

“Doomer” Culture: A Perspective on the Spiritual World of Russian Youth

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Abstract: *In recent years, a doomer network culture has emerged all over the world, and among many Doomer cultures, Russian-style Doomer music is the most popular. Why Russian Doomer music is so popular among young people is the question that this article attempts to answer. This paper points out that the Doomer characters with "nihilism" as their spiritual heart are their emotional carriers to express their dissatisfaction, disappointment and loneliness in real life. Doomer can arouse the emotional resonance and identity of young people. The development of Internet technology provides a hotbed for the reproduction of Doomer culture, and the lack of group beliefs is the deep-seated reason for the popularity of Doomer culture. Through Doomer culture, we can gain insight into the identity anxiety that Russian youth is currently facing, as well as the contradictory and confused psychological state of the ontological security issue of "who am I".*

Keywords: *Doomer network culture; Russian youth; lack of belief; nihilism; identity*

1. Introduction

With the development of the Internet, Russian doomer culture is favored and sought after by young people, and a large number of Russian "Doomer" young people who claim to be self-deprecating in real life have been born. They are prominently confused about life, unable to find the meaning of life, and lacking in purpose. The emergence of Russian Doomer culture makes people reflect on the profound meaning behind it. Youth is the future and hope of a country. However, Russian youth, known as the fighting nation, has become the mainstream audience of Doomer culture. What factors lead to the cultural orientation of Russian youth is the question that this article attempts to answer.

2. Overview of the development of Doomer network culture

Doomer online culture can be traced back to 2009 on a Polish forum called vichan on the Internet. Doomer is derived from wojak and is one of the variants of wojak. Doomer is a cartoon image of a bald head with a sad expression, which is used to express the actor's loneliness, depression and other emotions. Once the cartoon image was launched online, it immediately gained a large number of young fans and followers.

By 2018, 4chan users had started making wojak comics with the -oomer suffix, depicting various groups in real life in the form of comics, one of which was Doomer. The cartoon image based on Doomer combined with different creative backgrounds, emotional expressions and spiritual needs, and later derived Doomer music, Doomer short videos, etc., the most famous of which is the Russian Doomer music. Doomer has also shifted from the popularity of the virtual world of the Internet to people's real life, and Doomer has become a labelled self-positioning of the younger generation in Russia. The Doomer-style appellation not only reflects their situation and living conditions at the time, but also an emotional catharsis.

In fact, whether it is a two-dimensional cartoon image based on "Doomer" or a realistic application of the Doomer-style label, Doomer is a symbol that reflects the life atmosphere and social status of this era. However, the irony and joking taste of symbols in most contexts, and why Russian youth have become the mainstream audience of Doomer culture in the 21st century are the questions that this article attempts to answer.

3. Differentiation and Analysis of the Concept of Doomer Culture

3.1. *The philosophical origin of Doomer culture*

The philosophical and artistic concept contained in Doomer's image is consistent with the tragic art concept of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and others. Nietzsche mentioned in *The Birth of Tragedy* that the function of tragedy is to treat life with an aesthetic attitude in order to obtain temporary relief.[1] In the book, Nietzsche explained the nature of the Greeks and the essence of Greek culture with Schopenhauer's pessimism, and perfectly shaped the image of Doomer with the opposition between the god of the sun and the god of wine. The unity of the two spirits of the gods of the sun and the spirits of the gods gave birth to the ancient Greek tragedy.[2] When we speak of the sun gods, we see the same people, people who are trapped in illusions, who are trapped in pain that prevents them from actually solving real problems, as opposed to those who are in Alcohol spirits in reality, so in Doomer of the Auras, we see an Auras who once indulged in soothing visions. The image of a Doomer in black is exactly what Nietzsche said in *"The Birth of Tragedy"* is the spiritual instinct of the Sun God. From this point of view, Doomer culture or role is not a new thing in this era, we can find its prototype from ancient philosophy and use it to interpret the spiritual world of people in modern society.

3.2. *The core of thought - nihilism*

Nihilism is a philosophical concept that seeks to reflect on the value of human existence. Liu Senlin believes that "nihilism" has three main contexts and four meanings. Strauss's so-called special German phenomenon, which believes that modern civilization has gradually fallen into "the city-state of pigs" in terms of moral values; Nietzsche's so-called Platonism, It has always identified the super-perceptual world as a real existence, and at the same time reduced the perceptually generated world to an unreal world of illusion; identified the real world as a Gnosticism that is completely degenerate and nothing; Radical nihilism, which denies the true meaning of all existence, constitutes the fourth kind of nihilism as an esoteric interpretation of Nietzsche's nihilism.[3] Schopenhauer also said that life is essentially made up of chaos and meaninglessness, and that all striving for will is basically nothing.[4] Thus nihilism has become the spiritual core of Doomer culture.

Schopenhauer's philosophy of will is a kind of pessimism, and pessimism leads to the emergence of nihilism. Nihilism denies the meaning of life and the world, and nihilism leads to the loss of people.[5] Nihilism emphasizes the rejection of all power and prestige, morality, social customary behavior, and rejection of all established beliefs. Nihilists advocate acts of rebellion against the grasp of power. For nihilists, the ultimate source of moral value is not cultural or rational foundations but individual feelings.[6]

The development of globalization provides Doomer with an opportunity to understand the real world. They look at the real world with a transparent heart and cannot find the goal of life. They are also not interested in the most basic emotional and value needs such as family, love, friendship and self-worth, and they even perceive the world, life and life from a pessimistic perspective. Therefore, we can see that the various Doomer characters in the creation of the two-dimensional video depict the various dilemmas and sufferings they encounter in real life.

3.3. *Group attributes*

Doomer describes the young group of 20-30 years old, and "depression and pessimism" are the main mood of this group. Doomer is a group of people who have witnessed the dull nature of their real life and the pain of being lost in nihilism and inaction. They can't find joy in anything, and they keep an indifferent attitude to everything around them. They only think and lament. They are emotional carriers who are unable to change and have to make compromises and retreats after they recognize the reality. They can clearly see the social status quo but cannot change it, and they are full of negative energy such as powerlessness and disappointment. Because of their frustration with the real world, Doomers are also held back from taking any action to change the status quo. The lack of the spiritual world can only rely on games, alcohol and nicotine to numb itself for short-term peace. Although Doomer exudes negative energy, this does not prevent the youth group from liking this role. Because each of us seems to be able to see our past and even our present selves from some of Doomer's experiences.

3.4. Russian Doomer music

As mentioned above, after the Doomer comic image was spread on 4Chan, it was quickly sought after by the younger generation. As a result, a batch of Doomer music was also born, the most famous of which is the Russian doomer music. This style of music quickly became popular on the Internet as soon as it was released, and even caused a depression infection all over the world for a time. On foreign YouTube social software, almost every collection of Russian-style Doomer music has more than one million hits; on TIKTOK, Russian mourning song Судно was once regarded by people around the world as a Russian national image propaganda song, showing Russia The global reach of Doomer's music. The image of Doomer blends perfectly with contemporary Russian youth. In the world of the Russian Doomers, they can't find the meaning of their jobs, lack purpose in their lives, are spiritually empty and lonely, emotionally empty, and feel helpless with life and reality. In fact, when Doomer is used to describe a specific social group, there is no gender distinction. Although Doomer's creation prototype presents a male youth, this does not prevent the same young generation of female groups from loving this character. Doomer culture is different from "mourning". Its negativity comes from the helplessness after having a clear understanding of the general environment and its own limitations, and it is the mental internal friction brought about by sobriety. As a symbol carrier of an era, Doomer's spiritual core and emotional expression are full of speculative color.

4. Why is Russian Doomer music popular?

4.1. Doomer's music emotional resonance and identity

"The essence of Doomers is that they cannot find the meaning of life, and their spiritual core is nihilism. When people can't connect the virtual world and the real world, they urgently need an emotional and spiritual sustenance. This is Doomer with melancholy as the main tone. The appearance of the image fills people's disappointment in the real world, the emptiness of the spiritual world, and even the indifference and transparency that everything is classified as zero. As a result, the nihilism and decadence delivered by Doomer are those who face enormous pressure in real life but have nowhere to vent. The youth groups opened a skylight for emotional release, and these groups also gathered under the banner with the Doomer as the logo. The Doomer culture seems to call on the Doomers all over the world to gather together, report to the group to warm up, comfort each other, and from In each other's life experiences, they look for the spiritual source that they can continue to walk on. This role truly expresses the real life and complex world faced by the local youth group, and it is also a general microcosm of contemporary youth groups. The real ones are submerged in big data and modernization. In the torrent of the times, the appearance of Doomer just provides them with an identity, and they perceive their own existence from Doomer.

4.2. The spiritual position provided by Internet social media

The development of the Internet is the technical carrier for the reproduction, popularity and even secondary creation of Doomer culture, and social media platforms have also become the spiritual position where Doomer gathers. The rise of social media not only makes Doomer spread all over the world, but also provides a virtual spiritual home for Doomers all over the world. On social forums, a large number of netizens recounted their unfortunate experiences in real life in the comment area. Everyone opened their hearts and told each other as a kind of stranger but a similar person. In the constant cycle of threading and replying, everyone finds that they are not a special case in this world. Doomers all have similar experiences in reality. Because of the similarity, they can more emotionally resonate with Doomers in their mutual communication and care, and draw the distance between them. No matter how complex and real life is, people who live in the real world from beginning to end are looking for a certainty and self-worth realization and self-identity. It happens that the real experience makes them unable to see the uncertainty, and also produces self-doubt and denial, and admits that their ordinary and powerless sense of helplessness engulfs them. Therefore, in the Internet age, turning to the online world to seek spiritual comfort has become the most accessible and cheapest way for them. Behind the popularity of Doomer's character is a group of people who live in an unpredictable environment and a world of uncertainty, constantly seeking self-evidence of ontological and social existence.

4.3. The collapse of group beliefs

The collapse of belief among the younger generation in Russia is a deep-rooted factor in the popularity of Doomer culture. The collapse of the beliefs of young Russian groups is multi-faceted, which can be analyzed from three aspects: economy, politics, and emotion.

4.3.1. Depression

After the Ukrainian crisis broke out in 2014, the economic sanctions of Western countries led by the United States caused serious damage to Russia's domestic economic system, serious economic recession, and difficulty in developing emerging industries. It is difficult for young Russians to find a job, and even if they find a job, it is difficult to find a sense of accomplishment and value in their work. The entire Russian society is shrouded in depression and decline.[7] The outbreak of the new crown epidemic in 2020 has aggravated Russia's economic crisis. The main tone of sadness has become more and more obvious in the Russian country, especially after the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in 2022, the depressed economy, rising unemployment, and difficult people's livelihood have enabled young Russians to realize value and value in real life. Find a sense of belonging. Disappointed in real life, they urgently need a window to vent their emotions, and the appearance of Doomer plays a very good role in carrying the rich emotions of those who are down in reality. As a result, Doomer songs created by Russia are favored by young people in their country on the Internet.

4.3.2. Political disillusionment

The Russian Empire, which once dominated the world across the Eurasian continent, is now gradually reduced to a second-class country in the international community. The decline of national status and the tearing of the imperial psychological complex have made the entire Russia in an anxiety of identity. The economy is in decline and it doesn't get the respect it deserves in the international community. The once proud military strength was defeated in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in 2022, so that the outside world raised doubts, what happened to Russia? Russia, whose national strength is declining and its society is weak, is in sharp contrast with the Russian Empire that dominated the world in the past. It has a strong desire to gain recognition from the United States and the West, but has no ability to allow the United States and the West to recognize and accept them from the heart. The national mission of communism and the grand ideal and belief in the future end with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Gray has become the main color of Russia, and the heavy history and imperialist complex are destined to make Russia carry forward the heavy burden of the international society in the 21st century.

4.3.3. Lack of emotion

In the post-epidemic era, uncertainty has become the biggest feature of the 21st century. However, the uncertainty of the times is essentially at odds with the certainty that young Russians seek. Economic frailty brings a variety of complex social problems, rising divorce rates, suicide rates and depression, as well as a huge gap between the rich and the poor. In such a social context, many young people cannot obtain the warmth and happiness brought by a complete family, and they are accompanied by only a weak country, decay, society and meaningless work. They lack affection, love, and friendship, and are emotionally lonely. Emotional scarcity and spiritual emptiness. They can't find the value and meaning of existence in real life, and have no sense of achievement and belonging. The unpredictable environment makes them feel confused and confused about the future, and they are desperate and confused about reality, so they turn to the virtual world to find their spirit. Compatible Doomer.

5. Conclusion

The "fighting nation" is just a label that the outside world has put on the Russians, and they are also happy to wear it. Drinking vodka, shouting Ulla, keeping bears as pets, and doing winter swimming in the cold winter have created an image of a tough, brave and hard-core Russian fighting nation, but this is only our inherent perception of the Russian people. In fact, the Russian Doomer may be the true portrayal of their inner world. The cycle of aggression and being invaded has been staged in this country all the time, and this is a predicament from which they have not escaped. Like its youth, the Russian country is faced with confusion and uncertainty about the future. How to break the situation in Russia in the future is an urgent problem to be solved.

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