



Reflection on the becoming Cyborg of the Anthropos

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Introduction

The emergence of social deconstructionism [1] in the years 1960/1970 was followed by a progressive change of our relation to the body. In this new consideration, the individual does not undergo his body anymore. He possesses it, manipulates and modifies it according to his will, his desires and his whims. One of the illustrations of this free possession of the body by the subject is the question of the tattoo and its social acceptance in France, our case study. I propose to take a brief look at it.

The Tattoo

An ancestral and contemporary form of body's modification. Tattooing is a practice that dates back to several millennia before Christ. In 1991 was discovered in the Italian-Austrian mountains, the body of "Ötzi", man of ice, aged 5300 years. The latter had therapeutic tattoos (acupuncture), declined in lines and crosses, "on areas most prone to injury or pain, such as joints or back" [2]. Similarly, in 2014, a 3300 year old mummy, entirely covered with tattoos, was exhumed at the Deir el Medina site in Egypt. According to researchers, the thirty tattoos present on the mummy (body of a woman) mark a membership in the cult of the goddess Hathor. With the passage of time, and under the non-negligible Judeo-Christian influence, the tattoo has taken on a pejorative connotation. Thus, in France, at the end of the XIXth century, the peoples of Oceania presenting tattoos were considered as "savages", sub-humans who used their bodies to communicate since they were illiterate [3]. However, the progressive trivialization of this practice in the urban hippies, opened the way, since 1980, to a real craze of young people (millennials and generation Z) [4]. A study conducted by IFOP in

August 2018, reveals that 18% of French people have, or have already had, a tattoo, this against 10% in 2010. That is an increase of 8 points [5]. An interesting element in this study is the representative age. The 25 to 34 years old represent 29% of the tattooed population, and the over 65 years old represent 1% of the tattooed population. Another Ifop study published in 2016, reveals that 80% of French people aged 25 to 34 consider tattooing as a form of Art [6], this against 30% of people over 65 [7]. In this same vein of claiming tattooing as Art, there is in France, since 2003, a national union of tattoo artists regrouping 1500 members of which 1000 tattoo artists committed in the "recognition of their Art" [8]. We can observe through these figures a generational evolution of the practice and social acceptance of tattooing. Evolution and enthusiasm, which testify the desire of the modern human, to possess and to shape his body according to his aspirations. And the cultures of cosmetic surgery, bodybuilding, Fitness reinforce this project.

Cyborgization

New cybernetic modification of the body. Nowadays, with the double revolution of Biotech and Infotech, the new rising practice of body modification is cyborgization. It is defined as the fact of becoming a cyborg, by associating to a biological body, technological tools such as magnetic implants or robotic limbs. According to Patrick Kramer, CEO of Digiwell [9] (a start-up specializing in Biohacking), there are nearly 100,000 cyborgs in the world, and the value of this market could reach 2.3 billion euros by 2025 [10]. One of the main representatives of this cyborgism is the activist Neil Harbisson. Victim of an acute color blindness from birth, he manages, thanks to a cerebral implant, to "hear the colors" in the form of frequency.

In this case, the cyborgization has a therapeutic function. In parallel to this therapeutic function, several technology enthusiasts engage in this cyborg practice for the simple pleasure of geekery: this is the case of researcher Kevin Warwick, professor of cybernetics at Reading University in England. Recognized as the first cyborg in the history of mankind, he had electronic components incorporated into his arms in order to interact with computers. Let us note that for the moment, the society is skeptical, even, indifferent, in front of this phenomenon of cyborgization. However, just as we have witnessed a generational evolution in the practice and social acceptance of tattooing (and other forms of body modification such as piercings) over the last 50 years, there is a strong chance that we will witness a new generational evolution in the social acceptance of cyborgization, whether for therapeutic or aesthetic purposes, in the coming decades. The duration of this evolution and acceptance will depend on the speed with which the movements of cultural influence (showbiz, pop-culture, instagraming etc.) will take hold of the question, in order to popularize it and make it commonplace.

What is the Ethical Issue

There is, in our opinion, interest for the society to anticipate this movement, and to question its stakes; Because, contrary to the tattoo and to the other forms of modification of the body, the cyborgization really impacts this body and develops its capacities. This could, in the future, generate a new form of inequality: the biological inequality between augmented human and ordinary human. Hence the urgency to define as a human society, the borders between a restorative cyborgization and a demiurgic cyborgization; between a cyborgization at the service of health needs, and a cybor-

gization at the service of the desires and fantasies of grandeur and augmentation of humans. The definition of these boundaries will be done in a dialogue between policy makers, actors of the BodyHacking industry, and civil society.

Acknowledgement

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Conflict of interest

None.

References

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