

When the Imaginative Becomes Real! Future Anticipation as Depicted in Some Cyberpunk and Thriller Novels

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Abstract

Imagination is one of the mental faculties that distinguishes humans from other creatures. This explains why it has captured attention throughout history. Technological and scientific inventions that the world has witnessed since the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are prime examples of the power of imagination as a peculiar human trait. As a term, 'Imagination' is a cornerstone of literary theory, as demonstrated in S.T. Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* and his theory of imagination. Coleridge divides 'Imagination' into two forms: 'Primary Imagination,' shared by all people, and 'Secondary Imagination,' restricted to people with artistic genius. Although creative works are related to Secondary Imagination, but Coleridge asserts that both forms are integrated. Thus, this study aims to examine how imagination enabled some novelists in the past to anticipate the future, which is now the present reality. The study focuses on two mind-hunting global issues: the dominance of technology, embodied by the internet and its applications, over all aspects of life, and biological warfare (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic), which has sent millions into death. The selected novels are William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984), a cyberpunk novel, and Dean Koontz's thriller novel, *The Eyes of Darkness* (1981). Based on Coleridge's theory of imagination, the study concluded that diverse genres of fiction, such as cyberpunk and thrillers, can reflect the present reality and anticipate the future. Gibson and Koontz are visionary novelists whose creative imagination generates new perceptions of future global complexities.

Keywords: Imagination Theory, Cyberpunk, Thriller, *Neuromancer*, and *The Eyes of Darkness*.

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Introduction

The term 'Imagination' is defined as "a faculty for having mental images, and for making non-rational, associative transitions among such images" (Cottrell). Imagination is one of the mental faculties that characterize humankind and is closely related to creativity. For this reason, the term "imagination" has captured the attention of philosophers, critics, and psychologists as a fundamental component of human cognition and creativity. Interest in studying imagination dates back to the era of Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, but the peak contribution is associated with the Romantic Literary Theory by such outstanding figures such as P.B. Shelly, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

In his book *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Coleridge divides 'Imagination' as a mental faculty into two forms: Primary Imagination and Secondary Imagination. Primary Imagination, on one hand, is shared by all people and connected to their existence. It is based on the interaction between an individual's senses and the outside world. Secondary Imagination, on the other hand, is peculiar only to people with artistic genius (Coleridge 205). Fiction, belonging to Coleridge's imagination, mainly the secondary type, plays a significant role in human life. It expresses feelings and addresses pain, and sometimes prepares people for the future.

It is worth noting that some of the phenomena and crises witnessed by humanity since the second half of the last century and the first quarter of the current century have led readers of literature to relate their reality to literary works, especially novels. Although these novels were written many years ago, their content is surprisingly consistent with current events. Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of fiction in anticipating the future. Using S.T. Coleridge's "Theory of Imagination," this study will examine how imagination enabled past novelists to predict the present.

Accordingly, this study focuses on two global issues: the dominance of technology, embodied in the internet and its applications, over all aspects of life; and biological warfare (ex., COVID-19), which has sent millions of people into death. William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) is a cyberpunk novel devoted to examining the first issue, the domination of the internet and its applications. The second issue, the anticipation of biological warfare, is studied through Dean Koontz's thriller novel *The Eyes of Darkness* (1981). The selected novels are analyzed in light of Coleridge's theory of imagination.

Literature Review

The term "imagination" has captured the attention of philosophers, critics, and psychologists as both a fundamental human mental faculty and a pivotal element in creativity. Therefore, many researchers have developed theoretical frameworks to shed light on the nature, forms, and functions of imagination. This study begins

with the Greek era and the contributions of Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. It continues through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and finally the twentieth century. Ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle associated imagination (Phantasia) with imitation (mimesis) (Baktir 167). Through this process, the artists and the poets imitate the outside world. However, Plato and Aristotle had different perspectives on the value of imagination. While Plato evaluates imitation based on an "ethical and political context," Aristotle perceives it as "an aesthetic phenomenon" (167). Nevertheless, both philosophers agree that art and poetry are products of 'mimesis.'

Remarkably, Plato was antagonistic toward imagination, particularly in the context of art and poetry. Although he believes "that phantasy mediated between the realm of sensation and the realm of reason," he considered imagination to be a distorted version of truth (Boas 132). The sensory world is an imperfect reflection of the world of Ideals (or the world of absolute truth). Therefore, imagination is an imitation of the sensory world itself, an image of an image, making it far from the truth. Poets "imitate morally flawed divinities, [therefore,] they are prevented from forming virtues in themselves" (Tanner 35). Hence, Plato attacked poets for relying on imagination. For Plato, imagination is a source of emotions and deception because it fuels irrational emotions and passions and misleads the mind through images, myths, and feelings. This corrupts the soul and diverts it from a rational and philosophical orientation. Plato did not assign imagination a positive cognitive value; rather, he viewed it as a tool for deception and detachment from higher ideals.

According to Aristotle, imagination (or Phantasia) is "the ability of the mind to form mental representations or images of objects that are not physically present" (Alshalan 614). There are "two kinds of phantasy, one corresponding to the world of sensations, one to the world of thoughts" (Boas 132). In his *Poetics*, Aristotle refers to imagination as "mimesis" (xiii). For Aristotle, imagination is the source of art because it enables writers to represent human emotions, actions, and ethics (*i.e.*, reality) in new creative images that attract audiences. He believes that "the best recognition of all is that which arises out of the actual course of events, where the emotional impact is achieved through events that are probable" (*Poetics* 27).

In his *De anima (On the Soul)*, Aristotle distinguishes between passive and active types of imagination: "Passive imagination is what happens when the mind uses its senses to take in information from the outside world", while "Active imagination refers to the mind's ability to modify and blend sensory inputs to create new mental images" (Alshalan 614). Aristotle consolidates the latter, active imagination, perceiving it as a creative process through which artists and poets produce unfamiliar forms and images. Thus, for Aristotle, imagination is "an integral part of the human psyche, connecting our sensory experiences with our capacity for intellectual and creative endeavors" (*De anima*).

With the advent of Romanticism, imagination became a core principle in the works of Romantic writers like S.T. Coleridge, as seen in *Biographia Literaria* (1817). Unlike previous theorists, Romanticists related imagination to creation rather than epistemology. They perceived the world of imagination in a religious manner, relating it to the eternal world. In a book titled, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, M.H. Abrams explains the perspectives of Romanticists such as Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Shelley, who refute the premises that imagination is merely mimetic. According to Abrams, “the content of art has an internal origin, and that its shaping influences are not the Ideas or principles informing the cosmic structure, but the forces inherent in the emotions, the desires, and the evolving imaginative process of the artist himself” (46).

For the Romanticists, imagination is a creative power that enables an individual's experience to be universal. It is not a mere reflection of the outer world. It is not a mirror that merely reflects the outside world as it is. On the contrary, imagination plays the role of a lamp, not a mirror, because a lamp colors the world according to its light. Creative people do the same, coloring the outer world with their creative visions, which sometimes results in new creative forms.

Theoretical Framework: Coleridge's Theory of Imagination

The concept of imagination has preoccupied critics, philosophers, and theorists across ages due to its pivotal role in human cognition and creativity. Jürgen Klein et al. perceive the term “not as a simple power but a complex series of processes,” which provide “the possibility to transcend the space-time-determination and the cause-effect-relationship” (15). With the advent of the eighteenth century, ‘Imagination’ became a cornerstone in the Romantic literary theory through Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*. Coleridge's perspective on imagination was notably influenced by German Idealism philosophers such as Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. Like the German Idealists, Coleridge refutes the idea that Imagination is a mimetic tool that reflects the external world. For Coleridge, imagination is a creative power emanating from the artist that brings his creative vision to the outside world. For Coleridge, “the content of art has an internal origin, and that its shaping influences are not the Ideas or principles informing the cosmic structure, but the forces inherent in the emotions, the desires, and the evolving imaginative process of the artist himself” (Abrams 46).

In his book *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge postulates two forms of imagination, primary and secondary. Regarding the first form (i.e. Primary Imagination), Coleridge describes it as “the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM” (205). Coleridge's Primary Imagination asserts the idea that imagination is a universal power that eternally associated with human existence. Through this unconscious form of imagination, humans perceive and interact with the outside world via their senses. Primary Imagination, therefore, is characterized by peculiar features. It is universal, unconscious, spontaneous

(happens naturally without any deliberate attempt), and divine (as it echoes the miraculous force of the divine inside human beings).

Regarding the second form of Coleridge's Imagination, the secondary Imagination, he considers it

as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate: or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead. (Coeridge 206)

Unlike 'Primary Imagination,' 'Secondary Imagination' is conscious and intentional. It reflects Primary Imagination, representing the coexistence of the perceptions or objects humans unconsciously receive from the outside world through their senses and their conscious will to reshape or modify these perceptions or objects. For this reason, the production of creative works is related to this conscious form of imagination. This secondary form of imagination has a magical force because it combines conscious and unconscious aspects of human mind. It unites the inner/subjective and outer/objective worlds of humans. While Primary Imagination is universal, unconscious, and divine, Secondary Imagination is conscious and is mainly associated with artists and creative individuals.

In addition, Coleridge believes that these two forms of Imagination are different from 'Fancy'. 'Fancy,' for Coleridge, contradicts Imagination with its forms because it

has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; and blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory it must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association. (206)

In Coleridge's perspective, 'Fancy' cannot be equal to Imagination because it is a mechanical cognitive faculty that lacks creativity. Coleridge justifies his viewpoint that Imagination unifies diverse objects into one entity, fancy combines different objects/images in different forms, not a unified form. Unlike imagination that transcends limits of time and space, fancy deals only with the fixities as it lacks such capacity of transcending time and space. He, therefore, perceives it as a mechanical mental process and a less creative faculty. In contrast, Imagination in its two forms indicates human capacity to learn through their sensory interaction with the outer world, as represented in the Primary Imagination, or the conscious will and artistic faculties of creative people, as represented in the Secondary Imagination. In other words, Imagination is based on unity of an individual's

subjective and objective components, whereas Fancy is based on memory of different images which, although combined, reflect ununified nature. Based on this Coleridgean perspective on Imagination and its relationship with creativity, the selected novels, Gibson's *Neuromancer* and Koontz's *The Eyes of Darkness*, are to be analyzed as outcomes of Coleridge's Secondary Imagination.

Critical Analysis of William Gibson's *Neuromancer* and Dean Koontz's *The Eyes of Darkness*

Adopting the Coleridgean perspective on imagination and its forms, the selected Cyberpunk novel, Gibson's *Neuromancer*, and Thriller novel, Koontz's *The Eyes of Darkness*, are to be analyzed as products of Secondary Imagination rather than Fancy. Cyberpunk fiction, the first theme of this discussion, is a branch of science fiction dating back to the late 20th century. According to Bruce Sterling, "Cyberpunk is a product of the Eighties milieu... but its roots are deeply sunk in the sixty-year tradition of modern popular SF" (*Mirrorshades* 13). This literary genre examines the negative impact of technological dominance on societal values through a dystopian vision of the near future,. It focuses on the cause-and-effect relationship between new technologies and the radical changes witnessed by modern and contemporary societies. Sterling describes this genre as an integration of "low-life and high-tech" (Sterling, "Preface", xiv).

Recurrent themes in cyberpunk include: "body invasion: prosthetic limbs, implanted circuitry, cosmetic surgery, genetic alteration. The even more powerful theme of mind invasion: brain-computer interfaces, artificial intelligence, neurochemistry" (Sterling, *Mirrorshades*, 17). In other words, cyberpunk novels mainly focus on common themes such as In other words, cyberpunk novels mainly focus on common themes such as the coexistence of high technology and low life in lawless, impoverished societies (an outcome of capitalism), cybernetic implants, the merging of AI tools with humans, illegal networks controlled by hackers and cybercriminals, dystopia, self-fragmentation, and identity loss. Moreover, this sci-fi subgenre is characterized by unfamiliar concepts such as virtual reality, dystopia, and cyberspace.

Cyberpunk is also known for its unique focus on details, keen analysis of the fabric of the society, and intensive global vision. Robischon describes the cyberpunk style as a combination of "high technology with a noirish punk-rock, fight-the-system ideology and has inspired countless authors, magazine publishers, and filmmakers" (Renegar and Dionisopoulos 324). Notable novelists in this genre include William Gibson, Philip K. Dick, and Bruce Sterling, among others. These writers commonly depict the impact of technological advancements on human life and ethics. Their protagonists are often hackers living in a dystopian urban setting with a dark, pessimistic atmosphere. Their plots are fast-paced yet maintain a strong sense of impact and mystery, as exemplified in William Gibson's *Neuromancer*.

Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) is hailed to be "the novel that started or invented cyberpunk" (Admiraal). Despite some critics attribute the appearance of this genre to Philip K. Dick, *Neuromancer* is still considered a pioneering science fiction that explores concepts such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, genetic engineering, and the dominance of multinational corporations that now influence traditional nation-states. All of these concepts were explored in the 1980s, long before they became as prevalent in popular culture as they are today. This urges Sterling to describe Gibson's *Neuromancer* as a "quintessential cyberpunk novel" (*Mirrorshades* 18). Although it was published more than forty years ago, the novel shows unique anticipation of the future by its writer, a vision that has become the status quo of contemporary societies.

Structurally, *Neuromancer* is characterized by its simple structure, fast-paced and powerful narrative style, as well as diverse settings, including Tokyo, 'the Sprawl', Istanbul, and two space stations. As a cyberpunk, *Neuromancer* is based on the near future, which represents a major feature of such a genre. It is built upon mystery and suspense to attract the reader's attention until this mystery is resolved. However, such a mystery is not a simple puzzle, but strange and unfamiliar to people at the time of Gibson. (i.e., the eighties milieu). Gibson's protagonist is a hacker who lives in and moves between dark, rainy, and depressive settings. Another important feature in *Neuromancer* as a cyberpunk is its novel words as virtual reality, cyberspace, and AI. These concepts were not familiar at the time when Gibson wrote his novel. These features urge Jade Hagan to describe the structure of the novel as "a hook on every page" that keeps its readers as absorbed in it as its characters are in cyberspace" (30).

Through his winning novel of the Hugo, Nebula, and Philip K. Dick Awards, Gibson presents novel concepts such as virtual reality and Cyberspace to warn modern societies against the dire consequences of modern technology, especially Cyberspace, on the individual's consciousness and identity. He defines 'Cyberspace', therefore, as "A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation" (37). *Neuromancer* revolves around the story of Case, a computer hacker, whose life depicts how modern societies are obsessed with technology. The novel begins with Case living in a culture where "[f]ads swept the youth of the Sprawl at the speed of light; entire subcultures could rise overnight, thrive for a dozen weeks, and then vanish utterly" (Gibson 58). He struggles with his dependence on cyberspace, which he can no longer access after his previous employer discovered that he (i.e. Case) had stolen. This action turns his life upside down, as he was harshly punished by his employer for damaging his nervous system. As a result, Case is no longer able to connect to the computer network, the Matrix, that connects the world's computer systems.

It's been a year since he's been here, and he still dreams of cyberspace, even though his hope fades every night. Despite all the drugs he's taken, the risks he's run, and the shortcuts he's taken in Night City, the Matrix still haunts his sleep,

“bright lattices of logic unfolding across that colorless void” (Gibson 4). The expanse is now a distant memory across the Pacific, and he's no longer a cyber cowboy—just another hustler struggling to survive. Molly is a bodyguard sent by an ex-military officer named Armitage. Armitage offers to cure Case in exchange for performing hacking missions. Case and Molly soon discover the reality of Armitage. His real name is Colonel Willis Corto, the only survivor of the failed anti-Soviet military mission. Suffering trauma, he underwent extensive psychotherapy.

Everything, however, transformed when he discovered that the government knew that the mission was doomed to fail, and yet they proceeded anyway. To avenge, he killed his handler and turned into the criminal underworld under the name of Armitage. Later, Case and Molly realize that an artificial intelligence known as Wintermute is guiding their assigned mission. Upon arriving at the elite space colony referred to as Straylight, Case and Molly, along with their team members, are tasked with performing a series of actions that end successfully by integrating Wintermute with Neuromancer, another artificial intelligence developed by the same corporation. The novel ends with such a merge between Wintermute with Neuromancer and Case's return to his obsession and involvement in the information Matrix.

Reading Gibson's *Neuromancer* from a Coleridgean lens indicates its typical representation of Coleridge's Secondary Imagination, where Gibson transcends the constraints of time and space to produce a creative perspective of the dark side of the virtual world. In other words, Gibson generates the future that has yet to come from his present during the eighties. In addition, the cyberspace in *Neuromancer* greatly has the same features of the Internet today. It is based on decentralization and complexity due to the huge amount of data it stores, all of which can be accessed at any time. This digital entity foretells the status quo in contemporary societies. It is a world that is controlled by hacking, violation of privacy, urveillance, and loss of identity. Case notes that “technologies require outlaw zones, that Night City wasn't there for its inhabitants, but as a deliberately unsupervised playground for technology itself” (Gibson 11). Modern man has no choice but to be involved in the cyberspace. Also, the capacity to change and modify the present to produce new creative forms is highly reflected in the novel through the portrayal of the Artificial Intelligence Characters as Wintermute and Neuromancer, which root the future relationship between humans and AI.

Noteworthy, Gibson's *Neuromancer* is more than a future anticipation. It is a societal and cultural critique that attempts to raise awareness concerning the increasing domination of technological advances at the expense of human consciousness and identity. In an interview with McCaffery, Gibson asserts that *Neuromancer* is only a reflection of a world that suffers from technofetishist: “You know you're in a very strange place, but you're also aware this weirdness is just your world,” in Gibson's words (McCaffery 230). Humans have been entrapped

in the virtual reality and domination of the Internet and technical advancements have become inescapable. Gibson, through *Neuromancer*, attempts to attract attention to the increasing power of modern technology, which has become equal to the power of humans (if not more powerful). The novel, therefore, presents a sincere call for a rational and balanced co-existence with technological advancements, preserving ethics and the peculiar identity of each culture. *Neuromancer*, therefore, anticipated the contemporary world where the cyberspace is as powerful as the meatspace (i.e. the physical world).

Like Gibson's *Neuromancer*, Dean Koontz's *The Eyes of Darkness* (1981) is another literary work with a future vision, but it is a thriller novel. Thriller is fiction subgenre marked by its overlapping elements such as anticipation, mystery, and suspense. Being a Sci Fi subgenre, the plot of a thriller is mainly structured on a mind-hunting mystery that keeps the readers attentive until it is resolved at the end. Besides its puzzling plot, a thriller is also marked by its fast-paced narrative style with peculiar themes including, for example but not limited to, conspiracy, violence, kidnapping, revenge, and terrorism. A plot of a thriller can be, then, described as a villain-structured plot. Mostly, the characters of the thriller are terrorists, spies, escaped convicts, killers, police, as well as victims. The most prominent novelists in such long-rooted genre are, for example but not limited to, Agatha Christie, Stephen King, Lee Child, and Dean Koontz.

In his book, *Thriller*, James Patterson sheds the light on the forms of the thriller and its core function. Concerning its types, thriller has various types as "the legal thriller, spy thriller, action-adventure thriller, medical thriller, police thriller, romantic thriller, historical thriller, political thriller, religious thriller, high-tech thriller, military thriller. The list goes on and on, with new variations constantly being invented" (iii). However, all these forms have "a common ground [which] is the intensity of emotions they create, particularly those of apprehension and exhilaration, of excitement and breathlessness, all designed to generate that all-important thrill," and therefore "if a thriller doesn't thrill, it's not doing its job" (iii). According to Glyn Morgan, the peculiar features of such a genre "is a rich repository of ideas against which we can weigh our COVID-19 experiences," as reflected in *The Eyes of Darkness* (1).

The Eyes of Darkness is a remarkable thriller novel by the American novelist Dean Koontz. Koontz's works are characterized by "themes of spirituality, resilience, and the human condition, featuring strong characters and intense confrontations between good and evil" (Mohammed and Khaleel 351). Structurally, *The Eyes of Darkness* is featured by its fast-moving plot, mysterious and mind-hunting narrative style, anxiety, psychological depth, thrilling tone, overlapping emotions, unpredictable twists, and memorable characters. Conspiracy, maternal sorrow blended with devotion and readiness for self-sacrifice, and truth-pursuing adventure are the main themes in Koontz's suspenseful novel.

A reader of the novel is astonished by such a similarity between its story and the reality of the world during the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequent Quarantine and lockdown. Although it was published in 1981, the novel has attracted attention when the virus spread worldwide, resulting in the death of millions of people. Since that time the novel has been described as the novel that predicted the coronavirus forty years ago because of the striking similarities between the fictional virus and COVID-19. The virus mentioned in the novel is called Wuhan-400, the name of the Chinese city from which the coronavirus originated, and its rapid spread made it look like a biological weapon.

The novel revolves around the story of a mother, Tina Evans, who seeks to determine whether her son, Danny, actually died in a scouting accident a year ago or is still alive. Driven by maternal love, Tina has a growing sense that her son may be alive through strange signals she receives, which propels her on an adventure to search for the truth. Accompanying her on her detective journey is Elliot Stryker, a lawyer with experience in Army Intelligence, with whom she develops a romantic relationship. The two undergo difficult times and find themselves targeted by assassins hired by Project Pandora, a secret organization. In order to deepen and ensure the suspenseful nature of his thriller, Koontz depicts Tina as a mother who never gives up. Her maternal intuition drives her to pursue her search for her son. She knows that "Grief could drive a person crazy. She'd heard that said, and she believed it. But she wasn't going to allow such a thing to happen to her" (Koontz 10).

She, therefore, embarks on a series of adventures filled with horror, suspense, and mystery, only to discover shocking facts about the corruption of the US Secret Intelligence Service and the biological and chemical warfare race between the US and China. Tina and Elliot eventually discover that her son is still alive, but is being held in a military facility after being infected with a mysterious virus dubbed "Wuhan-400," which was developed in a laboratory in Wuhan. This military-developed virus is perfect biological weapon because it only infects humans and cannot survive outside the human body for more than a minute. The novel is an artistic endeavour of dark-sided impact of scientific experiments, funded by the capitalist powers, which are based on "materialistic, rather than spiritual" targets (Mohammed and Khaleel 350).

Reading Koontz's *Eyes of Darkness* from a Coleridgean lens indicates its typical representation of Coleridge's Secondary Imagination. Koontz's consciousness of the threats of the reality during the eighties milieu, which was characterized by conspiracies and competition between such superpowers as the United States and China competed, enabled him to generate new visions of the future. That is why his novel can be perceived as a warning of the danger of biological warfare that could claim the lives of millions of people, represented by the adoption of the deadly Wuhan-400 virus in Koontz's novel. This has drawn the world's attention during the COVID-19 outbreak, beginning in 2019 and resulting in the deaths of

millions of people. Notably, Koontz combines the real with the supernatural in his novel, an optimum embodiment of Coleridge's secondary imagination. Tina's reality is built upon the death of her son, Danny. In contrast, her maternal intuition makes her receive messages that contradict such reality and suppose her son is still alive.

Starting from such a depressive reality, Tina starts her adventure to make the supernatural call real. It can be said that she reshapes her reality (the core meaning of Coleridge's secondary imagination). In addition, Koontz in his novel not only focuses on the invention of the biological weapons, but also relates it to the ethical dimension. This is considered a moral message that Koontz sends to the world against the danger of technological and scientific progress if it is separated from ethics, the same message that Gibson's *Neuromancer* echoes. In a nutshell, the analysis of both Gibson's cyberpunk *Neuromancer* and Koontz's thriller *The Eyes of Darkness* assert the significant role played by literature in addressing vital societal and global issues in the present to enable the building of people and civilizations in the future. The analysis of the two novels highlights the imaginative power of fiction to predict the future.

Conclusion

The selected novels brilliantly demonstrate how the creative power of imagination can anticipate future events, such as virtual reality, cyberspace, and the dominance of digital capitalism, as illustrated by William Gibson's *Neuromancer* cyberpunk. Koontz also achieved this through his masterpiece thriller *The Eyes of Darkness*, which predicted important themes that ignite the minds of people around the world in the current era, such as biological warfare and international conspiracies. Applying Coleridge's theory to the selected novels, the study shows the significance of Coleridge's theory of imagination, and its contribution to literary analysis. For Coleridge, imagination has two types. The first type is the Primary Imagination, shared by all humans, through which people perceive and interact with their outer world through their senses. The second type is the Secondary Imagination, limited to creative people and those with artistic talents. Through Secondary Imagination, creative people interact with reality through their senses and such sensory perception represents a step forward to shape new images or modify the traditional ones. However, classifying imagination into two types does not mean their separation for Coleridge, as they complement each other. The writer relies on his senses to perceive the outside world (Primary imagination) and, then, he creates patterns and ideas unfamiliar to the outside world (Secondary Imagination).

By studying Coleridge's theory and applying it to the selected novels, it becomes clear that Gibson, through his cyberpunk novel *Neuromancer*, was helped by his own experience of the 1980s and his observation of the rising dominance of technological development, which led him to create a new literary world with new terms unknown to his society, but which would become familiar in the future (the

world now). He depicts through his novel the impact of technological advances on societal ethics, as embodied in the emergence of global crimes such as electronic hacking and cybercrime, and the loss of human identity and its replacement by artificial intelligence. Similarly, Koontz through his thriller novel, *The Eyes of Darkness*, was able to experience the reality of the 1980s, which was characterized by the global shift toward the production of biological weapons, in which superpowers such as the United States and China competed. This is why his novel a formidable warning against the danger of biological warfare that could claim the lives of millions of people, through the embodiment of the deadly Wuhan-400 virus. This has drawn the world's attention during the COVID-19 outbreak, beginning in 2019 and resulting in the deaths of millions of people.

Finally, the study also underscores the indispensable role of literature and writers in building societies and civilizations. The role of literature is not restricted to reflecting human beings' reality, co-existing with that reality or entertaining people, but it expands to anticipating humanity's future. Gibson's *Neuromancer* and Koontz's *Eyes of Darkness* are a typical example of literary works forecasting and delineating the future. Both novels present a sincere message to the world about the dangers of digital capitalism and biological warfare. In a nutshell, they integrally advocate that the dominant and the dominated, the victor and the defeated, both lose.

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عندما يصبح الخيال واقعاً! استشراف المستقبل في بعض روايات السيبرنك وروايات الإثارة

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مستخلص الدراسة باللغة العربية

الخيال هو أحد الملكات العقلية التي يتسم بها الجنس البشري ، ولذلك نجد مصطلح "الخيال" Imagination من المصطلحات المحورية التي حازت على اهتمام الفلاسفة والنقاد والباحثين في مختلف المجالات، وبخاصة في مجال الأدب، كونه أحد الدلالات على تفاعل الفرد مع عالمه المحيط ، كما انه الركيزة الأساسية التي يعتمد عليها إنتاج أي عمل أدبي. فمنذ عصر أفلاطون إلى العصر الحديث والفلاسفة والنقاد يكرسون الكثير من الجهد لدراسة تلك العملية المعقدة ذات التأثير الكبير. بيد أن هذا المصطلح أصبح ركيزة النظرية الأدبية على يد رواد الحركة الرومانسية ومن ابرزهم ويليام وورث وورث W.Wordsworth و صامويل تايلور كولريدج S.T.Coleridge . وقد صنف كولريدج من خلال كتابه (السيرة الذاتية الأدبية " Biographia Literaria - الخيال الى صنفين: "الخيال الأولي" Primary Imagination ، والذي يتشارك فيه جميع البشر، و "الخيال الثانوي" Secondary Imagination ، الذي يقتصر على المبدعين. ويؤكد كولريدج على التكامل بين الصنفين وتميزهما عن "الوهم" Fancy .

ومن الجدير بالذكر أن بعض الأزمات والكوارث التي شهدتها البشرية خلال نهاية القرن الماضي والربع الأول من القرن الحالي ، جعلت قارئ الأدب يربط بين الواقع الذي يعيشه وبين بعض الأعمال الأدبية ، وبخاصة الروايات، التي وان تم كتابتها منذ سنوات بعيدة ، غير أن أحداثها تتطابق الى حد مذهل مع الواقع . ولهذا، فإن الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة دور بعض الأعمال الروائية في استشراف المستقبل في أذهاننا

وأرواحنا . وبتبني "نظرية الخيال" لصامويل تايلور كولريدج ، يربط البحث بين اثنان من أهم الأحداث التي شهدتها العالم في العصر الحديث والمعاصر وهي هيمنة التكنولوجيا - متجسدة في الانترنت والواقع الافتراضي وتطبيقاته - على كافة جوانب الحياة، والحدث الآخر هو الحرب البيولوجية والتي استشعر العالم أثره خلال جائحة كورونا التي اطاحت بالملايين . ومن الأعمال المُختاره لبحث المحور الأول (هيمنة الواقع الافتراضي) رواية "نيرومانسر" (١٩٨٤) للكاتب ويليام جيبسون ، أما المحور الثاني من الدراسة (الحروب البيولوجية) ، فلقد تم من أجله إختيار رواية "عيون الظلام" (1981) للكاتب دين كونتز.

الكلمات المفتاحية :

نظرية الخيال ، السايبربنك ، روايات الإثارة ، "نيرومانسر" ، "عيون الظلام" .