

Research on the Female Image-Building in Mass Media

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Abstract—Mass communication is an indispensable carrier of public opinion and has a profound influence on social cognition. Women are both communicators and audience. Mass communication plays an inestimable role to promote the progress of female ideology in the process of development but at the same time mass communication also makes the female image in the process of transmission distortion of misunderstanding because it is easily affected by many factors. Based on the cultural perspective of the construction of female figure, this paper analyzes the present situation and existing problems of female figures in mass media and puts forward some suggestions.

Keywords—media, gender awareness, female image, image-building

I. INTRODUCTION

Girls' day, which originated in the late 1980s, is generally defined on March 7, the day before March 8. It was first initiated by Shandong University in China and then spread to other Chinese universities. This should be a festival caring about girl, showing the elegant demeanor of college girls, guiding the girls about their ideological quality, moral cultivation, cultural connotation, business ability, mental health, through the cultural activities of the high-grade and high-style, which is one of the representatives of the college campus fun culture. However, the promotion of objectified women in some universities and media e-commerce, which is thought humorous and funny by themselves, actually shows the labels that society places on women. Along with the development of era, the mass media is more and more important to the influence of the shape of the public awareness. In the era of traditional media, the female image has gradually become an important part of the consumption of mass media and is increasingly showing a trend of rigid in the mass media. Female stereotypes are being taken to the extreme in the era of online media. The "female character" has been repeatedly stressed and expanded, and the subjectivity of women has been seriously neglected. In recent years, this trend has become more and more unabated, affecting the public's correct understanding of gender equality.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Media is an important part of modern society; the role of

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media is to encourage and protect the public participate in both public life and the democratic process and exercise the function of criticizing and supervising the state public power and public affairs. In everyday situations, maintaining social supervision of public power and pressure, to ensure the normal operation of the public domain in order to realize the maximum welfare of private subjects in civil society, only depends on the social public opinions. That is to say, the whole society in the public sphere exchanges views through the public media, and query or form consensus on public affairs [1]. Around the world, the media has been shouldering important social responsibilities. The media not only provide social information, but also lead social ideas and create public opinions. Since the birth of the mass media, the media has been given the important responsibility of social instrument [2]. The level of responsibility tracks the contributions of people with decision-making capacity and influence in the organizational strategies because those who control the discourse can indirectly control the minds of people; and given that the actions of the people are controlled by their minds (knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, standards, values), the mind control also implies the indirect control of the action [3]. Media is the process of re-engineering objective reality. The media's construction of "symbolic reality" (mimicry environment) influences the audience's judgment of objective reality, and to a large extent, the accuracy of this "symbolic" reality determines the public's correct cognition of objective reality [4].

Stereotypes, or "fixed bias", have gradually become the important theory basis of understanding media effect. A considerable amount of research has found that the real life of the women does not show in the mass media, "Men and women have been shaped in traditional gender roles which follow the cultural norms by the mass media" [5]. From the reality of the development of media, the mainstream media pay little attention to women's issues, which is the reason why women's media are still full of fashion, beauty, emotional gossip and other information, and lack of news coverage that is truly relevant to women's own interests [2].

Nanjing Normal University professor Gu thinks that "social news" refers to no distinct industry characteristics and of wide public interest, to reflect the social life, moral ethics, anecdotes, etc. as the main content of the news." Thus, social news occupied a large proportion of news reports in the media, conveyed the audience a lot of social

information, constructed the mimicry environment for the audience, and played a subtle role in the understanding of news audience figures and news events. However, in the social news report, the female often appears as kind, dedicated, pitiful, dissolute figures. The distorted coverage of female images in the media will affect the correct perception of female groups [6].

The role of the media is magnifying, and this classic conclusion has been continuously confirmed in contemporary society. But at the same time, it can be proved that the female image is distorted after “one-sided enlargement” through the media. The changes of social history and cultural trends have influenced the formation of female character values, and the screen image reflects social psychology and social consciousness. No matter from “the 20th century Chinese female character screen mode”, “foreign Chinese female images in the film”, or from Zhang Yimou, director Xie, “rendering mode of women”, the researchers have obtained the conclusion that the stereotyping problem in Chinese movies is “female image” [7].

“The combination of male-centered ideology and the need for business culture shapes the image of women in media advertising.” The men's values still occupy an ideological and powerful position to some extent because the patriarchy and patriarchal traditions are deeply rooted more than two thousand years [8]. In fact, women are still a vulnerable group compared to men. The phenomenon that feminists are so passionate about expressing their strong desires is a powerful manifestation and strong proof. The sociologists' studies showed that most women were subordinate and supportive character whether in the workplace or in the family. While modern women are relatively independent to obtain material and spiritual, the inertia of traditional culture plunges them into “role conflict”: according to the standard of man in society to work hard, while also like the traditional women in the family. They plan for the future with great ambitions, trying to raise the level of material and spiritual well-being and worrying about the double behind the times in their careers and love [9]. Responsibilities associated with the reproductive role, traditionally attributed to and assumed by women for the maintenance of family life, and occupy a prominent position [10].

Discrimination against women has a long history and is deeply rooted in both Eastern and Western cultures, then, as a kind of deep cultural roots of the collective unconscious, the patriarchal ideas lie within the scope of the world and through the media widely spread is understandable. Although our country has accorded the utmost respect to women in the social system, various legal policies have indeed narrowed the discrimination of gender roles to women. But as a concept of deep social and cultural psychology, male master the female from the male consciousness is still deep in the social and cultural psychological accumulation, not only hampered the main body of the behavior of women, but also restricted the

society's expectation of women's role and value evaluation [11].

III. CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

The March 7th girls' day is now popular in universities. Some of the banners that hangs in the school is very warm heart, combine their own professional characteristic and proper care reveal, this just should be the beautiful intention of pure boys to participate in girls' day. But some others make people uncomfortable, such as “Better sleep with you than with the spring breeze” is a departure from the original intention of the girls' day, or even overt sexual harassment. Girls' day is an innocuous little college holiday, but slogans such as “example” do show the objectification of women, and some media spread the idea of entertainment which did not choose the positive and healthy content to show to the public, though it was easy to get clicks, it also advertised the banner content incorrectly.

“3·8 the queen's ceremony has been robbed. About the female god is early, fresh fruit snacks low to 30% off; the queen's feast in March, to the goddess festival benefits...” In March, the sales' pitch was all about “she”, and March 8 was the peak of the sale. But one survey found that many young women did not want to celebrate women's day because the public believed that “women” meant married housewives and gave a sense of aging. In order to cater to the huge consumption potential of women, many businessmen try their best to change the name of “3·8 women's day” to “goddess's day” or “queen's day”. This leads many young women to misunderstand the definition of the word “women” more seriously in the commercial press. In fact, women, in the official lexicon, are defined as the general term for adult women, not simply married women. Women over the age of 14 are defined in the judicial interpretation as women and men under the age of 14 as children.

But the influence of the media on women's values is more important than changing the name of women's day to goddess festival. Many e-commerce companies borrow “3·8” international working women's day to create “women's day”, “goddess day” and other new holiday names, and launch a variety of preferential activities. It is not only easy to give the illusion that “consumption is a noble act”, but also has the social negative effect of eliminating the original value of women's day [12]. Consumption is a part of life, but it should not be above value.

On March 8, 2015, both Google and Baidu changed their logo to celebrate women's day, but there was a big difference: Baidu's logo was a music box, a doll in circles, grow up, marry, and have children; the logo of Google was the representatives of successful women in various fields of technology, education, culture and art. This sharp contrast showed the difference in the understanding of women between east and west. Baidu held the understanding of women's success in life, which was the Chinese traditional ideas, staying at home and raising children, while Google

was the multi-dimensional understanding that successful women should be the guy who has made an outstanding contribution to the society in various fields, no matter the height or size, color international appearance.

In news reports that women are in a strong position, the gender of women is emphasized, while gender of men is not. In news reports, professional or social status which are powerful, respected, people yearning for, such as: mayor, ministers, generals, etc., these positions will be labeled as “female” to indicate that it can only be a woman, such as: female mayors, female minister, female director and so on. Thus, it can be seen, people have already formed such a mindset that powerful, revered, or profession in a strong position almost belongs to men exclusively [13]. The proportion of women in the workplace today is not low, but in the field of cutting edge, the number of female leaders is numbered. In relation to this under-representation of women in the upper echelons, the metaphor glass ceiling is emphasized. This was published for the first time in 1986 by the American newspaper *The Wall Street Journal*, alluding to the invisible barriers that prevent women from reaching executive positions. Its essence continues unchanged today and affects women with more than enough personal and professional abilities [14]. Walls, floors, mechanisms and barriers of procedures, structures, relationships of power, beliefs, customs, etc., are behind this, and other expressions. Thus, the glass maze refers to the obstacles that appear simultaneously and from very different angles in the ascent of women to high positions [15,16]. The metaphor glass wall denounces the limited capacity available to women to move into line positions through being systematically encapsulated in staff positions. Also, women have far fewer social resources than men, while women and men get different payment while they do the same work. It’s clearly announced in the job advertisement that male preference or hiring only men also reflects the unfair treatment of women in the workplace. It takes more effort for women to attain the same high status as men [17].

It can also be found in the news report that the general impression of women is weak, nagging, and even praising a woman would say, “The heavy burden is on the weak so-and-so woman”. Only women who really do something will get the same attention as men do. Although this kind of news report is not improper on the surface, in fact, it is constantly indoctrinating the public the think which discriminates against women [18].

In wide varieties of mass media, television is a very important means of communication. Summarizing and analyzing the gender roles of women in TV advertisements, the two most prominent types are: the image of a virtuous wife or mother and the image of a beautiful and sexy female star. Housework and the responsibility of raising a child should be shared with both husband and wife, but the modern media continues to spread the idea of “male master outside and female master inside”, ignoring women's real ideas and women are put in the position of dedication to hard work by wishful thinking. Mass media should not only

get rid of gender stereotypes, but advocate gender equality and restore women's original features. The other category is the beautiful and sexy female star image and TV advertisements related to it, including fashion, cosmetics, shampoo, etc. Full head of silk, floating in the wind, such as the fairy, attract the opposite sex losing heart, look back frequently so that hit the south wall. The female image in today's mass media is the image of women who are wanted and commercialized. On the contrary, the advertisement, which is dominated by men, is often in the fields of science and technology, communication and other fields. It emphasizes the wisdom of the brain while the advertisements dominated by women emphasize the views of the body. The mass media constantly reports on beautiful women, as if they were making things [19].

IV. CONCLUSION

Mass media has a great influence on modern social life and has become the main source of information reception and concept formation. However, a gender role concept in social concept is also deeply influenced by the mass media.

In the news media, we should call for the integrity and reality of the media “female image”. The image of discrimination against women in news reports is related to China's media development, traditional culture and social and economic development. To change this situation, we must start from these aspects to eliminate gender discrimination at the root and give women full respect. Not just to highlight the beauty of women's appearance, but to appreciate more women's intelligence and ability; not just require women to be gentle, but acknowledge the diversity of women's personalities; not just focus solely on public figures, but focus on the emotions of many ordinary women and recognize their contributions to society; not just limit the role of women to traditional family and entertainment, but support women's right to career development. In social news reports, the mass media should promote the concept of equality between men and women and increase the proportion of women reporting. Not only reflect the female perspective but report the news in a both comprehensive and impartial way and minimize the misreading of female images. Even in the times of commercialization, the mass media should not use distorted female images as a “selling point” to attract readers. Mass media should get rid of the situation of stereotypes, typification and labeling, use social responsibility to restrain themselves, taking the responsibility of mass media and conveying the correct concept of gender values.

To the film and television media, the writers should try to reduce the stereotype of female images, modeling the positive role of female characters, correctly guiding the audience's view of gender, and this should be the responsibility of creators of Chinese contemporary film and TV as a member of a society. The female image in our country's films and televisions should refer more to the modern excellent female images, such as excellent women in the workplace, women who stick to their dreams and

follow their heart, and women who have made outstanding contributions to the society through independent efforts. Film and television media's influence on the children and the old man is greater than the impact on the young and middle-aged, so shaping positive images of women, can help children to shape correct gender view and can help the old man to eliminate the influence of the traditional stereotype. The image and concept of excellent film and television media play a subtle and important role in shaping the overall values of society.

In the society, we should coordinate the social value system and advocate the advanced gender culture. In this way, we can reduce the blind recognition of the traditional gender culture in the patriarchal society, publicizing the female subject consciousness, improving the gender inequality, and pursuing the harmony of bisexuality. Perfect the corresponding laws and regulations to improve the status quo of female stereotype in contemporary media. Strengthen women's participation in communication and promote the spread of feminism and female self-discourse. Starting from the most basic social concept, it takes mandatory laws and regulations as the basis to guarantee, supplemented by influential mass media, to improve the current situation.

In short, the phenomenon of female image stereotyping in contemporary media is a legacy of traditional patriarchy culture in China for thousands of years, which is also a reflection of the immature media industry in China. But in this new time of rapid development, the mass media should make full use of their advantages, to spread the values of equality of men and women to the society, to carry out the basic state policy and the equality between men and women, to enhance selectivity and strengthen conviction, to transfer positive energy. It is of great significance that the role of mass media in shaping correct gender consciousness and guiding the public is to the comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development of society.

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