

Methods of Ontological Remix

Kira de Coudres
Hampshire College
Amherst, MA, USA
Kcd13@hampshire.edu

1. WHAT IS “ONTOLOGICAL REMIX”

Ontology refers to the nature of being while remix is the method of modulating variables, transforming a form or being into a variation of itself. Ontological Remix is media theory mixed and mashed with bioethical philosophies of science, and the unexplored potentials of biomedical technologies twisted with imperfect posthuman aesthetics. Focused on methods of mutation and modulation, Ontological Remix is interested in neuronal, biochemical, microbial, sensorial, and other embodied variables and processes that enable a spectrum of possible form variations. Methods of Ontological Remix are limitless, inclusive of practices that are still under development.

2. ONTOLOGICAL REMIX METHODS

2.1 DIY Hormone Synthesis

The ability to make your own hormones from chemical cookery and urine distillation opens potentials to produce and administer hormones in the privacy of one's home, circumventing medical intervention and streamlined assistance. How does this challenge the regulation of bodies during what Paul Preciado calls the “Pharmacopornographic era”? (Preciado 2013).

2.2 Transgenic Mutation

Biopolitical fears around technologies like CRISPR have drawn global attention to the potential ontological remixes revealed by transgenic practices, or Intentional Genetic Modification (IGM). As bioartist Dr Adam Zaretsky (2013) warns us:

“Beware of naïve optimism of Human Enhancement. Hereditary gene collage makes new breeds from desires. Transgenic beings are better art than art [...] sculpted from molecular collage. Organisms made from snips of other beings cut into novel entities. What is the full range of forms and beings we could force evolve ourselves into?”

2.3 Sensory Extensions

Sensory manipulation through vibrotactile and other multisensory technologies are being used in development in the name of sensory remediation. With sensory extensions, humans now have perceptual access to sense data in the environment that would remain imperceptible otherwise. How does this kind of sensory manipulation alter not only perception, but the perceptive being?

2.4 Disease

Infectious diseases are transmitted across bodies and remixes hosts in the process, and as process. Living things are *performative* processes, and disease is a dance that can steal the show. How does disease remix the insides of a body? How does transformation to our biological peripheries re/un/de-centralize our identity? (Wilson, 2015), and what are the ontological implications of the diseased body influenced by antibiotics or other medications produced and promised to ‘return’ the body to a previous, healthier state?

2.5 Other “Natural” Disasters

Car crashes are an excellent example of an explosive ontological remix. With statistics of metal and flesh body collisions comes the promise of disaster tomorrow and the next day. Car crashes are a reliable occurrence of what Catherine Malabou (2012) calls “destructive plasticity”. How can we come to terms with the inevitable Post-Fordist Post-Crashed Ballardian body? (Ballard 1973).

3. IMPLICATIONS OF ONTOLOGICAL REMIX

With the presence and continual advancement of biomedical technologies and the statistical promise of chaos and disaster, Ontological Remix is already present, with certain remixes (and their variables) deemed more valuable – or rather, more conducive to human “betterment”. This viewpoint presumes a fixed physical and social environment in which these variables exist. Imagining an inclusive

spectrum of Ontological Remix, of possibility and difference, means including the undesirable and embracing such as valuable to avoid a homogenous drone of embodiment.

4. REFERENCES

Ballard, J.G. (1973) *Crash*, Picador, New York.

Malabou, C. (2012) *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK.

Preciado, P.B. (2013) *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, The Feminist Press, City University of New York.

Wilson, E.A. (2015) *Gut Feminism*. Duke University Press, Durham and London.

Zaretsky, A. (2013) Say Yes! *Digimag Journal*, 74, 72–75.