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The Incorporation and Resistance of the Danmei Subculture

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Abstract

The Danmei subculture, emerging from Chinese fandom culture and influenced by Japanese Yaoi culture, centers around male-male romantic and/or sexual relationships in fictional narratives across various media. This research article explores the incorporation and resistance of the Danmei subculture within popular culture, with a focus on the internet's role as a facilitator. The study employs participatory observation and interactive engagement with 121 female Danmei fans to examine ideological and commercial incorporation, as well as the subculture's impact on gender norms and power dynamics. The findings reveal how Danmei challenges traditional gender and societal norms, fosters inclusivity and acceptance, critiques power imbalances, and promotes participatory culture. The commercial incorporation of Danmei has led to increased visibility but also raises concerns about commodification and cultural authenticity. The research contributes to a better understanding of subcultural dynamics and the significance of female Danmei fans' experiences in shaping contemporary popular culture.

Keywords: Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, Danmei Culture, Subculture Theory

Introduction

The relationship between subcultures and popular culture has long captivated the attention of scholars, as subcultures emerging from marginalized groups challenge dominant cultural narratives and offer alternative perspectives that shape the evolving landscape of popular culture. In recent years, the Danmei subculture has emerged as a significant subcultural movement, drawing attention within the context of Chinese fandom culture, and

influenced by Japanese Yaoi culture¹. Danmei centers around fictional narratives exploring male-male romantic and/or sexual relationships, manifesting across various mediums including literature, manga, anime, web novels, and fan creations. This subculture's incorporation and resistance provide a captivating case study to comprehend the interplay between subcultural movements and mainstream cultural dynamics, especially within the digital realm. The internet, characterized by its unique attributes of anonymity and easy accessibility, has become a powerful tool for subcultural groups to generate texts, construct meaning, and foster social communities in the virtual world. It has opened new avenues for subcultures to participate actively in and influence popular culture. The Danmei subculture exemplifies this phenomenon, showcasing the ways in which the internet facilitates the incorporation and resistance of subcultural practices.

This research article aims to undertake an in-depth examination of the incorporation and resistance of the Danmei subculture within the broader context of popular culture, with a specific focus on the role of the internet as a facilitator of subcultural practices. By exploring the cultural, social, and media dynamics that have shaped the Danmei subculture, this study sheds light on the complexities and significance of this subcultural movement within contemporary society. The objectives of this research are twofold: firstly, to investigate the incorporation of Danmei elements into mainstream media and explore how this subculture has influenced and transformed popular culture narratives in the digital age; secondly, to delve into the resistance efforts of the Danmei community, examining how they navigate societal prejudices and advocate for greater recognition and representation, utilizing the potential of online platforms.

The findings of this research contribute to both theoretical and practical realms. Theoretically, the study expands our understanding of subcultural dynamics within the Danmei subculture by exploring its incorporation into mainstream media and highlighting the resistance efforts of the community, particularly within the context of the internet. It sheds light on the strategies employed by Danmei fans to challenge societal prejudices and advocate for visibility and representation. Practically, the findings inform media producers, scholars, and fans about the significance and impact of the Danmei subculture, facilitating a more nuanced understanding of its contributions to contemporary popular culture. Furthermore, this research addresses the gender imbalance in subcultural studies by focusing specifically on female Danmei fans and their experiences, shedding light on the distinct dynamics within the Danmei fandom.

¹ Yaoi culture refers to a specific genre of fictional media that explores romantic and/or sexual relationships between male characters, primarily created by and for women. The term "Yaoi" originated in Japan and is an acronym for "Yama nashi, Ochi nashi, Imi nashi" (no climax, no point, no meaning), indicating that the focus of Yaoi narratives is often on the emotional and romantic aspects rather than a complex plot.

Literature Review

The relationship between subcultures and popular culture has garnered significant scholarly interest over the years. Scholars have acknowledged that subcultures, often emerging from marginalized groups, play a crucial role in challenging dominant cultural narratives and offering alternative perspectives that shape the ever-evolving landscape of popular culture (Hebdige, 2004; Thornton, 1995). However, it is important to note that the struggle of power relations, which the author overlooked in the previous discussion, is a crucial aspect to consider in understanding subcultures.

Subculture theory provides a valuable framework for comprehending the dynamics between subcultures and mainstream culture. Built upon the work of Cohen (2002) and Hall and Jefferson (1991), subculture theory highlights the formation of subcultures in response to shared experiences, identities, and values that set them apart from the dominant culture. Subcultures often emerge from social groups that face marginalization or exclusion, seeking alternative forms of expression and community. Within the realm of female subcultures, feminist scholars have expanded upon subculture theory to address the unique experiences and perspectives of women. Female subculture theory sheds light on how women's subcultures challenge traditional gender roles, navigate societal constraints, and create spaces for agency and resistance (Beynon, 2002; McRobbie, 2000). It emphasizes the intersections of gender, identity, and cultural practices within subcultural movements. Notably, McRobbie's theory has contributed to giving voice to women's studies, which had previously been overlooked by the Birmingham School (Wald, 2004). This background underscores the potential of the danmei subculture to make significant contributions to the literature, both from a subcultural and gender perspective.

One subculture that has garnered considerable attention in recent years is the danmei subculture. Originating from Chinese fandom culture and influenced by Japanese yaoi culture, danmei revolves around fictional narratives exploring male-male romantic and/or sexual relationships (Ng, 2019). It encompasses various mediums, including literature, manga, anime, web novels, and fan creations. The danmei subculture provides a captivating case study for understanding the interplay between subcultural movements and mainstream cultural dynamics, particularly within the digital realm. The internet, characterized by its attributes of anonymity and easy accessibility, has become a powerful tool for subcultural groups to generate texts, construct meaning, and foster social communities in the virtual world (Hine, 2000). It has opened up new avenues for subcultures to actively participate in and influence popular culture (Bennett, 1999). The danmei subculture exemplifies this phenomenon, showcasing how the internet facilitates the incorporation and resistance of subcultural practices. Online platforms have provided danmei fans with spaces to create, share, and discuss their works, challenging societal prejudices and advocating for greater visibility and representation (Lavin et al., 2018).

By examining the incorporation and resistance of the danmei subculture, this article expands the understanding of subcultural dynamics and sheds light on its potential contributions to the existing literature. The subsequent sections will delve into the specific manifestations of danmei within popular culture, exploring its incorporation into mainstream media and the ways in which the subculture resists the forces of cultural assimilation and commercialization.

Research Methodology

To investigate the incorporation and resistance of the danmei subculture, this study employed a participatory observation method, which took place from October 2019 to February 2022. Active engagement in the danmei community was prioritized, with a specific focus on various forums frequented by female danmei fans. This approach facilitated direct interaction with the participants, leading to a deeper understanding of their perspectives and experiences. Extensive reading of fan-fiction works produced by these fans and close observation of their interactive behaviors within a WeChat group were conducted. A total of 121 female danmei fans actively involved in the Weibo super topic community, LOFTER, and Bilibili participated in the study. These platforms were selected for their significance in the danmei fandom and their popularity among the target audience. The study sought participants who displayed strong engagement with the danmei subculture, allowing for the collection of rich and diverse data.

To ensure an open and flexible approach, relatively open and freely structured interviews were employed. This method enabled respondents to express their subjective views and experiences more clearly than standardized interview or marking and answering methods. By adopting this approach, the study aimed to capture the nuanced perspectives of the participants, providing insights into their motivations, experiences, and the ways in which they navigate the danmei subculture. The combination of participatory observation, extensive reading of fan-fiction works, and interactive engagement with the danmei fan community via online platforms allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the incorporation and resistance dynamics within the danmei subculture.

Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the processes of incorporation and resistance within the danmei subculture among female fans. This objective seeks to explore how female danmei fans navigate and negotiate their involvement in the subculture, examining the ways in which they incorporate its values, practices, and aesthetics into their lives while also resisting dominant cultural norms and expectations.

2. To understand the motivations, experiences, and perspectives of female danmei fans in relation to their engagement with the subculture. This objective aims to delve into the personal motivations behind their participation in the danmei subculture, their lived experiences as fans, and their perspectives on the subculture's significance in their lives, relationships, and identity formation.

3. To investigate the impact of participatory observation and interactive engagement on gaining insights into the danmei subculture. This objective aims to assess the effectiveness and value of employing participatory observation as a research methodology, focusing on the researcher's active involvement and interaction within the danmei subculture to gain firsthand understanding and insights.

Findings

The incorporation of the danmei subculture into mainstream media and popular culture can be examined from both ideological and commercial perspectives. This section explores how ideological factors and commercial considerations have influenced the integration of danmei elements into various forms of media and cultural products, and the resistance of female fans emerged as a response to the cultural incorporation from mainstream culture.

1. The Ideological Incorporation of Danmei Subculture

From an ideological standpoint, the danmei subculture disrupts traditional notions of gender, sexuality, and romance in China. Traditional gender roles in China emphasize strict norms, where men are expected to be assertive, dominant, and the primary breadwinners, while women are expected to be nurturing, submissive, and fulfill domestic responsibilities. However, the danmei subculture challenges these gender roles by centering its narratives on male-male relationships, promoting alternative expressions of masculinity and femininity. Characters in danmei stories can be sensitive, vulnerable, and emotionally expressive, presenting a different perspective on gender roles. For instance, in the danmei novel "Sajiao," written by one of the interviewees, the male protagonist works as a cross-dressing livestream host and enjoys acting cute and dependent around other males. Another example is Chocolate's novel, where two boys live together and raise a child, with one of them taking on the role of a mother, performing household chores and cooking.

Moreover, traditional Chinese society places significant importance on heterosexual relationships as the normative and expected sexual orientation. Marriage and heterosexual partnerships are seen as crucial for building families and continuing ancestral lines. In contrast, the danmei subculture disrupts this notion by exploring and celebrating same-sex romantic and sexual relationships, presenting an alternative perspective that challenges heteronormative narratives. By focusing on male-male relationships in its fictional narratives, danmei challenges the dominant assumptions and expectations prevalent in mainstream culture, expanding the possibilities beyond conventional heterosexual relationships. This ideological shift invites critical examination of societal norms and opens discussions about diverse forms of intimacy and affection.

Secondly, the danmei subculture fosters an inclusive and accepting environment for discussing danmei. It has garnered a large and dedicated following within online communities, such as Lofter, Weibo, and Bilibili. Fans of danmei novels often organize online games and dinners in participatory groups, particularly during holidays or special festivals. These activities not only strengthen relationships between members but also foster a sense of belonging to a larger community. Moreover, fan groups serve as platforms for readers to discuss their favorite novels and characters, share their fanfictions, and recommend new works. Members have the opportunity to interact with the authors of the novels, who often maintain social media accounts on platforms such as Weibo and Lofter. These authors may offer insights into their creative process, provide updates on new releases, and engage in direct communication with their readers. The enthusiasm and active participation of danmei fans demonstrate the appeal and resonance of non-heteronormative narratives, indicating a strong demand for alternative portrayals of love and desire. The subculture also promotes the idea that love and attraction transcend gender, emphasizing the importance of consensual and respectful relationships. Through its narratives and communities, danmei challenges homophobia, contributing to broader discussions on gay rights and representation. By providing a platform for the exploration and celebration of diverse identities and relationships, the danmei subculture challenges dominant ideologies that perpetuate exclusion and marginalization. It actively promotes inclusivity and acceptance while creating space for individuals to connect, express themselves, and find solidarity within the community.

Thirdly, the danmei subculture presents an ideological critique of power dynamics within relationships and society. Many danmei narratives explicitly examine and subvert power imbalances, questioning traditional hierarchical structures and challenging societal norms. These narratives often explore themes of agency, consent, and equality, inviting reflection on power dynamics and fostering discussions on issues of social justice and equality. For example, Flying Fish, an interviewee with 10 years of writing experience, authored a danmei novel called "The Healer's Touch." This novel portrays a relationship between a powerful nobleman and a healer from a lower social class. The narrative delves into the power dynamics between the characters, highlighting the agency of the healer and challenging the traditional hierarchical structure based on social status. The story places emphasis on the importance of consent and equality in relationships, prompting readers to reflect on power imbalances and societal expectations. Another author, Time, with 13 years of writing experience, penned a danmei novel titled "Beyond the Veil." This work explores themes of agency, consent, and equality within a supernatural setting. The narrative follows two characters who belong to a society divided by magical abilities. By examining power dynamics and challenging the existing hierarchy, the story encourages readers to reflect on issues of social justice and equality. It emphasizes the significance of consent and the right to make autonomous choices, regardless of one's position in society. Additionally, the prevalence of "dynamics tags" in danmei works serves as another example of the subculture critiquing power dynamics. Authors

and readers use these tags to indicate the power dynamics between characters, such as “top” and “bottom,” “dominant” and “submissive,” or “seme” and “uke” in Japanese terms, or “gong” and “shou” in Chinese terms. By explicitly labeling and exploring these power dynamics, danmei narratives draw attention to the complexities and nuances of relationships, challenging traditional hierarchical structures.

These examples illustrate how the danmei subculture actively engages with power dynamics, examining and subverting them to question traditional hierarchical structures and foster discussions on agency, consent, and equality. Through their exploration of these themes, danmei works invite readers to reflect on broader issues of social justice and challenge societal norms.

Finally, the danmei subculture's incorporation into popular culture reflects the changing ideologies surrounding fandom and participatory culture. Traditionally, fans were seen as passive consumers of media. However, the danmei subculture exemplifies the active engagement of fans in the creation and dissemination of content. It empowers individuals to become creators, writers, artists, and critics, challenging the hierarchical relationships between producers and consumers. This participatory aspect of the danmei subculture aligns with ideologies of democratization, empowerment, and grassroots creativity, contributing to a broader reevaluation of cultural production and consumption.

Overall, the danmei subculture disrupts traditional ideologies related to gender, sexuality, and romance, fosters inclusivity and acceptance within its communities, critiques power dynamics, and promotes participatory culture. Through its fictional narratives and the active engagement of its fans, the danmei subculture challenges societal norms and opens up discussions on diverse identities, relationships, and social justice.

2. The Commercial Incorporation of Danmei Subculture

The commercial incorporation of the danmei subculture refers to the process by which elements of the subculture are commodified and integrated into mainstream commercial ventures. As the danmei subculture gained popularity and attracted a significant following, it caught the attention of commercial entities seeking to capitalize on its market potential. This commercial incorporation has both positive and negative implications for the subculture and its community.

On the positive side, the commercial incorporation of the danmei subculture has led to increased visibility and accessibility of danmei content. Publishing houses and online platforms have recognized the demand for danmei novels and have started to actively acquire and promote these works. The popularity of danmei novels has led to an influx of capital in China's film and television industry, as companies seek to capitalize on the popularity of these novels. In 2021, all major platforms, production companies, and actors aimed to capitalize on the popularity of danmei novels by adapting and filming them after buying the copyright of the original works. According to a reporter from the

Semimonthly Talks (New Media of Xinhua News Agency, 2021), almost all the famous online danmei novels IP created by Jinjiang were sold, with the maximum price of a single IP being 40 million yuan. More than 60 danmei novels were being or have been prepared for film and television but were later banned. This increased availability allows more people to discover and engage with danmei literature, expanding the reach of the subculture beyond its core fan base.

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2	《魔道祖师》	墨香铜臭	电视剧	现代架空
3	《天官赐福》	墨香铜臭	电视剧	现代架空
4	《哑舍》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
5	《哑舍2》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
6	《哑舍3》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
7	《哑舍4》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
8	《哑舍5》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
9	《哑舍6》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
10	《哑舍7》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
11	《哑舍8》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
12	《哑舍9》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
13	《哑舍10》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
14	《哑舍11》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
15	《哑舍12》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
16	《哑舍13》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
17	《哑舍14》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
18	《哑舍15》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
19	《哑舍16》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
20	《哑舍17》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
21	《哑舍18》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
22	《哑舍19》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
23	《哑舍20》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
24	《哑舍21》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
25	《哑舍22》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
26	《哑舍23》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
27	《哑舍24》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
28	《哑舍25》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
29	《哑舍26》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
30	《哑舍27》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
31	《哑舍28》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
32	《哑舍29》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
33	《哑舍30》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
34	《哑舍31》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
35	《哑舍32》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
36	《哑舍33》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
37	《哑舍34》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
38	《哑舍35》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
39	《哑舍36》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
40	《哑舍37》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
41	《哑舍38》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
42	《哑舍39》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
43	《哑舍40》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
44	《哑舍41》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
45	《哑舍42》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
46	《哑舍43》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
47	《哑舍44》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
48	《哑舍45》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
49	《哑舍46》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
50	《哑舍47》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
51	《哑舍48》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
52	《哑舍49》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
53	《哑舍50》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
54	《哑舍51》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
55	《哑舍52》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
56	《哑舍53》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
57	《哑舍54》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
58	《哑舍55》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
59	《哑舍56》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
60	《哑舍57》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
61	《哑舍58》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空
62	《哑舍59》	玄黄	电视剧	现代架空

Source *In the 2021 drama competition . . .* (2020)

Figure 1 62 copyrighted Danmei novels from Jinjiang website sold out until September 24, 2020

Furthermore, the commercial incorporation has facilitated the professionalization of Danmei authors and artists. Previously, many Danmei creators were amateurs or hobbyists, but now they have the opportunity to work with publishers, earn royalties, and gain recognition for their talent and creativity. This professionalization provides a platform for Danmei authors and artists to further develop their skills and contribute to the growth and evolution of the subculture.

In addition to publishing, other industries have also recognized the potential of the Danmei subculture. For example, merchandise such as keychains, posters, and apparel featuring characters from popular Danmei novels is being produced and sold. This allows fans to express their support and affiliation with the subculture through material goods. The availability of merchandise not only generates revenue but also strengthens the sense of community among fans, as they can display their interests and connect with like-minded individuals.

However, the commercial incorporation of the Danmei subculture is not without its challenges. One of the concerns is the potential for commercialization to dilute or sanitize the subculture's content. In order to appeal to a broader market, some Danmei works may undergo modifications or censorship to conform to mainstream standards. This can result in the loss of the subculture's unique and sometimes controversial elements, compromising its authenticity and challenging the subversive nature of Danmei narratives.

Another concern is the risk of exploitation and marginalization of Danmei creators. As the subculture becomes commercialized, a power dynamic emerges between the creators and the entities that seek to profit from their work. Creators may face pressure to conform to market demands and compromise their artistic vision. Moreover, there is a risk of their works being undervalued or misappropriated without proper recognition or compensation.

Additionally, the commercial incorporation of the Danmei subculture may lead to the oversaturation of the market with subpar or derivative content. As demand for Danmei grows, there is a possibility of hastily produced works being released solely to capitalize on the trend, resulting in a decline in quality and creativity.

Overall, the commercial incorporation of the Danmei subculture has both positive and negative implications. While it increases visibility, accessibility, and opportunities for Danmei creators, it also raises concerns about the potential dilution of content, exploitation of creators, and oversaturation of the market. As the subculture continues to evolve and interact with commercial entities, it is important for stakeholders to strike a balance that respects the subculture's values, artistic integrity, and the well-being of its community. While the ideological and commercial aspects of incorporation are intertwined, they present different motivations and implications. Ideologically, the incorporation of Danmei subculture signifies progress towards greater acceptance and representation of diverse identities within popular culture. It contributes to a more inclusive cultural landscape and provides a platform for marginalized voices to be heard. Commercially, the incorporation of Danmei elements responds to market demands, capitalizing on the existing fan base and generating revenue. These dual aspects shape the incorporation of Danmei subculture, reflecting the interplay between social ideologies and economic considerations within the realm of media and popular culture.

3. The Resistance of Danmei Subculture

The resistance within the Danmei subculture encompasses the persistent efforts made by its community to preserve its unique identity, values, and creative expressions in response to commercialization and external pressures. As the Danmei subculture gains commercial success and mainstream recognition, there is a growing need to protect its subversive nature and artistic integrity.

One form of resistance is the preservation of authentic content within the Danmei subculture. Danmei works often explore unconventional and taboo themes, challenging societal norms and expectations. However, commercial entities may attempt to dilute or sanitize the subculture's content to conform to mainstream standards. For example, in China, where broadcasting works centered around same-sex relationships is prohibited, production companies have altered the romantic relationships between male characters into brotherly relationships to successfully air popular Danmei works online. This adaptation has been observed in recent online dramas based on Danmei novels such as "Guardian," "The Untamed," and "Shan He Ling."



Source Chan (2019)

Figure 2 Dan Gai drama - The Untamed (2019)

In response, Danmei creators and fans actively resist these attempts by advocating for the preservation of the original narratives, characters, and themes that make Danmei unique. They emphasize the importance of maintaining the subculture's subversive nature and pushing boundaries to promote inclusivity and representation. One interviewee, with 11 years of experience in reading Danmei novels, expressed their sentiments: Firstly, I purchase and read original works precisely for their intense and passionate love stories. If you change that, what am I supposed to read? Secondly, actors cannot convincingly portray the characters from Danmei novels and their passionate love. Thirdly, I only enjoy the original version of Danmei novels, so I will strive to protect them. I will actively complain to relevant authorities to have these adaptations taken down. Lastly, Danmei novels should not be turned into scripts and money-making tools for unknown actors by production companies.

Another form of resistance is the establishment of alternative platforms and spaces for Danmei creators and fans. Online communities, forums, and fan-driven initiatives have become essential in fostering a sense of belonging and providing a safe haven for the subculture. These spaces allow for the free exchange of ideas, discussions, and the creation of fan works without the constraints of commercial influences.

Within social media platforms such as Weibo, Tieba, Bilibili and Lofter, works, discussions and topics related to Danmei culture, as well as fanfiction of non-Danmei works, are frequently found. For example, in 2023, after the TV series “Kuang Biao” became popular, Lofter witnessed the emergence of numerous fan articles about the main characters An Xin and Li Xiang, as well as Gao Qi Qiang and Gao Qi Sheng. These fan articles, known as Tongren articles, are self-published or fan-made works typically in the form of manga or novels created by fans within the

specific fandom or subculture. They provide fans with additional stories, artwork, or interpretations that may not be found in the official canon. Tongren articles allow fans to express their creativity, share their love for the characters, and engage with the Danmei community. Moreover, when it is challenging to publish certain content online, Danmei novel writers often form private chat groups to share such content with their loyal readers through alternative means. These private chat groups enable writers to maintain control over the distribution and consumption of their content, ensuring it remains true to the values and vision of the Danmei subculture. By creating and maintaining their own platforms, whether through social media or private chat groups, the Danmei community actively participates in the production and distribution of their content. This allows them to retain autonomy and ensure that their creative works align with the subculture's values while fostering a sense of community and engagement among fans and creators.

Additionally, resistance is seen in the active support and promotion of independent Danmei creators. The subculture's community recognizes the importance of valuing and appreciating the contributions of individual artists, authors, and content creators. Most interviewed loyal fans of Danmei expressed that they would support and encourage the Danmei authors they appreciate to continue writing through methods such as tipping and purchasing. Additionally, the majority of adult readers do not oppose Danmei authors selling the rights of their Danmei novels to TV drama production companies. They understand that it allows the authors to earn legitimate income. However, they simply hope that the communities discussing the novels and TV dramas can be separated, without interfering with each other, to avoid conflicts and disputes with the mainstream perspective on artistic aesthetics, which may disrupt the territory of the subculture. By actively engaging with and supporting independent creators, whether through purchasing their works or providing platforms for exposure, the Danmei community resists the dominance of commercial entities and ensures that artists receive recognition and compensation for their efforts.

Furthermore, resistance is evident in the critical engagement and discourse within the Danmei community. Fans and creators actively discuss and analyze Danmei works, exploring themes, character dynamics, and social implications. This critical engagement deepens the understanding and appreciation of the subculture while fostering a sense of ownership and agency among its members. By engaging in thoughtful discussions, the Danmei community resists superficial commercial interpretations and actively shapes the discourse surrounding the subculture.

Moreover, the Danmei community actively supports and uplifts its creators by engaging in various supportive activities. For instance, fans organize fan meetings and conventions where they can meet their favorite Danmei authors, express their appreciation, and discuss the works in person. These events provide an opportunity for fans to directly connect with the creators, fostering a sense of community and strengthening the bond between them. Additionally, online platforms dedicated to Danmei, such as forums, social media groups, and fan websites, serve as spaces for fans and creators to interact and share their love for the subculture. Fans often leave positive comments,

reviews, and recommendations for Danmei works, encouraging others to explore and enjoy the diverse range of narratives and art styles within the subculture. Furthermore, fans actively support independent Danmei creators through financial means, such as purchasing their books, merchandise, or participating in crowdfunding campaigns. By directly contributing to the financial success of these creators, fans ensure their continued ability to produce quality content and sustain their creative endeavors. Moreover, fans engage in fan translation projects, making Danmei works accessible to a wider audience by translating them into different languages. These translations not only enable international fans to enjoy Danmei works but also help promote the subculture globally, fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

Overall, resistance within the Danmei subculture manifests through various means, including the preservation of authentic content, the establishment of alternative platforms, the support for independent creators, and critical engagement and discourse. These acts of resistance ensure that the subculture remains true to its core values, promotes inclusivity and representation, and maintains its subversive nature in the face of commercialization and external pressures. By actively asserting their autonomy and creative agency, the Danmei community continues to shape and evolve their subculture while safeguarding its integrity and identity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has explored the relationship between the Danmei subculture and popular culture, with a focus on the internet's role in facilitating subcultural practices. The study sheds light on the dynamics of incorporation and resistance within the Danmei subculture, examining its ideological and commercial aspects. The findings of the study highlight the disruptive nature of the Danmei subculture, challenging traditional notions of gender, sexuality, and romance in Chinese society. Through its narratives, the subculture promotes alternative expressions of masculinity and femininity, explores same-sex relationships, and critiques power dynamics. It fosters an inclusive and accepting online community, providing a platform for fans to engage with one another, share their works, and challenge societal prejudices. The research also delves into the commercial incorporation of the Danmei subculture, exploring how elements of the subculture have been commodified and integrated into mainstream commercial ventures. While this has led to increased visibility and accessibility of Danmei content, it also raises concerns about the potential dilution and commercialization of subcultural practices.

The analysis of the Danmei subculture through subculture theory and female subculture theory reveals significant findings regarding its ideological incorporation. Firstly, Danmei challenges traditional gender roles by portraying sensitive, vulnerable, and emotionally expressive male characters, providing an alternative perspective on gender. Secondly, it disrupts the notion of heteronormativity by exploring and celebrating same-

sex romantic and sexual relationships, prompting discussions about diverse forms of intimacy. Thirdly, Danmei fosters an inclusive community through online platforms, challenging homophobia and promoting acceptance. Fourthly, it critiques power imbalances in relationships and society, emphasizing agency, consent, and equality. Lastly, Danmei exemplifies a participatory culture where fans actively contribute to content creation and sharing, empowering individuals and reshaping cultural production and consumption. Overall, the Danmei subculture challenges societal norms, fosters discussions on identities and relationships, and encourages reflection on social justice issues.

Moreover, analyzing the commercial incorporation of the Danmei subculture reveals important insights. Commercialization has made Danmei content more visible and accessible, attracting attention from the film and TV industry for adaptations and expanding its reach. Additionally, it has provided opportunities for Danmei creators to turn their passion into a profession, collaborating with publishers and gaining recognition. Furthermore, merchandise featuring characters from Danmei novels strengthens the sense of community among fans. However, concerns exist regarding content dilution, creator exploitation, and market oversaturation, which need to be addressed to maintain the authenticity and well-being of the subculture.

Furthermore, analyzing the resistance within the Danmei subculture reveals important insights. The resistance efforts focus on preserving the authentic content that defines the subculture, advocating for original narratives, and resisting attempts to conform to mainstream standards. Alternative platforms and fan-driven initiatives provide spaces for creators and fans to engage without commercial influences. Active support for independent Danmei creators, critical discussions, and financial contributions demonstrate the community's commitment to preserving the subculture's integrity. Through these acts of resistance, the Danmei subculture asserts its autonomy, promotes inclusivity, and maintains its subversive nature in the face of commercialization and external pressures.

The study's theoretical and practical contributions are significant. Theoretically, it expands our understanding of subcultural dynamics within the Danmei subculture, highlighting its incorporation into mainstream media and the resistance efforts of the community. It contributes to subculture theory by examining the intersection of gender, identity, and cultural practices within a female-dominated subculture. Practically, the findings inform media producers, scholars, and fans about the significance and impact of the Danmei subculture. It deepens our understanding of its contributions to contemporary popular culture and addresses the gender imbalance in subcultural studies by focusing specifically on female Danmei fans.

Overall, this research article provides valuable insights into the complexities and significance of the Danmei subculture within the broader context of popular culture. It highlights the role of the internet in facilitating

the incorporation and resistance of subcultural practices and emphasizes the importance of understanding subcultures as dynamic and influential forces in shaping contemporary society. Further research in this area can continue to explore the evolving dynamics of the Danmei subculture and its interactions with mainstream culture.

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