

Demands in “Existence” and Carnival from “Trash Talking”

Analysis on the Audience’s Psychology of Bullet-screen Movie

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Abstract—From an online communicating mode of video website to a new mode of filmwatching, “Bullet-screen” has realized its transformation from the context of “Otaku Culture” to public communication space. The emergence of the “Bullet screen” projecting mode embodied the audience’s appeal of identity, existence and discourse power in the background of post-modernism context. But why did “Bullet-screen film” used to become a cultural boom and then receded soon? This article will put “Bullet-screen film” into the context of “Aestheticalization of daily life” and “Aesthetic fragmentation”, and analyze the psychological impact of audiences in the mode of “Bullet-screen” in the view of sociology and culturology. Nevertheless, through discussion and analysis on the coupling mechanism between “Bullet-screen” which as a projecting mode and “film” which as a category of arts, this article will also explore the development mechanism Bullet-screen film’s art identity and continuity.

Keywords—bullet-screen; audiences; discourse power; psychology

I. INTRODUCTION

On July 31, 2014, the 3D animated film “The Legend of Qin —Dragon Miles” was Bullet-screened on the limited lease ceremony in Hangzhou. Then, on August 4, the movie “Tiny Times 3” also adopted the projecting mode of “Bullet-screening” Beijing. Even the film that was more artistic such as “Brotherhood of Blades” has tried the projecting mode of bullet-screening. As a new mode of communication, the “Bullet-screen” has been immersed in the film from video and the game, and realized the transformation from the context of “Otaku” to “public”. However, someone predicted “Bullet-screen” will become a normal mode of film screening, after two years, it is like a thing of the past which quietly in more than two years after the present, barrage movie is like a thing of the past which quietly disappear from the growing film screens to be a normal viewing mode of online vedio. Why “Bullet-screening film” is used to popular and ended with quitting and back to website? Who like the “Bullet-screening” mode?

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The term of “Bullet-screen” was first appeared in the STG game to describe the dense bullet that likes a curtain. In 2008, “Bullet-screen video” was risen. When people browse the video on the website, a lot of comments rise across the screen which is similar to the bullet flew over in flight shooting game. Therefore, people called the effects of a large amount of comments as “Bullet-screen”. As a result, the “Bullet-screen” website was initially popular among young subgroups such as the so-called “Otaku” in China. Thus it can be seen that as a deriving mechanism of “Otaku Culture”, “Bullet-screen” is originally a kind of online interactive mode that has not entered the public communication space. And its generation mechanism and effective of discourse pattern are just limited online.

The rising of “Bullet-screen film” marked such mode of private online communication formally entered the public communication space. It should be said that the rise of “Bullet-screen video” has laid a certain audience base for the emergence of “Bullet-screen film”. The main audience of present film market is the young people who grew up with the Internet. But look on coldly, we will find that after the “thousands crowd” of the film “The Legend of Qin—Dragon Miles”, Bullet-screen film has not developed rapidly even liked 3D film to be a normal mode of film rejection. Launched on a website, “would you like to support the movie?” The vote for “YES” was to account for 33.5%, and the vote for “NOT” was to account for 32.7%. There are a little more audiences felt that the subtitle would impact the normal viewing. There are also 28.2% audiences thought that “Depending on situations, some films would be fit for this mode but some would be not”. (Ma Ting, 2014)

Then, the combination of “Bullet-screen” is as an interactive mode and film. As a category of art, is it “a good marriage” or “a matter of marriage”?

II. “AESTHETICALIZATION OF DAILY LIFE” AND “AESTHETIC FRAGMENTIZATION”

As to exhibitors, “Bullet-screen” is more as a marketing tool which added the fresher film viewing experience on the basis of traditional viewing mode of viewing entertainment. The officials of the above mentioned two “Bullet-screen film” said that , only the bullet-screen interferes illegal words

or dirty talking would be filtered, all other “trash talking” regardless of related the film or not will be retaining on the screen. The purpose of such marketing method is just aim to bring the greatest autonomy and freedom. But as to audiences, does it merely means a superficial sensory stimuli? Shen Leping, the director of “The Legend of Qin” said, many audiences reflexes that it is a novelty viewing experience that with the best movie atmosphere. “Bullet-screen” provides a platform for audiences and director to share their feelings. In the process of viewing, the audiences and director are equal. They can communicate with each other. In an age of entertainment and death, the movie caters to audiences' demands for fun. In the age of “Amusing to death” and “Bad movie everywhere”, “Bullet-screen film” satisfies the audience's needs of trash talking and carnival.

In terms of audience psychology of communication, the traditional communication way with the main transmission of one-dimension could not meet the audiences' demand of social intercourse. Even as “Weibo” and “Wechat” that the communicator and audience participating deeply can't really realize the audience's potential desire of be equal to communicator in the communication. Especially, such as “Public Wechat ID”, “Big V” continues to compel audience in the one-dimension communication mode and deprived the audience's right of participant. “Bullet-screen film” combines “Bullet-screen” and art. When audience experienced by himself that his comments or irrelevant words can appear on the spotlight art work, he will feel that he is just the important behaviors who successfully pull down the film into the physical daily life from the sacred palace of art.

Therefore, senior filmmaker Huang Shixian said: "in fact, bullet-screen film is just simple grafting of trash talking and film watching, not create more deep links. The vitality of such kind of fusion is very fragile. "While this view is not entirely accurate, it touches on the real weakness of the movie. In terms of transmission mechanism, in the original bullet-screen video website, the object of the audiences' bullet-screening is not strictly a "work". Even the movies on the video website only intercept some funny parts of the work. And the selected parts tend to be the classic or disputable paragraphs in classic films, in order to attract most audiences' watching and trash talking. The main purpose of this propagation behavior is to satisfy the long-suppressed appeal of "trash talking" by the traditional communication mechanism. But the communicating content of "bullet-screen film" is a complete work of art. The endless bullet-screen fragmented the audiences' reception process of the work, thus as to the audiences in the mode of bullet-screen, the work is no longer a complete aesthetic object, but rather are fragmented into many clips that they are interested in and want to trash talk.

Before the "bullet-screen film", the feedback from audience about a movie always shows a time lag. In the mode of “bullet-screen”, audiences could express their feelings in the first time, and is likely to get the response and feedback from others who are in the same time and space immediately. Such communication and feedback mechanism

is fit in with the audience's needs as a consumer in the age of online consumption.

III. SELF-DEMANDS OF “EXISTENCE”

There is a midnight show in the United States called “The Rocky Horror Picture Show”. As originally a simple film rejection, it was became a unique cultural phenomenon in the United States for decades. In 1975, when the film opened in Los Angeles, it was not very good at the box office. But after a year, the film, which occasionally projected at midnight in some theaters, has had an unexpected effect. Some audiences began to unconsciously imitate the dialogues, actions, songs and dances in the film. Later, this spontaneous imitation gradually became a special rite in the midnight movie show. When the movie started to be projecting, everyone begins to imitating the characters and even makes up for them. The whole cinema was filled with songs and dances, Shouting, profanity, flying garbage and scraps of paper. Thus, a group of FANS of “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” was spontaneously established which held a huge party about the film every year. It was the first time that the audiences were simultaneously interactive with the movie. It should be said that “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” is just an offline carnival. In the real life of the day, the individual sense of existence is fragmented and repressed. Most people who often play in late show are not to pursuit unethical carnival but to obtain the sense of free existence which is different from real life.

On the present age with rapid development of computer technology, the appearance of “Bullet-screen film” is that audiences could communicate with each other in time through online technology, but something behind it are demands of existence that caused by identity problems, such as the phenomenon of “The Rocky Horror Picture Show”. It could get responses from the theory of Carnivalization of Bakhtin (1998) in which the carnival life in square set up a completely “reverse world” that is opposite to the official world. This is a world of the general people where the difference and boundary in class, property, grade and identity...people contact, talk and play with each other equally. As to civilians, this is a temporary way to the Utopia. In Bakhtin's view, the desire for equality and freedom was met in this temporary utopia. It is such a "utopian" world that the "Bullet-screen" brings audiences. During the film-watching of bullet-screen film, the audience broke away from the compulsion that the traditional way of communication had been imposed on them, and was also free to act as the communicator. In addition, some audiences have given other functions to "bullet-screen". Some e-pals have been using subtitles to block his face if they don't like a star. According to the staff, some viewers bullet-screening like this: "who has a charger? I'm in X number X." And then, someone also watches the movie sent the charger to him.

The "Bullet-screen film" expands the autonomous space and possibility for the audience who sit in the "black box". Audience is in the “Official World” for a long time. He can only accept the movie on the screen passively. Similarly, in such an oppressive environment, the subject of communication, the film itself, cannot achieve the audience's

interactivity expectation. According to the communication theory of "Uses and Gratification", the audience's purpose of using media is to meet their specific needs. With the continuous expansion of the audience's demand for the media, the pattern and consciousness simulated by modern interactive media enable the audience break through the condition of one-way supply, and their demand for maximum subjective initiative is increasing strongly. But the "bullet-screen" gives them the chance to "create a completely 'Reversed World' on the other side of the Official World" that said by Bakhtin. In such world, the audience has the right to construct and develop the communicating space which can't be changed in its structure, even if such a "space" has beyond the normal category of communication. Not only this, from the view of internal mechanism of audience's information reception, in the process of communicating, the audience's character of "Self-assertive" made him giving his own understanding and elaboration to information. "Bullet-screen" can just reflect such character of film audience. When film is projecting with the mode of bullet-screening, audience's self-asserting will enable him having the opportunity to directly face the information itself, and can in timely communicate with others. Other ways of information reception can't satisfy the audience's demand of direct experience.

IV. FIGHTING ON THE "DISCOURSE POWER" IN THE CONTEXT OF NEW MEDIA

In Bakhtin's "Reverse World", there would be found that audience is rebelling against their passive status in the traditional mode of communication. The "Sense of Ritual" from traditional filmwatching mode weakens the audience's identity of "consumer" while also makes the audience passive in the process of reception naturally. However, as the only subjective factor in the cinema, when incentive which could exert the audience's subjectivity arising, the audience's desire of fighting the "Discourse Power" to reverse the position would be stimulated. In traditional media, such as TV, radio and classic cinema, etc., the audience's monologue is suppressed and strangled in the communicating process. In the process of communication, the audience not only has the desire to understand and receive information, but also the desire to control it. In the movie field which full of bullet-screen, the film itself is no longer the dominant role of communication, and the audience group undertakes the subject and audience of a communicating process that is parallel to the movie field. In this communicating field, the "individuality" and "groupiness" of the audience are recognized simultaneously. In this sense, the bullet-screen film brings a circusee under the "sense of Ritual" in the classic cinema.

It is well-known that as the "darkness" in the cinema not only the environmental requirements of projecting, but also meet the audiences' psychological sense of peep. Christian Metz explained: "in the darkness of the watching environment, the audience would not monitored by the characters and other audiences. They are enjoying a kind of abuse pleasure from controlling the film image." (Hu Xingliang, 2005) If audiences' "peep" is a pleasure of control and mastery, the "bullet-screen" provides a more

absolute sense of control and mastery. So to speak, in the psychological sense of "peeping", the abuse pleasure of audience is repressed or can't tell others in a certain extent. But in the discourse mode that provided by "Bullet-screen", the audience can release this kind of "pleasure" at any time, even may influence and guide the evaluation and attitude of other audiences in the same session of the film. In the context of new media, The "Bullet-screen" integrates the audience's identity of "user" and "audience" of the audience. For the audience with the identity of "user", movies are watched, used, and changed by themselves. (Yan Chunjun, 2016)

In the "bullet-screen" movie, the audience releases what Metz calls "abusive pleasure" through bullet-screen. For the traditional film, when the film text has produced, it means the birth of a complete movie. But the key factors of a bullet-screen movie are not film text but the bullet-screen that spread out of the screen reproducing the film text. That is, a real sense of "Bullet-screen" movie includes film text, bullet-screen and relative perception of audience. The communicating process "bullet-screen" is a part of the "Bullet-screen" movie. The "bullet-screen" breaks the concept of traditional cinema and traditional cinema from the two aspects of form and content, to establish the audience's discourse power in the context of new media. In traditional film watching mode, the meaning of the film is established, and the bullet-screen mode makes the meaning of the film relying on the bullet-screen discourse. And the meaning will change with the different bullet-screen to generate new meaning constantly. Therefore, the bullet-screen movie provides the audience with the possibility of continuously mastering the discourse power.

V. EXTENSION OF SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES

Many people take "bullet-screen" as a means and an act of socialize film watching. In the context of new media, film audiences in the present session are social circle and group, while film text provide the topics and chances of discourse expression to the current and temporary social sphere. It produces social retention between the members of the sphere, so that the group has social possibilities.

At the same time, as a public space, cinema has a function of social attributes. But this "social interaction" is more dependent on previous social networks and groups. The "Bullet-screen" provides a kind of "trash talking" social interaction that allows social individuals to be temporary and indirect with social groups without much scruple. Whether the words that unwilling to speak in realistic society or words no chances to speak out as a member of weak group are possible to get on with the "bullet-screen". On August 30, 2014, "The Chinese film audience data conference, 2014" held in Tsinghua University. With the analysis of audiences behavior of "The Legend of Qin", a study of the movie big data analysis is shown on the platform "idatage.com" (2016) found that the group of female and under the age of 30" is the main audience of "Ballut-screen" movie. Based on "the warlords moon" the audience's viewing behavior, the study found women audience and under the age of 30, the audience is main "barrage" movie viewing. The group of "Female"

and “90s” who has not yet been entered the social discourse sphere has the common character that narrow realistic social interaction and far from the political, economic factors, and with the weak power of social discourse.

Actually, “Bullet-screen” not only provides the discourse possibilities for the weak group such as “female” and “90s” but also helps individuals in social discourse system realizing the discourse path breakthrough. This is the common advantage of We-media. Similarly, in recent years, the communicating methods such as “circle of friends” and “live broadcast” which come from Internet mobile phone terminals have been more and more popular, so that everyone has the opportunity to express their wishes and words. By combining with the “Reward” mode, “live broadcast” has made many common people being rich rapidly, and became Internet Celebrity who is very famous and rich. It can be said that the social function of cinema has been acquired at the time of it was established. According to the research report by a consulting company called Entgroup “Chinese film audiences from 2014 to 2015”, 34 percent of audiences going to the cinema have the intention to accompany their friends and relatives. But it is undeniable that the social functions of classical cinemas are based on friends and relatives, and their scope and function are limited. And “Bullet-screen” movie expands the audience’s social scope in the limited space and topic, provides a defamiliarizing social opportunities that is easier to the mode of “accosting”.

VI. DESTRUCTION WITHOUT ESTABLISHING: THE REGRESSION OF “BULLET-SCREEN” MOVIE

After the passion of novelty of this new mode of filmwatching, audience’s anticipation and positioning of film’s nature that as art make them rethinking about this new mode. Tencent has conducted a survey of “95s’ Social Interaction”. In the 16, 000 survey samples, 60.05% of the “95s” users thought that the bullet-screen would affect the watching experience. In the group of older users, 65.65% of them did not like bullet-screen. (Tencent Website, 2017) In these two group of “95s” and older, people who like bullet-screen are taken 10% and less than 6%. Thus, even the younger audiences of “95s” do not completely agree with the mode of “Bullet-screen”. It is also proved that from the uproar of “Tiny times” and “The Legend of Qin” to recession of “Brotherhood of Blades” (2014), in the past 2015 and 2016, bullet-screen movie has disappeared in the cinemas.

The aesthetic and consumptive tension of “bullet-screen” movie is actually the contradiction between the media attribute and artistic attribute of the film. To be more precise, it is a gesture of the film’s artistic attribute to relinquish more power to the media attribute. (Yan Chunjun, 2016) Bullet-screen movie overemphasizes the audience’s consumption demand for the film but ignores the audience’s aesthetic demand. In the carnival from bullet-screen movie, the audience as the aesthetic subject is consumed in the noise of bullet-screen, and the rest is only consumers. In this sense, most audiences who are carnival in the bullet-screen are not really meanings, but the consumer of experiential consumption. The emergence of the bullet-screen movie is a demand of disruptive and innovation which actually caters to

the psychological demand of the trash talking. From another point of view, the “marriage” between bullet-screen and the cinema projection just shows the “pale” of the creativity of domestic films. From the audience’s standpoint, on the back of pleasure from the disruptive innovation, there is also the desire to “innovate”. But no matter how innovative the film is, it should not be sacrificed at the expense of artistic attribute and aesthetic attribute of the film. The “bullet-screen” is only one of many modes of communication. It can be established on the basis of the audience’s aesthetic acceptance of the film, and provides more opportunities of communication and understanding for the audience.

VII. CONCLUSION

It is worth noting that the “Otaku Culture” gene of “bullet-screen movie” makes it return to the space of “Otaku Culture”—online watching after moving to the offline public space. After flashing in the cinema, “Bullet-screen” as a option of watching pattern, has been retained on video and TV networks. In various forms and versions of the video player, the “bullet-screen” switch button has become a fixed option. For the audience, it is commonly accept to choose the bullet-screen mode on the video website to meet the demand of “trash talking” and “Speaking”, while offline watching ensure the aesthetic integrity and purity of the film. When the audience does not need a “bullet-screen”, he can choose to close it to avoid the aesthetic destruction caused by it. In addition, you can draw lessons from the “Rocky Horror Picture Show” in the United States to take the “film trash talking” as a way of entertainment. It can expand the entertainment function of film and enhance the feeling of the space that brought by film. Be different from the ordinary bullet-screen video and live broadcast, bullet-screen movie combines “bullet-screen” that as a communicating mode and “Film” as art and commodity. It pulls down art from the alter of traditional elite discourse power. Such disruptive communication is like a “double-edged sword” that is destroying and meanwhile exploring the possibility of new communicating space.

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