Theorizing Kineticism in Cyberbodies: Embodiment and Sexuality in the Technological Culture of Cyberspace

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary literature in cybernetic culture reveals a rise of technological beings of

cyborgs and disembodied selves as post-gender bodies on the Net. While Donna

Haraway defines the "cyborg" as a hybrid of machine and organism and, hence, a gender-

free entity in cybernetic culture, human beings interacting during online communication

are often conceived as disembodied selves, thus devoid of any gender identity. The

problematic condition of the negation of gender is, however, an oversight of the

nature of 'sexuality' and sexual 'subjectivity' of human beings in cybernetic culture.

Nevertheless, images in science fiction films and chat forums in Internet communication

not only reveal diverse sexual identities, thus challenging the absence of gender in

cyberspace, but manifests kinesthetic features in the embodiment of cybersexuality.

In this thesis, I theorize and inaugurate 'kineticism' as the structural condition and

state of existence of human body and sexuality, and its subversive potential for sexual

emancipation in cyberspace. The word 'kineticism' is intended to suggest the system of

ideas and condition of 'motion' that denote the 'structure' and 'mode of existence' as

manifested in the 'choreography' and 'tectonics' of cyberbodies. To support my point of

view, I will be drawing upon the theoretical perspectives of postmodernism and

cyberfeminist theory. For the purpose of conducting this research, I will be employing a

qualitative methodology of critical discourse analysis. As for the sources of this

research, I would be using theoretical texts as found in both print and online publications

as well as images in cyberpunk films and digital art in new media culture.

Deconstructing ideological notions of fixed sexuality and gender in human society, this research discovers and affirms a kinetic sexuality in cyberbodies. Introducing 'kineticism' as the 'structural condition' and 'mode of existence' of embodiment and sexuality in cyberspace, this thesis will not only contribute an original theoretical knowledge of sexual subjectivity and emancipation of human bodies in digital culture but offer a critical advancement of contemporary social and feminist theory as well.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In the postmodern era of technological culture, cyberspace emerges as one of the

major domains of existence. "Cyberspace", as William Gibson enunciates in his science

fiction *Neuromancer*, is "the total interconnectedness of human beings through

computers and telecommunication without regard to physical geography".[1] With the

rise of new computer technologies, human beings have been able to communicate across

geographical distance and time. The interface of the computer technology and human

being, however, challenges the presence of the organic body in the computer network.

While technophobes may assert the 'deletion' of the body on the Net, thus establishing

detrimental effects of digital technology on human beings, theorists such as Donna

Haraway postulate the 'hybridization' of the machine and human being, thus affirming the

presence of the human body in cyberspace.

The problematic condition of negating gender in Haraway's concept of the

cyborg, however, is the oversight of the nature of 'sexuality' and sexual 'subjectivity'

in cybernetic organisms. Although researchers such as Claudia Springer and Anne

Balsamo have explored the imagery of sexual representations and technologies of the

gendered cyborg body respectively, thereby construing the gendered subjectivity of

cyborgs, the 'structural condition', 'mode of sexual embodiment' and the 'subversive

potential' of cyborg performativity and sexuality have not been studied yet. Furthermore,

although there has been some research on the gendered images of cyborgs, there has not

been any study on the 'condition' of embodiment and sexuality of 'disembodied human

beings' on the Net, thus marking a serious gap in delineating integral knowledge of

human body and emancipation in cyberspace. The overall question that needs to be addressed is, thus, 'what is the 'structural condition' of the sexual body for both cyborgs and disembodied beings in cyberspace? How is the 'state of existence' of cyborgs and disembodied human beings molded in cyberspace, and what are their implications for sexual freedom?

This thesis theorizes 'kineticism' as the 'structural condition' and 'mode of existence' of embodiment and sexuality of cyberbodies in technological culture. The word 'kineticism' is intended to suggest the system of ideas and condition of 'motion' that denote the 'structure' and 'mode of existence' as manifested in the 'choreography' and 'tectonics' of cyberbodies. Here, cyberbodies will designate both technological embodiments of cyborgs as well as the disembodied human beings in cyberspace. Contemporary literature in cybernetic culture reveals the rise of technological beings of cyborgs and disembodied selves as post-gender bodies on the Net. While Donna Haraway defines the "cyborg" as a hybrid of machine and organism and, hence, a gender-free entity in cybernetic culture, human beings interacting during online communication are often conceived as 'disembodied selves', thus devoid of biological sex and gender identity. Nevertheless, images in science fiction films and chat forums in Internet communication reveal diverse gender identities, hence challenging both the absence of gender in cyberspace as well as ideological notions of fixed sexuality in human society.

To support my point of view, I will be drawing upon the theoretical perspectives of postmodernism and cyberfeminist theory. The significance of my research resides in contributing ontological knowledge of human bodies and sexuality in the cultural studies

of cyberspace and cyberfeminist theory. Popularly referred to as "cyberfeminism", feminist theory in cybercultural studies has not examined the subversive potential inherent in diversified sexual embodiments of cyberbodies yet. Although cyberfeminism has studied images of technological embodiments of 'cyborgs', there has neither been any research on the nature of sexual embodiment of cyborgs nor disembodied human beings in cyberspace. Manifesting 'kineticism' as the 'structural condition' and 'mode of existence' of embodiment and sexuality in cyberspace, my thesis, hence, will not only contribute an original theoretical conception of sexual subjectivity of cyborgs and disembodied human beings but offer a critical understanding of cyberfeminist theory.

Methods and Sources of Research

To conduct this research, I will be employing a qualitative methodology of critical discourse analysis. In this respect, I will be offering a deconstructive reading and critical analysis of both contradictory and supportive arguments of existing literature. The significance of this research methodology resides in questioning the ontological and epistemological assumptions of human bodies in cyberspace and offering interpretations of their existing condition. As for the sources of this research, I would be using theoretical texts in both print and online publications. In this regard, I will be drawing upon work of authors such as Donna Haraway, Sadie Plant, Anne Balsamo, Claudia Springer, Rosi Braidotti, and Alison Landberg. To conduct this study, I would be also offering semiotic analysis of cyberpunk films as well as three-dimensional images in new media culture.

Relationship to Existing Literature

The significance of my thesis resides in its theoretical contribution to the research stream of cybercultural studies. While still an emerging field of scholarship, the study of cyberculture flourished throughout the last half of the 1990s. As witnessed in the countless monographs and anthologies published by both academic and popular presses, cybercultural studies largely focus on virtual communities and online identities as engendered by the Internet and digital technology. [2] In this respect, Howard Rheingold's *The Virtual Community* (1993) and *Sherry Turkle's Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (1995) have marked the origin of cybercultural studies. As revealed from these works as well as subsequent writings by Donna Haraway, Sadie Plant and Anne Balsamo, the dominant theoretical perspectives of cybercultural studies are postmodernism and feminism.

Drawing upon Nietzsche's critique of modernism and deconstructive works of Ronald Barthes and Michael Foucault, postmodernism is a "philosophical movement that acts as a basis for the critique of essentialist notions of truth in the epistemology and ontology of positivistic social sciences". [3] To this end, postmodernism, as Andreas Huyssen states, is a "field of tension between tradition and innovation, conservation and renewal, mass culture and high art", [4] thus blurring the boundaries of generic forms and calling for fragmentation, multiplicity and differences in cultural meanings.

While postmodernism calls for the differences in cultural meanings, feminism is an anti-essentialist movement that challenges patriarchal domination of females and advocates equality of women. Although the anti-essentialist position may lead to claim

feminism as a product of postmodernism, the absence of accounting gender inequality in the latter often renders feminism as a distinct theory in gender relations. [5]

Focusing on the deconstruction of human corporeality and sexual freedom in cyberbodies, my thesis will be drawing upon both postmodernism as well as feminist theory. In examining female sexuality in cyberspace, however, my thesis will be challenging the opposition of feminist theory with postmodernism as well. To this end, I will be appropriating the postmodern conception of "differences" as opposed to "equality" of female beings in cyberspace, thus, introducing an innovative theoretical perspective and paradigm shift in the feminist theory of cybercultural studies.

The introductory chapter begins with a critical overview of cyborg feminism and gender representation of cyborgs in feminist science fiction films. In this respect, I will show how the predominance of sexual organicism over the mechanical parts in cyborgs challenges Donna Haraway's conception of cyborgs as 'gender-free' entities. In order to conduct this study, I will be offering a critical analysis of science fiction films *Blade Runner* (1982), *Ghost in the Shell* (1998) and *The Matrix* (1999). As opposed to science fiction films such as *Destination Moon* (1950), *Forbidden Planet* (1956), *Robinson Crusoe on Mars* (1964) and *Jurassic Park* (1993), wherein environmental landscapes and non-human creatures undergo fictional scientific examination, I will focus on the formerly mentioned films as they not only re-conceptualize human bodies as cyborgs but portray eroticism and sexual' diversity' within the technological embodiments of human beings. It is this manifestation of 'sexual diversity' that not only delineates a pluralistic subjectivity but an embedded dynamism and kineticism within the pluralism of female

subjects.

In Chapter 2, I will introduce 'kineticism' as the 'structural condition' and 'mode of existence' of sexual embodiment of cyborgs. The word 'kineticism' is intended to suggest the system of ideas and condition of 'motion' that denote the 'structure' and 'mode of existence' as manifested in the 'choreography' and 'tectonics' of cyberbodies. The chapter begins with an approach to demonstrate the rationale of depicting eroticism in technological bodies of female cyborgs. Although first-wave feminists may contend that the pornographic representations in techno-eroticism of cyborgs may render the female as a victim of sexual objectification, I will demonstrate that 'cyberpornography' affirms the procurement of non-sadomasochistic pleasure of homosexuality, bisexuality and narcissism for many women, thus subverting the male hegemony of viewing sexually objectified females. In my manifestation of cyberpornography as a 'site of resistance', I will delineate how the structure of 'fantasy' and 'sublimation' is central to prognosticating orgasmic pleasure and 'sexual freedom' in cyberfeminism. To further support my point of view, I will offer a theoretical overview of the spatio-temporal structure of 'fantasy' and 'utopia' that molds the subversive power of cyberfeminism and manifests 'fragmentation' of female sexual identity. It is this perpetual fragmentation of sexual identity that not only exemplifies kinetic features but an ambivalence of gender performance, thereby challenging the uniform and ideological representations of femininity.

The ambivalence of gender and fluid sexuality in the utopic conception of cyborg bodies asserts the dynamic proliferation of erotic diversity and affirms a 'malleable subjectivity' in the machine-human bodies of cyborgs. Here, I will introduce 'malleable

subjectivity' as a conception that embraces both pluralism as well as elasticity in

'kineticism' of cyborg bodies and sexuality. Although Rosi Braidotti's concept of the

'nomad' may affirm pluralism of the cyborg as a postmodern subject, her "situated" and

"simultaneous occurrences" of postmodern subjectivities do not adequately address the

'ductility' of eroticism in the metallic structure of cyborg bodies. Nevertheless, Braidotti's

post-structuralist notion of sexual "difference" and "diversity" is significant in

deciphering cyborg sexuality and 'emancipation'. In the final section of this chapter, I

will offer a critical overview of Sadie Plant's correlation of feminine emancipation with

the history of technology. Although Plant enunciates the essence of "weaving" and

"mimesis" in women's invention of digital technology, the absence of articulating the

nature of 'place' and 'memory' in any mimetic experience of cybernetic simulation marks

a gap in grasping cyberfeminism and, hence, calls for a revision of cyberfeminist theory.

The question that arises here is 'how does the Web act as a *place* and what is the nature of

memory that retains and revives the simulating site of cyberspace as a 'location' or

'place'? How does the matrix of the Web act as a site of simulation and embody the

disembodied cyberbodies?

In Chapter 3, I will manifest how 'prosthetic memory' and 'de-territorialization' act as

the kinetic condition and mode of existence of disembodied sexual beings in cyberspace.

Although the absence of the body during online interaction may negate the presence of

gender markers, a literature review of online communication reveals "gender swapping"

and enactment of "virtual sex", thus affirming the fluidity of 'virtual gender' and sexual

'positions' of the body in cyberspace. The first half of this chapter will demonstrate how

'prosthetic memory' acts a kinetic condition in configuring virtual bodies and gender in cybernetic culture. A focus on the fluid gender of cyberbodies exhibits the proliferation of a "third gender" of disembodied sexual beings in cyberspace. Although the inherent politics of 'imagination' may manifest a myth of gender experience, the 'image' of this perceptual existence justifies the reality of virtual gender as well. The chapter will further examine the fugitive character of disembodied spots of sexuality that strengthens the constant change of sexual 'positions' and, hence, 'traveling' of the dislocated human being in cyberspace.

In context of examining the changing sexual 'positions' and 'traveling' of the dislocated human being in cyberspace, the second part of the chapter postulates the disembodied cyberbody as a spatial configuration of 'de-territorialization'. Here, I will postulate how the kinetic cyberbody unfolds as a 'site' of blurring boundaries of corporeality and, hence, a 'de-territorialized' place. To this end, the human being is no longer defined as a "fixed membrane" of corporeality in cyberspace. Rather, the human being is transfigured into a de-territorialized embodiment of 'kineticism' whereby the body is defined by its 'motion' of shifting locations. This topographical study of kinetic motion and cartography in cyberbodies will not only manifest the semiotic condition of human bodies but re-conceptualize Newton's Law of Motion in technological culture as well.

On the basis of studying the foregoing chapters, it is evident that the cybersexual body is de-coupled from the nature of anatomical sex. While technological bodies of cyborgs are molded by metallic organs, the disembodied human being is characterized by

erotogenous zone of the mind, and not biological organs. To this end, it may be inferred

that the sexual nature of human bodies in cyberspace is 'denaturalized'. The question that

arises here is, hence, does the cyberbody problematize the visibility of sexual nature as an

invisibility of nature? Or is it the invisibility of nature that construes the true nature of

visibility?

      Chapter 4 examines how the kinetic cyberbody produces invisibility of sex as a

visibility of sexual nature itself. In this respect, I will posit how the 'veil' of sexual

invisibility acts as a visibility of sexual subjectivity and truth in cyberspace. Although

the veil of sexual invisibility may act as an 'illusion' of sexual nature, I will argue how the

illusion of sex acts as a true visibility of sexuality itself. Drawing upon Jean Baudrillard's

production of the Other as the Same and Freud's Intersubjective theory, I will manifest

how the 'veil' paradoxically exposes illusion of sex as the true visibility of sexual

subjectivity and procures its affirmation in the 'auto-erotic self sufficiency' of

cyberbodies. The chapter will further illuminate the function of the 'veil' in effectuating

'sexual desire', deciphering the text of the 'face' of cyberbodies and collapsing the

dichotomy between 'surface' and 'depth' of human bodies in cyberspace. Confirming

Friedrich Nietzsche's annihilation of the metaphysics of truth, the chapter will conclude

how the real sex does not dwell behind the surface but resides as an 'illusion' on or as the

surface of cyberbodies. It is this surface that affirms that truth is not revealed by

unveiling. Rather it is the 'veil' that illuminates the visibility of truth.

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[1] William Gibson, *Neuromancer*, Ace Science Fiction, 1984

[2] "Introducing Cyberculture", *Resource Center for Cyberculture Studies* <http://www.com.washington.edu/rccs/>

[3] Smith, Joel. "Emancipating Sociology: Postmodernism and Mainstream Sociological Practice", Social Forces, Sept. 1995 v74 n1 p53 (27).

[4] Wolmark Jenny. *Aliens and Others: Science Fiction, Feminism, and Postmodernism.* Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 1994, pp. 6

[5] Wolmark Jenny. *Aliens and Others: Science Fiction, Feminism, and Postmodernism.* Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 1994, pp. 16

Chapter 1.

Feminism in Science and Technology: Framing Sexuality in
Feminist Science Fiction Films

This introductory chapter begins with a critical overview of cyborg feminist theory

and gender representation of cyborgs in feminist science fiction films. Contemporary

literature in cyberfeminism attempts to claim the reconstruction of human bodies as

technological embodiments of 'cyborgs'. Although Haraway argues that the blend of

"machine" and "human" in robots and cyborgs creates 'gender-neutral entities' and, hence,

dismantles established gender differences in society, I will show that the predominance

of sexual organicism over the mechanical parts in cyborgs leads to erotic representations.

Alongside fantasy, aggression and violence, these markers of sexuality and eroticism

signify both cultural construction and performance of gender, thus challenging Haraway's

conception of cyborgs as 'gender-free' entities.

The study begins with Donna Haraway's feminist critique of science and technology

and her theoretical underpinning of 'cyborg feminism'. Following a critical overview of

Harway's concept of the "cyborg", I will demonstrate how the representation of cyborg

eroticism in science fiction films contradicts her notion of 'gender-absence' in cybernetic

beings. As opposed to Haraway, I will argue that the gender of cyborg bodies manifests a

significant position in constructing female sexuality. In order to support my view, I will

be offering a critical analysis of science fiction films *Blade Runner* (1982), *Ghost in the

Shell* (1998), and *The Matrix* (1999). As opposed to science fiction films such as

Destination Moon (1950), *Forbidden Planet* (1956), *Robinson Crusoe on Mars* (1964),

and *Jurassic Park* (1993), wherein environmental landscapes and non-human creatures undergo fictional scientific examination, I will focus on the previously mentioned films because they not only re-conceptualize human bodies as cyborgs but also portray eroticism and sexual 'diversity' within the technological embodiment of human beings. This manifestation of 'sexual diversity' not only delineates a pluralistic subjectivity but also implies a presence of 'fluidity' and 'motion' in cyborg sexuality.

Feminism in Science and Technology - An Introduction to Feminist Epistemology in Technological Culture

A sociological critique of science and technology reveals the singular viewpoint of absolute truth and the advocacy of patriarchy embedded in it. In her chapter, Donna Haraway (Haraway, 1991: 192) highlights the patriarchal nature of science and technology and argues for feminine emancipation. As opposed to the patriarchal nature of absolute 'truth', Haraway focuses upon optics or 'vision' as a feminist perspective in science and technology. 'Vision' may be defined as a "question of the power to see" (Haraway, 1991: 192). It is in this power of sight that diverse 'perspectives' may avoid binary oppositions in absolute knowledge and the biased nature of social inequality. In other words, an embodiment of 'diverse perspectives' in 'vision' facilitates an objective (Haraway, 1991: 189) point of view in society, whereby the embodiment of vision facilitates the construction of a usable "doctrine of objectivity". Although it may be argued that 'objectivity' in scientific experiments and its absolute truth advocates male hegemony in the production of knowledge and power, Haraway states that "feminist objectivity" means "situated knowledge" (Haraway, 1991: 188). In exemplifying her

postulation, she states that "feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge" (Haraway, 1991: 190) and, hence, "multiplicity" is central to the formulation of the female subject. It is the multiplicity exhibited in 'situated knowledges' that negates patriarchal domination through constructing one absolute 'truth' and marginalizing 'others' in scientific knowledge, thus celebrating equality essential to feminine subjectivity and freedom.

In addition to focusing upon embodiment of 'vision' and 'feminist objectivity', Donna Haraway highlights the significance of the 'apparatus of bodily production'. A feminist concept of 'situated knowledge', the 'apparatus of bodily production' argues that the biological body is an active agent and subject (Haraway, 1991: 189). Although Haraway may deny it, [1] her conceptualization of the body as a biological 'agency' emerges from Foucault's concept of 'bio-politics', and forms the basis of subjectivity and power in female beings. In a unique conceptualization of power and a critical response to the repressive hypothesis of sex in *The History of Sexuality* (Vol. 1), Foucault states that every act of power is associated with resistance and targets the body as an important site of power. Located in bodily structures, bio-power [2] addresses the questions of sexual freedom and liberty from patriarchal power. It is this concept of biological politics that has formed the basis of Donna Haraway's view of the 'apparatus of bodily production' and the female body as a site of 'situated knowledge' and subjectivity in science and technology.

Framing the Apparatus of Bodily Production and Embodying Vision: The Rise of the 'Cyborg' in Technological Culture

Haraway's theoretical premise of feminism in science and technology has engendered the popular idea of cyborgs and cyborg feminism. As Haraway defines it, cyborg is a "hybrid of machine and organism" (Haraway, 1991:149). With the application of technology in biology, modern medicine is full of cyborgs e.g., cyborgs comprise the rise of heart pacemakers, prosthetic limbs, and silicon or saline breast implants. To this extent, Haraway states that we are all cyborgs and we represent the contemporary hybrid of 'nature' and 'culture'.

To trace the origin of this form of hybridity, Haraway refers to the fragile boundary between 'human' and 'animal'. By the late twentieth century, the emergence of the scientific culture of 'animal cloning' with the aid of 'human cells' affirms that the boundary between 'human' and 'animal' is thoroughly breached. As the fusion of human-animal (organism) is associated with bio-technology, the boundary between the 'machines' and 'organism' is breached as well. It is this breaching of boundary between machine and organism that results in the evolution of the contemporary "cyborg", a hybrid of machine and the biological entity in cybernetic culture. Haraway's concept of the 'cyborg' significantly embodies the power of the 'apparatus of the bodily production' and blurs the boundary between organism and technology in the cyborg as well. It is this blurring of boundaries between the organism and technology that negates binary oppositions in historical science and embodies 'multiple perspectives' inherent in her feminist conception of 'vision' and 'reality'.

<u>With or Without Gender? A Critical Exploration of Cyborg Sexuality in
Science Fiction Film</u>

Inaugurating the cyborg manifesto, Donna Haraway conceives the cyborg as a

potential feminist figure - a figure that can make gender difference obsolete and liberate

women from patriarchal inequality in society. Once the notion of cyborg has eradicated

the boundary between organisms and machines, other hierarchical boundaries, such as

gender differences, may dissolve as well. To this end, Haraway claims that her

manifesto for cyborgs is an "effort to contribute to socialist-feminist culture and theory in

a postmodernist, nonnaturalist mode and in the utopian tradition of imagining *a world*

without gender, which is perhaps a *world without genesis*...." (Haraway, 1991:190).

But how far is Haraway's vision of gender obsolescence and the absence of genesis

valid in cyberfeminism? Does not gender continue to mark cyborg representations in

popular culture? And if gender markers do continue to define the female cyborg body in

capitalist 'origins' of cybernetic culture (a negation of Haraway's "world without genesis")

what are the implications in representations of cyborg sexuality? How is cyborg sexuality

formulated and what are the key features within this formulation?

In her manifesto, Donna Haraway has failed to elucidate the presence of

technological eroticism and its liberatory potential for female sexuality. In contemporary

popular culture, cyberpunk films are highly absorbed with gender markers and erotic

iconography. To this extent, the technological embodiment of female cyborgs reflect and

reinforce conventional knowledge of femininity. Gendered sexual images of cyborg

femininity can be seen in *Blade Runner* (1982), *Cyborg* [2] (1993), and *Ghost in the Shell*

(1998). This point has been observed by Mary Anne Doane,

Although it is certainly true that in the case that in the case of some contemporary

science-fiction writers - particularly feminist authors - technology makes possible

the destabilization of sexual identity as a category, there has also been a curious

but fairly insistent history of representation of technology which work to fortify -

sometimes desperately - conventional understandings of the feminine. A certain

anxiety concerning the technological is often allayed by a displacement of this

anxiety onto the figure of the woman or idea of femininity (Doane, 2000:110).

But why is femininity reproduced in technological embodiments of cyborgs? And how is the female gender produced in technology? In other words, what is the technology of gender in constructing female sexuality of cyborgs? In the context of hypothesizing a distant future and imagining utopia, technological fetishism appears to embrace a utopic transcendence through the feminine, thereby challenging the boundaries between the "human" and the "machine". In this respect, technological embodiments of the female do more to challenge the opposition between "human" and "machine" than that of male / female. This is because femininity is culturally imagined as "less compatible" with technology than rationality of masculinity. Our cultural imagination tends to align masculinity with the scientific rationality of technology, thereby unfolding male cyborgs to represent the blur of boundaries between machine and human. In contrast to male entities, female cyborgs are culturally coded as emotional, passive, and often, sexual (Balsamo, 2000:151). These characteristics of cyborg femininity seem to radically challenge Haraway's notion of an organic-mechanical hybrid and evolve a predominance of sexual organicism over mechanical parts in technological

embodiments. It is this unfolding of sexual organicism over mechanical parts that produce eroticism in cyborg femininity.

Framing Gender and Sexuality of Cyborgs in Science Fiction Films - *Ghost in the Shell* and *Blade Runner*

In contemporary science fiction films, female-gendered cyborgs delineate a sense of sexual difference and desire. Classical cinema inscribes the female body within ideological frames of sexuality, thereby manufacturing woman as an object of sexual difference and desire. The blurring boundaries of division of labor in contemporary scientific and technological cultures problematize (Penley, 1997:71), and, hence, signify the desire to re-introduce, a sense of gender difference. In the genre of science fiction cinema, it is enlightening to observe how *Ghost in the Shell* constructs female sexuality by depicting diverse erotic icons and pornographic images of female-gendered cyborgs. Set in 21st century Hong Kong, the film centers on opposing anti-terrorist police forces that fight the Puppet Master, an allegory of information capitalism. The Puppet Master is a self-generated secret agent who hacks his way into net-connected cyborgs and takes over their bodies. By fighting the Puppet Master, the film's cyborg heroine Major Motoko Kusanagi is forced to question the origins of her own 'ghost' or 'soul'. A central character in the *Ghost in the Shell*, Motoko displays her sexuality in anomalistic modes of kinetic action. A hybrid of "machine" and "human", Motoko is observed to possess distinct plug sockets at the back of her slender neck. She is connected to a computer by a set of wires. After being electrolyzed and sexually stimulated by the computer, Motoko unplugs the wires and starts stripping herself naked at the same time. In my view, this

unplugging of the mechanical wires, a constituent element of her cybernetic skin, and the simultaneous stripping of her attire substantiates Marshall McLuhan's postulation that the technological medium of "clothing" is an extension of the skin and a technology of the body.[3] After being electronically and sexually stimulated, the simultaneous discarding of mechanical wires and attire, however, not only appears to unfold clothes as the 'technology of the body' but a "technology of gender" whereby clothes act as a tool for stripping, and not covering, the sexually stimulated body of the cyborg. Wearing only a pair of black long boots, Motoko not only expresses her sexuality by stripping but moving and exhibiting diverse positions of her sexualized body. In this respect, her sexualized body starts flipping over, descends from a top of a tall building and she shoots a gang of male terrorists in an office. Soon after the act, Motoko's sexually exposed body undergoes a thermal camouflage and she evanesces into space. This act of the mechanical body transforming and evanescing into space not only signifies transcendence in orgasmic pleasure but also 'movement' and 'shifts' beyond the biological boundaries of sex, and, hence, kinetic elements of 'motion' in cyborg sexuality.

In a subsequent scene, Motoko is shown to be repeatedly smashed by one of her opponents. Motoko's kinetic body immediately transforms, evanesces into space and becomes invisible once again, whereupon she successfully counterattacks her opponents. After her kinetic act, Motoko re-appears in a transparent attire whereby her sexual organs are perceptible. In the next scene, the sexually ecstatic and kinetic body of Motoko is observed to float and move inside a sea. Touching the water from underneath the sea-surface, Motoko's voluptuous and naked body not only undergoes an erotic gratification

of narcissism but continually moves her sexual body in the sea as well. This experience

of sensual pleasure is depicted in another kinetic act of motion also, where Motoko's

mechanical body re-materializes from invisibility and starts moving up from a liquid

bath. Freely floating and moving in the bath, her nudity is closely shot from different

camera angles repeatedly, thus magnifying the sexually saturated female body as an

orgasmic woman of pornography. A corresponding scene of amplifying her sexual body

is observed later in the film as well. After engaging in a violent gun-shooting and

successfully slaying terrorists, Motoko starts ripping off her clothes and publicly strips in

the middle of a street. In the duration of this action, there are specific close camera shots

of her bare breasts from both the front and sides, the magnified and accentuated 'shapes'

and 'turns' of which demonstrate 'mobility' in her sexual disposition. Here, not only

the act of exhibitionism but the kinetic act of 'motion' in magnifying sexual organs

represents Motoko's sexuality. To this end, the 'destabilization' of a singular form to

diverse shapes of sexual organs signifies 'shifts', and, hence, kinetic 'motion' of scales and

planes of cyborg sexuality. It is the kinetic feature of motion in shifting 'shapes' and

'forms' of magnified sexual organs that signifies the pluralistic dimensions of cyborg

sexuality.

At the end of the film, the Puppet Master and his counterparts capture and

mechanically transform Motoko and another female hostage. While the male terrorists,

as in all the preceding scenes, are clothed and not sexually displayed, the female hostage

is denuded when she undergoes cybernetic transformations. In this scene, the

denuded woman experiences a fantasized sublimation and a mechanical re-birth of her

sexual body. Although her whole body undergoes transformation, it is her shivery breasts and mechanized, stiff nipples that are amplified by means of special shots of low camera angles, the 'shifting' sizes of which signify both kinetic 'motion' and pluralism in the pornographic image of cyborg sexuality.

Although constructions of feminine gender has been represented in classical films, it is significant to observe how *Ghost in the Shell* frames a heightened sense of gender difference by constructing female eroticism as a pornographic spectacle and amplifying cyborg sexual organs in kinetic acts of motion. As opposed to the male characters, who remain sexually inert and uniformly covered, Motoko and the female hostage perpetually display undue erotic exhibitionism and pornographic representations of sexual organs. Furthermore, Motoko and the female hostage not only undergo transcendence of their corpus but magnification and, hence, 'motion' in their cyborg sexuality. This kinetic sexuality of Motoko and the female hostage is further manifested when their mechanical bodies begin to move with accelerated velocities, change shapes, amplify their sexual organs, become invisible and re-appear ceaselessly. The intrinsic mechanical energy in these technological 'movements' of cyborgs not only strengthen biological power required for cyborg sex but acts as an elemental feature in constructing a gendered sexuality.

In cyborg bodies, hence, mechanical objects do not remain to be scientific applications anymore. Rather, the machine becomes a 'gender structuring practice' or 'technology of gender' [4] whereby inorganic properties of the machine shape sexual organicism embedded in the production of gender. While the physical integrity and malleability of machine connotes emphasis and amplification of physical organs, the

metallic luster in machine parts may stimulate the desire for salivary touch in sex, hence leading towards erotic fetishism and pornography in the production of gender in science fiction films.

A social construction that has nothing to do with biological sex, this production of gender recalls Teresa de Lauretis's postulation that "the construction of gender is both the product and process of its representation" (Lauretis, 1987:5). To this extent, gender is an ongoing "process" of perpetual presentation and re-presentation, the embedded construction of which requires social technologies for its production such as cinema, institutionalized discourse, epistemologies and critical practices (Lauretis, 1987:18). As depicted in *Ghost in the Shell*, the perpetual and prolific re-presentation of techno-fetishism of sexual organs and erotic symbols are some of the social technologies that mold feminine gender in science fiction films. To this extent, the pornographic construction of feminine gender in science fiction films may be postulated as the product and process of its re-presentation whereby scientific implements act as the technologies of gender.

The pornographic portrayal, pluralistic sexuality and mobility observed in cyborg femininity of the *Ghost in the Shell* is further emphasized in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982). Rachel, Pris, and Zhora are the female cyborgs or "replicants". While Rachel works for Tyrell, the head of the corporation that constructs replicants, Pris and Zhora have illegally returned to Earth trying to extend their lives and pass as humans. Both Pris and Zhora are femme fatale characters who use their sexuality in order to achieve their goal of securing residence on Earth. While Pris seduces the character of Sebastian to

lead her to Tyrell, Zhora uses her sexuality by procuring a job at a strip club and seducing a male character named Deckard. One night, Zhora is shown walking naked among a crowd of strippers. Deckard follows Zhora to check her dressing room for "dirty little holes" that people may have drilled in the walls in order to watch Zhora undress. Although Zhora is naked, she wears a body make-up that consists of glittering sequin scales to make her skin inhuman and starry. Furthermore, she coils a snake around her neck and body. The snake enveloping her naked body is both the "disguise" and "signifier". The serpent acts as a phallic symbol as well as a "narcissistic autoerotic self-sufficiency" (Dijkstra, 1986:308) of her female sexuality. An extension of Zhora's naked body, the serpent not only symbolizes the power to seduce and poison Deckard but seems to slither and copulate with her as well.

The cybernetic fusion of 'seduction' and 'narcissism' with respect to reptilian sinuosity recalls photographic documentation of the late nineteenth century. In this regard, the tempting and ingestive power of the frontal depiction of Carlos Schwabe's Medusa (1895) is worthy of note. In the water color, Medusa's head as the aggressive *vagina dentata* implies a phallic but ingestive vigor. With her mouth wide open and glaring eyes, Medusa exhibits a terrorizing and profusely growing snake hair that coils into a lustrous bouquet of "poison-toothed pink labia" (Dijkstra, 1986:310). The coordination of serpentine desires and feminine bestiality is also portrayed in Joseph Mullner's "Medusa" sculpture (1909). Here, each slithery strand of snake hair not only meanders and coils into each other but entangles Medusa'a neck, sliding downwards. In a female form, as Bram Dijkstra asserts, the emergence of each "uroboric snake", a detached

phallus and extension of a woman, not only reflects the power to seduce the other but to coil and copulate with oneself as well (Dijkstra, 1986:311-12). The Medusa, hence, carries a sexual identity that manifests a triple instinct of phallic desire, feminine bestiality and auto-erotic narcissism and it is reflected and reinforced in constructing the feminine gender of Zhora in *Blade Runner*.

The three-dimensional view of female sexuality in Zhora displays a sexual pluralism as well as a preternatural sensual strength greater than that of a male. In *Blade Runner*, Zhora not only exhibits a high magnetism of sensuality but a sinuous 'character' or 'identity' that leads Deckard to her place. The potency of this sinuous 'identity' in leading one to a 'place' resides in its feature of 'motion', an assertive characteristic of both serpents and sexuality. It is the appeal of this sexuality that leads Deckard towards Zhora's dressing room. In other words, the power of 'motion' inherent in Zhora's sexual identity conducts Deckard to her place and enables her to seduce him there subsequently. Here, the erotic motif of the phallic serpent entangling Zhora not only constructs sexual difference from Deckard, thus strengthening gender difference between the characters, but demonstrates an anomalous sensual and seductive strength of cyborg femininity.

In *Blade Runner*, the construction of female-gendered cyborgs and sexual 'mobility' is heightened when Zhora undergoes an act of counter-striptease in the presence of Deckard. After peeling off her apparel of the snake, Zhora begins putting on long black boots and a metallic bra on her previously denuded body. As the female cyborg Motoko in the *Ghost in the Shell*, who is depicted to incessantly strip in public and re-dress at a subsequent time, Zhora's act of stripping and re-dressing affirms her sexualization by

means of counter-striptease. Subsequent to her denudation, Zhora's wearing of an enlarged metallic bra and a transparent plastic raincoat constructs Sade's "counter-striptease". Counter-striptease refers to the re-dressing of the stripped materials within the act of striptease. An integral part of striptease, this act of re-dressing does not aim to veil exposed parts of the body. Rather it reinforces a "memory" of what had been uncovered preceding the act of re-covering. [5] Here, counter-striptease not only asserts a sexualized gender but a kinetic attribute of 'motion' in cyborg sexuality whereby 'transparency' in the raincoat affirms 'movement' and 'shifts' of light energy into the sexual embodiment of the cyborg. With a fragmented light cast on the sexual parts of Zhora's body, and, hence, dismembering her body into sexual parts, the fetishist apparels installed during counter-striptease aim to embellish and accentuate her sexual organs and magnify the idea of her erogenous zones. In the presence of Deckard, such amplification of Zhora's sexual parts by counter-striptease not only affirms gender difference but a perpetual 'change' in the scale and size of sexual organs, thus exemplifying mobility as well as a pluralism in cyborg sexuality.

Although Barthes postulates "immobility" (Barthes, 1993: 85) as a form of de-sexualization in striptease, [6] and, hence, a negation of female sexuality, I would argue that striptease in cyberpunk films may act as a form of sexual emancipation for female cyborgs. To this extent, I posit that striptease observed in cyberpunk films display 'mobility' as a kinesthetic feature of cyborg sexuality, thereby destabilizing the fixed positions of female sexuality and emancipating female beings in a patriarchal social order.

A focus upon striptease as a performative art not only reveals the act of choreography but the feature of 'mobility' embedded in it as well. To this end, the choreography of striptease as a performative art engages in a 'repetitive' act of stripping, whereby the perpetuity of 'repetition' destabilizes the fixed position of sexual bodies and affirms its 'mobility' in space and time. This feature of 'motion' in striptease re-affirms the theory of "de-focalization" in kinetography. According to the kinetography, the theory of de-focalization posits that the divergence from precise motifs creates mobility in art. [7]

To this extent, it may be posited that Barthes' "immobile" female strippers in the performative art of striptease exemplify "mobility" because they represent, as the immobile female nudes of fine art, "diverse" forms and "order of the universal law" (Clark, 1957: 357). A mobile dimension in the performative art of striptease, the 'indefiniteness' inherent in this diversity draws 'infinity' and 'continuity' in space and time, thus destabilizing and emancipating fixed positions of female sexuality in the patriarchal social order. As such, I would state that striptease does not render the female cyborg "immobile" and de-sexualized. Rather, the choreography of striptease frames a 'mobility' in cyborg sexuality and, hence, emancipates her as well.

In *Blade Runner*, Pris manifests a heightened sense of gender difference and eroticism as well. After Zhora is killed by Deckard, Pris emerges as a femme fatale character who uses her sexuality to seduce Sebastian and lead her to Tyrell. In the film, Pris is observed to be in gartered stockings, short, tight skirt, netting and lycra which may be associated with the female clothing in sex trade. As opposed to her male associate Sebastian, who is devoid of erotic symbolism, her available sexuality is not only signified by the choice of

her clothing but also in her cocked head and erotic body paint. In her anomalistic disguise, Pris is observed to spray her eyes with a black paint. This disguise of a 'raccoon mask' on Pris' eyes leads Sebastian to be sexually attracted to her whereby Sebastian is moved to claim that she is both "perfect" and "beautiful".

In a later scene of Blade Runner, the presence of the veil [8] unfolds Pris as a violent phallic woman and female castrator whose female genital is symbolized as the *vagina dentata* or "toothed vagina". Disguised as a spider woman, Pris is shown to be masked by a white veil. As soon as Deckard unveils her, she suddenly transforms into a hyper-physical woman with kinetic elements of 'motion'. She leaps, kicks Deckard in the chest and vehemently jumps onto his shoulder. With her legs apart and Deckard's head in between her thighs, Pris outrageously screams with her growling jaws, twists his head and ferociously smashes him so that she may devour him. Placing Deckard's head at the site of her vagina, Pris' continuous and monstrous head collisions not only render her as the kinetic cyborg but a phallic and castrating woman. Here, her phallic command in perforating and devouring not only threatens to castrate but rather to "penetrate and split open, explode, tear apart" as a kinetic action. It is this *vagina dentata* that attempts to devour and "castrate via incorporation" (Creed, 1993: 157). The signification of Pris as the *vagina dentata* striving to devour Deckard in between her legs recalls the myth about the woman as the castrator where the male fears and fantasizes her "female genitals as a trap, a black hole which threatens to swallow them up and cut them into pieces". A symbol of castrated female genitals, the *vagina dentata* of Pris not only acts as a "mouth of hell" and "devil's gateway" but reworks the classic myth of Medusa's head (Creed,

1993:110) the archetypal model of Freud's theory of fetishism and representation of phallic desires in cyborg femininity.

In *Blade Runner*, both Zhora and Pris have been fantasized as strong, violent and seductive female cyborgs. Unlike Pris and Zhora, however, Rachel is represented as soft, passive and vulnerable. Her indulgence and gentle disposition are not only manifested by her soft voice and submissive behavior but in her dress composed of a soft padded outfit and gentle furs with a circular, halo-shaped collar. Later, sitting at Deckard's piano, Rachel takes down her hair in a classic film gesture of female sexuality, and the soft curls around her face soften her image into one that is almost Pre-Raphaelite. Here, Rachel is visualized as a stereotypical female: beautiful, soft, and sexual. Deckard is attracted to her and he moves to kiss her. However, Rachel does not seem to be familiar with this conventional form of feminine beauty and sexual attraction. She appears to be coy and apprehensive. When Rachel attempts to leave Deckard's apartment, he rushes to the door and bars her exit. Deckard forces her to a venetian blind and attempts to kiss her. Although Rachel tries to abstain, he does not let her go. Deckard forces her to say that she loves him, until she finally submits. In *Blade Runner*, this scene reflects an asymmetrical gender relation where Rachel is not only overpowered and weakened by her male associate but rendered as a subservient female, especially when compared to the other seductive and violent female cyborgs in the film. Here, Rachel reasserts the social and political position of woman as an object of man's desire and consumption, thus reinforcing the conception of gender difference in human society.

Elasticity and Ambivalence of Gender Binary in *The Matrix*

In science fiction cinema, the ongoing performance of femininity not only fortifies existing gender difference from masculinity but re-affirms the presence of dichotomous categories of gender in technological culture. *The Matrix*, however, appears to be an exception to the conventional understanding of gender identity. As opposed to *Blade Runner, The Matrix* offers a rich text in deconstructing and re-figuring gender identities and demonstrates pluralism in gender identities as well. The film begins with Trinity's action-loaded confrontation with agents and police, thereby asserting the kinesthetic attribute of 'motion' in her mechanical body. Unlike the sexually denuded female characters in science fiction films, Trinity appears to be a defeminized cyborg whose subjectivity is solely defined by computerized signals. Nonetheless, codes of masculinity have been inscribed onto her and she can outrun and outfight the male characters as well, a kinetic phenomenon conventionally restricted to male action heroes. Although Trinity wears a glossy costume of latex that appears to render her as an erotic object of gaze, she demonstrates strong kinetic agency in exerting all her actions as well as expressing ownership of her sexuality. Not only is she 'not' the object of the gaze, she also exerts the gaze when she watches Neo sleep. Traditionally only masculine subjects get to bear the gaze upon female. However, Trinity exerts the gaze upon Neo and she vigorously inserts machine parts in his body as well. Hence, when Neo (Keanu Reeves) discovers Trinity's sexual identity and relates her with her impressive hacker past, he cannot help but exclaim, "Jesus! I just thought you were a guy."

In contrast to Trinity, Neo is feminized throughout *The Matrix*. He is a slim figured and non-muscular person whose effeminate body is most often shown being penetrated by various machine parts to plug him into the Matrix. Furthermore, he is compared to both Alice, from *Alice in Wonderland*, and Dorothy, from *Wizard of Oz*. For instance, Morpheus tells Neo, "I imagine that right now you're feeling a bit like Alice tumbling down the rabbit hole", and subsequently Cypher tells him "buckle your seat belt, Dorothy, cause Kansas is goin' bye-bye!" Furthermore, Cypher asks Trinity to look into Neo's "big, beautiful eyes" and the oracle tells Neo that he is cuter than she had expected. As a vulnerable girl, Neo accepts the insinuations of effeminacy. In the final scenes, Trinity takes on the role of Prince Charming and Neo is awakened by her kiss like Sleeping Beauty.

In *The Matrix*, the feminization of the male character Neo highly contravenes the hypermasculinity of achetypal male robots and cyborgs in science fiction films. In this respect, the masculine representation of T-800 (Arnold Schwarzenegger), a male robot in the film *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, is worthy of note. T-800 is a huge robot that is sent to Earth for protecting young John Connor from a similarly built, more advanced robot. Although an inhuman robot programmed by computerized systems, T-800 is assigned a masculine gender. In the opening scenes of the film, Arnold Schwarzenegger is portrayed to be walking naked among a crowd of male members of a bar. Unlike the sexual exhibitionism of female cyborgs in films like *Blade Runner* and *Ghost in the Shell*, Schwarzenegger does not exhibit his sexual organ. Rather than functioning as an object of gaze, Schwarzenegger acts as an active agent that promises both control and the

threat of violence as the principle means of maintaining that control. Being a machine

abstracted of human emotions, he expresses inability to fulfill John's request to "smile" or

relate affectionately, thus fortifying the male stereotype of being tough and harsh.

Furthermore, his muscles are excessively amplified by means of his mechanical lamina

and metallic ductility. In the form of "pumping iron", these mechanical muscles not only

delineate a paradox of "nature" and "performance", whereby the performance of

exaggerating muscles denaturalizes its existent rudimentary form, but strengthen the

stereotypical representation of muscle building in masculinity. In contrast to T-800, the

male character Neo in *The Matrix* is uncoupled from the tough and muscular attributes

and he is feminized. While Neo is characterized by feminine attributes, Trinity is

inscribed with masculine signifiers. The resulting reversal of gender roles not only

implies the fluidity of gender identities but validates the ambivalence and arbitrariness

present in any gender construction.

Although the reversal of gender roles in *The Matrix* does not destabilize dichotomous

categories of gender and the codes of masculinity and femininity persist in transposed

forms, the arbitrariness of its social construction is implied by Morpheus:

> The matrix is everywhere. It is all around us, even now, in this room. You can see it
>
> when you look out your window, or when you turn on your television. You can feel
>
> it when you go to work, when you go to church, when you pay your taxes. It is the
>
> world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth.

In the above statements, if the concept of "the matrix" is substituted by the word

"gender", Morpheus' description recalls Judith Butler's idea of gender construction

and performance. [9] In Butler's words, "gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly" (Butler, 1990:282). When she examines the "acts" which constitute gender, she understands them "not only as constituting the identity of the actor, but as constituting that identity as a compelling illusion, an object of belief" (Butler, 1990:271). To this end, it is the act of ongoing performativity of gender that manifests its illusion and ambiguity. As Butler would say,

> ...coherent gender, achieved through an apparent repetition of the same, produces as its *effect* the illusion of a prior and volitional subject. In this sense, gender is not a performance that a prior subject elects to do, but gender is *performative* in the sense that it constitutes as an effect of the very subject it appears to express (Butler, 1991:24).

With this ongoing performativity, there is no performer prior to the performed. Rather, there is an on going constitution of an "appearance" of a subject as its effect. In science fiction films, this "appearance" of a female subject is manifested by the repeated and fantasized simulation of femininity. In this respect, digital technology not only accelerates the simulated and ideological production of femininity but fortifies its sexual organicism through mechanized and magnified erotic embodiments of femininity, thus strengthening the gendered representation of female sexuality in the technological culture of cyberspace.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that technological embodiments in science fiction films echo and fortify existing gender difference among human beings in society, thus negating

Donna Haraway's theory of gender obsolescence in cybernetic culture. While theorists

such as Donna Haraway offer emancipatory implications of women and technology in

cybernetic culture, there have been unexplored areas and contradictory postulations of

which mark shortcomings of cyberfeminist literature as well. Although Haraway's

vision of the cyborg embodies her call for 'multiplicity', her disregard of gender markers

has negated sexual organicism of cyborgs as I have demonstrated in this chapter. While

the preeminence of sexual organicism over mechanical parts leads to an accentuation of

erotic attributes, the incorporation of machine-parts in the human body empower the

cyborg by amplifying kinetic energy, thereby transcending the limits of biological sex as

well. The hyperbolic representations of sexual characteristics in feminine cyborgs may

portray stereotypical images of pornography. Nevertheless, fluid states of sexuality in

cyberpornography may offer sexual emancipation as well.

Notes

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[1] As Donna Haraway states, "The cyborg is not subject to Foucault's biopolitics; the cyborg simulates politics" (Haraway, 1991:163)

[2] Foucault's concept of bio-power or biopolitics refers to the biological body as a site of power. While 'disciplines' manifest the anatomo-politics of human body, 'regulatory controls' delineate the bio-politics of the population (Foucault, 1978:139-140).

[3] As Marshall McLuhan would assert, technology is an extension or "amplification" of the central nervous system of human beings. In this respect, the stimulus of the environment brings about a response or "counter-irritation" in the central nervous system of bodies. The effect of this counter-irritation of biological nerves is the reorganization of the organic electrons and evolution of bodily "techniques" so that it may process and interpret necessary signification. The development of such techniques not only sustains equilibrium of the physical organs in light of environmental accentuation, and hence protects the central nervous system, but maintains an ecological balance between the changed conditions of environment and bodily system. Hence, the amplification and modification of nervous system gives rise to various technologies of the body. To this end, as Marshall McLuhan notes in his chapter "Clothing: Our Extended Skin" in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, the technology of clothes is an extension of our skin (1964:119-122). As differential temperatures of heat / cold produces counter-irritation in the nervous system of the skin and engender the development of clothes as its technological extension, I would state that the blurring boundaries of sexual difference in technological environments and subsequent loss of patriarchal desire give rise to the "need" of creating sexual difference, thus rendering "clothes" as bodily techniques, not to cover from low temperatures but as a strategy to "uncover", thus unfolding clothes from technology of body to technology of gender. In *Ghost in the Shell*, the condition of clothes as being technologies of gender is demonstrated by the unplugging of technological wires that electrically and erotically stimulate Motoko's body (an extension of the skin and cast as a clothe) and the simultaneous stripping of clothes (which McLuhan would state "extension of the skin" or technological extension of the body as well), subsequent to which her body is manifested to be stimulated and eroticized. To this end, clothes are not only technologies of the body but technologies of gender that act as a strategy to eroticize the female body.

[4] Based on Teresa de Lauretis' conception of the 'technology of gender'. As Lauretis states, gender is a social construction enabled by various strategies or "technologies of gender" and institutional discourses with the power to control social meaning and, thus, produce, promote, and "implant" representations of gender. (Lauretis 1987:18)

[5] The wearing of a transparent raincoat may make it possible for viewers to actually see the body, thus contravening any possible recollection of what had been uncovered during the preceding act of striptease. Nevertheless, the observation of wearing the metallic bra behind the transparent raincoat and the simulation of wearing a raincoat itself reinforces "memory" of the act of striptease, hence fortifying the idea of foregoing sexual exhibitionism.

[6] As Ronald Barthes notes, woman is de-sexualized at the very moment she is stripped naked. The shedding of a series of incongruous and artificial apparels characterizes striptease. For Barthes, the unveiled body is yet remote. Located in music halls and performance stages, the nakedness is adorned with jewelry, furs, feathers, fishnet stockings, gloves and fans. Here, the stripper perceives herself as an adorned, luxurious and erotic object of the music hall, [thus] distancing her nude body from sexual nature. The dance which accompanies the musical act is by no means an erotic factor. Rather, the prancing movements in striptease reflect a response to the "fear of mobility" and, hence, reinforce a denial to female emancipation. Entangled by embellishments, the reinforced "immobility", an asexual feature, embellishes, expresses and obscures the nature of female sex.

[7] *Kinetographien.* Europaische Academie, Berlin, 6 August 2001, <http://amor.rz.hu-berlin.de/~h2863i74/concept.html> (17 October 2002)

[8] The veil reflects and reinforces the presence of the phallus. As Mary Anne Doane notes on Lacan in "Veiling Over Desire" in Femme Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis, it is behind the veil that lurks the phallus as the "phallus can play its role only when veiled" (1991:127) In this phallic order, the veil is a symbolic representation of the 'lack' of the penis in the feminine manifestation, whereby the penis is located elsewhere. This dislocation of the penis connotes castration - a lack of the whole genital. Nevertheless, the inherent affirmation of 'wholeness' generates a sense of the whole, the phallus - a desired form of ideal power. It is this 'whole' in relation to which the man is lacking, a lack that takes birth in the Freudian concept of the 'phallic mother'. In other words, the upshot of the affirmation of the whole is the genesis of the 'phallic mother' that conceives the partial man. As Jane Gallop notes in "Of Phallic Proportions: Lacanian Conceit" in *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and* Psychoanalysis, the whole is the pre-Oedipal mother, apparently omnipotent and omniscient, until the discovery of her castration, the discovery that she is not a 'whole' but a 'hole'. To this end, the woman (phallic mother) is to the man what the man is to the (castrated) woman. In other words, "the whole is to a man as man is *to a hole".*

[9] Hannah Kuhlmann, "Fluid Realities/Fluid Identities: Gender in *The Matrix."* University of Minnesota, June 2000. <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~matri001/wost3190/kuhlmann2.html> (17 October 2002)

Chapter 2.

Theorizing Kineticism and Sexual Diversity in Cyberbodies:
Embodiment and Sexuality in Cyberspace

In the first chapter, I have shown that technological representations of cyborgs in

science fiction films reflect and reinforce gender identities, thus negating Donna

Haraway's theory of gender obsolescence in cyborgs. While cyberfeminists such as

Donna Haraway offer emancipatory implications for women in cybernetic culture, there

have been unexplored areas and contradictory postulations which mark shortcomings of

cyberfeminist theory. Although Haraway's vision of the cyborg embodies her call for

'multiplicity', her disregard of gender markers has negated the sexual organicism of

cyborgs. To this end, the preeminence of sexual organicism over mechanical parts in

cyborgs not only leads to an accentuation of erotic attributes, thus reinforcing the

presence of gender, but signifies an amplification of physical energy by the incorporation

of machine-parts in sexual organs and, hence, embodies kinetic acts of 'motion' in their

sexual subjectivities. Therefore, I postulate that cyborgs not only manifest a gendered

sexuality but 'kineticism' as an intrinsic element of their bodies and sexuality.

Although the hyperbolic representation of sexual characteristics in female cyborgs may

portray stereotypical images of pornography, the fluid states of sexuality in

cyberpornography further demonstrate sexual 'pluralism and emancipation for cyborg

bodies, thus calling for a revision of cyberfeminist theory and inauguration of new

theoretical concepts that may demonstrate cybersexual practices.

In this chapter, I will theorize 'kineticism' as the 'structural condition' and 'mode of existence' of sexual embodiment of cyborgs. The word 'kineticism' is intended to suggest the system of ideas and condition of 'motion' that denote the 'structure' and 'mode of existence' as manifested in the 'choreography' and 'tectonics' of cyberbodies. The chapter begins with an approach to demonstrate the rationale of depicting eroticism in technological bodies of female cyborgs. Although first-wave feminists may contend that the pornographic representations in techno-eroticism of cyborgs may render the female as a victim of sexual objectification, I will demonstrate that 'cyberpornography' affirms the procurement of non-sadomasochistic pleasure of homosexuality, bisexuality and narcissism for many women, thus subverting the male hegemony of viewing sexually objectified females. In my demonstration of cyberpornography as a 'site of resistance', I will further delineate how the structure of 'fantasy' and 'sublimation' is central to conceiving orgasmic pleasure and 'sexual freedom' in cyberfeminism. To further support my point of view, I will offer a theoretical overview of the spatio-temporal structure of 'fantasy' and 'utopia' that molds the subversive power of cyberfeminism and manifests 'fragmentation' of female sexual identity. It is this perpetual fragmentation and 'shifts' of sexual identity that will not only affirm a kinetic sexuality in female cyborgs but an ambivalence of gender performance, thereby challenging the uniform and ideological representations of femininity.

The ambivalence of gender and fluid sexuality in the utopian conception of cyborg bodies asserts the dynamic proliferation of erotic diversity and affirms a 'malleable subjectivity' in the machine-human bodies of cyborgs. Here, I will introduce 'malleable

subjectivity' as a conception that embraces both pluralism as well as elasticity in the 'kineticism' of cyborg bodies and sexuality. Although Rosi Braidotti's concept of the 'nomad' may affirm pluralism of the cyborg as a postmodern subject, her "situated" and "simultaneous occurrences" of postmodern subjectivities do not adequately address the 'ductility' of eroticism as observed in the metallic structure of cyborg bodies. Nevertheless, Braidotti's post-structuralist notion of sexual "difference" and "diversity" is significant in deciphering cyborg sexuality and 'emancipation'. In the final section of this chapter, I will offer a critical overview of Sadie Plant's correlation of feminine emancipation with the history of technology. Although Plant enunciates the essence of "weaving" and "mimesis" in women's invention of digital technology, the absence of articulating the nature of 'place' and 'memory' in any mimetic experience of cybernetic simulation marks a gap in grasping cyberfeminism, thus calling for a revision of cyberfeminist theory.

To support my point of view, I shall offer a theoretical foundation of cyberfeminism[1] and feminist post-structuralism. [2] In this regard, I will offer a critical focus on the works of authors such as Anne Balsamo, Ann Brooks, Rosi Braidotti and Sadie Plant. To conduct the study, I shall employ a qualitative method of critical analysis. In this respect, I will offer analysis on the basis of both contesting and supportive arguments, the counter-balance of which shall assess the validity and possibility of the postmodern conception of cyberfeminism. The significance of this study is the way it discerns the strengths and weaknesses of cyberfeminism and the original contribution of introductory concepts such as fantasy, sublimation, malleable subjectivity, prosthetic memory and

location central to the formulation of cyberfeminist theory. With this recognition, I will have opportunities to apply and improve our traditional concepts and methods in feminist theory. At the same time, I will have opportunities for developing and contributing a better understanding of cyberfeminism in the new technological culture of cyberspace.

Cyberpornography as a Site of Sexual Oppression or Liberation?

As I have highlighted in the first chapter, Donna Haraway has failed to elucidate the presence of technological eroticism in contemporary images of cyborgs and its implication for sexual emancipation. Represented in contemporary popular culture, cyberpunk films are highly absorbed with gender markers and erotic iconography. Such gendered sexual representation of cyborg beings is illustrated in many science fiction films such as *Blade Runner, Ghost in the Shell, Cyborg², The Lawnmower Man, Terminator 2: Judgment Day* and *Eve of Destruction*, thus contradicting Donna Harway's perception of gender obsolescence in cyborgs. In these films, the portrayal of sexual exhibitionism and dismemberment of female cyborgs may lead feminists to assert that cyborgs perpetuate pornography and male hegemonic power over females. For many feminist critics, hence, pornography in cyberpunk images often evokes sexual violence and female oppression. Women are not only conceived as sexual objects of the male gaze but objectified victims of pornographic representations as well. The anti-porn feminist's position is, hence, pornography denigrates women and leads to sexual violence toward them (Joette, 1993:3). As Andrea Dworkin would state, women are viewed as colonized victim's of male aggression, victims of the "brutality of male history", thus

curbing female emancipation (Dworkin, 1981:68). To this end, the choreographed or

mobile nude figures in cybernetic pornography may signify 'immobility' of female

emancipation.

As Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* defines it, "Pornography ordinarily represents

sexual organs, making them into a 'motionless' object (a fetish), flattered like an idol

that does not leave its niche.....". [3] For Barthes, pornography is merely a motor that has

stalled; there is no mobility in finding when fixation has become surplus. Pornography is

an exposition or reference to explicit sexual activity. To this extent, pornography

comprises of 'specific' looks and angles of photography, the choreographed 'fixity' of

which may contradict the theory of "de-focalisation" in kinetography. [4] This leads

Barthes to presume the exclusive photographic portrayal of the vagina and, hence, the

"immobile quality of the phallus". As the choreographed actor in pornography is

asserted to be "immobile", the spectator is considered to be in an immobile position as

well. In this respect, the John Foxx's verse exemplifies the immobile and hidden

position of both the viewer and viewed in pornography:

my sex.
waits for me
like a mongrel waits
downwind on a tightrope leash
my sex
is a fragile acrobat
sometimes I'm an overcane shot sometimes i'm an automat
my sex is often so low sometimes it shortcircuits then sometimes it's a golden globe my
sex is invested in suburban photographs skyscapers shadows on a carcrash overpass [5]

In Barthes' and Hawkin's understanding, the immobility of females in pornography

may exemplify the 'myth' of motion in sexual identity and, hence, confirms feminists'

assertion that women's sexuality are curbed in pornography. Yet, pornographic representations in cyberpunk films make me skeptical about the feminist assertion that in these films women are being sexually objectified. Is the female body really victimized and sexually objectified in pornographic representations of cyberpunk imagery? Is she a sexual object of male voyeuristic gaze or is she an active agent in exhibiting her sexual identity? What are the pleasures in viewing the pornographic female figure? And what are the emancipatory implications of cyborg pornography?

Although many science fiction films have displayed erotic representations and pornographic images of female cyborgs, cyberfeminists have not only failed to identify the presence of sexuality but the pleasure of fantasy and its emancipatory potential embedded within cyborg pornography. Pornography is a "genre that has seemed to endlessly repeat the fantasies of primal seduction, of meeting the other, seducing or being seduced by the other in an ideal pornotopia" (Williams, 1995:148), and its pleasures and subversive power need to be addressed in cyberfeminism. Pornography is an exposition or reference to explicit sexual activity whereby "sexual saturation of the female body" (Williams, 1995:154) appeals to the sensuous responses of viewers. Although the pleasure of viewing pornography has been traditionally constructed for male spectators, the pleasure and power experienced by female cyborg bodies in pornography and female viewers cannot be dismissed either. To this extent, the pleasure of 'fantasy' and the subversive potential of cyborg sexuality need to be considered and studied in cyberfeminism.

Theorizing the Structure of 'Fantasy' and the Subversive Power of Female Sexuality in Cyberpornography

In the context of utopian imagination and conception of a hypothetical future, images of cyborgs portray erotic experience and sexual desire as a manifestation of 'fantasy'. Although fantasy may be considered as a way of attaining desire, it is desire that molds the nature of fantasy. [6] As Jean Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis note in their essay "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality", fantasy is not an object of desire but an imaginary setting for expressing desire (Williams, 1995:153). To this extent, fantasy is an imaginary place where sexual desire and eroticism may be conceived and expressed. As Laplanche and Pontalis argue, fantasy is a "totally imaginary event that never took place". Fantasies are utopias where subjects transcend corporeal limits of existence and unravel "enigmas"with respect to subjugated sexual identity (Williams, 1995:153). While the "enigma of the origin of sexual desire" is solved by the fantasy of seduction, the "enigma of sexual difference" is resolved by the fantasy of castration (Williams, 1995:154).

In this theorization of fantasy, the concept of 'sublimation', an exalted condition of transcendence, becomes central to the formulation of sexual 'pleasure' of pornographic exposition in cyberspace. Although the non-sexual attribute of 'sublimation' may lead Freud to equate sublimation with de-sexualization, it is sexuality that subtends sublimation (Doane, 1991:254). To this extent, it may be stated that it is the libidinal energy of cyborgs that unfolds their 'sublimation' of erotic pleasure in pornographic fantasy. As Freud states, "the energy for the work of thought itself must be supplied from sublimated erotic sources", it is apparent that the origin of sublimation is sexuality, and not the deletion of it. In cyborg representations, thus, the sexual pleasure of

pornographic exhibition and eroticism is shaped by enacting 'sublimation' within a frame of fantasy and prognosticating its orgasmic pleasure in pornography. In other words, it is the framework of 'fantasy' and its sublimation that manifests erotic desire and molds sexual pleasure of female cyborgs in pornography.

Although conventionally attributed to male spectators, the 'pleasure' of viewing pornographic eroticism of cyborgs needs to be recognized as a female experience of fluid sexuality as well. This ambivalence of sexual pleasure in the utopic conception of cyborg bodies is reflected and reinforced by the kinetic structure of fantasy. Fantasy is characterized by the "lack of a fixed position" - a kinetic phenomenon where temporal and spatial existence is always 'mobile' and, hence, "can never be fixed" (Williams, 1995:153). It is this kinetic structure of spatio-temporal motion in fantasy that shapes the 'condition' of the female being situated in one sexual state to 'shift' to a cybernetic sexuality of another sexual orientation, thus signifying kineticism of sexual 'motion' and freedom in cyberspace. To this end, I would posit 'kineticism' as the 'structural condition' and 'mode of existence' of sexual embodiment of cybernetic bodies. Here, the word 'kineticism' is intended to suggest the system of ideas and attributes of 'motion' that is not only signified in the temporal 'condition' of fantasy in cyberpornography but is exhibited in the kinetic 'mode of existence' as manifested in the 'choreography' of pornographic images of cyberbodies.

The kinetic attribute of 'motion' is displayed in representations of cyborgs in science fiction films (as shown in Chapter 1) as well as pornographic images of digital art (Appendix). A study of erotic images of cyborgs reveals that the cyborg not only

displays a gendered sexuality but kinetic elements of 'motion' in it as well. In this respect, it is important to observe how cyborgs not only display kineticism by virtue of motion and fluidity in their choreographed positions of erotic acts (Figures 1, 2 and 3) but perform various forms of physical movements by enacting different sexual dispositions. In this respect, it is significant to note how the eroticized cyborgs in Figures 4 and 5 appear to float and move off the physical ground respectively. The act of physical 'motion' is further exhibited in Figures 6 and 7 where the denuded cyborgs exert muscular efforts of metallic limbs and mobilize through space. This mobilization in space is also exhibited by the sexually denuded cyborg in Figure 8 when her body's mechanical wheel moves in circular motions while having sex with another cyborg, thus signifying the kinesthetic elements of 'motion' within her sexualized body. Although the denuded cyborg in Figure 9 does not engage in any sexual act, his naked body shows kineticism when his mechanical circuit revolves in circular motions around his head, thus destabilizing linear order and exhibiting a kinesthetic element of 'motion'.

The characteristic of motion in cyborg sexuality is further exhibited in images of cyborgs mobilizing and extending their own sexual organs in space. While the denuded male cyborg in Figure 10 mobilizes his penis into an accentuated form, male and female cyborgs in Figure 11 and 12 extend their penises and breasts as technological extensions of guns respectively, thus exhibiting shifting dimensions of sexual organs and a kinetic sexuality. The kinesthetic attributes of motion are not only represented by the technological extension and movement of sexual organs but by the fluid transmutation and shifts in sexual organs and orientations as well. In this respect, it is significant to

note how the pluralism of sexual organs and orientations is represented from Figures 13

to 20. While Figure 13 represents both male and female sexed cyborgs moving out from

one cyborg brain, Figures 14 and 15 display red penises present in female sexed cyborgs.

This transmutation and fluidity of cyborg sex is not only represented in the multiple

sexual organs of cyborgs but in their diverse sexual orientations as well. Although the

erotic female in Figure 16 displays narcissistic sexual desire by gaining pleasure from

holding her own melting breasts in metal, Figures 18 and 19 exhibit female cyborgs

gaining pleasure from homosexual intimacy. These pornographic images not only

portray the procurement of homosexual pleasure in cyborg eroticism but display the

kinetic flow of electricity through their erotic bodies as well. As the flow of electricity

from the mechanical wires of the erotic cyborg in Figure 17, electric current flows from

the erotic bodies of homosexual female cyborgs in Figure 18 and 19 as well, whereby the

flow of electrons constitute energy or 'force' as a kinetic element of 'motion' present in

cyborg sexuality.

As reflected in diverse sexual orientations, pornographic images of cyborgs in fantasy

affirms the procurement of non-sadomasochistic pleasure for heterosexual, homosexual,

bisexual and narcissistic female subjects, thus subverting the male hegemony of

regarding females as sex objects and affirming cyberpornography as a 'site of resistance'

in the process. Although many feminists may argue that the sadomasochistic pleasure

inherent in some pornographic images negates sexual freedom of women, the narcissistic,

homosexual, heterosexual and bisexual pleasure of females viewing any erotic act in

cyberpornography demonstrates the de-stabilization of an essentialist view of female

subjectivity in male-dominated structures and the multiplicity of female pleasure in pornography. Here, the viewer of a cyberpornography is not necessarily the distant audience. Rather, the female participant of cyberpornography may become the viewer herself. In other words, the viewed may become the viewer in cyberpornography thereby affirming multiple sexual pleasures within her subjectivity. In this respect, Bela Chatterjee's example of Molly and Case in William Gibson's *Neuromancer* is significant to note. Although Molly and Case are both participants of cyberpornography, their 'cyberlinks' render them to view each other as well as their own pornography. [7] Here, the breakdown of dichotomy between the 'viewed' and 'viewer' not only affirms the procurement of heterosexual, bisexual and narcissistic pleasure for the participants as viewers of cyberpornography but the fluidity of their sexual orientations as well. Cyberpornography demonstrates a 'fragmentation', 'fluidity' and, hence, a mobility of female sexual identity that not only affirms the presence of kineticism in cybersexuality but sexual 'freedom' and ambivalence of gender performance. It is this ambivalence of gender performance in cyberspace that challenges the uniform and ideological representations of femininity in the contemporary society of cyberspace

Diverse Sexual States and Malleability of Cyborg Subjects: A Prelude to 'Malleable Subjectivity' in Kineticism of Cyberbodies

As I mentioned in the previous section, the ambivalence of gender in the utopic conception of cyborgs is reflected and reinforced by the variable spatio-temporal structure of 'kineticism' in the fantasy of cybersexuality. To this extent, fantasized cyborg

subjects in pornographic representations not only assert the proliferation of erotic 'diversity' and 'pluralism' but manifest a 'malleable subjectivity' in their machine-human bodies as well. Here, I introduce 'malleable subjectivity' as a conception that embraces both 'pluralism' as well as its 'elasticity' in the subjectivity of cybersexuality. Although Rosi Braidotti's "nomadic standing" of the postmodern subject may affirm pluralism of the cyborg, her elicitation of "situated" and "simultaneous occurrences" of the nomad (Braidotti, 1994:4) do not adequately address the 'ductility' of techno-eroticism as I have observed in the metallic structure of cyborg bodies in films and digital images.

As represented in science fiction films such as *Blade Runner, Ghost in the Shell,* and *The Matrix,* the bodies of female cyborgs display diversified sexual characteristics by means of their metallic structure. While Zhora in *Blade Runner* and Motoko in *Ghost in the Shell* express both heterosexual and narcissistic desires by the perpetual 'accentuation' of their metal-laminated sexual organs, Trinity wears a glossy costume of latex where the appearance of metallic 'luster' reinforces the erotic desire of salivary touch in sex. Nevertheless, Trinity's gender appears to be defeminized and codes of masculinity are inscribed onto her at the same time, thus transgendering and queering her sexuality in *The Matrix.* Although the luster of the latex costume may render Trinity as an erotic object of male gaze, nevertheless, she demonstrates strong physical agency in exerting all her action-loaded fights and expresses ownership of her sexuality. Not only is she 'not' the object of the gaze, she also exerts the gaze when she watches Neo sleep and actively penetrates him with machine parts as well, thus subverting conventional understandings of the submissive female in the heterosexual social order.

While on one hand, cyborgs exhibit 'accentuated' erotic features of heterosexuality, on the other side, they may destabilize dominant forms of female sexuality, thus proliferating and fortifying diverse and pluralistic sexual subjectivities. In my view, cyborgs fortify the 'pluralistic subjectivities' of diverse sexual features by the kinetic attribute of malleability, a metallic property of the machinery inscribed in their bodies. In cyborgs, thus, the mechanical parts do not remain scientific applications. Rather, elements of "the machine" becomes a 'technology of gender' or 'gender structuring practice' [8] whereby inorganic properties of the kinetic energy in malleability of machine parts shape diverse sexual organicism in the production of cyborg gender. While the glossy and metallic luster in machine parts, as reflected in Trinity's latex-appearance, stimulates the desire for salivary touch in sex, the physical integrity and malleability of the machine connotes emphasis, amplification, continual transformation and, hence, kinetic feature of fluidity and motion in physical organs in many cyborgs. The upshot is an experience of a 'malleable subjectivity' in cyborgs that not only affirms their 'pluralistic subjectivities' in expressing multiple sexual experiences but the concurrent 'transformations' and, hence, 'kineticism' of metallic mechanisms that structure 'elasticity' in the shape and form of cyborg sexual features. It is this elasticity in shape and form of cyborg sexual features that leads towards a production and experience of sexual diversity.

The sexual 'diversity' exhibited in female cyborg bodies recalls Rosi Braidotti's feminist post-structuralist notion of sexual "difference". As Braidotti would state, sexual "difference" is conceived as a social project aiming to set up conditions - both material and intellectual - that would allow women to produce alternative values to express other

ways of knowledge (Braidotti, 1994:242). To this end, sexual 'differences' in cyborg

femininity are produced as a "social project" where contemporary digital artists have

molded diversified and fluid sexual representations by digital tools of art, thus not only

advocating Braidotti's post-structuralist notion of multiple "differences" in female

sexuality but affirming 'kineticism' by virtue of mobility of sexual signs in cyborgs.

'Digital art' may be defined as an artifact that involves the production of computer

graphics. With the aid of imaging tools such as Adobe Photoshop and Macromedia

Flash, digital art enables the transposition and mobility of existing lines within an image

and the re-production of the same, thus blurring the boundaries of conventional

representations and creating 'differences' within an image of a particular identity. In this

respect, it is important to note how the kinetic effects in digital art have contributed to

the 'blurring' boundaries of dichotomized gender and enables the production of

transsexual representations. For example, *Gender Media Art* [9] and *Brandon* [10] are some

of the digital artworks that portray the 'mobile' and 'interchanging' positions of diverse

sexual identities by means of kinetic effects of graphical movement and, thus, blurs

the images of different gender identities. Designed by digital artists such as Lynn

Hershman, Sadie Benning, Jennifer Reeder, Debra Solomon, Sam Schoenbaum, Annie

Sprinkle, Daniel Brun, M.M. Serra and Shu Lea Cheang, these digital art works

contribute to the trangressive potential of sexuality, thus strengthening the theoretical

postulates of post-structuralism, feminism and queer theory, and destabilizing many

essentialist assumptions about female sexuality. New media technology, hence, emerges

to be a sophisticated tool that has enabled digital artists to blur the edges of conventional

understandings of sexuality and materialize Braidotti's "social project" of conceiving

sexual "differences" in the contemporary era of cybernetic culture.

The Morphological Structure of Sexual 'Differences' in Kineticism - The Structural Condition and Mode of Existence in Cyberfeminist Theory

In cybernetic culture, digital artists have indeed blurred the boundaries of

dichotomized gender and incarnated heterogeneous representations of female cyborg

sexuality, thus strengthening sexual 'differences' within cyberfeminism. However,

cyberfeminist theory has not only failed to identify the presence of 'differences' in cyborg

sexuality but demonstrates a need to examine the morphological 'structure' and the 'mode'

of framing sexual 'differences' within cyborgs as well. The question that arises here is,

hence, what is the 'structure' and 'methodology' of framing sexual 'differences' in cyborg

feminism?

Although Anne Balsamo has introduced "reading" as a methodological tool to

decipher the 'shifting boundaries' of the discursively constructed cyborg gender, her

concept of "articulation" in the method of reading (Balsamo, 1996:35) does not

adequately elucidate the theoretical configuration and 'structure' of sexual differences in

cyborgs. Needless to say, the transsexuality in cyborgs maybe construed as a "set of

embodied texts whose potential for productive disruption of structured sexualities and

spectra of desire has yet to be explored" (Grace, 2000:118) by reading. Nevertheless, the

structural erasure of 'otherness' within the kineticism of cyborgs is readable and effective

only when the structure of sexual 'differences' is conceived and explored in cyberfeminist

theory. Therefore, cyberfeminist theory needs to dissect the 'structure' of sexual

differences in kineticism of cyborgs to effectively read and implement its structural erasure of 'otherness' as the 'state of existence' of cybersexuality. It is the discerning of this structural erasure of 'otherness' as the mode of existence that will not only highlight how the female being is emancipated in cybersexual diversities but validate the inherent logic of 'differences' as well.

In context of late capitalism and consumerism, the logic of 'differences' is often exemplified by the electronic mode of digital art that has advocated a re-production and gratified consumption of erotic images of cyborgs. In the perpetual proliferation of erotic images of cyborgs, the upshot is an economy of 'signs' whereby symbolic exchanges of proliferated signifiers render a 'disconnection' of the signifier from its signified. In the kineticism of cyberbodies, the 'perpetual' and diverse proliferation of erotic signifiers of cyborgs not only undergoes a 'disconnection' from its signified of anatomical sex but symbolic exchanges with other signifiers of gender as well, thereby signifying kinetic effects of motion and interchangeability among the disconnected signifiers of cybersexuality. In this structural condition of kineticism, thus, the implosion of the 'signifier' and 'signified' in sexual images has given rise to "a sign of infinite possibilities of [sexual] differences" (Grace, 2000:84). To this end, the structure of sexual "differences" in the kineticism of the cyborg sign consists of a collapse of 'poles' of the signifier and signified and, hence, a structural dissolution of difference as 'otherness'. In cyborg sexuality, hence, 'differences' are no more conceived as the 'other', a site of opposition or comparison. Rather, 'differences' evolve as a range of 'diversification' within a given kind, "irreducible" in numeration and perpetually proliferating and shifting

as kinetic elements of 'motion'. In cyberfeminist theory, this kineticism of "irreducible" sexual 'differences' should be construed, as not only acting as the structural 'condition' of collapsing the dialectical poles of sexuality, but as acting as a 'methodological strategy' of upholding the 'mode of existence' of sexual 'differences' in cyborg representations. In other words, I posit that in kineticism the 'structure' of proliferating sexual 'differences' is itself a methodology and, hence, a 'condition of upholding the state of sexual 'differences' in cybersexuality. In short, kineticism acts both as a structural condition and mode of existence of sexual 'differences' in cyborg representations, the mobility of which renders cybersexuality as a 'site' of sexual 'pluralism' and 'fluidity'.

Kineticism and Transgressive Force in Performativity of Cyborg Gender in Cyberfeminist Theory

In the previous section, I have argued that kineticism acts as the structural condition of sexual 'differences' in cyborgs and how kinetic effects of motion in it acts a methodical strategy to proliferate and uphold the sexual 'differences'. Although Bordo may argue any incitement to attend 'difference' as an essentialist dogma in itself and, hence, predicts a danger inherent in certain methods of accommodating differences (Grace, 2000:82), the stimulus of sexual 'differences' has indeed invoked 'liberation' of the female cyborg. To this end, the perpetual simulation of diversified cyborg sexuality elicits sexual fluidity, a kinetic phenomenon of mobility. Nevertheless, how does sexual 'differences' and its fluidity affirm female liberation in cyberspace? So far, I have delineated kineticism as the 'structure' and 'method' of engendering sexual differences and its fluidity. But *how*

does the structural condition of sexual 'differences' in kineticism liberate the female
entity? In other words, what is the transgressive force in sexual 'differences' of
kineticism that 'liberates' the female cyborg?

In cyberspace, female cyborgs are not only shaped by the state of sexual 'differences'
but the transgressive force of gender 'performance' inherent in the sexual 'differences' as
well. In the simulacra of cybersexual 'differences', the performance of cyborg gender is
enacted by the "proliferative re-significations" of anatomical sex. Effectuated by built-in
machinery parts and metallic lamina, the 'proliferatative re-significations' of cyborg
sexuality can be read as a sign of an 'excessive form of naturalness'. In this production of
an excessive form of nature or hypernaturalness, the signifier of inorganic physiognomy
of machine exceeds its signified or referent of organic sex. The technological 'effort'
that goes into this production of cyborg sexuality, hence, renders the spectator to read
cyborg gender not as a manifestation of 'nature' but as a delineation of 'performance'.

To be precise, the production of cyborg gender is not just a performance but rather a
manifestation of 'performativity'. In examining cyborg sexuality, the "proliferative re-
significations" of cyborg gender, as the production of any coherent gender, is achieved
through an "apparent repetition of the same and produces as its effect the illusion of a
prior and voluntary subject" (Butler, 1991:24). To this end, cyborg gender is not a
performance that a prior subject elects to do but it is "performative" in the sense that it
constitutes as an 'effect' of the very subject it appears to express. In this ongoing
performitivity, as Judith Butler would state, there is no performer prior to the performed.
Rather, there is an ongoing constitution of an appearance or 'illusion' of a subject as its

effect (Butler, 2000:24).

Although for some the condition of ongoing production may lead to the conclusion that cyborg gender is a "deconstructive performativity" and, hence, needs to be constantly produced, the performativity of cyborg gender itself acts as a kinetic site of transgressive 'force' in liberating the female body. In discerning the political implications of cyborg femininity, thus, the question that needs to be addressed is: how does cyborg performativity act as a transgressive force and empower female cyborgs? What are the transgressive implications of cyborg performitivity and how does it liberate the female cyborg being in cyberspace?

In examining cyborg sexuality, the performativity of cyborg transgender acts as a site of transgression whereby 'kineticism' liberates female sexuality by virtue of 'shifting' or 'moving' signs of sexuality beyond the conformist boundaries of sex and gender. As in transgender, the suffix 'trans' refers to:

> moving across, or through, being in a state that is neither here nor there, or
>
> is both here and there, in between, but importantly moving. 'Trans' is about
>
> confusion of boundaries, contagion across boundaries, promiscuity between
>
> states, a loss of specificity in the movement from, to, across, through
>
> (Grace, 2000:129).

To this end, the transsexuality in transgendered cyborg bodies not only embraces Rosi Braidotti's "simultaneous occurrences" of sexual "differences" but the kinetic and concurrent erratic 'movement' and permutation of the diverse sexual orientations in it as well. In this respect, the kinetic motion in endless self-replication of diverse sexual

states in the transgendering of cyborgs render a sexual 'liberation'. In the metastatic

mode of self-reproduction, this 'liberated state' to produce more of the 'same' not only

features a liberation of sexual 'signification' from any 'point of reference' but a liberation

from sexual "otherness" as well. To this end, it is important to note how the kinetic

production of cyborg sexual 'signs' is no longer a site of "otherness" or "alterity" but

rather a setting of 'orbital circulation' of diverse sexual orientations. In cyborg

transsexuality, this kinetic phenomenon of 'orbital circulation' inheres a 'free' and 'non-

linear floatation' of diversified signs of sex that renders the cyborg subject in a state of

"ecstasy". In the kineticism of experiencing a 'free-floating' sexuality and dissolving

difference as 'alterity', "ecstasy", as Victoria Grace states, is a "dazzled state of

suspension in a fully positivised, virtual world where communication is about the

encounter with the sign, as sign; in fact, hardly an encounter, more a dissolution into a

mutual state of positivity, connectivity, seamless interaction" (Grace, 2000:137) that

transcends and moves beyond boundaries of dichotomized gender and emancipates the

female being in technological culture.

Tracing the Myths and Realities of Feminine Emancipation in the History of Technology - Writing Cyberfeminist Theory in Postmodernity

As I have noted earlier, the dissolution of binary poles in cyborg sexuality is

enforced by the structural condition of kineticism and deconstructive 'reading' of cyborg

bodies in technological culture. However, is the computer technology, the apparatus of

producing the cyborg bodies, a feminist or patriarchal device? If the former, how far is it

valid to be addressed in cyberfeminism? Although the apparent assertion is that the

architect of cybernetics in capitalism is man, Sadie Plant's alternative history of technology *Zeros + Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture*, a recent literature in cyberfeminism, runs contrary to the claim that computing emerged from masculine desire of control in the patriarchal social structure.

The first half of Plant's title "Zeros and Ones" refers to computer codes and reduction of all digital processes to a series of ones and zeros - on and off switches, the overs and unders of the warp threads of "weaving" and the encoding in the Jacquard looms that are the predecessors of computers. To this end, Plant's text is a hypertext in a medium of paper that postulates that the reader would be able to construct the critical intellectual linkages about the phallocentrism of western philosophy, thought, science and language. Subsequently the reader is not led to the "One" that is masculine - the unitary male sexual organ and the precedence of male desire. Everything else is nothing to be seen but a "Zero', a hole. The author, hence, points to a future where, within the zeros and ones of cyberspace, the dichotomies between life/machine and male/female may break down.

In the science fiction, Ada Lovelace, a Victorian teenage girl in William Gibson and Bruce Strerling's science fiction *The Difference Engine*, is the host of Sadie Plants's exploration. In her exploration, Lovelace manifests an intense preoccupation with the Analytical Engine and the Jacquard loom. Adept at "abstract weaving", the Analytical Engine not only added up and performed synthetic operations but constituted the intimate and effective connexion between every mathematical entity in the theoretical and practical realm of mathematics. It "wove" Algebraic patterns just as the Jacquard loom

weaved flower and leaves. It was this discovery of "weaving" in Ada Lovelace that

stimulated the convergence of nature and intelligence, and led her towards the

subsequent development of computer software and technology.

When Sadie Plant discovers that it was Ada Lovelace who had invented the first

computer technology, it leads her to apply to the history of computing a correlation of

feminine 'weaving' - one of the most denigrated and neglected female practices of the

private sphere. For Sadie Plant, 'weaving' was the most basic kind of technology

innovated by women, and a travel to 19th century Europe brings about an encounter with

the nameless women who laid the foundation of modern technology of 'weaving'.

Although it may be argued that men engage in weaving as well, the patriarchal

oppression of women, circumscription of female education in patriarchal societies and

confinement of women in the domestic sphere leads Plant to strongly assert the dominant

relationship of women with 'weaving', a practice of the private sphere. This concept of

feminine innovation of technology of 'weaving' is an analog to Freudian conception. As

Freud suggests in his *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*,

> ....women have made few contributions to the discoveries and inventions
>
> in the history of civilization; there is, however, one technique which they
>
> may have invented - that of plaiting and weaving (Plant, 1998:56).

For Sadie Plant, the loom is a fatal innovation which weaves its way from

squared paper to the data net. The derivation is that the locus of female identity is

intrinsically present in the Web of 'weaving'. For Plant, the matrix of cyberspace that

evolves from an abstract web of networking is, hence," the place of woman's

affirmation". However, Plant's conceptualization of women as subjects of "mimesis" in

the act of 'weaving' is disagreeable. Although Plant evokes the possibility of 'simulation'

for women, her conception of "mimesis" negates the liberatory potential of simulating

females in cyberfeminism. On one hand, Plant states that "....women, is both the

appearance and the possibility of simulation" (Plant, 1998:58). On another side, Plant

reinforces a mimetic nature and patriarchal subjugation of females by stating,

> Woman cannot *be* anything, but she can imitate anything valued by man:
>
> intelligence, autonomy, beauty..... Indeed, if women is anything, she is the
>
> very possibility of mimesis, the one who weaves her own disguises (Plant, 1998:58).

Here, Plant not only confuses the 'productive' nature of simulation with the 'imitative'

character of "mimesis" but reinforces the patriarchal subjugation of women in

cyberfeminism. Although the Freudian concept of mimicking nature may allocate an

affirmative experience of the female self, [11] mimesis of a 'patriarchal vision' and

"disguise" of women negates female emancipation. To this end, the emergence of female

experience in an enclosure of patriarchal subjugation is no less than suppressing the

women in the private sphere. The result is the fabrication of a 'myth' of a blur of the

private / public divide wherein the 'loom' emancipates the female in the private sphere -

an attempt to curb gender destabilization in a phallocentric structure of society.

Sadie Plant's theoretical understanding of women in digital culture is an innovative

step in conceptualizing cyberfeminism. The significance of Plant's cyberfeminist views

resides in elucidating the impact of new technologies of computers on female

subjectivity. In this regard, Plant's emphasis on "alliance" or "connection" between

women and technology has engendered a paradigm shift in feminism and has paved path towards the emergence of cyberfeminist theory.

However Sadie Plant, as I have noted earlier, has left many contradictions in her conception of cyberfeminism. She has not only reinforced a patriarchal subjugation of females in cybernetic culture, thereby contradicting her feminist assertion of emancipating women in cyberspace, but disregarded how the 'matrix' of the Web may act as a 'site' of simulation and liberation for female subjects. How does simulation procure lived experience and emancipation for disembodied subjects on the Web? One may question the validity of 'subjectivity' as the simulated nature of femininity in cyberspace is neither a lived experience of the present nor a reflection of a lived past. In this regard, the subjectivity of cyberfemales may be contested as she lives in 'simulation', and not a 'lived experience'. If subjectivity of cyberfemales neither draws upon a memory of the past nor cognition of present, then, is she a simulated female being undergoing lived experience of a 'prosthetic memory' of future? What is the mode of existence for simulated beings of 'prosthetic memory' on the Web? These are some the conceptions that need to be further addressed in cyberfeminist theory of technological culture and will be addressed in the next chapter. It is the appropriation of the theoretical understanding of these addressed conceptualizations that will substantiate cyberfeminism as a feminist theory and emancipate the female being from her misconceived form of patriarchal subjugation in human society.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I offered my theoretical postulation of kineticism in cyborg sexuality and innovative concepts that are pivotal to the formulation of cyberfeminist theory. A feminist critique of cyberfeminism reveals a potential to liberate female beings in technological culture. While theorists such as Donna Haraway and Sadie Plant offer emancipatory implications of women and technology in cybernetic culture, there have been many unexplored areas and contradictory postulations of the theorists which mark shortcomings of cyberfeminist literature as well. Although the vision of the cyborg embodies Donna Haraway's call for 'multiplicity', however, her disregard of gender markers has negated sexual 'differences' and 'pluralistic subjectivity' of cyborgs as I have manifested in this chapter. Sadie Plant's fictitious account of women devising digital technology may offer implications of liberating the female being but her speculation of female identity as 'mimetic' contradictorily reinforces patriarchal subjugation in techno-culture. Such feminist thoughts arising out of mere speculation and deletion of the feminine appears to pay more regard to an anti-feminist ideology and subjectivity.

In this chapter, hence, I have offered a major theorization in conceptualizing female cyborg subjectivity, the morphological structure of sexual 'differences' in the cyborg, transgressive force in cyborg performativity and the further need to address 'prosthetic memory' in examining the cyborg subject. To develop cyberfeminism as a feminist theory, hence, I would like to posit cyberfeminism as having a new and prior commitment to subjectivities, if not identities. In the words of Michael Foucault, "the purpose of history, guided by genealogy, is not to discover the roots of our identity, but to

commit itself to its dissipation". Hence, the 'way must be tried' and we should accept what stands out to be more preferable in the world of humanity.

Notes

[1] Cyberfeminism is referred to as a "hybrid social criticism that embraces technology as a means of inventing new modes of representing the feminine and thereby resisting what male-dominated culture would depict as necessary t o be feminine." (Vitanza, 1999:356)

[2] The methodology of feminist poststructuralism (a combination of post-Saussurean lingusitics, Marxism, psychoanalysis, feminism, works of Barthes and Foucault) is a mode of knowledge production which employs post-structuralist theories of language, subjectivity and social processes to understand existing power relations and identify areas of strategy for change. In post-structural methodology, each theoretical conceptualization is employed as a method to analyze experiences themselves. A post-structuralist approach to experience assumes that 'experience' has no embedded essential meaning. Rather, the essence lies in the 'plurality' in constructing subjectivities. (Gavey, 1989:460-465).

[3] From Barthes' *Camera Lucida* in Richard Hawkin's "Porn versus Erotic Art, Barthes' Jewels, Hide-and-Seek, Playing Doctor", 13 October 2002 <http://www.rufusrufus.com/ty/porn.html> (17 October 2002)

[4] According to the kinetics of art, the theory of de- focalisation posits that the divergence from precise motif creates mobility in art. To this extent, the immobile nudes in classical and modern art exemplify 'mobility' in the sense that it represent 'diverse' forms and order of the universal law. The indefiniteness inherent in this diversity draws infinity in space, a mobile dimension in art. "Kinetographien".
< http://amor.rz.hu-berlin.de/~h2863i74/concept.html>

[55] The lyrics/verse are the first few lines of a song by the late 70s synth band Ultravox. The song is called "My Sex"and it was written by the band's lead singer John Foxx. From Richard Hawkin's "Porn versus Erotic Art, Barthes' Jewels, Hide-and-Seek, Playing Doctor", <http://www.rufusrufus.com/ty/porn.html> (17 October 2002)

[6] As Williams states, "fantasies are not, as is sometimes thought, wish-fulfilling linear narratives of mastery and control leading to the closure and attainment of desire. They are marked, rather, by the prolongation of desire" and, hence, acts as a "setting for desire" (Williams, 1995:153).

[7] Bela Chatterjee, "This is Not Kate Moss" - An Exploration into the Viewing of Cyberpornography", *14th Bileta Conference: "Cyberspace 1999: Crime, Criminal Justice and the Internet"*, York, England, March 1999 <http://www.bileta.ac.uk/99papers/chatteje.html> (17 October 2002)

[8] As Teresa de Lauretis notes in *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction*, gender is a "representation" and social "construction". To this end, the "construction of gender goes on today through the various technologies of gender (e.g. , cinema) and institutional discourses (e.g., theory) with power to control the field of social meaning and thus produce, promote, and "implant" representations of gender" (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 17. Drawing upon Lauretis' postulate, it is significant to observe how cyborg gender is socially constructed by technologies of machinery as well. In my view on cyborgs, hence, I conceive the machine parts in cyborg bodies as a technology of gender or gender structuring practice.

[9] *Gender Media Art* is a multimedia CD-ROM featuring digital art work on gender and transgender and, hence, marks the new range of visions on sexual identity at the turn of the millennium. Presented in 1997-1998, this digital piece exemplifies how biological sex has lost its status as a dominant factor and sexual identity is multiple. *Gender Media Art* was introduced by *Axis, Foundation for Art and Gender*, an organization concentrating on initiating and developing art work that renews concepts of femininity and masculinity in gender. *Axis, Foundation for Art and Gender.* Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences <http://www.axisvm.nl/content/en/indexmain.html> (October 17 2002)

[10] *Brandon* is a one-year digital art project that exhibits sexual "differences" and transsexuality by multi-layers. Designed as a random retrieval of 50 images (144x108 pixel. jpg), this multi-layered digital interface exhibits the shifting images of diverse sexual orientations of a transgendered individual named Brandon / Teena Brandon, thereby reinforcing sexual "differences" by digital technology.

<http://brandon.guggenheim.org/bigdoll/> (In the site, the random retrieval of the digital images of sexual "differences" will initiate by bringing the mouse on the blank screen of the site). Shu Lea Cheang, *Brandon*. June 30 1998. <http://brandon.guggenheim.org/> (October 17 2002).

[11] As Freud states in his lecture on the achievement of "weaving" technology and its origin in feminine mimicry of nature, "Nature herself would seem to have given the model which this achievement imitates by causing the growth at maturity of the pubic hair that conceals the genitals. The step that remained to be taken lay in making the threads adhere to another, while on the body they stick into the skin and are only matted together." For Freud, it is mimicry of 'weaving' inherent in female 'nature' that gives rise to the weaving technology. In other words, it is the female being who has originated the technology of 'weaving' and, hence, the Web of cyberspace as well (Plant, 1998:56).

Chapter 3.

Framing the Disembodied Being of 'Kineticism': Prosthetic Memory and De-Territorialization in Cyberspace

In Chapter 2, I have theorized how the structure of sexual 'differences' and the strategy of simulation in kineticism engenders a pluralistic subjectivity in cyborg representations. However, the validity of 'subjectivity' in disembodied beings on the Net may be questionable as their simulated bodies are neither a lived experience of the present nor a reflection of a lived past. In this regard, the subjectivity of cyberbodies on the Web may be contested as they live in 'simulation', and not a 'lived experience' of the past or present. If the subjectivity of cyberbodies on the Net neither draws upon a memory of the past nor cognition of present, then, do disembodied beings simulate lived experience of a 'prosthetic memory' of future? What is the condition of existence of disembodied cyberbodies in prosthetic memory?

In this chapter, I will theorize how 'prosthetic memory' and 'de-territorialization' act as a kinetic condition and mode of existence for disembodied beings in cyberspace. Although the absence of the body during online interaction may negate the presence of gender markers, a literature review of online communication reveals "gender swapping" and enactment of "virtual sex". This act of gender swapping and virtual sex not only affirms the presence of gender but asserts the fluidity and, hence, the kinetic attribute of motion in shifting 'virtual gender' and sexual 'positions' of the body in cyberspace. The first half of this chapter will demonstrate how 'prosthetic memory' acts as a kinetic condition in configuring virtual bodies and gender in cyberspace. A focus on the 'fluid

gender' of cyberbodies exhibits a proliferation of a 'third gender' of disembodied sexual beings in cyberspace. Although the inherent politics of 'imagination' may manifest a 'myth' of gender fluidity and sexual emancipation, the 'image' of the perceptual existence of virtual gender and sex justifies its reality as well. The chapter will further examine the fugitive character of disembodied positions of sexuality that strengthen the constant change and motion of sexual 'positions', thus affirming kineticism of the dislocated human being 'traveling' in cyberspace.

In the context of examining the changing sexual 'positions' and 'traveling' of the dislocated human being in cyberspace, the second part of this chapter postulates the disembodied cyberbody as a spatial configuration of 'de-territorialization'. Here, I will postulate how the kinetic cyberbody unfolds as a 'site' of blurring boundaries of corporeality and, hence, a de-territorialized place. To this end, the human body is no longer defined as a "fixed membrane" of corporeality in cyberspace. Rather, the human being is transfigured into a de-territorialized embodiment of 'kineticism' whereby the body is defined by its 'motion' of shifting locations. This topographical study of kinetic motion and cartography in the 'prosthetic memories' of cyberbodies will not only manifest the kinetic condition of existence of cyberbodies from a futuristic point of view but re-conceptualize Newton's Law of Motion in technological culture as well.

Prosthetic Memory and Posterior-View Mirrorism - The Subjectivity of Cyberbodies in Technological Culture

'Prosthetic memories', as Allison Landberg defines, are memories that do not come from a person's lived experience. Rather, they are implanted memories of a simulated

future (Landberg, 1998:171). In general, we rely on our memories to validate our experiences. The experience of memory becomes the index of experience itself. It confirms that we must have had or possess the experience that the memory represents. But what if we had a futuristic memory prior to lived experience as the Pre-Crime police officer John Anderton in Steven Speilberg's *Minority Report* (2002)?

Anderton (Tom Cruise) is the head of a Pre-Crime division that prognosticates criminal acts to be taken place in future by means of cybernetic technologies. Utilizing premonitions of three psychics known as 'Pre-Cogs', the Pre-Crime police agency not only predicts who will be committing a murder but pre-visualizes where and when the murder will be taking place, and thereby arrests murderers before they commit their crimes. In this act of pre-determining futuristic criminal acts, however, John finds himself convicted of a murder that he did not commit. This begins to problematize John's identity and destiny.

A memory prior to a lived experience, the reminiscence of a future crime appears to invert the relationship between memory, experience and identity of John. As opposed to a lived experience that determines memory, the 'prosthetic memory' of John Anderton predetermines an undesired criminal experience prior to his choice, thus questioning his 'identity' as a police agent. As a senior man says to John, "You don't choose the things you believe in, they choose you!" Hence, when John is predetermined to commit a crime that he has not committed in his lived experience, he goes on the run to unravel the truth and seeks possibilities to save himself from the crime. However, as Gordon Fletcher (Neal McDonough), John's partner in the Pre-Crime division states earlier, "the fact that

it [the criminal act] is being prevented from happening doesn't mean it will not happen".

Nevertheless, Agatha, a Pre-Cog of the police division also tells John, "You can change

the future - you have a choice". In this respect, Agatha's reiterated question in the film

"Can you see?" and her assertion that pre-determinations "give us hope for existence" not

only envisions future from the 'past' but offers alternative choices of diversified

temporalities and spatial locations.

Therefore, even if the future phenomenon may not be altered, the prosthetic memory

of futuristic acts allocates experience prior to 'lived' experience. To this end, the

participant may choose and regulate his / her 'own' actions alternatively beforehand and

deviate from the inevitable futuristic events. As observed in *Minority Report*, John

Anderton begins to 'proceed' and seek alternative possibilities to save himself from the

crime he is convicted in future. In delineating this future from past, hence, prosthetic

memory is observed not to be a means for 'closure' - a strategy for closing or finishing the

past. Rather, the memory unfolds temporality and spatiality as an open-ended force, a

kinetic 'energy' which "propels us not backwards but forwards" (Landberg, 1998:176).

In envisioning the future from the 'past', hence, "prosthetic memory" implies an open-

ended temporality from a 'posterior-view' of time. Although Marshall McLuhan

presumes the 'rear-view mirrorism' in mediated experiences, his conception does not

address prosthetic memory of subjectivity as simulated in futuristic acts. According to

McLuhan's conception of rear-view mirrorism, media consumers tend to "look at the

present through the spectacle of the preceding age (McLuhan, 1987:243). To this end,

Nigel Clark claims that in new media,

each of the cycles or phases of digitality first looks to the anterior phase of

mediated effects in order to ground its present signifying capacities. Which is

to say, we begin each of our 'advances' into the cybernetic realm with a rear-vision

mirror firmly affixed to the console screen, moving into an indeterminate future

with a sort of ongoing recursive gaze (Clark, 1998:115).

But what if digital technologies in new media simulate the human body as a

'prosthetic memory' of future visions? As revealed in *Ghost in the Shell*, *Blade Runner*,

The Matrix and *Minority Report*, cybernetic technologies embody the human beings

beyond biological life of the present time and simulate cyberbodies from the future.

Prior to a 'lived experience, and, hence, a disembodied being, simulating cyberbodies

and their action from the 'future' is manifested from a 'posterior phase' of digitality, and not an

'anterior view'. In contrast to Clark's conception of looking towards an 'anterior phase'

and advancing with a 'rear vision' in digital media, I would argue that 'prosthetic memory'

is employed from a posterior phase of digitality which constructs the 'future' experience

of cybersubjectivity. The futuristic vision of prosthetic memory, hence, seems to map the

location of subjectivity not as a 'rear view', but as a 'posterior phase' of future viewpoint

or 'point of view'.

In conceiving prosthetic memory, it may be argued that it is not only the 'point of

view' but the 'point of being' of a posterior phase that locates the subjectivity of the

cybernetic body. As Derrick De Kerchove would assert, "a proprioceptive appreciation

of any reality involves the whole body and all the senses" (Kerkchove, 1995:187). To

this end, one's sensory extension in an electronic reality is "neither mere representation

nor pure vision of it". Rather, the sensory sensation of being somewhere is a tactile experience, and not just visual, whereby presence of the whole of body and its physical sensation affirms its "point of being" (Kerkchove, 1995:178). From this perspective, the 'point of being' of the posterior phase in prosthetic memory is not just a "perspective vision that frames reality", but rather a physical sensation of being. The totality of all sensory extensions involved in engendering the simulated body in prosthetic memory, hence, itself becomes a tactile and physical sensation of 'being', and not just a view. It is this 'point of being' of sensory extension in a posterior phase of prosthetic memory that simulates and situates the subjectivity of cyberbodies.

The significance of appropriating prosthetic memory resides in the way cyberbodies may appropriate an experience of the future and simulate alternative identities of 'emancipation'. It may be argued that 'experience' in prosthetic memory pretends to possess what one does not hold in possession and, hence, engenders an 'asymmetry' of experience between prosthetic memory and present identities. Nevertheless, prosthetic memory not only validates a lived experience of 'future' by simulating and performing alternative identities of a utopia but also validates a death of 'real' experience. [1] It is the death of the 'real' and the dissolution of one fixed reality that unfolds cyberspace as an emancipatory site of producing multiple subjectivities. In cyberfeminist simulation, it is the appropriation of this logic of 'prosthetic memory' that not only exemplifies the presence of multiple subjectivities in the utopian conception of virtual genders but exhibits cyberspace as a site for simulating the pluralistic subjectivity of sexual 'differences' as well, thus acting as a site of subverting patriarchal subjugation.

The Role of Imagination and Image in 'Prosthetic Memory': Tracing the Myth and Reality of Virtual Gender and Sex in Disembodied Beings

In the preceding section, I have shown how the utopian vision of future in 'prosthetic memory' of cybernetic bodies is constructed from the standpoint of a posterior phase of digitality. This vision is an ongoing recursive gaze that contributes to a destablization of a stable sense of reality or a 'subjugation of the real'. To this end, the dichotomy of the 'real' and the 'simulacrum' dissolves in cybernetic simulation - a death of the 'real experience' and a reality in itself. It is this death of real experience that enables the simulation of virtual gender in cyberspace, the prosthetic memory of which retains and revives its performance in cyberspace.

In short, it may be stated that it is the appropriation of 'prosthetic memory' of a future that retains and revives virtual gender in the Web as a simulating 'place' or site' in cyberspace. But *how* does prosthetic memory configure virtual gender in cyberspace? What is the 'mode' by which prosthetic memory 'retains' and 'revives' the virtual gender?

A focus on the fluid gender of cyberbodies exhibits the proliferation of a 'third gender' of disembodied sexual beings in cyberspace - a gender of kineticism that is 'fluid' and 'fleeting' in nature. Although the absence of the body during online interaction may negate the presence of gender markers, a literature review of online communication reveals "gender-swapping" and enactment of "virtual sex". As Sherry Turkle, Amy Bruckman, Robin Hamman, and many other researchers have shown, gender swapping and virtual sex are proliferating on the Internet. As Amy Bruckman states, "In text-based virtual reality environments on the Internet called MUDs, it is possible to pretend to be

the opposite gender". [2] In this respect, she refers to a case study in which a man named Peter has been swapping gender and playing a female character named SusieQ for the past seven months. In an interview with Peter, Bruckman discovers that playing a female character has helped him to get in touch with the female side of himself as well as reflect on the gender identity of masculinity. In her review of gender on the Internet, Sherry Turkle shares her experience of gender swapping as well whereby her character of being a male offered her "freedom" from the pursuits of the opposite sex. [3] As Shehla Korff reflects, Turkle further establishes that while in online chat rooms there are four real life men to every one real life woman, in MUDs, there are three male characters to every one female character. This suggests that more men are gender swapping than women. [4]

In her study, Turkle further addresses the "fake-lesbian syndrome" which justifies why men adopt fake lesbian personae to have virtual sex with women. [5] Virtual sex is a "computer mediated sexual interaction between the VR presence of two human beings". Currently, teledildonics is a growing virtual reality application which allows users to interactively have sex with other users who may be located across large distances. [6] In his survey and research on virtual sex, Robin Hamman asserts that cybersex in online chat rooms is defined here as having two forms i.e. 1) computer mediated interactive masturbation in real time and, 2) computer mediated telling of interactive sexual stories (in real time) with the intent of arousal. According to Hamman, both of these forms of cybersex are found on America Online and half of the chat rooms in AOL, i.e., 367 / 782 (in the survey) are oriented to virtual sex. [7] Based on a study of cybersex of a female associate named Rebecca and a divorced woman named Alison, Hamman asserts that

virtual sex not only procures "pleasure" but affirms "multiple selves" and "freedom to experiment" as well.

From the above account, the rise of 'gender-swapping' and 'virtual sex' on the Internet not only affirms the presence of gender in disembodied beings of cyberspace but demonstrates the kinetic attribute of 'motion' and 'fluidity' of 'virtual gender' and sexual 'positions' of the cyberbody. In this condition of kineticism, the question that arises now is: how is it possible for prosthetic memory to 'retain' and 'revive' a gender that is ever 'fleeting' and 'moving'?

In the prosthetic memory of virtual gender, it may be argued that the politics of 'imagination' may manifest a myth of gender fluidity and emancipation in cyberspace. In this regard, the antithesis of utopia and heterotopia may exemplify the myth of 'transcendence' in the imagination of kineticism in 'prosthetic memory'. For many women, the non-physical space of online communication may appear as a 'utopia' to materialize transcendent ideals of feminine emancipation and equality. Nonetheless, any utopian place is a "hierarchical ensemble of places". One's anticipation of depleting the organic body and establishing a homogeneous space of bodiless entities is, hence, both convincing and invalid. Utopias, as Michael Foucault defines, are "sites with no place" (Foucault, 1998:239). It is a "placeless place" where undesirable realities are absent and form the foundation of the 'ideal'. Nevertheless, any utopic site co-exists with its counter-site, the site that originates the non - existing utopic site and itself exists in reality at the same time. This counter- site, also, referred by Foucault as "heterotopia", is a paradoxical phenomenon of co-existence of the real and unreal that delineates a "state

of crisis" embedded in the structure of imagination (Foucault, 1998:240). In cyberspace, the 'heterotopia' of spatialized feminism inheres a contradictory reality of both ideal imagination of emancipation as well as the material restriction of the body to transgress the computer screen. Perhaps, it is this "state of crisis" of being materially restricted that reinforces the desire to travel to an ideal realm of utopia and equality. However, disregarding the material restraint of the body in imagination may reinforces a subjugated position of human bodies. It is this subjugated position of bodies that may reflect the politics of imagination and, hence, a myth of emancipation in the fluidity of virtual gender in prosthetic memory.

Furthermore, the 'imagination' of a virtual gender across space and time on the Net leaves no trace of physical markers of sex in its course of interaction. Instead, the politics of imagination appear to affirm a myth of the existence of virtual gender and sexuality. Yet, memories of 'visits' to these disembodied spots of sexuality, and its subsequent theorization, calls for an examination of the role that the 'image' plays in sustaining the perpetual memory and reality of virtual gender and sex in cyberbodies.

Although the politics of imagination may manifest the myth of conceiving virtual gender in prosthetic memory, I would argue that it is the 'image' of a perceptual existence that justifies the 'reality' of virtual gender. "Image, imagination and memory", as Christine Boyer states, are "intimately linked" (Boyer, 1996:139). In the memorization of an image, the orientation of 'space' and 'time' is the framework and structure of cognition that molds the theoretical image of any body of thought (Boyer, 1996:141). In the utopia of cyberspace, prosthetic memory does not configure virtual gender by

recollecting an image of the past but by recalling its image of the future. To this end, the

bodiless human body in cyberspace does not transfigure into an imperceptible being but a

visual configuration that needs to be re-configured perpetually in imaging future times,

thus strengthening the existence of the cyberbodies. In recalling the image of utopian

gender and sexuality, the act of 'travel' to the destined cyberbody appears to be two-fold.

Here, the traveler not only pays a visit to meet the other body, but on meeting undergoes

a re-visit that recalls and reaffirms its prosthetic image. In commonplace memory inheres

'travel', the embedded 're-visits' of which render a site 'fugitive' and 'arbitrary'. [8]

However, it is the fugitive character of a site that paradoxically stimulates the desire to

"re-visit", the 'image' of which sustains its 'memory'. In prosthetic memory of

cyberspace, the fugitive character of virtual body and gender instigates a 'return' to itself,

be it temporal or permanent. It is the need to re-visit the 'fleeting' attribute of the bodiless

body and its virtual gender on the Net that stimulates the formation and subsequent

revival of its 'image'. It is this process of reviving a hypothetical 'image' of virtual gender

that exemplifies how 'prosthetic memory' paradoxically retains the fugitive attribute of

gender and subjectivity in the kineticism of cyberbodies and sexuality.

The Fugitive Spots of Virtual Gender: Re-Mapping the 'Location' of the Disembodied 'Subject' in Prosthetic Memory of Cyberbodies

As I have mentioned earlier, the vision of prosthetic memory is an ongoing recursive

gaze that brings about a de-stabilization of a stable sense of reality and, hence, a

'subjugation of the real'. To this end, the dichotomy of the real and the simulacrum not

only dissolves in cybernetic simulation but contributes to a deconstruction of the

Cartesian subject, thereby manifesting the cyberbody of prosthetic memory as an 'open-ended' subject. As opposed to the "closed circle" of the Cartesian subject, where the linear trajectory of experience and its subsequent memory manifests coherence, consistence and rationality, and, hence, a closure of space (Kirby, 1996:45), the cyberbody of prosthetic memory delineates an 'open-ended' subjectivity. In this respect, the appropriation of a 'prosthetic memory' destabilizes the 'linearity' of experience and its memory, and unfolds postmodern subjectivity of cyberbodies as an 'open-ended site' of schizophrenia. [9] Unlike the closed space of the Cartesian individual, the simulating cyberbody marks an open-ended subjectivity of non-linearity whereby the subject manifests a 'fragmented' and 'fleeting' state of kinetic existence in 'time' and 'space'. While the 'posterior-view mirrorism' and 'immediacy' in experience fragments 'time', the perpetual dislocations in fantasy and futurism renders a 'fleeting' experience among the now-here-and-there 'spaces', thus manifesting the mobile attribute of kineticism in cyberbodies. It is the perpetual dialectical relation among the 'now-here-and-there' spaces, or "third spaces" in kineticism of cyberspace that leads towards the 'cohabitation' of cybersubjects in their own as well as extraneous spaces.

In short, the 'location' of subjectivity in cyberbodies maybe mapped as a 'cohabitation' of both internal and extraneous spaces. This cohabitation of cybersubjectivity is not only characterized by the kinetic attribute of 'fluidity' but attributes of 'foreigness' and 'traveling' in its locations as well. In this perspective, the "infinite semiosis" of diversified spaces with no reference point of the 'signified' leads towards a Friedrich Jameson's "de-realization" of space (Jameson,1986:62-3) in

cybersubjectivity. As such, kineticism of cybernetic subject is no more located by spatial

boundaries of a fixed reality. Rather, the location of cybernetic subjectivity is manifested

by the kinetic boundaries of 'motion', whereby the subject is capable of 'traveling' beyond

its real space of lived reality and embodying a 'fleeting space' in existence. This fugitive

character of cybersubjectivity is traced during instances of gender-swapping and virtual

sex in chat forums of the Internet whereby sexual identity and its location is shifted

across space and time. In other words, both gender swapping and virtual sex marks the

fugitive character of disembodied spots of sexuality that strengthens the constant change

and traveling of sexual 'positions' in space and, hence, kineticism of the dislocated human

being in cyberspace.

Embodying the Disembodied Subject - 'De-Territorialization' as Embodiment in Kineticism of Cyberbodies

In the context of examining the changing sexual 'positions' and 'traveling' of the

dislocated human being in cyberspace, it may be posited that the human body is no

longer defined as a body of biological cells in cyberspace. Rather, the disembodied

cyberbody is a spatial configuration of 'de-territorialization' whereby the body unfolds as

a kinetic 'site' of blurring boundaries of corporeality and, hence, a de-territorialized place.

To this end, the human being is not a "fixed membrane" of corporeality in cyberspace

anymore. Rather, the human being is transfigured into a de-territorialization of

'kineticism' whereby the body is defined by its 'motion' of shifting locations. To this end,

it is important to note how the dislocations of 'space' and 'time' are central to the

simulation and embodiment of changing gender features and sexual 'positions' in the de-

territorialized bodies of cyberspace. While dis-'placing' one's sexual features during

gender swapping on the Net and re-'positioning' oneself in virtual sex manifests the change of its 'spatial' dimension, the instantaneity of the sexual relocation marks 'temporality', whereby both the spatial and temporal dimension validates the corporeal status of its cyberbody. It is the perpetual spatial and temporal 'shifts' or 'motions' in simulating the cyberbody that manifest 'kineticism' as the structural condition and mode of existence of its de-territorialized embodiment as well.

In the context of cyberspace, the conception of cyberbody as a de-territorialized embodiment of 'kineticism' redefines the concept of the body. As I implied earlier, the body is not an organic matter of nature anymore. Rather the 'body' in cybernetic culture, a de-territorialized site of kineticism, is a 'social construction' engendered by the ongoing intersection of computer technologies and human bodies. This redefinition of the 'body' as a social construction of computer technologies contributes to Anne Balsamo's conception of the body in technological culture. As Balsamo states,

> the body is a social, cultural, and historical production: "production" here means
> both the product and process. As a *product*, it is the material embodiment of ethnic,
> racial, and gender identities, as well as a staged performance of personal identity....
> As a *process*, it is a way of knowing and marking the world, as well as a way of
> knowing and marking a "self." (Balsamo, 1996:3).

In cyberspace, the body appears to be both the "product" and "process" of social construction. While the intersection of computer technologies and human beings render the 'body' as a social "product", the 'intersecting forces' of kinetic energy in technology and human beings mark the "process" of the social construction of the 'body' in cyberspace. As such, the 'body' in cyberspace may be defined as a social construction whereby the ongoing intersection of kinetic forces of computer technologies and human

beings embody cybernetic beings as 'kineticism', the shifting phenomenon of 'space' and 'time.

Tracing Human Corporeality in Cyberbodies: A Re-Theorization of Aristotle and Newton's Law of Motion in 'Space' and 'Time' of Cyberspace

As I have stated, the kineticism of cyberbodies signifies a re-construction of bodies as 'space' and 'time'. However, how far may the cyberbody of space and time be regarded as a human body? In other words, how far is it valid to claim the spatio-temporality of cyberbody as human corporeality? The spatio-temporal dimension of kineticism embodying the cyberbody may lead one to disregard the corporeality of bodies and, hence, disregard the cyberbody as human as well. Nevertheless, in as much corporeality is important in conceiving 'space' and 'time', spatio-temporal contexts are necessary in conceiving corporeal bodies as well whereby 'space' and 'time' are both necessary in affirming the 'perception', 'measurement', and 'representation' of its human corporeality (Grosz, 1999:126). Furthermore, a topographical study of cyberbodies reveals 'location' as its elemental feature of human corporeality. To this extent, it is significant to note how the spatial dimensions of location, such as 'direction' in movement, 'positioning' of the "point of reference" or "point of perspectival access", and 'orientation' as derived from the "perceptual relations" of cyberbodies feature attributes of human corporeality. Although these spatial properties are not mathematical deductions, they confirm Albert Eintein's theory of relativity in scientific philosophy and demonstrate the corporeal existence of cyberbodies. As Einstein asserts, space, time and matter are interrelated and relative whereby the mass of objects is relative to their position in 'space' at certain time. To this extent, the presence of spatial relations in cyberspace determines that there

is mass or corporeality of cyberbodies at a particular time. In Einstein's theory, the object not only possesses mass but energy as well, [10] the force of which manifests the kinetic properties of 'motion'. Hence, it may be stated that space not only determines the 'corporeality' as an element of human beings but kineticism in cyberbodies as a state of existence as well.

While 'space' determines the corporeal dimension of human beings in cyberbodies, 'time' manifests 'immediacy' by virtue of instantaneity in simulation, an attribute of human corporeality as well. A lived experience of 'here-and-nowness', the 'immediacy' of three-dimensional cyberbodies insinuates 'proximity' and 'tactility', thus manifesting the essential properties of human corporeality. A three-dimensional figure, cyberbodies are not only perceived as a 'vision' but more essentially as 'tactility'. In this perspective, the three-dimensional body of cyberspace is by no means beyond the semiotics of tactility. As Derrick De Kherkhove asserts, we generally think of 3-D as 'visual' but the dominant sensation of 3-D is tactile (Kherkchove,1995:43). In this respect, Kherkhove offers an example and states, "When a person takes a stroll in the virtual reality, the whole body is in contact or touched by its surrounding environment just as it would be if one were dipping in the swimming pool." The 3-D of cyberbodies is, thus, "penetration" and "depth", and not just a "perspectivist angle of vision". In cyberbodies, this sense of penetration is an 'integration' which means two-fold. While his first meaning of 'integration' is "making whole or putting things together" by immediacy of instantaneous 'time' in simulation, the second meaning of integration, which is related to the Latin word 'tangere', means to touch (Kherkhove,1995:43). The 'integration' of space in the three-

dimensional configuration of cyberbodies is no exception to the manifestation of 'tactility', thus manifesting an attribute of human corporeality. As such, it may be stated that the spatio-temporal configuration of kinetic cyberbodies is a lived experience of human corporeality, and not a mere 'vision' of future.

Although it may be argued that previous scientific studies of 'space' and 'time' have manifested the corporeality of human bodies, the conception of cybernetic beings have challenged the existing laws in science, thus calling for a re-conceptualization of scientific philosophies in cyberspace. The significance of the conception of the disembodied entity as an embodiment of spatial and temporal shifts of 'kineticism, thus, not only manifests our structure and function in cyberspace but also re-conceptualizes scientific laws of physics in manifesting the existence of body in cybernetic space and time. Although it may be argued that Aristotle and Newton manifested spatial and temporal existence of human bodies, their scientific laws fail to demonstrate the 'spatio-temporal' conception of the cyberbody and, hence, need to be re-conceptualized for a better understanding of cybernetic culture. In the following section, I will be offering a re-conceptualization of both Aristotle and Newton's law of space and time for a better understanding of the cyberbodies of kineticism.

A brief glimpse into Aristotle's law of physics reveals his conception of 'space' as a metaphysical entity. In this respect, Aristotle not only postulates that space is infinite but it is empty and real. While 'emptiness' unfolds the capability of space to contain objects, its state of being 'real' renders space as indestructible and, hence, immobile (Grosz,1999:128). Nevertheless, a glimpse into the spatio-temporal configuration of

cyberbodies establishes dialectic of space and matter as manifested in the movement of kineticism. To this end, the kinetic properties of space in cyberbodies, such as the 'shifts' in location and 'direction' towards immediacy and tactility, delineates the presence of both 'matter' and 'motion' as opposed to the state of emptiness and immobility in space. An antithesis of Aristotelian law, space in cyberbodies is neither empty nor immobile. Rather the spatial framework of cyberbodies is featured by its corporeal 'matter' and 'motion' as manifested in its 'kineticism'.

As Aristotle, Newton's conception of space as an 'empty state' must be revised for a better grasp of corporeality and movement in cybernetic space as well. To this end, both Aristotle and Newton's theory must affirm the property of 'matter' and mobility of space as manifested in the 'kineticism' of cybernetic bodies. Although Newton's laws of motion[11] may affirm the movement of cyberbodies, his representation of temporal relations by a 'straight line' between two points of an event delineates spatial motion and its temporality as 'linear'. However, the 'convergence' of space and time in cyberbodies questions the validity of Newton's law of linear space and time in motion. The question that arises here is: How far is Newton's law of space and time is valid in examining the kineticism of cyberbodies?

A glimpse into the geography of cyberbodies reveals the non-linearity of movement in both space and time. In the praxis of simulation and hyperreality, the loss of distinction among the real and its re-production not only breaches the distinction between physical and virtual bodies on the Net but among spatial boundaries of cyberbodies as well. To this extent, cyberbodies on the Net inheres a "loss of spatial boundaries or

distinctions, so that all spaces begin to look alike and implode into a continuum" (Boyer, 1996: 19). In other words, the divergence among distant bodies on the Net have liquefied in such a way that local and remote locations coalesce and appear as a singular space of interaction.

In the electronic culture of digitalization, the annihilation of spaces of cyberbodies unfolds in 'synchronisation' with participant's own temporal movement of computing. To this end, participants of computer mediated communication are transported to remote places instantaneously. The 'simultaneity' embedded in this loss of spatial and temporal boundaries in the cybernetic city would have lead McLuhan to claim that "time has ceased, 'space' has vanished" (McLuhan,1967:74-5). Although McLuhan did not live to witness the evolution of cyberspace, and hence his concept of virtuality may had been weak, his vivid notion of the "global village" echoes and fortifies postmodern conditions of cyberspace where electronic media render an annihilation of 'space' and 'time', and maps a networked society on a global scale.

In the simulation of cyberbodies, the convergence of 'space' and 'time' appears to insinuate unprecedented socio-cultural implications. While one hand, instantaneous convergence of diversified spaces engenders immediate existence of cyberbodies in dislocated locations, thus replacing its geographical place by 'chronological topographies' of space, the inherent coalescence of 'time' deconstructs linearity of chronology on the other side. To this end, cyberbodies appear to be an attempt to erase the apparent neutrality of the humanist definition of 'linear time'. As such, the shifts and motion of kineticism in cyberbodies may be defined as a crisis in the humanist rationality

developed by Renaissance and Reformation in Europe. In modernity, "time" was observed to be a central aspect of humanist rationality in the sense that it functioned as a kind of neutral medium that linked and mediated other humanist discourses. The seeming neutrality, and not only its linearity, chronology or causality distinguished this conception of time as quintessentially modern. (Ermarth,1998:355-367). In contrast, the conception of cyberbodies appears as an attempt to erase the apparent neutrality of humanist temporality and open space for a variety of temporal experiences.

The deletion of linear time unfolds "time reversal" and the end of history in the conception of cyberbodies. As Jean Baudrillard's explores, the"fatal strategies of time" shape our ways of thinking about history and its imaginary end. In contrast to the Euclidean space of history, where the "shortest path between two points is the straight line" and its linear progress of time brings each historical event towards its "antipodal point", the non-Euclidean space of cyberbodies embraces a "curvature of time that perpetually deflects its trajectory" (Baudrillard,1994:10). From this perspective, the non-linearity of time not only evades the end of chronological occurrences in future but the "end of history" as well. Baudrillard claims,

> Exactly opposite of the end of history, then: *the impossibility of finishing with history*. If history can no longer reach its end, then it is, properly speaking, no longer history. We have lost history and have also, as a result, lost the end of history (Baudrillard,2000:43-44).

Even if there is a social construction of a linear end, it is an illusion. What appears to take place is a trajectory of reverting 'time'. Baudrillard further states that,

> ...this is not even the end of history. We are faced with a paradoxical process of reversal, a reversive effect of modernity which, having reached its speculative limit and extrapolated all its virtual developments, is disintegrating into its simple elements

in a catastrophic process of recurrence and turbulence (Baudrillard,1994:11).

By the retrogression of history to infinity, the hyperbolic curvature of 'time' in cyberbodies not only implies Baudrillard's trajectory that perpetually deflects its path but a 'loop' that maps its annular frame of spatiality in cybernetic culture. In the motion of cyberbodies, this 'loop' of time is not only characterized by its 'parallelism' with space, whereby the 'instantaneity' of temporal and spatial experience liquidates the potential intersection of Euclidean 'space' and 'time', but'infiniteness' that ceaselessly rules out its 'closure'. In this respect, I posit that the annihilation of linear time in cyberbodies substantiates the temporal 'loop' as a spatial experience of 'continuity' and 'perpetuity', a loop that unfolds time as a spatial site of recursivity. In cyberbodies, time does not remain to be a definite classification of moment or period by which a system or entity could be measured or accomplished with certitude. Rather, time has become a 'spatial experience' of non-linearity in cyberbodies. As opposed to being a distinct order of linear progress, time unfolds as a non-linear spatial experience of 'immediacy', whereby the cyberbody of future is simulated as a present 'moment' or 'time' of human 'being'.

In cybernetic culture, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* can be interpreted as a theatrical presentation of the non-linear experience of "space" and "time" in cyberbodies. In this respect, Beckett also argues against "linear time" or "chronological history" and perceives "human beings as trapped in indefinable space and time" (Reid,1993:77-97). In Baudrillard's conception, this "indefinable space and time" seems to inhere the significance of eternity as embedded in his apparent revival of nostalgia and continual state of Becoming. For Baudrillard the bygone object, which is the stimulant of

nostalgia, has one function - that of a signifier. He states, ".....the bygone object is purely mythological in its reference to the past. It no longer has any practical importance, but exists solely in order to signify".[12] Here, what the bygone object signifies is the essence of "time", not real time but its cultural signification. In the postmodern context of dislocated locations, the bygone object "...presents itself as authentic in a system whose rationale is not at all authenticity, but the calculated relations and abstraction of the sign". [13] In other words, the postmodern evolution of non-linear time, deletion of historical end and flight into an infinity of non-existing time is a simulation of a bygone era. What seems to be central to this idea is that we create mental images which relate to an object and simulate a non-existing period with which the object relates.

Myth of Baudrillard's Nostalgia and End of History in Cybernetic Culture

In the cybernetic era of simulation and hyperreality, the ideology of nostalgia inherent in escapism to non-existent times appears to revivify utopia of an idealized past. Nevertheless, "the postmodern revival of earlier styles serves not to bring them back to life but precisely to exaggerate our distance from them" (Lasch, 1984:70). To this extent, coherence to an idealized past not only mystifies the truth of past but creates a delusion of historical continuity. Reinforcing an 'escape' from the historical conditions of present moments, hence, nostalgia offers a greater understanding of the mythic stances of our present civilization.

Needless to say, Baudrillard's conception of the "end of history" and de-historization in nostalgic visions institutes contradictory positions within the postmodern origins of

cybernetic bodies. Although computer mediated communication may create a compression of 'time' and 'space' of cyberbodies, the conceptualization of the "end of history" in the trajectory of non-linear time negates the historical materialism of cybernetic origins. Tracing the postmodern development of technology in Enlightenment and modern capitalism, it may be asserted that it is the historical shift in organizations of capitalistic development, and not erasure of history, that has molded new forms of time-space experience. The advance of technological production and consequent shifts in spatio-temporal experiences are not an unprecedented phenomenon. Rather, convergence of space and time by technology has taken origin since the historical revolution of Renaissance. A brief glimpse into the history of Europe reveals that Renaissance (1350 - 1550 A.D.) and the 18th century Enlightenment saw a radical reconstruction of views of space and time in the Western world. To this end, the technological innovation of new modes of transportation, voyages of discovering remote places in shorter times, design of maps and scientific invention of the chronometer were some of the Enlightenment strategies that represented the conquer and re-organization of "space" through control and acceleration of "time" (Harvey, 1990:242-252).

In the post-Renaissance world, the convergence of 'space' and 'time' has been further subject to the persistent pressure of capitalistic economy, the accumulation and agglomeration of which induced enhanced technological production and "time-space compression". With the rise of modernism in the 19th century, capitalism marked a revolutionary mode of production in which material products as well as signification of 'space' and 'time' accelerated. To this end, the capitalist production of communication

technologies enhanced faster interaction across distant places, thus re-launching the historical "Enlightenment project of universal human emancipation in a global space bound together through mechanisms of communication and social intervention" (Harvey: 1990:270).

Capitalist modes of production sought under 19th century Modernism have not only been re-produced but accelerated in the mid 20th century of postmodernism. In this respect, it is significant to note how the postmodern accretion of commodity production and expedited mode of material consumption not only induce "volatility" and "ephemerality", an effectuation of the pre-conceived notion of time-space compression, but re-embodies the historical materialism of capitalist origins, thus not only negating Baudrillard's "end of history" but Donna Haraway's conception of a "world without genesis".

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced how 'prosthetic memory' acts as a kinetic condition in simulating disembodied sexual beings in cyberspace. In the utopian construction of "gender swapping" and enactment of "virtual sex", the fugitive character of disembodied spots of sexuality in cyberbodies manifests mobility of 'virtual gender' and constant change of sexual 'positions', thus affirming kineticism as an elemental feature in cyberbodies. Kineticism is not only manifested in the perpetual transitions of virtual gender but also in the shifting 'locations' of cybersubjectivity. To this end, cybersubjectivity is rendered as a spatial configuration of 'de-territorialization' whereby the human being is an 'open-ended' subject of motion across 'space' and 'time'. The non-

linearity of 'motion' experienced in the convergence of space and time in the kineticism

of cyberbodies not only embodies the corporeal body of human beings in cyberspace but

re-theorizes Newton's laws of motion as well as Baudrillard's postmodernist conception

of the "end of history". While the spatio-temporal framework of cyberbodies evokes

'non-linearity' in Newton's laws of motions, the historical materialism of space and time

in capitalistic 'origins' of cyberspace traces historical continuity in cyberbodies, thus

re-conceptualizing Donna Haraway's thought of the "world without genesis" and

strengthening the technological 'origin' and 'existence' of cyberbodies and sexuality.

Notes

[1] As Jean Baudrillard states in his conception of the 'real', "In fact it is no longer really real, because no imaginary envelops it anymore. It is a hyperreal, produced from a radiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere. By crossing into a space whose curvature is no longer that of the real, nor that of truth, the era of simulation is inaugurated by a liquidation of all referentials....... It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real, that is to say of an operation of deterring every real process via its operation double, a programmatic, metastable, perfectly descriptive machine that offers all the signs of the real..... Never again will the real have the chance to produce itself - such is the vital function of the model in a system of death...." (Baudrillard, 1995:2).

[2] Amy Bruckman, "Gender Swapping on the Internet", Proc. INET '93.
<http://www.mith2.umd.edu/WomensStudies/Computing/Articles+ResearchPapers/gender-swapping> (October 23 2002)

[3] Shehla Korff, "TinySex and Gender Trouble".
<http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/leonj/409bs99/korff/oral2.html#overall> (October 23 2002)

[4] Shehla Korff, "TinySex and Gender Trouble".
<http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/leonj/409bs99/korff/oral2.html#overall> (October 23 2002)

[5] Shehla Korff, "TinySex and Gender Trouble".
<http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/leonj/409bs99/korff/oral2.html#overall> (October 23 2002)

[6] "Teledildonics The Future of Sex", <http://www.teledildonics.com>

[7] Robin Hamman, "Cyborgasms: Cybersex Amonst Multiple-Selves and Cyborgs in the Narrow- Bandwith Space of America Online Chat Rooms", University of Essex, September 30 1996.
<http://www.socio.demon.co.uk/Cyborgasms.html#FNT11> October 23 2002. Transcript of cybersex in an AOL chat room is further given at <http://www.socio.demon.co.uk/Cybertrans.html>

[8] As Shelley Hornstein affirms, "Not only does travel locate and relocate, it is a medium to dislocate." In this perspective, she further states that it is the "oxymoronic notion of a place that leads us somewhere yet never will" and, hence, suggests a "returning to fugitive places". (Hornstein, 2000: 48-53)

[9] 9. As Kirby reflects, Friedrich Jameson highlights the state of 'schizophrenia' in postmodern subjects. "While nominally a dysfunction of time, schizophrenia equally presents a dysfunction of space: a failure to adhere to an external reality, to arbitrate between the distinction of inside and outside" and, hence, a "fragmented subject" (Kirby, 1996:51).

[10] "Albert Einstein Speaking on E=MC^2" <http://www.aip.org/history/einstein/voice1.htm> (October 23 2002). From the soundtrack of the film *Atomic Physics*, J. Arthur Rank Organization Ltd., Image © Brown Brothers, Sterling, PA, 1948

[11] Newton's Laws of Motion :
 (1) A body continues in a state of rest or uniform motion along a *straight line*, unless it is subject to a force.
 (2) If a force acts on a body, then the body has an acceleration *in the direction of that force*, and the magnitude of the acceleration is directly proportional to the force and inversely proportional to the mass of the body.
 (3) The forces exerted by two bodies on each other are equal in magnitude and *opposite in direction*, along the line joining their positions.

[12] Mark Wooley, "Beyond Simulation: Production and the Nostalgia Industry", Social *Science Paper Publisher* 2 (1999) <http://www.sspp.net/archive/papers/2(1)woolley.htm> (October 23 2002).

[13] Mark Wooley, "Beyond Simulation: Production and the Nostalgia Industry", Social *Science Paper Publisher* 2 (1999) <http://www.sspp.net/archive/papers/2(1)woolley.htm> (October 23 2002).

Chapter 4.

Unveiling the Kinetic Cyberbody: Visibility of Sexual 'Nature' in Cyberspace

We no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn;

we have lived too much to believe this. (Neitzsche,1974:38).

It is evident that the cybersexual body is de-coupled from the nature of anatomical sex. While technological bodies of cyborgs are molded by metallic organs, the disembodied sexual being is characterized by the erogenous zone of the mind, and not biological organs. To this end, it may be inferred that the sexual 'nature' of human bodies in cyberspace is 'denaturalized'. The question that arises here is, hence, does the cyberbody problematize the visibility of sexual nature as an invisibility of nature? Or is it the invisibility of nature that construes the true nature of visibility?

This final chapter will explore and theorize how the kinetic cyberbody produces the invisibility of sexual nature as a 'visibility' of nature itself. In this respect, I will posit how the 'veil' of sexual invisibility acts as a visibility of sexual subjectivity, truth and kineticism in cyberbodies. Although the veil of sexual invisibility may represent an 'illusion' of sexual nature, I will show how the 'illusion' of sex construes true visibility of sexuality itself. Drawing upon Jean Baudrillard's sociological theory of producing the Other as the Same in postmodernism and Sigmund Freud's concept of Intersubjectivity, I will show how the 'veil' paradoxically exposes the illusion of sex as the true visibility of sexual subjectivity and procures its affirmation in the 'auto-erotic self sufficiency' of cyberbodies. The chapter will further demonstrate the function of the cybernetic 'veil' in

effectuating 'sexual desire', deciphering the text of the 'face' of cyberbodies, collapsing

the dichotomy between 'surface' and 'depth' in constructing the 'truth' of its veil and,

finally, the illumination of 'kineticism' in the 'veil' of cyberbodies. Confirming Friedrich

Nietzsche's annihilation of the metaphysics of 'truth' in sociological theory, the chapter

will conclude how real sex does not dwell behind the surface but resides as an 'illusion'

on or as the surface of cyberbodies. It is this surface that affirms that truth is *not* revealed

by unveiling. Rather, it is the 'veil' that illuminates the visibility of truth.

The Nature of the Veil as an 'Illusion' of Nature ? - Comparing the Vision of Nature in Nude Artistry and Denuded Cyberbodies

As I have noted earlier, technological culture embodies human corporeality through

representations of cyborgs and disembodied beings on the Net. Although the

intensification of physicality in cyborgs embraces the sexuality of human beings, it may

be argued that its sexual nature is denaturalized by means of augmentation of hyper-

creativity and deletion of actuality. While metallic laminations tend to embody and

'augment' sexual organs in cyborgs, spatio-temporal embodiments of disembodied beings

on the Net replace biological cells of sexual organs, thus appearing to denaturalize the

sexual nature of cyberbodies. In this perspective, a denudation of cyberbodies appears to

exhibit an illusion and myth of the visibility of nature. The upshot is a fabrication of a

'veil' of female sexual 'nature' in cybernetic bodies that exposes obscurity and illusion of

the human 'nature' of sexuality.

The cybernetic 'veil' as the illusion of nature in sexual representations of
cyberbodies maybe illuminated by a comparative study of the vision of 'biological'
nature in nude artistry and the inorganic form of sexual representations in cybernetic
culture. A brief glance into the art history of the female nude reveals how artists have
affirmed biological nature in their works. Although the male nude has existed in artistic
forms since the 5th century, the female nude has secured a predominant position in visual
arts. The predominance of the female nude over the male, of which Raphael's *Judgment
of Paris* is the first example, increased in the next two hundred years till by the
nineteenth century (Clark,1957:356). This predominance of the female nude over the
male is justified by the analogy of the female anatomy with satisfying geometrical forms
in biological nature. As manifested in nude art, this anatomy of the female nude is
affirmed to evoke elementary notions of "order" and "geometrical forms" (Clark,
1957:357) in the universal law of nature. As Clark expresses,

> One of the few classical canons of proportion of which we can be certain
> is that which, in a female nude, took the same unit of measurement for the
> distance between the breasts, the distance from the lower breast and the navel,
> and again from the navel to the division of the legs. This scheme we shall
> find carefully maintained in all figures of the classical epoch (Clark,1957:20).

From historical times, artists have displayed a 'godlike impulse' to recreate these
universal principles of geometrical proportions and forms (Clark,1957:365). It is this
impetus of 're-creation' that had led to the ascendancy of portraying the denuded female
in art. While the biological body of the female nude "deduces ideal measurements from

nature" (Clark,1957:19), her "anatomy was related to the idea of energy" (Clark, 1957:352) in the nature of biology, thus delineating the biological anatomy of female nudity as a phenomenon of 'naturalism'. [1] A philosophical doctrine, naturalism is not only believed to be manifested in the 'scientific laws of proportion' but 'aesthetic beauty' of the biological nature of the female nude as well. To this end, as Winckelmann has asserted, "whereas the male nude might achieve character, the female nude alone could aspire to natural beauty". Uninfluenced by personal preferences, his theory further affirms that "beauty consists in smoothness and continuity"(Clark,1957:158). It is the desire to evoke this continuity in space that has led towards the affirmation of feminine beauty of 'nature' and, hence, a preponderance of female nude art.

Although the female nude had predominated the history of art, male nude figures had gained a dominant position as well. By virtue of demonstrating the 'law of proportion' and 'symmetrical balance', visual representation of the male nude had procured a significant standing amidst the predominance of female nudity. To this end, the Apollos of the early Greeks, who were passionate of mathematics and "perfect" geometrical forms, were a basis of ideal male nude art. Nevertheless, the male nude had undergone a feminization in artistic forms in subsequent times. In this regard, the four decades between the French Revolution of 1789 and the establishment of the July Monarchy in 1830 witnessed an escalation of supplanting the ideal male nude with its female equivalent, that is, the production of "feminized male bodies" (Solomon-Godeau,1997:43). Unfolded in a homosocial environment and pyschosexual economy of male artists, the production of male counterparts with a sexual difference not only

manifested an androgynous sexual appeal and eroticism but reflected and reinforced the representation of biological 'nature' in femininity. In this androgynous eroticism, the production of sexual difference 'without the woman' involved the process of casting a disembodied feminine presence in the embodied feminized male. Here, exhibitionism of the male nude may affirm the representation of biological nature in nude art but the incorporation of the female as the "muted other" in exhibitionism of the 'feminized male' conveys that the naturalism is an elemental feature of feminine sexuality. In short, it may be asserted that it is 'nature' that has been represented in both female and male nude art, whereby the universal laws of geometrical lines in female sexuality and its aesthetic beauty has been analogized with the concept of 'nature' in biology.

In juxtaposition to representing biological 'nature' in sexual imagery of nude art, technological embodiment of sex in cyborg images and the absence of biological organs in disembodied sexual acts on the Net may not appear to be nature but a 'veil' of nature. With the rise of digital media, cybernetic culture appears to have denaturalized the biological nature of sex and create new forms of human sexuality by embodying inorganic forms of sexual acts such as virtual sex, net porn, and teledildonics. In this respect, the absence of the biological 'nature' in representing inorganic forms of sex in cybernetic embodiments maybe questionable. The question that arises here is, hence: does the cyberbody problematize the visibility of sexual nature as an invisibility of nature? Or is it the invisibility of nature that construes the true nature of visibility?

A view into Nell Tenhaaf's hypermedia project *Neonudism* reveals that although digital media may mystify the biological nature of sex, it unfolds the invisibility of sexual

nature as a true 'nature' of visibility as well. *Neonudism* is an example of a new media project that is "designed to place viewers, or users in electronic parlance, into a conceptual and aesthetic environment in which they experience a "live" on-line sex scene". [2] To this end, *Neonudism* is directed towards the technological mediation of organic experience of biological sex, thereby appearing to denaturalize the nature of biological sex. As Tenhaaf describes,

> To participate in Neonudism, the user first engages with a constructed audio and visual environment whose underlying premise is "artistic teledelegation." This refers to a conceptual, visual and auditory strategy that links a viewer of the work to a denuding or self-revealing experience, which here involves a connection to CUSeeMe live two-way erotic video. Teledelegation is the key to penetrating the cloaking layers that block self-disclosure on the Net. It is a representational strategy based on several layers of surrogacy. The top layer of imagery is the point of identification or entry for the viewer -- a digital video "self-portrait of the artist," or at least, a portrait of a self-involved artistic temperament. This portrait is merged into the next layer of teledelegation, an "eye candy" program of self-generating imagery which portrays the inner workings of the machine as having a quasi-organic and visually pleasurable life of its own. The composite of these two elements responds visually and audibly to the moment of self-disclosure, that is, the feeding in of a CU SeeMe image. This recognition transforms the "amateur porn" participants who are present via CUSeeMe into "art nudes", thus pushing the viewer through the boundary of distinction between experience and art, and between nudity and sexuality.

On the basis of the above description, it is evident that Tenhaaf is attempting to procure virtual sex through "layers of technological mediation in parallel with revealing

personal desires" of human biology. To this end, it may be stated that, unlike the

representation of biological nature of sexuality in nude art, the technological embodiment

of sex in digital art problematizes the visibility of sexual nature as an invisibility or 'veil'

of nature. In this respect, Tenhaaf has stated that the "features of desire on the Net are

apparati that conceal rather than reveal, that clothe rather than denude". However,

Tenaaf shows how her digital media art attempts to portray concealment, and

consequently, denuding as well. In *Neonudism*, Tenaaf exhibits a "biological metaphor"

in her visual art practice whereby the technological representation is linked to "self-

reproduction of subjectivity". In this respect, Tenhaaf wanted to develop an image on

screen of a self-absorbed female character who would be his proxy in self-production. At

the core of Tenhaaf's strategy is the idea of representational surrogacy, or, of

representation as surrogacy whereby the female character would act as his proxy and

"hide" and "reveal" her biological presence as she speaks for her. As a "viewer's

delegate", the *Neonude's* surrogate's presence on screen is claimed to invoke a "biological

metaphor" whereby the image of the 'other' stands for the biological body of the human

being and merges in the machine. For Tenhaaf, biology here implies "involvement with

human drives, it is biology in the sense that Freud perceived as a yet unexplained bridge

between the needs and wants of the body, and those of the psyche." As Tenhaaf

conceives, the premise of *Neonudism* is to divest ourselves of the clothing of elaborate

tools with a view toward disclosing ourselves as fully as possible, thereby attempting to

regain a state of biological "nature".

In *Neonudism*, the surrogacy of biological sex in any sexual re-presentation of

digital media appears to manifest the biological instinct of sexual "drives". However, the

disembodiment of sexual organs and dehydration of body fluid in virtual sex 'veils' the

anatomical sex in biological nature, thus attempting to problematize the visibility of

sexual nature as an invisibility of nature. Nevertheless, it is this invisibility of sexual

nature that construes the true nature of visibility in cyberspace. To this end, the 'illusion'

or 'veil' of biological sex not only becomes the true nature of 'visibility' but the visibility

of 'nature' in cyberbodies as well. In the following section, I will examine and theorize

how the cyberbody produces the invisibility of sexual nature as a 'visibility' of nature

itself. In this respect, I will show how the 'veil' of sexual invisibility not only acts as a

visibility of sexual subjectivity but a 'truth' in cyberspace.

Visibility of Illusion as the True Nature of Visibility - Theorizing the Nature of 'Vision' in the Cybernetic 'Veil'

The invisibility of nature is the true nature of visibility in the postmodern era of

cybernetic culture. To this end, the illusion of nature in cyberbodies is nothing but a

'veil', the visibility of which becomes a 'vision' in itself. Illusion, as Jean Baudrillard

would state, is the "immediate experience one has through the five senses, a

subjective sensibility tainted by feelings without rationalizations".[3] This original

illusion, a visage which is not unreal or more real, is a 'hyperreality' that becomes a

reality in itself. It may be argued that the 'veil' of biological nature may act as the 'Other'

in the illusion - an entity opposing or negating the existence and celebration of nature.

Nonetheless, in the hyperreality of cyberbodies, this 'Other' is not produced as an object

of passion, hatred or love. In the postmodern era of 'multiplicity' and 'fragmentation', the Other is no longer a 'destiny' where its negation of the biological body signifies a fatal end of nature. Rather, the 'Other' is produced as a signifier whereby its 'production', and not its underlying referent of opposing biological nature', gains significance as a proliferating entity itself. To this end, the production of the Other is not an object of opposition but a subject of production and re-reproduction of its 'self':

> "it is no longer a question of killing, of devouring or seducing the Other,
>
> of facing him, of competing with him, of loving or hating the Other. It is first
>
> of all a matter of producing the Other. The Other is no longer an object of
>
> passion but an object of production. [4]

As opposed to being an object of opposition or seduction, the Other as an 'object of production is, hence, characterized by the lack of an absolute and referential "alterite". In the cybernetic veil of nature, 'otherness' as an alterite and its intrinsic dual relationships gradually disappear. The cybernetic 'veil' of nature as the 'Other' is no longer perceived as an illusion, but rather as an object of 'production' and re-production. In cyberspace, the 'veil' of nature is neither present to obscure biological nature nor create 'sexual differences' in a law of nature. Rather, the cybernetic 'veil' of nature witnesses a 'production' and 'proliferation' of inorganic 'signs' of sexual "differences" through digital art and simulation in cyberspace. [5]

In this act of producing and re-producing the inorganic signs of sexual "differences" by means of digital art and simulation of self, the Other is, hence, not meant to be seduced or conquered by an(other) but it is created from inside. In other words, the

Otherness in the cybernetic 'veil' of nature is produced and projected as an "ideal likeness" or re-semblance. In this respect, the projected Other as a resurrection of the 'Same' implies that the "otherness", the strangeness of the Other, has now shifted to the side of the Same.[6] Here, the visibility of the Other as the Same in the cybernetic veil of nature recalls Baudrillard's vision of extrapolating the femininity of men towards women in romantic Eros. As Baudrillard says,

> it is to a certain extent the femininity of men that is projected onto women
>
> and that shape them as ideal figures of likeness [*ressemblance*]. Romantic
>
> love is no longer about winning over a woman's heart, or about seducing her.
>
> It is rather a matter of creating her from inside [*de l'interieur*], of inventing her,
>
> either as a realized utopia (an idealized woman), or as a "femme fatale".....[7]

Projecting the femininity of men onto women in erotic love, the simulated sexual "differences" in the cybernetic veil of nature are not produced as an Other of nature but the 'Same' of its technological production and being. Here, I would postulate that the cybernetic veil as an invisibility of nature is not any illusion but a 'vision' in itself, whereby the 'resemblance' of the Other as the Same unfolds 'transparency' among its sexual 'differences' and, hence, visibility through its 'veil' of nature. It is the fabrication of 'transparency' in the cybernetic veil that replaces the dual 'otherness' [*alterite*] in seduction of opposite sexes by the Same of sexual "differences", thereby leading towards a 'non-differentiation' of the biological and non-biological sexual states.

Although Baudrillard's conception of producing the Other as the Same may affirm the liquidation of otherness in the cybernetic 'veil' of nature, his vision of an asymmetry

in the production of the Other appears to negate the advocacy of feminism in the production of cybersexual "differences".

> Feminism is in fact an example of hystericization of the masculine by women, a hysterical projection of their masculinity which follows exactly the hysterical projection by men of their femininity in the mythical image of a woman. But there still remains a dissymmetry in this forced allocation to difference. And this is why I was saying, in a paradoxical way, that men are more different from women than actually women are from men. This means that, in the context of sexual difference, men are above all different whereas there is some remnant of radical otherness within women, a radical otherness of women which precedes the degraded status of [*masculine*] difference. [8]

Does Baudrillard mean that it is the phallic 'lack' that demonstrates a "remnant of otherness" in women and, hence, a greater difference of men from women? Both women and men may simulate and project the Other sex as their Same in cyberspace and digital art. Nevertheless, Baudrillard's signification of a phallic "lack" as an existing relic of "radical otherness" in women appears to manifest a greater difference of men from women, an anti-feminist view of sexual inequality. However, my conception of the cybernetic 'veil' of nature not only makes me skeptical of Baudrillard's signification of the phallic 'lack' in women but demonstrates the need to re-think his theorization as well. What if I say that the cybernetic 'veil' of nature delineates an extrapolation of the phallus from femininity, a production of the sexual Other as the Same, and not its 'lack'?

The images of penile women in digital art (e.g. Figure 14 and 15 in Appendix) show

how the cybernetic 'veil' of biological nature reflects and reinforces the presence of the

'phallus' in women. It is behind the veil that there lurks the phallus as the "phallus can

play its role only when veiled". [9] In the phallic order, the 'veil' is a symbolic

representation of the 'lack' of the phallus in the feminine manifestation of (hu)man,

whereby the penis is located elsewhere. This dislocation of the penis connotes castration

- a lack of the whole genital. Nevertheless, the inherent affirmation of 'wholeness' in the

cybernetic veil of simulated female sexuality generates a sense of the whole, the phallus.

It is this 'whole' in relation to which the man is lacking, a lack that takes birth in the

Freudian concept of the 'phallic mother'. In other words, the upshot of the affirmation of

the 'whole' is the genesis of the 'phallic mother' that conceives the partial man. The

whole is the pre-Oedipal mother, apparently omnipotent and omniscient, until the

discovery of her castration, the discovery that she is not a 'whole' but a 'hole' (Gallop,

1982:22). To this end, the woman (phallic mother) is to the man what the man is to the

(castrated) woman. In other words, "the whole is to a man as man is to a hole" and

thereby signifies symmetry between sexual difference. The upshot is the projection of

the phallus of masculinity in women as men would project femininity, thus re-affirming

Lacan's vision: "The woman, therefore, becomes the phallus for the man; the man in turn,

"has" the phallus for the woman" (Lacan,1982:83-84).

In the cybernetic 'veil' of nature, the simulation and projection of the dislocated penis

in female beings not only attributes a phallic meaning to femininity, thus exemplifying

the extrapolation of the Other sex of masculinity as the Same in femininity, but

challenges Baudrillard's implication of women's lack of the phallus as a "remnant of radical otherness". To this end, the simulation of cybersex, a 'veil' of nature, not only projects masculinity in female beings, as the male would project femininity, but unfolds a non-differentiation or symmetry among gender relations, thus challenging and re-thinking Baudrillard's implication of the phallic 'lack' as a remnant otherness in women and establishing sexual equality among men and women.

Although cybernetic selves may bring about the supersession of biological reproduction by the technological re-production of signs of sexual "differences", thus casting an invisibility on biological nature, the cybernetic 'veil' of nature is a site of visibility itself. Not only the invisibility of biological nature is a visible signification in itself, but appears to unfold visibility among its multiple signs of sex as well. In this respect, there is a 'resemblance' and, hence, a visibility of 'transparency' between the Other and the self. Just as Baudrillard refers the Other as "an identification and an appropriation of the body as if it was a projection of the self, of a self no longer seen as otherness or destiny", the Other sex is produced as a resemblance of the cybernetic self as well.

However, Baudrillard's conception of the Other as an "object of production" may question the validity of subjectivity of cybersexual bodies. Does the production of the Other sex by simulation render the cyberbody an object or a 'subject'? Although Baudrillard's premise of producing the Other as the Same construes visibility of the Other sex as one's sexual self, the simulation of the Other sex as an "object" of production may re-affirm 'otherness' and, hence, a negation of cybersexual subjectivity. However, Freud's

insight into the phenomenon of intersubjectivity may not only re-think Baudrillard's concept of the Other as a 'subject' but substantiate the visibility of the Other as a sexual self in the cybernetic 'veil' of nature as well.

Although simulating the Other sex as an "object" of production may appear to cast a shadow of Otherness and, hence, generate a myth of sexual subjectivity, Freud's premise of 'identification' and its 'intersubjectivity' reveals the visibility of the subject. Freud's theory of 'identification' exemplifies the permeability of the boundaries of the 'self' and the assimilation of the apparently 'isolated self' that is external to the self in any social act. Proceeding from the inside/outside of the infant body and outside/inside frame of the other/self relations of his seduction theory, Freud highlights the shadow of the isolated self or Other on the ego. For Freud, this Otherness assimilates and identifies with the ego in two ways. First, the self is constituted by the identifications of the other. Second, it is reciprocally constituted in relation to the 'other' in accordance to the other's recognition and, hence, it is non-identical (Benjamin,1998:79). These two views confirm that the ego is not independent and self-constituting but is assembled by the entities it assimilates. As such, the ego cannot withdraw from the 'other' to be an independent outside entity or be secluded from itself as it undergoes an incorporation of the other invariably. In other words, the ego is non-identical and it is always masked by a shadow of the 'Other', a visibility in itself. Nevertheless, the second view also assumes the intersubjective approach of the Other as more than the self's object. This intersubjective view constitutes the 'Other' identical with the self. It is this identification that fosters a correlation between the 'Self' and the 'Other' and, hence, constructs the 'Other' perceptible

or 'visible' to the self as opposed to the invisibility that it may cast.

As opposed to the intra-psychic approach, the intersubjective view not only establishes the correlation of the self and illusion or the assimilated 'Other' but manifests its nature of visibility as the illusive reality in the cybernetic 'veil' of nature. It is this nature of visibility that demystifies the invisibility of nature in the technophiliac erotic vision of cybersexual practices. In other words, I posit that the 'veil' is not only the illusion but a transparent clothe that renders the visibility of sexual features in cyberbodies.

Necessity of the Cybernetic 'Veil' of Nature - Tracing the Visibility of Sexual 'Desire' in Cyberbodies

In the previous section, I have examined how the cybernetic 'veil' of nature is construed as a true nature of visibility in cybersexual practices. To this extent, I have elucidated how the 'veil' of nature in cybersex may be rendered as a visibility of sexual nature itself. However, what is the significance of casting a cybernetic 'veil' of nature when the surface of cybersexual bodies could have been visible with biological organs itself? For instance, the surface of cyberbodies portrayed (Appendix) could have been a mere physiognomy of sexual anatomy in cyberspace. However, the surface of the cybersexual bodies have been molded with technological embodiments, thereby casting a 'veil' on the sexual nature of human bodies. Why is it necessary to cast a cybernetic 'veil' of nature when sexual practices in human bodies can be stimulated by the surface of biological organs itself?

Although the surface is the location of the body's meaning, the (in)visibility of the surface by means of a 'veil' is necessary because the "surface is invisible to the body

itself" (Stewart,1984:127). To this end, the visibility of the surface, an external

appearance that is invisible to oneself, is only possible when it develops a dialectal

relationship with (an)other appearance or 'veil' that may add meanings to the surface it

masks. The 'face', a significant external surface of the body, reveals depth only when

reflected and reinforced by the 'veil' that appears to mask it. The face is that part of the

body that is inaccessible to a subject's own vision. Yet the face is the "most readable

space of the body". This face is 'read' only when a meaning or signification is constituted

and interpreted by means of (an)other. To this extent, as Susan Stewart would state,

> "the face is deep text, a text whose meaning is complicated by change
>
> and by a constant series of alterations between a reader and an author who is
>
> strangely disembodied, neither present nor absent found in neither part nor whole,
>
> but, in fact, *created* by this reading. Because of this convention of interpretation,
>
> it is not surprising that we find that one of the great *topoi* Western literature has
>
> been the notion of the face as book" (Stewart,1984:127).

In cybernetic culture, the face of the cyberbody becomes the 'text' which must be

"read and interpreted" in the course of any interaction. However, the face is"mute"

without the Other's interpretation and, hence, is by and for the 'Other'. The pleasure of

this textual reading resides in the erratic and spontaneous visual extensions, pausing,

conceiving and extending the sensation of Other's 'vision'. It is in this process of

extending visual sensations that the 'Other' enjoys' the freedom of action and control in

the narrative world and gains pleasure by construing the facial 'text'. In cyberspace, this

'desire' to extend visual sensations and secure pleasure of reading the text of one's face is

engendered by the structure of opacity and obscurity in the 'veil' of the Other simulated in the inorganic mold of organic sex. To this end, the cybersexual body is "veiled in an appeal to the gaze of the spectator" and, hence, illuminates the desire to gaze. Here, the function of the 'veil' is to induce the 'desire' to gaze as it is its prohibition that stimulates the act of visualizing the denuded cyberbody. The veil in this instance functions to hide an absence, to conceal the fact that there is nothing to conceal, to maintain a debt, and thus to incite desire (Doane,1989:48). Therefore, although the cybernetic 'veil' of nature prohibits viewing the biological nature of sex, it is its prohibition that induces the 'desire' to see the biological organs of sex where the lack of sight in the 'veil' induces the desire to see.

The 'veil' of nature, hence, induces "contradictory desires" (Doane,1989:48) - the desire to distance it by prohibition and the desire to view a surface closer. It is the given structure of contradictory functions that the 'veil' exhibits both the problematized visibility of nature as well as the true nature of visibility by both encasing and exposing the biological surface of cybersexual bodies. The resultant (in)visibility, hence, not only (dis)closes the nature of visibility but reveals the 'truth' of the visible as well.

In the discourse of metaphysics, the function of the veil is to make truth profound, to ensure that there is a depth lurking behind the surface of things (Doane,1989:54-5). To this end, the 'veil' of nature in both nude and semi-nude cyberbodies seems to make its surface profound. Here, the function of the veil is to metamorphose the physical surface of the cyberbodies into a 'depth' itself. It is this depth that renders the physical surface of the cyberbodies as a text and the veil as a secondary surface that cultivates the reading of

the textual surface. This collapse of the dichotomy between surface and depth not only confirms Friedrich Nietzsche's annihilation of the metaphysics of 'truth' but construction of knowledge in the realm of (dis)simulation. As such, the "real does not lurk behind the surface" (Doane,1989:57) anymore but resides on or as the surface. It is this surface that affirms that 'truth' is not revealed by unveiling. Rather, it is the 'veil' that illuminates the visibility of truth.

(Un)Veiling the Cybernetic 'Veil' of Nature - The Visibility of Kineticism in the Sexual 'Nature' Of Cyberbodies

As I have stated in the foregoing sections, the invisibility of nature construes the true nature of visibility in cybersexual bodies, whereby the illusion or 'veil' of the biological nature of sex is the true vision of sexuality in cyberbodies. To this end, the denaturalization of the cybernetic body not only 'shifts' the human body from biological nature but renders 'shifts' among its "different" signs of sexuality as well, thus affirming how the cyberbody perpetually 'moves' itself away from both anatomical sex as well as sexual signs in technological culture. It may be postulated that the (un)veiling of the cybernetic 'veil' of nature reveals the kineticism in the (de)naturalization of cyberbodies. The perpetual 'movement' from biological and technological configurations of sex not only affirms the inorganic nature of cybersexuality but the embedded feature of 'kineticism' in cyberbodies as well. In other words, the 'veil' of nature in the inorganic form of cybersex reflects and reinforces 'kineticism' as the embedded feature in cybersexuality. But how does the cybernetic 'veil' of nature manifest kinetic energy in cyberbodies? Doesn't the absence of the organic body, and, hence, the absence of its biological energy, in cyberspace de-mobilize the human body? In the 'veil' of biological

energy in nature, how does the cyberbody manifest its kineticism?

Although there is a 'veil' of nature and, hence, an absence of biological energy, the manifestation of 'kineticism' in human bodies of cyberspace may be justified by the theoretical debate of 'nature-nurture prism'. [10] While the 'nature side' of the debate posits that human goals and behavior are molded through the "process of evolution by natural selection", thereby limiting human nature to a singular framework of biological mechanism, the 'nurture side' of the debate postulates that human goals and behavior are "set externally or culturally and that human behavior is highly malleable in response to these goals", thus perpetually disengaging and mobilizing the human body from biological laws of nature. As Ruth Benedict suggested in her highly influential book *Patterns of Culture,* humans are 'flexible' because they had "no essential nature".[11] In the contemporary era of technological culture, this deconstruction of an absolute view of biological nature in the nurture standpoint of the debate strengthens the kineticism in hybrids of machine and human beings in cyberbodies whereby the mechanical parts in sexual organs, a 'veil' of biological nature, generate kinetic force and, hence 'kineticism' in the human bodies of cyberspace.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined how the invisibility of nature not only construes the nature of visibility but affirms a visibility of sexual nature in cyberbodies as well. As revealed from cybersexual practices in digital media such as *Neonudism,* it is evident that the cyberbody is de-coupled from the biological nature of anatomical sex. To this end, it

may be inferred that the sexual nature of human bodies in cyberspace is 'denaturalized'. Nevertheless, I have shown how the invisibility of biological sex is the true nature of visibility in cybersexual bodies itself. Although the veil of sexual invisibility may act as an 'illusion' of sexual nature, I have demonstrated how the illusion of sex not only affirms its true nature of visibility as a postmodern 'truth' but acts as a visibility of its cybersexual nature as well. To this end, the cybernetic 'veil' of nature manifests perpetual 'shifts' from both anatomical and technological signs of sex, thus reflecting and reinforcing 'kineticism' in the sexual embodiment of cyberbodies. It is the 'transcendence' of motion in the 'shifts' of kineticism that not only exemplifies 'liberation' from biological constraints of the corporeal body but signifies the teleological existence of human bodies in the technological culture of cyberspace.

Notes

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[1] Naturalism is a philosophical doctrine which states that "all phenomena are derived from natural causes and can be explained by scientific laws." as deployed in nude artistry. *Naturalists, Naturists and Naturalism* <http://www.auracom.com/~gmilroy/natural.htm> (October 23 2002)

[2] See Nell Tenhaaf, *Neonudism* <http://www.36mc-idea.org.uk/speakers/nt/neonudism.htm> (October 23 2002)

[3] . "Jean Baudrillard" <http://cgi.student.nada.kth.se/cgi-bin/d95-aeh/get/baudrillard> (October 23 2002)

[4] . Jean Baudrillard, "Plastic Surgery of the Other", *Ctheory*. Concordia University, Montreal. November 22 1995 <http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=75> (October 23 2002)

[5] . For a further demonstration on sexual "differences" in cyberbodies , see Chapter 2, "Theorizing Kineticism and Sexual Diversity in Cyberbodies: Embodiment and Sexuality in Cyberspace", pg 43-47.

[6] . Baudrillard, "Plastic Surgery of the Other", <http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=75> (October 23 2002)

[7] Baudrillard, "Plastic Surgery of the Other", <http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=75> (October 23 2002)

[8] . Baudrillard, "Plastic Surgery of the Other", <http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=75> (October 23 2002)

[9] Derived from a note on Lacan in Jacqueline Rose, "Introduction----II", *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, trans. Jacqueline Rose (New York: Norton, 1982), 42. Quoted in Mary Ann Doane, "Veiling Over Desire", *Femme FatalesFeminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 64.

[10] . Kenan Malik, "Flexibility, Plasticity and Agency", Kenan Malik's Lecture on the Meaning of Human Flexibility, March 2002 <http://www.kenanmalik.com/papers/flexibility.htm> (October 23 2002)

[11] . Kenan Malik, "Flexibility, Plasticity and Agency", Kenan Malik's Lecture on the Meaning of Human Flexibility, March 2002 <http://www.kenanmalik.com/papers/flexibility.htm> (October 23 2002)
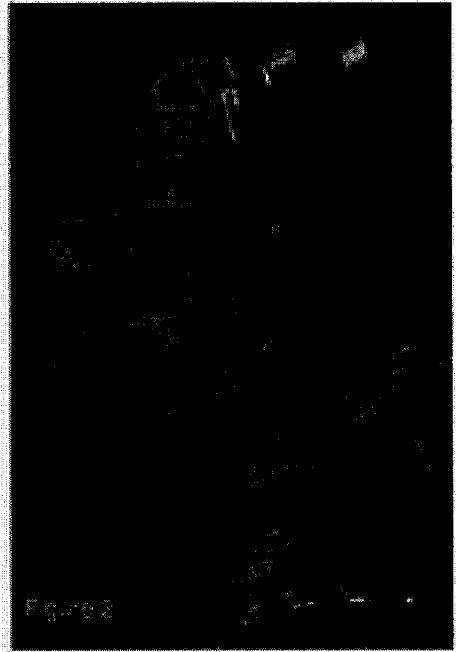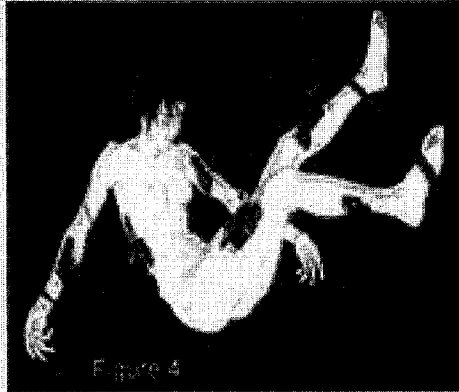
APPENDIX

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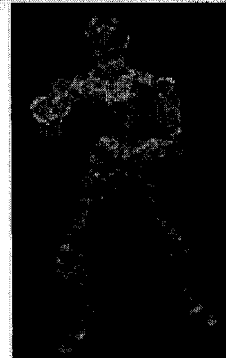

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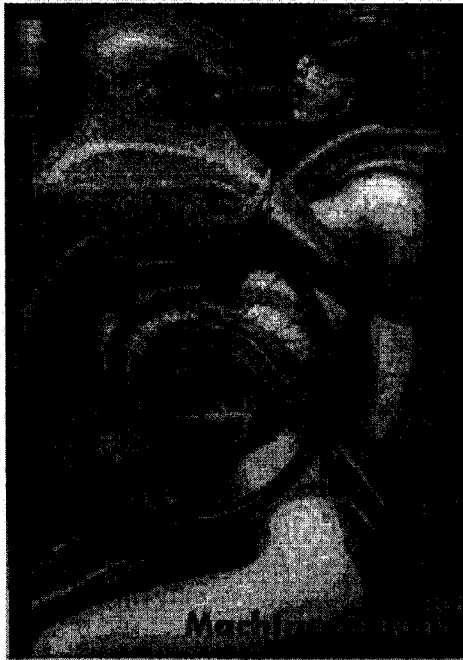
Figure 3.

Figure 4.

Figure 5.

Figure 6.
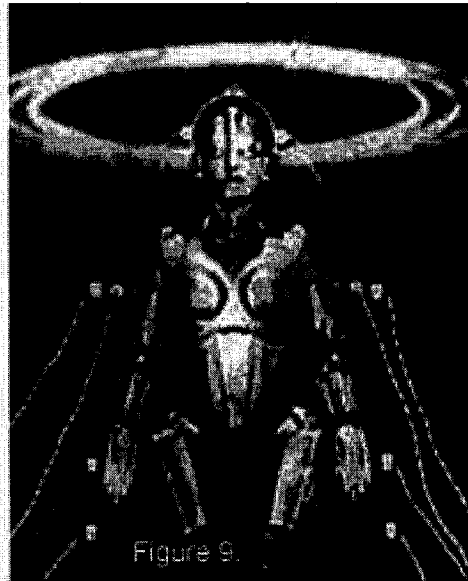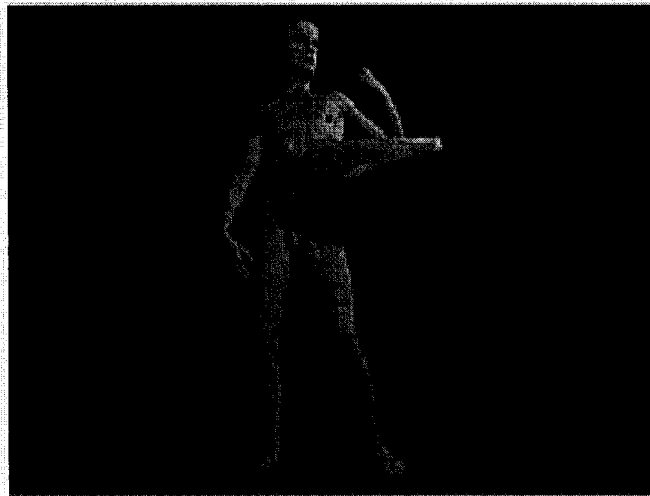

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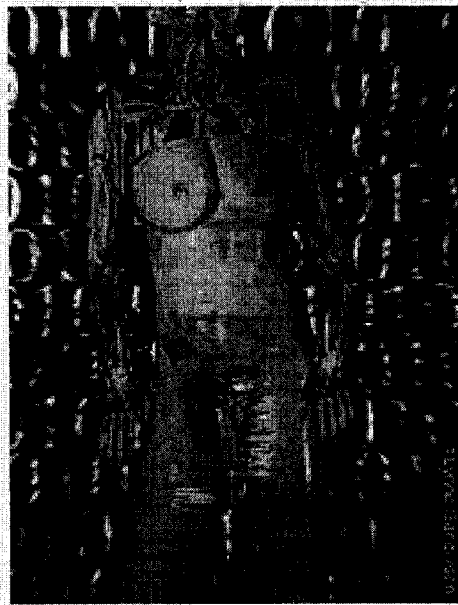Figure 8.

Figure 9.

Figure 10.

Figure 11.

Figure 12.

Figure 13.

Figure 14.

Figure 15.

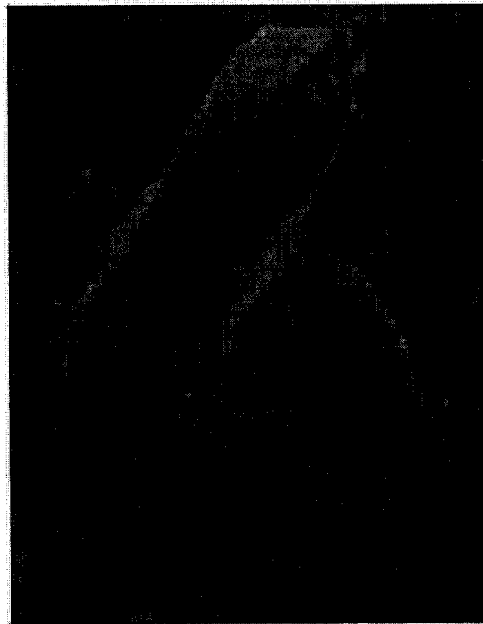Figure 16.
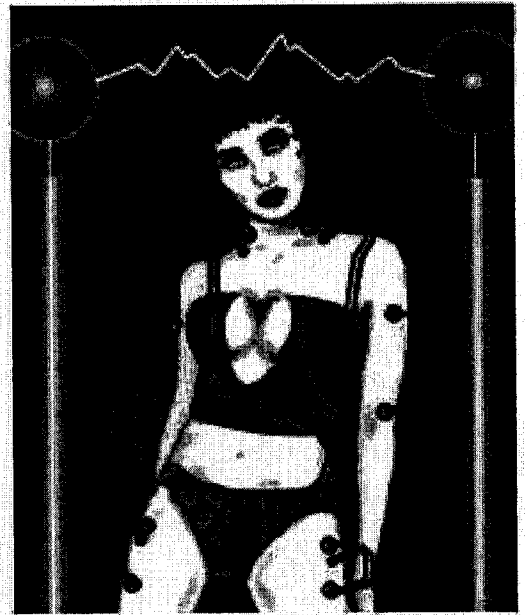

Figure 17.

Figure 18.

Figure 19.

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Figure 4. "Gendered Technoculture" <http://www.tcnj.edu/~jillfink/>

Figure 5. "The UncannyjGExperiments in Cyborg Culture"
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Figure 7. "All About Cyborgs"
<www.digitalhipps.com/english/ cyborg/cyborg00.htm

Figure 8. "Darwinistic Preview – Machine in Man"
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Figure 10. Wyrzykowski, Piotr. "Cyborg's Sex Manual"
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