

# Science fiction essay sample

[Environment](#), [Disaster](#)



## **Science Fiction between 1900 and 1960s**

According to McGraw-Hill (2001), “ between the year 1900 and the 1960s, science fiction was greatly influenced by the hopes, fears and concerns associated with the social and political changes that took place across the world” (p. 24). For example, many nations in the world were struggling with liberations from colonialism and wars had ensued in many parts of the world. Also, there were various changes that occurred in intellectual and spiritual aspects that were associated with social transformations. Some scholars tackled issues to do with gothic mystery, pessimistic visions, and apocalyptic visions in a bid to expound on issues of social and political changes that were occurring at around that time. “ In the early 1900s, many novels were written concerning positive promises of social progress and the unknown world of tomorrow” (McGraw-Hill, 2001, p. 32). Authors looked at the future with hope of advancements due to the social changes that were happening. For example, *Looking Backward* by Edward Bellamy was a novel that depicted a person who traveled to the year 2000 from 1900, whereby he gives a personal experience of the significant social changes that were taking place in the ‘ future’. This shows that social systems had given most people hope for the future such that authors decided to use the hope as a positive or uplifting basis for their science fiction stories. However, science fiction was also used to depict risks and concerns that were associated with social and political changes. This was done by the use of frightening encounters in the science fiction stories since many people had concerns about disaster and evil that held a possibility for the future. Another example of social influence on science fiction is the production of *Through the Eye of*

the Needle (1907) by Howells, whereby he produced the element of ethical socialism concerning Christianity and the American constitution aspects. Also, Walter Miller's A Canticle for Leibowitz was written in 1950 with the central theme of nuclear war and its expected impact. In this novel, Miller analyzed the consequences of an atomic bomb in various aspects such as religion, philosophy and spiritual categories. This drive had been caused by the creation of nuclear weapons by the major super powers such as America and Russia, and the associated fear that the two superpowers were not good allies. McGraw-Hill (2001) postulates that, " the issue caused fear and concerns for the future of the world, since people knew the consequences of a nuclear war" (p. 37).

### **That Only a Mother by Judith Merrill**

Science fiction and fantasy works are usually known for their escapism and entertainment value. However, it is important to note that these works are more than just fun. In some instances it is used to denote a mental diversion, usually as an escape from unpleasant aspects of life in a way that helps people to relieve depression and sadness in their lives. " Most of the science fiction materials allow people to get out of their problems of daily lives without offering ways that can improve people's condition in real life" (McGraw-Hill, 2001, p. 67). Taking an example of ' That Only a Mother' by Judith Merrill, one can see that the author brought out the aspects of the human condition. In the text, Merrill considered certain aspects of social, personal and cultural contexts of being human. She does this through the coverage of various aspects such as meaning of life, inevitability of separation and the fear of death. In her text, Merrill bases her arguments on

post war II stories, gender ideologies and man's role in nuclear war. The story was written in the year 1948, and the setting would take place 5 years into the future. The World War II had brought about the use of nuclear weapons that resulted in radiation poisoning among the people. The effect of nuclear bombing was seen in young children, whereby most of the pregnant mothers of the time gave birth to mutated children. The story has been written in the form of letters that were sent by a pregnant woman named Margaret, who was pregnant, to her husband called Hank.

Inevitable separation is brought about by the long distance between Margaret and her husband during the World War II. The couple had already decided to start a family but they ended up separated, leading to a lonely life led by Margaret, coupled with fears of uncertainties between them. The story portrays Margaret as a woman who really wants her daughter to be normal even when she knows that a majority of children born during the post-World War II are deformed. It brings to a reader's attention the love that a mother holds for her babies, and how a baby gives a woman meaning to life (McGraw-Hill, 2001). The text gives people a great perspective and opportunity to explore the human condition. The author provides some commendable psycho social aspects of strange stimuli through the issues of war and womankind. Man is seen as the initiator of the nuclear war that would affect their own offspring in a very strange way. Hank was a lieutenant, meaning that he was also involved in the same war that caused his own daughter to be mutated. Also, people have different ways of dealing with issues since they all hold different opinions about various situations that they find themselves in. For example, Margaret lived in denial about her

daughter's condition, and she did not even realize that her daughter was mutated since she wanted to believe that she was a normal baby. However, Hank held different beliefs about his daughter, and he felt that a girl who had no legs or arms should not be allowed to live. This made him kill his own daughter, bringing in the issue of immortality.

## **Deep Impact Film**

Deep Impact cannot be termed as just another science fiction thriller, since it offers more realities than most of the other Hollywood science-fiction films (McGraw-Hill, 2001). Deep impact is a film that has been associated with a significant scientific credibility. The film was produced in the year 1998. It was based on an attempt to prepare for a comet that was to collide with the Earth, in order to avert the consequences of a mass extinction. Deep impact showed more realistic science as compared to other films and novels depicting science fiction at that time. This film had some elements that did not seem to go well with truth of science. There were episodes in the film that depicted real happenings, and most of them could be supported by scientific evidences. For example, the manner in which the government responded to the issue of disaster management and mitigation seemed so real unlike other stories that depict science fiction. The other episode that looked quite real is the one where the reporter showed a close relationship with his family and friends. The Deep impact did not concentrate on too much fiction such as aliens or genetic mutations (McGraw-Hill, 2001). In the earlier years, most of science fiction stories concentrated with such issues as space and time travel, genetic mutations and supernatural powers. The film only emphasized on how people were responding to the fear of destruction

and extinction. Another difference of the deep impact as compared to other science fiction stories is that this film emphasized on real human emotions as they reacted towards the impending doom.

Deep impact can have great value in terms of representing recurring science fiction themes and archetypes. Science and technology have been playing a major role in forming the roots of science fiction. In this film, the director succeeded in representing advancements in technology and science in the current world (McGraw-Hill, 2001). It depicted the kind of advancements that United States and Russia had been making in the nuclear field and astronomy. Over the years, many scientists have attempted to understand the universe as it is, while trying to come up with theories that can explain the role of the universe. In the earlier years, authors and film-makers had been trying to come up with themes that were closely related to the astronomy and nuclear advancements. The preceding works had been used to denote man's discovery of the universe as a whole, and nuclear advancements in the two super powers (Russia and the United States). However, the preceding works had emphasized on the negative use of nuclear weapons among the people while the Deep Impact showed the positive use of nuclear energy to protect the humankind. Also, the exploration of the universe had been limited to the other planets such as Mars or other universe objects such as moon, while in the Deep Impact, the film did not consider explorations; rather, it considered the possible impact of a comet on the Earth. McGraw-Hill (2001) found that “ most of the measurements used in the Deep Impact and the corresponding collision and diversion of the comet are all possible occurrences” (p. 73).

## **Reference**

McGraw-Hill, G. (2001). Decades of Science Fiction. Lincolnwood, Illinois: NTC  
Pub. Group. Pp. 2+