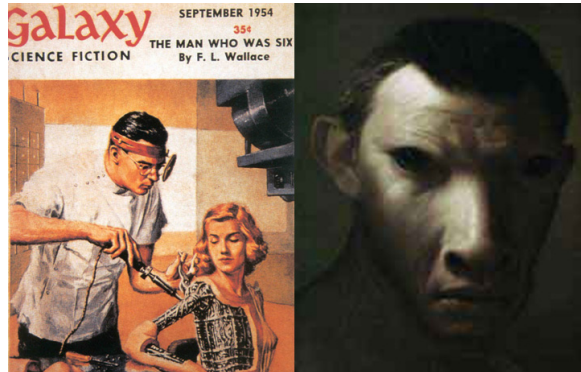


# Extended Biotechnological Bodies

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Comentarios



"Galaxy Magazine" N° 354 (1954) "Move (hibridation)" Ben van Berkel (1999)

Life manipulation techniques explored in synthetic biology, genetics or regenerative medicine, are radically redefining the notion of the body in evolutionary terms. That is still considered unacceptable by a significant parte of our society.

Bio-techniques break traditional reproduction boundaries between different species. Genes are transferred from one species to another to reconfigure living bodies, their features and behavior. That is the case of Alba, a transgenic rabbit genetically engineered by Eduardo Kac. Its DNA was hybridized with GFP (Green Fluorescent Protein) extracted from a bioluminescent jellyfish. The resulting bunny-jellyfish hybrid stands as a novel body-creature that glows in the dark.

Biotechnology makes possible the hybridization of living and non-living systems, blurring the limits between natural and artificial bodies. Cyborgs, understood as living systems with artificial parts embedded, are no longer science fiction but a reality. Cyborgization modifies the body for restorative or enhancing purposes. An example of both is Mathew Nagle, a handicapped ex-football player with an artificial device connected to his brain that enables him to drive a mouse pointer along a computer screen.

Other ways of exploding the notion of the body through biotechnology have to do with disembodied semi-living entities able to perform certain functions outside the body that once hosted them. In that sense, Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr printed living mammal cells to conform the Victimless Leather Jacket.

These manipulations require a posthumanistic approach (Huxley, Kurzmeil, Fukuyoma, Haraway, Moravec) and the use of crossbreed evolutionary strategies that redefine human and non-human agency (Latour, Sloterdijk, Descola, Foucault). There is the need to set up an extended framework where features from plants, animals, machines and humans, are hybridized to achieve higher forms of intelligence (Serres). That implies an ecological reconfiguration of life fabric and the modification of bodies that may still be unaccepted but it is happening.

Desde que el ser humano abandonó el camino de la selección natural, tomó el control del proceso evolutivo estableciendo nuevas reglas con las que regir los cambios en el futuro. Muchas de estas modificaciones han comenzado como factor de corrección de las deficiencias innatas del hombre, pero poco a poco, los avances biotecnológicos han pasado de ser opcionales a obligatorios, principio desde el cual la sociedad los acabará aceptando.

Electronic media and technologies are considered an extension of our nervous system and of our senses (Marshall McLuhan 1911-80). Consequently an artificial device becomes an inseparable part of our body, not only because of a physical arrangement that biotechnology provides, but also because it is the way our body understands and deals with its environment. The redefinition of the body also entails a redefinon of the sense of communication.

Digital technology has subverted established structures within the city. Phones, displays, internet... have generated a new spatial entity described by Peter Anders as Cyber-hybrid or Cybrid; spaces intrinsically actual and simultaneously virtual.

Architecture must acknowledge these specific conditions and develop the necessary tools for an informed intervention. The otherwise 'simple' exercise of mapping the current city is to be revised now, since multiple layers of spaces and durations are to be accounted for, where traditional media of representation might not be very adequate.

En esencia la Biología construye todos sus organismos y cuerpos en torno a las dinámicas y a la biotecnología le corresponde entonces dar una mirada hacia las formas dinámicas que combinen las dinámicas biológicas con las dinámicas tecnológicas. Lo que implica que más que fijarse en estructuras o sistemas deben entonces mirarse procesos de dinámicas indeterminadas. El movimiento, la temporalidad son las fuentes de todo proceso biológico.

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