

From "Miss Sister" to "Sister Lang": An Analysis of a New Female Culture

-- Taking "Sister Riding the Wind and Waves" as an Example

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Abstract

In this article, we discuss the new female cultural phenomenon shown through the narrative form of female TV programs in the new era. Focusing on the theory of "other", this paper takes "sister riding the wind and waves" as a case for text analysis, and analyzes the female narrative discourse, male gaze, and "sister circle culture" in TV variety shows, in order to reverse the contemporary society's double prejudice against middle-aged women's age and gender.

Keywords

Social Media Platforms; Emotion; Culture.

1. Research Background

Before the broadcast of "sister riding the wind and waves", the screens and social media platforms were dominated by youth idol talent show variety shows such as "youth with you" and "creation 101", which showed some beautiful girls with fair skin and youthful vitality. However, in 2020, the first season of the girl group growth variety show "sister riding the wind and waves" launched by Hunan TV ranked first in all dimensions of data, with more than 300 million views in three days, and more than 44 billion topic reads. At the end of the show, the broadcast volume exceeded 5 billion [1]. The second season of "sister riding the wind and waves" was launched and attracted widespread attention again, which shows the popularity of this age-defying female talent show. "sister riding the wind and waves" and previous variety shows such as "creation 101" and "wife's romantic travel" all focus on the life, work and emotional issues of contemporary women, and the shows are also collectively referred to as "she variety shows"[2]. "She variety show" can be traced back to "super girl" in 2004. With the development of the times, "she variety show" continues to develop, and the topic has shifted from "young women" to "middle-aged women" in their thirties. The protagonists of "sister riding the wind and waves" are all "30+" middle-aged women, more precisely middle-aged female stars.

The producers, content and consumers of TV programs in different periods follow the historical paths of gender narrative changes in different periods. In "the second sex", Beauvoir analyzed the gender power mechanism of men and women, and initially proposed the concept of "other", arguing that women are not born, but are constructed under the discourse of men." It is the complete abandonment of the subject, which willingly becomes the object in obedience and worship" [3]. Traditional TV variety shows are market-oriented and entertainment-oriented, in which the program production, guest setting, and narrative structure all reflect the male-dominated consciousness. Taking "running brothers" and "extreme challenge" as examples. Female guests are most of the time. It is that women have always been protected by male guests and subordinated to women who have always been self-proclaimed in the status of "other".

The content of the program "sister riding the wind and waves" was supposed to present women's inner appeals and emotions, abandoning the stereotype of traditional women's group variety shows. But a closer look reveals that the details presented in these shows are still carried out from the perspective of the male gaze. In "sister riding the wind and waves", a certain sister's well-maintained face or golden ratio body is often searched on Weibo, which arouses the attention and discussion of netizens. Most of this stereotype of women comes from the gaze of men. On the much-anticipated group night, the program team invited male assistant guests, which is a concrete manifestation of this stare.

2. The Difference between "Miss Sister" and "Sister Lang"

The current Internet buzzword "miss sister" refers to young, gentle, and lovely women. Calling them "sister" cannot reflect their own cuteness, so it is further developed into "miss sister". It is called "beauty" and "goddess". After that, another term for women, referring to all young and beautiful women.

Women should pay attention not only to self-examination, but also to men's views of themselves. "White, thin and young" is a traditional male aesthetic that makes them usually solidified in women's appearance, body, etc., so as to achieve absolute control of the right to speak. Foucault believes that "power is not an institution or a top-down control relationship, but a general term for complex strategic relationships in society, which is essentially a power relationship, a kind of power exerted on and control over others, which is hidden, fluid, but resistible." Foucault's discipline of power seems to have always existed. In the male-dominated discourse structure, the unequal age and appearance of sisters further deepens the ideology of "women must maintain their youth and beauty regardless of their age".

Under the cultural background of advocating "little fresh meat" in the whole society, "sister riding the wind and waves" "does the opposite", not only encouraging Mesozoic female artists to break free from the shackles of age, but also showing the confidence, independence and mature charm of middle-aged women, and also let more people begin to pay attention to the long-standing issue of women's age and rights. It can be said that, to a certain extent, from a feminist perspective, "sister riding the wind and waves" attempts to break the age discrimination against women in society and strive to speak for middle-aged women. Specifically, the rebranding is significant by giving the "30+" women on the show the role of "sister" status.

Therefore, compared with the "Miss sister" with a cute cultural temperament, "Miss Lang" abandoned the childish and cowardly image represented by "Miss sister", and showed a mature, confident and independent femininity. In the age discourse of the whole society, which is charming and tired of old age, the emergence of the word "sister" just gives women confidence and courage. "Sister riding the wind and waves" is precisely with the help of the fashionable "sister" culture, in the name of "sisters who ride the wind and waves forever", to correct the name of the Mesozoic female artist who is in the bottleneck period. The 30 women selected by the program range in age from 30 to 52 years old. They come from different occupations. Some are already married and have children, some are divorced, and some are still single at the age of 40. In short, they are all in an age crisis. However, the program closely follows the word "sister", constantly emphasizing that "age is only a number" and "middle-aged women also have their own style", and with the help of middle-aged female stars who participated in the draft, it reconstructs the society's understanding of middle-aged women. The 50-year-old of Zhong Liti said: "I don't want to think that they think 20-year-old will win, why will 20-year-old win, I think age is a number, my state mentality is always only 22 years old." When asked specifically about age, the 38-year-old of Wan Qian bluntly said, "girls of every age group have their own charm, why should I deny myself, I have reached my golden age". Here, age is no longer a

secretive topic, on the contrary, "30+" is endowed with mature, confident, independent and intellectual beauty.

The modern feminist movement revealed the deep-rooted sexism of the patriarchal society, and strived to win equal rights for women with men in the patriarchal society. However, in addition to gender inequality between men and women in the entire modern society, there is also age "inequality". American scholar Robert Butler noticed this and introduced the concept of "age discrimination" on the basis of gender discrimination, that is, the prejudice of one age group against other age groups, and the elderly are considered to be physically or socially weak, and only young have value. In the feminist movement, society also lacks due attention to the age inequality of women. Scholar Cui Enhao pointed out that we have always ignored the differences within women: the issues of age and aging among women have always been in a blank area. Even the feminist movement itself sees older women as "alien." In the ideological environment of the whole society's old age, old age often ushered in the golden period of life development, but some women chose to "return to the family", especially for female stars, 30 years old is a hurdle. It can be said that the consumer society since globalization has exacerbated the age discrimination and fascination psychology of the whole society. In the age of consumerism, young people are the main force in the consumer market. In order to attract young people, cultural products also try their best to please the tastes of young people. Whether it is the mass media era dominated by TV and movies, or today's internet era, the media has always been inclined to young women in their 20s and young beautiful women, because they are more suitable for The aesthetic and consumer demands of the contemporary media culture industry are gradually fading out for middle-aged women. In the "birth of an actor" program, Song Dandan bluntly said, "When she is in her 30s or 40s, basically no one asks her to act." In contrast, Wu Jing, Huang Bo, Xu Zheng and other male stars all ushered in the peak of their careers in their 30s and 40s. Therefore, for middle-aged stars, age is friendly to men and cruel to women. This is the age rule in the entertainment industry. Mike Featherstone quotes Kern in the body in consumer culture: Our age is an age obsessed with youth, health and physical beauty. Television, film, and the dominant visual media have produced a plethora of persistent messages to remember that a graceful natural body and a dimpled smile on a radiant face are the beginning of happiness, and even the essence of happiness [4].

The media blindly advocates and advocates the value of youth. Under the dominance of consumer ideology, a dazzling array of cosmetics and developed advertising and cosmetic industries continue to promote and create the myth of youth and beauty, which intensifies women's fear of aging and ugliness. Therefore, when "sister riding the wind and waves" features "30+" women as the protagonists of the show, showing their unique style in this age group, this is undoubtedly a major counterattack against contemporary Meiqing culture [5]. The program slogan "thirty and li, youth returns" is intended to break the age threshold of variety shows and re-endow "30+" women with new youthful connotation and independent spirit.

3. Practical Significance

"Sister riding the wind and waves" integrates gender awareness into narrative and communication forms. Although it does not break through the discipline of collective unconsciousness, its significance in constructing ideal values and personal growth models for women is realistic and profound. Under the constraints of gender-political discourse and commercial capital, women's subject establishment in women's TV programs is accompanied by the gaze of the "other", which has become the inevitable "surplus" in the self-weaving myth. Feminine self-awareness should not just be an empty cultural symbol or a grandstanding

marketing text. On the one hand, program producers need to establish their own female self-discourse based on the field of female subjectivity practice.

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