

## **You Tube Celebrity: A Journey of Self- Celebration**

Mamta, Research Scholar  
Research Centre, GCG-11, Chandigarh.

In the era of two minutes Maggie life is changing at a very high speed. Every day begins with some new challenges and ends with some unfulfilled accomplishments. Technology has enveloped us completely, and life without our gadgets seems quite impossible. When we find some problem with our smartphone or laptop, we give preference to repair it because almost all our works are depend on them. We have start living with the new-normal, and accepted the smart way of living: we attend classes on phones, we do shopping on it, we pay our bills, and even we meet our dear ones on it and the list goes on. It has become part and parcel of life; people from all walks of life are familiar with it. The pandemic gave a sudden turn to our culture; we came so close to social media, we used it and learnt so many skills from it. You-tube is emerging as a big enterprise where we learn from others as well as we can show our talent with the help of DIY. It has opened doors for those who were not able to raise their voice, provided a suitable platform to earn money, to gain name and fame. To become a You- Tube celebrity is in vogue now, people are enjoying their new celebrity status, and the folk feel connected and share their views with their favourite celebrity. So, we observe that many obstacles have been removed, boundaries collapsed and some new bridges have been constructed in our society.

We can this age, ‘an age of expression’, there are so many means to say, to express, and to share your thoughts. A new type of celebrity culture is emerging where ordinary person wants to achieve success through the media content. In the current phase, You tube has become a medium which is more effective for the celebrity in terms of instantaneous mode of reception as videos are uploaded frequently and watched with the help of mobile phones and portable dives that gives it as easy access and a sense of immediacy. The cultural and economy hegemony has imposed with advent of audio visual media. The media industry is manufacturing cultural goods which control the behaviour of individuals through marketing. In the current digital network, the spectator is no longer the consumer but an active participant in the process of production. Bernard Stiegler in his essay, “The Carnival of the New Screen: from Hegemony to Isonomy”, formulated that the newscreen becomes a space for ‘psychosocial individuation’. He highlights that the process of mass-communication has begun with the advent of printing press, then the constitution of new forms of religious individuation, Enlightenment and the French revolution, then the compulsory literalization of each and every member of an industrial and democratic society. The recent stage in that process of grammatization is the digitization of audio visual images that is the arrival of You tube and daily motion chiefly based on the principle of self-broadcasting, auto- production and auto-indexing. The network society has created an ecosystem in which individuals are constantly connected with each other in a bi-directional net that allows everyone to play the role of sender as well as receiver. In this process, people have to make their reception public, which becomes their production and hence their individuation.

The proliferation of knowledge has expended through qualified public. Stiegler talks about the journey of media from T.V., cable plans, and video recorder to the You tube and Daily motion. There is a

marked industrial revolution taking place in the domain of cultural technologies instead of cultural industries. The new media has created a rupture in the producer/consumer model of the cultural industries. "Broadcast Yourself": is the slogan of you tube, broadcast yourself, but, first look for yourself, and produce yourself. In the digital age, according to Stiegler, the traditional top-down system- monopolized by the established powers/ institutions has been overtaken by the bottom-up movement which has changed the production and dissemination of knowledge. With the emergence of You tube as a social space, the tremendous work done in the fields of auto-broadcast, auto-produced, and auto-indexed has provided a new reference of the trans individuation.

Talking about the historical background of You tube, Frederick Levy in his essay, "Becoming a Star in the You Tube Revolution" says that during the summer of 2006. You tube was one of the fast-growing website on the World Wide Web. It was ranked as the fifth most popular website on Alexa, a site that provides information on web traffic to other websites, for outpacing even the growth of my space. It soon became Google's second-largest purchase of all time and the company was named Time magazine's "Invention of the Year" for 2006. Even political candidates for 2008 U.S. prudential election used You tube as an outlet for advertising their candidacy. Despite temptation, You tube consistently refused advertising aside from rolling banners, and resisted placing ads before video and instead used their own credit cards to bankroll the cost of storing and sending out clips. In June 2005, advertising came to You Tube and it settled their loses in one go.

Smith Daniel in his essay, "Charlie-is-so 'English'- like: Nationality and the branded person in the age of You tube" talks about a You Tube star, Charlie McDonnell and his video 'How to be English'. The article throws light on the point that in the process of celebrification and 'self-branding' one loses his/her power of self- identity. In this celebrity culture, self-commodification is accomplished through the development of a persona, different form the real self. In the case study of Charlie Mcdonnell who has around one million subscribers on his You tube channel, he started video blogging in April 2007 and gained wider media attention for his video 'How to be English'. You tube granted him partner status and started to pay Charlie for uploading his vlogs. Charlie is a product of his making; he sells the 'charlieissocoollike' brand. The persona created in the videos to attract the intended audience is akin to an 'artificial character'. The fictional identity becomes a cognomen of the celebrity, and through his blogging he is selling himself. He says, "I was making a brand new name for myself and my whole brand ...is me." This process self-commodification where he presents everyday life helped him to gain popularity. So, his cognomen 'charlieissocoollike' becomes synonymous with his own person. The brands are logos, the marks of social identities extended through his iconic presentation or persona. But, Charlie is not happy with hispersona, he wants to be Charlie in real sense, hewants to share his own feelings with the public and not of the self-created persona. He wants to wear his real face of Charlie McDonnell and not of 'Charlie-so-coollike T.M.'

In this process of self-commercialization, the creative labour is defined not in terms of the relations of personhood but in relation external to the person. This externalization is consequence of the importance of commercial success which is measured by the 'views', 'subscribers', and 'features'. This mechanical reproduction leaves the work of art to be 'underpinned' by a 'politics' of authenticity. Walter Benzamin also discusses the translation of cinematic performance into a commodity, or their acting into stardom. In this profession, there is no direct involvement of public domain, the audience examines and reports the performance without any personal contact with the

performer. Constructing a You tube persona involves self-celebrification. Charlie performs Englishness as much as he is English, first he speaks an ordinary English, and this ordinariness becomes extra-ordinariness when he is heard by the global community of You tube users. Sometimes, he presents his speech like, “Hullo. And welcome to another episode of ‘How to be English’...My name is Charles, and I will be showing you the ancient English art that is making a cup of tea [snorty laugh].” Charlie gives a different exotic touch to the ordinary things through his creative style. By actively creating the ‘self’ through their camera mediated performances the You tube celebrity learn ‘how to build a meaningful presence and an engaged audience.’ Stiegler calls them ‘meta-celebrity’ who is always conscious of self-branding and multiple personas.

Graeme Turner in “The Mass Production of celebrity”, discussed about the celebrity discourses. He points out that the film and music industry use the ‘ordinariness’ in their methodology for economical practices. In this process, ‘ordinary people’ has discovered, suddenly extracted from their everyday lives and processed for stardom. The ordinary person has been plucked from obscurity and put into a highly specified and circumscribed celebrity life. The explosion of T.V. reality shows, confessional talk shows, docu-soaps, reality based game shows has significantly enhanced the demand of ordinary people desiring celebrification. The expansion of both the demand and supply has occurred in a symbiotic and accelerating manner. The point to be noted here is that the reality of the reality shows is a construction, and this manufactured reality enhances the illusion of being real.

The irony is that the celebrity-commodity structure is replaceable, and short-lived. The contestants of one season can be easily replaced by the next year contestants. In this celebrity manufacturing process, the product’s planned obsolescence is incorporated. Chris Rojek termed this public figure, with a short life cycle as “Celetoid”. He explained as, “Celetoids are accessories of cultures organized around mass communication and staged authenticity. Examples include- lottery winners, one –hit wonders, stalkers, whistle-blowers, sports’ arena stickers, have-a go-heroes, mistresses of public figures and the various other social types who command media attention one day, and are forgotten the next.” Media is producing and manufacturing a homogenous culture of its own. These ‘post-Habermasian’, vertical integrations have been introduced into the entertainment industrial structure for the commodification. Instead of the states, now media is playing a vital role in cultural construction of identity and desire.

John Hartley, on the other hand, considers it as the “democratization of the media”, media has occupied a familiar space in our life breaking with more elite formations of popular entertainment, dispensing with the privileging of information and knowledge, and allowing the media to focus on the construction of cultural identities. No doubt, Turner agrees with Hartley that the current trends have opened up access of media to women, to the people of colour, and to a wider range of class positions. But in chapter-five of his book, *Understanding Celebrity*, Turner challenged the neologism of ‘democratization’ by questioning the connection between democracy and the proliferation of DIY celebrity, the opening up of media access and the exploitation of the ‘ordinary’ in media content. He exposes that despite public participation at mass level, the media still remains in control of the symbolic economy, and they operate this economy in the service of their own interests. Hence, he considers these developments more as ‘demotic’, rather than ‘democratic’.

There is a need to reconsider the part media is playing in the society; it is working as an instrument of the ideological state apparatus. Being the fourth pillar in the society it has significant role to play in

the development of a nation. Media now a days is participating in inventing, popularizing and distributing formations of identity and desires in our societies. The culture of celebrity formation is flourishing day by day. But, the alarming and surprising thing is that the type of cultural celebrities, media is producing are so weak, contingent, unstable, loosely connected to the social conditions from which they emerge, and they lack consistency and responsibility. As they are vertically introduced in that type of culture, have less immunity to fight, consequently, they sometimes become victim of depression and lost in the unknown world.

By describing the space media has created in the system of identity formation, Nick Couldry talks about the 'myth of the media centre'. He says that "there is a centre to the social world and...the media speaks from and for that centre" and the ordinary people are at the periphery. The myth of the media centre works only for the welfare of the media industries because "it legitimates formations of identity that are primarily invented in order to generate commercial returns." Behind the myth of the media, Couldry observes the apparatus working to enhance media's power in society which is purely commercial based rather than an ideological and political imperative. The media is participating as 'authors' rather than 'mediators' in the process of identity formation. The centre of power has been shifted from the state to the media.

In this age of self-celebrification, a You tube star is, no doubt, gaining momentum. But in order to create new professional space we have to leave something, we have to sacrifice something. And, still, the way is not smooth, it is full of challenges. Our Tube stars are putting a lot to fight against the odds. Life is all about balance, and an adequate balance in personal and professional life can bring fruitful results.

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