

THE CYBORG NATURE OF CITIES

It is not true that cities must develop a new framework of their relationship with nature, as is often suggested since, as emergent ecosystems, they are expressions of nature itself. What is true is that cities are novel ecosystemic entities on the planet, constituted from a more or less complex set of organic and inorganic elements combined under unique cybernetic parameters derived from the cultural change inherent to human nature.

Cities are anthropic experiments in permanent adjustment, adaptive systems established in a territory under the premise of a particular organization with different levels of control, technological and institutional, in a context of changing complexity. Cities have ages, authors, aesthetics in conflict, scars, memory, and vital expressions associated with their particular way of resolving the conditions of relief, hydrology, climate, and biodiversity. A port city gradually built by merchants amid a mangrove swamp is not the same as a city of fishers, nor is a city of moorland the same as a city of mountain jungles. Part of every city's identity comes from the qualities of the territory where it is born and rooted. The ways of inhabiting constitute the other part. We settle in and share territories continuously interpreted with unique perspectives, and with that, we seek, without even saying it, a better habitat for all.

It is evident that the channels through which the metabolism of cities runs are by no means stable either. Perhaps most of the human population travels in vehicles along

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certain avenues. Still, the proliferation of roads and the labyrinth of streets open up innumerable possibilities for those who have discovered that takeout can be brought home by unexpected routes. Connectivity provides plasticity to cities' functioning and is evaluated according to the rhythm or rate of transit of matter, energy, and information through its structures. It is both a poetic and an operational property of the territory: if trees are seen as shadows that hide crimes and not the kiss of lovers, the countenance of the place will be very different. In any case, there is no obligatory perspective since the city will be as dynamic, fluid, and creative as its inhabitants allow it to be.

Between identity and connectivity, the notion of integrity is then

defined, a quality difficult to measure and even more difficult to judge since it depends on an evaluation of the system's coherence, which for some is more aesthetic than functional, even though both attributes are inseparable. The beauty of the cyborg city is always present as a collective work resisting being governed by any central authority, a fact that should change the perspective of institutions and their ways of understanding the notion of authority.

Emerging human ecosystems are changing rapidly, forcing us to continually reflect on the experience of being urban and part of a colonial organism that destroys and reconstitutes itself every day. A cybernetic organism that, in turn, inhabits the planet and may hold the key to its sustainability.

Quote as: Baptiste, B. The Cyborg Nature of Cities. P. 242. In: Mejía, M.A., Amaya-Espinel, J.D. (eds). *BiodiverCities by 2030: Transforming Cities with Biodiversity*. Bogotá. Instituto de Investigación de Recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt. 2022. 288 pages.