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Title: Whitewashing and the Prostheticization of Race in *Ghost in the Shell*

In 2015, when Paramount Pictures and Dreamworks announced that Scarlett Johansson was cast for the lead role in the live-action adaptation of Mamoru Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell*, a storm of controversy around whitewashing ensued. There were even rumors at one point in the production that visual effects may have been used "that would make white actors appear more Asian" but Paramount released a rebuttal to the effect that "absolutely no visual effects tests were conducted on Scarlett's character" as Melissa Chan reported for *Time* in 2016. Within a history and long-standing trend of whitewashing non-white characters, or more offensively having white actors play non-white characters in black face, yellow face, etc., *Ghost in the Shell* is continuing this legacy. However, the original feature film itself complicated race and gender through its prostheticization of both. In Oshii's original vision, Major Motoko Kusanagi is beset by uncertainty and anxieties about her embodiment and identity. These issues are uncannily brought into hyperfocus when the cyber-terrorist known as the Puppet Master downloads into a cyborg "shell" and seeks asylum with Section 9, the security agency where Kusanagi works. They literally eye each other across the laboratory where the criminal hacker is strapped down in anticipation for interrogation. A series of cutaways from close-ups of Kusanagi to subjective frames from the Puppet Master's perspective are used to suggest not just a connection but a meeting of doppelgangers. Kusanagi's partner Batou picks up on the strange atmosphere, and, upon confronting Kusanagi, she muses that she and the Puppet Master "look alike" (the English translation is "remind you of me"). This resemblance based on non-physical likeness (Kusanagi clarifies to Batou that she doesn't mean that they look physically alike) is especially eerie in that the "shell" of the Puppet Master is that of a Caucasian, blonde woman, whereas Kusanagi is phenotypically East Asian. Moreover, in the 1995 version, the Puppet Master is voiced by an incongruously baritone actor, signaling maleness in contrast to the female body whose femaleness itself is emphasized by its constant nudity.

In "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," Donna Haraway famously argues for the cyborg as a new way of being. In the "mythic time" of the late twentieth (now early twenty-first) century, according to Haraway, "we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs" (150). She celebrates the cyborg as "a creature in a post-gender world" (150), and how the cyborg shows that "the certainty of what counts as nature – a source of insight and promise of innocence – is undermined, probably fatally" (152-53). To her, "The cyborg is a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self" (163). Yet, even while her essay expounds upon the utopic potential inherent to the cyborg, the cyborg in film, in literature, on the internet, in material reality via mundane means such as technologized living as well as via extraordinary measures such as in medical advances in organ replacement, limb replacement, even face replacement, has shown itself to be bounded entirely by the very corporeal limits (class, race, gender) it could have, should have overcome. While Haraway herself in her later work acknowledges this disjunction between potentiality and actuality, I wish to explore the prostheticization of race by comparing Oshii's original film with director Rupert Sanders' radical adaptation. Oshii seems to suggest the same

potentiality of cyborgs in disrupting corporeal limitations of gender and race in his film, but the suggestion falls quite short in the political-economy of his globalized near-future world. Sanders' version began under the cloud of prostheticizing race in an almost literal way, and it is clear through the trailers for the film that race is problematically both framing yet paradoxically merely decorating the narrative.

However, in framing my project as the reading of these two films through the metaphor of prostheticizing race, it is important to acknowledge the limits and problems with this practice. As Diane Nelson points out in "Phantom Limbs and Invisible Hands: Bodies, Prosthetics, and Late Capitalist Identifications," "The prosthetic metaphor is drawn from recent work in cyborg anthropology, feminist studies of science, philosophy, political economy, disability studies, and neurophysiology" (304-05) to help understand the connection between the body and the body politic, but this metaphor may set up binaries that "can mask our complicity with various forms of embodied privilege" (305). For some people, a prosthesis is *not* a metaphor. What does it mean then to use it as a metaphor of reading? Here, I apply it to Oshii and Sanders' *Ghost in the Shell* films in the hopes of problematizing the cyborg as she exists in and is represented through these imagined disembodiments that nonetheless are embodied, and how these paradoxes are inextricably linked to anxieties about race and gender that the cyborg particularizes rather than disassembles.

Keywords: *Ghost in the Shell*, cyborg, prostheticization of race, embodiment