

身體、空間與記憶： 鄭淑麗網路藝術中的遊牧他者之 主體建構

Body, Space and Memory: The Construction of a Nomadic Other's Subjectivity in Shu-Lea Cheang's Internet Art

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摘要

鄭淑麗 (Shu-Lea Cheang) 以她世界公民的身份探討在全球化的現場當下，人們所面臨的認同問題，她所鎖定的是移民女性與西方世界知識體系的對話，尤其是亞裔女性，當她們面對時空交錯的媒體與網路生活，所帶來的多文化經驗以及身體體驗。在全球化的同時，她們的移動更成爲一種實踐，而其中牽涉到的身體移動更成爲網路虛擬藝術中的主題。因此本文聚焦探討鄭淑麗在進入二十一世紀後的近作《性愛網絡 IKU》*IKU* 2000 和《嬰兒遊戲》*Baby Play* 2001-06 系列，以網路藝術中的身體移動經驗，探討她以亞裔女性的身份爲出發所引起的身體建構議題，以及在後殖民與全球化的時空中，身體漫遊與跨文化所擦撞出的相關經驗。本文將聚焦以布烈朵堤 (Rosi Braidotti) 所提倡的「遊牧風格」(nomadism) 討論鄭淑麗以亞裔女性的身份，將其作品引介至其他亞洲國家，如日本，以及其他歐洲國家，如：丹麥、荷蘭，她在自身經驗與網路世界如何串連後人類的身體與時間、空間的相對關係，並進一步重塑自我認同與「他者」的主體性。

關鍵詞：身體、記憶、遊牧、他者、鄭淑麗

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Abstract

Shu-Lea Cheang, has restyled herself as a global citizen. In this position she intends to speak to the world with a different voice. As an Asian-American female artist, Shu-Lea Cheang concerns herself with situation of the minority. Her ethnicity and identity therefore leads us to consider her work from a totally different aspect. Artists of this background are capable of raising the issues of race, sex, and identification within Internet art, recognized as it is as a western technology, finding their own virtual life in relation to their cross-national and cross-cultural experiences. As their work has become known, their movement has entered the artistic vocabulary with the body movements involved becoming a subject in Internet virtual art.

Therefore, this paper focuses on Shu-Lea Cheang's art works from the twenty-first century, the *IKU* series in 2000 and the *Baby Play* in 2001-06; to confer the issue of body construction raised by her status as an Asian female from the experience of the body's movement in Internet art, as well as associated experiences initiated by body-roaming and culture-crossing. Shu-Lea Cheang provided another kind of identification as a western "other". Thus, this paper will focus on applying the aspect of the nomadic style that is introducing her work to other Asian countries such as Japan, and other European countries, for example, Denmark and Holland; the correlation of the post-human body, with time and space, in her self-experience and how she connects these waves in cyberspace.

Keywords: body, memory, nomadism, other, Shu-Lea Cheang



Shu-Lea Cheang, an active artist, who was born in Taiwan, studied in the United States,¹ but now resides at wherever she feels most at home in the world. In her early days, she actively participated in the Joint Exhibition of art museums. Her particular skill was in joining together dozens of artists or people from the circles of literature and art in this exhibition; her strategic approach to this has enabled her to pass effortlessly among various countries. Subsequent to this artist from her Internet creations became objects of cooperation in many world-famous museums.² Her base then moved from the United States of America to Europe, especially Amsterdam.³ As an Asian-American female artist, Shu-Lea Cheang has extended her focus from the situation of minorities in her early creation, to a closer attention to the female body, in furtherance of this she has filmed pornographic-artistic movies. Her focus mainly on female issues is evident, and the attempt also reveals that in the creations of female artist, there must be a closely-related concern with the self of the artist. In the late 1990's, Shu-Lea Cheang shifted the core of her creation to the Internet-media-art; she explored the problem with recognition which people face in the scene of globalization using her identity as a global citizen. On a closer inspection of her creation, it can be seen that she was still focusing on the interaction between female immigrants and the western knowledge system, especially on the issue of sexes, races, and classes, and how these act upon female immigrants, chiefly Asian women; when they confront the media and Internet, crossing space and time, body experiences raised by their multicultural experiences. The uniqueness of Shu-Lea Cheang's work lies in the fact that she took part in the development of Internet art, a field that originated from "white people" and the "middle class";⁴ as an Asian female, she creates a totally different aspect for discussion. The ubiquity of the Internet has had tremendous impact on those living in developed countries or those who hold a purely western perspective.

¹ In that time, Taiwan had just broken off relation with the United States of America and broken from the United Nations; therefore, many students chose to go to America for further education, and also to escape from the Martial Law Period in Taiwan.

² In the 21st century, she was also an invited artist of a large-scale biennale, including the 2000's Taipei biennale and the 2003's Venice biennale.

³ For detailed creation year-schedule, cf. website <http://www.juliafriedman.com/bio_cheang.html>

⁴ Maria Fernández posited that many post-colonialists think that electronic media theory comes mostly from white, middle classed people. On the other hand, because of the electronic media's lack of substantial human character and the method of anonymous interfering, making it difficult for electronic media to interact with the post-colonialism which emphasize the body as a mark of memory. Fernandez, Maria. "Postcolonial Media Theory." *Art Journal* 58.(1999.3), 63.



According to the observation of the author of this paper, among those artists who are capable of raising the viewpoint of race, sex, and identification within the dynamic of Internet art, which is recognized as western technology and virtual life, no one is better than those third world females who are now living and working in the western world. Because of their cross-national and cross-cultural experiences, as with the globalization, their movement has become a kind of practice. The body movement involved has also become a subject in Internet virtual art.

Therefore, this paper focuses on Shu-Lea Cheang's latest work since the 21st century, *IKU 2000* and *Baby Series 2001-06*; to tackle the issue of body construction raised by her starting as an Asian female passing through her experience of the body movement in Internet art, as well as the associated experience sparked by body-roaming and culture-crossing. Shu-Lea Cheang provided another kind of identification as a western "other", as she proclaimed, "I am an Internet nomad."⁵ In fact, "roaming" or "nomadic" style is highly advocated by Rosi Braidotti, a cyber feminist scholar, "the 'nomadic' style is most suited to the quest for feminist figurations, in the sense of adequate representations of female experience as that which cannot easily be fitted within the parameters of phallogocentric language."⁶ In addition, Braidotti further concluded, "a nomadic style of feminism will allow women to rethink their position in a postindustrial, post-metaphysical world, without nostalgia, paranoia, or false sentimentalism."⁷ Therefore, Cheang displays an emotion that is withdrawn from Asian female's nostalgia, by continuously moving herself, whether in the real world or a virtual space, she rejects the sense of rootedness in pursuit of existing as a female immigrant of cross-identification.

This paper, then will focus on applying the aspects of a nomadic style that is introducing her work to other Asian countries such as Japan, and other European countries, like, Denmark and Holland; the correlation of the post-human body, time and space, in her self-experience connecting to the cyberspace. As Braidotti's opinion:

⁵ qtd. in Guo, Tie-Ru. 2001. "Pornographic Version of the *Blade Runner* – How an Art Museum Artist Became a Pornographic-Film Director" *Artview* 11(2010): 10-17.

⁶ Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. (New York: Columbia UP, 1997), 60.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.



The nomadic subject is a myth, that is to say a political fiction, that allows me to think through and move across established categories and levels of experience: blurring boundaries without burning bridges...Though the image of "nomadic subject" is inspired by the experience of peoples or cultures that are literally nomadic, the nomadism in question here refers to the kind of critical consciousness that resists setting into socially coded modes of thought and behavior...It is the subversion of set conventions that defines the nomadic state, not the literal act of travelling.⁸

In other words, Shu-Lea Cheang applies the idea of nomadism to the territory of cyberspace and creates a cyber-body composed of different subjects, to shuttle around the cyber-world in order to blur boundaries of any identities and in what Braidotti stated again: "It entails a total dissolution of the notion of a center and consequently of originary sites or authentic identities of any kind".⁹ Furthermore, the most inspiring part of Braidotti's theory of nomadism is stated in recent work and she confirms that the issue of nomadism is related to gender and ethnicity as the backdrop when it comes to visibility. She states:

Gender and ethnicity play a central role in regulating access to visibility with high definitions of identity, as opposed to the invisible anonymity of those who are marginalized. In other words, power today is a matter of selection and control, entitlement and access: it is bio-power, centred on the body in its material and immaterial manifestations.¹⁰

⁸ Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia UP., 1994), 4-5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.



Nomadism could then be viewed as a way for women of color to pursue and reconstruct their identities and subjectivities in the modern world. Whereas, the connection between nomadism and post-colonialism is what Donna Haraway states to consider the issue on the basis of knowledge of science and split the sense:

Feminism loves another science: the sciences and politics of interpretation, translation, stuttering and the partly understood. Feminism is about the sciences of the multiple subject with (at least) double vision. Feminism is about a critical vision consequent upon a critical positioning in unhomogeneous gendered social space.¹¹

While most of scholars and academic papers persistently focus on the subject of diaspora and body displacement of women of color, this paper is trying to expand the issue to break the ground of situated knowledge and remodel the image of women of color. Again, Haraway concludes: "Situated knowledges are about communities, not about isolated individuals".¹² The more possibility of putting women of color into the field of science into account, the larger vision we can foresee in the future.

1. Body and Space: Modifying the Retrievable Memories

To cooperate with a Japanese independent movie company in filming pornographic films, *IKU 2000* (picture 1),¹³ is a strategy by which Cheang tried to move towards the minorities. *IKU* is a phrase that Japanese female porn-stars call out when they reach orgasm. The super-cyborg named Reiko, "Through her multi-transfiguration, just as an arm/phallus of fantasy incarnated by Lacan's sexual theory, as well as the exquisite multi-dimensional sexual theatre, accomplishes itself (being an enterprise's secret weapon in the technology era, and a

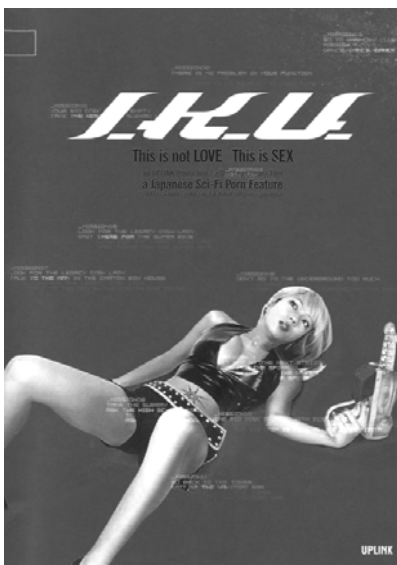
¹¹ Donna. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, edited by Amelia Jones, New York: Routledge. 1997, 291.

¹² *Ibid.*, 292.

¹³ After a series of cooperation with art museums, Shu-Lea Cheang intended to try cooperating with some private companies, tending slightly towards underground avant garde work.



mission special agent in searching out and collecting information pertaining to orgasm) of its subjectivity and movability".¹⁴ The role of Reiko possesses a kind of prototype of ancient myth. With a special never-exhausted energy, it is a goddess of senses full of carnal desires. This character also meaningfully overturned the traditional image of the female in pornographic films; she is the giver, and also the developer. We can see from the extreme subjectivity of her that she plays the double role of puppet and the puppeteer in the control system. Hung stated, "For one thing, she goes in and out of different kinds of male and female bodies by her ever-changing polymorphous liquid-flesh; for another, serves the others, giving the ultimate resplendent orgasm as if in heaven, and uses it as a sexual information data saved in the hard discs of her cyborg body",¹⁵ What Reiko now thinks becomes insignificant, because in this process of sex, she ingeniously evaded the unbreakable theory of eroticism; on the contrary, it delightfully satisfies every need. To Cheang, *IKU* is not telling a story of a cyborg, and handles every sex orgasm as a memory data, and under this condition, "sex" is merely an exchange of information. What Cheang attempted was "to alter the grand and spectacular story of human's love."



【picture1】 Shu-Lea Cheang, *IKU*, 2000.

¹⁴ Hung, Lucifer. "The Novel Snipes, Assassinate of the Desire – On the Films of Shu-Lea Cheang" *Chinese Taipei Film Archive* 18(2000.2):88.

¹⁵ Ibid.



If further comparing the cyborg that Shu-Lea Cheang advocates with the post-colonialism reading, we can see that when dealing with the problem of body, identity and history, she has surpassed the original threshold of post-colonialism, trying to propose a new prospect of identification; that is, to stride across identity, or even, not to identify it. As for Fernández's statement, "both postcolonial studies and electronic media theory discloses an overwhelming preoccupation with the body, identity, history, feminism, and agency that could be used imaginatively toward common ends",¹⁶ science fiction writers are inclined to consider the human body as purely flesh or repository of nostalgia, thus, only the cyborg is suited to life in the future world; and virtualization provides an extremely important concept to substitute for the original flesh. The mimicry, stereotyping, exoticism, or primitivism, seems difficult to associate with digital technology theory; however, it was not until Haraway's article "A Manifesto for Cyborg: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's".¹⁷ did the cyborg become the bridge between white-female feminism and third-world-female feminism. Haraway indicated that a colored woman could be interpreted as the cyborg's identification, because the subjectivity of the cyborg also comes from the compounded-identity given it by the others.¹⁸ The most important thing is that the cyborg is a subject that differs from the one that first-world/white people recognize. Thus, Shu-Lea Cheang's creation of *IKU* shows the concern for the phenomenon of the colored-woman and connotations she has of sexual trading, of the sexual act as a remunerative act. It artfully displays this in the realm of science-fiction; it also aims to overturn the preponderant situation of the colored-woman or Asian female where she is treated or handled in the field of science.

Under the lead of Haraway, the relationship of women from the third world and cyborg are closely bound together. Furthermore, the issue of emblem recognition --multiple, confronting, and contradicting, are the identity traits common to both parties. As a result, we can see from Cheang's cyborg, her identity is entirely egoistic and opened. Even though Reiko is a cyborg that collects orgasms, she can choose the targets she wants to collect from,

¹⁶ Fernández, "Postcolonial Media Theory.", 60.

¹⁷ See "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." 475-497.

¹⁸ See the further statement of Fernández : "With the exception of references to cyborgian qualities, including the multiple subjectivities of the mestiza, women of color seldom figure in the work of cyberfeminists. The supposition that women of color are natural cyborgs or that they already possess the tools necessary to oppose and to subvert oppressive practices is often used tacitly to condone separatism" (Fernández , "Postcolonial Media Theory.", 63.)



and if the data is not suitable or not needed, she can even delete or discard them. Although developed by the company to be a character resembling a sexual secret agent, Reiko's movable subjectivity, especially in the field of eroticism, displays a state of self-sufficiency. Whereas, B. Ruby Rich stated that *I.K.U* releases the body from the imprisonment of sex, granting rights to the fantasized object and with it simultaneously to infiltrates the user and the one being used, carrier and receiver, into a pornographic, impulsive, exciting and satisfying Internet world.¹⁹ This interlacing of multi-identity can reveal the peremptoriness of heterosexualism.²⁰ Shu- Lea Cheang used this fictitious female cyborg as a cross-sexual spokesperson. It could be argued that the thing most worthy of note is that Cheang designs all the Reikos to be Eastern females, which provides another aspect for discussion in handling the issues of race, nationality, and digital technology. For the earlier cyborgs, hidden and anonymous in their identity, she emphasized that they have hybrid characteristics, she seems to place them in a pure space for narration; for this, Jennifer González once criticized the problem of dealing with the cyborg's identity in an article, what makes the word "hybrid" controversial is "the assumed existence of a non-hybrid state—a pure state, a pure species, a pure race—with which it is contrasted. It is this notion of purity that must in fact be problematized".²¹ As a result, in Cheang's *IKU*, the cyborg is of Eastern character, and works to collect orgasms. To analyze this arrangement, the author of this paper assumes it substantiates two aspects of meaning. The first aspect is the racial problem of Reiko whom Cheang displays as an Asian female based on her own Asian background and her intention is to propose the position of being an Asian female in the field of digital technology. As a corollary to this, the Western female, originally eroticized by exoticism, has been transformed into a passive erotic character which can be applied to often-seen media, but an Asian female in the story of *IKU* has become the free-willed character that controls the erotic relationship. Therefore, Reiko subverts the stereotype of being an object of eroticism and to model this

¹⁹ Summarized by the author of this paper. See Rich, Ruby B. "The I.K.U Experience, The Shu-Lea Cheang Phenomenon." <<http://www.brubyrich.com/>>

²⁰ In 1998, the first Internet art creation, *Brandon 1998*, exhibited in the Guggenheim, New York. By many designs of interaction, "the visitor can identify with Brandon so that the radical potential of the breakdown of rigid categories of gender and sexuality can be experienced through the artwork." (Marchetti 2002, 416). As the writer's opinion, Shu-Lea Cheang's compassion toward the event of Brandon, is more of a dealing with the crisis of interpersonal relationships, especially the sex orientation of homosexual, and its development of sexual passion being edged out by the society.

²¹ qtd. Fernández, "Postcolonial Media Theory.", 64.



character is another departure from accepted knowledge. When the curator, Jermone Sans asked if it could obtain the majority recognition of minority-race's social goals by adding racial problems connected with pornographic films, Cheang answered, "*I.K.U.* boldly embraces sexual minority, transsexuality, in its all inclusive gender fuck. The orgasm data is color coded. Mobile instant sex for the generation on the go, mass marketed proletarian sex, share and consume" ("Interview") Hereby, Cheang reiterates the eroticism problems, her concerns are the consistence of sexes, races, and classes. Therefore, *Reiko* is a multiple subject, continuously shifting, moving, emerging, and disappearing in the place of it; however, they are not without origins, rather, they possess an opened spirit.

*In postcolonial studies theories of identity emphasize the social—identities are historically rooted, open-ended, collective political projects. Electronic media theory gives primacy to the individual as the construction of identity is viewed as an opportunity for self-development and (re)creation.*²²

Thus, it can be seen within Cheang's cyborg the attempt of crossing the historical identity that was constructed on the bases of post-colonialism. She placed emphasis on a kind of self-initiated multi-identity. Katrien Jacobs discussed the "queer voyeurism" and Cheang's intention of proposing to use pussy as a representative symbol of a matrix in *IKU* in her paper. Jacobs pointed out, Cheang's attempt in this film is "improvising within the realm of subversive eroticism disguised as 'Japanese pornography'"²³ She also mentioned that *IKU* is different from the idea of practicing society by imagined globalization proposed by Arjun Appadurai.²⁴ According to Jacobs, *IKU* "symbolically locates sex practices and pornographic

²² Fernández, "Postcolonial Media Theory," 65.

²³ Jacobs, Katrien. 2003. "Queer Voyeurism and the Pussy-Matrix in Shu-Lea Cheang's Japanese Pornography." Accessed March 02, 2011. <http://pages.emerson.edu/faculty/K/Katrien_Jacobs/articles/iku/iku.html#>

²⁴ Arjun Appadurai thinks that there are five cultural dimensions of globalization: ethnoscaples, mediascaples, techonoscaples, financescaples, and ideoscaples. See Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota P. p.33. The queerscaples that Katrien Jacobs quoted is from the study of Marchetti and her further interpretation. See Marchetti, Gina. "Cinema Frames, Videoscaples, and Cyberspace: Exploring Shu Lea Cheang's *Fresh Kill*." (2002): 412.



consumption in the realm of transnational cultural production." First, the passage indicated that Cheang re-wrote the pleasant sensation while watching heterosexual eroticism of the heterosexual and homosexual audience. Furthermore, Jacobs raised the concept of queerscapes, which "develop new concepts of space, gender and sexuality as they permeate the plural encounters between local and global citizens. Cheang's work and porns exemplify Appudurai's concept of geography, indication that queerscapes consist of zones of encounter figured upon ephemeral queer communities".²⁵ Also, on the great numbers of sexual scenes in the film, Jacobs thinks that by this method of presenting, Cheang is trying to propose the message that "the pussy is the matrix",²⁶ with it, to overturn the female character whose eroticism is often being "passively" handled in Japanese pornographic films. Moreover, Jacobs also thinks that the minority group is not "a people", which is not fully identified or decided. Therefore, she considers that in *IKU* those who possess the code are without a clear future, they have no history of being in a minority position, but are in the process of "becoming". "Becoming" is an innovational construction for it shuttles between the future and the past. "Cybersex killed the centerfold, and gave viewers the sensation of being 'queered' through ongoing encounters with multiple and transformative partners of desire"²⁷. Therefore, the genre, the issue, and even the method of creating, all displayed Shu-Lea Cheang's attempt to transcend the long-term concept and stereotype of others. The openness of *IKU* will not be easy to locate and explicate.

Except for the dreams, in Shu-Lea Cheang's *IKU*, the one who possesses all kinds of orgasm data, Reiko, has the repository of this information made possible by computer chip and computer memory (picture 2). As a result of people's memory becoming electrical, and ability to save, modify, replicate, set files, re-access, and re-use, etc. Thus, memories become a production, consumer goods, and a manufactured product that can be replaced and re-produced. The ultimate privacies which came under the individuals control are thus replaced with the files, and are merely an arrangement or combination of some digits, already losing the original uniqueness and privacy. Reiko is writing of her experiences, therefore through the utilization of her saved memory; in between every sexual encounter, the original

²⁵ Jacobs, Katrien. 2003. "Queer Voyeurism and the Pussy-Matrix in Shu-Lea Cheang's Japanese Pornography," 8. Accessed March 02, 2011. http://pages.emerson.edu/faculty/K/Katrien_Jacobs/articles/iku/iku.html.

²⁶ Ibid., 12.

²⁷ Ibid., 9.



privacy became a part of the memory file. The uniqueness of memory is no longer available, ceding its position to the memory that the body kept and which can be written down. If placing *IKU* under the category of science-fiction to analyze, science-fiction's exploration of memory was displayed more outstandingly due to the conjunction of the subject with cyberpunk in the 1980's. Hung mentioned, "Cyberpunk is closely connected with the Internet, enabling the main character to enter a space that is not a real space; that is, cyberspace. Through all kinds of virtual effects of reality, let us exist simultaneously in "the presence (spot)" and "the spot with no time limit and space".²⁸ Cyberspace comes from a tremendous database connected by computer; as a result, memory can be searched, retrieved, revised and embedded into another database. Reiko is a cyberpunk-like character, with an ambiguous place to write the relationship between body eroticism and memory for females. As Cheang's statement, the main character in *IKU* she displays a more simplified logic: humans no longer are bounded by memory and emotions. In *IKU*, "the female body in the film is a hard drive, the memory byte within in is already being set. They become the sex machines that collect orgasm; when the hard drive is full, it has to download; when rebooted, it must update."²⁹ This state is a self-contained world. Cheang claimed: I would rather believe that I, myself, am a machine of self-content. However, as Haraway mentioned while recollecting the cyborg's memories, "they do not remember the universe, they are cautious about holism, still, they need to connect."³⁰ As a result, a cyborg's memory finds the process and the purpose by which it is irrelevant made. The author of this paper considers that cyborg memory is, in fact, related to their own body-experiences; and that memory is directly connected with the body, not migratory and returning to the mother's body or the creator, father.³¹ Therefore, the performance of the body when engaged in different movements is the memory of the cyborg. *IKU*, was the denouement with which Cheang's movie work built to. The memory part is wonderful and delightful because Reiko's collecting work is the most extreme pleasure of human beings- orgasm. Undoubtedly, Cheang chose to keep the part of memory which is

²⁸ Hung, 1998, 33.

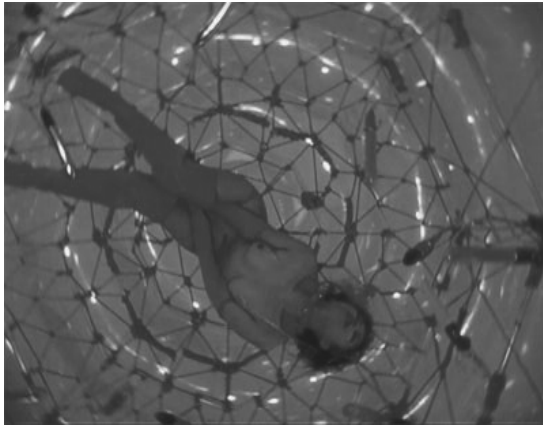
²⁹ Chiu, Li-Zing. "Kick! Baby. Kick! -- Shu-Lea Cheang Remarks on the New Media Art on Internet" *Chinese Taipei Film Archive* 19.(2001.3), 58.

³⁰ Haraway, 2003, 477.

³¹ See Braidotti, Rosi, "Cyberfeminism with a Difference." *In The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, edited by Amelia Jones, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 531-3



cheerful. If further exploring the background of the main character in *IKU*, it is also a display of collective-pleasure. First, Tokitoh Ayumu, who plays the role of Reiko, is in fact an actress in adult movies for a satellite TV station. Among the other actors, some are strippers, some are magazine models. While some are artist performing in fetish shows or other extreme forms of titillation. These people were all discovered by Cheang while she frequented to the clubs in Tokyo, jointing the "night life", watching adult movies. Therefore, Ayumu and the other actors represent pleasurable memory. The nature of human beings should be kept in the memory of delight and orgasm.



【picture 2】 Shu-Lea Cheang, *IKU*, 2000.

2. Body and Time: Sharing the Pleasurable Memory

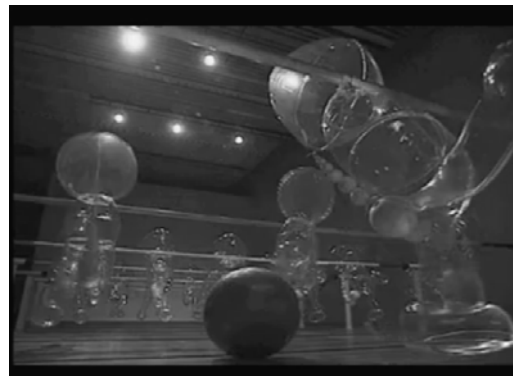
When considering the role of body and memory, Shu-Lea Cheang takes a different aspect in *Baby Play* 2001 (picture 3). This creation was inspired by cloning. Assume that in 2030, there is a biological-technology company starting to produce a baby with a locker, which is called locker baby. Afterwards, as a result of the development of cloning technology, it is possible to clone a baby. Thus, Clone Babies are the future generations. They will be able to replace foreign laborers, and they replace anything which we place our emotions and encounters on. Cheang's intention in this program is to make robots adorable family pets, or intimate friends. In the process of these robots' development, the most difficult problem to be solved is the memory. Cheang thought that human consciousness is of a higher level which has memories, families, and affections; their emotion is more complicated and more copious.



The production processes of robots, then, involve the problems of emotional and memorial consignment, which are inseparable from the body-writing. To begin with, baby's feet must be big enough in order to play soccer; the baby has no need of facial features; probably it can be explained as the result of evolution, and facial expressions aren't very important at all because the clone baby relies on its emotional memory to play soccer (picture 4). For this kind of clone baby, the self-experience doesn't represent the individual's self. It is affected by the saved emotional memory, and its body interaction generated from the memory connections with others. The function stands a great advantage, whereas the gender of the body is not mentioned. The features of the body break through the perspective of the theory of biological evolution in the technology era.



【picture 3】 Shu-Lea Cheang, *Baby Play*, 2001.



【picture 4】 Shu-Lea Cheang, *Baby Play*, 2001.

Her new creation *Baby Love 2006* (picture 5), is the second project in the *Locker Baby* series.³² This series of creations is inspired by a novel *The Baby in a Locker* written by Murakami Ryu, which is about two new-born baby boys, abandoned in a square metal cabinet, and in their processes of growing up, they were haunted by the sound of the heart beat of their biological mother. The revised *Locker Baby*, assuming a fantasized storyline in 2030. The main character is the Dolly Polly Transgency (DPT); which use the genes of Okinawa's deep-sea pearl to breed the clone baby. The slot locker in the busy Tokyo metro station becomes the ideal place for this Transgency to produce a test-tube locker baby. These biobot locker babies are a cloned generation produced by our science-fictional creativity. In the

³² The first creation of this series *Baby Play* is commissioned by NTT [ICC], and was exhibited in Tokyo in 2001.



introduction, the conceptual interpretation of this Internet creation is: human beings must entrust them to receive, store, deliver, and accord with other's memory and emotion. The locker babies hold the key to the inner space of communication network, that is, human's Memory and Emotion (ME) data. The setting of *Baby Love* is that people and locker babies co-exist in an amusement park's ever-turning tea cup; which makes tea, compassion, love and ME (Memory and Emotion) being stirred up all-together.³³ Clone baby is another version of a human, handled and combined with the ME data in the communication network in the tea cup. While riding with the baby in the tea cup, the ME data will be retrieved, reviewed, re-combined, and re-mixed. A peaceful ride can become a fast-spinning data intermix; and when the audiences face the baby, they must re-organize their own ME data. At the spot which the tea cups collide, the clone baby may exchange the ME data and mix them; afterwards, the intermixed ME data will be re-constructed and shown on the website (*Baby Love* 2006). Among this series of works, Cheang has transferred the memory and nostalgia her body once carried to a baby's body in which the womb-memory of coming from its mother's body to the world still remains. However, that memory is a vague and fluid image. The most vivid memory is the sound. All the memories cannot be written or recorded in words. Moreover, the new born baby is full of curiosity and the spirit of adventure; therefore, riding the tea cup is the baby's admission to this world. Cheang's baby is clearly a delightful memory of the mother's body. Through the colliding of tea cups and the sharing of music, constantly replicating, mixing this joyful memory (picture 6). Cheang used another way to interpret the memory and longing for mother's body/ homeland/ mother country, breaking away from a more physical carriage. Cheang faced the nostalgia of female immigrants and succeeds with a pleasurable attitude. Babies don't have sex; they don't have facial expression either, which is a perfect way to explain their great adaptability under any kinds of surroundings; neither do they need to compare appearances. The female immigrants need to cling to this spirit. Cheang doesn't consider the memory of homeland painful, neither does she think moving to another place is difficult. Her way of transcending recognition may be lying inside these babies, tea cups, and music. The love these babies convey is the problem of absence in recognition.

³³ In addition, everybody can set up to upload love-songs onto Baby Love website, send it to the clone baby's ME data through 802.11 wireless Internet.





【picture 5】 Shu-lea Cheang, *Baby Love*, 2006



【picture 6】 Shu-lea Cheang, *Baby Love*, 2006.

Shu-Lea Cheang's work, thrusts us into a future which owes much to science-fiction. In this science-fiction writing, individual/group, history/memory are all condensed into a chip. As a part of memory, the sound becomes its treasury with the memory are the computer chip and retention of the memory. These electric-digitalized human memories create the ability to store, alter, replicate, file, re-access, etc. Memories have become a kind of product, a consumable, and replaceable re-manufactured product. Once belonging to the extreme privacy of the individual, they are now merely the arrangement or combination of some digits; lost completely the original uniqueness and privacy of memory. Reiko in *IKU* didn't want to be limited by the undependability of memory. Orgasm is a version of recreation about "memory selling", anyone who pays for it can own the same memory. Then, anybody could have free access to their memory. Hung also mentioned, "Isn't memory some kind of trick?"³⁴ Therefore, in the age of science-fiction, Hung raised the question of the value of memory. While people are continuously writing memories, the memories, however, are distorted. Going further, Cheang seems to transcend that memory in *Baby Love*; yes, it is a kind of selling, but these cheerful memories are shared facts, which come from collected- and inter-colliding. If interpreting Cheang's development lately with this aspect, the author of this paper thinks that even though she tried so hard to diverge from her Asian background or a specific nationality, she still needs to handle the problem of memory in her work. Whether it is a cyborg or a baby that she creates, she still cannot ignore this problem. We find that

³⁴ Hung, "The Novel Snipes, Assassinate of the Desire – On the Films of Shu-Lea Cheang", 157.



Cheang dealt with this problem here by viewing memory as a wonderful and pleasurable thing which is worthy of collective sharing. More importantly, because different people process different memories, these delightful memories can be re-mixed into beautiful music when colliding with each other. The author here also considers that by the problem of body and memory, Cheang has changed the body which, in this post-colonial era, is the carrier of the national and historical memory of being colonized, and transformed it by showing that the memories shared by the body are all the joyful ones. She skillfully transcends the limit imposed by post-colonialism to the body and the memory. Also, the appearance of the baby displays an intimacy with the mother's body.

Apart from creating cheerful memory, Cheang emphasizes gathering collective memories. In order to break away from the position of being seen as an Asian female artist, Cheang applied the cooperative resources with the art museum,³⁵ being able to jump out of the stereotype that is limiting female artists or Asian artists and successfully connected all kinds of resources to proceed with her work of collective gathering and creating memories. There is a collective characteristic of creation in Cheang's work; every piece of work is completed by the team's work. "At the same time, I consider myself as a conceptual artist. My creation began with some images, some concepts and visual design in my mind. When the inspiration was formed, I started to search for colleagues to work together with. They may be producers, literal artists, computer programmers, engineers, designers, or performers, etc."³⁶ This concretion of Cheang's idea through countless people's hard work and her creation process gave her a platform in the public arena for her voice to be heard. There is a vivid characteristic of "Mass participation/interference" in Cheang's works. "Internet is a media in which we can easily intervene; the public can 'enter' the work. The work is thoroughly of the 'public domain.' My creations on the Internet are all based on the concept of a whole 'proceeding process' and the spectators' 'voluntary uploading'."³⁷ This kind of process in which the spectators are voluntarily intervening and participating is one of the characteristics

³⁵ The opportunities of cooperating with art museums including *Bowling Alley*, 1995, cooperating with Walker Art Center; the public art *Elephant Cage Butterfly Locker*, 1996, sponsored by the Tokyo government; *Buy One Get One Free*, 1997, sponsored by NTT/ICC; and *Brandon*, 1998, commissioned by the Guggenheim Museum. These are all the best examples of Shu-Lea Cheang's full usage of the public domain, and are all very successful.

³⁶ Cheng, Amy Huei-Hwa. "The Digital Artist Migrating Between Actual and Virtual Spaces—Shu- Lea Cheang". 04 Apr. 2011. <http://www.itpark.com.tw/people/essays_data/43/437>

³⁷ Cheng, "The Digital Artist Migrating Between Actual and Virtual Spaces—Shu- Lea Cheang".



of Internet art leading individuals into the public domain.³⁸ This method has placed individuals' gender-identity and body-eroticism in the public domain to challenge the way people think. If "personal is politic", then, the body-eroticism has overturned its marginalized and privatized position on the Internet; it is opened to people so that everyone has ease access to this problem. Take *Baby Love* as an example; the work is preceded in a recreational style which inter-connected a tremendous space of a football field and a website with the function of emotion-recording, forming an amusement play ground. This creation similar to the football field enables personal private pleasure to be vented and satisfied in the public domain. Cheang is familiar with the characteristics of Internet media, which is a virtual space where people can be inter-connected and communicate in public or private. "Thus, the Internet is like an enormous organism, full of uncertainty. Once you have entered the cyberworld, the edge of life in the real world is no longer the same. You cannot precisely grasp the inner reproduction, propagation and evolution of the Internet in a boundless world. However, it can gain unexpected inspiration through its participation".³⁹ Even though Cheang claimed that she never identified herself as a female artist or an Asian artist, in that time, in the dominant trend of feminism, she was naturally categorized in the position of a female artist. The problems caused by new immigrants, and the issue of racial identity recognition, greatly troubled Cheang, who has long lived in the United States of America and worked in other countries. Despite these misconceptions, Internet art provided her with a new prospect. As she stated the idea of statelessness in her own mind in an interview :

The reason why human beings are human beings may be the result of our having emotions, memories, families, and the concept of a root. I have been trying to abandon this concept. I don't want a root. The issue of a root is too much to bear for Taiwanese and Chinese. I have spent a great deal of time

³⁸ For example, there is a virtual court in the work *Brandon*, enables everyone to join the trial of this case.

³⁹ In the work *Bowling Alley*, Cheang sent the message and image through telephone cables in the bowling alley, art museum, and Internet-- three concrete and virtual spaces, connecting the relationships between these three spaces through the Internet which means transforming the originally private individual art experience into a collective joint experience. (Sun, Li-Quan, "Internet Traveler -- E-Generation Artist, Shu-Lea Cheang" *Different Cultures*, 7(2001), 32.)



*living in foreign countries. The nomadic life-style almost replace the fixed life-style. I will completely abstain from this concept ,including the foster of emotions. Why is it almost a fixed idea?*⁴⁰

Humans take the form of a robot's life to function in Internet art. Cheang considers herself doing all the creating as a robot. "...there must be conversation with the machine. My life and love are all on the keyboard. I push myself to an extreme life style. I now state firmly 'I am a robot; I am the robot even without the connection'."⁴¹ This should come as no surprise as it offers the best interpretation of Cheang after considering the new boundless nomadic life. Moving to wherever the case is has become Cheang's style. When stating her new nomadic life, she mentioned, "In 1997, the Internet became popular around the globe. Thus, I can carry a high-tech portmanteau and connect to the Internet to any place. Travelling to fourteen countries in six weeks; through the Internet, communicate with different Internet artists in each country."⁴² This kind of life style is shown in her Internet creation as well.⁴³

From Cheang's early installation art to the later film shooting, they all convey a unique esthetics that belongs to her; especially vivid in the issue of sex, this, along with her concern for peripheral races, makes her an effective spokesperson. In one earlier interview by the author of this paper,⁴⁴ she once again proclaimed that she is no longer thought of with the label of femaleness or nationality. And in another recent interview, she stated that her creation has surpassed the outside limitation.⁴⁵ She is currently living in Europe, considering the

⁴⁰ Chiu, "Kick! Baby. Kick! -- Shu-Lea Cheang Remarks on the New Media Art on Internet ", 58.

⁴¹ qtd. Chiu, "Kick! Baby. Kick! -- Shu-Lea Cheang Remarks on the New Media Art on Internet ", 58.

⁴² Guo, "Pornographic Version of the *Blade Runner* – How an Art Museum Artist Became a Pornographic-Film Director", 17.

⁴³ Take two of Shu-Lea Cheang's works as examples. In "*Buy One Get One Free*", there are two designs of a travelling case; one as an Internet device in the art museum, the other one carried by Shu-Lea Cheang and a writer friend of hers to travel. Shu-Lea Cheang uploaded the feeling and image creation to the art museum's Internet. The spectators can trace the track of the artist's travelling. In the creation, the design is based on a Japanese lunchbox, and a red-plum as the cursor; full of the image of travelling and another position of a boundless life. A later creation *Garlic=Rich Air 2030* disintegrates the center of Europe, and creates a unified currency. That is, creating a new unified world. This kind of virtual situation, for the artist as a global citizen, the concept of nation is no longer the geographical boundaries.

⁴⁴ The interview was held in May 27th, 2006, at the art gallery of IT Park.

⁴⁵ The interview was held in Apr. 20th, 2010 through Skype online talking.



recent situation and the most direct issue is immigration from Eastern Europe or other European countries. This trend naturally generates problems of race and class. According to Cheang's observation, Europe is not as experienced as the United States of America in handling the racial problem, also, Europe's history of accepting immigrants is not so long as America's, as a result, this new Europe is worthy of note. Therefore, she shifted her focus of concern to the continent of Europe.⁴⁶ Cheang's method of exhibiting, is via, connecting multiple artists is strategic in gaining public attention by the mass participation of minority races, this makes her the representative of Asian female artist, as a group. This has proved an extremely successful strategy. During 1994 and 1995, she entered the world of Internet creating. Afterwards, she became the first artist who is able to exhibit in prestigious museums by conjoining the issue of sex with Internet art, being in the vanguard of those who drew attention to virtual sex on the Internet and saw in it an artistic dimension.⁴⁷ Europe, far from integrating has rarely discussed this issue seriously, especially when facing the expansion of each race, class, or sex. That all these racial problems will rise together will also be a testimony of her future creation. Additionally, when discussing the creating trend in the next fifty years and the racial issue's presence in the works, she is still actively concerned about the topic of sex/gender; for example, clones or cyborgs, and human trying to alter some of the in-born appearance or biological working principles through bio-medical science. In these, there will be some political criticism. The author thinks that she has raised this issue in the three series of *Baby*, in other words, the problem of a bio-technology company creating the next human generation. Returning to the issue of self-positioning and identity recognition, she still repels the idea that she has to be in one category. Calling herself "a European nomad", Cheang further extends her tentacle to Europe, thus, she possesses another kind of

⁴⁶ In the interview, Shu-Lea Cheang recounted the moving history of herself. She considered that the New York of the 1980's greatly inspired her. In those surroundings, the racial problem was the most directly available material. She also mentioned that while filming *Color Schemes* 1990, she cooperated with twelve artists of different races in the Whitney Museum of American Art, forming a recording device. In addition, the later work *Those Fluttering Objects of Desire* 1992-1993 is also exhibited in the Whitney Biennale. At that time, twenty artists were invited to participate with the exhibition together. Making a comprehensive survey of the works during this period, they are still connecting the issues of sex, politics, and race.

⁴⁷ Also, the series of *Brandon* which probed into the transsexual issue is innovative. Especially, by applying medical science or bio-technology method to alter human's sex which has, in fact, become a subject in the 21st century. She also mentioned, when designing the work *Brandon*, she has already lived in Amsterdam. Thus, the design of virtual court or panopticon (the rounded prison with a panoramic view), all have concrete materials for reference in Amsterdam. It can be seen that she has turned her focus of concern to Europe at that time.



Taiwan/America/Europe's moving/immigrating experience, which became the text of comparative reading that can cross area/race/culture. As in Shu-mei Shih and Francoise Lionnet's study, they pointed out

*The paradigm of arrival in ethnic studies led, by necessity, to a more or less exclusive focus on domestic dynamics and hierarchies. On the one hand, new immigrants in general have been placed in a paradoxical position with regard to the claim of authenticity and cultural nationalism that have fueled the development of ethnic studies. On the other hand, vertical modes of resistance have tended to impede interethnic solidarity and international minority alliances.*⁴⁸

As a result, the collective experiences of Asian female in Europe, like Cheang's, are worthy of inter-textual reading. As Braidotti claims that "the feminist theoretician today can only be 'in transit,' moving on, passing through, creating connections where things were previously dis-connected or seemed un-related, where there seemed to be 'nothing to see'."⁴⁹ We need more texts differ from the authorized ones to help us analyze and elaborate the other possible image from women of color. Therefore, Braidotti states that "the epistemic nomadism I am advocating can only work, in fact, if it is properly situated, securely anchored in the 'in-between' zones."⁵⁰ It is doubtless that an Asian woman with nomadic background is like Cheang who can negotiate and shift her multi-subjects in the in-between zones. Furthermore, because Cheang's practice of trying to transcend the identity of sex and nationality, it seems able to be extended to handle the issue of cross-nationality, and it is different from the concept of "global":

⁴⁸ Lionnet Francoise and Shu-mei Shih, *Introduction: Thinking through the Minor, Transnationally in Minor Transnationalism*, edited by Francoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih. (Durham and London: Duke UP, 2005), 4.

⁴⁹ Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, 93.

⁵⁰ Ibid..



*The logic of globalization is centripetal and centrifugal at the same time and assumes a universal core or norm... The transnational, on the contrary, can be conceived as a space of exchange and participation between processes of hybridization occur and where it is still possible for cultures to be produced and performed without necessary mediation by the center.*⁵¹

That is, in cross-nation contact, the works of the Asian female can become the cultural product under inter-mixing. By removing the concept of a center or core, another originally viewed is being edged, may display subjectivity in the benefit of the cross-nation. Cheang has never put herself into this role; nevertheless, her vivid subjects have made her the unmissable object for the study of Asian female artists. In addition, she turned toward the field of Internet art in the 1990's, helping her to break through the issue of identity recognition, as well as helping her to receive many compliments. In the world of Internet art, the disintegration of geographical boundaries, sexual boundaries, and racial boundaries, signify the nascence of a new trend of thinking. In this technological environment, the corporeal or un-formed movement of the body triggered different aspects of consideration. Shu-Lea Cheang's Internet art further pertinently provided us with consideration of body issues that a female artist considers in these surroundings.

⁵¹ Lionnet and Shih, *Introduction: Thinking through the Minor*, *Transnationally in Minor Transnationalism*, 5.



Plate

【picture 1】 Shu-Lea Cheang, *IKU*, 2000. A film was commissioned by the producer, Takashi Asai. Tokyo.

【picture 2】 Shu-Lea Cheang, *IKU*, 2000. a Japanese sci-fi porn feature, which was nominated for an International Fantasy Film Award.

【picture 3】 Shu-Lea Cheang, *Baby Play*, 2001. 22 human size cloned and inflatable designer locker babies (140cm in height), 8 playing rods (5m in length), a large-scale projection and a website, was commissioned by NTT [ICC] (Intercommunication Center, Tokyo)

【picture 4】 Shu-Lea Cheang, *Baby Play*, 2001. 22 human size cloned and inflatable designer locker babies (140cm in height), 8 playing rods (5m in length), football playing field (15mx7.5m), a large-scale projection and a website, was commissioned by NTT [ICC] (Intercommunication Center, Tokyo)

【picture 5】 Shu-Lea Cheang, *Baby Love*, 2006. 6 clone babies (each 70 cm tall), silicon rubber, was commissioned by the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts.

【picture 6】 Shu-Lea Cheang, *Baby Love*, 2006. Mobile teacups (each 170 diameter) with 6 clone babies (each 70 cm tall), fiber Glass Reinforced Plastics and silicon rubber, was commissioned by the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts.



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