Gynoids: The Impact of Female Robots in Real Life.

ENG 2420 Science Fiction
Prof. Jill Belli
Joselin Campoverde
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Discuss the science fiction term of “cyborg” or “fembot” and its origin.

Explore how this term has emerged in real-live robotic design.

Investigate how female-appearing robots are a motive of debate and controversy in today’s society.

Analyze the positive and negative impact of these female robotic technologies in the present day.

Do you remember any science fiction film where a robotic machine has a humanoid female look?
What is the term “fembot” or “gynoid”? 

- Fembots are used to refer to robotic humanoids that resembles a female human form.

- Gynoid is more modern term in science fiction to describe a fembot (robot/android in female form).
Historical Background

• Robotess is originally considered the oldest female-specific term (1921).

• The term “fembot” was first introduced in the science fiction genre through the TV series *The Bionic Woman* (1976).

• Fembot term was used in the movie “Austin Powers” where stereotypical women were robots designed to seduce the protagonist and kill him.
Historical Background

• The recent term introduced in the science fiction genre to describe a female robot is known as gynoid.

• This term was introduced by Gwyneth Jones in her 1985 novel Divine Endurance to describe a robot slave character in a futuristic China, that is judged by her beauty.
From science fiction literature to films and movies, these female humanoid have become existent the early ages. Some examples of famous fembots:

- Metropolis (Fritz Lang, Germany, 1926)
- The Bride of Frankenstein (James Whale, USA, 1935)
- The Perfect Woman (Bernhard Knowles, UK, 1949)
- Solaris (Andrei Tarkovsky, USST, 1971)
- The Stepford Wives (Bryan Forbes, USA, 1975)
Gynoids or Fembots in Science Fiction

• Robotrix (Jamie Luk, Hong Kong, 1991)
• Star Trek (J.J Abrams, USA, 2009, 2013)
• Under the Skin (Jonathan Glazer, UK, 2013)
• Lucy (Luc Besson, France/USA, 2014)
• Ex Machina (Alex Garland, UK/USA, 2015)
Gynoids in Real Life!

• Nowadays where humanoid robot design is technologically possible, gynoids have also become a part of the real world as robots have been developed with female attributes and close to resemble a woman body.

• These idea has raised people reactions to fembots in ways that may be attributed to gender stereotypes.
Can Female Robots Be Beneficial to Society?

Studies on human-robot interactions reveal that gender plays a major role in how people perceive, communicate with, and treat robots, like it occurs with humans.

- In 2019, Julie Carpenter, a social science researcher at the University of Washington, asked 19 students to watch videos of two robots, one that was modeled after an adult woman and another that looked like a taller Wall-E with arms.

- The results revealed that the majority of students expressed their empathy towards the female robot since a feminine form robot seems more inviting, warm and interactive to them.
Can Female Robots Be Beneficial to Society?

- Other research suggest that gender could be beneficial for robot interfacing, as humans appear to be more comfortable with humans as caretakers. According to some researchers, “more feminine home health care robots could put patients at ease.”

- This opens the possibility to use female robots in tasks like caring for the elderly and teaching children.
But… Can Female Robots Negative Affect to Society?

• These humanoid robots have also raised a lot of debate and controversy specially among the female gender.

• The issues reveal that these machines create stereotypes that contributes with the objectification of woman.

• An example is the robotic version of the famous actress Scarlett Johansson whose design only has capabilities to respond to compliments by displaying a coquettish smile and wink.
Conclusion

• The term “gynoid” not only has increased in popularity in the science fiction genre for the last decades, but it also has bring to the real world as many robotic technologies have been created with a female humanoid form.

• Although these technologies have impact society in a way they negative affect humans, humanoid female robots can also be beneficial as they can incentive humans, specially the female gender, to involve in computer and technological fields.
Works Cited


• Melzer, Patricia. *Alien Constructions: Science Fiction and Feminist Thought*. University of Texas Press. p. 204.

• Klein, BJ. *College Weekend…a Strange, True Story*. Darkerotichorror.


