Three Kinds of Neighbor, Three Kinds of Violence: Woman and/as the Other in Kathy Acker

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ABSTRACT

The main concern of this paper is the relationship between the neighbors (the Other) and violence in Kathy Acker's novels. The recurrent theme of Acker's novels is the relationship between woman and violence. Yet, to render woman's relationship with violence, Acker not only represents woman through sexual relationship, but also explores woman as the "Other" of society through various discourses of the Other or the minorities, including the prostitute, the third world people, the poor, lesbians, gays, punks, pirates, etc. The power or rival relationship between the West and the minorities is mediated by the figure of the prostitute: the figure of the prostitute (woman) and the discourses of the Other or minorities reinforce each other in Acker's novels. Almost all of the heroines in Acker's novels are prostitutes or like prostitutes. The figure of the prostitute serves as the female flaneur who roams around and witnesses repressive violence on the minorities and the latter's revolutionary violence on society. Revolutionary violence can be further divided into two kinds: nihilistic revolution or real revolution. We will single out the figure of the third world, the figure of the punk boys, and the figure of the female motorcyclists or the pirate girls as the three groups of neighbors of the prostitute, who stand for these three kinds of violence: the figure of the third world stands for repressive violence, the figure of the punk boys for nihilistic violence, and the figure of the female motorcyclists or the pirate girls for real revolutionary violence. These three kinds of violence –repressive, nihilistic, and real violence – roughly correspond to the three different kinds of violence posited by Walter Benjamin in his "Critique of Violence": law-preserving violence, law-making violence, and pure violence. The figure of the prostitute standing for the paradox of (post)modernity or (post)modern subjectivity is the connection between these three kinds of violence: (post)modern subjectivity, at least for Marx, Baudelaire, Benjamin, and Acker, has to take on the form of violence, a double violence or even triple violence.

KEY WORDS

neighbors, the Other, violence, woman, modernity, Benjamin, Baudelaire

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I. Kathy Acker's Terrorist Poetics: Woman and Violence

Kathy Acker, a follower of William Burroughs famous for experimental writings, has written many postmodern novels which are fragmentary, "imagist" and montage-like and labeled as one critic has it, "Postpunk. Postmodern. Postpost," as one critic has it. According to Kathleen Hulley, Acker deploys five deconstructionist or disjunctive practices: first, she mixes genre; second, she makes abrupt shifts in plot, character, theme, and story; third, she used a flood of obscene language and images; fourth, she gives direct description of body; and fifth, she uses inconsistent sentence structure (Hulley 172–74). Corresponding to the postmodernist or deconstructionist form is the postmodernist content featuring multiculturalism or globalization in Acker's novels. Take Acker's *Blood and Guts in High School* for example. In the novel, Acker inserts into her English narrative some pages in Persian and about twenty pages of sketches with notes. The novel tells of the heroine Janey's different lives in New York and some third-world places, including Merida, Tangiers, and Egypt. And in any scene, western or the third-world, we can see the contrast or rival is between the westerners and the minorities, including the third-world people, prostitutes, lesbians, gays, punks, the poor, etc. The West's (capitalism's) violence against modern women and other minorities constitutes the main theme of Acker's novels.

The prostitute is the main heroine in almost all of Acker's novels: she stands for modern women, for both the repressive violence on women and their revolutionary violence on social or human rules. The rival is between the West and minorities is mediated by the figure of the prostitute in Acker's novels: the prostitute is the female flaneur who roams in many places and witnesses the (West's) violence practiced on the minorities as the Other of the West. To define woman's relationship with capitalist or (post)modern society, Acker not only expresses woman through sexual relationship, but also renders woman as the "other" of the society through the "language that constitutes the Other." The figure of the prostitute (woman) and the discourse of minorities thus reinforce each other in Acker's novels. Christina Milletti argues:

> While a range of feminist concerns is certainly evident throughout Acker's work, what specifically the feminine subject represents remains a site of opacity in her fiction into which she regularly inserts pirates, terrorists, cyborgs – even Don Quixote herself – as substitutes. . . . Acker consistently circumvents this question by examining how the idea of the feminine has become a discursive norm (or she clearly hopes to undermine) that function to constraint the subject position of woman. Acker's attention, in other words, is focused less on representing the feminine through writing, than on investigating through the language of fiction what constitutes the Other as such. (367)

Milletti points out that, to specify the "feminine subject," Acker appeals to such figures as pirates, terrorists, cyborgs, and Don Quixote. These figures, for Milletti, may provide some kind of "discursive norm," through which the "subject position of woman" as "the Other" may be rendered. We should add the figure of the third world to Milletti's list of figures of "the Other." It is through the figures of the third world, the terrorists (punk boys), the pirates, and the cyborgs (pirate girls and female motorcyclists) that social antagonism and, figuratively, the feminine subject position can be rendered.

From the perspective of the gaze or allegorical reading of the "Other," the relationship between the subject and society is based on violence. Violence in Acker's novels can have two different kinds of meaning: first, violence of deconstruction which can dismantle dominant ideology or identification, as pointed out by Milletti; second, violence of (re)construction which can (re)construct or redefine female identification or identity. On the one hand, there is male violence against heroines who are raped, beaten, and put in prison; on the other hand, there is a female violence against the rules set up by men, a violence that can be seen in the tattooed female motorcycle gang and the monster-like pirate girls. The first kind of violence is everywhere in Acker's novels, especially the earlier ones, and the second kind of violence can be seen in the later ones, including *Empire of the Senseless* and *Pussy, King of the Pirates*, which will be discussed in this essay. Acker's earlier novels are relatively deconstructive, and her later ones are relatively constructive because, for her, "there's no more need to deconstruct, to take apart perceptual habits," and "we have to find somewhere to go, a belief, a myth. Somewhere Real" (Hulley 35). We can interpret deconstructive and constructive violence in the context of Benjamin's critique of violence. The two different kinds of violence — the "destructive" and the "constructive" — roughly correspond to the two kinds of violence elucidated by Walter Benjamin in his "Critique of Violence": "violence related to law" (including the "law-founding" and the "law-maintaining" violence) and "pure violence" which is extra-legal and revolutionary (see Benjamin 1978). Violence in itself is "innocent," as Žižek puts it,[1] which can lead to "hegemony" or its opposite, "revolution."

Violence in Acker's novels is always double. Violence always means a "double lack" —the lack of the subject and the lack in the Other (the Lacanian symbolic order) —for the heroines and the other minorities in these novels. For Laclau and Zac, the lack (indeterminacy) of the subject will point to the lack (split) in the object (the Other) through a "dialectical reversal" (14). The Other's oppressive violence on the subject and the subject's revolutionary violence on the Other are two sides of the same coin or, more accurately, are on the two sides of the Mobius strip, to use a Lacanain metaphor. Yet the lack of the Other and the lack of the subject are not the same. Between the two there is a "minimal difference," a "vanishing mediator," which is the (Lacanian) subject as such. If Acker's earlier novels are full of social violence on the subject (woman), her later novels are full of various kinds of terrorism and revolution against society: in *Empire of the Senseless*, both the hero Thivai and the heroine Abhor are terrorists; in *Pussy, King of the Pirates*, the beginning of the novel focuses on a terrorist action in which the heroine O's two lovers are involved. Besides, almost all of the pirate girls in the novels can be said to be terrorists in some sense. Terrorism is the explosion of the real, a return of the repressed in the world of "non-reality":

> Terrorism is letting happen what has to happen. Terrorism is letting rise up all that rises up like a cock or a flower. Tremendous anger and desire. Terrorism is straightforwardness. You are a child. Only you don't imitate. For these reasons terrorists never grow up. Terrorism is a way to health. (*Blood* 124)

It is by virtue of terrorism, "double violence" or "violence against violence," that the untainted innocent nature (real) and (mental) health can be regained. That is to say, it is by virtue of terrorism as a discursive paradigm that the heroines' subjectivity can be defined. According to Milletti, "terrorism" offers Acker a "conceptual space" that "enables her to investigate the relationship between language and power with respect to subject formation" (356). Thus, the heroines in Acker's novels are torn between the two kinds of violence –the oppressive and the revolutionary – which either turn the woman into a non-human victim like an animal or make her an inhuman terrorist or murderer:

> "I want to be a female again"
> "What does that mean?" I inquired of Bad Dog . . .
> "Dogs and Murderers." (*Puss*, 189)

When the heroines are treated like dogs, they are suffering from male (repressive) violence; on the other hand, when the heroines become murderers, they bring (revolutionary) violence on society (men) and become terrorists or revolutionaries.

But how can the two different kinds of violence involved with woman—repressive and the revolutionary—be connected in Acker's novels, especially the later ones? How does woman as the victim of the male society come to be a revolutionary figured by the female motorcyclists or the pirate girls? In her later novels, Acker provides a male revolutionary figure—the figure of the punk boy—to mediate the two different kinds of violence related to woman. In Acker's earlier novels, there are nearly no main male figures, only such stereotypical figures as the rapist, the slave owner, the capitalist . . . etc., which stand for power. It is not until *Empire* that a main male figure Thivai emerges who gets involved in the (terrorist) revolution against power. Thivai can be seen as the first male protagonist and the prototype of the punk boy in Acker's later novels, a character which carries the elements of "death wish" and "sadism," modeled after Case in Gibson's *Neuromancer* (Zwaan 462–65), a character who devotes itself to nihilistic revolution or deconstruction. Why does Acker start to create the male revolutionary figure in her later novels? Evidently, Acker's purpose of creating the male revolutionary figure is to provide a mediation between the figure of the prostitute and the figure of the pirate girl or the female motorcyclist and turns violence of society (the West) on woman (and the other minorities) into woman's (the minorities') revolutionary violence on society or the whole human world. In *Pussy, King of the Pirates*, it is the punk boys who teach the group of prostitutes how to be pirates. O and Ange, the heroines of the novels describe: "Thus the punk boys told us what it is to be a pirate. We joined up with them. It was only now that we were able to make up the rules of piracy" (*Pussy* 204). O and Ange had been prostitutes before they meet the punk boys. After O and Ange meet the punk boys who teach them piracy, O and Ange join the pirate girls in searching for the buried treasure.

Acker needs the third kind of violence—a nihilistic one—figured by the punk boys to shift the focus from the external violence on woman to the internal violence constitutive of her. The real violence represented by woman is not an external violence brought by man on woman, but an internal violence as the inner split or inner difference of woman. And the nihilistic revolution represented by the figure of the punk boys can point to the internal violence that finds no surrogates (which is why it is called "nihilistic" or "deconstructionistic"), that may ultimately lead to the split or inner difference of any subject (woman), a split or inner difference that amounts to the Lacanian real. Later we will compare this kind of inner (immanent) difference as the real with so-called "politics of difference" or "identity politics" which is based on the imaginary and symbolic differences. Now let's probe a little bit further into the mediatory role of the figure of the punk boys in Acker's later novels.

Both *Empire of the Senseless* and *Pussy, King of the Pirates*, Acker's later major novels, juxtapose two kinds of revolution, one leading to nihilism and the other to utopia.[2] The juxtaposition of the two different kinds of revolution provides three different subject positions for woman: repressed (victim), (nihilistic) terrorist, and posthuman. In *Empire*, there is a juxtaposition of the third-world revolution in Paris and the revolution brought about by the heroine Abhor as a female motorcyclist who tries to make her own "codes of the highway." The third-world revolution in Paris begins with the Algerians' overthrowing the Parisians, representative of the dominant West, and ends up with an empty ruin of Paris, which does no good for the Algerians. This is also the case with the third-world revolution in *Pussy*—a third-world revolution in China—a revolution that doesn't change anything. And the third-world revolution in China in *Pussy* should also be compared with the revolution brought about by the pirate girls who create their own rules of piracy. Both of the two third-world revolutions in *Empire* and in *Pussy* have to do with the figure of the punk boys as terrorist revolutionaries, which is why the revolutions end up becoming nihilistic. When the third-world revolution becomes nihilistic, then the revolution loses its sting and becomes a "revolution without revolution."[3]

If the third-world revolution is nihilistic in nature, the revolution brought about by the female motorcyclists or the pirate girls is "immanent" in the sense that it causes an inner difference or split in the subject. The immanent revolution involved with the female motorcyclists or the pirate girls results in posthumanity through which woman's utopia is enacted. And the difference between the nihilistic and the immanent (utopian) revolution is implicated with the sexual difference between the heroes and the heroines in Acker's novels. Lacan's formulae of sexuation which involve two kinds of jouissance or transgression (revolution),[4] can help us understand the difference between the two kinds of revolution. The male jouissance (transgression or revolution) can be easily co-opted by the symbolic (social) rules, whereas the female jouissance can lead to the dissolution of the symbolic rules and to the refiguration of identification.

Let's take a look at how the difference between the two kinds of revolution is implicated with the sexual difference between the punk boys and the heroines in Acker's later novels. In *Empire of Senseless*, Thivai and his lover Abhor stand for two different attitudes toward revolution. Both Thivai and Abhor are terrorists under the command of Dr. Schreber, a Freudian psychotic figure, but they are quite different. Thivai is a psychotic and a pervert, who is antisocial and wants to "slaughter other humans and to watch the emerging of their blood" (*Empire* 20). Thivai's desire and memory is dead and the only thing he knows is "human separation." In his relationship with Abhor, he treats her "like a shit" and the reason why he wants Abhor is because, as Thivai himself says, "Whenever I twirled her around, my finger moved, so I was never bored" (61). Abhor, on the other hand, becomes a terrorist because she wants to restore the dream disappearing from the capitalist regime: for Abhor, it is not poverty that creates terrorists, but the capitalist "boredom," "the lack of dreams" (58). The "minimal difference" between Thivai and Abhor is that whereas Thivai is nihilistic, for whom the world is "reduced to evil, to just tactics, to how" (126), Abhor is utopian; whereas Thivai does violence for violence's sake, Abhor commits violence in order to create a new world by redefining the parameters of society.

In *Pussy, King of the Pirates*, we can also see the connection between the two different revolutions and the sexual difference. In the novel, the punk-boy W's failure in supporting the China revolution is parallel to his failure in keeping a good sexual relationship with O. Just as W supports revolution because of his sheer need to disrupt and destroy, so he keeps his sexual relationship with his girl friend O for sheer sex without love. W as a figure of nihilistic revolution corresponds to the male side of Lacan's formulae of sexuatuon, whereas O as a figure of posthumanist revolution corresponds to the female side of Lacan's formulae of sexuation.

II. You Have to Count to Three When It Comes to the Other: From Politics of Difference to Real Difference

After discussing how the two different kinds of revolution can be implicated with the sexual relationship, let's go back to the issue of woman as the Other. In the light of Lacan's formulae of sexuaiton, we learn the wager of the sexual relationship lies not in the antagonism between man and woman, but in the split or inner difference within woman as well as man. In terms of Lacanian psychoanalysis, the split within the subject is a blind spot by which man as well as woman is "gazed." The difference between man and woman with respect of the split of the subject is that woman leaves the split open (which can be witnessed by the fact that woman is the victim or symptom of the society) whereas man tends to fill it with an object of desire (woman). When woman becomes the other of man, it means not that woman is repressed by man as some feminists think her to be, but that woman marks the locus of the split within the subject. This split is the Lacanian real as the inner difference or the "not-all." In Acker's novels, this real as "not-all" is represented by posthumanity or "what is in the human more than the human" seen in the female motorcyclists or the pirate girls. It is this posthumanity as the split, inner difference, or "not-all" within the human that can ultimately give expression to woman as the other in Acker's later novels. In Acker's earlier novels, woman as the other, figured by the discourse of the third world, is based on the imaginary or symbolic difference of woman, on what is not "represented" (what is "repressed") in the dominant discourse. In Acker's later novels, woman as the other is based on the real difference within the human, on what is in the human more than the human.

Now let's compare the Lacanian "'real' difference" with postmodernist "politics of difference" to illuminate the different sides of the other as a "difference." Politics of difference or its double "identity politics" can be said to be postmodernist because it is premised on pluralism or multiculturalism. Let's take Iris Marion Young's idea of politics of difference for illustration. Young's theory of the politics of difference is based on the Lyotardian postmodernist "little narrative" against modernist "great narrative." Young herself quotes Lyotard: "The idea that I think we need today in order to make decision in political matters cannot be the idea of a totality, or of the unity, of a body. It can only be the idea of a multiplicity or diversity" (156). The politics of difference is a politics emphasizing postmodernist "multiplicity" or "diversity" against modernist "totality" or "unity." The modernist liberal ideal is based on a "universal humanity" or "principle of justice," by which every one or group is assimilated (Young 158). From the standpoint of politics of difference, the modernist liberal humanism is at the same time too "individual" and too "totalitarian": liberal humanism is too "individual" because every one is treated undifferentiatively as equal and too "totalitarian" because it appeals to a "universal humanity," which is ideology-leaden and can be oppressive. Thus the politics of difference "promotes a notion of group solidarity against the individualism of liberal humanism" (166) and "insists on liberation of the whole group of Blacks, women, American Indians" (167). In a word, Young's politics of difference is built on a challenge against the (modernist) grand narrative which is informed by an universality regardless of particular social positions or backgrounds. Speaking for the minority groups, including women, the blacks, the gays, the lesbians, etc., Young insists on recognizing the structural, positional, relational difference between different groups for the purpose of including the different groups in a democratic coexistence. Young maintains that the recognition of social differences—especially structural differences—actually serves positive political purposes. In the case of feminism, "feminist separatism," which emphasizes the specificity of female experience and values, which seeks for feminine "self-organization" and women-only institutions, and which refutes the male-made rules and male-dominated world, is ideal from the perspective of politics of difference (161).

The problem with the politics of difference is that it "substantiates" or reifies the structural or symbolic difference. The politics of difference is ultimately based on an inner contradiction: a "symbolic" difference is taken as "real," if not "reality" so that the "real" difference as the inner split of the subject is disavowed. Speaking for minority groups and fighting against their repression in the dominant discourses inevitably connects politics of difference with identity politics or multiculturalism in a suture. But this suture between politics of difference and identity politics will expose a paradox: the insistence on structural difference (within dominant discourse) ends up leading to an insistence on essentialist sameness (of the minority group).

Postmodern globalization is coextensive with the emergence of the discourse of the other which provides a critique of the totalitarianism of the dominant western discourse. Pluralism or multiculturalism celebrates the imaginary or symbolic differences and resists the master signifier or the grand narrative of the dominant western discourse. Yet, for Lacan, the master signifier (S1) and the chain of signifiers (S2) are two sides of the same coin: the master signifier provides the "point de caption" or the anchoring point for the chain of signifiers. The identification with the other or with the position of the difference ends up doing nothing more than putting a new content in the old dominant form of identification. As Laclau claims, "even in order to differ, to subvert meaning, there has to be a meaning" (112). And, for Laclau, any discourse is pushed by the "attempt to dominant the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a center" (112). Rather than merely to focus on the structural or symbolic difference between signifiers or different groups, Lacau entices us to pay attention to the antagonism of the social as a whole. For Laclau, "society is impossible" and "the specificity of the category of the subject cannot be established either through the absolutization of a dispersion of 'subject positions, or through equally absolutist unification of these around a 'transcendental subject'" (121). Due to the "very absence of a final suture," Laclau claims, the only way out is to appeal to "antagonism," modeled on Marxist class struggle as the constitutive contradiction of the society (122–24). According to Laclau, antagonism is not an "objective relation," but a "relation wherein the limits of every objectivity are *shown*" (125, italics original). In terms of Lacanian psychoanalysis, the antagonism as the "impossible" of society belongs to the register of the real as the deadlock within the symbolic. For Lacan, the symbolic difference or the flow of signifiers is imbedded in a more fundamental "real" difference as an inner difference or internal split within any signifier: the dispersion of subject positions or the flow of signifiers is actually motivated by the inner difference or internal split of any signifier.

This inner split of the signifier or the subject manifests itself in the female motorcyclists or the pirate girls in Acker's later novels, who are humans, animals, and cyborgs in one. In Acker's earlier novels in which woman is rendered as a victim and is connected with the discourse of the third world, an imaginary or symbolic difference of woman is presupposed, and a postmodernist politics of difference is implied. In Acker's later novels, where woman is connected with cyborg animals figured by the female motorcyclist or the pirate girls, the "real" difference of woman is disclosed through posthumanity. Now let's start to probe in details into the three kinds of the other (difference) and their relationship with the three kinds of violence as rendered in Acker's later novels.

III. The Figure of the Third World: From Repressive Violence to Nihilistic Violence

The ambiguity of the third world as the other of the West is an ambiguity based on the distinction between antagonism and difference. In terms of social antagonism, the third world is defined as the excluded of the West, whereas, in terms of difference, the third world stands for an alternative to the West. The third world as the "other" of the West carries an ambiguity: the third world can mark the lack of the West or it can fill in the lack of the West. This is why the third-world revolutions as rendered in Acker's novels never really succeed. The third-world revolution (violence, terrorism) ends up filling in the lack of the West and being co-opted by the later. According to Hardt and Negri, in the age of Empire or postmodernity, war or "state of exception" has become "a permanent social relation" so that war can no longer be distinguished from the working of power or politics and the former may serve the latter (12–13). Revolution or war can be totally integrated into the mechanism of capitalism: "Any revolution, right-wing left-wing nihilist, it doesn't matter a damn, is good for business" (*Empire* 182).

Let's take a look at the third world revolution in *Empire* first. As Acker reminds us in an interview, *Empire* is composed of three parts: "The first part is an elegy for the world of patriarchy," "The second part of the book concerns what society would look like if it weren't defined by oedipal considerations and the taboos were no longer taboo," and "The third part of *Empire* is Huckleberry Finn" as "one of the primary American texts about freedom and about how you live free in a society that isn't (Friedman 17). We can see that the third world revolution in the novel follows the "elegy of patriarchy" or the demise of the symbolic or traditional authority. The third world revolution in *Empire*, as a result of which "the taboos are no longer taboos," takes place in a Western city – Paris. The Algerians in Paris think the human world of Paris is "creepy disgusting horrible nauseous shit-filled exacerbating revolting" (*Empire* 73). But, since "most of the nation's governments are right-wing and the right-wing owns values and meaning," the Algerians can only express their resistance in their carnivals through embracing "nonsense, such as voodoo, and noise" (73). Later, the Algerians who are not "content only to hover in the shadow corners alleyways of the city like tamed animals" and "to be alive by dying, slowly" (75) start to establish a terrorist organization, following the lead of Mackandel. The terrorist organization is involved with murdering many white people. But since this isn't "enough terror to start a revolution in such a bourgeois city" (75), they start to take a more radical measure of revolution. At last, they take over Paris which has become "now a third world" (82) and a third of which has become "ash" (80).

But Algerians' taking over Paris is not as liberating as is expected by Abhor, also a terrorist. There are two reasons for Abhor's disillusion ment with the revolution: the intervention of the CIA after the revolution and the sheer "nihilism" or "nothingness" haunting "the Post-Apocalyptic mess." Let's examine the relationship between the Algerian revolution and CIA first. After the American CIA learns that the Algerians have taken over Paris, the CIA comes to Paris because the mess of the post-revolutionary Paris would be "the perfect drug-testing ground" (*Empire* 144). Before getting into Paris, the CIA has been involved with the programme of inhuman body-testing, testing drugs on real human bodies, especially those "mind chemicals or drugs" that may cause "human amnesia" and "destroy human memory." For the CIA, destroying human memory is better than murder since the latter is "impractical" and tends to become "public" (142). The CIA buys a whorehouse in Paris and then, behind the two-way mirrors, observes the response of those customers who have had the drinks into which the CIA has put the drug. The "Post-Apocalyptic mess" of Paris provides the best testing-ground for the secret action of the CIA so that "though the Algerians had taken over Paris, the American CIA still ran everything" (198). The existence of the CIA fits perfectly with what Hardt and Negri calls "the society of control" since the CIA manages to control the body and the mind of people in secret and invisible ways.

The Algerian revolution fails for another reason: the same phallic jouissance or male crime still dominates the post-revolutionary ruin. In the anarchist state of the empty Paris, Algerian soldiers indulge in doing various crimes: they drink to death in brothels, they rape girls, they kill for no reasons (89–90). For Abhor, "Algerian revolution had changed nothing" and "There is always a reason for nihilism" (110). After revolution, all Abhor knows is that there is nothing left but "terror" and "nothing." As she herself says: "Once I had enough of working for bosses. Now I had had enough of nothing" (80–81).

Now let's turn to the third world revolution in *Pussy* which takes place in the third world country rather than in a western city. In *Pussy*, there is a proletariat revolution in China where there are slums in every city and where most of the women whore for money. O, an American girl, follows her boy friend W to China and then becomes a whore there. The revolutionaries in China crack such public places as embassies and government buildings. But the fortune-teller whom the whores usually counsel tells O that the revolution about to happen will fail, "due to its own nature or origin" (*Pussy* 10). The fortune-teller tells O that when the revolution fails, when the sovereignty, "be it reigning or revolutionary," disappears, when the streets become nothing but "poverty and decay," all of O's dreams "would be shattered" (10). O herself also surmises that the revolution is doomed to failure because she suspects that the same government will own everything after revolution.

O knows that the same government will own everything because it is O's boy friend W, a rich American, who financially supports the terrorists or the revolutionaries. And why does he support the revolutionaries? O surmises that W supports the revolutionaries because there is "a need in him to disrupt and destroy" (*Pussy* 21). For O, W is at most a nihilist or anarchist. Later, when W learns that the revolutionaries have taken over the English Embassy, W is frightened and realizes, for the first time, that "to be rich and white is to be vulnerable" (22). W refuses to support the revolutionaries any longer. This irritates the revolutionaries and causes them to beat him up and almost kill him.

After examining the third world revolutions in *Empire* and *Pussy*, we might proceed to investigate how the third world revolutions can be connected to sexual difference, which we have mentioned earlier. In Acker's later novels, the failure of third world revolutions is always connected to the failure of sexual relationship. Take the sexual relationship between O and W in *Pussy* for example. W's failure in supporting the China revolution is parallel to his failure in keeping a good sexual relationship with O. Just as W supports revolution because of his sheer need to disrupt and destroy, so he keeps his sexual relationship with his girl friend O for sheer sex without love. In this, W is contrasted with Artaud, a man who loves O very much and is willing to die for her. While W is O's boy friend, he just doesn't love O at all.

What W wants from O is only sex. Besides, he wants O to whore for him. Later when O learns that W is the owner of the cathouse where she whores, she totally gives up the idea that W would come back to her and take her out of the brothel. Artaud, on the other hand, is poor but loves O very much. One day when he catches sight of O in the slum where he lives, he is attracted to her at the first sight and decides instantly that he "would die for her." He then plans to save O from the whorehouse. Since he is poor, he has to become a revolutionary to earn money to be able to save her.

Artaud finally gets the money needed and goes to the whorehouse, with his body seriously wounded in the revolutionary action. When he breaks into O's room in the whorehouse, O mistakes him for an intruder and knocks him out, making him fall down "to the floor on the arm that had been broken" (*Pussy* 22). Then O starts to pity him: "You're just a boy, so how could you be hurting so badly?'" Then O reaches down to him and holds him and, suddenly, O feels a strong sexual desire for him. They have sex. "Pain," for Artaud as well as O, is "the same as sexual pleasure" (22). But Artaud is later killed by W. W as a figure of nihilistic revolution corresponds to the male side of Lacan's formulae of sexuatuon, as we have mentioned earlier. W can be thought of as a member of the "punk boys" in *Pussy*, a figure which stands for fake or nihilistic revolution. Now let's proceed to inquire into the figure of the punk boys and decode it via the male side of Lacan's formulae of sexuation.

IV. The Figure of the Punk Boys: From Nihilistic Violence to Revolutionary Violence

In *Pussy, King of the Pirates*, there is a group of male punks or terrorists called the "punk boys." The punk boys see Artaud as a true revolutionary and liberator. They are active after Artaud's death. Like Artaud, the punk boys like to destroy. But the punk boys disavow their ancestor Artaud by disavowing history: they just have "no idea how to relate to each other" though they are "at the edges of a new world" (41). Though Artaud is the protopunk boy, he is "the one the punk boys publicly disavowed" (*Pussy* 41). The punk boys can be said to be "the direct descendants" of the anarchist Heliogabalus, the emperor of Alexandria, who despises his own government, whose rein in Alexadria is "replete with murder, incest, and a lack of values" (41). The punk boys are, in fact, "the last of the race of white men" (41). This makes their revolution or violence dubious. Since they come from the race of white men, the punk boys' revolutionary actions stand for revolution without revolution, violence without violence. The punk boys claim that the reason they devote themselves to terrorist actions is that they want to fight terror with terror: as they tell the whores, "Terror is the answer for our times because we, whores and punks, cannot liberate ourselves by running away from horror, a horror that's nameless" (42). Yet, in their fighting terror with terror, they seem to lose themselves and pursue terror for terror's sake. This is why they like to fool around in ruins or graveyards. With the punk boys, the ruin or graveyard has been reified, become a fetish, and lost all revolutionary potential: "Those who live in graveyards don't know time"; "they don't think about love cause they think about sex and skulls," so they can be seen as "perverts" (70). Punk boys like to fuck, but they never come. Here, like in the case of W, the punk boys' nihilist transgression is linked with their perverted sexual attitude, i.e., doing sex for sex rather than for love.

The punk boys' nihilistic approach to violence or ruin makes their "violence against violence" or "death against death" a "horizontal" chain of differences rather than an antagonism. When violence or ruin fails to cause the inner split or the death drive of the subject, the act of "fighting violence with violence" or "fighting death with death" comes to be "reifying violence with violence" or "reifying death with death." The reification of violence or ruin fills in the lack or the split produced by violence or ruin. That is, "death" or "ruin," for the punk boys, has become a fetish and reified into a "substantial" thing. In terms of Lacanian psychoanalysis, the ruin can be compared to the *object a* which is a "void" but which can be turned into a desired object by the subject. Once the *object a* is turned into a real object, it can no longer disclose the lack in the Other (subject), but, quite the opposite, will fill in the lack. When the constitutive lack or margin becomes the center, when the Real or Thing is directly targeted, the lack will be filled up and the Real will be reified. The figure of the punk boys plays an important role in defining postmodern fluid subjectivization in which transgression or the "state of exception" becomes a norm and loses its revolutionary potential.

The punk boys, however, stand for more than nihilistic revolution or postmodern fluid subjectivization. In *Pussy*, we can see something like the redemption of the punk boys. There are many scenes or descriptions in the novel in which the punk boys get their redemption by putting themselves to death so as to win back the girls they have mistreated and thus have lost. For example, in an incest myth in *Pussy*, the (punk) boy, after losing his girl friend and getting tired of the sheer ruin and nothingness, redeems himself by cutting off his own head and dreaming "only one dream": "He begs the girl to come to him because he can't live without her" (*Pussy* 71). "The world has to being again" in ruin, so the punk boy "begins to search for her," "for the treasure of the world" (71). The punk boys who are the "last of the race of the white men" can become the "real" revolutionaries after they cut their own heads off, become dead, and are reborn: their nihilistic violence can turn into a true revolutionary violence through the gesture of reflexive reversal. No wonder, it is the punk boys who teach the prostitutes the way of piracy.

The punk boys may be seen as the vanishing mediator between the prostitutes and the pirate girls or the female motorcyclists: it is through the death or transformation of the punk boys that the passage from the prostitutes to the pirate girls or the female motorcyclists can be accomplished. In *Pussy*, it is the punk boys who teach the group of prostitutes how to become pirates. Let's quote again: "Thus the punk boys told us what it is to be a pirate. We joined up with them. It was only now that we were able to make up the rules of piracy" (*Pussy* 204). After their leader Artaud dies, the punk boys have no one to follow, so they travel to Brighton in England and come across a group of prostitutes. There the punk boys teach the prostitutes how to be pirate girls. The punk boys, who like to live in graveyards, take on the embryonic form of the figure of "posthumanity" which is further developed in the pirate girls and the female motorcyclists. It is via the figure of posthumanity, entailing the change of the "human" rules, that the postmodernist decentering violence on the subject becomes revolutionary.

The figure of the female motorcyclists or the pirate girls can be said to be a combination of the figure of the prostitutes (standing for bodily jouissance) and the figure of the punk boys (standing for nihilistic violence). The figure of the prostitutes and that of the punk boys stand for the dark side of the postmodern permissive society, whereas the figure of the pirate girls and that of the female motorcyclists stand for the utopian side: the prostitutes and the punk boys subordinate the postmodern subject to the alienating violence of the dissolution of the self, whereas the pirate girls and the female motorcyclists enact the revolutionary violence of the refiguring of the self.

The death or transformation of the punk boy or the prostitute clears a space for "posthumanity" that constitutes revolutionary violence represented by the pirate girls and the female motorcyclists. In the discourse of the third world, the figure of death is mainly connected with the "death" of the West (America as its representative) as the ultimate enemy of the third world, a "death" which may ultimately refer to the death of power (the symbolic order). But in the world of the posthuman represented by the female motorcyclists or the pirate girls, the figure of death may also refer to "the other world" beyond the world of the living, a postmortem world in which a ruin can become a utopia through the gesture of the "reflexive reversal." The figure of death points ultimately to what the living world falls short of: the posthuman. The revolutionary reformation of the human, having gone through the redeeming violence, will turn the violence of power on the subject into a violence on power.

V. The Figure of the Female Motorcyclists or the Pirate Girls: Cyborg Animal, Posthumanity, and Revolutionary Violence

The (second) death of the punk boys points to posthumanity as the real revolution of the human world. Now let's take a look at how posthumanity is figured by the female motorcyclist or the pirate girls, who end up becoming what we may call the "cyborg animals." What the "cyborg animal" entails is the "becoming" (metamorphosis) and "virtualization" of the body. We will read the figure of the "cyborg animal" in Acker in the light of Deleuzian "becoming-animal" which refigures the subject in terms of "a zone of the indiscernible, of the undecidable, between man and animal" (Deleuze 197). What we will do with the figure of the cyborg animal is to spotlight the process of the becoming in becoming-animal rather than the end results of the becoming. The figure of the cyborg animal in Acker's later novels can represent the revolutionary violence of the female body, replacing the figure of the animal in Acker's earlier novels which renders a repressive violence on the docile body or the dominated body.

The metamorphosis or virtualization of the female body as represented by the figure of the cyborg animal is built on the otherness of the body which marks the locus of "what is in the human more than the human" or the "posthuman." The becoming, metamorphosis, or virtualization of the female body may refer to woman's "having a body" (as opposed to her "being a body").[5] There is a gap between woman and her body. The gap between the body and the self creates the chance for the body to be virtualized (Žižek, *Organs* 121). The process of metamorphosing or virtualizing the female body entails a "twofold violence" in terms of the confrontation between the body and power: the female body has been metamorphosed or virtualized by power before it can be re-metamorphosed, re-virtualized, or redeemed by woman. It is this twofold violence of the female body that witnesses the female body as an otherness or a violence represented by the figure of the monster or the animal.

Before we proceed to investigate the figure of the cyborg animal, let's examine the implications of Deleuze's "becoming animal" first, which can help us decode Acker's figure of the cyborg animal and illuminate the metamorphosis or virtualization of the female body in Acker's novels. In his "The Body, the Meat and the Spirit: Becoming Animal," Deleuze claims that the body is a figure with a faceless head, which means that the "human" face will disavow or repress the animality ("animal spirit") of the body. For Deleuze, the head stands for the animal nature of the man, whereas the face marks the human nature of the man. Deleuze argues that the head is the "integral part of the body" and that "the body can even be reduced to a head" (197). The head, Deleuze insists, marks the locus of the spirit which is an "animal spirit." The animal spirit represented by the head tends to be covered by the face and even eliminated through the act of "cleaning and brushing" the face. The chain of metonymy is like this: the body =the head=the animal=the spirit. And the deformation (transformation) the body undergoes has to do with the head, with "the animal features of the head" (197). Deleuze takes Bacon's paintings for an example to illustrate this kind of "deformation" or "transformation" of the body through the deformation or transformation of the head: in Bacon's paintings, usually "the man's head is replaced by an animal" (197). But the animal on the human body in Bacon's paintings is not the animal as a "form" but the animal as "an outline" or "a shadow," which expresses the spirit of animal as well as man (197). The "outline" or "shadow" of the animal marks the "zone of the indiscernible, of the undecidable, between man and animal" (197), as we have quoted earlier.

For Deleuze, the point of "becoming animal" of the human is to enter the "indiscernible zone" between man and animal rather than to really "play" or "imitate" the animal itself. That is, the point of "becoming animal" is the act of "becoming" itself rather than the "object of becoming":

> For if becoming animal does not consist in playing animal or imitating an animal, it is clear that the human being does not "really" become an animal any more than the animal "really" becomes something else. Becoming produces nothing other than

> itself. We fall into a false alternative if we say that you either imitate or you are. What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed term through which that becoming passes. (*Thousand* 238)

What matters or "what is real" in "becoming animal," for Deleuze, is "the becoming itself" rather than "the supposedly fixed term through which that becoming passes." After "becoming animal," the human does not really imitate the animal but sets him/herself loose from the man/animal boundary: "Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, 'appearing,' 'being,' 'equaling,' or 'producing' "(*Thousand* 239). Becoming-animal, Deleuze claims, will point to the Other as a "multiplicity" within us the human: "We do not become animal without a fascination for the pack, for multiplicity. A fascination for the outside? Or is the multiplicity that fascinates us already related to a multiplicity dwelling within us" (239–40)? Becoming-animal, Deleuze insists, does not refer to "fascination for the outside" but rather to the "pack" or the "multiplicity dwelling within us." How should we explain this "multiplicity within us?" For Deleuze, every animal is a "pack" or a "band": every animal has "pack modes" rather than individual characteristics, and it is when the animal appears in the "pack modes" that the human being encounters the animal (239). Deleuze distinguishes between three kinds of animals: 1) the individuated animals which are "family pets," which "draw us into a narcissistic contemplation"; 2) animals with characteristics or attributes, which refer to the animals in the myth and can serves as "archetypes or models"; 3) demonic animals which are "pack or affect animals that form a multiplicity, a becoming, a population, a tale" (240–41). Evidently, for Deleuze, it is the third kind of animal, the "demonic animal," that stands for the "multiplicity" or the "becoming." In this third kind of animal, the animal, the "demonic," and the "multiplicity" are connected. Let's see how Deleuze elaborates on the interrelation between the animal, the "demonic" and the "multiplicity":

> But what exactly does that mean, the animal as band or pack? Does a band not imply a filiation, bringing us back to the reproduction of given characteristics? How can we conceive of a peopling, a propagation, a becoming that is without filiation or hereditary production? A multiplicity without the unity of an ancestor? It is quite simple; everybody knows it, but it is discussed only in secret. We oppose epidemic to filiation, contagion to heredity, peopling by contagion to sexual reproduction, sexual production. Bands, human or animal, proliferate by contagion, epidemics, battlefields, and catastrophes. . . . The vampire does not filiate, it infects. The difference is that contagion, epidemic, involves terms that are entirely heterogeneous: for example, a human being, an animal, and a bacterium, a virus, a molecule, a microorganism. (241–42)

Deleuze interprets the animal as a "pack" or "multiplicity" in terms of "peopling by contagion." The animal, for Deleuze, becomes a "pack" not because of the "heredity" or "sexual reproduction" but because of contagion; a "pack" or a "multiplicity" is formed out of the "contagion, epidemics, battlefields, and catastrophes." At this juncture, the mutual implication between the animal, the multiplicity, and the "demonic" (the "catastrophic") can be recognized: it is the animal that causes the demonic which is then spread as an epidemic to other heterogeneous elements so that all these elements constitute a "pact" or "multiplicity" and form a circle of multiplicity as an inner variations within the animal. The circle of multiplicity involves the following chain of metonymy: the animal = the disease (catastrophe) = the contagion = multiplicity. The circle of multiplicity, thus, entails the metonymy between the universal and the particular or that between the genus and the species: the process of becoming as the relaying of the "contagion" is triggered by an inner variation or internal difference rather than an affiliation of the heterogeneous elements. Here we see how Deleuzian "becoming" or "becoming-animal" is different from the Harawayan "cyborg" as an "affiliation," "reconstruction," or "re-assembling" of the heterogeneous elements. For Deleuze, these heterogeneous elements are gathered together not by "affiliation" of different species of creatures but by monogenesis or the internal split of the genus: the species is it's own genus, as Žižek likes to emphasize. About this monogenesis or internal split, Deleuze explains:

> A multiplicity is defined not by its elements, nor by a center of unification or comprehension. . . . Since its variations and dimension are immanent to it, it amounts to the same thing to say that each multiplicity is already composed of heterogeneous terms in symbiosis, and that a multiplicity is continually transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities. (250)

What matters in "multiplicity," for Deleuze, is neither the multiplication of the elements nor the "unification" of them but the "variations and dimensions" "immanent" to the "multiplicity" which will create more "other multiplicities." The mutual implication between "becoming" and the "death drive" constitutes the core of Acker's figure of the cyborg animal represented by the female motorcyclists or the pirate girls.

After exploring Deleuzian "becoming animal," we may now start to investigate the figure of cyborg animal in terms of Deleuzian "becoming animal" informed by the mutual implication between "becoming" and the "death drive." We term the figure of the animal in Acker's later novels the "cyborg animal" because the female body is connected with both the image of the animal and that of the machine. The combination of the female body, the animal, and the machine can be witnessed in the following description: "The animals got on their bikes and rode everywhere, anywhere, whenever" (*Empire* 169). The motorcyclist can be said to be a cyborg, half-man, half-machine. The combination of woman and the motorcycle turns the woman into a cyborg:

> I am on a Virago that feels like my two real ones, only the one I'm on is too high up: I am riding just outside my control. Handlebars that think they're the grips of a lateral-raise machine rise up from the bike frame straight into the air. I don't know how to act in the

> face of this strangeness. So I tuck chrome under my armpits. I'm still high, not falling, in no way safe. I've become strange. (*Pussy* 139–40)

On the motorcycle with handlebars which "think that they're the grips of a later-raise machine," O the biker has to tuck the handlebars under her armpits. This gesture makes her become part of the motorcycle or vice versa, the motorcycle seems to have been transplanted onto her body. O on motorcycle thus becomes a cyborg. This is also the case with Abhor in *Empire*. Though Abhor herself is born a cyborg who is "part robot, and part black," as we have mentioned, she is just a "sex object" or "body-machine" controlled and operated by her boy friend Thivai who stands for the male world or power. It's not until Abhor becomes a motorcyclist that she becomes a real cyborg, part-woman, part-motorcycle, pursuing freedom: "And so that I can move so swiftly, even when I'm not dreaming, that I fly everywhere anytime and I escape all cops forever" (*Empire* 211). The part-woman, part-motorcycle cyborg can "fly everywhere" and "escape all cops forever," which means she ("it") can get her own freedom on motorcycle. It is not difficult here to see the connection between the figure of cyborg animal and the pursuit of freedom or utopia. The last part of *Empire* actually plagiarizes the escape plot centering around Tom and Hack in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, a plot which renders "American freedom," as we have mentioned in Chapter 1. In this plot of "escaping to freedom," Abhor tries to live on her own for the first time in her life and get away from men: ". . . I was determined not to be anymore out of anyone else's head who was out of his head," as Abhor herself says (211). It is the motorcycle that enables Abhor to pursue freedom. For the motorcyclists, "there are no more laws" (170). Like Abhor, Antigone in *Pussy* also gets out of the American prison with the help of the motorcycle: "They couldn't keep me inside: all I did was speed, while driving, and I wasn't doing that illegally" (185).

The "multiplicity" as "peopling by contagion" is also behind the figure of the pirate girl as a cyborg animal. Bad Dog, one of the pirate girls, says "I want to be female again" and when O inquires of Bad Dog about what she means by that, Bad Dog answers: "Dog and murderers" (*Pussy* 189). Here, in Bad Dog's answer to the question of what it looks like to be a woman, "woman" is connected with "dog" and "murderer." What is the "murderer"? It is the "pirate." So, here "woman," "dog," and "pirate" are connected. And this connection ("peopling") is based on the "contagion" of the "otherness" which is fatal and can lead to the "death" of man: "woman," "dog," and "pirate" are all "deadly," "fatal," or "catastrophic" to man. When O inquires of Silver about who the captain of the pirate ship is, Silver responds by pointing to a pirate girl who Silver claims "can kill a man at forty yards," whom O sees "lying between two gigantic wolfhounds" (218). After meeting this dog-like girl with the ability to kill men, O says she sees "the point of taking these repulsive girls with us on our search for buried treasure" (218). For O, it is the animal with the ability to kill a man that can count as a trustworthy pirate. The heterogeneous elements of "woman," "animal," and "pirate" are "peopled" together by "fatality" as the defining feature of the pirate girl. No wonder, "death" is the origin of the pirate girls, as Bad Dog claims. "Do we know who we are? Mustn't we go back to our past? Where are the pirates of yesteryear," Bad Dog asks the other pirate girls, and then she herself answers that question this way: "Girls of fortune, we, and this is the first time, here, in Brighton, that we call ourselves fortunate, know that we come from a long and glorious lineage. Of *death*. For one of the meanings of the word lineage is '*dead*'" (190, italics mine). For Bad Dog, the pirate girls come from the lineage of "death." But the end is the beginning and the catastrophe is the hope for the pirate girl as a "catastrophic subject" born of the lineage of "death": for "the first time" and right "here" they are "fortunate." Later, Bad Dog claims that "Pirates came from the moment when animals became holy" because, according to the myth she tells us, the Wild God (the Wild One) as the creator of the world won't let the Lord of Genealogy live unless the latter makes himself "Lord of the Animals" (195). Here we see how the element of "animal" reinforces the element of "otherness" in the pirate (girl) as the figure of cyborg animal and these two elements then in turn reinforce the element of "woman" as a "murderer" of man.

In Acker's novels, the otherness of woman or woman as the "real" other is represented by the figure of the animal; the figure of the animal represents the "inhuman core" of the human which constitutes what is "more human than the human" or a violence within his/her social or sexual relationship. When woman's body is enjoyed by the Other, the otherness of the body is connected with the inhuman part within the human. But we should not mistake the Other or the inhuman part within the subject for the Kristevan abject as the natural (maternal) body repressed by power. The Other shouldn't be understood as an "unattainable object in a linear subject-object relationship" but should be seen as "a function that derails the linearity of the subject-object relationship, figured in the relationship between the subject and *objet petit a*"; "Otherness figures the persistence of desire as excess, an unresolved carryover of intersubjective interaction" (Flieger 2005:235). The Other is the otherness of the body which causes the subject's unsatisfied desire or surplus enjoyment and hinders the linear subject-object or subject-subject relationship. The otherness of the body constitutes the structure of what Lacan coins as "extimacy" figured by the topology of the moebius strip which involves, simply speaking, "the relation of a small 'a' with the Symbolic order" (Miller). The extimacy involves the four terms S1, S2, the $, and the *object a*, where the first three refer to the flow or the exchange of the subject position in the chain of the signifiers (the symbolic order or the Other), whereas the last term refers to the "heterogeneous element in the structure" which marks the "not-all" of the signifying process (see Miller). It is the *object a* as the object cause of desire that triggers the whole signifying process of identification. Thus, the body as the *object a* or an "extimate" object mediates between the subject and the Other; the body is the vanishing mediator between the subject and the Other. The subject's "extimate" relationship with the Other is inscribed in and mediated by the *object a*: "Lacanian Other is confounded with the body as the place of inscription: on the one hand as a web of signifiers, and on the other as unsymbolizable real being, remaining out of reach of the nameable" (André 95). André Serge aptly connects the Other, the body, and woman through the Lacanian "not-all": "If a woman can incarnate the body that the subject tries in vain to unite with, it is because woman, or the body of woman, has the value of the metaphor of the Other to which there is no signifiable relation: like the Other, the woman is discompleted, not-all subjected to the signifying law" (97). The relationship between the woman, the body, and the Other, for André, thus constitutes an equation: the woman is equal to her body which is in turn equal to the Other, all of which are equal to the Lacanian "not-all."

The existence of the female body as the otherness of the woman or the human beings as a whole can only be indirectly proved through sexual violence on woman. In Acker's novels, the body is always a body of violence, or, to be more precise, the body always marks the violence within the sexual relationship. The violence of /on the body can foreground the existence of this "otherness" or "negativity" in the core of the subject. The body is something which can only be indirectly proved through the hurt or the violence on the body: the existence of the female body as the otherness of woman can only be indirectly proved through sexual violence on woman. The otherness of woman, figured by the cyborg animals, points to posthumanity of woman and makes woman more human than man since posthumanity indicates what is in the human more than the human.

VI. Conclusion

Posthumanity constitutes the essence of the prostitute who sells her body as a commodity. It is her posthumanity that makes the prostitute become the other of human society and speak for the paradox of (post)modernity or (post)modern subjectivity. In terms of the liberation of the body, the prostitute stands for both ideology and utopia, for both repressive violence and revolutionary violence. This is why the figure of the prostitute recurs in Acker's novels, whose main concern is the paradoxical effects of the sexual liberation on (post)modern women. The prostitute can be seen as the vanishing mediator between the tradition and modernity in the sense that the liberation of the female body entails a "double violence" or a "double death": the female body has to suffer from the "violence" or "death" (commodification, objectification, alienation) first, and then, in the gesture of a "reflexive reversal," the same violence (death) can witness the emergence of the excess, surplus, or otherness, pointing to Freudian "death drive." That is, the prostitute's (modern woman's) body never emerges without a certain form of violence or, to put in another way, the prostitute's body is a violence itself. In Acker's earlier novels, this violence is a repressive violence represented by the raped body, the beaten body, the imprisoned body, the dominated body, the commodified body, or the "docile body" of the heroines as victims; in Acker's later novels, this violence is revolutionary violence represented by the "posthuman body" of the female motorcyclists and the pirate girls as the revolutionary women. The repressive violence on the female body corresponds to the figure of the third world, whereas the revolutionary violence of the female body is echoed by the figure of the cyborg animal represented by the female motorcyclists or the pirate girls.

When critics claim that Acker's novels are informed by an "aesthetic of violence," they focus on how Acker's violent language explodes the dominant discourse. These critics are right with Acker's earlier novels, in which sexual violence on women are consistently connected with the violence of language. For example, Christina Milletti explores how Acker uses the "intersections of political and literary violence" to dissect the normativity implied in the power-language-sexuality continuum and produces "transgressive textual acts" (354). Acker's terroristic "textual acts," for Miletti, can break through the "discursive networks" which "shape and transform the identities of marginalized subjects" (356). Thus, for Miletti, the idea of "violence" or "terrorism" offers an "abject position" with regard to Western hegemony, a position by virtue of which Acker can "foment a challenge to, and become an unsettling force within, a system of power that positions marginalized figures (the feminine, the queer, the poor, and the non-western) outside dominant narratives" (357).

Milleti is arguably a pro-deconstruction critic who hails Acker's deconstructionist or terrorist aesthetic for its ability to dismantle or explode dominate (western, male) discourse or ideology. For Milletti, an explosion of discourses is correlated to the explosion of identities, which can help overthrow the dominant sexual relationship or power relationship between the West and the third world. Christina Milletti argues:

> Acker's terrorist poetics are designed specifically for this task: not only do they disrupt the system's gears, jam its institutional organs, but, above all, they refuse to install "replacement" parts which might erect a new system from the scrap of the old. In this regard, it might be said that Acker reconceives "revolution" to mean "revelation" – an enhanced awareness of the function and proliferation of discourses among their subjects: an opening up (or dehiscence) of the system to itself by a writing that highlights its boundaries. Her poetics thereby enable a state of perpetual dismantling: a jamming that is not the cease of motion, but ceaseless oscillation; a chaos that is neither destructive nor constructive, but that always reveals the limits that keep the masculine and the feminine, the homo and the hetero, the first and third worlds, apart. (368–69)

The "perpetual dismantling" or "ceaseless oscillation" enacted by the "proliferation of discourses," for Miletti, will cross the limits or boundaries of the fixed or dominant ideology or identification.

Apt as Miletti's comments on Acker's "terroristic aesthetic" are, they can apply only to Acker's earlier novels, but not the later ones in which Acker connects "terroristic aesthetic" with myths or mythical narratives which are relatively "unitary" and "utopian," aiming not for "deconstructing" power but for "constructing" female utopia. This utopia is enacted by posthumanity of woman which changes the coordinates of the normal human world dominated by men. Posthumanity or the "not-all" of woman provides a "universality" or "totality" of woman in a negative way: as Žižek puts it, a concrete universal is based on a particular which is excluded and it is this excluded particular or exception that makes the universal concrete

(*Organs* 50–51). Posthumanity of woman thus marks what is excluded by the human (as defined by man), but, precisely because of its status as an exclusion or exception, posthumanity points to what is in the human more than the human. The revolutionary reformation of the human figured by the otherness of the female body turn a body suffering from the violence of power into a body that creates a violence on power, a symptomatic body that exposes the lack in power. The posthuman figures such as female motorcyclists and the pirate girls do violence to power by doing violence to their bodies.

In the posthuman world, the human limitation is lifted: "The animals got on their bikes and rode everywhere, anywhere," as Thivai, the representative of the male world, says about the motorcycle gang outside the prison he is now in (*Empire of the Senseless* 169). In the "posthuman" world, it is power itself that is put into prison. Through an act of "violence on violence," the cyborg-animal takes over the normal human world. The rules of the normal human world no longer apply in this "posthuman" world. At the end of *Empire*, Abhor, now a motorcyclist and cyborg animal, announces: "From now on *The High Way Code* no longer mattered. I was making up the rules" (*Empire of the Senseless* 222). *The High Way Code* instructs Abhor on how to ride on the road, but she finds that no rule in the "code" actually works when she rides her Honda on the road. This is why she has to make up the rules for herself. The posthuman world in *Pussy*, dominated by the pirate girls, another group of cyborg animals, is no less other-worldly than that dominated by the female motorcyclists. The pub the pirate girls hang around looks dirty when seen from the outside (human) world, but it looks clean and flashy seen from inside: ". . . though from the outside this shelter for drunks looked as if rats were using it for their gym, to my surprise, its insides were clean," as O, the prostitute-becoming-a-pirate, pronounces (*Pussy* 217). O, the prostitute who is going to join the pirate girls to search for the treasure, who is the boundary-crosser between the world of the prostitute and the world of the pirate girls, recognizes the difference between the "outside," the human world and the "inside," the "posthuman" one.

NOTES

[1] For Žižek, "innocent" violence as "pure" violence has two different connotations: "pure" violence as "the state of exception" posited by Carl Schmitt and "pure" revolutionary violence posited by Benjamin (*Iraq* 158–62).

[2] What we mean by "utopia" here is not any "imaginary" paradise to be accomplished by any political revolution (such as the third-world revolution) but the "real" transformation enacted by the change of the parameters of the social rules (in this sense a utopia is equal to a ruin). For Žižek, a utopia is enacted in the process of "becoming" in which the normal linear temporality is suspended and the past, present, and future are connected in the "dialectic at a standstill"; the criterion of a utopia is an "immanent" one and a utopia has to be "enacted" rather than "found" (see Žižek, *Puppet* 22–23). The "actual" or the "present" world can become utopia when the former is "looked awry" so that its rules or coordinates change. In Acker's later novels, the female utopia amounts to posthumanity and is enacted through the "posthuman" world.

[3] The discourse of the third-world revolution (violence, terrorism) may end up filling in the lack of the West and being co-opted by the later, as we will discuss in more details in Section III.

[4] Lacan's formulae of sexual difference are based on the difference between the "prohibition" (the loss) and the "impossible" (the lack) in the symbolic. On the male side of the formulae, the "phallic function" or the phallic signifier as a signifier without signified is coupled with an exception – "an x" –which can negate the phallic function (Lacan 79–80). This exception or "x" can be translated as the *object a* as such. When the male subject devotes himself to the phallic function or the phallic signifier as a signifier without signified, he presumes that there must be something out of the reach of him, which will lead to a phallic jouissance (81). To pursue this something out there entices the male subject take the transgressive strategy. On the female side of the formula, there is no exception in the symbolic. But just because there is no exception in the symbolic, the nature of the symbolic as such can manifest itself: the symbolic is never the whole, the symbolic is "not-whole," or, as Lacan puts it in another way, "She is there in full" but "there is something more" (74). This "not-whole" or immanent difference can emerge only when the subject takes the fatal

strategy of scarifying everything she has to the Other and let the Other commit a suicide itself, thus creating a "separation" of the Other as well as the subject. Both phallic joiussance and feminine jouissance point to the "lack " in the symbolic order, but their difference lies in that the phallic joiussance creates a standing-in for the lack, whereas the feminine jouissance leaves the "lack" alone without providing any mandate for it.

[5] According to Miller, the body can be divided into two kinds: the "ego-body," the "body of knowledge," the "body-pleasure which obeys"; and "body-jouissance," the libidinal body, the body by which the unconscious desires or drives can manifest themselves (21). In terms of the self/body (mind/body or soul/body) relationship, the "ego-body" can translate as "being a body," whereas the "body-jouissance" can translate as "having a body": when your body is reduced to pleasure of the raw flesh, you are "being a body," whereas, when your body can express your unconscious desires or drives, you are "having a body" (21).

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三種鄰居、三種暴力：凱西・艾克小說中的女性之爲他者

摘要

艾克的小說，論者常視之為「暴力美學」，其小說主角以女性為主，探討社會體制對女性的結構性暴力，描述女性在（後）現代社會中的疏離感。艾克所勾勒的女性主義跟傳統女性主義不同之處在於她突顯女性「解放」（性解放）之後的矛盾與弔詭，而不在於一味強調女性的「解放」。本文探討艾克如何借用三種不同的「他者」意象來表達女性與（後）現代「解放社會」的三種暴力關係。「第三世界」的「他者」意象象徵（後）現代社會的「壓制性」暴力，「龐克男孩」象徵「虛無主義式的解構暴力」，而「女機車騎士」或「女海盜」則象徵「革命性暴力」。本文的結論指出暴力並非來自於社會體制本身，而是女性的本質：女性並非社會中受宰制的「他者」，而是自己的「他者」，註定永遠的「自我異化」。

關鍵字：女性、他者、異化、暴力、性革命、拉岡