

Analysis on the Secularity of Popular Culture and Its Civilian Consciousness

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Abstract: With the rapid development of society, popular culture, as an important cultural phenomenon, is increasingly penetrating into people's daily life. Popular culture has the characteristics of secularity, which must contain civilian consciousness. The development of popular culture also means the gradual rise of civilian consciousness. The purpose of this paper is to explore the civilian consciousness behind it by analyzing the secularity of popular culture, and explain the social significance behind this cultural phenomenon from various phenomena of popular culture.

1. Introduction

Popular culture is a specific category that primarily refers to the contemporary cultural form that emerged with the rise of modern mass society and is closely related to modern industrial production, with mass media as the main means of dissemination for large-scale cultural production.

Popular culture is a process of experiencing daily sensual pleasure for ordinary citizens through mass media as a means, operating according to the laws of commodity production, and aiming to provide popular literature, popular newspapers, bestselling books, popular music, television dramas, movies, and advertisements, etc. in various forms.^[1]

2. The manifestation of secularity in popular culture

The secularity of popular culture leads the works of popular culture to secularization and civilian life. If a writer wants to win the readership, he must intervene in the real daily life of the public, and express the daily necessities, gains and losses of interests that the public care about in real daily life. In his speech at the Novelist's Forum, Mo Yan said that we should "write as ordinary people" instead of "write for ordinary people", truly stand on the standpoint of the public, identify with the public's way of life and values, reveal the public's living conditions with popular thinking and language, and return from the utopian ideal on the other side to the civilian things such as survival, personnel relations, money, fashion and entertainment.

The novel "Love of Hawthorn Tree" has turned the "Cultural Revolution" into a distant background. The unfinished love between the third child and Jingqiu is not the ideological barrier like "father and mother", but the failure of people's struggle with diseases and natural forces. The horror of leukemia is the source of the sadness and beauty of the story, and the absolute nature of its death is the helplessness and irreparability of pure love. This reflects the secular nature of pure and beautiful love

pursued by the public, and makes the sadness of love break away from the lofty ideology, but attribute to the secular suffering in life. This kind of popular cultural works have a strong attraction to people, and it also shows the public's demand for the popularization of works.

This trend of civilian consciousness is not only manifested in the literary field, but also spread to the corners of the cultural field. In the field of film and television, in recent years, more and more film and television works have been approaching people's lives. For example, two series of works, "I'm Fine in a Foreign Country" and "My Hometown is Safe", depict the difficulty of their lives by showing people of different ages who are struggling in the workplace. The love line, friendship line and family line are all depicted truly, and the audience is like watching their own life. When the public finds their own shadow and resonance from it, they will like it. These are the works that the public likes. Civilian consciousness is reflected in the field of film and television, which can be summed up in two words: "resonance". People pursue "the same" in society, find comfort and comfort in "the same", and give themselves the strength and courage to live.^[2]

In the movie "Article 20", the husband and wife played by Lei Jiayin and Mary quarreled daily, which made the audience feel happy and real. Hao Xiuping's family, who was oppressed by evil forces in the movie, aroused public sympathy, which also stemmed from the public's "resistance consciousness". Eventually, the bad guys were sanctioned, and the public would feel "cool". This "cool" feeling also reflects the public's civilian consciousness. Because it is equivalent to a few elite groups, the general public is usually regarded as a "vulnerable group", oppressed by capital and suppressed by life. However, the rise of Shuang Ju just reflects the awakening of the public's civilian consciousness and its resistance to the label of "vulnerable", which also provides opportunities for popular cultural works.

2.1 Secularization of content and subject matter

The themes of popular culture all come from the daily life of ordinary people, and what they want is realistic, present and photographic truth. Stories such as recreational newspapers and magazines such as Zhiyin, plots in soap operas, and love and hate in popular songs are about ordinary people, daily things, and public feelings. People don't expect it to have any philosophy of life, but look for their familiar real life and characters.

2.2 Secularization of expression

At the same time, the civilian consciousness of popular culture is also reflected in the secularization of expression. Just as the TV series Fanhua is performed in Shanghai dialect, thus narrowing the viewing distance, popular culture always chooses the most popular expression. In Chi Li's novels, the vulgarity of the Wuhan dialect, the widespread use of various buzzwords, and the catchy popular music all contribute to the secularization of the concept of representation. That is, the values of popular culture are secular, and it affirms those small real life, which is not noble or sacred, and does not admire any lofty goals, but gropes and cares about the benefits that can be seen day by day.

2.3 Diversity of manifestations

Popular culture is diverse in form, including movies, television, music, dance, drama, novels and other art categories. These art forms have their own characteristics, integrate with each other, and together constitute a rich and colorful popular cultural landscape. The Divine Comedy, represented by Jiangnan Style and Uneasy, quickly became popular all over the world in a short time with its simple, easy-to-learn, "poisoning" melody and crazy attraction. The rise of these divine comedies is

inseparable from the promotion of mass media, especially the communication function of the Internet. The phenomenon of Divine Comedy embodies the basic characteristics of popular culture, such as popularity, entertainment and gameplay, and media dependence.

At the same time, contemporary literature has also been profoundly influenced. Literary works have become more diversified and market-oriented under the impetus of popular culture. For example, in Chi Li's novels, we can see a series of depictions of ordinary characters, who face all kinds of troubles and trivial things in life and show their real life style. For example, Yin Jiahou in *Troubled Life*, who worked hard between work and family, experienced all kinds of troubles and helplessness, but always kept his persistent pursuit of life. Wang Shuo's novels profoundly reveal people's complicated mentality towards money in the social transformation period. For example, Zhang Ming and other characters in *Rubber Man* pursue interests by any means under the temptation of money, which eventually leads to the distortion of human nature and the deterioration of interpersonal relationship. These works reflect the influence of popular culture on people's values by exploring the concept of money. Literary works are constantly innovating in form and content to meet the needs of popular culture. This trend makes literary works pay more attention to marketization and readers' acceptance while maintaining humanistic care and ideological depth.

2.4 Broadness of audience

The secularity of popular culture is also manifested in its huge audience. Popular culture has a wide audience, covering different ages, genders, occupations, regions and other social groups. It pays attention to meeting the cultural needs of the broad audience, and has strong popularity and influence. Take the hit drama in the summer of 2024 as an example. According to data from Xinhuanet, the total box office of this period has exceeded the 10 billion mark, showing the strong recovery momentum of the Chinese film market. Among them, more than five works of drama films, cartoons, documentaries, action films, crime films, romance films and other types of films have been released, meeting the needs of different audience groups. This diversified film supply strategy not only enhances the overall vitality of the market, but also provides audiences with more choices for viewing movies. At the same time, the audience composition also shows a trend of younger and increasing demand for family movie viewing. The proportion of audiences aged 24 and under reaches 22.0%, and that of audiences over 40 is as high as 16.8%. This change shows that the enthusiasm of young audiences for the movie market is picking up, and the demand for family movie viewing is more obviously reflected in the growth of the proportion of middle-aged and elderly audiences.^[3]

The extensiveness of popular cultural audience is not only reflected in the huge number of audiences, but also in the diversity of social strata, age group and cultural background of the audience. This broad audience base enables hit dramas to have a wider social impact in the process of dissemination and promote the prosperity and development of popular culture.

2.5 Commercial prominence

As a kind of commodity culture, popular culture has a strong commercial color. It focuses on the production and sale of cultural products, aiming at profit. This commercial feature makes popular culture pay more attention to market demand and audience feedback, so as to constantly adjust and optimize its own cultural content and form. For example, during the broadcast of the 2024 Spring Festival movie "Hot and Hot", a large number of tidbits and clips were filmed on the Internet, as well as topics such as Jia Ling's successful weight loss, which attracted the attention and discussion of a large number of viewers, forming a very high popularity and topicality. The producer of the series has gained a lot of traffic and clicks by broadcasting the clips of the series on the online platform. Then, these traffic can be used for commercial activities such as advertising placement and brand

cooperation, and at the same time, the audience can be successfully introduced into cinemas to increase the box office. In addition, many popular dramas and popular movies can also drive the development of related derivatives markets, such as the costumes and props of the characters in the dramas, which can become hot-selling commodities.

3. The Causes of Secularity of Popular Culture

The secularity of popular culture is mainly manifested in the fact that its content is close to ordinary people's lives, reflects their daily needs and emotions, and transmits cultural information in an easy-to-understand, intuitive and simple way. As an important feature of modern culture, the secularity of popular culture is the result of the interweaving of many factors.

3.1 The change of cultural demand brought about by the development of market economy

The rise of popular culture is closely related to the development of market economy. Market economy promotes the commercialization of cultural products, making cultural production guided by market demand. In order to meet the consumption demand of the public, cultural products have to become easy to understand and entertaining, thus having secular characteristics. With the rise and prosperity of market economy, mass culture as a commodity culture has risen rapidly. It follows the law of the market, aims at making profits, and meets the cultural needs of the public by mass production and sales of cultural products. This market-oriented operation mode makes popular culture pay more attention to secularity to cater to the tastes and preferences of consumers.^[4]

The secularity of popular culture is deeply rooted in the lives of ordinary people, and it is usually manifested in the works as detailed description and emotional resonance of the triviality of daily life. As a popular culture in modern society, its audience is ordinary citizens. Under the high-speed operation of modern society, they face the pressure of survival competition every day and the troubles caused by daily necessities. For this group, they don't have much interest in thinking about the grand narrative of the dominant culture, nor do they have much leisure to meditate on the ultimate pursuit and ultimate value. They are more interested in the content close to secular life, and prefer to obtain information and cultural enjoyment in an easy-to-understand, intuitive and simple way. Therefore, popular culture, with its close to reality and easy to understand characteristics, quickly occupied the cultural market and became an indispensable part of people's lives. In popular cultural works, the world outlook, outlook on life and values of ordinary people are always clearly shown.

3.2 The Dissolution of Elite Culture in the New Media Environment

The rapid development of communication technology, especially the popularization of modern media, provides conditions for the wide spread of popular culture. The popularity of modern media, such as TV, Internet and mobile phones, provides a broad platform for the spread of popular culture. These media tools not only enable cultural products to quickly reach a wide audience, but also make it easier for audiences to obtain and share cultural information. This convenient media environment promotes the secularization of popular culture.

One of the reasons why the secularity of popular culture can develop rapidly lies in the dissolution of elite culture in the environment of new media technology-"dispelling charm". In recent years, the word "Qumei" has been widely circulated on the Internet. The word "Disenchantment" originated from Max Weber's "Disenchantment of the world", which refers to the disintegration of an integrated religious interpretation of the world. It occurred in the modern transformation of Western countries from religious theocracy to secular society. Generally speaking, "disenchantment" refers to the dissolution of the mystery, sanctity and charm of science and knowledge.^[5] By extension, it can also

refer to the subject's signifier doubts or representational confirmation of sublime, exemplary, elegant and meta-discourse in cultural attitude. That is to say, in the Internet environment, the status and identity of communication subjects are becoming more and more diversified, and many voices are advocating that we should not worship the so-called elite culture, but flatter authority, celebrities and wealth. It can be seen that under the network environment, people are constantly advocated not to blindly worship the elite culture, but to break the filters of authority, celebrities and wealth, pay attention to their own lives and become the real masters of society. This phenomenon reflects the awakening of today's popular civilian consciousness. Instead of taking the elite as the core, they pay more attention to their own lives and interests. This also reflects the awakening of today's public civilian consciousness. They no longer pursue the elite as the core leadership, but pay more attention to their own lives and make themselves masters of society.

3.3 Popular culture is deeply rooted in ordinary people's lives

The secularity of popular culture has an important relationship with the materiality of economic and social development. With the transformation and changes of society, people's lifestyle and values have undergone profound changes. As a cultural form that reflects social reality and people's spiritual needs, popular culture has also undergone corresponding changes. It focuses more on secularity to accommodate people's increasingly diverse cultural needs. After the reform and opening up, Chinese society has undergone a profound transformation, a secular mass society has gradually formed, and the interest of the middle class has become the standard of social aesthetics. This social transformation has led to the change of the public's demand for culture, from the pursuit of spiritual promotion to the pursuit of entertainment and recreation, which has further promoted the secularization of popular culture.

Since the reform and opening up, China's economy has developed rapidly, and people have paid more and more attention to secular material living standards. Chinese people's civilian consciousness is becoming clearer and stronger. They demand entertainment, are keen on consumption, enjoy life and exercise their main power. This kind of civilian consciousness has also become the main line of the existence and development of popular culture, which determines the most essential attribute of popular culture.

4. Civilian Consciousness in the Secularization of Popular Culture

Why do people like or even follow some popular cultural works? One reason is that the more people yearn for something, the more they like it. The popularity of the "re-employment men's group" is an example. Several singers who debuted in Happy Boys in 2007 experienced more than ten years of silence and submersion. After more than ten years, they became popular again by chance and even boarded the Spring Festival Evening. In the variety show they recorded together, the audience liked their relaxed, natural and funny when they got along, and envied their deep brotherly feelings. This kind of feeling beyond friendship is more like family affection, which makes the audience feel moved, think of their own friendship, and feel sad why they don't have such a group of friends.

The audience found their own shadow in them. After so many years of low times, they finally exploded. Everyone's love for them also reflected the public's inner desire to accumulate wealth, find a trace of vitality in their unsatisfactory life, and find the meaning and strength of life in their stories. People follow what they desire and don't have in popular culture, trying to get happiness and comfort from it.^[6]

People follow popular culture just because they want to get what they want in it. The public has changed into self-centered, and the consciousness of the civilian people has awakened. They think that cultural works that serve the public are what they want to pursue, so now there are more and

more secular and civilian works that are in line with life and the public.

5. The Significance of the Secularity of Popular Culture

The best embodiment of the secularity of popular culture and the consciousness of civilians in today's society is that everyone becomes the disseminator of information and the creator of popular culture. With the popularity of new media platforms such as Douyin, Xiaohongshu, and Kuaishou, people post videos on them to share ordinary life, follow popular hot spots, and even eat ordinary people's "melons" on the Internet, it can be seen that people pay more attention to ordinary life and pay more attention to yourself, which reflects the civilian consciousness in secular culture. People encourage each other on the Internet, encourage each other, and actively face the hardships of life. This beautiful secularity will make the society more United. Under this trend, it is helpful for people to reflect social display and people's livelihood needs, enhance cultural popularization and dissemination, and promote cultural diversity and innovation. Specifically manifested in the following aspects:

5.1 Meet the cultural needs of the masses

The secular characteristics of popular culture enable it to better meet the cultural needs of the broad audience. Through easy-to-understand content and diversified forms, it enables people to find spiritual sustenance and emotional comfort in their busy life.

5.2 Promote the popularization and dissemination of culture

The secular characteristics of popular culture help to promote the popularization and dissemination of culture. Through the wide spread of modern media, cultural products can quickly cover a wide audience, thus improving people's cultural literacy and level. For example, the reason why "Nezha: The Devil Boy Comes to the World" released in 2019 can arouse strong resonance among the audience lies not only in its exquisite pictures and shocking special effects, but also in its profound cultural connotation and emotional expression. Through the story of Nezha, the film conveys many profound philosophies and life wisdom, and makes the audience feel the charm and value of traditional culture in the process of watching the film. At the same time, the film also shows profound reflection and humanistic care for modern society. Nezha's growth process is not only a struggle and challenge to personal destiny, but also a discussion and reflection on human nature, morality and values in modern society. Through the story of Nezha, the film calls on the audience to face their own destiny and inner fears bravely, stick to justice and kindness, and pursue their dreams and happiness.

5.3 Promote social harmony and stability

The secular characteristics of popular culture help to promote social harmony and stability. By expressing people's secular feelings and beautiful pursuits, it enhances people's emotional connection and sense of identity, and helps to alleviate social contradictions and promote social harmony.

5.4 Promote the development of cultural industry

The secular characteristics of popular culture help to promote the development of cultural industry. Through its commercial operation, cultural products can become hot-selling commodities in the market, thus driving the development and growth of related industries.

However, the secular character of popular culture also brings some negative effects. First of all,

secularity is accompanied by vulgarity to a certain extent. Popular culture often ignores the social benefits of cultural products and crowds out elegant culture. If it is not restricted, it will lead to cultural ecological imbalance. Secondly, the flattening and batch copying of popular culture dispels cultural individuality and creativity, and makes cultural products uniform and lack depth. In addition, the excessive entertainment and commercialization of popular culture also leads to the public's superficial taste of culture and consumerism tendency.^[7] The rapid and convenient dissemination of information also makes vulgar information and bad culture spread, which affects the progress of popular culture, so it needs to be restricted by law and society.

6. Conclusions

Secular material life is the realistic foundation of popular culture civilian consciousness, and popular culture civilian consciousness also provides sufficient meaning and value for the secular material life of the masses. It affirms and recognizes the current living state and significance of the public, and strives for a certain cultural status and basis for the real daily life of the public. There is no problem with the secularity of popular culture itself. The crux of the problem is that identifying with the public does not mean giving up poetry, just as identifying with suffering is not to compromise with suffering, but to complete the transcendence of world life at a higher level. While exposing the ugliness and despicability of life, we can't break the normal order and beauty of life together. It is not important that the culture is noble and mediocre. What matters is that the life of the masses must be true, rich and diverse.

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