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The Isolated Self: A Re-imaging of the Individual in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Mamoru Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell*

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The Isolated Self: A Re-imagining of the Individual in Mary
Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Mamoru Oshii's *Ghost in the
*Shell**

Submitted thesis For English

University at Albany

May 2014

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Abstract

Mary Shelley's 1818 *Frankenstein* and Mamoru Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* films (1995 and 2004) were both created in times of great upheaval in scientific communities, and show that the further away we get from the organic body, the harder it becomes to articulate what is specifically human through dualisms. Shelley was writing during a period of secularization. Human identity and relations were no longer strictly based on one's relationship to God or one's family's standing. Oshii's work comes in the midst of the arrival of the new digital age. Medical enhancements and the proliferation of communication technologies such as the internet have allowed technology to become integrated with people's daily lives. Like Shelley, Oshii uses the idea of unnatural (re)production to illustrate one outcome of digital life with cyborgs. In both *Ghost in the Shell* and *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*, inspiration from posthumanist theorist Donna Haraway is present in Oshii's conception of the cyborg and the cyborg world. Haraway sees cyborgs in a world of the "ambiguously natural and crafted" meaning that there is confusion between what simply is and what is constructed. Both Shelley and Oshii use these non-human creatures to question the naturalization of the human concept, its status, and its reliance on the organic body. Through the posthuman identities explored in these texts along with new conceptions of the body and the individual introduced, one can find a blurred relationship between the human and non-human in the lack of a "natural" human subject.

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Edward: Water: 35 Liters, carbon: 20 kilograms, ammonia: 4 Liters, lime: 1.5 kilograms, phosphorus: 800 grams, salt: 250 grams, saltpeter: 100 grams, and various other trace elements...

Rose: Huh?!

Edward: That list represents the complete chemical makeup of a human body for the average adult. It's been calculated to the last microgram, but still there has never been one reported case of successfully creating a human life. And you're telling me something modern science can't do, you can do with prayer?

--from *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood* Episode 3 "City of Heresy"

Introduction

The quote above is probably my most accurate starting point for this project. And, though the anime series it is from is not among to texts I cover in this project, this quote is very pertinent to the question I wrestled with: what is a human? In Mary Shelley's 1818 *Frankenstein*, Victor Frankenstein creates a being with capabilities beyond that of a human, yet unable to fit into a society in Shelley's time or acquire the social relationships needed to succeed in the social setting within the novel. Motoko Kusanagi of Mamoru Oshii's 1995 *Ghost in the Shell* and 2004 *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* films can be seen as a sort of foil to Frankenstein's creature. Shelley's and Oshii's texts are very different from each other, in medium and in content, but these texts each use a posthuman figure to challenge the naturalization of what is the human, and to confront issues regarding the body and reproduction raised by the introduction of new science and technology. Each text was created at a time of great upheaval in scientific communities, and shows that the further away we get from the organic body, the harder it becomes to articulate what is specifically human. Shelley was writing in a time when science was being secularized. God was no longer the only answer for why things were the way they were. With new scientific discoveries came new technologies that altered the everyday

life of the public. Human identity and relations were changing and were no longer strictly based on one's relationship to God or one's social standing. Shelley presents a possible outcome of these changes if they were to go as far as to include a different way of creating new life. Oshii's work comes in the midst of the arrival of the new digital age. Medical enhancements and the proliferation of communication technologies such as the internet have allowed technology to become integrated with people's daily lives. Oshii takes this further, like Shelley, using the idea of unnatural (re)production to illustrate one outcome of digital life. Through the posthuman identities explored in these texts along with new conceptions of the body and the individual introduced, one can find a complete revision of the human in the lack of a "natural" human subject. The posthuman figure stands between the human and non-human, blurring the lines that maintain absolute difference between the two. This ushers in a redefinition of the individual in a posthumanist setting from a complete and isolated being to one that is fragmented and integrated.

Kusanagi, the protagonist of *Ghost in the Shell*, is a cyborg. Donna Haraway, a posthuman theorist, describes cyborgs as advanced creatures "simultaneously animal and machine, which populate worlds ambiguously natural and crafted" (Haraway 149). Like Frankenstein's Creature, the body of the cyborg has physical capabilities beyond those of a human and is created from a blend of the organic and the technological. The integration of technology with the organic body is an element of the posthuman figure. Posthumanism along with Critical Posthumanism are frames of thought that contest the legitimacy of some humanist fames of thinking that place an emphasis on the human subject. The posthuman figure is a being pushed generally by technologic means beyond

the conceptual boundaries that define what the human is. For this project I greatly limit the variety of accepted these definitions of the human to Cartesian Dualism. While the Creature is certainly not human and could be could be posthuman, Haraway names the cyborg as the center of her posthumanism which she outlines in the “Cyborg Manifesto”. One of the motives of Haraway’s manifesto is to challenge the general feminist view that cyborgs are born from the same mechanics as what has kept patriarchy in power, and so, the cyborg is inherently bad. This is similar to the argument posed by Critical Posthumanists who posit that Posthumanism is actually an extension of humanism and that erasure of difference does not solve issues created by difference (Haraway 158-9). Posthumanism and its figure of the cyborg are seen as extensions of problematic ways of thinking, not as resolutions. Haraway—while agreeing that cyborgs “are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism”—contends that “illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins” (Haraway 151). This is definitely true for Haraway’s cyborg, the cyborg Oshii has in mind for *Ghost in the Shell* and *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*. This is also true of Frankenstein’s Creature, the illegitimate progeny who turns against his father.

Both characters have reason to go against their respective “fathers” and desire a type of transcendence from their respective Cartesian selves; the Creature wants to connect with others, while Kusanagi wants to literally move beyond her body and fully embrace her abilities on the net. The Creature and Kusanagi were both created out of self serving goals of their “fathers”. Victor Frankenstein wanted to create a species that would worship him as their creator (Shelley 82). Then once his creation was complete he abandoned it. Kusanagi’s body was created by the MegaTech company, not so much for

a particular individuals gain, but for the benefit of corporations and the government she works for. While one may assume that the organic body is an essential part of the human, the bodies of these characters are not so much part of their own identities as they are barriers to each character's true desires, and, therefore, barriers to true representations of their selves. It is important to point out that neither of these creatures have a natural body both have created bodies. Yet, one may accept these bodies as their proper bodies just as we are taught to accept the bodies we are born into as such. For the Creature his hideousness is supposed to match his monstrosity. Kusanagi, as a film character, is identified by an audience by her body. For Oshii, the cyborg body is a good point of comparison for a natural human body. He sees fluidity in both as well as limiting effects of social ascription. For example, Kusanagi has a female figure, yet she doesn't really seem to identify with any gender. Organic humans can experience similar complication due to the gender assigned to them based on their bodies. Some do not identify with their gender, and even people who feel completely comfortable with the gender assigned to them have to navigate through stereotypes and general misconceptions of the abilities of one gender or the other. The Creature and Kusanagi both experience isolation due to their bodies and their lack of attachment to their bodies. The idea that there is some ever-present attachment to the body of the organic human is superimposed onto these posthuman characters. This ever-present attachment comes from Cartesian dualism.

While Cartesian dualism is not Humanism itself, it too centers itself on a conception of what is human. The Cartesian conception of the human is that humans are essentially thinking things composed of a mind and a body. In his Second Meditation, Descartes concludes "to speak accurately I am not more than a thing which thinks, that is

to say a mind or soul” (Descartes 142). Descartes places the essence of the self in the mind. Later during the Sixth Meditation he confirms the mind’s relationship to the body:

finally, in the sixth I distinguish the action of understanding from that of imagination; the marks by which this distinction is made are described. I here show that the mind of a man is really distinct from the body, and at the same time that the two are so closely joined together that they form, so to speak, a single thing. (Descartes 133)

Descartes claims that while the mind can understand, it is through the body which the mind can imagine corporeal objects, and so the body is real (177). From this relationship, the mind and body are clearly separated and, at the same time, thoroughly connected. In Descartes’ mind-body dualism a complete individual is made up of a mind and body. Thinking of the human being in this way leads to allusions to mechanical workings of the human body. Automata were popular in the Early Modern period. Descartes himself conceived of automata including his own version of the man-machine, an Early Modern conception pertaining to the mechanical workings of man (Muri 54). These automata were often used to illustrate the workings of man as a “steered vessel” or a “vital flame” that controlled the mechanisms of muscles (46, 110). This “vital flame” is what distinguishes the human from the mechanical replica.

Rene Descartes’ mind-body dualism and the idea of the man-machine hold a complicated significance that is exploited in these texts. The Creature from *Frankenstein* is a living representation of a man-machine; he is: “the horror of a new mechanistic form of human creativity usurping the natural order of God and threatening human spirituality” (Muri 27). David S. Hogsette even claims Victor Frankenstein “reduces true creation to material invention, and he reminds a finite materialist in denial, inverting by assembling

preexisting materials into a hideous frame fashioned after his own filthy image, constructing his own “hideous progeny” that he is unprepared to accept, nurture, or redeem” (Hogsette 534). Hogsette believes that Victor has “usurped the natural order of God” by attempting to create a being; however, Victor’s assemblage of materials, to Hogsette, is more of an invention than a creation. The Creature is made problematic by the fact that he was created by a man not from god, nor born from a woman, and he has reasoning skills far beyond an automata.

The *Ghost in the Shell* films can be seen in a similar way. Oshii definitely sought to evoke the same tradition of mind-body dualism with his title alone. Yet, Oshii’s cyborg’s are beyond the simplicity of man-machine and the human. In *The Enlightenment Cyborg*, Allison Muri considers the relationship between mind-body dualism and the cyborg. Muri wonders if mind-body dualism is a way to conceive of the cyborg at all. In the introduction, Muri makes it explicit that she does not believe there is an Enlightenment cyborg, and that she sees no clear lineage between the conceptions of the man-machine from the early enlightenment period and the modern cyborg (Muri 3). She writes:

the Cartesian implications for the cyborg identity have no stable meaning, and their symbolic significance fluctuates depending upon whether one uses the cyborg image to symbolize loss of community and coherent identity, radical change, of egalitarianism and individual empowerment (14)

Muri sees Descartes’ mind-body dualism as a simple enough conception of the human that it can be stretched to fit what a reader or scholar wants it to, particularly with the cyborg. One point Muri stresses throughout her book is how little impact Descartes

had in the influential fields of natural philosophy (better known today as natural science) and technology (15,26). Yet, this does not mean that Descartes' philosophy has no clout in the way Westerners view their surroundings and themselves today. Muri would not have included her discussions of Descartes in her book if it were the case.

Descartes obviously did have some influence on Oshii and the original creator of the original *Ghost in the Shell* manga series, Masamune Shirow. However, another big influence in Oshii's films is Donna Haraway who is not Cartesian nor is her notion of the cyborg figure. One intersection Oshii seems to work between these two influences is the issue of completeness. Descartes claimed that the human was essentially a thinking thing—a mind with a body—and that the connection between the mind and the body is so thorough that they form essentially one complete being (Descartes 142). In her manifesto, Haraway claims “To be One is to be autonomous, to be powerful, to be God; but to be One is to be an illusion” (177). While Haraway seems to recognize the benefits thinkers such as Descartes attribute to the complete and isolated individual, she claims that to see the self in such a way is to be fooled by an illusion. This is obviously at odds with what Descartes has claimed, and, as I argue, the line of thinking Oshii tends to keep closer to pertaining to completeness.

The flaw I see in Descartes work does not come from his distinction of the mind and body, but that this distinction is limited to two parts, one often considered superior to the other. These pieces always absolutely fit together, and Descartes disregards any possibility for further fragmentation, pieces that don't fit, or how deep the connection one has to one's surroundings can be. One of the issues with a dualism structure is that there tends to be rankings. This is true with man-woman, human-beast, and animal-machine.

These are dualisms that are contended in both of these films. The dualistic structure also tends to leave out the possibility for other options. For example, when Americans think of their political system as a two party system, the plethora of other parties in the country are often ignored or forgotten. Gender is another place where this is an issue. The construction of man and woman not only limits the identities of those who can identify with either, but also leaves out those who are transgendered or androgynous people. One way we see the logic of unity fall short is through people who feel disconnected from their own bodies which is another problem for those with ambiguous gender identification.

It is important to understand, however, the distinction between the categorization explained in the above paragraphs and difference in general. That is, that while difference may be used as a means of distinction or categorization, it does not necessitate it. This is clear when we consider the humanist subject is a uniform subject. In this school of thought, the human is subject to the same rights and autonomy (Edgar and Sedgwick 165). The human subject within humanism tends to be a white Western male. This is problematic particularly because it overlooks the possibility of cultural difference lending itself to the justification of ethnocentric ideologies and methods such as the “civilizing” efforts of colonialism. Ethnocentric ideologies create an isolated group deemed other. This group is seen as separate, subhuman, opposite. Many scholars have associated the Creature as a manifestation of the ethnic or cultural other, the group isolated from society. The posthuman subject, on the other hand, is one of fragmentation and heterogeneity. When explaining to Togusa why she promoted him to Section Nine, Kusanagi explains, “Like individual, like organization. Overspecialization leads to

death” (Oshii 1995). Here, difference is a matter of survival. This idea goes beyond a simple erasure of the markers of difference in posthumanism. Donna Haraway calls such thorough erasure of difference, exemplified by Catherine MacKinnon’s radical feminism, “radical reductionism” (Haraway 159). Haraway claims that “MacKinnon’s intentional erasure of all difference through the device of the ‘essential’ non-existence of women is not reassuring” (159). She argues that this approach utilizes the authoritarian framework that has helped keep patriarchy in place which supports the Western privilege of totalities, ideas that encompass “everyone” such as the Descartes’ perspective. Instead of disregarding all difference, Haraway suggests that we re-inscribe difference and use it for its advantages. This is similar to what Kusanagi is saying here, and what the Puppet-Master tells her later in the film; Oshii emphasizes difference as a very natural necessity.

The texts I examine are only a few of the many texts that show that an innate connection between the mind and body is not the only material needed to make the human, nor does it always work. Shelley’s Creature does not imagine himself as a monster until he sees himself and is repeatedly rejected from society. His mind and body are separate, but do not form “a single thing” as Descartes had suggested for the human. The Creature is created as a monster twice. First, he is created as monster through his corporeal form. Then, he is created as monster by the way he is treated which convinces his mind he is the monster he appears to be. It is this monstrous form that truly limits his future and even ability to identify himself. By the end of the narrative the Creature says, “Who was I? What was I?” (Gigante 581). He is unable to answer these questions himself because his identity relied on external sources. The human characters are created by their surroundings as well. Victor Frankenstein begins his story with the story of his

family and personal relationships. For Kusanagi and the other cyborgs of Oshii's films, their work and the company that manufactured their bodies, MegaTech, has a big impact on the way that they are identified. MegaTech literally designs their bodies for their jobs at Section Nine Public Security.

The first section of this project will be devoted to many of the ideas Oshii presents in *Ghost in the Shell* and the function of the bodies of Motoko Kusanagi and the Creature. Oshii makes Kusanagi into an interesting rendition of Cartesian Dualism. The remaining piece of her original body is some organic brain tissue, a detail which resonates with Descartes' placement of the self within the brain. However, it is not with her brain tissue, nor with her manufactured body that Kusanagi finds herself, revealing a more complicated landscape under a veil of Cartesian dualism that is present throughout Oshii's film. In other words, Oshii's image of the ghost in the shell may seem very close to Descartes ideas, but upon further investigation, the audience realizes that what Oshii is showing is much more complicated. Kusanagi's body is not a ship steered by her organic tissue, but has its own function without that tissue, which is an important component in shaping the individual. Many of the issues raised in the first section focuses on functions of the body. Both Shelley and Oshii create characters that have capabilities beyond those of a normal human being, yet, like human bodies, the bodies of these characters are subject to social ascription. Gender, otherness, ownership of one's own body, and whether or not these physical, external identifications should really matter are all relevant not only to these characters, but to humans as well.

The next major section expands on the different binaries these texts deal with. These binaries such as self-other and natural-unnatural are used the help shape the

social settings within these texts. The second film *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* is discussed in more detail in this section. The second film demonstrates instability with the body as seen in the first film, but does not throw the body aside as easily as Kusanagi does in the first film. Oshii turns to not only the importance of an individual's own body, but the bodies that surround an individual. This extends to not only bodies, but what a person surrounds themselves with in general. This way of thinking allows for an individual to be thought more as a web of networks rather than this single limited entity, contrary to the isolating or limiting effect caused by the humanist focus on the individual or Cartesian entity.

The “Ghost”, the “Shell”, and the Monster

Mamoru Oshii's 1995 *Ghost in the Shell* film follows cyborg female protagonist Motoko Kusanagi and her work with Section Nine dealing with the case of the internationally known hacker known as the Puppet-Master, or Project 2501. The film gives a very soulful answer to the question “what is the ‘I’” as Kusanagi journeys to the transcendence of her individuality and its embodiment into the vast net. The film deals with issues of embodiment that are resonant with the challenges faced by Frankenstein's Creature. Neither Shelley nor Oshii depict the body as a sacred vessel, a container for the soul forged by God. Shelley seems endorse the Cartesian idea that the mind and the body are separate, yet challenge the idea that they are linked in such a way that they are essentially one thing (Descartes 133). Oshii contests this linkage as well with the ability to replace bodies. Both artists created plotlines in which audiences are introduced to individuals that don't truly connect to the shell they are given, nor, in fact, can they see their own bodies as a form of natural embodiment. By thinking of Descartes as a base for understanding the conception of the human, one can see that both of these artists created posthuman characters to show that the human should not be confined to these terms. Oshii creates a space for these limits to be stretched in *Ghost in the Shell*, a space that was not available for Shelley's Creature who retreats to be the monster society deemed him as.

Descartes' model of the self, as described in the introduction, consists of a mind and body which together create a complete identity. He argued that the self, the essence of the human, relied on the undeniable truth that the human must think to consider themselves as an entity, while all external sensations were suspicious and could be

misleading (Descartes 134, 147). Vivian Sobchack has a different approach to the self describing the individual as a being integrated with its surroundings to the point that the perception of the human is changed with the changing of technological eras. This way of perceiving the human allows for more fluidity and emphasizes the effect of historical change. This is something that is often overlooked because, as Sobchack points out, our new perceptions that are radically transformed by these technologies easily become “naturalized and transparent” (135). In other words, it becomes second nature to overlook the frames through which we process what a human is. She splits her discussion into three technological eras: photographic, cinematic, and electronic. Each of the technologies, she argues, arose within cultures that deemed them appropriate and evolved from expressive technologies to perceptive technologies (137,135). What was used to express the self was soon used to define the self.

Each era has its own way of perceiving the human. The photographic captures stills of moments lost. Sobchack says “the photographic has something to do with loss, with pastness, and with death, its meanings and value intimately bound within the structure and aesthetic and ethical investments of nostalgia.” (146).The photo ultimately relies on physicality and the past. The cinematic brings life to the photographic as the pictures themselves move on a reel. Sobchack explains that the cinematic “is semiotically engaged in experience as [not only objective, but] also subjective and intentional, as presenting representation of the objective world” (148). She continues that unlike the photograph, the film is not easily contained (148). This junction between the photographic and the cinematic is where I would place *Frankenstein*. Victor’s narrative dwells in the nostalgia of his childhood and family. The animation of the Creature goes

from objective matter (the photograph) to a subjective thing (the film). The Creature captures the uncontrollability of the cinematic. Just as the film audience can “not control or contain its autonomous and ephemeral flow and rhythm or materially possess its animated experience”, when his Creature is animated Victor never gains the control he thought he would have over his creation. The third era Vivian Sobchack discusses is the electronic. While Sobchack argues that the technologies of these three eras are all “culturally pervasive”, the electronic technologies are the ones she recognizes to have “absolute presence” (135, 158). This makes the electronic the hardest to escape from and the easiest to overlook. Sobchack describes the electronic as information based and bodiless (159). The electronic enables instant and easy access and replay via the scene. While Sobchack sees some flaws in this vision of the human, Oshii seems to adopt a similar frame in the *Ghost in the Shell* films. This is particularly true of the first film when Kusanagi completely leaves her body for the net (Oshii 1995). The lack of “body” is seen in scenes like when Section Nine is tracking the garbage truck. The audience is shown an abstract grided map. When the camera pulls in the maps gives way to the “three dimensional” world in the film. The moving map abstracts the streets in a way similar to how Sobchack believes that the electronic representation is able to reduce the body (161). Oshii would not see this as much of a reduction, but an embrace of the electronic as a different mode of “embodiment”.

Embodiment of the self, particularly Descartes mind-body dualism is evoked in the title *Ghost in the Shell*. The ghost is a sort of alternative to the mind, while both lack materiality they also seem to contain the true core of the self. A ghost does not need a body. In *Ghost in the Shell* a “ghostline” is generally indicative of an original person, not

an android. The shell is a type of body, particularly an empty one. In his article “On the Edge of Spaces: *Blade Runner*, *Ghost in the Shell* and Hong Kong’s Cityscape”, Wong Kin Yuen discusses the metaphor of the shell. He quotes Gaston Bachelard saying:

The Creature that hides and ‘withdraws into its shell’ is preparing a ‘way out’...by staying in the motionlessness of the shell, the creature is preparing for a temporal explosion, not to say whirlwinds of being. (Wong 16)

Here, the shell is a haven, a place of preparation until a “temporal explosion” when the creature will exceed its own shell. This gives the metaphor another meaning without the Cartesian dimension: the shell is a place of preparation, not only a body to experience external sensation or be manipulated. The ghost in the shell is no longer one complete entity, but a creature in its habitat. The self is encased in the shell. Wong sees Kusanagi’s underwater diving as an example of this. The ocean becomes her shell in which she can retreat for contemplation. I can see this metaphor applied to Kusanagi herself who at the end of the film moves from the body in which she contemplated her own reality. The hut the Creature stays in while observing the DeLacy family aligns with this metaphor as well. While there, he learns and waits for his opportunity to leave his shelter, which backfires (Shelley 162). If we think of this shell as a type of shelter the title becomes much more resonant of Kusanagi’s story, an individual who feels limited and is able to cast off these limits, than with the mind-body dualism metaphor.

Oshii has Kusanagi explain this idea of the individual as limited in the boat following Kusanagi’s underwater dive in *Ghost in the Shell*. She claims:

Just as there are many parts needed to make a human there’s a remarkable number of things need to make an individual what they are. A face to distinguish yourself from

others. A voice you aren't aware of yourself. The hand you see when you awaken. The memories of childhood, the feelings of the future. That's not all. There's the expanse of the data net my cyber-brain can access. All of that goes into the making of me what I am. Giving rise to a consciousness that I call "me" and simultaneously confining "me" within set limits (Oshii 1995)

First, she recognizes that the individual is made of parts; however, these parts are many, and are not limited to the two Descartes discusses. A face and a hand are features of the body; in this case, features that help one recognize one's own body. However, the language suggests that there is no real attachment to these parts. A face is something that distinguishes you from others; a hand is something you recognize as your own. These are things that may be replaced like different colored shirts used to tell identical twins apart. This language makes changing a face seem less drastic, but that is Oshii's point by calling the body a shell: something that is changed, updated, and traded, but still used to make an entity distinguishable and recognizable. We can think of this in relation to the hermit crab which changes the shell, its home and for its owners their recognizable feature. Then Kusanagi moves onto what Oshii would call the ghost, which contains memories and feelings. This is what one may expect of a ghost. Finally, there is the expanse, or piece, of data net that she can access. A narrow interpretation of this "expanse" is that it can be likened to social and informational surroundings. This is the data she can interact with. What the conclusion of this is that these pieces both define and limit the individual, particularly Kusanagi. Her body, her shell, defines physical limits, particularly, as shown above the separation between the self and the next object or individual. Your memories predispose your feelings of the future. Then this data net that

has so much information is only available in a limited way. As her list of parts expands from a centralized point, what she is defining contracts from human, to individual to “me”. She takes what she surmises about the individual and applies it to herself, a specific individual.

In this scene these qualities can be seen as a definition of and limitation to the individual. One can make a similar interpretation of the individual with Shelley’s Creature. His body is an amalgamation of parts. His first memories are of abandonment and fear. And, the context that surrounds, in Shelley’s time human society, shuns him labeling him as a dangerous monster. The Creature seems to realize, even at his beginning, that it is he who feels, hears, and sees these things which are not part of him:

A strange multiplicity of sensations seized me, and I saw, felt, heard, and smelt, at the same time... I felt light, and hunger, and thirst, and darkness; innumerable sounds rung in my ears, and on all sides various scents saluted me (Shelley 130)

Oddly, for a creature that seems so physically aware, the Creature is not aware of his own body’s appearance until months after his beginning: “how terrified was I when I viewed myself in the transparent pool” (142). He struggles with identifying with his own appearance and understands the fear felt by the humans who have seen him. Sadly, the body he doesn’t connect with is what forces his rejection from society. What the body and social context define him as ultimately becomes his biggest limitation.

Returning to how these limitations and isolations of the individual are represented in *Ghost in the Shell*, the images of the post-underwater dive scene add another layer to the contrast between limited isolation and outward connection in Oshii’s film. Kusanagi

is shown against the backdrop of the city which appears to grow around her (Oshii 1995). The city becomes a character, subject to change and growth, more than just a background. The city is another body, a type of shell. This works well with the shell metaphor discussed earlier. The city is very much like a shell. It can be built in layers as population expands and for many the city is a home. The city is particularly significant in this setting because cities are seen as technologically advanced and there is a dichotomic struggle between connection and loss of connection. Cities tend to have complex public transportation systems and simply have a much larger population than more suburban or rural areas. The opportunity to connect is ever present, but underutilized. This is something which resonates with the internet age we find ourselves in now. In this interconnected space, we see that there is still a lack of connection. This is shown, in the film, through Kusanagi's isolated frame. By growing around her, the city is separate from Kusanagi while suggesting that there is a space for her within the city. She appears to be shrinking into it. This is one of the several scenes Kusanagi is placed in front of a city background, an image that seems to convey a sense of isolation. She is seen as separate from the city. This is something she experiences which is akin to Frankenstein's Creature's experience. The Creature is isolated by his body, people fleeing from the sight of him, an unfit shell in the human social context (Shelley 133-2). He stands apart from his surroundings. Kusanagi's isolation stems from her uncertainty of her own authenticity which is a huge limitation on the self. How can you feel fulfilled as an individual, if there are parts about you that make you doubt the truth of your own existence? These images of isolation are connected to the emphasis of the singular entity

of mind-body dualism. This conception of the individual does not encourage one to seek out identity through other modes including one's connections.

There are two scenes that I would like to discuss which illustrate her uncertainty. The first is just at the end of the interrogation of the garbage man who was implanted with false memories. Technology in the film has reached a point where it can implant false memories into someone, but has not found a way to reverse this. Instead, the man now has these very vivid false memories along with the knowledge that they are false. This can lead to a very confused existence, to the point that the man may never know who he really is. The camera pulls back from the distraught man to Kusanagi and Batou who are monitoring the interview from the other side of a one-way mirror. Kusanagi is shown looking at the glass at her reflection looking back at her (Oshii 1995). This image makes the audience wonder if Kusanagi sees herself in that interview. The false memories the man has become his real life; his identity is defined by these false memories. She may be wondering if the same thing is true for her. The audience's suspicion of this is confirmed the next scene I want to discuss. An injured cyborg body, which happens to house the Puppet-Master, is obtained by Section Nine. After seeing it, Kusanagi and Batou are in the elevator together:

Kusanagi: Doesn't that cyborg body look like me?

Batou: No, it doesn't.

Kusanagi: Not the face or the figure.

Batou: What then?

Kusanagi: Maybe all full replacement cyborgs like me start wondering this. That perhaps the real “me” died a long time ago and I’m a replicant made with a cyborg body and computer brain. Or maybe there never was a real “me” to begin with.

Batou: You’ve got real brain matter in that titanium shell of yours. And you get treated like a real person don’t you?

Kusanagi: There’s no person who ever seen their own brain. I believe I exist based only on what my environment tells me.

Batou: Don’t you believe in your own ghost?

Kusanagi: And what if a computer brain could generate a ghost and harbor a soul? On what basis then do I believe in myself? (Oshii 1995)

Kusanagi sees herself in this other cyborg body because she may be an empty shell as well. She cannot see or feel the organic material that is supposed to be from her original body, nor does there seem to be anyone around from her life before her prosthetic body. All of her memories may be fabricated. Both of these scenes deal with authenticity. First, we are presented with a man who supposedly has a more organic body than Kusanagi’s, but his life is a lie. This is an opening for the doubts Kusanagi further explores in this later scene, and exacerbated when it is discovered that the Puppet-Master is a life form born from the net. If that real man’s life could be so altered, why couldn’t her life, in her manufactured body, be completely fictional? If a ghost can be created, what makes hers real?

Batou’s assertion that she gets treated like a real person suggests that maybe this issue of authenticity doesn’t or, at least, shouldn’t really matter. If she feels like she exists and the people around her treat her like she exists, then the true answer to this

question may not really be relevant. There may not even be space for the answer to that question to matter since they live in a world filled with cyborgs, where the real and artificial are integrated. Yet, this is not enough for Kusanagi. She knows her existence only through her surroundings, so she needs a way to transcend her surroundings and see if there is anything left. She feels limited by her body, as the lens through which she interacts with her surroundings and the Puppet-Master leads her to a sort of spiritual transcendence into the vast net to prove she exists beyond this environment. In both Kusanagi's and the Creature's cases, it seems there is a tension between body, or embodiment, and the mind, or embodied self; a tension that seems to reinforce the Cartesian dualism of mind and body. However, in both of the *Ghost in the Shell* scenes the tension between mind and body is more complex than a simple disconnect. If we first look at the garbage man, whose memories are falsified, we realize that he doesn't really own his own mind; someone or something else created these thoughts that defined him. How can Descartes' seat of the soul, space of the true self be manipulated like that? True, this is part of a fictional film, but the idea of an outside force influencing to the point of dictating self thoughts is very real. The way we define ourselves is affected by media and social interaction. In the second scene, Kusanagi asks "What if a computer brain could generate a ghost and harbor a soul?". The existence of a being such as the Puppet-Master raises this question. Oshii creates an individual that can be completely removed from God. The mind and body can be altered and upgraded.

Oshii's conception of the individual discredits the mind, and creates a body that is completely empty. He does this through unnatural creation. In both texts the unnatural creation leads to questions about reproduction. At the idea of his creation with a

reproducing female, Victor Frankenstein goes back on his promise destroying his work on the female (Shelley 193). Reproduction and its alternative occur in *Ghost in the Shell*. This is important because Oshii makes it clear the reproduction is a life process. He finds ways for his posthuman characters to reproduce as another way to prove they are alive. The Puppet-Master makes the distinction between production and reproduction when he explains to Kusanagi why he won't just copy himself:

A copy is merely a copy. There's a possibility a single virus could utterly destroy me. A mere copy doesn't offer variety or individuality. To exist, to reach equilibrium, life seeks to multiply and vary constantly, at times giving up its life. Cells continue the process of death and regeneration being constantly reborn as they age. And when it comes time to die, all the data it processes is lost leaving behind only its genes and offspring. All defense against catastrophic failure of an inflexible system. You want the variety needed to guard against extinction. (Oshii 1995)

The life process of reproduction includes variety in its definition. While the Puppet-Master and Kusanagi are unable to achieve this in its truest sense they do achieve some form of (re)production. To best illustrate his idea of reconfiguration of a live birth and the life of information, the Puppet-Master merges the language of evolution and the language of computers here.

Let's take a moment to sort through what "evolution" is and its significance to humanist and posthumanist thought. Evolution, strictly speaking, is the theory which claims that all life developed from a basic organism and that the surviving organisms had particular traits which made them the best fit to survive their environment. Humanism can turn to evolution to claim that humans are the finished product of evolution. That is

to say, that humans are the best evolved and the end of the line. Posthumanists question and even topple this status of the human. Oshii, himself, sees the potential in branching out from the human: “Humanity has reached its limits. I believe that we must now broaden our horizons and philosophize about life from a larger perspective” (Oshii). This stance on evolution is visually illustrated during Kusanagi’s fight with the tank. The camera lingers on an empty branch next to the human on the Tree of Life as two advanced pieces of technology battle. How can the human still claim dominance there? Through the Tree of Life, Oshii points to a space for an alternative advanced species.

This branching out not only includes biological organisms, but for *Ghost in the Shell* it includes artificial life, cybernetic organisms, and the net itself. The splicing of the computer language with the language of biological evolution shows the demarcation effects of language. In *The Enlightenment Cyborg*, Allison Muri discusses the cyborg as an example of a creature of communication (90). This means that not only is the cyborg functioning with cybernetic communication systems and biological feedback loops, but it is also a central location for a discussion over communication. Muri mentions that “from the moment the cyborg became a word; it signaled a complicated relationship between bodies and souls” (41). She focuses on the cyborg as a word and not the figure it denotes and later discusses the “tradition of metaphors” the cyborg was born from (99). This indicates the influence language has had in the creation of cyborgs. One example of this is that a “communication device that is connected by a feedback circuit” is comparable with the workings of the nervous systems of animals. In other words, language is a place for combination and relation as well as distinction. The same kind of interchangeability of language is seen in the *Ghost in the Shell* film. The Puppet-Master compares DNA to

code, a string of information, which it is. This blurs the separation between humans and computers. What is done here linguistically is done visually with the cyborgs' bodies. They look human, were once human, but aren't actually human. Returning to what the Puppet-Master said his language makes the language of biology and technology interchangeable because he reveals that a distinction in language is unnecessary.

Oshii takes the stripping of distinction to the next level by suggesting that even a distinction between selves is unnecessary. According to Roger Smith, J. D. Bernal was one who saw beyond the limiting effects of the central self and considered the possibility of multiple selves: "Bernal had recognized such a possibility and imagined a human form made up of brains detached from bodies and linked to other brains" (Smith 72). This is decades before the computer or the internet existed, technologies that "transformed the interface of person and machine" (72). Bernal's idea is strikingly similar to many of the images and concepts represented in Oshii's 1995 *Ghost in the Shell* film. Those with a cyber-brain, a common cybernetic enhancement that allows one to access data nets with their mind, can have the ability to telepathically communicate, metaphorically erasing the need for physical speaking abilities (a voice, mouth, hearing, ears). Even those who are completely organic have e-brain upgrades with similar functions. There are many literal images closer to Bernal's. The audience first sees a stage of Bernal's idea when the Foreign Minister's interpreter's brain is being examined at the beginning of the film. The interpreter's cyber-brain is shown outside of her body hooked up to machines for examination (Oshii 1995). The cyber-brain, much like the brain Descartes imagined, is where an individual's ghost resides. The way a cyber-brain seems to function is much like a computer that stores information and can be hacked. A ghost, which resembles the

conception of the soul, is supposed to have extra protection from such hacks, but even a ghost can be at risk showing a great vulnerability in this conception of the self: a single ghost in a brain shell. With these images Oshii creates a space in which an unisolated version of the self can be considered a reimagining of the individual.

Scenes in which there is a cyber-brain “dive” evoke Bernal’s image in a more precise manner. A cyber brain dive is when two cyber brains are tangibly connected by wires so that one individual can “dive” into the other individual’s mind to look for information, a virus, or a ghost line—where the soul or ghost is. Kusanagi’s merge with the Puppet-Master, which begins as a dive, is probably the best example in the film of Bernal’s multiple selves. Batou links Kusanagi’s and the Puppet-Master’s cyber-brains with wires (Oshii 1995). Kusanagi sees through the Puppet –Master’s eyes; the Puppet-Master speaks through Kusanagi’s mouth. However, the multi-self image is dissolved when both Kusanagi’s and the Puppet-Master’s bodies are destroyed. Kusanagi later explains that neither the individual known as Major Motoko Kusanagi nor the Puppet-Master exists anymore, but a new entity in their place (Oshii 1995).

The destruction of their connected cyborg bodies can hold another level of significance when thought of in sequence with the preceding action. When Kusanagi arrives to find the Puppet-Master she battles a tank. The building they battle in resembles the London Crystal Palace, a place that not only represents tradition, but also the elevated status of man (Chu 10/03/13). Their battle refutes this status. The ceiling is shot up resembling the crashing down of tradition. The tree of life, an image representing the evolutionary status of the human, is shot up and lingered on by the camera to reveal a space for a species next to humans (Chu 10/03/13). These shots are acceptable

representations of the postmodern/posthuman condition, leading to questions regarding the stability of the human subject, but the multi-self image created by Kusanagi and the Puppet-Master is the limit. At the end of the film in Batou's safe-house, the post-merge being finds itself in one body forging the type of completion whole the Puppet-Master was seeking (Oshii1995). The Puppet-Master is able to be a ghost in a body, and Kusanagi is no longer limited by that body. She is able to access more nets, leaving her body completely. There are a few tropes these final scenes speak to, but it is the importance of completeness within one body, which reminds me of Descartes who seems to privilege wholeness. But this is not the whole he considered. This is a different type of "complete" self from Descartes' that is not a simple mind and body. In the simplest terms this merge could be considered an amalgamation of two minds within one exchangeable body.

This idea of completion through a mate is another place the Creature and Kusanagi meet somewhat. While both the cyborg and the Creature are isolated selves, Donna Haraway expresses a fundamental difference between the two explaining:

Unlike the hopes of Frankenstein's monster, the cyborg does not expect its father to save it through a restoration of the garden; that is, through the fabrication of a heterosexual mate, through its completion in a finished whole, a city and cosmos (151).

This major difference centers on the desire to return to a time of innocence in the garden, modeled on the prelapsarian Judeo-Christian Garden of Eden human origin story. The creature wants a mate of the opposite sex to go from civilization with. The cyborg does not seek a mate, nor does it believe in a time of innocence. This may be another

reason why the creature fails in his environment. For him, there is no innocent beginning despite his desire for one. The cyborg, on the other hand, accepts this reality and embraces it. Haraway claims that through the heterosexual mate the creature seeks completion, and that the cyborg rejects this. The Cyborg embodies the incomplete. There is nothing that can enhance the “complete”, yet there is always the possibility of upgrading with the cyborg. Completion through a mate is one place where Oshii’s Kusanagi sidesteps Haraway’s cyborg. The Puppet-Master wishes to merge with Kusanagi because he is incomplete. While one can argue even after the merge that neither Kusanagi nor the Puppet-Master is really complete, the desire for advancement towards a fuller self through a union with another is clearly evident in this film. This union is still different from the Creature’s mate who would be a distinct opposite sex, whereas the Puppet-Master is a computer program with a male voice in a female body.

This merge and the issue of (re)production in general are examples of some of the complicated issues surrounding gender when dealing with the post-human subject. While gender is ascribed to a person’s body, it is actually a social construct. This means that gender, something many think is an important part of their identity, comes from something beyond the mind and body of the individual. While Carl Silvio makes a good argument about how Kusanagi becomes a maternal figure during the Merge with the Puppet-Master, his decision to identify the Puppet-Master as male in this scene is lacking. Silvio admits that the Puppet-Master’s gender is ambiguous, but he overlooks this because the Puppet-Master enters a “female body”. He also overlooks that the Puppet-Master entering was preceded by Kusanagi’s dive. Before we hear the Puppet-Master speak through Kusanagi, we see through the eyes of the Puppet-Master as Kusanagi. This

is not to say that Silvio is wrong in concluding the scene perpetuates a traditional reproductive trope for it is through Kusanagi that the Puppet-Master can “bare his children onto the net”, only that his argument is unfinished by overlooking the gender blurring in the scene. There is also something to be said about the use of the voice versus the use of the eyes. Both are ways we interact with and interpret the world, yet voice seems to have the upper hand in power between the two. Political change is made by those who have a voice and use it. History is written by those either with the louder voice or the one most agreed on. The Puppet-Master’s attribution of Kusanagi’s voice can be a sign of his power over her or can be interpreted as a sign of their bond. The Puppet-Master seeks out Kusanagi; she isn’t a random pick from the crowd. He sees himself in her: a desire to connect, feel real, and be part of something more

In these final scenes leading up to and including the merge the instability of the body becomes a focal point in which issues of gender, species, and naturalness can be contested. In “Acts of Becoming: Autobiography, *Frankenstein*, and the Postmodern Body”, Mark Mossman uses a few compelling anecdotes to convey his vision of his body as a postmodern text that is riddled with instability. In one of them, he talks about walking to the beach to swim in the ocean. For this he must take off his prosthetic leg to protect it from sand. It is when he walks past the sunbathers that he feels the most disabled; “felt the stares of roughly forty sunbathing, vacationing people, and heard the questions of several small, inquisitive children, I felt deeply disabled” (#12). However, once in the water, he is no longer seen as disabled; his body is hidden by the waves. This shows the importance of the outside, particularly other people, in identity. His mind and body are still present, but they cannot be defined by other beneath the waves. He

emphasized the effect of this with his story of stripping down in front of his mirror. As more clothing comes off, his disability becomes more apparent, and other markers of identity are lost (#14). As a text, his body is unstable. The Creature cannot function in the same way because his body is not as pliable as either Mossman's, or even a cyborg's, as illustrated by his attempt to reach out to the DeLacy's. Once the blind man's children see the Creature's appearance, the Creature's kind work and conversation with the man is null and void (Shelley 162-3). As Mossman finds in his article, the Creature is ultimately unsuccessful at overcoming his socially inscribed "disability" through the use of narrative.

The gender of Oshii's posthuman characters incurs similar bouts of instability due to the body. Kusanagi's interactions with her partner Batou illustrate the divide between social expectations and Kusanagi's treatment of her own body. The first instance of this is after Batou and Kusanagi contain the garbage man's hacker partner (Oshii 1995). Kusanagi is naked after using her optic camouflage and Batou comes to her and covers her with his jacket (Oshii 1995). She is completely comfortable being naked in the open. The same thing happens when Batou sets up her dive with the Puppet-Master. He covers her broken body with his jacket. These interactions are present to show her reaction, Batou's is the conventional reaction, but she doesn't seem concerned with the social inscription of her gender. The sequence which leads up to her body breaking, shows the instability of Kusanagi's body. Kusanagi strips for her optic camouflage and charges at the tank to rip off the hatch with her bare hands. As she pulls, her body becomes visible not as the slender female figure we see throughout the film, but as a hulking mass of muscles that eventually tear under the exertion (Oshii 1995). Oshii takes the body that is marked as female despite her more prominent personal characteristics, despite the

operator of the body not associating with this identification, and turns it into a nearly unrecognizable hulky mass which then falls apart like an overused and exerted piece of equipment. When her limbs break down, the image of the turns feminine again: vulnerable. Her arched back resembles a dancer, her body returning to a more feminine form as bits of metal and manufactured tissue fall all around her (Oshii 1995). Her body was a piece of herself, and, like all cyborgs, a replaceable component; however, without her body she is incomplete within the physical world. She lacks social capabilities and requires Batou to move her to the Puppet-Master and set up the dive.

The breaking of her body shows that she is not truly attached to it. As a cyborg, she can get a new one. In his article “Acts of Becoming: Autobiography, *Frankenstein*, and the Postmodern Body”, Mark Mossman talks of a disabled student of his who felt “her body, herself being lifted from her, being reshaped and remade because of the recognition of difference” (Mossman #10). Both Kusanagi and the Creature can relate to this sensation, since neither actually owns their respective bodies. In Kusanagi’s case, her body was completely manufactured by the corporation, MegaTech, with the exception of some of her original organic brain tissue. She explains on the boat with Batou that if they resign from Section Nine, they have to forfeit bodies and memories (Oshii 1995)—she does not own her body in any way. The Creature, also manufactured by another party, is cast from society for difference given to him.

Kusanagi’s relation to her gender is an interesting point of debate on the issue of gender. Allison Muri claims that there are “two dominant versions” of the female cyborg: “the coldly rational and highly sexualized” one and “the horrifying representation of the disembodied and independently reproducing womb” (Muri 167). Both of these models

are threatening manifestations of the integration of woman and machine in the world of the humanist subject; still they both signify the representative quality of a woman in a traditional frame of thinking: reproduction. The sexualized model refrains from reproduction. One female cyborg character Muri uses as an example for this is Kitsune from Bruce Sterling's *Schismatrix*. Of Kitsune, Muri states:

Kitsune has almost no emotional sensibility but experiences powerful sexual pleasure, cold rationality, and reproductive control demonstrates once again the anxiety and the desire that the cyborg stories register about female intellect, sexual autonomy, and pleasure without 'natural' fertility within the organic womb. (172)

The cyberization of the female voids her emotions. Interestingly, sexual pleasure is heightened with cold rationality. Rationality is used as a marker of the boundary between human and animal, yet sex is a behavior engaged by all animals. However, "cold rationality" seems different from the rationality of man. What Muri would be talking about is not the heralded rationality of man, but a programmed rationality of a machine. By this, it follows that sexual pleasure for those marked as female is unnatural. This cyborg does not delineate the myth that the only reasons a woman would be having sex would be to please a man or conceive a child, but enforces it by creating the image of a female who would be in charge of her sexuality completely, in the form of a provocative body with a computerized mind. This gives the impression that the only type of woman who would be like this would not be human. As Muri notes, this construction reveals the unease associated with the abilities of the female without the womb, the organic mode of reproduction and the metaphorical symbol of women's lack of control (Muri 168).

Oshii utilizes gender blurring caused by technology to indicate the presence of the ambiguities and arbitrariness that accompany gender assignment in some cases. Muri's polarized models each have some relationship to power and the female body. Since it has been regarded as natural that the female is powerless, these models are considered dangerous and monstrous. In Oshii's world this doesn't seem to be the case. Kusanagi surely is not powerless at all, and particularly not because of gender, nor is she considered a monster. It is easy to classify Motoko Kusanagi as the first type of cyborg at first, but there are many issues with this assessment. Kusanagi does not experience any sexual pleasure in the film. While she may be read as rational and cold, these are characteristics her job asks for, not her female embodiment. And, it is by her employers her autonomy is most meddled with. Her body was constructed for a specific job. Kusanagi is definitely not a disembodied womb either, but as mentioned throughout this chapter Oshii uses Kusanagi to navigate new ways of (re)production. While her body is represented as distinctly female, she seems un-phased by the social implications of this. Her only direct reference to her own body as female is a joke about menstruation at the beginning of the film (Oshii 1995). It is the utility of her body which enables her to do her job which seems to have a greater impact on her life. As for the inability to reproduce, biologically this stands, but Kusanagi's merge with the Puppet-Master does signify an alternative type of (re)production. Moreover, the manufacturing of Kusanagi and the other cyborgs is another method of reproduction Oshii explores.

Kusanagi is part of two methods of (re)production in this film. The first is seen in the opening credits of the film when she is being manufactured by MegaTech (Oshii 1995). If cyborgs are going to be a new life form, this would be their place of birth. This

is assembly line production of an empty shell. MegaTech designed Kusanagi's body, and so defined her body for the purposes of her job. Interestingly, MegaTech seems to adopt the characteristics of Muri's disembodied womb and maintain a patriarchic control over its creations. This adds another dimension to Kusanagi's lack of concern for her body particularly its social implications. Her body was not made for her, but for a specific job. The second mode of life creation Kusanagi takes part in is her merge with the Puppet-Master discussed before. This production resonates with natural birth in that Kusanagi and the Puppet-Master are both sources of information that combine to make a new collection of information. This is like the DNA of parents that mixes to create a child. It's most significant difference from natural birth is the lack a bodily involvement. Natural birth is very focused on the body. Children are conceived through the physical act of sex. Pregnancy changes a women's body over the course of nine months and some of these changes don't go away. And the result of all of this is a baby who has a fragile body that must be taken care of and nourished. Because of its bodily investment, natural childbirth is can be seen as a form of control over women. The way these two methods of reproduction kind of bookend the film shows an interesting spectrum of the possibilities for producing life in the world Oshii imagines. He begins with the manufactured production of individuals which some would be uncomfortable with, and ends the film with this idea of creating a new individual without to constraints or hazards of the body.

The effect that perception of the body has on identification is something both Oshii and Shelley consider in their created worlds. For both, the issue is how these new human-like creations will fit into society. In *Frankenstein*, it is quite clear that Shelley

did not envision such a creation fitting into society. Oshii, on the other, is more optimistic about his posthuman creation. His world embraces the digital age and its possible technologic enhancements for the human. Mossman's anecdotes add a layer of depth to these fictional examples. He illustrates how the issue already exists, and has existed. While we have not yet created beings in our own image, we already live in a world that has identified groups of people as subhuman and that already integrates technology with the human body. Like with Kusanagi, like with the Creature, like with Mossman, some of these differences between "human" and "other" are easier to hide or discard than others. Because the body is so important in identification it is important to realize the instability and disconnection that bodies can create. Not only does this disconnect and fluidity of the body exist and refute Descartes sturdy model of the self, but it is also part of an incomplete system surroundings, past, hopes, desires, life events all interconnect into the web of the self.

The Posthuman “Human”

Between the first and the second *Ghost in the Shell* films there seems to be an overall deepening of themes and issues Oshii deals with. Oshii further develops some of the themes introduced in the first film in a story that pulls focus away from the protagonist to widen the scope of Oshii’s world. These themes include a division from the body, the lack of privilege for the human, and questions about authenticity. Kusanagi has abandoned her body and is wandering through the nets (Oshii 2004). Lacking a shell, she is not the protagonist of *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*. Oshii’s choice to name Kusanagi’s former partner, Batou, as the protagonist is partly due to how we think of individuals. Here, Oshii is indicating that we think of individuals as having bodies even when we have been introduced to an individual who is not attached to any particular body. As Sobchack explains, the way we see the human is naturalized and transparent, and this is not easy to change. While Oshii may have created Kusanagi as an individual who embraced a bodiless life, she may still not be considered a full individual. The inability to see beyond the body can be seen in society’s curiosity and even disdain for people who do not have bodies that are easily interpreted (such as androgynous people) or people without a ‘natural’ human body (people with missing limbs or deformities). These people tend to endure extra stares in their day to day life. These are people that are easily categorized as “other” or outsiders. The Creature from Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* would too be placed with the “other”; however, he possesses a body that is undeniably outside of even the realm of human. Interestingly, Oshii does choose another cyborg as the protagonist, and Batou is not the most human looking of the cyborgs. This, along with Batou’s relationship with his dog, speaks to Oshii’s desire to branch out from the

human. By looking beyond the human and not at posthuman figure, but entirely different species and even not living things, we are asked to reanalyze the structures upon which we structure our society. While in the first chapter I had examined the mind-body dualism specifically in *Frankenstein* and the *Ghost in the Shell* films, in this chapter I will explore the ways these texts treat other dualistic relationships that may be used to identify or define the individual. The characters from these texts may be considered non-human, but the posthuman markers link each to the human blurring the boundary between the human-non-human binary, yet we are faced with the question: does having a “real ghost” ultimately replace the “human”?

While the posthuman may blur the boundary between the human and non-human, as mentioned, the posthuman is not always successful in its context. This is one place where Oshii’s and Shelley’s posthuman characters diverge. While the posthuman identity fails, falling to the wayside of the “other”, in *Frankenstein*, posthuman identities in the *Ghost in the Shell* films seem to thrive as accepted individuals. The root of this difference comes from the rigidity of the society within Shelley’s novel versus the fluidity in Oshii’s films. While dualisms like self-other and human-non-human are still present in the *Ghost in the Shell* films the kind of binary driven society seen in *Frankenstein* is not present in Oshii’s conception of the world. Whether something is natural or unnatural, scared or without god, human or non-human seems to have a higher impact on the individual in *Frankenstein* than in *Ghost in the Shell* or *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*. In Oshii’s films the natural and unnatural are often blended. Most of the main characters are cyborgs which are generally composed of both organic and synthetic parts. Oshii’s cyborgs generally look human too; at least visually, there is very little

distinction from the natural and unnatural. This also helps blur the distinction between the human and the non-human because many of the non-humans can be made to look human. The taboo of breaching the God-human binary—“playing God”—is not as present in the *Ghost in the Shell* films. The religious God that exists in *Frankenstein* doesn't really have a place in *Ghost in the Shell*. While the films do have spiritual elements, the “god” in these films would be the companies that make the law or attempt to go above it such as MegaTech and Locus Solos. The binary categories still exist, but are policed less than in Mary Shelly's novel.

In *Frankenstein*, there is little doubt over who or what belongs where because of the rigid categorical structures in effect. These categories are hierarchical as one side is generally more favored, powerful, or accepted than the other side. For example, while in the hut by the DeLacy cottage the Creature observes the family is able to learn a human language and culture. He exclaims that language must be a “godlike science” (Shelley 140). His attribution of language as holding such high power reveals a power distinction between the “human” who possesses such power and the non-human that does not. Considering this, one can see one of the complications made by the Creature's being. In terms of language, he may be considered more human than not, but he is not human. This is the sort of distinction blurring posthuman figures are capable of. The Creature's use of language and narrative temporarily calms his creator's hatred for him. After the Creature finishes his story about his life thus far, Victor tells Walton:

I was bewildered, perplexed, and unable to arrange my ideas sufficiently... The latter part of his tale had kindled anew in me the anger that had died away while he narrated his peaceful life among the cottagers (171)

The Creature's ability to tell a story earns him a moment of peace and recognition in his creator's eye, however fleeting the moment. In this moment the Creature has control over his own narrative, but once Victor Frankenstein's anger returns he take the narrative back from the Creature. Frankenstein does this literally by taking back his place as narrator, and figuratively by only registering a narrative which shows the Creature as wicked (Shelley 171-2).

The voiceless "other" is another theme along with innocence Oshii picks up in *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*. The title *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* puts forth the question: who or what is innocent in this film? This is an applicable question to the plot considering that the main story in the film is essentially a mystery comprised of a slew of crimes including a few murders, gang violence, and kidnappings. At the end of the film, however, no one person seems to be entirely innocent and even the kidnapped girls turn to murder as a means of an escape. The pleasure dolls, on the other hand, are a viable option for the holders of the innocence the quality Oshii picked out for his title. Of course, this is only viable if we overlook the anthropocentric view of victimology—the concept that only humans can be victims. While there are many who do think that animals can be victims of abuse and neglect, to see things such as dolls as victims is probably a bit too far for most; however, Oshii believes in their innocence. In his article "Mechanic Desires: Hans Bellmer's Dolls and the Technological Uncanny in *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*", Steven T. Brown argues that it is the gynoids before they were imprinted with souls that Oshii claims are innocent (Brown 244). In fact, once Batou and the gynoid hacked by Kusanagi find a kidnapped girl, neither are very sympathetic for the girl. In response to the girl's protest—"I didn't want to become a doll"—

Kusanagi says “We weep for the bird’s cry, but not for the blood of fish. Blessed are those who have voice. If the dolls could speak no doubt they’d scream, “I didn’t want to become human”” (Oshii 2004). This juxtaposition of the bird’s cry and the blood of fish drown out the girls protest that she doesn’t want to be a doll because it illustrates that just because she is able to voice her desires does not mean her opinion is more important. This completely challenges the power distinction between the self and other or the human and non-human. Through Kusanagi, Oshii points out that there is this discrimination against the voiceless, while introducing the idea of moving beyond this bias. It is easy the ignore the opinions of the voiceless; it is easy to hear want those with a voice want. This does not mean they should be ignored. For Oshii, these voiceless are dolls and animals. When the girl explains the deceased inspector’s plan, Batou says, “Didn’t he consider the victims? Not the humans. What about the dolls endowed with souls?” (Oshii 2004). The sympathy in the scene lies with the dolls, not the girls. Oshii’s voiceless are like the Creature in that Oshii does not expect them to make their own mark through narrative as the Creature had tried. What the dolls say in the film is actually from the kidnapped girls’ ghosts. Oshii wants us to accept a doll for what it is and recognize its own strengths.

Voice is a very powerful ability not only restricted to the human, but to certain sub-groups of the human which can also be identified by binaries. Broadly speaking, the “self” is an autonomous entity with voice, while the “other” is not and can often be determined by the self. The self-other binary can be applied on an individual level or even a communal level. Voice is a quality of the self; to have narrative voice is to have some sort of power generally not given to the other. This is something Mark Mossman

tries to prove in his “Acts of Becoming”. One of Mossman’s goals for his work is to “create a reading of disability” (#5). He argues “writing disability is the (re)production of disability, a potent act of creation. Autobiography by a disabled person is an authentication of lived performed experience; it is a process of making” (#7). The disabled are generally not included in this naturalized, idealized image of the human. They too are “other”. By creating a disabled narrative or biography, people like Mossman are not only giving voice to a group of people, but also recreating disability with the power to redefine itself. Haraway too claims a certain power is to be found in cyborg writing: “All the characters explore the limits of language, the dream of communication experience” (179). Haraway sees a definitional power in writing, but also the importance and appreciation for the ability to communicate as well as how pliable these methods can be. This can be seen in the Puppet-Master’s blend of DNA and code discussed in Chapter one. Unfortunately, for the Creature, this power of narrative is stripped away by Victor’s preconceived notions of his creation and its body. However, the Creature’s narrative does still have an effect on those outside of the novel; the readers. This does not affect his place in society within the novel.

This self-other binary is not strictly followed in the *Ghost in the Shell* films. One may argue that the Puppet-Master may be considered “other” as his possession of life is debated in the film, but he is integrated into Kusanagi’s self by the end of the film. This combines self with other, effectively destroying the dualism. A similar blurring of otherness can be said for all of the “others” seen in the films. At one point or another someone or something one may think of as other is validated by a character or event in the plot. In the first film when Kusanagi tells Batou her fears of being some replicant of

her original self, or something with a completely fictional past, he assures her that she is an individual if only for the way those around her treat her (Oshii 1995). This is most evident in the second film which seems to focus on the external self—the non-“others” and social context. This sort of validation of the “other” is particularly evident with the dolls in the second film. While Kusanagi is the protagonist of the first film and is supposed to be human, at least at some point in her life, the gynoids in the second film are introduced to the audience as dolls with a malfunction. The coroner Haraway, named and inspired by the theorist, legitimizes the dolls as victims in the case Batou and Togusa are working on as well as victims of abandonment (Oshii 2004).

Oshii putting Haraway in his film shows how much her ideas have influenced his ideas for this film and the in the first. In *Ghost in Shell*, Haraway’s influence on Oshii is evident in Kusanagi. Kusanagi has traits from Haraway’s cyborg such as the rejection of an innocent origin and gender categorization. In the second film, Haraway’s original ideas pertaining to erasing created distinction between dualisms like man and machine are used, especially in the character Haraway. Haraway, the character, is very involved in the case Batou and Togusa are investigating. The first thing she tells them is that she is not sharing the investigation (Oshii 2004). She sees the doll as a victim, a living thing that was murdered by Batou, while Togusa seems to see it as only a doll or android that was stopped in the midst of a murder spree. Opposite ends of a spectrum are created during this scene, on which on one side the gynoids are seen as victims, and the other end the gynoids are seen as lifeless dolls. Haraway is on the former end, while Togusa is on the latter, and Batou seems to be wandering between. This is visually indicated by the lack of movement by Togusa and Haraway in the scene, and the images of Batou walking

around the room, looking at all of the bodies. Togusa has a very conventional stance, one reminiscent of the people in *Frankenstein*: the distinction between us and dolls, androids, or monsters is clear, as it should be. Haraway, however, won't let the issue be solved this simply. She says, "we model [gynoids] on a human image, an idealized one at that." (Oshii 2004). Immediately, the idea of creating a being in a human image should remind one of *Frankenstein* and the Creature. Both the Creature and dolls are expected to submit to their creators: humans.

The human "power" in place is not only the subjugation of its creations, but also judges these creations through a "human" lens looking for the same characteristics found in a desirable human. This is one way the posthuman can blur the distinction between the human and non-human. The Creature can be seen in a similar light as he is rejected for his ugliness and has often been interpreted as an embodiment of what people thought of foreigners and the lower-class at the time. This class narrative relies on a similar logic as the self-other, or better yet, the human-non-human binaries. Both, for one, are influenced by birth. Humans and aristocrats come from specific lineages, while the non-humans and lower classes may come from unknown families and can even lack an origin family.

Anca Vlasopolos argues that "the hidden logic of *Frankenstein* rests on Mary Shelley's fusion of the socio-political forces used to ensure the survival of the aristocracy with the private drama of a man who sees himself as eluctably driven to insect" (125). Victor Frankenstein transgresses society by creating a being not of god or women, but in his own filthy image (Shelley 158). The resultant Creature is a physical and constant reminder of this undoable transgression; the symbol and catalyst of the destruction of the Frankenstein family. Anca Vlasopolos focuses her argument around the class selection in

Frankenstein which encourages incest of the “well born” to perpetuate the “desirable characteristics” of the upper classes such as beauty (126). Here a class binary is created between upper class and not-upper class and the distinction between the two is made with “desirable characteristics” such as beauty and family.

A possession that those within the society of Shelley’s novel value greatly, one the Creature lacks is the family. Victor Frankenstein begins his tale with the words “I am birth Genevese; and my family is one of the most distinguished of that republic” (63). By starting with these lines, which are followed by passages regarding his family life and the making of his domestic sphere, show the importance of family in one’s identity in this novel. In his narrative about his family readers see a pattern emerge in which when something goes wrong, the preferred course of action is to retreat within the family rather than rely on external support. This is true of the adoption of Elizabeth, whose widower father warns Alphonse Frankenstein: “Reflect upon this proposition [to raise your sister’s daughter]; and decide whether you would prefer educating your niece yourself to her being brought up by a stepmother” (65). Alphonse Frankenstein leaves immediately to get the child, who is brought up to be Victor Frankenstein’s wife. Vlasopolos notes that conflicting incestual relationships develop from these actions, which are furthered with the death of Caroline Frankenstein, the matriarch of the Frankenstein family. On her death bed she vocalizes what Victor and Elizabeth had always known: that she wants them to get married. Then she tells Elizabeth, “my love, you must supply my place to your younger cousins” (72). Elizabeth is Victor’s cousin, sister, as well as, a mother to his younger siblings. The attention paid to the beauty of the Frankenstein women as well as the family unit supports Vlasopolos’s claim, while also creating a stark comparison to

the creature's ugliness. In "Facing the Ugly: The Case of *Frankenstein*", Denise Gigante starts "Facing the Ugly" off by saying that if ugliness is the opposite of beauty then ugliness is a lack of beauty (565). Following this, the ugly must lack what beauty has. In *Frankenstein* this is clearly true, the Creature lacks family and station in society, while the beautiful Elizabeth not only has these advantages, but was picked out for this life partly because of her beauty.

Victor Frankenstein remembers his mother deeming Elizabeth "the most beautiful child" (Shelley 65). Victor, himself, admires Elizabeth's great beauty telling Walton, "Her figure was light and airy, and, though capable of enduring great fatigue, she appeared the most fragile creature in the world" (65). Her light and airy qualities give her a sort of ethereal look suggesting that her beauty goes beyond that of a human's. The idea that her body seems to occupy a space of impossibility is furthered by being both fragile as well as enduring. The way Victor Frankenstein describes her beauty seems to allude to angels, inferring that the character has angelic qualities if she is not an angel herself. This description supports Vlasopolos's claim that beauty is a sign of class in the novel. Elizabeth may even be seen as above her own class as she possesses the qualities of the heavenly. On the other end of the social hierarchy, we have the women whose job is to take care of Victor after he is captured in Ireland. Of this woman, Victor says "her countenance expressed all those bad qualities which often characterize that class. The lines of her face were hard and rude" (Shelley 203). Here, class and appearance are directly related by the narrator. The lines on the woman's face are signs indicating the harshness and rudeness associated with her class. Interestingly, Justine, the girl who the Frankenstein family takes in as a close family servant, is of a lower class, but is able to

intermingle with the family quite well for some time. Elizabeth's explanation for this is the republican nature of the government; however, I believe that Justine's beauty plays a role into her acceptance into the family. In a letter, Elizabeth reminds Victor that "if you were in ill humor, one glance from Justine could dissipate it, for the same reason Ariosto gives concerning the beauty of Angelica" (94). Justine is too a possessor of great beauty and so fits in with the women of the Frankenstein family, at least on the surface. This beauty only takes her so far, as she is unjustly sentenced to death for a murder she did not commit. This failing of the justice system is another indication that Justine's beauty factors greatly into her acceptance into the family, as it shows that the just republican government Elizabeth cited does not actually exist (Shelley 93). Justine has the beauty of the upper class, but ultimately lacks other aspects that mark the upper class.

While the displeasure of the Creature's ugliness stems from a similar need for the presentation of beauty, his ugliness is not the same ugliness of the lower classes. The Creature's ugliness incites fear, while the harsh appearance of the lower classes is merely fitting for their social status. The harsh appearance of the lower classes is rather harmless, if not helpful, for the upper-classes. It helps maintain distinction. The Creature's ugliness, on the other hand, is threatening because of its integration of human and non-human in his posthuman body. Denise Gigante claims the Creature is "an excess of existence, exceeding representation, and hence appearing to others as a chaotic spillage from his own representational shell"; he is "only too real" (566). While the appearance of Oshii's creatures can represent the human image, the Creature cannot; his body is monstrous in that it cannot be contained.

I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!—Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of his muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness, but these luxuriations only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same color as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion, and straight black lips...now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart (Shelley 86)

Once his creation is complete, once his idea becomes a reality, it loses its beauty. During the feverish preliminary stages, Victor Frankenstein wanted to create being worthy of admiration, and believed he would. Instead, the more appealing features of the Creature, his hair and white teeth, only seem to heighten his hideousness for their inability to disguise it. The appearance of his creation also seems to mock him because he believed he was creating greatness and ended up with something that can't even appear to be great. The lack of cover provided by the skin is probably one of the uglier things about the Creature. The Creature's skin barely covers anything. In her article, Gigante discusses the Burkean definition of what is beautiful and ugly. She states: "Cousins and Žižek both implicitly follow Burke in emphasizing the "broken" surface as a contributing effect of the ugly" (573). The Creature's skin is stretched and sutured over his hulking mass. He is replete of smooth, undamaged surfaces.

In a quote used by Brown, Oshii states:

What would it mean for a human to "become more than human"? One answer would be to discard the actual human body, and embrace becoming a doll. People try to adjust their natural bodies, evolved for something very different, to the modern urban

environment. Instead of following that trajectory, we're better off turning into dolls, into intended artifice. (Oshii)

Becoming "more than human" may mean moving beyond even the posthuman by becoming something that is thoroughly not human. This idea of intended artifice seems like it would be a full embrace of the separation of the ghost and the shell. Instead of being hindered by physical ailment, ghosts of individuals would be an expansive net. This may be the ghost in the machine Vivian Sobchack was concerned about (Sobchack 162). Oshii would see this as a more enlightening experience. This would leave shells to be used sporadically as interchangeable accessories or untouched and innocent. This is a difficult concept for many to grasp since we live in an anthropocentric world. Oshii suggests moving beyond the human by becoming dolls and embracing "intended artifice". "Intended artifice" is significant because when we think about improving the human, we tend to still want the human to be human, to be "real". Physical appearance can be especially indicative of the "real" humans. This was another failing due to the creature's lack of beauty. It is not only an ugliness, but, visually, he is so unavoidably not human, and is rejected because of this. In the more fluid society of Oshii's films, however, Batou looks "human enough". Even so he does seem to experience some discrimination as "cyborg cop from Section 9, [whose] bum luck catches like the plague" (Oshii 2004). The dolls of *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* are shaped by similar standards regarding human appearance and beauty. While they were created to possess human beauty, they are not actually human. Ghost dubbing, the processes through which the ghost of someone is copied and uploaded into something, is part of what makes this specific sexaroids so appealing. Ghost-dubbing is illegal in part because the original

subject dies in the process. In the case of these dolls, it allows the user to treat something very human-like however he pleases because it is a doll. The character Haraway asks “Why are humans so obsessed with recreating themselves?” (Oshii 2004). If humans want to advance, want to be better than what they are, then why do they cling to the image they were given, and, at times, create; why do they impose this image on others? One possible answer for this is that by perpetuating the organic image of the human, we are upholding the accepted image of the human and the set parameters which dictate what is human. Similar to the incestual relationships in *Frankenstein*, the standards of human beauty used to make the dolls help maintain a status quo.

The focus on physical cover-up of artifice brings attention to our desire to create hidden advancement beneath the skin. In the first film, Kusanagi is explicitly a full cyborg, but she also appears completely human. While her appearance keeps those around her treating her like she is a real person as Batou points out to her, her uncertainty about herself still lies beneath her skin. Batou’s arm looks like a muscular human arm, yet it opens up to reveal a gun. While both characters have bodies that obviously embrace the advanced technology, it is still beneath a human skin, an excepted body form. Batou, not as much, since his eyes in particular are obviously synthetic. This change in protagonist appearance has something to say about the difference between the first and second films. The first film almost caters to the acceptance of the human form as a shell and focuses on the internal transformation of Kusanagi’s ghost. While bodies are portrayed as interchangeable, all of Kusanagi’s bodies are human and female in appearance. The second film pushes these limits further. As mentioned, Kusanagi has no body in the second film. If an audience is able to accept the genesis of an individual

through Kusanagi's and the Puppet-Master, can they still see this as an individual without any body? Batou's eyes raise the stakes in a similar way: if we are able to accept Kusanagi despite her own doubts, can we accept Batou even when his appearance is a step further from the human? And, despite the steps these manifestations of the individual take further from the human, whenever they are injured or damaged they are immediately repaired. This is not only a perk of having a cyborg body, but also an effort to maintain smooth surfaces and dispose of cracks. This is not to say that dolls aren't made to do this, because the gynoids are modeled after a very desirable human form and dolls' likeness to humans is another theme in the film, but Oshii believes that by becoming a doll you are really becoming something that is not human, something beyond the human.

Kim, the hacker Batou and Togusa question about Locus Solus, explains how the doll is beyond the human:

The inadequacies of human awareness become the inadequacies of life's reality. Perfection is possible only for those without consciousness, or perhaps endowed with infinite consciousness. In other words, for dolls and for gods. (Oshii)

Kim explains that humans lack the perfection of dolls because perfection can only come from complete unawareness or complete awareness. Dolls do not have the consciousness that leads to the inadequate awareness humans suffer. Kim is a character who is able to "go doll" to the fullest extent in the film. He has a doll's body and surrounds himself with dolls and automata. His movements are slow and clumsy and his mouth is only a hinged piece that opens when he speaks. His entire life seems to embrace the intended artifice Oshii talks about. Kim is a hacker who implants false images and

scenarios into the minds of others. Kim is suspected to be the hacker who supposedly caused Batou to shoot himself in the arm in the convenience store (Oshii 2004). Later, when Togusa and Batou go to see him he puts them on a loop on entering and reentering his mansion. The mansion itself is part of this intended artifice. Oshii sort of mind hacks the audience with the three-dimensional illusions painted in Kim's rooms. The room with the seagulls is one of these rooms. Initially, Batou walks in and there appears to be birds or at least three-dimensional representations of birds in the room. Then he looks more closely taking a few steps into the room, and Oshii reveals that the birds are only painted in a specific way on the ceiling and walls (Oshii 2004). Oshii does not only point out the importance of perspective, but also to emphasize that nothing in the movie is actually three-dimensional because they are watching it on a two-dimensional screen. The entire film is intended artifice. It is a made up story in an imagined world, yet it still holds significance. Artifice does not necessarily reduce meaning, but can offer an alternative way of conveying it.

All of these skin deep illusions that cling to the natural human image are hiding something. For the cyborgs, Kusanagi and Batou, they hide the high percentage advanced technology that makes up their bodies. For the dolls, they hide a corporation's misdeeds and the lost souls of young girls. Such illusions do not exist in the character of the Frankenstein's Creature. The broken surface is seen in the *Ghost of the Shell 2: Innocence* as well. Right before Batou destroys the gynoid that had murdered its owner and two police officers, she starts repeating "Help me...help me..." as she tears open her skin and her torso bursts open. As Brown notes, this image is another tribute to Bellmer, particularly his drawing *Rose ouverte la Nuit* (1934) (239). This drawing depicts a girl

with an opened torso looking at her innards. The gynoid goes from having a beautiful exterior, to the spilling of its interior complicating its beauty. Similar effects occur with Kusanagi and Batou. As discussed in Chapter one, Kusanagi destroys her body in the first film not only rejecting the social gender implications applied by such a body, but also any connection or need for that specific shell. The smoothness of her body is corrupted first by her musculature when attempting to open the hatch then by her limbs actually breaking (Oshii 1995). Both visually reveal that her human appearance is only an appearance. What all of these broken surfaces seem to have in common is that they can reveal truth. The visible workings of the Creatures muscles and arteries show that he is indeed alive. The gynoid's opening scene reveals that there is something within the doll. Kusanagi's and Batou's broken surfaces reveal that they are both beings of technology beyond the human. Perhaps, rather than merely because of its absence of smoothness, the broken surface is ugly because of its blunt reality.

While the broken surface is present in Oshii's films, he doesn't use the ugly like Shelley did. Instead, Oshii's films use broken surfaces to conjure up the uncanny. The uncanny, according to Freud, is where the familiar and the hidden cross. There are a couple of ways to incite an uncanny feeling: doubt pertaining to whether a lifeless of animate object actually does or does not possess life and doubling are two ways (Freud 5,9). Both are present in *Ghost in the Shell* and *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*. Starting with doubts over whether an animate object is alive or not, there are two scenes I would like to discuss pertaining to the uncanniness of dolls caused by uncertainty of life. When Batou first encounters a gynoid, she is motionless. Suddenly she moves, as if a spirit had possessed her, and she sort of floats. As she attacks Batou

she exhibits no change in facial expression (Oshii 2004). There is something very uncanny and eerie about her movements. After Batou pushes her against a wall, there is a moment when she looks like a helpless woman. Then she twitches, like a malfunctioning robot, before she starts saying “Help me...Help me...” and tearing her skin creating a broken surface (Oshii 2004). The features of this scene that raise the uncanny are the same which point to the truth. First, we see a lifeless doll who is charged with a possessive spirit. Originally, this gynoid was like most dolls, soulless, but then it was infused through the process of ghost-dubbing with the ghost of a girl who is using it to get attention for a problem. Then, the audience is reminded that this is ultimately a doll, she is unable to change her facial expression and can turn her head all the way around. Her suicide attempt fuses these two elements—the doll and the girl inside of the doll—switching from her face of a beautiful woman to her shaky motions, from her pleas for help to her synthetic skin tearing (Oshii 2004). When her body and face finally open to reveal her manufactured innards, her status as a doll should be settled, but there is still the uneasiness about whether or not there was something alive there.

The next scene I would like to discuss for the uncertainty which arises when something thought to be alive is not or if something not alive may actually be alive is when Batou and Togusa first find Kim. He appears to be dead and Togusa surmises that a firewall zapped him while he was hacking (Oshii 2004). Batou sees through the ruse and tosses Kim’s body out of its chair (Oshii 2004). While still connected to wires, the body falls to the floor like a puppet whose strings are cut. This is very fitting considering Kim’s death note: “Life and death come and go like marionettes dancing on a table. Once their strings are cut, they easily crumble” (Oshii 2004). This quote is from a poem

by noh actor and playwright Zeami titled “Mirror of the Flower” (Brown 227). Noh Theater was popular in the Muramachi-period in Japan and relied on artifice (227-8). Here, Zeami is advising noh actors to have their minds function like a puppets strings to make their characters come to life. As Batou suspects, Kim is not dead and Kim starts laughing. His eyes are still bulging from his head and his mouth moves on a hinge. Oshii gives the audience a full view of this laugh. As Kim begins to laugh harder, he opens his jaw essentially splitting his face in half. Even though Kim is a human his trick and his body make him seem not alive, but like an automata you would find in a carnival game. The way his face opens up reveals his mechanical structure, while his laugh itself sounds mechanical. In these moments it is uncanny to realize that Kim is alive, yet again we find this uncanniness revealing. One reason this scene provokes this uneasiness is summarized by Kim, himself: “[The dolls] make us face the terror of being reduced to simple mechanisms and matter. In other words, the fear that, fundamentally, all humans belong to the void.”(Oshii 2004). The laughter can be particularly uneasy in this sense because laughter is so much a part of social human interaction, but here it is reduced to an eerie sound. Oshii shows us another way in which humans are not a special as we tend to think. Thinking about the closeness between a doll and a human can reveal this. A similar issue is seen in *Frankenstein*. One of the problems with Victor’s Creature is that it proves that the essence of life can be created by man just as a machine can be built.

Doubling, like the uncertain life status, is a way to incite the uncanny. According to Freud, “The double was originally an insurance against destruction of the ego, an energetic denial of death” (Freud 9). But the double ultimately turns against the ego. The double in *Frankenstein* is a double in motivation more than a traditional

doppelganger or look alike. Anca Vlasopolos claims that the Creature can be seen as a sort of double for Victor Frankenstein that is able to act out his true desires. Unlike a physical double, the Creature manifests as Victor's inner desire's incarnate. This ties in well with Gigante's claim that the Creature is "too real". Like from a dark secret, Victor Frankenstein runs and hides from his Creature. Walton and Victor Frankenstein can also be seen as doubles of each other in a similar way. They both leave their families for their own pursuits. The double in the *Ghost in the Shell* films returns to the idea of the doppelganger. Oshii shows that the body or shell is not only replaceable, but reproducible. In the first film, Kusanagi sees the woman in the café who looks like her who could be a copy or who she could be a copy of. He reiterates how present doubling is in this world with the gynoids. The gynoids illustrate doubling to its full extent in the film. As an army of hacked gynoids are approaching, Kusanagi tells Batou, "A mirror does not reflect evil, but creates it" (Oshii 1995).

Mirrors are relevant in both of the *Ghost in the Shell* films and do not function the same in both films. In the first film, the mirror seems to act as a reflecting device. Kusanagi sees herself in the window when she is watching the garbage man's interrogation. When she asks the Puppet-Master why he was interested in her, the Puppet-Master responds, "Because in you I see myself, as a body sees its reflection within a mirror" (Oshii 1995). This is not to that he thinks Kusanagi is the same as him. The metaphor "as a body sees its reflection within a mirror" suggests that he sees a piece of him in Kusanagi, something that makes them akin, but not the same. These mirrors seem to show an inner connection with the self. The final mirror in the film is that one Kusanagi wakes up to, a superficial reflection. Like the Puppet-Master had said,

however, this reflection is only a piece of Kusanagi (one she can change or even displace). The idea of the mirror reflecting the image of a piece of the individual is different in the second film. While on their way to talk about the gynoids case with the police, Togusa and Batou say “It is no use to blame the looking glass if your face is askew. The mirror is not an instrument of enlightenment, but of illusion” (Oshii 2004). The mirror no longer seems to depict any truth, at all. If you consider what Oshii proposes about how replaceable the body is then this makes sense as far as what you see in the mirror is only a shell. And the shells of cybogs are an illusion because they are made to look very human. It is towards the end of the film that Kusanagi says “who can gaze into the mirror without becoming evil? A mirror does not reflect evil, but creates it” (Oshii 2004). Coupled with the visuals of the scene, it is clear to see that Kusanagi is taking about the doubling numbers of the gynoids. This unchecked duplication is what creates evil, like the blind reinforcement of the status quo.

Both Shelley and Oshii not only create stories which emphasize the importance of external influence, but also use external influences to create their stories. Like the Puppet-Master’s mirror, fragments of these external influences are found in all of these texts. They use their forms to flesh out their intentions. Many scholars note the remarkable reading list Mary Shelley had, while and leading up to writing *Frankenstein*. She knew her mother only through Wolstencraft’s writing, and was greatly acquainted with her father’s work as well. When she met and married Percy Shelley, her reading world only expanded (Shcerf and Macdonald 12-7). Daniel Cottom has remarked that the novel *Frankenstein* is much like the Creature: made of pieces of various texts sewn together by Mary Shelley. Oshii shows a similar affinity to incorporating the work of

other into his own work. This is especially clear in the second film. He includes a character based on Donna Haraway as a sort of tribute to her influence in his films, and includes images inspired from Hans Bellmer's doll pictures as well as Bellmer's book *The Doll*. Oshii has a very strong interest in dolls that began with Hans Bellmer (Brown 234-43). Bellmer was a German Surrealist who starting in 1933, built life-sized dolls inspired by the female form. His creations could move and were made of materials such as paper-mâche, plaster, wood, and metal. His dolls are thought provoking because they depict manipulations of the female form (i.e. no head, extra legs, misplaced limbs). He published photos of his work in a book titled *The Doll* (Brown 253). The book is shown in the film as a great allusion to the Locus Solus gynoid mystery. When Batou finds the book in the murdered inspector's home, inside he discovers a holographic picture of a girl, the girl Batou finds at the end of the film. The girl is inside *The Doll*, which is a superb nod to what is actually going on with the gynoids: ghost dubbing. Then there are the sayings which are quoted throughout the film. Just like the characters of these works, these texts were made in conversation with their environments as products of a culture. Brown wrote that:

The dialogue of *Ghost in the Shell 2* is replete with layer upon layer of literary, religious, philosophical, and scientific citations, ranging from the Buddha to Confucius, from the Bible to Milton, from Julien Offray de Le Mettrie to Richard Dawkins. (226)

Oshii goes through great lengths to see that his work in the individual is multilayered and feature multiple perspective from both the East and the West, and, I believe, that by doing this Oshii is already making a clear indication of what he wants audiences to think about for his re-imagining of the individual. I started this project with

the vast question of what is the human? In Shelley's world and novel a human is someone born of a woman with a rational mind—and there is not much room to stray from this conception. Victor Frankenstein's experiment in womanless reproduction, though resulting in an intelligent and able creature, is ultimately a failure. Oshii, however, opens the world to a more complicated answer. Oshii does not really offer a set definition to explain what the human is, but a fluid conception of the self and the individual. This individual is unisolated from other individuals or from other species, and it is not chained to a certain image. Instead of a specific image of the human body or the basic construction of a mind and body, Oshii suggests a more integrated image of the individual one that is based more on what and whom an individual surrounds themselves with, an individual based on his or her own decisions, rather than a template.

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