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## Research on narrative restructuring of movies in the context of postmodernism (Postprint)

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### Abstract

Re-edited films have emerged as a novel form of recreation and entertainment among young audiences. Within this landscape, the film clip reconstruction format known as “Short-Form Movie Explainers” has flourished. Our analysis reveals that the “Three-Minute Movie Talk” format deconstructs the original film’s scene and narrative structure, and through its own interpretive lens, transforms the source material into a new cinematic narrative model. This mode of expression, which articulates novel value concepts, has garnered significant attention from online users and gradually coalesced into a new film and television culture.

### Full Text

### Preamble

#### Research on Narrative Restructuring of Movies in the Context of Postmodernism

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**Abstract:** Re-edited movies have emerged as a new form of recreation and entertainment among young people, with the film clip reconstruction phenomenon known as “Short Video Movie Reviews” flourishing in particular. We have observed that the “Three Minutes to Talk About Movies” format fragments the scenes and narrative structure of original films, imbuing them with new interpretive frameworks to create a novel cinematic narrative model that expresses fresh value concepts. This has captured the attention of online users and gradually forged a new film and television culture.

**Keywords:** Narrative reconstruction, secondary editing, film and television culture, postmodernism, short video movie reviews

## 1 Introduction

Since the 1960s, postmodernist thought has profoundly impacted literary and artistic practice, expanding film art in terms of genre, narrative, and style while catalyzing innovative experiments across all dimensions. Within this context, film reconstruction through re-editing—exemplified by the “Three Minutes to Talk About Movies” phenomenon—has emerged and flourished. We have observed that this format fragments the scenes and narrative structure of original films, and through its own interpretive lens, transforms the original into a new cinematic narrative model. This not only captures the attention of online users but has gradually formed an entirely new film and television culture. In this regard, we are curious: Compared with the original grand narrative, does this new film narrative structure express novel values? How does it reconstruct a new narrative model? How are these new values displayed? What role does the editor’s interpretation play in this process? Will watching movies in three-minute formats reduce audiences’ desire to view the original works?

### 2.1 Overview of Literature on Film Narrative Reconstruction Phenomenon

The phenomenon of film narrative reconstruction has been examined from multiple perspectives in academic circles. Chinese scholar Yang Yanfang’s work “Reconstruction and Risk: Short Video Communication of Film and Television Drama Works” summarizes and analyzes this trend, noting that it may undermine the artistic integrity of films and television dramas, diminish audience appreciation for cinematic art, and over-interpret plots to cater to popular tastes. Additionally, domestic scholar Yang Yahan’s 2022 publication “The Re-intermediation and Hyper-intermediation of Short Videos—Taking Film and Television Commentary Short Videos as an Example” analyzes the phenomenon from an intermediation perspective, arguing that film and television commentary short videos reconstruct traditional cinema through two dimensions: re-intermediation and hyper-intermediation. This process not only simulates traditional image consumption to achieve de-intermediation but also realizes hyper-intermediation by restructuring the temporal and spatial dimensions of conventional film and television consumption.

### 2.2 Review of Literature on Film Review Short Videos

In their 2021 study “The Narrative Style and Cultural Dissemination of Film Review Short Videos—Taking the Douyin Account ‘Poison Tongue Movie’ as an Example,” Chinese scholars Zhou Mengjie and Wang Tian Meihui examined the impact of secondary creation on emotional engagement and interaction, while also raising concerns about the dissipation of artistic depth in film review short videos. Concurrently, domestic scholar Huang Ruilu’s 2019 work “Cultural Symptoms of Self-Media Film Short Videos—Based on Investigation and Analysis of the Weibo Platform” proposes that formalism and carnival culture

characterize film short videos, supplementing our understanding of why film narrative reconstruction forms new cultural and artistic phenomena.

## 2.3 Research Questions

Building upon existing scholarship, this study addresses the following questions: Compared with the original grand narrative, does the new film narrative structure express novel values? How does it reconstruct a new narrative model? How are these new values displayed? What role does the editor's interpretation play in this process? Will the three-minute movie viewing format reduce audiences' desire to watch the original films?

## 3.1 Research Questions

This study investigates the phenomenon of film narrative reconstruction under postmodernist thought and poses the following research questions:

First, compared with modernist film narratives, will narrative reconstruction—flourishing against the backdrop of postmodernism—bring about changes in image concepts led by postmodernist values? Second, after watching numerous video editing adaptations, will audiences develop a dependency that further affects their concentration when viewing original films? Third, will the accelerated development of film narrative reconstruction accelerate the spread of postmodernism?

### 3.3.1 Literature Collection Method

This study collected relevant literature from academic databases such as CNKI by searching keywords including “film and television commentary,” “movie short videos,” “editing short video,” “re-editing,” and “movie reconstruction.” After retrieval, we read sections related to our research topic, establishing a theoretical and empirical foundation for this study, which is detailed in the “Literature Review” section. Through this collection and analysis of previous scholarship, we conclude that current academic circles have achieved considerable success in studying the vigorous development of film narrative reconstruction and film review short videos from multiple perspectives. However, two shortcomings remain: First, in terms of research perspective, while American scholar Jay Bolter emphasizes that new media emerges not through linear technological development but through continuous reference and superimposition of old media, existing studies have examined film and television reconstruction from perspectives such as carnival culture but have not investigated the phenomenon of film re-editing from a postmodernist viewpoint. Second, research has focused on eliminating risks to audience artistic enthusiasm but has paid less attention to the new cultural, artistic, and transmitted values formed by this phenomenon.

### 3.3.2 Content Analysis

This study employs content analysis with the following parameters:

**Sampling Range:**

We selected Bilibili as our primary media source—a highly concentrated cultural community and video platform in China encompassing numerous cultural circles. Bilibili has built an ecosystem that continuously generates high-quality content, including many excellent film and television commentary videos that can be recognized as representative of the genre’s development. For short video platforms, we chose Douyin for two reasons: First, as one of China’s most widely used short video platforms, Douyin guarantees both video quantity and quality. Second, due to Douyin’s characteristics of being “fast,” “short,” and “eye-catching,” film and television commentary videos that gain attention on this platform differ from those on Bilibili. Therefore, selecting film and television commentary videos from Douyin allows for comparative analysis, yielding more comprehensive research results.

**Sample Selection:**

We selected the film *Ruan Lingyu* as our research object, searching for “Ruan Lingyu Movie Commentary” on both platforms. We chose [Muyu Micro-theater] *Ruan Lingyu*—Guan Jinpeng’s work from Bilibili and *Watching Movies in the Arctic—Ruan Lingyu* from Douyin for comparison with the original film.

**Category Construction:**

We divided commentary videos into two categories: long-form and short-form. Long-form videos from Bilibili are characterized by longer duration and slower pacing, while short-form videos from Douyin feature shorter duration and faster pacing.

**Comparative Process:**

First, we viewed the original film and summarized its artistic, rhythmic, and appealing qualities, supplementing our analysis with film reviews from platforms such as Douban and Weibo to avoid subjective bias. Second, we viewed the commentary videos, summarizing them according to the same aspects used for the original film analysis, and incorporated viewer comments as supplementary data. Third, we conducted comparative analysis by placing the summarized results of both the original film and commentary videos in a list for subsequent research on their differences.

**Research Focus:**

Recognizing that differences between film ontology and commentary videos are inevitable, our research emphasizes the new cultural, artistic, and transmitted values brought about by these differences. Simultaneously, the subjectivity of film commentary provides a valuable opportunity to study the editor’s interpretive role.

**Encoding Table:**

Video Source | Ruan Lingyu [Muyu Micro-theater] “Ruan Lingyu” Guan Jin-

peng's work | Watching movies in the Arctic - Ruan Lingyu

—|—|—

Duration | 2:06:00 | 15:54

Platform | Bilibili (long-form) | Douyin (short-form)

Primary Metrics | Artistic quality, video rhythm, overall viewing experience |

Content selection, editing choices, interpretive framing

## 4 Results

As the Internet continues to develop, its conceptual, information-sharing, and public welfare characteristics have diversified video types, yet this has also led to rapid content turnover, preventing some video types from achieving long-term development. Although film and television editing videos are driven by commercial interests and operate according to market rules and industrialized methods, they primarily develop through what can be termed the “fascination” complex. The vigorous regeneration of film short videos thus results from the resonance between creators’ “fascination” complex and Internet culture.

When analyzing the original film and commentary videos from both platforms, we find that young people’s attention to commentary videos exceeds their interest in the original films themselves, as evidenced by the like and playback counts of these videos. In our view, this occurs because short video movie reviews reset the narrative structure through re-editing, expanding film art in terms of types, narratives, and styles while accelerating the narrative rhythm of the original film, thereby intensifying narrative tension. Simultaneously, film commentary incorporates symbols of youth subcultural language—for example, using the most popular internet slang to replace original dialogue or plot points—making three-minute movie reviews more integrated into youth subcultures and gradually forming a new film and television culture.

However, film and television editing videos inevitably suffer from a significant drawback: content flattening. As short videos drastically reduce the content of film and television dramas, certain plots must be abandoned, resulting in some metaphors and foreshadowing becoming straightforward descriptions. Additionally, the proliferation of film and television editing videos can cause artistic dissipation, diminishing the aesthetic beauty of traditional cinema.

### 4.1 The “Fascination” Complex and Internet Spirit Resonance in Narrative Reconstruction

The development of film category short videos has gradually matured, featuring diverse types and rich content. Although current content increasingly prioritizes commercial interests, its origins lie in authors’ voluntary sharing of film information—what can be termed the “fascination” complex rooted in fan psychology. Cultural critic Susan Sontag believed that “fascination” refers specifically to “the very specific kind of love,” a form of affection that transcends the

ordinary movie fan's perceptual appreciation. Consequently, numerous film enthusiasts have devoted themselves to secondary creation, leveraging their strong artistic perception and extensive viewing experience to develop more professional understandings of cinema.

Taking [Muyu Micro-theater] *Ruan Lingyu*—Guan Jinpeng's work—as an example, the creator not only restructured the film *Ruan Lingyu* but also expressed personal views and insights regarding directorial choices, acting, and editing methods. The author represents a “fan” with substantial knowledge reserves. However, the “fascination” complex constitutes only one dimension; the other depends on audience participation and group effects inherent in the media environment. In the era of participatory media, everyone can become a creator within a highly inclusive and free environment. Therefore, when the fascination complex resonates with Internet culture, film and television editing categories dominated by narrative reconstruction can be released from media constraints to achieve dissemination from individuals to groups.

## 4.2 Narrative Network Reconstruction and Changing Concepts of Film Viewing

In the context of developing Internet information technology, Brazilian scholar Gabriel Menotti has noted that vertical-screen images are rapidly occupying the current audiovisual environment, and compared to traditional models, people increasingly accept fragmented information. The vigorous development of narrative reconstruction is accelerating this conceptual shift. Among our three research samples, the degree of fragmentation progressively increases, while playback counts show positive correlation. This indicates that most audiences have lost interest in lengthy original films, preferring instead to use fragmented time to quickly understand film content through others' interpretations. From another perspective, movie commentary represents an alternative form of film criticism. With the expansion of film review short videos, film criticism has returned to the people, aligning audience psychological expectations with the notion that “users better understand users.”

Film review short videos feature weak language professionalism and emphasize colloquial expression, with works prioritizing short-video entertainment value. These characteristics align with people's daily fragmented mobile phone usage patterns, bringing about changes in image concepts led by postmodernist values. By the end of 2022, the new film and television culture brought by film commentary videos sparked extensive discussion. In some film works, producers label characters as “handsome boy” or “unlucky one” based on their traits. This simple coding of protagonists has become a new online popular element, attracting audiences through text-based guidance and making content more life-like and accessible, with popular culture occupying an important position.

### 4.3 Soul Dissipation: Content Flattening and Loss of Cinematic Artistry

In Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, the mass production of copies in the machine age causes the original "soul" of the work to disappear. This soul constitutes the inherent attribute of artistic works and represents a crucial reason why works can achieve "beauty." On one hand, in the Internet era, the "copy and paste" nature of film review short videos caters to the entertainment mentality of the general public, diminishing the artistic beauty of original films. On the other hand, cinematic composition often requires integration with its frame to create unique aesthetic effects. The technical conditions of mobile phone vertical screens greatly limit the textural quality of films themselves, leading to deficient artistic reception.

Simultaneously, public aesthetic deviation may become fragmented. Harvard University professor Cass Sunstein formally proposed the concept of the "information cocoon," a common product of content-push models based on user preferences in the micro-era. However, single-viewing experiences lead to reduced aesthetic deviation, easily limiting individuals' aesthetic confidence and hindering the development of healthy aesthetic taste. Film and television editing short videos face another unavoidable problem: content flattening. The substantial duration differences inevitably lead to sharp content reduction in short videos compared to original films, forcing the abandonment of certain plots or direct omission.

Some films are well-crafted, rich in connotation and reflection. However, after rapid narrative reconstruction processing that eliminates careful pacing and development, these works cannot display their original artistic charm. Over time, although audiences may satisfy their curiosity and feel they have experienced many films, they are actually only tasting superficial elements, leading to the gradual degradation of their artistic appreciation abilities.

### 5.1 Summary

In the Internet era, people's information consumption habits are shifting toward the defining characteristics of "short, flat, and fast," making narrative reconstruction an inevitable product of this adaptation. Grounded in Marshall McLuhan's media theory, narrative reconstruction achieved through dismantling original film texts represents not only a new form of knowledge production and cultural communication but also an emerging entertainment consumption model that aligns with the innovative cultural ecology created by Internet-driven youth subcultures.

However, in the process of narrative reconstruction, personalized and subjective narrative discourse has displaced the original grand narrative of cinema. Postmodernist cultural trends—including fragmentation, copying, formalism, and carnival—weakens the depth and thickness of audience engagement with

films. While narrative restructuring is currently reaching its climax, its inherent problems cannot be ignored. How to develop “film and television editing short videos” still requires calm and continuous reflection, and how long the postmodernist structure can last remains to be observed and discussed within the industry.

## 5.2 Limitations

This study has two primary shortcomings: First, the sample size is too small to be generalizable. When selecting research samples, we chose only three videos across two platforms, conducting merely a tripartite content analysis that cannot conclusively represent audience acceptance attitudes. Second, subjectivity exists in sample analysis. During the analytical process, assessments of artistic and editing qualities were completed by ourselves, introducing certain subjectivity. Although theoretically grounded, personal preferences may inevitably cause conclusions to deviate from objective findings.

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