

# Main Theme, New Vehicle: The Educational Value of Science Fiction Movies—Taking the Wandering Earth II as an Example



Yiheng Li<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Xinjiang Normal University, China

**Abstract:** As a new type of melodramatic film in recent years, melodramatic science fiction films are not only novel in subject matter and loved by the audience and widely disseminated, but also play an important role in publicizing the national mainstream ideology and values. Combining it with youth value education not only has the theoretical fit in terms of value orientation, education mode, education content, and target audience, but also has the application value of enriching classroom content, adapting to fragmented learning, and enhancing the participation and initiative of young people. This paper takes the movie “The Wandering Earth II” as an example to analyze the theoretical connotation and application value of realizing melodramatic science fiction movies in youth values education, and proposes a possible practical path for the organic integration of the two.

**Keywords:** melodramatic science fiction movies; values education; movie appreciation

## 1. Introduction

With the development of science and technology, new media art forms have become more and more popular among young people and radiated to middle-aged and teenage groups. In 2023, *The Wandering Earth II* (hereinafter referred to as *Earth II*), a sci-fi disaster movie, adopts new media forms and plays an exemplary role in telling a good story about China in Chinese words and presenting a believable, lovely, and respectable image of China with Chinese stories. As the storyline of “*Earth II*” unfolds, profound thoughts on the idea of the community of destiny, such as fate and commonwealth, family and national sentiments, and the historical view of the masses, are implicitly expressed, and under its sci-fi-colored rendering of the disaster, there lurks the contemplation on the reality of the problem. With the innovation of narrative strategy, visual effect technology, and aesthetic expression, the *Wandering Earth* series of films has opened up the process of industrialization of Chinese science fiction films and gained the

possibility of communication and dialogue with world-class science fiction films (Yao & Zhao, 2023).

As a social ideology, art is highly attractive and ornamental on the one hand, and on the other hand, it can serve as a carrier to support the creative background and cultural heritage behind it. A movie is a special form of art, including pictures, sound, and other factors, can show the audience a more intuitive large screen image, and is a comprehensive art form to reflect life. At the same time, the movie also has certain artistic rules and values and is an important carrier to reflect people’s spiritual life, but the social dissemination rate is relatively high media, has a strong aesthetic and artistic (Yue, 2023). According to Wang Peixian, “In the context of the theory of ‘Anthropocene’, the prosperity of science fiction movies also has a positive impact on the dissemination of ecological values in the sense of natural environment.” (Wang, 2023) As an important part of the school education system, values education theory class is a key course for implementing the fundamental task of establishing morality, and a valuable occasion for connecting other disciplines

**Corresponding Author:** Yiheng Li  
Xinjiang Normal University, China  
Email: 289835177@qq.com

©The Author(s) 2024. Published by BONI FUTURE DIGITAL PUBLISHING CO., LIMITED This is an open access article under the CC BY License(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

and improving the comprehensive quality of youth. Utilizing the fast-developing and popular information technology, broadening the education mode, transforming the teaching method, and immersing the youth in it are the important ways to improve the values of education at present. Explaining the implicit expression and technical presentation in the movie, and revealing the theoretical fit, application value, and practical possibilities of the main theme science fiction movie as a form of new media art and youth values education can help to improve the previous teaching mode which is a little bit boring, and inject new vitality and vigor into youth values education.

## **2. Fit and Interoperability: The Integration of Main Theme Science Fiction Movies and Youth Values Education**

### **2.1. Compatibility of educational methods**

The educational mode of melodramatic sci-fi movies and youth values education fits in that they complement each other. Melodramatic sci-fi movies are endowed with educational attributes based on fun, while youth value education and need to add vividness based on theoretical profundity. Educational is one of the signature features of melodramatic movies, which is of great significance in helping people cultivate their sentiments, improve their cultivation, understand history, respond to reality, and explore the future. The main theme movie conveys ideas through vivid images and stories, and this kind of edutainment can help young people receive education in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. Similarly, youth value education needs to make more vivid reforms that can stimulate the interest of young people and cause them to think about the traditional boring teaching methods, and fit the transformation of teaching methods from the traditional “teacher-centered” to the “student-centered”. The transformation of the teaching method from the traditional teacher-oriented “teacher-centeredness” to the student-oriented “student-centeredness” to improve the learning efficiency of young people (Liu, 2012). The process

of classroom use of multimedia resources from traditional book teaching to boards, courseware, and then such as audio and video is the process of confirming the vividness of teaching methods. As a science fiction movie, “Earth II” not only has the advantages of general melodrama movies but also attracts a large audience's attention and love with its unique science fiction elements and grand worldview. Moreover, the scenes of global human beings working together to face difficulties and the hero's determination to face difficulties for the future of human beings are all reflective of the idea of the community of human destiny that all human beings are united in the face of the apocalyptic catastrophe, and that they will blow the hymn of hope for human beings with their courage. The core content of youth value education is embedded in the artistry of the movie which is full of fantasy colors, reflecting the high degree of compatibility between the main theme of science fiction movies and youth value education.

### **2.2. Fitting the content of education**

Marxism believes that “man creates the environment, and likewise, the environment creates man (The Collected Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 1, 2009, p. 545).” Movie art, like other art forms, is a mirror that reflects real life. The main theme of science fiction movies created in the new era is more and more diversified in their creation form and wider in the range of materials, but all these inspirations can not be separated from the real-time and life experiences felt by the movie creators, so the overall category of the content and the spiritual connotation have remained unchanged, and the content of the value education for the youth has a greater degree of commonality and compatibility. The main theme of science fiction movies takes science as the background, emphasizes the integration of scientific literacy and humanistic spirit, and through the unfolding of the storyline, conveys the thinking and exploration of science, technology, society, and other issues. This spirit of reflection and exploration is consistent with the goal of comprehensive development and comprehensive quality education emphasized in youth values education. Meanwhile,

as an important carrier of cultural inheritance, melodramatic movies convey the excellent traditional culture and values of the Chinese nation through images and stories. In *Earth II*, the creators try to build a set of “Chinese-style redemption” discourses to cope with the global human crisis and show the value of the community of human destiny with Chinese wisdom (Fan & Zhang, 2023). The spirit of defying difficulties, unity and cooperation, courage, and selfless dedication shown by the protagonists in the movie is the embodiment of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation, which is compatible with the educational content of the value education for the youth.

### **2.3. The fit of the acceptance object**

The creation of melodramatic film and television works aims to maximize the dissemination of positive values, so it takes the consensus of the whole society and the strength of the whole society as its goal and covers audience groups of all ages in the society, which is characterized by the universality of the people. With the continuous expansion of China’s movie market and the continuous development of the movie industry, more and more young people have begun to pay attention to movie culture and become the main force of movie consumption, and the trend of movie-watching shows a youthful attitude. Main theme science fiction movies usually take science and technology and social development as the theme and inspire the audience to think about and explore the future by showing the future world and the challenges faced by human beings, which not only covers a wide range of age groups, but also matches the age and interest of young people, and takes into account the unity of the two-pointed theory and the key theory. Relevant data show that the age structure of Chinese audiences tends to be younger (Wu, 2022), according to the audience data of *Cat’s Eye* in February 2023, the average age of the audience of *Earth II* is 29.3 years old, which confirms the attractiveness of *Wandering Earth* to the youth group under the premise of targeting the social masses. The melodramatic sci-fi movie not only shows the relationship between

science and technology and society but also demonstrates mankind’s exploration and thinking about the future through the storyline and characterization. This concern for the fate of mankind and exploration of the future world can trigger students’ empathy and help them better understand themselves and the world.

In conclusion, there is a high degree of compatibility between the main theme of science fiction movies and youth value education in terms of value orientation, educational method, educational content, and acceptance object. By introducing melodramatic science fiction movies into youth values education, we can innovate the education method, enrich the education content, and improve the education effect to better realize the goal of values education.

## **3. Enhancing Quality and Shaping Subjects: The Application Value of Main Theme Science Fiction Movies in the Values Education Classroom**

### **3.1. Enriching teaching content and improving teaching quality**

In today’s networked and information era, the traditional teacher-oriented teaching mode can no longer meet the learning needs of contemporary youth, and it is difficult to improve the quality of youth in the classroom by relying only on theoretical education. Educators need to strengthen the content and quality of teaching, improve the interest of young people in learning, guide the mobilization of young people’s ability to think independently and accelerate the transformation of the classroom to the main mode of youth.

The main theme of science fiction movies can be used as a teaching resource in the classroom of values education, providing a rich variety of cases and materials to help young people better understand and master the content of the curriculum. Through the popular storylines and characters in the movies, teachers can guide young people to think deeply about issues such as scientific and technological development, social relations, morality, and ethics, and expound their views and concepts on political, historical, and social issues, to broaden young

people's horizons and deepen their understanding of the course content, enhance persuasive power and credibility, and improve the quality of teaching. At the same time, the movie contains elements of science fiction, adventure, action, etc., and creates vivid storylines and shocking visual effects, which can attract the attention of young people and increase their interest in the values education program. By watching movies, young people can learn in a relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere, and at the same time, they can better understand the relationship between science and technology and society, and enhance their motivation and enthusiasm for learning. For example, as a prequel to the Chinese sci-fi disaster movie "Wandering Earth" adapted by writer Liu Cixin of the same name, "Earth II" tells the story of all mankind's self-rescue in the face of apocalyptic catastrophes and customer service difficulties in the advent of the "solar crisis". Behind the common disasters and crises faced by mankind, the creators use the "femur" speech to embody the whole of mankind in the world before the problem of warmth, unity of purpose, and expertise in the tragic epic; with the "moving mountains" "moon" "Wandering the Earth" and other expressions full of Chinese mythology and romance reflect the traditional Chinese cultural thought of family and national sentiments; with the fearlessness of the world's people in the face of disaster embodies the collective heroism. The idea of unity in the face of disaster, overcoming obstacles, and moving towards hope is the humanistic core of this movie. The storyline and characters of this movie have subconsciously inculcated the values of young people.

### **3.2. Adapting to the "fragmented" learning mode and enhancing the sense of experience and participation of young people**

With the development of the mobile Internet, the learning mode of young people has gradually changed to fragmentation, and the learning environment of young people and the teaching environment of teachers have undergone a great transformation, and the learning mode of mutual interaction between physical teaching in schools and

self-learning on the Internet has been formed. From the traditional point of view, the longer main theme of science fiction movies can't be intertwined with the current "fragmented" life and learning, however, the movie in the era of new media has the ability of strong interaction with the network media, and a longer movie can be created twice by the network video bloggers, deconstructing the whole or part of its fragments, to be divided into A long movie can be deconstructed by online video bloggers to split it into many short videos, realizing the "fragmentation" of a long movie. Teachers fully guide young people to make use of mobile learning tools and Internet learning resources to carry out various forms of fragmented learning through short videos and other forms, so that young people passively or randomly enter the "fragmented" learning mode, which is not only conducive to young people's mastery of fragmented independent learning methods, but also improves their ability to analyze and integrate knowledge, and combines formal learning in the classroom with informal learning outside the classroom. Formal learning and informal learning outside the classroom can be effectively integrated to achieve the learning goals and realize the transformation from passive or random learning to active learning.

### **3.3. Grasp the characteristics of contemporary youth discourse and improve youth initiative**

Contemporary youth are growing up in the mutual shaping of the Internet, which is an indispensable way of life, a space for growth, and a "sixth sense" (Chinese Youth in the New Era, 2022), they are more inclined to use concise, vivid, and graphic language to express their thoughts and opinions, and pluralism, democratization, and individualization have become their unique discourse characteristics. Contemporary young people have preliminary but immature values and a strong desire for expression, they are active in various online media platforms, are very concerned about hot social events, and each holds their unique views, refusing to be homogeneous, and bursting out of the thought

“sparks” in the heated discussions on online social platforms.

#### **4. The Practical Path of the Integration of the Main Theme Science Fiction Movie and Youth Values Education Classroom**

##### **4.1. Seek effective carriers to overcome the resistance of integration**

With the continuous development of modernization of education, all the teaching venues of colleges and universities in China are equipped with advanced multimedia equipment, which provides equipment and technical support for promoting the reform of college curricula enriching the classroom of youth values education, and the same time provides a new opportunity for the development of youth values education. However, there is still a lot of work to be done to truly realize the entry of new discourse media into the classroom represented by melodramatic sci-fi movies, which not only includes the efforts and changes made by the educators but also puts high demands on the new forms of art media.

From the side of educators, many educators need to realize that the main theme of science fiction movies can become an important carrier of values education, and explore its potential value in the field of values education. Not only should they adapt to the times, update their teaching concepts, formulate teaching objectives, and make teaching plans, but also effectively integrate the main theme of science fiction movies with youth values education, and strengthen the exchange of ideas between teachers and students. At the same time, the teaching process of professional courses can also focus on the teaching of professional knowledge at the same time the professional knowledge to give vivid dispersion to the relevant mainstream film and television works, to drive the enthusiasm of young people to learn.

In terms of the carrier of the communication body, the quality of the media resources used in the integration of melodramatic science fiction movies into youth values education must be guaranteed. Films must meet the three stringent conditions of

wide dissemination, artistic enjoyment, and theoretical profundity, and only such films can be used as a key tool for youth values education. This requires not only the unremitting efforts of literary and art workers, but also the social recognition of the educational value of melodramatic science fiction films, and the completion of multi-party communication and exchanges among educators, educational tools, and educational concepts, to overcome the resistance to integration and realize the innovation of educational methods.

##### **4.2. Improve appreciation ability and stimulate the sense of autonomy**

As the object of education, the youth is the key to the integration of the melodramatic science fiction movie and the youth value education classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to improve young people's artistic appreciation and cognitive ability, so that their appreciation of melodramatic films does not only stop at watching and relaxing, but also recognizes the unique value and educational significance of melodramatic films that differentiate them from general commercial films at the subjective level, and cultivates young people's initiative to watch films and accept them. It is worth noting that contemporary colleges and universities have already opened courses on movie appreciation, which is of great significance to promoting the entry of melodramatic sci-fi movies onto campuses.

For young people, self-learning ability is a necessary skill. While the ideological and value-led education of teachers in the classroom is important, the independent learning of young people in the classroom is also a key step to the success of value education. Therefore, in addition to guiding young people in the classroom to correctly grasp the cultural connotation of melodramatic films, convey the national sentiment, and promote the spirit of the nation, teachers should also carry out a variety of activities after class, such as regular screenings of melodramatic films in line with the preferences of young people, seminars on appreciation, and encouraging young people to create their melodramatic works and other ways to make

melodramatic films integrated into the lives of young people.

### 4.3. Improving teachers' quality and cultivating the workforce

In the face of the emergence of new technologies and resources, the key to both the transformation of teaching methods and modes of teaching and the improvement of the comprehensive quality of young people lies in the teaching force. Teachers are the main organizers and guides of youth values education, and their acceptance and guidance level of melodramatic films is the basis for deciding whether melodramatic films can be perfectly integrated into youth values education and whether the integration of melodramatic science fiction films into the classroom is both an opportunity and a challenge to them.

To enhance the educators' film and television literacy, they are encouraged to go into the cinema to experience the charm of films. Effectively organize relevant lectures, salons, and quality course competitions to increase the mutual integration of melodramatic films and values education. To enhance educators' political discernment and teaching level, universities with the ability to do so can carry out inter-university exchanges and joint training to improve educators' teaching skills in the use of melodramatic films, and to produce several examples of teaching melodramatic films that are popular with young people, to serve as a reference for educators who are actively exploring an innovative and energetic teaching classroom. Colleges and universities can also introduce teachers with professional backgrounds in film and television to provide professional guidance and assistance to youth associations and youth cultural activities in the direction of film and television. Through training and study, teachers can better understand and use melodramatic films for values education, improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching, and provide vitality to the values education work of youth in the new era.

### Conflict of Interest

The author declares that he has no conflicts of

interest to this work.

### References

- Yao, K., & Zhao, L. (2023). A chinese-style road to salvation: A study of the values and aesthetics of the wandering earth film series. *Movie Review*, 2023(04), 18–21.
- Yue, L. (2023). Analysis of values in film media art. *Daguan (Forum)*, 2023(10), 69–71.
- Wang, P. (2023). Narrative discourse analysis of wandering earth II. *Sound Screen World*, 2023(17), 58–60.
- Liu, X. (2012). On “student-centeredness.” *Research on Higher Education*, 33(08), 1–6.
- The collected works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 1 (p. 545). (2009). People's Publishing House.
- Fan, Z., & Zhang, M. (2023). Wandering earth 2: Chinese redemption of the apocalyptic crisis and the narrative tension of the philosophy of “life-time-existence.” *Research on Culture and Art*, 2023(03), 65-72, 114.
- Wu, J. (2022). Analysis of the changing needs and development trend of movie audience: Taking the example of the top 10 movies in box office from 2011 to 2020. *Movie Literature*, 2022(05), 18–23.
- Chinese youth in the new era. (2022, April 22). *People's Daily*.

**How to Cite:** Li, Y. (2024). Main Theme, New Vehicle: The Educational Value of Science Fiction Movies — Taking The Wandering Earth II as an Example. *Journal of Global Humanities and Social Sciences*, 05(03), 126-131. <https://doi.org/10.61360/BoniGHSS242016040304>