CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN CYBORG BODY AND CYBER SELF

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ABSTRACT. TechnoFeminist Science Fiction is a new trend in contemporary Women/Gender Studies and Feminist Science Fiction and aims at showing the stories of technowoman and their technoworld by creating new women figures − combining both cyborg and cyber. British novelist Sue Thomas has opened a new three dimensional world to contemporary women science fiction through a technodigital world in which cyborg embodiment corresponds with her cyber self by breaking down the boundaries between woman and machine and physical and non-physical organisms. In her novel, *Correspondence (*short-listed for Arthur C. Clarke Award for Best Science Fiction Novel in 1993), Thomas weaves the mutual relationship between women and technology and develops an image of cyborg consistent with Donna Haraway's cyborg manifesto and cyberspace consistent with Sadie Plant's cyber matrix. This second person narrative novel weaves the issues of AIs, roleplay game, online player selves, loneliness and strangeness of cyborg figure, cyber job of the cyborg woman, cyberspace and virtual realities, cybersex between cyberwomen, and cyber virus. That is, virtual reality, cyberspace, is created by a cyborg woman who composes an online cyberfeminist science fictional narrative through creating a techno-digital world, cyberspace. The unnamed protagonist, called *You*, adopts herself to the computer and begins to live in a virtual cyberworld that she composes, so by this way, she tries to transform her body into a machine, to a cyborg organism. Therefore, the aim of this study is to demonstrate how technowoman is reborn through correspondence between cybernetic organism and cyber self.

Keywords: technowoman; cyber self; cyborg woman;
TechnoFeminist Science Fiction; women studies; gender studies

Technology and science affect women globally and contemporary feminist science fiction weaves this affect by criticizing such kind of classification as technology and science are inherently under the authority of patriarchy. Instead, technology and science can liberate women if used strategically (Melzer 19). Thus, over the past ten years or so, "there has been a great deal of general interest within feminist and cultural theory in two related but distinct metaphors, that of cyberspace, and the cyborg" (Wolmark, 1999: 1). In the age of digitalization, TechnoFeminism is the notion that gender and technology run together during the production process, women use the product for various means, that is, technological chance and the lives of women are interrelated to each other. Judy Wajcman issued her feminist views of technoscience by grounding her *TechnoFeminism* combining the philosophies of two important key feminist analysts of technoscience – Sadie Plant and Donna Haraway. In the light of Wajcman, Plant and Haraway, the aim of this study is to analyze TechnoFeminist Science Fiction novel *Correspondence* by British author Sue Thomas in terms of corresponding cyber and cyborg selves.

Feminist constructivist technology studies (FCTS) regard gender as socially and culturally produced. It is developed in social studies of technology and it adopts social constructivist perspective on technology that rejects technological determinism. Wendy Faulkner questions gendered notion of technology and this feminist constructivist technology studies are referenced by "the sense that technology and society are mutually constituting – hence, the coproduction of gender and technology" (90). Likewise, Wajcman suggests a social shaping or constructivist view of technology and offers a useful and effective interchange with feminism. That is, Wajcman, instead of technological determinism, supports a mutual relationship between technology and society, and especially between gender and technology. She puts stresses on the view that social circumstances can shape technological change, as well. Wajcman asserts that in terms of their usage, design and content, technological artefacts are socially shaped and so, she regards technology as "a sociotechnical product" both in its creation and in use. That is, gender roles and sexual divisions are considered as "part of the socio-technical system or network" (Wajcman, 2004: 34–35).

Because of the false idea that technology and science are under the hegemony of men and that women are under-represented in scientific and technological fields, there appeared pessimistic views. Men do not shape technology and women cannot be excluded from the field; on the contrary, technology and science are free from gender and we cannot talk about any sex shaping them. Wajcman argues that contemporary feminist debates are more optimistic about the impact of radically new technologies on women

and its possibilities opened up for women. She says that "we have begun to conceive of a mutually shaping relationship between gender and technology, in which technology is both a source and a consequence of gender relations" and because of this reason she coined the term TechnoFeminism. Wajcman points out the mutual constitutive relationship between technology and women and the notion of technology is considered as not monolithic and neutral by her TechnoFeminist framework with an "emphasis on the contingency and heterogeneity of technological change." Therefore, her TechnoFeminist framework gives women opportunity to transform technologies (Wajcman, 2004: 5–7).

Thereby, while previous generation of feminists like radical, cultural, socialist identified technological pessimism, these new generation feminists like TechnoFeminists, Cyberfeminists and Cyborg Feminists identify technological optimist feminism. Women can make some choices by defying biology such as choosing the sex of the child, choosing the color (of hair, eyes, body) of the child, having a child after menopause or not having a child altogether. These new body technologies sever the link between femininity and maternity and so the categories of the body, gender, sex and sexuality are disrupted. Hence, Wajcman claims that this liberates women from the tyranny of biology or having been captive to biology. Thus, by the help of this new technology, women have right to choose to use their body as an incubator or not to use their maternity power. Women's exclusion from technoscience, their restricted access to scientific and technical institutions and careers or the structural barriers to their participation in scientific and technological jobs became the major concern of feminism. Wajcman argues, "if girls were given the right opportunities and encouragement, they could easily become scientists and engineers" (2004: 14).

Wajcman's TechnoFeminist approach has parallels with more developed gender theories as Cyber- and Cyborg feminists. Plant and Haraway have been influenced by this new technoscience development as well by claiming that new information and communication technologies provide female empowerment agency and pleasure. Within TechnoFeminist framework, Wajcman combines Cyberfeminism and Cyborg feminism. Cyberfeminists reject the patriarchal power of men on the field of technology and science because women use various technologies and participate in cyberspace. That is, thanks to the opportunities of the Internet by which female ways of being can be expressed, the relationship between women and machines has been changed, as well. As cyberspace is beyond the control of any sex, technology liberates women from the tyranny of traditional and conventional gender roles by creating gender-free future. Therefore, cyberspace allows freedom and a new space to women feeling at home; they can connect to this new space while lying on their bed.

In "Genderquake" section of *Zeros + Ones: Digital Women + The New Technoculture*, Plant argues that in the 1990s, Western cultures challenged to all "old expectations, stereotypes, senses of identity and security," so, since the 1990s women have found "unexpected economic opportunities, technical skills, cultural powers, and highly rated qualities" (37–38). However, control of power has shifted neither to men nor to women, and men began to lose their patriarchal authority and control over women. Zero may mean just a hole and nothing to the Western world, but holes themselves cannot be considered as simple absences of positive things (Plant, 1997: 57). That is, the symbol of "zero" is related to the psychoanalytic lack of women, conceptualizing nothingness or absence of positive but holes are not absences, so women exist without being affiliated to any constant "one." Wajcman argues that thanks to those Cyberfeminists like Plant, the relationship between woman and machine has shifted in a more mutual way that has secured the place of zeros in digital space by displacing "the phallic order of ones" (Plant, 1997: 57) Plant claims that the Net is the best place for the mind to be freed to flight from physical boundaries to non-physical realms. So, we can say that flight through the network is a kind of freeing the mind from constriction and restriction as well as breaking out of the prisons. Like Plant, Wajcman applauds this distributed nonlinear world, "the Net, cyberspace, virtual reality and the matrix" in which we cannot be shaped by orderly dominant authority and are not subjected to be controlled, instead, this world has its own origins and even an ideal place for women who can feel themselves as free as they are at home. Plant sees cyberspace out of male control because she believes that identity is not a goal in virtual reality: "virtual reality destroys his [man's] identity, digitalization is mapping his soul and, at the peak of his triumph, the culmination of his machinic erections, man confronts the system he built for his own protection and finds it is female and dangerous" (*On the Matrix*, 181–182). That is, for Plant, Cyberfeminism is composed of links and connections between women and computers.

A new way of thinking about the relationship between technoscience and gender, culture and gender, human and machines has become prominent with the metaphor of the cyborg. Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" creates a cyborg metaphor that breaks the binary oppositions and boundaries between culture and technology; boundary breakdowns between human and machine, human and animal, and physical and non-physical. Haraway defines the cyborg as "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" as well as defining social reality as "lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction" (1991: 149). We can say that Haraway rejects the dualistic way that we have explained our bodies

and ourselves, so she sees cyborg imagery as "a way out of the maze dualisms," that is, her cyborg world breaks down the gender dualistic boundary (1991: 181). Haraway regards technoscience as a cultural activity in which nature is invented and the culture-nature line is constructed as a separate process. This deconstruction will also demolish the binary oppositions such as society-nature, man-animal, machine-human, and become a liberating action for feminists. By means of cybertechnology, women will be able to reach beyond their biological bodies and redefine themselves without any historical and cultural boundary related to their bodies. Wajcman applauds loudly Haraway's playful deconstructive strategy, which gives hope and a sense of agency to women. All in all, following the theories of Wajcman, Plant and Haraway, the goal of this study is to show how technology and women correspond and new technowoman figures regenerate as more wired, wet, fluid, flexible, adaptable, mutable, multiple, ever-flowing, unstable and virtual.

In the TechnoFeminist Science Fiction novel *Correspondence*, Thomas creates a novel of woman and machine. Thomas's cyborg creature fits with Haraway's description of cyborg as the organism of cybernetic, as the machine/organism hybrid, and as fictious/factious creature. That is, Thomas creates her woman character referring to Harawayian Cyborgology as the hybrid of woman and computer machine by blurring the boundaries between non-physical/virtual reality and physical/real(ity) and referring to Plant's Cyberfeminism by creating cyberspace for cyberfigures in virtual reality. The novel consists of 27 chapters in capitals and bold, and at the end of each chapter, there are either Infodumps as Regis Tours or Datablocks, or Breaks which give information about the machine, cyborg, some references to the role of women in technoscience and the role-play game for the players/readers and the general information about virtual story and the game. The narrative of *You* –Thomas does not give a name to her cyborg woman – is written in second person narration. In this role-play novel, the story is written inside the screen of a computer which seems to write a novel. It consists of six main characters; *You* as a compositor of fantasies, Alan as *Your* boss, the artificial intelligence Marie as *Your* guide, Rosa as *Your* cyberself-figure and the virus Shirley as the friend of Rosa for years.

Correspondence does not have a linear story line because all three dimensional worlds are interweaving to each other that makes the text difficult to understand. But with its non-clear linear plot (we see first effects and then causes within each dimensional world), with its infodumps, short but many chapters and breaks, and second person narration addressing you as reader and composer of the story, it has a postmodern narrative technique. It is a TechnoFeminist Science Fiction novel with its virtual reality cyberspace created by a cyborg woman who also composes an online cyber-

feminist science fictional narrative through creating a techno-digital world, cyberspace. Marie as an AI in the composed game also becomes a guide to us as player/readers to understand the virtual reality within the text better because the text is written in second person narration, so it confuses us about whom the text is talking and to whom it addresses. Marie also addresses to players with the pronoun you in the same form (without capitals, italics or bold), so it is confusing whether she is addressing to the players or to the protagonist, cyborg composer. So, in order to make this analysis clear, we use "*You*" in italics and the first letter capitalized for the cyborg woman composer. Because "*You*" refers to the woman and also to the reader as a singular person, we use appropriate verb forms for singular third person "she."

By the help of the character *You*, you become both the narrator and the reader: as a narrator you are a computer programmer composing of virtual realities for the players and readers, and as a reader you are taught how to play a virtual reality role-play. Because of having lost her husband and her child in a car accident, *You* adopts herself to the machine, computer and begins to live in a virtual cyberworld that she composes, so by this way, *You* begins to turn herself into a machine, to a cyborg organism. As a result of this accident, the cyborg woman becomes numbness and cannot feel redemption in the real world, but within her cyberworld she feels some small redemption with her cyberfigures Rosa and Shirley. By using the desires and the hopes of the world as source material, *You* composes a cyberworld, but becomes a prosthetics for her work, so regenerates herself into a cyborg woman. This technowoman begins to live in her cyberlife with her creation Rosa, the machine consciousness that she creates from the source material of herself. Hence, *You* leaves her pain, sorrow and emotions, and all her past behind as well as future and she prefers to live in her cyber future world. *You* is a cyborg because part of her body is replaced with machinery, that is, her regeneration results from her hope of getting free from the tyranny of her female body and adoring herself to her cyberspace work. As she has to plug into a computer terminal to construct virtual realities, she does not need to engage with the people in real world. However, day by day, *You* loses the control of her cyberfigure Rosa who becomes her machine consciousness, so the more *You* is connected to her, the more Rosa starts to distance herself from *You* by developing her own life better. Hence, at the end of the novel, *You* is left alone with her own choices and completes regeneration.

In this "imaginative and highly meta-fictive cyborg novel," we meet with interchangeable and mutable subjectivity (Harper 416). The story centers on the relationship between the cyborg *You* and the computer network with which she is directly interfaced. Harper defines the character *You* not as "a

woman needs to build a better rationality/biology/technology interface, but one who wants to shed her biology altogether, replacing it with a purely technologic rationality" (416). We can say that this body without a name (BWN, the term we have coined) character, *You,* wants to plug computer hardware into her body through having various medical operations with whom she replaces her human bodily organs and ends her feminine biological functions. Harper claims that she transforms her body into a cyborg because of feeling loneliness, but a cyborg does not need a reason in order to exist; it exists as it is there. She transforms her body in order to exist not to escape from the real world. As human beings, we are bound to our origins and history, but as Haraway claims, cyborgs are not innocent and loyal to their origin, so Thomas's cyborg easily rejects her origin and past through transforming her body into an android form, super-computer in order to get rid of her bodily tyrannies and through erasing her memories and past, that is her origin, so that not to remember her sorrow and pain psychologically.

AIs and Online Player Selves

AIs populate cyberspace controlling the actions of humans and cyborgs. Cyberspace as a homogeneous place simulates social processes in which we see repressed, different and multiple identities, difference, and mutual relationships to technology (Wolmark, 1994: 119–120). In the novel, AI Marie manages the role-play game that *You* composes as well as telling the work of *You* as a compositor. *You* creates this AI as a guide to players before and during the game. While *You* is composing her program about virtual role-play for players, Marie is her guide. Until Marie appears with pop-up windows by *BREAK*, we cannot understand whether the text is talking to us as if giving directions or it is telling the story of *You*, the cyborg woman composer. In this part, we will examine the relationship between the AI guide and the players, but Marie tells the cyborg composer and her work throughout the novel. In fact, neither infodumps nor breaks are given in linear order in the text, so we have classified those interruptions in a linear way in order to make the text more understandable.

In the first chapter WHO ARE YOU?, there is an interval and Marie pops up with a *BREAK* by explaining her status to the players/readers as: "Hi!, My name's Marie, and I'm here to guide you through the story. Sorry I wasn't here to greet you, but I hope you're finding your way okay" (Thomas 2). She says sorry not to greet players/readers because the novel opens with the story of *You*, so it is certain that the whole text in second person narration is not told by this AI, we only see Marie during breaks. So, the voice of the text is unknown, it might be the writer's or the text's but

not the characters including *You*. Marie says that she will just plod along the background of the screen and bring the facts if the players need them:

> I don't want you worry too much about me […] I'm only a mouthpiece really. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask. Otherwise, I'll just point out the people and places of interest as we go along, and all you have to do is sit back and enjoy. I will, of course, be giving you information from time to time to help you keep up as the scenario develops. Oh, and naturally it's my legal duty to warn you that this is a role-play.

That is, AI Marie as a guide of the program says that she will point out the people and places and give the information about the program from time to time in order to help the players/readers to keep up as the scenario develops, so the only thing players/readers have to do is to sit back and enjoy the free sample role-play. Thomas creates Marie as the guide of the cyberworld and by making her talk to the player, the text directly talks to the reader in the mouth of Marie: "Wasn't that mentioned in your brochures? Oh dear. Well, it should have been. Someone must have slipped up down at the office. I'll explain again." Then, she explains the game to the players as if the writer telling the role of you as a reader: "You've been allotted a character to play and I'm just here to fill you in on the background details. You've already become acquainted? Great!" Next, while Marie is directly talking to the players, the text speaks to the reader directly to introduce the cyber-virtual-reality which will follow: "Now, if you look under your seats you should find a starter pack containing guilt, loneliness and desire. It's there? Oh good, at least someone is doing their job properly." Finally, Marie talks about the role-play: "Now on this trip we are also fortunate to have been given a free sample of wish-fulfilment, although I must warn you to use it in single doses only. Lifetime supplies are available from Regis, although to be honest they've extremely expensive […] I hope you enjoy your small free sample." The other point is that all the players should use the features in the starter pack; guilt, loneliness and desire throughout the game as well as free wish-fulfillment. As Marie says, the players should register the info-dumps during the game in order to skip to the next level. Last, she says that she will be with them whenever they want (Thomas 3).

Marie interrupts to give information about the role of the players like a little background to help them. She wants them to retune to the Guidetron frequently and then she switches them at that moment. In Guidetron, she gives them background info about the duty and the role of game com-positors, the difficult process of the composing games and the Regis game fantasies. Thus, she warns players about how impossible is to add new de-sires or make changes within package. It is certainly forbidden to reprogram

any kind by the compositor, so Marie warns the players not to come for such demands (Thomas 17).

Before the third *BREAK*, players skipped Datablocks A, B, C and D, so they have been introduced to the characters. Then, Marie pops up to check the online players/readers whether they like their role or not: "Well, everyone, you've had a chance to get to know Rosa and Shirley a little bit now. We'll be stopping in a moment for a bit of a rest, so how are you all feeling? Mrs Cartwright? (Thomas 31). By the time, we understand that Mrs. Cartwright plays the role of Rosa and Mr. Johnson, playing Shirley, does not like his play-character. Marie tells the directions of Mr. Johnson that he would rather be Rosa, but Marie says that it is impossible because he purchased the Super-Regis tour that he could get only one character. Only if he had bought the de luxe package, he could have been any of the characters. The only weak male player Thomas creates is Mr. Johnson and he is weaker than the woman players. Marie claims that she tries to iron out the problems players create and the only problematic player that Thomas portrays is a male one. Mr. Johnson tries to interfere in the erotic desire doze to the game untimely by makeup scenarios about sexual passion related to age when the plot was on Shirley's boyfriend's death anniversary and her devoted mothering on her stepchildren. Marie warns him again to retain from interfering more seriously; "Mr Johnson! I must ask you to refrain from interfering! Now Shirley is upset. You must be conscientious" (Thomas 78). She means that to use the desire doze will come soon, and he needs to be patient. We can say that here it is criticized masculine, untimely, insistent and libidinous passions about sex and lack of conscientious manner in men because of their sexual urges. Women players are more conscientious to their job.

Meanwhile, a day passes, players sleep and have breakfast after the last Datablock E. after this last training, and the players are now in the virtual world. After this break, the virtual plot starts in motion. Then later Marie intervenes in the game with the next break before the lesbian sexual love affair occurs between two woman cyber characters Shirley and Rosa. The plot is left to the imaginations of the players whether they will let their avatars have sex. Marie tries to learn how the players feel with the virtual bodies and the break ends with her question without answers because it is time to use desire doze for the players. That is, when the story continues, we witness the sex between two women; the players finish the dose of desire in their package. There remains only loneliness dose and players begin to use this dose. After that sexual encounter, the two virtual women leave each other feeling the guilt, and they begin to feel the loneliness. As a result, Shirley commits suicide because of feeling too much loneliness.

In the next *BREAK*, Marie pops up to calm down Mr. Johnson who cries for the death of his avatar Shirley; "Don't cry, Mr Johnson. Shirley always preferred to travel alone. Truly" (Thomas 136). Finally, in the last *BREAK*, Marie announces that it is the end of the game for the players, and it is the end of the novel for the readers as well: "AND SO THIS IS WHERE IT ALL ENDS Or begins. You go forward together now, ladies and gentlemen" (Thomas 153). Through Marie, the text provides the optimistic message that women and men are equal and can walk together side by side.

Cyborg Body of the Compositor

The cyborg has a place in feminist science fiction. Haraway does not think of the cyborg as unconscious, so she regards this conscious cyborg as a woman. Thomas' cyborg woman, compositor *You*, fits with Haraway's cyborg figuration. Haraway regards the notion of cyborg as a woman, that is, she insists on the femaleness of the cyborg because she explains her judgment like that:

> For me the notion of the cyborg was female, and a woman, in complex ways. It was an act of resistance, an oppositional move of a pretty straight forward kind. The cyborg was, of course, part of a military project, part of an extraterrestrial man-in-space project. It was also a science fictional figure out of a largely male-defined science fiction. Then there was another dimension in which cyborgs were female: in popular culture, and in certain kinds of medical culture. Here cyborgs appeared as patients, or as objects of pornography, as "fem-bots" – the iron maiden, the robotisized machinic, pornographic female. But the whole figure of the cyborg seemed to me potentially much more interesting than that. […] From my point of view, the cyborg was a figure that collected up many things. […] I was interested in affirming not simply the human-machine aspect of cyborgs, but also the degree to which human beings and other organisms have a kind of commonality to them in cyborg worlds. It was the joint implosion of human and machine, on the one hand, and human and other organisms, on the other hand. […] The cyborg became a figure for trying to understand women's place in the "integrated circuit" – a phrase produced by feminist socialists (Haraway, 2004: 321–322).

As Haraway argues, cyborgs are possible by blurring the human/machine, human/animal, and physical/non-physical boundaries. Thomas tries to breakdown the boundary between the human and machine, so this breakdown makes us difficult to distinguish the endpoint of humanity and starting

point of machinery. In the novel, *You* projects herself into the program, the game that she composes. She tries to turn her body into electronic devices connected to her body. She is terrified of going outside, and her contact with the world is completely mediated by the computer. She spends most of her time plugged into it. It can be said that human and machine meld together. Then, the fusion is reflected in the multiplying of identities, she begins to see the world from the eyes of the characters she created, Rosa and Shirley (that she accidentally created, but cannot erase). Both the virus Shirley and Rosa inhabit and control both the matrix and the composer, *You*.

In the cyborg woman's office room, there are two terminals; one is hooked up to the mainframe belonging to the firm and the other is for her personal system by which she does shopping, contact with her specialists about whom her boss Alan does not know. However, when *You* feels ready to work, she logs in to the other mainframe. The text explains what kind of feelings occurred in the cyborg woman turning into a machine organism hybrid:

> You love that feeling of logging on! It's turned you into a junkie. You look in, and you want to stay there. You can feel the feather-duster tickle of digital switches clicking in your brain. When the power is high they send frissons of electrical charge through your body, like a series of impulse orgasms. The patent for that would be worth millions– if they could control it better. You've got used to having sudden climaxes while you work, but it could be a very disruptive effect if everyone did it (Thomas 59).

Anyway, *You* spends most of her salary to prosthetic surgery. *You* is now a cyborg, but her plan is to be a full machine. Even now people recoil from *You* because "they can feel the machineness in you." People fear of *You* as they see something strange in her eyes, "They [men] assume that you're [women are] alien, or perhaps autistic." *You* makes her new body designed by people in highly advanced laboratories, "Your circuits, replacements for your vulnerable internal organs, are the product of human factories. You represent the pinnacle of human achievements. You are no more or less than a product of their own technology" and during her process "You have melded and blended until you too are now nearly all machine, and soon you will have forgotten even the change" (Thomas 141–142).

On the other side, Wajcman points out the impact of technology on women that might create utopian future visions. By using utopian, she means that the new generation feminists like TechnoFeminists identify techno-logical optimist feminism by moving from the negative and deterministic approach of the earlier feminisms. For her, in terms of Cyberfeminism, women gain access by using various technologies, so in this way, they participate in cyberspace and achieve liberation from conventional gender

roles, freedom and gender-free future in the global cyberspace. Hence, cyberfeminist writers create virtual reality that is a proper place of freedom for women as internet is beyond the control of patriarchy and it is also the liberation of the conventional definition of women as biologically determined belonging to the private sphere and jobs (Wajcman, 2004: 4). Thomas creates utopian future visions in this novel. She also creates her female protagonist free from conventional gender roles belonging to the private sphere and job; she is the best game composer and the most suitable person to arrange this online role play game.

In addition, for Wajcman the biomedical technologies can create hopes for women by offering freedom and "fantastic opportunities for self-realization – we can literally redesign our bodies and commission designer babies." For example, women can "defy biology altogether by choosing not to have a child, choosing to have a child after menopause, or choosing the sex of their child," so "severing the link between femininity and maternity, as these new body technologies do, disrupts the categories of the body, sex, gender and sexuality. This is liberating for women, who have been captive to biology" (Wajcman, 2004: 4). Thus, by the help of this new technology, women have right to choose to use their body as an incubator or not to use their maternity power. In *Correspondence*, biomedical technologies create hope for the character *You* who tries to regenerate her body by choosing not to have a child, so Thomas disrupts the categories of body, sex, gender and sexuality by using technology that is liberating for her female protagonist who does not want to become captive to biology.

Before *You* regenerates her body into a cyborg completely, she has some feminine features that prevent her to work firmly. During this transition time, although she feels her womb absent, every month *You* continues to have her period that she cannot think straight: "This results in peculiar silicon burps in the RealTime system. Strange things happen. Your hormones send uneasy bursts of current which download on to the circuits like the lightning flashes of a distant storm, and impulses reverberate through your body causing disorientating flights of emotion." Thus, during these days it is impossible for *You* to work and "you must content yourself with minor physical tasks until the storm in your system subsides" (Thomas 110). Regenerating her feminine body to a cyborg means an early menopause because of the operation, but for a while her absent womb continues to breed. Thus, by erasing feminine obstacles from the body, as Haraway aims, Thomas's cyborg criticizes the binary oppositions between women and men that create segregation. Likewise, Wajcman argues, "There has been a tension between the view that technology would liberate women – from unwanted pregnancy, from housework, and from routine paid work" (1991: 113). In the same way, Thomas eliminates femininity from her cyborg

figure: "Your womb was one of the first things to go-unnecessary now, and taking up valuable space. It is ironic that it was replaced by backup memory circuits. Not your memory, but your body memory, functional equipment to facilitate better processing" (Thomas 64). Even the hearth of *You* has been replaced with a prosthetic one and her machinery body is told like that:

> My legs are hydraulically driven. Below my navel I have a retracted colostomy bag. My reproductive and excretory functions are inessential and the organs have been removed. I don't eat. Or pee. Or shit. I don't cry with tears, although the pain is still within me. I salivate simply in order to speak. I breathe air only temporarily, until that last refinements are made (Thomas 115).

The cyborg composer says that she does not have a name anymore. Hence, we can say that Robson loads her cyborg woman a BWN (body without name) characterization.

The other point is that as cyborgs are partly human and partly machine, they have humanly physiological needs but in machine format. Machines even need physiological needs to charge themselves; when they are plugged, they charge their hunger and when they are closed, they sleep. Thus, sleep is one of the necessities for both humans and machines because "robots and even computer minds will probably have to have regular outings, vacations, time off to recreate themselves. This will make them seem far more human-like to us" (Benford and Malartre 178). Thus, unlike their robotic and machinery appearance, cyborgs also require human essentials as sleep and food, but not as much as normal human beings.

In the novel, the other feature of the cyborg is her sleeping, eating and dreaming facilities. In the work place of the cyborg composer, *You* has a large room in which there are four TVS running continuously and a large collection of cassettes and books. There is not any place to sit in her lounge and she sits rather stiffly these days because she feels more comfortable standing up. Where does the power of the cyborg woman come, from the electricity when she logged on? Thomas creates her cyborg character with obvious machine parts and as strong as a machine that she can work 24 hours online and does not need a sofa to sit and does not need any necessity to eat and to drink.

You does not want her boss Allan to take the work away from her and give it to a young one, so *You* spends too much time on work. *You* finds it difficult to estimate what people need in cyberlife, but as a real woman she can always know what they need and gives them what they want, hence thanks to this talent of pleasing people in real life *You* "straight[s] towards being the perfect wife/mother/daughter/daughter/neighbour/friend/ and finally/mistress" (Thomas 8). Because of this reason, she spends all her time online in order to answer to the needs of players. She has two sorts of

sleep; mechanical and physical. However, she claims that "Mechanical sleep is when you cut out for a period of time. Sometimes it's induced by your programmers, far away at the other end of the terminal line, and sometimes it just occurs unexpectedly and for no apparent reason that you can work out. Either way you stay where you are, in whatever posture you're assuming at the time, like a switched-off toy" (Thomas 61). That is, sleeping is a problem for the cyborg woman, but again Thomas installed a different kind of sleep to her cyborg figure.

The Loneliness and Strangeness of the Cyborg

Haraway draws the cyborg as not innocent and loyal to its origin. That is, they never feel duty or responsibility to anyone or to their origin, so they are free and alone. Cyborgs are partly mechanical and partly biological beings and their partly machine side gives them a strange appearance. On the other side, Thomas criticizes the position of women in society by loading loneliness and strangeness to her cyborg figure. This loneliness, results from the patriarchal authority, has always loaded different meanings to women such as strangeness, madness, monstrous, lunatic, Otherness, and weird. Likewise, the strangeness of the Other loads the cyborg figure an alien feature. *You* explains how she misses her husband John and her child, and her loneliness without them. However, after her disastrous affair, she is impervious to the feelings of other and *You* begins to think only herself by remaining closed off because it is the easiest way to cope with the loneliness.

In addition, the paranoiac fear of cyborgs to be seen as alien by the rest of the society is best explained through the cyborg woman who is regarded as weird because of her body. In the light of Haraway, Thomas's cyborg breaks down the boundary of female/male dualism in society. Thomas also criticizes patriarchal society in which women are still harassed because of their female body. Because of such harassment, women are pushed to return to their domestic home. The other point is that; virtual world is safer than the outside for each sex, in this technodigital age, people prefer to manage their lives online while lying on their bed, even they prefer to continue to communicate with people via social media, forums and social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, Instagram, Viber, and WhatsApp and fulfill their needs via online shopping and online banking. We are accustomed to live online at full and high speed net. The new technology makes the life easier, the connection faster through regenerating us into wired cyberselves.

In the novel, the cyborg woman has a bad experience of going out to use the cash card machine, so *You* decides not to use it again, instead she

will find another way to draw money from her account. While *You* is wait-ing in the queue, a group of disco roller-skaters arrived. The connection between the machine and *You* is expressed like that: "You stayed a while in front of the machine, watching the lights flickers and wishing that you could talk to each other better. You felt lonely" (Thomas 10). The reason of the sense of this loneliness is going out to the real world, to the danger. When the cyborg woman comes face to face with one of the skaters who is drinking, he wheels round to bar her way. When they make eye contact, "like so many others in the past, he didn't comprehend what he saw, and he was scared" by saying: "Look at this, lads! Look at this slag's eyes! Weird, en't they?" (Thomas 11–12). While the skater boys consider her as weird, she also considers them as alien with "goggle-eyed," that is, it can be re-ferred from the novel that *You* feels herself alone outside the technological world or cyberworld and begins to find the others scary though "there's a trace of you in every one of them, but they just can't see it" (Thomas 1). The novel tells the alien-weird position of the cyborg woman in this techno-digital age and it is stated like that:

> People often turn away from you in the street, but you can understand that. You find them pretty scary too, and of course you know you're both frightened by the same ting-you see a little bit of yourself in them, and they see you likewise. The only difference is that you understand, and they don't. You've heard them whisper, when they think you're too far away to hear: 'There's something odd about that woman, but I can't quite figure out what it is. She's just not quite the same as us…' (Thomas 1).

Because of these reasons, the cyborg woman develops the habit of going out very little not to make people feel uncomfortable and not to lose time outside instead of doing online banking. She makes online shopping, online banking, and orders all the requirements to her house like most of us do in this technodigital age.

Cyber Job of the Cyborg Woman

Thanks to digital revolution, traditional hegemonic structures and power bases of male domination declined. Then, as Plant argues, there appeared a "genderquake" in the 1990s in Western cultures that the power in techno-logical innovations shifted from men to women who gained economic opportunities, technical skills and cultural power, and she stresses on the liberating potential of cyber culture for women's subversive subjectivities. Plant argues that the technology is not a patriarchal system in which mas-culine identities regard female identities as nothing, a zero. There is a close

relationship between women and machines, Zeros now have a place, enter to the matrix and virtual world of infinite possibilities by displacing the order of ones. The character *You* enters to the matrix and virtual world and so, displaces the order of ones by creating multiple virtual realities. In her "Binaries" section of *Zeros and Ones*, Plant stresses on the symbolism of zeros and ones which represent Cartesian duality; male as phallus and female as lack. She asserts that while computers:

> […] are gathering information, telecommunicating, running washing machines, doing sums, or making videos, all digital computers translate information into the zeros and ones of machine code. These binary digits are known as *bits* and strung together in *bytes* of eight […] And they made a lovely couple when it came to sex. Man and woman, male and female, masculine and feminine: one and zero looked just right, made for each other: 1, the definite, upright line; and 0, the diagram of nothing at all: penis and vagina, thing and hole . . . hand in glove. A perfect match. It takes two to make a binary, but all these pairs are two of a kind, and the kind of one. 1 and 0 make another 1. Male and female add up to man. There is no female equivalent. No universal woman at his side. The male is one, one is everything, and the female has "*nothing* you can see." Woman "functions as a hole," a gap, a space, "a nothing – that is a nothing the same, identical, identifiable . . . a fault, a flaw, a lack, an absence, outside the system of representations and auto-representations" (34–35).

Here, the phrases of Luce Irigaray above "*nothing* you can see," "functions as a hole," and "a nothing – that is a nothing the same, identical, identifiable . . . a fault, a flaw, a lack, an absence, outside the system of representations and auto-representations" are quoted by Plant (Irigaray 47). That is, women living in this binary world were left to be female but nothing else while men were regarded as the ones doing anything. In other words, Plant says that women were considered as "single purpose systems, highly programmed, predetermined systems tooled up and fit for just one thing" but this is more suitable for men who have single minded behaviors and actions (Plant, 1997: 36). Women can do multiple or various several things at the same time while men cannot concentrate on two more things synchronically.

Plant claims that monitors are merely avatars of the Net, and there is a kind of actual space behind. Technology is changing us as we change technology. Plant also asserts that touch as the interplay of the senses appears as a power on the web; that is, touch replaces sight denying masculine tendency that separates and classifies the world through visual devices. In the wetware, "living is an immerse, multidimensional process," so such

world creates direct physical contact between those living on land. Plant calls the Net "hypersea … a terrestrial sea of countless and interconnected conduits"[1] with the creatures that constitute it (Plant, 1997: 248). In ancient Greek mythology the relation between body of the unknown and the ocean is linked to "water and madness… in the dreams of European man" (Plant, 1997: 250).[2] Thus, the hypersea embraces also the female besides the liquid, the mutable, the ever-flowing. Plant creates the metaphor of the digital web as the female body whose detail, multiplicities, multi-dimensionalities are against the wholes, the unitary perspective of man the screen. Likewise, the body of *You* is like the digital web which is against the wholes. She has multiplicity in her own body having both human facilities and machine-like facilities using computerized digital working system. Thus, she has much more details in her body that is multi-dimensional. As she is living in wetware most of the time, her living body has multidimensional process both as a composer, living cyborg organism in real world and managing cyberselves in virtual cyberworld. She has a direct physical contact with the virtual world she has created though both her consciousness and her body plugged by cables. That is, *You* creates a hypersea with Rosa and the virus Shirley in her composed game world, hence; virtual selves are fluid, mutable and ever-flowing. For example, the fluid Rosa is always mutable and flows to every virtual reality that differs in each play.

In addition, Plant assumes that "if women were computers, now they were programming themselves" (Plant, 1997: 151). The character *You* is also programming herself as well as programming the game. Plant claims that the computer technology consists of the contributions of women to the sciences and claims that "women seem far 'better prepared, culturally and psychologically' for the new economic conditions which emerged at the end of the twentieth century" (Plant, 1997: 42–43). In the novel, it is stated that woman cyborg, *You*, is the best for the digital work both psychologically and culturally. In one of the breaks, Marie says that "Women make the best compositors, although there are a few men who make a living at it" and even claims that "Bereaved mothers are the best candidates of all. This is because they have no demands on their imaginative resources their faculties are well developed and in need of an outlet" (Thomas 17). More, it is stated that *You* is happy most of the time and sometimes of course *You* feels some regression, but her work helps her to purge her thoughts and emotions. *You* is a compositor and busy with her work, so when she overwhelms by the amount of source material, she takes a week off by switching off completely and then in turn she begins to work as refreshed. *You* has the project of composing because of her complex seniority, but she knows that she is the best in business (Thomas 5).

Wajcman claims that it is Plant who asserts that women have been central to technology by stressing their female superiority as programmers thanks to their skills in weaving, so as weavers of information they contribute to modern computing. Plant supports her idea of weaving from Sigmund Freud who "is willing to ascribe [weaving] to women," because "He tells a story in which weaving emerges as a simulation of what he describes as a natural process, the matting of public hairs across the hole, the zero, the *nothing* to be seen" (Plant, *On the Matrix*: 332). Wajcman argues that Plant "interprets this idea that women are essentially suited to weaving by identifying weaving with the threads of communication that enmesh the world, the connections these allow, and the metaphor of the connectionist machines" (2004: 65). Plant ridicules Freud's failure to understand women and his depiction of women as a lack and absolutely nothing at all. She opposes to Freud's attempt to femininity; "to those of you who are women" as a problem; "this will not apply – you are yourselves the problem" (Freud 145–169). Freud, while watching his daughter Anna, considers the sexuality and genitalia of female as deficiency and only male genitalia can fill its emptiness. Therefore, Plant challenges to the misinterpreted understanding and consideration of women as nothingless in history as if the only presence is the masculine and absence is the female in society. Plant asserts that: "women seem far "better prepared, culturally and psychologically" for the new economic conditions which have emerged at the end of the twentieth century" (1997: 42–43).

Supporting Plant's ideas, Wajcman argues that women have opportunities to enter the workforce in current technological workplaces and stresses on Plant's regarding women as superior programmers, weavers of information and as communicators that are more skilled. From this point, Wajcman also asserts that feminization of the workforce "favours independence, flexibility and adaptability," therefore she argues that "while men are ill-prepared for a postmodern future, women are ideally suited to the new technoculture" (2004: 64). Like Plant and Wajcman claim, Thomas creates her female protagonist as a superior programmer, weaver of information, more skilled communicator who is ideally suited and better prepared to the new Technoculture thanks to her adaptability, flexibility and capability. In the novel, all the input about the job of *You* is compared with other artists' jobs. AI Marie informs us that composing has the same sophisticated development as the other arts such as painting, writing, drama, music, etc. She claims that all sorts of artists, including compositors, have been busy with the dreams, desires and fears of human beings in trying to capture those sensations, but their success was limited because "each artist was informed by only a minuscule area of human experience – his/her own, plus a few snippets read or seen – and could therefore only deal within a very restricted field." It is the

case for compositors as well. Thus, this job turns *You* into a cyborg woman, a hybrid of human and machine. The text seems to speak directly with the cyborg woman. The compositor deconstructs the real life experiences by creating virtual lives and characters, but loses her control over them later, so both the composed virtual world and selves have their own self-control differing from player/reader to player. Shortly, it is compositors by whom every human experience is researched and examined through long year study. Thereby, Marie reminds the cyborg woman of her role that is difficult to compose.

Composing Cyberselves

McCaffrey claims that "there's some kind of *actual space* behind the screen, someplace you can't see but you know is there" (272). *You*, by composing an actual space behind the screen, creates a virtual cyberself who later turns out to be an actual self within the body of her. Plant argues that:

> This actual space is not merely another space, but a virtual reality. […] Cyberspace is nothing transcendent. […] Entering the matrix, is no assertion of masculinity, but a loss of humanity; to jack into cyberspace is not to penetrate, but to be invaded. […] Cyberspace is the matrix not as absence, void, the whole of the womb, but perhaps even the place of woman's affirmation. This would not be the affirmation of her own patriarchal past, but what she is in a future which has yet to arrive but can nevertheless already be, felt. […] This fabric, and its fabrication, is the virtual materiality of the feminine; home to no-one and no thing, the passage into the virtual is nevertheless not a return to the void (*The Future Looms*, 60).

Plant makes a resemblance between the woman and the computer. That is, behind the screens of computers there are virtual realities and behind the body of woman, there lies her reality, so she conceals her reality/virtuality behind her screen that is her camouflage and veils. Like a computer, *You* creates her virtual reality self, Rosa by whom she finds her reality/virtuality.

Like infodumps, Datablocks are for players to tune one by one, and they become open and on-line when they pass infodumps, then, they are ready for the game. From DATABLOCK A to the DATABLOCK E, the composer's creation of the two virtual figures is explained as an introductory chapter to the game before entering the motion of their virtual world. *You* composes Rosa as a virtual reality character in cyberworld, but then suddenly there appears another virtual figure Shirley as a virus that *You* cannot delete, so these two figures become friends for years. These two close friends live opposite to each other.

The text is telling how *You* creates Rosa as well as how Shirley appears: "The piece is beginning to come together now. It will be about a woman, and her name will be Rosa…You love her already." It is stated that Rosa is only a composite built of data and "she lives and breathes in your [cyborg woman's] imagination and it's not yet time for you to meet her. But she'll be here soon, and her story will unfold itself." However, when *You* loges in the day before, someone else tries to butt in and "her profile popped up on the screen, so you reset. You only need one person [Rosa] in this fantasy- two would make it complicated." The Virus, Shirley, seems hopeless but she is not the type of Rosa being a designer lady. *You* does not want her to enter the program, but cannot make her out of it. *You* thinks that such an opposite figure to Rosa can make the program bad, and claims that this virus travels everywhere, has not a soul and philosophy, so she has not right to enter to her game program. However, after *You* resets, she appears again trying to squeeze in next to Rosa: "Hang on…she's got a name now…Shirley. Not a very pretty name. boring. But…oh…she's pushing in…you can't keep her out…get away!...she's messing it up…oh no…you can't stop her…" by this way, the creation of Shirley by *You* is completed (Thomas 26–27).

Male Boss and the Woman Cyborg

For Plant, "Cyberspace is out of man's control: virtual reality destroys his identity, digitalization is mapping his soul and, at the peak of his triumph, the culmination of his machine erections, man confronts the system he built for his own protection and finds it is female and dangerous." She asserts that "there is a virtual reality, an emergent process for which identity is not the goal but the enemy, precisely what has kept at bay the matrix of poten- tialities from which women have always downloaded their roles." Hence, Plant defines Cyberfeminism as "an insurrection on the part of goods and materials of the patriarchal world, a dispersed, distributed emergence composed of links between women, women and computers, computers and communication links, connections and connectionist nets" (*On the Matrix*: 335). Like Plant, Wajcman asserts that in "Cyberspace, all physical, bodily cues are removed from communication. As a result, our interactions are fundamentally different, because they are not subject to judgments based on sex, age, race, voice, accent or appearance, but are based only on textual exchanges" (2004: 66). Plant celebrates that cybertechnology is out of control and free from male control. Some may consider the Internet as a product of global capitalism with new forms of exploitation such as women's exploitation, but Plant does not see technology likewise and instead she asserts that digitalization of women or technology means freedom for women.

Besides, subversion of masculine identities and multiplicity of innovative subjectivities are the main concerns of new technologies. As seen in Plant's metaphor of zeros and ones, the singularity of masculine identity verses the multiplicity. That is, conventional gender roles are transformed via the Internet because a machine can alter the body and self-relationship. This idea has become a popular theme of the recent postmodern feminism. For Plant it is men who have always been in the "prospect of being in a position to know, and preferably control […] crucial to modern conceptions of what is used to be called man's place in the grand scheme of things." In Plant's term thanks to this genderquake, "Everything was moving much too fast. What had once seemed destined to become as smoothly regulated world was suddenly running away with itself. Control was slipping through the fingers of those who had thought it was in their hands" (1997: 44–45).

In the novel, the male boss of the cyborg woman, Alan, tries to suppress her. He phones *You* to ask how the story is going on, but "You hate it when he keeps tabs on you." He is friendly, but tries to control *You* and that makes him cool. He recommends her not come work these days as she is sick, but she rejects because she is afraid of his wishing to visit her. However, as she guesses, he says, "It would just be nice to see you once in a while. You're missing some very important updating sessions, you know, and it's a shame because there are so many youngsters here who'd love to meet you." *You* thinks that the problem for her boss is that he is insisting on to show her off for a long time, but does not like such kind of manly show offs. He tries to use her as an advertising face and it is a kind of patriarchal view of male authority to use a woman's body as a show off object to affect and persuade clients. The second problem with him is that she feels him too close for comfort and too close within her borders in order to control her: "he keeps insinuating that you're going a little crazy-he doesn't know the half-and you suspect that he doesn't really trust you anymore. You've grown beyond his control." It is stated that Alan is her pimp: "That's something he hasn't acknowledged. He did, nevertheless, deliberately collaborate in your deflowering on the very first day of the training course. It was many years ago, but you can't forget it" (Thomas 107–109).

Then, *You* remembers the "Personalized Training" that consisted of threesome: Alan, *You* as an unwitting lady, and a micro in a tiny room for days. Alan finding some excuses to sidle out (he does this when he understands that *You* is getting on good at training), leaves *You* alone with a keyboard and the screen, but *You* realizes that his intention is to spy on *You* and in the room next door there is another micro, networked into yours, so by this way, he can watch her working and printout her progress. At first, *You* feels uncomfortable but then thinks that "What the hell, he can watch if he likes. You knew that he couldn't do it himself, poor man" (Thomas

109). She thinks like that because she is sure that he doesn't have the ability of emphasize as she has. This shows us that men in business life do not have the ability to empathize which is often associated with women, because of this reason we can claim that men do not have a social and empathetic manner to the people in work place and this prevents the problem solving ability.

Cyberspace and Virtual Realities of Cyberfigures

Plant declares herself to be in favor of "cybernetic feminisms" that explore the "convergence of woman and machine." In her philosophy, we meet with the metaphor of weaving that she claims the computer emerging "out of the history of weaving, the process so often said to be the quintessence of women's work. The loom is the vanguard site of software development." In other words, Plant relates the computer to the process of weaving countless patterns and resembles it to the Jacquard loom which weaves the flowers and leaves. (*The Future Looms*: 45–46).

Thus, Plant gives reference to the first computer programmer Ada Lovelace, who is the daughter of Lord Byron. Lovelace designed the first computer software by weaving the looping of algebraic patterns onto machines after she understood the working system of the Jacquard machine. Plant also draws her weaving metaphor on Freud's claim that women solely contributed to civilization by weaving but Plant turns this restricted view into women's weaving contribution into the whole of human history, creative and scientific discovery. She contends weaving that "has been the art and science of software" and "even the fabric of every other discovery and invention." She claims that "weaving is always already entangled with the question of female identity" and so comes to a point "at which weaving, women and cybernetics converge in a movement fatal to history," this convergence leads to the eventual liberation of women. Plant also argues that women have woven themselves into history's fabric through learning how to imitate and simulate although they never been the subject of it. Like computers, women can "mimic any function," so they can espouse a particular kind of virtuality (Plant, *The Future Looms*: 56–59). In Plant's version of the matrix, embodiment is irrelevant because she points out self-organizing systems and self-arousing machines of cybernetic systems/ circuits. Women do not have necessity of defining or achieving selfhood because cybernetic systems lead to the possibility of "an agency, of sorts, which has no need of a subject position," so Plant demonstrates cyberspace itself as emancipatory for women thanks to its notion of disembodiment (*The Future Looms*: 54). Likewise, Wajcman claims that "the virtuality of cyberspace is seen to spell the end of naturalized, biological embodiment as

the basis for gender difference. The Internet is expressive of female ways of being, and thereby creates manifold opportunities for changing the woman-machine relationship. Technology itself is seen as liberating women" (2004: 7).

The body of women becomes invisible and has a new embodiment in cyberspace. They do not have a stable or fixed gender identity in this new frontier. They may present themselves as cyborg, avatar, men, animal, or any being and that enables them to have multiple cyber identities and embodiments. Hence, the gender becomes free-floating entity within cyberspace without bodily base. Therefore, Thomas's cyber entities are not stable and fixed; *You* creates cyberfigures in her virtual reality role-play game and these figures become her cyber identities. *You* weaves the Internet through looming an online role-play game for the players/readers and create virtual cyberfigures who both represent herself and freedom. Then, by weaving herself with her cyber identity Rosa, she decides to regenerate her body into a cyborg (hybrid of computer machine and human) in order to spend most of her time in cyberreality better. The more she comes closer to her cyberfigure, Rosa, the more she becomes fluid, wired and hybrid. She tries to make her body more flexible to computer technology by which she achieves possibility to live in virtual reality within the Net. Wajcman considers women as flexible to the changing technology and describes cyberspace, virtual reality and the Net as distributed nonlinear worlds: "It is the ideal feminine medium where women should feel at home. This is because women excel within fluid systems and processes: their distinctive mode of being fits perfectly with the changes associated with information technology" (2004: 7).

Likewise, Thomas with her distributed nonlinear worlds presents three-dimensional space for the readers; the space of cyborg woman, the space of virtual figures and the space of players. In each space, women are flexible and more suitable to technological developments. In the first space, *You* is better prepared for the online job and best in game composing, Rosa is a powerful unstable and uncontrolled virtual figure, and within the three players, two women, Mrs. Burton and Mrs Cartwright are more clever, easy going and better players than the male player, Mr. Johnson who always complains about the game, suffers transference and wants to switch his avatar Shirley with Rosa. After the artificial intelligence Marie introduced the plot in datablocks, *You* starts the game for the players. The virtual game starts with the travel of Rosa to Ireland. Thomas, by giving place to cyberspace and online virtual realities, she gives voice to the experience of women by focusing on online women bodies.

The text is speaking with the cyborg woman again about how difficult her job is: "You find that your perspective is becoming more and more

detached, causing a disturbing unevenness in the shape of the dream. Never mind, in the future it will be regarded as the first step towards a new genre of the mind-machine interface." Haraway follows this mind-machine interface genre as Cyborg Manifesto. For her, cyborg figure breaks down the binary between physical and non-physical as well as machine and human, so *You* is a perfect figure both Harawayian Cyborg Manifesto with her composed cyberworld and her machine-human cyborg body. Although *You* is a composer, she questions her fictional computerized character Shirley because it is a virus and acts freely without the control of the composer, its creator. *You* composes her cyber characters but day by day begins to lose control over them.

The virtual story starts by Rosa's travel to Ireland. Rosa writes a letter to Shirley saying that she has fallen in love to Conal who lives in Dublin. However, like her other affairs, this relationship ends and she feels very bad as she is very romantic, so Shirley comes to take her home by helping her to handle the situation. After they return, Rosa moves to new house. *You* as a composer cannot understand Rosa as well about her decision of a new house. Rosa is so busy with her new house and has treated Shirley very unkindly although Shirley has always been supportive to her. Nevertheless, Shirley feels sorry for Rosa as she has not had a man. She remembers her husband's saying that Rosa's husband Jim blamed Rosa for her coldness and unimaginativeness in bed, but Rosa claimed vice versa that she has a passion by relying on herself for erotic pleasure. Then, Shirley visits Rosa a month after moving and is shock to see a different Rosa. Rosa in this town is different to Rosa in the country: "she had become still, gentle, and soft" (Thomas 88). Rosa feels herself refreshed after moving this house. Shirley in her visits cannot find Rosa at home. She cannot find her, but while trying to calm her nerves in the cottage garden her lighter flashes and mites begin to cover her. She runs inside, takes a shower, goes to Rosa's room in search of refuge, throws off her towel and falls asleep there. Then, when Rosa returns to her own bedroom, they began to have a sexual encounter which causes their friendship trouble and causes Shirley commit suicide. As a result, this virtual story is over.

Cybersex between Two Cyberwomen

In the chapters ROSA and SHIRLEY and then SHIRLEY AND ROSA, players use the dose of desire. It is told that these two close friends are satisfied with the sex they have made. First one is told from the perspective of Rosa and the second one is told from the perspective of Shirley. It starts when Rosa finds Shirley in her bed. They start to touch and kiss each other's soft skin and the pleasure of lesbian sex is explained like that: "there

was not the self-conscious artistry of man and woman together. It was different [their first experience] to touch another person and know at the same time what that touch feels alike." Rosa sleeps on Shirley's breast until noon and Shirley in the same way enjoys "an intensely erotic submission. This was the sexual act that she had fantasied but had never expected to experience." After this experience, Shirley has thought that she "had turned into Rosa or that Rosa had become her. She had not at all expected to remain in her former body." For Shirley, the sexual intercourse is an affirmation of love. Shirley confesses to herself that she loves Rosa and wishes to stay with her in this house, but she is aware of the fact that Rosa does not think and feel like her, so decides to leave her and remain silent for the rest of her life. Shirley leaves Rosa by leaving a rose for her and commits suicide on the beach (Thomas 121–123).

Goodbye Virus

Richard A. Spinello asserts that "A virus spread when someone passes long the infected code" (208) and *You* passes long the infected code while she is composing her cyberself Rosa and there appears Shirley virus. However, "Worms are similar to viruses, but unlike a virus, a worm can run independently and travel from one system to another without attaching itself to another entity" (Spinello 208). Thus, *You* can delete Shirley virus, but cannot delete Rosa who is both a virus and a worm. Rosa is a kind of Melissa virus, a hybrid creature, combining elements of both a virus and a worm. She/Rosa mimics the virus/Shirley (after sexual encounter) and can travel from one system to another easily and independently, but like a worm she sends a copy of herself to any entity and makes herself embedded in that entity forever. By loading her self into the composer's mind, Rosa sends signal to the composer to delete Shirley. *You* places Shirley on a beach where she remembers her childhood memories. She starts to play childhood games. She realizes that walking along the cliff-top is one thing she did not do in her childhood, so she starts to climb but the rock is damp and slippery and she is unable to control her legs anymore and she falls down. She does not feel suicidal and struggle because she knows that this is inevitable and finally she dies. Hence, the cyborg woman listens to her voice of virtual conscious (Rosa) and kills Shirley.

The War between Cyborg Body and Cyberself

Plant asserts that "The computer, like woman, is both the appearance and the possibility of simulation" and she claims that "Woman cannot *be* any-

thing, but she can imitate anything valued by man: intelligence, autonomy, beauty. . . . Indeed, if woman is anything, she is the very possibility of mimesis, the one who weaves her own disguises." *You*, like the computer, is the possibility of simulation and mimics the appearance of the machine through turning her body into a machine. That is, *You* weaves her own disguises and she is "already more than that which she imitates." *You*, "like the computer, appears at different times as whatever man requires of her. She learns how to imitate; she learns simulation. And, like the computer, she becomes very good at it, so good, in fact, that she too, in principle, can mimic any function" (Plant, *The Future Looms*: 59). However, she begins to lose her control over her cyberself creature because like her, Rosa has learned how to imitate and simulate. Day by day, Rosa becomes very good at imitating the program in the Net and succeeds to transform herself into a virus and a worm so that to inhabit in the computerized body of *You*. Thus, Rosa becomes more than what she imitates and she breaks her boundary within the cyberspace and gets her freedom as a free being in real world. This transition creates trouble between the creator and the created.

Rosa's grow disturbs its creator. *You* has created many figures before but Rosa is so beautiful and different because she has had much relevance for *You*: "More and more it feels as if it's moving towards something deeper than a simple sensory simulation (Thomas 63). The cyborg woman considers Mary Shelley and her work in this chapter. The creation of a new life form by Frankenstein resembles to her creation of Rosa, but in different ways:

> The life that Shelley created in her book was male, and built by a man. Somehow that dooms it to failure. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons. Men have committed so many sins. And how far was Mary really thinking about the way that men take the material that is woman and recreate an image which they can own – only to find themselves unable to respond to the breathing being they have fostered? Frankenstein was the scientist who could not love his own creation, although it loved him. It transcended him, as Rosa is transcending you (Thomas 66).

That is, *You* starts to compare herself with Frankenstein who could not love his creature despite its love, but *You* believes that she will love Rosa. Both two creatures transcend their creators, but unlike Frankenstein, *You* "will not reject her simply because she is a figment of your psyche." *You* knows that Rosa is not real, but wishes that she were real with all her hearth. She is sure that she and Rosa have a future together. Thomas gives a reference to Virginia Woolf's "A Room of One's Own" essay: "Somewhere there is room in this world for a woman who feels without knowing and a woman who knows without feeling. Well, that's not quite true. You can feel a little

something now that Rosa is here with you, but it's somehow shadowy" (Thomas 64). *You* knows that a machine self can also have feelings likewise a human being might not have any. That is what *You* tries; to regenerate herself to get rid of the tyranny of feminine feelings and humanly sensations. She wants to feel like a machine and she knows that a machine can have a soul in the same way a human cannot have a soul.

While *You* is watching her creation on the screen, *You* becomes both disturbed and happy at the same time because Rosa grows and takes the control of her cyberself being. The transformation of these two figures are in process at the same time; the more the cyborg body of *You* regenerates into a machine-like organism, the more Rosa grows her own being by taking control. The more Rosa grows her own cyber identity, the more *You* tries to take her under control, but no matter how much *You* tries, Rosa establishes her own independency. We can say that women were considered either monsters or angels in the house, or mad woman in the attic. If you are mad, it is normal to be illusionary or delusionary like the cyborg woman. The cyborg woman is neither a mad woman in the attic nor an angel in the house. She works as a compositor or a computer program and knows that Rosa is not an illusion and real. The cyborg woman just waits to be brought back to life, but considers Rosa to bring her to another life. She gives birth to a child, a new virtual life, that is; she produces her new self. If she cannot end the life of Rosa, she is going to live not only within this cyberworld but also a second life within Rosa.

Then, *You* tries to speak with that emancipatory cyber character and so an online dialogue starts between *You* and Rosa. By this way, *You* has brought a forth life with Rosa one more (her sons, herself and Rosa); "From somewhere inside this gross mix of circuitry and flesh you have produced a child, which is you. Yes, Rosa is you, sent into the world reborn into a new person who even now turns to face you and cries to return." From this dialogue, we see that *You* cannot decide to end Rosa, to cast her out in order to get rid of her simulation to turn back to life again. In this dialogue, Rosa begs her not to cast her out, "I belong with you, my life is within you. If you cast me out I shall float free, and where will I go? What will happen?," but *You* says: "Don't be afraid. Look at me. I can survive without you, and you without me. I still live. You are only born of me, of my mind. You take with you my love and hope to carry them forward. I shall stay here, purged of my pain." Next, Rosa says she reminds her of joy and can make her learn to live with pain because Rosa believes that there is no way to purge pain. *You* admits that she is joy and wants to release her to go where she will, but Rosa says: "You're are selfish! You're scared! You're getting rid of me first, before I can have the chance to leave you again." This reminds *You* of Frankenstein. *You*, then, feels herself as the scientist Frankenstein because

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like his creature loves him, Rosa loves her, but both creators try to get rid of their new life forms because of fear. Thus, not to be blamed, *You* begins to blame and accuse her claiming that it is Rosa who left first even before *You* could understand her existence. Rosa accepts that she left *You*, "Yes. I left you. And I'll leave you again. But I always come back. I come and go, but I need to return. Don't you understand? Without you I can't exist." However, *You* does not want to surrender to her, but *You* does not want her to leave, as well: "You must make her go, so that you do not contaminate each other. Oh, you want her to stay, but she would not stay for ever. She admits as much. And you, in turn, cannot countenance such uncertainty" (Thomas 65).

   You is confused with her because Rosa is a virus from now on and if *You* does not delete this virus, it might contaminate into the machine program in the new body of *You*, so that might cause her new cyborg body not to work properly. *You* loves Rosa, but cannot trust a Melisa virus within her body all the time. Thus, *You* closes down Rosa for that night because of getting tired from her pleadings. *You* is afraid of giving in Rosa. *You* does not want Rosa to enter in her body, so the only way to prevent her body is to delete her otherwise *You* will need to end her regeneration and rejoin the human body. Hence, *You* decides to watch over her without letting her stay any more, but *You* prefers her to go first before *You* deletes her.

   The cyborg process of *You* is about to finish, but "Rosa is hovering round the edges sending ripples through everything. She's disturbing the equilibrium that's taken so long to establish." *You* knows that she's not real, only a piece of software, but *You* is suspicious of her to engineer something to reach her. *You* is not satisfied with Shirley's proposed dead-end, so *You* wants to start the story all over again. However, Rosa starts a conversation that *You* cannot start it again and has to wait to the end, and *You* says, "Really? Wait until you've sabotaged the whole thing and I have to start again? I'm working to a deadline you know, and at this rate I suspect it's a dead-end too" (Thomas 126). *You* means that she is supposed to give the story a dead end in case Rosa takes the control of the virus Shirley and then *You*. Thus, *You* feels sorry for Shirley's compulsory end, but sees that Rosa is happy about that end. Rosa thinks that she has given what Shirley wanted (sex, friendship, death) that makes her happy. *You* understands that she has lost the control of her cyber character. *You* cannot make Rosa do her commands.

Correspondence between Cyborg Body and Cyberself

In the light of Plant, virtual reality is a kind of flight from the body and cyberspace allows us to create our own cyberselves, so this enables us to

create symbiotic relations between us (women) and the machines. As Marvin Minksy claims the machine can be brought to consciousness, cyberself creature Rosa is brought to consciousness by its creator. Rosa as a cyberself transforms herself into a cyber-body loading herself into the cyborg body of *You*. Thus, the technowoman *You*, unconsciously, plays the role of communicator between her cyborg body and cyberself creature Rosa. Plant asserts that:

> Today, both women and the computer screen the matrix, which also makes its appearance as the veils and screens on which its operations are displayed. This is the virtual reality which is also the absence of the penis and its power, but already more than the void. The matrix emerges as the process of an abstract weaving which produces, or fabricates, what man knows as 'nature:' his materials, the fabrics, the screens on which he projects his own identity (*The Future Looms*: 46).

Likewise, the cyborg woman composer *You* is herself "a great communicator," like Ada Lovelace that Plant exemplifies (Thomas 46). She is a communicator between the players and the virtual selves by composing several virtual games for players and between herself and her cyberselves. The matrix, the cyberspace, is understood by the Nets of her communication. Her process of weaving cybernetic information shows Plant's association of women with software, the cyberspace and the matrix, that is, the computer which emerged out of women's weaving history. By weaving cybernetic information, she also weaves the correspondence between cyborg body and cyber self, between women as body and women as self. At the end of the novel, the woman as self, Rosa, and the woman as body, *You*, reunite within a cybernetic organism this time and then the technowoman is born.

A strange thing happens while *You* is working at her terminal. When *You* leans over to check the printer, *You* cuts out: "The next thing you know it is afternoon, and you've been standing there next to the printer for 5.35.78 hours. Your motor circuits have stopped completely, but fortunately cognition isn't affected [...] but the worrying part is that you have dreamed about the aeroplane again" (Thomas 138). As a cyborg figure, *You* has not been sleeping for over two weeks, so that makes her to worry about her cognitive circuit which might override the motor section, so the energy might be drained off because of over use. Only one solution comes to her mind; to run the recall memory by the help of RealTime in order to purge the system. However, in order to protect herself from the total shutdown, she needs to erase the entire recall file by isolating. If she succeeds this, she will be "a woman (woman?) without a memory." She does not call herself a woman since she tries to regenerate herself into a machine-like cyborg. Then, she succeeds and begins to recall her past.

Then, *You* has tests for the whole three days such as blood tests, urine tests, and marrow tests. *You* has doctors, technicians, programmers, Real-Time consultants. *You* can start Rosa up when *You* is free from the tests by connecting to the computer. *You* lets Rosa enter her computerized brain body by imprinting her inside herself. Rosa asks where the real world is and whether this is Earth. *You* tries to explain the real world, "Look around, Rosa. This is my source [cyberspace]. This place is giving me life, as I gave it to you." *You* gives chance to her cyber-creation to live in a virtual world as a simulation of real world (game space). *You* through connecting via her own cables plugged into the computer wants Rosa to feel her body and wants her to touch her hand. Rosa says that the hand of *You* is cold (because of mechanical skin), and Rosa asks if *You* feels her as well. *You* says, "Yes I can feel you. Not in the same way that you feel me perhaps, but this new skin senses you are there, and tells me who you are" (Thomas 160). However, Rosa says that she does not like her new cold skin and wonders why *You* tries to regenerate her body into machine look. *You* explains her thoughts about this regeneration: "This is my last major recon-ditioning, Rosa. Tomorrow my systems will go down for the last time, and I'll go to sleep for the last time. When I wake up I'll never go to sleep again. I'll never feel the pain. Everything will be forgotten – including you, Rosa. We won't speak together again." In fact, Rosa tries to prevent the last operation of *You*, her full regeneration both physically and psychologically because she will delete her memory and past and start a new life without her, so it means that *You* will not remember her composed realities and characters any more, even Rosa. Rosa does not want *You* to leave her and the cyberworld, and begs *You* to stay with her by saying that she has a home for both of them, but *You* says "I want to stay. I want to turn back the clock and not do this. But how could I stop it now? It's nearly finished. By this time tomorrow I'll be desensitized, and I'll have forgotten you […] You'll have your sensuality, I'll have my logic (Thomas 145). *You* rejects Rosa while she is in connection with the computer and while Rosa is still inside her body. Although she does not trust Rosa, she is not aware of the fact that a virtual cyberself can grow herself into a virus and transmit herself into the body of *You* during the connection. Then, Rosa deliberately threatens *You*, "I can follow you, you know. I know of a way to pursue you into the place where being is all there is. So, if you won't stay with me in my place I'll follow you to yours." However, *You* says that this trans-mitting is impossible and there is no way to such thing as they have their own lives. *You* knows that after this new operation, *You* won't remember her although *You* wants to remember Rosa who is the only one alive *You* has in this world though it lives in cyberworld.

At that time while *You* is arguing with Rosa, there is a knock and *You* quickly switches Rosa off-line. You cannot not say goodbye to Rosa. The senior technicians and two doctors enter and they ask if *You* has ever contacted with any other systems during the whole process of her transformation. *You* says that it is impossible to do this with the terminal line *You* uses for the work. However, they say that *You* has picked up a virus, "We've isolated it to you of course, but it's very persistent and we don't seem to be able to remove it" (Thomas 146). They say that *You* needs to decide either to scrap the project or to remain with virus. *You* prefers to continue the project. *You* knows that this virus is coming from Rosa with only whom *You* contacts online every time as Rosa claimed before that she will find a way and regenerate herself within Y*ou*. That is, *You* and Rosa will reunite in the cyborg body of *You* this time rather than in cyberspace. Rosa steps into the world of cyborg body through transmitting herself like a virus. After the last sleep of operation of *You*, Rosa confesses that:

> I told you we couldn't be separated! […] I found a way. As you say yourself, I'm only a programme, a piece of software, but that means I can do any of the things a programme can do. Some small adjustments, and I was able to reproduce myself within you. Ha! You like to lecture me about how you created me – well, I've created myself, again and again and again. . . You don't understand. You can't answer me, can you? Well, let me put it another way – I can copy myself. I'm the so-called virus! But not a virus to do you harm. I only did it so we could be together (Thomas 148–149).

Thereby, *You* has created a life that is the simulation of the real world and now *You* has to follow Rosa's world with her new body and soul. The players finish the game, but *You* knows that the game of Rosa will continue. A still place *You* sends Rosa is the cyberworld in which she will always live through the players. Rosa ends with this game, but she prisons herself in the body of cyborg *You* as a virus.

Following Haraway's cyborg figure, *You* continues her life as a human-machine hybrid as well as physical-non-physical hybrid organism thanks to non-physical virus Rosa within her body. She breaks down the boundary of physical and non-physical world through combining real and cyber/virtual reality in itself. Now, her machine consciousness is completed. Her cyber-reality Rosa grows, flourishes and develops her own life in the world *You* has composed for her, but later announces her independency breaking the control of her creator and moving to a still place; to her creator's body and mind. We can say that neither Rosa nor *You* is innocent and loyal to their own world, origin and creators. This time *You* starts a new life in this simulation world that she has previously created for Rosa and so for the

players. Her new body is a kind of correspondence between cyber and cyborg hybridity, and between real and cyber/virtual worlds/spaces.

Consequently, the title of the novel is the correspondence of a cyborg woman between physical and non-physical reality, between human and AI machine consciousness, and between cyber and cyborg figurations. In the novel, there is a direct correspondence between the reader and the writer; and Marie plays the role of the guide or mediator between the cyborg woman, compositor/writer and the players/readers. In real life, there cannot be a direct mutual correspondence/conversation/contact between a woman and a man, that is to say, men cannot understand and enter the world of women without a guide. In an interview with Sue Thomas, we asked how she came up with the title *Correspondence* and to what it refers, and whether the title is a kind of correspondence or conversation of a cyborg woman with a machine or with people in cyberspace or virtual realities. Or it is a kind of mutual correspondence between women and cyberspace, machine, the Internet, or the technology. That is, we asked if the title means that there cannot be any correspondence between men and women in real world, but only in cyberspace. Thomas answered that the term correspondence "refers to what might be described as the phenomenological correspondences between our relationship with nature and our relationship with computer/ programmed space. I didn't realize it at the time but it is really about the experience of the sublime, online and offline, physical and virtual" (Erkan and Buran, 140–146). Shortly, we can say that the novel gives voice to the mutual correspondence between women and technology.

NOTES

1. See also Mark McMenamin and Diana McMenamin, *Hypersea: Life on Land*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994, p. 93.

2. See also Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, Pantheon, New York, 1965, p. 18.

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