

Abstract for Symbiotic Cinema Conference

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Cinematic vs Televisual Cyborgs in the *Terminator* franchise

This paper wishes to consider how the TV series *Terminator: the Sarah Connor Chronicles* (Fox, 2008-2009) builds on and reworks the characteristics of the cyborgs presented in the three *Terminator* films preceding it, *The Terminator* (Cameron, 1984), *Terminator 2* (Cameron, 1991) and *Terminator 3* (Mostow, 2003). How is the spectacle of the cyborg, one of science fiction film's key special effects, transposed on television? Indeed, if science fiction on a big screen requires the display of special effects, how can they be transposed in the smaller and more intimate realm of television? This paper seeks to compare the *mise en scène* of the cyborg's appearances and combat skills in the films and the TV series but also the different narrative arcs governing characters who can be more fully developed within the length of a TV series than within a self-contained film. Indeed, whereas *Terminator: the Sarah Connor Chronicles* draws from the *Terminator* films to present its panel of cyborgs, it reprograms the different cyborg characters several times during the narrative, making them the center of the plot's twists and surprises. The character of Catherine Weaver in *Terminator: the Sarah Connor Chronicles*, for instance, echoes the *Terminator 2* T1000's metallic fluidity and ability to transform at will, announcing an antagonistic force, yet her final deployment serves to protect Sarah Connor and her son against the enemy, going against the viewers' expectations set by the films. Finally, it is interesting to note that the TV series changes the gender of many of the franchise's cyborgs, turning the male protagonist and antagonist of *Terminator 2* into females who have to deal with feminine-coded issues like love and motherhood. This raises the question of the difference in targeted audiences between the film franchise and its televisual adaptation. Can the turn to television be seen as a means of attracting the female audience of TV series such as *Buffy* and *Firefly* (Fox, 2002-2003, where Summer Glau, who plays the cyborg protagonist in *Terminator: the Sarah Connor Chronicles*, first appeared), to the male world of the *Terminator* film franchise?

Biography

Associate Professor at the University of Picardie Jules Verne, Marianne Kac-Vergne works on masculinity in contemporary Hollywood genres, more specifically science fiction. She has recently published *Masculinity in Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema: Cyborgs, Troopers and Other Men of the Future* (IB Tauris, 2018). Recent articles include "Sidelining Women in Contemporary Science-Fiction Film", *Miranda* [Online], 12 | 2016, <http://miranda.revues.org/8642> and "The Limits of Hypermasculinity: Intimacy in American Science Fiction Films of the 1980s" (in David Roche and Isabelle Schmitt-Pitiot, *Intimacy in Cinema*, McFarland, 2014).