

Analysis on the Boosting Value of Pop Culture for the Development of Cultural Industry from the Perspective of Media Communication

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Abstract: With the development of digital communication technology in recent years, popular culture has evolved from a type of entertainment into one of the primary ways culture is spread globally today. This paper studies how popular culture promotes the development of the cultural industry through media communication. Building on the Frankfurt school's critique of mass deception, Henry Jenkins introduced the idea of participatory convergence culture, and now we will explore how current media platforms have promoted active participation by consumers. Three main ways that popular culture promotes industrial development have been identified: the commercialisation of intellectual property (IP) through transmedia storytelling, the rapid expansion of the 'fan economy', and the promotion of transnational cultural globalisation. Based on the above investigation, it can be seen that algorithms of digital media and social networks have changed the power relationship between cultural producers and audiences, converting passive consumers into active "prosumers" who help create cultural value. Therefore, the paper concludes that it is necessary to use the dynamic and interactive features of popular culture in a multi-platform media ecosystem for the long-term economic development and continuous innovation of contemporary cultural industries.

Keywords: Popular culture, cultural industry, media communication, convergence culture, fan economy, transmedia storytelling.

1. Introduction

At the intersection of media communication and cultural production is one of the most active and economically significant phenomena of the 21st century. With the large-scale changes in the world's information ecology driven by digital technology, the boundaries among high art, popular culture and industrial commerce are gradually disappearing. Popular culture refers to film, television, popular music, digital games and internet literature; although it has long reflected changes in society, now these elements have also served as the foundational material for large-scale cultural industries around the world. To know about the economy and society of modern cultural markets, we need to learn how popular cultural works and media facilities work together to spread them.

In the past, scholars have viewed popular culture in the context of industrialisation very pessimistically. Early critical theorists believed that the industrialisation of culture served as a way to control society, and thus produced standardised, standardised entertainment for the masses that promoted passive acceptance of capitalist consumption. With the development of interactive digital media, some modifications have been made to the theory system. Nowadays, the platforms for spreading culture do not work alone; instead, they have created interactive environments in which users can participate in, modify and share cultural works. Therefore, the source of economic and social benefits for culture will be generated through participation rather than consumption.

The two are thus linked and have been transformed by globalisation. In the early days of industrialisation, a product's economic value was relatively low because it was difficult to obtain and required little labour to produce. However, in the area of the cultural economy, value is created through the production and dissemination of meaning. A popular song or

a viral movie have high initial production costs, but the marginal cost of distributing an additional digital copy is close to zero. Therefore, the primary issue facing cultural conglomerates at present is no longer production; it is how to attract widespread attention in an extremely competitive digital environment promptly. Popular culture addresses the basic economic problem. By drawing on the current mood of society, reflecting people's contemporary anxieties, or offering very attractive escape stories, popular culture can attract the public's attention and thus be monetised by the cultural industry. Without the emotional appeal and viral communication power of popular culture, the large-scale technological facilities of world media companies would be devoid of life and profit.

In the current media environment, popular culture has become one of the most sought-after goods for the cultural industry to attract people's attention in the digital era. Popular culture offers the emotions and stories that can attract a large number of people. In return, the cultural industry will provide funds and technological platforms for the dissemination of these cultural works around the world. The two will promote the other, thus forming an ongoing economic circle for creating content and improving media technology.

Applying the framework of media communication, this paper will investigate how popular culture promotes the development of the cultural industry. After the above introduction, Section 2 will review the theoretical development of the cultural industry from mass deception to participatory culture. Section 3 presents the economic benefits of intellectual property (IP) commercialisation and transmedia storytelling. Section 4 investigates the development of the 'fan economy' as a result of digital media interaction. Finally, Section 5 presents the main contents and offers a concluding thought on the future development of the world cultural market.

2. From Mass Deception to Convergence Culture: Theoretical Evolution

Over the years, the theoretical concepts of the relationship between popular culture and industrial production have also changed. In the mid-20th century, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School first used the term 'culture industry' [1]. With the spread of radio, film and mass-market publications, they began to believe that industrialisation in culture had resulted in "mass deception". From this standpoint, the cultural industry was viewed as a single, top-down system that mass-produced standardised popular culture in a factory-assembly-line manner to enforce ideological conformity and suppress independent thinking [3].

Although the Frankfurt school correctly identified the capitalist reasons for media concentration, it did not adequately consider the role of the public. Late in the 20th century, scholars of culture began to deviate from the previous view of determinism. John Fiske and other scholars believe that popular culture is not merely a one-way transmission from high culture to the public; instead, it is actively created by the people themselves using the resources provided by the cultural industry [2]. Mass-produced cultural texts are employed to construct a sense of social identity among the people and, through interpretation resistance, challenge prevailing ideologies. As a result, the consumption of popular culture has been seen as an active process of meaning creation [12].

Web 2.0 and interactive digital media have also provided more platforms for this participatory model. Henry Jenkins proposed the idea of 'convergence culture', and in this kind of media environment, older and newer forms of media have been merging; at the same time, the influence of producers and consumers in the media system has also become erratic [5]. As more and more audiences use various media platforms, they have begun to participate in the circulation of cultural works and thus fundamentally altered the economic structure of the cultural industry [6]. Now that tools for creation, modification and distribution of content are available to the public, the old broadcast model of the industry can no longer be maintained. Therefore, it should actively attract and use the participatory energy of popular culture to remain fashionable and drive economic development.

The participatory turn has broken away from the old models of copyright and industrial control. In the twentieth century, cultural industries have been applying broad legal protection to prevent unauthorised use of characters and stories through various means. Given the trend of converged culture at present, a rigid approach is likely to be economically unfeasible. When media conglomerates increase the strictness of copyright enforcement and shut down fan-created works, they risk alienating their enthusiastic fans and suppressing the organic spread of popular culture in recent years. As a result, the most successful modern cultural industries have employed a strategy of selective tolerance. They know that when a fan remixes a pop song for a TikTok video or creates a digital meme featuring a cinematic character, this unauthorised work serves as highly effective, free promotion for the original work. The cultural industry has learned to strategically relinquish some of its control over the texts in exchange for the vast algorithmic amplification provided by an active-participatory consumer network.

3. Transmedia Storytelling and the Commercialization of IP

The main way that popular culture promotes the cultural industry is through the development and commercialisation of Intellectual Property (IP) via transmedia storytelling. A good cultural work rarely exists in the current media ecology alone. When a popular cultural work, such as a fantasy novel, a comic book or a viral internet story, gains the attention of the public, the cultural industry will quickly acquire its intellectual property rights and promote cross-media development [7].

Transmedia storytelling is used to spread essential parts of a fictional world across various platforms in an organised way, aiming to create a whole and cohesive entertainment experience for the audience. For instance, a well-known story may first appear in a movie and then spread across the world through various other forms, such as TV series and video games, and have graphic novel adaptations that reveal characters' rich backgrounds. All of them are equally good at presenting the story in different ways. This way requires considerable organisation of the gatekeepers, distributors and creators in the cultural industry network [4].

Transmedia IP commercialisation is economically very profitable. It is naturally free from the large financial risks of cultural production. A well-known, popular cultural intellectual property can be used to provide a certain number of viewers for a new work. In addition, the different modules of transmedia storytelling will generate various revenue sources and grab the attention of more people. Through all sorts of media, the cultural industry has created an all-encompassing lifestyle brand based on pop culture that is now everywhere and growing at an ever-increasing rate.

The other function of transmedia storytelling is to satisfy people's desire for narrative immersion and a sense of a world. The public is no longer content with a self-contained, two-hour film plot. They want large, detailed fictional worlds where they can live, explore and study in depth for a long time. Transmedia IPs directly address this need by spreading core narrative clues across multiple platforms and turning cultural consumption into a cooperative, game-like experience of digital exploration and collection. Connect all these story segments to give the audience a strong cognitive pleasure and a sense of belonging. Deep narrative immersion results in high brand loyalty. A member of the public who has devoted many hours to deciphering the hidden lore in a video game tie-in product will be significantly more motivated to buy the next theatrical film and related merchandise. Therefore, through the application of media communication technology to construct a multi-layered transmedia system, the cultural industry can capture the audience's imagination and achieve continuous financial benefits from core intellectual property.

4. The Financial Power of the Digital Fan Economy

The development of the 'fan economy' in the cultural industry has been accelerated by new media communication networks and is being driven further. Fandom is no longer a marginal culture; it has begun to show signs of economic viability. Digital social media platforms offer the communication facilities that fan leaders and ordinary fans use to organise collective promotional, reporting and data-gathering activities [11].

Intense emotional labour is carried out by fans in these digital spaces. They create fan fiction, produce tribute videos, organise large-scale online voting campaigns, and promote their favourite cultural idols or works aggressively. Recent studies have also explored how fan creation contributes to the dissemination and commercialisation of media and culture through fan-produced texts, videos, and promotional activities [10]. When a pop culture idol or franchise goes viral because of organised fan communication, it provides extensive, unpaid marketing and platform-visible indicators of consumer participation for the cultural industry.

The cultural industry can also create a sense of scarcity and exclusivity for people. By issuing limited-edition goods and exclusive behind-the-scenes digital materials or high-end fan clubs, companies can convert fans' emotional support into actual funds. The globalisation of phenomena such as the 'Korean Wave' (Hallyu) is a typical case. Transnational convergence of East Asian pop culture is now propelled by high-end algorithms for digital media that cultivate a borderless, highly engaged fan economy and continually pour significant funds back into the original cultural industries [8-9].

The fan economy has begun to shift the traditional financial model for cultural production. In the past, the funding for cultural projects came from central studios and record companies; thus, executives were very risk-averse. The network of the fandom's communication has been somewhat established; now, many people participate in all kinds of fundraising activities organised via crowdfunding. When a famous pop culture franchise is discontinued by a large-scale TV station, or when an independent creator wishes to release a niche work, they can directly contact the fans via social media. Driven by affective loyalty, the fans willingly provide the necessary funds for the cultural work to be realised. This direct-to-consumer financial pipeline does not go through traditional industrial gatekeepers. Although large media groups still account for most of the total, this fan-driven financial system needs to meet the demands of specific niche communities online in time. It can be seen that in the current media environment, economic power is no longer concentrated at the top; it is also continuously circulating through the passionate and financially strong communication network of global pop culture fandoms.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of popular culture in the area of media communication, pop culture has now been incorporated into the current cultural industry. The theoretical path from the Frankfurt School's criticism of mass deception to the present state of participatory convergence culture shows a structural alteration in industry. At present, people are no longer passive recipients but active participants in the creation of culture via new media platforms. By offering the communication facilities required for the public to interact with, adapt and spread cultural works widely, new sources of income have gradually appeared.

The cultural industry has drawn the attention of the public

with two main, highly profitable models: transmedia commercialisation of intellectual property and organised exploitation of the affective fan economy. Disseminate popular culture stories through many media channels to create all-encompassing and immersive entertainment for the public, thus reducing financial risk and increasing income. At the same time, organised fan communities can be leveraged to create a continuous loop of organic promotion and fan loyalty for the industry, spreading culture around the world.

Finally, for the cultural industry to develop sustainably in the 21st century, it must be able to respect and cultivate the participatory character of popular culture. A company's attempt to lead the wave of cultural changes by itself through old-fashioned top-down broadcasts will likely fail. In the future, our industry will lead the way to motivate people around the world to fully explore the multi-platform media ecosystem for rich and interactive cultural exchanges, transforming the lively spirit of pop culture into enduring global economic and artistic values.

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