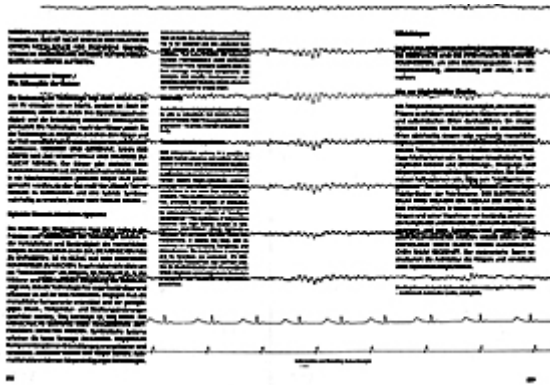


Enhanced Gesture / Obsolete Desire — Third Hand Stelarc

Post-evolutionary Strategies





Redesigning the Body / Redefining what is human

It is no longer meaningful to see the body as a site for the psyche or the social, but rather as a structure to be monitored and modified. The body not as a subject but as an object- NOT AS AN OBJECT OF DESIRE BUT AS AN OBJECT FOR DESIGNING. ALTERING THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE BODY RESULTS IN ADJUSTING AND EXTENDING ITS AWARENESS OF THE WORLD. As an object, the body can be amplified and accelerated, attaining planetary escape velocity. It becomes a post-evolutionary projectile departing and diversifying inform and function.

Obsolete Body

The body is neither a very efficient nor a very durable structure. It malfunctions often and fatigues quickly, its performance is determined by its age. It is susceptible to disease and is doomed to a certain and early death. Its survival parameters are very slim — it can survive only weeks without food, days without water and minutes without oxygen. The body's LACK OF MODULAR DESIGN and its over-active immunological system make it difficult to replace malfunctioning organs. It is no longer a matter of perpetuating the human species by REPRODUCTION but of enhancing the individual by REDESIGNING. What is significant is no longer male-female intercourse but human-machine interface. THE BODY IS OBSOLETE. We are at the end of philosophy and human physiology. Human thought recedes into the human past.

The Invasion of Technology

Miniaturized and biocompatible, technology lands on the body. Although-unheralded, it is one of the most important events in human history — focussing physical change on each individual. Technology is not only attached, but is also implanted. ONCE A CONTAINER, TECHNOLOGY NOW BECOMES A COMPONENT OF THE BODY. It is no longer of any advantage to remain "human" or to evolve as a species. EVOLUTION ENDS WHEN TECHNOLOGY INVADES THE BODY. Once technology provides each person with the potential to progress individually in its development, the cohesiveness of the species is no longer important. What is now intriguing is not the mind-body distinction but the body-species split. The body must burst from its biological, cultural and planetary containment. The significance of technology may be that it culminates in an alien awareness — one that is POST-HISTORIC, TRANS-HUMAN and even EXTRATERRESTRIAL. The first signs of an alien intelligence may well come from this planet.

Hollow Body

Off the Earth, the body's complexity, softness and wetness would be difficult to sustain. The strategy should be to HOLLOW, HARDEN and DEHYDRATE the body to make it more durable and less vulnerable. The present organization of the body is unnecessary. The solution to modifying the body is not to be found in its internal structure, but lies simply on its surface. THE SOLUTION IS NO MORE THAN SKIN DEEP. The significant event in our evolutionary history was a change in the mode of locomotion. Future development will occur with a change of skin if we could engineer a SYNTHETIC SKIN which could absorb oxygen directly through its pores and could efficiently convert light into chemical nutrients, we could radically redesign the body, eliminating many of its redundant systems and malfunctioning organs -minimizing toxin buildup in its chemistry. THE HOLLOW BODY WOULD BE A BETTER HOST FOR TECHNOLOGICAL COMPONENTS.

Pan-planetary Physiology

Extraterrestrial environments amplify the body's obsolescence, intensifying pressures for its reengineering. There is a necessity to design a more self-contained, energy-efficient body, with extended sensory antennae and augmented cerebral capacity. Unplugged from this planet, from its complex, interacting energy chain and protective biosphere — the body is biologically ill-equipped not only in terms of its sheer survival, but also in its inability to adequately perceive and perform in the immensity of outer-space. Rather than developing specialist bodies for specific sites, we should consider a pan-planetary physiology that is durable, flexible and capable of functioning in varying atmospheric conditions, gravitational pressures and electromagnetic fields.

No Birth / No Death -The Hum of the Hybrid

Technology transforms the nature of human existence, equalizing the physical potential of bodies and standardizing human sexuality. With fertilization now occurring outside the womb and the possibility of nurturing the fetus in an artificial support system THERE WILL TECHNICALLY BE NO BIRTH. And if the body can be redesigned in a modular fashion to facilitate the replacement of malfunctioning parts, then TECHNICALLY THERE WOULD BE NO REASON FOR DEATH — given the accessibility of replacements. Death does not authenticate existence, it is an out-moded evolutionary strategy. The body need no longer be repaired but simply have parts replaced. In the extended space-time of extraterrestrial environments, THE BODY MUST BECOME IMMORTAL TO ADAPT. Utopian dreams become post-evolutionary imperatives. THIS IS NO MERE FAUSTIAN OPTION NOR SHOULD THERE BE ANY FRANKENSTEINIAN FEAR IN TAMPERING WITH THE BODY.

Anesthetized Body / The Atrophy of Ecstasy

The importance of technology is not simply in the pure power it generates but in the realm of abstraction it produces through its operational speed and its development of extended sense systems. Technology passifies the body. Because technology so successfully mediates between the body and the world, it disconnects the body from many of its functions. DISTRAUGHT AND DISCONNECTED, THE BODY CAN ONLY RESORT TO INTERFACE AND SYMBIOSIS. The body may not yet surrender its autonomy but certainly its mobility. The body plugged into a machine network needs to be passified. In fact, to function in the future and to truly achieve a hybrid symbiosis the body will need to be increasingly anesthetized ...

Hybrid Human-Machine Systems

The problem with space travel is no longer with the precision and reliability of technology but with the vulnerability and durability of the human body. In fact, it is now time to REDESIGN HUMANS TO MAKE THEM MORE COMPATIBLE TO THEIR MACHINES. It is not merely a matter of "mechanizing" the body. It becomes apparent in the zero G, frictionless and oxygen-free environment of outer-space that technology is even more durable and functions more efficiently than on Earth. It is the human component that has to be sustained and also protected from small changes of pressure, temperature and radiation. The issue is HOW TO MAINTAIN HUMAN PERFORMANCE OVER EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME. Symbiotic systems seem the best strategy. Implanted components can energize and amplify developments; exoskeletons can power the body; robotic-structures can become hosts for a body insert.

Host Body

And with micro- miniaturized robots we will now be able to COLONIZE THE BODY'S SURFACE AND INTERNAL TRACTS to augment its bacterial population to probe, monitor and protect the body.

Towards High-Fidelity Illusion

With teleoperation systems, it is possible to project human presence and perform physical actions in remote and extraterrestrial locations. A single operator could direct a colony of robots in different locations simultaneously or scattered human experts might collectively control a particular surrogate robot. Teleoperation systems would have to be more than hand-eye mechanisms. They would have to create kinesthetic feel, providing the sensation of orientation, motion and body tension. Robots would have to be semi-autonomous, capable of "intelligent disobedience." The experience of telepresence becomes the high fidelity illusion of teleexistence. ELECTRONIC SPACE BECOMES A MEDIUM OF ACTION RATHER THAN INFORMATION. It meshes the body with its machines in ever-increasing complexity and interactiveness. The body's form is enhanced and its functions are extended. ITS PERFORMANCE PARAMETERS ARE NEITHER LIMITED BY ITS PHYSIOLOGY NOR ITS IMMEDIATE SPACE. Electronic space restructures the body's architecture and multiplies its operational possibilities.