

Cyborgs/Terminator

My chosen topic was Cyborgs/Terminator, mainly because I could relate it to the course that I'm doing (Web Design), more than any of the other images which I had to choose from. I was provided with the following three images.

Image 1

The first image is from the film *Terminator*. It depicts the main character that is played by Arnold Schwarzenegger as a cyborg who has been sent back from the future to kill Sarah Connor, a young woman whose life will have great significance in the upcoming years.



It shows him as half human / half machine or perhaps even all machine, but built to look like human. If it is meant to show him as cyborg, it suggests that the human form wasn't enough in the future for certain jobs. They needed more power, so they need to be upgraded by adding enhancements. The characters name Terminator implies that this extra power brought to him by the integration of man and machine would be used to fight or terminate things, most probably for the purposes of evil, rather than good.

As he still looks like a human (only from one side in the image), it shows how far technology had advanced in the year the film was set in. It could be impossible to differentiate between a human and a cyborg as they would be indistinguishable.

The human look could be being used as a mask to hide what's underneath, similar to the way in which the internet has given the means for people to become anybody they want to be. This is especially true on message boards or forums where you only see a person's nickname and avatar. These two items which tell apart on person from the next are unique and it is not often possible to tell who the person is, even if you know the people participating in real life.

For example, on the New Media course web site there is a message board that students and tutors from the New Media courses communicate via. Many don't use their real names, so it's hard to relate a posted message to who says it as you often don't know. It offers students a way to express themselves and air views and comments that they may be afraid to express face to face for example.

This is a mainly positive as without this virtual mask; some students may have remained silent with their views unshared. However, does this mask stop student's true personalities coming out in real life? Will they become too dependant on the internet to express their views, and in consequence not gain the needed social skills to get by in real life.

In the times before computers and mobile phones, the only ways to communicate was via talking, telephones and writing, meaning people communicated mostly via voice which built up their social skills naturally. But now with the advent of electronic communication it is becoming harder. It's becoming an increasingly easy way to communicate, hiding behind a nickname on the internet. If people don't like you; you can easily find other people or even become somebody else by simple creating another nickname.

Image 2

This image depicts a character in the video game *Terminator – Dawn of Fate*. It differs from the previous image in that is not trying to mask who he really is by making him look exactly like a human so they become indistinguishable. But still takes a human shape, and is quite clearly robotic.



This is a scary image, as it implies that these robots have freewill of their own. This is emphasized by the evil look on the robot's face. He is holding a gun and everything around him has been destroyed, which suggests a sense of destruction.

As this image is from a video game, it could mislead people implying that all robots are evil, which is not true at all. Robots can be used in positive ways, but the way in which this image is presented shows only negative. I don't know much about Terminator, but I believe the main character is a cyborg who is trying to protect somebody from being killed. If this is the case, and it is portrayed like this in the video game, then this also show something positive about cyborgs/robots.

Because this image depicts a robot, rather than the integration of man and machine, it can be compared to many things related to the internet. For example, most message board software will filter out bad words and replace them with a set of asterisks, to protect young eyes from seeing them. This is done automatically, which is sort of like a robot as it doesn't require any intervention from the user to do its job. Every day web servers receive request

s for web sites from all over the world. They can choose whether or not to accept your request and deny you access if for example, you've caused trouble on the site previously, or are from a part of the world that is not allowed to access the web site in question, possibly because of certain laws in certain countries. For example, China blocks access to a lot of web sites which contain questionable content or controversial views on the government. Again, this is mostly done automatically, handled by machines to control what you can access. Similar to how the robot pictured in the above image has freewill, so have these machines by deciding and restricting what you can and can't view.

Image 3

This image is entitled *Daum marries her Pedantic Automation George in May 1920: John Heartfield is very glad of it* and was created by George Grosz in 1920.



It refers to a marriage of an obviously unsuitable couple. Her being scantily clad and looking towards him and him being a combination of man and machine that is motionless and doesn't seem to show any signs of interest towards her.

In the way that he is depicted as automated, but showing no emotion, could be similar in which the ways we communicate nowadays. Texts and e-mails can't show emotion properly, except with generic emoticons. But, if you talk to someone face to face or on the phone, their voice varies depending on their emotions and you can easily tell what their feeling.

If George wasn't automated and motionless, then maybe the marriage would be more suited as he would be given back his freewill and be able to show more emotion towards her.

This image was created in 1920, which was when things started to become more automated and perhaps was trying to predict what the future man could look like based on the way things were going at that time.

In many ways, most of us have already become cyborgs. We are reliant on machines, e.g. mobile phones, computers, pacemakers and other artificial limbs. We sometimes judge people by what they are wearing and what possessions they have, rather than their personalities. Clothes and accessories can mask who you really are, so effectively you can make people believe you are anyone by differing the way you dress in a similar way you can change your nickname or avatar on a message board to become somebody else.

Without machines and robots, things would be very different. We wouldn't be cyborgs and would more easily be able to learn new social skills and meet more real people, rather than hiding behind a virtual mask pretending to be somebody were not.

Conclusion

The above three images show an advancement in technology; the first image being most human like and the last image showing lots of different things put together which doesn't look very human like at all.

These images make us aware of how you shouldn't judge somebody by the way they look or act, as underneath they could be anybody, like in the first image there is a robot underneath the human look, and on message boards on the internet people can hide behind a nickname and avatar.

Man and machine are becoming more integrated as our technology progresses, helping to keep us alive by the means of pacemakers and artificial limbs, but also providing us with many new ways to communicate, which can be negative as some people hide behind nicknames, thus restricting the true emotion they can show or letting people know who we really are.

Bibliography

Terminator - Dawn of Fate game profile:

<http://xbox.ign.com/objects/017/017464.html>

Description of the image: *Daum marries her Pedantic Automation George in May 1920: John Heartfield is very glad of it:*

http://www.berlinische-galerie.de/en/66-15-14_2-15.htm

New Media message board as an example of nicknames and avatars hiding people's true identities:

<http://www.newmedia.lincoln.ac.uk/community/>