who used new media technology in the early stage, have been at the front end of the media industry change, but at the same time, the fan community has also been greatly affected by the digital revolution. Since its operation in 2009, Weibo has become the dominant force in the formation and development of the rice circle. Professor Tong Qi from the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong has interviewed many post-80s and post-90s girls. They claim to be attracted by the platform push and the star content of fans Anli after joining Weibo, thus entering the dining circle. In Weibo, in order to increase the exposure and traffic of their own love beans, fans will regularly do some data tasks published by the data group or the support group every day, and use social software to promote their own love beans. Not only that, they can also attract playback volume and create value through their own production of copy or video content. In the digital age, user-generated content can be transformed into the means of production of digital capitalism. These content produced by fans themselves can be regarded as a kind of free labor based on emotion, also known as fan labor. Fan labor, as the essence of exploitation in the capitalist world, is also a new means for entertainment capital to control the fan community.

2.2 Democratic fantasy in participatory culture

The most prominent feature of the rice circle culture is participation. Whether it is data labor or consumption emotion, it is a manifestation of participatory culture.^[1]

Jenkins defines this participatory culture as 'fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content'. He believes that this participatory culture has the following five characteristics, first, the low threshold of expression participation, followed by creation and sharing, strong support, the third is informal apprenticeship, the fourth is the trust of contributing members, and finally the members with certain social connections.^[2]

Social media provides fans with the premise of cooperative participation in free time. Although this fan participation culture is representative, it is doubtful. In the social media environment, different fan groups are constantly arguing and comparing. For example, under the public opinion war of the stars' respective dining circles, it is easier to form a 'one-sided' situation under the influence of the opinion leaders of the dining circles, rather than creating an environment in which individual fans can speak democratically.

In addition to the opinion published is imprisoned, in the decision-making process, most people in the dining circle are also excluded. First of all, as consumers, they have no right to enter or lack the conditions to enter the decision-making process. Fans in the restaurant circle are mainly through the creation of 'micro content' to achieve transaction participation, and they will choose to achieve participation from the three levels of production, selection and dissemination. Although the personalized content production carried out by fans themselves is very valuable, they will not have the return of economic benefits, nor can they get the power of decision-making, which belongs to their free payment for love. Secondly, this participation is a limited participation. Most of the members in the circle can only express their attitude towards idols by choosing to support or oppose them, that is, to express their attitude towards idols in a way that expresses identity. This makes the participation culture in the dining circle only a democratic fantasy, and the democratization of star-making is only a bubble. Finally, the core of decision-making participation is ownership, which excludes most of the members of the dining circle. Fans can only contribute to the flow of stars. They use the unlimited time, energy and intelligence to replace the limited participation rights,

while idols are always the other who are thousands of miles away from them. This makes the participatory culture of the powder circle only a combination of symbolic democracy and instrumental rationality at best, and loyalty and demand are quietly replaced by capitalists as attachments to cultural commodities.

3. The influence of rice circle culture

3.1 Positive impact

3.1.1 Social assistance in the name of idols

The ultimate goal of fans is to enhance the public goodwill of idols, so it is a multiplier to actively participate in public welfare. Basically, each of the more mature fan groups will set up a fan charity station in the name of their idols, and even some star studios will set up their own public welfare stations, whether fans or star components. The public welfare station will actively cooperate with the official public welfare organization to carry out public welfare funding in various fields. For example, during the earthquake in Gansu, many fans of stars quickly gathered and donated materials. Not only that, each fan public welfare station will open the details of the funds on the micro-blog, in an open and transparent way to face everyone's review, let everyone see the positive side of the rice circle. In addition to public emergencies, fans public welfare stations will also participate in some daily public welfare activities such as funding children in mountainous areas and building roads for remote areas, which has played a strong positive role in society.

3.1.2 Transmit the mainstream voice through the 'rice circle'

During the epidemic period, stars such as Lu Han and Chen He posted precautions for epidemic prevention and control through Weibo; zhu Yilong, Wang Yibo and others participated in the documentary recording and boarded the Weibo hot search; zhang Zifeng, Li Qin, Qian Xi and other stars participated in the filming of the film ' Chinese Doctor '. The participation of traffic stars and the forwarding and publicity of fans have made some contributions to China's prevention and control work during the epidemic. Star-chasing behavior is usually regarded as an integral part of the network subculture, which makes him clearly different from the mainstream culture. However, in today's "rice circle" era, it is an honor for idols to be recognized by the mainstream media, and the mainstream media also needs to use a large group of star fans to gain attention. Relying on social media, mainstream media and star fan groups have achieved good cooperation, showing a trend of win-win cooperation.

3.2 Negative impact

3.2.1 Information cocoon narrows the vision of fans

In the ' fandom ', the fan groups are centered on their own idols and rarely pay attention to other people or things. In this case, they will gradually lose contact with the outside world. The algorithm of the social media platform will accurately push fans, aggravate the narrowing of fans' vision, and promote the information cocoon.^[3] For example, there is a fight between Jay Chou and Cai Xukun's fans due to the ranking of Weibo super words. The reason is that a young fan of Cai Xukun publicly said that Jay Chou's traffic is not as good as Cai Xukun's, and Cai Xukun is the person who really stands at the top of the traffic pyramid. This comment has aroused the dissatisfaction of Jay Chou's fans. They have risen to vote for Jay Chou and have therefore boarded the Weibo hot search. This is precisely because the fans in the rice circle era listed the list and data as the only standard to

measure a star's reputation, and because they did not pay attention to people other than Cai Xukun, which caused such a situation.

3.2.2 Extreme lack of confidence and extreme exclusion

Fans in the dining circle are either all accepted or completely denied the opinions or ideas provided to them by the big fans, and the blessing of the group promotes it to be prone to group polarization. Impulsive emotions, to make some reckless behavior to defend their idols.^[4] Fans in the propaganda or anti-black activities will continue to strengthen their sense of possession and privacy for idols. In this private desire space, a series of products such as 'mom powder' and 'girlfriend powder' were born, and this emotion will show a gradual deepening trend under the manipulation of capital. Fans have differences in age and location, but because they love the same star, the common aspect is that they feel that each other is 'their own people' while fans of other stars belong to 'alien groups'. This distinct sense of boundary strengthens the sensitivity of individual fans to external sounds, so there are frequent frictions between fan groups.

3.2.3 Over-entertainment dispels the seriousness of public events

The 'rice circle' has gradually evolved in the direction of generalization, making the rice circle culture begin to infiltrate into other aspects of life, and the rice circle behavior has also been applied more in other aspects. For example, during the epidemic period, the behavior of netizens to list together for the construction of forklifts, excavators, etc. for the construction of Raytheon Mountain and Huoshen Mountain Hospital was magnified after the media's rendering, which made the rice circle culture penetrate into the mainstream propaganda. Although it eased the serious atmosphere, it was also a manifestation of excessive entertainment. This kind of entertainment behavior of public events is easy to dispel the seriousness of public events. If it is not grasped well, it will reduce the public's trust in the mainstream media.

4. Cultural 'out of the loop' under social media

In the face of a series of negative effects brought by the rice circle culture, the rice circle culture, as a kind of network subculture, should be correctly guided rather than completely denied. At present, the rice circle culture under social media is no longer a carnival of a few people. Some cases of cultural circle provide a good reference for the follow-up development of rice circle culture.

4.1 Seeking social identity

To construct social identity, in addition to establishing self-identity, obtaining community identity and sense of belonging, obtaining external identity is also very important, which is related to the identity of individuals within the community and the social status and existence value of the group. The 'rice circle culture' is the youth subculture in the final analysis. As the name suggests, 'rice circle' home page is still a star, which to some extent can not be understood by the public. In social media, the stigmatized image of 'food circle' still exists, and negative evaluations such as 'food circle scolding war', 'brain residual powder' and 'blind star chasing' are common. In the era of social media, 'discourse machine' has become a reality, everyone has the right to express their opinions in the network, which leads to the abuse of discourse power, especially the teenagers in the food circle are emotionally unstable, easy to be irritated, prone to verbal violence, which is the reason why the food circle has been controversial. Members of the rice circle are well aware of this situation, and rational pursuit of stars has become their common value pursuit. In the fight against

the incident of "Hong Kong China independence," fans put down the prejudice between groups, showed the patriotic feelings of "no idol in front of the country," and successfully won the recognition of others. At the same time, the mainstream media also voiced public praise for the members of the rice circle, and the # Communist Youth League Central # released Weibo to point out the direction for the patriotic youth's expedition. After gaining external and even central recognition, the members of the rice circle have re-recognized their self-worth and identity positioning, and the group cohesion has been continuously strengthened.

4.2 Technical support text interpretation and reproduction

The digital media era has enriched the means for fans to participate in text interpretation and reproduction. In the dining circle, the common idol stars become the common interest of fans, but each fan's other different hobbies also constitute their different ways of expressing their love for idols. In the social media environment, fans can spread their own emoticons, write idols and make short videos. In 'Creation 101 ', fans make Yang become the third successful actress through the second creation of her name, image and expression. This second creation is also regarded as a kind of 'text poaching '.

Some scholars say that ' in the whole process of ' text poaching ', idols, as prey, have become an empty subject rewritten by fan groups, and the position of the protagonist is firmly occupied by fans as ' poachers '. If idols want to benefit from this fan-led carnival, they must cooperate with poaching and participate in the rewriting of themselves. ' ^[5]

For Yang Chaoyue, this kind of cooperation can be the imitation of his expression package and the reproduction of classical discourse. In her variety show after her debut, she also imitated some of her classic words and expressions, so she won the straight and hard label for a time. This kind of ' text poaching ' behavior, the center of gravity of power is deflected to the ' poacher ' at the beginning.

4.3 Fans disenchantment, active intervention in society

Most of the members in the rice circle are teenagers. Although the rice circle culture is also a kind of youth subculture, it is essentially different from the early subculture: the rice circle is not on the opposite side of the mainstream consciousness. If we want to break the barriers of the circle, we need to focus on the integration of the ' two-dimensional ' subculture and the mainstream culture. This is also an important action to ' de-stigmatize ' the circle, and it is the performance of the circle from seeking ' self-identity ' to seeking ' social identity '. In 2019, ' Rice Circle Girl ' and ' Emperor Bar ' jointly rebutted Hong Kong China attempt to split the motherland. They used social software such as ins, Facebook and other social software to anger Hong Kong China independence by means of expression packs or buzzwords. The strong offensive force made the other party dumb. It not only safeguarded China's national sovereignty, but also changed the antagonistic relationship between rice circle culture and mainstream culture in the 1.0 era of rice circle.^[6]

Some scholars believe that: " The ' rice circle girls ' spontaneous organization ' network expedition ' is an effective means to express patriotic feelings and convey group demands. The community reshapes identity through self-categorization and social comparison, and finally obtains social identity. The positive interaction between teenagers and mainstream culture weakens social conflicts to a certain extent and maintains the stability and harmony of network ecology. ' ^[7]

5. Conclusion

As a kind of network subculture, the rice circle culture is a cultural phenomenon formed by the

collision with social media in the Internet era. It has inherent advantages, such as strong sense of social participation, interaction and social cohesion. His gestation and development are important changes in the minority culture in the era of new media and big data. But we should also pay attention to his defects in time while seeing its advantages. This paper focuses on the essence of the rice circle culture in the social media platform represented by Weibo, the positive or negative impact and the cultural circle strategy, and systematically shows the development and characteristics of the rice circle culture, and contributes to the study of the rice circle culture in the social media environment. In the future development of the rice circle culture, these negative effects of the rice circle culture cannot be ignored. To control this phenomenon, we need to work together, not only need the government to improve the relevant laws and regulations, to build a clear network environment; media workers also need to focus on journalistic professionalism and improve their professional quality; at the same time, it also needs the joint guidance of society, school and family to realize the integration and development of the sub-culture of the dining circle and the mainstream culture.

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