

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF 'THE DARK KNIGHT' AND 'INFERNAL AFFAIRS' REVIEWS

Group E project Report

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Introduction

The aim of this study is the thematic changes and emotional trends of film criticism in a certain period of time, so 2001-2010 is selected as the film release interval. Within this interval, this study considers combining the awards won by films and the ratings of platform viewers, which respectively represent the recognition of films in the industry and the views and preferences of general audiences on films. After screening, two films, *The Dark Knight* and *Infernal Affairs*, are selected as research objects. Among them, *The Dark Knight* was the film with the highest rating on imdb platform among all the films that won various awards of the Academy Awards during this period, and *Infernal Affairs* was the film with the highest rating on Douban platform among all the films that won various awards of the Hong Kong Film Awards.

Methodology

This study collects reviews of *The Dark Knight* on two platforms from 2008 to 2023, reviews on IMDB from 2002 to 2023, and reviews on Douban from 2005 to 2023 (Douban is a platform established in 2005). A total of 4 corpora (due to commercial reasons, Douban only shows 6w comments randomly), and after data cleaning, the files are divided into multiple txt files by year, and uploaded to voyant for semantic analysis.

Voyant Tools is a web-based text reading and analysis environment.

1.Three main findings about the Dark Knight movie

1.1Oscar Nominations: Impact on English vs. Chinese Film Discourse

Distinctive words (compared to the rest of the corpus):

1. 2008: ticket (46), le (29), midnight (65), blah (46), nomination (140).
2. 2009: thuck (6), thith (5), crassus (5), bla (5), roman (6).
3. 2010: welsh (6), randy (4), renewed (4), dominatrix (3), injured (4).
4. 2011: pg13 (10), give's (3), america.are (3), uhm (2), knots (2).
5. 2012: their4 (16), kitted (16), 000000 (5), 0000 (4), bats (19).
6. 2013: na (15), lorem (8), ipsum (8), linesi (6), zizek (6).
7. 2014: income (5), leisure (3), der (4), reeling (3), epoch (3).
8. 2015: lurk (8), lithuanian (6), shoe (7), tbb (4), cobbler (4).
9. 2016: película (17), delaware (16), hall (55), verla (8), mucha (8).
10. 2017: reprized (4), medieval (6), tdkr (7), great.there (2), filmin (2).
11. Next 6 of 6 remaining

<div> <div>Contexts</div> <div>Bubblelines</div> <div>Collocates</div> <div>?</div> </div>				
Document	Left	Term	Right	
3] comme...	又悲怆都没能	提...	81届奥斯卡的BP	
3] comme...	评选中获得多项	提...	, 并最终获得最佳音效	
3] comme...	一个奥斯卡最佳影片的	提...	2016 小丑神表演 2016	
3] comme...	英年早逝 这部连个奥斯卡	提...	都没有我是不服	
3] comme...	希斯莱杰如果	提...	最佳男主角 (而非	
3] comme...	Dent也是至少可以	提...	最佳男配的表现	
3] comme...	不要考验人性....., 2019 黑豹	提...	最佳影片, 是对这部	
3] comme...	送上一个最佳影片	提...	? (空间补标46。), 2019	
3] comme...	音效、剪辑、特效和化妆	提...	。故事编的很牵	
3] comme...	英片, 奥斯卡只给	提...	就离谱。漫威你	
3] comme...	结合居然没拿到	提...	, 可见奥斯卡貌似庄重实	
3] comme...	官方教科书。 Oscar 最佳摄影	提...	, 2023 4.5, 2023 看	

提名* X



12 context

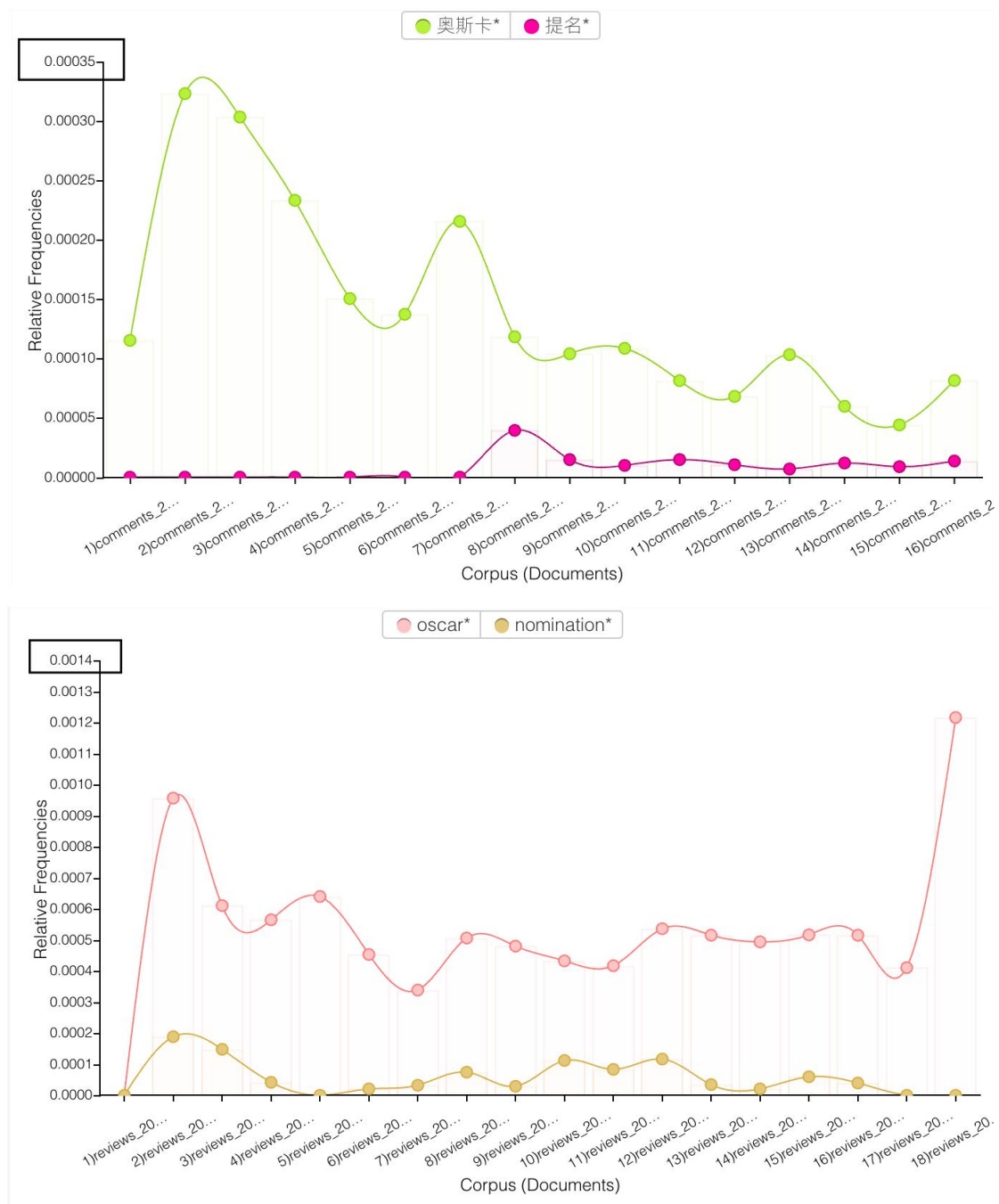


expand



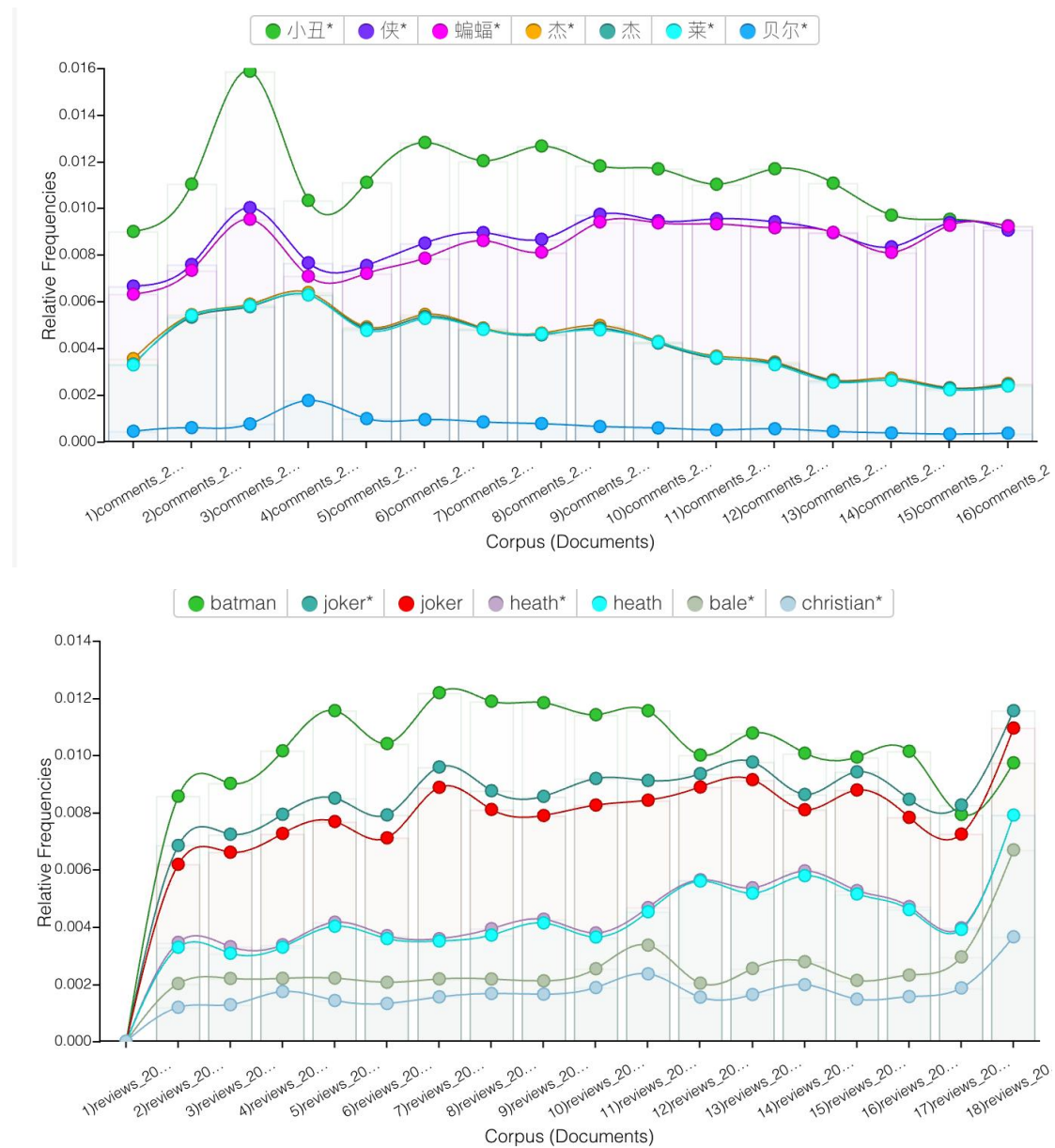
Scale





The nomination appeared 140 times in imdb reviews in 2008. But the keyword "nomination" appeared only 12 times in the larger Douban review corpus, reflecting the fact that Oscar nominations have a far greater impact on the English-speaking world than the Chinese-speaking world.

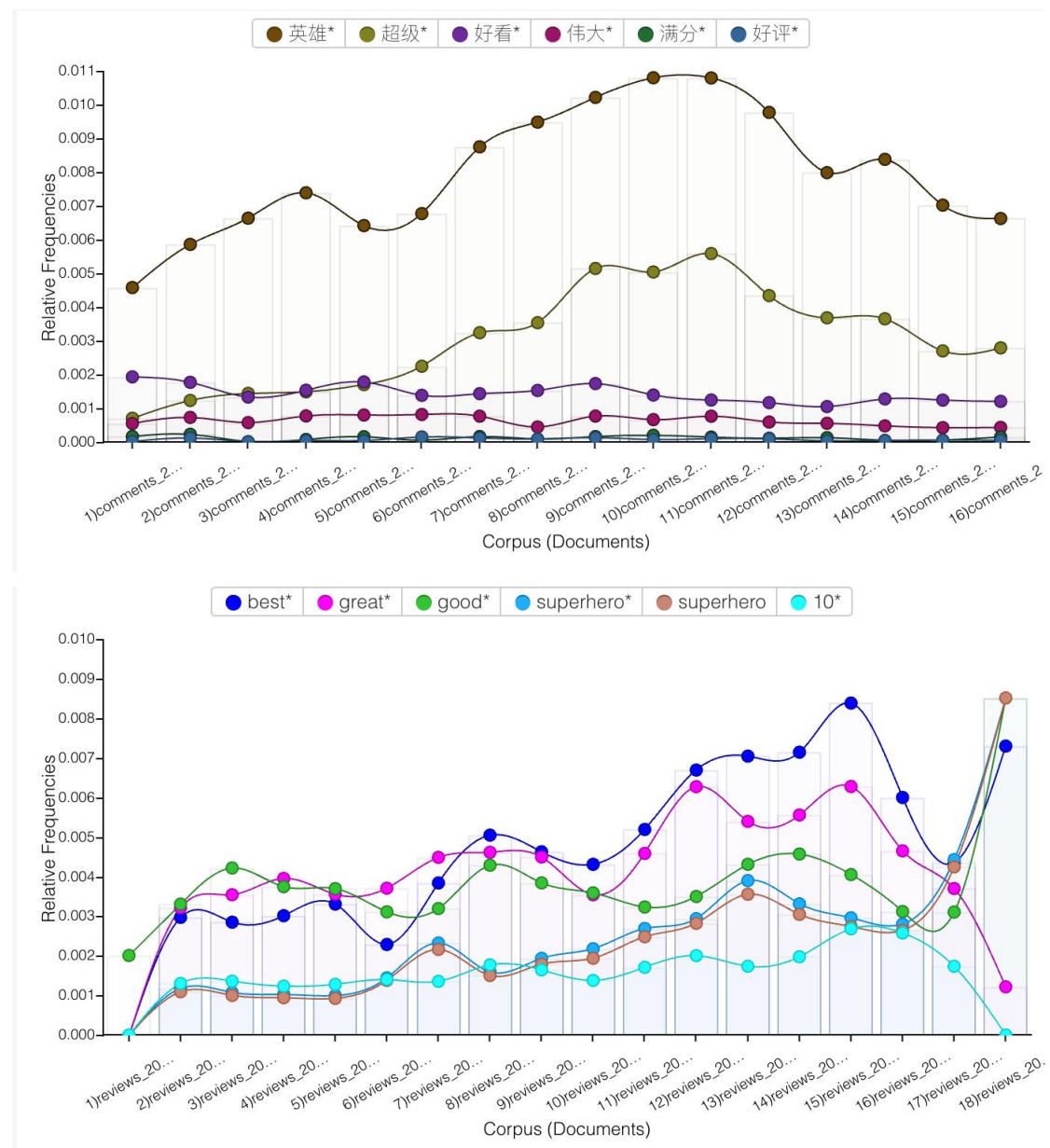
1.2 Audience focus: Comments about the character



On imdb, the frequency of mentions of Batman and joker is basically positive, reflecting that the relationship between the two protagonists has been the focus of interest of audiences and critics since the release of the movie. In addition, on imdb, Batman, the protagonist of the movie, appears more frequently than Joker, the supporting actor. But Ledger, who plays the Joker, appears more frequently in comments than bale, who plays Batman, reflecting Ledger's more discussed and influential performance

The Joker appears more frequently on Douban than Batman, reflecting that Chinese audiences also pay more attention to Ledger's performance and are more enthusiastic about discussing the supporting Joker than the main character Batman.

1.3 Continued Acclaim: Sustained Growth in Movie Reputation



From 2008 to 2023, the frequency of "Ledger" and "performance" in reviews of the movie "Dark Knight" on imdb platform showed an upward trend, and the

changing trends were basically related. It can be inferred that Ledger's performance as the clown has gained more and more attention from moviegoers over time. The frequency of "Ledger" reached a high point in 17-21, perhaps related to the discussion triggered by the news related to the movie "Joker" released in 2019, and the news related to the new Joker ip allowed more people to review and affirm Ledger's classic character.

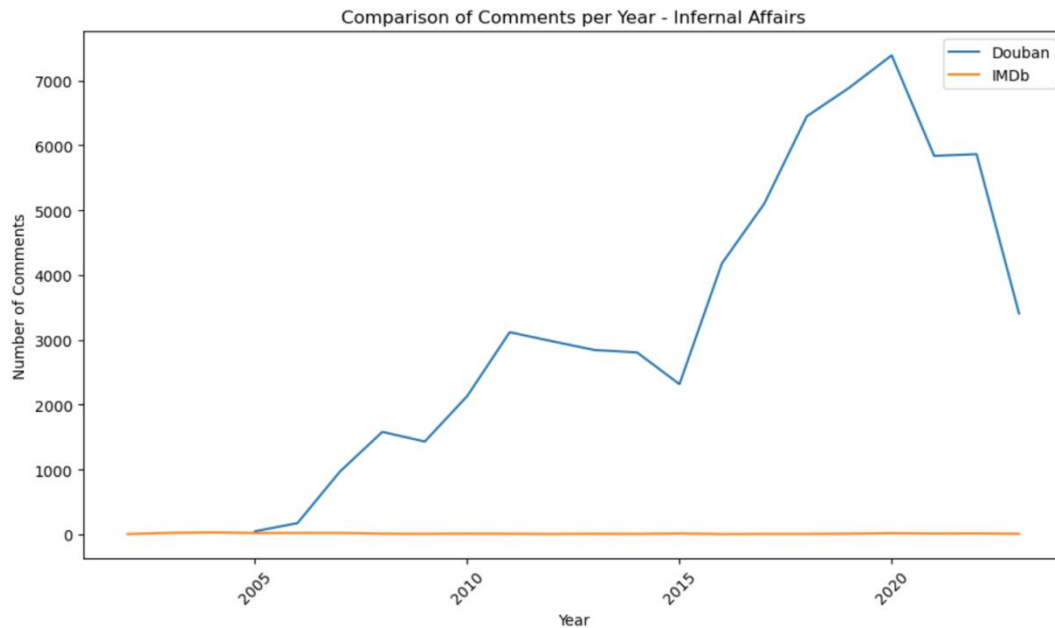
In addition, the frequency of 2016-2018superhero increased significantly a few years after the movie was released. Combined with the Google trend of the rise of the keyword superhero, it reflects that audiences more frequently evaluated the Dark Knight and superhero films together during this period

From 2018 to 2022, keywords such as "best", "great" and "10.0" appeared most frequently. Looking at the collocate words of "best" in movie reviews from 2018 to 2022, we can see that "best" is frequently associated with superhero. In the same period, the decline of superhero in Google trend can be inferred that it is related to the end of the second phase of Marvel Superhero Universe, which is the most influential in this period, and the decline in discussion of Superhero movies. It can be inferred that moviegoers have a higher evaluation of the Dark Knight after experiencing the certain stage of superhero movie development, compared with Superhero movies in a certain period. The film's positive word-of-mouth spread further.

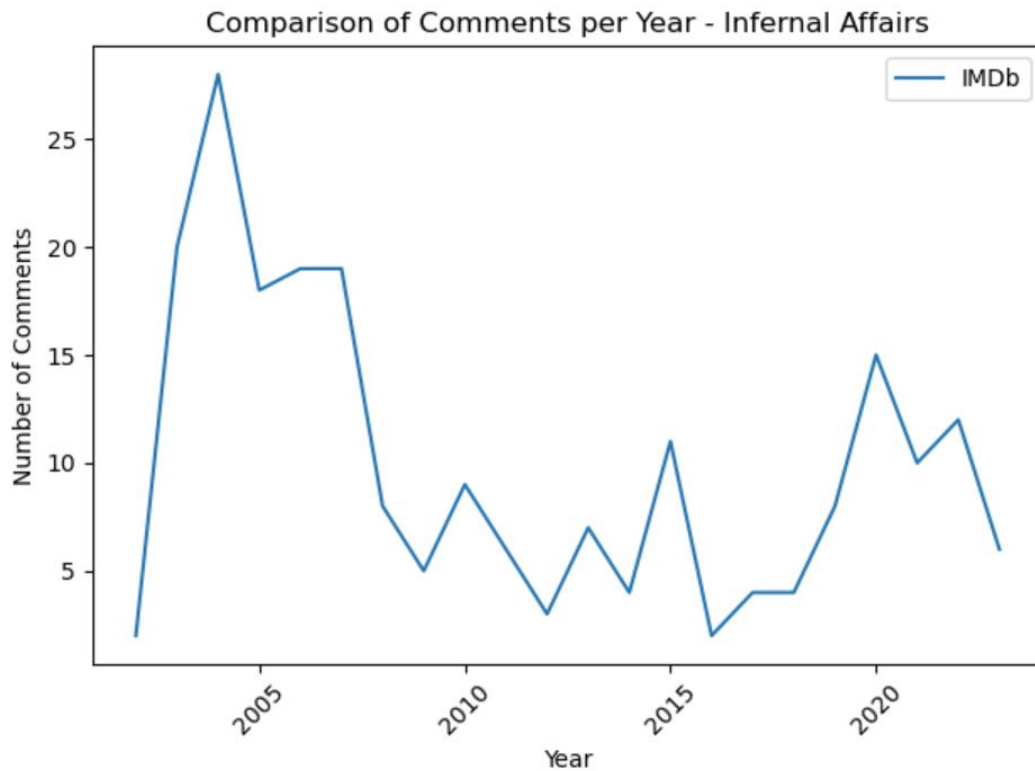
Douban platform's evaluation of the Dark Knight has not fluctuated greatly, and the film has maintained a certain stable reputation.

2.Main findings about the Infernal Affairs movie

2.1 Analysis from the perspective of year changes



It can be observed that the comments on 'Infernal Affairs' on Douban show a gradually increasing trend, indicating sustained interest from the Chinese audience in this excellent work. The number of comments suddenly decreases after 2020, which could be due to a decline in audience interest in the movie. However, since Douban only randomly displays 60,000 out of 220,000 comments, this phenomenon might also be because the comments posted later were not showcased by Douban. Analyzing this data may require a comparative analysis with the changing trends in the number of comments for other movies.

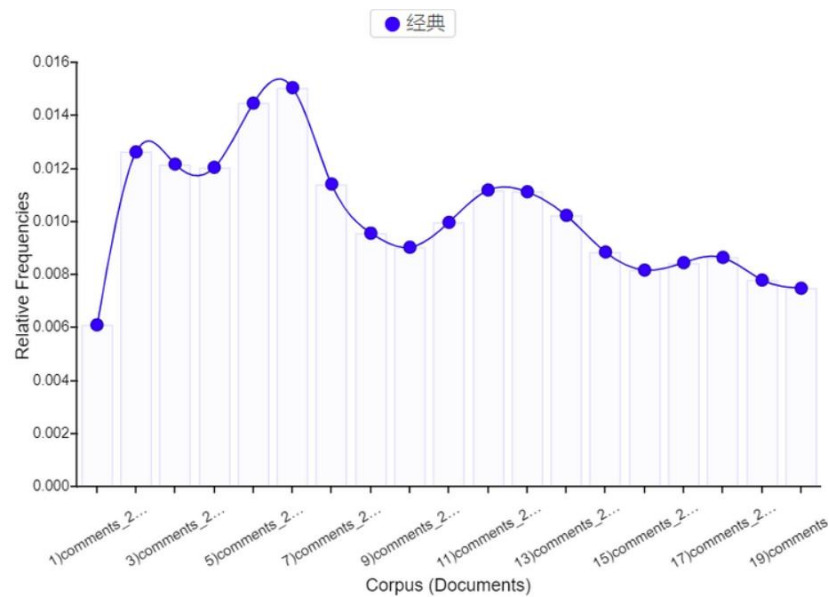


The IMDb reviews of *Infernal Affairs* is far more less than Douban, so it's challenging to observe the trend in the comparison chart. We created a visualization for IMDb comments. The chart above shows that the number of comments for '*Infernal Affairs*' peaked in its second year of release and rapidly declined afterward. This could be because, as a Chinese film, '*Infernal Affairs*' did not have a large-scale theatrical release in the English-speaking market, and many English-speaking viewers watched the film through online channels. The fluctuation in comment numbers aligns with the general trend of changes in movie comment numbers. In the following decades, although there were fluctuations in comment numbers, the small sample size prevents us from drawing conclusions about changes in market attention.

After importing the data into Voyant, a word cloud map will first appear.

From the first picture, it can be seen that the most frequent word is 'departed '. combined with the original review text. This is because "Infernal Affairs" was remade by Martin Scorsese in 2006 as "The Departed", and the latter has a wider international influence. This indicates that the main trend of film reviews is the cross comparison of the two versions, and audiences continue to compare and discuss the original and remake versions, This reflects the audience's comparative psychology when evaluating movies.

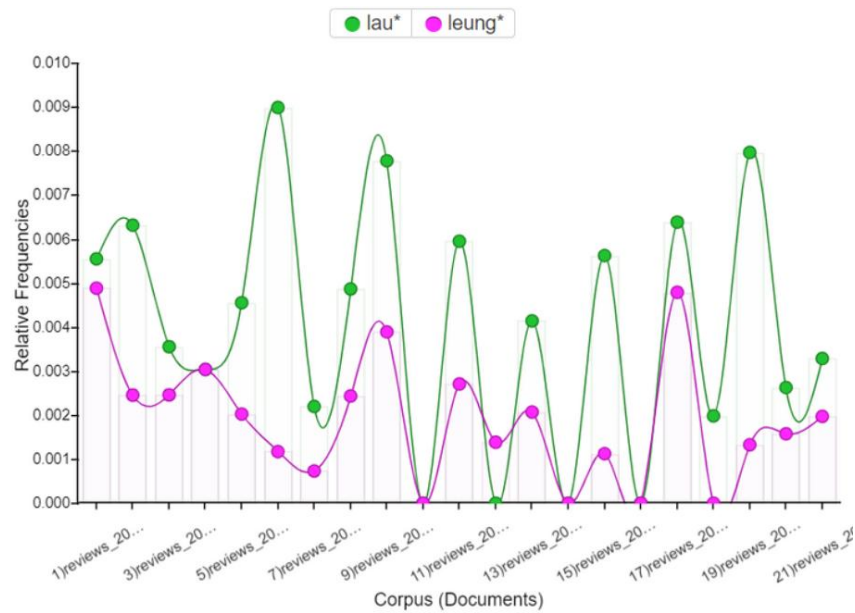
The second most frequently used word is "good". Based on the comment, before the remake version appeared in 2006, IMDB viewers held widespread praise for the original "Infernal Affairs" and believed that Hong Kong movies have a unique style. However, with the emergence of remakes, film reviews have become more diverse. This is because the remake may have brought different perspectives and styles, and audiences have begun to compare the two versions, triggering more disagreements and discussions. The diverse review trends show changes in the audience's evaluation standards for remakes and original works.



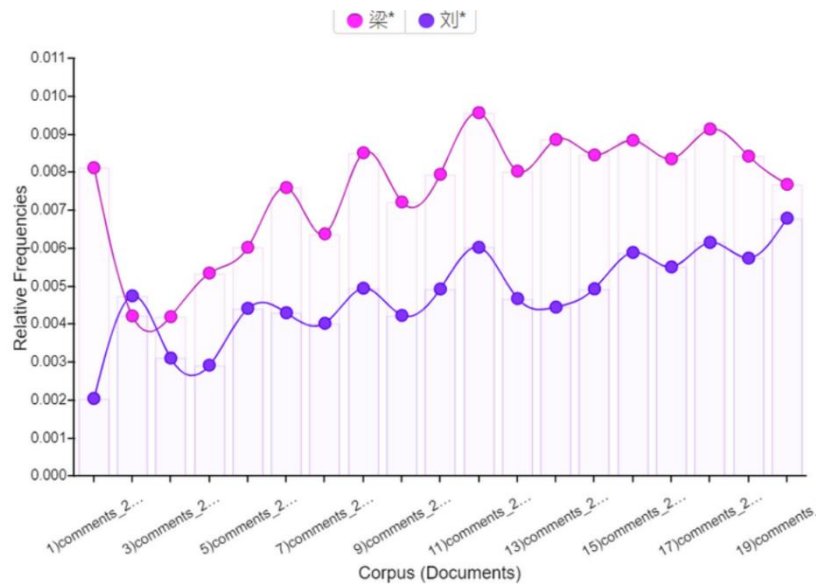
On the Chinese film review platform Douban, the most frequent word is "classic".

We found that contrary to IMDB, Chinese audiences do not pay much attention to the remake version. This word has basically maintained a stable and high frequency no matter how time changes. This means that The film has lasting influence and value in the minds of audiences. This trend shows the continued praise of the film by audiences, who believe that it has extraordinary quality and value in terms of film genre, plot or performance, and is recognized as an enduring classic.

2.4 Analysis from the perspective of actors and roles



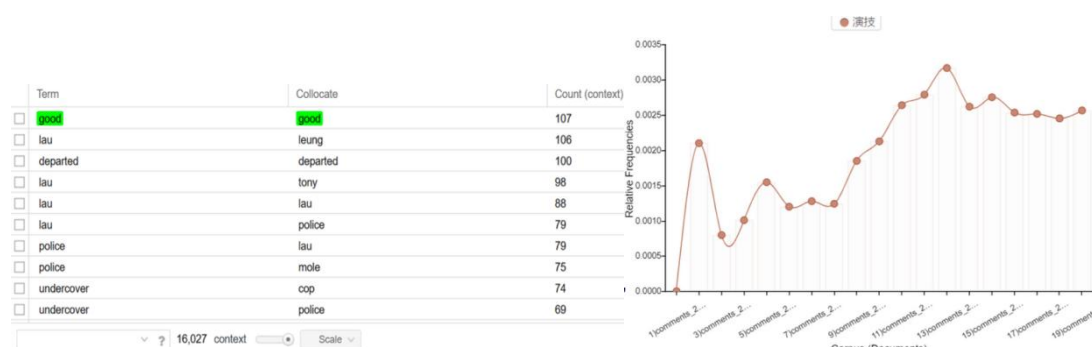
The number of IMDB audience comments discussing actor Andy Lau from 2002 to 2023 has basically been higher than the number of comments discussing Tony Leung. The audience is more inclined to discuss the role played by Andy Lau. He made a deeper impression.



Douban viewers are more interested in discussing Tony Leung than Andy Lau. They feel that Liang's acting skills are better because Chinese audiences are more familiar with the past acting skills and works of the two actors. The audience has certain stereotypes about them, which also leads to "transition difficulties" when

actors try new roles. This shows that audiences from different cultural backgrounds may have different comment trends due to differences in personal preferences, aesthetics, and values.

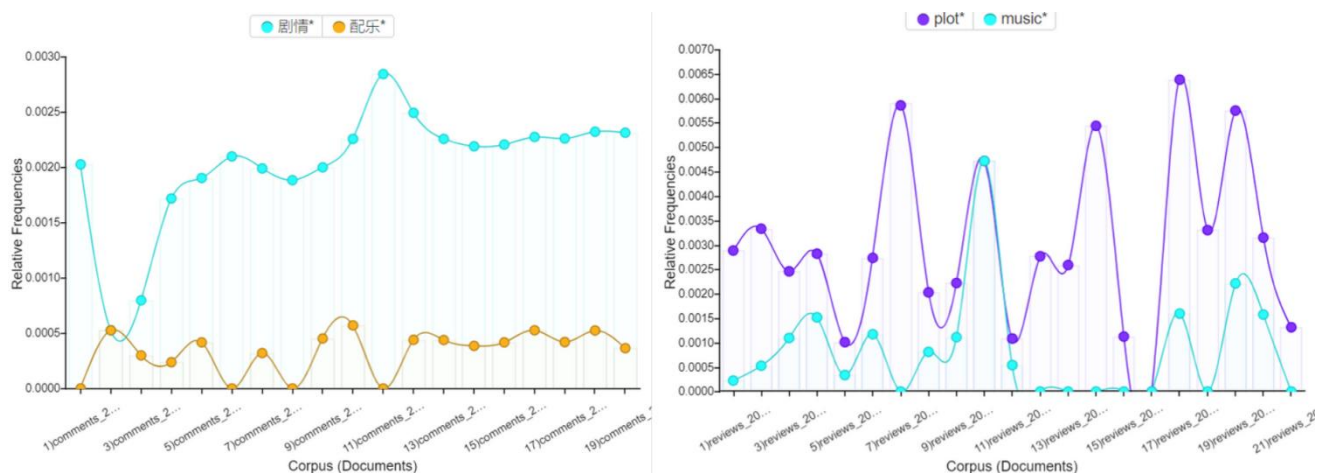
2.5 Analyze from the focus of comments



From 2002 to 2023, it can be seen that most of the audience comments on IMDB are discussing the plot of the movie itself, based on the collocations of some words that appeared more frequently. Based on the original comments, they tend to comment more on the storyline, filming techniques, narrative structure of the movie itself, which reflects the preferences of IMDB audiences for the storytelling and entertainment aspects of the movie. They are more inclined to evaluate a movie through its plot and production. Because these factors are easier for them to understand and evaluate, and also because they have relatively little understanding of Chinese movies, directors, and actors.

On the contrary, for the Chinese film review platform Douban, we found that comments tend to discuss more about the actor's acting skills may better determine their level of love for the movie.

2.6 Analysis from the perspective of audience's film aesthetic taste



It can be seen that compared to the two platforms, the comments on Douban have always had lower discussions on movie plot and music than those on IMDB, indicating that audiences from different cultural backgrounds have different aesthetic tastes. But, the number of comments on Douban discussing the plot of movies has been increasing year by year since 2006, reflecting the increasing interest of audiences in in-depth analysis of movies.

2.7 Analysis based on the overall number of comments

This corpus has 19 documents with 1,849,289 total words and 45,147 unique word forms.

This corpus has 22 documents with 52,765 total words and 6,210 unique word forms.

Although the time span of the IMDB comments we crawled is larger than that of Douban comments, the number of comments on Douban is significantly higher than that on IMDB. This may be due to the fact that audiences within the English-speaking world can use more film review platforms, For example, "Rotten Tomatoes", "Metacritic", etc. It may also because the IMDB platform is not suitable for

audiences who are not good at or accustomed to using English. Or in some countries or regions, there may be access restrictions on international websites such as IMDb, making localized platforms such as Douban more popular.

The limitations of Voyant

Through analysis, we believe that Voyant has two main limitations and flaws. Since the comments we captured include Chinese comments, we discover Voyant has certain limitations in the recognition of Chinese corpus and cannot accurately identify Chinese words or morphemes. And Metaphors or specific expressions used in certain cultures may be misunderstood or cannot be correctly explained by Voyant.

Conclusion

Based on the review analysis of the two movies on two different platforms, the following points can be seen:

- ① The audience is more inclined to discuss and pay attention to villainous characters, and they have a higher interest and attention to the portrayal and performance of villainous characters in movies.
- ② Viewers from different cultural backgrounds pay more attention to familiar actors, whether in IMDb or Douban. Viewers are more inclined to discuss and appreciate the performances and acting skills of familiar actors, which reflects the trend of audiences paying more attention to and supporting familiar actors.
- ③ The development of new IP will drive discussions on the original film, and

comments will show a more diverse trend. Over time, audiences will begin to compare the original and remade versions. The evaluation criteria for new and original works have changed in different time periods, and audiences have different perspectives and styles of thinking about the film.

④ The audience has different aesthetic preferences and comments due to different cultural backgrounds. Chinese audiences tend to pay less attention to the plot, while Audiences within the English-speaking world not only focus on the plot but also pay attention to moral issues.

⑤ Although the above two movies have different themes, they have interconnectivity and similarity, both of which have high ratings on the platform and are loved by audiences. This is because they both demonstrate the complexity and conflict of human nature, and the construction of characters is very in-depth, with suspense and action scenes as selling poin Which will trigger more thinking from the audience.