The Current Situation and Future Development of Female Images in the Network Media

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Abstract: The progress of the Internet has brought faster and wider dissemination of information, and brought a communication platform for women to show their charm. But the Internet, as a more efficient medium of communication, has also deepened the dilemma of the male gaze for women. The author used summarizing literature as a method, and summarized the current situation, problems and future development of female images on the Internet based on the survey results. The research purpose of this paper is to discover the presentation of female images on the Internet in the current Internet era, discover the existing problems and challenges faced by the current female images on the Internet, and explore the future female images that promote the development of feminism. The problem, according to the study, is that network media focuses on women's appearance and body, imprisoning women in the male gaze, and women are objectified and lose their own value. In order to further promote the development of feminism, the author believes that women should use the Internet media to spread feminist ideas, the government should strengthen the supervision of the Internet, and culture and education should be improved.

Keywords: male gaze, objectivation of women, network media, influencers, female image

1. Introduction

With the development of science and technology, the Internet speeds up its dissemination and improves its ability to transmit information. People all over the world frequently use the Internet to socialize, especially some short video platforms become popular. Many women have become influencers, posting photos and videos of themselves on social media to gain attention. Due to the Internet celebrity economy of marketing and the long patriarchal perspective of the male gaze on women, network media magnifies the value of a woman's looks, solidifying the image of women under the stereotypical patriarchal society, and imprisoning women in the male gaze. In order to cater to the public's aesthetic and make money, the images of many women in photos and videos have begun to become cute and obedient, conforming to the requirements of the traditional patriarchal society for women. As a result, women objectify themselves in the male gaze brought by the Internet and gradually lose their awareness of self-worth. Under the negative impact of the Internet on women's images, many female influencers have created a variety of video content, created brave and confident female images, and broken the traditional male gaze on women. The author wants to explore the female image that can really promote feminism. Therefore, the author's specific research topic is the current situation and future development of female images in the

network media. In this paper, the author will specifically study the current representation of women on the Internet, the objectification of women in the network media, and the development of new female images in the network media in the future. By summarizing the literature, the author will describe in detail the presentation of today's female images on the network media, find problems and inspiration, predict the future female images in the network media, and put forward suggestions to improve the female images.

2. The Female Image and Image Transformation in the Internet Era

2.1. Female Image in the Network Media for Long Time

The Internet is the product of scientific and technological progress. Its convenient functions and superior transmission speed make it a popular media in the new era. Various short video platforms and social software develop rapidly and become frequently used software in daily life. As the participants of the network, women participate in the construction of the Internet, and the image of women is also shaped by the Internet. The Internet celebrity economy brought about by short video platforms has given many women the opportunity and possibility to work but also strengthened the gaze and discrimination women have encountered. The images of women created by the Internet today are often combined with "beauty", either beauty and fashion influencers who are good at grooming themselves, or text, video, and audio that attract attention through nudity and sexually suggestive copy or images. Thus, the image of women on the Internet is more and more related to beauty. And hidden in the praise of "sexy", "beautiful", "fashionable" and other words, the stereotypical requirements for the image of women and the attitude of contempt will not be noticed. At the same time, women will pursue beauty as the goal, thinking that the female image in network media is just a way of entertainment, thus falling into the trap of the male gaze [1]. Except for beauty, women are currently expected to be submissive. Men have long expected women to meet their needs. They need to satisfy the male self-esteem, and become weak and submissive, so as to set off the male's strength. At the same time, they must also become good wives, fulfilling themselves according to the needs of male society, gentle but not weak, with strong character, but this self-sacrifice is for the service of men [2]. Beauty and submission are the qualities that modern women are popular with men on the Internet.

2.2. The Change of Female Image in Network Media

While the Internet is aggravating the objectification of women, women are also beginning to show a new image of brave and free women on the Internet. In the network media, women get different image representations and discourse construction [3]. On the short video platform, many alternative female Internet celebrities began to appear, such as Lizi Qi, who filmed pastoral life and spread excellent traditional Chinese culture, Fang Qi(kiki), who filmed travel videos with romantic scenes and beautiful copywriting, papi Jiang, who filmed funny jokes that made people think. Their video content is not what men expect of women -- beautiful, cute, obedient, sexy. Instead, they distribute attractive content in their respective fields, and the quality of the video is more of a selling point than the level of their appearance. Their accounts have been successful, with millions of followers and views. This phenomenon proves that although the male gaze on women in society is strict and rigid, the new image of women displayed on the Internet platform is also extremely accepted and loved by the public. Women can gain a place on the Internet without looking and figuring. They appreciate themselves, are willing to show themselves, show their true self, have unrestrained vitality. Although different in practice, they have made their own personality known openly and frankly in a way that leads to the same destination and completed their own writings for themselves. They take "breaking through themselves" as the starting point of all their behaviors. Their behaviors

and value orientation subvert traditional gender norms and let the public see the truth in the truth from them [4]. The exploration and innovation of female Internet celebrities for female images have broken the bondage of traditional female images. Through the dissemination of the Internet, the qualities of bravery, confidence and freedom have also been spread to more Chinese women, allowing them to reposition their own values.

3.   Images of Women Being Objectified on the Internet

China has been a patriarchal society since ancient times, and women are the possessions of men as objects to be admired. Although China advocates gender equality, the rise of the Internet has made women objects to be stared at again. Because the Internet celebrity economy needs a selling point that can make money quickly, and the beautiful faces and sexy bodies of women are the selling point that can be used to quickly attract the attention of men, that is, the click rate, and then cash. Over time, in order to pursue visibility, women strive to get close to men's aesthetic, and then become the "object to be watched", while the value of women is weakened invisibly and alienated into "serving men". The art critic John Berger, in "The Method of Seeing," puts forward the idea of the "woman seen": "Men looking at women, and women looking at themselves being looked at, determine not only the relationship between men and women, but also the relationship between women and themselves. The appraiser of the woman herself is the man, and thus she becomes an object, primarily a visual object: a landscape." [5]. The female image in contemporary network media is dominated by the male aesthetic. When the male aesthetic becomes popular, all the people in society will take the male aesthetic as the mainstream, including women subconsciously tend to use the male gaze perspective when watching women [6]. After women habitually become the object of male gaze, when women examine a woman, they will automatically demand women with male aesthetic, so that women live in the male gaze, and lose the beautiful quality and value of women themselves.

4.   The Future Image of Women in Network Media

4.1. The Awakening of Women's Self-wareness

To develop female images in network media, the first and most important thing is the awakening of female self-consciousness. From being the objecification of the male gaze to becoming the dominant person, abandoning the requirements of women under the patriarchal society, the pursuit of independence. Like many female influencers these days, they boldly show off their unique selves.

4.2. To Raise Public Awareness of the Social Value of Women

Secondly, the public in society should be made aware of the strength and value of women, rather than the value of beauty under the male gaze. Women are not objects, but people who can contribute to society as well as men. The authors of *"Half the sky"*, who have traveled to dozens of countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, argue that prioritizing women's problems can do more to promote development in developing countries [7].

4.3. Monitor the Secure Operation of Network Media

In addition, the good ecology of the Internet should be maintained to ensure that rational feminism takes root and sprouts. The Internet has given everyone equal opportunities and allowed women to prove their talents on a wider scale. However, the Internet now lacks a sound legal system to implement regulatory measures, so that network security is jeopardized [8]. Set up female channels

on public platforms and publish high-quality feminist topics to trigger rational and positive discussions. In the internet which is a double-edged sword, media monitoring and media education are particularly important. Besides, new technologies should be used to promote gender equality [9].

4.4. Promote Culture and Education

Finally, culture and education are the fundamental measures to promote gender equality, which can really make everyone in the society understand and promote the development of feminism, so that women can establish a new image in the new era and get rid of the plight of being objectified completely. On the basis of the existing network media, the society should enhance the ideological consciousness, strengthen the correct values, promote gender education, and strengthen the construction of network culture. The society should combine the thought of feminism with the communication of network public opinion and reconstruct the female image in network media with the theory of communication [10]. The government should actively build a good Internet atmosphere, connect values with excellent traditional culture, integrate socialist core values into the network, influence the thoughts of Internet participants imperceptibly, and convey respect for women and understanding of feminism. In terms of education, the society should be educated in an all-round way, and all social groups, including men, should be allowed to establish correct gender concepts, not only in form, but also fundamentally change the values of objectifying women produced in the long-term patriarchal society. Women should be educated and given opportunities to show their wisdom and talents, which will also enable them to bring progress and development to the whole society. It is necessary to educate Internet practitioners, not to blindly pursue traffic, but to improve the gender consciousness of practitioners, so that they can grasp professional ethics and protect the pure land of the Internet.

5. Conclusion

The Internet is not only an important factor in the intensification of objectification of women in the new era, but also a platform to display new images of women. Women are currently expected to be submissive and pretty on the Internet, a result of the male gaze combined with the Internet celebrity economy. However, many female influencers have begun to shoot more content focusing on female connotation, to express the independent, brave and confident female image of the new era, and to a certain extent get rid of the discipline of male gaze. The Internet is a double-edged sword, so the people and the government should jointly amplify the advantages of the Internet and promote the development of feminism with the Internet. In order to promote the steady development of feminism and achieve gender equality in the society, women should be self-conscious. The government should maintain the good ecology of the Internet, and really change the gender concept of the society through education and culture, so that the maximum value of women can be reflected in the society. At present, this paper uses the method of summarizing literatures, but lacks the proof of large amounts of data and actual investigation. More specific and accurate data are still needed to support the conclusion of this paper. In the future, people can use the theory of communication to spread the content of feminism, so as to arouse more women's consciousness, take the initiative to challenge the traditional female image, create a more diversified female image, and let men realize that they should not define and objectify women. The government should monitor the trend of Internet public opinion, establish a good Internet ecology, and give everyone discourse right. Society can change women's self-cognition through education, and create an era of equality between men and women through the combination of education culture and Internet media.

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