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İSTANBUL YENİ YÜZYIL ÜNİVERSİTESİ

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI



**FROM CINDERELLA TO CINDER: THE POSTHUMAN REIMAGINING
OF FAIRY TALES IN MARISSA MEYER'S *LUNAR CHRONICLES***

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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

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ÖZET

Bu tez çalışması geleneksel peri masalı *Külkedisi*'nin ve onun Marissa Meyer'in masal ve bilim kurgu eserlerde kadının toplumsal cinsiyet meselelerine odaklanan *Cinder the Lunar Chronicles* başlıklı roman serisinde de görüldüğü gibi siberpunk bilim kurgu türündeki modern anlatımının söylemsel ve tarihsel bir analizini sunmaktadır. Geleneksel masal, genellikle bilim kurgu gibi diğer türlerden etkilendiği için kadın bedenini cinsiyetleştirmeye yönelik sosyal ve kültürel yapıları yeniden oluşturur. Çağdaş post insan eleştirel teorisinin, mevcut cinsiyet tartışmalarına katkıda bulunmak ve özellikle kadın ve siborg kadın bedeni hususunda geleneksel cinsiyet meselelerini tartışmak için önemli olduğu savunulmaktadır. Bu tez çalışmasının temel amacı, yüzlerce yıldır devam eden ve bugün hala aktif olan bir kadın figürü örneğinin ardındaki temel nedenleri ve sosyal yapıları araştırmak ve post insan eleştirel teorisi ile Donna Haraway tarafından ileri sürülen ve Anne Balsamo'nun siborg okumalarıyla geliştirilen siborg öznenen yararlanarak geleneksel peri masalı *Külkedisi*'nin eleştirel bir okumasını yapmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Peri Masalı, Siberpunk, Posthümanizm, Kadın Bedeni, Siborg, Külkedisi

ABSTRACT

This study offers a discursive and historical analysis of the traditional fairy tale of *Cinderella* and its modern retelling in the cyberpunk sci-fi genre as seen in Marissa Meyer's *Cinder the Lunar Chronicles* novel series that focuses on the traditional gendering issue of the female in fairy tale and sci-fi works. The traditional fairy tale usually regenerates social and cultural constructions, mainly those on gendering the female body as influenced by other genres like sci-fi fiction. It is argued that contemporary Posthuman critical theory has been fundamental in contributing to current debates and negotiating the traditional gendering issue, particularly in regard to the female and female cyborg body. The principal objective of this study is to investigate the main reasons and social constructions behind a female image model that lasted for many centuries and is still active today and to criticize the traditional fairy tale of *Cinderella* using posthuman critical theory. Taking advantage of the contemporary critical theory of the Posthuman, and the cyborg subject presented by Donna Haraway and promoted by Anne Balsamo readings on the cyborg, this work seeks to realize its objective.

Key Words: Fairy Tale, Cyberpunk, Posthumanism, Female Body, Cyborg, Cinderella, Cinder

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All my wishes to my dear country (Iraq) hoping it will be glorious again!

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fairy tale criticism has drawn on organic metaphors to recount the fairy-tale state. After the Second World War, this genre was considered lifeless in Germany. However, it was resurrected, like *Red Riding Hood* when she got out of the wolf's stomach. As Guido König stated in 1975, "fairytales can apparently be neither killed nor eradicated" (Joosen, p. 1). The genre suffered many blows with every opponent and skeptic standing up, but many critics proclaimed their support. The rich body of the fairy-tale genre became an attraction and aspiration for many authors who wanted to retell or criticize the genre. The fairy tale has been in constant adaptation throughout the centuries. One of the most famous adaptations is seen in the Science Fiction genre, that has shared elements with its fantasy. This is one of the approaches the genre uses in blending and creating "hybrid genres". Jack Zipes, Jean-Michel Adam and Ute Heidmann explored how the fairy tale merged and obtained certain properties from other literary genres.

The style and structure of traditional fairy tales have been modified and adopted thousands of times in other genres like novelization and picture book adaptation among various literary adaptations. The plots and content of the famous tales have been modified into numerous forms like sequels, prequels and parodies among others. The contemporary retelling of the fairy tale coexists with the traditional versions, and the growing corpus of retellings and criticism help keep the fairy tale alive.

Fairy tale retelling and criticism overlap. Many critics have highlighted this connection. Stephen Benson in his work, *Contemporary Fiction and the Fairy Tale* (2008), stated, “it is fascinating [. . .] to note the extraordinary synchronicity, in the final decades of the twentieth century, of fiction and fairy-tale scholarship. [. . .] The concerns of the fiction are variously and fascinatingly close to those of the scholarship” (Joosen, p. 2). In the last decades of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21th, the fairy tale genre witnessed a remarkable dialectical development by the vast majority of fairy tale writers and critics who have contributed to creative works in all cultural fields.

Many discourses in fiction address the fairy tale genre. This study aims to focus on the variable cultural and social structural elements of the retelling process of the traditional *Cinderella* fairy tale in comparison with its contemporary sci-fi novel, *Cinder: Book One of the Lunar Chronicles* (2012-2015), by Marissa Meyer. One of the knowledge (gaps) addressed is the female cyborg body depiction in literature throughout the ages, and how this female cyborg body is depicted in the latest fairy tale rewriting as seen in Meyer’s posthuman novel series. Of interest is how she re-imagined the traditional *Cinderella* fairy tale into a posthuman cyborg, Cinder, her protagonist. The fairy tale has been the subject of much modern research in cultural, feminist and gender studies for its important impact in creating and moulding personality since childhood. Its amalgamation with other literary genres (such the recent literary blending of sci-fi fiction) has

become an increasingly imperative area in literary criticism to negotiate the long-standing, passive and patriarchal coding in representing the female image.

Additionally, this study analyses the conversion process of fairy-tale elements such as magic, supernatural, sexual politics, cultural codes and gender into a sci-fi cyberpunk posthuman world. It intends to argue against the enduring, traditional notations in literature and, particularly, science fiction writings that encapsulate the female body between only two choices, either to present her as sexually alluring, seductive, innocence and restrained or smart, hyperactive, wicked and a monstrous, destructive female. With a critical eye, this study explores the early texts and records of fairy tales that appeared in history long ago in Eastern civilizations. *The Panchantra*, going back earlier than 576 CE in India, significantly influenced the literary works that followed such as *Thousand and One Nights* and *The Ocean of Story*, which became the building blocks for later fairy tale works in Europe and elsewhere in the world. The main point of debate investigated is the emergence of the fairy tale out of the womb of the fantasy to become a literary genre that influenced many writers to record them from oral folktales and reproduce and blend them with other literary genres such as science fiction. Since literature is a reflection of life, the fairy tale is one of its mirrors reflecting social and cultural norms. In this light, this study highlights the image of the female body presented in the traditional fairy tale of *Cinderella* with the purpose of investigating how this faulty image in literature had retained its

characteristics for so long time. In fact, it still reflects the same image of the female body as sexualized, feminized and gendered) according to traditional patriarchal coding. It investigates how this female body image developed and goes on to explore how the past few centuries have seen a rapid development of fairy tale retellings and reworkings into many literary forms such as the novel genre. Of note, the latest retelling investigated is the traditional *Cinderella* transformed in the posthuman novel series, *Cinder: Book One of the Lunar Chronicles*.

A growing trend in fairy tale studies is seen in the last two decades because the genre contains a rich corpus of information feasible for social and cultural studies, especially topics related to the feminist and gender contemporary fields. For instance, take the analysis of the fairy tale's recent blending with the Queer Theory by Dallas J. Baker, as seen in his study, *Monstrous Fairytales: Towards an Écriture Queer* (2010) that probed fairy tales' endings that punish or eradicate the queer monster. Baker's main concern is how modern writers handle the queer monster in a positive way by informing it with the critical queer theory.

Moreover, the gendering of the cyborg, especially the female cyborg, is a recent topic debated in academia stimulated by feminist critical waves and activists like Dona Haraway, Anne Balsamo, Garfield Benjamin and other authors. In her article, *The Gender of The Cyborg* (2004), Heather Walton presented the sexual politics of contemporary cyborg iconography. She examined the cultural

representations of the posthuman through the cyborg figure. She focused on two key points, first the gains from the *Mechanism of Power*, by analysing the main influential cultural symbols such as the performances and practices of exhilarating, ever-developing technologies. The second key question that Walton speculated on is whether cultural productions can construct a transformative world or not. This article stressed that the metaphors do not unite and stabilize the various philosophical structures; however, when linking them, they produce a high “surge of illumination”.¹

Recent attention has concentrated on the subject of female body gendering in the advanced technological medium; for instance, the gendering of androids, robots and the female cyborg. Yaeri Kim’s article, *In Defense of the Cyborg Woman: Reappraising Anne McCaffrey’s The Ship Who Sang* (2017), criticized the predominantly dystopian tendency in recent sci-fi works. Instead, he promoted that literary authors follow the footsteps of the Golden Age Masters, the literary elite of the past century, in order to investigate a positive potential in the near future, advocating that they present a more compelling picture of a superior alternative reality, where advance technologies really make the world a better place. The need for a positive futuristic world is even more urgent for woman when it comes to gender. Cyborg technologies opened a new world of

¹ Heather Walton, ‘The Gender of the Cyborg’, 33–44.

possibilities as revealed in *The Ship Who Sang*, where gender norms were reviewed to a steady degree instead of being removed or reversed.²

The ultimate failure of much science fiction lies in the fact that it has not been seriously concerned with the future. . . . This has been science fiction's failure as far as women are concerned also.

- Pamela Sargent, "Women in Science Fiction" (1975)

Believing we have all the technology we'll ever need, we seek to draw attention to its destructive side effects. . . . Time for the SF writers to start pulling their weight and supplying big visions that make sense.

- Neal Stephenson, "Innovation Starvation" (2011)

This study criticizes the gender norms of the patriarchal code that have been passed from generation to generation since the dawn of history, and are still present today, offering a chance to rewrite them positively using the cyborg as a woman. These gender norms, especially the gendering of the female, are explicit in the literature; for instance, the notions embedded in the traditional fairy tale of *Cinderella*. This study examines the famous fairy tale and its contemporary retelling in a novel series that incorporates various literary genres. The series seems to urge writers to present the female body in a positive form in their writings, especially in those sci-fi works that deal with alternative realities in the future like Utopia, where women have equal rights with men. The most obvious finding to emerge from the research is that cyborg technologies have been adopted by Haraway and her contemporaries, offering a chance to challenge all the biased sexual politics, gendering norms and other social practices that depict

² Yaeri Kim, 'In Defense of the Cyborg Woman', 35–59.

the female body in an exaggerated feminized way and draw a faulty image of woman for the generations to come.



2: THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 THE ORIGINS OF THE FAIRY TALE

Literature is a reflection of life, and fairy tales are the result of intellectual and psychological accumulations in the mind of man from the beginning of time. As early humans contemplated and reflected upon the phenomena around them in concern and confusion, the fairy tale, among the oldest and earliest forms of literature that humans created, began to emerge. In the ancient world, fairy tales and legends migrated, were recreated, and disseminated around the globe, seemingly communicating without limits. The plot and especially the protagonist of these fairy tales vary from story to story. Often the central character appears in the form of a human being, an animal, or even a plant—sometimes even combined in a single tale. Although many of these tales were only for amusement, others often carry messages of moral significance.

Marina Warner explained in her book *Once Upon a Time* (2014) how the fairy tale circulated when she stated, “Stories slipped across frontiers of culture and language as freely as birds in the air as soon as they first began appearing; fairy tales migrate on soft feet, for borders are invisible to them, no matter how ferociously they are policed by cultural purists” (Warner, p. xv). The swift spread and dissemination of fairy tales around the globe is due to its oral form, because it is easy to communicate and exchange oral narratives. Not bound by any barrier

and passed along from person to person for centuries, these short narrative fairy tales were in the beginning folk tales.

The fairy tale is a short narrative form that people are familiar with because of its shared concerns with the domestic topics of ordinary people. Old and ancient and circulated for many generations, most fairy tales are called “folk tales” and are credited to the “oral traditions” of narrating tales simply because speech comes before writing. In the process of being told and retold these tales began to take on colour and shape, and the oral tradition of folk tales transmitted them to the far corners of the world. The source of these tales is believed to be unknown, for the oral folk tales originated among unlettered, peasant folk, not the educated elite. Fairy tales carry the spirit, insight, and feelings of early people, the accumulated wisdom of many generations embedded and deposited in these tales.³ Nobody was interested in recording the fairy tales, because in the beginning writing had to do with commerce and religion, not literature. Writing was used for temple code writing, and later on, for legal contracts; only then did people start to record literature.

The roots of the fairy tale date back to the “folk tale,” which often includes elements of wonder and myth as a way of understanding these mysterious stories in the absence of scientific facts. The folk tale and the fairy tale became a significant source in the thinking of the people, for these tales and narratives were

³ Marina Warner, *Once upon a Time*, 2016., xvi-xvii

the main instruments of human expression. Early people expressed in these tales their experiences in life and their fear of unknown nations and natural phenomena and thus the folk and fairy tale became a means of emotional and psychological discharge. Not only was the folk tale something that spread rapidly among the people and nations throughout the ages, but also expressed an unusual essence and nature as represented by constant modification and alteration. The folk tale is rooted deep in human history. As a result of the development of society, and through this interaction between the folk tale and society, the tale has become a vessel recording many events of history and has provided supporting references to folk history.

The folk tale narrative tradition is regarded as a general term that embraces multiple forms of tales that derive from an oral tradition, including fairy tales of all kinds—the tales of the Elves, animals, the folk epics, and the moral, educational and adventure tales. A few features are common to the tale and the story, which has sometimes led to a confusion between the two, although it is safe to say that the tale is based on the narrator's temperament, personality and methods of narration, including suspense, description, and persuasion. Therefore, the tale is closer to folklore than to more artistic literature intended for entertainment, teaching, and for presenting human models and social and historical events, as is the case with the novel, which may present a real or

imaginary sequence of events that are in both cases written by and for the literate elite.

Tracing the origin and history of the fairy tale is different from tracing the history of other genres, because these tales predate and lie well outside the tradition of the scientific revolution, which is above all based on observed evidence, and because fairy tales are rooted in oral traditions and not supported by written records of any kind. Ruth B. Bottigheimer explains in her book, *Fairy Tales: A New History* (2009) that the “history of fairy tales is not only built on a flimsy foundation; its very basis requires an absence of evidence” (p. 2). Those who support this theory of the oral origin and transmission of the fairy tale believe that these tales were passed through generations by older women and other people through oral narration. Many of these tales, of course, have monsters and witches in them.

The transmission and dissemination of fairy tales from one society to another led to its evolution and crystallisation in terms of narration, plot, and events, becoming a “simple narrative” that gives the audience a report on the events in this tale in a traditional manner. This straightforward narrative is one of the artistic and literary formations of the fairy tale. Andrea Jolles, in *Simple Forms: Legend, Saga, Myth, Riddle, Saying, Case, Memorabile, Fairytale, Joke*—a 2017 translation of his 1929 original study—elaborated on the structural and narrative forms in literature and the related laws of the fairy tale and describes the form of the “simple narrative” as the cornerstone of storytelling. He explained that this

narrative is an attempt to relate any significant event so that the narrative itself is more significant for the audience sentiment than are the characters who are experiencing this event.⁴ In this sense, the simplicity of the narrative is the primary vehicle for touching the feelings and senses of the audience.

Like Jolles, Vladimir Propp in his 1928 book *Morphology of the Folktale* applies the structuralist approach to literature to define the basic structure of the fairy tale. Propp analyses Russian fairy tales from a structuralist perspective in order to identify the typical structure of these tales, defining 31 basic functions. For example, he describes what he calls “functions of character,” which serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale. The number of functions known to a fairy tale is limited.”⁵ Propp goes on to argue that the events in all fairy tales have the same structure, and these stable and independent elements in the fairy tale are manifested by the characters themselves. For Propp, as for Jolles, the structure and narrative of these tales is far more important than whatever characters happen to inhabit any given story.

Furthermore, Propp claims that there is a “similarity of tales throughout the world,”⁶ asserting that this leads to a unified global history of these tales. Maria Tatar commented on this statement in her book *The Cambridge Companion to*

⁴ André Jolles, *Simple Forms*, 180–86.

⁵ Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 21.

⁶ Propp, 16.

Fairy Tales (2015) that Propp managed to find a common structure between many fairy tales but failed to analyse the changing elements in some of the tales, even though he states that these changing elements give the fairy tales their “brilliance, charm, and beauty.”⁷

Moreover, Propp suggests that there are certain elements that constitute the main elements of these tales that drive the course of action, including Auxiliary Elements for the Interconnection of Functions; Auxiliary Elements in Trebling; and Motivations.⁸

In addition to the fact that both the folk tale and fairy tale have shared roots in oral tradition, they still have differences between them. To begin with, the folk tales differ from the fairy tales in terms of structure and form in that folk tales are a reflection of the social environment of the folk, their reality, beliefs and their audience. The plot is short, and the chain of events is regular and steady, and contains characters who are depicted from the same familiar place and world environment as the audience. As for the popular themes of these stories, they are about farmers, thieves, clergy, husbands and wives, where events take place in a standard plot of stories about the abuse or robbery of someone’s money or property of another, or even the offending of his/her honour. Marital disputes are also among the most common themes of these tales, in which the events chronicle the difficulties and challenges faced by married couples, rather than their

⁷ Maria Tatar, *The Cambridge Companion to Fairy Tales*, 97.

⁸ Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 71–74.

happiness and enjoyment. Notably, the events of the folk tales are easy for the audience to remember as the story narratives and events stem from the conditions of the human being.⁹

The folk tales are considered as the largest part of the oral tradition of the folk of that time and are what depict the normal social life of those folk, such as their struggles and belief systems. Conversely, regarding the characteristics and elements of the fairy tales, they differ from the folk tales in several aspects. For instance, in the realm of fairy tales, the narrative is free from reality and relies more upon mysterious and imaginative adventures in which the narrator modifies real events and things that could happen, into wondrous events woven by his intellectual creativity and speculation. In addition to this, the characters in fairy tales are simplified and abstract regarding details in order to remain far from reality so as to be portrayed as nearly empty from content. These characters live in an abstract, non-sensual world, where they fill their world with magic, wonders, and delinquency to symbolic meaning; for example, the character of the protagonist is pale and has no psychological foundation to feel or sense the bewilderment of what is strange or marvellous, and he always responds to the spirit of the group to which he belongs, and is considered as an interpreter and mirror to express their dreams in general. The wondrous, magical characters in the world of fairy tales are overwhelmed by jinn, witches, and ogres, underworld

⁹ Ruth B. Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 3–4.

realms, and exotic animals. The colours of the fairy realm are delightfully bright and shining, and perhaps one of the most important features is the absence of time and/or dimension where the hero exists...he is magically isolated from time and place where perhaps even his family are, because characters in the fairy world are depicted in a place that seems to exist nowhere, and neither time nor age are known.¹⁰

The sequence of events of any tale in an oral tradition is not as fixed as in written texts, since the narrator of a tale has some leverage and freedom to exercise his or her imagination. The narrator plays the role of both composer and storyteller, sometimes changing and modifying the details of the oral story. The narrator reserves and sustains the oral tradition while practising it.¹¹ The narrator has control over the narrative and is thus an essential component in any telling of the story. The tale will naturally differ from one narrator to another, and therefore no oral tale is ever told in the same way.

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the history and origins of fairy tales. One of the earliest collections of fairy tales is nearly 1500 years ago from India known as the *Panchatantra*. Studies of fairy tales show the importance of India in compiling and documenting the oral folk traditions of the fairy tales into many extensive collections that have been a major influence on world literature.

¹⁰ Fatima Zahra Qawarari et al., 'The Mythical Folk Tale in the Umm Al-Bohaki Region', 11–12.

¹¹ Chandra Rajan, *The Panćatantra*, Kindle Location 399-403.

Formed from old folk tradition and oral folktale narratives, fairy tales captured information for many centuries. One of the oldest collections is found in India, written in “Sanskrit,” an ancient Indian language found in many ancient classical literary works, including poetry and poetic epics. (Many Indian languages have descended from this language in the northern regions of India in particular.) The *Panchatantra* is a significant literary work that contains a large collection of fairy tales that are intended to entertain and teach moral lessons. The original author, collector and editor of the *Panchatantra* is named Viṣṇu Śarma, a skilled writer and legendary figure in Indian literary history who is considered an exceptionally skilful author because of the importance of this work.¹²

Viṣṇu Śarma collected many tales from the ancient oral tradition and recorded them in his exceptional style sometime before the year 570 CE; this work is considered to have significantly influenced the works that followed, and the author to have elevated the fairy tale to higher levels of complexity and distinction, and the *Panchatantra* was imitated by authors and writers throughout the ages. Viṣṇu Śarma, with his immense imagination, established the structure of these tales, including fictional and moral elements.

Johannes Hertel, a German Indianologist, studied the surviving copies of the *Panchatantra* and found that there are more than 200 versions of the collection, which have been translated into 50 languages, most of which are not common to

¹² Chandra Rajan, Kindle Locations 215-227.

India. Through these translations, the *Panchatantra* was transmitted from its native land to the world beyond India, beginning as early as the 1st century CE. This literary masterpiece began to spread into the surrounding regions, and a copy of the *Panchatantra* has been found translated during the reign of emperor Khosro Anushirvan in Iran (550-578 CE) into the “Pehlevi” language, a writing system that can be loosely described as a correlation based on the Aramaic used in Persia from the 2nd century BCE to the advent of Islam in the seventh century. This Pehlevi version of the *Panchatantra* was executed in the ancient Persian language as ordered by the emperor and carried out by Borzoë, his court physician, in the year 570. Unfortunately, this version has been lost. Nonetheless another version from the same period was composed in the Syrian language by a priest named Bud, who titled his completed version *Kalilag wa Dimnag*. This version was followed by another version titled *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, which was translated from Persian to Arabic by the author and writer Abdallah Ibn al-Moqaffa in 750 CE. It should be noted that the reason for change in the titles of these translations is due to the Arabization of the names of the two jackals of the original Sanskrit text—Karaṭaka and Damanaka in the frame story of the book.¹³

The transmission of these tales from one place to another was a natural custom in the old world just like exchanging commercial goods, jewellery, silk and ivory.

¹³ Chandra Rajan, *Kindle Locations* 295-309.

The tales travelled from one port to another carried by merchants, navigators, soldiers and travellers. The original manuscript of the *Panchatantra* was transported from India to Persia, then translated to Arabic; that version of the *Panchatantra* (*Kalilah wa Dimnah*) travelled to Europe, where it continued to spread from there. The National Reserve in New Delhi retains a copy of the *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, an Arabic version of the *Panchatantra*, which dates to 1491 CE. Another copy of the *Panchatantra* has been found that was translated into English and has been dated back to 1199 CE and later edited and published as Volume XI of the *Harvard Oriental Series* by Hertel in 1915.¹⁴

The impact and influence of the *Panchatantra* left a remarkable trace on world literature, especially on Middle Eastern works such as *Alf Layla wa Layla* (*Thousand and One Nights* or the *Arabian Nights*), a literary masterpiece that was translated in the Middle Ages into French. Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum in their book *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context* (2008) collected many published articles and essays that dealt with the *Nights* from a historical point of view and review and analyse different versions and translations from the period of Antoine Galland, the first translator in the 15th century, to Burton in 2005 in order to bring together all aspects of this significant collection in one single work of scholarship. Although it is difficult to find a clear primary source for the *Nights*, Mohsen

¹⁴ Chandra Rajan, *Kindle Locations* 418–20.

Mahdi (1926-2007), an Iraqi researcher, attempted to reach a conclusion in this regard. In his quest, he examined a large number of versions to forcibly argue that the source of the version adopted and translated in France in 1704-17 by the French archaeologist Antoine Galland was Arabic. Galland translated *Nights* from Arabic into French; later that work was translated to other European languages. According to Mahdi this Arabic version of the collection originated in Iraq and Syria. Mehdi concluded that Galland used the three oldest Arabic versions, which dated back to the 14th century in Syria, and are now preserved in the Museum of Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris.¹⁵

As discussed above, the translation of the *Nights* brought knowledge about the culture, literature and society in the East to the West, and Galland's translation took the literature and the fairy tales of Europe in general and French in particular to a whole new stage. One of the reasons for this unusual European interest in the East was the Arabic culture established in Spain and Sicily after the Arabic conquests of the 8th and 9th centuries; this interest increased significantly after the translation of the *Nights* by Galland. He imported this masterpiece from Constantinople and Istanbul, a so-called "contact zone" where cultures meet, socialize and clash and where he lived for nearly a decade before going back to France to work on publishing his works. Galland translates the *Nights* from an anthropological perspective, not a literary one, for the purpose of studying the

¹⁵ Makdisi and Nussbaum, *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context*, 1.

Eastern and Arabian culture to satisfy this European curiosity.¹⁶

The opening tale of the *Nights* begins with the frame story of King Schahriar and his wife Scheherazade, which provides the structure of the collection.

The misogynist and bloodthirsty Schahriar is reformed by the power of Scheherazade's tales into believing that he had erred in killing his former wives, and he marries Scheherazade who apparently is not worried about the sultan's reputation to his former state of mind. (Makdisi, p. 14)

When king Schahriar learned about his wife's adultery he killed her and swore to take revenge on all women by marrying every day a new woman and cutting her head off at dawn, until one day no women was left to marry him. That is, until Scheherazade, the daughter of his minister, accepted this challenge and risk. She managed to prevent the king from killing her by starting to tell him a story every night, asking him to keep her alive so she could finish the story the next night. This continued for years till she finished one thousand and one nights, and the king finally falls in love with her and they live happily from that point on.

It is believed that the origin of the *Nights* can be found in a Persian text referred to by the 10th century Arab historians Ibn al-Nadim and al-Masudi as an Arabic text named *The Thousand Nights* or *The Thousand Tales* that had been translated from a Persian work titled *Hazar Avsan* (which means "a thousand legends"); unfortunately, these two works are lost. However, another version has been found,

¹⁶ Makdisi and Nussbaum, 29–33.

which bears the opening mark of the story frame, beginning in a night and ending with a thousand and one nights, a clear indication of where the following titles and versions came from.¹⁷

The *Nights* and other literary works from the East have been disseminated around the world because of several factors, including interest in the customs and traditions of Eastern society, the elaborate Arab emphasis on hospitality, and the tradition of the men coming together in the evenings to share tales, usually told by a person called the “Rawi,” a skilful story teller who knows the narratives well. Another essential factor for this wide transmission of these tales is the general importance of the ancient civilizations of the East to world history and the cold climate in the West that forced the narrative of the tales to be confined only to the family circle.¹⁸ The Indian legacy in storytelling plays a vital role in the shaping and development of a variety of storytelling styles, including fairy tales, folklore, and wonder tales. The Indian *Panchatantra* was followed by many substantial collections of tales, while the study of Indian Sanskrit manuscripts showed the importance of another Indian anthology, Somadeva’s *KathaSaritSagara*, also known as *The Ocean of Story* or *Ocean of Streams of Story*. This work is considered to be one of the earliest collections of tales of its size to survive.

The original author and collector of *The Ocean of Story*

¹⁷ Muhsin Mahdi, and Husain Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights*-xiii–xiii.

¹⁸ Penzer, *Ocean of Story, Being c.h. Tawney’s Translation of Somadeva’s Katha Sarit Sagara (or Ocean of ... Streams of Story)*, Vo I. I:xxxvi.

anthology belongs to a prestigious class of poets. This is indicated by the author's name in his native language—Somadeva—which consists of the author's name—Soma—followed by Deva, a suffix used for a particular class of distinguished poets called the Brahmans in Kashmir. The work of Somadeva is marked by the Brahmanic style, and this class of poets is characterized by phenomenal memory and precision; these exceptional mental and poetic skills exist among the Kashmiri Brahmans even to this day.¹⁹

Such a massive collection as the *KathaSaritSagara* required Somadeva's mastery of writing skills, and one of his editors elaborated on the importance of his work and how it includes a great number of tales and varieties as follows:

Great work united in itself all stories, as the ocean does all rivers. Every stream of myth and mystery flowing down from the snowy heights of sacred Himalaya would sooner or later reach the ocean, other streams from other mountains would do likewise, till at last fancy would create an ocean full of stories of every conceivable description. . . . This is the *Ocean of Story*; this is the mirror of Indian imagination that Somadeva has left as a legacy to posterity. (Penzer, Vo I. I: xxxi)

Penzer compares Somadeva's work to an ocean of stories that includes an immense number of tales to depict the vast Indian artistic imagination.

The *Ocean of Story* and its 24 chapters—which is twice the size of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* combined—was written in approximately 1070 CE when Somadeva was a poet in the court of Queen Suryavati, the wife of Ananta, the king of

¹⁹ N. M Penzer, *Ocean of Story, Being c.h. Tawney's Translation of Somadeva's Katha Sarit Sagara (or Ocean of... Streams of Story)*., Vo xii-xivi-xiv.

Kashmir. Somadeva tells us that this work was not original but was taken from an even bigger anthology called the *Great Tale* or *Brihat Katha* by a Gunadhya author, but unfortunately the manuscript of this anthology is lost.²⁰

The *Ocean of Story* was translated into English for the first time by the English author and translator Charles Henry Tawney and is considered one of the great feats of nineteenth century English literature. Tawney's translation was published in two volumes in 1880 and 1884 respectively, and this rich and diverse artwork became the focus of attention for comparative literature studies, folklore, human sciences and religion around the world.²¹

In addition, it is necessary to take a glance at the content of the collection, which contains many tales, some of them familiar to the reader from childhood, but it should be mentioned that Somadeva left his great artistic stamp on all of this work. As a gifted writer, his artistic touch added a magical aura that makes these tales timeless.²²

Current research therefore suggests that in general India is indeed the home of stories and fairy tales, which were transmitted from there to Persia, then to the Arabian Peninsula where the masterpiece of *Alf Layla wa Layla* or the *Arabian Nights* was created. These works travelled from the Middle East to Istanbul and Venice and then on to Europe, where they influenced the works of Boccaccio,

²⁰Penzer, Vo l. I:xxxii–iii.

²¹Penzer, Vo l. I:ix.

²² Penzer, Vo l. I:xxxiv–xxxv.

Chaucer and La Fontaine. These anthologies from India and the Middle East are clear evidence of the great debt owed by Western tales to the East.²³

A period of conflict between the East and the West began in the 8th century CE, particularly after the Arabic conquest of Spain in that century and of Italy in the next. These conquests were followed by successive Western crusades that lasted until 1453.²⁴ These bitter wars were also a contact zone between the cultures of the East and the West, where the Middle Eastern and Arab culture spread, and which included the *Panchatantra*, *Kalila wa Damna*, *Arabian Nights*, and other literary works. This link between the East and the West became a bridge for cultural and literary exchange and inspired western culture. In Italy, for example, Giovanni Francesco Straparola (1480-1557) was a writer and a fairy tale compiler, and living in this contact zone he must have been influenced by Eastern authors and their collections of tales. Straparola collected his fairy tales from oral traditions as well as from written forms. About his tales, Straparola asserts that not one of them was his own but was collected from a variety of different sources. Nevertheless, through his distinctive style of writing he in a sense recreated these tales as he weaves many literary genres together to create his 40 fairy tales, borrowing the frameworks and themes of these tales from their Babylonian, Hindi, Arabic, and North African origins.²⁵

²³ Penzer, Vol. I:xxiv–xxxv.

²⁴ Philip F. Kennedy, and Marina Warner, *Scheherazade's Children*, 2.

²⁵ Jack Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale*, 167.

Straparola's unique style helped him to introduce many fairy tales in his two-volume collection of tales titled *Le piacevoli notti* (usually translated as *The Pleasant Nights*) in 1550 and 1553. One of his famous tales is "Surana," which is considered the first version of the tale known today as *Puss in Boots*. Unfortunately, few details about Straparola's life are available.

Straparola's collection of fairy tales became very popular in the 16th century and left a strong imprint on the future structure and narrative of fairy tales. At least twenty editions of his collection have been published, and his tales have inspired the work of a number of European writers, including Basile, who rewrote a number of his tales, Perault, and, later, the Brothers Grimm, and the influence of Straparola's fairy tales can be seen in many of their works.²⁶

During the last decades of the crusades, the Renaissance swept Italy as Europe moved from the Dark Ages into the modern era by the rediscovery of humanism and human works and scientific and literary achievements, especially in the humanities, arts and literature. The word renaissance means *a rebirth*, a French

²⁶ Regarding Straparola's works and style, Ruth Bottigheimer, a literary scholar in attempts to praise his works but in an exaggeration way where she gives Straparola credit for creating the literary fairy tale in her paper in 2005 Tartu to folklorists, the authors' indignation was raised at the meeting when she claims that Straparola is the originator, in her paper she also neglected the most essential aspect of the fairy tales and that is all fairy tales born in the oral traditions, on the other hand, this study put Straparola's works under the spotlight to the scholars for further investigation, however the argument of Bottigheimer was weak and provocative and not built on scientific grounds, Bottigheimer is given another chance to defend her hypothesis at the conference of "Atamos" International Conference nevertheless it also ended with the committee questioning her argument again.

term used by the 19th century historian Jules Michelet to describe this era. One of the important developments in the literature of this period was the short narrative technique and the emerging of fairy tales as pioneered by Straparola and Basile, through which Italy influenced other European authors such as Perrault, Madam D'Aulnoy and others from around the world.

One of the leading authors of the Italian Renaissance was Giambattista Basile (1566-1632), a writer and poet best known for his distinguished literary works in the Neapolitan dialect as contained in a collection of fairy tales titled *Lo cunto de li cunti overo lo trattenemiento de peccerille* (*The Tale of Tales or Entertainment for Little Ones*) published posthumously in two volumes in 1634 and 1636 respectively under the name of Gian Aesio Abbatutis. Also known as the *Pentamerone*, the collection transformed the oral narratives and other folkloric and linguistic materials from popular culture into originals through his intricate style. Basile intersects both the low and high levels of culture, and his sophisticated literary style became popular during and following this period, empowering the fairy tale to interpret the world as well as delight the readers and listeners at the same time.²⁷ Many writers of the Renaissance wrote their fairy tales in order to be narrated aloud and be listened to by all classes of people, not just by an educated elite.²⁸

The Italian Renaissance spread across Europe and the world. France was

²⁷ Jack Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, 41–43.

²⁸ Zipes, 41–43.

particularly affected by this rebirth in many different fields, especially by the literary and artistic works of Italian authors. Charles Perrault followed Basile's example by transforming stories to find a moral message in them, intending to end his tales with one or two moral exhortations to teach lessons about life.²⁹ Perrault played a significant role in laying the foundation of the literary genre of the fairy tale, which began to take shape during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to become an important literary genre in France and Europe, rather than longer narrative forms like the novel as in England. Perrault wrote many fairy tales, claiming that the source of these tales was his son, who heard them from the maids in his household. Some critics have accordingly accepted the position that Perrault's source of his tales was the farmers and maids in his home. Bottigheimer (2009), on the other hand, has questioned the credibility of Perrault's sources as French peasants and has argued that the plot of most of the tales that he wrote in the 1690s come from Italian sources.³⁰

Nevertheless, not all his works are taken from the Italians. Many do in fact come from local French narratives that go back centuries, although these originals might have been modified by the embellishment of later narrators and when authors like Perrault mix literary styles with the simple narrative of illiterate people and

²⁹ Tatar, *The Cambridge Companion to Fairy Tales*, 2.

³⁰ Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 57.

peasants.³¹ Perrault wrote many famous literary works, including *Histoires ou Contes du Temps passé* (*Tales and Stories of the Past with Morals*), subtitled *Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye* (*Tales of Mother Goose*) and *Tales from Past Times*, the latter of which contains many famous tales, such as “Sleeping Beauty,” “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Blue Beard” and “Cinderella.”

Perrault, like Basile, added ironic and moral elements to his fairy tales intended to gain public attention to reflect on the true meaning of these tales and closes each fairy tale with a rhymed morality statement. As Jolles (2017) describes these statements:

Virtue is always rewarded in them and vice is always punished. They all try to show the advantages of being honest, patient, prudent, diligent and obedient, and the evil which [*sic*] overtakes those who are not. . . . However frivolous and odd the events in all these tales may be, they definitely instil in children the wish to be like the people they see becoming happy, and, at the same time, fear of the misfortunes into which malicious people have fallen through their malice. . . . These are seeds being sown; at first they produce only spurts of joy or sadness, but they seldom fail to result in a propensity for good. (Jolles, p. 192)

Antoine Galland (1646-1717), a contemporary of Perrault, contributed to the development of the fairy tale in France and Europe when he published his translation of the literary masterpiece, *The Arabian Nights*. After spending years in Constantinople and roaming the neighbouring Arab countries, recording and exploring that exotic culture, he settled permanently in France in 1688, enlightened with these new and novel ideas from the East. His research,

³¹ Bottigheimer, 53–57.

translations, and writings enriched French literature, especially fairy tales. Galland, like Perrault, frequented the Parisian literary salons, where he met with authors and writers like Madam d'Aulnoy, who was undoubtedly inspired and influenced by both Perrault and Galland to create her breakthrough in the literature of the French fairy tale. Jack Zipes in his book *The Irresistible Fairy Tale* (2012) discusses the development of the French fairy tale as it emerged between the years 1690-1710. Although French fairy tales dominated the French literary scene at this time, it is worth noting that before this period fairy tales were not considered to be a viable literary genre. But the year 1690 witnessed the birth of this new literary form, the “literary fairy tale”—any oral folktale that had been reworked into French by educated writers like Straparola, Basile, and Perrault.³²

It is doubtful that Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy (1651-1705) was aware of the fact that she was creating a new literary genre when she first used the term “*conte de fées*,” which in English means “fairy tale,” in the title of her 1697 work *Les conte de fées*. Although she promoted this term in the Parisian literary salons, she never elaborated on the exact reason why she used the term in her writing, but it is no coincidence that she came up with this term in the same year that Antoine Galland began publishing his collections of fairy tales. Whatever its origin, the term spread widely in France and Europe. Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy published several works, but two collections became

³² Bottigheimer, 7.

famous in their title “fairy tale” in 1696-1698. Following d’Aulnoy numerous fairy tales circulated widely in France, resulting in the domination of the fairy tale genre over other literary forms.

The plots of fairy tales, many written by women, usually included fairies and goddesses, and the imaginary realm of fairy tales became a gratification zone for women in Paris to escape from the daily routines of life and the social regulations of French law, the Church and the monarchy. Because of the dramatic increase of women’s writings in France in the seventeenth century, both supporters of modernity, such as *Mercure*, and critics like the cleric Villiers came to assume that the fairy tale was a “female genre.”³³

The numerous observations made about this literary genre by Wilhelm Carl Grimm in 1786 provide a clear perception of how fairy tales were dealt with in the 18th century. The legacy of the Brothers Grimm endures to this day. Marina Warner suggests in her book *Once Upon a Time* (2014) that their writing contributed to a bridge between the ordinary folk and the educated elite. The Grimm Brothers collaborated with the writer Clemens Brentano, his sister Bettina, and her husband Achim von Arnim, an associate who collected many fairy tales. This collaboration resulted in a collection of stories first published in 1812 that included eighty-six tales that shed light on German cultural history. A few years later they published a new version of the collection, and the final version includes two hundred and ten

³³ Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale*, 23–25.

tales that have been translated into more than 160 languages to become the most translated works in the world after the Holy Qur'an and the Bible.³⁴ In the 19th century, the bourgeoisie needed to teach and educate their children and began using fairy tales in their schools. Some of these tales were used for entertainment, while some, like those of Basil and Perrault, end with a lesson and moral preaching. Others taught children about patriarchy and gender roles by providing examples of chivalry and how the man or prince should always save the princess or girl and help the weak.

2.2 CINDERELLA A HISTORICAL PROFILE

Cinderella is an internationally popular fairy tale. First written in China in the 9th century, the tale has been told millions of times over the centuries. But in spite of this retelling, the main plot structure of Cinderella remains intact. This lack of radical change through untold generations of telling and retelling is a result of what Walter Anderson calls the "Law of Self-Correction," which explains "how some relatively stable stories persist in the popular tradition because storytellers upon hearing a defective version, correct it in the retelling" (Zipes Oxford, p. 95). The story of Cinderella is well known. "Once upon a time" a girl's father remarries after the death of her mother. The new wife brings with her two spoiled daughters, and, in her father's absence, Cinderella is treated badly by all three. An invitation letter then arrives to a ball during which the king's son is to choose a

³⁴ Warner, *Once upon a Time*, 2014, 54–55.

wife. Cinderella is prevented from attending the ball by her stepmother, but her fairy godmother appears and casts a spell so Cinderella can attend the ball in a beautiful dress. The prince falls in love with her, but the spell wears off at midnight and Cinderella rushes home. But as she leaves the ball, one of her glass slippers falls off and is found by the prince. The next morning, he searches the kingdom for the one girl whose foot would fit the magical slipper. Even though her stepmother and stepsisters try to prevent it, Cinderella eventually tries on the slipper, which fits. The prince marries Cinderella and the pair live “happily ever after.”

The story appears in a European text for the first time in 1558 in a collection titled *Les Nouvelles Recréations et joyeux devis* (*New Recreations and Joyous Games*) published by the French author Bonaventure des Périers. The tale appears again in Giambattista Basile’s *Il Pentamerone* collection sometime around 1635 and, 60 years later, in Charles Perrault’s *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (*Stories or Tales of Times Past*) published in 1697 in France.

The next appearance of Cinderella is in the Brothers Grimm’s anthology *Kinder und Hausmädchen* (*Children and Household Tales*) published in 1812-15. Finally, the author Joseph Jacobs retells the Scottish Cinderella in the two volumes *English Fairy Tales* published in 1890 and *More English Fairy Tales* in 1894. As Maria Tatar explains in *The Cambridge Companion to Fairy Tales* (2015), the most popular modern version is a combination of versions based on “an abstract plot that derives from the

interaction between Perrault's and the Brothers Grimm's literary versions" (p. 150).

The plot patterns of the typical fairy tale became well established by the beginning of the 17th century. One common pattern was that the story of the central character begins in misery, agony and suffering, and ends with happiness and luxury—the basic “from rags to riches” story. Although Cinderella was not poor and tormented at the beginning of her story, she quickly became so when her father married a woman with three daughters. Her life remained miserable until the day she was freed from her torment in a miraculous way, marrying the prince and returning to a life of happiness and prosperity.

Over time, the retellings of “Cinderella” produced numerous versions, often modified and rewritten to accommodate new cultures, yet the story saw no radical changes in the plot. However, three distinct versions of the Cinderella fairy tale—those by Basil, Perrault and the Brothers Grimm—have gained wide popularity on a global scale. Leaving the plot intact, each author attempts to modify the plot of the tale to make it fit with the audience each is writing for, which may completely change the story's tone, mood and other elements.

For instance, Ruth B. Bottigheimer in her work *Fairy Tales: A New History* (2009) describes the main elements of Basil's version of “Cinderella,” *The Cinderella Cat* (*La Gatta Cenerentola*). After Cinderella's father is widowed, he marries a harridan for his new wife who torments Cinderella; in order to stop this misery,

Cinderella protests to her governess, who then plots with Cinderella to get rid of her stepmother once and for all by dropping a trunk lid on her neck to kill her. Cinderella then begs her father to marry the governess, who will grant Cinderella everything she wants. From here the murderous *Cinderella Cat* begins her ascent to the throne.³⁵

While Perrault's version depicted the materialistic worries and values of his middle-class audience, the Brothers Grimm focus on the hardships of the life of farmers. Although the plot of both Perrault's and the Brothers Grimm's Cinderella is the same, the unique writing style of each author eventually leads to some modifications in the fairy tale. The culture of a writer's audience is considered a crucial element that drives the tale to include changes from the traditional version because the writer must respect the ethics of this society. Perrault's audience is French, and he is writing for the aristocracy and the upper and middle classes. Therefore, his style of writing is a light one in order to appeal to these educated classes. Perrault describes the pampered lifestyle of Cinderella's two stepsisters. The sisters wear their "gold-flowered cloak[s]" and their "diamond stomacher[s], which are far from being ordinary" (Perrault). Perrault did not show Cinderella's sisters as interested in other aspects of life like culture and art but as shallow and focused only on material things. Especially after their invitation to the ball they think of nothing else but jewellery, luxury clothes and the beauty of their

³⁵ Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 67.

appearance.

On the other hand, The Brothers Grimm were not concerned with the shallowness and materialism of the sisters but instead with making their readers sympathize with Cinderella according to the cultural norms of their audience. The ending of Cinderella's tale in Perrault's *The Little Glass Slipper* is a happy one and includes her forgiveness for the cruel and harmful treatment of her stepmother and sisters towards her, which is the moral lesson of the story. Perrault's emphasis is on forgiveness.

The Brothers Grimm, however, take the quite different viewpoint, believing that sins can't be forgiven, and this message is quite explicit in their version. Cinderella's kindheartedness is of course rewarded, and she is even willing to spare the sisters punishment. But the gods are not. At Cinderella's wedding party, two birds poke out their eyes because they lied to the prince.

Basile's *Cinderella Cat* is a world away from the versions of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, but there are nevertheless minor differences between their versions. For example, the magical power that helps Cinderella overcome her hardship is handled differently. The Brothers Grimm depict this power as a magical tree growing close to her mother's grave, that "threw down to her a dress that was more splendid and magnificent than any she had yet had, and slippers of pure gold" (Grimm). In Charles Perrault's version, this magical power appears in the form of a

fairy godmother who supplied Cinderella with a marvellous gown, the little glass slippers and a carriage.

Fairy tales are sometimes interwoven with other literary genres to create significantly different works, like those of Straparola who for the first time included entire fairy tales in novella collections, like his extremely popular *Le piacevoli notti (The Pleasant Nights)* (1550-3).³⁶ This blending of fairy tales with other literary genres has become common since the 19th century. For example, fairy tales can be merged with the fantasy genre, since both genres share common generic properties like the fantastic and the marvellous. In addition, fairy tales have helped inspire the development of other genres. In the 19th century, for example, female writers inspired by the fairy tale genre wrote many works of the imagination and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) paved the way for the new literary genre of science fiction.

Jack Zipes in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (2000) argues that the science fiction and the fairy tale genres are related and drew on the work of several critics in this field to clarify the boundaries between these two literary genres and their relationship to the element of "Fantasia," in which supernatural events and creatures appear in an imaginary realm but which sometimes intersects with the real world. The literary critic Samuel R. Delany elaborated on the specific component that links these two genres, calling it "subjunctivity." This

³⁶ Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, 255–56.

element is a common factor between science fiction and the fairy tale. Sci-fi is based on experimentation and facts and a need for change that in turn requires the element of imagination. On the other hand, the fairy tale is fictitious, contrary to facts and does not require scientific verification but contains fantastic elements that stem from pure imagination and a human belief in magic and the supernatural. Both science fiction and the fairy tale share this characteristic of subjunctivity.

Finally, Rosemary Jackson argued against the belief that fantasia is a mere escape from reality and explained that fantasy is more of a “mode” than a genre and follows a general set of rules that are not related to a particular literary genre. This idea is considered useful by literary critics like Damien Broderick and Brian Aldiss, who argue that sci-fi is just the latest addition to the literary fantasy that was formed in the 19th century, a period of rapid development and a constant demand for research in all scientific fields.³⁷

It is therefore safe to say that the sci-fi genre is an updated form of fantasy derived from the fairy tale genre to suit the demands of contemporary scientific advancement, creating a vast body of literature that inhabits fantastical realms similar to the fantastical cities in the world of the fairy tale.

³⁷ Zipes, 451–52.



3: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF SCIENCE FICTION AND

CYBERPUNK Edward James in his book *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (2003) describes science fiction as “less a genre—a body of writing from which one can expect certain plot elements and specific tropes—than an ongoing discussion” (James, p. 1). This narrative form is characterized by the ability of the author to create an unprecedented fictional world by basing that world on various scientific theories and hypotheses. Indeed, the field of sci-fi can be described as a “mode” more than a literary genre, for it contains no constant plot structure or theme elements but instead a merging of science and imagination in a wide variety of literary genres. One of the features of science fiction, regardless of its literary genre, is a “sense of wonder,” which lies at the heart of

most works. David Nye described this feeling as, “the appreciation of the sublime whether natural, such as the rings of Saturn, or technological: a space station or rocket ship” (James, p. 3). Works of science fiction can often be interpreted in many ways, but its only limit is the limit of the universe.

By the end of the Renaissance and the beginning of the first Industrial Revolution in the mid-18th century, a vast wave of change in all aspects of life began to be reflected in the literature of the time. The invention of the printing press in the 15th century and its refinement and improvement over the years paved the way for the rapid dissemination of information. The power of the printing press to change the world can be seen in the religious reformation brought about by Martin Luther and John Calvin and the scientific revolution brought about by Nicolaus Copernicus and Galileo Galilei. And without Heminges and Condell’s posthumous publication of the complete works of William Shakespeare in 1623 in what has become known as the First Folio, fully half of the dramatist’s plays—those not published in his lifetime—would have been lost to English literature forever.

Moreover, those literary writers enthusiastic about science began writing about the development of science, speculating how future scientific discoveries would serve humanity. Many writers used their imaginations in developing the narrative of the “Utopian Fantasy,” for it appeals to the readers through its speculative narrative in the fantasy realm to explore social and political possibilities. These

utopian fantasies became fertile soil for the literary writers who have a keen interest in science, mixing literature and science to produce marvellous literary works.

One of the earliest writers to write a utopian fantasy was Thomas More in his work *Utopia* (written in 1516 but not published in England until 1551, several years after his execution); More is the first to introduce and coined the word *Utopia* in his work to describe an imaginative place where everything is perfect. With the fresh inventions and discoveries of the Industrial Revolution, sci-fi imagined not only worlds of serenity and imaginative paradises but also the worst of places where people lived in disastrous conditions. This type of fiction writing is called a *Dystopia*, the opposite of a utopia and a term also coined by More to describe an undesirable place or society. Both utopian and dystopian fiction writers blended science fiction and fantasy to show both good and bad living conditions and societies in futuristic settings where technological advancements play a huge role in creating these contrasted conditions. Science fiction literary works evolved over time, and new literary features and sub-genres explored this imaginative realm, continually driven by breakthroughs in science.

One of the earliest developments in this literary field was the journey to explore new places and lands. Francis Bacon in his work *New Atlantis* (1627) was perhaps the first to establish this form. Ten years later, this work was followed by another significant work by the author Francis Godwin when he wrote about space travel

in *The Man in the Moone* (1638).³⁸ Bacon's work envisioned a futuristic land where everything is peaceful and built on science and evolution, while Godwin's work enriched and developed the literary field of science fiction, since his work on human space travel to the moon has broadened the horizons of man's ambitions to include the possibility of distant exploration.

Science fiction shares common elements and themes with the *speculative fiction* genre that presents fictional elements and themes in different worlds and planets, but it also deals with horror, the supernatural, and other imaginative phenomena. These works begin to include and deal with more speculative theories. At the beginning of the 18th century, another form of science fiction known as *satirical science fiction* appears, which criticizes social defects in a humorous way, amplifying the attack by using imaginative worlds to convey a message of social reform.

An early work of this kind is the novel *Niels Klim's Underground Travels* (1741). The Norwegian writer, Ludvig Holberg, presents a satiric theme and the work is considered an important step in establishing the literary type of the *imaginary journey*. The novel's events take place in the centre of the earth, where Niels, the main character of the novel, begins an exploratory journey revealing fascinating civilizations underground, all reflecting the reasoning and contemplative work of science. Holberg used the term *Hollow Earth* for the first time in literature to

³⁸ James and Mendlesohn, *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, 15–16.

suggest that planet earth is completely hollow on the inside and might have vast spaces inside it. The main characteristic of this work is that Holberg went to a place in his imagination few people thought of when he chooses the hollow earth to create his significant adventure.³⁹

The theme of the *imaginary journey* has expanded to include places outside the planet Earth and beyond in the vastness of the universe, such as the literary work *Micromégas* (1752) by Voltaire, the satirist and author. In this novella, he describes a mysterious visit of space creatures to the earth that have come from the planets of Cyrus and Saturn, pushing the scope of science fiction beyond planet earth and the moon. The human curiosity of Bacon, Godwin, Holberg, and Voltaire, empowered by imagination, can challenge human logic; As Albert Einstein said, “Logic will get you from A to Z; imagination will get you everywhere”.

One of the fascinating scientific creations of the 18th century during the industrial revolution that fascinated the Europeans is the famous *Chess-Playing Turk Automation* of Wolfgang von Kempelen (1769); it is a reflection of the scientific aspirations inspired by fiction. This chess-playing automation became famous when the Turk was winning chess matches against skilled players while touring Europe. Although there was no proof that this was a fraud at that time, the level of intelligent this automation displayed raised suspicions and scepticism. Edgar

³⁹ James and Mendlesohn, 17.

Allen Poe observed this automation when the Turk toured the United States. Poe, a young journalist at the time, assured his readers that the Turk could not play without the interference of human agency and that it was not possible that “a pure machine” could perform at such level of intelligence.⁴⁰

The rapid industrialization of the 18th and 19th centuries led to urbanization and the growth of large cities. In spite of the many advantages of city life, this rapid transformation had a negative effect on the lives of many workers as the environment became increasingly polluted. Scholars have long pointed to the relationship between scientific discoveries, technological developments, and science fiction, which aims to present the consequences, both positive and negative, of scientific experimentation and development. For instance, one of the pioneering works at the beginning of the 19th century was Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), which reflected developments in the field of surgery and the idea of the unlimited potential of the human body.

Shelley’s work explored the *posthuman* condition, a concept that was later discussed by Clarke and Rossini, who draw upon the subject of posthumanism in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Posthuman* (2017) in explaining the objective of posthumanism discourse, which promotes:

Neither the transcendence of the human nor the negation of humanism. Rather, critical posthumanisms engage with the humanist legacy to critique anthropocentric values and worldview. . . . Posthumanism questions how relations between humans and nonhumans operate within

⁴⁰ Stefano Franchi and Güven Güzeldere, *Mechanical Bodies, Computational Minds*, 110.

the environments where they are assembled. What forms of political agency, what codes of ethics, but also what aesthetic principles would be needed to arrive at a posthumanist world? (Clarke and Rossini, p. xiv)

The posthuman concept is a sort of response to the way the industrial revolution was changing human life and this response predicted the modern forms and future possibilities beyond being human.

Lisa Yaszek and Jason W. Ellis elaborated on the subject of the posthuman by pointing out that Shelly's work was one of the first to address the subject of people who are enhanced and improved by technology and the notions of posthuman. The 19th and the early 20th centuries witnessed the development of theories of human improvement and evolution beyond being simply human and explored the possibilities that would occur if the human being were the basis on which new races and creatures could be created.⁴¹ In the same period as Shelly's 18th century masterpiece, E.T.A. Hoffman's German short story *The Sandman* (1816) depicts a female-like human machine that plays the role of lover to the protagonist.

These two works, one English and one German, have in turn influenced American literature, and, in particular, the writing of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose works were often shaped by the new discoveries of the 19th century, including the development of drugs like morphine, the manufacturing of artificial limbs that simulate the natural movement of the human body, and the

⁴¹ Bruce Clarke and Manuela Rossini, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Posthuman*, 71.

discovery of electromagnetism in physics. These discoveries were reflected in the literature of the time, resulting in the emergence of a new literary sub-genre of science fiction called *Gothic Sci-Fi*, which is distinguished from the traditional gothic novel of the previous century in that the source of horror is science itself—usually science run amok.

One of the critical themes of this sub-genre is the work of mad scientists, often conducting experiments on themselves or their loved ones that of course always lead to disastrous results. We have already noted Frankenstein's monster, a creation of a scientist named Victor Frankenstein that ended up in a disaster when the monster began to kill innocent people. Following on Shelly's masterpiece, Poe's short story "The Man That Was Used Up" (1839) focuses on a famous war hero who is initially described by the narrator as "a large and exceedingly odd-looking bundle of something," which must be reassembled piece by piece each morning by the hero's valet in order to produce a functioning "human" being. This is another example of a literary work that presents the idea of the grotesque body of the posthuman.⁴²

Although Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and his theory of evolution through natural selection created a wide-ranging controversy in the world mainly because of evolution's incompatibility with religion's stance on human origins, the idea of the development of humans from lower orders of

⁴² Clarke and Rossini, 72.

animals opened up a whole new area for science fiction as prefigured by *Frankenstein* and Poe, becoming a common theme in many science fictions works between 1880 and 1940, a period that witnessed the very crystallization and establishment of the science fiction genre. Donna J. Haraway defines this contemporary genre as “generically concerned with the interpenetration of boundaries between problematic selves and unexpected others and with the exploration of possible worlds in a context structured by transnational technoscience” (Kirkup, p. 91).

Among the most prominent science fiction narratives emerging during this period was that of *time travel*, particularly in the work of the English author H.G. Wells, in *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). Wells has been called the Shakespeare of science fiction and even the father of science fiction. He addresses new scientific theories as well; the story of the *Time Machine* includes a time-travelling journey to the year 802,701 CE for the purpose of evaluating Darwin’s theory of evolution as a solution for the issues of social hierarchies in the Victorian age and the rapid technological growth. In this novella, Wells explores the evolution of humanity into two species and the extinction of the human. These species are the *Morlocks* and *Eloi*. They live in the ruins of an advanced civilization, the ugly Morlock feeding on the Eloi. The narrator concludes that in the future, humans can reach a state of utopia but one that will not last forever; eventually the sense of life will fade away, which is

quite different from the gloomy picture of human evolution presented in the *Time Machine*.

Another narrative of *time travel* to appear about this time was *Creative Evolution* (1907), a book by the French author and philosopher Henri Bergson. Bergson view of the distant future was optimistic, replacing Darwinian evolution, the dark side of which Wells showed in *The Time Machine*, with his belief that evolution is driven by something he called the “vital impetus,” a term he coined to express the self-organizing and spontaneous formation of elements that exist in the nature of human beings that provides the race with the creative desire.⁴³

The first part of the 20th century witnessed a proliferation of works of science fiction, since this mode of writing allowed authors to communicate their ideas and address new social experiences and problems in this age of rapid change. One of the most powerful of these expressions was the work of early feminist author Mina Loy, particularly in her poem, “Aphorisms on Futurism” and her prose “Feminist Manifesto,” both of which coincided with the escalation for Women’s suffrage in the United Kingdom.

One of the essential developments that inspired many works of science fiction in the early part of the 20th century was the growing dependence on machines in daily life. In a period of war, manufacturing developed more sophisticated and complex machinery, and literary works speculate on the man-machine concept in

⁴³ Clarke and Rossini, 73.

the field of posthuman after World War I. For example, the 1920 science fiction play by Czech writer Karel Čapek titled simply *R.U.R.* (which stands for Rossumovi Univerzální Roboti in Czech and is translated as Rossum's Universal Robots) introduced the word *robota* for the first time in Czech, which became *robot* in English. In Čapek's play, the R.U.R. company created robots to work as slaves; later they become skilled enough that they replace their masters.⁴⁴ Čapek's robots are made from organic materials to look exactly like humans. The narrative is dark, ending with a robot uprising and the extermination of the human race.

The writer Isaac Asimov, in a series of stories published between 1950 and 1977, later expanded on Čapek's concept of the robot. Asimov also introduced the *Three Laws of Robotics* for his fictional creations: "1. A robot may not injure a human being, or through inaction allow a human being to come to harm. 2. A robot must obey the orders given to it by a human being, except where such orders would conflict with the first law. 3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the first or second laws."⁴⁵ These laws, a code of ethics also known as "Asimovian Laws," were used in the narratives of many fiction works to ensure that even robots must obey these rules—obedience to which, as in *R.U.R.*, were often violated.

⁴⁴ James and Mendlesohn, *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, 166.

⁴⁵ James and Mendlesohn, 166.

Jean Baudrillard, in his work *Simulations* (1983), explains the difference between the two kinds of artificial beings: the “automation and the robot.” For Baudrillard, an automation is a “simulacrum of the first order,” which makes the robot a second order creation. The automation is an analogy for human beings, a clock-like mechanical being that is identical to man but does not have full autonomy. On the other hand, the robot is a machine that has full autonomy and self-governance and generates its own behaviour by its physical means.⁴⁶ These scientific and mechanical developments opened up whole new worlds for the writers of science fiction to explore.

American literary critic and political theorist Fredric Jameson, in his 2007 commentary on the work of science fiction writer Philip K. Dick, identified five different types of fiction in Dick’s work: the space opera and adventure, speculation fiction, cultural criticism, pulp science, and subjectivity. To this list Jameson added a sixth type of science fiction, which he called Cyberspace and defined as “A general period break which is also consistent, not only with the neoconservative revolution and globalization but also with the rise of commercial fantasy as a generic competitor and ultimate victor in the field of mass culture.”(Benjamin, p. 188)

Cyberpunk, a sub-genre of science fiction, is mainly about “high-tech and low life,” generally presenting a futuristic narrative about the conditions of society in

⁴⁶ Franchi and Güzeldere, *Mechanical Bodies, Computational Minds*, 111–12.

big cities with highly developed cybernetics systems of automation, distinguished by a culture of art and fashion called “the punk,” thus the name of this type of fiction. Ironically enough, however, the cyberpunk’s futurist world is strongly influenced by the old fairy tale genre, which, in the beginning, was always a work of fantasy. Both the fairy tale and cyberpunk have their roots in fantastic and mythical cities.

Brian Attebery and Ursula L. Le Guin, the editors of *The Norton Book of Science Fiction* (1993) compared myth and science fiction. The former is based on the laws of magic and the power of expression of language and persuasion, while the latter is defined by facts, causality and effect. Fantasy thus combines these two twin literary types; there is hardly any difference between the themes of fantastic ancient myths and contemporary science fiction. For example, thousands of years ago the fictional journey of Gilgamesh included most of the symbols and tropes that exist in present science fiction. It was only after the beginning of the industrial revolution, that the two began to separate, driven by discoveries in science and arts. Nonetheless, today’s science fiction includes narratives nearly identical to the journey of Gilgamesh and the *Odyssey*. Modern journeys of space exploration owe much to the works of antiquity. Writers even borrow the heroes and creatures of folktales—the man-made “Android” in modern laboratories echoes the Golem, created from inanimate matter in Jewish folklore. And

“Shambleau,” the title of a 1933 short story by C.L. Moore, is also the twin of Medusa from ancient Greek Mythology.⁴⁷

The cyberpunk narrative began to develop and take form after the “pulp fiction” or “pulp magazine” become popular, and *pulp science fiction* became a term that describes a period of publishing from the 1930s to the 1950s when science fiction magazines were published on cheap wood pulp paper. Pulp fiction began in America and not only was the paper of poor quality but also the literary quality was often inferior, particularly when compared to the quality of English fiction of the time like *Frankenstein* or the work of H. G. Wells. Nonetheless, pulp science fiction was widely popular during the first decades of the 20th century. Writers like Edgar Rick Burroughs and Abraham Merritt published their works in science fiction magazines, the first of which was founded in 1926 by the inventor Hugo Gernsback, titled *Amazing Stories*. The period of the 1940s has come to be called the *Campbell Era* after the editor of the magazine *Astounding Science Fiction*, which began publishing many complex works, including those by such significant writers as Henry Kuttner and C.L. Moore. This was the Golden Age of Science Fiction and, because the themes of the works published during this period did not yet contain strong sexual material to conform to Campbell’s intent to publish literary works that were suitable even for children, this era is also called the Lost

⁴⁷ Brian Attebery, *Teacher’s Guide to Accompany The Norton Book of Science Fiction*, 3–4.

World of Innocence.⁴⁸ Of particular note of this standard is the rejection by the editors of *Amazing Stories* of Aldous Huxley's now classic *Brave New World* because of its explicit sexual content.

One of the important sub-genres of science fiction that has remained most popular is the cyberpunk. This literary form attracted unprecedented attention from both inside and outside the science fiction world. The cyberpunk concept clearly indicates its grounding in the information technology and cybernetics of the 1980s, and the science fiction writer Bruce Bethke coined this term in 1983 to present a clear idea of the new dark world of technological and information, one in which people find themselves unable to cope with the rapid development of technology as their freedom is profoundly undermined. Although the term has become popular since the 1980s, many works of art and literature mentioned earlier in this chapter clearly belong to this sub-genre as defined by Garfield Benjamin in *The Cyborg Subject* (2016)—"the negation of social and individual fantasy in the computerized world" (p. 188).

One of the most important goals of Cyberpunk is to explore the problems of society in light of the development of communication technologies and literature, driven by the mass production of electronic products and the growth of the population. These are the stories of evolution in a virtual world and rebellion in a hard world of reality.

⁴⁸ Attebery, 6–7.

The setting of the usual cyberpunk story is rendered in a posthuman environment of the future. Although this posthuman theme has been used in literary works for centuries, H. P. Lovecraft first used the term in his 1936 novel *The Shadow Out of Time*. Both posthuman and cyberpunk literature explores human identity beyond the human, most strikingly in themes and stories built around the *Cyborg*, a human-machine hybrid. And as fiction turned to fact, during the attempt of the United States to send a man to the moon, a space travel symposium was held in San Antonio, Texas in 1960. Manfred Klein and Nathan Klein had conducted research on the physiology of the human body in space travel and proposed a way to modify man for journeys through distant space by integrating mechanical equipment with the human.⁴⁹

In Mechanical Bodies, Computational Minds: Artificial Intelligence from Automata to Cyborgs (2005), the editors, Stefano Franchi and Guven Güzeldere, explain that the main reason in construction the cyborg, is not just limited to the creation of artificially intelligent beings. These advanced technologies can also be used to create parts that can integrate into the human body and, connected by a cybernetic feedback system, could give the human body superior abilities; this hybrid creation of the cyborg would have power beyond the ordinary human.

The cyborg creation is not only a theoretical and mythical creature. In 1988 Kevin Warwick, the author of numerous works like *Cyborg: Digital Destiny and Human*

⁴⁹ Sue Short, *Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity*, 55.

Possibility in the Age of the Wearable Computer (2001) and *I, Cyborg* (2002), allowed himself to become a cyborg experiment subject for a week by implanting a computerised chip into his left arm; this chip communicated with his surrounding environment. In 2002 Warwick was involved in another experiment in which a 100-unit microelectrode was implanted into the nerve of his left arm to permit communication between his brain and a computer.⁵⁰

Since these two real scientific experiments, attention to the idea of a cyborg grew exponentially, not just in space research and science fiction but also in the humanities, as studies of cyborg anthropology have been devoted to the issues raised by the cyborg for contemporary society. Commentators have asserted that the cyborg is not only a mythical creature but also a reality, claiming, for example, that a person with an artificial limb or an implanted medical device is in fact a cyborg. Others have even argued that a person living in an interdependent relationship with technology is also a cyborg.

Anne Balsamo, a well-known commentator on art, technology and society has written in her essay “Reading Cyborgs, Writing Feminism” (2000) that the cyborg is a:

human-machine coupling, most often a man-machine hybrid. Cyborgs are stock science fiction characters which are alternately labelled, “androids,” “replicants,” or “bionic” Whether cyborgs are considered the first citizens of an industrialized technocracy or the perfect companions for an anti-social, simulated society, their images pervade film and popular culture, as well as the world of consumer

⁵⁰ Franchi and Güzeldere, *Mechanical Bodies, Computational Minds*, 115.

commodities. (Kirkup, p. 148-149).

The hybrid cyborg creation in Western literature, films, and popular culture reflects provocative imagery that feminist critics contemplate in the field of humanities to understand the human in a possible futuristic society; the cyborg subject is an iconic figure science fiction and, perhaps, a prediction for a posthuman reality.

Although the term was coined in the 1960s, cyborgs, robots, and automated machines can be found in much earlier literature. E.T.A. Hoffman's story of "The Sandman" (1816) portrays a humanoid female machine that plays a central role in the narrative. Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man That Was Used Up" (1839) has been discussed earlier in this study. And in the 20th century, C. L. Moore's famous novella, "No Woman Born" (1934), is about a beautiful actress whose fire-damaged body is placed inside a metallic case to become a metallic creature.

The cyborg in both philosophy and cultural studies is embraced as a posthuman image of the hybrid combination of digital, flesh, and metal. In philosophy the cyborg is considered a legitimate posthuman subject. Even in cultural studies the cyborg wavers between the material body and mind and mixes the boundaries between femininity and masculinity.⁵¹ Clarke and Rossini explained that, "posthumanism's discursive projects aim to decenter the human by terminally disrupting the scripts of humanism"(Clarke & Rossini, p. 141). The posthuman

⁵¹ Clarke and Rossini, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Posthuman*, 110.

projects like cybernetics and the cyborg have been used to argue against the anthropocentric ontologies and to create a rejection of all human former prejudices and biases.

Like science fiction, cyberpunk provided an umbrella that incorporated many techniques and methods, like science, literature and even philosophical reflection.

The cultural background of cyberpunk is characterized by the presence of androids, AI systems and humanoid robots dressed in worn-out clothes, brightly coloured, and unique hairstyles. Philip Dick's Sci-Fi novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) is celebrated as a masterpiece. This novel was later adapted into a film by the filmmaker Ridley Scott entitled *Blade Runner* (1982). Scott portrayed life in America in the "near future" as "high-tech low life," a world of advanced technologies yet the people living a low and troubled life. In the Megacity, enveloped by dense black clouds where nature is almost non-existent, life is difficult because of rambling violence. The most valuable asset in this world is information.

William Gibson, a contemporary of Dick and a pioneering cyberpunk writer, published his renowned novel *Neuromancer* in 1984, which contained ideas inspired by Dick and other authors such as William Burroughs. Gibson's work left an immense imprint on the world of cyberpunk. In the *Neuromancer* Gibson described the polluted "sky above the port . . . the colour of television, tuned to a dead channel." *Neuromancer*, like *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* before

it, was characterized by its emphasis on a futuristic cultural background of “worn-out antiques,” suggesting a lost connection with the past. Although Gibson’s “stylistic exuberance,” “self-reference,” and use of the “simulacra” may be found in other literary genres, they are certainly distinctive features of cyberpunk.⁵²

Furthermore, one of the typical roles the protagonist plays in the cyberpunk world is as a saviour of a sort to overcome a crisis that is threatening both the real and the cyber worlds. The protagonist is often a thinker or hacker, observing a predicament about to happen and eradicating it.⁵³

3.2 GENDERING THE FEMALE CYBORG

The emerging field of cyborg studies in cultural anthropology, women’s studies, philosophy, and critical theory paves the way to renegotiate stable human boundaries. Stefano Franchi and Guven Guzeldere emphasized the importance of the cyborg subject and its potentials to create significant changes in human life, arguing in *Mechanical Bodies, Computational Minds* (2005) that, “a discussion of cyborgs becomes relevant because cyborgs blur the boundaries between the fictional and the actual, the natural and the artificial, the human and the machine, and our perception of our own self and that of the other” (p. 109). This offers a new perspective on human-machine relations and a fascinating field for

⁵² Attebery, *Teacher’s Guide to Accompany The Norton Book of Science Fiction*, 11.

⁵³ Garfield Benjamin, *The Cyborg Subject*, 189.

interdisciplinary scholarship in the humanities, exploring the hybrid condition of the human-machine in a posthumanist world.

The past few decades have seen a remarkable increase of interest in the metaphor of the Cyborg, particularly in cultural and feminist theory. Since the 1980s, a significant body of literature has been produced that draws on these disciplines, focusing on the cyborg metaphor, which has destabilized the once stable boundaries between individuals in the age of “post-Enlightenment,” a period of struggle to achieve social and political equality and justice for marginalized groups. This period is also known as the *Posthuman Era*, a futuristic age of advanced technologies where boundaries have become uncertain. The metaphor of the cyborg and other artificial beings has become wide spread in different fields and cultural contexts, providing a clear indication of the political implications of science and technology. For instance, one of the most prominent and influential works of the 1980s in the fields of social, science, culture and feminism is Donna Haraway’s *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1984).

Most of the various studies in the humanities addressed the topic of the cyborg from the angle of “soft science,” which is completely different from the “hard science” of engineering, technology, AI, and the natural sciences. In the 1980s Haraway and other authors tried to build a practical political and ethical system for contemporary society using the cyborg to focus on solving the social and cultural problems of the time, especially that of gender inequality. Looking to

advanced technologies for possible solutions, these works often centred on the problems that occur between the boundaries of gender and culture. Donna Haraway's *Manifesto* was one such work.⁵⁴

Critics in such soft scientific fields as the humanities, including Haraway, used the concept of the cyborg as a metaphor at the centre of their argument. Haraway argues in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (1991) that:

by the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimaeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centres structuring any possibility of historical transformation.” (p. 150)

Through the cyborg Haraway wants to create a utopic vision of the body transcendent, a “ hybrid of machine and organism, a creature from social reality as well as a creature of fiction” (Clarke & Rossini, p. 110). Although Haraway explains that there are primarily two types of the cyborg, a mechanical cyborg that is a hybrid of human-machine and an organic cyborg made up of various animals, other cyborg combinations can be found in various works of science fiction.

Haraway seeks through the cyborg to create an opportunity to change the history and structure of society, to build a utopic world and tradition, and to imagine a world without gender. The hybrid cyborg provides an opportunity to destabilize the borders and areas of their production. She uses this vision to replace the Western traditions based on capitalism, which is of course dominated by males,

⁵⁴ Franchi and Güzeldere, *Mechanical Bodies, Computational Minds*, 116–17.

who built unjust gender rules on the supposed differences between men and women. The human-machine hybrid cyborg blurred those traditional gender boundaries, thus destabilizing them.

Long before the work of Haraway and her contemporaries, who used the cyborg to attack sexual stereotyping, the female cyborg had made her appearance in literature and the arts. Perhaps the earliest of these gendered female cyborgs was captured by an unknown painter in “The Mistress of Horology” (*L’Horlogère*) in 1740. As described by Jennifer González in “Envisioning Cyborg Bodies: Notes from Current Research” (2000), the painting describes:

Soft feminine shoulders descend into a tightly sculpted bust of metal. Clinched at the waist, her skirts flounce into a stiffly ornamental “montre emboeté” [embossed watch] which rests on dainty feet, toes curled up to create the base. . . . The body of the woman is not merely hidden inside the machine, nor is the organic body itself a mechanical replica. Rather the body and the machine are a singular entity. (p. 541).

González in *The Gendered Cyborg* (2000) goes on to elaborate on this early image, arguing that it “is an example of a Cartesian view of the body as a mechanism, and very stereotypically, a clock. The female body is objectified and sexualized, with its breasts, narrow waist and large hips” (Kirkup, p. 8-9).

This image of a gendered cyborg presents the early notions of culture towards complex machines and cyborgs. This clock-woman is the “pre-industrial representation of . . . [The Mistress of Horology and] thus functions as an early prototype of later conceptual models of the cyborg” (Kirkup, p. 60). This pre-industrial cyborg model of a clock-woman embodies that century’s ontological

and cultural norms of how society sees a woman as a complicated being that can work like a machine and also be beautiful.

The work of C.L. Catherine Moore, in “No Woman Born” (1944), is one of the science fiction texts that touched on the subject of the “nonhuman-human” or posthuman by using the cyborg body as the point of discussion. The story plot is about Deirdre, a beautifully talented singer, artist, and dancer. Although badly scarred by a fire in her theatre, she insisted on continuing to perform. In response, a scientist named Maltzer made a metallic structure to contain her damaged body and thus she became a cyborg. But her manager and Maltzer worried that she had become a monster. Although she dances and sings like her old self, her metal body suggests that she had become a beast. Indeed, at the end of the story her voice begins to take on a metallic sound. Her maker is troubled and regrets his action, comparing himself to Doctor Frankenstein in Shelly’s famous work.⁵⁵

Moore’s work highlights the question of *Women* as either a constant or a changeable category, questioning whether there is a difference between a *Natural Woman* or a woman in a cyborg body. “No Woman Born” shows that it is possible for this literary genre to confuse its own concepts of gender, sex and the structure of femininity. Typically, the body of the female is greatly feminized in science fiction, which focuses on the attractions of her body and depicts women with a lack of knowledge and technology.

⁵⁵ James and Mendlesohn, *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, 126–27.

“No Woman Born” also raises the issues of the embodiment of a woman’s body in a new non-human form that suggests a post-human cyborg status. As Brian Attebery pointed out, “the Master Narrative of science has always been told in sexual terms. It represents knowledge, innovation, and even perception as masculine, while nature, the passive object of exploration, is described as feminine.” (James , p. 241).

The science, technology, and industrial production have always been associated with men as proactive and rational, while a more passive, natural, pure and fragile status has been associated with women. The woman/nature analogue is often expressed in terms such as “mother earth” or “mother nature” when describing a natural phenomena or scenery to compare nature with the female.

Moor’s work has tackled gender issues and the embodiment of body in light of modern technology and its impact. Deirdre’s human has been replaced by a synthetic metal body, making her a powerful cyborg. The beauty of her voice and her skill in dancing, which so impresses her audience, becomes even more powerful with her “non-human” and “hyper-masculine” body. This aroused the fear of the male narrator whether such a strong body might hurt her fragile brain. But the severity of the tension lies in the idea that Deirdre embraces and appreciates this new powerful body and the immense new possibilities of agility

and strength that comes from this posthuman body.⁵⁶ Yet even still, as Deirdre's voice takes on a metallic twinge at the end of the story, the reader can only wonder if the mechanical will ultimately overpower the human.

Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston address the subject of the human body, its cultural and natural ties and the posthuman, drawing upon the uncoupling of human properties and opening a new approach to "Imagineering," thus implanting the imaginative ideas from science fiction into practical human disciplines. In other words, the authors study a new area that specializes in questioning the characteristics of "subject, body, culture" for the purpose of breaking these cultural and natural bonds of the human body and looking at the physical transformation of the body in the posthuman world.⁵⁷

Despina Kakoudaki, in her *Anatomy of a Robot* (2014), discusses an example of a 19th century female automaton found in E. T. A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman" (1816), a short story about a female automaton named Olympia, who represents and reflects the social status of women in the middle of that century. Hoffman depicts Olympia as, "beautiful, quiet, and silent," a gendered female automaton that embodies the norms, culture and stereotypes of women in Western society.⁵⁸ The male protagonist in the story falls in love with Olympia, believing it has deeper feelings and more human understanding than Clara, his fiancée, whom he

⁵⁶ James and Mendlesohn, 244.

⁵⁷ Clarke and Rossini, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Posthuman*, 156–57.

⁵⁸ Despina Kakoudaki, *Anatomy of a Robot*, 176–77.

charges as being rational, logical, and insensitive. Thus for Hoffman, as for so many writers fascinated with the cyborg, the artificial helps us better understand what it means to be human.

This relationship between the human and the machine drives much of science fiction, both in cinema and in literature. The nature of this relationship may of course vary from one work to another, sometimes as negative and catastrophic in much dystopian literature, sometimes positive in various utopias in which sexually submissive fembots follow Asimov's "Three Laws of Robotics." In Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's *Eve of the Future* (1886) a female machine is designed on request as a model of what men wish to take the place of real women. In cinema, *The Perfect Woman* (1949) features a robotic creation created as the perfect, sexualized woman. In fiction, Ira Levin's *The Stepford Wives* (1972) allows husbands to replace their wives with identical, yet "improved" and submissive, robots.

These sexualized female machines in both literature and the cinema are entirely the consequence of male fantasies—the ideal woman is servable, obedient, and helpless. Sometimes found in various fantasy-driven male Utopias, she can also be found in certain dystopian narratives reflecting deteriorating human existence where human technologies have driven the human race to the verge of extinction. For example, in Fritz Lang's movie, *Metropolis* (1927), a female robot leads a monstrous rebellion that results in widespread destruction and death. Such a

scenario dates back to at least Shelley's *Frankenstein*, where new posthumans show that technology is the dangerous and unpredictable offspring of the human race.

These science fiction themes and stereotypes are not limited to sexualizing soulless artificial machines, androids, robots, and AI bots but also can be found in hybrid cyborg subjects. For example, one of the works that gendered the female cyborg body is Anne McCaffrey's *The Ship Who Sang* (1969). In the novel, Helva, the protagonist, is a girl whose body is badly twisted from birth but whose brain is exceptionally strong. Her brain becomes "encapsulated" as the controlling centre of a space ship. One of her missions is to save life on an inhabited planet by transporting 100,000 embryos before the planet is destroyed by an unstable sun. This work explores one of the traditional aspects of sexuality, gendering a cyborgian spaceship to become like a mother, a typical task for a female to carry embryos.

The posthuman condition is not only confined to the cyborg but is also represented in other posthuman forms. The World Transhumanist Association (WTA) characterizes both the state of the posthuman and the transhuman as "possible future beings whose basic capacities so radically exceed those of present humans as to be no longer unambiguously human by our current standards" (Jeanine, pp. 40-41).

This is a level of development that many human beings expect to reach in the near future, where humans cross the borders of their species and enter the posthuman stage, intertwined with technological enhancements. For instance, several human power-boosting technologies are available today, like the exoskeleton suits, vision enhancement optics, bionic limbs and other advanced applications that make human body exceed its biological limits into posthuman possibilities.

The straight jacket of gender can be found in much literature and art, particularly in the field of what is now called technoscience, the scientific study of the ways in which humans interact with technology. One of its most prominent features is the deep classification of the gender binary of man and woman, where women are always perceived as weak and inferior in contrast to men. This division associates women with nature, emotion, and subjectivity, while men are associated with art, rationality, and objectivity according to these hierarchical patterns.⁵⁹ This is one of the reasons why so much of western art, literature and cinema is filled with these cultural dualities.

The language and imagery of science fiction is most often the language of the patriarch, and it is challenging to create a scientific discourse that challenges or even reverses this long-standing social system. This effort is not confined just to feminist criticism but can be found in sociology, philosophy, and the history of science. One of the pioneers challenging the patriarchal language in science

⁵⁹ Gill Kirkup, *The Gendered Cyborg*, 4.

fiction is Donna Haraway. In “A Cyborg Manifesto” (1985) she uses the cyborg myth as a point of departure for separating the human body from this patriarchal coding. And in her later writings she uses the cyborg to un-gender human discourse and speculate on the social environment of a posthuman future.⁶⁰ But the patriarchal social and cultural system, past and present, is deeply intertwined with all areas of life to form a tight grip on the power monopoly of men; therefore building a critique that deconstructs this deeply rooted network has proven difficult but not impossible.

In order to find a solution for the current patriarchal social and cultural system, it is necessary to understand the roots of such social inequality, especially as such inequality affects women, in order to dismantle it. One source of this system can be traced to the work of Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), a botanist, zoologist and physician known as the “father of modern taxonomy.” In his system he deliberately associated rationality with male as his term for the human race—“Homo sapiens” is Latin for a *wise man*. As for women, he considered them as “lacking rationality,” emphasizing the biological, rather than rational, characteristic of the gender.

One of the common stereotypes in literature, especially in science fiction narratives, consistently associated women with animals and even machines. The female monsters sometimes found in these narratives may have sprung from the

⁶⁰ Kirkup, 4.

physical differences between European and non-European women, differences that could have been seen at one time as monstrous. One early example of this early racism is Sara Baartman, a South African Khoikhoi woman who, because of the large buttocks characteristic of her tribe, was exhibited as a freak and monster in nineteenth century London and Paris under the name of the “Hottentot Venus.”

Cyberpunk stories and scenarios may be narrated in diverse ways, but the gendering and stereotypes can be easily distinguished; being a cyborg female does not free her from sexual and gender stereotypes. A decade before Haraway’s manifesto, Alic Sheldon, writing under the pen name James Tiptree, Jr., published a cyberpunk novella titled *The Girl Who Was Plugged In* (1973). Deformed by disease, a young girl named P. Burke agrees to allow her brain to remotely control a soulless Replica body of a beautiful woman named Delphi, who was grown in an artificial womb without a brain. The beautiful, sexual but soulless Delphi becomes a celebrity but is submissive and totally without freedom to act. A rich young man of course falls in love with her, very much complicating her existence. As *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (2003) points out, “even the cyborg may become enmeshed in and diminished by a too-faithful performance of femininity” (James, p. 133). P. Burke, of course, falls in love with the young man who, upon discovering Delphi’s true nature, destroys both her and Burke.

Tiptree's novel is considered as proto-cyberpunk, presenting the topic of the cyborg within a futuristic fairy tale theme to provide a scenario of what may result from the association of a female's body with technology.

Prior to Haraway's utopian vision in *A Manifesto for Cyborg* (1985), literary works that dealt with the cyborg had most of the embodiments in the posthuman, especially female body, subject to the same old patriarchal culture of males; they classified it as masculine/feminine, or sexual. Whether a robot or cyborg, it made little difference in the world of cyberpunk until Haraway's critique embraced the idea of the cyborg as a means of *deconstructing* the legacy of systematic gendering.

The cyborg is not a feminist invention, but it was adopted by Haraway in her manifesto as a feminist symbol. She presented it as a political irony since it was first released for the purpose of "blurring, transgression and deliberate confusion of boundaries of the self, a concern with what makes us human and how we define humanity. [. . .] The cyborg is to be a creature of a post-gendered world" (Kirkup, p. 283). Haraway's cyborg theory engendered a critique in the feminist academy extending from the 1980s to the 1990s, becoming active as *canonical* as anything gets for the leftist group.

After the boundaries between the animal and human are breached, humans became machines, paving way for women writers to disrupt and undermine the current male coding construction of gender dualism, such as the practice of

masculinizing/feminizing. Therefore, she used cyborg imagery to suggest a “way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves. This is a dream not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia.” (Kirkup, p. 283-284). Haraway’s cyborg theory suggests an approach using a hybrid cyborg to “de-gender” the female body.

Haraway positioned the image of the cyborg at the centre of her “ironic faith.” She explained that “world-changing fiction” politics is the most crucial aspect of our real-life social structures, because in this world of fiction —for instance, the sci-fi imaginary world — constant changing generates new thoughts and speculations that will stir the old social and political constructions that have remained intact and still active in society today. Therefore, Haraway adopted the hybrid cyborg creature to seek a new discourse that will help deconstruct old social norms and beliefs. She stated in her manifesto that, “the cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity”. (Manifestly Haraway, p. 8).

Haraway argues that the cyborg is a futuristic creature borne in the future; not linked to or having a past, the cyborg (wo)man does not look at his/her past because it has none. Thus, she chooses the artificial cyborg over the nature-based goddess when she stated in her manifesto, “I would rather be a cyborg than a

goddess.” (Manifestly Haraway, p. 181). Feminist critique has debated the dichotomy of the two metaphors of the “cyborg and goddess” that Haraway adopted in choosing the material or “artefactual” cyborg over the natural goddess associated with the spiritual ecofeminist wave. The goddess as *Natural* is portrayed as good while the *artificial* hybrid cyborg is evil. For instance, *Frankenstein*’s monster is considered a cyborg of a different kind, an “organic cyborg” according to Haraway. He is cast as an ugly evil artefact compared to the beautiful nature of the world in the novel.

One of the influential critics that adopted the cyborg critique and applied it to real, social contemporary life is by Aihwa Ong. Ong is an anthropologist who explores the working conditions of women in the Southeast Asia. she considers these women workers in the U.S. and Japan’s electronic factories as cyborgs, because as she states, they are “actively rewriting the texts of their bodies and societies.”(Haraway 2016, p. 59). Women around the world can share their experiences in this determined social quest and practice the process using modern technologies. She describes that “communications technologies and biotechnologies are the crucial tools recrafting our bodies, these tools embody and enforce new social relations for women worldwide. Technologies and scientific discourses can be partially understood as formalizations,” (Kirkup, p. 55).

Haraway’s promise of monsters capable of challenging existing human social politics is seen when she writes, “a cyborg identity...will deconstruct and

reconstruct the nature of what it is to be human.” (Kirkup, 8). In fact, Haraway uses the cyborg image of “imagination and material reality” to create a possible reconstruction of history. In the Western cultural imagination, monsters always defy and challenge the boundaries of culture and gender. One of the things that might have driven and inspired Haraway to adapt the cyborg in her critique is the Western fascination with mechanical bodies. Jennifer González comments on the issue of cyborgs found by her colleague, Elena Tajima Creef, in *Silent Möbius* (1991) a Japanese comic book. González argues that “...in Western imaginary, this body is all about revealing its internal mechanism.” (Kirkup, p. 70). For instance, take Hollywood films such as *The Terminator* and *RoboCop* when they try to fix their wounds; they reveal their internal components and the wirings beneath their “skin” to show their hybrid body nature. In addition to the fascination and satisfaction in seeing the cyborg’s mechanical internals, the strength of the cyborg is another factor behind Haraway’s adaptation of the cyborg body as the subject of her critique. For instance, Kiddy, a young female character and the protagonist in *Silent Möbius*, in a decisive moment in the story reveals her true identity beneath her skin to her lover when she says, “this is my body Ralph . . . Seventy percent of my body is bionic, covered with synth-flesh. Three years ago, after being cut to pieces, I was barely saved by a cyber-graft operation. But I had it changed to a combat graft.” Why? Ralph asks. “So, I could become as strong as Wire, the thing that destroyed my life.” (Kirkup, p. 68-9).

She reveals her cyborg body and her motives to become stronger than her old self. Despite the fact that the ideal cyborg, Kiddy, is gendered and sexualized in the comic book as beautiful, with big coloured eyes and a disappearing nose and mouth -- typical Euro-American comic-book standards -- with her chocolate brown skin, there is an apparent reference to her as a “hybrid”. González’s example elucidates one of the reasons behind Haraway’s choice of the cyborg in her manifestation. Haraway utilized such ideas and other sources of people fascination with cyborgs in Western literature and the media to create her own cyborg to write liberating rather than limiting imagery.

Lynda K. Bundtzen in *The Gendered Cyborg*, tries to deconstruct sci-fi films by applying the feminist lens of the gender / technoscience confluence; for instance, in the 1986 *Aliens*, Ripley, the protagonist, during an attempt to fight off an alien queen “reinforces her cultural coding and becomes a cyborg by climbing inside a huge robotic casing, demonstrated (necessarily) earlier in the film as a powerful twenty-first-century fork-lift truck. Then she fights the alien with enhanced technological strength and the signifier of excessive biological motherhood is apparently overcome.” (Kirkup, p. 94).

In the final scene of the film, when Ripley fights and tries to overcome the huge alien monster, Ripley uses advanced technology and becomes a strong cyborg in order to match the power of the monster and defeat it. Both Ripley and the alien queen are biological females. However, Ripley overcomes this when she became

a techno-cyborg during her confrontation. In this scene, cyborg Ripley is not gendered or sexualized. This is what Haraway in her manifesto tries to create when she uses her “cyborg imagery” to argue against the cultural coding that sees women as unwise and incompetent with technology. Only men can be competent in this regard.

A decade after Haraway’s discourse, in the 1990s, Anne Balsamo in her book, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women* (1996), explored the “discourse of body” and the combination of practices and relationships that structures the body in society. Balsamo investigated Michel Foucault’s works in this field, focusing on the connection between body, society and culture in order to chart the aspects of body. In his genealogical project of discursive, political and social practices, Foucault considered them as “facts” about human bodies. He described the apparatus that produces body marks and “body knowledge” in his book, *The History of Sexuality* (1976). He enumerates constructions of traditional and scientific biopower as follows: “(1) the hysterization of the female body; (2) the construction of homosexuality; (3) the creation of distinction among infant, child, and adolescent sexualities; and (4) the establishment of a discourse of perversion.” (Balsamo, p. 20). These devices of the human body (for instance, “the hysterization of the female body”) are used by the scientific biopower to establish in psychology, science and later practices in the capitalist family the justification of the “medicalization of the female body,” This social construction

of the female body has been common in the discursive practices of science, medicine, social institutions and most other related fields. Therefore, Foucault called the process of connections that produces a “true effect” on the human body as an apparatus or technology.

Balsamo investigates many feminist writers in the field of contemporary feminist works in body discourse, especially “corporeal feminism,” a branch of sexual difference theory developed by Elizabeth Grosz and Moira Gatens. The corporeal reference is for “an understanding of corporeality that is compatible with feminist struggles to undermine patriarchal structures and to form self-defined terms and representations” (Balsamo, p. 157).

Grosz associated many bodily relations and constructions with the individual mind and sought a way to diminish the binarity principle. However, some feminist writers believe that the body was and still is a battleground for women to regain their rights. Balsamo’s reading of the body in its present manifestations is meant to highlight the leading areas for the feminist future work agenda. Balsamo believes that new body technologies, such as machinery and cyborgs, help alter the body politics by reshaping the *material* body, using advanced technological equipment. Balsamo’s repositions the female body agency from passive to active using the new technologies.

Balsamo finds a way to argue against prevailing gender stereotypes by using female cyborg images to encounter the machine/human opposition since females

are coded as incompatible with technology and science, unlike the “rational males.” Therefore, the gendered female cyborg or android backfires on traditional gender stereotypes. For instance, Rachel in the *Blade Runner* film (1982) is a gendered female cyborg (replica) coded as sexually alluring and emotional, yet she is a technological creation; and her constitution challenges cultural conventions.⁶¹

Balsamo uses the cyborg techno-body to argue that the conventional link between nature and body can be undermined by the unnatural *artificial* body of the cyborg, since the body is the site of natural identity, while the cyborg is a hybrid combination of bionic machine and organic materials. Therefore, it questions traditional body knowledge.

In *The Gendered Cyborg*, Dion Farquhar points out the importance of Haraway’s cyborg idea. She argues that the cyborg does not have “blood ties” such as kinship and family, unlike human beings; therefore, Farquhar sees this as an opportunity to challenge the patriarchal hegemony of connected ties. Moreover, Balsamo highlights Haraway’s remarks on the cyborg capability of “transgressing boundaries” and argues that cyborg identity is foreground as the means to create a constructive *otherness*, a different identity from the self because of the radical

⁶¹ Kirkup, 98.

disturbances created by otherness that destabilize the notions that identity depends on.⁶²

Haraway's hope is that the cyborg will be beneficial in creating such an identity since it has no past. "Cyborgs are not reverent; they do not remember the cosmos." It has no blood ties and "it is not made of mud;" therefore, it can be considered as "other" or different and will not be bound or controlled by any patriarchal rule.

Katherine N. Hayles in her book, *How We Become Posthuman* (1999), reviewed the effects and impact of the cyborg concept on many stable constructions such as the dualities of animate/inanimate, human/animal, human/machine, fantasy/reality and metaphor/fact. The cyborg violates all these structures and boundaries; it disrupts and erases some of them and blur others. Hayles also pointed to body boundaries and shows how Haraway uses the cyborg to talk about the body sexuality of the cyborg to transgress boundaries of class, ethnics and cultural differences. She calls it "pleasurably tight coupling between parts that are not supposed to touch" (Hayles, p. 84-5). Electrical engineering, biology, psychology and many scientific branches are derived from cybernetics and scientific information that configure the body. The cyborg stems from cybernetics; therefore, it has the potential to remap these intellectual fields; for instance, the female cyborg Rachel from *Blade Runner*.

⁶² Kirkup, 167.

The cyborg that Haraway promoted is not only a metaphor; she also remarked that “cyborgs are simultaneously entities and metaphors, living beings and narrative constructions.” (Hayles, p. 114). Technological development is bound up with theory in central domains: the cyborg image in contemporary discourse is more critical than ever because the cyborg is not only confined to science like medicine, bionics and prosthetics, but also to cybernetic fields like virtual reality, modern military warfare applications and weaponry. The cyborg becomes a reality; in fact, approximately 10% of the population in the United States are technically cyborgs. The term may be applied to people with bionic joints or limbs, artificial implantations such as a heart, iris, skin, hearing aids and, in military, the “intelligent cockpit” pilot system. Included are artillery soldiers guided by smart aiming computer and even the virtual video games of kids and many other prototypes waiting approval from the “FDA”, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The connection between discourse and science is decisive.⁶³

Hayles went further than the posthuman cyborg identity promoted by Haraway in her works in suggesting a “posthuman collectivity” that not only blurs and transgresses the boundaries of gender dualisms but also establishes new identity constructions: “an ‘I’ transformed into the ‘we’ of autonomous agents operating together.”⁶⁴ She forcibly argued to transport the human self and consciousness to a robot or other techno-body; moreover, R.L. Rutsky elaborated on the topic of

⁶³ Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 114–19.

⁶⁴ Clarke and Rossini, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Posthuman*, 191.

“imagining a Nonhuman Posthuman” in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Posthuman*, in which she suggested an intermediary posthuman identity for Haraway’s posthuman cyborg and Hayles’ posthuman collectivity— a rather “non-humanist posthuman” that challenges the “assumption of an original or essential humanity to which technology necessarily serves as a prosthesis or supplement.”⁶⁵

In this regard, earlier literary works and films presented such non-humanist-posthuman notions in technological characters like “replicants”, fictional bioengineered bio-robotic androids, and especially Rachel in *Blade Runner* (1982) who Haraway uses as an example of a cyborg. There are also *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) based on the manga (1989– 90) of Motoko Kusanagi as an example of a cyborg or posthuman identity and the role of the “Puppet Master” in a manga that pushes the boundaries of human identity beyond a unitary subject or consciousness, suggesting another option for imagining non-humanist posthumans. In addition to the collective, technologically-networked hive like the individual *Borg Queen* from *Star Trek: First Contact* (1996) or the humanoid Cylons in the reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* (2004– 09), these non-humanist posthuman figures have been cast as threats to humanity because they represent an identity that is entirely different from the traditional human one.

⁶⁵ Clarke and Rossini, 192.

4: RE-IMAGINING *CINDER(ELLA)*: MARISSA MEYER'S *LUNAR CHRONICLES*

The Lunar Chronicles is a contemporary young adult science fiction novel series written by the American novelist, Marissa Meyer. Meyer is also the number one *New York Times* - and *USA Today* - bestselling author of several books for teens, including *The Lunar Chronicles*, the *Renegades* Trilogy and *Heartless*. *The Lunar Chronicles* consist of four novels, incorporating several literary genres, such as science fiction, young adult fiction, fantasy fiction, and utopian and dystopian fiction genres.

The novel series is a contemporary retelling and reworking of a collection of famous fairy tales, including *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Rapunzel* and *Snow White*. Meyer presents the frame of the narrative in a cyberpunk setting, and she also tempered the contemporary theory of the posthuman in her series to criticize traditional fairy tales. In the first book *Cinder*, presented in a distant

future, humans and androids crowd the city of New Beijing. Later in the novel, a war breaks out between a lunar space colony and earth, and the fate of earth depends on one *cyborg* girl Cinder(ella). She is the protagonist in the first book of the series and its leading character. Cinder is a teenager cyborg who has to deal with her vicious stepmother, her two spoiled daughters and a many bigger problems, such as leading a revolution against the tyrant, Lunar Queen Levana. Levana murdered her older sister, Queen Channary, and burned her three-year-old niece, Princess Selene (Cinder), but later in the novel Cinder reappears again as a cyborg after being lost for a decade. During her quest, Cinder forges an alliance with Scarlet, the protagonist of the second book, Cress from the third and Winter from the last book of the series where all these heroines join efforts to overthrow the vicious Queen Levana and free earth and Luna (the moon) from her tyranny. The fairy tales in her recent literary writings are blended with many contemporary genres, for instance the Queer Theory. Dallas J Baker, in his paper *Monstrous Fairytales: Towards an Écriture Queer* (2010), investigated how authors are rewriting such narratives in Queer Theory. Baker's analysis of the writing methods and strategies of queer writers working in the field of fairy tale fiction remarks that fairy tales always end with punishing or destroying the queer monster. Baker's main concern is how these queer writers are taking a positive act in rewriting queer monster figures and how critical queer theory informs it. Similarly, fairy tale narratives are rewritten and blended with other contemporary

theories such as the Posthuman Theory concerned with the sci-fi genre and futurology. An analysis is undertaken to reflect on the new concepts and the creative writing practices of posthuman writers within the fairy-tale genre. Fairy tales usually feature traditional and cultural codes of the patriarch where girls are assimilated to accept codes of conventional femininity.

One of the main objectives of this chapter is to investigate how Meyer reworked the female body of Cinderella, the protagonist, in her retelling of the *Cinderella* tale and how this reworked female body became a *cyborg* female as reflected in Meyer's cyberpunk novel series. Furthermore, this study also looks at how Meyer converted the fairy tale elements into sci-fi (magic, fantastic elements and a universal lesson) in her work.

Pauline Palmer has noted that many fairy tales were traditionally “employed to acculturate young girls into accepting codes of conventional femininity” and that the fairy-tale heroine was “frequently relegated to the conventional heteropatriarchal role of trophy and object of exchange.”(Baker, 2). Fairy tales in many ways reflect the female character as passive, submissive and culturally coded, as well as gendered and sexualized and exaggerated emotionally and in terms of femininity.

It has been argued that fairy tales engage in proscriptive discourses that writes, describe and sustain gender boundaries. These boundaries create a binary division between the masculine heterosexual and the feminine sexually. Furthermore, fairy

tales are concerned with promoting patriarchal stereotypes of gender, masculinizing males bodies and sexualizing female bodies. In this context, this study will describe and consider methods for a positive (re)writing of the fairy tale in the light of posthuman theory that could be employed by authors of literature, notably writers of sci-fi fairy stories.

One striking phenomenon of contemporary anglophone fiction is the renewed interest in fairy tales appropriated and subverted through rewriting, parody and other intertextual modes. Modern authors tap the extraordinary wealth of narrative forms, plots, motifs and images of the fairy tale tradition as they reinvent its familiar stories after their own fashion since, as Angela Carter well knew, fairy tales “can be remade again and again by every person who tells them”(Bobby, Loc. 221). Every retelling testifies to the endurance of such stories, but it also often expresses the need to transform these influential cultural scripts to voice new possibilities of being and living in the world. Emma Donoghue, one of the talented writers to have refashioned some of the most popular tales in recent years, creates a rich and complex dialogue with Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen in *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins* (1997). Donoghue's retellings of Cinderella, Snow White, Rapunzel and Thumbelina, to name but a few, exemplify Adrienne Rich's definition of revisionary writing as an “act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction”(Bobby, Loc. 219-226).

Meyer's novel series in its main intertexts aligns with a literary tradition that subverts the dominant myth of sexuality, love and happiness of the *Cinderella* story (as a cultural stereotype). She replaces the traditional Cinderella as a stereotypical character and as Jack Zipes describes it, “importunes her sexually” as a crucial element in the tale.⁶⁶

Marina Warner explained that, “You could say that the fairy tale grew up in 1979. That same year, Angela Carter issued a deliberate and outrageous provocation, an essay called *The Sadeian Woman*; in it, she upheld the pornography of the Marquis de Sade as a feminist tool of illumination. The essay was published by the new feminist house, Virago Press. What Carter had found in fairy tales of Perrault, Grimm and (later) D’Aulnoy were profoundly disturbing symptoms of men’s assumed hegemony and women’s collusion with their oppression and sexual exploitation;” (Warner, Loc. 2061-2065).

Bruno Bettelheim, the noted psychoanalyst, in his work, *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976), writes about the character of Cinderella as the heroine of the tale. He notes that when she left the ball in a hurry, the prince admires the lovely slipper that fell from her, a symbolic representation of her sexuality and femininity.⁶⁷

Warner explained that, “feminists grasped this role of the fairy tale: sexual education in the broadest sense became the aim of their subversions.” (Warner, p.

⁶⁶ Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, 97.

⁶⁷ Bettelheim and Overdrive Inc, *The Uses of Enchantment*, Kindle Location 5575.

136). She described the utopian dreams/wishful thinking of contemporary writers as follows: “every scriptwriter and director takes up a passive Cinderella and turns her into a champion freedom fighter”(Warner, P. 173).

For instance, Meyer rewrites the character of Cinderella into a new posthuman form, and body. The new Cinder(ella) is a cyborg teenager; she looks like a “a stick-straight figure”, too angular with a boyish body. In fact, Cinder has a remarkable artificial leg and arm.⁶⁸ Cinder’s body was ruined by doctors due to a cyborg operation, and 36% percent of her body is not human.⁶⁹ It ruined her femininity. In this cyborg depiction, Meyer echoes what has been previously presented by Haraway’s utopic vision of body transcendence as a “hybrid of machine and organism, a creature from social reality as well as a creature of fiction.” (Clarke, and Rossini, P. 110). Through the Cyborg subject, Haraway seeks an opportunity to change the history and structure of society.

In fairy tale narratives, there is a clear distinction between the figures and characters, and it is common to present a stereotypical personage like Cinderella as close to nature and animals, as mention earlier in chapter 2 when Linnaeus coupled women with mammals, considering them as “lacking rationality.” By contrast, Meyer altered this pattern and placed Cinder next to machines, robots and artificial beings in a cyberpunk world to indicate that female capabilities can handle advanced technologies as well as men.

⁶⁸ Meyer and 3M Company, *Cinder*, Kindle location 484-486.

⁶⁹ Meyer and 3M Company, Kindle Location 1100-1110.

While there are different intertextual approaches to be applied to a literary text, Manfred Pfister offers a model that consists of two separate interpretations of the concept: Barthe's poststructuralist interpretation and the structuralist and hermeneutic interpretation. The model that Pfister offers is a common center one. The highest intertextual density lies in the middle, and the "more we remove ourselves from the 'hard core' of the center, the more [the intertextual intensity] decreases"(Joosen, P. 18). Pfister presents six qualitative parameters in order to decide where to position the pretexts in a focused writing's intertextual scope. The six qualitative parameters that he derives from typical discussions on the subject of intertextuality are: selectivity, communicativity, reflexivity, structurality, referentiality and dialogicity.⁷⁰ If this method is applied to the intertextual extent of fairy tale retellings, it can be observed that the traditional tale will be placed next to the "hard core of the center" of the retelling's parameter. As for fairy tale criticism, it will be removed further from the middle but still considered a relevant intertext.-

Berthany Joy Bear introduced her essay, *Struggling Sisters and Failing Spells: Re-engendering Fairy Tale Heroism in Peg Kerr's The Wild Swans*, with the words, "When an artist chooses to bring a traditional fairy tale into her writing, she transforms the story's long-standing magic with her own variety of enchantment" (Bobby, Loc. 737-738). In her introduction, Bear describes the

⁷⁰ Joosen, *Critical and Creative Perspectives on Fairy Tales*, 18.

uniqueness of the fairy tale genre and how delicate the artist must be when incorporating it in his/her work.

Vanessa Joosen in her book, *Critical and Creative Perspectives on Fairy Tales* (2011), describes how fairy tale works inspire the production of many academic writings in the process of their re-narration. The process of rewriting has many terms such as retelling, re-narration and rewriting, among others, and gives a manual “prefix” on the specific relationship of this literary class with the original text -- in this case the traditional fairy tale. The retelling or rewriting of a fairy tale does not mean that the writer has restored the original text because the roots of fairy tales stem from the oral folktales. Therefore, it is important to mention that the fairy tale did not result from the evolution of a sequential text, having a beginning and end, but rather a web of hypertext.⁷¹ It is necessary to acknowledge that any attempt to analyze or re-work a contemporary fairy tale is almost impossible given the difficulty of knowing the source of the original work. Even if the author explicitly mentions the version rewritten, still its origin is based in the oral culture. For example, the *Cinderella* tale has early records in China, but actually goes farther back. Moreover, as John Stephens and Robyn McCallum have argued:

Even where there is a strong pre-text [...], retellers are most likely to use intermediary versions to produce a retelling of a retelling"(4). And this applies not only to retellers but also to readers: the intertextual knowledge

⁷¹ Joosen, 9–10.

of author and reader is inevitably discrepant. In the case of *De Roos en het Zwijn*, it is therefore quite plausible that readers are more familiar with other versions of the same tale than the ones that influenced Provoost (Joosen, P. 10).

When using intertextuality in retellings, the authors sometimes make the text explicit or hide the dialogue. Mariana Nikolajeva elaborated on the two motives of “open and hidden dialogues.” She uses “open dialogue” to describe works that are intently explicit to make the reader familiar with the text and plot patterns. Like Meyer’s *Cinder* novel, there are an explicit name, patterns and elements of Cinderella, as seen in the title and heroine name. However, the characters’ forms change, such as Cinderella, who becomes cyborg Cinder. Ulrich Broich emphasizes that:

The threshold for marked intertextual references will be much lower for the literate reader than for the occasional reader. On the other hand, the threshold increases together with the growing temporal distance to the text or pre-text for many later recipients, when the contemporary context is no longer immediately present.(Joosen, P. 12).

Despite the existence of many modern versions of fairytales, still they bridge the gap between the earlier generations of writers. Moreover, the “open intertextuality” dialogue is one of the features of fairy tale retelling, in addition to what Hans Robets’s described as “horizon of expectation.” The traditional fairy tale is narrated as an omniscient and undefined gender mark. The setting or “chronotope” is one-dimensional -- both place and time are out of reach, the supernatural is considered normal, the characters are one-dimensional and the

pace of the plot moves fast. Such traditional fairy tale features are the typical formation in Western culture. To the contrary, the features of fairy tale retelling differ from the standard ones and disrupt the “horizon of expectations in various properties, for instance. The chronotope has a tangible setting in the *Cinder* novel, in which the setting is New Beijing, China in the year 126 T.E. which stands for *Third Era*, a time that starts after the *Fourth World War*. This is an explicit indication of the Chinese origin of the *Cinderella* tale. The attitude toward the supernatural is seen in the retellings of fairy tales that renegotiate the borders between what is real and magic. For instance, the *Cinder* novel is in a cyberpunk futuristic setting where technology is mixed with quasi-magic elements whereas in the traditional *Cinderella*, the boundary between magic and reality is clear. The characterization in the *Cinder* novel entails a psychological development taking place, and the events are details are elaborated extensively unlike the original tale. Furthermore, while the ending of the reworked fairy tale is not always optimistic and happy, *Cinder* ends happily. The narratological aspects are likely to be told in the first person.⁷² However, *Cinder* is narrated in the third person like the traditional *Cinderella*.

Joosen describes that in the retelling process, the more realistic the setting become, the more the occurrences of magic element declines.⁷³ In the retelling of

⁷² Joosen, 12–15.

⁷³ Joosen, 16.

Cinderella in the sci-fi novel, *Cinder*, what happens to supernatural magic of the fairy godmother who charm animals into becoming carriage horses and rags into a gorgeous gown. In the retelling process in *Cinder*, Meyer converts these magic elements to give the people of Luna a quasi-magic gift that make them able to control the bio-electricity of other people in order to control their minds. Dr. Erland, one of Cinder's allies, explains this ability to Cinder in a scientific way, saying that all living beings generate bioelectric waves and some animals like sharks use this energy to detect their prey. Dr. Erland emphasizes that it is "not magic. Claiming it to be magic only empowers them." (*Cinder*, Loc. 3085-3086).

Moreover, Meyer converted the sparkle effect of magic in *Cinderella* into a synthesis shimmering dye that coats all the Lunar equipment and clothing to give them a magical touch. For instance, when the Lunar queen, Levana, visited Prince Kai in the New Beijing Palace, the Lunar spacecraft body shimmered with gold runes; it was very bright in the afternoon sun making Kai wonder if the runes were magic; or was it the dye material that make it fancy and glittery.⁷⁴ Not only the spacecraft, but almost all Lunar products from clothing to technical gear were made from the same glittery material.

Joosen explained that the intertextual relationship between fairy-tale retellings and traditional fairy tales has a double effect. By critically distancing themselves from the original fairy tales, retellings invite readers to reconsider the traditional

⁷⁴ Meyer and 3M Company, *Cinder*, Kindle Locations 2352-2356.

text (Joosen, 16). Moreover, another function can be performed through this process, as Julia Kristeva highlighted in her argument that the author can rework a certain literary work to express another message while retaining its original meaning. This process creates a double meaning word.⁷⁵ Hutcheon identified a contradiction at the center of “parody” that applies to a fairy tale retelling: “at the same time it criticizes and reinforces the target text; it is simultaneously negative and affirmative, desacralizing and resacralizing, rebellious and conservative” (Joosen, 16-17). Despite the great number of retellings that problemize the traditional tales, they are considered crucial to the canonizing process.⁷⁶ Drawing on this relationship and the canonization process, Meyer in her retelling of *Cinderella* into *Cinder*, touches upon certain aspects of the traditional text. As such, she problemizes the traditional tale of *Cinderella*. Meyer’s retelling of *Cinder* invites the readers to reconsider the traditional fairy tale text through a posthuman re-imagining. Among the elements that Meyer invents is the crowded New Beijing Megacity, where the tall buildings are built close such that they become endless stretches of concrete and glass. The streets are noisy with robots and advertisement screens that cover every wall; the chatter of advertisements, reports and news fills the air. While the traditional *Cinderella* heroine lives in a fairy world, surrounded with beautiful, calm nature and friendly animals in the woods, she is domesticated, contained and forced to live in rags. This image of

⁷⁵ Joosen, *Critical and Creative Perspectives on Fairy Tales*, 16.

⁷⁶ Joosen, 17.

Cinderella is juxtaposed to nature/animal elements, a clear indication of a traditional patriarchal norm as mentioned earlier in Chapter 3 on Carl Linnaeus' classification. He deliberately associated rationality with males, as indicated in the term, "Homo Sapiens", Latin for a wise man. Women were grouped with mammals and considered as "lacking rationality".

The *Cinderella* tale is presented in a natural world and the elements of the tale stem from nature. For instance, she is desperately stuck in her misery for years until rescued by magic powers. There are minor differences of this magic agency in Basile, Perrault and the Grimm brother's versions of the story. For instance, it is depicted as a magical tree close to Cinderella's mother's grave. The tree "threw down to her a dress that was more splendid and magnificent than any she had yet had, and slippers of pure gold" (Grimm). In Charles Perrault's version, this magical power takes the form of a fairy godmother, who supplies Cinderella with a marvelous gown and little glass slippers, along with a horse carriage. On the other hand, Meyer depicts Cinder as a teenage girl living in a cyberpunk futuristic world in a "hi-tech low life" condition. In the opening of the novel, Cinder's face and hands are stained with grease from working at her booth with her android, Iko, fixing broken robots, yet she is not as desperate and helpless as *Cinderella*. After her father's death, she is represented as a sad character contained within the household as a maid unable to lead herself out of this misery. By contrast, Cinder works outside in her booth as a renowned robot mechanic. Even Prince Kia hears

of her fame and comes to her workshop to fix his broken android, taking her for a man, not a female. This is an indication that Meyer wanted to highlight that even females are fully capable of handling technology, not the other way around. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Rachel from the film, *Blade Runner* (1982), as a replica or technological creation, challenges the cultural convention that coded the female as incompatible with science and technology. Moreover, like Cinderella, Cinder is also lonely and has a non-human friend, her artificial intelligence android, Iko, with a “faulty” personality chip that make it act like a female teenager.

The traditional Cinderella was depicted as a charming belle -- compassionate, patient, a tender-hearted nature lover, sexually attractive with her white skin and hands and small feet -- and Jack Zipes described her as more beautiful than her stepsisters. In fact, she is described as the most attractive woman in the party.

Meyer’s depiction of Cinder is a walking disaster with her messy hair and wrinkled gown: it was “wrinkled as an old man’s face”.⁷⁷ In fact, Cinder becomes a mockery to her aunt, Queen Levana. Meyer desexualizes Cinder’s body such that the “passionate” character of Cinderella becomes transformed in *Cinder*. Meyer even describes Cinder in the novel as incapable of crying or blushing, due to her missing tear ducts. Dr. Erland explained to her that she doesn’t have tear ducts and elaborated on her incapability of blushing due to her brain monitors that

⁷⁷ Meyer and 3M Company, *Cinder*, Kindle Location 4208-4216.

prevent her system from overheating.⁷⁸ In Meyer's retelling of *Cinderella*, as stated, the setting of the *Cinder* novel is a cyberpunk world of "high-tech low life", where earth is plagued by a deadly virus and Cinder, the long missing (Princess Selene), has to fight her way up to reclaim what is hers as the rightful heir of the Luna crown and eventually live happily. It is similar to the traditional Cinderella fairy tale where the heroine began in rags and ended with riches except that Cinderella is assisted by a fantastic magic agency, while Cinder is empowered with knowledge and the power of advance technology. Cinderella waited desperately for someone to rescue her from her dismay, while Cinder's active and independent persona prompts her quest to uncover her lost identity, the only thing hindering her. After learning from Dr. Erland, she starts her rebellion.

In the conversion process of the traditional *Cinderella* tale into the posthuman image of *Cinder*, Meyer converted the condensed short narrative fairy tale text and symbols into an elaborative detailed novel in order to explore the psyche of the character of Cinder, the heroine. Her cyborg body is one of the main changes in the retelling or rewriting. At the very beginning of the novel, Cinder's cyborg body is depicted as hated and looked upon with "with curious eyes". For instance, when Chang Sacha, the baker next to Cinder's booth across the street, came to take her boy away from Cinder's booth and warned him not to get close again, it upsets Cinder, who muttered to

⁷⁸ Meyer and 3M Company, Kindle Location 1534.

her empty booth, “It’s not like wires are contagious,”⁷⁹ The cyborgs in the novel are depicted as superior in strength with skills greater than people; the reason a general hatred towards cyborgs. Catastrophic violent riots had caused great destruction in the city by a small group of criminal cyborgs in New Beijing’s past. Since then, the late empire of New Beijing instituted the “Cyborg Protection Act” to limit the cyborgs.⁸⁰ This is why *Cinder* wears gloves all the time to hide her cyborg identity. The new ideal woman that Meyer wants to create is the posthuman woman, desexualized with superior strength and knowledge. In the series, Cinder redefines her body image from a hated cyborg into an acceptable one after saving the earth from the destruction of Queen Levana. The posthuman female image that Meyer re-imagines is superior compared to the delicate female image of the traditional Cinderella. For instance, Cinder can handle technology, drive a car, defend herself, forge alliances and plot an uprising.

When applying the retelling method to fictional fairy tales and non-fiction criticism of fairy tales, each type of discourse has its possibilities, functions and limits. In short, expressing an idea in literature, differs from expressing it in criticism and vice versa.⁸¹ For instance, when a literary scholar remarks on Cinderella’s inability to take action by herself to change her miserable situation unless aided by an external force, typically a male (i.e. the prince), it is seen as a

⁷⁹ Meyer and 3M Company, Kindle Locations 108-113.

⁸⁰ Meyer and Meyer, *Cress*, Kindle Locations 3987-4006.

⁸¹ Joosen, *Critical and Creative Perspectives on Fairy Tales*, 29.

patriarchal instrument or simply Cinderella's bad luck. This fundamental view applies to the status of the story's content whether a fictional fairy tale retelling or non-fiction criticism. In fiction, it pertains to imaginary narratives, whereas in nonfiction works, it is linked with factual reality. Think of Meyer's retelling of *Cinderella* in her *Sci-Fi Cinder*, where she converted almost all the imaginary fiction settings and elements into a sci-fi quasi-reality world, a posthuman one that appeals to reader with its futuristic conceivable reality.

Of note, one vital insight on intertextual elements is presented by Marcia K. Liberman's influential article and fairy tale critique, *Some Day My Prince Will Come: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale* (1972). The work is about an ideological-critical reading of gender patterns in Western culture's best-known tales such as *Cinderella*. Her article is one of the earliest feminist works in the American fairy tale *Renaissance* of the 1970s. Liberman strongly takes umbrage with the gender representation in the famous fairy tales. She is associated with Alison Lurie who participated in the early debate on feminist and modern fairy tale discourse, focusing on the sociopolitical and sociohistorical context of this genre.⁸² This debate over various critical problems and questions helped to lay the foundation of fairy tale research for the next three decades. The forty-year-old milestone article by Liberman anticipated feminist fairy tale theory by embracing topics beyond the

⁸² Joosen, 49.

sociopolitical and sociohistorical such as the queer, deconstruction, semiotics, psychoanalysis and Marxism. —————In addition, aspects of Liberman’s argument are obvious in the approach to traditional fairy tales; for instance, *Cinderella* is expressed in many retellings throughout time, the most recent one being *Cinder: Book One of the Lunar Chronicles* (2012). Other works in the feminist fairy tale debate take a suitable point of departure to conduct a thematic comparison on what is known as “dialogicity.”⁸³ Drawing on a critique of the ideology transmitted in the best-known fairy tales as seen in Andrew Lang’s *Blue Fairy Book* (1889) and Walt Disney’s *Cinderella*, the celebrated animated film, Liberman’s article may be feasible, especially in regard to the constructiveness of gender in cultural and biological aspects of the woman -- like the body’s sexual appeal in the traditional *Cinderella* and the retelling process. The constructions can be debated; for instance, Meyer altered these images in *Cinder* by targeting the adolescent audience to create positive ideological impact in contrast to the passive effect of the traditional fairy tale because it, “has affected masses of children in our culture”.⁸⁴ Since the reading process has a significant effect on children’s identity formation, popular fairy tales have worked as a concealed educator for quite long time now. Liberman stated explicitly that:

A close examination of the treatment of girls and women in fairy tales reveals certain patterns which are keenly interesting not only in themselves,

⁸³ Joosen, 50.

⁸⁴ Joosen, 51.

but also as material which has undoubtedly played a major contribution in forming the sexual role concept of children [. . .] Millions of women must surely have formed their psych-sexual self-concepts, and their ideas of what they could or could not accomplish, what sort of behavior would be rewarded, and the nature of reward itself, in part from their favorite fairy tales. (Joosen, P. 51).

As mentioned in chapter 2, fairy tale telling was not confined to a particular class; it is, after all, a “folk tale”. Moreover, it was exploited by the Aristocratic class to inject their ideology into their children. For instance, the *Cinderella* tale is very famous, and without a doubt, it is one of the favorite role models for girls of a perfect woman. However, Cinderella as a protagonist is heavily contaminated with all sorts of patriarchal norms, and over time, the story was tailored to create a constant role for girls of what a “good woman” looks like and behaves, especially in Western culture.

In her retelling of *Cinderella*, Meyer’s selection of her adolescent audience is not arbitrary. To direct her novel series, starting with *Cinder*, the heroine is a teenager to better appeal to this significant group in society, especially females, and to provide an alternative choice and role model of what Cinder(ella) might become as a grown woman.

Regarding childhood and children’s literature, particularly fairy tales, Katrien Vloeberghs considered the child as a blueprint of a rational subject, a hope for a better social future that carries improvement from the present. This child is

regarded as an unfinished product, and it is the crucial job of the instructor to prepare this being to become an independent and active community member.⁸⁵

The work of Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) has had a significant impact on feminist literary criticism, particularly in criticizing stereotypical gender patterns in fairy tales. Gilbert and Gubar in their analysis explore the source of their discomfort with authorship when examining the metaphors in the texts of male authors and how they depict women. In their book, Gilbert and Gubar speculate on the question when opining in the first chapter, "Is a pen a metaphorical penis?" (Joosen, 215). Male writings and designs of female images are proven to be biased and limiting. One explicit image pattern in *Cinderella* is her beautiful character -- pure, kind-hearted, yet passive, limited, dependent and submissive to male patronage. After Cinderella's father died, she fell in misery and neglect. Her only chance was to escape and find a prince to rescue her from her nightmare under her step-mother's patronage. The typical image is pure and selfless. However, another image is the "female monster", represented with active, unfeminine aggression as seen in Meyer's Cinder. According to these patterns devised by a male writer, it is safe to say that Meyer's Cinder as a character is a representation of a "monster woman" similar to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847). Think of the furious monster, Bertha Mason, and the contemporary work, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) by Gilbert and

⁸⁵ Joosen, 51.

Gubar. These so-called mad or monster female characters share common characteristics with Cinder, who is active, aggressive and unfeminine. She is a renown mechanic in the novel, aggressive towards people who try to harm or insult her because of her hybrid cyborg body form.

Gilbert and Gubar focus on the ability of the female character to speak at different levels: “no human creature can be completely silenced by a text or by an image” (Joosen, 216). This is in contrast to Marcia Liberman who focuses only on the character by identifying her in the reading mode.

Gilbert and Gubar’s readings of the 19th century fairy tale texts of the bourgeoisie culture can be narrowed down into two mythic images of woman, as “the angel and the witch”. According to the patriarchal ideology of the perfect woman, “it is the angel who conquers and the witch who is defeated and punished” (Joosen, 216-217). Gilbert and Gubar point out that every female character in the patriarchy is limited to these two images. Gilbert and Gubar argue that a woman can only master patriarchy if she is restricted and confined. For instance, similar to these two mythic images is the one in the traditional fairy tale of *Cinderella* of the *angel* woman -- pure, sympathetic, confined and limited -- while the posthuman image of *Cinder* that Meyer offers is a cyborg version, a monster woman, according to the patriarchal description of the active, unfeminine and aggressive female. However, against the biased standards of this patriarchal ideology, the image of cyborg Cinder in the novel series is a balanced image of

the female body model that Meyer presents for her adolescent audience. This image of a female cyborg is different from the female images that other feminist authors have tried to create to avoid the patriarchal ideology. For instance, Meyer associates Cinder with technology and being expert in it, an image against the grain of the sci-fi female trend of the patriarchy that almost always depicts woman characters as incompatible with technology. Moreover, Meyer depicts Cinder as being an outcast cyborg and *monster*, because monsters are always defying the boundaries in the Western culture.

Gilbert and Gubar further discussed the dynamics of the intertextual dialogue and theory practice in fairy tale retellings and how they perform in fiction relative to their traditional pre-texts. At first, they approach the intended fairy tale text from a broader literary context. Then, they broaden their scope and depth of character psychology to give it a real dimension and reverse or remove the static black-white binary. Moreover, they problemize the happy ending (the female cycle) in fairy tales, in addition to justifying the supernatural such as the magic in *Cinderella* by transferring it to sci-fi elements in *Cinder*, like the Lunar features and gears -- the shimmering color of equipment, the bioelectricity manipulation of people, the lab monster mutations through bioengineering. Most of these conversions are a common in fairy tale retellings. One popular strategy in feminist retellings is the reversal of gender characteristics such as giving former negative female characters positive characteristics and roles such as the passive role of

traditional Cinderella becoming the active role of Cinder.

In his book, *Why Fairy Tales Stick* (2006), Jack Zipes talks about the evolution of fairy tales in terms of Darwinist and epidemiologic analogies, in addition to function, style and content. As strange as it seems to compare the Darwinist theory of biological evolution to the fairy tale genre, a virtue arises from using the comparison. To begin with, the fairy tale evolved from the oral tradition thousands of years ago as mentioned. Evolution is a product of accumulation inside the mental and physical biological human being throughout the ages, and thus fairy tales evolved from oral stories that were passed on generation to generation by various cultures that “cross-fertilized” these oral fairy tales and spread them around the world. These tales are a product of human beings, making it possible to use the *Darwinist* comparison.⁸⁶

The large dissemination of primary texts cannot be overlooked; some of the fairy tale retellings are preserved in the original structure and style; however, others contain minor changes to the content, and sometimes alternative endings are produced. Despite the generic evolution of traditional fairy tales, the texts have retained their main form due to what Walter Anderson calls the “Law of Self-Correction,” as mentioned in Chapter 2. These refreshed retellings whether done by merging into a poem, short story, drama or psychological or historical novel empower and sustain the genre and have made it “stick” for so long. In fact, these

⁸⁶ Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick*, 3.

retellings depend on the popularity of the traditional fairy tales that are necessary to understand the revitalized revisions, such as the retelling of *Cinderella* into *Cinder*.

Other significant aspects in contemporary fairy tale retellings are presented by Susan Redington Bobby in her work, *Fairy Tales Reimagined: Essays on New Retellings* (2009) With a forward by Kate Bernheimer, this collection of essays puts under the microscope the voices of many scholars and artists whose reflections on certain topics have been embedded in fairy tales throughout the ages and can now be interpreted clearly. The role of “gender and sexuality” are redefined. The literary technique of rewriting and the inherent different intertextual modes bring the traditional fairy tale into a new realm. Martine Hennard Dutheil in his essay, *Queering the Fairy Tale Canon: Emma Donoghue's Kissing the Witch*, described the renewal interest in fairy tales as follows:

The modern authors tap the extraordinary wealth of narrative forms, plots, motifs, and images of the fairy tale tradition as they reinvent its familiar stories after their own fashion since, as Angela Carter well knew, fairy tales ‘can be remade again and again by every person who tells them’. Every retelling testifies to the endurance of such stories, but it often also expresses the need to transform these influential cultural scripts in order to voice new possibilities of being and living in the world. (Bobby, Loc. 220-222).

Dutheil explores the works of Emma Donoghue and her refashioning of the best-known fairy tales in a rich dialog between Perrault, Grimm Brothers and Hans Christian Andersen in her influential work, *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins* (1997). Donoghue's retellings of *Cinderella* is seen as an act of looking

back with fresh eyes at the old text in a new critical way. Donoghue, a scholar and self-proclaimed lesbian writer, reveals and explores the concealed alternative messages in the traditional fairy tales. She seeks “perverse” or “deviant” alternative themes capable of questioning the stereotypical depictions of sexual desires and gender roles in order to deviate from the sole path of female fate encoded in these fairy tales.⁸⁷ Donoghue’s forceful argument serves to question the authority of the “master text” and long-accepted fairy tale plots and norms by exploiting “gaps” and the hidden critical edge in them.

Donoghue presented a retelling of *Cinderella* entitled, *The Tale of the Shoe*, a demonstration of the development of “lesbian genre fiction” rewriting strategies. For instance, among the gaps revealed by Donoghue’s focus are the *problematic moments* in her sources that provide fresh representations and new possibilities, such as putting Cinderella into a new “skin, shape, form, which embodies the matter of the tale and the destiny of Cinderella the protagonist which is situated in the center.”⁸⁸

In a similar way, Meyer retells the literary tradition to subvert the dominant myth of sexuality, love and happiness supposedly perpetuated by the Cinderella story (as a cultural stereotype). She changes the association of the female body with nature by making Cinder, the protagonist, the embodiment of an artificial female cyborg. This conversion created unprecedented changes in the protagonist that

⁸⁷Bobby, *Fairy Tales Reimagined*, Kindle Locations 227-230.

⁸⁸Bobby, Kindle Locations 245-246.

challenges the entire equation, especially the stereotypical depictions of the female sexual image and the gender roles encoded in the fairy tale. As a result, Meyer linked the techno-body of the cyborg to Cinder's knowledge of a highly-advanced technology.

In her collection, *Kissing the Witch*, Donoghue explored the intertextual networks in *The Tale of the Shoe* and constructed a chain of first-person narratives to be passed and shared from one anonymous female narrator to the other. This intertextual style aimed to create a strong bond between the female protagonists. In the same vein, in her novel series, Meyer linked a group of female protagonists from famous fairy tales into *The Lunar Chronicles*, starting from book one, *Cinder*, to *Scarlet*, *Cress* and *Winter* the fourth book in the series. This league of heroines was led by cyborg Cinder to overcome their hardship. The characters in the novel presents a positive image of female protentional, especially cyborg Cinder as an example of a posthuman figure, who is the leader of this band of heroines. In *Kissing the Witch*, Donoghue retells the traditional *Cinderella* in *The Tale of the Shoe* in a way that deconstructs the conventions, stereotypes and inherent heterosexual ideology in an explicit way. Donoghue argument aims to question, "the still dominant representations of social relations and sexual roles, and *Kissing the Witch* conflates the fairy godmother with the prince charming, fairy tale heroines who fall in love with their stepmother . . . In this way, class and age divisions, fixed gender identifications and single sexual preferences are

undermined” (Bobby, Loc. 262-264).

In the same way, in *Cinder*, Meyer also undermines almost every fixed gender and sexual indication in the traditional Cinderella and later versions of the female image, such as bodily depictions -- for instance, Cinder’s cyborg body. Meyer presented her storyline instead of the typical one of the prince saving the princess.

In fact, Cinder storms into the ball to warn Prince Kai of an assassination attempt if he sealed an alliance with the Luna colony through a political marriage with Queen Levana.

Bethany Joy Bear in her essay, *Struggling Sisters and Failing Spells*, deals with re-engendering fairy tale heroism in Peg Kerr's' *The Wild Swans*. Bear explores the recent interest of academia in the role of gender and sexuality represented as the main motives in fairy tales. She investigated these motives in author Terri Windling’s Tor books. Windling’s fantasy series focuses on the fairy tale as a window reflecting female concerns.

Windling emphasizes the crucial gender role patterns that have been deeply engraved in the literary genre of the fairy tale and how altering the character’s gender and characteristics can change the flow of the narrative into the traditional happy ending, as in the case of Carter's retelling of the Bluebeard legend in “The Bloody Chamber”⁸⁹ In *Cinder*, Meyer alters the female body of Cinder(ella) with an enhanced cyborg body having far superior abilities than normal humans. In

⁸⁹ Bobby, Kindle Locations 747-749.

doing so, she effectively altered the gender role of the tale's female character which changes the scope of events and the typical happy ending. Instead of the typical female character of Cinder waiting for the man (the prince) to rescue her from her misery, she, instead, rescues him and becomes the hero.

Neil Gaiman Mathilda in her work, *Inventions and Transformations: Imagining New Worlds*, explained that contemporary reinventions of traditional fairy tales have "always been a female genre," like recent recreations by female authors, Jeanette Winterson, Margaret Atwood, A.S. Byatt, Anne Sexton and Angela Carter. Mathilda mentioned that since the traditional fairy tale contained adult content and while parents tell it to their children, much of the content is transformed such that "little morals" are injected in the text about gender roles, especially how woman should look seductive and behave sexually in a patriarchal society.⁹⁰ For instance, at the ball every woman in the kingdom has to be extremely beautiful to impress the prince; on the other hand, in the *Cinder* novel, Meyer chooses not to sexualize Cinder, the protagonist. Instead she desexualizes her with a wrinkled dress and stiff cyborg body -- not unpleasant, but also not feminine and sexually alluring either.

⁹⁰ Bobby, Kindle Locations 1126-1128.

Conclusion

Fairytales have always and remain to be vessels for folk culture to entertain, teach, express habits and norms and serve as a mentor and guide: in early childhood and adolescence, they teach the social and cultural norms of society. In this light, the significance of fairytale studies becomes extremely important in showing the genre's ability to mold and form the personality of a child in a given society. The oral element has had great influence in transmitting these tales in addition to the short narrative form which helped the dissemination process. Among the crucial social and cultural values that fairytales regenerate is the reproduction of the social, cultural politics of the society it addresses. The social hierarchies of gender roles, gender inequality, male domination and power monopoly, as well as gendering norms of the female body have been common notions in the discursive practices of science, medicine, social institutions and most related fields.

The gendering of the female body is particularly explicit in fairytales. As mentioned, aristocrats used the fairytale as a tool to teach their children about social norms. The most common coded in these tales is the gendering of the female body and its depiction. The negative impact it instigated has been insidious, affecting the female body image throughout the ages, not to mention its effect on masses of children as a role model during the character creation process.

What lies behind this female stereotyping? Male dominance in a patriarchal society is a major factor in enforcing compulsory female heterosexuality: in order to serve men's needs, heterosexuality or heteropatriarchy requires men to force women into heterosexual relationships and marriage under a patriarchal society. The traditional *Cinderella* fairytale and later versions, where the prince marries our heroine and live happily ever after, perpetuates gendering codes.

The influence of industrialization and the new social constructions on the representation of the female body image in literature from the First Industrial Revolution to the present time is explicit in sci-fi works. Using the element of imagination and fantasia, the sci-fi genre explores human futuristic possibilities using the scientific lens to impart a logical sense. Newer examples reflect the social and cultural constructions of a cyberpunk society, and the gendering of the female cyborg body is as complex as a machine and sexually alluring.

In both fairytales and sci-fi literature, the female body has been depicted as complex, feminized and sexualized in an exaggerated way for many centuries. The works that followed the First Industrial Revolution reflected technological advancement and the audience's aspirations. Robot production began taking shape in a form similar to the human body. Technologically advanced robots and hybrid cyborgs were bound by a patriarchal social coding that turned these techno-beings into feminized and masculinized gendered bodies. In the 20th century, female

critics and writers became more aware of the gendering issue. As a result, literary writings began to deal with female cyborg gendering as seen in Anne McCaffrey's novel, *The Ship Who Sang* (1969). By the late of 20th century, the affective work of Donna Haraway really put this issue under the microscope; she proposed a solution to the gendering issue by using a hybrid cyborg as the ultimate or alternative form of the female body.

Haraway used the cyborg as a literary device to deal with gender and sexuality within the context of women's studies. The cyborg subject was adopted by many contemporary literary critics and writers like Anne Balsamo, Aihwa Ong, N. Katherine Hayles and many other others because of the European fascination with the cyborg culture. The United States and Japan made it easy to appeal to readers in these overpopulated countries. As a cyborg, a female character has excessive power that literally and hypothetically enables and encourages her to do miraculous deeds and access knowledge in fields like information technology, among many others. Of course, she wouldn't have been able or allowed to do any of this in the past due to the gendered representation of her body as "too feminine, fragile and incompetent."

The cyborg is a highly-advanced creature that can boost both her power and knowledge as demonstrated in Meyer's Cinder. The relevance of this embodiment is clearly supported by the findings of this study. Meyer's posthuman image of the cyborg Cinder(ella) character is an improvement over the traditional Cinderella in

various aspects; i.e., cyborg Cinder is not gendered, sexualized or confined to herself. To the contrary, despite being a cyborg, she has the normal body of a teenager; she is active and open minded with the will and determination to change her destiny unlike the restrained character of the traditional Cinderella.

Accessing three famous versions of the Cinderella tale around the world, Marissa Meyer amalgamated them to reimagine the female body from a posthuman prospective that complies with the new culture and female expectations. The ending of the *Lunar Chronicles* series is an unexpected one, unlike the traditional *Cinderella* fairytale (and its later versions), where the prince marries the heroine and they live happily ever after at the end. In Meyer's retelling, Cinder didn't marry the prince after all, despite his proposal. Both Cinder and the prince decide to rule their kingdoms separately, a type of social equality inserted by the author who asserts that power is not exclusive to men, but women can also have the same authority.

Not surprising, fairytales, unlike other genres, are often interwoven with other types of literature to produce splendid works that appeal to the reader for various reasons. Both the fairytale and sci-fi genres are related to fantasia, sharing many common features such as their infinite possibilities of literary production. Important to this study is the fact that the sci-fi genre bases its fictional world on scientific theories that appeal to the reader logically. On the other hand, fairytales

are based on pure imagination, evoking magical, supernatural elements and phenomenon that evoke in the reader a sense of amusement and wonder.

This study has presented the influence of the patriarchic social system on the female body image, using both the fairytale and science fiction as a tool to trace changes in female status and body image depiction in literature. The famous traditional Cinderella character and its contemporary retelling as Cinder in *The Lunar Chronicles* have served markers to review these changes and their impact on the present-day female.

Covering vast ground, this thesis provides deeper insight into female body representation in the majority of literary works, especially fairytales and sci-fi texts that comply with the patriarchal coding that sees women as sexualized, passive, gendered, wicked and incompatible with technology and science. It is one of the first attempts to thoroughly examine and compare traditional and Posthuman female body image depiction using Meyer's work. The predicament of the gendering pattern of the female and female cyborg body can be handled more efficiently in fairytales and science fiction literary works.

An analysis of female cyborg body depiction since its early appearance in literature and art -- like (*L'Horlogère*) in the 1740 "The Mistress of Horology" -- to now has provided a clear judgment of the gendering issue. The scope of this study was limited to female body image representation. It highlights the main

sources of the social codes and rules that led to gendering the female cyborg. It further provides an effective solution to the old patriarchal laws, using a loophole to de-gender the female cyborg body (as seen in cyborg Cinder) by allowing the subject to escape them.

Future studies of the retelling of fairytales in science fiction from a Posthuman perspective can provide valuable insight on gender and sexuality in the context of women's studies as regards the regeneration of patriarchal gender laws and norms in literary texts with the goal of eradicating them.

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