

Emotions in Science and Science Fiction

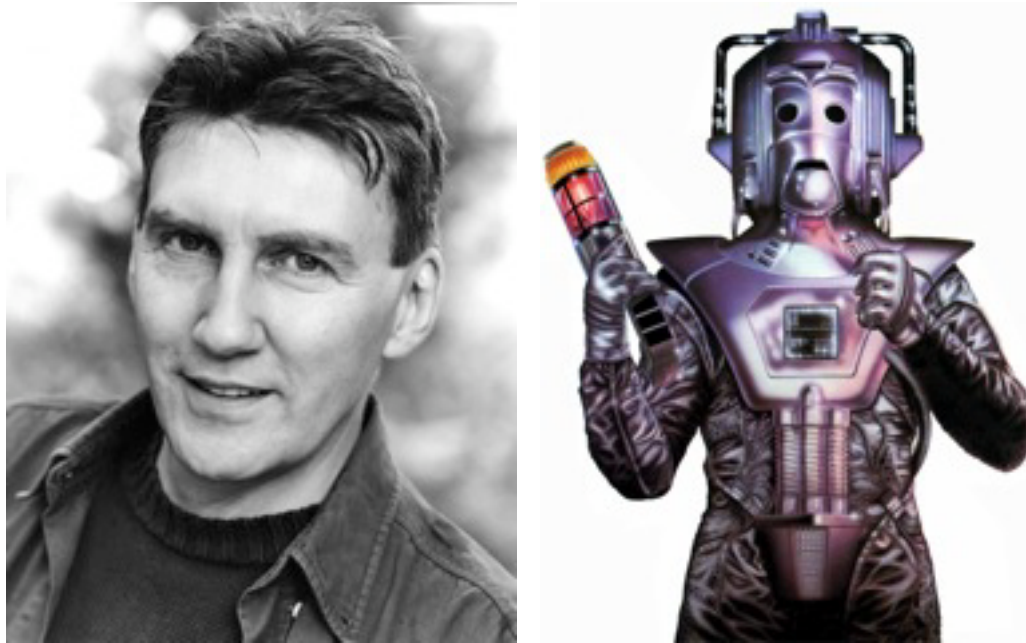
Presented by the Centre for Time and the Russellian Society

Two short talks on emotions and their place in science and science fiction.

5pm, Friday March 28

Refectory, Main Quadrangle, The University of Sydney

Free



David Banks as himself & as the Cyberleader

(Photo: Peter Simpkin, painting: Andrew Skilleter)

Life as an emotionless killing-machine

David Banks - *Actor and Author*

An emotionless killing machine threatens every human on the planet. David Banks, Cyberleader from BBC TV's long-running science fiction series *Doctor Who*, traces the origins and implications in the cybernetic concept of artificially-augmented life, and explores the role of science fiction and the far-reaching ideas of scientist and writer Dr Kit Pedler, co-creator of the Cybermen. When does an augmented person cease to be human? Where is the mind-body problem? What is it like to be a robot? Are emotions optional and should we care? Banks examines these questions and comes to an unexpected, unsettling conclusion.

How I learnt to stop worrying (amongst other emotions)

Professor Paul Griffiths - *University Professorial Research Fellow, The University of Sydney*

The Edwardian psychologist William McDougall said that an organism without emotion "would lie inert and motionless like a wonderful clockwork whose main-spring had been removed or a steam-engine whose fires had been drawn." This seems an intuitively sensible thing to say, especially if, like many in the history of psychology, we count pleasure and pain as emotions. But if McDougal is right, what is supposed to be making the Cybermen do all that killing? This and other puzzles have led me to argue that 'emotion' is unlikely to be a category for which a mature scientific psychology will have much use. In that sense, perhaps none of us really have emotions.

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