Escape from WeChat: Expression and Exposure of Social Identity in the Internet Context

Yuanze Gao

School of Journalism and Communication, Ningxia University, Ningxia, China

Abstract: With the development of Internet technology, the boundaries between the virtual world and the real world have become so blurred that we have gradually become accustomed to socialising in the cyberspace of physical absence, between active and passive. And in social interaction, social identity is the first prerequisite for our social interaction. But it is important to note that in current online interactions, social identities are not set in stone. In different social platforms, we choose different social identities to socialise with and treat them as our real selves. We portray our desired identities in different scripts, replacing reality with the virtual. Many social identities bring many social pleasures, but it is important to note that this pleasure is shallow and to some extent even disorienting. Therefore, this paper will further explore and interpret the expression of multiple identities under the Internet on the basis of clarifying the logical mechanism behind the multiple social identities.

Keywords: social identity, "pantomime" theory, emotional empathy, rave theory

1. Introduction

In recent years, users have begun to subconsciously construct virtual identities in online social networking. Different social identities are used in different social situations, and it is safe to say that in the online age we are all "spies". In 2022, almost everyone will have an app such as Weibo, WeChat, Zhihu, etc. For us, different platforms serve different purposes, for example, we will choose to use WeChat for our daily social communication, and we prefer to build a positive and almost hypocritical image in WeChat. On Weibo, we are more willing to let ourselves go, a platform where we are probably closer to the real us. On Zhihu, we are more emphatic, willing to portray ourselves as people of a higher social level; someone once joked that the level of the world is in Zhihu.

2. Outside of WeChat we have the angles of the world

When we surf the internet, we put on a mask of social identity. Mark once suggested that we all have different masks, which exist to solidify or conceal our true identities. In the process of solidifying or concealing our identities, setting rules and writing our own social scripts, we wear our masks as mere social tools, not to show or understand our own personality traits, but to act out our own scripts[1] . For many people, this script has become part of their daily life. Each person uses their own script to shape their own persona. In this section, we look at a few characteristics that exist in social platforms outside of Weibo.

2.1. Faceting social identities

In the age of online social interaction, users are used to putting on different masks when interacting socially, giving themselves different identities[2] , and these masks always show our identification and recognition of our new social identity. We display our expectations of different social identities in different social platforms. In WeChat, for example, we are always used to or happy to present ourselves as a positive and upbeat image, and will portray ourselves in a series of ways in our circle of friends. To a certain extent, behind the mask even represents a satisfactory image of perfection for ourselves. It could even be argued that an exploration of the style of presentation of the prevailing image in WeChat yields a picture of the current preferences and constructions of the image of online users. Representing what kind of person we currently appreciate or would like to be more, what kind of person we are. Just like the protagonists in the TV series, we show what we want to be, and even to a certain extent, have had a great impact on our overall social aesthetic.

2.2. Social identity is a microcosm of the social environment

The reason why we mention that social identity is a microcosm of the social environment is that when we seriously explore the image of each social platform in society we will find that every mask we have is influenced by social rules and moral norms, for example, "we always think that all young people should be hardworking, old people should be kind, and children in primary school should be good learners "In such a social environment, we unconsciously combine our identity with the expectations of the whole social environment, for example, in WeChat, we are always willing to portray ourselves as a kind of good child, good wife, etc.

2.3. Social identities have age groups

It is important to note that in our current society, we always have a certain strict character to the way we portray ourselves, for example, we find that people of the same level, or of the same age, always have a similar meaning to the way they portray their social identity. Young people who have just graduated, for example, are always willing to portray themselves as people who are fully committed and willing to work hard, so that their social image is shaped for their work and for the expectations of their bosses, which, with the interaction of the subjective and objective, can add a layer of insurance to their social identity and make it less likely to fall off the horse.

3. The logic of social identity construction

At present, everyone will have different social identities, but these are not completely separate from each other; it is the overlap, so to speak, of the many masks of society and ourselves that make up who we really are. We play different roles in different scripts after careful study and reflection. A kind of self-awareness and self-exploration formed in the script is a relatively stable individual identity[3]. When there is a conflict between different social identities and our real identity, or when there is a difficulty in transforming between various social identities, a feeling of confusion and helplessness will arise, but this phenomenon rarely occurs in online social networks, because in online social networks, there is a theoretical logical point behind our many identities, and this logical point is usually our most authentic self. For example, a proud person, no matter how humble he is, will have a point behind him, perhaps a moral satisfaction behind his modesty, or some other kind of weakness, so to a certain extent it can be said that the logic of social identity construction is to have a relatively real point, to be able to integrate the self with the me that I have created.

"It's the best of times and the best of us", more and more young people are now able to leave the basic needs of survival and can go after spiritual satisfaction, being able to be discreet to a certain extent as part of their lives, which to some extent is also an affirmation of the social environment. Many people would argue that social identities are complicated, but it is important to note that social identities are not actually scary, we use them to maintain and protect ourselves, we use the most appropriate identity in the most appropriate for this online society. In the extremely interpersonal WeChat, we shape ourselves more as shiny and positive people, but because WeChat is a derived social identity, this identity also replaces our real-life social identity to some extent, and therefore this level of identity is extremely important and cannot be compromised or tarnished. Therefore, in online society, we slowly form an underground province, escaping from real life for a short time, from WeChat, which is highly connected to real life. We use other underground social identities, to be anonymous but extremely real people.

4. Underground social identities real self-submergence

Some would argue that we are more like the real us in Weibo, because we are more anonymous on top of this platform, although there is also the risk of dropping our vests, but overall it is still much safer than the platform of WeChat. In the platform of Weibo, we don't need to portray ourselves, we can say something bad in Weibo, something we don't want the people around us to know. Besides Weibo, soul also makes us forget who we really are, putting ourselves behind the screen and speaking out our inner emotions for good change with a strange and unknown online friend. So by running away from weibo, we are actually running away from this society, from this real society. The reason why we prefer to communicate on Weibo is because of the unique model of "anonymity in the foreground and real names in the background". In today's society, Weibo is an open social platform that generates a lot of

information. In this huge social network, everyone can find their own nodes and information flow, but they only have this opportunity, but they cannot have the same number of followers as the opinion leaders in the industry or the important marketing numbers, who have the majority of the traffic in Weibo. This has reduced the amount of traffic and attention going to each individual, creating a simple "privacy space" to a certain extent, which is why Renmeng is willing to post information related to his emotions or to express his niche or sharp opinions on Weibo, a social networking software. However, it should be noted that the 'privacy space' in Weibo is a hidden pseudo-proposition, as all Weibo content can be found by searching for it, but before this premise there is a huge amount of information, and Weibo can find specific information, but the process is extremely difficult. So the central shop of underground social identity is secrecy, and in our daily social interactions we use emotional "privacy" as a way of releasing our emotions. There are also many different social identities in the realm of social dating. For example, soul, a popular anonymous dating app, has made a name for itself in many online apps and has achieved good results because it collects information about users' emotions based on a variety of psychometric questions at different levels and uses this information to categorise them into different habits and different ways of thinking. It can be said that this kind of psychometric test can be used to find the right person for you, so that you can find the right person in your daily life and interaction. The different answers represent different identities, while the anonymous communication can protect the practical needs of their own fears of leaking secrets, and can help communication users give up their doubts and guards, promote emotional empathy in the anonymous virtual environment, and unload their hearts through random matching, leading to real and trustworthy communication. Therefore, Li Xingchan pointed out that in the anonymous society, the psychology of prying privacy and the sense of real communication are important positioning factors for the success of soul.

5. Behind the anonymity is the truth

At present, social interactions are very much about personal privacy, and what anonymous social networking offers is a model for recording real life. On top of this, anonymous social networking is more about recording or discussing some of the more non-mainstream things we want to say but are afraid to say and do in our daily lives. In such a social context, we are more willing to reveal our truth in the online world, maybe behind it is a light, maybe behind it is a dark, but behind it must be our real selves, these are closer to ourselves, we can use this identity to see the world and complete reconciliation with the world. On anonymous social media platforms, we can give up some of the restrictions of our identities that we cannot overcome in real life. It is also possible that someone you meet in real life who you would not want to talk to, you find something nice about them in the anonymous social interaction and talk with soul to soul.

Nowadays, it is an internet society, with the rise of the internet, the change of media forms and even the rise of mobile smart terminals, all of which are important but less visible things in this world. With the spread of smartphones, various online apps are making their mark. We are no longer the society we were in, we are more relaxed and free, we are no longer in the ancient society of "the chicken and the dog, the old man and the dead", we can place ourselves in any scene. We may not have left the world, but we have left the earth and the universe in the online world. But because of this, what we lack most in today's society is a sense of insecurity between multiple social identities. We all feel a sense of weightlessness at the moment. We move from city to city in different social circles, so it is more difficult for us to find a sense of belonging through offline interaction. As herd animals, humans are the largest group of creatures in the world, and social interaction is a fundamental attribute of human beings, and it is only through active communication and social interaction that we can find a place for ourselves in the world, and the multiple attributes of social identity are based on this.

In today's society, almost any hobby, no matter how niche, can be found on social media. When we are on our own hobby platform, we can learn about the best in our field; we can exchange experiences with friends in our hobby circle online, and learn what the hobby circle is really like, and we can even become real friends with our online hobby circle friends. You can even become real friends with your online circle of interest. You can catch up with your online friends in the second gen club, or meet up with your car friends in the car forum to attend a car show in the same city. Social software instantly provides a home for people's sense of belonging that has nowhere else to go. The social identity that people build through their interest circles connects them to a world that they would otherwise have little connection to in real life, and this social identity provides a new perspective on a diverse world.

6. Conclusions

In the current social network, having multiple social identities is equivalent to having multiple lives. Even if I experience social death in one society, I can still harvest my own emotional comfort in other social platforms. In the future, social identities may be more specific, and may be subdivided into different software or APPs for different times, all of which will be updated and made more vertical, with their own real fans and users, so that users can stick to the software.

It is important to note that while different social identities can provide an outlet for emotions and can help us understand a different world, they can also easily be divisive and disorienting. In the process of switching between multiple identities, it is also important to be clear about your true purpose and motivation for using your identity, so that you can ensure that you make the most effective use of your multiple social identities to socialise in society. In the future, we hope that we can have more diverse identities and happier lives, and that we can express our true selves more openly and happily. Virtual identities always represent a part of me, and we need to recognise this clearly to help our own selves to better understand themselves, not to get lost in the virtual world of the internet, not to get lost in our virtual selves, and even to give up our real selves because of our virtual selves. At present, the age of intervention in the online society is getting younger and younger, and how youngsters with immature minds can have their own unique thinking in the complex online society is also something that we need to be extremely concerned about now. So stay away from WeChat, stay away from your true self, and escape from the real society. I hope everyone can know themselves correctly and know others more correctly, and promote the change of the whole social climate, so that the online society in my coming can be more windy and happy.

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