The Creation of AI-Generated Short Dramas Featuring Human-Like Characters Based on Relational Authorship Theory: A Study of Human–Machine Relationships and Aesthetic Judgement

Ziyi Zhou
School of Art Design, Academy of Fine Arts, Nanchang Normal University, Nanchang, Jiangxi, China

Abstract: With the rapid increase of short drama produced by AI similar to human characters, the discussion about creative ability has begun again. In other words, if machine can create real characters and acting skills, where is the value of human creation? This paper focuses on the central thing of "human decision" by using relational authorship theory, as a key word to understand the unchangeable role of human beings when they are making together with machine. "aesthetic judgement has entered the whole process of creation-choosing themes, thinking ideas, doing a good job in prompt, selecting materials, adjusting mood and adjusting rhythm. Finally, decide the appearance and touching mood of the work. This paper investigates several representative AI-simulated short drama, analyzes how this power works in different stages of creation, and tries to provide a theoretical framework for clarifying the value of human creation again in the increasing use of AI tools.

Keywords: AI-Simulated Short Dramas; Relational Authorship; Aesthetic Judgement; Human-Machine Collaboration

1. Introduction

In recent years, the creation of AI-generated micro-short dramas has flourished. From the China Media Group's pioneering series Chinese Myths and AI Reads Classical Texts, to works such as Hero, Love Never Ends, Fantasy Shop and Sanxingdui: Apocalypse of the Future-launched successively on major platforms-AI image-generation technology is being integrated into the film and television production chain at an unprecedented pace. Consequently, AI-simulated short dramas, featuring highly lifelike virtual avatars as protagonists in AI-driven performances, have rapidly emerged as a prominent sub-genre [1]. By January 2026, their share in the top 100 domestic animated series rankings surged from 7% to 38%, confirming their immense market potential [2].

However, a widespread unease is spreading. The 'uncanny valley effect' has trended on social media, with viewers feeling 'a shiver down their spine'. Their fear stems not from technical crudeness, but from content being "too lifelike, yet soulless" and "visually polished, yet devoid of warmth" [3]. This reveals a paradox: AI tools have drastically lowered the creation threshold, yet the proportion of high-quality work has not risen proportionally. Using the same tools and script, results vary dramatically. Once tool access is democratised, what truly sets creators apart is an implicit ability concerning choice, taste, and a grasp of human emotion and aesthetic sensibility-this is aesthetic judgement. Now that AI handles repetitive work from visual generation to editing, every subtle human decision in topic selection, prompt design, material screening, emotional calibration, and pacing becomes a key imprint of creative agency. If AI determines the quality baseline, aesthetic judgement defines its ceiling.

Ostad and Șerban (2025)' s "relational authorship" theory provides us with an important first theoretical entrance [4]. They advocate that the production of AI movies is based on human judgment, the output of machine and the interpretation of the audience, with "human judgment" as the center. However, this sentence needs further decomposition and thinking. What are the elements? What is the absolutely necessary center? This paper advocates that aesthetic judgment is the essence of human judgment. Investigating this through the production of short plays made by AI can deepen our understanding of the relationship between man and machine and help producers re-examine their own value standards.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Literature Review

The research on the content and creative function of AI production has changed from the use of technology to the profound problems of the relationship between man and machine and ethics. Ostad and Șerban (2025) put forward a very important framework. The film production of AI is interpreted as "relational authorship". It comes from people's choice, the output of the machine and the explanation of the audience. The beauty of the image comes from some minor technical problems and unstable texture [4]. Sun and Gualeni (2025) said that the role of AI is between "immobile doll" and "semi-self-moving actor", indicating two properties of AI [5].

In this country, Gong and Ma (2024) emphasized that people have feelings that cannot be replaced by other things, so virtual people can only become assistants in creating content [6]. Zhou and Zhao (2025) will use AI to make virtual characters, which are divided into three parts: digital simulation, content generation, and people and machines making together [7]. Cao (2025) used Baudrillard's hyperreality to analyze the creation of simulacrum world by AI short plays and the resulting ethical risks [8]. Li (2025) interviewed the important creators of The Monkey King, Hero, and Chinese Myths, and investigated the "affordance" of AI when making short plays [9].

Although great progress has been made, the structure of the difference between "human judgment" in short plays made by AI and the judgment of beauty in the production stage has not been carefully analyzed. Therefore, this paper refers to relational authorship theory and industrial cluster life cycle paradigm [10], and from a subtle point of view, investigates the expression and mechanism of judging beauty in each stage.

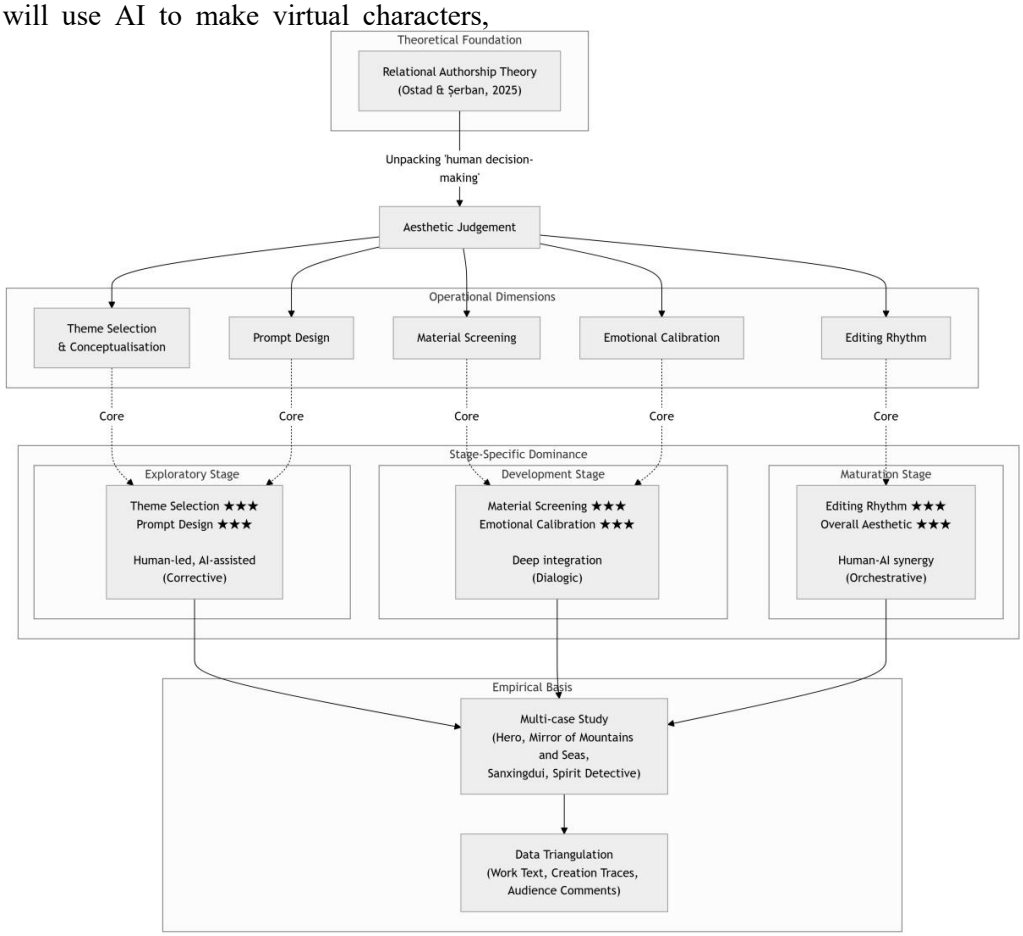


Figure 1. Theoretical Model

2.2 Theoretical Analytical Framework

Tichy (1998) divided the life cycle of industrial cluster into genesis, growth, maturity and decline [10]. We turned this into three stages in order to make AI short plays: exploratory (genesis), developmental (growth) and maturity (maturity). In exploratory stage, it has the characteristics of topic selection and failure after various attempts in prompt design. In the developmental stage, with the deepening of cooperation between people and AI, we will devote ourselves to material selection and embedding. In the mature stage, the production method will become regular,

and there will be good cooperation between the editing rhythm and the overall aesthetic adjustment.

This study divides "aesthetic judgement" into five parts: topic selection and conceptualisation, as well as suggestive design, material selection (selecting from the versions made by AI), emotional calibration (adjusting the expression to overcome the uncanny valley) and editing rhythm (cutting the length and alternation of scenes), and collecting data from multiple case study, records of the creative process and audience comments to confirm this structure. This framework is written in Figure 1.

3. Research Methods and Data Collection Process

3.1 Sample Selection and Characteristics

A multi-case study approach is adopted to enable cross-case comparison and theoretical replication. Selected cases must be publicly broadcast, highly recognised, and provide rich public creative material. Four representative works spanning different development stages were chosen (Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of the Case Study Works

Title	Platform Source	Genre	Duration	Assessment of Development Stage	Key Features
Hero	CCTV (China Central Television)	Time-travel / Hero's Journey	Approximately 14 minutes	Exploration phase	AI-assisted, a first for mainstream media
Mirror of Mountains and Seas: Cutting Through the Waves	Kuaishou	Fantasy	Short Series	Exploration Phase → Development Phase	The first original AIGC production, with detailed director's notes
Sanxingdui: Apocalypse of the Future	Douyin + Bona	Science Fiction	13 episodes / 52 minutes	Development Phase	Continuous narrative, high level of technical integration
Spirit Detective	Tencent	Fantasy/Mystery	46 episodes / 100+ minutes	Mature phase	A major breakthrough in long-form series, with significant cost-effectiveness

Table 2. Data Collection Details

Title of Work	Data Collection Target	Collection Method	Content Collected
Hero	Film script, audience reviews, official film reviews	Online viewing, comment scraping, literature search	Visual and narrative characteristics of the work, audience feedback, interviews with the creative team
Mirror of the Mountains and Seas: Cutting Through the Waves	Film script, audience reviews, director's notes	Online viewing, review scraping, literature search	Work characteristics, creative process, and records of prompt iterations
Sanxingdui: Apocalypse of the Future	Work text, audience reviews, interviews with the creative team	Online viewing, comment scraping, literature search	Work characteristics, technical challenges, character generation process
Spirit Detective	Work text, audience reviews, industry reports	Online viewing, review scraping, literature search	Work characteristics, production timeline, cost data

3.2 Description of the Data Collection Process

Primary sources include creators' public production diaries, technical videos, behind-the-scenes footage, screening recordings (for Sanxingdui), and interviews. Secondary data comprise multiple close viewings to record visual, narrative, and emotional features, plus at least 200 valid audience comments per case from Weibo, Douban, and Bilibili (Table 2).

4. Case Studies

Based on the theoretical analytical framework presented in Figure 1, this paper will analyse the sample works across three stages of AI-generated short drama production-the exploratory, developmental and mature phases-and summarise the characteristics of aesthetic judgement at each stage, along with the mechanisms of its interaction with AI tools.

4.1 Exploratory Phase: Human-Led, Technology-Assisted

The exploratory phase marked the initial technical trial of AI-generated short dramas, with representative works including CCTV's Hero and Kuaishou's Mirror of Mountains and Seas: Cutting Through the Waves. The former is an official experimental production by a mainstream media organisation, whilst the latter is a landmark work by an independent director transitioning from traditional film and television to AI-driven creation; together, they exemplify the fundamental characteristic of this phase: 'human-led, AI-assisted'. Table 3 presents selected representative data and extracted keywords from sample works of the exploratory phase.

Table 3. Representative Data and Extracted Keywords from Sample Works of the Exploratory Phase

Feature Dimensions	Work	Summary of Representative Data	Keyword Extraction
Theme and Concept	Hero	The inspirational theme of 'overcoming oneself is what makes a hero' resonates with the identity anxieties of today's young people	Value Judgements and Resonance with the Times
Theme and Concept	Mirror of Mountains and Seas: Cutting Through the Waves	"Director Zhang Yimou's insights on special effects budgets, suggesting that AI can achieve fantastical visuals at low cost"	Balancing technical constraints and artistic effects
Prompt Design	Mirror of Mountains and Seas: Cutting Through the Waves	"Refining the prompts over a hundred times", "effectively correcting the AI's inherent Western aesthetic bias"	Trial-and-error iteration, cultural calibration
Prompt Design	Hero	"AI technology was used to complete a vast amount of scene composition, enabling the efficient rendering of scenes such as ancient battlefields"	Technology-driven, efficiency gains
Footage Selection	Sanxingdui: Apocalypse of the Future	"AI generated a vast number of character designs; any that bore a striking resemblance to real-life celebrities were discarded"	Precise Control, Aesthetic Selection

As can be seen from Table 3, the choice of theme and concept is the primary manifestation of aesthetic judgement during the exploratory phase. In Hero, the creators chose the theme of 'an ordinary person travelling back in time to become a hero', conveying the inspirational value that 'overcoming oneself is what makes one a hero'. In an interview, the creative team mentioned that this theme was intended to address the anxieties surrounding self-identity among contemporary young people [9]. In Mirror of Mountains and Seas: Cutting Through the Waves, the director explained in his creative notes: "Inspired by Director Zhang Yimou's remarks on special effects budgets, I believe AI can achieve fantastical visuals at low cost" [11]. This choice of subject matter reflects a balancing act between technical constraints and artistic outcomes-creators do not merely consider "what they want to film", but also factor in "what they are capable of filming" when making decisions.

Prompt design is the stage of the exploratory phase that most requires trial and error. The director of Mirror of Mountains and Seas: Cutting Through the Waves revealed that, in order to generate mythical characters that met their expectations, the team went through hundreds of iterations of refining the prompts. It is reported that by adjusting the attributes, the producer tells the mythical figures with Eastern aesthetic characteristics through "effectively corrected the AI's Inherent Western Aesthetic Preferences" [7]. The reason why this work takes time is that there is cultural deviation in the training data of AI model. The images produced directly often tend to have the tendency of Western aesthetics, and the producers need to fine-tune the prompts several times and modify the output of the model bit by bit. In this sense, prompt design is not only a technical work, but also can convey cultural judgments and aesthetic preferences [12].

Generally speaking, in the exploration stage, the main challenge faced by producers is how to make AI "understand" their aesthetic intentions. Due to immature technology and lack of experience, the output quality of AI is not fixed, and aesthetic judgment is often manifested as the ability to "correct". In other words, we should find the output problem of AI, and then find a way to correct it. At this stage, the relationship between man and machine is easy to become unilateral. When a person gives a command, the

machine makes an output, and the person adjusts the command according to the output. The role of machines is not so much a conversation partner as a tool that is difficult to control.

4.2 Development Phase: Deep Integration of Aesthetic Judgement and AI Tools

The development phase is characterised by rapid iteration of AI technology and a shift in creative models from assistance to co-creation. A representative work from this period is Sanxingdui: Apocalypse of the Future, co-produced by Douyin and Bona. This series was the first to achieve end-to-end AIGC production of a 13-episode continuous narrative, integrating more than ten types of AI tools, and marked the transition of AI-generated human-like short dramas from single-episode experiments to serialised production. Table 4 presents representative data and coded keywords for sample works from the Development Phase.

Table 4. Representative Data and Keyword Extraction from Sample Works from the Developmental Period

Feature Dimensions	Works	Compilation of Representative Data	Keyword Extraction
Selection of Source Material	Sanxingdui: Apocalypse of the Future	"AI generated a vast number of character designs; the team selected them one by one, discarding any that bore a resemblance to celebrities"	Simulation versus reality; assessment of demeanour
Material selection	Mirror of the Mountains and Seas: Cutting Through the Waves	"Technical issues can be resolved, but the character must be right"	Overall vision and criteria for selection
Emotional Calibration	Sanxingdui: Apocalypse of the Future	"The greatest challenge in AI production lies in 'portraying people'; dialogue and micro-expressions are the bottlenecks"	Technical limitations, emotional expression
Emotional Calibration	Hero	Audience reviews describe it as "natural and refreshing"	Emotional authenticity and audience acceptance
Emotional Calibration	Sanxingdui: Apocalypse of the Future	"Integrates over a dozen AI technologies"	Technology integration and external collaboration

As can be seen from Table 4, material selection has become a core element during the development phase. AI generation is inherently random; the same prompt can produce multiple different outputs. In an interview, the lead creators of Sanxingdui: Apocalypse of the Future mentioned that the AI generated a vast number of character designs, which the team selected one by one; if a character bore a striking resemblance to a real-life celebrity, it was discarded [13]. This selection criterion is thought-provoking: the images discarded were not those that were 'unattractive', but rather those that 'resembled real people too closely'. It reflects the creators' judgement regarding the subtle relationship between 'simulation' and 'reality'-excessive realism may actually trigger the uncanny valley effect, whilst a well-balanced 'resemblance without being identical' is the ideal state. The director of Mirror of the Mountains and Seas: Cutting Through the Waves offered another selection criterion: 'Technical imperfections can be resolved, but the overall aura must be right. [11] 'This illustrates that the core of material selection lies not in technical perfection, but in capturing the overall aura-technical flaws can be rectified in post-production, but if the right aura is not chosen from the outset, it is difficult to salvage later on.

Emotional calibration is the most prominent challenge during this developmental phase. AI-generated characters often perform well in static shots, but tend to appear stiff when it comes to dynamic expressions and subtle emotional shifts. The creative team behind Sanxingdui: Apocalypse of the Future candidly admitted that the greatest difficulty in AI production lies in 'filming people'-the rendering of dialogue and micro-expressions remains a technical bottleneck, and future efforts must focus on enhancing micro-expressions on characters' faces [13]. Audience feedback from the viewer's perspective corroborates this: some netizens described the performances in Hero as "natural and refreshing", whilst some contemporaneous fully AI-generated short dramas were criticised for their stiff expressions [3]. Given the same technical

conditions but differing levels of emotional expressiveness, the disparity clearly lies not in the model parameters, but in whether the creators have carried out additional, meticulous calibration of emotional expression.

In the development stage, the relationship between people and AI began to change little by little. Developers are no longer just giving instructions unilaterally. On the contrary, I found something valuable from the feedback from AI and began to adjust my way accordingly. The cooperation between people and AI has changed from "unilateral instruction" to "two-way feedback". The judgment of beauty has also changed from "correction" to "harmony"-not only to correct the mistakes of the machine, but to find a balance acceptable to both sides through constant communication [14].

4.3 Maturity Phase: Human-Machine Collaboration Led by Aesthetic Judgement

The mature stage is the stage when short plays made with AI enter the industrial standardization production. A representative example is Tencent's Spirit Detective. There are 46 episodes of the play, with a total broadcast time of more than 100 minutes. The production cycle is almost halved, and the overall cost is reduced by about 70%. This marks the change from "technical experiment" to "industrial scale mass production". Table 5 shows the representative data and coding keywords of the sample works in the mature stage.

Table 5. Representative Data and Keyword Extraction for Sample Works from the Maturity Phase

Feature Dimensions	Work	Compilation of Representative Data	Keyword Extraction
Editing Pacing	Spirit Detective	"Pacing and narrative tension have actually been enhanced"	Long-form narrative, pacing
Editing Pacing	Spirit Detective	"Production time has been cut by nearly half, whilst overall costs have fallen by around 70 per cent"	Efficiency improvements, standardisation

As can be seen from Table 5, editing rhythm has become a core element in the mature phase. Spirit Detective, a feature-length work exceeding 100 minutes, was reported to have "actually seen an improvement in its pacing and narrative tension"-this use of "actually" is noteworthy, as conventional wisdom suggests that a longer runtime tends to lead to a looser pace. The difficulty of maintaining pacing in a long-form narrative lies precisely in the fact that it no longer tests the quality of individual scenes, but rather the control over the overall narrative arc: where to plant the climax, where to lay the groundwork for the build-up, and how to design the audience's emotional arc. These judgements cannot be broken down into individual shots for separate handling; they must be considered from a holistic perspective.

Overall aesthetic control has become the dominant skill in this mature phase. At this stage, creators are no longer confined to the production and selection of individual shots, but instead exercise control at a macro level-focusing on the overall narrative flow, emotional fluctuations and the audience experience. The scaling up of production teams, the maturation of technical platforms and the stabilisation of audience expectations collectively constitute the industry ecosystem of this phase. The production cycle for Spirit Detective was cut by nearly half, whilst overall costs fell by approximately 70 per cent. The significance of this lies not merely in improved efficiency-such efficiency means creators are no longer overwhelmed by technical details, leaving them with more energy to refine the content itself.

At this stage, aesthetic judgement is no longer merely a tool for 'remedying' technical shortcomings, but a core capability that proactively guides the direction of creation. The relationship between humans and machines has evolved from 'adjustment' to 'collaboration': machines handle the tasks they excel at, whilst humans focus on what they are best suited to do; the boundaries between the two have become increasingly clear, and they no longer hinder one another.

4.4 Cross-Case Comparison and Stages of Evolution

Based on the above analysis, the manifestation of aesthetic judgement in the creation of AI-generated short dramas follows a clear evolutionary trajectory across different developmental stages.

During the exploratory phase, aesthetic judgement primarily manifested as trial-and-error exploration in topic selection, conceptualisation

and prompt design. Creator must decide which topics are suitable to be expressed in AI and which prompt will produce the desired results. At this stage, the output quality of AI is unstable, and aesthetic judgment is a means to "correct the route". The relationship between man and machine is human-led, and AI plays an auxiliary and instrumental role.

In the development stage, it is mainly to choose raw materials and adjust feelings. Although the ability to generate AI has become better, the "rigidity" of the character's emotional expression is still a big problem. Creator must choose the materials that meet the aesthetic standards from many generated results, adjust the details, and enhance the emotional strength of the role. At this stage, aesthetic judgment plays a role as the ability of "dialogue", and makes many improvements while constantly communicating with AI. The relationship between people and AI has entered a two-way feedback stage.

In the mature period, the adjustment of editing rhythm and overall aesthetic feeling is the center of creation. The technical problems have been solved, and the creative process has become a fixed practice, so creators can use AI tools more easily. At this stage, the judgment of beauty is the work of "adjustment"-managing the overall rhythm, integrating various elements and unifying the works. The relationship between man and machine tends to be cooperative.

These three stages indicate the path from "correction" to "dialogue" and finally "dominance". The role of man has gradually changed from a person engaged in technical work to a leader of beauty, and aesthetic judgment has changed from passive to active guidance.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

5.1 Summary of Results

Based on the theory of relational authorship, with aesthetic judgement as the analysis center, this paper will build a five-dimensional model to analyze the judgment of people when making short plays with AI generated by virtual human. We will investigate a large number of case, sort out and explain how assets appear in different stages of development [4]. The results show that the aesthetic judgement in the production of short plays made by AI is not a vague thing, but a collection of forces composed of five parts. These five parts are topic selection and idea making, prompt design, material selection, mood adjustment and editing rhythm. When the creation changes from the trial stage to the mature stage, the center of these parts will change.

Especially in the search and production stage, aesthetic judgement mainly appears in the form of intuitive judgment when choosing themes and summarizing the ideas of works. In addition, sometimes you will repeatedly fail or correct when making prompt. The most difficult thing for producers is how to make AI "understand" its own aesthetic intention. aesthetic judgement mainly plays a role as "repairing power". In the progress stage of the work, selecting the material and adjusting the mood become the central elements. The producer must choose from many results given by AI and carefully adjust the expression of the character's mood. At this time, aesthetic judgement mainly acts as "the power of dialogue". In the completion stage, focusing on the editing rhythm and the overall aesthetic adjustment, the producers shifted their focus from one image to the adjustment of the whole story rhythm. At this time, aesthetic judgement mainly acts as "the power of adjustment". In these three stages, from "healing power" to "dialogue power" and finally to "pulling power", a person's role changes from the person who operates technology to the leader of aesthetic little by little.

5.2 Theoretical Discussion

The above findings reveal the phased evolutionary patterns of aesthetic judgement in the creation of AI-simulated short dramas; it is necessary to compare these with existing literature to elucidate the theoretical contributions of this study.

Firstly, this study finds that human decision-making is not a vague 'final say', but rather a cluster of capabilities comprising multiple observable dimensions. This finding addresses a gap in Ostad and Șerban's (2025) theory of relational authorship [4]. Whilst Ostad and Șerban correctly established human decision-making as one of the three pillars of AI creation, they did not elaborate further on its internal structure. By decomposing 'human decision-making' into five dimensions-topic selection and conceptualisation, prompt design, material screening, emotional calibration and editing rhythm-this study provides a meso-level, operational conceptual tool for this theory. This corroborates Sun and Gualeni's (2025) assessment that the role of AI lies 'between that of a puppet and an actor'-where machines are responsible for generating

possibilities, whilst humans are responsible for making choices, and the quality of those choices depends precisely on the operation of aesthetic judgement across these various dimensions [5].

Secondly, this study finds that the focus of aesthetic judgement shifts as the creative process progresses; this dynamic perspective has received little attention in the existing literature. Gong Xiaoliang and Ma Yuchao (2024) emphasised the irreplaceable nature of human emotional perception, whilst Zhou Wen and Zhao Tian (2025) categorised the evolutionary stages of AI virtual characters from a history of technology perspective; however, neither explored whether human capabilities themselves are also undergoing phased changes [6,7]. The findings of this study indicate that the relationship between creators and AI is not static, but rather evolves from an early phase of 'correction' towards a later phase of 'collaboration'. This is a context supplement that conforms to the big concept of "human-machine relationship". The true face of this relationship varies according to the producer's technical environment, accumulated experience and production purpose, and cannot be generalized.

In addition, in terms of emotional regulation, this study found that each kind of short drama produced by AI has different requirements for aesthetic judgement. In the culture-centered works, efforts are made to adjust the cultural atmosphere. In emotional-centered works, we are committed to protecting the authenticity of feelings. In the imagination-centered works, I am committed to freely expanding the connection between imagination and balanced speech. From this initial classification, it can be seen that aesthetic judgement is not equally applicable to all AI short drama, and there will be obviously different usages according to the cultural orientation and story type of the works. This provides an analytical basis for further research to deepen the understanding of human-machine relationships from the perspective of classification.

In addition, the results of this study are helpful to explain the structure of "uncanny valley effect" seen in short plays generated by AI with the role of humanoid. If the creator relies too much on AI generation and ignores the careful modification of emotional adjustment, the work will easily give people a feeling of "like a person but without a heart". Comments made by the audience many times, such as "empty eyes" and "stiff expressions", basically indicate that the aesthetic judgement is not enough in the part of emotional adjustment [3,15,16]. This is not only an indirect confirmation that emotional adjustment is one of the important cores of assistants, but also shows that even if technical efficiency is improved, the shortcomings of assistants cannot be made up at will. In short, through consultation with previous studies, this study not only proves that aesthetic judgement plays a central role in the production of AI-generated short plays with humanized roles, but also understands how the five elements will produce results in different forms at different growth stages. We have deepened our understanding of the problem of "where is the value of human beings" in the joint work of human and machines, and provided new experimental evidence for the wider use of relational authorship theory in the field of AI-generated short plays [4,17].

5.3 Limitations of the Study and Future Prospects

This study analyzes the special meaning and structure of human decision-making when making AI-simulated short dramas in an orderly way from the perspective of auxiliary artifacts. Through a large number of case study, we find that in exploratory phase, developmental phase and Maturity Phase, the aesthetic judgement appears in different forms. The main findings in these five stages are as follows: In exploratory phase, authorization mainly appears in trial-and-error attempts in topic selection and prompt design; In the developmental phase, the emphasis will shift to material screening and emotional calibration; In mature phase, the rhythm of editing and the overall aesthetic control are very important. These three stages are from "correction" to "dialogue" and finally "leadership", which provides a meso-level conceptual tool for understanding the irreplaceability of humans in human-machine collaboration.

This study has its limits. First, this study relies on creative journal, interviews, media reports and other auxiliary materials published by creators. Because there is no in-depth interview or participant observation, the details of unexpected judgments that have not been recorded in the creative process may be ignored. In the future research, we can consider adding in-depth interviews with creator and creative experiments to grasp the structure of asset management in a

form closer to the field situation. Secondly, the analysis of audience's comments on this study is exploratory and has not undergone rigorous quantitative testing. Therefore, it is not yet possible to establish a definite causal relationship between creators' identification and audience reception. Future research will combine large-scale questionnaire survey and control experiments to further confirm that aesthetic judgement will become a good experience for audience. In addition, the analysis framework of this study is based on four case study. Due to the small number of samples and the uneven amount of published data in four cases, it may affect the equality of information base of cross-stage comparison. Moreover, the selected cases all come from the famous platform and professional production team. Therefore, the information of grassroots creative practice conducted by small and medium-sized creator and ordinary users using AI tools is not enough. In the future research, we will increase the number of case study, introduce in-depth interview into creator, conduct experimental research, and further investigate the causal relationship between the quality of aesthetic judgement and creative works. Moreover, this paper mainly focuses on the Esthetic Judgment of creator. In the following research, we will discuss the feedback effect of Esthetic Judgment of audience on creative process, as well as people and machine [18].

References

[1] Si R, Wang F Y. Industrial form, development dilemma and future path of China's micro-short dramas [J]. Contemporary Cinema, 2024, (1): 12–19.

[2] DataEye Research Institute. January 2026 Top 100 Comic Drama List [R]. DataEye-ADX Industry Edition, 2026.

[3] Chen X P. An aesthetic interpretation of the 'uncanny valley effect': From robots to AI digital humans [J]. Literature & Art Studies, 2024, (8): 142–151.

[4] Ostad A, Șerban A C. Artificial aesthetics: Rethinking authorship, aesthetics, and affect in AI-generated cinema [J]. Journal of Film and Media Studies, 2025, 37(2): 45–68.

[5] Sun Y, Gualeni S. Between puppet and actor: Reframing authorship in this age of AI agents [J]. Computers and Composition, 2025, 76: 101789.

[6] Gong X L, Ma Y C. Intelligence and humanity: A re-examination of virtual human roles in human–machine communication [J]. Youth Journalist, 2024, (12): 56–58.

[7] Zhou W, Zhao T. Creation of film and television virtual characters based on AI technology: From digital simulation to intelligent co-creation [J]. Motion Picture & Video Technology, 2025, (3): 23–29.

[8] Cao D. Hyperreal ethical risks and governance approaches for AI micro-short dramas in the context of new popular literature [J]. Contemporary TV, 2025, (4): 89–94.

[9] Li D. Creative logic and practical reflection of CMG's AI micro-short dramas from the perspective of media affordance [J]. TV Research, 2025, (5): 45–49.

[10] Tichy G. Clusters: Less dispensable and more risky than ever [M]//Steiner M. Clusters and Regional Specialisation. London: Pion Limited, 1998: 226–238.

[11] Xianren Yikun [username]. (2024). Creative notes on Mirror of Mountains and Seas: Cutting Through the Waves [EB/OL]. Kuaishou Platform. Retrieved July 10, 2026, from https://www.kuaishou.com.

[12] Peng L. Content production in the era of human-machine symbiosis: New subjects, new relations and new logic [J]. Journalism & Writing, 2023, (6): 5–15.

[13] Quji Xiaojang. Exclusive interview with the creative team of Sanxingdui: Apocalypse of the Future [EB/OL]. The Cover, 2024 [10 July 2026]. https://www.thecover.cn.

[14] Chen C F, Song J G. Mechanism reconstruction and ethical reflection of human-machine collaborative content production in the AIGC era [J]. Journalism & Communication, 2024, (3): 5–24.

[15] Colton S, Wiggins G A. Computational creativity: The final frontier? [C]//Proceedings of the 20th European Conference on Artificial Intelligence. Montpellier: ECAI, 2012: 21–26.

[16] Mori M. The uncanny valley [J]. Energy, 1970, 7(4): 33–35.

[17] Li Y. Construction logic and aesthetic implication of relational authorship in digital art [J]. Theoretical Studies in Literature and Art, 2024, (2): 178–187.

[18] National Radio and Television Administration. Guiding Opinions on Promoting the High-Quality Development of Micro-Short Dramas [EB/OL]. 2024 [10 July 2026]. https://www.nrta.gov.cn.