Biomedia (Electronic Mediations)

Eugene Thacker
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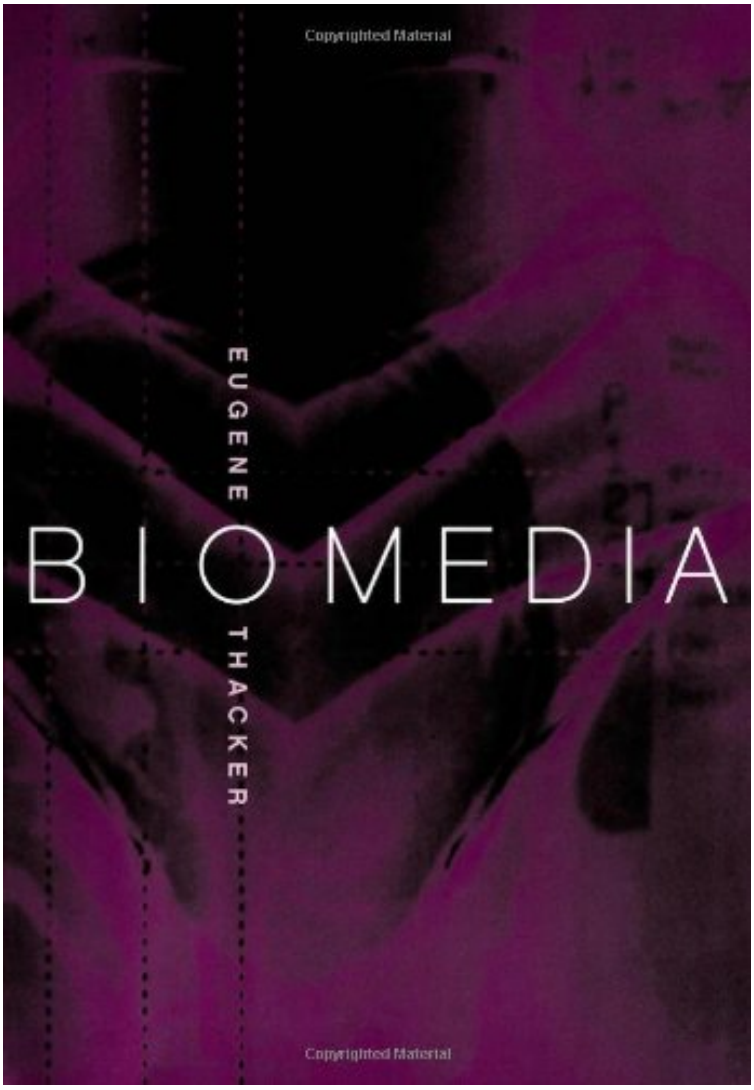

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Eugene Thacker : Biomedia (Electronic Mediations) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Biomedia (Electronic Mediations):

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. An innovative look at biotech...By BiomassThis is an exciting book - it's basically a look at biotech from the angle of new media or media studies. Clear, astute descriptions of current research, as well as innovative ways of looking at the research. And best of all, there's none of the familiar jargon of cyborgs, cyberspace, or "virtual" this or that. Thacker goes beyond what alot of science studies and media studies have said on this topic, and opens up worthwhile new avenues to explore.As a recent grad student, I've read more than enough books on biotech. Also, I've enjoyed Thacker's various posts to lists like Nettime and other online

journals; he always seems to cut to the core of an issue, but without simplifying things. An example is the chapter on systems biology, which raises alot of basic questions for research today. Thacker looks at a range of approaches that eschew the gene-based imperatives of the drug RD industry, but also shows their differences. For instance, the tendency now towards systems biology often doesn't question the basic gene-centrism of alot of research. Complexity and other approaches do offer alternatives, but ones that exist separate from the imperatives of the drug RD approaches.The chapters on bioinformatic and DNA computing are also really good, as it patiently sorts out the tensions between materiality and immateriality. I appreciated this attention to philosophical issues, while remaining rooted in the technology itself. Perhaps the biggest lesson one can take away from this book is Thacker's concept of "biomedia": that biology and biotech is integrated with information technology, but that does _not_ mean that biology is becoming immaterial - it means the opposite.On a final note, I'm not a big science fiction fan, so the segments on sci-fi wasn't as effective for me, but the juxtaposition of science and sci-fi is interesting. I'd recommend this alongside other like-minded work, such as Richard Doyle's Wetwares.

As biotechnology defines the new millennium, genetic codes and computer codes increasingly merge-life understood as data, flesh rendered programmable. Where this trend will take us, and what it might mean, is what concerns Eugene Thacker in this timely book, a penetrating look into the intersection of molecular biology and computer science in our day and its likely ramifications for the future.Integrating approaches from science and media studies, Biomedia is a critical analysis of research fields that explore relationships between biologies and technologies, between genetic and computer "codes." In doing so, the book looks beyond the familiar examples of cloning, genetic engineering, and gene therapy-fields based on the centrality of DNA or genes-to emerging fields in which "life" is often understood as "information." Focusing especially on interactions between genetic and computer codes, or between "life" and "information," Thacker shows how each kind of "body" produced-from biochip to DNA computer-demonstrates how molecular biology and computer science are interwoven to provide unique means of understanding and controlling living matter.Throughout, Thacker provides in-depth accounts of theoretical issues implicit in biotechnical artifacts-issues that arise in the fields of bioinformatics, proteomics, systems biology, and biocomputing. Research in biotechnology, Biomedia suggests, flouts our assumptions about the division between biological and technological systems. New ways of thinking about this division are needed if we are to understand the cultural, social, and philosophical dimensions of such research, and this book marks a significant advance in the coming intellectualrevolution.Eugene Thacker is assistant professor of new media in the School of Literature, Communication, and Culture at the Georgia Institute of Technology. His writings on the social and cultural aspects of biotechnology and biomedicine have been published and anthologized widely and translated into a dozen languages.

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