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Endless Authorship and Open Texts: Multiple Perspectives and Meaning Generation in the Self-Representation of "High Speed Rail Drift Bottles"

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Abstract:
This paper analyses the phenomenon of "high-speed rail drift bottles", revealing the close connection between its rapid popularity in cyberspace and self-expression. Adopting a cyber-ethnographic approach, the study explores how "high-speed rail drift bottles", as an emerging open textual practice, reflects the emotional needs of modern people and promotes cultural diversity and tolerance. The article also discusses the significance of this phenomenon for information dissemination, social psychology and a harmonious society, providing new perspectives for understanding social behaviors and cultural phenomena in the Internet era. In view of the complexity of the "high-speed rail drift bottle" incident, this article adopts the "reduction of exposure theory", "transparency theory" and "reciprocity principle" of self-expression theory as its analysis. principle of reciprocity" as the analytical framework to analyses motivational disclosure, relationship construction and psychological reward. Based on the typology of participants and the influence of self-identification and social construction, this paper extracts three "typical patterns" to deeply analyses this online interaction phenomenon.

Keywords:
self-representation, cyber-ethnography, open texts

1 Introductory

"Here, I invite you to listen to my ambition that I have never told others, I want me to be confident and sunny, I want me to achieve something, I want the world to have a beam of light because I am bright ....." This field material comes from the cleaning bag printed with the pattern of the train, which is covered with a "red" passion of an examiner densely. Covered with the "red" passion of an examiner, this is a passenger on the G1836 train on 26 March left the high-speed rail "drift bottle". In the Middle Ages, as a rare means of communication, the floating bottle became a unique symbol of interpersonal communication in the age of seafaring exploration. In China, the earliest open text is Lubu, which was used by soldiers on the battlefield in ancient times to deliver news in a flowing manner and "to announce by dew, wanting the four directions to be informed quickly", holding up the Lubu. Returning to the "high-speed rail drift bottle" itself, as an emerging

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open textual practice pattern, the "high-speed rail drift bottle" integrates physical and virtual space, providing new perspectives for the study of information dissemination and social psychology, which is of great significance to the construction of a harmonious society. The aforementioned cases do provide us with profound insights; however, in-depth investigation of any topic should be closely centered on the specificity of its research object. This study focuses on a unique phenomenon - the rapid popularity of "high-speed rail drift bottles" in cyberspace and the intertwining of self-expressive behaviors, and for this reason adopts the research method of cyber-ethnography, which seeks to delve deeper into the daily lives of cultural practitioners, in order to be more relevant to the daily lives of cultural practitioners. The research method of cyber ethnography is adopted in order to penetrate the research perspective into the daily life of cultural practitioners, so as to understand the essence of this phenomenon more closely and comprehensively.[1] . In examining the changes in non-verbal communication behaviors between passengers on green trains in the 1980s and those on high-speed trains in the present day, although both of them show a microcosm of modern fast-paced life, such as talking, resting and working, there is an unexpected trend: the activity of "handwritten floating bottles" on high-speed trains has accidentally become an emerging trend. In contrast to China's world-leading high-speed railway network, passengers have revived the ancient and warm art of handwriting to weave a romantic chapter of slow time in this fast-moving space. So, what kind of groups are participating in the "high-speed railway drift bottle"? What role do the "high-speed rail bottles" they deliver play in social interaction? What kind of heartfelt feelings are they expressing or listening to in the surging digital torrent? This is exactly the question that this article wants to think about and explore.

2 Literature review

The concept of self-representation was first introduced and defined by Jourard. He initially defined self-representation as the process by which an individual reveals information about himself or herself to a target person[2] . Subsequently, in his book The Transparent Self, Jourard further refined the concept, explaining it as the process of honestly sharing one's personal, confidential thoughts and feelings with others. This process not only involves the transmission of information, but also implies the exchange of emotions and trust[3] . Since then, the focus of self-expression research has been broad and deep, encompassing multiple dimensions.

Firstly, in terms of the themes of self-representation, different scholars have designed a variety of questionnaires to assess individuals' representations on different themes according to the subjects and purposes of the study. Jourard's Self-Representation Questionnaire (JSDQ) covers six thematic dimensions such as opinion-attitude, hobbies and interests, work (or study), money, personality, and physical[4] . Shechtman and Vurembrand, on the other hand, focused on children and adolescents and presented eight thematic dimensions including family, friends, self, and discipline.[5] Papini et al. focused on adolescents' self-representation to their parents and friends in terms of emotions, such as frustration, happiness, jealousy, and other shared emotional states[6] . Second, the target of self-representation is also an important aspect of the study. The relationship between the target person or the expresser and the target person significantly affect the level, frequency, and likelihood of an individual's disclosure. In general, people are more inclined to reveal themselves to close and favorite people (e.g., parents, spouses, or close friends)[7] . Third, the reciprocity of self-representation has also been a hot topic in research. Jourard first proposed the idea that self-representation is reciprocal, i.e.,

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that it triggers the other person to show up.[2] Dindia and Allen's meta-analysis further confirmed this view, and Berg and Derlega proposed three more possible explanatory mechanisms: first, intimate information received from the revealer increases liking and trust in the revealer; second, people tend to give appropriate feedback when they receive a reveal from another person; and third, the reciprocity of the revealing may be a result of imitation by the hearer[8] . Fourth, gender differences have also received much attention in self-representation. Most studies have shown that women tend to express their feelings and thoughts more than men. This gender difference is particularly significant between same-sex partners[9] .

Fifth, there is also a strong link between self-expression and personality traits.Jourard argues that self-expression is a sign and cause of healthy personality and is associated with positive personality traits. Individuals with high personal self-awareness tend to be more willing to reveal their inner world to their peers, which reduces loneliness[2] . Sixth, self-expression also plays an important role in the area of intimate relationships. Research has shown that self-expression has a positive impact on the establishment and development of intimate relationships, such as friendships, relationships, and marriages.[10][11] Self-expression has been shown to have a positive impact on the establishment and development of intimate relationships such as friendship, romance, and marriage. At the same time, certain factors in intimate relationships can also influence individuals' self-expressive behaviors[12] Seventh, loneliness and self-representation. Seventh, the relationship between loneliness and self-expression is complex and subtle. On the one hand, self-representation may help reduce loneliness; on the other hand, loneliness may inhibit individuals' self-representation behaviors[13] on the other hand, loneliness may inhibit an individual's self-expressive behaviors. In addition, some mediating variables may affect both loneliness and self-expression.[14] Self-expression. Eighth, the effects of self-representation are more complex in specific contexts, such as AIDS/HIV disclosure and child sexual abuse disclosure, which may have positive effects such as social support and stress relief, but may also lead to negative consequences such as rejection and discrimination.[15][16] The impact of self-representation is more complex. Victims of child sexual abuse, on the other hand, often choose not to disclose because of fear and self-blame, which further exacerbates their psychological distress.[17] . Ninth, research on emotional and traumatic expression also reveals the important role of self-expression in an individual's physical and mental health. Expressing negative emotions or traumatic experiences, such as through writing, can help promote an individual's physical and mental health[18] .

As a result, future research should continue to delve deeper into the mechanisms of self-representation, its influencing factors, and its role in different contexts to better serve psychological counselling, therapy, and individual growth.

3 Network practice: a field study of handwritten letters from high-speed rail travelers’ rubbish bags

3.1 Reducing Theoretical Perspectives (I): "I'm on the high wire of exam review"

"Now I'm sitting on the high-speed train to the review, I'm confused and anxious, but also full of expectations for my future." This heartfelt monologue is quietly engraved on the cleaning bag decorated with unique textures in the train compartment. 27 March, a netizen on Xiaohongshu anonymously known as "momo"

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posted a warm and attention-grabbing post with a straightforward title: "The prospective graduate student on the G1836 train! Hello", with a picture of the red handwriting cleaning bag carrying countless dreams and passions, so that this inspiration and moving to continue. "I believe that by now you have arrived at the location of the retest with full confidence." "Good luck for the retest, good luck to you and to me." These dialogues full of warmth and encouragement quickly fermented on the network, attracting many eyes, some people here to talk about their anxieties, but also some people use this to look back on their own path of study. As the article continued to climb in popularity, the message Lele (a pseudonym) students have also been exposed to the post in real life. At first, the more introverted Lele felt a tinge of discomfort, believing it to be a subtle difference from her usual image. However, as her classmates expressed their feelings of emotion and encouragement, Lele gradually relieved and gladly accepted the change[https://news.ycwb.com/2024-04/28/content_52651769.htm] .

Focusing on the specific scene of "I am on the high-speed train for the examination review", the high-speed train has not only become a physical mobile space for the candidates, but also a virtual platform for them to communicate their emotions and thoughts. From the perspective of reduction theory, the words left by the candidates on the high-speed train are not only a direct expression of their personal emotions, but also a release of self-pressure and a response to the uncertainty of the future.[19] The text is not only a direct expression of their personal feelings, but also a release of self-pressure and a response to the uncertainty of the future. These words, whether about the anxiety of the examination, the vision of the future, or the questioning and affirmation of the self-competence, all constitute a part of the open text, which actually reflects the dilemmas and needs faced by individuals in the pursuit of self-expression and emotional communication in the modern society: nowadays, it is often difficult for people to find a suitable channel to talk about their inner real feelings. The emergence of "high-speed rail drift bottles" provides a relatively private and free space for them to express themselves, enabling them to share their joys and sorrows with others anonymously. Further, the words in these bottles are constantly disseminated and discussed in cyberspace, and different readers personalize and recreate these words according to their own life experiences and emotions, thus giving them a new life and value. This process of meaning generation not only enriches the connotation and extension of the text, but also promotes the emotional communication and understanding between different individuals.

3.2 Perspectives on Transparency Theory (II): "For You Who Have Never Met"

According to the subject of the survey, "Cat" recalled that she also encountered such an experience during the high-speed train journey from Chengdu to Luzhou, and the letter read as follows: "To you whom I've never met before. Hey, stranger. It's the last day of March. On the high-speed train from Chengdu to Luzhou. The weather is not bad today, like my mood." Cat was touched by this unexpected warmth, and immediately posted a photo of the "drift bottle" letter on social media platforms with the message: "Thank you stranger, Chengdu is a particularly warm city, and I wish you a happy life". This simple response also triggered widespread resonance and concern on the Internet, with the post being reprinted and liked in large numbers, becoming a bridge connecting the emotions of different individuals. Coincidentally, the "stranger" Xiao Li (a pseudonym) also learnt through the Internet that his message had been so valued and responded to. In a follow-up interview, Li talked about the original intention of the message: "I have met a lot of kindness from strangers, so I want to pass on the small beauty, small fortune and cheerful optimism in life to my friends

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with whom I have 'a bond'". This is not only a casual social interaction, but also a vivid portrayal of people seeking emotional resonance and passing on positive energy in modern society.

In the vast network ocean of the digital era, the emerging phenomenon of "high-speed rail drift bottles" not only reflects the individual's desire to seek connection and understanding across time and space, but also shows the complex process of self-expression in multi-dimensional levels under the perspective of the theory of translucency. As a result, individuals are not totally open or absolutely closed in their self-expression, but are in a dynamic and selective state of transparency. In this subtle process of social exchange, at first, the sender shares his or her feelings anonymously, like throwing a stone to stir up a wave, which triggers a warm response from the receiver, opening a cross-temporal textual dialogue, and then, if the resonance deepens, the two parties' self-expression becomes more frequent and in-depth. At this point, the "strict exchange" described by social penetration theory gradually diminishes, and is replaced by a more natural and fluid emotional exchange, as if the two people have established an intangible, intimate relationship that transcends physical boundaries. The responses and retweets from netizens further promote the publicization of this act of self-expression, causing it to resonate with a wider community and generating collective memories and emotional links beyond the individual. As Hendrick (1981) argues, social penetration theory provides a powerful framework for exploring patterns of self-representation in human relationships.[20] . In the case of the "high-speed rail drift bottle", I can see that from the initial tentative disclosure to the later in-depth communication, this process is the epitome of the formation and development of intimate relationships.

3.3 Reciprocity Theory Perspective (III): "I have good news for you"

In the fieldwork of the high-speed train, a modern mobile space, the author has captured a series of individual narratives presented in non-traditional forms, recording the transient but profound emotional exchanges and self-exposure among travelers. Unlike traditional letters or diaries, these stories are more improvised and anonymous, embedded in the cleaning bags of high-speed train carriages, becoming a unique cultural phenomenon. "I have good news I want to share with you!" Under the title of "Take a journey on the go", a traveler not only shared his journey of deciding to embark on an impromptu journey, but also revealed his curiosity and longing for the unknown world. These exchanges not only enrich travelers' experiences, but also promote cultural diversity and inclusiveness: "Dear Stranger, by the time you read these words, I'll be in Chongqing already, this is an impromptu journey, the first destination for three people who haven't travelled together before". These "floating bottle" narratives often contain profound reflections on personal growth, emotional fluctuations and even life choices, and they cross the boundaries of physical space to build a bridge of the heart between strangers, describing in detail recent developments. The above cases reflect how individuals strengthen their self-identity and establish a sense of social belonging through sharing and listening in the closed but open public space of the high-speed train.

According to the theory of social reciprocity (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, 1993), the essence of interpersonal interaction lies in "getting something in return for something".[21] In the case of the "High Speed Rail Drift Bottle". In the case of the "high-speed rail bottle", when a traveler carefully writes down "I have good news for you" and puts it into the high-speed rail bottle, he/she is not only sharing the joy, but also expecting something that is not in his/her mind. When a traveler carefully writes "I have good news for you" and puts it into the "bottle" of the high-speed train, he/she is not only sharing the joy, but also looking forward to an invisible

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response that may never come. This expectation is based on the belief that the kindness and empathy of others will be returned to oneself in some form, even in the most uncertain mobile space or online environment. If the message reveals sincerity and warmth, the recipient (i.e., those who happen to read the handwritten letter) is more likely to reciprocate with intimate words or actions that will strengthen, build, or sustain the meaningful, albeit unseen, connection. The subtlety of relationships is that they transcend physical boundaries. In addition, the stage of development of the relationship profoundly influences the reciprocal behaviors that occurs. The initial shyness and caution of putting pen to paper or unfolding a clean bag for perusal gradually gave way to a deepening of mutual understanding and trust in communication in the Internet space, resulting in a richer and deeper self-expression. It is worth noting that whether or not the revealer allows him/her to reveal in return is also one of the important factors influencing reciprocal behavior. Under the anonymity protection of the "high-speed rail drift bottle", many travelers choose to open up, but also set their own boundaries. This delicate balance not only guarantees the freedom and safety of self-expression, but also stimulates the recipient's desire to explore and respond. Therefore, the rapid popularity of "high-speed rail drift bottles" in cyberspace is not only a collective outbreak of self-expression, but also a vivid interpretation of social reciprocity theory in the digital age.

4 Discussion: Meaning Generation of Handwritten Letters for High-Speed Rail Travelers' Refuse Bags

4.1 The law of sharing through the millennia

The phenomenon of high-speed rail drift bottles is like a clear stream, quietly practicing the instinct of sharing and connection that has spanned thousands of years in human beings. This phenomenon, which at first seems to be a chance encounter between modern technology and traditional letter culture, actually deeply reveals the enduring charm and vitality of the "Law of Sharing" in the context of different times. Since ancient times, from ancient rock paintings and murals to ancient pigeons and geese, human beings have been exploring ways of communication across time and space, using words as a medium to convey emotions and record life. Nowadays, high-speed rail travelers take this ancient tradition in a brand-new form - handwritten letters on rubbish bags, and with the help of the power of the network, they give it a new lease of life and become a unique emotional communication link in the digital age.

Upon further observation, the richness of content and the sincerity of emotions shown in these handwritten letters are all touching. They not only reflect what high-speed rail passengers see and feel during their short journey, but also reflect the collision and fusion of multiple cultures in contemporary society. Through these letters, we can get a glimpse of how people of different professions, different age groups and different regions use words as a bridge to build a bridge of hearts in the common space of high-speed railway. This kind of sharing and connection across identities, backgrounds and regions not only deepens the understanding and empathy between people, but also promotes social and cultural exchanges and dissemination. More importantly, the phenomenon of high-speed rail drift bottle also demonstrates the survival wisdom and innovative vitality of traditional correspondence culture in the digital era. In this era of information explosion and fast-food culture, people often ignore the value of deep reading and thinking. These handwritten letters of high-speed rail passengers, however, remind us in a simple and sincere way that in the fast-paced life, it is still

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necessary to retain a reverence and love for words. They prove that the traditional correspondence culture has not faded away due to the change of time, but has found a new living space and development opportunities under the new technological background. To sum up, the author thinks that the significance of handwritten letters in the rubbish bags of high-speed rail passengers is a vivid interpretation of the "Law of Sharing" that continues across the times.

4.2 Modern interpretations of social tension

In the current wave of digitization, the modern interpretation of social tension has taken on a more diverse and subtle form in every corner of our lives. The rise of high-speed rail drift bottles is a vivid portrayal of the change of social psychology and behavior in the context of this era. In the modern society filled with digital social communication, although people enjoy the convenience of instant communication, they also feel more and more alienated and empty in virtual communication, and have an unprecedented desire for sincere and profound interpersonal connection. High-speed railway, the steel dragon connecting cities, has quietly become a new social stage, on which float not only the physical sense of the floating bottle, but also the deep call for emotional resonance in the heart of modern people.

On the high-speed railway, passengers are temporarily linked together by a common destination, forming a miniature society that is both independent and interdependent. At this time, a letter handwritten on a rubbish bag conveys the sincerest feelings of the writer, creating a subtle emotional link between unfamiliar passengers. The social practice of high-speed rail drift bottle is an innovation and expansion of the traditional social model. The existence of anonymity adds a layer of protective color to this freedom, enabling everyone to bravely show their innermost and truest thoughts and feelings while retaining personal privacy. This social mode not only satisfies modern people's pursuit of freshness and excitement, but also deepens the emotional connection between people in an invisible way, allowing social tension to be more vividly interpreted in the vein of modern society. In addition, the high-speed rail drift bottle also reveals a unique balance of tension in modern social interaction - the pursuit of individual expression and self-realization, as well as the desire to establish a deep emotional connection with others. In the process, people learn how to maintain the integrity and independence of their personal space while at the same time being able to cross barriers to establish sincere communication and empathy with strangers. The cultivation and enhancement of this ability undoubtedly provides new paths and possibilities for modern people to find a sense of belonging and identity in the complex and changing social environment, and also provides us with useful inspiration and reference for exploring a healthier and more harmonious social model.

4.3 Insightful Reflections on Social Observations

The phenomenon of high-speed rail drift bottles, like a prismatic mirror, reflects people's deep need for sincere interaction and emotional resonance under the fast-paced and high-pressure life, as well as the unremitting pursuit of human temperature in the digital torrent. On the one hand, the rise of high-speed rail drift bottles is a strong call for real and pure emotional communication in people's hearts under the double attack of consumerism and virtual social networking. With its unique anonymity and immediacy, high-speed rail drift bottle provides passengers with a communication platform that transcends the real social framework but is not virtual, enabling them to temporarily put down their defenses, express themselves sincerely, and seek

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solace and resonance of the soul. This process is not only the fulfilment of individual emotional needs, but also a profound reflection on the status quo of interpersonal alienation in contemporary society. On the other hand, the content of the text in the high-speed rail drift bottles is like a vivid social psychological drama, revealing the loneliness, anxiety and confusion hidden deep inside the hearts of contemporary people while pursuing material affluence. Whether it is the longing for distant landscapes or the confiding in the reality of the plight, it maps out people's profound questioning of the meaning and value of life in the fast-paced life. Apart from the eve, it also deeply reflects the complexity and fragility of modern interpersonal relationships. This uncertainty not only gives social activities a sense of excitement and freshness, but also makes people wonder: in such a fast-changing world, how do we build stable and lasting interpersonal relationships? Should we continue to indulge in virtual social bubbles, or bravely step out of our comfort zones in pursuit of real connections that touch the heart?

5 Conclusion

The handwritten letters on the rubbish bags of high-speed railway passengers, as the figurative carrier of this cultural phenomenon, not only show the infinite possibilities of the intertwining of technology and culture, but also trigger our profound thoughts on the complex relationship between the self, the other and the world. The intertwining of technology and culture has been demonstrated to the fullest extent in the high-speed rail drift bottles. The rapid development of Internet technology provides unprecedented opportunities for the modern transformation of traditional culture, and the high-speed railway, a modern means of transport, has become a vivid stage for this transformation: handwritten letters, an ancient and affectionate way of communication, are revitalized in the speed of the high-speed railway, and a new space of meaning is constructed in the intertwining of the virtual and the real. This kind of cultural inheritance empowered by technology is not only a kind of tribute to tradition, but also a strong proof of the power of cultural innovation. However, the significance of the high-speed railway drift bottle is much more than that. In the face of the future, we expect that the cultural phenomenon of high-speed rail drift bottles can continue to play its positive role and become a bridge connecting different people and different cultures. At the same time, we should also be alert to the possible negative impacts of technological alienation and consciousness deviation, and strive to build a more harmonious and inclusive social and cultural ecology. In the continuous dialogue between technology and culture, let's write a new chapter of cultural inheritance and innovation together.

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