

## CUS 325D Seminar in Current Cultural Issues: Ghosts, Cyborgs and Abjects—“Things” we enjoy watching but do not want to be



Fall 2006, 3 hours per week

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This course examines the various ways in which humans become human in our cultural imaginary through constructing and consuming representations of various non-human forms, including “prehumans” like ghosts, “posthumans” like cyborgs and “never-to-be-humans” like abjects. Ghosts in Chinese culture have been narrated as states of being that yearn to be human, cyborgs are often thought of as a modern invention referring to mechanized human/animal forms that are designed to overcome organic inadequacies (e.g. Six Million Dollar Man, Bionic Woman, Tima in *Metropolis*, etc.), while abjects could be seen in terms of social, political and/or cultural marginal subject positions which humans have and continue to define themselves/ourselves against. We will explore the possible linkages, similarities and differences among the three through closely examining past and recent renditions of Chinese ghosts, alongside contemporary media texts on cyborgs from the U.S., Japan and Hong Kong, within the context of humanist discourses. These I hope can help us understand the processes and politics of ajectification in our own communities today.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

蒲松齡,《聊齋誌異》(1679-1695)。

《國際聊齋論文集》,北京:師範學院出版社,1992。

Chris Hables Gray ed. *The cyborg handbook*, New York: Routledge, 1995.

Mary Douglas, *Purity and danger : an analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo*, London : ARK Paperbacks, 1984.

Julia Kristeva, *Powers of horror : an essay on abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course encourages close textual study of reading materials and applying your readings to reflect on your lived experiences. One presentation plus one paper related to the topics covered are expected from each student. Students are expected to be able to read 1-2 articles per week. All of the books from which the readings come from are available either in class or in the University library. Students are expected to be open-minded in receiving new and/or sometimes controversial ideas. While students are encouraged to think and speak your minds freely and honestly, mindless and careless dismissal of reading materials is not supported. Students are expected to constantly challenge your own preconceptions and/or biases and are ready to be challenged. All classes are conducted in the form of seminars and tutorials. Please be active and verbal within classroom.

### Grading

Continuous Assessment	30%
Completion of course readings, assignments and active participation in class discussion and presentation. Attendance in seminars and tutorials.	
Class Presentations	40%
Final Paper	30%

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

### Sept 5 Week 1 Introduction

Playing videogame *Tuboflex: flexibility through the tube* (Molleindustria, Italy)

Screening: 《倩女幽魂》(李翰祥, 香港, 1960) AVF 987.83 2421 2003

### Sept 12 Week 2 Ghosts and Death

節錄自蒲松齡,《聊齋誌異》。

石育良,《怪異世界的建構》,台北:文津,1996,頁5-69。

### Sept 19 Week 3 Ghosts and Men

蔡怡君,〈搜「人」記-《聊齋誌異》的「文人」研究〉(碩士論文),台北,1998,頁1-8, 79-123。

Screening: 《倩女幽魂》(程小東, 香港, 1987) AVE 987.83 2421

### Sept 26 Week 4 Ghosts and Desire

戶倉英美,〈變身故事的變遷——由六朝志怪小說到《聊齋誌異》〉,《國際聊齋論文集》,北京:師範,1992,頁161-197。

王溢嘉,〈欲望交響曲——《聊齋》狐妖故事的心理學探索〉,《國際聊齋論文集》,頁213-227。

### Oct 3 Week 5 The Thinking Man

Excerpt from Rene Descartes, *Discourse on the method*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

Screening: *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, Germany, 1927) AVV 791.4372 METR 1989

### Oct 10 Week 6 Ghost in the Machine

Geoff Simons, "The Biology of Computer Life," *Questioning Technology: Tool, Toy or Tyrant*. John Zerzan and Alice Carnes eds. Philadelphia, PA, Gabroila Island, BC and Santa Cruz, CA: New Society Publishers, 1991, pp. 119-125.

許麗雪,〈機器裡的靈魂:當代科幻電影裡的"機器/人"〉(碩士論文),台北,2005,頁28-35。

Screening: *Metropolis* (Osamu Tezuka's *Metropolisu*) (Osamu Tezuka/Katsuhiro Otomo/Rintaro, US/Japan, 2001) AVF 987.85 5276 2002

Oct 17 Week 7 Cyborg

Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," *The Haraway Reader*, pp. 7-45.

Dan Cray, "Incredible Shrinking Doctors," *Popular Science*, July 2000, pp. 63-65.

Oct 24 Week 8 Cyborg Citizenship

Chris Hables Gray, *Cyborg Citizen: Politics in the Posthuman Age*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 9-38.

Screening: Excerpts from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Marvin V. Rush, US, 1991)

Oct 31 Week 9 Posthumanism

Neil Badmington (ed.), *Posthumanism*, pp. 1-10.

Chris Hables Gray, Steven Mentor, Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera. "Cyborgology: Construction of the knowledge of Cybernetic Organisms" in *The cyborg handbook*, pp. 1-14.

Screening: Excerpts from *Six Million Dollar Man* (Edward M. Abrams, Reza Badiyi et al, US, 1974-1978) AVF 791.4572 SIX 2005

Nov 7 Week 10 Cyborg Differences

Ann Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*, Durham and London: Duke University, 1996, pp. 17-40.

Jennifer Gonzalez, "Envisioning Cyborg Bodies: Notes from current research," *The Cybercultures Reader*, pp. 540-551.

Excerpts from *Bionic Woman* (Gwen Arner, Jack Arnold et al, US, 1976-1978) AVF 791.4572 BION 2005

Nov 14 Week 11 Filthy Things

Curtis Mitchell, "Uses of Waste", *Lusitania* 1.4.

Mary Douglas, "The System Shattered and Renewed", *Purity and danger : an analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo*, London and New York: Routledge, 1966, pp. 159-179.

Screening: *Sixty Million Dollar Man* 百變星君 (Yip Wai Man, Hong Kong, 1995)

Nov 21 Week 12 Abjects

Julia Kristeva, "Approaching Abjection" and "Powers of Horror", *Powers of horror : an essay on abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, pp. 1-31 and pp. 207-210.

劉逸凱,〈文化大革命中的牛鬼蛇神

〉,《三角公園文化研究月報》三十七期,台灣,2004。

Nov 28 Week 13

Students' Presentations.

Dec 5 Week 14

Students' Presentations.