

Symptom Perspective: Multiple Hidden Worries under the Pan-entertainment Network in the Era of Digital Capital

Linna Ran

Southwest University, Chongqing 400715, China.

Abstract: In the era of digital capital, the phenomenon of pan-entertainment on the Internet begins with the conspiring of digital capital and digital media technology. It breaks through the appropriate boundary limits of entertainment, and extends to various fields such as politics, science and education, culture, society, and entertains many contents that should not be entertained, silently dissolves and constructs people's value identity. The atomized individuals in the network are excessively addicted to the instant pleasure and sensory stimulation brought by the pan-entertainment landscape, and fall into the dilemma of self-mutilation, aesthetic malformation, erosion of mainstream values, and loss of network morality in the fragmented and dazzling pan-entertainment landscape. In view of this problem, our criticism of the phenomenon of pan-entertainment on the Internet should not only stay at the level of describing the phenomenon, but also reveal the essence of the problem from the symptoms, so as to explore the possible correction path.

Keywords: Network Pan-Entertainment; Symptom

Introduction

Marx believes that human needs are multifaceted, which can be divided into three levels: survival, enjoyment and development, and the spiritual life of entertainment is the reasonable satisfaction of pleasure. Entertainment is the main activity of people in their leisure time, aiming at promoting people's comprehensive and free development. However, with the development of Internet information technology, entertainment gradually exceeds the original definition and boundaries, constantly penetrating into serious fields such as politics, economy and culture, and eventually moving toward "pan-entertainment". In *Brave New World*, Huxley said, "We will be ruined by what we love, and a 'Brave New World' may await us, in which we are entertained to death, What people feel painful is not that they replace thinking with laughter, but that they do not know why they laugh and why they no longer think."^[1] The popularization of online entertainment is quietly changing people's way of life and thinking. Therefore, it is of great significance to deeply analyze its contemporary hazards and reveal the essence of its problems from the manifestations of its symptoms.

1. Aesthetic deformity: aesthetic value is superficially and generalized distorted by entertainment landscape

"Aesthetics is the essence of life."^[2] However, in the context of the increasing development of consumer society and digital media technology, human society has entered a "landscape society" surrounded by visual symbols. In this society, the preference and mass production of images by various visual media have led to the "entertainment" of the whole society, which is also the "aestheticization" referred to by Welsch, Baudrillard and Featherstone. The process of entertainment generalization is also the aestheticization process of daily life. In the symbolic, graphic and image simulation world, the aesthetic is largely transformed into the concept of "entertainment", which is directly related to "desire" and "pleasure". In the flow society, the logic of digital capital realizes the spiritual domination of the audience through the symbol consumption in network entertainment, resulting in the original entertainment as a "life necessity" to become "excessive entertainment" that hinders the free and comprehensive development of people. Marx pointed out, "Human beings are a kind of 'perceptual' and 'objective' existence."^[3] By utilizing this point, digital capital constantly emphasizes "pleasing people's 'sensibility'" in entertainment products, amplifies and stimulates individual's pathological consumption desire at the psychological level through pictorial narration, and continuously immerses individuals in visual consumption indulged in the flood of images and the accumulation of symbols, and delights in the pan-entertainment scene with no depth and shallow level. In a word, when entertainment products become appendages of capital and develop towards the aesthetic trend of the audience, individual aesthetics will tend to be more vulgar in the long-term false sensory pleasure and lack the aesthetic implication in the sense of Plato.

2. Value erosion: the mainstream values are eroded by bantering of entertainment discourse

Under the pan-entertainment discourse system, entertainment discourse has become a narrative template, and has gradually penetrated into serious topics such as politics and culture, leading to the dissolution of mainstream value discourse. "Discourse" is a central concept in Foucault's theory, stating that discourse is not a totality of symbols, but rather "the practice of systematically forming the objects of these languages"^[4]. In other words, in the era of pan-entertainment, when entertainment becomes the core element of public discourse, and gradually gains discourse power and possesses a powerful and penetrating right into human body and mind, pan-entertainment human civilization will be quietly constructed, and the mainstream value discourse of others will be constructed as others, so that they will keep silent, exclude and banish it, or transform it and claim it as their own. Finally deconstruct the mainstream discourse rights. For example, under the promotion of "entertainment to death", a large number of Internet users, in order to pursue novelty, constantly create Lin Daiyu style "crazy literature", "Du Fu is very busy", "Lu Xun says again", and other Internet hot meme phenomena, and form a strong public opinion field under the background of technology empowerment and "everyone can be entertained". At this time, under the background of technological empowerment and "everyone can be entertained", a strong public opinion field is formed. When entertainment audiences get rid of the "mimicry environment" constructed by mainstream discourse and playfully "decrown" mainstream images, their own discourse status is crowned and the power of new discourse continues to rise, resulting in the weakening and decomposition of the dominant position of mainstream discourse in the social discourse system.

3. Moral loss: the desire of entertainment subjects exacerbates moral loss

According to Freud, "many human desires, especially desires, are repressed in the unconscious for reasons contrary to the moral norms of society."^[5] It can be seen that the wanton production of desire will provide a hotbed for social moral anomy, and the network pan-entertainment is an efficient "catalyst" to stimulate human desire. When the network pan-entertainment products driven by digital capital over-emphasize "pleasing and people's 'sensitivity'", it will inevitably amplify the desire of individuals at the psychological level, making the subject continuously immersed in the vulgar pan-entertainment scene. Network media interests first, blindly cater to the audience's preferences, satisfy the entertainment subject's senses, consumption and other desires, to ridicule, "joking", "spoof" and other network popular memes or contradictory expressions, trample on national heroes, discredit ancient saints and sages. Such as "Du Fu is very busy", "naming a manul Sun Simiao", "Lei Feng died of overwork" and so on, all break through the ethical and moral bottom line. Over time, in the silent entanglements of "residual pleasure", the pan-entertainment subject becomes morally noble, the moral reason is eroded, the moral seriousness is weakened, and the individual eventually moves towards moral and value nihilism, and even the meaning world is chaotic and lost.

4. Self-destruction: the homogenization of entertainment information accelerates self-harm

Under the empowerment of digital information technology, human life in modern society is increasingly intelligent. On the one hand, it makes entertainment free from geographical restrictions and diversified ways, but on the other hand, subject to the influence of digital capital operation, network entertainment subjects inevitably fall into the "algorithm trap". As Yuval Noah Harari said: "After the fusion of the biotechnology revolution and the information technology revolution, big data algorithms may be better able to monitor and understand my feelings better than I do, and the authority over everything may shift from humans to computers."^[6] Specifically, the algorithm can construct a homogeneous pan-entertainment landscape based on the audience's single interest and preference and prioritize the aggregation and integration of homogenized content to "feed" the audience, making individuals fall into an endless self-cycle, and eventually causing people to fall into the puzzle of self-imagination and the disappearance of the network other. Secondly, the algorithm can carry out big data calculation and analysis according to the individual information data and preferences of users when they stay, pay attention to and entertain in various websites and apps, and finally accurately "feed" entertainment information to the audience, so that the audience will continue to indulge in the entertainment carnival and be bound in the homogenized entertainment "information cocoon". Byung-Chul Han pointed out that "the negation of the other gives the same person contour and scale. Without this negation, homogenization grows."^[7] "Homogenization harms both the body and the spirit."^[8] In other words, under the operation of capital logic, the algorithm technology caters to the audience without restriction, time limit, and space limit, "feeding" the main body of network entertainment, and the decline of the immune system further leads to the spread of homogenization. In the long run, online entertainment entities lose their reflection and criticism on homogeneous content in the blind eye of the pan entertainment landscape, and move towards

self destruction in spiritual emptiness, delayed thinking, and value loss.

Conclusion

In the era of digital capital, the generalization of network entertainment has become a common trend. In order to escape the loneliness and anxiety of reality, the atomized individuals choose to indulge in the instant pleasure and sensory stimulation brought by the pan-entertainment landscape, and fall into the dilemma of aesthetic distortion, the erosion of mainstream values, and the loss of network morality in the fragmented and dazzling pan-entertainment landscape. Therefore, it is of great significance to deeply analyze the symptoms of Internet pan-entertainment phenomenon and reveal the essence of its problems for further exploring possible corrective pathways.

References

- [1] [America] Neil Postman: *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, CITIC Press, 2015, p. 269.
- [2] Jin Y. *The Value Dimension and Practice Dimension of Aesthetics of Life Theory*, Academic Monthly, Issue No.4, 2010.
- [3] Liu XZ. *Approach to the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 -- On Marx's Theory of Human Perceptual Liberation*, Study Exploration, Issue No.6, 2006.
- [4] Michel Foucault. *L'Archéologie du savoir* (2nd Edition)[M]. Xie Qiang, Ma Yue, Translated Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2003, p. 53.
- [5] [Austria] Freud, *Civilization and its Defects*, Anhui Literature & Art Publishing House, 1987, p. 119.
- [6][Israel] Yuval Noah Harari, *A Brief History of Today: The Great Issue of Human Destiny*, CITIC Press, 2017, p. 45.
- [7] [Germany] Byung-Chul Han, *Die Austreibung des Anderen*, translated by Wu Qiong, CITIC Press, 2019, p. 3.
- [8] Guan W. *The Disappearance of the Other and the Destruction of the Self: Byung-Chul Han on human destiny in the digital age under the domination of capital*. Marxism & Reality, Issue No.6, 2021.