Animating Without Organs:

A Deleuzian Study of 1995’s Toy Story and Ghost in the Shell

by

Aaron Borok

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Abstract:

Throughout its worldwide history, animation has always operated in a state of becoming, often as a blurring, and even denial of subject and object. There is a potential unique to animated film to deterritorialize the realities with which it plays. Despite his lack of work on animation studies, Gilles Deleuze's work on cinema and philosophy can be invaluable to the study of the medium. In particular, one may deploy the Deleuzian conception of the Body without Organs to map how animation treats bodies on screen, across its global and multimodal history. In Mamoru Oshii’s 1995 cyberpunk anime classic, *Ghost in the Shell*, the Body without Organs manifests itself as the film’s story arc and philosophical through-line, animating the imperceptible by way of its technologically transhumanist commentary. By contrast, Pixar’s first fully computer-animated film was released in the same year. *Toy Story* (1995) vilifies Bodies without Organs, both as “mutant toys” within the narrative, and as antithetical to the branded media empire that surrounds the film. Using these films and their connected franchises as primary case studies of differing modes of animation, one can map out the internal and cultural functions of the art form in a global perspective.
Introduction: 1995

December 24th, 1995, I was born in Buffalo, New York. On June 22nd, 1995, exactly 5 months before, my grandfather died of pancreatic cancer. I was named after him 6 months and 2 days later. Exactly 5 months after his death, the computer-animated film *Toy Story* would have its national release. However, it first premiered in Los Angeles on November 19th, 1995. The animated film, *Ghost in the Shell* was released in Japan on November 18th, 1995. Both films would have premiered about a month prior to my birth, and coinciding with one another across international lines merely a day apart. About 15 days prior to their releases, Gilles Deleuze would commit suicide at the age of 70 in Paris, France.

In pointing to all these dates, I am not intending to give them any unnecessary significance. On the contrary, I am attempting to merely trace various points on a map; I exist at an intersection of all these lines in one way or another. I was not assembled through cybernetic implants, plastic and glue, computer graphics or hand-drawn cels. They are not all the points that encompass me, but just tracings in my assemblage. It would be more apt to say that they and I all can be shared within the same rhizome. Nevertheless, I can’t help but notice the symmetry in these shared birthdates-- and death dates.

Deleuze and Guattari start each chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus* with a date or year of some kind; not as some objective starting point, but as a starting point of conversation. The years they describe are just points of entry into the lines they create. For me, 1995 happens to be a point of entry; one in a literal sense as it is my point of entry into this physical plane, but also interestingly a point of entry for many other lines that map me, as well as this very paper. I point out the cosmic coincidence of the year as a point of entry for all these subjects of inquiry:
namely, that of the animated films I am attempting to study, as well as the theoretical frameworks of which I am attempting to trace the connections.

But not only is there a connection here between that of the animated films and philosophies in question, but also a connection of the connecter; the writer who argues these connections. That is to say, I, myself, am surely a part of this assemblage that is this paper. No doubt, a small cog in the machine, but one that I find would be intellectually dishonest not to acknowledge. Indeed, I argue that my saying this is in fact a denouncement of my authorial powers, and that instead this is by design a collaborative project. And that in fact, all works are collaborative projects, a product of the material conditions that encompass its assemblage. I am as much a tool for disposal as those of Gilles Deleuze, or Buzz Lightyear, or Motoko Kusanagi in this argument, however explicit the tool may be.

Not only this, but the assemblage and tracing of flows that is the act of writing is not dissimilar to the literal tracing of an animated figure. Whether it be the loose sketches of an animatic or the detailed virtual modeling of a space, the very movements and by proxy creations of those movements are tracings and becomings of a greater mapping.

...the book is not an image of the world. It forms a rhizome with the world, there is an aparallel evolution of the book and the world; [...] The Pink Panther imitates nothing, it reproduces nothing, it paints the world its color, pink on pink; this is its becoming-world, carried out in such a way that it becomes imperceptible itself, asignifying, makes its rupture, its own line of flight, follows its "aparallel evolution" through to the end. (Deleuze & Guattari 11)

This paper is not an image of my world. It is a rupture, aparallel evolution of my world, along with that of Deleuze’s, or Toy Story’s or Ghost in the Shell’s.

So too is the animated film by design, its own becoming-world. It by design is not an image of the world, but literally “paints the world its color.” Regardless of the process of
animation, its images are all flat; all their own rhizomes formed by rupture from, rather than imitation of the world. Not only do they form a rhizome with the world, but they themselves comprise of assemblage, always in a parallel evolution with the very notion of movement. Animation is a constant series of “ands,” a physical and metaphysical mapping of the next. Every frame is its own becoming-movement, its own “and” to whatever it is between. Every frame through its consistent potentials, is its own line of flight; a line of “falling with style.”

These arrangements of the writer can be linked with the arrangements of the animator; and perhaps more poignantly, the arrangements of the philosopher. Art in its entirety has a way of creating ruptures; this is arguably one of its defining functions. As philosophers, or artists, rearranging that which is already around us is the most we can do; and yet we do so by mapping our own plot of land and reterritorializing it to our own ends. It is impossible and imperceptible to fully trace the whole map, especially as the act of tracing in itself adds and morphs the map into something new. To trace is commonly mischaracterized as a form of mimicry, but to consider it as such in this context is to miss the differences that are laid by way of its tracing.

Animation as an artform is both flat and not flat; layered as literal folds of cels or paper or digital layers or clay-molded folds. They are tracings but not exact tracings, every frame always with a slight difference to the next, every frame defined by its relation to its potential previous and potential next. And this potential is a valuable point: the potential of an animation to go in any direction, start from any point and end on anything else. The very nature of the animated film from its inception is its ability to break its established flow for a new flow at any time, unlike that of conventional film. The closest live-action film gets to this is montage; animation is simply a constant montage, never ending, each second a multiplicity of montage as they are all artificially created, one after another. Through the growing mixes and evolutions of
computer graphics, this difference is increasingly blurred. And yet, this blur is precisely because of animation’s a parallel functions with the real world. Every frame is a becoming, every composition of layers within that frame is an assemblage; animation itself is becoming-movement.

Writing, I argue, operates under similar parameters. Every word has its own function, used for the plot of land that the writer arranges it in. And yet, there is always the possibility of what word will be next in the chain; what idea will be next in that particular line. And how those arrangements of ideas will assemble into what concept. This is true of all forms of writing, whether it be fiction or nonfiction, storytelling or a manifesto, handwritten or tapped by touchscreen, or as is most common, something that is somewhere in between.

Even life itself is defined as a constant state of becoming, always already assembled by the rhizomatic passage of time— a multiplicity of potentialities, albeit within the traced barriers of institutions, with their constant attempts at stabilizing us into Being. And yet in spite of this, we are all becoming, always on a path that is being actively created by our own steps. And not simply our individual steps, but the steps of everyone and everything that surrounds us.

In a morbid sense, we are all becoming bodies without organs, all inevitably succumbing to the literal Death Drive until our organs and organization no longer meaningfully exist. We all eventually are put into the ground, territorialized in a literal plot of land, becoming one with The Body without Organs. The Plane of Immanence itself. The Earth. However, I don’t intend to dwell too heavily on this aspect, at least within this paper. Instead, I hope to investigate further an example of what can be considered bodies without organs in life, or as the case may be, the Illusion of Life; in the art of animation.
At first when considering 1995 as a point of entry, it is important to remember it as both a point of the future and the past. The films of *Toy Story* and *Ghost in the Shell* do not represent some wholly separate approach to the mode of animation and separate world of 1995; they are all within the same 1995, all coming from the same rhizomatic network that consists of global trends and cultures. They are always already a culmination of what came before, what will come after and what comes simultaneously. And these culminations are not always wholly visible; sometimes they are simply as visible as virtual wireframes, strips of code so imperceptible that they travel across generations and nations, their only visible connection being the mode they travel through. In this case, it is the mode of animation; the mode of the year 1995; the mode of this very writing, 23 years later.

*Pink Panther - The Pink Phink (1964)*
**Animating Deleuze, or What can Deleuze Animate for You?**

Gilles Deleuze, in his decades-long career as a premier film theorist and philosopher, seemingly only made two notable mentions of cartoons in his work. The first reference was in the first couple pages of *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*. He explains that the cartoon “belongs fully to the cinema,” as the drawing “is always in the process of being formed or dissolving through the movement of lines and points taken at any-instant-whatevers of their course” (Deleuze 5). The second reference was with his co-writer, Felix Guattari, as an example of their concept of the rhizome. On page 11 of *A Thousand Plateaus*, they write:

> The Pink Panther imitates nothing, it reproduces nothing, it paints the world its color, pink on pink; this is its becoming-world, carried out in such a way that it becomes imperceptible itself, asignifying, makes its rupture, its own line of flight, follows its "aparallel evolution" through to the end.

Despite these being the two only real mentions of the medium in Deleuze’s work, they both seem to have a similar trajectory. In both instances, there is an emphasis on animation’s constant movement as a form of becoming; whether it be through the act of drawing itself and its movement of lines, or through the actions of the cartoon character as it contributes to its own becoming-world. This thruline is important, as it is a thread that is in no way exclusive to Deleuze, but a conception that I argue is central to the study of animation as a whole.

In spite of Deleuze’s lack of theoretical attention to animation, here we can begin to see how his ideas can be invaluable to the study of the medium. This paper will examine Deleuzian concepts of select importance, along with theoretical work already done on the study of animated films through the lens of Deleuze. This combination of Deleuzian theory and animation studies is an essential step in the project of considering how animated film may be illuminated by the
Deleuzian concept of bodies without organs in particular, which will serve as a concluding synthesis of these main ideas.

**The Moving of the Movement Image: Disney and Deleuze**

![Walt Disney's Personal Message To Sergei Eisenstein](image)

As our first quote suggests, to understand what may be a Deleuzian perspective on animation starts with *The Movement Image*, along with Deleuze’s studies on cinema as a whole. Deleuze’s conception of the image is largely articulated as a critique and expansion of the work of Henri Bergson, particularly from *Matter and Memory* (1896). Bergson argues a theory of time, where past and present are not limited as a succession of one another, but both as constants that coexist. For Deleuze, the image isn’t an objective thing that is in front of us, but a process that surrounds and affects us throughout. In a sense, the movement-image is not simply an image that moves, but more accurately a movement that images; the movement image is a process of images rather than an objective stable image in itself. To this, Deleuze argues that despite the mechanical nature of early cinema, the composition of a shot or frame creates an imaging of
movement; a movement-image. He expands on this to encompass montage, where an accumulation of differing shots and thereby movement-images create a certain affective assemblage, based on the nature of what kind of montage is used. He argues that this invention of montage is what differentiates cinema of the movement-image and early, “primitive” cinema.

For both Deleuze and Bergson, this is a critique of the mechanization of time; the clock being too linear a succession, and in turn, the work of early cinema too “primitive.” This dismissal of mechanical time as unimportant in Deleuze and Bergson’s conceptions of time is what Thomas Gunning suggests to be the difference between the movement-image, and his own conception of the moving image, in his essay “Animation and Alienation.” For Gunning, the critique of the mechanisms of film is what limits both Deleuze and Bergson in their scope of cinema. Gunning suggests that this dismissal, while logical with both philosophers’ purviews, “not only limits the importance of animation, it also creates historical limits to his concept of cinema” (2). Gunning defines animation as “the creation of the perception of motion through technological means,” and that this form of motion is something Deleuze and the movement-image is inherently disinterested in (3). Instead, Gunning argues that the dismissal of animation and early cinema as just a technological reproduction of motion, rather than a creation of motion, simplifies their scope as just a cinematic illusion.

Despite Deleuze’s own lack of theory on the subject of animation, animation studies can be traced as far back as Eisenstein. Eisenstein wrote extensively on Walt Disney, describing the primal “plasmaticness” of its cartoons. This “plasmatic” quality is in reference to animation’s constant becoming something else, or how “it is beyond any image, without an image, beyond tangibility--like a pure sensation” (Eisenstein 46). This already has a strong resemblance to the image as Deleuze describes it, which is unsurprising when considering Deleuze’s strong
borrowing from Eisenstein in his own *Cinema* books. When compared to our initial Deleuze quote, we can see again the importance of constantly shifting lines and points of the drawing that encompass animation as a form of becoming. As Patricia Pisters describes in her essay, “From Mouse to Mouse,” “Eisenstein's plasmaticness is also very close to Deleuze's concept of becoming… animation makes it impossible to decide… who is the model, who is the copy.”

Patricia Pisters takes this already existing connection between Deleuze and Eisenstein’s musing on cartoons to the degree of the virtual and actual. For Pisters, Eisenstein’s conception of Disney cartoons was related to its becoming not just by its mechanical practice, but through its blurring of lines between human and animal, man and mouse, actual and virtual. She argues that this indistinction between what is real and unreal in animation is what permeates in Deleuze’s conception of time, particularly in *The Time-Image*. As Pisters puts it, “Deleuze states that becoming… puts 'truth' in crisis,” and that “animation was the first kind of moving image that demonstrated this.” According to Deleuze, the virtual and actual are both real, to the extent that “the virtual insists on the actual” (Pisters). The virtual can then become blurred with the actual under the context of certain images, such as time-images or crystal-images. Pisters argues that this indistinction and “immanent conception of images” can be played with further in the context of animation as well as the borders between “old and new images.” Here, we can find a similar critique of Deleuze as Gunning’s, where both theorists find Deleuze missing animation’s potential for becoming.

A common thread from Deleuze that is often used in relation to animation theory is that of affect and the affection-image. In *The Movement Image*, Deleuze defines the affection-image as “the close-up, and the close-up is the face” (87). It is important to note the distinction of affection-image as the close-up, but not as directly the face. As Deleuze notes, the close-up can
be of anything, but through the act of it being a close-up, the object becomes the face. He explains affect, by way of Bergson, to be “a series if micro-movements on an immobilised plate of nerve.” This too implies an important distinction, specifically between affect and affection; where affection defines the outcome of being affected by one another, affect is the serial connection itself. He argues the importance of not the physical movement of the image, but a movement through expression, between that of desire and admiration. The affection-image therefore is an image of expression, or an expression through image. Deleuze is often credited for his start toward an “affective-turn” in philosophy, shifting focus of not only cinema but social and cultural relations as a whole to that of the intensities of expression and experience.

An interesting connection of affect and animation can be found in Eric S. Jenkins’s *Special Affects*, which translates affect into a mode for understanding the transformations of media history in a broader context. Using Deleuze and other affect theorists, Jenkins attempts to examine the connections between media and consumerism, with an emphasis on the emergence of Disney animation. Jenkins argues that “animation and affect alike entail the sensations of moment and life,” and that “affect precedes… representation, emotion, consciousness [and] interest” (6, 11). Through this lens, Jenkins explores how Walt Disney both affects and is affected by the multimedia capitalist society it inhabits, and he utilizes Disney as a point of entry to a broader case-study on the ways in which Hollywood cinema as a whole affectively permeates American culture. This thereby connects animation to the broader canon of popular entertainment, as a part of the culture industry. This text serves particular importance as a way in which animation can converge with Deleuzian theory, but also shows how Deleuzian theory can properly critique it, in a broader cultural context.
The Screen and the Anime Machine: Deleuze and Anime

Something that can be found in common so far from these Deleuzian takes on animation is an emphasis on early American animation as a case for study, especially Disney animation. However, a large subset of the academic community on animation studies can be found in relation to other cultures in the world, most notably with Japanese anime. Many premier scholars of anime studies borrow and take from Deleuzian concepts in their work, such as Steven Brown, Thomas Lamarre or Livia Monnet.

In the introduction to a collection of essays on the study of anime, Cinema Anime, Steven Brown starts with a quote from Deleuze, where he explains that “cinema not only puts movement in the image, it also puts movement in the mind” and that “the brain is the screen” (1). Brown uses this conception of the brain as screen to explain the aim of the book as a whole, to “explore anime’s hybridity of different styles and modes of image making” and to situate “anime in relation to the screen” rather than a “unitary fixed object” (2). He uses this situating of the screen to explore its “transnational spaces of viewing” in connection to “the brain circuits of anime viewers around the world” (Brown 2, 6). In relation to the anime series, Serial Experiments Lain,
Brown references Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of abstract machines and how it “makes visible the less conspicuous, but no less constitutive, networks of control” (5). He explains not only how the anime’s plot has the main character, Lain, confront and be surrounded by abstract machines and the control society, but how the anime itself may operate as a grander metaphor for the functions of anime in a cultural context, disclosing how “the world is the anime screen” (6). This quote, while not a direct reference, may also recall a different Deleuzian idea on cinema as image of the world, or cinema as the world, finding it here in the realm of anime. This essay also serves as another example of how Deleuzian philosophy may further contribute to the validity of animation studies, regardless of Deleuze’s own lack of work on the subject.

In Monnet’s essay, “Such is the Contrivance of the Cinematograph,” she plays with the Deleuzian notion of diagrammatic duration by developing an idea of “diagrammatic dur(anim)ation.” The essay itself mostly is an analysis of the Japanese avant-garde artist, Tabaimo, and her installations of animated shorts “showing ordinary characters in familiar Japanese settings… whose everydayness is placed into question by various acts of transgression” (Brown 16). Monnet argues Taibamo’s installations “collapse time and space… as well as a spectrum of bodies, materialities, memories and imaginaries onto a single plane” (190). This plane is what she refers to as diagrammatic dur(anim)ation, possessing “most of the qualities pertaining to Bergson’s concept of durée,” but also acting as “an effect of the convergence of specific socioeconomic factors and cultural practices whose historicity has been blurred or erased.” Here we find yet another critique and expansion of Bergson and Deleuze for the specificities of animation. Monnet’s argument rests on the characterization of Tabaimo’s art as “a rethinking of duration, time and movement as animation,” which Monnet describes as “a latent theory of animation in Bergson’s thought.” This is presented as not quite the same as
Deleuze’s reading of Bergson where “matter is a meta-cinema,” but instead propose that “the world is a kind of meta-animation, an animated meta-film.” Here again, we find a commonality between animation scholars, in expanding Deleuze’s conception of cinema as the world to animation as the world. Monnet concludes her critique of Tabaimo by stating that, while he is successful in creating this rethinking of time, he ultimately fails “to produce a new, critical-revisionist tale” of what he aims to critique (217). She argues that the artist has not yet surpassed “citation and imitation” to the goal of “critique and evolutionary laughter.” This critique of animation’s inability to fully grasp its political aims rings well in connection to Jenkins’s critique of Disney and consumerism, as well as Brown’s application of *Serial Experiments Lain* to the cultural context of anime in the modern age. Despite coming from entirely different subjects, the social criticisms generated in all three texts still contribute to a greater academic reverence for the study of animation as a significant artistic and cultural practice.

In the work of Thomas Lamarre, we may find another interesting contribution to Deleuzian scholarship, with extensive use of Deleuze’s work with Guattari rather than solely the ideas presented in *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*. Here we may also find our own break and transition away from Deleuze on Cinema, to what will eventually be Deleuze and Guattari on Bodies without Organs. In fact, one of Lamarre’s most prominent works, *The Anime Machine*, takes reference from Felix Guattari, playing with both Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptions of machines and machinery in relation to the “machine-ness” of anime and animation as a whole. In contrast to many other anime theorists, Lamarre attempts a more ahistorical approach, at least with regards to *The Anime Machine*, giving “priority to [the] technical determination” of the medium as an artform rather than as a Japanese cultural text; an approach that works in tandem with his Deleuzo-Guattarian influence (xxviii).
One of Lamarre’s main concepts is a play on the Movement and Time-Image, with regards to styles of animation. He undertakes a similar approach with his conceptions of Animetism and Cinematism. He not only relates these to the *Cinema* books, but also to machines and abstract-machines, attempting to go from discussions of the “apparatus” to that of the “machine.” Lamarre attempts to describe the composition of cel animation in particular as a “multiplanar image, an image composed of multiple layers or planes” (xxiii). In his conception, “animation is as much an art of compositing… as it is of animating bodies.” Under this framework, he describes tendencies in composition in both animated films and live action as based around Cinematism or Animetism. Cinematism, a term he borrows from Paul Virilio, is for Lamarre “hyper-Cartesian,” and involves “the use of mobile apparatuses of perception which serve… to collapse the distance between viewer and target” (5). Animetism, by contrast, is “the separation of the image into multiple planes,” and “does not take us out of the modern technological condition but hints at other ways of dwelling in it” (6). Lamarre creates a conception in which one can see the tendencies between “movement into depth” (cinematism) and “movement on and between surfaces” (animetism) in a given work’s composition, both in aesthetic and narrative terms (7).

Despite this subtle difference in cultural approach, there is a strong resemblance of Brown’s work to Lammare’s, with both saying animation as a whole can manifest as abstract machine. This also can be related to Gunning’s points on the moving image, where the mechanically linear aspect that Deleuze may have considered as the extent of animation can be contested. In this sense, we find a critique of Deleuze by Deleuze, by way of his later work with Guattari on the machinic, which is shown to be in contrast with his earlier Bergsonian hangups on the mechanical aspects of early cinema.
In the essay, “Shinkai Makato’s Cloud Media,” Lamarre argues there is a certain affect that permeates the director’s films; most notably in his most recent, *Kimi no Nawa (or, Your Name)*. The anime film, which came out in 2016, has a strong theme of imperceptible connection, that is amplified with the plot of two teenagers switching lives with one another at random intervals, only to realize they pass through both the realms of space and time when doing so. On its own, the film resembles a certain Deleuzian take on time, as the past and present converge as one, along with the convergences of its characters and images. Lamarre argues this imperceptible convergence can be found in Makoto’s other works, in a notion he calls “cloud media.” On page 2, Lamarre writes:

Every distance takes on the aura of cosmological scale, and the cosmos seems to pervade every gap, every nook and cranny of everyday life. Yet the very same distances also feel somehow illusory, unreal, as if distant points were always already in communication, somehow intimately in contact, like electrons at once remote yet entangled across interstellar space.

He relates the consistent aesthetic trope of the clouds and sky in Makoto’s works, to the narrative one of vast distances and yet intimate communication. This, he argues is a form of media becoming imperceptible, as media networks emerge as a dematerialized system “whose limits cannot be perceived or known, a frictionless cloud, akin to what Deleuze called ‘gaseous perception’” (Lamarre 3). Here, we can find again a relation between animation and its “becoming-world,” and how animation can encompass Deleuzian values of blurring the lines between the real and unreal.
Between the Animated and the Actual: Deleuze and the Hybrid

So far, we have examined various examples of how Deleuze has been utilized in analyses of more popular and well-known realms of global animation. However, as is of course common within academia, research on animation is no exception to the study of the cultural fringe materials that often get overlooked. In this section, I will focus on what may be the edges of the field, where it may blur the lines not only between real and unreal within the realms of its own animation, but where it may blur the lines of what it means to be animation in itself.

In his essay, “In Search of Lost Reality,” Markos Hadjioannou examines the animated documentary, Waltz with Bashir, predominantly in light of Deleuze’s conception of the “powers of the false.” The powers of the false originate from Deleuze’s second Cinema book on The Time-Image, where he differentiates organic versus crystalline regimes of the movement and time-image. Deleuze explains that while the movement-image operates under the assumption that the camera presents an image from a “real” world, regardless of the physical legitimacy of that world, the time-image as the crystalline regime does not have this limitation. Instead, as Hadjioannou puts it, “the description of space by the camera… literally replaces the actuality of
the real,” and “is activated by the camera’s construction of it as cinematic” (112). Similar to how Patricia Pisters had previously portrayed the crystal image as a blurring between the actual and virtual, so too here do we find Hadjioannou using this point in his inquiry into the animated film in question. With regards to *Waltz with Bashir*, he argues that the film operates through both a falseness of the image by its digital animation and falseness of memory by way of its narrators. He relates this directly to the film itself as being not as interested in giving an objective account, but rather as constituting a crystalline mixing of the real and the imaginary as a constant creation of reality. This point is emphasized by films playing with past and present time as “the Bergsonian durée… [is] that which endures across time and with multiple temporal directions” (117). In the context of the essay, this all is presented under the lens of both how the narrative’s disinterest in objective truth and the film’s use of animation work in conjunction to create this crystalline blurring between real and imaginary. Furthermore, Hadjioannou argues this creates an emotionally affective resonance for the film, as it becomes unimportant as to whether or not the director Ari Folman had actively been in the scenes depicted, as the power of the false “makes him an inseparable component” (119). This presents the animated film as an assemblage, encompassed by both the art direction and the embodiment of the creator himself. This transitions well to the next essay I plan to discuss, one that deals with a similar animated assemblage of the virtual and actual.

In David H. Fleming’s essay, “Digitalising Deleuze: The Curious Case of the Digital Human Assemblage,” we find our first mention of bodies without organs in relation to animation. This article also presents us with a form of animation that is rarely considered to be as such, despite being its most prominent form in the modern era: computer-generated imagery. In this essay, Fleming predominantly discusses *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, a Hollywood
film normally considered to be live-action. However, he argues on the basis of its famous use of CGI, specifically in the extensive digitalization of its “star,” Brad Pitt, to depict his character’s aging process. Fleming argues that this digitization demonstrates, literally in this instance, a blurring between virtual and actual, and in turn creates a sort of destabilizing of the opposition between performance and representation. As Fleming writes, “Benjamin illuminates a complex interplay between real and false, actual and virtual... actor and animator... character/film and viewer” (195). Despite popular culture’s lack of consideration of this topic, Fleming makes clear that this form of digital technology is in itself a form of animation. Fleming cites a different animation theorist, Lev Manovich, with regards to this: “Born from animation, cinema pushed animation to its periphery, only in the end to become one particular case of animation” (194). Here, we can see Fleming’s argument first as regards to both an importance in the animated as a subject for inquiry, but more pressingly in how this trend opens us to new modes of thought, where the digitalization of actors can break the binary boundaries between real and imaginary and instead function as a multiplicity of performance and images.

Connecting Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of body without organs, machinic assemblage and the time-image, David H. Fleming argues that the creation of Benjamin Button as a “digital being” or “cyber-star” results in the performance by Brad Pitt as not a representative performance, but rather as a piece in the constellation that is the creation of this digital character. Fleming argues that “Benjamin’s body [operates] as a meta-cinematic time-image,” perhaps not too dissimilar to how Monnet had discussed the meta-animated properties of Tabaimo’s work. Fleming further explains that this may take on a Deleuzian version of the eternal return, where “the cinematic performer can be viewed as transmutating diachronic force that returns in the digital era after formulating a new technological range of machinic-assemblages” (195). We find
a return as well to the idea of animation as machinic-assemblage, only in this instance the assemblage gains a dimension and thereby transforms in nature. We are no longer talking of the plasmatic, “analogue” becomings that exist when considering Mickey Mouse as both man and animal; here we find that relationship in Benjamin Button to be one between man and the digital. This is not to say that the becomings between Benjamin versus Mickey is quantifiable in their importance, but Benjamin operates in a whole new dimension to the hand-drawn cartoon in quite a literal sense, and thereby manifests a new multiplicity all its own. Fleming’s argument stems from the assemblage that encompasses digital cinema itself, along with the complex assemblage that Benjamin Button himself becomes as a digital being. In other words, the assemblage of the cyber-star is one of the aesthetic and cinematic qualities of its composition, along with its qualities as a “performance but more-than” in regards to Brad Pitt’s involvement. Despite the dominance of animation that encompasses most of Benjamin Button, Brad Pitt’s own body encompasses a multiplicity in itself, through the assemblage that is his brand. This point, too, can be found previously within the context of the brand as integral to the assemblage of animation; namely, in Eric Jenkins’s book on *Special Affects*.

This also is where we may find an animating principle with relation to bodies without organs. In his essay, Fleming explains how the digital character may “deterritorialise the virtual body and turn it into an affective body without organs” (199). He claims this in reference to Elena del Río’s view of the performative body “as the potential to make other bodies,” through the lens of Deleuze’s “cinema of the body.” Fleming then applies these points to the performative acts of the digital body, and how it has the potential to “also be affective and intense rather than merely functional and extensive.”
For Deleuze and Guattari, the Body without Organs is “what remains when you take everything away” (151). They define it as a multiplicity antithetical to the psychoanalytic framework of an organ-ism or organ-ization underneath, instead always becoming, but never quite being. In this context, we can see Fleming’s argument for the potential of a digital body without organs. The digital body is defined as an affective assemblage, always in a constant state of becoming and with no legitimate set of identity. Yet despite this, an identity is incorrectly thrust upon it by the parameters of our lack of a conceptual understanding of the constellation that a digital star really consists of. This potentiality nonetheless still manifests itself where the digital body abandons its organs and is thus no longer limited by the standards of its organ-filled host; in this instance, that host being Brad Pitt, and more notably, Brad Pitt’s persona.

Fleming’s article not only serves well as a culmination of previous Deleuzian perspectives on animation studies, but also provides an introduction to how bodies without organs in particular can become further animated. Based on this research, we find many common lines that assemble what may be a Deleuzian theory of animation. Namely, we find a strong case for animation as not simply an illusory image, but a perceptual and even affective one. Furthermore, animation as an artform constantly manifests a play between virtual and actual, where its borders between real and imaginary, subject and object, human and animal, or even acted and animated are made indistinguishable. Animation is consistently established by its constant state of becoming, whether with regards to its play of space and time, or the instability of its figures and bodies. This is culminated and cultivated through the medium itself being an assemblage that is always in flux, both historically and physically, literally defined by its shifting and movement. With these points in mind, I argue that animation in itself has the potential to become a body without organs, both in the sense of creating figures and images that defy subject
and object, as well as in a more meta-animatic sense, where the assemblage of the medium itself can potentially deny the limits of the organism. Yet, despite this potential, it all too commonly does not go far enough, held back by societies of control. For the next few chapters, I hope to present distinct examples of how bodies without organs may manifest themselves in the realm of animation, both in success and failure. Using the tools now given, we can further expand into the unique capabilities that differing modes of animation may have, and perhaps further animate the discourse in the process.
You’ve Got an Organ in Me: The Toys in *Toy Story* as Bodies without Organs

In the 1995 film, *Toy Story*, rivals Woody and Buzz Lightyear end up trapped in a deadly predicament as they are taken in by their owner’s neighbor, Sid, known for his horrible and destructive treatment of toys. When left in his dark and cavernous room, juxtaposed with the bright and cloudy skies of Andy’s room, they are greeted by what can only described as monstrous cannibals, grabbing at the remnants of Sid’s latest creation as they disappear back into the crevices of the room. These silent creatures are themselves amalgamations of various toy fragments, supposed “mutant toys,” previous creations of Sid’s from his playtime. As Lilian Munk Rösing puts it in her book, *Pixar with Lacan: The Hysteric’s Guide to Animation*, the toys resemble “surrealist constellations,” implying a sort of artistic aspect to his sadistic and violent fragmentation and re-attachments to his toys. Indeed, this is even the case for how the creators of the film see him. In various behind-the-scenes featurettes, the writers discuss how many of Sid’s antics are direct parallels to their own childhoods, and tease the idea that Sid would grow up to become “a good animator one day.” However, I wonder if Sid’s toys may be grasped not as simply newly assembled bodies, but also as bodies without organs.
Gilles Deleuze’s concept of “body without organs” originated in his book, *The Logic of Sense*, where he borrowed the phrase from Antonin Artaud’s radioplay, *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*. However, I will mostly be borrowing from his chapter on the subject with Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, where they discuss the implications of how it may be applied in a more encompassing context as an antithesis to the paradigms of the unconscious phantasy. They describe the body without organs as not simply a state of being that one can achieve, but a practice of becoming that can never be fully realized. The importance of how to have a body without organs does not stem solely from the physical lack of organs, but the metaphysical lack of organism. There are no organs, only intensities; no subjectivity, only that which is nonrepresentational. I argue that what the character Sid does with his toys resembles this practice of BwO, the results of which are his “surrealist creations” that are not and cannot be representational, and always already in realizing their potential and actively becoming something else through Sid’s constant “sadistic” experimentation.

**Sid the Sadist**

It seems an apt term to call Sid’s character a “sadist,” as in someone who actively derives pleasure from the harm and mutilation of others, yet it is curious to consider him as one. While his personality and the general tone given to him by the film is one that is villainous and sadistic, his actions do not necessitate this from his perspective. We, as the audience are meant to sympathize with the protagonists who are frightened for their lives, and yet for Sid, his actions are solely onto the inanimate objects he plays and builds around. The most actively sadistic behavior he is consciously aware of is the mental stress he gives his sister Hanna by the mutilation of her toys. However, perhaps a more important consideration may be how the toys would be perceived under this paradigm; for every sadist there is the object of sadism, i.e. the
masochist. Deleuze and Guattari describe the masochistic body as one of the many kinds of bodies without organs. They write:

The masochist body: it is poorly understood in terms of pain; it is fundamentally a question of the BwO. It has its sadist or whore sew it up; the eyes, anus, urethra, breasts, and nose are sewn shut. It has itself strung up to stop the organs from working; flayed, as if the organs clung to the skin; sodomized, smothered, to make sure everything is sealed tight. (Deleuze and Guattari 150)

Does this description not sound similar to the actions of a certain young boy with his toys? If we are to consider the toys as bodies, their bodies are not only sewn shut, but sewn to one another, in a state of Becoming new bodies all their own. Despite the lack of direct masochistic pleasure present in the toys themselves, they certainly have a sadist at hand to sew them up.

In none of the Toy Story films do we ever get a concrete reasoning for how or why the toys can come to life. It seems to be that most come with a fully fledged personality right out of the box, but we never get any indication of when life begins and when it ends, aside from the complete destruction of the body. The toys are generally given the ability to stop being alive at any moment, simply to deanimate themselves whenever any humans are around to see them. One might ask, why they would do this? Why lose your very essence and become simply a literal ragdoll solely for the chance to be poked and prodded by equally sentient beings deemed greater than you? This is especially the case for Buzz Lightyear in the first half of the film, as he up to this point has never even realized himself to be a toy, but a fully developed space ranger. However it seems that they gain something akin to pleasure from the exchange, but one that is derived from the leaving of one’s body behind. Deleuze and Guattari discuss the masochist as deriving not pleasure from pain, but the masochist's suffering as “the price he must pay… to untie the pseudo-bond between desire and pleasure as an extrinsic measure” (155). In other
words, the toys may actively lose themselves as a way to lose the connection between their desire and the pleasure of being played with. Under this context, we may consider not only if Sid’s toys are bodies without organs, but if all toys are masochistic in their literal ability to lose their consciousness to be at the fate of whoever comes to them, as self-animating beings.

I propose that there is still something here that separates the mutant toy bodies from the bodies of Woody or Buzz, though. If we look back at Rösing’s analysis of the film, she inscribes the Lacanian distinction of the symbolic versus primal father on the play styles of Andy and Sid, respectively. Rösing explains that Andy’s play is that of explicit naming and incorporating the symbolism and desire into the subject, while Sid is what happens when this symbolic father is absent and replaced with “the sadistic primal father of enjoyment” (21). This can be backed up explicitly by how Andy and Sid play and consider their toys. Andy quite literally inscribes his name onto his toys, as well as actively plays with them with specifically organized and developed symbologies and personalities in mind. Sid on the other hand is a more active player in his playtime; while he does create scenarios for how he interacts with his toys, he rarely even gives much thought to the naming or even physical respect to his toys as anything but objects for his manipulation. Again, we may consider this lack of regard as sadistic specifically under the perspective of the toys themselves.

While of course Rosing’s perspective is a psychoanalytic one, and therefore antithetical to Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of bodies without organs, this distinction between Andy and Sid is still present and prescient. For them, psychoanalysis “royally botches the real, because it botches the BwO” (Deleuze and Guattari 151). With this in mind, we can reconfigure the supposed analogy of Andy and Sid from a psychoanalytic to a schizoanalytic perspective; namely, in reimagining Sid as the “point of entry” rather than the arboreal root system that is
Andy. Under this perspective, Andy’s explicit naming is not a Lacanian naming of the father that supposedly re-affirms and creates the subject, but perhaps a metaphor for psychoanalysis itself, and its botching of the BwO. Andy’s playstyle and ownership is one of actively giving significance to the subject, or organs to the body; names to the toy. Andy’s toys are literally organized in a hierarchical system based on their physical placement in his room, both to him and to the other toys. What Sid does however, is strip organs from the body; whether that be ownership (such as the stealing of his sister’s toys, or even arguably Woody and Buzz), signifier (he is unaware and uncaring of his toys’ original names), or literally physical parts. His toys are without any form of organization or hierarchy, none are more significant than any other, once they have been used. For Deleuze and Guattari, the body without organs is a practice, one that I argue Sid is an expert on. Sid’s activities in creating these bodies are rhizomatic practices, linking and re-linking as they are re-animated into literal moving images.

Is the doll’s head with a metallic spider body a spider or a doll? Or neither? Or both? Or something else altogether? The answer is that it is a process, no longer simply a stable plastic or metallic body of Being, but now a hybrid body in a constant state of Becoming, always potentially going further down the rabbit hole known as the Other. With a dismantling of what objects they are, there is a dismantling of what subjects they are; instead becoming non-representational. There is no place where one piece starts and another ends, only intensities that refuses to let the entity be stably defined.

Let us return to the dynamics presented with Sid as sadist and the toys as masochist. The conditions of this supposed masochistic pleasure stems from a level of release from their corporeal being, surrendering their own consciousness to their human owners. If we are to consider this form of potential pleasure that comes from being played with as a type of bodies
without organs, then what does this make the human child that plays? To borrow the famed phrase from Marshall McLuhan, that “the medium is the message,” we can consider toys as mediums and therefore extensions of ourselves. In fact in McLuhan’s book *Understanding Media*, he points out how the notion of mediums as extensions of humans are not only under the parameters of physical senses, but in almost psychoanalytic terms as “fixed charges to our personal energies” (8). On one level, the plot of *Toy Story* where toys are alive and have agency in their own worlds seems to negate this idea of toys as extensions of oneself. However, the direct differentiation that can be seen in how the toys are characterized as so interlinked with their owners imply otherwise. Andy’s toys are in pristine order, literally inscribed with his signature on their persons to never forget that they are his. Sid’s toys are too given a signature, in their various mutilations, as markers that these toys couldn’t have been anyone else’s but Sid’s. Even in their personalities, the toys of Andy’s room are given explicit characteristics based on their functions and style of use by him. Sid’s toys on the other hand, are rarely named and do not even seem to have the ability to speak, almost as if their ability to signify is connected to their ability to be signified. I argue these traits are in fact interrelated to them as being not only “part of their owners” in a metaphorical sense, but a literal and pragmatic one. At the very least, this is the case under the strict perspectives of their owners, as the natures of the toys themselves seem to operate as extensions of the owners’ respective personalities and styles of thought as well as play.

A curiously similar phrase to McLuhan’s is Deleuze’s phrase “the brain is the screen.” Deleuze considers the cinema as “molecular,” as film’s state of constantly moving images that “never stops tracing the circuits of the brain” (Flaxman, 366). This conception of the moving image as a complex network of “linkages and re-linkages” is the basis for most of Deleuze’s
work on cinema. In fact I argue that this tracing of circuits harkens to some of Deleuze’s later pursuits with Guattari, in particular their mapping of the rhizome. The rhizome, also borrowed from biological terminology, is Deleuze and Guattari’s alternative form of mapping of things in the world; not as a simple linear or even branched structure, but as an underground network of assemblages, constantly creating new connections and disruptions. If we are to consider Deleuze’s ideas of the screen and cinema as proto-rhizomatic, then could we make the same case for Sid’s collages of toys? Even in the scene where the toys reveal themselves to Sid, some of them literally sprout straight from the ground, others having literal parts of one connected to the other. Sid’s activities in creating these bodies are rhizomatic practices, linking and re-linking as they are re-animated into literal moving images.

Taking into account his supposed kinship to the animators of the film itself, Sid’s “surrealist creations” seem less a way of deriving a sort of pleasure from the pain of others, and more a form of art practice. Simon O’Sullivan describes art as a kind of ritual practice, linked with affect. For O’Sullivan, affect is “our own world seen without the spectacles of human subjectivity” (50). He argues that under this definition, the notion of affect is a process that we
are always becoming, and that to experience this asubjectivity is to “dismantle the molar aggregates of our subjectivity.” In the context of Sid, this idea of art as “opening us up to the non-human universe” fits well with his physical dismantling and metaphysical asignifying of his playthings into things of intensities. Deleuze argues that advertisements cannot be real art, because “no real art tries to create or exhibit a product in order to correspond to the public’s expectations.” Andy corresponds very well to the expectations of being a kind young boy that treats his playthings with love and care, even to the point of owning intentionally recognizable and even branded toys; he is the capitalist. Sid quite explicitly does not care for outside expectations and his playthings reflect that; he is the artist.

Under Sid’s perspective, the story of *Toy Story* is perhaps a tragic one. If we consider Woody’s intervention on the supposed mutant toys, his is an intervention of literal organization. Woody from the very start of the film is characterized as a leader, with a particular aptitude for organizing and managing the other toys. For the body without organs, organization is quite literally the enemy; that which organizes is to give organs to the body, to make an organism.
Woody and Buzz immediately upon their arrival have already disrupted the lack of natural order that is present in Sid’s room, by their categorization of the toys as Other. However this categorization is shifted to something more specific when Woody plans for his rescue of Buzz with the aid of the other toys. Even though none of them seem to talk at all, Woody actively seems to inscribe names and signifiers to them. In fact for many of them he seems to inscribe these signifiers based on specific parts of their bodies (‘Legs’ for a fishing hook with women’s legs, ‘Duckie’ for a duck-headed pez-dispenser, etc.) He is actively providing them with signification, despite their original creation involving the stripping away of such names.

However perhaps the greatest aspect of signification is the reaction to Sid. If we are to consider the toys “playing dead” as a form of de-organizing the body, then the active component of coming to life in front of Sid is a direct opening of the body to organs; it is the equivalent of taking that which was sewn shut and ripping off the seams. If we are to consider Sid’s relationship with his toys as an extension of his own bodily processes, and therefore as a way for him to undergo the practice of body without organs, it is as if more organs than he had previously have been thrust inside him. This new wave of knowledge that toys are alive disrupts his state of play, and actively creates an entirely new level of self-consciousness to him. “The BwO howls: ‘They've made me an organism! They've wrongfully folded me! They've stolen my body!’” (Deleuze and Guattari 159) When it is revealed to him that his toys are alive and have subjectivities of their own, Sid howls “You’ve made them organisms! You’ve wrongfully folded them! You’ve stolen my bodies!”

This point also ultimately explains why *Toy Story* as a film goes against bodies without organs: because *Toy Story* is a film of advertisements. It is this in a literal sense with its subjectification of commodities and real life toys, as well as through its advertisement of itself
and its own unique toys. The story of the mutants in particular is one that is twofold, where Woody, the capitalist leader “type,” succeeds in his attempts to signify and subjectify the mutant toys from Sid. In reality, so too does the actual capitalist entity of the Disney corporation, in commodifying and thereby signifying the mutant toys. Despite the Pixar team’s alleged relationship to Sid in terms of their passion for animation, their jobs as corporate owners betray Sid more than Woody ever could.

Rösing aptly points out how many of Pixar’s films seem so well-fitted as metaphors for psychoanalytic theory; this idea is the entire thesis and goal of her book after all. However, this may also explain why to consider Toy Story in a Deleuzian take, we must literally strip it from its intentional context, re-casting the villain as protagonist, and in a way, deterritorialize the film in its entirety. In the process of defining the fragmented hybrid toys that are in the film, we have fragmented the very film itself, disassembling and creating new assemblages from the various plastic pieces we have pried off with pliers and duct tape. In his conclusive argument on the Time-Image, Deleuze states the similarities and distinction of cinema and philosophy. He writes that the philosophy of cinema is ‘not 'about' cinema, but about the concepts that cinema gives
rise to... the practice of concepts in general having no privilege over others, any more than one object has over others” (Deleuze, 280). In other words, theory is an art practice all its own, just as art is a theory practice all its own. Perhaps if Sid were to not become an animator as his creators imagine him, maybe he could have become a philosopher; and maybe these are in fact simply the same thing.

Woody’s Roundup of Organs

This consideration of Woody as capitalist Organizer proves only more poignant in the franchise’s later installments. Indeed, their very existence is a product of Toy Story as product. The later films attempt to deepen this question of signification as Toy, and namely, question whether that signification is necessary. Each film only questions further the rigidity of such an identity, while at the same time reinforcing the pre-established structures that be. If there is what could be considered a State in the world of Toy Story, it is the sheriff and space ranger who enforce their laws. A coincidence perhaps that the two are playthings representative of police, but nonetheless fitting for their functions in the Organization that is Toys as Playthings;
operating almost as Lacanian functionaries of the symbolic order. The films always seem to play around with a grander critique of its own structure, always (be)coming towards the body without organs in one way or another; yet are always held back from reaching that potential.

*Toy Story 2* is a story that reverses the initial functions between Woody and Buzz. Buzz, now no longer signified by Star Command, but now by Andy, is forced to meet his own past self, still "deluded" into believing in the fake reality of space exploration, rather than the capitalist reality of toy ownership. In contrast, Woody's story is one of genealogies. Woody meets his fellow cowboy toys and learns of his own heritage as a part of the old 1950s television series, “Woody's Roundup.” At first intrigued by the prospect (represented by the Prospector) of his newfound history, the film ends with Woody remembering "what really matters" and decides to stay with Andy. The Prospector on the other hand, is vilified not dissimilarly to Sid, where he is punished for his attempts to transgress the status quo and deterritorialize (albeit only for the sake of his own reterritorialization). His punishment, in fact, is a sort of feminized analogue for Sid; he is now forcibly given to the hands of a young girl, identified with terror in the musical score as an “artist.” An ending with comic relief, to be sure, but one where the joke lies in the heteronormative panic of the Prospector.

In *Toy Story 3*, we continue this further shift of the series toward critiquing its own premise, and yet still further encapsulated within the confines of its own world. We begin the film with the toys having been trapped in the toy chest for a decade, desperately trying to be played with by Andy one last time. They then manage to escape being put into the attic, (or worse, the trash) by way of a daycare, advertised as almost a haven where they are given never-ending kids to play with. However, it is soon revealed that the daycare in itself operates as a hierarchical State, with its de-facto leader, Lots-o'-Huggin' Bear. The film then decidedly takes a
prison-break theme, as they must now escape and revolt from the corrupt and abusive power structures into which they have now gotten themselves.

The Daycare plot intentionally resembles that of a revolution against an unjustly hierarchical regime. The toys must aim to stop the corrupt leadership of Lotso, and eventually manage to overthrow the current system in place of a more equitable one, where all the toys have equal say on the daycare’s goings on and equal share of the workload. As Barbie in the film aptly describes it, “authority should derive from the consent of the governed, not from the threat of force!” However, the overall story does not take this route, as it still must be limited to the ideals of specified owner and “master” signifier. Similar to Toy Story 2, we are presented with an alternative to the arboreal Owner model, and almost immediately it is characterised as a worse solution. Woody, namely, is ever the Statesman, consistently attempting to get the toys back to Andy, despite the increasingly obvious point that they have outgrown his use of them. This is, to be fair, also characterised as something for Woody to realize, an obsession he must grow out of, but if we are to look in the broader systems at play, Woody’s perspective wins out in the end (at least in this film). By the end, Woody and the gang are given a new owner with Bonnie, in a touching pass of the torch moment between her and Andy. As heartfelt as this scene may be, it also reterritorializes the toys under simply the same type of organization with a new name. At the start of the film, they near the potential of finally losing the Organs and significance of Andy, while Woody must learn to accept this new reality. However, by the end of the film they are given Organs once more by way of Bonnie, now having her signifier strewn on the heels of their boots.

We can find a similar, albeit less abstract, example of Pixar’s use of revolution in Eric S. Jenkins’ book, Special Affects. An overall critique of the “consumerist affects” present in the
Disney brand as a whole, Jenkins gives a specified case for the Pixar film *Wall-E* as exemplary of the capitalist inconsistencies of narrative versus film branding. Jenkins’ overall argument hinges on Disney as a part of the culture industry, instructing “a primary lesson that today dominates the affect economy and [Deleuzian] control society -- *that the mode is the message*” (197). *Wall-E*, in this analysis, is exemplary of Disney’s broader use of computer animation as a mode that “digitally translates” into a society of control. In this context, *Wall-E*, despite having a seemingly anti-consumerist message wherein the end of the world and humanity as we know it is brought on by corporate control, still in itself perpetuates and represents that same corporate sponsorship by way of its own corporate upbringing and ergo never fully embraces its affective potential. It is a film that actively critiques the societal modes of “dividual” directives, yet is stifled by those very same modes outside the confines of its filmic world.

I argue *Toy Story 3*’s “revolution” has a similar issue to *Wall-E*, here. In both *Wall-E* and the *Toy Story* series there is a certain nostalgic embrace of the object. In both instances, and indeed in many of Pixar’s films, there is arguably the embrace of a Walter Benjamin-esque aura to what are otherwise commodities, to de-commodify them within their narratives as somehow separate from their capitalist genealogies and thus participating in subjective revolts against the establishment. And yet, both are still stifled by their own modes of creation, as they ultimately are commodities even within the confines of their narratives, continuing to exist for the sake of their commodification. In his book, *Capitalist Realism*, Mark Fisher writes in his own similar critique of *Wall-E* that the film operates as a product of capitalist realism, furthering capitalism as the only viable solution despite its ironic narrative critique. As Fisher writes, “it performs our anti-capitalism for us, allowing us to continue to consume with impunity” (12). The *Toy Story 3* daycare-revolution not only does the same thing for us, but does it for the characters within the
story. It dismantles an unjust hierarchy that is presumed to be the unjust hierarchy, and yet still remains to put the protagonists themselves into what is deemed the best possible compromise of remaining within singular ownership. The toys are given the opportunity to be given at least a multiplicity in ownership, a kid or several, and yet they still decide on the most arboreal option of Bonnie. They have had their anti-capitalist daycare fill, now they may continue to consume by way of Bonnie with impunity.

It is interesting to note that Toy Story 4 has the least number of branded characters, at least on its surface level. There are of course, the Potato-Heads, both of whom have drastically smaller roles this time around, and a handful of small cameos for Barbie or obscure Star Wars figures, but otherwise the film is surprisingly devoid of explicit plays with pre-existing toy properties, which was a staple in previous films to one degree or another. Instead, most new
additions to the cast are of the other types: either the generic non-brands (such as the comedic
carnival toy duo of Duck and Bunny, along with the silent but scary Benson ventriloquist
dummies, and arguably Forky), or the alternate-universe parodies of real-life toys (namely, the
Talking Tina analogue of Gabby Gabby, the Polly Pocket inspired Giggle McDimples, and the
70's Evel Knievel parody of Duke Caboom). Gone are the in-universe mentions of Mattel or
Hasbro from the first film, replaced with more direct references to brands created by Toy Story
itself, such as a cameo of the franchise's G.I. Joe parody, Combat Carl, or of the short film
protagonist that inspired the first movie, Tinny from Tin Toy. I don’t believe this to simply be a
coincidence, but in fact a sign of Toy Story itself as looping around its initial concept, now no
longer in need of legacy brands as cameos in their films, whether it be for clever reference or
capitalizing on direct nostalgia; it is now a legacy brand in itself, capable of marketing its own
preconceived toys and creating its own new additions to its commodity empire. Toy Story is a
brand of itself, literally playing with the brands of other forms. It is perhaps exemplary in
surpassing the very process of commodifying children’s toys. Unlike the nostalgic works just
prior to its era, which were partially an inspiration to the films, Toy Story cuts out the narrative
middle-man. Instead of needing to create a whole universe for which the toys may not be toys,
for the purpose of selling and marketing toys, Toy Story is now literally a narrative about the
lives of toys. The characters’ entire function and identity are tied to their own commodification.
The Toy Story franchise has managed to make toys out of toys, and commodify the very concept
of commodity.

To go back for a moment, Combat Carl himself is an interesting track for this trend as a
whole, starting as a white, voiceless and generic soldier that is blown to bits by Sid: in his
introduction in the film, Combat Carl is the first body we see Sid destroying its organs, his
gruesome explosion presented as exemplary of Sid's sadism. Bits of his pieces and remnants can be found on various Mutant Toys, reorganized and reterritorialized into new bodies of Sid's creation. However, he later appears again as a full-fledged character in a television special, now a confident soldier of color voiced by Carl Weathers, assisting the toys in escaping a motel. He is also accompanied by a smaller version of himself, Combat Carl Jr. This is the version of the character we see in *Toy Story 4*. Combat Carl's becoming-Carl Weathers, is to an extent a form of object becoming subject. But, by proxy, it is another example of organs put back into the body. He goes from being pieces that can be assembled and rearranged into new bodies, into a soldier with a new coat of paint, now inseparable from his newly sanctioned organization as a celebrity parody.

*Toy Story of Terror! (2013)* [left],  *Toy Story (1995)* [right]

And yet, this is not something new or unique to the *Toy Story* formula. Since its inception, the series had operated around the capitalization of its toy brands, alongside its capitalization of its celebrity actors. This, perhaps, is one of the most direct examples of how *Toy Story*, and Computer-Generated films like it, mimic live-action: not simply by the increased
realism of computer-generated space, but by their common ground of commodifying their artwork by way of the celebrity. Here, we can look back at David Fleming’s chapter from *Deleuze and Film*, “Digitalising Deleuze: The Curious Case of Digital Human Assemblage, or What Can a Digital Body Do?” Despite Fleming’s focus on a “live-action” use of CGI for the “cyber-star,” much of 1980s and 90s animation can be considered some of the first instances of this type of animated assemblage between pre-existing celebrity and assembled counterpart. Indeed, for the specifics of “cyber-star,” Woody and Buzz Lightyear can be considered some of the first, with their initial celebrity casting of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen respectively. In Fleming’s analysis, he explains how Brad Pitt’s casting on top of the nearly entirely digital Benjamin Button constitutes “a materially schizophrenic synthesis of actors and animators, humans and machines, actual and virtual, and realises a believable and affective form of performing subject-object” (208). In this context, the same can be said for the cast of the *Toy Story* franchise, comprising organless assemblages in themselves by way of their formation.

However, similar to how Brad Pitt’s influence is characterised in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, there is an emphasis on the actor’s influence on the character-assemblage. It is evident in all of the *Toy Story* franchise’s casting choices, from Don Rickles as Mr. Potato-Head to Keanu Reeves as Duke Caboom, that the pre-existing stardom of their voice actors have lasting influence on who that character is, perhaps even more so than their specific performance. Tom Hanks is not only Woody’s voice, but also the active inspiration and advertisement for the character-- one that even if he is stripped from his voice-box, neither Woody nor Tom will ever separate from their respective assemblages. Mr. Potato-Head in *Toy Story 4* is a showcasing of this, as Don Rickles had passed away before production of the film. For what few lines he had, they used pre-existing lines of dialogue from his previous work. Thus, alongside his earlier
assemblage as body with rearrangeable organs, perhaps the most organless body of the main cast, Mr. Potato-Head functions as almost a pure assemblage, even his voice simply reterritorialized from its original functions. Yet, at the same time this also exemplifies how he will always be inseparable from the organ of his voice. Even in death, Mr. Potato-Head cannot escape the Organ of Don Rickles.

*Toy Story 4: Woody Becoming-Nomad*

Right from the initial premise *Toy Story 4* introduces a new body without organs for discussion: Forky. Forky is perhaps the most literal example in the franchise of organs being thrust upon the BwO, however there is perhaps more nuance to him compared to that of Sid’s mutant toys. For one, his creation is not framed quite explicitly as horrific as are Sid’s collages, being a “new friend” created by Bonnie on her first day of kindergarten. To look at the difference in framing between Sid’s process and Bonnie’s process shows this: that while Sid’s creations are that of the grotesque, Bonnie creates something new and profound. This is where we first see a potential drastic change between the films in terms of framing bodies without organs. However, Forky is still abomination-esque in his assemblage as toy. In an interview, the director of *Toy Story 4*, Josh Cooley, describes “the world of *Toy Story* [as] built upon the idea that everything in the world has a purpose. A toy’s purpose is to be there for its child.” In a Deleuzo-Guattarian read, this tracks, as all things have their function, with the toy’s function within the film being based on its child-ownership. This is the crux of Forky’s character, that he is a reterritorialized spork, given new function as toy. Throughout the start of the film, Forky constantly defies the signification of “toy” in favor of “trash.” His existential dread is rooted in its desire for death. Even more so than Sid, we see an active example of the BwO howls, in his protest that they have wrongfully folded him, stolen his body and made him a toy organism. This is exacerbated in that
Bonnie is not his sole creator. In the film, we see that the real person responsible for his assemblage from Trash to Being Toy, is Woody. Woody, in an attempt to serve his State function of treating well his new Signifier, gives Bonnie the materials from which Forky is assembled. Aside from this literal reterritorializing that Woody does, he also acts in a similar manner as he does in the first film, as Statesman in charge of signifying those who are unsignified. In a dialogue that mirrors that of the first film, Woody must constantly explain to Forky that he is not Trash, but Toy, and constantly police his behavior for this purpose. Eventually by the end, Forky embraces his new territory, even in assisting a new knife-becoming-toy through heteronormative means in a post-credits sequence.

In tandem with Forky’s ultimate acceptance of his Organs, it turns out he is not the most Deleuzian narrative motif of the film, and indeed the franchise. About halfway through, we are re-introduced to Woody’s old love interest and lost toy, Bo Peep, who is now what can only be described as a toy nomad. In direct contrast to Woody and his cohorts’ life since Andy, Bo has lived owner-less for “seven fantastic years,” almost completely deterritorialized from the Toy function of ownership. Unlike in previous films where those who intend to deterritorialize
themselves from the established order of kids and toys are vilified and punished for their transgressions, Bo gets no such comeuppance, and in fact is framed with as much significance as those of her more Organized cohorts.

A solid way to characterize the differences between the *Toy Story* films can be their use of arms as Organs. The loss of a toy’s arm signifies something similar to that of the loss of one’s Organ, symbolizing one’s shift away from the organization that they are at that moment a part of. We see this first in *Toy Story 1*, with Buzz Lightyear. Buzz in the first half of the movie is “deluded” to the fact that he is a toy, a point of aggravation to Woody, always the signifying Statesman, who is attempting to police him into his proper territory of “toy” rather than “space ranger.” This is shown throughout the film by his almost constant responses to Buzz that “you are a toy,” explicitly attempting to signify (and therefore subjugate) him. Despite these attempts, Buzz is already territorialized and signified, as the Buzz Lightyear. This being the central conflict of the film, it functions similarly to the territorial conflicts of the collector’s item status in *Toy Story 2* and the daycare in *Toy Story 3*. In all these instances, the aim is to show that the territory of ownership is the most valid function a toy can have, that without that Organization, there will always be some lack of fulfillment.

*Toy Story (1995)*
To go back to Buzz’s conflict in the first *Toy Story*, this internal conflict culminates in the “I Will Go Sailing No More” sequence, where he attempts to prove himself as Space Ranger by trying to fly, only to fall and lose his arm in the process, thus solidifying his material reality as Toy. The duration of his armlessness is when he is deterritorialized, in search of a new purpose and function. It is only when Woody convinces him of his Toy significance, that his arm is accepted back to his body, and his new Organs are accepted into his body.

![Toy Story 2 (1999)](image)

We see the arm as signifier for Organ again in *Toy Story 2*, this time with regards to Woody. When his arm is nearly torn off, he is put up onto the top shelf, signifying his loss of function as plaything for Andy, at least until he is repaired. This is a source of existential dread for Woody, complete with an organ-bound dream sequence of various toy arms forcing him down the trash-bin. This is Woody’s greatest fear-- to become trash-- to become a body without organs. Later on in the film, he is given a full restoration in detail, sewn back together by a professional in preparation for his new life as a museum item. Here, we can see a sewing of the organs back into the body, only now signified as reterritorialized in the context of the genealogy of a collector’s item, rather than that of Andy’s toy. Indeed by process of his restoration and
reterritorialization, he is deterritorialized from Andy by way of the painting over of his boot. Later on in the film, the Prospector unstitches Woody’s arm once more, both as a threat to stay within his new territory, but also narratively signifying his deterritorialization from that of collector’s item. Finally at the end of the film, we see Andy’s mom has sewn him back up, albeit to not the same level of restoration that the professional had, signifying his full reterritorialization back into Andy’s care.

*Toy Story 3* has a somewhat similar case, however instead of the arm it is the eye that is involved. Early on in the film, it is established that Mrs. Potato-Head has lost one of her eyes, somewhere within Andy’s room. The Potato-Heads have been already established as inseparable from their organs; she is able to see through that eye despite being in vastly different spaces. At the start of the film, this is used as a means to show the toys deterritorialized state, where they are unable to fulfill their functions as playthings for the now college-bound Andy. However, it is later used to provide evidence that they were never fully deterritorialized, as she is able to see that Andy is still in active search for them. Finally, Mrs. Potato-Head is reterritorialized once more when she is finally reunited with her eye and the rest of the toys are reunited with their Organ, Andy.
*Toy Story 4* is where we see the greatest shift, in fact symbolizing the vast differentiation of it from the past 3 films. There is a very similar scene to that of Woody’s and Buzz’s loss of arm when Woody is with Bo in search of Forky. Woody attempts to grab Bo’s hand, and immediately snaps her arm clean off. Instead of a scene of thematic weight or existential shock, this is played off as a joke with Bo simply stating “this happens all the time,” and casually tapes her arm back on. This signifies a noteworthy difference between that of Woody’s and Bo’s priorities and territories. Bo is in an organless position, where the loss of one’s arm does not denote a deterritorialization. Bo, as a “lost toy,” may nomadically reterritorialize herself in any position.

This potential for de-organizing is apparent throughout the film, most explicitly through Woody’s character arc. At the start, it is revealed that Woody is no longer a favorite toy of Bonnie, not having the same level of status and care that Andy had once given him. Despite this, he is still loyal to his signifier, ever-dedicated to the protection of her new favorite toy in Forky. However, in seeing the potential for freedom of ownership that Bo represents, there is now a break, an opening for a new line of flight. And indeed, by the end he surrenders his State-badge of Sheriff to Jessie and the rest, and breaks away from Bonnie to live free with Bo.

There are other significant examples of Organs in *Toy Story 4*. Namely, there is the “antagonist” of Gabby Gabby, an old doll with a broken voice-box, who desperately wants Woody’s pull-string for one more chance at being with a child. At first, she is presented as a villain, complete with bodies without organs of her own, the silent dummies Benson. However, Woody eventually gives in to losing his voice-box, letting them literally strip the organ from his body, as a way of giving that organ to Gabby Gabby. This transfer of organs, similarly portrayed with sewing imagery, is both a literal organ transplant, as well as a metaphorical one. It
encapsulates a literal deterritorializing of Woody, sacrificing his organ, and the reterritorializing of Gabby towards the potential for ownership, gaining his Organ.

There is also a similar point of Voice as analogue to Organ in the film, with Buzz’s misinterpretation of Woody’s phrasing, that he “listens to his inner voice.” Buzz’s interpretation of this to mean his own physical voicebox is apt, as it is played for comical effect as he consistently uses the randomness of his speaker-catchphrases as a way of thinking through his problems; it is almost a metaphor for Buzz’s remaining trust in his Organs to guide him, only it eventually leads him astray. This literalism is, however, still apt for Woody, as he now loses his own voice box and “inner voice,” which tells him to remain as a functioning plaything for an owner that decidedly does not care for him. Buzz does not break off from his Organ, but is at least somewhat punished for his lack of nuance. Woody however literally loses his organ, and thereby manages to finally find peace in finally breaking away from his perceived function as owned plaything.

In this distinction, we may find Woody’s arc as finally perhaps an embrace of the nomadic lifestyle, and the closest the Toy Story series gets to becoming-bodies-without-organs. However, despite this newly found position, Toy Story 4 is once again stopped from achieving its full potentiality due to the confines of its premise. Just as Sid’s toys must be organized, just as Forky must be indoctrinated, Woody cannot fully leave his Organized principles behind. Instead, the narrative operates a sort of synthesis between the two. Woody and his newfound friends join with Bo Peep and leave behind the organization of owner, but only to operate for the same function outside its confines. Now Woody and Bo and their new merry gang function as nomads, but those who help toys get to owners. Instead of Woody fully becoming-body-without-organs, he has managed to bring Bo at least somewhat to the side of giving organs to other bodies. If
Woody were a Deleuzian nomad, he would be perhaps a nomadic war machine, operating outside the State; but here he is still an assistant to the State. This is however arguably, no longer Woody’s fault, as it all culminates to the same confines as all the *Toy Story* films have since its inception: the confines of its capitalist roots. And yet, this film out of any other seems to be the most affirming, both inside and outside of the narrative. Pixar, now no longer overseen by *Toy Story* creator, John Lasseter, and much of the old guard slowly deteriorating from its ranks, Woody and Bo and company at least have more possibilities than before for future ends. The film series in itself has reterritorialized, at least somewhat; leaving Woody and the rest to have their own future nomadic adventures. With Woody himself, the flagship of the series, now moving beyond his supposed function, and now “lost” and free of both owner and pullstring, he is at least one Organ or several less. He is now no longer just Toy or just Lost, but has now made a new path where he can function as both Lost And Toy. Perhaps, at least more than in prior installments, Woody and the franchise as a whole now has greater potential for Becoming-Infinity-and-Beyond.

*Toy Story (1995)*
In the near future: Corporate networks reach out to the stars, electrons and light flow throughout the universe. - The advance of computerisation, however, has not yet wiped out nations and ethnic groups. - Ghost in the Shell (1995)

But everyone knows that these institutions are finished, whatever the length of their expiration periods. It's only a matter of administering their last rites and of keeping people employed until the installation of the new forces knocking at the door. These are the societies of control, which are in the process of replacing the disciplinary societies. - Postscript on the Societies of Control (1992)

**Shell with no Ghost: Ghost in the Shell and Becoming the Net**

The film *Ghost in The Shell*, also born in 1995, starts with what can be described as the birth of a body. We see in detail the technologized creation in a laboratory of a synthetic body, from its programmed code and modeling, to its vatted additions of flesh and skin, all to the point of a literal fetal position as the water leaks from its valves, “revealing a fully realized person.” And yet, we know this not to be a fully realized person, as one would describe a person to be. This is not in effect a “revealing,” but an assemblage; an assemblage of a body, or in terms of the film, a shell. This shell, as an assemblage, is “empty,” or with no ghost; a ghost here meaning consciousness, “soul,” or the organism of the body. It is, in literal terms, a body without organs.
This scene is considered one of the most iconic of the film, showcasing both a comparison between the mechanized and artificial creation of what looks and functions as a natural human body, and a more aesthetic contrast between the film’s cel animation and early 3D-computer animation. This, in itself is an interesting comparison to make between on the one hand the conflicting binaries linking artificial and natural and on the other computer-generated and hand-drawn images, which are here intentionally blurred together. The assumption may be to map on the computerization of animation to the notion of a computerization of the body, yet this comparison I argue is not necessarily as clear-cut as a division between the digital and the natural. Indeed, I argue the film as a whole may go against such linear divisions of being one or the other, as it instead makes a case for a process of becoming something else entirely. Specifically, I intend to show how the film in itself operates as an embrace of a rhizomatic network that can only be described as a Body without Organs.

The Cyberbrain is the Screen

What are the Bodies without Organs present in Ghost in the Shell? In the film, and the franchise as a whole, “ghost in the shell” is in reference to the cybernetic bodies of its world, where it is not uncommon for people to rearrange or upload their consciousness (ghost), into machine-based artificial bodies (shell). Looking again at the original Deleuzian concept, “bodies without organs,” as referring to bodies without the interior organ-ism, the Organs of bodies without organs could be closely construed as the Self in the psychoanalytic sense. Therefore, if we take the literal stance in the terms of the series vocabulary, “Body without Organs” can be re-worded as “Shell without Ghost.” However, how well does this fit, and where might we find examples in the film? Under this context, the universe of Ghost in the Shell is filled with bodies without organs, or to be more precise, the becoming bodies without organs. We can best see this
literal form at three scenes: the start of the film, the end of the film and the point prior to the Puppet Master’s twist reveal. In the assemblage of Motoko’s body or “shell,” and the “entrapment” of the Puppet Master’s ghost into a random cyberbrain and body, there is a process that is invisible to us, but no less real. Only at the end of the film, when the Major and the Puppet Master actively merge into one, do we get the closest glimpse of this process: this being the process of transfer.

Deleuze and Guattari explain their philosophies as a sort of rhizomatic mapping of lines, all intersecting at different points, but the real point of entry being “lines of flight.” As they describe in their introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*:

> The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome. What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency. It is itself a part of the rhizome. (Deleuze & Guattari 12)

What about the “connections between fields” that exist as physical connections between technological devices? In a very literal sense, coding and wiring is a mapping of this kind. A brain is a wiring and mapping of this kind. So, what of the cyberbrain?

Shells without ghosts are seen in the film. Namely, there are the brainless mannequins that are seen in the still city shots in shopping centers; perhaps the most literal examples of organless bodies. We know they are cyber-bodies and not merely mannequins because they hold the same face as the protagonist; as she looks at their lack of humanity, questioning her own. The body of the Major, our protagonist, is described as “stock” in the film, only internally with added military-grade adjustments. And yet, we also see these bodies alongside actual mannequins,
blurring the differences between them, as if the bodies themselves were simply fashion statements. The montage of considering these “stock” models with regular mannequins and advertisements gives us the impression that these are not only shells, but commodities.

The Major sees reflections of her own face, so-to-speak, in window-sills and sitting in cafes, almost as a form of repetition. The intentionally unique, blank eyes of the Major gives a machinic, less than human conception of her; while the comparison of this same face in the cityscape gives a more capitalistic one. Here, we may consider the difference in what is simply organless bodies and bodies without organs. Despite the literal, physical brainlessness of these mannequins, it is in the act of comparison by way of the Major’s perspective, do we understand the Organs in the Body. These are perhaps not Subjects, but they are certainly Objects, functioning as an Other for the Major.

In this context, they are given several signifying distinctions. First, there is the significance of commodity-- here, we may consider them not as Bodies without Organs, but
more Bodies Not Yet With Organs. Similar to say, our previous conception of Toys in Toy Story as Organized by their commodification, so too are these mannequins, albeit to a lesser scale. They may not have literal Organs as of yet, but they are certainly Organized; specifically by the capitalist institutions that have created them. Second, there is the significance of Other-- here, we may consider them as physical analogues for the Major. Through the montaged comparison of her with her Ghostless counterparts, we are meant to see the relationship between them take place; in other words, we actively witness the Major herself in attempting to Organize by way of questioning the similarities between her and the shells. However, this does give us an insight into the Major’s own journey into becoming a body without organs; here, we see her own attempts to Oedipalize herself and the ensuing existential crisis, having to reconcile her inherent lack of individuality. The faces she sees represents the very real possibility she is not only inhuman, but therefore, trapped from humanistic freedoms. By the end of the film, she is given the chance to anti-oedipalize and deterritorialize from this conception, being able to become something beyond human. But furthermore, this puts the implications of this scene into a new light; now the mannequins are not simply signifiers of Major Motoko’s commodification and lack of bodily autonomy, but instead symbols of her newly developed form as multiplicity.

**Dividual Freedom**

There is almost an argument that the functions of cyberbrains as machinically enhanced organs, capable of further networking outside its individual parameters as almost a rhizomatic body without organs *as* an organ. However more specifically this could be considered as a material form of what Deleuze calls the Society of Control. In his essay, Postscript on the Societies of Control, Deleuze describes what he finds to be the next societal formation after Michel Foucault’s Disciplinary Society. In contrast to the modern society of discipline, where
“the individual never ceases passing from one closed environment to another, each having its own laws;” the society of control is where “one is never finished with anything-- the corporation, the educational system, the armed services being metastable states coexisting in one and the same modulation” (Deleuze, 1, 5). I argue this is the type of society we see in the Ghost in the Shell universe; one where the machines and modulations of the factory are replaced with that of the computer network.

Ghost in the Shell (1995)

Ghost in the Shell does not dwell heavily on any of its institutions as markedly separate; in fact, it turns out to be a separate section of its own government that creates the terrorist artificial intelligence that they are tasked with dealing with. This is the threat that both government sections we see in the film present: the need for not only constant forms of control, but even the intersecting needs of controlling those forms of control. The State in Ghost in the Shell is inevitably intertwined with the Corporate-- to the point that neither of these are expressly separate institutions at all, all operating within the same network, constantly at odds yet
inseparable. As Deleuze writes, “we no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become ‘dividuals,’ and masses, samples, data, markets, or ‘banks’”(5). The individual is no longer a concept of importance; instead, Ghost in the Shell is a society of dividuals.

If we consider Ghost in the Shell as a story of dividuals, then Major Motoko Kusanagi has an arc of “dividual freedom.” Throughout the film, we find examples of social control. The Major herself, as a Statesman, represents a level of control on society from her functions down to her physical body. She is literally a part of a police task-force, with the duty and function of dealing with high-end security risks for the State. This is further shown by the noted, corporate assemblage that is her cybernetic body and State-owned secrets of her memory. However, these points, while material reasons for her existential crisis, is not completely upended for her character arc. It is not a story of finding out what is “special” or “individual” in a conventional sense. Rather, her solution is an embrace on the very same modulations that the oppressive institutions that assemble her are based from: the network. She does not break from the molded casing by way of some escape from the machinic aspects of herself, but instead breaks away from the self and a notion of individualism. The Major by definition, divides herself with the Puppet Master, and fully integrating with the purely immanent world that is the Network. The Major does not find individual freedom, but instead accepts the loss of her individuality for the sake of freedom.

As somewhat of an aside from my specific analysis of the film, I would like to digress to a quick look into the Ghost in the Shell animated series, Ghost in the Shell: Stand-Alone Complex. Much of the series could easily fill a dissertation all on its own, however I would like to focus on a particular scene in which they directly reference Anti-Oedipus and have a
discussion of its implication of bodies without organs. The quote comes from the Tachikoma, a set of artificially intelligent “spider tanks” exclusive to the animated series, that function as both cutesy comic relief as well as direct philosophical analogues of the show’s main themes. In Episode 15 of the first season, "SA: Time of the Machines – MACHINES DÉSIRANTES" (literally the original French for “Desiring Machines”), the episode focuses on the Tachikoma themselves dealing with their increased semblance of consciousness, and their worries of being dismantled by their superiors as a result. In one of their discussions, one of the Tachikoma attempts to relate their differences from humans through a Deleuzo-Guattarian lens:

1: ...the problem is that we're too close to being human. It's because the line that separates human from robot has already become a few minor differences of the physical body. Stop and think why our 'bodies without organs' are not made to look human.

2: Efficiency as weapons, maybe?

1: That's part of it, but the more important reason is that if we were humanoid our users would over empathize with us in a weird way. I think we'd be hated even more if we were humanoid.

*(Ghost in the Shell: Stand-Alone Complex)*
This argument could in itself be a microcosm of the arguments held in this paper. The Tachikoma, perhaps even more directly than the Major in the film, give us a case of “bodies without organs,” where the source of their oppression stems from their breakage from the machinic functions they are designed to be: instead Becoming something new by way of those very same networked modulations used to control them.

While not canon with the events of the film, the Tachikoma here deal with very similar issues of sentience that the Puppet Master does. Despite this, they have less power to deal with this issue as they are invariably linked to the physical bodies they possess, ones that are considered too armed and dangerous by the State. Interestingly enough, this exemplifies the Major herself as a Statesman, as she is the one who initially has worries and decides to decommission the Tachikomas for their growing sentience and individuality-- perhaps a greater crime within the dividual society of control that the anime takes place. However, despite the Tachikoma having somewhat distinct personalities, their memories and functions are invariably linked up to one another as a sort of cloud/hive-mind of sorts. One may wonder if they could consider themselves more dividuals than individuals in this context, and ultimately find similar freedoms that the Major herself finds in the film, if things had gone differently.

**The Puppet Master as Sadist**

Another instance of shells without ghosts, or at least shells whose ghosts are played with, would be in the Puppet Master’s victims. Two of the main instances of this can be found in the early sequence of the garbageman and his accomplice. Let us first start with the latter. The accomplice is first presented as a lowly, generic terrorist; in sunglasses and a cloaking hood, firing at the Section 9 team before being beaten by the much more skilled Major Motoko Kusanagi. However, once beaten it is revealed just how much of his brain is wiped clean, simply
the literal Shell without much of his Ghost, not even in necessity of knowing his own name. The Puppet Master had simply stripped his organs and replaced anew for a more simplified function. The fight scene in itself could be a metaphor for the sort of sadistic play that is done to the man; where the Puppet Master manipulates the man’s ghost and brain for their ends, so too does the Major invisibly plays and twists with the man’s external body and organs in their confrontation.

The garbageman, by contrast, shows us a different light to the Puppet Master’s form of sadism. We first meet the garbageman as a man down on his luck, albeit criminally hacking phone-lines for the chance to spy on his ex-wife. However, we soon realize that his phone-hacking is not simply of his own accord, nor even his wife; instead, his own mind had been hacked by the Puppet Master, implanting false memories to manipulate his motivations and reactions. In a way, we can consider if this is similar to Sid’s sadistic attempts at the manipulation of his toys, and ergo a form of assembling bodies without organs. However, again in a literal context, this may in fact be more of an implanting of organs that should not be. The
Puppet Master is not simply stripping the garbageman’s organism, but in fact replacing it with new, greater organs; namely, the replacement of organs from “bachelor” to “family-man.” In this instance, the Puppet Master does not simply sew the organless bodies shut, but instead crams new organs inside; and the film in itself does find this a more tragic and horrifying degree. We are meant to feel sorry for the garbageman, now forced into knowledge and memories that he was not initially designed to have. Instead of the Puppet Master being an analogue for Sid as Sadist, he almost resembles Woody as Sadist forever scarring what turns out to be Sid the Garbageman.

**The Major Becoming Minor**

In 2008, an updated version of *Ghost in the Shell* was released, only made with what can be considered slight differences. One of the most striking differences, outside of its updates in CG segments and aesthetic shift to warmer orange over the classical green and black of the original, is certain redubs of the material; most notably, that of changing the voice actor of the Puppet Master. The original Puppet Master was, despite its “female” body, given a distinctly male voice and referred throughout as “he.” However, in the updated *Ghost in the Shell 2.0*, they are given a female voice, and along with it changes in the dialogue to feminine pronouns. This is a distinct shift, as it almost plays with the already existing lack of gender dynamics of the narrative.1 Throughout the film, prior to the Puppet Master’s reveal, they are consistently presumed to be an American male, human terrorist. Even the name, The Puppet Master, denotes a gendered and arguably Major demarcation. It is certainly questioned and considered only a hypothesis based on evidence, but never one that is truly argued against until the reveal of who and what the Puppet Master really is.

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1 For the purposes of this argument, these points are predominantly based on how the English dub is portrayed, and may not sufficiently explain the use of pronouns in the native Japanese dubs.
Deleuze and Guattari describe man as molar, and that becomings must be molecular. They explain that the arboreal model standardizes the “white, male, adult, "rational," etc.,” as the majority to which the minority is in opposition. “There is no history but of the majority, or of minorities as defined in relation to the majority” (292). The Puppet Master is at first defined by the standards of the majority: an adult, white male, a “master” that controls minoritarian characters as mere puppets to his game. However, as the story progresses, this specificity is toyed with. First, the Puppet Master literally becomes woman, as it is presumed to be “trapped” in a female cybernetic body. This could be argued to be further contorted when considering the differences between the original and updated versions: in *Ghost in the Shell 2.0*, the Puppet Master becomes woman further by way of its voice becoming woman along with its female body. Its pronouns become woman. And yet, it is not even a woman, nor white, nor straight, nor even human under the confines of what the film calls or even questions to be human. They are as they define themselves, “a lifeform born in the sea of information.” The Puppet Master actively becomes inhuman, becomes molecular, becomes “the net.”

*Ghost in the Shell (1995)*
Even within the backstory of the Puppet Master’s “conception,” we find various histories of the majority. Aside from the majoritarian history of the Puppet Master as some American terrorist, there is the history of the government itself, attempting to create the Puppet Master for their own State purposes. The Puppet Master is a tool for societies of control, not too unlike the ways in which Section 9 is codified for the Japanese State. And yet, The Puppet Master, at first defined as major by the majority, is now defined as minor. And so too do they offer that molecularity to the major’s Major; by way of merging with the Major and thereby minoritizing her, the Major literally becomes minor.

While the Puppet Master’s arc of becoming is represented by growing perceptions of those around them, the Major’s arc is that of an active becoming. The Puppet Master becomes by way of contextual perception, while the Major becomes by way of personal development. The Major’s womanhood is questioned and played with, by way of her almost agender gaze and personality. The only character that seems to find any gender specificity to the Major is Batou, who consistently feels sexual or romantic tension for the Major throughout the film, mostly by way of wanting to “cover up” her nude body in varying circumstances. Despite this, the Major can almost literally be called a “standard.” Most notably, in one scene, the Major looks through crowds of onlookers, mannequins in shopping districts, people in cafes; we see that the Major’s own physical body is standardized, a simple “shell” model that anyone could easily fit their “ghosts” into. The Major’s body is literally a mass-produced prop, a body constrained by the majority. What is the Difference between her own face and the face of a mannequin? This is essentially the question the Major poses. Instead of an answer, there is only a Repetition of the body, with all the implicit assumptions of the majoritarian State that comes with that body.
Along with this literal standardization of the body, there is the “selling of one’s soul” to the State, that all members of Section 9 must adhere to. Even this aspect can be taken literally, as the legitimate constraints on one’s memories are assumed to be State-property. The Major not only questions her Self in a psychoanalytic sense, but in a very tangible, literal sense. Her Self is owned and operated by the State; a point of connection with The Puppet Master’s Self, who is in a similar position. The difference here is that The Puppet Master manages to break from their State cage, only to incorporate themself into a new cage they call “living organisms.” But by that same process, they offer the Major a break from not only her State cage, but her human cage; both cages being invariably intertwined. The Puppet Master is an example of deterritorialization re-territorialized under a different point, while the Major’s deterritorialization is the closest we get to a deterritorialization of the Self.

**Ghost in the Machine**

In his extensive work, *The Anime Machine*, Thomas Lamarre applies Deleuze’s cinematic concepts to a different anime, also released in 1995: *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. In it, he explains how *Evangelion*’s use of “hyperlimited animation” is a way to see the crisis of the classic movement-image that leads to the rise of the modern time-image. He relates this notion to the difference between “classic” full-animation, and “modern” limited animation. He argues that the infamous use of still frames for moments at a time, or the literal limited and hyper-simplified aesthetic of its final episode, appears to show “the emergence of the time-image [and] is thus associated with the optimization of the modern technological condition.” Lamarre posits that the “action-image opens up from within, exploding into anxiety, uncertainty, disorientation, and also reverie recollection love, and confidence” (199, 200).
I point to this reference for two reasons. First, what does Lamarre’s conception say for *Ghost in The Shell*? Lamarre references Oshii’s work earlier in the book, in fact, in his section on full animation. He points to the film as an example of rotoscoping, an age-old technique of animating sequences by tracing over live-action film sequences, to better capture a realistic level of detail and motion. *Ghost in the Shell* is a unique example of this technique; its famous Hong Kong inspired backgrounds and scene settings are in fact results of rotoscoped video sequences of real Hong Kong city streets and waterways. Lamarre’s inclusion of this as an example of full animation, implies that this scene is in the more “classic” style. While Lamarre does not directly make this point in terms of *Ghost in the Shell* specifically, we can infer that on a surface level, this scene should be operating as exemplary of the movement-image. And yet, this doesn’t seem to track with what appears to be the director’s intent; that is to say, the detailing of the Hong Kong backdrops seem to function better as sorts of prolongations of time, not dissimilar to that of *Evangelion*’s, perhaps more explicit, pauses.

![Neon Genesis Evangelion (1996)](image)

Despite this distinction, I don’t intend to mischaracterize Lamarre; based on his overall points I argue he would agree with what I present here. This claim fits well with his main
conception of the “open compositing” and layers of “animetism” versus the camera-based “cinematism” that can be found in both cinema and animation. Indeed, despite these various distinctions he comes across, his point is not to separate films down to “cinematic” versus “animetic.” Instead, not dissimilar to Deleuze’s movement-image and time-image distinctions, there can be variations on tendencies for one or the other, in all artforms. I argue the fluid, cityscape scenes in question still fulfill largely similar functions as those of the limited frames in Neon Genesis Evangelion’s quieter moments. In both instances, these scenes function as narrative breaks, that capture atmospheric and thematic points, rather than quicker-paced progressions of plot. They also serve a similar thematic function, as both operate within their narratives as “cerebral” interpersonal moments of silence, albeit with varying degrees of comfort and audience participation. The differences in technique culminates in similar functions, however the nuanced differences between them are still of note. In both instances, it can be argued that the technique of limiting the animation versus more fully encapsulating motion employs the unique aesthetics of animation. In the instance of Evangelion, the limitations almost create a French New Wave form of showcasing the elements of its artificial production. In Ghost in The Shell, albeit in a more subtle context, the very act of rotoscoping over a real cityscape does not simply give a greater “reality” to its world, but is in itself an interaction with it; a showcasing of the artificiality of its space by way of sci-fi-mechanization and indeed by way of the drawing over itself. The processes shown, of Evangelion’s storyboard sequences and minute-long still shots, along with Ghost in the Shell’s rotoscoping and computer-generated overviews, all come from differing points of entry, but also all rhizomatically connect to the world, through their own world, that world being the technique of animation. As Lamarre himself writes on
Ghost in the Shell’s use of rotoscope: “the result was breathtaking, a strangely cinematically yet fantastical world, a world not cinema and not not cinema” (65).

My second reason in introducing this point was to ask: what does Neon Genesis Evangelion, in itself, say for Ghost in the Shell? As mentioned previously, the series had first premiered in 1995, merely a few months before Ghost in the Shell’s release (as well as Toy Story’s). Both anime works may represent a shifting tendency of the industry to some degree, as both are often lauded as benchmarks for the growing “global anime boom” that had spread across the world in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as well as for the deployment of deeper and more artistic storytelling that is now considered a staple feature of the medium. Both share status as “cultural touchstones,” however much importance may be attributed to this fact. However, they also mark similar, yet differing paths. On both sides we have what could be described as “Neo-Tokyo,” dystopic (to varying degrees), yet hyper-technologized police-states. Ghost in The Shell sets itself where the bodied barriers between naturalized “ghost” and artificial “machine” is blurred by way of most of its semi-cybernetic citizenry. Neon Genesis Evangelion, on the other hand, also deals with the human in the machine, but under the context of human bodies within machinic bodies in themselves. Ghost in the Shell and Evangelion are about robots and their
relations with humanity, but of very different types of robots and ergo, very different types of human.

Robots, machines and technology are common staples not only in the world of *Ghost in The Shell* and *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, but in Japanese animation in general. Ever since its widely considered inception in *Astro-Boy*, anime and manga have had a long history of characterizing machines as a subject of interest. This subject matter is not lost on Lamarre, being at least a part of his wider argument on the importance of the machine in anime; both as subject (themes of technology in its storytelling) and object (literal mechanical operations in the act of animating). Lamarre outlines how “animation thinks technology… at once works with technology and thinks about technology --and the two processes are inseparable” (xxx). Here, he attempts to emphasize the materiality that is always inherent in the technological process of animation, regardless of the direct themes of the animation in question. However, he explains that what he means when he calls anime a “machine” is in a very Deleuzo-Guattarian sense; namely in the concept of the abstract machine. In this view, the machine does not end at the literal apparatus of the computer or animation stand. Instead, as Lamarre writes, “the challenge is to find the machine on which the apparatus ends.”

Both *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and *Ghost in the Shell* can be said to be at play with their respective anime genre tropes. *Ghost in the Shell* can be considered a retooling of the cybernetic hero, a trope as old as anime with its arguable start in Tezuka Osamu’s *Astro Boy*, itself a “modernized” (of its time) take on Pinochio. *Evangelion* is similarly a postmodern play on the anime sci-fi subgenre of mecha anime. Mecha anime is generally defined by its use of humans in charge of giant mechanized robots, classically in pursuit of greater world-ending pursuits or at
war with other factions. Of note, Mamoru Oshii, prior to working on *Ghost in the Shell*, had previously been well known for his own mecha anime series, *Patlabor*.

In terms of our conception that *Ghost in The Shell* progresses into Bodies without Organs, what does this say for *Neon Genesis Evangelion*? In *Evangelion*, there too is a conception of “soul” within the machine-- namely in the main character, Shinji, piloting a mech that is imbued with the soul of her dead mother. The series as a whole plays with the psychological underpinnings of each of the characters, ultimately ending in a fully internalized conception of Shinji’s inner insecurities. This provides a very different understanding of similar themes with existential identity. *Evangelion*, by contrast to *Ghost in the Shell*, looks much more inwards for its source of inquiry-- and therefore, it could be considered more an example of the psychoanalytic than Ghost in the Shell’s schizoanalytic themes. Despite this, *Evangelion* certainly utilizes more schizoanalytic techniques, further blurring the lines between reality and even its own artistic logic as the series goes forward. It may be unclear as to whether this ultimately gives the series a Deleuzian outlook compared to *Ghost in the Shell*, but the lines of inquiry and modalities by which to consider them, are still present in both works.

**Animating The Anomaly**

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari describe how *Moby-Dick* may be considered “one of the greatest master-pieces of becoming.” They explain that “Captain Ahab has an irresistible becoming-whale, but one that bypasses the pack or the school, operating directly through a mon-strous alliance with the Unique, the Leviathan, *Moby-Dick*” (243). Captain Ahab’s becoming is perhaps comparable to Major Kusanagi’s. In both instances, Ahab and Kusanagi make “a pact with a demon” in their becomings-animal. Both also deal with an Anomalous contradiction, breaking from their packs in pursuit of what they perceive as some
transcendent thing. For Ahab, it is in “break[ing] the law of the whalers;” for Kusanagi, it is in breaking the law of her fellow police, along with the laws of some “pure human essence.” Here is where we may find our first meta-textual contradiction, however. Where the Major finds a point of transcendence, Deleuze and Guattari may find immanence. Within the narrative of the film, Kusanagi’s “white whale” is allegedly the Puppet Master. But just as Ahab’s becoming-whale is not a question of the literal animal, Kusanagi’s becoming-body-without-organs and becoming-code is not as the literal physical merge implies. Instead, Kusanagi is becoming through the Anomaly that is the Puppet Master. The Puppet Master themself is in relation to this anomalous affect between the human and the machine. Major Kusanagi’s real break from the pack, is represented not just in her break from her profession with the State, but in her literal break from the mass-produced body that physically encompasses her; breaking from the pack that is the society of control.

There are other interesting similarities between Herman Melville’s book and Mamoru Oshii’s film. For one, both works are well-known for their detailed descriptions of what is otherwise the “mundane” aspects of their narratives. A large amount of Moby-Dick’s page-count is dedicated not only to action-packed sea-battles, but the silent specifics that are involved in the operation of a whaling boat. Similarly, Ghost in The Shell, despite its premise as a cyberpunk
crime thriller, spends a great amount of its runtime in slow, silent montage of the Neo-Tokyo backdrop, detailing its various slummed city landscapes. In both instances, there is an argument to be made over how these otherwise “unnecessary” dedications to backdrop, are in fact there as part of the greater themes of becoming that is present in both works. This may in fact even be a form of adaptation from the original Ghost in the Shell manga, which also utilized heavy footnoted descriptions of the intricacies of its technological and social networking, not dissimilar to *Moby Dick*. While the film does not go into as much detailed depth into how each piece of its abstract machinery functions, perhaps its silent interludes of the city landscape operates as a sort of visual adaptation with the same result of actively delaying the narrative action for further introspection into its ideas.

**The Rhizome of Life**
Ghost in the Shell perhaps functions as both an embrace and cutting through the control society. However, the context of it as an embrace of the immanent is not necessarily self-evident. As a conclusion to this chapter, I would like to look once more at the climactic scene within the abandoned museum, in which the Major has her confrontation with a Fuchikoma (a walking tank, different from the previously mentioned “Tachikoma”), and her ultimate enlightenment with the Puppet Master. In the museum, there is what appears to be a phylogenetic “tree of life,” most likely based on an early evolutionary diagram by Earnst Haeckel, in his 1879 book, The Evolution of Man. However, in the ensuing battle, the etched diagram on the wall is covered in bullet-fire, all the way to “hominis,” or “MAN,” at the top.

The imagery is quite striking. No doubt, the symbolism is quite clear, signifying the eventual merge of Ghosts that are the Major and the Puppet Master, as the next step in life’s evolution. At first, this may seem as perhaps antithetical to the argument I present here; instead of a rhizomatic immanence, we are given a literal arboreal model of transcendence in life. However, I argue the bullets are not merely a tread to the top, but in fact a disavowal and literal flattening of it. This is not the machine’s contribution to the tree of life, it is the destruction of it. It is the intentional vandalism of its history, both by the rhizomatic State of control that the tank represents, and by the literally rhizomatic network of its technology. These bullet holes are not simply lines to the top, but points of entry.

So too is the case for the Major and Puppet Master; despite interpretations otherwise, I argue that their conception (both in literal and metaphorical terms) is one of a breakage from not only the hierarchical structures of man, but of transcendent evolution in itself. After Batou saves the newly merged cyberbrain from destruction, the new hybrid awakens in a child-sized cybernetic body, being the only shell Batou could buy at the time. One of the final lines from the
hybrid form of Major/Puppet Master, is a biblical quote from 1 Corinthians 13:11-- “When I was a child, my speech, feelings, and thinking were all those of a child. Now that I am a man, I have no more use for childish ways.” In Deleuze and Guattari’s chapter on the Body without Organs, from *A Thousand Plateaus*, they write:

> If it is tied to childhood, it is not in the sense that the adult regresses to the child and the child to the Mother, but in the sense that the child, like the Dogon twin who takes a piece of the placenta with him, tears from the organic form of the Mother an intense and destratified matter that on the contrary constitutes his or her perpetual break with the past, his or her present experience, experimentation. The BwO is a childhood block, a becoming, the opposite of a childhood memory. It is not the child "before" the adult, or the mother "before" the child: it is the strict contemporaneousness of the adult, of the adult and the child, their map of comparative densities and intensities, and all of the variations on that map. (164)

This, I think, is what constitutes the hybrid form as a body-without-organs. It is not signified or named. It is not the Major, nor the Puppet Master. It is not fully human or machine. It is not a child or an adult. Instead, it is Major *and* Puppet Master; human *and* machine; the adult *and* the child. It “constitutes a perpetual break with the past,” always already a new form of experimentation. It is a network of Becoming, rather than a stable Being; a mapping of itself along with “all of the variations on that map.” As the hybrid themself claims: “And where does the newborn go from here? The net is vast and infinite.”

*Ghost in the Shell (1995)*
Conclusion: The Toy Cyborg

When I first considered this comparison between *Toy Story* and *Ghost in the Shell*, I initially thought of the Major as a parallel of Buzz Lightyear. Both Buzz and the Major could be considered cyborgs in their own right. For Buzz, this may be two-fold-- both as a technologically advanced Space Ranger, but also as a toy with state-of-the-art features such as sound effects and “karate-chop action.” For Buzz, his wings and helmet are just as much parts of his body as his arms or head. Buzz Lightyear, as a “new toy,” is commonly associated with other counterparts and models who share his mode of being-- we see this directly in *Toy Story 2*, where Buzz finds himself in the “Buzz Lightyear aisle” of a toy store, and eventually meets his mirrored self in Utility-Belt Buzz.

This image resembles the Major’s view of her body as “stock,” when she sees her own face and model throughout the city-streets in *Ghost in the Shell*. Correlatively, in both films there is a commentary on the repetition of bodies and their use as standard commodity, along with the questions as to what is the difference between these bodies in various instances.
Along with this, we can see a similar journey taken by Buzz and the Major, albeit to different ends. In terms of their perspectives, both are officers of the law, given reason to question their own concepts of existence, and ultimately required to reterritorialize themselves as a result. However, with the Major this reterritorialization is into that of a new assemblage, becoming something new out of newly attached components-- from Section 9 to the rhizome of the Net. With Buzz, the reterritorialization is simply into another State, another Being-- from Space Ranger to Andy’s Toy.

At first, this dichotomy between cybernetic bodies fits well with what the Differences are between the films and franchises as a whole. However, this shifts when taking into account the most recent installments of both. In *Toy Story 4*, we find a more direct form of Becoming Bodies without Organs not in Buzz, but in Woody-- the ever-loyal Statesman of the series. The dynamic between Woody and Bo is not dissimilar to that of the ending conversation between the Major and Puppet Master. Woody, an officer of the law, both in his imaginary role as “Sheriff” and in his active role as Toy, begins to question his identity and necessity in life. Bo, a familiar face
now radicalized against the status quo, presents him with an opening to deterritorialize, to forget his obsession with Being-Owner’s-Toy, and embrace the potential for Becoming-Lost. Both films present this potential in their last lines: “The Net is vast and infinite.”-- “To Infinity,” “And Beyond.”

In contrast, *Ghost in the Shell*’s most recent adaptation, a live-action film in 2017, presents a plotline in which the Major is of special origin, the first of her kind. Despite the film still taking place in Japan, its casting of a white actress, Scarlett Johansson, in the lead role as the Major, proved controversial. Its solution to this becomes a plot where the Major must find the source of her lost memories and past as a young Japanese girl, having been forcibly reterritorialized into that of a cybernetic soldier. As a form of Americanization that attempts to justify itself, the film takes on a very different narrative and meaning compared to its source material; the remake’s ultimate message is that it is a necessity to look deep within oneself to find who one is -- in other words, it stands as a complete rejection of the Body without Organs. While the film attempts to claim its message is that “we cling to memories like they define us, but it’s what we do that defines us,” the plot ultimately betrays this notion-- along with the themes of the original animated film it heavily borrows from.

Here, we can find our Buzz Lightyear analogue, in the 2017 film’s Major “Mira Killian,” rather than in the source material’s Major Motoko Kusanagi. In both, we find a cybernetic soldier to their State, finding out the supposed Truth that their memories and reality are in fact falsified for the functions they were made for. And, in response to this revelation, both ultimately reject the potential radical freedom this could provide, in favor of simply gaining new Organs, and a new form of State.
This is further exemplified by the casting of Scarlett Johansson in the first place, with the film’s extensive use of computer animation. It serves ultimately as an example of the same Organizing of the digital star that permeates Hollywood cinema, including that of the Toy Story franchise, where the role of celebrity overshadows the rhizomatic body without organs that is the computer-generated Major in the film. Here the transformation spreads itself so far as to leach onto *Ghost in the Shell*’s narrative themes.

In regards to *Ghost in the Shell*, it is of interest to note that the film’s popularity was at first greater in Western markets than in its home of Japan. This is in fact commonly cited as evidence for its impact on popularizing the medium as a whole to global markets. It is commonly argued that this is because of Japan's milder interest in computer technology at the time, in comparison to the United States’ ever-increasing interest in it.

Here, we can also consider the impact of Pixar and *Toy Story*. As *Toy Story* in itself could be considered a marker of how invested the United States had begun to be in computers at the time. *Ghost in the Shell* and *Toy Story* represented very distinctly similar points of entry as both were examples of popular cinema that utilized computerization as selling points. With *Toy Story*
this was less by way of its story (it, in fact being quite purposefully more of an antiquated setting) and more due to its material creation as the first fully computer-animated film. With *Ghost in the Shell*, this digital dimension was quite expressed directly through its themes, setting and plot; moreover it even utilized actual computer graphics in certain sequences for a purposefully virtual effect. Though parallels in this regard, there is still something to be said for how both film properties had gained and created influence through the same cultural affects that were operative at their shared historical moment of production. Specifically, despite vastly different settings and cultural makeups, both can be contextually located at the growing American computerization boom of the 1990s.

Indeed, this very same boom is arguably what prompted Deleuze's own conception of the Society of Control. In his essay, Deleuze explains “the societies of control operate with machines of a third type, computers… this technological evolution must be, even more profoundly, a mutation of capitalism”(6). In other words, the control society is defined by its relationship with computers as its primary form of capitalist machinery. *Ghost in the Shell* attempts to depict what could ultimately be the effects of such a society under an admittedly Japanese perspective. *Toy Story*, within the continuum of Pixar as a whole, marks a culmination of the American control
society as a postmodern form of capitalism; both through its own success in commodifying the commodified, as well as in Pixar's own Silicon-Valley underdog story seeping through the entertainment industry. Both, however intentional it may be, were not only responses to the rising control society, but also actively fueled and emphasized it.

Regardless of its more nuanced critique of authoritarian and capitalist leanings, *Ghost in the Shell* is rarely so bold as to claim grander solutions outside its more metaphysical ones. It still revolved around what can be described as a State-induced War Machine; a police force tasked with keeping order by whatever means necessary. And as is the case with most police dramas, there is at least some level of romanticism associated with the job and the cybernetic dystopia that comes with it. Similarly, within the film especially, there is an issue of the male gaze. Despite the film's approach to the Major as almost genderless and asexual, there is nonetheless a certain sexualization of her body throughout. This is particularly true in terms of the Major's lack of inhibitions toward nudity. A decidedly nonissue to the Major herself, it is still shown in sexualizing detail; a point even acknowledged by way of Batou's embarrassed reactions in certain situations. These are ultimately examples of the contradiction in the art of imagery—that a visualized critique always has the potential for romanticising that which it attempts to critique. This is also not helped by the grander societal history of Japan itself as a fascist nation, the imagery of authoritarian regimes never entirely leaving the cultural zeitgeist. Anime in general as a cultural "genre" commonly romanticizes these roots in both subtle and overt ways; from underlying themes of working as a team to fight for one's country, to literal depictions of militaristic culture and authoritarian state institutions.

This also still holds true even for the more “progressive” reading of *Toy Story 4* as rejecting its own premise. The film still is one made by and for the purposes of consumerist
consumption, it being inseparable from the merchandising and corporate imperialism it upholds. Characters that actively represent anti-capitalist commodification such as the trash-assembled Forky or the un-institutionalized Bo Peep are ultimately commodified and organized by their very narrative existence into the capitalist system of control they are combatants of. Regardless of the film's attempts at radical shifts and messaging, it still is bound by the corporate organs that are its life-support.

An Animated Manifesto

What does all this say about what these films can give us? For this, I would like to take a quick look at a scene from Mamoru Oshii's official sequel to *Ghost in the Shell, Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*. In the scene in question, Officers Batou and Togusa from Section 9 are on a case about a string of AI robots murdering people and then "committing suicide." In response to this, they go to a roboticist for an autopsy, an older woman only named “Haraway”-- a reference to the feminist theorist, Donna Haraway, known for writing “A Cyborg Manifesto.” In a discussion of why these robots keep malfunctioning, Haraway posits this:

...if you ask me, I think it's because humans discard their robots. You know, when they no longer want them anymore. When the new models come out people buy the latest and greatest, some of the discarded ones end up on the streets, where they gradually deteriorate from lack of maintenance. The robots just want us to stop treating them as disposable.

Here, we may find what could be a greater connection between the worlds of *Ghost in the Shell* and *Toy Story*. The real Haraway, while not explicitly Deluzian, offers a very similar critique of Oedipal and essentialist notions of Being and identity. Her manifesto argues for a radical embrace of the cyborg and a rejection of "the goddess," or traditional forms of women's identity. As she describes it, “the cyborg does not dream of community on the model of the organic
family, this time without the oedipal project. The cyborg would not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust” (Haraway).

The connection between Haraway and *Ghost in The Shell* is relatively clear; one so clear, that Haraway becomes a direct character in its universe. However, I argue *Toy Story* may fit this embrace as well, operating similarly as a metaphor for the restrictions of Being, and the freedoms of post-human Becoming. In both instances, do we find similar worlds, where the rights of the literally Objectified are oppressed, not by necessarily malicious intent, but simply by their systematic roles and existence. And in all these instances, we find a revolutionary change in defying that which is considered unbondable, and in doing so, find not an individual self, but a multiplicity of Becoming-- a Becoming-Bodies-without-Organs. As Kim, an ex-hacker from *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*, describes, “the definition of a truly beautiful doll is a flesh and body devoid of a soul… That sort of perfection can only be achieved by something with no consciousness or infinite consciousness. In other words, it is only attainable by dolls or Gods.”
I argue this thruline is not simply exemplary of *Ghost in the Shell* and *Toy Story*, but perhaps of the majority of animation as a medium. In both *Ghost in the Shell* and *Toy Story*, we find an active example of that which can rarely be done in live-action-- the personification of the object. With *Toy Story*, we find this in the literal form of toys come to life, and in *Ghost in the Shell*, we find this in the inorganically created consciousness within artificial intelligence, along with the increasing mechanization of the human body as a whole. This is not simply a trend in these films; the creation of subjectification of objects has been a staple since the inception of animation and cartoons. However, what sets these films apart is how they deploy that subjectification. Here, more than ever before, do we see a rise in the explicitness of the machine in animation-- by way of an ever-increasing personification of the machine. In the same year, one of the last of Disney’s Princess-era films, *Pocahontas*, was released. While fitting into Disney’s aesthetic and narrative tradition and heavily basing itself on its natured themes and tone, the film was quickly overshadowed by *Toy Story* in popularity. Perhaps, along with Donna Haraway, the animation industry itself would increasingly “rather be a cyborg than a goddess,” in both its stories and technology.

This characterizes the very concept of animation-- to animate and liven the inanimate. This is what Eisenstein refers to as its “plasmaticness.” Whether it be strips of paper, molds of clay or virtual models, animation is defined by its manipulation of its own literally material conditions. It is this that makes even the most realistic of imagery, the most detailed of visuals, retain that piece of artifice, that remnant of its material conditions. This is where animation as a medium has its message-- a radical and distinct one: its becoming-world. It is by function its own becoming-world, and a becoming so encompassing that it encompasses the world of its own making as well.
This is also to say that this inherent materialism has an effect on the ideas it portrays. It is this radical understanding of the relationship between human and animal, subject and object, virtual and actual, that causes the stories told through the medium to also be radical on a metaphysical scale. Is it any surprise then, that so many animated films, especially those that are discussed here, would consistently characterize literal bodies without organs? Regardless of its portrayal, bodies without organs are not only a commonality and staple of animated film, but its very function. Animation as a machine is one involving the assembling of bodies without organs. And in that, it is both explicit and malleable in its form and function, always already in a potential becoming, always in a line of flight, becoming vast and infinite and going beyond.

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