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Pop-cultural representation of non-conforming genders and sexualities on Chinese social media

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- 1) In China, danmei/baihe privilege idealised beauty; platform-networked circulation intensifies and filters this bias, pushing less polished representations to the margins.
- 2) The Chinese state's positivity/legibility norms, along with platform capitalism's attention economy, co-produce a tightly bounded space where desire and imagination circulate only when monetisable and politically harmless.
- 3) Within this space, pop-cultural gender and sexual fantasy is shaped less by direct top-down control than by the interaction of platform design, market pressures, peer norms, and regulatory signals.
- 4) Chinese platforms turn non-normative visibility into a product through safe and pleasing styles rather than overt political branding. This both resembles and differs from Western cases, showing that theories of queer commodification need to be adapted to the Chinese context.
- 5) As women's consumer power grows, they gain greater cultural influence and emotional authority in subcultural spaces, even as these same spaces can also reproduce heteronormative norms and even misogyny.
- 6) On social media, gender and sexual non-normativity is often turned into recognisable, novel, and interactive content, circulating as simulated transgression rather than lived experience and exceeding simple binaries such as resistance and compliance or authenticity and inauthenticity.
- 7) On social media, gender performance is shaped and interpreted as much by algorithmic and audience expectations as by the performer's own identity and intentions.
- 8) Social media platforms reward metric-legible forms of gender performance and monetise emotional labour that aligns with profitable stereotypes.
- 9) In consumer society, the market often makes difference attractive, thus saleable, before society makes it acceptable.