

On the Opinion Synergy of Cultural Consumption in the Network Environment

Ling Zhu^{1, a,*} and Hongying Dong^{2, b}

¹Beijing Institute of Culture Innovation and Communication, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, 100875, China

²School of Journalism and Communication, Tsinghua University, Beijing, 100084, China

^aEmail: keyan_kiko@163.com, ^bEmail: donghongying@sg.com.cn

*corresponding author

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Abstract: The change of the network environment to the form of popular culture is reflected in multiple dimensions. The Internet is not only a platform carrier of cultural production and consumption, but also a tool of comment, and even becomes the content of consumption itself. The opinions of network cultural consumption are influencing the style flow of cultural products imperceptibly. Different from the way of opinion exchange in elite culture, the way of opinion synergy in Internet public opinion has a significant language economy and post-modern aesthetic style. The mechanism and principle explained by the synergy theory provide us with an analytic perspective and tool to understand and grasp the key nodes and implied elements in the opinion synergy of Internet cultural consumption.

1. Introduction

In the network society, with the disintegration of elite culture and the rise of grass-roots power, the opinions on cultural consumption have been transformed from traditional structural order to the diversified and fragmented structural order. Under the network environment, the aesthetic interpretation and value evaluation of cultural products and services no longer abide by the professional privilege or political orientation. Through the open public discourse platform, a large number of ordinary Internet users join the ranks of evaluators. Because of the control of social media means such as We Media, they are small in number but are not meager in strength. Its roaring way of opinion writing rapidly updates the evaluation mechanism of cultural consumption, and its self-organized approach of opinion synergy also influences the style flow of cultural products imperceptibly.

2. Web Collaboration in the Opinions on Cultural Consumption

The popularization of Internet and other new technologies is reshaping people's speech expression and their way of act. Compared with the pre network era, people's cultural consumption mode has undergone profound changes in terms of the production and marketing mode of cultural products, aesthetic orientation and viewing habits, as well as the value demands of the audience and presentation means. In the comments on cultural consumption in the network environment generated, it presents new features, among which the most noteworthy is the formation of guiding and consensus opinions, which is known as opinion synergy in this article.

2.1. New Features of Cultural Consumption in the Network Age

2.1.1. The "De Authorization" of Production Subject and the Vertical and Horizontal Axis Transformation of Propagation Direction

With the popularization of the Internet and the rise of We Media tools, the producers of cultural products are no longer limited to traditional professional institutions and cultural authorities. At the

same time, the well-organized "top-down" mode of communication, like the common cultural consumer goods, also makes the chain communication and flat diffusion suitable for the characteristics of the Internet itself. There is no doubt that such a profound change in the production subject and communication mode also affects the production aesthetics of Internet cultural consumer goods. The historical ambition of traditional cultural products to cast into the common memory of generations by virtue of their accumulation is often replaced by the desire to obtain space for rapid communication and diffusion. The historical ambition of traditional cultural products to cast into the common memory of the people from generation to generation by virtue of their accumulation tends to be replaced by the desire to gain space for rapid dissemination and diffusion.

2.1.2. The scattered Distribution of Aesthetic Attention and the Post-modern Collage of Narrative Logic

The difference from the gaze-based contemplation of people towards cultural products in the past, massive information leads to the scattered distribution of aesthetic attention. As cultural consumption resources blow out like stars in the sky and they cover or are covered rapidly in the time dimension, the audience has to scan the sea of information like a flash because of limited attention, and quickly switch their vision between the fleeting light. The new aesthetic habit is bound to make the hot cultural consumer goods show the characteristics adapting to such practice, including the post-modern transition and collage of narrative logic, the caricature sketch of exaggeration and gag of the prototype of things, and acquisition on demand, and the occupation of a low ration of attention [1].

2.1.3. Amplification of Individual Value and Potential Conformity Demand in Network Mirror

To a large extent, the flat extension characteristics of the Internet world flatten the class differences in real society. Because of the anonymity and semi-anonymity of sounding on the Internet, the freedom of individual self-expression has been raised to an unprecedented height. The function of real-time consumption and feedback of network culture has made such expression impulse have full space to come true. In particular, grass-roots lack the right to speak and have no way to express themselves in the real world, and their desire to show their personal value can rapidly expand under the network image. Such self-representation tends to be achieved by subverting the mainstream value, dissolving the heavy sense of reality, and rebelling against the orthodox language style and system. But along with the freedom of self-expression is an equally urgent need for the recognition of self-value. The Internet that nearly expands to an infinite scope constitutes a vast virtual square. The existence of emotional and relative cultural communities, such as WeChat Moments, provides a good fermentation environment for the conformity behavior of individual users on the Internet.

2.2. Influence of Network Opinions on Cultural Consumption

Generally speaking, opinions refer to the views, understanding, or proposals of the people on things. In the process of consumption and feedback on cultural products, a large number of Internet users have made their consumption opinions, which tend to gradually show the same trend, which may ultimately develop into one or a limited number of opinions. This phenomenon seems to be contrary to the natural inference that the high degree of freedom of sounding on the Internet leads to endless and diversified expression of opinions. However, it is just in line with the new characteristics of the cultural consumption of the network age, reflecting the internal logic self-consistency of cultural consumption.

2.2.1. Consumption Opinions of Tangible Cultural Products are Dominated by the Internet

The film *A Murder Caused by a Steamed Bread*, a spoof of the film *The Promise*, is regarded as a classic work for Internet users to express their opinions. It has fulfilled public enlightenment for the grass-roots spirit. *A Murder Caused by a Steamed Bread* deconstructs the grand narrative of *The*

Promise with the wisdom and interest of the grass-roots class and completely reduces the ultimate issue of sovereign's supremacy, love and hate, and life suspended in the imaginary world to "The Promise equals a boring square." In this ant-elephant battle, elitists are discovering that in the new arena of opinion, the big elephant is no longer the strong one. Whether it is Chen Kaige's *The Promise*, Zhang Yimou's *The Flowers of War* or Feng Xiaogang's *Back to 1942*, the films made by these great directors seemed to pull out all the stops, but they hit the soft cotton ball with one punch, and finally, their strength dissipated and their focus was lost.

2.2.2. Internet Vocabulary Becomes the Special Carrier for Internet Cultural Consumption

In the post-modern process of network acceleration, the category of objects of cultural consumption has been expanded in an unprecedented manner. In addition to the consumption of cultural products and services with specific forms, such as publications, film and television works, performance works, and artworks, another Internet cultural consumption activity led by Internet users is particularly striking. It is the cultural consumption of Internet users with the content of the writing and dissemination of the fragmented text, such as the group semantic consumption with the help of Internet buzzwords. Internet buzzwords are a kind of vocabulary created by the grass-roots people on the Internet, which is popular and widely spread on the Internet and can reflect or interfere with reality. It has a strong nature of black humor [2-3]. The Internet buzzwords are represented by Shen Ma (meaning "what" in Chinese), Shang Bu Qi (meaning too delicate to bear a blow in Chinese), Gei Gui Le (meaning to give me a break in Chinese), Liang Le (meaning to bright out in Chinese), and Ye Shi Zui Le (meaning that "I am speechless" in Chinese). Through the continuous interpretation and superposition of their meanings by Internet users, they are loaded with strong intension tension with extremely simple linguistic signs. When the consumption mode of web text is expropriated by mainstream society, it becomes a way to eliminate the psychological gap between different classes [4].

3. Principle of the Internet Opinion Synergy Mechanism

3.1. Origin of the Concept of Internet Opinion Synergy

The synergy theory, also known as synergetics, was founded in the 1970s by Hermann Haken, a German theoretical physicist. The synergy theory studies the common law that all kinds of different systems change from disordered state to ordered state through self-organized cooperation among the huge number of their subsystems. In the process of the formation, interaction, and collaboration of the morphological structure of the Internet world and network opinions, there is also the principle of collaboration.

The reason why the synergy theory can gain the influence of the Pan discipline is that it constructs a set of concise and effective rules for model building. Its core consists of the following concepts:

3.1.1. Instability

It means that the structural state of the system is variable. In fact, synergy is the evolution process of the system from the old structure to the instability and then to the new structure. We can regard the instability as the state of the system when it reaches the critical point in the transformation from the stable and disordered state to the stable and ordered state.

3.1.2. The Order Parameter

Haken uses two kinds of system parameters to describe the state of the cooperative system: fast parameter and slow parameter. The parameters with a large number but fast attenuation, which have no obvious effect on the overall evolution of the system, are called fast parameters. The slow parameters refer to the one or a few parameters that play a role in the evolution process from the beginning to the end and are widely responded to by each subsystem, playing a leading role in the control of the behavior of the subsystem. When the system approaches the critical point of a qualitative change of form, the slow parameter fully determines the macroscopic behavior of the

system and represents the degree of ordering of the system, which is then called the order parameter.

3.1.3. Slaving principle

The slaving principle refers to that when the slow parameter changes to the order parameter, it establishes the macrostate of the system. At the moment, many other fast parameters are forced to follow and obey. When the system is at the critical point, an avalanche-like trend will sweep the whole system, and the order parameter will quickly control the overall situation and dominate the evolution of the system to an orderly state [5].

3.2. Elements and Operation Mechanism of Internet Opinion Synergy

3.2.1. Elements of the Model of Internet Opinion Synergy

Some disciplines in social sciences, such as communication, it is difficult to establish a dynamic equation to describe their evolution because of the complexity of the systems involved in these disciplines. But the core idea of the synergy theory is still valid. By means of analogy, we can build a model to describe how the complex and disordered expression of multiple opinions on the Internet gradually changes into one or several consensuses. This model contains the basic elements of the synergy theory. The whole Internet is an open system. However, in the relatively closed emotional and relative cultural communities, such as WeChat Moments, and relatively open cultural communities, such as Baidu Post Bar, they form a number of subsystems with different sizes, and these subsystems interact with each other with varied frequencies. We regard the expression of massive network opinions produced by specific cultural products or cultural phenomena as the "system parameter" in the original synergy theory. Among these parameters, those which are large in number but fail to arouse attention and are transient can be regarded as fast parameters [6]. However, the parameters of opinion expression that can be widely accepted can be regarded as slow parameters. When network opinions reach the critical point of transition from a disordered state to an ordered state (i.e., to achieve opinion synergy), the slow parameter will gain an overwhelming advantage, and the order parameter will reach the maximum value. Then, there will be powerful and dominant opinions arising on the Internet.

3.2.2. The Operating Mechanism of the Internet Opinion Synergy

At the beginning of the occurrence of the role of the Internet opinion synergy, there are usually some kind of triggered events, which can be referred to as "catalyst". In the behavior of Internet cultural consumption, catalyst can be a cultural product or a kind of cultural phenomenon. Within one or more emotional and relative cultural communities, the dominant opinions can be spontaneously selected from a large number of diversified opinion expressions ("system parameters") for the catalyst, due to the influence of several key factors. When the dominant opinions (slow parameters) come into being, the slaving principle will start to play a role, and the dominant opinions will have a masking effect on other different opinions in the system. At this time, the opinion synergy will be formed in the cultural community. At the same time, different cultural communities interact with each other, and there are overlapping phenomena among different cultural communities, while a member tends to belong to multiple cultural communities. Then, the dominant opinions can spread rapidly in various directions and overlaps among various cultural communities, and they can be further integrated and updated in this process. Finally, the large-scale Internet opinion synergy effect can be achieved.

3.3. Three Influencing Factors on the Formation of Dominant Opinions

It is of great significance to build the entire system evolution model by studying the generation of dominant opinions as a crucial factor of the Internet opinion synergy. Through extensive observation of practical examples, we find that the expression of opinions that win out in the jungle competition of the Internet tends to reflect the influence of the following factors, although the forces of these factors are not always homogenous.

3.3.1. Aesthetic Style

If the expression of an opinion is to stand out from a large number of competing opinions with different or heterogeneous features and spread rapidly, its configuration and style usually need to conform to the external configuration of a concise image, the logic structure of alienation, the deviation from a relatively grand style, the dilution of the sense of solemnity, and the extensive application of irony rhetoric. Since the expression of the ideas on cultural consumption is also secondary cultural consumer goods in the network age, the representative expression is bound to adapt to the overall style of Internet cultural consumption in terms of aesthetic features [7]. The logic structure of alienation and the extensive application of irony rhetoric reflect the general entertainment tendency of the aesthetic taste among Internet users. The deviation from a relatively grand style and the dilution of the sense of solemnity reflect the individual's demand for the release of the repressed self in the context of authority and the mentality of hiding from the hard reality. The external configuration of a concise image is suitable for the feature that it can be easily imitated mentioned below.

3.3.2. Emotional Dimension

The establishment of dominant opinions also depends on their ability to evoke similar emotional experiences of different individuals on the Internet. As mentioned before, due to the distraction caused by massive information resources, Internet users tend to rely on intuitive extraction of their own emotional experience for quick response to online things. When the expression of opinion can strongly arouse the emotional resonance of an individual at the beginning of its presentation, it can be spread widely after being recognized by the public. It should be pointed out that, due to the characteristics of psychological consanguinity in the cultural communities of the Internet, such emotional resonance is generally spread within the community, so that it can be resonated and strengthened. Moreover, because the same network individual tends to belong to multiple network cultural communities, this kind of opinion expression, which causes emotional resonance among the individuals, is likely to be continuously disseminated to the surrounding cultural communities.

3.3.3. Participation

The expression of the opinions that can ultimately occupy the dominant position is usually more understandable and can often be used for parody so that it can meet the psychological demands of Internet users to express themselves and participate in the play and re-creation of the connotation of such opinions. Participation is of vital importance to the formation of dominant opinions. Due to the effect of this factor, it is a proper explanation to how the antinomy between "the likelihood that a high degree of freedom of Internet expression can lead to a full diversity of opinion expression" and "the reality of the general convergence of opinions in Internet cultural consumption" in the preceding part can realize logical self-sufficiency. The parody and dissemination of the Internet users to the dominant opinions can not only realize the publicity of individual creative desire but also meets the psychological needs of the emotional and kinship cultural community, thus showing a magic process of how the "other's opinion" on the Internet quickly changed into "our opinion" or even "my opinion" which has affected the individual consciousness on the Internet. In the course of the rapid dissemination and update of dominant opinions, it actually arouses the Internet users to collectively participate in the expression of opinions and make them more enthusiastic, so that they can get into group carnival.

4. Inspirations from the Internet Opinion Synergy Mechanism

4.1. Self-Organizing Communication with the Help of the Interpersonal Network

The synergy theory examines an open system far from equilibrium, which is composed of multiple heterogeneous units, complex and disordered. A large number of ordinary Internet users speak as they like in such a huge network as the open system. The Internet has brought about a revolution in the way of information exchange and interpersonal communication. At the same time, the virtual network is overlapped with the real society. The ultimate goal of the revolution is to

achieve a new type of interpersonal relationship and a new way people connect with the world. The new interpersonal relationship based on the social network platform promotes the identity construction of Internet users on the Internet. On this basis, the Internet discourse power can be redistributed, while the structure of online discussion is prone to polarization. According to the different roles of the Internet users in the network, the individual identity of Internet users can be divided into opinion leader, follower and neutral. The concept of the opinion leader was first proposed by Paul F. Lazarsfeld and explained by Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Bernard Berelson et al., in their book "The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign" in 1948. Based on the previous studies, Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld (1955), in the subsequent book "Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications", further confirmed the key role of the opinion leader in the media effect. By observing the discourse discussion system of the ideas on cultural consumption on the Internet, we can find that the Internet has become a greater square for the opinion leaders to make them heard. Enthusiasts of literary criticism, the people that discriminate against people who disagree with themselves, and the activists of agenda-setting have exerted an important influence on the selection and evaluation of cultural consumption of Internet users.

In the process of network opinions changing from the disorderly state to the orderly state, the slow parameter is the key factor for the opinion synergy mechanism to surpass the critical point, while the opinion leader which stands out in the state of network self-organization is the essential slow parameter. The slow parameter playing a dominant role is no longer generated in the top-down mode of mass communication as in the traditional era, but spontaneously selected and generated from the expression of multiple opinions, and spread by means of interpersonal relations on the Internet. For this reason, it is necessary for the producers and communicators for the cultures in the network era to conduct the conceptual change by understanding the new generation and operation mode of dominant opinions from web collaboration.

4.2. The Synergetic Effect of Hyperlinked Linguistic Signs on Opinions

Different from the way of exchange of views in elite culture, the exchange, approval, opposition or coordination of views on the Internet involves significant language economy. Internet language is an important discussion tool for cultural consumption on the Internet, and it has also become the Internet cultural consumption itself. It allows the Internet language with value orientation to obtain more abundant driving forces for diffusion of innovations. "Internet language is a symbol system in network environment, which can be called Internet symbol [8]." It is through the creation and arrangement of a rhetorical symbol system that the Internet users set up identity labels and value cant. This set of symbol system represents the creativity of the post-80s Digital natives whose world outlook, views of life and values are affected by the network environment. Besides, it also carries the collective definition and interpretation of society among the group of Internet users. These symbols have the typical characteristics of network subculture, and constitute the argot and lip code with the function of identity assimilation in the Internet world. Such Internet language has a strong language economy, and it is hyperlinked and intertextual, but also rich in entertainment, humor and allegory. By using this symbol system, Internet users can more efficiently and implicitly propose their opinions and views, and then the order parameter in the Internet opinion synergy can come into being more practically.

4.3. Social Psychological Projection and Community Identity

We can regard the synergy mechanism as a competition for the order parameter among multiple parameters. In the description of the macrostate of Internet public opinion, the key to the order parameter lies in the number of people who agree or disagree. When the number of people who agree or disagree reaches the maximum, the Internet public opinion champs will come to a critical state, and the system will rapidly evolve into an ordered structure like an avalanche. The key to winning the order parameter lies in the identity of the parameter opinion in the specific public opinion champs. It is generally believed that such identity is based on rationality, while the champs theory emphasizes that identity of psychology, emotion and identity is more concealed. Pierre

Bourdieu, a famous French sociologist, studied human nature, which is conducive to our understanding of the features of a networked society [9]. Different from the way that individualists seek inward, Pierre Bourdieu made an attempt to understand how a special group comes into being in the concealed mechanism of social interaction, including its interest, self-care and strategy. The popularity of popular culture is inseparable from a kind of social and psychological background, that is, the formation of several social psychological mechanisms. In terms of projection effect, identity effect and compensation effect, the first problem that the grass-roots class should solve in the macro proposition of the times is the support of micro self. In a diversified society, what people agree with is no longer the instillation of consciousness or rational preaching, but the endorsement of words and the agreement of habits.

Conclusion

The formation of Internet cultural consumption opinions is rooted in the specific public opinion champs created by Internet users. It is not hard to find that a deconstructionist trend of thought that resists the instillation of mainstream values is vague in the cultural consumption review activities on the Internet. With the emergence of these phenomena, in fact, it shows some deep-seated problems that the dream of elites cannot necessarily move the masses. When literature and art are unable to accept the lofty sense of mission, the more they hope to occupy the commanding heights and serve as soul engineers, the more likely they are to unconsciously make assumptions higher than those of the people [10]. In the context of the Internet, to win the hearts of the ordinary people, we should find out the resonance with their spirit, emotion, and value. It may be a deep-seated mechanism hidden in the Internet opinion synergy of cultural consumption. It will be a new method required by contemporary cultural production, consumption, and communication to grasp the group psychology that the network champs collide with and the social attitude conveyed and achieve the understanding of the order of the network system in the changing state.

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