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Ambivalent Portrayals of Female Cyborgs in Oshii Mamoru's *Ghost in the Shell* and *Innocence*

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What we witness is that Oshii's narrative and patriarchal technology creates the female cyborgs, who simply mirror male heterosexual desire and who are denied agency in their role. Oshii does not imagine any possibility that might destabilize his newly-imagined order, such as a cyborg that might upset heterosexuality. The absence of any female agency or desire in his cyber fantasy questions its subversive potential. Oshii seems to be immune to feminist theories on posthuman existence that conceptualizes subjectivity outside the gender polarities. Oshii describes a society where high technology only reinforces gender polarities. The representations of women's relationship to technology in Oshii's film, therefore, are quite problematic; the transgression of boundaries does not work out to reduce or annihilate domination by patriarchal needs and desires. Despite the fact that Oshii denies his female cyborgs a subject position other than that based exclusively in patriarchal fear and desire, his representations mark an ambivalence inherent in cyborg resistance, and feminist politics need to pay attention to such ambivalence.

Keywords: posthuman, cyborg, doll, psychoanalysis

Introduction

In this paper, the author focuses on two contrary representations of female posthuman bodies—Major Mokoto Kusanagi in *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) and the doll gynoids in *Innocence* (2004)—and speculates how successfully or unsuccessfully Oshii visualizes posthuman female subjectivities. The author then analyzes the ambivalent representations of the female posthuman body within the current discussion on posthuman feminist theory. How does technology define the female body? And how do gender politics shape the female techno-body? An examination of Oshii's female cyborgs and the ways in which his critical narratives' comment on patriarchal technoscience contributes to the ongoing feminist debate of how women interact with technology and how they resist potential appropriation.

Representations of Female Posthuman Bodies in *Innocence*

The genre of feminist science fiction and film has represented the female body within technoscientific relations; it also has explored possible subversive political identities that might develop within those representations. The ambivalent and varied portrayals of female bodies within feminist science fiction films highlight the contradictory effects of technology on women's lives and the continual need to examine their

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inconsistent positions within this debate. Visual examples of these ambivalent representations of the female body as customized by technology are found in Mamoru Oshii's futuristic films, *Ghost in the Shell* and *Innocence*, also known as *Ghost in the Shell 2*. While Oshii is typically not considered a feminist director, his consistent interest in cyborg female bodies and their desires within a technologized future submits questions of potential female posthuman subjectivities.

Mamoru Oshii's films, *Ghost in the Shell* and *Innocence*, the author argues, can be placed within the context of this increasing appreciation of cyberpunk themes. They are particularly powerful in their treatment of both gender and technology, and are thus effective for analyzing how "[t]he process of technological development is socially structured and culturally patterned by various social interests that lie outside the immediate context of technological innovation" (Wajcman, 1991, p. 24). How does technology define the female body? And how do gender politics shape the female techno-body? An examination of Oshii's female cyborgs and the ways in which his critical narratives comment on patriarchal technoscience contributes to the ongoing feminist debate of how women interact with technology and how they resist potential appropriation.

In this paper, the author focuses on two contrary representations of female posthuman bodies—Major Mokoto Kusanagi in *Ghost in the Shell*, and the doll gynoids in *Innocence*—and speculates how successfully or unsuccessfully Oshii visualizes posthuman female subjectivities. The author then analyzes the ambivalent representations of the female posthuman body within the current discussion on posthuman feminist theory.

The plot of *Ghost in the Shell* is as follows: In the year 2029, global barriers have been broken down by the Internet and cybernetics, but this brings new vulnerability to humans in the form of brain hacking. When a highly-wanted hacker known as the Puppet Master gets involved in politics, a group of cybernetically enhanced cops known as Section 9 are called in to investigate and stop him. The pursuit calls into question what is human and what is Puppet Master in a world where the distinction between human and machine is increasingly blurred. Major Motoko Kusanagi, a female cyborg from Section 9, is partnered with Batou, a heavily cyborged police officer. She chases after the Puppet Master and ends up merging with him, ultimately disappearing into the vast sea of the net.

In *Innocence*, Batou is in trouble and Motoko comes back as his "guardian angel". Batou, now partnered with the mostly-human Togusa, is assigned to investigate a series of murders committed by prototype "sexaroids",—female androids created by the cyborg-producing corporation, Locus Solus. Batou and Togusa are tricked into a maze built by Kim, who was once an intelligence agent of the government and now works for Locus Solus. The company is aligned with a Japanese mafia group and has been abducting young girls whose "ghosts" are used for making android dolls more "desirable" for male customers. With the help of Motoko, who now appears as an android doll, Batou ultimately kills the gynoid warriors and rescues one of the victim girls whose holography was retrieved at the place of the Locus Solus shipping inspector. The film ends with Motoko's re-disappearance into the net.

Oshii's *Innocence* seems to offer ambivalent portrayals of the gendered effects of technology. On the one hand, by presenting alternative ideals that disassociate gender identity from biology, technology in Oshii's film destabilizes the female body as based on existing patriarchal notions, thus subverting conventional male-defined subjectivity. On the other hand, his cybernetic engineered life relies heavily on gender differences, especially in relation to heterosexual male desire, which remains the primary paradigm of sexuality throughout the film. Hence,

Oshii's filmic creations of female posthuman existence reveal not only the fixed but also the fluid aspects of technological representations of the gendered body. They remain ambivalent, because they challenge conventional gender categories, and at the same time, place women into a framework of patriarchal heterosexual desire.

Seemingly, the most challenging aspect of *Innocence*'s representation of femininity, especially its technological denaturalization, turns out to be quite conservative. It does not endorse the cyborg feminists' view that the removal of the natural body causes the destabilization of a female identity, and that it leads to potential liberation from naturalized identities and power relations. In other words, it fails to produce a significant change in the fixed notion of women: They still position themselves as fetishized sexual objects within a male-dominated sphere. Technology in the film does not remove the restrictive definition of the natural female body. Instead, it allows male subjectivity to reinstall itself into the posthuman domain through techno-fetishization of the female body. The cyborg dolls in the film do not endorse the possibility of the subjectivity and genderless identities of the feminist cyborg; they are only the embodiment of the other that claims human subjectivity. This becomes clear when the promising disruptive presence of Motoko, the film's main cyborg, is finally eliminated, and her subjectivity, as separate from technology, is obliterated. In Oshii's futuristic visualization, a patriarchy projects its ambivalent response, fears, and desires onto the female body. Oshii's strategies of representation renounce a clear demarcation of agency, and instead, mark the ambivalence between pleasure and fear that characterizes techno-fetishized techno-scientism.

Feminist Views on Posthuman Subjectivity

Feminists acknowledge that just as globalization is driven by technology, so too has the female body and its social environment have been invaded by technology; they call for the examination of technologies of the gendered body. On the other hand, cyborg feminism advocates that technoscience destabilizes the inherent dualism of reason versus nature. The denaturalization of bodies and identities proposes a moment of disruption, and as a result, composes a new constellation. When we read science fiction texts from this auspicious point, questions emerge. Does technology facilitate feminist subjectivity? Do gendered power/politics disappear between nonessential bodies? Can desire and sexual relations be transformed by technology?

We observe that gendered body's affiliation with technology is at the core of much of cyberpunk fiction. And in that cyberpank realm, however, most of these texts create a ruthless male subject, like Batou in *Innocence*. This is why most typical cyberpunk fictions induce conventional anxieties about the formation of a masculine subjectivity mediated by technology. Then, how do the feminist critics articulate this phenomenon?

Some feminist critics seem to welcome the more essential human position in the new reality where technology is in the process of shaping, and where one can find posthuman subjectivity in feminist texts. Feminist technoscience-fiction writers, who support the posthuman feminism, for example, seem to regard subjectivity as developing form of a symbiotic relationship between technology and the material body. Hayles asserted in her introduction to *How We became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Lliterature, and Informatics* (1999), "In the posthuman, there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulations, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals". She (1999) continued, "Posthuman subject is an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction" (p. 3).

In contrast, cultural feminism, which renounces technology, has relied on the notion of natural female embodiment and regards it as the foundation for a feminist subjectivity. It believes that the subject can and must recapture the original unity. Within humanism's meta-narratives of the constitution of the subject such as psychoanalysis and its Oedipal separation from the (m)other or Marxism's alienation through class relations, technology can only be seen as a fundamental threat to human subjectivity.

It is this "natural female embodiment" that posthuman feminists problematize. They are skeptical about the idea of an original unity or "natural female embodiment" in the beginning, and that advocates the collapse of the Cartesian dualism of mind/body. They claim that the collapse of the dualism of mind/body has been accelerated and in due course, as Hayles (1999) asserted, "There are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulations, cybernetic mechanism" (p. 3).

Haraway, for example, argued in "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1991) that from the perspective of cyborgs, we will be free from "the privileged position" of the oppression that incorporates "the innocence of the merely violated" or "the ground of those closer to nature" and thus can access to powerful possibilities (p. 54). That produces, according to her, the story of "liminal transformation" based on the cyborg imagery that leads to the freedom from "the original innocence" or "the return to wholeness" (Haraway, 1991, p. 54). Here the author wonders if Oshii is so fascinated by Haraway's idea of cyborg imagery that he names his film *Innocence*. Haraway (1991) proudly concluded her manifesto that it is cyborg imagery that makes us out of "the maze of dualism" as follows:

> Cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves. This is a dream not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia. It is an imagination of a feminist speaking in tongues to strike fear into the circuits of the supersavers of the new right. It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories. Though both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess. (p. 57)

Doane (1989), who relied on psychoanalysis, however, criticized the lack of theory of subjectivity in Haraway's envisioning of the cyborg outside of any psychoanalytic framework. (She thinks that) the subject's relation to embodiment has been gendered; women have always been defined by their bodies.

Then how can we discern the relation of posthuman entity, like a cyborg, with its subjectivity? Is its "subjectivity" totally liberated from the burden of dualism such as body/mind or any gender power politics? One reliable response may be seen in the discussion by Halberstam and Livingston. They maintain that the posthuman body has no "natural" corporeality on which to base its identity; thus, it denaturalizes power relations. They (1995) asserted, "Posthuman bodies are the causes and effects of postmodern relations of power and pleasure, virtuality and reality, sex and its consequences" (p. 3). They (1995) continued:

> Posthuman bodies never/always leave the womb. The deprendence or interdependence of bodies on the material and discursive networks through which they operate means that the umbilical cords that supply us (without which we would die) are always multiple….
>
> Posthuman bodies were never in the womb. Bodies are determined and operated by systems whose reporduction is—sometimes partially but always irreducibly—asexual. (p. 17)

Cyborg imagery hence represents cultural understandings of how technology reshapes embodiment, and the role it has in defining a postmodern subjectivity. It advocates that the disappearance of the body and the

downloading of consciousness into an abstract, computerized realm leads to subjectivity based on disembodiment and consciousness separated from the body. As Hayles (1999) pointed out, this vision of posthuman subjectivity actually shares the separation of mind and body with the liberal subject: "Identified with the rational mind the liberal subject possessed a body, but was not usually represented as being a body" (p. 4; emphasis hers). Posthuman being that Hayles refers to, then, trapped in the dualism of mind/body. It is not the material body that disappears, but the notion of the body as a naturalizing status of the self. Likewise, the narratives of posthuman embodiment naturally reflect this discursive formulations of posthuman subjectivity.

As one form of posthuman embodiment, the feminist cyborg holds the body's materiality within a posthuman discourse. Representations of cyborgs are therefore a reflection of not only the future, but also the present; they emerge from political discourse at the same time that they inform it. As Gonzalez put it in "Envisioning Cyborg Bodies" (1995):

> Visual representations of cyborgs are… not only utopian or dystopian prophecies, but are rather reflections of a contemporary state of being. The image of the cyborg body functions as a site of condensation and displacement. It contains on its surface and in its fundamental structure the multiple fears and desires of a culture caught in the process of transformation. (p. 267)

Then how can the cyborg body reach the ideal of an unmarked entity, free from the present system? The negotiations in determining the construction of the cyborg usually fail.

Feminist science fiction writers often insist on the value of technology in reconstructing the female body in relation to subjectivity. However, they seem to preserve the patriarchal system in which this technology is embedded. They place their protagonists' resistance and agency into the intersection of human and machine, and by doing so, try to create utopian moments within the dangerous and apocalyptic settings in which their protagonists find themselves. Here and then, they claim that the problematic historical relationship of women and technology is redefined and appropriated. They welcome the concept of posthuman embodiments that succeeds the gendered humanist ideal of the unmarked body. But how are we to understand the cyborg that remains entrenched in technological and ideological origins within a patriarchy rather than transcending them? Does Oshii's cyborg successfully obtain a posthuman subjectivity with an unmarked body? How can a feminist agency be conceptualized if the absolute category of woman is not available, and instead women's partial identities are accepted?

Patriarchy and Technology on the Female Body in *Innocence*

The author's analysis of Oshii's female technobodies revolves around the cyborg's representations of posthuman embodiment. If the cyborg is a cultural metaphor, we can thus read the effects of modern technology on posthuman subjectivities through these cyborgs. In Oshii's films, the feminist political metaphor of the cyborg plays a major role as the posthuman actor. In his technological cyber realm, his mechanized women reflect inevitable reactions, such as misogyny and hatred, derived from the male heterosexual desire which defines gender relations.

Even as they are produced by patriarchal science and man's social order, the technobodies in *Innocence* constitute a threat to both aspects of patriarchy and echo the resistance of the feminist cyborg. Oshii depicts the female body's relationship to technology as beyond merely problematic. He submits a question as to whether the

female body can be defined through technology. In the realm of *Innocence* and *Ghost in the Shell*, women are all cyborgs, implanted with ghosts and radically modified. Does Oshii's view reflect the quotation from de l'Isle-Adam's *Tomorrow's Eve* (2001) placed at the very beginning of the film as the epigraph? The quotation is as follows: "Since our gods and our aspirations are no longer anything but *scientific*, why shouldn't our loves be so, too?" (de l'Isle-Adam, 2001, p. 164).

If we accept the condition that even gods are "anything but *scientific*", or scientific phenomena, then any relationship between male and female will be defined through science, and the female body under this condition cannot be free from the predefined and patriarchal system. Here, there emerges a question: Does the female body in *Ghost in the Shell* and *Innocence* reconcile a male sexual desire (in patriarchal system) with the possibility to form the female body through technology in a site of empowerment and resistance? The two films, and especially *Innocence* with its futuristic narrative, are still obsessed with the female body's perverse reconstruction through patriarchal technology, and they ultimately generate a vision of the destruction and control of female sexuality. Oshii's representations are in sheer contrast to feminist critics' appropriation of technologies, especially in their transgressions—transgressions in the binaries of human and machine, which enable a feminist techno-consciousness. These conflicting elements reflect much of feminist criticism's ambivalence towards technology's role in gendering the body, and address the difficult question of agency in the realm of the posthuman.

Oshii's Ambivalent Portrayal of Posthuman Female Embodiment

The underlying themes of *Innocence*—mechanical versus human and machine consciousness versus human consciousness—manifest themselves in the figures of the dolls. *Innocence* begins with a mission to investigate the disappearance of young girls, and Batou's attack at the secret factory of high-tech giant Locus Solus[1]. Batou, the protagonist of *Innocence*, was originally partnered with Major Motoko Kusanagi who disappeared into "the vastness of the net" at the end of the first film, *Ghost in the Shell.* He is now teamed with a reluctant Togusa, the most "organic" man in Section 9, who complains that he never requests the assignment and that he knows he can never compare with Major Kusanagi. Locus Solus creates the gynoids as sex dolls. These dolls are desirable largely, because they possess "ghosts" created through an illegal procedure, called "dubbing", which produces "information-degraded, high-volume copies" but results in the death of the originals (the human girls). Eventually Batou learns that Kim, a former intelligence agent, is now working for Locus Solus and kidnapping large numbers of young girls for this procedure. After escaping imprisonment by Kim, Batou (with Motoko's assistance) destroys Kim's matrix[2]. Through flashbacks, Batou tells Togusa (and the audience) that Kim was once a secret agent—a cyborg like Batou himself—for an underground organization. Batou realizes that an attack on him in a convenience store was merely an illusion generated by Kim, and that he—having been ghost-hacked—actually attacked his own arm. Significantly, the narrative is never told from a doll's perspective: Batou is the main narrator. The dolls have no voice in how the story is relayed, and thus no subjective position.

[1] The name comes from the title of a novel written by Raymond Roussel, a French novelist. In the novel, a protagonist (scientist) shows around the guests to his own invented machines displayed in his mansion.
[2] The description of Kim's residence has intensive allusion with the matrix in de 1'Isle-Adam's *Tomorrow's Eve*.

The dolls are all female, all sexualized, and all featured as hybrids between Japanese and Western dolls; they are characterized by jet-black hair, porcelain-colored skin, and blue eyes. They are also a reproduction of Hadaly, the android constructed to be an "ideal woman" for Ewald, in de 1'Isle-Adam's *Tomorrow's Eve*[3], which pursues the possibility of technology producing a reconciliation between the Cartesian mind and body, or a materializing of the ideal. This association with the android named Hadaly in *Tomorrow's Eve* evokes the hidden theme of the film—mechanical versus human and machine consciousness versus human consciousness.

The contrasts between mechanical and human or machine consciousness and human consciousness result in the dissolution of the category of the "real" in cybernetic technology. The tension arising from these contrasts is embodied in the dolls produced by Locus Solus. The dolls are androids made in the form of young women and used as sex dolls. However, a default set by a programmer forces them to kill their male customers after sexual intercourse. After several politicians and prominent business leaders are killed, Section 9 is urged to investigate. Batou eventually learns that because of the "programming failure" intentionally set in the cyborg dolls, the dolls have gotten out of control. One of the victims, whose holograph is retrieved by Batou at the inspector's office, asks the inspector to set the program failure in order to save her life. This inspector is eventually murdered by yakuza members hired by Locus Solus.

Oshii's ambivalent portrayal of posthuman female embodiment is reflected in Motoko's difference from the other dolls. There are two kinds of female cyborgs: first, illegally copied dolls which possess the ghosts of human girls, and second, Major Motoko Kusanagi who comes to save Batou in his battle with doll-shaped assassin cyborgs discharged by Locus Solus. Motoko, in contrast to the other female cyborgs, has the potential to destabilize patriarchal categories of human/machine and original/imitation by challenging the terms of her existence. In *Innocence*, even though her appearance is very brief and limited to the end of the film, she presents a different viewpoint from Batou's with regard to the girl who is rescued by Batou and Motoko. When Batou asks, "Have you ever thought of the other dying girls?", he accuses her of selfishness in sacrificing the others (Hadalys) to save her own life; it was this "innocent" girl who urged the Locus Solus shipping inspector to set an error in the program in order to save her own life. Batou's question is associated with the title of this film, "Innocence", as well. In Batou's viewpoint, even though she is a victim, she is definitely not "innocent". One may read Batou's question as a criticism on human arrogance and negligence toward cyborgs. Motoko, in contrast, never blames the girl. As both Batou and Motoko are ghost-inhabited cyborgs just like Hadalys, the difference in their attitude toward the rescued girl may reveal Oshii's ambivalent view as exhibited in the portrayal of cyborgs against the patriarchal background of contemporary society.

Tensions in *Innocence*

The decadent atmosphere of *Innocence* draws to mind fin de siecle and the fathomless anxiety that accompanied it. It is such increasing anxiety that produced Symbolism art at the turn of the 20th century, much of which is replayed throughout *Innocence*. de 1'Isle-Adam's *Tomorrow's Eve* is one product of this period. The fundamental conflict of the time was between the Enlightenment's promise of progress and its rational,

[3] In *Future Eve*, Thomas Edison, the master scientist and entrepreneur of mechanical reproduction is the inventor of the prefect mechanical woman, and android for Count Ewald. Edison's creation embodies the ideal of woman and her name is Hadaly which is, so we are told, Arabic for the ideal.

autonomous, and masculine subject on the one hand, and the fear of technology and a newly discovered Freudian unconscious and the idea of natural instincts which threaten the coherence of a modern subjectivity on the other hand. The tension generated by these conflicts and their threat to modern subjectivity becomes the epitome of Symbolism and its aesthetics.

In *Innocence*, this tension is most eloquently represented in the scene where Batou and Togusa visit Kim's illusive residence, a product of Symbolism aesthetics in cyberpunk tradition. This castle-like mansion, not a real place but a virtual image created only in Batou's and Togusa's E-brains, traps them and causes them to be absorbed by the illusion generated by Kim. Togusa, totally deceived by the illusion, has to go through the same maze three times, and never successfully escapes until Batou breaks it. It is in this psychological battle within the e-brain domain where the tension and conflict between the rational, autonomous Batou and Togusa and a completely technobodied Kim is displayed. Additionally, we witness conflicts between the real and the illusion, the superficial and the hidden, the rational and the irrational, and especially between life and death, a conflict which permeates the entire film (e.g., Kim's skeptical statement cast to Batou and Togusa, "a creature that certainly appears to be alive really is dead", or the maxim on the wall of Kim's room saying that life and death are coming together).

This tension finds expression in a decadent symbolism "where invocation of decadence and malaise were regularly interspersed with the rhetoric of progress and the exhilarating birth of a new age" (Felski, 1995, p. 30). Oshii directly evokes the sentiments of such symbolism with excessive consumerism and the pitfalls of technological development. Sexual difference, one of the central organizing elements of the tensions of modernity, is embodied in the dolls and is also Oshii's main means of meditation. The dolls in *Innocence*, as modern machine-women, inhabit the ambiguous symbolic function of both danger and promise to man. On the one hand, they symbolize a denaturalization of the essential feminine. On the other hand, they are the reaffirmation of a patriarchal desire for technological mastery over women.

Such a machine-woman of fantasy is created without the mother. We find the mother's most recent reincarnation in Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1991):

> An origin story in the "Western" humanist sense depends on the myth of original unity, fullness, bliss and terror, represented by the phallic mother from whom all humans must separate, the task of individual development and of history, the twin potent myths inscribed most powerfully for us in psychoanalysis and Marxism. (p. 151)

Doane (1989) asserted derives from Haraway's intention to counter "the two most potent myths of original unity and identity we have, Marxism and psychoanalysis" (p. 210). Here, if we take Oshii's cyborg as a replica of Haraway's "(t)he cyborg without a history, without an unconscious", it will inevitably maintain the ambiguity of Haraway's cyborg.

Oshii's cyborg dolls do not detach or de-historicize themselves from the master narratives of Marxism and psychoanalysis. Oshii's dolls, products of a postmodern age, bear the symbols of "a culture increasingly structured around the erotics and aesthetics of the commodity" (Felski, 1995, p. 4). The copied dolls' murderous inclinations and sexual desires exemplify the "association of femininity with nature and the primal forces of the unconscious", while her technological origin makes her "surface without substance, a creature of style and artifice whose identity is created through the various costumes and masks that she assumes" (Felski, 1995, p. 4).

Here, within this cyberpunk site of typical "(post)modern dilemma", the masculine subject is replaced by a fetishized and commodified femininity generated through the discourses of modern desires.

Aesthetics of Symbolism in *Innocence*

The female cyborg in Oshii's film, therefore, becomes the symptomatic embodiment of a fetishized and commodified femininity, and of the repressed desire and irrationality which pervades the culture of Symbolism. Likewise, it serves as a powerful symbol of both the dangers and promise of the modern age. Oshii directly evokes the sentiments of Symbolism in the contrast between humanist ideology and excessive (global) consumerism and the trap of technological development. With a stylistic combination of elements from the baroque and cyberpunk, Oshii introduces a Symbolism aesthetics (especially in his equation of sex with death) into his Postmodern film. Both *Innocence* and *Ghost in the Shell* show the hybridity of Symbolism and Postmodern (computerized and digitalized) images, especially in the background scenes of bridges, buildings, streets, and festival props.

Oshii works with metaphors of both the surreal and the baroque; he also draws on the cyberpunk tradition of fusing the technological with the sensual. One of the ostensible examples of the combination of the surreal and the baroque, or the fusing of the technological with the sensual, is Kim's illusive mansion, seemingly symmetrical yet disproportioned, thus evoking a sense of the unreal, the mysterious, and the grotesque. The interior of the mansion also displays a collection of surreal/baroque garniture. While pieces of furniture within the mansion are replicas of Baroque art and architecture, facilities like the machinery dolly in the "Kintaro" (a baby warrior) figure are reproductions of fin de siecle Symbolism technology.

Kim's abundant quotations, which comprise an assortment of proverbs from the west and the east, the old and the new, and the materialism and the mysticism, also reproduce Symbolism aesthetics. The quotation which most eloquently speaks of Batou's philosophy is by Julien Offray de La Mettrie (1709-1751), a French physician and philosopher, and one of the earliest French materialists of the Enlightenment. The quote says, "Man's body is a machine of clockwork automatons and a living sample of everlasting movement". In contrast to this veneration of technology based on the Enlightenment, there is also a verse by Milton (2008) depicting the decadent, dark, and mystic portrayals of the fallen angels and Satan:

> till on the beach
> Of that inflamed sea, he stood and called
> His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced
> Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
> In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
> High overarched embower… (I., 299)

This quotation from *Paradise Lost* (2008) describing Satan's call to the fallen angels is significant, because it reveals Oshii's quintessential ambition to juxtapose spirit/soul and (sexual) desire within the framework of Original Sin. As the title of the film implies, the theme of "the loss of innocence" resonates in every scene and constitutes a drama of conflicts between the innocence of the dolls (techno-produced dolls or "ghost"-less dolls) and the loss of innocence (Hadaly's), between humans and cyborgs, and between masculinity (male) and femininity (female).

In Oshii's context, different from Milton's version, "the loss of innocence" plays a crucial role in the representation of female cyborgs, especially the sexroids. The ghost signifies not only the "soul" or "spirit" that makes man as he/she is, but also the desire/drive (including sexual desire and a death drive in the Freudian sense) which demarcates the boundary between man and other creatures. Ghost, however, causes a disruption in the wholeness of existence by generating innate contradictions or conflicts. Since it is an essential constituent for building a sense of self and subjectivity, it will naturally initiate disruptions due to desire. The ghost-dubbed cyborg dolls who are potentially able to retrieve subjectivity, then, may act as agents and disrupt the patriarchal system built on technology centralization. The dolls, however, are doomed to die as Batou destroys the dubbing factory. Between the realities of "doll space" and the cybernetic technology-dominant realm of *Innocence*, there seems no space amidst Oshii's doll cyborgs for a feminist subjectivity to develop. The dolls' fate seems to be inscribed in their program's innate death wish. The programmer in this case plays Satan in *Paradise Lost*. The brutal massacre of the programmer epitomizes the severe punishment imposed upon those who violate the border between human and cyborg; his sin is more serious, because he destabilizes the patriarchal system which secures the techno-oriented space.

Conflicted Female Body

Oshii's embodiment of woman, upon which technology has left its mark, and the way technology relates to the female body, are contradictory. On the one hand, they are not immune to the discomfort of cultural feminists who define any technology as essentially patriarchal; on the other hand, they point to the role that social, political, and economic structures play in technology's impact on people's lives. The social-sexual constituents of technology are dependent on the political and social conditions, or the major ideology of the time in which they are produced. In *Innocence*, dolls are locked into a position in which both patriarchal ideology and an uncontrolled technophilia define them; the dolls are dangling between the patriarchal/the historical embodiment and the utopian/fantasy realm of technology.

In *Innocence*, suppressed patriarchal desire permeates all technology; technology becomes a part of its structure, and thus, can never be neutral. Therefore, in the subconscious or "ghost" of the cyborg doll, there exists not only the power to control, but also a repressed sexual desire which disrupts the ordered and patriarchal space. Can the "ghost" implanted into the cyborg dolls' bodies to make them "sexually desirable" be understood as this order-destabilizing sexual desire itself? It is this ghost that transforms them from lifeless dolls into "whores". The cyborg dolls subvert the definition of what is human: The dolls are alive and dead, organic and inorganic, and human and non-human. Their organic/inorganic nature, the basis for their un-humanness, is epitomized by sexual difference within an economy driven by male heterosexual desire.

The female body is shaped by patriarchal technology in a way different from that of the male body. In *Innocence*, we witness the conventional relationship between the one who consumes (male) and the one consumed (female): The female body, particularly the gynoid body, is produced for consumption whereas the male body, as a customer of the gynoid dolls, consumes. Only Motoko disrupts this exchange system. The cyborg dolls are all female, a prototype of the feminine ideal—sexual slaves obediently serving male masters. There are male cyborgs, such as Batou and Kim, but only female gynoids are mass-produced as sexual objects. Sexuality and perverse desire are at the core of man's relation to the doll.

As they are the production of man's patriarchal technology, the dolls are naturally programmed to satisfy the contradictory demands of male heterosexual desire: One is for the ideal of an asexual and girlish beauty (an innocent girl or "shojo"); the other is for a vamp who gratifies the male's secret desire for violent sexual passion. Such binary construction of women is obviously based on the objectification of women, and it mirrors the historical discord within a patriarchal desire that finds new models in technological post-humanity. These extreme poles of patriarchal desire are distinctly embodied in the gynoid dolls. Therefore, Motoko stands in stark contrast to other gynoid dolls that represent women as objects of sex or fetish.

The doll falls within the category of the "monster", which reflects a patriarchal view of female sexuality. The image of the cyborg doll is merged with that of the witch or the vampire. The doll as demon/witch/whore corresponds to an ancient classification of female sexuality as the Other, and such implications often are sexist. This Other as the desired object usually ends up with its death. The cyborg dolls' perilous bodies reflect the threat that the female body poses to the male "rational" ego formation. The cyborg dolls embody the principle of a dangerous female sexuality, the other body. Their bodies are wild, seductive, powerful, and at the same time, contaminated and dangerous. The doll is threatening not only because of the danger she embodies for human reproduction, but also because of her addictive effect on men.

Motoko vs. Cyborg Dolls: Doll Identity, Agency, and Resistance

In the cyborg dolls, the feminine ideal is subsumed within the latent side of man's desire, a secret sexual fantasy coming true. Each dubbed with a "ghost", these cyborg dolls are biologically/ontologically human, and therefore the most frightening manifestation of a loss of humanity through their transformation and their independence from man in their existence. It is this role as agent, albeit a limited one, that they pose a threat to their creators.

The ideological division of the virgin/whore or mother/monster dichotomy of patriarchal cultural imagination, which divides dolls into "good" creations (the asexual, aesthetically pleasing, and technologically complex "sisters") and "bad" objects (the sexually defined gynoids), implodes with the creation of the cyborg dolls. Their sexual desirability—a deadly "allure", which makes them irresistible to men—is paired with violence, which ultimately leads to the death of patriarchal order and mankind. Motoko's sexual impotence is also that which created her; she embodies man's simultaneous and conflicting desire and fear of both women and machines.

Considering the ambivalent representations of cyborgs in *Innocence*, the question remains whether it is possible to extract a feminist potential from Oshii's posthuman vision. On the one hand, the cyborg doll's existence seems to disrupt the norm of the human body. In this way, the cyborg dolls pose a postmodern threat to a male-defined humanism. On the other hand, they do not display resistance in general, despite the power that their quantum technology bestows upon them; they do not possess any agency beyond their man-made programming. In her agency, Motoko seems to differ from other dolls: Motoko resists her implanted program. In these two types of female cyborgs, Oshii creates creatures that precariously balance the ambivalence between domination through technology and female resistance through technology.

Innocence is concerned with humans' fear of becoming machines. The dolls' humanness is transformed into a mechanical substance; their intelligence/consciousness develops from an attempt to copy the activity of the human brain through fractal programming. Even though the dolls' consciousnesses are not those of humans

adapting to an embodied state as a cyborgs, neither are they androids developing a human consciousness. The dolls have a distinct machine consciousness that does not grow from a fusion of human and machine; their consciousness is derived directly from technology.

The machine consciousness does not provide each of the cyborg dolls with a spiritual essence, and that is why "ghosts" are implanted. Their personalities are composed merely of computer interface signals without substance. As a simulacrum of the ideal feminine women, they have no subjectivity beyond electrical signals; they are the ultimate representation of woman as machine.

The machine consciousness of the dolls does not enable them to feel a classical (and often unclear) distinction between machines and humans in science fiction. The cyborg dolls can desire, however, since desire is a physical experience as well as an emotional one. This fact blurs the distinction between "pure" emotion and desire, as well as that between human and machine. Oshii's film conveys an underlying nostalgia for human emotion, a mourning of the human touch of "innocence" that each cyborg doll loses upon acquiring her ghost. Oshii seems caught between these poles of imagining a female cyborg-body with the potential for a radical new subjectivity, and the insistence that "innocence" or human emotion needs to prevail in any posthuman future. This insistence pulls the narrative back into the familiar liberal sentiment of humanist subjectivity.

It is only in Motoko's character that the feminist cyborg potential finds resonance. As a creature who moves between human and mechanical realms, she violates boundaries. Nevertheless, despite Motoko's disruptive identity in *Ghost in the Shell*, Oshii's cyber realm does not offer an alternative to the posthuman female embodiment. After all, Motoko, the only cyborg who resists the patriarchal system, disappears (into the "sea of net"). Her identity as one resisting cyborgs does not prevail; instead, her consciousness is haunted by her lost humanness. Even though Motoko seems to have accepted her existence as cyborg, she is not happy to embrace the cyborg identity that requires from her an acceptance of the constructed self.

In *Innocence*, the only subjectivity available to the mechanical dolls is a victim subjectivity that leads to their collective and individual deaths. Oshii's representations reinscribe the dichotomy of the rational masculine and the irrational/nature. The depiction of feminine in *Innocence* does not allow for any independent conception of female identity, agency, or desire. The cyborg dolls symbolize a crisis of masculine subjectivity and do not engage with a possible solution of that crisis through an alternative feminine subjectivity.

The dilemma of dissolving boundaries between human and machines, real and counterfeit, and woman and doll, are not solved in *Innocence*. Motoko, potentially the most disruptive figure in *Innocence* and *Ghost in the Shell*, ultimately does not possess a subjectivity separate from that of her creator. Unlike Haraway's feminist cyborg, who turns against her patriarchal military origins and develops her own agency, Motoko is unable to transcend the origins of her creation. Since the cyborg's main characteristic is to contest categories of identity and subvert its potential, it is difficult to regard Oshii's vision as a critical comment on the existing patriarchal oppression.

Conclusions

What we witness is that in Oshii's narrative and patriarchal technology creates the female cyborgs, who simply mirror male heterosexual desire and who are denied agency in their role. Oshii does not imagine any possibility that might destabilize his newly-imagined order, such as a cyborg that might upset heterosexuality. This observation is even more troubling when one considers that Oshii's narratives are never from the perspective

of the female cyborg. The absence of any female agency or desire in his cyber fantasy questions its subversive potential. Oshii seems to be immune to feminist theories on posthuman existence that conceptualize subjectivity outside the gender polarities; Oshii describes a society where high technology only reinforces gender polarities. The representations of women's relationship to technology in Oshii's film, therefore, are quite problematic; the transgression of boundaries does not work out to reduce or annihilate domination by patriarchal needs and desires. Despite the fact that Oshii denies his female cyborgs a subject position other than that based exclusively in patriarchal fear and desire, his representations mark an ambivalence inherent in cyborg resistance, and feminist politics need to pay attention to such ambivalence.

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