

# Research on the theme selection of Chinese films in the new environment

Qinying Geng<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Nanjing No.1 Middle School, Nanjing, 210036, China

**Abstract.** This selection is important because the film is a good way for the country to show itself to foreign countries. China's progress can be shown to foreign countries through improvements in film production, and it can also reduce some high-cost low-income films and make the direction of film development clearer. The comparative analysis method is used to analyze the paper more comprehensively and focused. It is found that the film needs to be richer in macro construction and less in narrative and lyrical storytelling. Because science fiction films need to be more well-made for the imagination of the wide world, China is still too conservative and wants to add a sense of home and country to the film, which is sometimes counterproductive. This paper goes from comparing the two films to analyzing the success and failure of similar films to the problems and suggestions encountered in developing science fiction films in China. Hopefully, it can play some role in Chinese films' development direction and methods.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Research background

Nowadays, the film industry has developed. Different film genres emerge endlessly, and China is no exception. China first focuses on traditional films, but now they also pay attention to science fiction films. But because China started late, they cannot do what Western countries do. Science fiction films seem to catch people's attention more easily, but traditional films are unique to China. Two films, *Man Jianghong*, and *Wandering Earth*, were broadcast this winter vacation. *Man Jianghong*'s investment cost was less than 100 million, but it gained 4.544 billion. *Wandering Earth*'s investment was 530 million, and the final box office was 4.029 billion. In terms of data, it seems their final box office is not much different, but the workforce and material resources are far from comparable. The shooting site of *Man Jianghong* is the ancient county town of Taiyuan in Xi'an, a scenic spot that has existed for a long time. It does not need many sets and high-tech machines. It only needs a few exquisite ancient costumes and ordinary photographic equipment. On the other hand, in terms of traffic on Earth, the filming location is located between Shanghai and Qingdao, using 8 studios in the film and television industry park, with a scenic extension area of nearly 100000 square meters, including transport vehicles, underground cities, and space stations, all of which are constructed in real scenes. Compared to live shooting, this kind of production seems to require multiple increases in time and effort. But in the end, there was still a difference of several hundred million at the box office. Even the

director of *Wandering Earth* said, 'After filming *Wandering Earth 2*, our funds are completely insufficient. With such box office revenue, people cannot continue filming.' The unsatisfactory results have also led to Chinese people's reflection [1-2]. Is it really not suitable for making science fiction movies? The gap between Chinese science fiction films and foreign productions, the box office not meeting expectations, and the difficulty of producing them well, have repeatedly questioned whether Chinese science fiction films are suitable for continuation. Finding a way out and taking the path that leads to the best results is the significance of this paper. People want to explore this issue because the intensification of contradictions, the emergence of different voices, and the film industry's future direction seem unclear. If people can discuss the selection of Chinese films in the new environment, investors will not have to spend a lot of money betting on whether a movie can sell well. Accurately identify projects that are profitable and not profitable. People don't have to worry about whether this movie is as good or bad as opening a surprise box because the unity of themes will continuously promote the film industry to produce better works. Even in the world film industry, movies that mention this topic tend to look towards China because of its representativeness. From this perspective, the discussion on material selection must be comprehensive.

### 1.2 Research framework

Firstly, it should be determined that the article's purpose is to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of two directions through data, text, and viewpoints. There is

\* Corresponding author: [yuanxy1@bosc.cn](mailto:yuanxy1@bosc.cn)

no need to distinguish between good and bad. Secondly, there are successes and failures in cases, as well as novelty and achievements, all of which need to be written. Finally, the viewpoint will be reflected, and then will dialectically look at each aspect and provide rough suggestions. A thousand people have a thousand Hamlets in their hearts. Whether there is a need to change, the direction of change, strategies, and time are all very important, and they are also why the author wrote this paper. Because of their love, they hope to use their weak power to put forward some viewpoints, engage in discussions, and obtain results. This is the purpose of this paper. The film industry may develop more colorfully in the future, and all kinds of films can be shown on the screen. Chinese can be approved on the world stage to review this paper; the world is different from now, and people do not need to chat about development. Instead, the topic is how to create a new film environment.

## 2 Case description

As mentioned at the beginning, the main reason science fiction films have not developed is the uneven quality of the films. It is undeniable that the *Wandering Earth* series was a very successful breakthrough, as they successfully infused Chinese values into science fiction films for the first time. When watching movies, people cannot help but bring in unique emotions belonging to the Chinese people. The local sentiment of Chinese people is that even if they want to leave, they must take their family. Not only in plot but also in film structure, it has achieved the industrialization of the film! In the future, making movies will no longer be about an investor finding a skilled director and then pulling in some influencers to join a Hengdian and start acting [3]. The outline has not been determined yet, so do thinking while filming. In making movies in the future, they first have a macro idea, then discuss the entire story outline, clear positioning, and stable logic, and subdivide it into each scene [4]. However, successful examples inevitably come with failure; the year after the release of *Wandering Earth*, another science fiction film called *Shanghai Fortress* was released. This movie has had continuous negative reviews and declining ratings since its release. There are three main reasons for this. Instead, the negative impact of traffic exacerbates the decline in reputation. Science fiction movies focus on special effects and ideas. No good movie is supported by traffic and love, which is why *Wandering Earth* succeeded while *Shanghai Fortress* failed [5].

## 3 Analysis of problem

The first school of thought is that there is no need to try something new because the cost of investment and the harvest are often not proportional, but they will not be able to make ends meet. And foreign science fiction film technology has been fully mature, in the mass base is also particularly large, like Marvel produced every movie in China after the release of the response is very enthusiastic also has a good enough box office. So there

doesn't seem to be any harm in giving up on science fiction movies made in China. But another school of thought feels that movies symbolize the country, and the fact that foreign countries can do well in science fiction movies symbolizes that they have high-tech equipment and sophisticated skills. The fact that China can't do science fiction movies well means that China's movie technology is nothing special. Imagine why it is easy to see big foreign production movies in China, but almost no Chinese movies, especially narrative movies, are released abroad [6]. One reason is that foreign countries do not understand Chinese history, so they will not have a high box office if released, and the other is that they prefer to watch well-made movies rather than stories. So to do well in science fiction movies is to have higher quality movies and for China to show the world film technology and Chinese connotation. But why have people been making science fiction movies since a few years ago, but now there are not many movies that can be called by name? This is the problem of quality. Box office continues to rise, with more focus on emotional expression. Liu Peng, director of Cat Eye Research Institute, illustrates the current situation of China's science fiction film market with data and charts: the number of science fiction films released in the Chinese market has increased in the past two years, and box office revenue continues its upward trend. 2019 is also a milestone for Chinese science fiction, with the contribution of domestic science fiction box office exceeding that of imported science fiction for the first time [7-8].

### 3.1 Existence problem

In fact, the main thing about science fiction movies is the structure of the big framework and the support of technology. The real problem lies in the construction of the framework. Perhaps because of the customs and traditions from ancient times to the present, Chinese people always care more about family feelings and emotional expression. So no matter what movie they like, they mix these emotions more or less. For example, in the *Wandering Earth*, middle-aged astronauts stand in for young astronauts to participate in the mission; in foreign films, they may be a silent high five, a silent pat on the shoulder, but to the Chinese film, it has become a great report number out of the row. This is true and very tear-jerking, but the focus of a science fiction movie should not be how to accomplish this task well, not the old and new and children's love. If so, why not just make a movie about the greatness of the astronaut's father to ease and speed? It's not just a problem with this movie, and it's a common problem with Chinese movies that they are tear-jerking and sensationalizing for the sake of sensationalism. This problem leads to the fact that after leaving the cinema, what the viewer recalls is not the superb science fiction production, but that the movie is very touching and hot-blooded, which is wrong from the direction. And foreigners who have not seen the film just read the comments will brainstorm a tear-jerking astronaut movie away from the essence of science fiction films, production, and structure [9-10]. The Chinese are interesting to watch, both amazed and sad,

but the foreigners are confused, said the good science fiction film. The reason for the problem appears in the direction of the film's success.

### 3.2 Explore the reasons

In fact, if you think about it, foreigners use the film to tell the story that Marvel told what story a group of supermen to save the Earth, and the final sacrifice. In the Chinese view, the story is too simple, and they do not need to tell others can think. But the bias of Marvel through this story of the big framework derived from many different personalities and different styles of characters. They told their respective stories and lives, gradually fleshing out this story. Because of a large framework, people have a strong interest in the characters, and because people have an interest, there is more hope that the film company can tell each character's own story to shoot out, so their movies can always come out all the time; even if the main character of the film dies, supporting characters can still come out of their series of films, and then these pre-supporting characters combined, and become a new protagonist, happy new series of movie [10]. China, because there is no structure of the big framework, the film takes a bad shot second. Here the big framework does not refer to the universe or the planets of this spatial view, but each character in the film has distinctive characteristics and can be constantly diverged from the big framework. For example, wandering Earth, the first season because the solar system is no longer suitable for human survival, the Earth needs to wander to other galaxies, the difficulties encountered in the wandering process, the end of the first season, the difficulties solved what the second season to shoot. But the film can not always be shot forward without follow-up development, and the second season is easily successful, then the third season to shoot what? Such a problem led to the movie one by one being boring, one by one uninspired, leading to the final IP rotten science fiction films and into the bland period. When Wandering Earth was first released, it was changed from a novel by Liu Cixin, which was a total of a few thousand words, it was not easy to make a movie, and the content was squeezed out, and the second part was already considered original, which led to immature and hollow content. So these problems have led to the Chinese science fiction film has been good and bad, the popularity of the review fluctuating, and can not occupy a place in the world.

## 4 Suggestions

Of course, this author thinks there are still some humble opinions about the future development of Chinese movies. The first thing is to break the restrictions; there are too many restrictions on entertainment film and television, an industry that relies on imagination and creativity, but emphasizes practicality everywhere, so why don't people watch the news and create something? The film seems to be confined to a framework with no sensationalism, and no patriotism is not a good movie, so the film will only come out of the same more than the

same, but cause resentment. Secondly, there should be created, not a template fire, where it stays. Walking behind others will not have their road. Stray Earth Fire, there are many films time-simultaneously with the Earth disaster as the background as if there is no disaster, grand scene, or moving story. Can't it be the entry of new species, the change of the universe? The third is the rich content; the accumulation of grand scenes will lead to a kind of fatigue of the viewer, flying in the sky, walking on the ground, can not look over, let alone the plot. Or the drama of one person saving the world, individual heroism is never a team; there is no collective power to move the heart. Chinese movies tend to focus on just a few people but forget to put the audience in the situation, leading to many movie viewers feeling bored or unable to remember the plot after watching. What this author said before is whether to choose a science fiction movie or a narrative movie; in fact, what needs to be developed is the core of the movie. It can't seem like a science fiction movie but still the same old storytelling. How to make the film does not fall into the cliché. Maybe people should let the screenwriter try to write a novel himself instead of adapting someone else's novel. Adaptation is easy, but the screenwriter does not fully understand the novel's spirit, and after all, the novel has been published, its length is placed there; there is no way to add many things, not to mention the gradual development into a complete universe. But if the screenwriter writes it differently, you can write while planning how to shoot and take the next step, do not worry about whether the others want to describe the shot clearly, because they write the article. This shooting, without worries, will also be able to present better work. Chinese people always feel that it must be something that is around, something that could happen, and has a hint of being a science fiction subject. But because these things come with certainty, the audience will have their own ideas when they watch, and if they find that it's not what they expected from the movie, they might not watch the same series next time. But if it is completely impossible, then the film is the only narrator and is the only way for the audience to understand these events. Even if there may be one or two works in the series is not outstanding, the audience can choose to understand; after all, this is a world that no one but the filmmaker has ever envisioned. Faced with the unknown, people are often curious, and this curiosity can overlook some flaws. After all, the flaws do not cover up the defects; really good works can convey a new world, a new pattern, and even new values and have always attracted the audience.

As a moviegoer, I've seen the clichéd plots many times before, and there are good narrative movies in China, so storytelling is no longer a favorite for the entire movie market. Many directors say during roadshows that they don't get a lot of support for their sci-fi movies, which leads to a lack of funding. The real reason for the lack of funding is that they are not confident that they can't do it right. But if there are excellent scripts written, large sci-fi ip adaptations, the introduction of foreign methods, there will still be these problems. So I think another way is to learn foreign techniques. There is no denying that foreign countries are higher than China, which is just

starting out, in terms of making sci-fi movies, both in terms of experience and technology. In the past few years of the epidemic, China has been trying to figure out the way to make science fiction movies on its own, and has made some achievements, but there are still areas that can be improved. And now that the epidemic is over and life is getting into the swing of things, it's a good time to start learning foreign technology. Bring in a professional production team and cut your teeth with foreign actors, and you're sure to succeed. Just like the just released *Jaws 2*, Chinese and foreign actors acting together, both production teams help each other, in the release of a few days did not achieve 200 million box office results. Win-win cooperation, cooperation and progress. The fumbling alone is like walking in the dark, as long as you work hard, you can find the end of the line. But cooperation is like a light in the dark night, guiding the direction of the front walker, so that walking is no longer groping, but a big step forward. One person's persistence is certainly valuable, but two people are not impossible. In the present age, there is nothing that cannot be solved by cooperation. When foreign countries started to study science fiction movies, China chose to study narrative movies and achieved great success, and now it is bound to succeed in the development of science fiction movies.

## 5 Conclusion

Nowadays, Chinese films mainly face the problem of focusing too much on the importance of the story and ignoring the fact that science fiction films themselves should focus more on the grandeur of the scenes and the architecture of the content, which has led to a situation where science fiction films have been one step further and one step back, or one step further and five steps back. Although China has done well in the narrative genre, it is difficult to get foreigners' recognition because of cultural and conceptual differences. It has contributed slightly less to the international development of cinema.

### 5.1 Research significance

In contrast, this selection discusses how Chinese films can develop in a good direction and some poor suggestions on development because, at present, everyone values the use of technology in films, and because of the development of more technology, science fiction films have become the mainstream of the film industry. China, as a big film country, films should not only be suitable for its own audience but also need to go global and face the world audience. Hence, the article discusses. The article discusses the choice of subject matter and the pros and cons of each genre.

### 5.2 Limitations

However, since one person is a high school student and has no more ability to consult filmmakers and experts to discuss better choices, some of the author's opinions may be personal views, and this author has no way to put them into practice. Coupled with the uncertainty

about the future, perhaps a few years later, Chinese narrative films will also gain public recognition, and foreign countries will turn around and learn from Chinese films, which may result in only current articles. However, for now, Chinese cinema needs to be discussed regarding subject matter selection and focus, so this point was chosen to write this essay.

## References

1. G, Ting. "Fan tra. and fil. Cri. in Chi.: Re-r. The Wan. Ear. (2019) thr. tra." *Translation and Interpreting Studies* (2023).
2. W, Shu, and Ewing Luo. "The Wan. Ear. II: A hap. Uni. Bet. Sci. and fil." *The Innovation* 4, no. 2 (2023).
3. R, Carlos. "At Hom. in the Wor.: Wan. Ear. Env. and Rei. Hom." *Journal of Chinese Film Studies* 1, no. 2 (2021): 223-236.
4. B, Chris. "No Fat. Reu. Chi. Sci. in The Wan. Ear. and Nov." *Film Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (2020): 40-44.
5. W, Jiaren, and W. R. Kanyu Wang, eds. *The Making of The Wandering Earth: A Film Production Handbook*. Taylor & Francis, 2022.
6. Z, Mingqi. "Rea. for the Suc. of The Wan. Ear." In *2021 3rd International Conference on Literature, Art and Human Development (ICLAHD 2021)*, pp. 228-232. Atlantis Press, 2021.
7. W, Mike. "Thi. to com. 'The wan. Ear.' and Chi. cin. Gro. pre." *Metro Magazine: Media & Education Magazine* 201 (2019): 70-75.
8. W, Mengmeng. "Ope. a New Jou. of Chi. Sci. Fic. Fil. Cre." *The Wan. Ear.* *Academic Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences* 2, no. 4: 57-62.
9. L, Zirui, Q. Bingjing, W. Yan. "Res. on the Int. Com. Eff. of Wan. Ear." *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research* 4, no. 12 (2021): 699-705.
10. K, Elizaveta G., Alexandra L. Sevastianova, and Tatiana I. Petukhova. "Val. Con. in Con. Chi. Cin. Bas. on Ang. Rev. and Com. on Fil." (2019).