

# **On the theoretical source and practical demand of "imagination consumption"**

**Bingqing Wei**

Master of Arts and Cultural Management, the University of Melbourne, Melbourne, VIC 3010, Australia

**Keywords:** "imagination consumption"; Theoretical sources; Actual needs

**Abstract:** This paper combs and summarizes the popular theory of "imagination consumption" in China at present. This paper sorts out its theoretical source and development context, and tries to answer the question "How does imagination consume?" And "imagination how to ensure audience consumption" two practical problems.

## **1. The era of experiential consumption calls for "imagination consumption"**

Thomas L. Friedman once said, "Imagination will dominate the future competition." "The most important competition in the future world will not be between nations or between companies, but will be the competition of people's imagination." Like a combination of "dream", "window" and "mirror", art and commerce, culture and ideology, appreciation, and criticism, the film plays a self-evident role in aesthetic entertainment, aesthetic education, and aesthetic cognition. At the same time, the film also plays a key role in showing the national style, presenting the national style, deepening the national confidence, and promoting the national concept. Therefore, in the post-globalization era, China's film needs the blessing of imagination, the presentation of imagination, and the emergence of "imagination consumption" films.

In recent years, the Chinese box office has been booming, and movie genres have been diversified, the aesthetic taste of film audiences keeps rising and tends to be rational. From this perspective, China's film industry is thriving. However, behind the prosperity of singing and dancing, China's film industry also reveals many shortcomings, such as the impetuous industry, lack of creativity, and lack of imagination. With the success of many science fiction films and fantasy films such as *Monster Hunt*(2015), *The Mermaid*(2016), *Detective Dee: The Four Heavenly Kings*(2018), *The Wandering Earth*(2019). It makes us see the important value of "imagination" to Chinese film creation and film director, and the market value and practical significance of "imagination consumption" film.

As *Monster Hunt* (2015), *The Mermaid* (2016), and so on many science fiction films and fantasy films builds through the audio-visual feast, satisfy The audience aesthetic expectation, express Chinese traditional aesthetic spirit, and humanistic values, both at The box office, word-of-mouth success, let's see The "imagination" to The Chinese film creation value, film director, "consumption" imagination of market value and practical significance. By creating an audio-visual feast, satisfying audiences' innovative aesthetic expectations, and expressing traditional Chinese aesthetic spirit and humanistic values, they have achieved double success in the box office and public praise.

Therefore, we need to vigorously develop the category of "imagination consumption" films and vigorously appeal to the era of "imagination consumption".

## **2. The origin and development of the theory of "imagination consumption"**

On the imagination problem and "imagination consumption" of Chinese films, Chen Xuguang proposed in His book *On the Lack of Imagination in Chinese Films* that "Chinese films lack imagination". Chen Xuguang predicted that "with the increasing youth of market audiences and producers, science fiction films with abundant imagination," "high-IQ" thriller films and psychological horror films should and will rise ". In 2016, Chen Xuguang proposed the concept of "imagination consumption" in *The Challenge of Imagination and Exploration of Chinese Fantasy*

Films (Creation and Review, No.4, 2016): "Chinese science fiction and fantasy films themselves are a new cultural symptom, which conforms to the consumption demand of a generation of young people nurtured by the Internet. It is generated in the background of the absence of science fiction and fantasy films, as well as under the constraints of traditional Confucian culture and realistic creation. This has its own unique and significant significance. Now the introduction of digital technology and the Internet has given birth to a generation of imagination and consumption, which is completely out of thin air and has nothing to do with reality. Image consumption, which has to turn a lot of curves, has unprecedented power of consumption. It is different from the artistic satisfaction and emotional consumption we said before. It's a consumption of imagination." Therefore, the concept of "imagination consumption" film is well known, and "imagination consumption" film also keeps developing, exploring, evolving, and constantly breaking through and succeeding. With the successful practice of numerous "imagination consumption" films in the First Year of Chinese Science fiction in 2019, we need to continue to attach importance to and vigorously advocate the creation and development of "imagination consumption" films. Therefore, according to the current situation of directors, films and audiences, Chen Xuguang mentioned in "Chinese science fiction Films and The Era of" Imagination Consumption "(Beijing Youth Daily, April 19, 2019):" At present, the audience of the 'net generation' and the new Internet media, which can defy history, transcend reality and indulge imagination, are symbiotic and symbiotic with the new world of simulacra. Imagination beyond reality is especially needed for Chinese films. The mainstream youth audience in China has a huge demand space for 'imagination consumption'." In this way, the author makes an overview of the source of reality and the prospect and suspense of the future road of "imagination consumption". In this way, the author makes an overview of the source of reality and the prospect and suspense of the future road of "imagination consumption". Later, Mr. Chen Xuguang called for the era of "Imagination consumption" in Chinese films (Nanfang Daily May 5, 2019) and made an appeal and prospect for "imagination consumption" films: "China's film market may usher in a new stage to explore the" virtual consumption "or" imagination consumption "of Chinese audiences. To a certain extent, 'fantasy films' are one of the yardsticks to measure a nation's imagination, creativity and creativity. This kind of movie is not only because of its story assumption and fiction, fully catered to the present the sense of attachment to the younger generation simulacra environment consumption 'and' imagination, and based on the types of fusion to join Chinese fantasy reengineering mode can also help in the film creation of the modernity transformation of Chinese traditional culture."

Finally, Mr Chen Xuguang in the type development, the industrial aesthetics "stratification and the theory of" imagination "consumption of vast space - > < stray earth" aesthetics "film industry and compare with > < crazy aliens" (studies of ethnic arts, 2019) the article again to the audience factor for the formation of consumption "imagination" films, has made the further stressed: "the movie audience's connotation, constitution and the degree of culture is undergoing fundamental changes, mainstream audience of young is an important trend of irreversible. In this regard, the film gets the right to win when it gets to the teenagers. For the "net generation" generation growing up in an Internet multimedia environment, they are symbiotic with the Internet new media era, which is devoid of history, transcending reality and indulging imagination, and with a new world of simulacrity or "simulacrity". The world is theirs, after all. Media reality change is bound to affect the artistic thinking and artistic production that movie way of thinking, language style, the change of the way of story form, that the Internet will also thought embodied in their films, such as fantasy, science fiction film, "burn brain films" and "a high IQ movies", cranial nerve film, film "database", and so on different appellation of film form, are in fact their films as "net generation" thinking of compromise."

Zhi-zhong fan, Cai Jun, meanwhile, in the < crazy alien > : after the era of globalization of simulacra discourse ", the article also mentioned in the film world park is the use of "simulacra space" the function of imagination and creation, and then from the Angle of simulacra care film text, then confirm the "imagination" "simulacra" for the important role of film creation. After that, as the summer nezha conquers the familiars down "in the form of fantasy cool and aesthetic, the artistic

conception of Chinese style and grounding gas and the content of the reality and success, and further confirm the market value of the "consumption 'imagination and reality meaning:' the familiars down ultra high box office is the young generation audience the release of the huge potential of 'imagination' consumption."

To sum up, the author combs and reviews the origin of "imagination consumption", from which we can see its cutting-edge theoretical assumption, realistic theoretical value and historical theoretical significance.

### **3. How does "imagination" carry out "consumption", and then achieve "imagination consumption"?**

Based on this, we might as well trace and interpret Jean Baudrillard's theoretical propositions. With the change of times and the change of society, the concept of modern society has changed from a traditional society with abundant food and clothing to a post-modern society with the pursuit of experience and enjoyment. Because of the changes in modern society, Jean Baudrillard once proposed the concept of "consumer society". He believed that post-modern society is a consumption-led society. Accordingly, it is not difficult to verify from real life. For example, in the "consumption boom" of annual shopping festivals such as Double 11, 618, and Valentine's Day, the vast majority of people get pleasure, satisfaction, and release from "consumption". Similarly, audiences do the same thing when they watch movies. They "consume" and "enjoy" in the "imagination" picture of movies, to achieve satisfaction, release pressure, and then successfully "consume imagination". As Jean Baudrillard said: "Around us today, there is an amazing phenomenon of consumption and abundance made up of increasing goods, services, and material wealth. It constitutes a fundamental change in the human natural environment. Properly speaking, the rich are not surrounded by people, as they used to be, but by things." In conclusion, it is not difficult to see that in the "consumer society", all "things" surround people, while "imagination" in the process of artistic creation promotes creators to soar from "bamboo in the eye" to "bamboo in the heart", and finally to "bamboo in the hand". Therefore, "imagination" can create "objects", which is necessary for modern art "objects". Modern social consumption is "amazing consumption made up of objects". Therefore, "imagination", which constitutes "objects of art", also has amazing and rich consumption, also known as "imagination consumption".

It is worth noting that Chinese economics professor Lu Jiangyong also wrote in "The Age of Imagination, Why Did Jack Ma say that the 'new economy' is the 'Imagination Economy'?" An explanation of the "imagination economy". He emphasized that "the imaginative economy model requires special attention to the user imagination, organizational imagination, business imagination, and market imagination. "It further emphasizes that imagination lies in the economic value of modern society, thus further illustrates the viewpoint that "imagination" can be "consumed" and has "economic value", and further verifies the "consumption of imagination". We might as well the road Jiang Chong emphasizes the four elements of corresponding with the movie authoring system, from the interpretation of "imagination" consumption films: imagination, the audience for movies imagination, organization imagination for the film producer, director, producer, screenwriter, director) of imagination, imagination is subject for movies, development, and marketing of imagination, imagination is a film investment, market, the film's imagination. Therefore, "imagination consumption" movies are the product of modern economic development and have "economic value" and market potential.

### **4. How can "imagination consumption" movies promote audience consumption and ensure that the audience "pays"?**

Therefore, we can try to look at the future development prospect of "imagination consumption" movies from the theoretical field of "Simulacra society". In terms of simulacra, " simulacra is generally considered to mean that in the post-modern society, with the rise of mass media such as computer technology, integrated circuits, and TELEVISION networks, there are a large number of

duplicated, extremely real images without objective sources and without any references." The "extreme truth" and "no objective source" in this is the subjective creation and presentation under the vision of the imagination. "It not only represents an absence as a presence and imagination as real but also, through its potential to weaken any contrast with the truth, assimilating the truth into itself." "The boundary between emulations and reality has imploded. The implosion is not a simulation of a domain, a target, or an entity. It does not require an original object or entity but uses a model to generate a reality that has no source or reality, which Baudrillard called 'hyper-reality.'"

Looking back at China's science fiction, fantasy, and other "imagination consumption" movies, are in the absence of (real life does not exist) as the performance of existence (Extremely similar to the real-life, the audience can substitute into the film, knowing it is not the reality, but yearning for the world in the film). It is the performance of the imagination into the real, the past, the future into the present.

For example, the picture of demon life depicted in *White Snake: The Origin* is very fantastic, but it is also very real. People and monsters get along with each other in the film, which has the poetry lacking in real life, as well as the breath of life and sensory reality in real life. As "wandering the earth" in the bleak picture, the picture of the future also has "absence" in the future of "imagination", whether fireworks playing mahjong underground gas, campus, class, or the reality of the ground temperature bitter feeling, the orderly rules and sense of order in the sky, also is the individuals of persistence, independence, brave, kind and cooperation between the people together, support each other, is a "real" world of simulacra, or under consumption "imagination" in the "real world" hyper-reality.

Relying on the concept of "imagination consumption", the film has made breakthroughs and innovations in many aspects such as technology and media, in order to create a "simulacra", so as to make the audience resonate and identify with it.

At the same time, it is worth emphasizing that "simulacra are sometimes more acceptable to the public than the real society, because the" super-reality "created by simulacra is more in line with the public's psychology, and the experience that is truer than the real makes them willing to be captured by simulacra."

The "imaginative consumption" movie we advocate is the "virtual reality world" that "does not exist but is extremely real". The audience seeks, discovers, reflects, makes achievements, and surpasses themselves in the "virtual world of images". On the one hand, I can satisfy my game instinct through the strange and splendid imagination, and then achieve liberation from the real society and pursue the aesthetic feeling of images. Through audio-visual feast, on the other hand, meet the needs of their own "wonders" and "imagination", the audience for all kinds of life, social pressure, and fantasy, imagination in "" tori, picking the poetic scene, also can" think "the future society and the beauty of the landscape, also can" think "in ancient China anecdotal story," the disorderly god of the strange power "consume" imagination "movies will assume the audience can refer to" think "the responsibility, to think of" audience "to" reality "screen, let the audience in the process of appreciating the film to get the satisfaction of" imagination ", to consume "imagination". Thus, the audience is encouraged to "consume imagination".

Lu Jiangyong once said that "creativity is the imagination of the ground, imagination is the basis of new manufacturing", and further stressed the importance of imagination. Also, vice President of alibaba group Liu Song had "imagination X artificial intelligence" as the theme Shared his understanding of the artificial intelligence, "big data, he thought, and artificial intelligence data from intelligent multiplied by the imagination is not only bring the new ideas of personalized and intelligent, create new species and a variety of new forms of operation in the service industry, and, more importantly, will allow us to imagine and create the future."

As the seventh art, film has great potential in the era of big data and artificial intelligence. While practicing the concept of "imagination consumption", Chinese films can modernize the traditional Chinese artistic spirit, create new film types and various new ways of film publicity, and also enable creators and connoisseurs to re-imagine future films and create future films.

In short, practical significance of the "imagination consumption more than the expansion of Chinese movie types, the pull on the economy and improvement of industry, more is that it can meet the audience wonders, the aesthetic demand of audio-visual feast type, is advantageous to the Chinese traditional culture and art, the aesthetic spirit heritage and development, is conducive to the emergence of the expansion of the Chinese thinking and imagination.

In the Internet age, Internet generation audiences have unique hobbies, diverse groups, pioneering aesthetics, huge consumption potential and infinite imagination. Under the common changes of times and audiences, domestic film creation must also change with The Times and the world, so as to explore "imagination consumption" and "polytropism" with big times and new audiences, and then write a splendid chapter in the new era. But to stress is that the emphasis of the author in this paper, "imagination" consumption type of film is in the imagination on the basis of inheritance, on the basis of inheriting imagine, is not like "gold heist" that "with sulfuric acid melting pot carrier liquid gold" low-level imagine, nor as "the killing" that "the whole village together kill a ruffian" illogical to imagine, but the stray earth type home hand in photograph reflect the feelings and the future prospect of the imagination, nezha conquers the familiars down "type of the actual situation in their discussions with reality struck a chord with melodious imagination, the top players show virtual precess and reflection to imagine. As Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge, for knowledge is limited, while imagination summarizes everything in the world, drives progress and is the source of the evolution of knowledge." As we continue to examine, study and discuss the development prospect of Chinese "imagination consumption" movies, perhaps we can get the answer from Einstein's words.

## References

- [1]Chen Xuguang, Wu Yanju. Reflections on the Lack of Imagination in Chinese Films, Contemporary Film, no. 11, pp. 98-101, 2012.
- [2]Chen Xuguang, Lu Chuan: The Challenge of Imagination and The Exploration of Chinese Fantasy Films, Creation and Review, no.4, pp. 123-128, 2016.
- [3]Shi Yiqing, a study on Baudrillard simulacra theory, Changsha: Hunan Normal University, 2007, p. 7.
- [4]Sun Mingjie, A Brief Discussion on Baudrillard's simulacra World, Popular Literature and Art, No. 9, pp. 38-39, 2017.
- [5]Lu Jiangyong: Why Jack Ma said the "new economy" is the "imagination economy" in the Age of Imagination? , Finance and Economics, no. 5, pp. 61-63, 2019.