

Short Videos Village and Imagination of “Other”: a Study of Rural Women's Image in Tik Tok

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Abstract: Through the observation of 35 videos and 175 comments of 7 rural women's accounts in Tik Tok, it's found that the visibility of videos of rural female groups gradually eliminates the stereotype of others on this group and constructs a new image memory. The viewer and the publisher construct their own subjectivity in gazing at each other. The former responds to the accelerating real life in the memory, yearning and imagination of the countryside, while the latter seeks their own value and significance in the imagination of the city and the practice of the countryside.

Keywords: Rural Women; Female Image; Rural Memory; Other

Introduction

The anxiety of individuals in the "cyber society" is increasing, and people are urgently looking for spiritual comfort under the prisoner's dilemma. Short videos such as Tik Tok convey distant pastoral scenes and memories to the city, and in the created space and time, the city and the countryside look at each other and jointly construct their own subjectivity. In the short video featuring women, the charm of rural women has been shown more, and the traditional impression has been gradually broken. In the original ecology videos, the individual temporarily left refinement and consumerism, relieved the pressure, and found a way to reconcile with reality.

1. Literature review

Previous studies focused on media and gender. In recent years, there has been a discussion on authoritative women's magazines. Wang Lei (2011) pointed out the Changes of Femininity on the cover of China Women's Daily. Jiang Sishuo (2013) explored modern lifestyle, life ideal and gender concept of social women. Scholars studied the popular images of aunts and rural women left behind. Li Rong and others analyzed the media image of Aunt as "the media context of news reports, the expression of social and cultural phenomena at the intersection of social public opinion, social transformation and cultural changes"^[1]. Dong Xiaoyu (2015) et al said that paper media produced typed impression of rural women. Deng Xiaoxu (2010) and others think that spiritual needs, personal rights and life pressure of left-behind women seldom described. There is a certain phenomenon of "aphasia".

It focuses on: rural women's demand for short video and influencing factors. Little research on the image changes of women in Tik Tok, especially in countryside. Scholars noticed the construction of rural society and culture in short videos. Liu Chaoxia (2020) said that Li Ziqi's video on Youtube was a modern rebellion and pastoral imagination in the fourth consumption era. Chu Yajie (2020) and others discussed short videos give women more expression and discourse influence.

2. Research methods

"Rural women" as the key word, more than one million fans as sampling condition. Screen out 7 valid accounts: @YunnanXiaohua, @Aunt Luo, @Country side Little Joe, @Hoang Cam, @Countryside Good Voice Sister Long, @Peach Sister, @Shen Dan. Dig comments under videos with high praise or broadcast volume in the past year. The amount of likes and words' length are taken as mining restrictions, excluding irrelevant advertisements, and there is no specific number of second-level comments. 25 video samples and 175 comment samples were obtained.

Classified according to the "main images of women presented in short videos": the labor images,3 accounts; Independent image: 2 accounts; Positive image, 2 accounts. They're coded as 1,2 and 3. Comments are:objects, emotional color and commenter's gender,including publishers, viewers, hometown,interests,other appearing, lifestyle, and others, code as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7; Emotion refers to communication's effect: positive, neutral and negative, coded as 1, 2 and 3. Commentator's gender refers to the sex ratio and preference of audience.Male and female are coded as 1 and 0.

3. Research findings

3.1 Types of images

Classify the images displayed in seven Tik Tok accounts,mainly as follows:

3.1.1 Sacrifice image

"Do farm work "are the main contents.Women dedicate to families is greatly reflected.In order to cook a hot family meal,they have to worry about "what families eat".Men rarely appear in the kitchen,women don't have their own time alone , as they said"The family happy,i'm happy".The representative is "Peach Sister",she posts a noisy life.Played the role of a good wife and mother,able to cook and work hard,while her husband is an image of enjoyment:enjoying food and his wife's care.

3.1.2 Independent image

The image is increasing in recent years.The representative is "Shen Dan":the failure of marriage and the closure of the factory led her to back to hometown.Plowing fields,building houses,herding sheep,driving tractors,and even starting a second venture,she seems to be "omnipotent".

She makes people nostalgic for hometown,and also makes people see a new side of rural women:tenacious with independent thoughts and ambitions.

These appearances have subverted the stereotype of rural women.

3.1.3 Positive image

Other bloggers show leisure life,mostly for entertainment.Dancing, hungin fair, these entertainments show optimistic attitude and harmonious neighborhood relations, attract a large number of spectators. The last 70-year-old grandmother named Aunt Luo in Tik Tok, whose videos are mainly about daily life,sitcoms and jokes. In her videos, we can see the old life like dancing and playing mahjong,the younger activities like playing the piano,tongue twister, rap and role-playing,as well as the expressions of rich life experiences such as "What is love rat","First Love" and "Teaching You to Play Friends".

3.2 Comments

3.2.1 Object

Commented subjects are different:publishers(29.7%),sharer(17.7%), details (25.7%), hometown (7.5%), interests(4.6%), lifestyle(5.1%), others(9.7%). Focus on peasant yearning, publishers' evaluation and women's emotional resonance.In modern society, people pour into city from the countryside,and the social pressure makes people look for channels to release their emotions. In this process of finding and healing themselves,people begin to look back on the countryside.Separation spirit from body: the body stays in city,but the heart is in a distant hometown. @Blue Tears: Everything is so familiar. Flowers, grass, trees, tiles, even rainy hills.....evoked countless childhood lives. @Xiao Chen: When I was a child,I hated my hometown for being old and shabby,but my hometown never hated my youth and ignorance;When I grew up, I complained my hometown was too far away,but my hometown never complained that I didn't return.I left my arrogance unreasonable to hometown,humble and courteous to the distance; However the distance didn't treat me gently,but my hometown never left me. @Mobile User:Smoked goose is the strongest memory of

childhood.

3.2.2 Emotional color

There are 157 positive comments such as "like", about 90%. Negative including: negative resonance and opinions. Two views reflects psychology. In videos: harmonious family, neighborhood and environment. The lack of city seem to have been alleviated in the countryside. When people watch, they miss their childhood, and also renew their memories.

Audience also can find resonance. "Peach sister's hemp is so good. Family're very gentle", "It's so warm, like when you're in love." "Reunion and harmony" is important of happiness. Immersed in the imagination of reunion, reality pulls them back. In the contradiction, the emotions need to be exported urgently. Under the video of "My nephew doesn't eat", @simply said: Look at this aunt and think of my child's, my heart is cold. A psychological gap between the two, which aggravated the resentment, and that generated by the strong expectation of "a complete and beautiful life". Furthermore, people "guide" publishers' life. For example, audience pick on Sister Peach's husband and sister-in-law in the comment section to fight for her. People intervene and struggle with all factors that destroy "perfect harmony" through "comments".

3.2.3 Commenters' Gender

The social psychological turn of "returning to countryside and turning off beauty and filters" has appeared. Compared with delicate images, individuals feel the impact of original ecology when watching earthy images, which makes individuals escape from social aesthetics, and reconcile with their natural selves in the long-term viewing, which dispels the morbid pursuit of the ultimate smooth aesthetics and reduces the excessive anxiety of face value. Different from Li Ziqi, rural women's videos are ordinary. Although the regions and classes are different, the identity of women makes "publishers—viewers" closer to each other. Especially women, have found a way to avoid the impact of "exquisite aesthetics and consumption". Anyway, rustic videos give emotional support to female viewers, and dispel the stereotype of traditional rural women.

@Morning Dream Yun Xi: I want to be a good woman like you.....Be a happy person.

4. Research results

4.1 Stereotypes and new impressions

Stereotype is: "Because of the narrow living space, people will form a fixed and generalized view of a certain person or things in this environment^[2]". Due to the limitation of information and attention, the empirical contact with external affairs is limited, it's easy to fall into the "Pseudo-environment" shaped by media, which strengthens the fixed stereotypes. Traditional media portrayed rural women as illiterate, or "family laborer". Great changes are taking place, and many new images appear. According to one report, "Women are more active and influential in the content production of the Tik Tok.....more than half users are females.....The dissemination is higher than men."^[3] Tik Tok give women more visibility and rights, they can show interest instead of passive narration.

Moreover, positive and negative comments reflect the conflict between stereotype and new impression. Seven bloggers are representatives of emerging rural women, they're good at new technologies, have careers and pursuits. Viewers express their praise and excellent ability. Their videos let everyone see the personal charm of rural women in new era, subvert stereotypes such as "uneducated", and abandon previous mindset of the groups.

4.2 Connection: nostalgic countryside

"The two aspects of rural social representation: in rural videos, virtual panoramic vision extends vision, stereo sound effects extend hearing, and space-free touch screen moves from a distance extends touch. Rural entertainment extends minds, customs extend psychology, wandering homesickness extends emotions, and rural specialties extend emotions."^[4] With the help of music, vision and interactive technology, short videos create a "real-like" countryside, "Touch-the perceptual interface between hearing and vision is emerging around us^[4]", the interface between short videos and villagers disappears, and the boundary between cities and villages

degenerates. Rural women are really "performing" what they see and enjoy, all related to the countryside involve viewers' mind. The shooting environment and content come from countryside. Relying on the power of mankind, folk "entertainment, customs and products" are presented. The presentation of virtual scenes and active emotion of human subjects drive the mood of audience outside. Therefore, the public is happy to find roots and nostalgia in such "unpacked" life videos. Moreover, videos reveal the reality of rural society, or construct local memory and pastoral identity. Rural women try to enter urban public space with a new identity. The rural culture, customs and entertainment they show are presented from a modern perspective. Therefore, public can see the original appearance of the countryside, and also the shadow of the city. Rap and role-playing in "Aunt Luo" videos are popular in cities, but they're shown in rural videos.

4.3 The imagination of "Other"

Other is a concept relative to Self, which refers to all other than self. Other emphasize the characteristics of object, dissident, etc. "The public unconsciously separated themselves from group, thinking that they were completely different, and gradually formed another imagination of this group^[5]". Paying attention to "Other" means re-examining ourselves psychologically.

The videos' village is a part of reality and public memory. "Anxiety is a continuous and pervasive social psychology, a universal, representative and key-tone life experience, floating in society or groups^[6]". In short videos, "the rural society is characterized by the virtual space's 'absence' and becomes the romantic identity imagined by the public. In the imagination, public gets some kind of rural utopian society perception^[4]". People try to fight against modernity with tradition, against acceleration with nostalgia, and against refinement and consumerism with roughness. Audience appreciates externals, and also try to understand emotional expression and lifestyle, so as to reflect on themselves. Viewers regard themselves as Other and separate themselves from village, but there are contradictory behaviors, such as judging the content of videos as "true or false" based on their own rural experiences. Seemingly people talk loudly about "returning to countryside", but extremely indifferent to their relationship, looking down at rural with a proud attitude, and venting personal depression and disappointment. "The ritual resistance of urban culture is reflected. it's solving contradictions and tense ideology within 'mother culture^[4]". By deconstructing the entertainment of social pressure, releasing pent-up emotions and memories, individuals can reconstruct their own identity and beliefs. Altogether, audience's rural imagination, the Other mapping of rural to city, have completed the interactive gaze through virtual scenes. Viewers bring into urban elements through comments and live interaction, rural individual integrates viewer's suggestions to produce rural videos with urban elements. In the process of gazing at each other, they rediscover their self-cognition and construct a new self from the inside out.

5. Conclusion

The popularity of "Native Video" in Tik Tok reflects the turn of grassroots culture in the new era. Deep participation of rural groups has become one of the core landscapes in Tik Tok, especially the participation of rural women has brought new cultural production. The smooth and consuming from the perspective of exquisiteness and consumerism, the roughness from the perspective of rural women's culture, and the natural truth of China's traditional culture are more liked. Rebellion and criticism of modern society are pinned on the pastoral gaze and imagination of the pre-industrial society, so as to support the pressure of modern life. Rural subjects pin their otherness imagination on city in the practice of rural life, thus completing their own subjective value construction. Furthermore, the appearance of new rural women images gradually dispels the stereotypes left in the traditional society, and also brings emotional integration and psychological resonance between rural and urban women groups.

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