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**Carnival Rituals and Rational Interactions
of Subcultural Groups- A Rooted Theory
Analysis of the B-site Pop-Ups of Animal
Rhapsody**



Abstract: - Pop-up is a technological innovation in the field of network video in the Internet era, which enables every Internet user to transcend the time and space limitations, realize real-time discussion and interaction, and create an atmosphere of freedom, openness, equality and tolerance. At present, the pop-up function has gradually become a mainstream feature of network video, but it presents differences in content and form in different types of videos such as film and television dramas, variety shows, and animation. This paper takes the anime work Animal Rhapsody as a representative, uses Python to crawl the pop-up content, explores the behavioral characteristics of users in the use of pop-ups through the analysis of pop-up content, and mines out the two psychological demands of the audience groups of reveling and rationalization.

Keywords: pop-up; anime; user behavior; binge; rationality

1. Introduction

The term "pop-up" originated in World War I. It originally refers to military operations in which artillery fire is as dense as a curtain, and has since appeared in pop-up websites to refer to real-time pop-up commentaries in videos. The pop-up function is a technological innovation in the field of online video, which allows online video groups to interact and discuss online at any time, creating a "virtual living room" atmosphere. The earliest pop-up website is Japan's Niconico, which has a large group of ACGN (animation, comics, games, novels) subculture enthusiasts, and China's two major video websites, B Station (Bilibili) and A Station (Acfun), which also gather a large number of ACGN enthusiasts, also introduced pop-up function in 2008, and up to now, mainstream video websites in China such as Tencent, Aiqiyi, Youku, etc. have opened pop-up function. Mainstream video sites are open to the pop-up function, pop-ups have been transformed from a niche behavior to a feature of the video site, but from the pop-up content, pop-up publishers are still dominated by the younger generation².

Animal Rhapsody is a Japanese anime released in October 2019, which gained a large number of manga fans after only two episodes, airing in the top three of the anime charts on B-station in its first week of broadcasting, and getting a 9.4 high score on Douban in a shocking manner. The main characters of this anime are all animals, but

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unlike the original animals, they have animal characteristics but wear human clothes and live like humans, a group with thoughts and emotions, under the garb of the meat-eating and herbivorous classes in the anime, it is in fact a metaphor for the instinctive desires of human society.

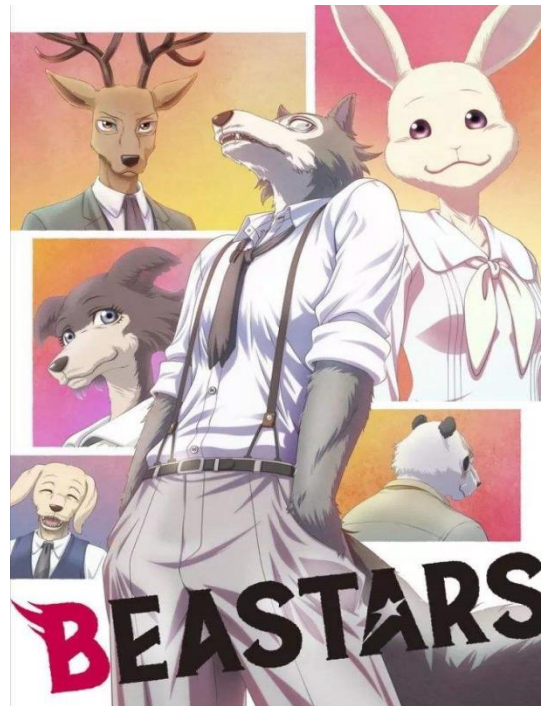


Figure 1: Promotional Poster for Rhapsody of Animals

This study takes the pop-ups in the anime with the theme of human nature, novel themes and a wide audience as the research object, comprehensively analyzes the content of the pop-ups posted by the users, and explores the behavioral and psychological characteristics of the users in the use of the pop-ups in the anime videos.

2. Theoretical Background and Research Question

2.1 Rationale

2.1.1 Usage and Satisfaction Theory

Usage and Satisfaction Theory is put forward by American sociologist E. Katz, the theory starts from the perspective of the audience, through the analysis of the audience's motivation to use the media and needs to explore the psychological and behavioral impact of the media on the audience, and believes that the reality of the mass media is precisely due to the satisfaction of the audience's psychological needs to continue to exist and develop. Pop-ups, as a communication method of network video media, can be widely loved by the public because they satisfy the needs of the audience and have an effective influence on the audience's behavior³.

In addition to this, foreign studies have shown that users of UGM (user-generated media) are satisfied in three main ways:

³ CHEN Zhijuan, DING Liangqi. Carnival and rationality: a study on the use of pop-ups by youth groups--a case study of the online variety program "Creation 101"[J]. China Youth Research, 2019(11):93-99.

Acquiring content, participating in interaction (the need for group interaction), and generating new content (the need for self-expression and realizing one's own value). Pop-ups as a form of UGM, pop-up publishers can satisfy their needs for information acquisition, group interaction and realizing their own value².

2.1.2 Carnalization Theory

The theory of carnivalization was put forward by Bakhtin, a famous Soviet thinker, in his book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, which originated from the carnival and carnivalesque view of the world, which is essentially a yearning for a utopian world with no constraints or norms in which people are free to express themselves without restrictions of hierarchies and dogmas, and which is an idealized existence, and the pop-up culture The characteristics of criticism, freedom and subversion that pop-up culture possesses largely highlight the carnival mentality of users.

3. Interactive Ritual Chain Theory

The interactive ritual chain theory was developed by American sociologist Randall Collins. According to Collins, the source of interactive social dynamics, the image presented by each individual in society is generated by the communication and interaction of others. At the same time, Collins also believes that emotional energy is the core element of human communication and interaction, and people's motivation to participate in communication should be attributed to the "rational choice of emotional energy". Therefore, he creatively put forward the ritual chain model of social interaction, and put forward the ritual chain model of social interaction, that is, the participants of interactive rituals can produce a shared emotional experience and identity in the mutual connection of focus and emotion, and then form a new social orientation and social image. And the pop-up screen, as a carrier of information transfer between users, also reflects the importance of interactive rituals and emotional energy.

2.2 Research questions

With the gradual mainstreaming of the pop-up function in video websites, related studies have also emerged in the past two years, but the existing literature focuses on users and ignores the content of the pop-up itself in the selection of the research content, the pop-up, as a product of the Internet era, has a strong new media characteristics, which stimulates different information interaction behaviors of the users in the capacity of a new type of information carrier, so in the study of user behavior on pop-up video websites, both users and information should be emphasized, and the content needs to be included as part of the study. Therefore, when studying the user behavior of pop-up video websites, it is necessary to pay attention to both users and information, and it is necessary to include pop-up content as part of the study. In addition, the current research on pop-up user behavior is mainly qualitative, and although these studies can partially analyze users' behavioral motives and psychological demands, the results are prone to subjectivity, and most of the studies do not pay attention to the characteristics of pop-up as a carrier of expression. To sum up, this study starts from the reality of pop-up audience groups, combines quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis, chooses "Animal Rhapsody" as a representative of anime videos, analyzes the content and release of pop-ups, and digs into the behavioral characteristics and psychological demands of users.

The following are the specific research questions of this paper; the

Q1: What kind of content do users post as pop-ups while watching anime such as Animal Rhapsody?

Q2: What behavioral characteristics and psychological demands are reflected in the pop-up content posted by users?

3. Research methodology

3.1 Content analysis methodology

This study uses content analysis, which is a systematic and objective method of quantitative analysis, as the main research method. It measures the frequency of occurrence of units through statistics and describes the results numerically or graphically.

The author used python to crawl the pop-up data of "Animal Rhapsody" released by B station, and obtained 12 episodes of pop-ups, totaling 36,000 (due to the large number of users posting pop-ups, B station utilized "narrowcasting" to control the pop-ups that appeared in real time. Therefore, the number of pop-ups users see when watching the video is not the same as the actual number), according to the chronological order of the pop-ups, the pop-ups were divided into 5,760 samples with 30 seconds as the interval line, and 500 samples were randomly selected for analysis.

3.2 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is based on the theory of symbols and discourse to analyze the symbols and discourses in communication activities and to dig out the hidden deep meanings. The French philosopher Foucault proposed that the so-called "discourse" is a group of statements that follow a specific rule of discourse practice and belong to the same discourse formation system. Therefore, it is necessary to "study discourse as the practice of systematically forming the objects spoken of in these discourses", and to examine the relations between statements, between groups of statements, and between statements or groups of statements and events belonging to another category.

Based on the discourse analysis method, the author categorizes the captured pop-up samples to analyze the symbolic meanings and user attitudes mapped by the pop-up content from a specific context.

3.3 Rooted theory

Rootedness theory was developed by two sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. Among them, Strauss more comprehensively summarized the rootedness theory: "The rootedness theory is a method of building a theory by conducting in-depth and long-term research on social phenomena in a natural setting, utilizing methods such as open-ended interviews, document analysis, and participant observation, collecting information widely and systematically, saturating the data, and then categorizing and coding the data, through the open coding and associative coding to form a propositional chain, then core coding the propositional chain to discover the political, economic, cultural, historical and other conditions that influence the central proposition, on the basis of which the theoretical propositions are generalized, and the generalized propositions are then returned to the data or similar scenarios to be tested and the theory is further revised and developed."

In this study, the author uses discourse analysis to decompose and conceptualize the pop-up samples line by line,

summarize and condense them on the basis of the concepts, form the categories, and explore the relationship between the categories to further sublimate them into theories.

4. Research findings

4.1 Main pop-up content

After coding the 500 samples of captured pop-ups, the author found that the pop-up content of Rhapsody of Animals was divided into the following categories.

4.1.1 Tell the category of viewing motives

In the beginning part of the anime, there are tons of pop-ups expressing motivations for watching this anime.

"Rushing for the Douban rating."

"Everyone said it looked good, so I came to check it out."

"My boyfriend has been obsessed with this anime for the past two days and has ignored me, so I'm going to see what's so attractive about it!"

"Come for the voice acting."

From these pop-ups expressing the motivation to watch, it can be found that for an anime to attract a large audience, factors such as production level, netizen evaluation, voice cast, etc. are very important, while well-known movie review sites (such as Douban) are important channels for word-of-mouth transmission.

4.1.2 Picture and language evaluation category

Some of the content of the pop-ups in this anime work are comments on the graphics, language, and other details.

"The picture quality is amazing!!!"

"This is a beautiful frame."

"Hahahahaha, the rabbit looks like he's bald when he looks like that."

"Zebras are so pretty."

"The voice is too soft."

From these pop-ups evaluating the images and language, it can be found that users do not have any utilitarian purpose in evaluating these images and language, but just use them as a way to consume the extra energy of watching anime, and while expressing their own opinions and feelings, users hope to get the approval and reply from the rest of the users as well.

4.1.3 Comments and Answers

In watching anime, a number of users ask questions in the form of pop-ups about issues they don't understand in terms of plot and so on, and then there are other users who answer and explain the previous questions.

"Note that against panda's statement that "Meat eaters experienced in attacking herbivores will be stressed", hawks are suspect."

"It's repressed nature, he has his own bottom line."

"Cats and dogs are carnivores oh."

"It was the wolf who helped deliver the love letters the dead alpaca had written to the sheep during his lifetime."

"Hippos are omnivorous just like humans."

Asking questions in the form of pop-ups is an excellent way to help yourself build up knowledge about different things, while also satisfying the thrill of being needed by the person answering the question.

4.1.4 Emotional expression

Infected by the plot of the anime, users will then post pop-ups that express their emotions.

"What happened to a little sweetness!"

"Sorry didn't hold back hahahahahahaha!"

"The Yin-Yang Bunny laughed my ass off!"

"Ah cry, so gentle"

When users are infected by the plot to post pop-ups to express their emotions, they can let their happy or sad emotions be expressed, and also feel a sense of empathy when they see some pop-ups with the same feelings as their own, which deepen their interest and desire to watch on.

4.1.5 Exchange of views

Nearly half of Animal Rhapsody's pop-ups are users posting and exchanging opinions in response to plot content.

"It always feels like this tiger's character is prone to commit crimes."

"Rabbits have to repress their natures, bitter... isn't it good to be a wolf sister?"

"It's this worldview that leads to this."

"It's sad for carnivores, too, to repress their nature under such a system. Living in shame all the time."

"Without the so-called lowly desires you speak of, many physiological activities could not be carried out, and you would still be alive today to eat and say that?"

"The wolf and rabbit haven't finalized their relationship yet, the rabbit is single, so they can screw around all they want, right? The pop-ups say Louis is too shallow, right? They are in love, okay?"

From these pop-ups, we can see that users have different understandings of the plot, and due to the different worldviews and values of each person, the same issue is often analyzed, through the pop-up exchange can be discussed with other users, to learn more about the user's views, and broaden the thinking about different aspects of the problem.

4.1.6 Integration with reality

During the process of watching anime, many users will combine the anime plot with reality.

"It's just like selling human flesh on our black market."

"The author's black market has something in common with something even if there is no intention of insinuating reality"

"Like love, like your own invisible, have to lick what you think is love"

"This kind of girl exists on Chinese campuses too, in every university."

"If humans were kept from eating meat, they would die of temptation at the sight of so much meat."

"It's a normal desire, but it's the ugly side of human nature to eat meat."

These pop-ups are users' deeper understanding of the plot and description of the real events they associate with it, and some of these pop-ups essentially map users' dissatisfaction with certain real problems, and their indignation that cannot be expressed in reality is expressed through pop-ups.

4.1.7 Meaningless Chat Category

A portion of Animal Rhapsody's pop-ups are meaningless chatter between users.

"What to do, want a dog."

"Suddenly I want to order a takeout."

"The Curse of the Bachelor."

"It's better than the Youth Training Manual."

The content of these pop-ups are mostly everyday conversations with no real meaning, similar to the pop-ups evaluating the graphics and language, which users simply use as a way to burn off excess energy.

4.1.8 Check-in and clock-in category

At the beginning or end of each episode of Animal Rhapsody there is a batch of pop-ups covering the punchline.

"Sofa."

"Clocking in at number one."

"Send a pop-up to prove I was here."

These pop-ups reflect the user's need to seek presence and can create an atmosphere of collective activity.

The different kinds of pop-up contents mentioned above as well as the word cloud generated by the author based on the pop-up samples demonstrate the feature of freedom of pop-ups, through which users are free to express their opinions. After rooting and analyzing the pop-up content, the author made further refinement and mined the deep psychological demands of users.

what people get in mass media is to experience game-like happiness, and pop-up screen is an excellent representative of such game characteristics. Although pop-up is a carrier of information transmission, its essence is not to transmit information itself, but to provide users with a viewing experience through such real-time commenting subtitles, and make them feel game-like joy. This is exemplified in *Animal Rhapsody*, where emotional and meaningless chatting pop-ups have no real meaning, but add to the enjoyment of the user.

The pursuit of these pleasurable feelings also precisely reflects the game-like psychology of users. In this fast-developing society, the main audience of pop-up websites, i.e. the youth group, is facing more and more pressure in work, study and life, and the traditional information interaction cannot meet their needs for releasing pressure, at this time, pop-ups win their favor by virtue of the characteristics of freedom, openness and tolerance.

4.2.2 Rationalization

(1) Claims of existence

Freud said, "Narcissism is a kind of attention." Pop-ups are ostensibly real-time exchanges between users utilizing Internet technology, but in reality they also essentially contain users' psychological demands for their own sense of existence. In the traditional way of watching videos, users can only rely on their own empathy to realize their own sense of existence, but in the immersive viewing realized through pop-ups, users have the right to express their own emotions and thoughts, and most users post pop-ups to obtain self-identification and a sense of existence on the virtual platform of the network.^{Error! Reference source not found.} Most users post pop-ups to gain self-identification and a sense of existence on the virtual platform of the Internet.

In the pop-up samples of *Rhapsody of Animals*, a large amount of content is lyrical emotion and expression of opinions and views, and the text of the pop-up advances with the progress of the video, and the user consciously chooses the appropriate language to post according to the characteristics of the real-time pop-up and the content of the video. The pop-up makes the traditional monopoly of discourse no longer exist, realizing the realization of the right to free expression, and each user is able to express his or her personal views and emotions. "Legacy is so gentle, I like him too much", "This pair of cp is too sweet", "This picture cuts well" and so on, all these emotional expression and opinion release type of pop-ups reflect the user's For their own existence and the right to speak, which is exactly what Freud said the narcissism of the performance, when the user's pop-ups are recognized and liked by other users, this narcissism is even more satisfied.

(2) Rational reflection on the content of the work

From the perspective of anime viewing method, the participatory viewing of posting pop-ups is different from the traditional one-way viewing, which focuses on realizing the effect of indulging the audience in the work, while the pop-up function emphasizes making the audience withdraw from the plot and think independently, which doesn't mean to cut off the emotional connection between the user and the work, but rather is an upgrade of direct emotional resonance, encouraging the user to think independently, and preventing his/her emotions from being controlled by the emotions of the characters of the work. controlled by the emotions of the characters of the work.

"This is a normal desire, but here "eating meat" is considered as the ugly side of human nature, right?" and "Without the so-called low-level desires you talk about, many physiological activities could not be carried out,

and you would still be able to live to this day, and have enough to eat. to say that?" In the "Rhapsody of Animals" pop-up samples, such content is exactly the expression of users after rational thinking, including some words with strong rebuttal are not just venting negative energy, but high-quality content generated by users based on their own deep thinking about the issue. Although the quality of pop-ups still varies, the function of pop-ups does stimulate users' ability to think rationally, which makes the unidirectional ideology of traditional video delivery subverted to a certain extent.

(3) Interaction in dialogic exchanges

Every individual in human society is not completely independent and needs to communicate and interact with other individuals, and the two or more parties in the interaction deepen their understanding of each other with the help of language to form a non-coercive consensus and maintain the orderly development of society. Users in anime videos pass their worldviews and values to other users through pop-ups, and also feedback to the anime production team. They express their thoughts and attitudes through rational communication in such a free, equal and open situation, and relate to the subjective and objective worlds in a comprehensive way.

Through the study of the pop-up screen samples of Animal Rhapsody, the author found that when a user posts a pop-up screen that is truthful, reasonable and sincere in words, his views and opinions will be shared by most users. Therefore, the dialogic exchange in the pop-up screen can be seen as a coordination mechanism, where users use the pop-up screen as a medium to form a consensus with other pop-up screen users and act on the whole subjective and objective world.

4.3 Model construction

After rooting and analyzing the pop-up discourse, the author takes the interactive ritual chain theory as the basis, further refines it and generalizes the anime pop-up interactive ritual chain model. The details are shown in the following figure.

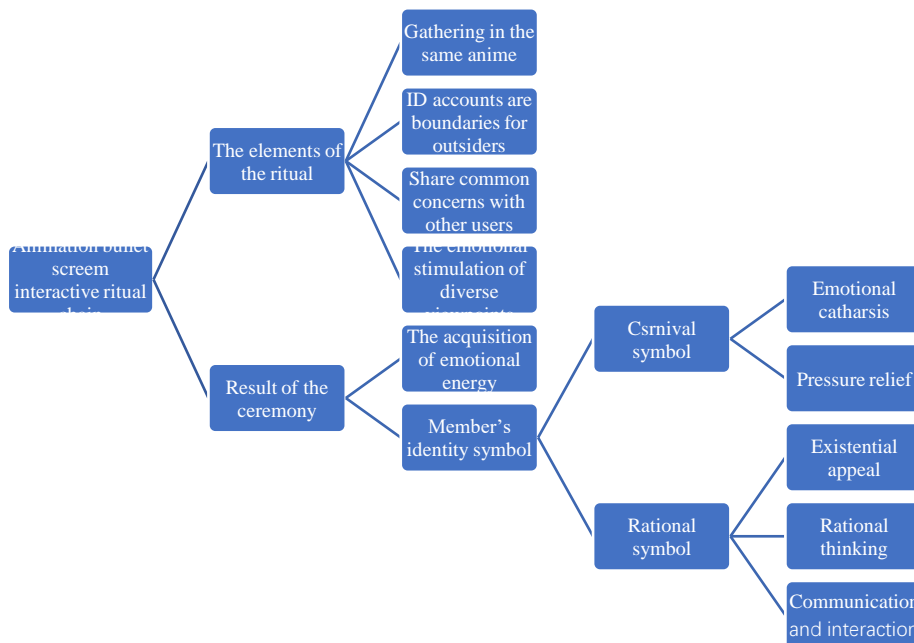


Figure 3: Model of the Anime Pop-up Interaction Ritual Chain

This model clearly demonstrates the generative elements of anime pop-up interaction rituals and the results of the rituals. In this model, there are four conditions for the initiation of the interactive ritual:

1. two or more users gathered in the same anime.
2. The user's ID account sets boundaries for outsiders.
3. There are common concerns among users.
4. Emotional stimulation from diverse viewpoints among users.

In the case of the anime *Animal Rhapsody*, at least two or more users have selected the anime together, and each user has a virtual ID, and these ID accounts are boundaries set for outsiders, so that only those who watch the anime together can be combined into an inter-encounter group, thus opening up the interactive ritual. In the initial period of the ritual, due to the low frequency of pop-ups, users do not care or pay much attention to other people besides themselves, but as the plot of the anime slowly advances, each individual user gradually senses the existence of other viewers through more and more pop-ups and begins to influence each other, and the interactive ritual moves forward. Here I need to emphasize that, although in the process of watching anime, users can not gather under the stage like watching a concert, but in the era of new media with the rapid development of the Internet, users can use the Internet to break the time and space limitations, creating a kind of "virtual living room" atmosphere. Moreover, as the users watching the anime exclude outsiders by virtue of their ID accounts, this makes the group of people who love the anime have a strong sense of exclusivity, which in turn enhances the unity and sense of honor of the whole group. As the number of plot projections and pop-ups continues to increase, users will pay closer and closer attention to the group's co-viewing actions, with more and more exchanges of opinions and emotional interactions, and they will have a better understanding of each other's behaviors and feelings, experiencing a strong sense of empathy, and further deriving a sense of solidarity of a higher intensity than before, which is also an acquisition of emotional energy brought about by the interaction rituals.

As users come from all directions, each with their own distinctive characteristics, the anime interactive ritual also generates different membership identity symbols. With the development of the anime plot, the state of empathy between users continues to strengthen, the entire pop-up content will become more and more frenzied, when the video content triggered everyone's empathy, almost all users uploaded pop-ups in unison, and the entire screen will instantly be covered with a "rain of bullets"; and when a certain pop-up content is contrary to the will of the crowd, other users will attack it. When a pop-up content is against the will of the crowd, other users will attack it. Users in this environment get a great catharsis of their emotions and release their pressure, and the original lonely private space for watching anime becomes a carnivalized stage, and the unidirectional communication mode of passively accepting information bombardment is completely subverted. The opposite of the carnivalization symbol is the rationalization of the users. Different from the traditional way, the pop-up screen emphasizes the communication between users, enables users to detach themselves from the plot and think independently in a retrograde way, and helps users to express their own opinions so as to obtain a sense of existence. In such a free, equal and open situation where carnival and rationality coexist, users can not only share their emotions and opinions, but also pass their opinions to the anime producers, promoting the optimization and improvement of the quality of future anime.

5. Conclusion

Through the analysis of the pop-up samples of Animal Rhapsody, this paper digs out the two psychological demands of the audience groups of carnivalization and rationalization. Unlike the groups that grew up in traditional media, the pop-up participant groups of anime videos grew up in a highly participatory media atmosphere, where they not only directly participated in the process of information dissemination, but also mastered the power of utilizing cultural power to achieve free and fair development of the society. Their use of pop-ups is by no means a brainstorming frenzy, but rather a way to strengthen their self-identity and sense of existence through real-time interaction, as well as to engage in rational thinking and put forward creative opinions and views. Therefore, we should not only treat pop-ups as a means of entertainment, but also pay attention to the reasons and demands behind why users need pop-ups as a communication medium.

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