A virtual character: One ghost from Tang Dynasty

-----The Naissance of an Internet Celebrity of Culture Studies

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Introduction

This social media campaign and website design project is a combinational online celebrity generation and promotion plan for a virtual character, a ghost called "No-Name" who died in AD 595 and transcended time to come to 2021 for continuing her hobby of culture studies. This ghost, acted by the author, uses the social media account on The Red (little red book), through caricatures combining photography of real person and hand-decorated paint to share the social observation with cultural analysis in modern China from her perspective of an ancient ghost. The website, whereas, is a digital immersion storytelling product helping users to quickly get know the character set of the ghost, No-Name, and attracting them to consistently follow this online character on social media. This project essentially works with the goal of figuring the character set, being enthusiastic for culture studies and able to conduct interesting culture comparison studies between ancient China and modern China of this virtual ghost and obtaining attention as well as being subjected to the mass.

This online celebrity project, in order to achieve this target, drives from a theoretical framework penetrating the steps to transfer the cyber citizens into fans, attracting sights, evoking interests and constructing emotional links sustaining the audience consistently being willing to consume the information published by this ghost. This theoretical framework is a triple structure involving to real and virtual identity of the audience, the psychological interaction between an online celebrity and fans and spiritual demands of audience in its corresponding cultural domain. Following that, the theoretical part will be developed basing on these three core theories. Firstly, the virtual identity in cyber space is different but connected to the real identity, reflecting the hidden part in identity not expressed in real life and helping to achieve the pursuits not finished offline (Holmes, 1997; Waggoner, 2009, p.11). Secondly, one of the different relationship models between internet celebrity and mass rendering the audience voluntarily follow and see it is "exoticism" (Abidin, 2018, p.51). Thirdly, as Kardash and Scholes (1996) stating, people enjoy fabricating their own interpretations on controversial topics.

Design rationale

This website, embracing the core function mentioned in the introduction, chooses the strategy of leading the user into a visual and auditory immersion journey to experience the ghost's main footprints from her encounters before death, reason of

death and transcending time process to her main culture studies activities in modern time. The core design rationale is to create a “sensory immersion” experience (Ermi and Mäyrä, 2005), in which the all elements are designed in integrated style-----slight thriller and grayness, trying to engender tangible and fully immersive experience of a ghost’ s fantasy story.and also gives interactive opportunities to evoke users’ own thoughts and choices. In this way, users ultimately can get clear about the character set of this ghost, be attracted by her mindsets and interested in more her cultural topics in social media thereby becoming her watchers or fans in long term. Additionally, the audio and graphic interactions from the ghost also never lose her cute and funny features.

Instruction: please open the website by safari browser and keep them in full screen (if not the music will not autoplay) and see from the file named no.1 and all pages can be linked inside it. It is best to use MacBool of 13 inch.

Social media campaign

Making the virtual character, ghost, into an online celebrity undergoes various procedures. This part will along the actions to reveal what the social media campaign did and how them applied theories.

Social media main page link:

https://www.xiaohongshu.com/user/profile/5ef61b7a00000000010045de?xhsshare=CopyLink&appuid=5ef61b7a00000000010045de&apptime=1639410236

Design of the virtual character set

The ghost, named No-name, is designed as a 15 years-old girl living in a famous history period in Tang Dynasty, called The war conducted by Lushan An and Siming shi (安史之乱 ：from AD 755-763), who had a hobby of making research in term of social culture before death and accidentally died in the war. Due to the Chinese Azrael (黑白无常) still did not appear to lead her to reincarnate in a long time after her death. She decided to continue her dream of culture studies in different times so then through a particular river connecting underworld and normal world, she coincidentally entered in 2021. After that, she began her culture comparison analysis around some different or similar culture phenomena in ancient and modern China. This period is presented in caricature combining real person photography and hand-drawing as the first episode. The subsequent episodes are all in the same art style.

This character design mainly uses the exoticism theory from Abidin (2018, p.51) to construct her attractive ability and create interests in audience group. Abidin (2018, p.51) supposes that one category of Internet celebrity holding totally different

personal situations with most people and especially strange identity, taste, appearance, quality or other features seldom being seen in offline life of particular audience can attract audience by their special character set and related contents basing on the characteristic. This is actually identical to the ghost's design. She is ghost not human, ancient person not modern girl, different from all social media residents. Simultaneously, she addresses as an ancient girl with traditional Chinese clothes of and hairdo of Tang dynasty and the outflowing blood of her when she died still remains on her face and body, which, in further, tangibly shows and strengthens her exotic sets. This implements the first step of becoming an internet celebrity, attracting attention. Next, her culture analysis then is also from generated in her perspectives of ancient person and apropos to comparison between ancient times and current society. This also differs from a normal culture commentor, which can evoke the consumption demands from exotic information from a part of culture studies hobbyists.

Three main culture studies caricatures

Following the first episode, the ghost published three core culture researches in non-academic language style. The first one talks about a culture phenomenon of antinomy about Chinese people's appearance standards towards male that from ancient to now, mainstream values oppose the men get appearance prone to women but at the same time some older people belonging to orthodox value system regard the male appearance similar with women as a good thing can be shown off. The second one analyzed a cultural modernity, the extreme abruption values system in modern China instinct from the unified and stable ones in ancient. The third one, from the female identity's existence evolution after and before the arrival technology time, predicts the concept of female identity's disappearance in future.

The three culture researches not only polish and support the character set of loving culture studies of this ghost but also exert some theories about virtual and real identity. The themes of the three researches are all implicated with strong and obvious social conflicts in China, such as gender equality and education equality. Many people

want to join in debates about them but, being constrained by the offline real-name regulation and certain of real identity, not dare to speak real ideas for avoiding offends more powerful persons or being attacked. This psychological appeal, according to Soldatova and Pogorelov (2018), will transfer to virtual identity in cyber space, with which the people set themselves with more freedom instead of needing care so many things that not able to speak what they want. The three caricatures, with the aid of media, an anonymous extended space of real world (Fuchs, 2021), create topics for debating, new ideas, new conflicts and invite watchers to join in discussion or answer questions is method to awake audience's virtual identity and give them opportunity to play in virtual identity. This compensates their psychological demands so can drive to reserve watchers and transform them into fans.

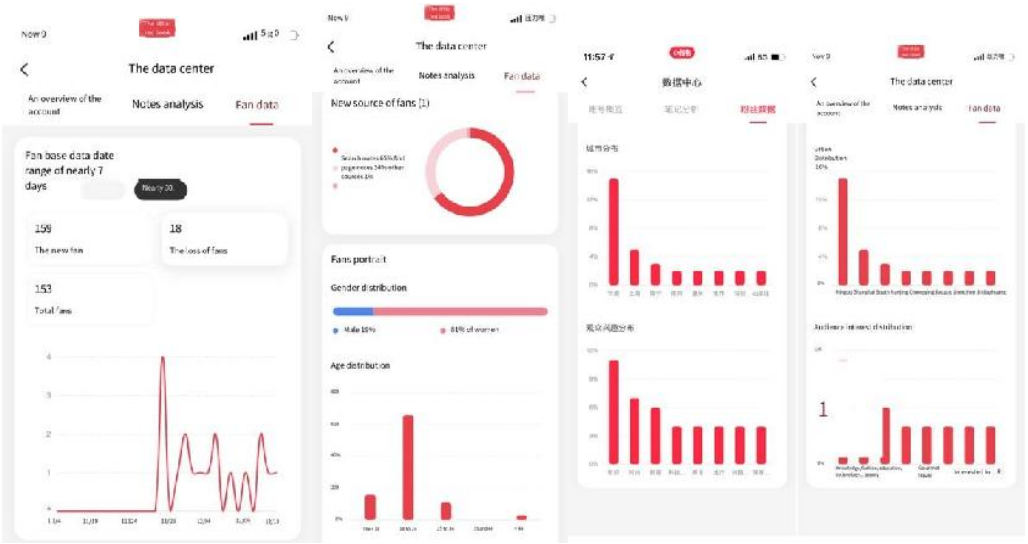
Three short articles for attracting data (flow)

In the intervals of the core actions, the account also puts out some life share contents to improve the reality and tangibility of the ghost. Additional, the ghost also opens a column, *social observation from ghost*, to publish three irony works on three dramatically controversial topics. Whether the communication major is the worst subject; whether the sino-foreign university is the worst school; whether studying abroad is the worst choice.

In light of Kardash and Scholes (1996)'s claim, the mass appears more interested in controversial ideas because the process of fabricating their own interpretation from their position is an enjoyable thing. Inspired by that, the ghost brings these three controversial topics to public sphere and literally cause huge page view and numerous debates in comments place.

Data performance and impact analysis

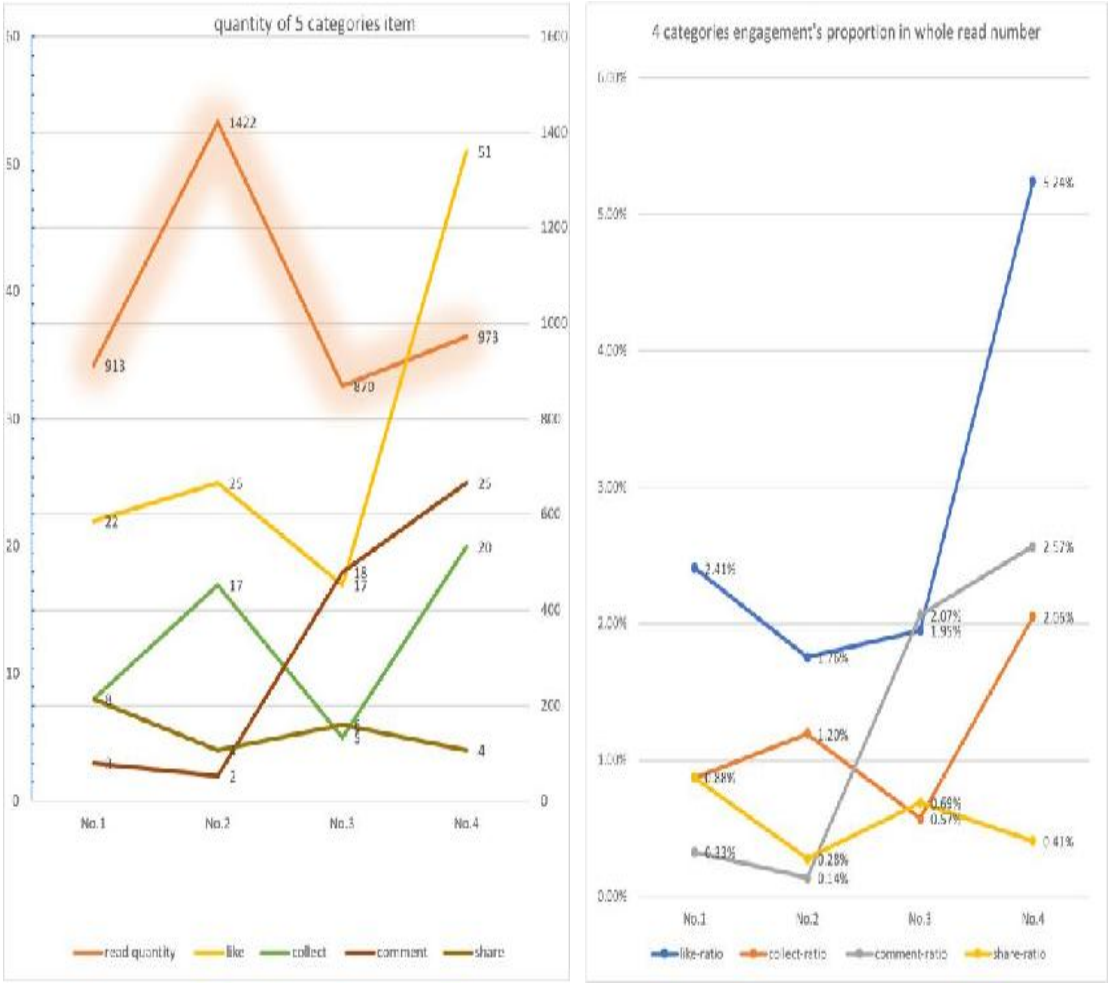
Main user portrait



(the data summery from The Red's official report)

It can be seen in the pictures that this social media campaign with 12 notes in total, gained 141 fans with 11.75 fans for every content in average. The fans mainly contributed by young female users with the interest direction of knowledges. This is accord with anticipated target group of this cultural online celebrity, which means the ghost does precise reader attraction.

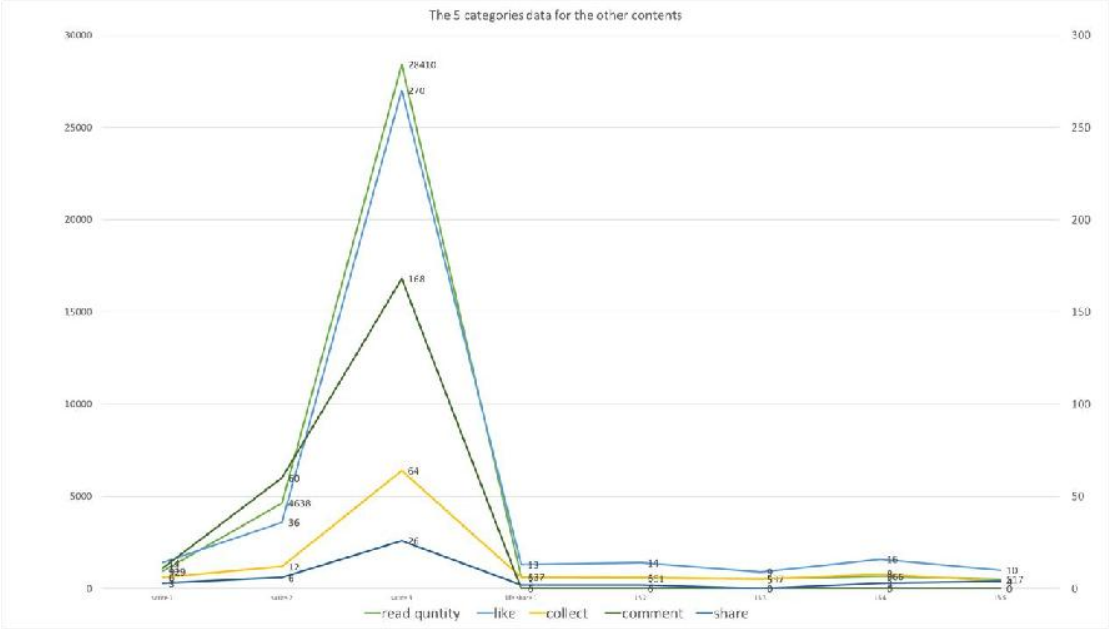
The four core caricatures' data performance in time sequence



(citing the official data centre of The Red, evidences are in appendix)

The two charts show the read quantity and all kinds of engagement quantity and their ratio in whole read numbers. All read quantities gather around 1000 average likes of 29 and the engagement ratio of like, comment and collect behave in rising tendency, illustrating the content quality is gradually making progress.

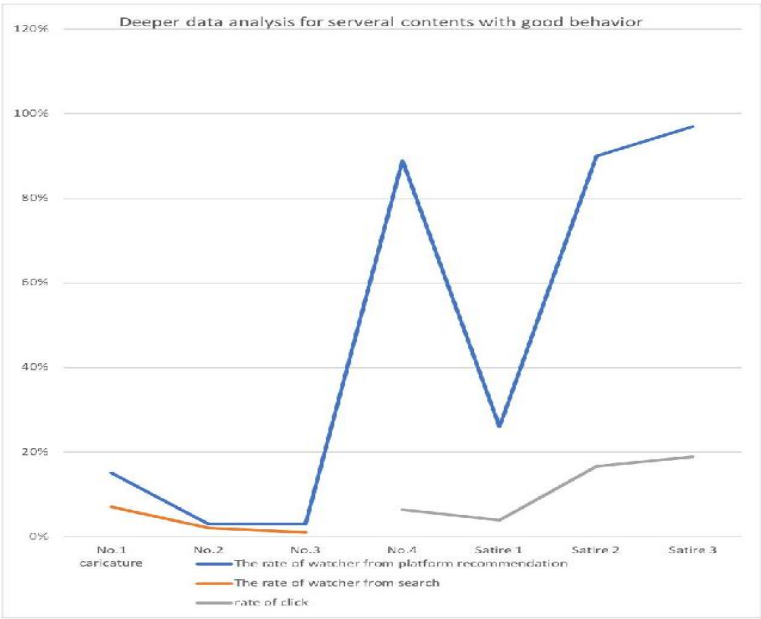
The data performance for other peripheral contents, satire article and life share



(citing the official data centre of The Red, evidences are in appendix)

In the all other contents, described in the double-y axis diagram, two irony works capture extraordinary outstanding read quantity, (28410, 4638) and engagement rate, especially huge number of comments, which origins from the controversial themes, also reaching to the social problems China's young group concern most, studying abroad and choosing university while the extreme and ironical expression style bring huge emotional shock on different persons with different ideas. The two articles successfully increase 60 fans for this account.

Deeper data analysis for the part of contents with relatively good performance.



(citing the official data centre of The Red, evidences are in appendix)

The resource of watchers reflects the quality assessment of contents from social media platform. Ratios of recommendation and search being high implicates the content quality is relatively high or cater certain hot spots. Rather, the data from personal main page usually from the helps from family and friends. The startling gap of rate of being recommended among different contents is likely from some sensitive speaks may be flow-limited by platform. The click rate's rising convinces that the topics touching society conflicts can get higher clicks.

Impact and values

- The intense disputes from the mass in comments create new and deeper thoughts around the cultural topics thrown out by ghost.
- Some comments for ghost's contents correct and ameliorate the author's mindsets and academic ability.
- The non-academic language telling culture analysis can spread social science knowledges in mass and expose social reality at the same time trigger more people to think about the solutions for cultural dilemma.
- Some companies like photo studios or ceremonial dress shop invite the author to play as model after seeing the ghost acted by the author.

Reflection

From data analysis, some drawbacks can be found.

- The most fans age distributing in 18-24 possibly states the content depth, in a large extent, can only service the young persons. If the account tries to enlarge potential fan domain, it needs to deepen contents despite of this result partly because the main user of The Red is young people.
- In purpose of getting more internal flow in platform, the sensitive or question contents need to be more veiled to avoid over low recommendation rate.
- The relations between 5 data items present that the comments can obviously aggrandize the click rate and read quantity of the content in future so creating points can be discussed and evoking desire for expressing are significant.
- The cultural commentors online are abundant and the ghost cannot stick out instruct the author needs to equip herself with more academic knowledges and make more efforts to create more creative and valuable ideas, attempting to accumulate fame by irreplaceable content quality.

References:

Abidin, C. (2018). Internet celebrity: Understanding fame online. Emerald Group Publishing.

Fuchs, C. (2021). Social media: A critical introduction. SAGE publications Limited.

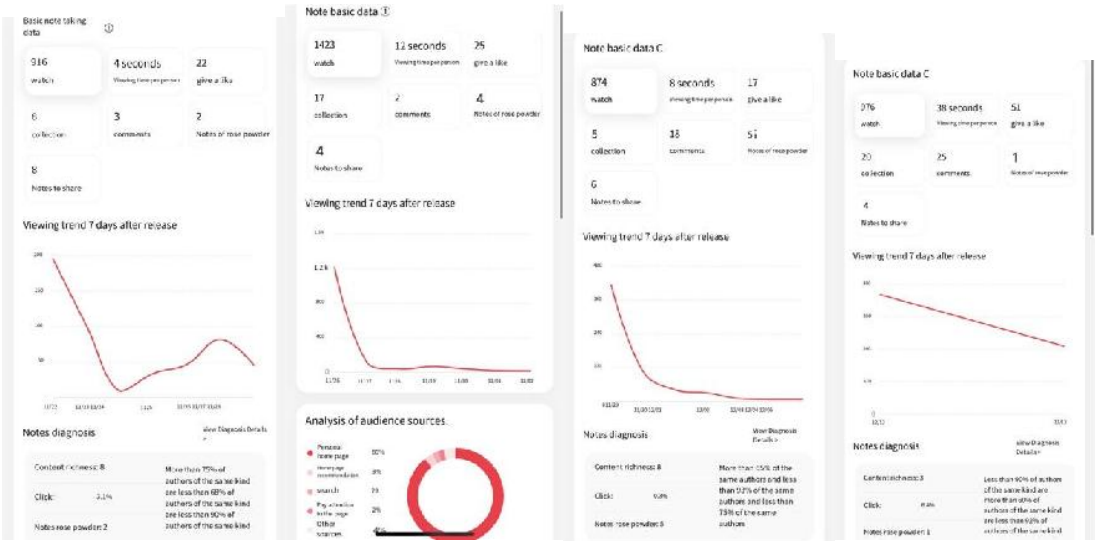
Kardash, C. M., & Scholes, R. J. (1996). Effects of preexisiting beliefs, epistemological beliefs, and need for cognition on interpretation of controversial issues. Journal of Educational psychology, 88(2), 260.

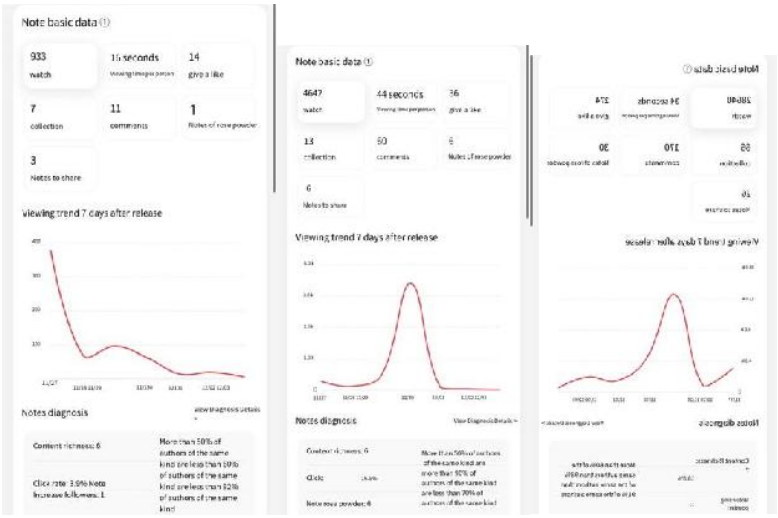
Soldatova, E. L., & Pogorelov, D. N. (2018). The phenomenon of virtual identity: The contemporary condition of the problem. The Education and science journal, 20(5), 105-124.

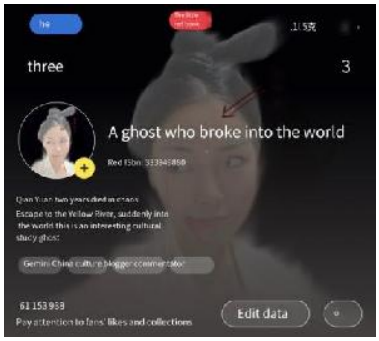
Ermi, L., & Mäyrä, F. (2005). Fundamental components of the gameplay experience: Analysing immersion. *Worlds in play: International perspectives on digital games research*, *37*(2), 37-53.

Appendix:

Data evidence:







(They are they all data performance had be given in platform's back side)

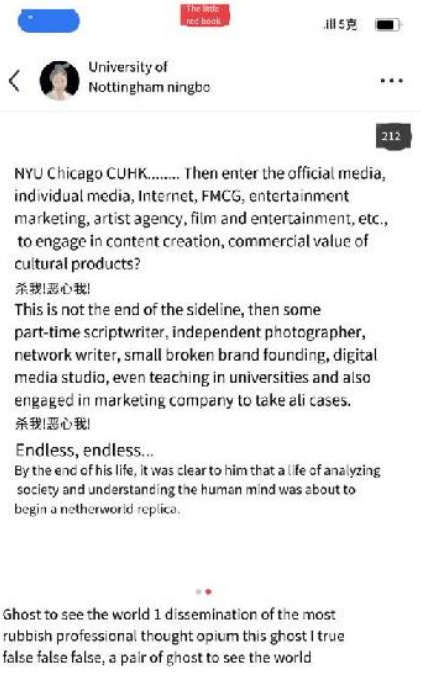
Translation for social media

There are some content in Chinese still needs translation:

Why can college students niu Jian?
多元途径
所以
So

大专也没问题，牛剑也没问题
只是在多元存在与多元认知的不平
衡塑造下，荒诞世界中，
（大专生真的上牛剑啦）
Junior college is no problem, cow creation is no problem
Just in the multi - existence and multi - cognition of the injustice
Balance shaping, absurd world, college students really on the sword

University of Nottingham ningbo
Communication of the UNNC most annoying professional, communication of the world's 12 most garbage professional!
No one!
Every day to study foucault's power relations, Marx's social operation, Deleuze's Assemblage solution domain, tubers, time crystals, and then run dry plateau upstream grazing..
Daily RIPS on technology and social restructuring, hourly Baudrillard modern consumption infiltrates gender, colonization, and social control. Remix a point of Marcuse capitalism with rebellion.
So what happens, you get a whole bunch of cyber junk floating around in cyber space? UNNC boiling a certain course, in place to take off, manufacturing network red. Cats, bears, investigations, even ghosts
It is said that the garbage discharge, but also to write essay?
Analyze the link between media content and cultural environment, integrate identity,
意识形态?话语?的灵魂?自我?
杀我!恶心我!
They go to Oxford, Cambridge, LSE, USC
Ghost to see the world 1 dissemination of the most rubbish professional thought opium this ghost I true false false false, a pair of ghost to see the world


University of Nottingham ningbo
212
NYU Chicago CUHK..... Then enter the official media, individual media, Internet, FMCG, entertainment marketing, artist agency, film and entertainment, etc., to engage in content creation, commercial value of cultural products?
杀我!恶心我!
This is not the end of the sideline, then some part-time scriptwriter, independent photographer, network writer, small broken brand founding, digital media studio, even teaching in universities and also engaged in marketing company to take ali cases.
杀我!恶心我!
Endless, endless...
By the end of his life, it was clear to him that a life of analyzing society and understanding the human mind was about to begin a netherworld replica.
Ghost to see the world 1 dissemination of the most rubbish professional thought opium this ghost I true false false false, a pair of ghost to see the world

Ghosts look at the world 1 Sino-foreign Cooperative university thought opium false and sincere, true and false, I a pair of ghosts to see the world I am that comment on the modern Tang Dynasty ghost

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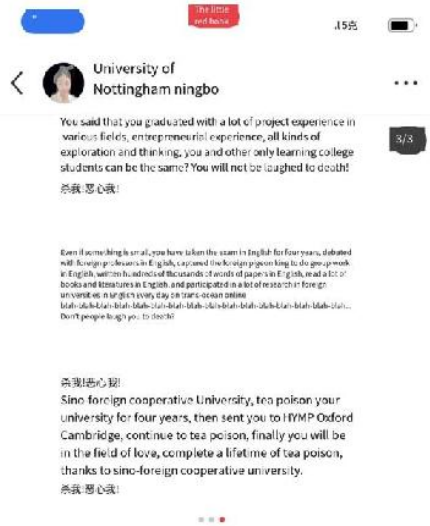

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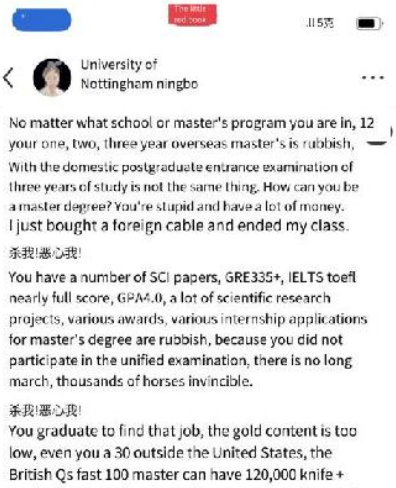

Ghost world 1 the world's most water master thought of opium

Ghost world 1 the world's most water master thought of opium