

Abstract

Ideas concerning the corporeal body and its relationship to technology have long been a point of contention in scientific and academic circles. Taking its standpoint from science fiction cinema, this paper explores the notion of the human-machine hybrid of the cyborg. Particularly, it endeavours to examine the cultural differences that prevail in the West and in Japan in relation to both ubiquitous technology and its potential fusion with the human body, arguing that the figure of the cyborg poses more of a threat to humanity's morality in the West than it does in Japan. The fictional and factual origins of the cyborg are discussed as well as the various approaches that have been considered by cultural critical theorists, including post-colonial and feminist ideas. The cinematic cyborg is an entity onto which our fears and hopes of technology are projected, having the capacity to provoke introspection and calling into question our own unique identity. How the cyborg is portrayed and consequentially received depends on the environment into which it is born. Moreover, the trope of the posthuman body ultimately provides an avenue to discover how a particular culture views technology, themselves and others. Through qualitative comparative analysis and using examples from Hollywood and Japanese film, including anime, this paper investigates the differences and similarities of the popular culture cyborg in both regions. In conclusion, it is argued that the cyborg's dualist nature as both a technological reality and a cultural construct, allow it to escape complete definition.