

Commercialized Imagination: Chinese Science Fiction Today

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Abstract:

Recently, there has been a rapid development in the science fiction literature and industry in China. Online literature and print publishing are very popular in the reading market. Some science fiction films have made a large amount of money. These provide opportunities but also cause inevitable problems. With the emergence of related cultural products and video games, the mechanism of intellectual property empowerment in science fiction has gradually taken shape. Due to the implementation of a series of national policies, science fiction tourism has generally realized the reconstruction of real spaces through the commercialized imagination and has achieved positive results. Commercialized imagination promotes the rapid development of science fiction in China. It is poised to become an important cultural commodity that affects the next generation and provides a significant market for science fiction writers. Science fiction industry plays a crucial role in the promotion of science fiction literature.

Key words: science fiction, cultural industry, cultural creativity, cultural market

Cultural industry, including literature, is essentially a process of production, dissemination, and consumption in the modern context. When the literary industry becomes more marketable, a specific literary theme will become a kind of market-oriented commodity. As Diane Crane mentioned, the nature of the cultural industry refers to a specific type of culture (46). Therefore, it may be possible for it to be divided into communication or mass communication. It is of great significance to study the marketization of a literary genre, thus exploring the relationship between literature and cultural industries and investigating the process of its formation.

Chinese science fiction is such an example. It did not seem to have a significant

position in the world twenty years ago, but now it has become an important part of the genre. When it comes to the science fiction writing in the world, few can ignore the vitality, competitiveness, and creativity of Chinese science fiction in the last decade.

It is acknowledged that China is a country of very rich heritage in fantasy literature. For example, *Journey to the West*, written by Wu Cheng'en in the sixteenth century, is a science fiction creation with many fantasy elements. In this book, Wu Cheng'en conceived of many advanced technologies such as human flight and gene cloning, which have been realized today. In addition, *New China* (1910), written by Lu Shi'e at the turn of the twentieth century, depicted a vivid picture of life in the city, much like how Chinese people live now. In the twentieth century, more extraordinary science fiction films were produced, including *The Rhapsody of The Ming Tombs Reservoir* (1958), *Dead Coral Island* (1980), and *Wonder Boy* (1988). They were regarded as propaganda films or children's literature at that time and have never attracted the attention of academia throughout the world, unlike contemporary Chinese works written by Liu Cixin and Hao Jingfang.

Chinese science fiction owes its success to the efforts of its writers. The rapid development of the country's cultural industry is another essential driving force. It includes the production of online literature, the publication of books, the release of films, the manufacture of related cultural products and video games, and development of the tourism industry. These aspects have constructed the imagination of cultural commercialization around the science fiction IP and formed a huge cultural production system. This promotes the dramatic development of Chinese science fiction. In 2019, the total value of the science fiction industry was 65.87 billion yuan, an increase of 44.3% compared with the previous year. The same year, the market for science fiction was estimated to be worth 2.01 billion yuan, a year-over-year increase of 13% (Yang).

The Chinese science fiction industry is a brand-new topic, yet the current academic community has not paid much attention to it. Research on it so far has emphasized the strategic coordinates in the science fiction industry based on the bibliometric analysis (Chen & Li 26), the mechanism of creation, production and reception of science fiction works, such as film production (Huang 40), the production and dissemination of Liu Cixin's novels (Gaffric & Peyton 26), and the study of "intellectual property (IP) manufacturing" in the Chinese science fiction industry (Zhu 19-20). Systematic studies on Chinese science fiction and its industry are yet scant.

This article will first consider theories of the cultural industry, with respect

to methods of cyberethnography and conceptual analysis. Following that, it then examines specific objects such as online literary works, print books, movies, video games, related cultural products, and tourism. Finally, based on the current situation, the last section constructs a broader social and cultural background for science fiction to explore the existence, dissemination, reception, and possible direction of future development in China.

1. The Textual Presentation of Science Fiction: Internet Literature and Print Books

Online literary works and print books are the most popular forms of textual presentation of science fiction. This can be seen through the abundance of internet videos that flood China, all presented in the same way. Science fiction is an important component of the current reading market presented in the same way.

1.1 Internet literature

Many people, particularly teenagers, prefer online books in the digital screen-reading era. It should be noted that the total number of science fiction literary works has exceeded one hundred thousand (January 2021) in the six largest Chinese literary websites: www.hjism.net, www.Readnovel.com, www.qidian.com, www.yuewen.com, www.jjwxc.net, chuangshi.qq.com, and www.tianya.cn —the largest online virtual community. The amount is huge and outstrips the total volume of full-length novels in the same year.

The readership for these works is statistically astonishing (fourteen billion times in total as of February 2021). It is almost about 10 readings per Chinese citizen and involves nearly three thousand authors, an unimaginable achievement. These works vary in length; some are over one million words while others barely reach one hundred.

It is apparent that these works have a great influence in China and permeate different reader groups through personal mobile terminals. Related research has proven that science fiction as online literature is quite popular in China, and the readers are mainly commuters, college students, and small shop owners (Bao 148). Many online writers are expanding the science fiction genre. The traditional fictional works based on scientific fantasies have become monotonous today. This genre has been redefined, creating a broader stage for science fiction.

Strictly speaking, such works do not fall under the category of science fiction, but the definition is not static. The question of what is science fiction is still

controversial (Chen 39-40). Science fiction is not just a genre. Rather, it is more like an element. This genre has also become rich and diverse among the active science fiction literature found on the internet in China. It includes the discussions on the future world, universal civilization, evolutionary mutation, and even Western myths and epics. It also mentions cultivating immortals and Daoism related to Chinese traditional myth, in which science fantasies and traditional metaphysics are combined. This kind of science fiction is labeled and classified as fantasy in China.

Of course, this type of fiction isn't the only one that expands the boundaries of conventional science fiction; there's also a sub-genre of science fiction that can be identified as a rising star in the world of Chinese online literature. Readers coined the term "ancient armored vehicle wars" to describe this type of fiction. The emergence of this term is entirely due to the growth of such works, rather than terms such as "star civilization" and "future world" that have existed for a long time. Through Baidu, China's widely used online search engine, we can find as many as six hundred thousand web pages related to this term, involving thousands of pieces of online literature.

"Ancient armored vehicle wars" refers to a story describing an armed war with mechanical armor that took place in ancient times. This kind of science fiction, called "travel back to history", has gained unprecedented popularity within Chinese literature. Some people argue that this theme imitates the Japanese Gundam series. However, its fantasy element indicates that it has become one of the most influential subjects in Chinese science fiction. An example is *Fake Heroes* written by the author "72bian". This epic novel is about a young man who journeys through time, serves his country, and engages in interstellar warfare. It has reached 4.21 million words, three times that of *Quiet Don* by Sholokhov.

1.2 Print Books

Online science fiction literature is not in opposition to print books. In fact, many online literary works have been published due to the special literary production mechanism, which is determined by the Chinese Writers Association (including awards and the publishing system). Online literature and paper publishing were once regarded as two literary fields, online literature accounting for the main literary field and all others occupying the secondary field (Han, "On the Split..." 18-20, 94). Online science fiction literature has changed this situation. It has not been given due attention and has been marginalized for a long time, even under the mainstream literary production mechanism. Many science fiction writers have been included in the category of children's literature writers, amateur writers, or

screenwriters. In these circumstances, the science fiction internet literature and print book publishers have formed a force of convergence to break through the existing literary production mechanism.

Therefore, science fiction in print cannot be ignored in China and its content must be acknowledged. According to our research, among the already published science fiction works, quite a number of them were online works with tremendous influence. The novel *Little Mushroom* written by Shisizhou was a best seller, which accumulated nine billion points on www.jjwxc.net (with total readings at nearly three hundred million). The book has a circulation of more than one hundred thousand copies since Beijing United Publishing published it in 2020. The sales volume exceeded seven thousand copies on dangdang.com alone. This is incredible since print books are practically negligible when compared to online copies, which are used more frequently. The author has realized that this win-win situation on both sides has an influence on the readership of traditional publications.

Of course, this is not a single case. Among the top one hundred books sold on dangdang.com (February 1, 2021), thirteen of them are science fiction works with an average of 3,520 copies per book sold online. This is far more than other recreational reading works. In contrast, only two of the one best-selling books are canonical, with an average sales volume of 923 copies. It is apparent that works of science fiction literature are as popular as the teaching materials. Therefore, science fiction has an irreplaceable market share in recreational reading.

Many works are printed on paper. Apart from being purchased by readers, where else did they go?

Quantum Seventeen: Mecha Warrior (Vol. 1), written by Agui, is currently the most popular work on dangdang.com. It was published in 2018 and had sold 3,780 copies on the site by February 2021. We learned from the Chinese Public Library's retrieval system that this book has been held by 1,140 libraries by February 2021, and the collections rank among the most popular books.

This is due to the popularity of science fiction literature. As early as 2015, it is shown that among the 100 books with the highest annual borrowing rate in 10 large public libraries across the country, fifty-two were works of science fiction, and even the same book appeared in nine public libraries (Han, "The Dilemma" 69). This situation has basically stabilized so far. Many university libraries and public libraries announced that science fiction works had a relatively stable borrowing rate, and it was of high proportion.

Science fiction literature is growing in popularity in the cultural industry through its availability both online and in print. It occupies an extremely unique

place in the literary industry. The main characteristic is that it is reproduced in different media formats. In addition to online literature and books, there are other types of cultural products, which will be an important channel for studying the existence, dissemination, and acceptance of science fiction in China.

2. The Power of Capital: The Rise and Dilemma of Science Fiction Films

Online literature and print publishing are the most basic cultural industries, so the rise of science fiction films should be regarded as an updated model of the science fiction industry, of which capital intervention is a very important sign.

Cultural products have become an industry where high commercialization of production and consumption occurs. The cultural product industry also includes capital income, which shows circulation and development in market production (Morawetz 421). Science fiction novels promote the flourishing of science fiction movies, which proves that science fiction literature and its industry have indeed developed rapidly.

2.1 The Rise of Science Fiction Film

In July 2020, the China Film Administration and the China Association for Science and Technology jointly issued “Several Opinions on Promoting the Development of Science Fiction Films,” or “Science Fiction 10 Articles” in short. This is the first document issued in China with regards to the development of the science fiction industry. The China Association for Science and Technology established the “Scientific Communication and Film Office” at the China Science Fiction Convention in November 2020. From the perspective of government administration, the development of science fiction films must be urgently standardized. The capital assets cannot be ignored. In 2019, the cumulative box office earnings from science fictions movies reached 19.51 billion yuan for the Chinese market. Three of this year’s top 10 movies were science fiction movies. Currently, some of the highest grossing movies, such as Marvel’s *The Avengers*, *Ready Player One* and *The Wandering Earth* are stirring consumers’ interest.

Chinese science fiction films are increasingly controlled by capital, and the mode of cooperation between producers and investors is gradually forming and affecting the process of distribution. One of the motivating factors is the growth of high-tech internet companies. They were mainly involved in the promotion and distribution of films but did not participate in film production in the first stage. This is due to a limited financial capacity, and a lack of interest and money in promoting

such major projects like film production. However, with the further development of internet technology in China, some companies, such as Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent have gradually formed their own platforms and collaborated with video-streaming platforms such as iQiyi, Youku, and Bilibili, changing their roles from promotion and distribution for others to content-production for their own platforms. These companies have set up platforms for production and explored potential thematic resources for science fiction movies with the advantages of internet companies. After 2017, Chinese internet giants like Tencent and Alibaba began to dominate the science fiction movie industry, moving from production to a new stage of capital operation.

For example, in February 2018, Ali Pictures signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Wanda, a large Chinese real estate company, to acquire a 12.7% share of Wanda for 4.68 billion yuan. After that Alibaba Pictures participated in the investment and production of *The Wandering Earth*, *Star Trek Beyond*, and *Iron Man*, which occupied a prominent position in Chinese science fiction film production. The cooperation of producers and investors has become the main mode of film production.

This model is widely replicated in the production of the most outstanding science fiction films in China. For example, *The Wandering Earth* was jointly produced by China Film Co., Ltd. and Beijing Jingxi Culture & Tourism Co., Ltd. *Crazy Alien* was produced by Huanxi Media Group Limited, which was distributed by Holgos Youth Film, Shannan Film, and Wuxi Baotang Film Co., Ltd. *Shanghai Fortress* was jointly produced and distributed by HS Entertainment Group Incorporated, China Film Co., Ltd., Tianjin North Film Group, United Entertainment Partners, Tencent Pictures and other institutions. *Warriors of Future* was produced by Gravity Pictures and One Cool Pictures. It was released by Jia Ying Film Co., Ltd. *Bleeding Steel* was jointly produced and distributed by Youku and Xiaomi Pictures. *Pathfinder* was produced and distributed by Shanghai Tencent Pictures Cultural Communication Co., Ltd. and Movie Fun Co., Ltd. *Fatal Countdown: Reset* was produced and distributed by New Clues Film, Horgosz Jiaxing Media, Beijing Sparkle Roll Media Corporation.

2.2 The Dilemma of Science Fiction Film

It should be noted that the local science fiction film market is highly concentrated, and an efficient industrial system has yet to be formed. Only a few film and television companies with strong financial background can participate in production and distribution (Toubao Research Institute 23). Therefore, there is still

a long way to go for Chinese science fiction industry to become a strong world wide power with a large scale system. However, the sound development trend indicates that Chinese science fiction films have the potential to improve.

In addition, the rapid development of science fiction film has affected literature, inspiring innumerable writers to participate in the production of films. However, it is still in its inception, filled with many obstacles. Film productions require a clearer division of resources and attaching more importance to the role of science fiction writers.

It is indisputable that all science fiction films are adapted from literary works. This is a process of artistic recreation, and the success of the movie will inevitably promote the science fiction industry. A large number of science fiction writers no longer aim at publishing books or even creating best sellers. Instead, they participate in film creations, like Liu Cixin does. Research shows that among the sample size of one hundred science fiction writers, ninety-two people expressed their expectation that their works could be made into a movie, while fifty-five said it didn't matter to them whether their novels were published or not but preferred it to be a film (Jinjiang Wenxuecheng Co. Ltd. & Ali Pictures 40). For example, *Shanghai Fortress*, written by Jiang Nan, is a bestselling novel published in 2009. However, his goal was not just to write a bestseller, but also rather to put it on the screen (C. Zhong). Vision China Star (HS Entertainment Group Incorporated) and other institutions had begun to prepare for the movie since 2017, but after the film was released, the box office only made 120 million yuan, far less than the film production cost of 360 million yuan, causing huge losses to the producer and distributor (Yao).

Even though the failure of this film at the box office put Chinese science fiction movies in a dilemma, it also allowed for an accumulation of experience. It had an enormous pool of investment capital but a considerable amount of expenditure goes to superstars like Lu Han and Shu Qi. In the end, the process of editing and production was rather rough. The plot was not schematic. The dialogue was absurd. The lighting, setting and special effects were hardly satisfactory. Audiences were disappointed. Several critical articles poured in, and the marketing reputation plummeted. Director Teng Huatao and the author Jiang Nan had to write an article to apologize (Z. Xin).

Funding is indispensable for film projects. The success of science fiction film requires that a lot of money be spent on the adaptation of creative works and top-notch screenwriting. Some praiseworthy works have elaborate storylines that fascinate readers. Care should be taken when adapting a literary work into a film that is limited to 150 minutes. The literary work should be rewritten for the screen,

and dialogue should be refined to avoid clichés. In addition, money should be put into lighting, choreography, beautiful settings, and other visual aspects. As heavy industry films, science fiction films require a particular type of craftsmanship. The fictional scenes should be spectacular, but also tally with general scientific knowledge. It should be an immersive experience for the audience, allowing them to feel the impact of future technology, instead of making crude scenery and thus leaving a bad impression.

Therefore, it is believed that science fiction cinema should not be entirely focused on the star performers. Funds should be allocated to screenwriters and set designers to create a more faithful film adaptation of the original literary works. Selling scripts to filmmakers is no longer the science fiction authors' goal. They also want to play a key role in film creation, writing high-quality scripts with directors, screenwriters, and other creators. Moreover, they should put forward their own suggestions on visual effects, setting, lighting, and special effects. On the other hand, producers and distributors should respect the author and clarify the division of work among the staff. After all, the author is the person who conceives the essence of the film, and therefore should be given more power in the decision-making process so as to promote a collaborative, innovative atmosphere within the creative team.

In short, we should respect science fiction itself, promote science fiction films to a higher degree and help them to get out of this predicament as soon as possible. By doing this, we will enable science fiction film to reach its full potential in a new cultural background rather than simply treating it as a category of cultural industry that is independent of science fiction literature. We should recognize the logical connection between science fiction books and films. Only when science fiction literature develops soundly can movies have a more promising future.

3. Related Cultural Products and Video Games: How to Realize IP in Science Fiction Literature

An important sign of the prosperity of the cultural industry is the diversified expansion of business formats under IP (intellectual property). Related cultural and creative products and video games are important manifestations of science fiction IP empowerment.

3.1 Related Cultural and Creative Products

The main feature of related cultural and creative products is larger IP but

lower cost, among which the most eye-catching is the cultural creative industries surrounding museum gift shops. This kind of product related to literary themes has already existed for a long time, and things like matchbox pictures, stamps, and dolls were popular in the 1980s. However, there is no suitable IP authorization mechanism for them, and they also lack a more healthy and pluralistic mode.

In recent years, with the rapid development of science fiction industries, its related cultural and creative products are also growing. They are mainly produced by publishing houses, literary websites, or cultural companies that undertake the duty of promoting science fiction. One of the most important reasons lies in the convenience of IP authorization. Publishers, as the biggest owners of IP rights, can easily engage in cultural creation. Related cultural and creative products should be an important driving force for the success of print media in the face of fierce competition.

This study has found that Chinese science fiction-related cultural and creative products are mainly as follows. One category features postcards, notebooks, and other products developed by publishing houses for science fiction masterpieces, such as the “Dreaming in the Sea” postcards and “The Wandering Earth” notebooks, developed by Cixin Publishing Group for Liu Cixin’s novels. These goods are sold individually in online stores. The second option for buyers is to buy books with complimentary playing cards, notebooks, and other products. For instance, when Tangjiasanshao’s *Legend of the Dragon King* was sold on dangdang.com, thematic notebooks and card stickers were also given away. The last category is the derivative commodity cooperatively developed by filmmakers and video broadcasting platforms. For instance, the “Art Illustration Collection of *Three Body*” was jointly printed by The Three-Body Cosmos, Future Affairs Administration (FAA), and Hangzhou Senyu Culture Co., Ltd. through crowdfunding. The Three-Body indoor humidifier was designed by the China Film Group Corporation. These commodities mainly create a closer relationship between the audience and works of science fiction through the process of production and dissemination.

These products reflect that the Chinese science fiction industry is in a state of rapid growth, and that the potential of IP empowerment is increasing. Compared to other cultural products, the IP potential for literary works is relatively rich, which is very suitable for the development of cultural and creative products. According to the statistics of this study, these kinds of products have included more than 50 influential science fiction books, and the number of goods has exceeded 200. This number is not huge, but it includes a wide range of products that have laid an important foundation for the development of cultural and creative products.

3.2 Video Games

Compared to related cultural and creative products, science fiction video games are more distinctive. Operating under the category of science fiction, they require the same roles and graphical framework. Currently, Chinese science fiction games have played a positive role in the world. They have become an important domain for many science fiction writers, allowing them to achieve self-fulfillment. It is recognized that science fiction games include both computer games and mobile games.

As early as 2015, the online game *Thunder Fighter*, developed by Tencent, announced that it would cooperate with Liu Cixin. He would participate in the game's development as one of the designers and also write a new story entitled "The Story of Thunder Fighter." In 2019, ZLONGAME, one of the largest Chinese game companies in Beijing, developed the *Second Galaxy* mobile game. Several writers were involved in writing the script. It has amassed a great deal of attention since the game went live, with as many as one million registered users. This game is as much a science fiction masterpiece as the *Three Body Problem*.

Light-Driven Sailing, a science fiction game developed in China, was launched in early 2021 and is one of the country's top downloads. This game is widely regarded as an excellent example of interactive science fiction. In addition to the core game play, the game also has a complete worldview setting as well as alternative storylines. Its behind-the-scenes team includes several avant-garde science fiction writers and illustrators. Strictly speaking, science fiction video games cannot be equated with science fiction literature in the traditional sense, but taking into consideration the overall developmental trends of science fiction in China, they share common traits. They include plot, narration, and interpretability. More and more science fiction writers have begun to participate in the design and development of science fiction games. This indicates that games will become a larger component of the science fiction industry.

In the internet era, the scope of gaming has been constantly expanding. The boundaries between the games and their printed counterparts have gradually begun to blur and they infiltrate each other. The direction of the plot and the ending of the story have seemingly been handed over to the game player. It is notable that the game player is invited into the text creation directly and participates in the process of writing.

Haruki Murakami contends that games may serve as the most suitable genre for literature (Wray and Murakami 13). In the view of some radical cultural researchers, video games are another form of literary texts. Because of the empowerment

of science fiction IP between electronic games and literary texts, an interplay mechanism has been formed. The core of this mechanism is the self-construction of human ideology (Lu and Li 59-60). In fact, video games are independent and can be seen as deconstructed poetics. This not only completes the self-construction, but also forms a synchronous narrative. Moreover, video games have formed a new paradigm in which we anticipate further theoretical research.

These two kinds of cultural products related to Chinese science fiction are in their infancy at present. Compared to world powers like the United States, there is still a considerable gap. The cultural industry is in a weak position, judging from industrial volume, added value, and social influence. However, there are noteworthy products empowered by science fiction IP, and they have high economic added value. In the future, products and video games should be given sufficient attention.

4. Science Fiction Tourism: Real Space Reconstruction by Commercialized Imagination

In 2018, the Ministry of Culture and the National Tourism Administration were combined to form the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China. The integration of culture and tourism has gradually penetrated China's cultural industry. It has become a new form of the Chinese cultural industry. In fact, tourism is the most attractive industry in the field of science fiction.

Science fiction tourism is science fiction industry based on tourist projects. It is broadly categorized into three types. The first is projects built around themes of science fiction themes, such as the Parallel Universe exhibited at the China Science and Technology Museum. The second is resorts and children's playgrounds based on science fiction stories, such as the Guizhou Oriental Science Fiction Valley Theme Park and the Jianyang Science Fiction Town which is still under construction. The last is the travel routes from canonized stories specially customized by some travel companies for science fiction fans, such as the Xichang Satellite Launch Site and the Lenghu Mars Camp. These three kinds of tourism generally cover the current science fiction destinations, and they are in varying degrees of development in China.

These types of tourism are essentially a reshaping of real space according to commercialized imagination. Thus, they transform the concepts embodied in the text into a reality that can be experienced through the senses. Some argue that this deconstructs the core of science fiction, namely, imagination. For the creation of science fiction, fertile imagination is necessary to be imbued with novelty and pleasure. In China, this is mainly reflected in the following three aspects.

4.1 Construction of Real Space Based on Commercialized Imagination

At present, one characteristic of science fiction tourism is that the virtual scene is realized and real space is constructed via the commercialized imagination. The scene, as a medium to obtain information, should be considered as an extension of the human being (McLuhan 2-3). Therefore, the spectacle offered is a kind of fantasy information medium based on science fiction, but this imagination is commercialized and has cultural traits.

When commercialized imagination constructs real space, it does so with respect to current trends of consumerism. For instance, during the construction of Jianyang Science Fiction Town, the magazine *Science Fiction World* selected the most popular science fiction stories, such as *Three-Body Problem* and *Folding Beijing*, and put forward ideas for IP realization. This case will obviously pique the interest of writers and inspire them to create better content. At the same time, it will also allow more people, possibly including non-science fiction fans, to understand this genre and to kindle interest in it.

4.2 Utopian Presentation of Literary Texts

For a long time, people have argued that science fiction is a sort of imagination because it does not exist in real life. Its most obvious features is that it is fictional and is disconnected from real life. Unlike most literary works, it is not based on history or real life, but on the imagination of basic scientific principles. Science fiction tourism is a way of re-imagining the text. Neither theme parks nor distinctive towns truly realize the imagination of the science fiction stories, and they are more of a realistic fiction.

Literary text and tourism are different fictional types, but they are substantially utopian presentations. Tourism is the utopian presentation of the literary text. Utopia is a textually or non-textually imaginary world because the text is the vehicle of imagination. The growth of science fiction projects along with tourist participation has been gradually proposed recently. For example, the background of the Guizhou Oriental Science Fiction Valley Theme Park is universal civilization and adopts the striking setting created by *The Wandering Earth*, *The Three-Body Problem*, and *Star Wars*. Science fiction fans immerse themselves in an imaginary world drawing on cutting-edge technology like virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence (AI). Their experiences provide them with the possibility of rewriting literary texts. This program is similar to video games but more realistic, providing consumers with a utopian outlook on reality.

4.3 Reaching the Scene of “Super Imagination” through Immersive Experience

Aesthetically, the acceptance of literary works occurs because people can enter a world that is completely virtual and exists in ideology. Therefore, literary appreciation is a purely ideological activity. Compared with reading, tourism is an immersive experience. The spectacle is not imaginary but super-imaginary which reconstructs the content of imagination.

At present, most of the science fiction destinations are based on the literary works, such as *The Wandering Earth* and *Three-Body Problem*, or the Lenghu Mars Camp that is closely associated with science fiction novels. These resorts provide the possibility of an immersive experience for tourists; but at the same time, they also reconstruct the imagination of science fiction stories and form the scene of super-imagination. This offers participants with a different view of the original works, which inspires consumers’ passion for science fiction.

Science fiction tourism constitutes a reshaping of the real space according to the commercialized imagination and enhances the development of China’s science fiction industry. Although it is in its initial stages, most projects are profitable businesses, because science fiction tourism is consistent with major national strategies such as targeted poverty alleviation, construction of distinctive towns, new infrastructure, and internal circulation. Therefore, China’s science fiction tourism industry is promising. This study has found that there are thirty-eight projects still under construction in China, and there are thirty projects in which the investment capital is more than 100 million yuan. The real budget may be far more than what we know. The scale of tourism may exceed that of the movies and be a considerable component of the Chinese science fiction industry.

5. Conclusion: Chinese Science Fiction Needs Imagination and Market

When it comes to market share in China, no other literary genre has exceeded science fiction. This ancient country has embraced globalization, which is inspiring the imagination of writers. Their imagination is no longer the same as the writers who lived over a century ago and dreamed of a life free from poverty. They believed this freedom would be possible due to powerful future technologies. Current writers can now give full play to their imagination beyond the bondage of time and construct a variety of romantic and magical connections between the universe and the earth. However, we should realize that its essence is still commercial imagination, which is the premise of further study of the Chinese science fiction industry.

Firstly, commercialized imagination drives the development of science fiction industries, which will become an important cultural commodity that affects the children of the next generation. Though there is nationalism in *The Wandering Earth*, this film discusses how China can become the new Messiah. *Folding Beijing* illustrates social issues in China and criticizes the maladies of the city. Chinese science fiction, like other cultural products, tends to cultivate the values of a generation and pique their interest in history, culture, and the future of their country.

Moreover, commercialized imagination provides an important market for science fiction practitioners. The rapidly growing industry continually generates opportunities for them to become world-class science fiction writers. Chinese science fiction, therefore, needs imagination and market. A higher income can stimulate writers' imaginations, and they can participate in cultural creative activities. These activities can be done in a variety of ways, thus mutually stimulating markets and imaginations.

Chinese science fiction has played an important role in world literature. It has not received any governmental support or funding, unlike other literary subject matter, like war or history. It relies solely on the market. Many talented science fiction writers have yet to gain recognition. Even the Mao Dun Literature Award, the most authoritative award for Chinese novel, has never been awarded to a science fiction writer before. Nevertheless, there are hundreds of thousands of science fiction novels in China, something unprecedented in the history of Chinese literature since 1949.

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