The Positive Significance of Studying
the College Campus Sub-culture

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Abstract

This paper tries to explore the three aspects of the root causes of subculture, its characteristics and manifestations to find the positive significance that the sub-culture inherently has in favor of the construction of the mainstream culture. It suggests making correct use of the positive factors of the campus subcultures, guiding the healthy development of campus subcultures, strengthening the construction of the campus subculture to promote mainstream school culture.

Keywords: Subculture, Explore, Positive significance

Campus subculture, also known as small culture, has been regarded as an alien and negative cultural phenomenon and excluded out of the mainstream culture, as constitutes an antagonistic situation. With the deepening of opening up, the growth of the market economy, the popularity of Internet technology and other factors, the campus subculture has become increasingly rich. Subculture, which was once neglected and denied, has produced greater influences on the young students. It has been proved that such influences are positive, and negative as well. Compared with that education of campus mainstream culture is mainly concentrated on the professional culture, as to the educational guidance, the ideological investigation and analysis, whether the values are right or wrong and the degrees of firm ideal, the subculture covers a some ratio in the university students' life and gradually become an important force of influencing the construction of school climate and academic atmosphere. As to the political and ideological workers, how to correctly understand, deeply study and properly guide it have become an important task, as also causes widespread concern in the theoretical circle. In the new historical period, the campus subculture of college students, as a special group in a special stage of youth time, is not the one that deviates from the mainstream culture. Its roots and the rapid development, in particular, the features of the implied convergence and adaptability are worth concerning by the theoretical circle and the educators.

1. The positive significance of exploring the sub-cultural roots

The term of subculture was advanced as early as in 1886. It means that a group in a community, region or society bears the cultural or social behavior features that sufficiently distinguish themselves from others. It is Chicago School that begins this theoretical research, followed by Birmingham School in 1964, marked by the establishment of Centre for Contemporary Culture Strozzina (CCCS). Objectively speaking, Chicago School is one of the theoretical origins for the Birmingham School in the systematization of the concept of subculture. However, the discipline-institutionalized researches were started with the Chicago School. Birmingham School inherits and develops it in the aspects of research field and methods. In July 2002, the CCCS was abolished by the University of Birmingham and the research on sub-culture entered into the post sub-culture era. Its object of study is the so-called post-modern society, mainly involving in the changed youth sub-cultural phenomenon in the era of globalization. It redefines the youth subculture and constructs a new theoretical system, which marks that the subculture research has entered a new historical period.

The subculture was born resistance against the mainstream culture and hegemony. Stuart Hall, the leader of the Birmingham school in his first book, Popular Art (written in collaboration with Wanell in 1964) described the resistance of the subculture: young people formed such special style as talking in a special way, going to special places, performing special dances, wearing special clothes and maintaining a certain distance from the adult world, and other diverse manifestations of nonconformity to resist the mainstream society. Hall acutely pointed out that the formation of a special youth subculture style aims at "resisting the society". However, if we seek the root causes of the sub-cultural "resistance", we will find that it does not mean to give a thorough resistance but a

special form of seeking for "identification". For example, pop music of subculture (music, magazines, concerts, festivals, films, etc.) can help young people establish a sense of identification to confirm their self-identity. Answering the questions of "Who I Am ", "Where I stand" and "Where I should go", etc. involves the self-identity, collective identity, social identity and cultural identity. It shows that the subculture essentially bears the nature of convergence to the mainstream culture. Another phenomenon is the adaptability of sub-culture. After the appearance of sub-cultural style of resistance, the main interest groups and the mainstream culture have never ignored it. They have contained and incorporated it all the time. Hebdige in his book of The Subculture focused mainly on punk rock in Europe and the United States and pointed out that expressions of subcultures are usually integrated or incorporated into the dominant mainstream culture through two main channels. The first is the channel of commodity. The subculture symbols (clothing, music, etc.) are transformed into mass-produced goods and put into mainstream society. The second is the ideological channel. The dominating group (police, media, and the judicial system) labels the behaviors of the youth sub-culture and accepts and re-defines them.

At this point, it is not difficult to see that just because the subculture can not avoid its fate of being the result of incorporation; it often appears to be ambiguous and complicated. It despises or hates or flatters the mainstream culture. It is superficial and profound and of resistance and convergence. As far as the mainstream culture is concerned, it is a potential rival and an incorporated object, the antithesis of mainstream culture and the creator of mass culture. The incorporated subculture loses its resistance to various degrees, which makes it possible for it to integrate into the mainstream culture with each other. From the perspective of development, yesterday's subculture can be today's mainstream culture, and today's subculture can be tomorrow's mainstream culture. This shows that the so-called resistant and oppositional subculture has become the impetus for mainstream culture to develop.

2. The positive significance of exploring the campus sub-cultural characteristics

Campus subculture, as an integral part of campus culture, refers to the beliefs, values and lifestyles unique to college students, which, to a certain extent, reflects the tendency of thinking and behavior and at the same time displays what the college students think about the society and their own values. Campus subculture is diversified in dynamic development. With the development of the times and the enhancement of the awareness of student body, college campus subculture has the tendency of growing prosperous. It has particularly evident characteristics mainly as the following.

2.1 Creativity

Because college students are of vigor of mind, cheerful dispositions and they do not adhere to the traditional mode, their innovation of self-awareness and knowledge is particularly strong. Although the idea of higher education are also constantly changed, due to the constraints of the real situation of education and the relative stability of the mainstream campus culture, the latest social trend is first reflected in the subculture of college students. Moreover, it produces conflicts and contradictions with the existing university cultural environment to various degrees. This is not uncommon in real college life. For example, the creative subculture, such as commercial culture and sports culture coming from the different interest and hobbies, completely meets the needs and creativity of students and reflects their features of seeking novelty and differences. The feature of creativity of subculture makes up for the rigid and inflexible shortage of the mainstream culture. The students' personalities are displayed and their status of main body is strengthened, which arouses the enthusiasm of the students to take the initiative to build their own knowledge system. The final result is to develop the students' creative ability and enrich and develop the campus culture, injecting fresh blood to the mainstream campus cultural development. As long as it is correctly guided, the creativity of the subculture will produce positive effects on the development of the campus mainstream culture.

2.2 Criticalness

Young people form the campus sub-culture groups for they are open, radical and independent. These characteristics determine that the sub-cultural group is multi-values and tends to be more critical and marginal. The content mostly displays that the young people are confused about their future and cynical about the society. Thus they often present themselves to be radical and rebellious. They talk about a variety of sensitive social phenomena in radical and biased words. The criticalness of the subculture reminds the mainstream culture of re-examining itself. It is a forceful supervision and a warning to the mainstream culture, which has become rigid in ideology, empty in content, single in expression, routine in development mode, complacent and conservative and positive because for a long period it has been supported by the mass and has achieved the advantages of identity. And it can stimulate and urge the mainstream culture to make more progress.

2.3 Novelty

The highly-developed society today and the ever-growing amount of information have led to the emergence of a variety of new sub-cultural organizations. The new ideas, reflected by the novelty of expressions, have brought a fresh air and rich information to the campus, which greatly enlarges the students' horizon and way of thinking, and spurs their enthusiasm of creativity and inspiration of innovation. There appear a lot of profound insights, consciousness and emotions of positive significance. As long as attention can be paid to new ideological trends among the young people, to strengthening education and to correcting guidance, the features of the youth subculture in pursuing of fashion can be attracted to the right track, as is of great significance to the development of the campus mainstream culture.

2.4 Plasticity

College students are the main body of campus subculture and their ideas are constantly changing with the increase of their knowledge. And they are apt to be affected by other ideas from all aspects of the society. As a dynamic culture, the campus subculture is of strong instability and plasticity. Guided scientifically, the phenomenon of campus subculture can become more rational and mature. By making great efforts to explore the positive factors and limit its negative impacts, we can make the growth of the campus subculture on the sound orbit and become the beneficial supplement for the campus mainstream culture.

3. The positive significance to explore the campus sub-cultural manifestations

The contemporary campus culture is not only complex in content including all aspects of the college students' life and thoughts. Moreover, its expressions and modes of transmission are also multiplied. They can become the carrier for the negative, vulgar and even reactionary culture or the carrier for active, elegant, healthy and progressive culture. As long as they can be used reasonably, these expressions are still of positive significance.

3.1 Desk culture and dormitory culture

At present, there is a negative phenomenon among college students of doodling on the desks and chairs, leaving a mess in the classroom. Classrooms are polluted and dormitories are secularly decorated with all kinds of film stars and beauties, which to some degrees greatly affects the improvement of the inner spirit of the individual student. In response to these phenomena, we can take some measures to organize students to design their own "civilized classroom" activities of inviting those famous sayings and epigrams or inspirational mottoes to the classrooms and let the students made a full play of their initiative and creativity to let the civilized, healthy and elegant culture occupy the classrooms to improve the taste of classroom culture and resist the negative factors of desk culture. The activities of developing the "civilized dormitory" can help to realize elegant dormitory culture, clean, health and lovely, where the civilized students can help each other and abide by the laws and regulations. Thus we can correct and reorganize the negative subculture and let its positive factors work.

3.2 Toilet culture

Doodling in a toilet has experienced a long time. The erotic poems and the information of cheating in exams and those vulgar ads have become the hotbed of the negative subculture. We should occupy this cultural position to let the healthy and civilized wind disperse the dirt and clouds away here. Now, we are pleased to see that the toilet culture is being improved. The encouragement of toilet civilization and saving resources of water and power highlights the warm and civilized cultural connotation. And the toilet culture has a positive meaning of serving the mainstream culture.

3.3 Network culture

The negative effects of internet culture have harmed the young students to a frightening degree. Online games, sex, violence, deception and other reactionary information are full of the network and have poisoned a large number of young students, which makes internet culture the evil source. It is urgent for us to occupy this position. We should build the campus website of ideology, knowledge, interest and service, enhance the management of the campus BBS and never provide channels for wrong words and viewpoints. We should constantly expand the range of guiding the school subculture and make a full play of network transmission.

In all, the campus sub-cultural manifestations are positive and negative as well. As long as we actively occupy the position of subculture and make full use of it, we can let it play positive role. Colleges and universities should seize these positive factors of the manifestations of the subculture, construct the campus subculture with the mainstream culture of Marxist ideology, the socialist core value system and the scientific outlook on development as the guideline. We should adhere to the steady core of the mainstream culture, respect the diversity and differences of the campus subculture, find and use the positive aspects of the subculture, correctly

deal with the relations between the construction of the mainstream culture and the campus subculture, avoid the disadvantages and utilize the advantages, correctly guide the healthy development of the campus culture of different tastes and manifestations, and work hard to improve the taste and level of the subculture.

4. Conclusion

In summary, whether from the viewpoints of source, characteristics and manifestations, the sub-cultural phenomenon has the positive significance of merging with and used by the mainstream culture. As a cultural idea and cultural pattern, campus sub-cultural groups will become a significant force in campus cultural life in shaping the students' attitude towards life and values. Educators of higher institutions should actively explore and utilize the positive advantages of the sub-cultural groups, depend on scientific and modern management to promote the development of the mainstream culture with school teaching and training as the core.

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