

The Construction of Female Images in Talent Show

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Abstract

This paper takes two variety shows broadcast in 2020 as the research object and discusses the construction of female images in talent shows from the perspective of communication. Talent shows not only enrich the public life, but also bear the responsibility of constructing advanced gender concepts and value guidance. Based on this understanding, this paper expounds and analyzes the female images in “Youth with You 2” and “Creation Camp 2020” from the perspective of feminism, discusses the problem of value bias in the construction of female images, and further analyzes the root causes behind it. The same kind of female talent shows focus on contemporary women, showing the various characters of contemporary female groups. However, the author believes that the nature of nowadays female talent shows is still the product of the construction of female images and the consumption of female physical feature under the logic of power and cultural industry. Finally, the author puts forward the countermeasures and suggestions from three perspectives, namely the transmitter, the content and the system.

Keywords

Cultural industry; Talent shows; Stereotypes about female; Youth with You 2.

1. Introduction

The year 2020 will be the most unforgettable year for mankind. The online entertainment, online consumption and other forms of online business driven by Internet technology and entertainment platforms are developing rapidly. According to public data, the number of daily active users of online video platforms increased by 7% year on year during the Spring Festival in 2020, ushering in an era of combining live Internet broadcasts with cloud entertainment. With the increasing demand for online entertainment, live variety, interactive variety and live variety for selling goods shows a rapid development and presents an explosive growth. According to the data of Yien, 67 online variety shows had been launched as of May 28, 2020. This was 42 percent less than the same period in 2019. In the context of unprecedented attention paid to online variety shows, iQIYI’s “Youth with You 2” and Tencent video’s “Creation Camp 2020” have achieved the greatest success in terms of overall popularity. Data shows that “Youth with You 2” and “Creation Camp 2020” all topped the broadcast index, viewership and user popularity rankings from January to May of 2020.

In the first issue of “Youth with You 2”, there was a topic character -- Shangguan Xia. After their team’s performance, the adviser Ella asked everyone to talk about their own understanding of their performance. Wenzhe said that the content of the performance was about the girls’ power that girl should have, and she talked about the characteristics of contemporary women and what it means to be a distinctive woman. However, as a female talent show, the key words of “Youth with You 2” are youth, vitality and loveliness. In fact, there is still an unavoidable female stereotype caused by the nature of the program. A large amount of light pink presents a

stereotypical color of female, but we can only find that these girls with different female character are “out of place”.

As far as the form and connotation of the program itself are concerned, this is actually a kind of split of feminist consciousness.

2. The Female Body Being “Stared at”

In terms of the way of seeing, John Berger pointed out that women have a double gaze, one is an internal and self-observer, namely self-observation and self-gaze; the other is observation, that is men’s observation and gaze at women. “Gaze” is a kind of power operation mode associated with vision, which contains power relationship and desire behind. Foucault also regarded it as a way for the party with power to “discipline” others.

The emotional resonance generated by women when watching the program, and the content of the program provides the lifestyle and the reference of body image for the female audience, all of which are women’s self-gaze and observation.

At the same time, female talent shows of nowadays present a male gaze to the audience rather than a female one. Women are often constructed as “the other” in the mass media, based on the traditional gender values and aesthetic expectations on the role of women, making male hegemony mainstream. Through the solidification of women’s dress and body shape and some other respects, women are objectified as the judged objects under the gaze of male, thus highlighting the discourse power of men. The core aesthetic message conveyed by the male-dominated society through shaping the image of women is: for women, body is the decisive capital, and only young and beautiful people can be accepted and recognized by the society, so that they can gain more favor from the opposite sex.

Foucault once pointed out that behind the gaze is the operation of knowledge and power, and any power operation can be inseparable from the control and mutilation of the body. Because power is generated in discourse, and discourse embodies power, discourse is closely related to power: discourse carries production and power, and discourse strengthens power, damages power, reveals power, weakens and hinders power. Similarly, silence and secrecy hide power and establish taboos, but it loosens control and enforces vague tolerances. The female body has long been at the core of power struggles. The female body aesthetics in any era is the external manifestation of the power relationship between men and women. In modern society, the aesthetic standards of the female body have not got rid of the shackles of the patriarchal society, but have fallen into the index, parameter and technology. In the first issue of “Creation Camp 2020”, the program had a game segment: Let the players go through barriers of different width, which range from 35 cm to 18.5 cm, converted to waist about 74 cm to 45 cm, use unified waistline to examine the girls’ body management. In such a talent show which advocates personalization and to “be yourself”, the training of clothing choice, the theme song and dance choreography still is youthful, beautiful, lovely and sweet style and still gives priority to male aesthetic perspective and only to cater to male perspective to construct the image of women is not a true portrayal of contemporary women.

3. Program template under industrial production mode

Representatives of the Frankfurt School Horkheimer and Adorno put forward the concept of “cultural industry” in “Dialectics of Enlightenment” in 1947. They believed that mass culture has the characteristics of commercialization, standardization of style and deceptiveness under capitalist conditions. The blowout development of female talent shows can easily lead to the emergence of a large number of “industrial assembly line” production-like homogeneous programs.

Nowadays, a large number of female's/male's talent shows are the results of the contemporary "cultural industry". After investigating the talent shows launched by various websites, we can find that the homogeneity of such shows is serious. The cultural products we consume nowadays are a cycle shaped by the cultural industry. Because people have this kind of needs, the demand drives the production of products, which will make this product have various consistency like an industrial assembly line. These products have shaped a taste, an ideology, and once again consolidated these needs. Therefore, for "Youth With You 2", it is precisely because of the changes in today's social technology and people's psychological needs that provide growth space for this kind of talent show, so that the talent show is continuously produced in a streamlined form. These products are dominated by the needs of consumers, so after the products are consumed as commodities, they will continue to strengthen this demand of consumers again and make this circular chain continue to operate. For example, the rules of the "Young With You 2" are similar to other programs of the same type: there are girls with different personalities, different kinds of performances, and similar type of tutor lineup.

Now that the technology is highly advanced, the creation of works no longer requires long and exhausting investment as before. Large-scale replication and model application have become industry habit and become a "spectacular" cultural scene in society. The Frankfurt School has a definition of this kind of scene: "The old things are copied in the old way, and even the things that have not been considered are forced into the model of mechanically reproducible things. This is stipulated by the prevailing literary style."

Variety shows with similarities and small differences construct female media images in the same way. Homogeneous shows produced in an industrial stream can easily make audiences suffer from aesthetic fatigue. However, subtle differences in details and differences in the audience's ability to process information make the audience disapproving. Even the rule of capital has long been taken for granted, and individuals have actively accepted this mandatory domination.

4. Women Goods Kidnapped by Consumerism

From the theoretical perspective of cultural industry, cultural products tend to be commoditized, and female talent show is also a way for capital to obtain benefits in some degree. When a product transfers to a commodity, the entertainment demands and consumption behaviors of consumers conceal the fact of capital rule. In terms of female group development programs, most trainees have already signed different companies. Therefore, the competition among the trainees is not only a comparison of their personal abilities, but also a game of capital power behind it. The cultural industry is an entertainment industry system that replicates and disseminates cultural products and goods on a large scale by means of modern science and technology. The characteristics of the culture industry can be explained from the perspectives of commercialization, standardization, fraudulent, dominant and consumer. Hawk Hammer and Adorno found that art once become a commodity, it can only be operated in accordance with the rules of market. This is not only applicable to "Youth with You 2", but t all the other industrial production of products. Those products popular with consumers will constantly be copied and dump. Pop songs, popular movies and popular TV series will flood the market, occupy the daily life of public, and the capital behind them will be the biggest winner. A variety of talent shows emerge in endlessly, whose original aim is to foster the cultural prosperity but result in cultural lag and aesthetic lag. There is no innovation and flexibility in the programs, and the audience can only stick to the false carnival and the past aesthetics.

At the same time, making use of female psychology, many businesses promote their goods with the help of the homogenized template of beauty. The majority of the media trying even tries to tell women what they should be. Many audiences criticized that the topics about "Youth with

You 2" frequently visited Micro-blog hot search list. Actually, using the commodity attributes of cultural products to hype the topic is also one of the means of capital operation.

In the process of becoming a commodity, women seem to have achieved physical liberation, but in fact are still under the control of men and capitalists. Many of the physical consumption behaviors that seem to be dominated by women are actually implemented according to the aesthetic standards of men. At the same time, women can't escape being judged by the same aesthetic standards in daily life and strive to achieve the basic requirements of "being a fair-skinned, rich and beautiful lady". It is almost difficult for women to take photos without the unified whitening, wide-eyed and pointed face mode of beauty camera. Brandy Mellvie is a brand which only sells clothes of the small size (or similar to size S) is popular among slim girls because it provides an opportunity for girls to prove their great figure. Mini-plastic surgery is also popular. Women are eager to become the beauty in everyone's eyes through a simple small operation...

5. How to get rid of imprisonment

The gaze of women from the male perspective has solidified the social aesthetic standards one after another. The program mode solidified under industrial production has once again consolidated this aesthetic. Females have fallen into the trap of consumerism and become commodities consumed by the society. Under the control of capitalists. The construction of female images and the bias of values in variety shows just reflect the lack of gender awareness. As a kind of superstructure, mass media are restricted by social economy, politics, especially the dominant social values. But at the same time, the mass media has also created its own culture based on the social reality. This social reality is the mainstream value of the society in which it is located a male-centered culture and social concept. Under the guidance of this culture and social concept, the media uses a large number of the dissemination of information containing patriarchal cultural concepts that is repeated, repetitive and high frequency will suppress, restrain and monitor the marginalized female consciousness and concepts. The central part of the work of talent shows is to first adhere to the people-oriented creative concept, to pursue gender equality, not to fall into the misunderstanding of female dependent on male, to respect the diversity and particularity of individuals, and to accept diversified values.

Each of us has grown up in a traditional gender culture and has more or less accepted certain gender stereotypes. Gender discrimination and stereotypes are sometimes not deliberately done by the media. They are often caused by the media's unconsciousness of gender issues or "natural" reflections of traditional stereotypes. Therefore, for media decision-makers and practitioners, they should consciously receive gender awareness training, strengthen gender awareness, and actively advocate gender equality.

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