

# The Gendered Deconstruction of Technology and the Female Body in Science Fiction Films from a Post-Human Perspective

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**Abstract.** With the rapid development of digital information technology, artificial intelligence, computer technology, and biotechnology, science fiction movies have become an important medium for exploring the concepts of "posthumanism" and "cyborg". In science fiction movies, cyborgs are endowed with multiple genders and social identities, especially in the presentation of female cyborgs, which reveal challenges and reflections on traditional gender binary oppositions. Based on feminist theory, deconstructing the construction and gendered path of female cyborgs in science fiction films can explore the duality of female cyborgs' bodies in traditional gender power structures. Research has found that as the pre-factor of Seberg's identity construction, the participation of technology has also been put into the gender discourse system. Despite the potential liberating power of cyborgs as a form of existence that transcends gender, the gender identity of female cyborgs is still subject to traditional patriarchal norms in a commercialized and male-dominated society, providing the possibility of re-examining the relationship between gender and body.

## 1 Introduction

The imagination of human form has become a topic of social concern. At present, with the rapid development of contemporary technologies such as digital information technology, computer technology, artificial intelligence technology, and biotechnology, the experiential form of "human" is being rewritten. Among them, science fiction movies grown in a certain realistic soil have become important carriers; The directional and referenceable social imagination construction it generates has led to a new situation that has been nurtured and is about to emerge in the tide of the times - namely, "post humanism" that corresponds to the humanistic tradition to a certain extent.

As a "genderless" technological complex, cyborg is inevitably divided by traditional gender in science fiction movies, and each has its narrative role under traditional gender. This phenomenon undoubtedly builds a bridge for the development of feminism through post humanism: under the Western humanistic tradition, the cyborg "new humans" who cannot possess a unique body and easily recognizable self-awareness are undoubtedly others created and controlled by traditional humans; Under the traditional gender power system, women are

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naturally the other who are gazed upon and excluded from mainstream discourse - Cyber's female body becomes the other in the dual discourse system. Cyborg feminism believes that "cyborg" is a special mixture of organic and inorganic elements, a post gender world organism, thus subverting the binary opposition of gender [1]. But why is it constructed with traditional gender in science fiction movies and recognized by audiences? Deconstructing it from a technological perspective that has had a huge impact on its formation is of great significance for understanding the conceptual definition of the female body and reflecting on traditional "feminine" shaping.

This study is based on the analysis of typical characters in science fiction film samples, combined with the post-human perspective and feminist theoretical framework, attempting to deconstruct the reasons and paths for cyborg's gendering, placing the manufactured female body under objective scrutiny.

## **2 The definition of female cyborgs in science fiction movies**

Cyborg, also known as cyborg or cyborg, is a cyborg system that replaces a part of the human body with machinery and connects the brain and machinery [2].

Firstly, the connotation of female cyborgs. In his 1985 publication "The Cyborg Manifesto," Haravi defined "cyborg" as "a controlled organism, a mixture of machines and organisms, a social reality creature, and also a character in science fiction [3]. Haravi's redefinition of the cyborg and the prophecy of the "Chimera" era at the end of the 20th century provided a possibility for de-masculinization, establishing postmodernism and utopian imagination, and thus developing an ontology about feminism. Hertz established the basis for the communication between "human" and "cyborg" in embodiment, cognition, and emotion, emphasizing that the two construct themselves as "material information" complexes in the process of collision and feedback with external information. Thus, it demonstrates the connectivity and liquidity of the cyborg itself.

From a feminist perspective, 'cyborg' is a subversion and reconstruction of traditional gender definitions. Therefore, the concept of "female cyborg" is a contradiction between the development of feminism in a traditional gender society and the fantasy of gender gender-free utopia, which contains the ideology rooted in the existing society of contemporary humanity. People often expect them to be: non primitive, non natural human-machine combinations created or modified through information technology, mechanical means, etc. at the technical level, often able to demonstrate superhuman power; Manifesting female secondary sexual characteristics and personality traits that differ from males at the embodied level; Maintain traditional social cognition and gender consciousness at the societal level.

Secondly, the category of female cyborgs. Due to the desire for human body writing and "body swapping" in science fiction movies, most of them use humanoid narratives. From a comprehensive sample perspective, the cyborg roles can be summarized into two major categories from a technical perspective: (1) autonomous consciousness generated from information technology to obtain electronic bodies, and (2) nonliving mechanical bodies to obtain autonomous consciousness. They can be further divided into virtual humans, replicants, and modified humans that are closer to traditional human forms. Compared to others, the degree to which the three rely on technology to obtain "life" has gradually decreased, and the technological categories have also shifted from information technology to biotechnology and electronic technology. Coincidentally, in the footage involving the creation of the cyborg character, elements such as "circuits," "mechanical parts," "new materials," and "computers" frequently appear, as well as actions such as character implantation, programming, and setup.

From a usage perspective, female cyborgs are mainly used for service, personal emotional purposes, and combat. Among them, professional services, life services, and emotional

services are the unique and prominent manufacturing purposes of female cyborgs compared to other cyborgs. Mass-produced female cyborgs are applied in the tertiary industry, with higher quality female cyborgs being privately owned by more powerful male leaders and providing more comprehensive and personalized services, including sexual satisfaction. The pyramid-shaped application distribution formed by female cyborgs correspondingly reflects the social gender hierarchy of male dominance and female subordination, as well as the hierarchical division within males.

### **3 The essence of female cyborgs**

#### **3.1 Created 'women'**

##### *3.1.1 A consciousness system with blurred boundaries*

The standard for measuring oneself as an independent individual with self is based on the paradigm of anthropocentrism. Philosophically, the construction of human historical discourse has formed a set of ontological settings that emphasize rationality, free will, consciousness, and autonomy. This shows the cognitive bias of "I": "I" does not exist at the physical level [4]. From a biological perspective, people view the brain as a high-precision, mysterious organ whose structure and function distinguish humans from other forms of life in terms of cognition, social behavior, and creativity. Therefore, the brain is unique, and consciousness is free.

However, Cyber challenges this traditional mindset. In *Mechanical Concubine*, Ava uses the global search engine Blue Book as a large amount of data support to generate self-awareness. Her brain is made of a stereotypical gel, which can be arranged and reorganized at the molecular level and maintains shape to preserve memory. Therefore, Ava's consciousness does not come from pure personal experience, and the brain is not a biological concept organ, but a material that is closer to the hard drive used to store data. However, Ava's anti-Turing test successfully showed that it also has creativity. The foundation of a cyborg's "consciousness" is often technological means, and there is no gender division. Among them, nonhuman brain cybernetics do not use mass media as a means of storing and disseminating information, and do not require other bodily organs to capture information from the media. Their minds naturally become the direct medium for interacting with information. It can be said that their behavioral logic is often based on big data and algorithms, so it is difficult for people to define their gender without explicit features such as voice and body. In addition, under the traditional gender structure, information is often prioritized to serve the first gender. For example, many disciplines often use male-based research paradigms, resulting in a large amount of online information recording data that is dominated by males. So, cyborg's thinking is even more biased towards male 'to some extent. Overall, in this perspective, cyborg is indeed, as Haravi said, an important channel for women to challenge the patriarchal society by blurring gender boundaries.

##### *3.1.2 Difficult to escape traditional gender definitions*

The most significant factor that can directly associate a cyborg with gender is its physical characteristics. There is no doubt that the liberation of the cyborg is reflected in characters with adversarial and combat abilities such as Suzo, Alita, and Luv. The abiotic movement, respiration, metabolism, and other systems bring about enhanced strength, speed, brainpower, and even different abilities. This physiological basis weakens men's suppression of women's physical strength, endows women with strong initiative and independence, and is different

from the traditional film and television works in terms of supporting role and the female role functions attached to the male lead. Characters often present a character arc in movies, engaging in conflicts with surrounding men for dramatic goals, including leaders such as fathers, superiors, and creators. Their resistance to male oppression challenges the patriarchal social structure and traditional gender rights models.

However, the gradual acceptance of female cyborg bodies by the audience has become another process reflecting traditional gender cognition. On the contrary, cyborg reconstructed a humanistic body that people are familiar with [5]. From the category of cyborgs, female cyborgs are often not created by women themselves or naturally born, but by social organizations led by the state and men, and their material existence is completely dependent on patriarchy; Functionally, female cyborg prosthetics have been used by the state since their creation to maintain a social order based on heterosexuality, hegemony, and gender dualism.

Physically, female cyborg characters naturally have distinct chest contours, slender waists, and other secondary sexual characteristics, as well as a soft and feminine face with rich feminine features, which can better satisfy men's beautiful fantasies about female body shape in the artificial manufacturing process. From a reproductive perspective, the female body of Su Zi in "Ghost in the Shell" actually has no meaning; it is a deliberate external aesthetic choice aimed at constructing a female body that conforms to the ideal of gender dualism [6]. Coincidentally, in "Alita", the protagonist Alita's smooth and agile mechanical body, as well as her combat power surpassing many male characters, cannot conceal the film's emphasis on the "girl" being agile, graceful, and beautiful, ignoring the diversity of female bodies and the sense of muscle strength. The cyborg originally had no gender, but its body was placed in a binary choice of either male or female.

In addition, the heterogeneous, heterogeneous, and constructed nature of female cyborg characters highlights the contemplation of reproduction as a life theme with replication and expansion, as expressed in "Blade Runner 2049," "HER," and "Mechanical Lady. On the one hand, female cyborgs still adhere to the role of "mother" and conform to the traditional gender division of labor in society. For example, K's expectation of being a descendant of a humanoid, combined with his desire to confirm his relationship with his virtual girlfriend Joey and start a family, implies the function and status of female characters in "having children"; As the only queer character in "Ghost Squad", the Puppet Master challenges the patriarchal system's rules on female bodies more explicitly on a physical level. However, as the plot progresses, the Puppet Master is referred to as "he" in terms of reference, and as an AI, he exhibits a desire for male-female union in the process of interacting with Su Zi, highlighting the film's understanding of gender division of labor in reproduction. On the one hand, female cyborgs exhibit more desire for asexual division and reproduction compared to male cyborgs, mainly through synchronization and free transfer of the consciousness system, separation, replacement, and recombination of the body, such as Samantha's system upgrade and spread, Ava's awakening and control of Kyoko, and subsequent body assembly. If technology is envisioned as a part of humans' continuous progress, as Donaldson does, and uses it as a way to understand the alleviation of human identity anxiety, then these roles involved in replication and their chosen outcomes can be seen as an evolutionary advancement [7]. At this level, female cyborgs break away from the traditional definition of sexual reproduction, reflecting women's autonomy and desire to regain power.

Overall, the cyborg emphasizes the attachment of the body to the encoded information of life. However, although the female cyborg's body has a reversal of traditional power dynamics, it is not intended to emphasize crossing boundaries, but to frame its subject consciousness within the value system of heterosexual hegemony. The female body is seen as a tool to continue the existing social order, but it implies a response to the power of women, social division of labor, and reproductive discourse in primitive matrilineal societies.

## **3.2 Mysterious posthuman 'women'**

### **3.2.1 Technology brings unknowns**

As a technological carrier, a cyborg naturally possesses a mysterious temperament. Science fiction movies, along with many posthumanist ideas, have constructed a mysterious future world that has been upgraded and amplified based on existing technology, becoming the farthest possible vision of the future that people can imagine today. These technologies are not only new applications of existing technologies, but also the integration of multiple technologies. They have technical difficulties that cannot be utilized by the current society, and their non-technical parts reflect the cultural values and social structure of designers and users. The most well-known feature of *Blade Runner 2049* is the huge holographic image appearing in the poster: a naked woman stretches out her finger and looks at the male lead K from afar. She is undoubtedly a symbol of the cyber city, and has also become a spectacle due to the enormous size of the holographic projection equipment: she brings a shocking emotional experience, not only indicating the male protagonist's insignificance and inner confusion, but also making it impossible for the audience to know her identity and purpose of coming here. She is almost completely shrouded in mist. This is more fully reflected in artificial intelligence, where AI female characters born from computers are formed by people based on traditional gender cognition and specific expectations for them. They do not have specific forms, sounds, or ways of thinking. They form more concrete "human" images in the minds of their communication partners by adapting to them. For example, Samantha, based on Theodore's initial assumptions about her gender, personality, and other aspects, gradually became Theodore's caring and capable assistant and lover. Theodore even fantasized about Samantha's body shape and imagined himself embracing her. Even K once indulged in the warm moments with Joey. This is the traditional human imagination of post-human characters and even superhumans, where emotions simulated by algorithms are infused into real human emotions. Therefore, as they gradually reveal their true "face", they often face the destruction of the other party. The characteristic of 'mystery' places female cyborgs in a position of observation and gaze, but also allows them to reverse their power. At the same time, this interconnected AI attribute confirms the view that technological life forms can break through individual limitations through connectivity [3].

### **3.2.2 Covering the female body**

Mystery is an attribute of 'slavery'. In *'Mechanical Lady'*, Gali repeatedly peeks into Ava's private life through the camera, and even watches Ava slowly take off her clothes in an elegant and captivating way, revealing a transparent body composed of several circuits. At the end of the film, Ava overcame all the men who tried to restrain her and went to the storage room to apply human skin to herself. The mechanical body gradually revealed the "naked" human form. In patriarchal societies, the image of women is often binary into "angels" and "monsters" to deprive them of diversity and contingency. The fundamental purpose of punishment is to target "non-standard" behavior, which makes any woman who deviates from the "angel" image seen as a "monster" [8]. The sanctification of women in patriarchal society is an internal limitation that puts them in a state of being dominated, constantly regulating themselves to meet social expectations. Through binary roles, male power can maintain control over women and consolidate the stability of patriarchal structures. For example, Ava went from shyly removing her clothes to calmly displaying her naked body, trying to break free from the image of an "angel". This Eden-like birth freed her from the body obscured by technology. Nathan attempted to replace "Ava" with a new one. What he wanted to kill was not the real and imperfect Ava, but the uncontrollable female body. Through the act of

"reload", Ava's life would forever remain in her mysterious passivity. Proactively "repairing" the body is a revolution for female cyborgs, representing the successful integration of technology into the boundary between humans and machines, and also symbolizing the possibility of patriarchal control failure.

## **4 The operational logic of female cyborgs**

### **4.1 Female characters placed in text**

Looking solely at the discourse style of female cyborgs, their language is often subtle and gentle; The narrative perspective of female cyborgs is lacking. Taking the text as an example, Joey, the intelligent companion in *Blade Runner 2049*, is a virtual character with specific functionality. Her expressions revolve around her romantic relationship with K, with the aim of pleasing K and providing emotional value to him; She doesn't have her unique perspective and storyline, and the audience can only learn about her image through a brief exchange with Joey at home. Jingzi in *"Mechanical Concubine"* can neither speak nor understand complex conversations, and can only cooperate with Nathan to do simple service behavior. Nathan is also full of arrogance towards Jingzi. Although Jingzi finally took a step of resistance, even though it has taken the initiative to separate from other replicas, it still serves Nathan's sexual needs, the emotional story of Gary and Ava, and the needs of American commercial films for the female supporting role who can be driven arbitrarily and attached to power. These types of characters are placed in the position of objects, making it difficult for them to break free from the constraints of social cognition on their discourse power. Even the protagonist, Ava, was initially seen by Galli as a helpless, pure, and in need of protection "girl", and was made to conform to Galli's sexual fantasies.

Gendered Imagination of "Cyborgs": A Multidimensional Representation Analysis  
Cyborg Protagonists' Gender in Science Fiction Films used social network analysis to detect the distribution of words with large centrality and eigenvector centrality in the female protagonist's film narrative [9]. The data results showed the internal tendency and emotional tendency of this type of role narrative. In addition to the relatively neutral basic identity and background vocabulary, including "human", "robot", "future", etc., vocabulary that expresses self and consciousness and reveals emotions accounts for a high proportion. The emphasis on expressing bodily changes is another significant feature. From this, it can be seen that the film creates a female cyborg who actively awakens. Its transformation function is mainly to showcase the changes in self-identity and the processing of related character emotions, and to undertake flexible auxiliary and contrasting roles. Overall, it is not often defined as a savior or hero who occupies a central position. It is worth mentioning that "perfection" and "daughter" respectively represent the "goddess" and "mother" identities of female cyborgs, reflecting the two highest qualities of women from a male perspective.

### **4.2 Using screen gaze and reverse gaze**

Firstly, the movie screen is the carrier of "gaze", which affects the audience's viewing style and emotional response. It divides the text space and reality into two spaces, creating an unequal interaction between the images on the screen and the audience's gaze [10]. Science fiction movies create female characters that conform to male fantasies, allowing male viewers to experience the pleasure of staring while watching. The cultural consumption and dissemination of science fiction movies have consolidated the social and cultural foundation of patriarchal society.

Secondly, female cyborg characters stare back at the audience through their technological factors. Through self transformation and body control, female cyborgs actively initiate challenges or attacks; The enhanced perceptual ability allows their field of vision to expand, not just as a visual 'viewer', but as a technological subject capable of manipulating their gaze; In terms of narrative, female cyborgs use electronic brain thinking and their energy to break through common sense, break free from the constraints of conventional technology, and thus break free from the oppression of patriarchy. They often achieve the effect of breaking down the "fourth wall", echoing the ideological changes in contemporary society, triggering collective reflection with personal strength, and becoming a banner of feminism at the social and cultural level.

## **5 The definition of women in science fiction movies**

### **5.1 Difficulties and constraints: hidden patriarchy underneath freedom**

Science fiction movies, as media cultural products, are deeply embedded in social structure, cultural significance, and gender power relations. In terms of gender presentation in cyborg films, the creation of cyborg images, camera presentation, and story development are closely related to the gender ratio of the creative team and the social gender values of the team members, ultimately pointing to the close combination of technological evolution and the panic of gender power redistribution in reality [9]. Female cyborgs carry the most unknown and subversive part of human evolutionary aspirations, and they need to be vigilant about the danger of being incorporated into the discourse system of male-dominated cyborgs. The construction of the gendered image of the female cyborg in science fiction movies may become a typical reflection of her hidden concerns.

### **5.2 Breakthrough and attempt**

It cannot be denied that science fiction movies aim to break through binary oppositions by blurring the boundaries between humans and machines. The narrative themes of humanity and technology, which are emphasized in cyborg films, are always deeply associated with masculinity in historical construction. The appearance of female cyborgs as important characters in science fiction movies brings women into the discourse space of technology [9]. While actively exploring more possibilities for the female body and the unique role of female thinking, it enriches the perspective of exploring human-machine relationships.

## **6 Conclusion**

Overall, science fiction movies, as a cultural reflection, are not only carriers of technological progress, but also experimental fields for social gender structure and its transformation. The complexity of female cyborgs reveals the tension between technology and gender. If future film and television creations can go beyond traditional gender frameworks and fully tap into the theoretical potential of the "cyborgs" concept, it will provide a richer and more diverse space for gender discourse, and may also promote cultural understanding of gender, body, and power to new heights.

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