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STELARC AND THE OBSOLESCENCE OF THE BODY: (BIO) ETHICAL AND AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS AROUND THE WORK

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Abstract: Based on the work of the Cypriot-Australian artist, Stelarc, this article examines some of the fundamental milestones of his work that postulate a potential obsolescence of the human body. Three clear moments are distinguished in the production of the artist's work that serve as an argument to explain the possible paths of the human body in the face of the irruption of technology and biotechnologies. Finally, the scope of the relation between art, science and technology is questioned from a bioethical and aesthetic perspective that reflects on the figure of the cyborg.

Keywords: body, evolutionary art, bioethics, posthumanity, technology

Stelarc y la obsolescencia del cuerpo: consideraciones (bio)éticas y estéticas en torno a la obra

Resumen: Basado en la obra del artista chipriota-australiano Stelarc, este artículo examina algunos de los hitos fundamentales de su trabajo, que postulan una potencial obsolescencia del cuerpo humano. Se distinguen tres momentos claros en la producción de la obra del artista, que sirven de argumento para explicar los posibles caminos del cuerpo humano ante la irrupción de la tecnología y las biotecnologías. Finalmente, se cuestiona el alcance de la relación entre arte, ciencia y tecnología desde una perspectiva bioética y estética que reflexiona sobre la figura del *cyborg*.

Palabras clave: cuerpo, arte evolutivo, bioética, posthumanidad, tecnología

Stelarc e a obsolescência do corpo: considerações (bio) éticas e estéticas em torno da obra

Resumo: Baseado na obra do artista cipriota-australiano, Stelarc, esse artigo examina alguns dos marcos fundamentais do seu trabalho que postulam uma obsolescência potencial do corpo humano. Distinguem-se três momentos claros na produção do artista que servem com um argumento para explicar os possíveis caminhos do corpo humano face a irrupção da tecnologia e das bio-tecnologias. Finalmente, o escopo da relação entre arte, ciência e tecnologia é questionado desde uma perspectiva bioética e estética que reflete sobre a figura do ciborgue.

Palavras-chave: corpo, arte evolutiva, bioética, pós-humanidade, tecnologia

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Introduction

> "The kingdom of men with amputated roots begins with us. The multiplied man who mixes with iron and feeds on electricity. Let's prepare the next identification of man with a motor."*(1)*

In his book, *Goodbye to the Body*, the French sociologist André Le Breton*(2)* invites us to think about the body as a means to think about the world. Largely obliterated from philosophical discourse for centuries, we could say that it is only in the nineteenth century that the body once again took center stage with Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and especially with Freud's psychoanalysis.

Even art itself has always been the bearer of images alluding to the body*(3)*, and recently with Manet's painting, we could say that it is "carnalized". The nude, used since the Quattrocento as a way to represent deities or mythological figures (especially with the female body), scandalizes a part of Parisian society with the female nudes of *Le ºDéjeuner sur l'herbe (Breakfast on the grass)*. Manet manages, in addition to proposing a powerful, self-reflective sense of art, to take the body to a new dimension of pictorial representation*(4,5)*. It scandalizes because it seems too close, too real, and its scenes portray an everyday life and an almost insolent luminosity represented on the body made flesh, which transgresses the canon of classical art.

A little over a century after Manet, performance art once again begins to question the place of the body, but now employing the body as the very basis of the work*(6)*. In the context of contemporary art, in my opinion, there is an artist of particular relevance to the discourse of which he provides us from some of his works or performances: the Cypriot-Australian engineer and artist, Stelarc. In this article, I would like to address some (bio) ethical and aesthetic questions related to the body inserted explicitly or implicitly in Stelarc's work in order to stress the relationship of the body with science, technology and the dominant economic structures in an epochal moment that some have proposed as the advent of a transhumanity or posthumanity.

The main objective of this text is to address some (bio)ethical and aesthetic issues related to the body, which are explicitly inserted in the artist's main working hypothesis: the human body is obsolete. The complementary objectives of the article are to stress the relation that exists between art, science and technology, considering it as a backdrop to an epochal moment that some theorists, such as Fukuyama or Solano, have proposed as the advent of a transhumanity or posthumanity. To achieve these objectives, we will review some of the fundamental milestones of Stelarc's career that propose the obsolescence of the human body and examine three clear moments in its production that serve as an argument to explain the possible paths of the human body in the presence of the irruption of technology and biotechnologies. Finally, the discussion on the blurred boundaries that exist between art, science and technology is concluded by reflecting on the aesthetic-narrative resource of the *cyborg* and certain art forms that, as the art psychologist Rudolf Arnheim*(7)* points out, migrate towards the bit universe.

1. "The body in suspension"

Although in recent years Stelious Arcadious has radicalized his discourse of the "obsolescence of the body" through the mechanization and digitization of his cybernetic exoskeletons, the series of "suspensions" he made in the seventies harbored a question that was philosophically quite interesting: to carry out a kind of skeptical act on everything previously conceptualized around the body. In this regard, through its performative deployment of the body, the series of "suspensions" seems to have notably anticipated the most consistent and paradoxical thesis of its future work: the obsolescence of the human body; a path of no return from the human journey towards a possible hybrid- biotechnological accession, half flesh and blood and half cables and artificial components.

In his first interventions (*Stretched Skin Suspensions*, 1976-1988), employing a series of hooks measuring five to six centimeters embedded in his skin and by virtue of his own resistance and integumentary elasticity, he remained suspended for hours, either on the shore of the Sea of Japan, in an abandoned warehouse in Sydney or inside a museum in Krakow*(8)*. In *Event for Rock Suspen-*

sion (Japan, 1980), which in my opinion was the most impactful intervention during this period, Stelarc set out to float in space, grasped by seventeen hooks placed directly on his skin, counterbalancing his naked body with seventeen regular-sized stones (Figure 1). The remarkable visual effect of this performance (much better achieved aesthetically than the previous ones) seemed to paraphrase in some sense the title of Milan Kundera's novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being(9)*, which in one of its passages strips the body down to a functionality that seems to emerge from the most heinous organic mechanisticity:

"Today, of course, the body is not unknown: we know that what beats inside the chest is the heart and that the nose is the tip of a hose protruding from the body to carry oxygen to the lungs. The face is nothing more than a kind of dashboard from which all the mechanisms of the body flow: digestion, sight, hearing, breathing, thinking (...)"*(9, p.20)*.

The naked body of Arcadious levitating, supported by invisible threads and surrounded by floating stones, now appears to us not only as a wretched challenge to gravity but also to every attribute of traditional aesthetic representation of the body. It is an ironic exercise towards its possible metaphysical dimension: a display of floating flesh that for some could be as terrifying as it is disconcerting.

2. "The obsolete body"

Over time, Stelarc's interventions on his own naked body would give way to the unregulated use of technology, allowing himself to be widely fascinated by the mechanization of the body. As an example, *The Third Hand* (Figure 2) exemplifies a new productive period; yet, this time it appears more akin to sci-art than to performance, deploying a protean hand manufactured in Japan that increases its organic potential by controlling an artificial arm attached to his body through the electrical stimuli of abdominal and leg muscles and simultaneously emitting sounds through an electronic interface*(10)*.

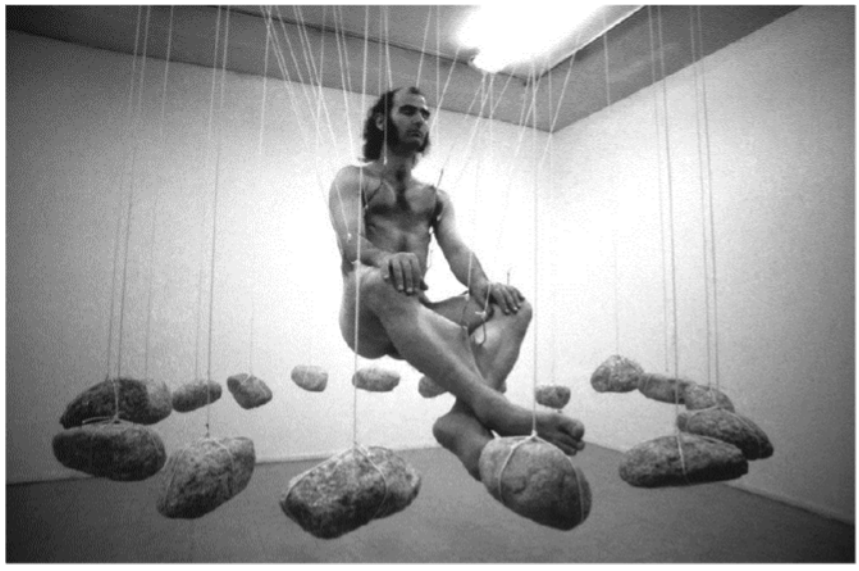

Figure 1. Stelarc – *Event for Rock Suspension* (1980). Source: www.stelarc.org

Figure 2. Stelarc - *Evolution* (1982). Source: www.stelarc.org

How can we then understand the emergence of a posthuman art through Stelarc´s example and art forms that integrate the prosthetic dimension in performance? David Le Breton, in this regard, points out the following:

"Stelarc radicalizes the obsolescence of the body, its abandonment of the species and its insignificance in the face of current technologies. For him, as for many other contemporaries, this is a kind of anachronistic shell from which it is urgent to break free. Mortification, the transformation of pure material, is a preliminary stage before its elimination or the necessary fusion of a remnant of flesh with the techniques of computer science... man's physiological structure determines his relationship with the world: by modifying it, man modifies the world. The obsolescence of the body ratifies the conditions of subjectivity (...)"*(2)*.

The author adds that for Stelarc, "the body no longer seems to be the place of the subject, but rather another object of its environment"*(2, p.54)*. In this sense, the evolutionary perspective of the body and life seems to have exhausted its function at the precise moment when the human being is emancipated from and autonomized in their evolutionary need through technology that incessantly invades, supplies, or complements the body and restructures it according to distinct circumstances. Regarding Stelarc and his work, Mark Dery postulates that "[it seems that for Stelarc] the body is no longer able to accumulate the amount of information that circulates, always referring 'to the body' and not to his body"*(2, p.54)*.

However, Stelarc's concern, at times, does not even allude to a "terrestrial" body. Rather, his discourse moves towards what seems to him to be the inescapable adaptation needs to the outer space of the humanity of the future:

"[The body] cannot cope with the quantity, complexity and quality of information... it is intimidated by the precision, speed and power of technology and is biologically ill-equipped to cope with its new extraterrestrial environment"*(10)*.

With this, the ancient Greek notion of *bios* as a place of reference to the nature of the terrestrial world is lost, and once its physical possibilities are exhausted and then artificially reestablished, "life", the "living" and the "living being" will accept the possibilities of differentiated ontological domains of a human-organic body and a hybrid-artificial-extraterrestrial body.

3. "The body colonized by technology"

Similarly to Arnold Gehlen´s thought at the time, Stelarc affirms that the idea of humanity has been radically modified by technology, which replaces, supplements or complements physiological functions (technoevolution) and progressively abandons a tissue-based biology and the original organic component. This separation of the body and its organic biological dimension from its counterpart of technological intervention is a dyadic blueprint that creates tension and juxtaposes the realm of the "living" and the "living being",

Figure 3. Stelarc – *Exoskeleton* (2003-2011). Source: www.stelarc.org

thus producing a quality relative to the organic in the former and, in the latter, a quality to be defined, yet open to the possibilities of a hybrid or a completely mechanized-virtual way of life. As such, the enhancing or supplementary artificiality of the human body, with its implants, extensions and possibilities of representation, is probably defined as a post-biological category given that it will claim its own existence, as in the case of the replicant in *Blade Runner*.

Therefore, humanity – reified, protean and permanently interconnected to a computer or a server – becomes cybernetic humanity, as Le Breton*(2)* points out, at which time the body is physiologically, electronically and virtually colonized by technology. As in Putnam's philosophical experiment in *Brain in the Pan* in which a brain connected to a super computer feels, lives and experiences the belief of being an embodied human body, Stelarc's work leads us to consider how the biological body will be able to maintain its relationship with attributes, such as the "organic" and the "artificial", with the irruption of a virtual-digital world. Dery points out that "the physiological structure of the body determines its intelligence and its sensations, and if you modify that [structure], you get an altered perception of reality"*(11)*.

That is why when the artist-engineer considers the body "obsolete", this assumption opens up the possibility to the *summum* of technological madness or to the noblest of human achievements*(12)*. However, for the artist today, understanding corporeality as the core of the psyche or the social realm is meaningless*(12)*. His suggestion would then seem to comprehend the body more precisely as a structure that can be controlled and modified, such as a computer or, as I propose, as a *portable information device* that will

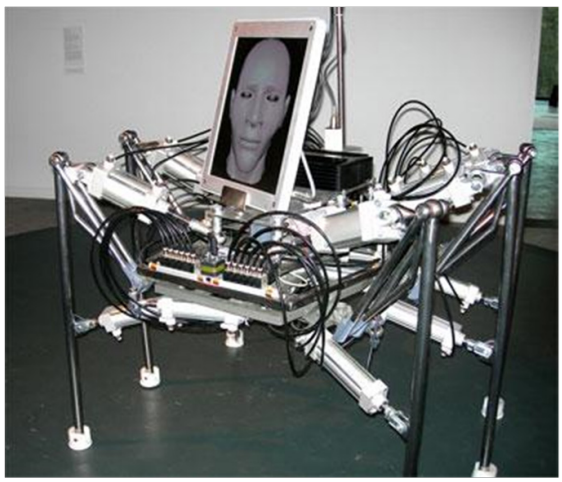

Figure 4. Stelarc – *Walking Head* (2001-2006). Source: www.stelarc.org

accept a series of transient couplings with other devices, with a floating identity, and is permanently updated with the incoming data to your nervous system: "evolution ends when technology invades the body. The body not as a subject, but as an object, not as an object of desire but as an object of design"*(11)*.

In response to the author's *technoperformatic* display, Le Breton concludes that the body is now an alter ego from which sensations and emotions emanate:

"A geometric place of the reconquest of oneself or territory to be explored with vigilance for unprecedented sensations. A social and economic asset that must be modeled to seduce and obtain the approval of others. A body, whose sudden passion for itself, is a consequence of the individualistic structuring of our Western societies, especially in its narcissistic phase"*(2)*.

For Vilém Flusser, the reformulation of the *ars vivendi* of (the convergence of telematics with biotechnical biotechnology) predicts the resurgence of the oldest conception of art of Latin origin, which is understood as "the art of life or knowing how to live." It projects the possibility that life can now be programmed at its most fundamental level: the genetic level. Where here the arts, which until now, were limited to the more or less complex manipulation of inanimate matter, they now face the extraordinary and terrifying novelty that it is possible to elaborate information, imprint it on living matter and thus multiply and preserve this information.

"It is necessary that the artists participate in the adventure. The challenge is obvious: we currently have a technique (art) capable not only of creating new living beings but also life forms with new mental processes ("spirits"). We currently have the technique (art) suitable for creating something hitherto unforeseen and unimaginable: a new living spirit. This spirit is the creator itself and thus will not be able to understand since it will be based on genetic information that is ours. This is not a task for biotechnicians immersed in their own discipline, but rather a task for artists who collaborate with the currently established laboratories (...)"*(13)*.

Faced with this scope of possibilities, some artists, such as Eduardo Kàc (14) and his transgenic art, propose to raise the banner of the contemporary artist to dispute the biotechnology of the possible supremacy of the use of technique and technicians – an aspect that assumes the most radical discontinuity of art from its tradition by no longer producing inert images but rather creating living works.

4. Some philosophical considerations: the fascination of technique

From an empirical-anthropological-philosophy perspective, Arnold Gehlen considered technical dominance as a threat to culture and individual personality, projecting, similarly to Paul Virilio*(15)*, a mass, standardized and manipulated society. He considered that, ultimately, the Modernity technique is the result of the "will to impose oneself", and consequently, all modernity, that is in its technical essence, makes man a "technical functionary", as termed by Heidegger, one of the thinkers who emphasizes a philosophical reflection on the purely instrumental use of technique, as well as the disturbance in the human-nature relationship.

What is truly disturbing is not that the world is turning into a complete technical domain. Far more disturbing is that man is not in fact ready for this radical transformation of the world. Far more disturbing is that we are not yet prepared of reaching, through meditative thought, an adequate confrontation with what is emerging in our time*(16)*[2].

In relation to human nature, Gehlen*(17)* considers that there is a natural and innate impulse in the human being that made his adaptation and survival in nature possible: a creative faculty strengthened – in addition, by the endowment of "artistic wisdom" that Plato points out – in conjunction with a genetic inheritance and "spiritual equipment" for the development of artifacts or utensils. And, since the human being did not have an instinctive skill or organs that advantageously disposed him to deal with nature, as in the case of animals, the human being as *Mängelwesen* (a "being with deficiencies" or

[2] This translation is my own.

"lacking being", a concept previously present in Herder) achieves its survival by replacing, complementing or strengthening the organic through the intellect. This early human fascination with technique, which Gehlen*(17)* describes from an anthropological perspective, was interpreted by Ernst Kapp*(18)* as an interest in achieving "*organ projection*", similar to Stelarc with his "Third hand" or "Third ear". From Kapp's perspective in which the technique has been "embodied" in the human body waiting to be deployed by the needs of the environment:

"The wealth of spiritual creations springs, then, from the hand, the arm and the teeth. A bent finger becomes a hook, the hollow of the hand a plate; in the sword, the spear, the oar, the shovel, the rake, the plow and the spade, various positions of the arm, hand and fingers are observed, whose adaptation to hunting, fishing, gardening and farm implements is easily visible"*(18)*.

But from this perspective, the instruments and tools of the technical world developed by the human being not only reproduce the possibilities of the organic world but also allow their creator to return to nature with increased power over the world and therein lies part of its greatness and potential danger. In this regard, Gehlen points out that the "projection of organs" extends to the possibility of covering three basic functions: "organ replacement" (*Organersatz*), "organ discharge" (*Organentlastung*) and "organ overcoming" (*Organuberbietung*):

"The stone in the hand to strike both discharges and successfully overcomes the striking fist; the cart [and] the riding animal relieve us of the movement on foot and far exceed their capacity. In the pack animal the principle of unloading becomes evidently clear. The plane, once again, replaces our wings that have not grown and far exceeds all organic capacity for flight. Some of these examples indicate that there is a very old technique of the organic: domestication, especially animal husbandry, is a genuine technique that only succeeds after many experiments"*(17, p.114)*.

It could be thought, then, that in any case the human being develops a technique that substantially participates in nature. However, when the work of mastery over nature is undertaken – what we could consider the essence of the Baconian ideology of modernity – it would be the moment that risks the radical autonomy of the technique, along with the prevalence of the object. Galimberti*(19)* thinks that the essence of the technique is obscured because modern sciences are not capable of thinking about the foundation of their own development.

The complete realization of the Baconian formula has brought about a profound transformation in the narrative. It no longer revolves around the supremacy of humans over nature; instead, it underscores the ascendancy of technology, exerting control not only over human beings but also over the natural world. This shift signifies a redefined power dynamic, where the influence once wielded by humans is eclipsed by the overwhelming force and impact of technology on both humanity and the environment*(19)*.

In relation to this, Heidegger*(16)* argues that technology is a mode of understanding the world, where entities are technically uncovered and disclosed. Furthermore, Heidegger aims to delineate the specific nature of modern technology, distinguishing it from Greek technology. He also underscores the ambiguity and danger that modern technology poses for humans, revealing a destiny that emerges from Being itself and implying the loss of self-awareness and a reduction in human freedom. Paraphrasing Heidegger*(16)*, he later points out how in this context, observing the human being reduced to a "technical functionary" is akin to the human being being "elsewhere" in relation to the dwelling they historically knew; hence, it signifies being "far from oneself." In this manner, the distinction between fact and value implies that technology, along with science, is capable of instructing us "how" to carry out something, irrespective of whether this is significant in relation to the appreciation of the common good, or even more so, if this implication of technical development involves a reflective questioning about the scope and implications of this or that scientific innovation. For this reason, the technification of existence can in no way be seen as something "neutral."

Where then do we find the essence of the technical and its formative implications for culture?

For now, we can clearly say that one is probably in the encounter between aesthetics and ethics, but according to Galimberti (19), ethics shows its impotence in the contemporary world due to a predominance of technique and a world regulated by doing as the pure production of results in which the effects add up in such a way that the final successes are no longer compatible with the intentions of the initial agents. This means that it is no longer ethics that chooses the ends and that is supported by technique to find the means, but rather it is technique that, assuming the results of its procedures as ends, conditions ethics, thus forcing it to take a position on a denatured or artificial reality in which the technique does not cease to build, produce and permit the object according to whatever its position assumed by ethics.

5. Conclusions: "This reminds me of a story..."

Considering the artistic sphere of recent years and with regard to the numerous intersections between art, science and technology, certain artistic creations consider the biological body, its limits, scopes and technological extensions in relation to a "humanist" project an openly disputed territory. In this regard, the promoter of transgenic art points out that new technologies culturally alter our perception of the human body, which ranges from being a naturally self-regulated system to an artificially controlled and electronically transformed object*(14)*.

From an artistic perspective, filmmaker David Cronenberg, for instance, has explored the concept of the "New Flesh." In his interpretation, it becomes an integral part of the organic-machine synthesis, giving rise not to a combination of flesh and metal but rather to flesh transformed through the machine's influence — a futuristic embodiment resulting from an almost sensual interaction with the technological realm. The "New Flesh" represents a psychophysiological transcendence of the conventional notion of subjectivity, disrupting the dualistic framework that separates mind and body. In this context, the "New Flesh" is conceived as a psychophysiological overcoming of the classical idea of subjectivity, challenging the dualistic structure that distinguishes between mind and body*(20)*.

In consideration, the concept of *posthumanity* has been a concept that has perhaps incorporated a greater number of critical elements to be presented as the last link in the chain of biotechnological advances that are situated at the core of the contemporary scientific-social imaginary. Likewise, the concept of *posthumanity* is installed in a broad framework of discussion that ranges from the possibilities to the dangers associated with the use of biotechnologies in everyday life and their effects. This framework considers two concepts proposed by bioethics that describe the relations between humanity and its association with new technologies in terms of biological alteration, which is necessary to differentiate: the *transhuman* and the *posthuman*. To address this distinction, Póstigo Solana argues that "the first would be a human being in transformation, with some of their physical and psychic abilities being superior to those of a 'normal' human being, but not yet 'posthuman'"*(21)*. On the other hand, a *posthuman* subject would be considered a being (it is not specified whether natural or artificial) that the author describes with the following characteristics: a life expectancy of more than 500 years; intellectual abilities two times greater than the maximum that the current human being could have; and mastery and control of the impulses of the senses, without psychological suffering*(21)*. Such provisions of biotechnological superiority would eliminate any ambiguity between the human being and the posthuman.

Among the critics of this concept, Francis Fukuyama, one of the theorists who has contributed the most in arguing the possible *posthumanity* and its consequences, warned in *Our Posthuman Future* about a dangerously near future in which the distinction between therapeutic improvement and ethics will fade. According to the author, it is impossible to not associate this progression with the inevitable super-commercialization of life, which this probable future will implicate*(22)*. In this sense, Fukuyama's concern is related to the possibility that a commercial model of biotechnology could surpass existing medical ethics based on humanitarian concerns. With regard to this, he mentions that:

Human nature shapes and restricts the possible types of political regimes, but with a sufficiently

powerful technology, it would be enough to reshape who we are, with possible malignant consequences for liberal democracy and the nature of politics in themselves*(22, p.7)*.

The author, taking into account these assessments, defends the existence of a fixed concept of "the human" or "humanity" as an essential term for social organization*(22)*, a term that reaffirms the fundamental values of humanism over the new technological and ethical possibilities that the development of science brings forth.

In this regard, Paul Virilio points out that if the human body, inherited and natural, has become obsolete, it is due to the installation of the *fragmented body* (*post-industrial*), which as he understands, developed in parallel to the brutal strengthening of the omniscient tele-visions, which have produced "a disregard for the dimensions of the body itself"*(15)*. Stelarc, meanwhile, after his initial *suspensions*, would progressively radicalize his thesis of the obsolescence of the body through consecutive technoperformatic exhibitions until arriving at a digital modeling of himself whose destiny is a screening of his artificially simulated face in the center of a *cybernetic mechanized exoskeleton*, an aspect that largely resembles a kind of *post-human antihero*.

This "new flesh" could be understood as the symbiosis that, in representational terms, has taken on the form of the *Cyborg's*[3] *postbody(23)*: an entity, neither completely human, nor completely machine, endowed with a singular self-consciousness, as reflected in the closing dialogue of the film *Blade Runner* by Ridley Scott, in which Roy Batty - Nexus 6 (Ruter Hauer), one of the *cyborg replicants* with superhuman capabilities, decides to save Deckard (Harrison Ford), his pursuer:

It's quite an experience to live in fear, isn't it?

That's what it means to be a slave.

I have seen things that you would not believe.

Attacking burning ships beyond Orion

I've seen C-rays glow in the dark,

near the Tannhäuser Gate.

All those moments will be lost in time,

like tears in the rain (...)*(24)*.

Within this context, the Cyborg's elevation to an aesthetic category symbolizing the new flesh proves to be a fruitful instrument for philosophical exploration. It is also employed as a resource in discussions pertaining to gender and feminism*(25)*. This representation scheme concurrently addresses both dimensions, symbolizing the concept's permeability and cultural universality.

Concerning the connection between art and bioethics, MacNeill*(26)* proposes that bioethics could gain valuable insights by welcoming contributions from the arts, particularly from artists who explore materials, including their own bodies, at the nuanced intersections of art, bio art, and bioethics. These artists aim to involve audiences in questioning ethical principles and assumptions related to life and existence. As noted by MacNeill*(26)*, the 2008 Croatian Congress on Art and Bioethics serves as an illustration of this potential collaboration

According to Hubenko*(27)*, the interdisciplinary interplay between bioethics and art has the potential to reshape the methods and channels through which art is shared amid emerging biotechnological advancements. Simultaneously, these two disciplines contribute to a critical examination of the role of science and its responsibilities in the contemporary world. Bioethics, in this regard, can contribute to the socialization of art, and conversely, art can serve to popularize the subject matter studied within bioethics.

However, and in consideration of the above, it seems to me that the intersection between science, art, technology and bioethics will reach a high point of discussion when the machines demonstrate some degree of self-awareness. In such

[3] The term *Cyborg* "cybernetic organism" was coined in the 1960s to describe the fusion of technology with the human body. Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline, both NASA scientists whose perspective was to strengthen the human body for long and challenging space travel, seem to be the proponents of the term. The researchers proposed the combination of chemical substances and technological surgery (body implants based on the operation of computers), along with other faculties enhanced by expert electronic systems coupled to the body.

instances, the authentic exploration and transcendence of human limitations through machines do not solely hinge on the technical achievement of replicating a flesh-and-blood human body, as exemplified by the replicants in Blade Runner. While this technological feat is undoubtedly underway and already in progress, the authentic philosophical inquiry arises when these entities achieve the most enigmatic of attributes, surpassing even the capabilities of advanced neuroscience: consciousness and inherent self-awareness. This critical juncture represents a distinct turning point, prompting a profound exploration into questions concerning the nature of consciousness. To exemplify this perspective, in the 1960s, biologist Gregory Bateson*(28)*, reflecting on the components and qualities of life amid the burgeoning era of computer technology, recounted a poignant narrative to his students at a California art school. This narrative aimed to clarify what he perceived as the fundamental essence of the human phenomenon:

> A man wanted to know something about the spirit, finding the answer not in nature, but on his large private computer. He asked the computer (no doubt in his best Fortran language), "Do you calculate that you will ever think like a human being?" The machine then went to work to analyze its own computing habits. Finally, the computer printed its answer on a piece of paper, as machines usually do. The man ran towards the answer and found these words clearly printed:
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> …THIS REMINDS ME OF A STORY... (...) *(28, p.21)*.

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