

# *Digital body and embodied communication in sci-fi movies*

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**Abstract:** Contemporary technology not only creates virtual space and changes the relationship between body and space, but also transforms the body through new technology. The media technology in the era of intelligent media has been promoted to a new height. The combination of intelligent technology, communication science and humanistic design has laid a technical foundation for the immersion of human senses and given people unlimited immersion from different dimensions. The digital body narration in sci-fi movies presents some body aesthetic problems, such as the spatiality of body, the cross-border existence of body and the body of information theory. Movies collect the trajectories of body movements, showing the multiple possibilities of body in real and virtual space, thus constructing the close relationship between body and world.

## **1. Introduction**

After the 21st century, with the rapid development of film special effects technology and the arrival of the intelligent era, this imminent subjective dilemma calls for our positive reflection on digital body and embodied communication. In this sense, sci-fi movies undoubtedly provide us with a good opportunity. While shaping a series of AI images, the screen is also updating the understanding of the essential differences between human beings and machines [1]. By audio-visual means, the digital body in the film swings between mechanization and materialization. As a medium, body sense contains important clues about society, politics and culture. From this perspective, the film presents rich visual, physical and cultural landscapes, which is helpful for us to further think about the body aesthetics in sci-fi movies.

AI is a creation in the era of science and technology, and sci-fi movies is also built by giving it infinite imagination space on the basis of scientific principles. The combination of the two creates the AI-type sci-fi movies. For sci-fi movies, if science and technology take a big step towards intelligence, sci-fi movies based on science and technology and fantasy will be more innovative and forward-looking. Based on the study of sci-fi movies, this paper combs the development characteristics of this kind of movies, and then analyzes the digital body and embodied communication in sci-fi movies, so as to rise to the man-machine identity brought by film art to the audience and the philosophical speculation about human beings and technology.

## 2. Cybermen's digital bodies in sci-fi movies

Human culture is not only based on grasping the reality of the body, but also on resisting the "limitation" of the body. With the advent of the machine and information age, the transformation of the body has gradually become practical, which has led to the emergence of cyber people [2]. There are many "virtual people" in sci-fi movies, which can be called cybermen. They are often transformed from natural people, and they are equipped with artificial organs in a range for the purpose of damage or function enhancement of physical organs. This physical transformation did not cause tension in the fictional world, but met people's psychological expectations of "superheroes" in the real world. They used their super bodies to defend the fairness, justice and equality that human society lacked. Human beings recognize that the physical value of cyber people conforms to human cultural traditions, so as to confirm the consistency of their cultural identity and maintain the stability of their identity.

From the perspective of cultural research, contemporary sci-fi movies have obviously reshaped the ideological identity of gender, race, nationality, religion, class and so on [3-4]. The continuous improvement of sci-fi movie technology for the expressive force of virtual reality space images aims at explaining "how science and technology change human life". In Hollywood sci-fi movies with the theme of interstellar development, there are imperialist traditions in the colonial period in history and racist cultural logic in reality. The concept of cybernetic man-machine hybrid technology gave birth to cyberspace, which brought a brand-new imagination about the future space for science fiction literature writing and film creation [5]. Among them, the cyber body in cyberspace became the theme of popular culture in Cyberpunk in this period, and its complexity of identity politics theoretically opened up a broader cultural space for science fiction literature and film creation.

Cybermen are not only diversified in body structure, but also related to their body ideology. The physical body should not only guarantee the material survival of human beings, such as prolonging life and improving the quality of life, but also provide a way to understand the world. But the machine senses provide a completely different "perspective" landscape from the naked eye. Cybermen essentially regard the world and life as "machine" centrism, just like police officer Murphy in the movie "RoboCop" had to choose between two identities: It is already a cyberman, and it is impossible to return to the flesh, and the actual order has "cancelled" its human identity because it has been declared dead in the flesh; On the way to the transformation of body paradigm, once the subject finds that he has lost his "body", but he is not an out-and-out machine, the subject will swing between the uncertainty of human and non-human, which constitutes the anxiety of the subject, thus making the subject's previous efforts to confirm his self-identity through the body more and more difficult in reality [6].

## 3. Aesthetic structure of digital body in sci-fi movies

In movies, the passage of time must take place in a spatial background, because no matter how to deal with time, spatiality is a condition of perception. The lifestyle of the characters' bodies in sci-fi movies is a part of the described space, so it is extremely important to explore the emotions and multiple identities of characters in the virtual world [7-8]. Contemporary technology not only creates virtual space and changes the relationship between body and space, but also transforms the body through new technology [9]. In the sci-fi narrative, the body created or transformed by science and technology does not exist mechanically, and he/she also has subjective consciousness, human awakening and personal pursuit [10]. In the near future, AI robots will appear in military, commercial and household fields in large numbers. Their physical and mechanical abilities are better than those of human beings, and they will replace human beings in labor and gradually

replace human work in society.

In the series of "Blade Runner" movies, the replicators are dissatisfied with the fate of being enslaved by human beings, and they rise up and fight, and also create a "blackout" event, clearing all computer data, trying to eliminate the boundary with human beings and strive for freedom and equality. Similarly, the trilogy "Rise of the Planet of the Apes" is the same. Conscious orangutans know how to fight for their own survival and rights and compete with human beings for resources and homes. No matter what kind of situation, it is deeply related to the self that human subject is imagined as having clear boundaries. This is exactly the same as Nietzsche's theory of staring into the abyss. The existence of the virtual world body is the projection of the real world subject consciousness.

On the narrative level, there are many circular narratives in sci-fi movies, that is, the imagination about the time cycle, and the motivation is that people are often driven by the psychological desire to make up for their regrets and have a new hope for everything. Although the film "Source Code" has always been regarded as an interpretation of the parallel universe theory, it is better to regard it as a physical experience story of "virtual time and space" than to talk about the parallel universe theory. We are now in an era of great material wealth. More and more advanced electronic devices such as mobile phones and faster network infrastructure take up a lot of our time, and with the material wealth, time is increasingly scarce. However, with the further increase of people's demand for watching movies, the further enhancement of film's contribution to the market economy, and the increasingly mature film technology's support for the sci-fi world, the "digital body" has become a solution that can finally achieve immortality and transcend all physiological, time, feeling, space and other limitations with the assistance of fake devices or electronic chips.

#### 4. The embodiment of reflexivity

In sci-fi movies, AI's "embodied" narrative is precisely the reverse presentation of cybernetic experiments. Robots in sci-fi movies and AI in different stages can get a new definition through the dimension and perspective of "language", that is, how the subjectivity of AI is constructed in a specific code system. The "virtuality" of AI in sci-fi movies has gone to two paths. On the one hand, digital special effects technology and generating ability have shaped a more convincing intelligent machine landscape. On the other hand, some sci-fi movies have found a new way in the digital production ecology, responding and predicting the potential of AI with human performances. Machines not only have overspeed language learning ability, but also can imitate or even surpass people's communication ability, which has become a new symbol of AI. The virtuality provided by sci-fi movies has the characteristics of gender perspective and digital "embodiment". In this sense, the situation of AI has also been placed in the "other of human beings"-especially in recent years, the film and television works appear as the "other" image, which makes AI constantly defined only by the relationship with human beings. The discourse of the other of AI in film and television works is also a reflection of anthropocentrism, or a mirror image of human language centrism.

As far as the human body is concerned, technology has obvious remodeling. Exploring the relationship between technology and body from the macro-theoretical level of media environment school, it is not difficult to find that body and spirit, body and nervous system, senses and consciousness spirit have become important elements of body construction. Media technology in the era of intelligent media has reached a new height. The combination of intelligent technology, embodied communication science and humanistic design has laid a technical foundation for the immersion of human senses, giving people unlimited immersion from different dimensions, which is mainly reflected in the following two aspects. First, physical contact brings immersion to the body senses. The continuous development of AI technology and big data technology has promoted

the further change of body action, and the digitalization of body is one of the themes in the era of intelligent media. Body data is mainly divided into the following three aspects. The first is the digitization of body paths. The body path is digitized, that is, the path left by the body on the network is characterized by data. The second is the digitization of body senses.

The emergence of AI has realized the dream of the creator of human beings. AI conscious thinking is almost a complete copy of human beings. AI robots in sci-fi movies are almost perfect replicators. They have memories, dreams and pursuits. We can't completely deny that there will never be such a perfect robot in the digital body world outside the screen. In "The Surrogates", human beings in the future world live in an incredible world. In daily life and working hours, they use humanoid robot body double instead of themselves to carry out all social activities in real life, while their real bodies are lying in the consciousness transmission machine at home. To sum up, the combination of retaining human consciousness and mechanical body in sci-fi movies has become the true embodiment of Cyberberg. However, the combination of human consciousness and mechanical machines is bound to cause some problems, just like "the separation of information and carrier seems clear, but once it is applied to human beings, it will inevitably lead to profound problems."

## 5. Ethical issues of human-machine ethics

The idea of human beings creating mechanical life is much earlier than the invention of computers. Robots originated from people's imagination of "automation". In "Ex Machina", the hero of the machine is an "artificial mind" created by Nathan, the boss of a search engine company who often drinks too much. In "Vice", the protagonist is the product of a computer out-of-control program error. However, the problem of automaticity is that the seemingly "obedience" behavior of robots does not necessarily bring beneficial execution effects to human beings. The "rebellion" of the machine in the film is actually carried out in the name of "obeying" the long-term development of mankind. This is actually a reflection on automation culture.

Under the discourse of sci-fi movies, human beings created AI as creators. Compared with human beings, they have stronger bodies and personalized consciousness. They were born in human society, but it is difficult to get human recognition. In the movie "Her", Samantha, the AI system, is a virtual subject without embodiment. In Samantha's relationship with human beings, the virtual subject is also a part of her anxiety. It tries to compensate for the defect of detachment through the entity identity of female volunteers and complete the impossible events in man-machine love. The replicators in "Blade Runner" who escaped from the outer space colonies are so. They live in fear of having only four years to live, and they are chased by the police Blade Runner on the earth. In AI sci-fi movies, human beings are wary of artificial robots everywhere. Conscious intelligent robots may be friends of human beings, or they may very likely become enemies of human beings, vying for the inherent position of human beings in society. Humans cannot fully trust the robots around them and become true friends with him.

In movies such as "Transcendence" and "Ready Player One", the subjects get rid of the limitations of the physical body and the embarrassment in real life in cyberspace, and they gain greater freedom in cyberspace. Virtual reality technology endows future cities with a new form of existence. The attraction of virtual world impacts people's courage to face real life. Sci-fi movies reflect on the relationship between reality and virtuality in the construction of virtual cities, and reflect on whether people can still recognize the boundaries between reality and virtuality and whether they can still control themselves in the virtual world.

## 6. Conclusions

Contemporary sci-fi movies' shaping of Cyberg's body obviously presents a state of reshaping the ideological identity of gender, race, nationality, religion, class and so on. Contemporary technology not only creates virtual space, changes the relationship between body and space, but also transforms the body through new technology. In sci-fi movies, there are many circular narratives, that is, the imagination about the time cycle, and the motivation is that people are often driven by the psychological desire to make up for their regrets and have a new expectation for everything. Therefore, sci-fi movies have opened a new field of vision in the dynamic language and body construction, whether it is realistic, anthropomorphic or mechanical image-building. Sci-fi movies brings us from reality to the future, and makes us think about the beauty and consequences of the future. Facing the future, we need human beings to have a heart of awe, and grasp a degree between the desire to use technology and rationality, so that the future human-computer relationship can be expected in a certain period of time.

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