Online Youth Subculture Performance from the perspective of Emotional Communication--Research on the phenomenon of "Nonsense Literature"

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Abstract: In this study, the semi-structured in-depth interview method is used to conduct qualitative research on the phenomenon of "nonsense literature", in an attempt to answer the reasons and mechanism of its prevalence.Through the research, the author finds that "nonsense literature" not only presents a distinct tendency of satire and resistance and subculture attributes, but also has a powerful communicative function and has its applicable context in real life.It is worth noting that this study also found that the sudden surge in popularity of "nonsense literature" makes people blindly follow the trend, and its contents are mixed, which has a certain negative impact on the network environment, which is worthy of vigilance and reflection.
Key words: Nonsense Literature Emotional Communication Meme Theory Subculture

1. Introduction

1.1 Background Introduction

In the post-COVID-19 era, the situation of COVID-19 in China is changing rapidly.At present, people are returning to normal production and life in an orderly way, but the COVID-19 pandemic is not over yet and the risk of the epidemic still exists.[1]Some overseas scholars believe that the continued occurrence of COVID-19 will reshuffle the world order and that the threat to human life, health and security will be temporary, but the economic and even political turmoil it will affect may last for generations.[2] American writer Thomas Friedman regards the novel coronavirus outbreak as a new starting point of the historical period, and calls the period after the starting point the post-epidemic period.[3]

At this time, due to the influence of epidemic control and conscious protection factors, ordinary people's free activity space is reduced, and the way of leisure and entertainment is limited. People are increasingly putting their spiritual needs on social media such as Douyin, Kuaishou, Bilibili, Weibo, wechat, QQ, etc., deepening the background of "traffic is king". At present, a large number of videos and content that are short of information and strive for traffic flood the network.On social platforms, audiences have created a plethora of meme-rich expressions, such as the "nonsense literature" that this article aims to explore."Nonsense literature" refers to texts that mainly appear in the field of new media and has almost no presence

significance, but mainly absent significance.We have observed that many people are dissatisfied with the low quality content in the current network media, so they use the way of parody to learn nonsense to satirize these works and realize resistance.In this regard, we are curious: why do contemporary youth produce "nonsense literature"?What is the motivation behind it?Why is "nonsense literature" so widespread?The reason for the prevalence of this "nonsense literature" reflects the psychology of the contemporary youth?What spiritual needs do they meet?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Literature review of the phenomenon of "nonsense literature"

The phenomenon of "nonsense literature" has caused the academic circle to study from many perspectives.The initial research on the phenomenon of "nonsense literature" in the academic circle focused on linguistic philology. Zhang Qin analyzed and studied it in terms of pragmatics and semantics in 2021, and pointed out that "nonsense literature" is a special linguistic phenomenon deliberately created by linguistic social groups. It is anti-elite and anti-tradition, with humorous aesthetic style and greeting function.[4] In 2022, Zhu Xinyi analyzed its context effects and interpersonal functions from the perspective of relevance theory, and found a large number of original materials for the study of "nonsense literature".[5] Qian Yimin, Sun Hui and Zhong Yuanyi classified "nonsense literature" and "fuddleology" into the category of "perfunctory science" in 2022, and explained the popular principle of "fuddleology" from the perspective of cognitive processing, arguing that both "fuddleology" and "nonsense literature" implied the public's frustration and resistance to passive social interaction.[6] In the same year, Luo Min and Hu Mingyuan studied the production process and outcome from the perspective of cultural consumption, and pointed out that "nonsense literature" changed from the recovery of audience meaning and happy production to the elimination of subjectivity and the deconstruction of resistance, reflecting the pessimistic situation of Internet cultural consumption.[7]

In a word, the current research on "nonsense literature" mainly focuses on language analysis, which is at the superficial level of concept definition, category division, feature induction, etc., and the in-depth and diversified research is not enough.

2.2 Subculture

The concept of subculture was put forward by American sociologists in the 1940s, but the actual research has already started, and its formation and development have gone through three stages.In the first stage, the Chicago School began to study immigration phenomenon, juvenile delinquency, occupation and gender subculture in the 1920s, and formed the famous Chicago "deviant subculture" study in the 1960s.In the second stage, from 1970s to early 1980s, the Birmingham School took the British working class youth group after the Second World War as the research object, established the academic system of youth subculture research, and opened up the cultural perspective of the subculture.[8] In the third stage, post-subculture research was

put forward by scholars.In 2003, Weinzierl and other scholars believed that the post-subculture was different from the previous youth subculture because of its uniqueness and social practice.[9] Domestic scholars such as Tao Dongfeng have introduced and analyzed foreign subculture theories.

Network subculture is the product of the emergence and development of the Internet, which Andy mentioned in his book After Subculture: A Critical Study of Contemporary Youth Culture published in 2012.[10] There are many types of network subculture in China, such as mourning culture, bullet screen culture and parody culture.In 2017, Wan Jinxiang, Ye Ting and Peng Xuanxuan argued that network parody culture is vulgar, kitsch and vulgar, and is a "Wolf in sheep's clothing", covering up the nature of "evil";[11] In the same year, Gu Xueqiang and Liu Pengfei believed that the network subculture was influencing the values of teenagers imperceptively, making the ideological education of teenagers face great challenges;[12] In 2022, Wang Shuixiong and Zhou Jiteng focused on the Generation Z youth born between 1995 and 2009, and made an overall investigation of the youth subculture formed by them. They concluded that the youth culture of Generation Z has a new form due to the development of the Internet, and the influence has both advantages and disadvantages.[13] In the same year, Li Su and Pan Jingang discussed the causes of modern cynicism such as pan-entertainmentalism, exquisite egoism and consumerism in the youth subculture in the age of all-media, and proposed countermeasures.[14] However, these studies did not study the phenomenon of network subculture from the perspective of emotional communication.

2.3 Theory of emotional communication

Emotional communication theory has attracted much attention from scholars, mainly in the network environment, and has achieved more research results at home and abroad.Emotional communication is supported by three theories: first, emotional language expression;[15] Second, the theory of emotional social sharing;[16] The theory of emotional infection.[17][18] The definition of emotional transmission has not reached a definitive conclusion. Derks D argued in 2008 that emotional transmission is the identification, generation and sharing of emotions or emotional levels among more than one individual.[19] Domestic research on emotional communication has developed gradually in the past decade, with the increasing activity of network media.In 2021, Chen Jingyang divided the early emotional communication studies before 2013, which were mostly based on psychological theories, into the exploration stage.[20] In 2007, Yin Yating explored the field of network emotion communication for the first time with the help of "Xiaoli" event;[21] In 2008, Zhang Jinglong and Li Duansheng studied the expression of social emotions in network communication from the perspective of communication.[22] In 2011, Jin Yunbo and Xu Yuanli, based on the perspective of network communication, explained the influence of network alienation on network emotion communication.[23] From 2013 to 2015, some scholars conducted in-depth research on the framework and mechanism of network alienation.[20]In 2013, Wang Lei studied the propagation mechanism and influencing factors of group emotion based on system dynamics.[24] In the same year, Lai Anting tried to explore the origin and process of group events from the perspective of group emotions, so as to explore

the psychological mechanism of group events.[25] In 2018, Zhu Tian and Ma Chao pointed out from the perspectives of public opinion, psychology and computer science that the research on emotional communication should develop to the holistic emotion research.[26] In 2021, Zhou Shuhuan and Yang Xiaokun made an empirical analysis and research on emotional communication and its impact on social media under the new coronavirus epidemic.[27]

Foreign scholars tend to use empirical research methods to study emotional transmission. In 2014, Kramer et al. believed that emotions displayed by news media would affect people's behaviors.[28] In the same year, Coviello et al. showed that online social media could enhance people's empathy and emotional infectivity.[29] In 2015, scholars Balon and Rime pointed out that compared with the way to express emotions through face-to-face communication in real life, written love is more popular among people.[30]

Up to now, the academic circle has not studied the phenomenon of "nonsense literature" from the emotional communication theory.

2.4 Problem Raising

Therefore, from the perspective of emotional communication theory, this paper tries to answer the following questions: Why do contemporary youth produce "nonsense literature"?How do these motivations affect the spread of "nonsense literature"?What do the reasons for the prevalence of "nonsense literature" reflect on the psychology of contemporary youth?What spiritual needs do they meet?

3. Research Methods

This paper uses semi-structured in-depth interview to try to answer a series of questions such as the reason and mechanism of the popularity of nonsense literature.

3.1 In-depth interview method

3.1.1 Interview outline making

The interview questions are mainly divided into three parts.The first part mainly involves the basic information of the interviewees, including their gender, age and occupation;In the second part, the research questions are reduced to interview questions, and structured core questions are determined for the interviewees (including their views on "nonsense literature" on the Internet). In the third part, new questions close to the reality are put forward according to the objective situation of the interviewees and their answers.

3.1.2 Selection of interviewees

This study conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 12 interviewees for about 60 minutes.The interviews began in December 2022 and ended in February 2023.First, the

interviewees included college students and other young people, and second, they recruited up hosts who produced "nonsense literature" videos through social meetings.More research samples. According to the principle of maximum sampling of qualitative research method, all the interview contents were sufficient to answer the research questions when the 10th respondent was collected, and sample collection was closed.The interviewees were different in age, occupation, location and other aspects, and the degree of homogeneity was low.The interviews were conducted by wechat text interview and one-to-one interview. The interview results were arranged into verbatim manuscripts with a total of 25,013 words.The processing of interview content was completed by myself.The core questions are as follows: opinions on the "nonsense literature" meme itself on the Internet, opinions on young people playing this meme, ways to get in touch with "nonsense literature", the situation of people playing "nonsense literature" meme around them, their own motivation to play "nonsense literature", and ways to make "nonsense literature" meme.It is worth noting that the questions involved in the interview are not limited to this, but can be extended into different subsections depending on the answers given by the interviewer.

4. Research findings and discussion points

4.1 Satirical resistance tendency and subcultural attributes

"Nonsense literature" is a kind of meme formed under the mutation of language. It attracts attention by subverting traditional speaking habits and discourse logic."At a time when speech cannot be expressed as freely as expected, nonsense literature has emerged.There are so many rules on the Internet that you can't always type letters and get through.When you're done saying things you can't, people tend to parody this nonsense literature, "respondents said." Memes are a safe and hidden way to let off steam."One of the distinguishing features of nonsense literature is that it evokes a sense of identity and empathy, as much as it does not.70% of interviewees talked about their personal experiences. In video software such as Bilibili and iQiyi, it is common to encounter a situation where people in short videos or TV dramas say some non-nutritious lines, and a large number of "quotations" such as "listen to your words, listen to your words" will float across the bullet screen.Although only 10 percent of interviewees would follow suit, 80 percent of interviewees admitted that when faced with similar situations in other videos or life situations, they would subconsciously want to use the "nonsense literature" meme as a joke."After the outbreak of COVID-19, my lifestyle changed and home isolation became the norm.Staying at home, I felt an ethereal mood.I often feel that my life is empty and boring. All kinds of information on my mobile phone make me sick and nauseous, and 'nonsense literature' just reflects my mood and state, "the respondent admitted.Stuart Hall proposed an adversarial reading of texts in the theory of encoding and decoding, which detests and even opposes the spiritual core of texts and holds a negative attitude towards the thoughts, feelings and ideologies conveyed by texts.Decoding is the active cracking of the information transmitted by the receiver to the communicator.Audiences dislike receiving boring and boring low-quality content, and "nonsense literature" is an emotional expression based on this basis, which is a resistance to low-quality information.

4.2 Communicative function and social life

"Nonsense literature" has strong application ability and is suitable for a variety of practical contexts.When greeting people, you can say, "Long time no see, I haven't seen you since last time";Encourage others by saying, "You can do this unless you can't";Sarcastically, you can say, "If there's any truth to what you're saying, it's not so unreasonable."When the leader asks about the progress of the work, he can say "not done yet, but not done at all".It is an obvious fact that "nonsense literature" permeates real life and has some influence on today's offline social interaction.It is humorous and easy to imitate. It is a popular meme among young people in social circles."We used to say 'nonsense literature' when we were having fun in the dorm. It was a clever way to follow up a lot of sentences, and it also practiced our ability to be funny," the respondent said.On the other hand, as a meme culture, "nonsense literature" has many limitations in its use offline and is not suitable for serious, formal situations.The interviewee admitted that "I need a lot of courage to speak nonsense literature in front of teachers, which is rarely the case". Similarly, "nonsense literature" should not be used in the summing up of meetings, or it will have nothing to say and become "empty talk" and "conventional talk"."Some leaders act arrogant, find something to do, waste everyone's time, talk over and over again can't say a few important words but pretend badly, either he has no ink in his stomach, or he has nothing to do.Viewed in this way, 'nonsense literature' seems to be a discourse tailored specifically for certain 'useless' leaders.", said the interviewee.When memes are played on people who don't understand "nonsense literature," barriers can also be created and communication barriers created.

4.3 The heat surges and the content is mixed

As a meme, "nonsense literature" is spread too much on social platforms such as Douyin, Bilibili and Weibo.When the interviewee discussed the interviewee's attitude towards "nonsense literature" and other issues, it was found that people were dissatisfied with the abuse of "nonsense literature".Low-quality and inappropriate "nonsense literature" is disliked, while high-quality "nonsense literature" with "something to say" is praised.The former is specifically manifested as the repeated application and brainless circulation of some sayings of "nonsense literature".David Croteau has explained this "star principle," which states that popular products are the primary economic goal of most media organizations."As far as I know, I know nothing" and "A minute on stage, 60 seconds off stage" are the equivalent of "stars", and creating topics related to them provides more opportunities and resources, and is more likely to generate comparable profits and benefits."I like it if it comes up occasionally and at the right time. It's funny for the occasion, but it annoys me if it comes up over and over again," respondents said.In other words, in an environment where "traffic is king", "nonsense literature" is being consumed to the point of being "annoying". When the interviewer continues to ask how "nonsense" has "substance", he will fall into a logical contradiction.The high-quality "nonsense literature" admitted by 80% of the interviewees are the videos organized by using the language of "nonsense literature" as lines, which obviously shows the irony and critical attitude towards language formalism, and the ghost videos and spoof videos

created by combining "nonsense literature" with popular music or network popular "famous scenes".

5. Summarization and Reflection

"Nonsense literature" has experienced the transformation from subculture to mass culture. It uses parody and irony to convey the audience's dissatisfaction with the current phenomenon of expressionism and formalism, which is to fight poison with poison.To resist "nonsense" with "nonsense" has already fallen into a vicious circle, not to mention the invisible control of the hand of capital and market, so it has been covered with a tragic color since its birth."Nonsense literature" has obvious emotional attributes, prominent satirical resistance tendency and powerful communication function, which lays the foundation for its popularity so far.The more young people need emotional catharsis and wish to attack language formalism, the more they cannot leave "nonsense literature".The network environment of "traffic is king" and "entertainment to death" penetrates thoughts into real life with the help of "nonsense literature" and changes people's language habits imperceptible.But in the final analysis, "nonsense literature" is based on "nonsense" in real life as the raw material for the production of the satires, which allude to the drawbacks of today's society: leading cadres procrastinate in meeting and do not solve practical problems, network media content production is quantity and quality, young people are unable to face the competitive social reality, confused about the future, do not know what to do and so on.The disadvantages are the "death knell", while the terrier is the bell for beating. The existence of "nonsense literature" has its own value, and its future development has its own rules.

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