

# "Why Can't a Full-time Wife be Defined as an Independent Woman"-Breaking and Rebuilding the Stereotype of "Independent Women" Under Social Media

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## ABSTRACT

As the "her economy" becomes more active, gender equality and women's power have aroused heated discussions in the film and television industry. The frequent appearance of the image of "independent women" prompted discussion and thinking among the audience. Faced with such a group of women, does the media show their actual image and inner world, reflecting true gender equality? Taking the movie "Hello, Li Huanying" as an example, the article analyzes the gender characteristics and identity crisis of the image of "independent women" in the analysis. From the perspective of the influence of social media on self-cognition and the philosophy of independent thinking through de-tagging, it cuts into the social interaction in recent years. The construction of the characteristics of "independent women" by the media. Although there are still more stereotypes in the image of "independent women" in social media, problems, and opportunities coexist. The image construction of "independent women" and the breaking of stereotypes requires a slow and progressive exploration process.

**Keywords:** *femininity, independent women, stereotypes, social media*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Women in today's society are paying more and more attention to the realization of self-worth because of the continuous improvement of their education level. The pursuit of gender equality is an essential means and content for women to realize their self-worth. The awakening of female consciousness seems to have made "independent women" a buzzword. The film and television industry has keenly captured the changes in the mentality of female audiences and has created a variety of female images.

The box office of the movie "Hello, Li Huanying" exceeded 4 billion. While constantly creating surprises, people's discussion of the movie has gradually shifted from maternal love and regret to women's independence and self-awareness.

## 2. SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMAGE OF "INDEPENDENT WOMEN"

### 2.1 *The impact of social media on self-perception*

The impact of social media on us is far more than just conveying information, and communicating culture are as simple as that. It is a mirror that reflects life. Social media is a set of Internet applications based on Web 2.0 technology, including websites and apps [1]. With the continuous development of Internet technology, social media can provide users with great freedom and flexibility in creative space and user engagement [2]. User-generated content (UGC) is the essence of social media. Based on various forms of UGC, users of social media can create, share and exchange information online via the Internet [3].

Social media in the Internet age will affect people's perception of the external socialized environment and affect people's self-perception. This is based on the concept of "pantomime environment" by Walter Lipman. On social media, people can create their homepage to show the personal image they want others to see, that is, to build an "other self." This "self" is based on real personal information but is packaged with the help of the Internet. The "self" presented through various display pages in social media is the "mimic self" presented by each individual after filtering his information. Therefore, "the self in the network" cannot be equated with the "self" in reality. The development of social media has provided a platform for the public to express themselves, but the massive amount of information on social media has brought information anxiety to people.

## ***2.2 Social media and the formation of "stereotypes"***

The relationship between gender and social media has been around for a long time. Social media clearly shows how to portray different gender roles in different forms. It is undeniable that all social media centers on masculinity and femininity stereotypes for gender-specific communication activities. People hope that social media can empower women and enable women to have the power to resist the stereotypes brought by mainstream media. In other words, it can give women a voice: the meaning of "female" can be redefined or broken. The definition of has a more dynamic definition[4]. In social media, stereotypes can also be said that hashtags are more common among women than men[5]. Digital media technology will cause and accelerate "algorithmic oppression." However, social media provides a platform for feminists to oppose gender discrimination and pursue gender equality to resist social prejudice and oppression. But social media will inevitably generate prejudice against minorities. So the social media environment will continue gender stereotypes.

The gender stereotypes artfully expressed through the co-occurrence of words in the language have been deeply integrated into the social ether. We use stereotypes as first-hand empirical evidence of collective manifestations. This stereotype has a strong influence on our language and has the potential to shape how society thinks and treats social groups[6]. People expressing and presenting themselves on social media platforms is an important way for social media to express gender differences. Men and women have different ways of posting content on social media. Girls share their own photos, while boys share their own photos and comments. We can understand this situation as gender differences are rooted in cultural backgrounds, and men and women have different cultural values. In traditional media, gender differences and gender stereotypes persist, and

they persist in the online world. However, social media can still provide a platform for the diversity of gender concepts. If we regard social media as a commoditized environment, then the specific traits exposed in social media that we use in exchange for attention, likes, and even defined success can be understood as circulating in social media. Currency[7]. This so-called "specific trait" is what we call "stereotype." The rapid response cycle and the motivation to increase social media click-through rates have prompted content creators to publish controversial and compelling content. So on social media, gender markers targeting women may be released[8].

According to Canadian communication theorist Marshal McLuhan, mass media can not only provide people with information and entertainment but also influence people's lives by shaping people's opinions, attitudes and beliefs[9]. We all recognize the female stereotypes promoted in the media. No matter where they stand, television, magazines, and commercials are full of idealized female images that represent the perfect body. The media, whether they are a mirror of society (to convey their expectations, needs, or requirements to the public), or their symbolic structures, in our preference for specific gender normative models, influence our views, decisions, evaluations and reports. The criteria of the social situation or category[3]. The stereotype of women, especially "women should return to the family and do housework", triggers consideration of women's career development, life academic planning, family career balance, and even a measure of whether a woman is "happy" The standards are largely constructed to serve men[10]. Bryson believes that identity is not predetermined, but based on time, location and audience, and in a way that is influenced by interaction and community.

## ***2.3 Definition of "independent women"***

The foundation of women's independence lies in the independence of ideology. Only by following one's own heart and following one's own female role can one obtain personality independence, spiritual independence, and even economic independence.

## ***2.4 Image comparison of "independent women" and "full-time wives" in social media***

Feminist researcher Simone Beauvoir put forward the classic "social shaping gender thesis" in "Second Sex"- "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." [11] (Women are not born, but It is acquired.) Therefore, the "acquired formation" of women is naturally difficult to get rid of the shaping role of the mass media.

American scholar Judith Butler advocated "gender performance theory", and her advocacy also became the origin of "queer theory". This theory delineates the concept of gender as "a model of acting that is produced

and forced to be imposed to maintain the constrained practice of gender consistency." That is, gender is not innate, but a "behavior pattern." Gender identity is not constructed from the beginning with a substantive subject, but a "constructed performance model" along with a certain ideology, which means that the subject is "performing" gender. Of course, it is not Butler's creation to regard gender as a product of social decisions. Earlier social constructivist feminists have put it into practice in the realm of social life. But the "gender performance theory" provides a theoretical model for the subject of "performance" to perform "gender performance" along with social norms. Therefore, the subject may go beyond the boundary in this "gender performance" process, that is, break the performance area delineated by social norms; it is also possible that due to the error or failure of the "performance", it may create a distance and gap with the boundary of social norms. Therefore, when the subject is outside the boundary or in a rift, a rebuilding of the subject by returning to the "other" is produced, and the "gender performance" has a new meaning.

What kind of characteristics should "independent women" have? This is actually a topic closely related to social development, so it is often new. Judging from the history of feminism, to restore their independence and freedom, women have experienced long-term struggles and struggles with various forces. In the beginning, women's efforts were to get rid of their economic and emotional attachments in family relationships. There is actually a close connection between the two. The restriction and oppression of the social environment on women lead to women's economic dependence status, and the cultural ideological level of shaping the second gender of women, as well as the interpretation of the "transcendence" of love, etc., make women more voluntarily to complete This double attachment. Nowadays, women's economic attachment status is changing, and women's awareness of independence is gradually awakening. Despite this, women still have not got rid of the stereotyped shaping of their own image by society. What is interesting is that this shaping sometimes comes from women who desire independence. . An almost "deified" female image gives "independent women" a negligible fault tolerance rate[12]. Women must be perfect in everything to get the respect and favor they deserve; on the other hand, Gu Jia, who is in the upstart class, has been trying to climb to a higher level of upper-class society. Such a goal setting and value orientation, to some extent, Limiting the successful model of "independent women" makes ordinary women without "ambition" daunting.

The so-called "full-time wife" refers to a housewife who does not participate in workplace work at all times or a certain stage of life, does not receive labor compensation in the market economy, and only takes care of the family's daily necessities at home. There is no specific quantitative indicator for the economic sources

of "full-time wives" occupations. There is no income or the amount of income depends on the husband. The existence of this situation has caused some "full-time wives" to rely entirely on their husbands. Most "full-time wives" are completely dependent on their husbands. "Economic income comes from the husband, and dependence on the husband can easily make women passive in the family status. Most women have a weak economic foundation before returning to the family. After returning to the family, their income depends on the husband's hard work. Their own living expenses, the family All daily consumption depends on the husband. As the literal meaning of "full-time wives" means, their profession is "wife", the workplace is at home and the leader is the husband. There is a very delicate employment relationship between them. The existence of this relationship affects the status of women in the family. Many families are "strong men and weak women", and women's family status is inferior to that of men. Although China has always been inferior to men in the family status of women, women return to their families. After that, this inequality became more obvious.

### **3. ANALYSIS OF "LI HUANYING" IMAGE IN SOCIAL MEDIA**

The box office of the movie "Hello, Li Huanying" exceeded 4 billion. People's discussion of movies has gradually shifted from maternal love and regret to women's independence and self-awareness.

#### ***3.1 The relationship between female independence and marriage***

True independence does not lie in resisting marriage or competing with men, but in accepting the true self.

In the movie, Xiaoling Jia tries her best to change the trajectory of her mother's life. She hopes that her mother will marry the factory manager's son, live a good life, and have a promising daughter. She feels that all this can make her mother happy. But in fact, her mother didn't get all of this. She still married ordinary Jia Wentian and gave birth to a daughter who made people worry. Jia Xiaoling thought her plan had failed, but she did not expect her mother to say, "I have had a very happy life in this life, so how come no one believes it?" The film almost put aside all-male perspectives and only saw the woman herself. All the men in the movie have become supporting actors. Even what kind of person Li Huanying married, in the end, is not explained in the movie, but we know that she is happy.

Marriage does not necessarily cause an independent woman to lose herself. On the contrary, a woman who accepts herself is independent regardless of whether she is married or not.

### ***3.2 The relationship between female independence and children***

Li Huanying was independent when she was a girl. After becoming a mother, she also maintained the self-independence of a mother. She didn't base her life value on her daughter's future. Although her daughter always wanted to get into trouble, she said, "My daughter, just be healthy and happy."

If a woman cannot see her own value and cannot accept her life, she will put all her expectations on her offspring.

"A healthy mother-daughter relationship is characterized by mutual respect, recognition of each other's independence, and the ability to tolerate contradictions and conflicts. The cornerstone of its success is the mother's independent female consciousness, and the ideal result is that the daughter will eventually develop an independent personality and calmness. Sexual awareness and positive attitude towards life".

### ***3.3 Social media's evaluation of the image of "Li Huanying"***

Li Huanying has a rare sense of self. She never shows weakness, is not pretentious, is not cowardly, and is not vain. Contemporary Chinese women always show images of excessive anxiety in movies. Anxious appearance, anxious material, anxious career, anxious birth, anxious self-worth, anxious everything. The image of Li Huanying has returned to a certain original ecology of women. Li Huanying is a wife, a middle-aged woman, and a mother who works hard for her children, but she can also be an independent and free woman. Her happiness has nothing to do with men, and it has nothing to do with her children's success.

## **4. "INDEPENDENT WOMEN" STEREOTYPES IN SOCIAL MEDIA**

### ***4.1 Identity Crisis: Passive Awakening and Gender Prejudice***

The term "identity" reveals the relationship between individuals living in society and society. Identity refers to a kind of cognition and description of the subject itself, which includes many aspects, such as cultural identity and national identity. And self-identity takes the self as the core, emphasizing the psychological and physical experience of the self. Women will have a lot of hidden objectification imposed on themselves. Often this situation is undetected. One of the consequences of this objectification is an identity crisis. Identity can be regarded as the psychological process of the individual's confirmation of self-identity and the cognition of the

group to which they belong, and the accompanying emotional experience and behavioral patterns.

Social media has a diffusion effect. American media culture scholar Kellner believes: "Communication media (newspapers, television, media) will shape and influence the public's definition and understanding of gender. The media will imply different personal images of men and women." Women's media images challenge traditional Stereotypes. The concepts of "big heroine" and "strong woman" put the female body into masculinity. The images of women created by the media show men's goals, rigor, and perseverance while abandoning femininity. This research has to admit that the presentation of any person, event, and thing by the media is constructed through a complex coding system. The same is true for the shaping of female images by the mass media[13].

### ***4.2 Misogyny: the masculinization of the image of "independent women"***

There is a concept in psychology called "misogyny", which is essentially the disapproval and contempt of female roles, that is, the belief that male characteristics are inherently noble, and female characteristics require the recognition of men. We often think that men have misogyny, but in fact, they are not. When we think that women are weak, humble, sacrificed, and compromised, we naturally have a dislike of our own identity and desire to get rid of these so-called female images and are desperate. To prove that he can be independent and autonomous like a boy. In fact, this is a kind of pseudo-independence, which is essentially a rejection of oneself.

The liberation of women's images is not blindly pursuing the "masculine" and "neutral style" of women, but to make women ignore the "external gaze" and become themselves. When portraying girl power, they will focus on expressing the pull of their gender temperament related to female roles, which seems to be the only way for women to grow.

## **5. HOW TO BREAK THE STEREOTYPE OF "INDEPENDENT WOMEN"**

### ***5.1 Expand the definition of independence***

When we think that women are weak, humble, sacrificed, and compromised, we naturally have a dislike of our own identity, eager to get rid of these so-called female images and work hard. To prove that they can be independent and autonomous like boys, women suppress themselves and lose their freedom. This is a kind of pseudo-independence, which is essentially a rejection of oneself. "Only a woman's independent work can guarantee her true independence." Career rise and financial freedom are the most common ways for women to get rid of the vassal label. However, purely material success cannot be equal to true independence[14].

When a woman knows what she wants, even spending her husband's money can't hinder her freedom because bringing a baby at home can also be an active choice. "Women are not only prescribed by the past but also shaped by modern times, which will inevitably form role conflicts." Independent different people should have a diversified appearance. The key is that they can sense themselves among multiple identities such as mothers, wives, and professional women. Clear cognition to strengthen the life position.

## **5.2 Correctly understand the "stereotype" under relabeling**

Gender stereotypes still play a role in quickly screening productivity based on production methods. Enterprises, institutions, and organizations can directly screen out those that do not meet the requirements of job production through "gender stereotypes" and improve production efficiency. Although gender stereotypes do not reflect the idea of "equality," it allows society to assign different roles, functions, and jobs according to the different temperaments of women and men. Therefore, to a certain extent, gender stereotypes reflect the fairness of gender distribution.

However, as society tends to be diversified today, labeling a large group of people with one or a few labels simplifies people's cognitive process and hinders people's understanding of the new characteristics of the group. The "label" in the stereotype separates some women individually and strengthens many feminine qualities that are not recognized by traditional gender concepts, but it does not redefine these feminine qualities. Once the cognitive bias is caused, "sexism" appears as a by-product of stereotypes.

Labels are not necessarily imperfect at all, but implicit stereotypes and mandatory classification can never generalize the living existence of everyone. The process of labeling and de-labeling is the process of changing and taking over one's life[15].

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The female image is difficult to define. In other words, the female image should not be defined. Although the female images displayed on social media can represent typical female images in today's society to a certain extent, they are usually limited and narrow. It can be said that such female images exist generally based on "stereotypes" or to break "stereotypes." There should be as many different female images as women in the world, although these images have more or fewer commonalities.

And putting aside the various or progressive or restrained female characters in the mass media, perhaps the most significant key point for the mass media in 2020

when constructing the image of women is that it has successfully attracted people's attention to "women" and "independent women." Arguing. Social media has focused public opinion on women. In fierce confrontations, men and women are re-examining the reality gap derived from gender differences.

Appropriate controversy and judgment are good medicine to promote a more three-dimensional image of women. It is expected that the mass media in the future can reflect the real world more vividly and profoundly, and present and construct more diverse and multi-dimensional images of women. Every individual can also face up to women's subjective values and accept women's self-development.

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