

TIME TRAVELING CONTRADICTION IN LIGHT OF GRANDFATHER PARADOX IN THE FILM X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

Tualha Bin Nasir

M.Phil. Scholar, Riphah International University (RIU), Lahore

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Corresponding Author: *

Tualha Bin Nasir

Abstract

Time traveling is an important aspect of the present-day world literature, particularly the cinematic manifestations. However, its practicality and logical understanding have always remained questionable within the boundaries of the laws of physics. To answer this, science has come with the idea of possible casual loops or temporal paradoxes comprising of bootstrap, consistency, and Newcomb's paradoxes in case of actual time travel through theoretical assumptions. Later, these paradoxes have paved way for further research. These paradoxes have helped with the considered understanding of possible time travel phenomena and its implications for the practical usage if it becomes possible and use of this phenomenon in fiction. In the same manner, this research will analyse the film X-Men Days of Future Past through the idea of "Alter Ego" by Hugo Gernsback in the field of Grandfather Paradox which is part of consistency paradoxes and studies the effect of time travel activity on space and time continuum. To do so, the actions and dialogues in the film are used to understand and analyses the possible logical flow of space and time continuum with the possible outcome for the altered timeline and find the contractions as per the law of casualty. In doing so, the concept of alter ego is given the central focus for the construction of the new timeline through positivism paradigm. After the analysis, the study concludes that the resulting new timeline presented in the film is not accurate to the events in the alerted timeline but rather a sugar-coated utopian fairy tale ending through Deus ex Machina in violation of the laws of physics.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Time travel is an important phenomenon in literature since the start of the 19th century (Nahin, 2011). At the same time has faced various criticisms due to the absence of any practical example. Among these criticisms, rose various time-traveling paradoxes (Lobo & Crawford, 2003). These paradoxes have allowed people to understand the intended and logical flow of the story (Lobo & Crawford, 2003). While these provide a basis for time-traveling stories; their absence and rejection in a story too is a reason to concern. The film X-Men: Days of the Future Past directed by Bryan

Singer is one such movie that includes time travel and yet the paradox is absent in it.

Statement of Problem

Time travel creates a ripple in the flow of time and in the already existing timeline. (Long, 2003) This ripple is almost impossible to trace and yet can be anticipated as per different events and the nature of characters. The film under consideration includes time travel and concerns with timeline alteration but seems to have missed a number of events. The paper

is meant to cover these events and provide the required outcome of the time-traveling actions.

Significance

Time traveling has always been a problem for common understanding. (Nahin, 2011). This paper is meant to provide this understanding for its reader. It will also try to answer the contradiction of the story represented in the film from the actual possible outcome of the time-traveling activity.

This study will also provide a basis for future application of the paradoxes for easier understanding of the phenomenon.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to highlight the contradiction in the film as per the possible progress of an altered story timeline. It compares all the elements, characters, their choices, whereabouts, and resulting outcome from all those things.

Research Question

This research paper will try to answer these questions:

- What are the contradictions in the case it does not?
- What will the logical outcome of the story progression after time traveling activity?

Hypothesis

The film deserves a different ending from the one presented in the film due to the contradictions it has with the time continuum.

Definition of Terms

In addition to the term “grandfather paradox”, the research will include causality; which is the fact that every outcome requires some reason behind it.

Limitation

This study of contraction in the timeline continuum is only applicable to the film concerned. It cannot be generalized that all other film faces contractions like this one.

Delimitation

The research will only include the characters in the film; characters absent from the course of the film will not be considered for the analysis. Only the ones

taking part in the action and interaction are used for the analysis

Summary

This chapter discusses contractions about the time continuum in the film X-Men: Days of Future Past. The analysis includes characters involved in the progression of the story to find contradictions and formulate the intended outcome.

Review of Literature

Time traveling has been an issue of fantasy and science fiction literature (Beare, 1996). But ever since the idea of travel is presented in The Time Machine by H. G. Wells, the right possible time traveling and its accurate outcome has been an issue of discussion (Smart, 1963). This is primarily due to the fact that there has been no practical time-traveling only speculations about some possible time-traveling activities. The idea primarily begins with the publishing of “The Time Machine”, also the term coined with it (Pilkington, 2017). Later the idea of scientifically accurate time traveling is argued throughout through theory, short stories, novellas, novels, and films. All of these ideas are set around causality.

Mainly it has given way to different paradoxes about the timeline, display of the list of events in chronological order as in Rosenberg and Grafton (2013). These paradoxes include; the predestination paradox time travelling activity becomes part of the past and the resulting outcome is the same, bootstrap paradox a person or an object goes back in time and results in an infinite loop due to its existence without any concrete origin also called an ontological paradox, grandfather paradox traveling to the past and disturbing your own line come with either timeline protection hypothesis or multiple universe hypothesis, let's kill Hitler paradox carry out some deed in the past that leads to elimination of the purpose, and Polchinski's paradox you go back in time and affect your action in the past to a great extent but no completely. These paradoxes have been effectively discussed in science fiction research such as William Burling discusses variants of time dislocation form and time contrast form (2006), Bradley Monton (2009), and David Lewis (1976). Deutsch and Lockwood (1994) take a look at time traveling through

the laws of Quantum Physics. William Grey discusses these as problems with time traveling (1999). While Alasdair Richmond (2001) and Algis Mickūnas (2015) view it through the philosophy of time travel. Valaris and Michael (2015) discuss time travel with respect to endurantism.

Developing understanding has reached as far as the new media literature (SU, 2016). Later as time traveling is employed in films, researchers turn to study it respectively (Verhoeff, 2006), (Bruckner, 2015), (Joshua, 2016). These researches provide the basis for the current paper.

Methodology

Research Design

This study will study the series of events in the past timeline to determine the possible outcome in the future. All the events and character choices will be considered to understand the timeline and its working.

Research Paradigm

The study will consider positivism as the research paradigm. All the events will be considered as objective reality and no alternative reality will be taken into consideration. The researcher will stay isolated from the research. Individuals and their abilities will be considered as tools to understand the possible choices made by them. While the flow will be on the basis of the law of causality.

Research Framework

The research will follow the concept of “alter ego” from the article Hugo Gernsback’s Flowers First and Then Flaws, (Gernsback, 1927) to access the story and find the rightful timeline and flow of time. It will consider the tempering in the original flow and compile the final outcome after the time-traveling activity.

Research Approach

All the present characters and references to absent characters will provide the necessary understanding and information about the story. Hence, every dialogue, and gesture will be considered for the research.

Data Collection

The directed, acted, and performed story in the film, that was released in 2014, will be considered as the data. This includes locations, objects, individuals, individual capacities and subtitles of the film. All these will be used for the analysis in the research.

Data Analysis Method

Data analysis will be qualitative in nature. Dialogues and actions will be considered to explain the phenomenon of timeline change in the story. Although data include numerals for timelines but they do not play influential role in the analysis.

Discussion

The film stands as both the future and super future of the previous instalment X-Men First Class. The future which is the past in the film is set in 1973 while the super future which is present in the film is set in 2023. The present timeline (old present) presents a war between humans and mutants while sentinels carry out fighting for the humans. The mutants have been pushed to the edge of extinction where the X-men and brotherhood of mutants join forces to put the sentinel threat off for good. To achieve this outcome, they send someone back in time to avert all this from ever happening and create a new 2023. This sort of time travel is mental and Wolverine (Logan), who can heal as fast as the mind rips apart as a result of time travel, is picked for the task. Shadowcat (Kitty) makes it clear that until the process continues Logan will be asleep and the present timeline (old present) & past timeline (new past after alterations) will coexist; and when he will awake, the present (2023) will change as per the altered past (1973) he has had lived during the mental time traveling. While at the end of the film, the (new) present in (new) 2023 is changed to a condition where there is no war and every known mutant is alive. Considering this hypothesis, the discussion will take place.

During Wolverine’s mentally travelled past life, he meets Beast (Hank McCoy), Magneto (Erik Lehnsherr), Professor Xavier (Charles Xavier), and Mystique (Raven) from mutants. Although all of these characters do not meet their alter egos from any other timeline except Professor Xavier and Wolverine, all of them act as alter ego to alter the past and in turn the present. They carry out tasks that are different from

the older past timeline (old 1973). Thus, a new 1973 is born. During this, they carry out these events that could alter the timeline and give way to the new present (new 2023). They carry out these events; Wolverine introduces Quicksilver to Professor Xavier, Magneto is broken out of prison, mutants make their public presence much earlier than in the original old past, Mystique does not kill Trask, an encounter with William Stryker gives Wolverine a glimpse of the alternative timeline, Professor Xavier meets & communicates his future self through Wolverine, Magneto attacks White House and its officials, he pierces rebar in Wolverine's whole body, and Wolverine falls in the hand of Mystique (Raven) instead of original William Stryker.

None of these events are given their concern in the final 2023. Rather the film presents irrelevant outcomes for the story into some made-up ending.

Quicksilver is given no importance in the course of the event. Quicksilver has no role in the new 2023 nor does he find out about this father. While he hints at the connection between him and Magneto at one hour and 25 minutes as it is in comics, animated series, and other representations.

Magneto is freed and that could cause problems for Professor Xavier and X-Men. This too has not to mention throughout the final conclusion neither does there is any mention of any sort of conflicts that X-Men engage at all. Also, there is no mention as such for he is still a convict for President Kennedy's murder.

After the 1973 summit, mutants have become a public entity. This would give everyone the right to have an opinion about mutants and thus shape decisions and life of mutants among other humans. Yet there is no mention of people's opinion in the new 2023 only that the Xavier School is crowded with students.

Trask is imprisoned in the past timeline after the White House incident. But what becomes of him in the long run? 50 years is a long time for anyone to serve their sentence and come with revenge or break jail to take revenge. But like a kid's fairy tale, he is skipped from the actual timeline.

During glimpses, Logan presumably meets his "alter ego" from the old past within his mind. This messes with his mind time travel and severs the connection causing a sort of merger between the two timelines (the older one already existing and the intended one

against the alteration). Since the merger can destroy the alteration and make way for the older existing timeline to remerge, the mind time-traveling connection is realigned. In other words, the connection with the alter ego is severed so that the intended timeline alteration is achieved. Still, the original William Stryker sees Logan's claws and displays a disgust for it. Stryker's this learning goes to waste and has no reference in the new 2023.

Professor Xavier meets his older self in the old present. The older self is much wiser and calm as compared to the younger. Such an encounter could possibly affect the personality development of the younger self. This could result in much faster progress of Professor, X-Men, his school, and his struggle. This could possibly mean revolutionising but there is no such thing in the new 2023.

Magneto attacks the White House and during his fight with Wolverine, he pierces Wolverine's body with rebar from broken columns placed nearby. This piercing causes a great amount of pain for him while his healing is acting to recover. This healing can be seen later when he is taken out of the water. His body has no rebars sticking in and he can move unlike after piercing. Still, it cannot give him adamantium bones and claws in the new 2023 because, in the original experiment in the old timeline, liquid adamantium was injected into his bones through sharp needles. This is also because his healing flushes out the damage rather than absorbing it.

Lastly, after being drowned Logan's body is found by Mystique disguised as William Stryker, who in the old past timeline experimented on Logan. This is quite clear that Mystique does not possess the knowledge as Stryker, thus she cannot carry out the experiment he did in that timeline with his alter ego, thus, Logan cannot have adamantium in his bone in the newly formed present (new 2023). Also, there lies a question, where is the original Stryker?

Next, in the newly formed timeline (new 2023) Logan states that he does not remember what happens after drowning. While after being taken out of the water, he recovers as normally as possible. Thus, the amnesia is unexplained and illogical.

Conclusion

The outcome where everything is perfect and peaceful is not the possible outcome of the mind time

traveling. Quicksilver is ignored in the final outcome. There is no mention of Magneto and Mystique's fate. Normal humans' attitude toward the mutants has no role in the presented final outcome. Dr. Bolivar Trask is omitted from the story. Despite the encounter with his alter ego is very brief, Logan cannot be the same. In other words, by interacting, he should have destroyed himself; he should not have adamantium claws and his amnesia is not possible, but the film does not present it. Also, Stryker is nowhere to be known like Trask. Xavier should have developed his school. Simply put, the film sugarcoats everything, violates the time continuum and presents a utopia that is not possible as per the events of the film in the mind time traveling. The possible outcome of the new 2023 should include a weak Wolverine, a highly advanced Xavier School for Gifted Children, Magneto & Mystique loners, and Quicksilver at the Xavier School.

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