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Research on the Production Orientation of Film and Television Second Creation Works from the Perspective of Cognitive Surplus

Maihui Zhang*
School of International Studies, Beijing International Studies University, China
***Corresponding author E-mail: 15811228145@163.com**

Abstract:
In the Internet era, with the rapid development of digital media technology, the market for second creation works of film and television has ushered in unprecedented development opportunities. Second creation works, with their unique fragmented and deconstructed forms, have broken the narrative framework of traditional film and television works, forming a huge audience and creator group, and profoundly affecting the dissemination and acceptance of film and television culture. Based on cognitive surplus theory and the uses and gratifications theory, this paper explores the reasons for the popularity of second creation works, their common traits, and the psychological or cultural needs of netizens they satisfy, through text analysis of the top 60 second creation works in the film and television section of Bilibili, combined with interview research. The research results show that second creation works, with their duration that conforms to netizens' cognitive surplus characteristics, creative video images, and text content that precisely meets netizens' needs, have become an important force in the dissemination of film and television culture, providing new ideas and references for the production and development of film and television second creation works.

Keywords:
Film and Television Works, Second Creation, Cognitive Surplus, Uses and Gratifications

1 Introduction

With the rapid development of Internet technology and the popularization of digital media, content consumption has gradually diversified. In this context, the market for second creation works of film and television has ushered in unprecedented development opportunities. At present, second creation works are often presented in fragmented and deconstructed forms, breaking the complete narrative framework of traditional film and television works. However, their strong vitality has continuously expanded the audience and creator group of second creation works, forming an emerging market that cannot be ignored, profoundly affecting the dissemination and acceptance of film and television culture.

We are curious about the following: What are the production orientations of second creation works? What common traits do they have? What psychological or cultural needs of netizens do they satisfy?

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2 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Cognitive Surplus Theory

In the book *Cognitive Surplus: The Power of Free Time*, Clay Shirky elaborates on the concept of "cognitive surplus". Cognitive surplus refers to the enormous social benefits generated by educated individuals with extensive knowledge backgrounds who engage in collaborative creation based on their freely disposable time and a strong desire to share. In other words, "cognitive surplus" represents the dividends that knowledge sharing brings to human society.

2.1.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

Initially explored by several scholars in the 1940s, the Uses and Gratifications Theory was explicitly formulated in 1959 by American sociologist Elihu Katz and has garnered significant attention from scholars both domestically and internationally, yielding numerous research findings.

In 1959, American scholar Elihu Katz first pointed out that communication studies should not solely focus on "what the media do to people" but should also carefully examine "what people do with the media." Foreign scholars Blumler and Katz provided a comprehensive overview of Uses and Gratifications in their 1974 book *The Uses of Mass Communication: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research*. In the same year, foreign scholars Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch co-published Personal Influences on Mass Media Use, summarizing research and key issues in the field of Uses and Gratifications.

Chinese scholars Heng Lu analyzed the underlying assumptions and criticisms of the theory in his 2011 article *Uses and Gratifications: A Labeling Theory*, pointing out that Uses and Gratifications is increasingly viewed as a pathway rather than an empirical theory in today's communication studies. Chinese scholars Di Zhou, in his 2016 article *A Study on the Phenomenon of "Liking" Posts Among College Students on WeChat: Based on the Perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory*, combined the actual phenomenon of "liking" posts among Chinese college students on WeChat with the Uses and Gratifications Theory, revealing the motives and satisfaction of social media use among this group.

2.2 Phenomenon Review

The prosperous development of film and television second creation works has attracted multi- perspective research in academia.

Scholar Lothian, A. studied the uniqueness and marginalization of fan groups in fan generated fan videos from the perspective of fan creation in *A Different kind of love song: Viding fandom's Undercommon*. He explored blended video as a popular video production and editing practice in the fan community, with a particular focus on its performance in the "Undercommon" space. Scholar Ruijie Ma analyzed "second creation" works from a copyright perspective in her article *Law, Market, and Culture: Rethinking the Copyright Issues of Second Creation Videos*, pointed out that emphasizing a negotiated weak copyright protection model is a path for the development and improvement of copyright law in the digital age. Scholar Sun Yan conducted

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an overall analysis of short videos of second creation works in film and television from an aesthetic perspective in her article *Research on Short Videos of Second Creation in Film and Television Works*, noting that the meaning and shortcomings behind short videos of second creation works in film and television should be viewed dialectically, and valuable elements should be extracted through in-depth research and reasonably constructed.

American Scholar Henry Jenkins analyzed secondary creation from the perspective of participatory culture in his 1992 book *Text Hunters: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. He pointed out that television fans often use appropriation, splicing, and other methods to create secondary works on the parts they truly love in the original text, giving new meaning to the text through personalized expression. Chinese scholars Xiao Hao studied the communication effect and influencing factors of film and television second creation videos using the Encoding and Decoding Theory in his article *Research on the Communication Effect and Influencing Factors of Film and Television Second Creation Videos*. His research shows that to achieve good communication effects, second creation videos must resonate emotionally with users. Scholar Xiaoxuan Qi conducted a more detailed study of the phenomenon of second creation using the "participatory culture" theory in her article *"Text Hunting": A Study on the Phenomenon of Short Video Second Creation from the Perspective of Participatory Culture*. Her research shows that in the process of creating second creation videos, creators complete in-depth interpretation and personalized reconstruction of the original text through a series of methods such as the implantation of popular cultural elements and cross-media reorganization.

However, these studies have not examined the phenomenon of "second creation" from the perspective of Uses and Gratifications and therefore have not answered questions about the production mechanism of film and television second creation works.

This paper departs from the Cognitive Surplus Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory, attempting to answer the following questions: What are the production orientations of second creation works? What common characteristics do they possess? What psychological or cultural needs do they satisfy among internet users?

3 Methods

This paper adopts text analysis and interview analysis, starting with the "cognitive surplus" theory.

3.1 Text Analysis Method

Text analysis refers to the systematic analysis of texts related to the research topic, including words, graphics, symbols, audio, and video records, to obtain comprehensive commentaries and explanations. This paper selects 60 second creation works created during the period from December 15, 2023 to January 14, 2024 in the film and television section of the Bilibili, sorted by play count, as samples. Through multi-dimensional analysis of video duration, video text, video images, video music, and video types of film and television second creation works, this paper explores the content characteristics and commonalities of such videos. The video dimension coding statistics has been summarized in Table 1 and Table 2.

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Table 1 Statistics on the number of videos of different durations

Video duration interval	Number of Videos
0-5 minutes	9
5 – 10 minutes	10
10 – 20 minutes	21
20 – 30 minutes	8
30 – 41 minutes	7
More than 41 minutes	5

Table 2 Coding Statistics of Various Dimensions

Dimension	Specific Meaning	Percentage
Video Text	Deconstruction of Character Identity	14.02%
	Connecting with real-life issues	9.68%
	Joke about the plot	11.89%
	Emotional language	9.68%
	Interactive content	2.16%
	Provide fresh information and perspectives	25.81%
Video Imagery	Classic dialogue splicing	6.45%
	Summary of original work content	20.32%
	Highlight Scene Extraction	81.94%
	Special Scene Enlargement	5.56%
	Slow-Motion Key Scenes	2.78%
	Emoji Addition	9.72%
Video Music	Lyrical Music	12.09%
	Atmospheric Music	48.35%
	Commentary Music	10.99%
	Descriptive Music	28.57%
Video Type	Condensed Commentaries	50.00%
	In-depth Analyzes	7.14%
	Editing &Reconstruction	21.43%
	Entertaining Parodies	21.43%

3.2 In-depth Interview Method

This paper adopts a semi-structured interview approach, selecting users who watch second creation works on the Bilibili during their surplus time as research subjects. Surplus time is mainly defined as “before sleeping” “waiting for people, vehicles, or meals” “riding public transportation” “eating and chatting” and other non-working hours. The interview revolves around watching time, watching motives, watching effects, and other aspects. Based on the interview outline, interviewees are encouraged to share their specific feelings about watching second creation works, and the interview questions are flexibly adjusted according to their answers to fully expand the interview corpus and ensure the comprehensiveness and detail of the interview content. The interview process uses the Tencent Meeting online communication tool for remote interviews with interviewees, with durations ranging from 15 minutes to half an hour, ensuring the depth and compre-

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hensiveness of the interviews. Interviewees vary in age, occupation, education level, and region, with a low degree of homogeneity. The interview results were organized into verbatim transcripts, totaling 8 363 words. The basic information of the interviewees has been summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 Basic Information of the Interviewees

Number	Gender	Age	Occupation	Number	Gender	Age	Occupation
S1	Female	25	Civil Servant	S6	Female	21	University Student
S2	Female	19	University Student	S7	Female	27	We-Media Blogger
S3	Male	28	Marketing Management	S8	Male	26	Secretary
S4	Male	39	Teacher	S9	Male	21	University Student
S5	Male	49	Logistics Management	S10	Female	23	Graduate Student

4 Research Findings

4.1 Short Duration Caters to Netizens' Cognitive Surplus Needs

In the era of fragmentation, netizens generate a substantial amount of fragmented surplus time in their work and daily lives. As such fragmented behaviors gradually become mainstream, they disrupt netizens' habit of consuming media in uninterrupted chunks of time, further fragmenting their work and life. As a result, cognitive surplus has emerged as a dominant trend. This also poses new demands on media forms. Only videos that align with netizens' cognitive surplus characteristics can garner higher attention.

Secondary creative works, namely video content created based on original film and television works, emerged against this backdrop. They typically feature shorter durations, refined and creative content, capable of quickly capturing viewers' attention and conveying core messages.

"Because you can use your fragmented time to watch these things." (S1)

"Secondary creative works are shorter. You can watch them in your fragmented time, which reduces time pressure because you can finish an episode quickly." (S6)

"Some traditional film and television dramas are too long and might drag on. Secondary creative works provide an alternative, allowing people to learn certain content in a shorter time." (S9)

It is evident that this advantage in duration enables secondary creative works to seamlessly fit into netizens' fragmented surplus time, becoming an important choice for entertainment, learning, and socializing during these periods. Precisely because the duration of secondary creative works is generally shorter than that of original film and television works, meeting users' needs for media consumption in their surplus time, it has emerged as a burgeoning market that cannot be ignored. The relationship between the video duration range of secondary creative works and their viewership as well as video count has been summarized in Table 4.

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Table 4 Relationship Between Video Duration Interval, Viewership, and Number of Videos

Video duration interval	Average Viewership	Standard Deviation of Viewership	Number of Videos
0-5 minutes	1857777.78	348327.79	9
5 – 10 minutes	2149000.00	373267.79	10
10 – 20 minutes	2723333.33	843710.30	21
20 – 30 minutes	2412500.00	1088185.86	8
30 – 41 minutes	2328571.43	947015.71	7
More than 41 minutes	2074000.00	707481.04	5

Data analysis further confirms that secondary creative works adhere to a production orientation of short durations in terms of their length settings. At the level of video quantity, secondary creative videos with durations of 10-20 minutes account for the largest number and have the highest average viewership. As the duration increases or decreases, the number of videos and the average viewership gradually decline. This duration setting is convenient and aligns with netizens' "cognitive surplus" habits, reducing the time pressure on netizens when watching film and television dramas, thereby "embedding" itself into netizens' surplus time.

4.2 Diverse Types Offering Multi-faceted Experiences

Secondary creative works come in a wide variety of types, each showcasing the creators' unique creativity and modes of expression. These different video types not only enrich the connotation of film and television culture but also provide viewers with more diverse and enriched viewing experiences. The relationship between the types of secondary creative works, their viewership, and the number of videos has been compiled in Table 5.

Table 5 Relationship Between Video Types, Viewership, and Number of Videos

Video Type	Average Viewership	Standard Deviation of Viewership	Number of Videos
Condensed Commentaries	2534285.71	1002857.14	35
In-depth Analyses	2120000.00	784885.71	5
Editing &Reconstruction	2240000.00	861684.36	15
Entertaining Parodies	2240000.00	941520.56	15

Condensed commentaries refer to secondary creative works where the creator summarizes a lengthy film or television series in a much shorter timeframe, with the specific commentary duration varying based on the situation but always significantly less than the coriginal work. The highest average viewership and a larger number of videos in this category indicate that viewers have a high demand and attention for concise and clear video summaries. For example, the secondary creative work titled "Famous Actor Spends 4 Years Catching Hedgehogs for His Daughter, But the Hedgehog Runs Too Fast to Catch Up", posted by the account "Long Film Short Commentary", concisely conveys the story of the original 109-minute film "Sonic the Hedgehog 3" in less than 15 minutes. As of January 14, 2024, this work has received 5.83 million views on the Bilibili.

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In-depth analyses delve deeply into the original film or television work, revealing the hidden deeper meanings and creative concepts behind the plot, aiding viewers in better understanding the original work. Among the 60 works selected based on viewership, there are only 5 videos of the in-depth analysis type, accounting for approximately 7.14%. This may be due to the relatively higher production difficulty of in-depth analysis secondary creative works, which require stronger professionalism and academic rigor, posing certain requirements on the creators' skills. For instance, the secondary creative work titled "Year-End Heavyweight! Have You Really Understood the Reign of Emperor Yongzheng? The Secret of White on Top of the King!" posted by the account "A Leisurely Wooden Fish," conducts an in-depth analysis of the TV series "Reign of Emperor Yongzheng" by exploring historical facts, screenplay adaptations, and creative concepts, combined with a historical materialist perspective.

Editing and reconstruction secondary creative works dismantle one or more film and television works, select clips from the originals, break the original narrative structure, amplify a particular detail of the original, or present a story vastly different from the original. For example, the work titled "The Moment of Questioning Tang Monk, Art Reached Its Peak!" posted by the account "Stranger from Many Past Lives," focuses on showcasing the charm of the character Sun Wukong by selecting his lines from the TV series "Journey to the West." Another example is the work titled "What Happened on This Planet in 2024?" posted by the account "Million Editing Lions," which blends major news events, film and television works, and game content from 2024 for a montage, reconstructing images and sounds from different fields.

Entertaining parodies are characterized by significant ease and entertainment, with these videos not focusing on the original narrative but rather deconstruct the content and tone of the original work through exaggeration, ridicule, or sarcasm to entertain viewers. For instance, the secondary creative work titled "Sharp Critique of Guardians of The Dafeng': Dazed Expressions, Fragmented Lines! A Farce Where Characters Serve Traffic!" posted by the account "Life Like a Dream, Six Matters Over," does not focus on the original narrative content but achieves the purpose of entertaining viewers by excerpting clips from the original work and using sharp wording.

Videos of the editing and reconstruction, and entertaining parody types are at an intermediate level in terms of average viewership and number of videos. They attract viewers in their unique ways but still lag behind condensed commentaries in overall viewership.

4.3 Lightweight Text Reduces Viewing Burden

Video text serves as a crucial vehicle for conveying key information, enhancing emotional expression, and presenting creators' viewpoints and personalities in video works. The grand narrative of original TV dramas often requires extensive viewer concentration to grasp its deeper meanings. However, second creation works, through editing and commentary, lighten the text, thereby alleviating viewers' comprehension pressure of the original text.

"I might not understand some things in the original movie, but by watching second creation works, I can grasp the principles behind it and learn things I didn't know." (S1)

"Some expressions in the original TV dramas are too obscure for me. The meals I missed can be satisfied

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by watching second creation works." (S7).

"I don't need to maintain full concentration when watching second creation works."(S10)

The lightweight nature of video text in second creation works reduces the burden of information acquisition for users and fulfills their entertainment, relaxation, and personalized needs.Specific manifestations of this lightweight text include character identity deconstruction, connection to real-life issues, plot ridicule, emotional wording, interactive content, provision of fresh information and viewpoints, classic line mosaics, and summaries of original content.

Data analysis reveals that videos featuring fresh information and viewpoints have the highest average view count and constitute the largest number of samples sorted by view count among the 60 selected. Videos summarizing original content follow closely. In contrast, videos with interactive content have a lower average view count and fewer numbers. This indicates that in terms of video text, videos that provide valuable information to viewers or effectively summarize original works garner more attention, while interactive content may not be a significant factor in driving view counts for second creation works. The relationship between video text in second creation works and view count as well as video count has been summarized in Table 6.

Table 6 Relationship Between Video Text Characteristics, View Count, and Video Count

Video Text	Average Viewership	Standard Deviation of Viewership	Number of Videos
Deconstruction of Character Identity	2223333.33	1137337.03	9
Connecting with real-life issues	2140000.00	941176.47	8
Joke about the plot	2430000.00	1158302.50	9
Emotional language	2122222.22	876811.59	9
Interactive content	1800000.00	494974.74	2
Provide fresh information and perspectives	2670833.33	1003703.70	20
Classic dialogue splicing	2083333.33	730296.74	5
Summary of original work content	2446666.67	1073270.44	15

4.4 Highlight Scene Extraction Highlights Original Focus

In second creation works, video imagery serves as the core vehicle for intuitively presenting creativity, emotions, and stories, directly determining the visual appeal and narrative effectiveness of the work. Due to the shorter duration of second creation works compared to originals and the streamlining or reconstruction of the original narrative structure, highlight scene extraction becomes the primary type of video imagery in second creation works, with relatively high average view counts and numerous videos. This suggests that highlighting exciting segments can effectively attract viewers and increase video view counts. Videos featuring special scene enlargement, slow-motion key scenes, and emoji additions have relatively lower counts and average view counts, potentially serving auxiliary or specific situational roles in video production. The rela-

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tionship between the use of video imagery in second creation works and view count as well as video count has been summarized in Table 7.

Table 7 Relationship Between Video Imagery, View Count, and Video Count

Video Imagery	Average Viewership	Standard Deviation of Viewership	Number of Videos
Highlight Scene Extraction	2486440.68	1028982.33	48
Special Scene Enlargement	2100000.00	707106.78	3
Slow-Motion Key Scenes	2000000.00	0.00	2
Emoji Addition	2271428.57	1014185.12	7

4.5 Atmospheric Music Enhances Work Ambiance

When music is integrated into video production, its independence diminishes, serving instead to enhance the video itself. Currently, research on music in short videos or second creation works lacks significant findings. Therefore, in this dimension, we refer to the classification of music functions in the “Dictionary of Film Art” for coding, categorizing the music in second creation works into “lyrical music” “atmospheric music” “commentary music” and “descriptive music.”

Lyrical music refers to music used in video works to express emotions that characters find difficult to articulate through words, portraying their psychological activities. Atmospheric music refers to music used in videos to heighten the atmosphere of a specific scene, deepening the visual effect. It can either enhance the atmosphere locally within the film or span the entire film. Commentary music refers to music used in videos to express the creator's subjective attitude towards characters and events. Descriptive music refers to music that depicts action-oriented objects or scenes in the imagery through corresponding musical means, such as the chasing of birds or the operation of machines. The relationship between the selection of video music in second creation works and view count as well as video count has been summarized in Table 8.

Table 8 Relationship Between Video Music Selection, View Count, and Video Count

Video Music	Average Viewership	Standard Deviation of Viewership	Number of Videos
Lyrical Music	2227272.73	1016049.87	11
Atmospheric Music	2545454.55	1048770.97	27
Commentary Music	2180000.00	948683.29	10
Descriptive Music	2400000.00	1077032.96	12

Data analysis shows that videos with atmospheric music have a relatively high average view count. Using atmospheric music in videos may help create an ambiance and enhance the video's appeal, thereby attracting more views. Videos with lyrical, commentary, and descriptive music also perform well in terms of average view count, but atmospheric music stands out more prominently in this dataset. For example, the second creation works “Life is a Wonderful Journey Full of Unknowns, It’s Hard to Know in Advance Where You Will Shine, High-Rated Lesser-Known Movie ‘Oswald the Lucky Rabbit’” by the account “Guwo Movie” repeatedly uses the music “Hiyamugi, somen, sometimes Udon - Mikan” to create a warm and healing atmosphere. Another example is the work “Boyka vs. King of Prisons! ‘Undisputed 4’ Ultra-Exciting Fighting Movie! Adrenaline Rush!” by the account “Moshe Detective”, which repeatedly uses the music “Undisputed” to cre-

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ate an intense and tense atmosphere throughout the video.

5 Conclusion and Reflection

This study delves into the production orientation and popularity of second creation works in film and television from the perspectives of the Cognitive Surplus Theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory. By employing text analysis and in-depth interviews, we systematically analyzed high-viewership second creation works in the film and television section of the Bilibili and drew several significant conclusions.

The research revealed that second creation works are generally shorter in duration than the original works, a feature that enables viewers to utilize fragmented time for viewing and reduces time pressure. Meanwhile, different types of second creation works exhibit variations in viewership and audience attention. For instance, condensed commentary videos have higher average viewership, whereas in-depth analysis videos are relatively fewer in number. These differences reflect diverse needs and preferences among viewers towards different types of second creation works.

This study further found that second creation works emphasize providing fresh information and viewpoints in their video texts. By deconstructing character identities and connecting with real-life issues, these works enhance their watchability and depth. Additionally, techniques such as playful commentary and emotional wording increase the works' entertaining value and interactivity. Exciting scene excerpts have become the primary visual type in second creation works, effectively attracting viewers and boosting viewership. Furthermore, techniques such as enlarging special scenes and slowing down key scenes play crucial roles in specific contexts. Atmospheric music dominates in second creation works, adding to the ambiance and deepening the visual effects. Lyrical, commentary, and descriptive music also enrich the works' emotional expression and narrative layers to varying degrees.

Despite the remarkable achievements in creativity and narrative of second creation works, copyright issues remain a non-negligible challenge. It is an urgent problem to address how to encourage and support the creation and development of second creation works while protecting the rights of the original authors. Future research can further explore the feasibility and effectiveness of a weak copyright protection model in the digital era. Meanwhile, as audience aesthetic standards improve and demands diversify, second creation works need continuous innovation and upgrading to meet viewers' expectations. Future research can focus more on changes in audience needs, explore more diversified visual expression techniques and narrative methods, and inject new vitality into the development of second creation works.

In summary, as an emerging form of content consumption, second creation works in film and television demonstrate abundant creativity and narrative techniques across multiple dimensions. Their production orientation and audience demands exhibit diverse characteristics. However, challenges such as copyright issues and audience demands still persist. Future research can further delve into these issues, providing more theoretical support and practical guidance for the creation and development of second creation works.

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