THE BIONIC COMPUTER
By Victor Margolin

Ever since Chester Gould invented Dick Tracy's wrist radio, every manufacturer in the world has dreamed of miniature machines that could be appended to the human body. Recently a Lilliputian television with a wrist strap hit the market and soon to come are tiny fax-modems guided by nanotechnology and miniature strap-on expresso machines with Barbie-sized cups. But what happens after every known machine has been nanotechnologized? In their quest for the "next wave" of technology, manufacturers will go bionic.

We will become bionic devices ourselves and use our own organs to perform machine functions. In the new cyborg culture, we will internalize these functions and thus do away with cumbersome equipment that clutters up the landscape and eventually the landfills. The bionic technology of the future will be ingested like vitamins and the machines will grow within us as they come in contact with our precious bodily fluids. The ultimate bionic machine is the personal computer complete with fax modem. It will come in packets of pills that contain all the electronic circuitry in compressed form. We will swallow these pills whose contents will unpack themselves and report to designated stations in the body's organs and nerves. Once the hardware has been distributed to appropriate sites in the body, we will swallow flavored software pellets. Windows 95 might taste like lemon while Word 7.5 could taste like kiwi fruit. Type fonts will also come as separate flavored pellets - vanilla for Helvetica, raspberry for Keedy Sans, and licorice for Mason (né Manson).

The new bionic computers will be designed to make use of both internal organs and bodily orifices. That part of the human anatomy now used for eliminating solid waste will become the printer. We will ingest compressed rolls of tofu-based printer paper. Rest rooms will have new types of stalls - seats with printer trays beneath them where we can excrete faxes, memos, and even entire manuscripts.

Control panels for the bionic computers will be keyed to body parts so that the eyes, nose, ears, and mouth can activate different functions. A blink of the left eye, for example, could open the word processing software while speech might be converted into bits and bites that will function like a keyboard to generate printed letters and numbers. The ancient art of shiatsu, affecting emotions by touching designated pressure points in the body, will have a new meaning. Pressing a point on the upper arm will access the system software and a point behind the left kneecap will be keyed to

Quark Express. We will be able to literally massage our data. The screen for Word Processing will be located in the left brain while all the visual software such as Quark and Photoshop will be in the right brain. To scan photographs, you'll simply bring your image to a public scanning station, stick your nose in a plastic or metallic orifice, and then inhale the picture.

The bionic computer will turn the body into a lively site of production. Instead of watching drivers twist themselves into Plastic Man or Plastic Woman as they yak on their car phones while careening down the freeways, we will witness instead the greatest street spectacles since the fairs of the Middle Ages where contortionists and jugglers entertained the populace with their antics. People will writhe and twitch as they work at their bionic computers in the malls. Hardware and software functions will even be connected to the sexual organs so busy executives need not waste time while engaging in bodily pleasures. They will be able to fire off memos during the very act of copulation, thus combining business with pleasure in a way that was never before possible.