

Public Compassion under the Mediation of Suffering: Taking the Videos of "Second Uncle" on Social Media as an Example

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Abstract: All along, the media has been keen on writing about suffering. This paper takes the video "Three days back to the village, my second uncle cured my mental depletion" as an example, and uses a combination of discourse analysis and content analysis. Based on explaining the video's strategy of mediating suffering in terms of narrative subject, narrative content, and narrative perspective in the perspective of nonfiction narrative, the paper explores the interaction between mediating suffering and public compassion through the analysis of the text in the comment section. It is argued that media-mediated suffering can, to a certain extent, evoke various forms of public compassion; the paradox of authenticity in non-fiction news texts constrains the generation of public compassion; "compassion fatigue" prompts the public to show emotional resistance to media suffering narratives; media suffering narratives cannot touch all the public, and in the case of "compassion avoidance", we need to be wary of the "post-truth" trap.

1. Introduction

In the public opinion field with increasingly diversified power relations, the empowerment of the Internet and new media has gradually attracted the attention of society and obtained a certain right to speak in public opinion. Some scholars have proposed that current cyberspace is facing a change from the "low-level object era" to the "low-level subjectivity era".^[1] In the era of the continuous emergence of grassroots forces and the rapid development of we-media, more and more ordinary people use rich communication tools and ways to release dynamic information, tell individual stories, and consciously use various communication means to gather public opinion spontaneously and independently and aggregate the opinions, attitudes, and concepts of a single individual.

Among the many typical issues that grassroots media pay attention to and tell about, the issue of suffering has a basic and important position. On the one hand, the issue of suffering has a natural communication value, which has an innate appeal to the mass media. The topic of human's struggle

against individual destiny, social reality, and natural environment is in essence highly consistent with the psychological needs and spiritual aesthetics of the public's information reception. On the other hand, the popularization and anonymity of grassroots media give it the unique characteristics of "citizen media". Grassroots media is a mass media with lower cost and lower threshold, which makes information dissemination show the trend of individuation and socialization.^[2]

For the people and things in the narrative of suffering, the media is the source of power and has a distinct meaning-conferring function. The mass media, especially the grassroots media with distinct characteristics of civilianization and freedom, will influence public moral tendency or public action to some extent by writing about suffering (how the media mediates suffering). Both academia and industry are also concerned about the possibility of a "sympathetic public" arising from the media's portrayal of suffering. Does the representation of suffering by the media help to bring the audience closer to the victims, thereby stimulating feelings of care and empathy? As for the public as content consumers, there are some long-standing issues in the online public opinion field - namely, whether to show compassion in the face of distant suffering; The reasons for expressing or refusing compassion. To what extent compassion should be reached. Based on this, this paper attempts to study the following two core issues. First, in the narrative framework of "suffering intermediation", how do we media tell suffering stories and arouse public compassion? Second, in the narrative framework of "suffering intermediation", what kind of compassion does the public, as content consumers express to the suffering writing of the we-media? Is there any emotional resistance?

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Mediation of Suffering

In general, academic research on the mediation of suffering can be divided into the following three areas.

The first is to study the writing strategies of suffering issues from the perspective of the news business. When studying the media's suffering narrative and its mediating strategy, most domestic and foreign scholars first define "mediating". For example, Tomlinson (1999) believes that mediatization can be defined in two ways: first, it overcomes the time and space limitation of communication and allows the audience to watch the events happening in the distance in real time, which eliminates the space and time barrier and narrates the psychological distance between different communities; Second, from the perspective of media communication behavior itself, medialization means that the information received by people through mass media is all affected by the technological intervention and the symbolic mode of technology use.^[3] On this basis, some scholars have proposed that "far away" is not limited to geographical significance, but can also be "far away" in social and cultural sense. Because of the gap between classes, the stories at the bottom constitute "far away" in social significance for mainstream society.^[4] From this point of view, mass media, especially grassroots media, have the first-mover advantage and gatekeeping function in the aspects of clue discovery, story writing, public opinion dissemination, etc., and play the role of bridge and link between the "distant suffering" and the "mainstream society".

The second is to study the victim image in the suffering narrative from the perspective of narrative techniques. The images of victims in suffering news can be generally understood from two aspects. One is the victims when disasters happen, they are often the "uncertain majority", such as the casualties in sudden accidents or natural disasters; The other type is the specific subject who suffers from suffering. They may not directly pay the price of life and health like the victims in the disaster, but they are relatively vulnerable in terms of social attributes such as life experience, social status, career development, and right ownership. Their stories of suffering, struggle, and triumph have long been in the media. The study found that in these two types of victim images, compared with broad

statistical information, clear characters, and specific cases are more likely to arouse public emotional resonance.

The third is to study the use of images in the narrative of suffering from the perspective of media technology. With the development of media technology, pictures, videos, and other forms of communication are constantly enriched, which greatly expands the boundaries of traditional text communication. Whether it is pictures or videos, the advantages of images and the situation are one and two sides. However, to a large extent, it can only present the surface facts of events, which increases the sense of distance from the "truth" invisibly. The memory constructed by people through media images constitutes a part of collective memory, affecting the emotional perception and action tendency of a specific group.^[5]

However, in the current discussion on the mediation of suffering, there are still insufficient studies on the communication effect, especially few studies from the perspective of the audience to explore how the suffering narrative of the media affects public emotion, and what specific characteristics are reflected in the public emotional tendency.

2.2. Public Compassion

First of all, compassion is a kind of value judgment, that is, cognitive judgment about "what is unfortunate", "why is suffering", and "what is worthy of compassion". Compassion is also a kind of ability, a kind of ability to "apply the suffering of others to others." In the face of suffering, the emergence of compassion and the existence of compassion fatigue is not only related to the media's communication strategy but also related to the communication effect - that is, whether the public has emotional changes and action tendencies because of the media content they are exposed to.

As early as the 1990s, in his analysis of suffering in the media and at a distance, Potansky proposed that the representation of suffering has the potential to inspire three different modes of compassion in the audience: a denunciation, a sentiment, and an aesthetic. In 2004, in an empirical study of viewers' reactions to images of victims on television news, Heyer added two other models of compassion to Potansky's work: "shame-filled" and "powerlessness-filled."

Scholars have also noted that, in addition to compassion, a considerable part of the public still shows indifference in the face of suffering, expressing an attitude of refusing to sympathize. Among the public who refuse to sympathize, they adopt two specific strategies. One is to deny the authenticity of the media content, believing that the presentation of suffering is entirely due to the media deliberately stirring up emotions and spreading false news out of consideration of political or commercial interests. The second is the "dehumanization" or "impersonalization" of the victim, in which the audience devalues the victim's culture, intelligence, life, and behavior from the perspective of self or others.

In addition, domestic scholars have also noted the existence of "compassion fatigue". In today's society, public opinion has been alienated by consumption to some extent, and public opinion shows a different consumption trend from the past. One of the manifestations is that "media consciously set up and even artificially create various topics for news events to trigger audience discussion".^[6] In the current social media environment, public opinion has become not only the public discussion of a certain social public event but also a cultural commodity packaged by the media, especially many self-media emotions.^[7] The special communication mode of social media makes it more difficult for public opinion events to obtain widespread "public compassion", and the public is prone to "compassion fatigue" in public opinion, which is mainly manifested as exhaustion of energy, numbness of emotion, and loss of passion.

3. Research Design

3.1. Research Methods

This paper intends to use the combination of discourse analysis and content analysis to carry out the follow-up analysis.

Discourse analysis, as a qualitative research method, traces its origins to sign theory and discourse theory. It refers to placing research objects in specific social relations and historical conditions to conduct in-depth analysis and dissection of various symbols, texts, and discourses in communication phenomena and activities. This paper attempts to explore and refine the value, ideology, power relationship, and other deep meanings implied in the discourse.

Content analysis is a quantitative research method, which refers to the quantitative description of text content through screening, coding, classification, statistics, and other means with the help of mathematical statistics, and emphasizes the basic general picture of distribution law and overall characteristics of things reflected through data representation.

This paper tries to combine the two research methods, which not only gives full play to the advantages of content analysis with data support and high credibility of research results but also makes use of the characteristics of discourse analysis with in-depth insight and a high degree of theoretical abstraction.

3.2. Case Selection

On July 25, 2022, a video titled "Three days back to the village, the second uncle cured my spiritual internal friction" was brushed across the net. In the 11-minute video, @Yige in bilibili tells the story of the first half of his second uncle's life in the countryside with a gentle tone, literary narration, and real pictures.^[8]

At that time, the "genius boy" in the village became disabled due to a misdiagnosis. After being struck down by despair, the second uncle chose to stand up again and make a living with the carpentry craft he learned in 3 days. Such a rural disabled person has created a lot of small "highlight moments": doing woodwork in the Beijing army, buying their own "luxury" furniture for their sister's marriage, saving money for their children to buy more than two hundred thousand houses, for the 88-year-old mother's pension, contract the maintenance of the village fortune-telling affairs and so on.

This is not a complicated story, but it has triggered great resonance among netizens. After the video was released in the bilibili, the number of plays climbed up, breaking through 16 million times in one day, and quickly reached first place in the bilibili's ranking, becoming the "hottest" short video in the first half of the year. Subsequently, the central level media, including People's Daily, CCTV network, Farmers Daily, China Youth Daily, etc., have made statements around the "second uncle incident", marking that this "grassroots figure" who has entered the public eye through the media has officially entered the mainstream public opinion field.

According to the data provided by Baidu Information Index, since the release of the video on July 25, the public opinion heat of the "second uncle incident" has been rising, and reached its peak two days later on July 27, and the accompanying discussion of related topics has also risen.

3.3. Data Collection, Cleaning, and Sampling

Data collection: Through the web crawler, 51,531 texts in the video comment section published by the @Yige in bilibili on July 25 were obtained. The crawling information includes three key fields: comment text content, user ID and comment time.

Sampling: Through random sampling, 300 samples are randomly selected from all the texts for

data cleaning and emotion coding.

Data cleaning: The data of 300 samples were cleaned to remove the meaningless text of no more than 3 words such as "thank you", "ahem" and "good morning". It should be noted that although some of the texts are less than 3 characters, they still have a clear emotional tendency, such as "crying", "moving" and "terrible", etc. This article performs a uniform removal operation because these well-defined words are still in the minority and not representative of the larger data. Secondly, to facilitate the subsequent discourse analysis of typical texts, it is generally believed that the longer the text, the richer the meaning, the more the emotional logic behind it can be reflected.

3.4. Data Coding

In his analysis of suffering in the media and at a distance, Potansky argues that the representation of suffering can inspire three different modes of compassion in the audience: denunciation, sentiment, and aesthetic.^[9] In an empirical study of viewers' reactions to images of victims on television news, Heyer added two other modes of compassion: "shame-filled" and "powerlessness filled." These provide a theoretical framework to enrich and refine the connotation of "public compassion".

Table 1: Sample coding types and descriptions

	Number	Type of emotion	Explanation
Compassion	1	Compliment	A tribute to the second uncle's spiritual qualities and attitude toward life.
	2	Sentiment	To express compassion and compassion for the suffering of the second uncle, but also think of the situation of more people.
	3	Denunciation	Blame structural factors, such as socio-economic development, and the perpetrators who put the second uncle in adversity.
	4	Shame-filled	Compared with the suffering of the second uncle, I feel ashamed that I am not satisfied with the environment I am in.
	5	Powerlessness-filled	I feel pity for my second uncle, but I feel powerless over the suffering.
No Compassion	6	Unconcerned	Believes that suffering should not be celebrated, but should be seen behind the suffering (human strength, social factors, etc.)
	7	Compassion fatigue	Arguing that videos create a "consumer good" that brings people into a certain empathy while ignoring the structural factors that cause mass anxiety in today's society
Avoidance of compassion	8	Blessing	Relying on the spirit of the second uncle, express blessings, wishes, encouragement and encouragement to oneself or others
	9	Gloat	Rejoice in the absence of suffering
	10	Give advice	Make suggestions and advice on structural factors (such as national policies, state media reports) and look forward to making improvements
	11	Analysis	Tell the facts, or express opinions, but the second uncle incident itself is neutral or unclear
Others	12	Other comments	Comments unrelated to the second uncle incident

Considering the complexity and diversity of emotions in this study, emotions cannot be defined by simple positive and negative variables. In addition, the emotional expression of netizens involves many popular online neologisms (such as "social PUA") and obscure expressions. Therefore, under

the premise of controllable sample size, manual analysis is carried out to combine content analysis and discourse analysis. At the specific operational level, the author first cursory reviews and overall grasp the emotional attitude in the reviews. Then, based on the four categories of compassion classified by Heyer (2004) and the particularity of the "Second uncle incident", the author further added the sub-types of "compassion", "no compassion" and "avoidance of compassion". The 12 coding types and corresponding descriptions can be seen in Table 1.

3.5. Results

In the comments on the video, netizens expressed mixed emotions. As shown in the following table, after coding classification and sample sampling, among the 256 comments finally extracted, 42% expressed compassion for the second uncle himself and his situation, 6% explicitly refused compassion, and 34% evaded the compassion through blessing, self-congratulation, advice and expectation, without showing a clear emotional tendency. The remaining 17% are comments unrelated to this study, such as personal emotional attitudes towards the creator.

Based on the classification of Heyer (2004), the possible modes of compassion that viewers may have for victims' images in media communication include sentiment, denunciation, shame-filled, and powerlessness-filled. Due to the particularity of the second uncle incident, the second uncle embodies excellent spiritual qualities such as diligence, bravery, and so on. Quite several netizens expressed their affirmation, praise and admiration for the "second uncle spirit", which to a certain extent is consistent with the spiritual aesthetic rooted in national genes and traditional culture. This is highly consistent with Potansky's "aesthetic compassion" when analyzing the suffering of media and distance. Therefore, the study introduces complementary compassion based on Heyer's four categories when analyzing the patterns of compassion. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. List of sample coding results

	Emotional type	Amount
Compassion (42%)	Compliment	52
	Sentiment	18
	Denunciation	9
	Shame-filled	14
	Powerlessness-filled	15
No Compassion (6%)	Unconcerned	8
	Compassion fatigue	8
Avoidance of compassion (34%)	Blessing	33
	Gloat	10
	Give advice	8
	Analysis	37
Others (17%)	Other comments	44

4. Conclusions

4.1. The Analysis of the Suffering Mediating Strategies of "Second Uncle" Videos

4.1.1. Narrative Subject

First, in the narrative subject, the narrative framework of "human touch" is introduced to realize the three-dimensional shaping of the real characters.

The protagonist of the video, "second uncle", is a real person in history and reality. This protagonist has undeniable authenticity, rather than a figure imagined or fabricated by the author, which also becomes the foundation of the overall narrative promotion of the video. Secondly, the creation of the character image has been selectively processed by the author. Based on the real appearance, character and spiritual quality of the second uncle himself, through three-dimensional and life-oriented artistic processing means, the character image is completed. Through a large section of plain, simple, and humorous copywriting narration, supplemented by the real life and work scenes of the second uncle, the author highlights his character. For example, "Second uncle sitting in the courtyard watching the sky, like a large frog", with a "sad humor" to deepen the impression of the second uncle's appearance. "Second uncle always has a way, any brand can put on you... Tianjin brand, Beijing brand, luxury brand is also OK", the second uncle's handmade furniture is a detailed portrayal, not only reflecting the hard work of the second uncle, but also showing his smart, stubborn, and unyielding. Such description helps people realize that the characters like the second uncle are not perfect "imaginary bodies", but three-dimensional and real, which truly narrates the psychological distance between the narrative subject and the audience, effectively suturing the subjective will implied by the characters and the audience's acceptance psychology, and realizing the same frequency resonance between the real individuals and the current life.

In addition, in the story of the second uncle full of misfortune, absurdity, and even tragedy, the presentation of the suffering element and the promotion of the individual spirit are always accompanied. For example, the description of the second uncle is hurt by the village doctor who "gives four injections a day", but it also emphasizes that after many years, the two people "laugh it off" and resolve the conflict with humor. The video describes the difficult life of the second uncle taking care of grandma, but also emphasizes that "Second uncle likes to cook noodles for grandma, and then pour some tomatoes and scrambled eggs, which is very delicious." For each suffering, there are always a second uncle's specific actions and details to respond, vividly showing a rural elderly image who is not beaten down by suffering, positive and optimistic, and tenacious life. This narrative framework of "human touch" is in line with the spiritual aesthetic in a deeper sense.

4.1.2. Narrative Content

Second, in terms of narrative content, through literary language and spatial narration, it realizes the legendary representation of real social history.

Just 11 minutes of content, from birth to disability, from life to work, the video "borrows" the eyes of the second uncle to observe the changes of the times. It integrates the issues of the times such as the restoration of the college entrance examination, reform and opening up, and the aging society, showing the ups and downs of the life of the second uncle as an ordinary rural person under the era of change. Through the detailed and slice observation of a specific scene, the non-fiction adaptation of real social events is realized, and the spiritual core of the events is reconstructed while deconstructing the events, and the social is reconstructed with a legendary narrative technique.^[10]

In the process of narrative content organization, as a "technical" operation, the narrative language and structure adopted by the author deserve special attention. The literary narrative language runs through the whole text, highlighting the image of the characters. In the comments section of the video, quite a few netizens lamented that "the copy is too good". The "good" of copywriting is precisely that the author makes good use of a large number of literary languages and tells the story in a narrative style similar to prose. Whether it is the use of various rhetorical devices or the choice of words and sentences, it is more accurate and vivid to depict the character image of the second uncle. For example, the ending sentence, "From the second uncle, I saw all the ordinary, beautiful and strong of our nation," expresses my feelings directly, and highly summarizes the spiritual qualities of the second uncle in experiencing suffering and overcoming suffering. Such delicate language expression not only

enhances the appeal and appeal of the content but also helps to enhance the overall artistic aesthetic value of the video.^[11]

The spatial concentrated and compact narrative structure also strengthens the narrative effect. Compared with traditional TV news, which adopts time-oriented narration, pays attention to the antecedents and consequences, and pursues a systematic and complete narrative structure, this video adapts more to the communication characteristics of new media short videos and organizes the whole story with spatial narration. The author chooses several important "slices" in the life of the second uncle and does not deliberately pursue too much thought, rationality, and meaning, but "captures" the user's attention with a powerful scene narrative.^[12] In this spatial narrative structure, linearly, the transition, conflict, and conflict of the story are densely arranged, and it is easier to form emotional resonance and ideological shock while enhancing the video perception.

4.1.3. Narrative Perspective

Third, from the perspective of narrative, it adopts the "compound perspective" to realize the emotional transformation from "other" to "us".

In a news narrative, an "outside perspective" refers to the total amount of information from a relatively objective, independent third party that observes the facts themselves and provides the user with "omniscient" information. The "inside perspective" takes the parties (narrative subjects) of the event as the starting point and observes the event from the perspective of the authorities, which helps to bring real and perceptible details to the audience. The application of composite perspective in the practice of non-fiction news is a fusion of "external perspective" and "internal perspective". The "external perspective" emphasizes "omniscient" facts as the narrative background and the "internal perspective" is integrated to carry out vivid and specific narration, making the content full and rich in details.^[13]

At the beginning of the video, the author first declares his relationship with the narrative subject - "This is my second uncle, a genius boy in the village", naturally allowing himself to stand in the same perspective as the audience, inviting the audience to walk into the story of the second uncle on the screen. Then, in the process of narrative promotion, he reviews his suffering from the perspective of the second uncle and describes and restores the thoughts and actions of the second uncle in scenes and details. And the author timely jumps out of the narrative frame and expresses his feelings from the perspective of a bystander, such as "This is the Chinese style of parents", which plays a role in sublimating the theme and guiding thoughts.

In the objective description of a character, the author also intentionally includes the second uncle in a group, giving it certain social and aesthetic spiritual characteristics in line with social values. Many netizens in the text associated with the elders around, relatives, and even themselves - "my grandfather is also a carpenter" (No. 156); "Everyone's relatives in the country may have a second uncle, who looks at the fate of many difficulties, but is still strong" (No. 183); "Magnificently plain, like every one of us" (No. 221). From this point of view, when users receive information, it is very likely to include the distant "other" into a certain social group, and then have a relationship with the people and things around them. "Second Uncle" is no longer the distant old man who has suffered all his life, but the old man who has become "the epitome of ordinary Chinese people" (No. 5) and "There are also people around me" (No. 208). When the psychological distance is narrowed and the resonance of the "other" is generated, the video will naturally have a certain impact on the audience's self-experience, emotional tendency, and moral cognition.

4.2. The Analysis of the Public Compassion

4.2.1. Compassion for the Second Uncle: The Representation of Multiple Emotional Arousal

Of the 256 samples, 42% expressed compassion for the second uncle's situation. Among the many complex compassion tendencies, complimentary compassion accounts for the largest proportion, and many netizens have expressed praise and tribute to the spiritual quality and life attitude of the second uncle, such as, "ordinary but great" (No. 1; No. 8; No. 20; No. 147; No. 194); "The common man who makes his living is quietly becoming great" (No. 226). Of course, the praise here is not necessarily closely related to the suffering itself but is more influenced by the "mediating" role of the media and the charm of the second uncle's personality. For example, one netizen said: "The ordinary but tenacious life of second uncle is described in the plainest tone" (No. 81); "There is a kind of moving feeling that a person's life is recorded in modern writing on a Chinese examination paper" (No. 191). All these point to the author's unique narrative strategy to arouse public compassion.

It is worth noting that in addition to the complimentary compassion, more netizens associate the personal situation of the second uncle with many "ordinary people like the second uncle", and have sentiment, for example, "after watching the tears, I think of my grandmother" (No. 113). "Plain and magnificent, just like every one of us, the video brought tears to my eyes" (No. 221). This shows that the author adopts a compound perspective to expand the narrative, realizing the emotional arousal from "the other" to "us", and people find more emotional resonance in the second uncle.

Some comments also express a sense of powerlessness in the face of suffering, such as "Times have changed, but circumstances have not changed" (No. 88). Comparing the suffering suffered by the second uncle with the relatively good living environment he is in, he has compassion and thinks that the story of the second uncle has indeed "cured my spiritual internal friction", such as "I want to cry because I have an easier life than him, my right hand can hold a bowl when I hold chopsticks in my left hand, and my right leg can support the back when my left leg is forward." (No. 54).

Based on expressing compassion, a small number of comments made attribution analysis on the suffering of the second uncle and expressed anger and condemnation on the social structural factors that caused the second uncle to fall into such suffering conditions. For example, "It is a loss to the world to have both virtue and talent and not to achieve ambition" (No. 181). The proportion of five different compassion tendencies can be seen in Figure 1.

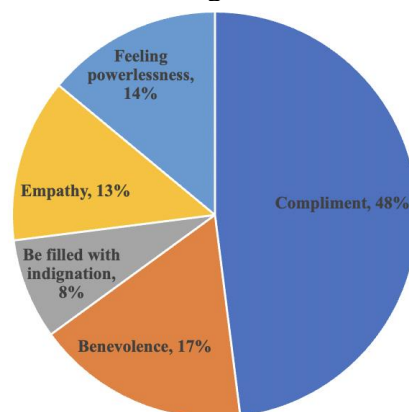


Figure 1: The proportion of five kinds of compassion tendencies.

On the whole, this part of the audience, based on jointly recognizing the spiritual quality of the second uncle and generating compassion, combined with personal experience and experience to distinguish five different modes of compassion. This shows that suffering through media "mediation" can produce public compassion to some extent, but the specific type of public compassion is beyond

the control of the media. This is largely influenced by subjective factors such as the user's experience, cognitive structure, and level of knowledge. In particular, in addition to the praise type of compassion, a considerable number of netizens revealed a relatively strong sense of powerlessness based on compassion for the second uncle. They either condemn the structural causes of suffering or feel powerless against the seemingly "cold" reality of society. It can be seen that in the framework of the media suffering narrative, there are still members of the public who use "compassion" to express their voices and try to fight for the right to "negotiate" with the state.^[14] It can be found that the public can understand their situation by comparing themselves with others, and thus influence individual value judgments. In this video, the second uncle still maintains an optimistic attitude towards life in the face of severe suffering, which is in sharp contrast to the young people who are currently in a high tempo of life anxiety. Many netizens expressed that "mental internal friction is cured", and it is in this comparison that they found the exit of their own emotions and rebuilt the cognition of the individual state and the environment.

4.2.2. No Compassion: "Compassion Fatigue" and Emotional Resistance

In 256 samples, the emotional tendency to explicitly reject compassion accounted for only 6%, but this part of the strong emotional expression deserves attention. Among the samples who refused to sympathize, 50% of the samples showed compassion fatigue for the second uncle incident itself, believing that the video created a "mental consumer product" to bring people into a certain atmosphere of empathy while ignoring the structural factors that cause group anxiety in today's society, which is a larger range of "social PUA". For example, "After many people are intentionally or unintentionally brought into this kind of empathy by network emotions, they fall into the thinking cycle of 'my mental internal friction is that I am not strong enough, not open-minded enough, not hard enough', and can't see the real cause of group mental internal friction. When something happens, they don't look at whether the external environment is fair, but first think about whether they have a problem with their ability or not hard enough." In a state of self-denial and self-reflection "(No. 7). Another type of commentary tries to deconstruct suffering and dissolve suffering, arguing that it is not necessary to express compassion for such suffering narratives, but should pay more attention to other elements such as people's spiritual qualities and objective causes of suffering. A more typical view is such as, "It is not to celebrate suffering, but to love life is to live" (No. 32; No. 195). The proportion of two different unsympathetic tendencies can be seen in Figure 2.

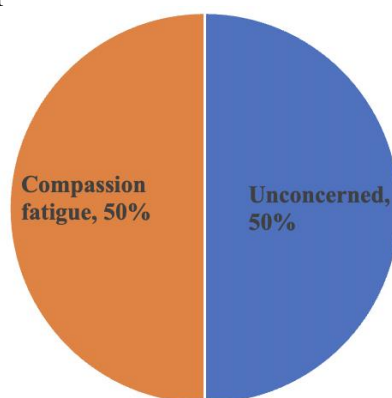


Figure 2: The proportion of two kinds of unsympathetic tendencies.

The commonality of such commentaries is that they shift the focus of discourse to an understanding of "suffering" itself and its "mediating" process. Specifically, the bitter life experience of the "second uncle" has been responded to and embraced by the mainstream world of the "distant" urban middle class through the writing of the @Yige, and has realized cross-class dissemination to some extent.

Through this spatial circulation in the social sense, the suffering of the second uncle has gained relatively full visibility in the mainstream public space and has stimulated a large number of public discussions. In this process, the writing of the @Yige can be regarded as the key carrier of "mediating" the suffering of the second uncle. As mentioned above, in the communication strategy of "mediating" suffering through video, the element of suffering is weakened and individual spirit is emphasized, and the sense of community as "us" is strengthened by shifting the perspective of "others". While arousing public compassion to a certain extent, part of the public is also dissatisfied or even disgusted, resulting in compassion fatigue, and thus expressing their emotions through sharp words. Resist the "assimilation" of a certain mainstream ideology.

It is worth reflecting that in today's society, public opinion has been alienated by consumption to some extent, and public opinion shows a different consumption trend from the past, one of which is that "media consciously set up and even artificially create various topics for news events to trigger audience discussion". This is not difficult to understand, after the release of the video, the @Yige suffered a certain degree of skepticism, and public opinion accused it of alienating the second uncle himself into a "consumer product" to gain traffic. Some netizens pointed out in the comments section that in this era of consumerism, the video has created a kind of "spiritual consumer goods" that cater to young people, "deliberately" conceals the analysis of the causes of young people's "spiritual internal friction", and creates a kind of "unequal, weak, and nihilistic" empathy.

At this time, as a kind of cultural commodity, it is more difficult for media narration to obtain widespread "public compassion", and the public has a kind of "compassion fatigue" to public opinion, which is mainly manifested as energy exhaustion, emotional numbness and loss of passion.^[15] Therefore, the emergence of "compassion fatigue" prompts the public to show emotional numbness and loss of passion when facing the suffering narrative of mass media, thus showing emotional resistance to the media narrative.

4.2.3. Avoidance of Compassion: "Otherizing" Suffering

34% of netizens avoided the compassion tendency of the second uncle incident by praying for blessings, being gloat, giving advice, and analyzing.

Of the four kinds of a tendency to avoid compassion, the largest proportion is "analysis and questioning". 42% of netizens told the facts or expressed opinions in the comments section, but their attitude toward the incident itself was neutral or unclear. For example, "Let me help you say it, this is the new age of 'video literature' " (No. 42). 38% of netizens expressed their blessings and wishes for the second uncle, exhorted and encouraged themselves, etc., relying on the incident of the Second uncle, but such comments were often limited to the "blessing" itself and did not think too much about it. As far as specific feelings of compassion are concerned, these netizens take an evasive attitude. For example, "Do your best no matter what, your life should not be filled with past regrets" (No. 23).

Some netizens expressed their self-congratulation by comparing the suffering with that of the second uncle, extending the misfortune of the "other" to their relative luck. For example, "Even if I am not successful, I can still entertain myself "(No. 130); "I am a bit like the happiest kind of person" (No. 129). It is also one of the common ways of mediating media suffering to obtain the value judgment of a certain thing or phenomenon through the different comparison between "the other" and "us", and then gather consensus on "us" as a social community.

In addition, a small number of netizens expressed their advice and expectations on the social structural factors that caused the suffering through this incident and expressed their opinions on issues such as policy improvement, and help for vulnerable groups, such as, "The suffering of Second Uncle is closely related to The Times, and the solution is only to make the times better" (No. 122). It is worth noting that some netizens thought about the identity attribute of the video author, @Yige, as a we-media, and naturally associated with the opposite "official media", believing that we media and

official media played complementary roles in this incident, and put forward critical thinking about it. For example, "We-media gives some people the ability to express those things (referring to suffering), while the official media propagates accepting suffering" (No. 14); "We need sincere satire and tragedy, to illuminate the dark corners of humanity and community with a bright and pure light" (No. 64). Judging from the comment text, these netizens who take an evasive attitude are basically not touched by the suffering narrative of the media, and still regard the second uncle incident as a distant "other", expressing opinions from the relevant objective and neutral "third party" perspective. The proportion of four different avoidant compassion tendencies can be seen in Figure 3.

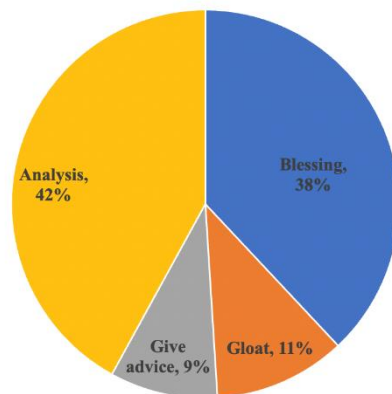


Figure 3: The proportion of four kinds of avoidant compassion tendencies.

It should be noted that as a two-dimensional cultural community gathered by young people, the platform communication is characterized by fragmentation, emotional and personalized, and the comment section is prone to emotional polarization. Therefore, most of the views, analyses, and questioning published by such netizens have not been verified by facts, and most of them are "taken for granted" speculations and jokes. Subsequently, with the deepening of the "Second Uncle incident" process, more and more facts were presented, and many questions from netizens were answered accordingly (for example, the kinship between the second uncle and the author himself, the relevant facts and details were questioned, etc.). Therefore, from the root of the "avoidance of compassion", it is still difficult to divide the boundary between facts and emotions, and even the situation that "the transmission of emotions is greater than the fact" and the trap of "post-truth transmission".

When studying the "emotional logic" in domestic public opinion, scholars pointed out that compared with Western countries, the channels of information disclosure and political participation in the public opinion field in China are not smooth enough, so some of the public who do not know the truth tend to use emotional narrative means to mobilize and create momentum, which is the "public opinion forcing" effect. In this case, whether the facts are true, whether the expression is rational, and whether the discourse is logical are no longer the focus of public attention, and identity and moral identity are "infinitely amplified". Emotional expression at this time (such as the analysis and questioning expressed by netizens for the "second uncle incident") has become a kind of moral energy and social resources weighing each other under specific historical conditions.

In conclusion, this paper takes the video "Three Days Back to the VillageVillage, my second uncle cured my spiritual internal Friction" published by the @Yige in bilibili as an example, and analyzes the mediation strategy of suffering, and further explores the interactive relationship between media suffering narration and public compassion. It is believed that suffering through media "mediation" can arouse various forms of public compassion to a certain extent, and "compassion fatigue" causes the public to show emotional numbness and loss of passion when facing the suffering narration of mass media, showing emotional resistance to media narration. Through the discourse analysis and content analysis, this paper explains and clarifies the interactive relationship between the mediation

of suffering and public compassion to some extent, but there are also limitations.

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