

## Last Class~~

Games, internet, webs of connection

## Key question of the class

- How to we analyze the popular culture of the East from Western academia?
- How to we acknowledge difference?
- How do we keep our bias in check?

## Lenses

- Should provide you with the tools to analyze
- While leaving you room to account for difference
- And avoid orientalism, techno-orientalism, digital-orientalism, capitalist-bias, value systems.

## Manga

- Has a history
- Is political (in form and content)

## Readings

- Mia CONSALVO, "Convergence and Globalization in the Japanese Videogame Industry," *Cinema Journal* 48:3 (Spring 2009): 135–41.
- Leibold, James. 2011. "Blogging Alone: China, the Internet, and the Democratic Illusion?" *The Journal of Asian Studies* 70(4): 1023-1041.
- LENS: Ueno Toshiya, Techno-Orientalism
- CBC podcast

## Fragmenting Culture

- Prosumers
- Cultural assumptions behind consumption
- Obstacles for consumption/marketing
- A break down of (hegemonic, singular) national imagined community
- How/Who are we connected by the net?



NEW YORKER

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of firearms. Martin Hollis, a developer of the 1997 James Bond-themed game GoldenEye 007, told me that he once received a fax from Shigeru Miyamoto, the inventor of Super Mario, calling the game “tragic” and “horrible.” Miyamoto proposed that, at the end of GoldenEye, players should be forced to shake hands with their victims as they lay recovering in hospital beds. (The idea was never implemented.)

## Video Games

- Have their roots in Japan
- But Japan remains somewhat isolated from the Western market



## Games

- Media mix/synergies
- “games as one component of a broader media ecology that includes anime, manga, trading card games, toys and character merchandise.”

## Japanese games

- Have been key to industry development
- But not central to international profits

## Video games: Convergence

- “The convergence of content across media platforms, and the joining together of media producers and consumers in the production and negotiation of that content—through user-generated content, greater feedback mechanisms for consumers, or fan-driven media campaigns.”



## Prosumers

- Fans as part of production
- =consumers become producers (or at least part producers)

## Sentiment

- “elements that make each iteration of *Final Fantasy* feel familiar”

## Games

- “Western youth is asserting its identity through its consumption of Japanese anime and manga...”
- What does it mean to assert your identity through another culture?

## “cool”

- Why is Japanese anime and games considered “cool”?
- Why is Kpop considered “cool”?
- Why is something consumable from China not yet “cool”?
- Or is China cool?

## Localization or exoticization

- Globalization is not as even as we may think
- Games (and other businesses) make versions suitable to consumption in local markets

## Localized vs Culturalized

- Localized: adapted to language/location
- Culturalized: adapted to cultural expectations, local systems of power and symbolic

## Games

- Demonstrate the ways in which one can be culturally powerful but not necessarily market powerful
-

### Liebold: internet in China

- explore how a range of different actors are deploying these new social spaces and informational flows to reshape public and private life in contemporary China.

### New medium, new message

- “allowing its citizens to mobilize in new ways. “
- Reshapes the ways people understand themselves to be connected
- Very different than the newspaper of Anderson (IC)

### Different actors

- State
- Individuals

### National vs individual interests

- weblogs represent the single largest, and most dynamic, communication platform on the Chinese internet, providing unprecedented opportunities for netizens to both engage in national-level debate and indulge their personal fetishes in isolated, interest-based enclaves.

### Political power of the web?

- Nicholas Kristof (2006) declared that a “single blog can start a prairie fire,” arguing that the unprecedented free speech in the Chinese blogosphere threatens to eventually topple the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from power.

### Blogging

- Who is blogging?
- Who is reading?

## Blogs

- Do you read blogs?
- What are they about?

## Is the web politically as powerful as that?

- Explore the ways “sitting alone in front of our blinking screens can both connect and disconnect us from others;”
- “alter and perpetuate long-standing patterns of socio-political engagement.”

## Web and politics

- Do blogs need to be about politics to BE political?
- What kind of blogs could be reproducing ideology without even realizing it?

- “Killing time on the net... helps to depoliticize large segments of the population, and without a free media and civic organizations that can openly criticize those in power, net surfing can actually strengthen the ruling party and its elite.”



## Internet and IC

- The appearance that the internet brings us together
- When in fact it may be separating us

## Can the internet break the IC?

- “A society made up of the juxtaposition of flows and tribes ceases to be a society. The structural logic of the information age bears the seeds of a new, fundamental barbarianism”
- “networked individualism” it produces
- Confirmation bias/ “selective exposure”/ information cocooning

### Problems of the “personalized internet”

- First, it increases the ability of diverse yet segmented discourse communities to talk and listen to one another rather than engage in genuine dialogue;
- second, this process of balkanization also polarizes online opinion, leading to more extreme opinions which can foster hatred and even real world violence;
- and third, enclave deliberation often produces cyber-cascades, allowing rumors, conspiracy theories and false information to spread like wildfire on the internet;
- and finally, cyber-niches undermine “general-interest intermediaries,” like newspapers and the nightly news, making shared deliberation and consensus building more difficult.

- The “narrowcasting” or “pointcasting” of tweets, hyperlinks, RSS-feeds, and iTV
- have replaced the old broadcasting paradigm of newspapers, free-to-air television and wireless radio,
- creating the sort of “me-centered networks” that Dave Healy calls “lifestyle enclaves” and Cass Sunstein the “Daily Me”

### Political power of the internet

- there is increasing evidence that it can actually narrow or warp our beliefs.

### Political power of the internet

- False rumors and conspiracy theories alike are as old as human societies, but the speed, reach and filtering power of the internet has caused them to spread like wildfire throughout networked societies.

### Individual as producer

- anyone with access to a computer and the internet can now become a “prosumer”



<http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xb1d4>

- “History has shown us again and again that a hive mind is a cruel idiot when it runs on autopilot.”

- What lurks on the internet?
- In its corners, radicalizing.
- No one sees the same internet as you

## Slow revolution

- Subtle change
- What can our expectations of China and the internet be?

## Podcast

- Maybe “Chinoid”
- Assumption that internet makes for capitalist democracy
- That liberal democracy has won
- That China can’t innovate without becoming like us

## Podcast

- “A terrific technology for strengthening the state”
- “social media takes private discourse and makes it explicit, visible and recordable”
- Private discourse can be stopped before it becomes public discourse.

## Podcast

- Shift from print culture to digital culture
- Publishers had an authority and responsibility (curator)
- Now everyone has this power (Prosumer)
- McLuhan “the natural state in an oral culture is terror.” How do we now judge?

## Orientalism

- Edward Said writing about the middle east
- Explained how power has become symbolically rendered
- The West is normalized
- The East is exoticized
- The East becomes the object of the West's gaze
- This is all part of the logic of Imperialism

## Orientalism

- The east has been historically orientalized by the West
- Orientalism makes gendered power dynamics out of national ones.

## Self Orientalization

- One response to orientalism
- East Asia comes to portray itself as a woman fighting back (in SOME situations)

## Reconfiguring Orientalism

- East Asia's use of white female bodies can also be understood as a resistance, a renegotiation of gendered power dynamics.

## Digital-orientalism

- Means the West has different expectations of the internet in Asia (particularly China) than in the West
- How do we understand that things might work different in different cultural situations without making problematic assumptions?

## Techno-orientalism

- A version of orientalism
- Orientalism: a form of othering the non-west
- Othering allows for dehumanizing
- Othering



### Podcast/Ueno

- If Techno-orientalism is an encounter between human vs machine/net AND West vs Japan
- Then our (Western) expectations about China and the net become more transparent

### Podcast/Ueno

- The West identifies itself against a China it sees as needing to progress (aka become more Western)
- And the West identifies itself against the net.

### Japanoid

- Not Japanese
- The stereotype of Japanese

### Cultural imperialism

- Is Japanimation a kind of cultural imperialism?
- Is Kpop a kind of cultural imperialism?
- Are video games?
- What is the difference between soft power and cultural imperialism?

### Ghost in the Shell



### Ghost in the Shell

- A hacker
- Bodies that may or may not contain real experience
- A virus that can take over humans
- A body transformed by technology is still human if it has a "ghost"

## Ghost in the Shell

- “East Asia is a huge corporate zone dominated by multinational economic and information operations
- The live of its inhabitants are intertwined with advanced technologies”

## Ghost in the Shell

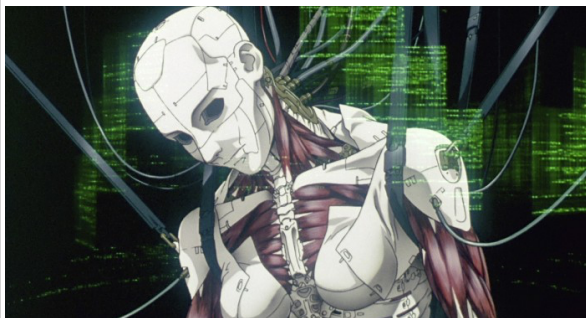
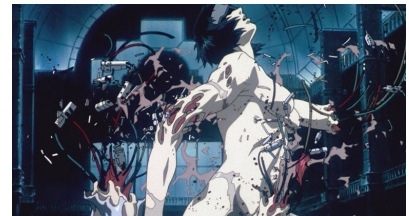
- Where does humanity begin and end?
- Where does the machine begin and end?
- How much is ghost, how much is net?

## Ueno

- Posits this as a critique of capitalism

## Ghost in the Shell

- Allows us to see human vs net/machine
- And the dehumanized Japanoid fantasy of Japanimation



## trailer

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2MEaROKjaE>

### Toshiya Ueno: Techno-orientalism

- “Western stereotypes of the Japanese hold them to be sub-human, as if they have no feeling, no emotion, no humanity.” (Morley and Robbins)
- We can extend this to all of Asia

### Ueno

- “The basis for orientalism and xenophobia is the subordination of Others through a sort of ‘mirror of cultural conceit.’”
- Binary opposition.
- Defines self through other.

### Ueno

- Japan (Asia) is not only located geographically, but temporally
- Japan (Asia) is cast into the future
- Instead of the past

### Ueno

- Japan (and Asia) modernized
- Japan (and Asia) is now the stereotype of the future
- “The West is seduced and attracted by the model on the one hand, while on the other hand, the model of Japan is looked down upon rather than envied.”

### Ueno: techno-orientalism is a relationship between

- Human and machine/net
- Japan and other

### Techno-orientalism vs Soft Power

- Inverse of each other
- Techno-orientalism dehumanizes East by West
- Soft power humanizes East to West

## Power from East to West

- Soft Power
- Techno-orientalism
- Convergence

## Key question of the class

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## Lenses

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## Term Paper

- Read the instructions
- Make sure you introduce your “thing” but spend the main part of the paper doing your own reading, using lenses
- Define why it’s popular
- You don’t need to “build a wall”

## Paper

- Go back to the abstract instructions
- Check you cover each of those points in more detail.

## Due date

- March 15.
- Late penalties go into effect March 22.

## Paper Citation

- Use the information on the syllabus.
- So for lenses, you can use just the author and title and page number (no publication details needed)
- All text and thoughts that are not your own, must be cited
- Text, ideas that are not yours, and are copied, and not cited, will be reported to OSAI.

## Term Test

- 25%

## Using the Lenses for analysis

- How is the medium is the message? Does it have limitations on where it can be read/seen/consumed (because of size for example)? (McLuhan)
- What are the connotations and denotations? (Barthes)  
Are they culturally dependent to understand? Are there any you know you can identify that you don't understand?
- Juxtaposition (McLuhan)
- Is it popular? With whom? (Hall)
- How is it distributed? Does it need authenticity/intrinsic value? (Marx/Benjamin)
- How does it contribute to an understanding of Japaneseness/Koreaness/Chineseness for the domestic reader? (IC)
- How does it contribute to an understanding of Japaneseness/Koreaness/Chineseness for the foreign reader? (Soft Power/Techno-orientalism)
- What is the act of reading/watching like? Direction? Speed? Feeling? How does it feel to hold? (Phenomenology)

## Study slides

You should be able to connect these slides to readings

You should be able to use your lens toolbox

Identify the slide

Explain which reading/week it relates to and how it does so

Use lenses to make your own observations