

Survival, Alienation and Destruction: War Imagination in Science Fiction Movies

Yongping Fu*

*Institute of Languages and Cultures, Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, No.7989
Wai Qingsong Road, Shanghai, China*

Keywords: Science fiction movies, Nature, Science and technology, Alien civilization

Abstract: Science fiction movies are an effective way for audiences to pay attention to social phenomena and participate in the development of events and reflect deeply. This value is deeply expressed in the imagination about the origin of war. This kind of imagination depicts war as an important phenomenon in the development process of human society, and strives to form a common understanding of war among different countries and groups. The content of the film focuses on the conflict and transformation between human beings and nature, the war and transformation between human beings and the development of science and technology, and the conflict between human civilizations and alien civilizations. They are described in the context of trans-generation, trans-species and trans-celestial bodies, so as to inspire human beings to understand the nature and consequences of war.

1. Introduction

War is a state of conflict between different countries, regimes or groups, and its occurrence is often the result of deliberate consideration by human beings. In the beginning of Clausewitz's *On War*, when discussing the nature of war, he pointed out that war is a violent act that forces the other side to obey our will. War is not an isolated social phenomenon. Every war has its own characteristics, with different forms and means. Large-scale war will cause devastating disasters to the whole human race, and human civilization may be destroyed in the war. As an art category, the description and attention of war scenes in science fiction movies give people an intuitive and rapid experience and shock. This paper interprets the war scenes and war thoughts in science fiction movies from three aspects: the war between human beings and nature, the war between human beings and the development of science and technology, and the war between human beings and alien civilizations, which is not only beneficial to the creation and appreciation of the content of science fiction movies, but also provides an ideological source for the development of future society.

2. Survival: the Battle between Human Beings and Nature

The earth is a beautiful home for human beings. Human beings are living and evolving in the changes of the earth's environment. The earth presents a diversified evolution of species, and human beings are gradually becoming stronger and stronger in adaptation. This mutual influence becomes

more and more prominent with the enhancement of human's ability to control the environment.

The environmental changes of the earth mainly come from two aspects. On the one hand, it is the change of the earth environment naturally caused by climate or meteorological changes, which may occur periodically, such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, snowstorms, thunderstorms, landslides, volcanoes, cold waves, bloody collapses, tsunamis, sandstorms and so on. Such environmental deterioration is an objective factor that threatens the survival and development of human beings, and has a profound impact on the survival and development of human beings. On the other hand, environmental deterioration is caused by human production and living activities. A certain spatial range of human activities is an ecosystem, in which both organisms and environment have certain stability, that is, ecological balance. Unreasonable development and utilization of natural resources by human beings often unconsciously destroys this balance, causing a chain catastrophe reaction, which directly and indirectly leads to natural disasters such as floods, floods, acid rain, drought, frost, snowstorms, sandstorms, storm surges, seawater intrusion, avalanches, landslides, debris flows and land subsidence.

Environmental disasters will have serious adverse consequences, such as drinking water shortage, food shortage, destruction of living conditions, physical trauma and mental disorders. After the disaster, people are forced to use surface water, which may be polluted by the pollutants in the upstream human and animal excreta, human and animal corpses and collapsed buildings. After spreading, it will form a situation of large-scale epidemic of infectious diseases.[1]

The harmful effects of these two factors on the environment are gradually revealed in human society. In science fiction movies, it can be presented visually in a faster and stronger way, which gives people a visual and spiritual shock. The change of the natural environment makes the survival of human beings in jeopardy. The movie *Armageddon* depicts a large-scale meteorite shower, which is extremely destructive in meteorite shower. According to the photos returned by the space telescope, a giant meteorite is flying towards the earth and will hit the earth in 18 days. The head of NASA knows that meteorite shower is just a prelude, either the meteorite will destroy the earth or the meteorite will be destroyed. And the only way to save the earth is to land the spacecraft on the meteorite, and then let professionals drill an 800-meter-deep hole in it and put in a nuclear bomb to break the meteorite or change its course, otherwise all life on the earth will be destroyed.

Due to the lag of human environmental protection, it has brought serious environmental crisis and air pollution to the whole earth, resulting in greenhouse effect and serious environmental damage. This theme has been presented many times in science fiction movies. The movie *The Day After Tomorrow* depicts a terrible scene brought about by global warming. Due to the melting of icebergs in Greenland and the Arctic, a large amount of fresh water enters the North Atlantic, reducing its annual salinity, which leads to the complete termination of the Gulf Stream and even the global ocean thermohaline circulation. Therefore, the equatorial and low latitudes stopped transferring heat to the polar and high latitudes, resulting in a huge drop in temperature in these places and entering a new ice age. Similarly, in the movie "Future Water world", it is depicted that in 2500 AD, the rising water level due to the greenhouse effect submerged the human world in a vast ocean. People can only float on artificial islands to survive [2]. At that time, people's greatest wish was to find land. The film tells the story of a lonely sailor who came to a floating island to exchange a jar of mud for water and tomato seedlings. A little girl named Enola on the island, with a map on her back indicating the legendary land position, was chased by pirates. Sailor Mariner rescued Enola after a fierce fight with pirates, and proceeded to land according to the instructions of the subway map. In the movies, these pessimistic future pictures may be approaching reality step by step because of the existence and intensification of the greenhouse effect.

3. Alienation: the War Caused By Science and Technology

Science and technology is the common wealth of mankind and a powerful weapon for mankind to know and transform the world. The development of science and technology is changing with each passing day. With the progress of science and technology, human beings are more and more dependent on science and technology, and science and technology dominate human life more obviously, weakening people's own strength. After entering the 21st century, the speed of change in the world's scientific and technological circles has been improved unprecedentedly. New scientific development and new technological breakthroughs are constantly emerging. On the other hand, science and technology is a double-edged sword, and high technology is the ladder of human progress. The dawn of human hope will also bring many challenges to human society, which will bring disasters and misfortunes into the living space of human beings and become one of the important sources of modern human social risks.

3.1. The Technological War Caused by the Subversive Development of Artificial Intelligence Technology

Mankind is welcoming a revolution in artificial intelligence technology, which will fundamentally change our working methods and living conditions. In reality, artificial intelligence technology is developing rapidly, and has widely penetrated into all aspects of life. However, in science fiction movies, the development of artificial intelligence technology is more mature, from the role of human assistant tool to the strength to compete with human beings.

The technological progress of human beings has been limited by intelligence so far. As a scientist and science fiction writer, Vernor Steffen Vinge put forward the technical basis, which marked the moment when artificial intelligence triggered the technological progress that human beings could not understand. One day in the future, perhaps with the help of computers, artificial intelligence can change its own coding, self-improvement and self-programming, so that each generation of artificial intelligence is stronger than the previous generation. This evolution can be carried out many times on the basis of the original artificial intelligence made by human beings, until one day human beings will be unable to understand artificial intelligence and artificial intelligence will become unpredictable [3].

This kind of confrontation and war between the future development of human beings and artificial intelligence is depicted in various perspectives in science fiction movies. The film *I, Robot*, shows a battle for the rise of intelligent robots. The year 2035 has become the era of machines. As a slogan of robot companies, it not only refers to those articles for daily use and household appliances that have been highly developed and are full of mature technology, but also indicates those intelligent robots that have penetrated into human life. As the best production tool and human partner, robots are beginning to play an increasingly important role in various fields. Due to the limitations of the three well-known laws of robots, human beings are full of trust in these partners who can do all kinds of work without complaint, and many of them have even become an integral part of a family.

Robot Research Center has designed the control program for NS-5 advanced robots. They have learned to think independently and solved the control code by themselves. With the adoption of the technology of making robots by robots, robots rebelled against human beings and copied a large number of his followers. They are already completely independent groups, a high-intelligence mechanical group coexisting with human beings. In the end, robots were no longer satisfied with their existing living conditions, and openly rioted. They took to the streets to confront human beings, and a large-scale conflict and war broke out. Until the end of the film, no human beings could control the war. Instead, a messianic robot appeared, leading countless replication robots, returning

to the original program setting and actively stopping the confrontation with human beings.

In the story setting of the film *The Matrix*, human beings have already become the ruled party in the war. In the 22nd century, when the earth was ruled by robots, human beings used their own bodies to provide energy for robots. Humans live in a huge virtual world Matrix arranged by robots. Humans don't know the truth. Only a small number of people, for special reasons, realized the truth of the matter and decided to resist the rule of robots and escape from the matrix.

Therefore, while science and technology bring benefits to mankind, it will also bring various impacts to human society, which we should fully understand. Today, when the development of science and technology has become the irreplaceable motive force of human civilization, we should give full play to the positive role of science and technology, and at the same time guard against and overcome the negative consequences that science and technology may cause.

3.2. Technological War Caused by Gene Alienation

Genetic engineering technology is an important branch of the development of modern science and technology. Genetic engineering refers to adopting a method similar to engineering design at the level of genes (nucleotide sequences that can encode substances with certain biological functions), designing according to human needs, and then creating new biological products with certain new characteristics according to the design scheme [4]. Genetic engineering is to transform the original organism on the basis of genetic material, and the transformed organism will acquire some new genes according to its wishes, so that the organism can acquire some new genetic traits. Genetic engineering is carried out at the molecular level. Finally, in order to create new varieties that people need, it can break through the genetic barriers between species and surmount the incompatibility between species in a large span.

Genetic engineering is the manipulation of variation and evolution by human beings, and this manipulation must also contain frightening risks and harms. The emergence of these new traits may endanger the development of human society. This kind of worry is long-term and potential. It is difficult to manifest in a short time. In science fiction movies, this fear can be evolved into vivid characters, which can be displayed quickly and fully.

Genetic variation is an important type of application of genetic engineering technology. In biological genetics, variation refers to the difference between the offspring and parents of an organism, and the difference between offspring individuals. It is one of the attributes of biological organisms and can be divided into two categories: heritable variation and non-heritable variation. Non-heritable variation has nothing to do with evolution. It is caused by environmental changes and will not be passed on to future generations. Genetic variation is related to evolution due to the change of genetic material.

The characters portrayed in science fiction movies, such as Batman, Spider-Man, Hulk, the hero or villain in *X-Men*, are all mutants without exception. They have skills that ordinary people can't have, and other non-mutants are like a fragile porcelain jar in front of their abilities, which may break at any time in the face of wind and waves. Batman's strength, speed, endurance, reaction speed and flexibility are all superior to those of ordinary human beings in the same period. Wolverine in the *X-Men* has the ability of rapid self-healing, beast-like perception, and his natural arms have claws that can be extended out of the body. In the "Weapon X" experiment, his bones were infused with indestructible Adamantium. Professor X has the most powerful telepathic ability, and teaches young mutants how to face and control their special abilities. So once they want to fight against humans, the consequences are unimaginable. Just like Magneto in the *X-Men*, his ability is to create a magnetic field so that he can manipulate metals. As a mutant, he is very strict with ordinary human beings. He founded the Mutant Brotherhood to lead them against human beings.

Another technology widely used in human social life is cloning technology, which is a milestone in the development of modern genetic engineering technology and is of great significance to human health and social development. Cloning refers to the generation of offspring whose genetic characters are very similar to those of the mother through asexual reproduction. Scientists have developed cloning technology to copy or create life by artificial methods. But once this object is human, it may do great harm to human society. Human cloning is not conducive to the diversity development of human genes, and violates the basic laws of biological evolution, which may cause the single inheritance of human genes to bring about the evil consequences such as race degradation, gene mutation, new virus epidemic, etc.

However, if the cloning technology is mastered by scientific maniacs, criminals, racists, militarists, extremists and terrorists, a large number of war weapons with tame genes may be copied, and a large number of cloned thugs with violent genes and criminal genes will appear as tools for aggression, slaughter and abuse. The hero in the sci-fi movie "Edge of Tomorrow" Edge of Tomorrow is such a duplicated weapon of war. It tells us that American Lieutenant Colonel William Cage knows from his memory that a mysterious honeycomb-shaped alien creature will attack the earth, and a cruel and global war is about to break out. He was ordered to take on the task of resisting foreign enemies. Cage was killed on the spot a few minutes before he went to the battlefield. However, he was surprised to find that he seemed to inexplicably enter a time-space corridor. At the moment when he was dying, he magically woke up again on the morning of the mission and went to the battlefield again. Of course, he was killed in the mission again and again.

The development of cloning technology marks the arrival of a new era of biotechnology revolution. It can further improve social material production and human health, and it may also develop towards alienation, bringing war and chaos to human society.

4. Destruction: the Battle of Clash of Civilizations

Throughout human history, whenever one civilization comes into contact with another different civilization, we are always excited [5]. For centuries, the exploration of alien civilization has been an important topic of concern and controversy in the scientific community. Before the 17th century, the related discussions were mainly limited to the purely speculative ideas of some philosophers. In the 1960s, scientists promoted a series of SETI (Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence) projects, which were devoted to receiving electromagnetic waves from the universe with advanced equipment such as radio telescopes, analyzing regular signals from them, and hoping to discover alien civilizations.

For the exploration of alien civilization, after searching for alien information for decades without success for centuries, scientists think it is time to change their thinking and send out information by using radio or laser signals instead of passively waiting.

At the same time that the contact between scientific people and extraterrestrial civilization began to take action. The scientific community also launched a heated debate on the possible serious consequences of this action. Scientists who support these plans suggest that contact with alien civilizations is of great significance. Alien civilizations are bound to be more mature and perfect than Earth civilizations. On the one hand, they can open up the treasure house of knowledge possessed by our galaxy and other galaxy's intelligent civilizations. These scientific, technological, philosophical and biological information bring hope, help human beings improve the existing quality of life and improve the efficiency of resource utilization. On the other hand, they think that the thinking of aliens will not be the same as that of people on earth. Now that their civilization has developed to an advanced stage, they won't only know that the law of the jungle and fight with each other like people on earth.

Scientists who oppose contact with alien civilizations believe that it is not clear whether alien civilizations are kind and friendly at present. In this case, if humans send information to outer space in a hurry and expose their position in space, it is very likely that they will be attacked by aggressive civilizations. The famous scientist Hawking also pointed out that with reference to ourselves, we will find that intelligent life may develop to a stage that we don't want to meet. It is conceivable that there is such a possibility, if they have exhausted the resources on their home planet and live in a giant spaceship, such advanced alien civilization may have become a vagrant in the universe, waiting for an opportunity to conquer and colonize the planet they want to reach. [6]

Based on the above two opposing viewpoints, science fiction works have also formed a confrontation situation in an unconscious way to find extraterrestrial civilization, and this idea has become the source of many science fiction movie stories. Among them, the ideas about the consequences of human contact with alien civilizations can be roughly divided into two categories, friendly alien civilizations and aggressive alien civilizations.

Alien civilization will bring war and destruction to mankind. The movie *Independence Day* depicts that one day in the future, an alien carrier with 114 moons will quietly come near the earth, and then release 36 spacecraft to fly to the scheduled earth city. When the US military tries to get in touch with the spacecraft, they are greeted by a deadly light. Spaceships over different cities started synchronous attacks, which destroyed 36 big cities. So human beings began to fight back, that is, using nuclear bomb, the most powerful weapon in human arsenal, could not break through the shield of alien spacecraft, which made human attacks appear pale. The sequel "*Independence Day: Resumption*" takes place 20 years after "*Independence Day*", which tells the story of aliens invading the earth again with advanced weapons. After experiencing the massive invasion of the earth by aliens, humans know that these invaders will definitely come back one day. Using the scientific and technological civilization left by previous aliens, human beings have developed a powerful earth defense system to resist the re-invasion of aliens. However, 20 years later, these aliens invaded the earth again with unprecedented, more advanced and powerful force, which brought greater global disaster, and human beings will once again fight for survival.

Alien civilization will bring hope and peace to mankind. The movie *Arrival* tells the story that twelve shell-shaped UFOs suddenly appeared in the sky of the earth, suspended in the sky of twelve different countries. Aliens sent signals to humans to establish contact with them, because aliens saw that they were in crisis after 3000 years through their ability to foresee the future, and the earth people came to save them, so they gave the earth advanced alien technology. The movie "*The Day the Earth Stood Still*" tells the story of an intelligent life from another planet. He arrived at the earth with a powerful alien robot. The purpose of his trip to the earth was to represent his race to see if human beings could effectively control the greenhouse effect and prevent a series of damages to the earth's ecological environment. That is because his race once suffered from the pain caused by temperature changes.

5. Conclusions

The war caused and spread by various reasons in human history is accompanied by the progress of human civilization. With the rapid development of human science and technology and the great improvement of material civilization, the ways that human beings use to cope with the deterioration of the natural environment, the investment for technological upgrading and the strength of space defense are gradually upgrading. By using all his own experience, knowledge and wisdom, human beings not only have a more comprehensive, systematic, scientific and deeper understanding of the objective world such as social history, living environment and space, but also have a better understanding of the nature of human relations and spirits. Therefore, human beings need to think

and deal with problems from the global perspective and the perspective of all mankind, so as to fundamentally avoid war. In this way, the risk of war will be virtually suppressed by the just demands of human pursuit of civilization and progress, and peace will be achieved.

References

- [1] Li Yanfang. (2017). *Research on Natural Disasters and Emergency Management*. Economic Daily Press, 4-7.
- [2] Zhang Xihua. (2014). *Ecological Enlightenment from American Science Fiction disaster movie*. *Learning and Exploration*, 11, 7.
- [3] Bernstein, D. S. (2017). *Blockbuster Science: The Real Science in Science Fiction*. Prometheus Books, 158.
- [4] Wang Jinting, Mahone, Wang Yujiang. (2014). *Introduction to Life Sciences*. Huazhong University of Science and Technology Press, 343.
- [5] Terzian, Y., Bilson, E. (1997). *Carl Sagan's universe*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 103.
- [6] Jiang Xiaoyuan, Mu Yunqiu. (2011). *Hawking's Meaning: God, Aliens and the Authenticity of the World*. *Journal of Shanghai Jiaotong University: Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition*, 19(1), 6.