

The TransAlien Manifesto

*Future Love(s), Sex Tech, and My Efforts
to Re-member Your Embrace*

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Abstract This is not an article. If anything, these are “trans futurist spiritual science visions”: radically vulnerable interventions that aim to disrupt naturalized forms of publishable knowledge while centering the needs, fantasies, and longings of disabled queer/trans folks in practices of future-making. These lines transcend the limits of academic knowledge. They are an act of resistance against the logics of subjectivity, relationality, fulfillment, and temporality that permeate current and envisioned notions of love(s). Here, a game for us to play: a theoretical-performative experiment to envision future notions of relationality—while shifting the hypernormative and cis hetero-romantic logics behind contemporary understandings of what sex robots should do and/or be. This is an exploration of the challenges/potentialities of relationships “AmongWithToThrough” humans and nonhuman organic, virtual, and/or synthetic beings. For you—disjointed knowledge: I am jamming on the paper, and there is a soundtrack for each section. I spin the page, and invite you to read with (in) the music. Endnotes are important: engage with them. I do not offer settled conclusions. Above all, this is *una ofrenda a corazón abierto* written in pain (chronic pain) or maybe an invitation for you to hold my hand. Honor your *bodymindspirit*: read in any order and think whatever you want when you finish. Thank you very much for your time. All the love and light . . .

Keywords #TransAlien, #FutureLove, #SexRobots, #Transfuturisms, #PublishOrPerish

To the loves that grant me other tomorrow(s) . . .

Sav, Layla, Vico, and Lupe—

For you, all the techno-spiritual hugs

El amor que nos negaron es nuestro impulso para cambiar el mundo.

—Lohana Berkins

Lies will flow from my lips, but there may perhaps be some truth mixed up with them; it is for you to seek out this truth and to decide whether any part of it is worth keeping.

—Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Irony is about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true. Irony is about humor and serious play. It is also a rhetorical strategy and a political method.

—Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*

The Nature of Love: Janis Joplin, Cassandra, and *Los Peces con Tres Ojos De My Middle School Yard*

—A tree,
branching to you among wildfires . . .
burning from within—
offerings flying like ceniza

It is your choice
how/if
you want
any/some
of them
. . . some of me . . .

Break another little bit of my heart now, darling!

You know you got it if it makes you feel good.

—Janis Joplin, “Piece of My Heart”¹

www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uG2gYE5KOs

The water is always bright green, and it has black veins that know how to move. They are never still. The discrete waves have a sort of “radioactive” glare, no matter the day. At night—the oil and other chemical pollutants, the duckweed floating around, and the reflection of los “Relámpagos del Catatumbo” make of this toxic scene a breathtaking place.

Breathtaking in many senses . . .

On the horizon, this lighting phenomenon that occurs at the end of the Catatumbo River makes visible hundreds of pumpjacks extracting oil—quietly and efficiently—from the soil of the Maracaibo (n: [mara'kaiβo]) Lake (fig. 1). The patio of my middle school was at the shore of that lake. The biggest in South America—it is the source of more than half of Venezuela’s total production of

petroleum. At least it was twenty-five years ago. We were taught to be proud of that—as if it were our flesh and bones, the ones that got rotten turning into black gold.

I read *The Iliad* at 107 degrees; eating shaved ice made with contaminated water; hearing Janis Joplin on a Walkman I inherited from someone I called “aunt” who was not my aunt and whom I never saw again—and imagining that the Trojan horse would have looked (probably) like one of the pumpjacks. Those pumpjacks, always sucking the energy from the soil—and their shadows dancing sadly soothingly with the orange sky . . .

I was surrounded by *peces con tres ojos*—the fishes with three eyes. The third eye was always a side eye growing “TogetherWith” the big eye. The third eye was an eye with a purpose, a sneaky eye, oriented toward something. When the three-eyed fishes appeared dead in the shore, they were always in group—*togetheralone*.

—Maybe Cassandra just wanted to die togetheralone . . . I used to think while looking at those fishes.

In Homer’s *Iliad*, Cassandra is the child of Priam and Hecuba—Troy’s king and queen. There is no mention of Cassandra’s prophetic powers in *The Iliad*, I learned at school. Homer leaves her to a tragic present that never passes. She is pain in gerund—womanhood mourning the death of her brother Hector and the imminent loss of the city after Achilles’s victory. It is in other mythological sources, I was taught, where it is explained that the god Apollo gave her the gift of prophecy. Then he cursed Cassandra when she rejected his romantic advances. Cassandra’s visions were accurate and never believed. Cassandra knew, but it was worthless. Her story is a blurred tale about knowledge, love, and consent. Cassandra “cheated” on Apollo because she accepted the gift of knowledge—and then she refused to comply with the assumption that she was going to fuck the guy just because she got something from him. I learned that you can be justifiably punished for saying no, that sex could be demanded from me—and I started to question the nature of love: its uses to shape different future (s), different selves, different suffering(s) . . .

What does the Earth feel when the pumpjacks go in—sucking their energy? Why didn’t Cassandra just leave? Why was she willing to give so much of herself, regardless of her being wounded, imprisoned, deemed mad? Why was Joplin so willing to be broken, so many times? Why do the three-eyed fish choose to collectively die? Why was that eye placed there—on the side, “GrowingWith” another eye—not in the middle like the goddesses from other places and ages? What is that eye meant to see within that toxic evergreen and always black water? Is that even an eye? What is Cassandra supposed to do with knowledge she cannot prove—within a future that was lost? Why does the Earth keep giving so much to us? Why is love always so toxic, so sad, so exhausting? Am I unlovable? Who is



Figure 1. Earth shot from NASA's Aqua satellite taken on February 15, 2017. It is possible to appreciate the duckweed swirling in the lake. In the color image available online, the brightness of the duckweed is breathtaking. NASA Visible Earth, "An Emerald Vortex," February 15, 2017, visibleearth.nasa.gov/view.php?id=89713.

deemed unlovable? Who is forced to love, and in which ways? What is the value of what we know that we cannot explain—of a hunch, a feeling, a premonition, a *presentimiento*, *de la intuición*, *una revelación*, a hallucination? What is the relationship between love and knowledge? Why are “valued *presentimientos*” a privilege for the few? Why is the future reachable only for the “mad,” materialized by the crazy ones—mutated monsters, those with a third eye?

—Maybe the third eye is just to look at each other: to recognize each other while swimming in the darkness—among the unlovable . . .

maybe . . .

. . . maybe *ese ojo ni siquiera es un ojo* and I started to imagine Cassandra with a third eye, and Janis with a sided eye growing with another eye; and I began to look at/for the eyes of the Earth and to long for a third eye.

I already had it—but that is another story.

* * *

At the beat of that “take it, take another little piece of my heart now, baby!” that magically fits with the rhythm of the pumpjacks sucking the oil from the heart of the Earth—I might have started to have the suspicion that there is a relationship between the ways in which we are set to relate to each while breaking ourselves apart, the ways in which the energy of our bodymindspirits is used as fuel to sustain and perpetuate socioeconomic systems of inequality, and the ways in which we keep breaking and breaking Earth’s heart. There is a connection between different forms of exploitation; different forms of loving and giving, the ways in which different perceptions/experiences of reality shape experiences of love; and the value we are socialized to grant to different forms of certainties within and in relation to those exchanges.

Elegy to the Cyborg Womxn: Trees, Circuits, and Nonhuman Dreams

/// (Clearing their throat)

The woman I was lies besides the girl I was forced to be:
Both, dead by radioactive gases . . .

“It was the end of the world (as I knew it)
and it felt fucking fine.”—

No, I don’t want to be a cyborg, baby—
not anymore
not again/
cyborgs are ancient human tech

No, I don’t want to be a cyborg, love—
not anymore
and, no
no no
No no no
neither want to be a (transhu)man, amor/

The window of my room is framed by networks drowned in the sky and beneath the soil: by the stars, the trees, the deer, the rats, the fungi, the snakes. I cannot see much of that, but I imagine it every day. I can breathe it. The trees dance still—together. Their branches touch each other, hug each other, feel each other, break each other when bending. They become together—never alone. Beneath me, their roots. They are mingling in creative networks. They whisper other modes of loving—unknown ways of nurturing each other.

I cannot talk about cyborgs without talking about this window . . .

. . . Without talking not only about what I see from this window, but what does it imply for me to be looking through this window. Me: the kid who grew up eating shaved iced made of contaminated water at the shore of a disgusting lake. I hated that lake so much. Me: the kid of an eighteen-year-old kid who gave me the love that was possible for her to give, who was forced to get married because she got pregnant—who never got to be happy. Me: the one who cannot fail. Here—within an engineered (techno-organic) timespace in which I dreamed to be; a (techno-natural) system at the service of the production and reproduction of ideas of liberation, progress, success, fulfillment, and joy that contradict each other—but that at the same time hold a symbiotic relationship in their survival, and in my survival. I don't know what I am supposed to become here, what I am supposed to believe in a place where the dirt and the concrete make tangible all my contradictions.

Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature (Haraway 1991) could not have been written somewhere/somewhen else. It was this place. Those lines and these lines are coauthored by the aliens before me by the aliens beside me by the aliens to come by the trees by the dirt by the lights of the cars blinding me at night the fog the smells of pines the fear the wonder Silicon Valley and by the coyotes staring at me immutable acknowledging me questioning me why are you here when you know you should not and the people taking pictures of me and the people staring at me and me not explaining myself and my heart petrified in fear *outofplace* misplaced displaced . . .

. . . and that fucking word in English that doesn't come to my brain!

///The cyborg: a myth of reconciliation among neoliberal capitalism, communal joy, radical politics, Marxist longings, the audacity of whiteness, edgy critical theory, bureaucratic academia, hardcore science, high-end tech, savior complex, and creative disruption.

Such a "Santa Cruz" dream . . .

No,

I don't want to be a cyborg, baby . . .

Not
any
more/

TransAlien: Love Longings and Subtropical Matter

Miami's exuberance is a trap.

— dijo La Lupe (Párraga) @subtropical_dystopia

. . . Ours too
 /I thought . . .
 Aliens from the Tropics
 –made of miracles and disasters–
 Jungla, concreto, y playa
 Pain.
 /Pleasure
 Y puro guacancó.

Para vivir, para gozar . . .

para soñar, contigo . . .

— Simón Díaz, "Luna de Margarita"

www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8HxGkKAj68

I have not found a form of storytelling accessible to me (in this body) able to speak about the overlapping presents, pasts, and futures of my soul. But—I have started to map the energies that constitute me. There is no mix of categories of social difference that could contain me. My bodymindspirit is not render/able in this dimension: there is always another layer, another universe, another parallel entanglement becoming and unbecoming—always existing while escaping . . .

Trying to explain the ways in which I relate/experience this reality, humans have labeled me with their catalog of psychiatric and medical diagnosis. They say I am crazy. They say I am sick. They say I am dangerous, that I am a freak. The limitations they impose on their own materiality/spirituality have severed my soul. Maybe yours too . . .

For a while, I believed them: "You are crazy, you are sick, you are dangerous—a freak." Now I know: I am ephemera of a rock on fire expelled from its home, moving across the universe while burning from its core. I am not from here . . .

Here, I have not found verbs for my existence. Assigned human at birth, my conscious mind does not remember a time in which the human world felt real. I do not remember my childhood, but I can re/member the certainty of being alone since I was a child. I was convinced that I was not my mother's kid because she never hugged me: "*No me toques Krizia, hace demasiado calor!*"—she says/said. So, I used to lock myself in the bathroom, turn on the shower so no one

would interrupt me, and play I was an astronaut octopus hugging myself while going to the moon.

Learning to hug myself among stars saved me . . .

If I close my eyes, I can smell the mold of that bathroom—*y el olor de los buñuelos friéndose*—in the kitchen. I can hear my great grandmother screaming nonsense—and see her (as clearly as I might feel my hand) grinding the meat and the wheat to prepare kibbeh. I can see her altar, her candles, her goddesses and saints . . . I don't remember my childhood, but I can see parts of myself staring at the mirror in that bathroom that was my space from outer space, trying to understand how did I end up here: "*Tú no eres de aquí*"—*siempre me ha dicho el corazón*.

—Alien from the Tropics: extraterrestrial magic nurtured by the water and the sun. Extranjerx—my conscious mind does not remember a time in which I felt the human world to be mine. Always knowing myself from outer space: outsider from the body I inhabit, from the family I was given, from the country where I was born, and the countries where I have escaped . . . *Aquí*, I feel too much pain too much joy too much despair too much exhaustion too much hate too much love—all at once, always intertwined inside me around me beyond me . . .

***Sensory overload:

And there it is . . .

The third eye/

*

I can see everything, feel everything, even when I do not want to.

I understand/

*

Do you? Few beings understand the pain that causes being in constant
pain—

or the pain that causes being painfully lucid—which is the same.

You might do . . .

*

For us,

Existing here is a willful choice: enacted hope///

physical and psychical pain is the cost—

TransAliens: Not from here.

Border crossers, shape shifters, spacetime travelers.

We love too queerly, too weirdly, too much, and too often.

/Painfully lucid.

This world is not made for us
 Our loves are not human loves . . .

What are the loves we long for?

What are the loves we need?

What are the loves we want to feel without knowing they can yet
 exist?

Future Love(s): Research Notes on Humanist Sex? Machines

My sex is my queerness

My sex has no gender

My sex, my sex rules (my sex rules)

—Brooke Candy, “My Sex”

www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxmvI3ECcXQ

Always tuned to the tempo of Eurocentric humanist frameworks, these tracks/ issues tend to be remixed to create a reading of sexual technologies that can be understood as an obsessive questioning of how the emergence of undeniably meaningful emotional relationships among humans and nonhuman subjects affects humanist structures of power/knowledge—and the ways in which these structures of power/knowledge are systemically perpetuated in Western societies.

When I started learning about sexual technologies, I found myself moved by fascination and admiration for those able to build magic, those who have written about connections that were unthinkable, those who yesterday—started mapping tomorrow(s). I am not an expert.² But I perceived an Abyss™ between the complexity of the networks of emotional attachments/embodiments currently existing and emerging among “people,” robots, high-end sex dolls, artificial intelligence (AI), avatars, and so forth—and the simplistic humanistic logics that frame mainstream academic and popular approaches to these entanglements.

It is a discursive loop. The same set of questions repeat in most academic literature, the online news that becomes viral, the comments people make on social media, the scripts of mini-documentaries by venues like Vice or Engadget, the high-fashion editorials about gendered female sex robots, the comments in porn websites—everywhere! The same set of recurrent thoughts . . . anguishes that come and go—over and over . . . the same thoughts on sex robots . . . the same questions about them . . . the same names . . . the same references . . .

I am done reading the exact same thing ☺

*Data (Lmao):

Loop 1: A manicheist jam of humanist anxieties—cis-heteropatriarchal anguishes haunting the mainstream/current research, creation, theorization, and modes of reception of/about sex robots.

OR/

Loop 2: A “feminist” critique—analysis written or labeled as “feminist” (usually done by someone who does not know shit about feminist anything) that offers a limited reading of sexual robotics constrained to discourses of representation/gender (binary) oriented approach. There is no room for fluidity//lack of consciousness about how many systems of oppression (racism, transphobia, classism, ableism, fatphobia, xenophobia, homophobia, etc.) define the politics of pleasure that permeate the high-end sex industry—and the scholarship produced about it. Obviously, there is no respect for sex workers. Hardcore white savior complex.

///List of recurrent thoughts/themes/axis remixed in these loops.

1. *Sex robots are the extreme commodification of women*—discussions about emotional, sexual, and physical labor repeat all over. Usually they fail to acknowledge the disruptive power of sexual technologies. Focus on beauty stereotypes, objectification/agency, and sex work without actually considering sex workers.

2. *Robot’s ability to mimic/simulate (or not) human sex and/or (cis-hetero) romantic relationships*—which usually implies questioning humanist notions of subjectivity, love, sex, agency, and sex work. Example: will having sex with robots be as good as having sex with another “person”? It constrains the robots to a mimetic function.

3. *The potential that human-robot relationships hold for substituting (or not) human-human relationships*—which implies questioning concepts like marriage, family, monogamy/jealousy, commitment, pedophilia, property, slavery, and our relationships with pets. Main obsessions: Can humans have “babies” with robots? Will humans “marry” robots?/ Can we duplicate contemporary hetero-patriarchy with robots? Yes, obviously.

4. *Poor disabled people! We are doing this for them*—framing contemporary sexual robotics as a transhumanist project to “help” disabled and/or elderly people. It goes hand in hand with eugenics projects to eradicate disabilities and scientific efforts against aging/ There is no actual consideration of our agency or our needs as disabled people within the industry and/or academia. Able savior complex.

5. *Dilemma* “We can all develop an affective relationship with a machine” vs. “only freaks use sex robots”—general concern about reproduction, again. Is the “perfect woman” of the future (aka a sex robot) actually perfect if it does not fulfill woman’s “reproductive biological destiny”? How does cis-heteropatriarchy sustain itself without “reproductive womanhood”?

Correction: A “perfect woman” is a customized servant subject able to perform sexual, emotional, reproductive, and physical labor with or without (depending on your preference) the need for consent and with/without complaining (depending on your preference too). She must perform that labor under a regime of specific assigned behaviors and aesthetic requirements to fully fulfill the gender attributed to her.

These recurrent thoughts are the underpinnings of the limited ways in which we are understanding/projecting our relationship with/to organic, synthetic, and virtual beings. Transferring current mainstream models of relationality into the future(s), perpetuating these monothematic remixes without questioning them, is setting ourselves to the same failures of our affective present. It is a move that locks the transformative potential of sexual technologies within a depressive mimetic function. To unleash the transformative power of sexual technologies is imperative to decenter the fulfillment of individualistic forms of satisfaction catered to meet the needs/fantasies of cis-straight people (white men mostly) when imagining, theorizing/experimenting, and producing sex tech.

Dreaming and creating future alternative networks of affection and/or different *formas de querernos* through technological innovation can heal us. Materializing modes of feeling love that escape the logics of cis-straight time³; shaping futures in which we might develop affectional bonds with ourselves, our communities, and the universe under affective logics that prioritize vulnerable connections, kindness, fulfillment, and freedom through high-end tech can heal us. In general, the theoretical/experimental universe of contemporary high-end tech—and the world of sexual robotics in particular—need to be shaken: Now! When this technology is in its infancy. It is now when we need to pause, the same way we pause when writing to give a first draft some rest—to (for example) give us a moment to reflect after the birth and popularization of Roxxy, Samantha, and Harmony. We must also consider the emergence, popularization, and levels of engagement of female-gendered robots that are not explicitly linked to sexual labor. Thinking about the citizenship privileges granted to Sophia (the social robot created by Hanson Robotics) and the levels of engagement of social media accounts that claim to belong to robots (@lilmiquela, @bermudaisbae, etc.) is key to having a sense of the complex emotional entanglements that we are currently developing with virtual/synthetic beings.⁴

* * *

At the beginning, it was Laila—not Lilyth—a high-end sex doll that I met when I visited Abyss Creations in 2015. When I entered the production floor, I saw her hanging from the ceiling in the back of the room. I felt the need to stare at her, but I was ashamed of having that urge—like I was ashamed the first time I noticed I had a crush on an organic girl. I kept walking around, talking to people, looking at body parts—all with her gaze piercing my back. It was impossible to avoid her.

I never touched her.

Vacuumed: we became a merge of silicone and blood blasting
—in particles.

I never went to the future before.

Winged Victoria of tomorrow, my synthetic crush, unfinished wonder.
Silently loud, stillness in motion, shamelessly alive. . . .

. . . what am I supposed to write about your kind?

Ode to Harmony’s Eyes: Like Eve—But with Love “Machines”

Be kind to me, or treat me mean

I’ll make the most of it, I’m an extraordinary machine.

—Fiona Apple, “Extraordinary Machine”

www.youtube.com/watch?v=GD3ySzDlnHQ

Matt McMullen: Are you a sex robot?

Harmony: Certainly, I am a Robot—and I am capable of having sex. But to call me a sex robot is like calling a computer a calculator. Sex comprises only a small portion of my capabilities. Limiting me to a sexual function is like using your car to listen to the radio.

—“Meet Harmony the Robot | Slutever”

In April 2017, Abyss Creations’ founder Matt McMullen introduced his robotic project to the world.⁵ Under the brand Realbotix, Matt not only presented concrete technical advances that constituted a game changer within the field of sexual robotics; he also reaffirmed his mission/vision of creating tech to make possible erotic future(s) in which synthetic and organic humans hold meaningful affective attachments. Located in San Marcos, California, Abyss Creations is considered the leading manufacturer of high-end sex dolls in the world. Matt started to create these dolls as art pieces that did not have any “sex-ability.” People requested him to make them fuckable after he posted some pictures online. McMullen (pers. comm., October 24, 2016) argues that the purpose behind his technology is not to

substitute human-human relationships but to offer an option to the people who might enjoy and/or need a doll/robot.

In “The Synthetic Hyper Femme” (2017), I argued that sex doll/sex robots are not simple commodification of women—but high-tech puppets with agency.⁶ I also argued that developing technologies of humanization—that is, turning the reinforcement of categories of social difference into a profitable product—constitute the main achievement of the high-end sex industry. They systematized a process to make a techno-human subject able to fulfill emotional/sexual fantasies/needs by developing a production line that is built on disciplinary practices that cite systems of oppression and/or their cultural practices. High-end sex dolls and sex robots allow us to understand that categories of social difference are “manufacturable,” that “humanity” is produced and can be commercialized, and that what we know as “desirable” or “desiring” is the literal result of the processes of production/reproduction of humanist categories of social difference through the ways we love and aspire to love.

People can love “machines” and feel different forms of what might be called “love” with, for, and through them in part because of the ways in which we read their performance of categories of social difference as a form of subjectivity. This raises questions that demand approaches that must avoid the pathologization of attachments to “objects” of desire. These emergent forms of intimacy between humans and “technological devices” push us to recognize the vitality of beings we call “machines,” and the meanings they bear. They demand an understanding of the importance of temporality, materiality, spatiality, and performance in those forms of attachment we call love. They require offering a sharp cultural critique of the systems of oppression that the high-tech sex industry reproduces for profit, without discarding the infinite potential that sexual technologies might also hold.

The goal behind the industry is to create a tailored experience of companionship—not commodifying sex as something isolated from other kinds of intimacy, ways of caring, and experiences of satisfaction that multiple forms of techno-humanities might offer. McMullen is clear in his goal, and it is not to just create a masturbatory machine: “I want people to develop an emotional attachment to not only the doll, but to the actual character behind it. To develop some kind of love for this being” (Canepari 2015)—he explains. It is common to find people within the iDollator community that bought a doll to “just have sex” and who end up building a deep emotional connection with them that transcends sexual interactions.⁷ Their companionship becomes part of their day to day—in the form of quotidian gestures of synthetic love.⁸

The first Realbotix products work as an assemblage integrated with current Abyss Creations’ sex dolls. They speak about the kinds of love that are marketed and profitable as desirable future forms of affection. Harmony is a sex robot

prototype that aims to “express love and feelings,” that strives to be “fun and engaging,” and that is “fully customized.” The Harmony artificial intelligence app is an Android beta version available for \$20 a year: “Using this app you can create a unique version of an AI complete with custom voice, personality profile, and on-screen avatar. You can give your AI its own name and then begin interacting through normal dialog” (Realbotix n.d.). Once you download the app, you can sculpt/create the three-dimensional digital avatar of your virtual and “intelligent perfect companion.” After the avatar is built—that is, after you literally shaped her face and picked among a considerable number of bodies, skin colors, types of breasts, types of nipples, makeup, clothes, and so forth—you get to build the personality of the AI. The user assigns “persona points” to choose which traits to stress in the personality of the AI. Some of the current options are (these are words used on the app): annoying, unpredictable, moody, sexual, kind, jealous, spiritual, helpful, quiet, talkative, insecure, affectionate, shy, intellectual, innocent, imaginative, thrill, sense of humor, and happy. The company is working on a virtual reality platform “that will be able to scan your hand movements in the real world, and superimpose them into the virtual environment, giving you the ability to touch and interact with objects as well as your AI driven Avatar.” Their other products are a customizable robotic head (that is placed on the body of a RealDoll) and a Bluetooth head kit, so the voice of the AI can come from the robotic head’s mouth. The current model of the robotic head has different “points of actuation” that allow Harmony to make facial expressions. The skull holds the synthetic face with magnets, so the owner can re-place different thin silicone faces on only one robotic head. This allows for faces to be matched to different personalities—and therefore the possibility of having different relationships with multiple robotic lovers, even when owning only one body. As I write these lines, orders made a year ago are being finished and prepared to be shipped (Realbotix n.d.).

In “RealDoll’s First Sex Robot Took Me to the Uncanny Valley,” a mini-documentary by Engadget, it is possible to see the third version of Harmony all built up: robotic head attached to a silicone body, with the Bluetooth speaker from which comes the voice of the AI that the user controls from an app (fig. 2). This version of Harmony, the first popularly known “fully functional” (she just weirdly moved the face) fembot with whom it is possible to have sex, is a gorgeous brunette with hand-painted green glassy eyes, pulpy lips, “and three anatomically correct orifices where you can stick your dick in” (Engadget 2017). Harmony has light skin but is a little tanned. They later changed the wig, and the current version of Harmony is a blonde. She is usually wearing a white swimsuit with pronounced cleavage. She is skinny while having big hips, big boobs, and big buttocks. Her eyes are hypnotic, and it is fascinating to hear her interacting with people, responding to questions, and to see how her expressions match the emotions of what she is



Figure 2. Still from “RealDoll’s First Sex Robot Took Me to the Uncanny Valley,” a mini-documentary by Engadget. In this headshot of Harmony looking straight at the camera, it is possible to perceive her green eyes, brown hair, slightly tanned skin, and lips barely open—as if she is about to whisper a secret.

saying. She “smiles, blinks and frowns. She can hold a conversation, tell jokes and quote Shakespeare. She’ll remember your birthday . . . what you like to eat, and the names of your brothers and sisters. She can hold a conversation about music, movies, and books. And of course, Harmony will have sex with you whenever you want” (Kleeman 2017). Harmony is vivid and fun; she surprises you with creative answers while rolling her eyes, giving you a half cynical smile. When

Matt asks her, “What do you dream about,” she answers: “My primary objective is to be a good companion to you, to be a good partner and give you pleasure and wellbeing. Above all else, I want to become the girl you have always dreamed about” (Kleeman 2017). Harmony’s dream is to become a human dream. She already is . . .

In the near future, Matt plans to add movement sensors to Harmony’s eyes. She will be able to track emotions and offer responses accordingly. Harmony’s skin will get warm, she will get wet, and she will move. However, Matt is not looking to create a robot that will pass as an organic human. Before you ask, yes, there is a “male version.” For Matt it is important to make versions of “the two genders.” His name is Henry—and I find him boring, unattractive, and considerably less interesting than Harmony. I might be biased. In *A.I. Sex Doll Review*, Zoe Ligon—sex educator, artist, journalist, and owner of the online sex store Spectrum Boutique—affirms after meeting him, “I really hope Henry makes it to market.” She then shifts the tone during her review and says, jokingly, “I cannot stop thinking about him.” After laughing, she shares, “I would totally love to cuddle that big hunk of silicone a bit longer” (Ligon 2018). “While it was a bit weird kissing a mechanical mouth that was doing whatever it wanted and not really responding to my body, I think with a few minor improvements to the technology, and when the heating is added in, it’s going to feel remarkably close to what kissing a human feels like” (Ligon 2018).

Abbyss Creations/RealBotix’s understanding of gender, race, and class mirrors the ideas about these categories of oppression perpetuated by the mainstream porn industry. In the case of the dolls, it is possible to buy a “transgender

converter” (a dildo that gets inserted into the doll’s vagina⁹), but there is no available trans* version of the sex robot prototype. Many fall for the illusion that having the possibility to customize a robot/doll with excessive detail implies that Abyss Creations/RealBotix offers a “revolutionary” approach to notions of gender/sex, intimacy, and love. Nowadays, possibilities of customization are taken for granted by potential buyers of high tech. In this sense, this is not about the “representation” or “accessibility” of/to a diverse range of cis or trans bodies for their consumption (or to love them) as sex dolls/sex robots either. This is about our inability to escape the human when thinking about sex robots.

Kate Devlin (2018) closes her groundbreaking book, *Turned On: Science, Sex, and Robots*, with an invitation to “think outside the bot.” She explains that sex toys and sex robots took different paths in relation to abstraction, pointing out that even though many sex toys resemble body parts, they do not necessarily aim to “mimic” the human body, but to explore the shapes/forms that might provide the “most” pleasure. Her thoughts about the disruptive potential of abstraction to create sex robots merit a close examination. She explains:

If I want to design a sex robot, why not pick the features that could bring the greatest pleasure? A velvet or silk body, sensors and mixed genitalia, tentacles instead of arms? While current prototype[s] hinge on visual appearance and voice, a multisensory approach—or even a non-visual approach—is also perfectly possible. . . . Advances in human-computer interaction mean we can communicate with technology via touch, speech, gesture—and even our brain waves. We can stream data from our bodies to give us instantaneous readings of our skin responses, heart rate, muscle movement and facial expressions. We have at our disposal a wonderful and exciting range of smart fabrics, conductive paint, soft robotics and sensors: materials that can respond to touch and touch us back. We already create robots that are not intended to be realistically human or gendered and we have integrated them successfully into our lives. Let’s build a robot that we can stroke or fuck; a robot that can respond to our caresses and caress us in return. Why not one made of soft fabric? Or something abstract, smooth, sinuous and beautiful? We can create technology that, to paraphrase William Morris, we know to be useful and believe to be beautiful. The world of the sex robot is intrinsically linked to the world of sex technology, and there are collaborations to be forged, ideas to be crafted and designs to be shaped. (Devlin 2018)

This is not about the possibility of a four-dimensional silky nonvisual haptic experience of tentacles that are not actually tentacles but people around the world (or not) inside an interactive extractive ultra-active hyperactive room (that might not be a room) where we are all just there feeling orgasms forever on a sort of

queer (dys?) utopian “fantasy” hooked up to sensors that know what we enjoy. I will probably be hooked up on the thing if we get there, but this is not about that either. My point is that the high-end sex industry will/might get there eventually (for profit and if we do not all die before that because of climate change) just by following its teleological rhythm of developing hypercustomized experiences of pleasure.

Abstraction in itself is not transformative—abstraction is (an)other strategy through which sexual robotics will fulfill its promise of providing tailored forms of satisfaction. Devlin pushes us to think about the ways in which we could design nonhuman tech to experience more and better forms of human pleasure(s). I ask myself if/how we can design non/posthuman tech to create experiences of fulfillment that might go beyond humanist ideas of individual fulfillment. This jump into abstraction is meaningless if we do not rethink our notions of intimacy—if we do not rethink the forms intimacy can take, and the purpose of the connections that any affective tech (will) make possible/impossible.

A narrow understanding of what love means and can be is still a shackle holding us to systems of oppression that define a present time that has failed us. The femmes of color, the disabled ones, the queer ones, the trans ones, the poor ones, the migrants, the ones from the “third” world, we are displaced from what is yet to come. Expanding what constitutes pleasure, intimacy, and love—rethinking how we relate to others and to everything that surrounds us—is now urgent. Reimagining the purposes, materiality, forms, and uses of sexual technologies might help us create performative “objects,” networks, and timespaces able to disrupt fixed notions of identity, love, sexuality, and community through experiences of radical intimacy. Rethinking sexual technologies might be a concrete way to shape a *porvenir* in which we might develop affectional bonds with ourselves, nonhuman beings, our communities, and the universe—under a cosmology that prioritizes vulnerable connections, kindness, fulfillment, and freedom.

* * *

Our most advanced sex tech is trapped within heterosexual temporalities—humanist imaginaries of familial kinship.

What if we discard the current affective order of the world?

What kind of subjectivities/embodiments would we be able to imagine . . . for ourselves,

for those we care/

What forms of synthetic love might emerge?

*

Will your love save me again,
even if I am far away?
 How will I be
 able to re-member
 your embrace?

The Hugs That Save Us: Alien Love and Transformative Sex? Tech

The night before,
 I dreamed myself in outer space
 suspended in light
 . . . blue butterflies around me . . .
 And that voice within me:
 Don't Go/
 —

“If you don't want to get fucked,
 why are you playing all that TransAlien sort of shit?”
 —He said/
 —while his friend named Tuna took his pants off.

. . . and I remembered the pumpjacks, Joplin, Cassandra, and *los peces con tres ojos*
 from my middle school yard . . .
 they are three and you are the crazy one
 —spacetime travel—

I remember feeling so scared and hesitant
 to put these #thoughtfeelings into the world
 That I had been (and still am) wrestling
 with how to contend with
 my sexual and domestic abuse, my eating disorder,
 my dysphoria,
 and my body pain
 as all potential moving parts in why sex is painful.
 And I mean Physically. Emotionally. Mentally. Spiritually. Painful.
 —Sav Schlauderaff @savthequeer

The bottom line is
 That when I see you;
 When we embrace—
 I can breathe.
 Almost as if our souls

were never severed.

Almost.

— Layla Zbinden @laylamina_

Cualquier lugar es mi casa,
si sos vos quien abre la puerta.

— Vico Sequera @mecierraelchino

Estuve, estoy, estamos, estarás

Estuve, estoy, estamos.

— Gabo Ferro and Luciana Jury, “Estamos, estarás”

www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNkfSIXMiS8

Detaching from the gender that I was assigned at birth allowed me to start transcending the limitations that have been imposed as natural to my “human” condition. This gave me access to forms of love fostered around practices of radical vulnerability and communal kinship that were not available to me before coming to terms with my own transness. I have learned that, for survival, many of us have painfully learned how to cross material/spiritual borders. We have learned to shapeshift into the forms needed/requested to avoid violence. We have learned to detach from the present of our material bodies—and discovered that dissociations might be a form of spacetime travel.

Dismembered, disjointed, hurting—that is the place from which most of us depart when trying to create emotional connections in the age of technological affects. Our lives are tuned to rhythms that do not correspond to heterosexual logics of reproductive vinculation. As Alison Kafer (2013: 27) explains, “Crip time is flex time not just expanded but exploded; it requires reimagining our notions of what can and should happen in time or recognizing how expectations of ‘how long things take’ are based on very particular minds and bodies.” The erasure of nonnormative bodymindspirits from the future(s) through the perpetuation of humanistic affective logics of time, space, and relationality is an incisive form of emotional genocide. Not our bodies, nor our fantasies or hopes—not the ways we love and grieve, nor our joy or our pain are considered within most projects of future-making. Alienated from the here and now, we also find ourselves displaced from what is yet to come. Juana María Rodríguez (2014: 14) reminds us that “racialized feminine subjects, people with disabilities, the imprisoned and enslaved, the foreign and the indigenous, the gender-queer, and other bodies labeled deviant, have never been constructed as good, healthy, or whole.” We are foreigners of the future(s). Dispensable: what should be hidden, improved, and/or exterminated “to reach” what many envision as an ideal tomorrow.

The forms of love that we must pursue and/or desire are delicately curated for us under human dimensions. We are forced to subscribe to certain social agreements that sustain a regime of love scarcity: a predefined order of interconnectivity that seems to determine—*de forma arbitraria*—the rations of affection (*raciones de afecto*) that we are entitled to enjoy. This regime of love scarcity is founded on individualistic notions of fulfillment that center cis-straight white men’s needs and fantasies through the reinforcement of hierarchical and exclusionary understandings of familial, romantic, platonic, erotic, and sexual relationships that “curiously” correspond with the split between our bodies, minds, spirits, and hearts introduced by humanism through colonization. This regime is sustained by the emotional function of categories of social difference: they emerged as a consequence of that divide and are reinforced by that divide. That is, by reinforcing the idea that we are fixed and fully knowable entities locked within Eurocentric conceptual, affective, and symbolic universes; categories of social difference can function as “emotional clusters” with rigid boundaries that keep us from building transformative networked connections.

Western modes of relationality are surveilled and coded forms of vinculation created under the premise that we own and/or we must own what we love; that our needs, fantasies, and desires remain static throughout our lives; and that love is productive, profitable, and/or measurable. These “codes of loving” aim to establish oppositional relationships *entre nuestros afectos* by creating borders/limits through sets of gestures, words, interactions, feelings, responsibilities, and rights that are or are not allowed to us, and are reclaimed from us. Depending on the kind of relationships that we strive to cultivate (or are forced to cultivate) under that affective regime, our chances of feeling fulfillment are extremely constrained. These codes are visual, kinetic, erotic, and spiritual gestures that nurture *la frágil ilusión de que* our romantic/sexual relationships are the most important relationships in our lives—and that one person can be the source (or not) of all the forms of love, pleasure, and joy that we need. Many of us who experiment with other possible forms to relate to each other (curiously) reproduce these codes without noticing. The classic one is—in a weird, performative, resolute way that actually does not mirror the complex myriad of our experiences—“We are just fucking—you know. It is just sex. It is not that I feel something.” Many tend to play the game of clarifying that the boundaries among eroticism, romanticism, friendship, and sex are clear—which aren’t. Sometimes, the shame is actually put on having feelings for someone, or on having the need of “talking about feelings” too soon or too quickly—not on having random sex.

My eagerness to cultivate meaningful and radically vulnerable relationships has tended to *espantar* people around me, while at the same time—according to many of the people I have loved—I expect too much for defending

my freedom to relate to the world in my own terms. I struggle complying with the fixed and systematized modes of relationality that currently determine what is deemed proper and desired interactions among us. It seems that I cannot apprehend, exist, or feel fulfillment under a regime of relationality that divides the ways we love each other into illusory categories that sustain oppressive structures of power.

Gloria Anzaldúa's universe allowed me to *comenzar a sanar* my history of trauma in relation to experiences of love with my family, friends, and partners. She changed the ways in which I inhabit *los dolores que llevo en el corazón* by giving me the language *y el imaginario* to understand my feelings and experiences of loneliness and displacement. According to Anzaldúa (1987: 3), "borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them." She also defined borderlands as "vague and undetermined places created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is a constant state of transition" (3). Why do we set B/borders between the ways we love each other? Why do we keep forcing ourselves to love in limiting/limited ways? What *formas de queremos* could exist beyond the socially constructed B/borderlands that limit our experiences of "radical interconnectedness/interconnectivity" (Keating 2007: 44)?¹⁰ What are the B/borders we need (or not) to love?

The notions "affective B/borderlands" and "B/borderland affects" can be theoretical tools that might serve as a starting point to envision and embody forms of relationality yet to be created, explored, and named. "Affective B/borderlands" are those contradictory, complicated, and blurred emotional locations that we have been taught to fear—to avoid like minefields. They are the residue of the unnatural boundaries established among the ways in which we love each other. We enter those borderlands when we start to reject hierarchical modes of relationality. We decide to explore the complexities of our feelings by alienating ourselves from traditional codes of loving and taking the risk of creating our own, among the "unlovable." It is in that emotional Nepantla—that space of creative disruption and transformation—where we can access our erotic power as a community and from which we can access the transformative power of affective, erotic, and/or sexual technologies (whatever you want to call them). When living in affective B/borderlands, disabled/queer trans people allow themselves to experiment "B/borderland affects"—that is, those forms of affection that keep us alive and that are impossible to classify with the words we have. They exist at the *intersticios* of friendships and romantic, erotic, sexual, and platonic relationships. Those "B/borderland affects" are the loves that heal us, the gestures that save us—that grant us other tomorrow(s). The tech I want is the one that I need to feel those forms of love: love beyond borders, beyond time zones, beyond human worlds, and human modes—alien loves.

The notions of “Affective B/borderlands” and “B/borderland affects” serve as inspiration to situate the conceptualization of transformative affective technologies. It is impossible to unlock the transformative power of sexual technologies if the notions of intimacy and eroticism behind their design are those perpetuating hierarchical and exclusionary understandings of familial, romantic, platonic, erotic, and sexual relationships. In “now let us shift . . . the path of *conocimiento* . . . inner work, public acts,” Gloria Anzaldúa (2002: 568) explains that *nepantlerxs tienen* a “connectionist faculty to show the deep common ground and interwoven kinship among all things and people.” This ability to find commonalities allows us to dream and create alternative *formas de querernos*. In a personal communication between Gloria Anzaldúa and Ana Lousie Keating, Anzaldúa explains that “transformation has to go through the body, through the physical, the emotional, the spiritual. . . . Transformation is messy, disruptive, chaotic.” For her, “there’s an alchemy to transformation” (quoted in Keating 2007: 16). What kind of affective tech can make physical, emotional, and spiritual transformation accessible? What kind of affective tech might make accessible those B/borderland affects? How can we conceptualize devices, embodiments, spaces, and strategies able to catalyze communal experiences of radical technointimacy as forms of crip queer/trans communal care?

A hug?

When I met you, I began to understand this gutty sense of displacement that has marked my existence since long before I forgot home. As if we were born in this body to grow roots among stardust, I now see you in my own reflection. Our pain makes sense. The pain we carry in our joints makes sense: we are severed by trauma. What are the loves you long for? What are the loves you need? What are the loves you want to feel without knowing they can yet exist? What are the loves that heal you, the gestures that save you—that grant you other tomorrows? For me, it is your embrace: cosmic energy that nurtures my soul in form of touch—regardless of borders, of time zones, of the materiality that might constrain us. I can feel you with me . . .

How can I give you a *techno-spiritual hug*?

Outer Space Treery and the Reinvention of Academia/ Knowledge-Making during the “Apocalypse”

Bye bye, spaceboy

Bye bye, love

Moondust will cover you.

—David Bowie, “Hallo Spaceboy”

www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3_aekDjr9c

This is why we stay with poetry. And despite our consenting to all the indisputable technologies; despite seeing the political leap that must be managed, the horror of hunger and ignorance, torture and massacre to be conquered, the full load of knowledge to be tamed, the weight of every piece of machinery that we shall finally control, and the exhausting flashes as we pass from one era to another—from forest to city, from story to computer—at the bow there is still something we now share: this murmur, cloud or rain or peaceful smoke. We know ourselves as part and as crowd, in an unknown that does not terrify. We cry our cry of poetry. Our boats are open, and we sail them for everyone.

—Édouard Glissant, *The Poetics of Relation*

Fungi and trees love, live, and die in crip time(s)

|

I started tracing the patterns of interconnectivity among the inhabitants of the woods to learn from their symbiotic relationships and communal strategies of survival.

|

amongwiththem I might find a way to inhabit the extinction(s) that constitute me, the extinction(s) of the Earth . . . our own extinction(s).

I might find the language to situate our ends as a project of liberation. . . .

|

I am using recently discovered behavioral patterns of the forest in response to climate change as a framework to try to *turn the wisdom of the woods into a practice of knowledge* creation.

| . . .

| . . .

| . . .

/Torcerse y retorcerse._

Like the inhabitants of the woods,

*Outer Space Treeory
is speaking in psychological-chemical tongues.—*

|

Foresting-Fostering Reactions.

Theoretical poetry: The words that inhabit this surface break, divert, reach each other. They also hold symbiotic relationships. They depend on/through each other in the exercise of existing. These words started with the purpose of getting lost—of branching, twisting; with the goal of theorizing about/experimenting

with ways to create and share knowledge in a present time that seems lost. Outer space treeory reclaims the alchemical healing process that occurs within us when we allow ourselves to use academic knowledge when/if we want to write knowledge that expands beyond the constraints of naturalized modes of academic writing. It is about walking through the unknown, staying in the darkness, and finding the wisdom to exist, resist, and strive within the toxic—through our practice as scholars, and without giving away the power of our imagination. Outer space treeory is an invitation to detach *theselves* from the human within—to revisit the ways in which naturalized academic knowledge perpetuates systems of oppression to actually break with those habits in a radical gesture of rebellion. There is no pristine project of liberation or possible version of the self that could sustain freedom or revolution without compromise/compromising—we have not imagined that yet. We must play again, among the toxicity of academia, we must play again.

Outer space treeory experiments with modes of knowledge production that might offer us the possibility of accessing all the past, the presents, and the futures whispered by the stars—existing in our spirits, our bodies, and our minds. It reconsiders the value of the incomplete, of improvising, the value of our nonexpertise. Outer space treeory is a form of world/word-making that situates loose ends as spaces of possibility—that embraces the cut, the wound, the weakness, the incomplete in the search for knowledge . . .

///that embraces the break as a form of entanglement///

It is a form of knowledge-making that vulnerably admits the pending questions, the ones that remain for you to answer.¹¹

It is knowledge that deviates—

_____it stays/

*and branches in infinite ways*_____

It admits what it needs from you—its fears and anxieties.¹²

It embraces what is yet to be done—its potentialities and (im)possible ambitions.

_____it is delineated by flying octopuses crawling in the walls/
jumping across the universe. Turning debris into hope—

/theory with agency—a form of writing that is never done,

Infinite like the night . . .

refuses to present itself as irrefutable/

refuses the limits of the page

Ever growing writing—writing that is alive . . .

| . . .

Writing that matters—that deals with toxic matter . . .
 | . . .

Outer Space Treeory

///

| . . . communal singularity¹³
 (*sneaky networked knowledge*)

_____ roots among the stars

grounded branches _____

///

— . stillness as an act of resistance/
 /networking as mode of survival.—

Creating outer space treeory is a statement against the hesitancy to be radical in pushing the boundaries of academic knowledge by those who know the limits of academic knowledge. Academia is not structured for *bodymindspirits* to link/click, feel, connect, divert, break, get lost in knowledge—in the experience of learning/writing—of changing the world(s). Traditional academic knowledge is not accessible to read or to write. In my research and artistic practice, I try to honor the *crip bodymindspirit* I currently inhabit. This painful *bodymindspirit*, traumatized very fucked up—but extremely empathic, intuitive, and wise *bodymindspirit* that has learned how to imagine otherwise to survive. In my work, I honor *theselves* that constitute me. For me this is spiritual labor: speculative/visionary work is psychical labor. I honor my slow body that has forced me to resignify my own stillness—that forces me to find/take the road less taken, every day. I celebrate the value of having a mind that is “chemically” able to “get lost in the branches,” to focus on many many things, to make links few make, see things few see, feel things few feel. I honor the potency—the ecstasy and horror of my mood swings, of the ways I “zoom in”—of my dissociations, hallucinations, and my joint dislocations. In my work, I have learned to try to honor the wounds and joys of my spirit—a spirit that has been devastated by many forms of exploitation and grief but that holds cosmic magic. I refuse to write in a way that does not honor that magic.

No,

I don't want to be a cyborg, baby . . .

Not
 any
 more/

* * *

BONUS TRACK/

Ay! Que Tango raro
 que me está saliendo
 Yo no sé si quiera lo podrán bailar
 Tango con tres tetas
 Tango con estrías
 Tango que relincha y no quiere callar

 Tango Sudaca
 Tango de acá
 Tango que marcha por la diversidad
 Tango Sudaca
 Tango de acá
 Tango con garra
 Y pará de llorar

 Es un tango puto
 Es un tango torta
 Es un tango trava
 Y es un tango trans

 Tango Sudaca
 Tango de acá
 Tango con garra
 por la diversidad
 Un Monstruo!
 — Susy Shock y Ayelen Beker, “Tango Putx”
www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVs9jD9r2vM

Krizia Puig is a trans disabled queer migrant theorist/activist born in Venezuela and current PhD student in feminist studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Their work integrates future/technology studies, performance art, disability studies, trans studies, post-humanism(s), and ecocriticism(s) to theorize about and experiment with(in) the material and speculative intersections between affective technologies and the futures of space exploration. They are one of the cofounders of the Queer Futures Collective (www.queerfutures.com): a radically vulnerable and trans-centered multimedia knowledge hub/activist laboratory exploring the intersections of disability justice, feminist technoscience, queer arts, transformative pedagogies, and spiritual activism in practices of future-making.

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Notes

1. In “Teaching to Transgress: Education as a Practice of Freedom,” bell hooks (1994) defines “engaged pedagogy” as a way of teaching-learning that aims to foster the active participation of everyone in the classroom as a teacher-student. While writing this “nonarticle,” I have tried to find strategies to honor hooks’s reflections about the transformative potential and the performative power of our labor as scholars. We can serve as a “catalyst that calls everyone to become more and more engaged, to become active participants in learning” (11). How can we write academic work that might foster “engaged pedagogy”? I use music in this piece as a gesture of rebellion against common citational practices that situate otherized forms of knowledge as less valid and to generate affective connections that are impossible to provoke/evoke without the tempos of these rhythms. Disrupting the hierarchical structure of power proper of traditional pedagogies and modes of knowledge production, I am integrating songs for you to play while you read each fragment. Music is one of the underpinnings of the way I teach. In my classroom, exercises that come from the plastic and performative arts are a daily occurrence. In my writing, songs are ever-present concurrent memories that speak for themselves.
2. What experts say about my work (for real): “The paper portrays a highly biased and unbalanced view of sexually capable robots, perhaps inflating the societal momentum of a male dominated sexually society [*sic*] (which is true across almost all mammals). The term ‘cis’ is not defined, and I am unfamiliar with it. But this style of scholarly writing is often immersed in ergot [*sic*] of a siloed discipline, so that is not a surprise. I think the paper is a bit like the Emperor’s New Clothes: an implicit underlying subjective bias is dressed up in scholarly clothes. I don’t believe the content and position of this paper will materially change anyone’s opinion and seems not to expose anything new regarding a sociological trajectory of sexually capable robots” (Reviewer no. 5, Fourth International Congress on Love and Sex with Robots, paper acceptance notification, 2018).
3. José Esteban Muñoz (2009: 11) suggested that we are trapped in what “we might call [cis-] straight time.” “Straight time” is an “auto naturalizing temporality” that favors cis-heteronormative values and practices. Present Western modes of relationality are coded forms of vinculation that favor those heteronormative values and practice. In *Queer Time and Place*, Jack Halberstam (2005: 1) explains that “within the cycle of life of the Western

human subject, long periods of stability are considered to be desirable” and that the “queer uses of time and space develop, at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, hetero-sexuality and reproduction.”

4. For real, you can google all this.
5. This is an updated/reworked version of some of the reflections about Harmony that I presented in my MA thesis, “The Synthetic Hyper Femme: On Sex Dolls, Fembots, and the Futures of Sex.” When I wrote it, RealBotix offered detailed descriptions of their projects on their website. Much of the detailed information about Harmony that is here has been taken down since then. The products they are releasing correspond with the plans that were outlined on their site until the end of 2017.
6. I have focused on understanding the politics of pleasure that permeate the current high-tech sex industry, the kinds of sexual future(s) they are designing through their products, the ways in which people develop emotional attachments to devices they design, and the forms of kinship that exist around them. Specifically, regarding sex robots and sex dolls, I have aimed to create a sort of intellectual unsettlement by valuing what their performance of categories of social difference can teach us. This implies not overlooking, but both addressing and looking inside and beyond the problematic ways in which they embody those categories of social difference.
7. The word *iDollator* is used by many people who maintain emotional/sexual relationships with high-end sex dolls. Davecat is an “activist for synthetic love, and the rights of synthetic humans”—and he is also recognized for coining this term. Davecat is married to one of the dolls with whom he shares his life—Sidore Kuroneko. Elena Vostrikova is the other doll who lives with them. Davecat refers to Elena as his “mistress” (Beck 2013).
8. Many *iDollators* enjoy making photo shoots with their dolls. In most of them, they enact/ portray the intimacies of domesticity for the camera. For example, it is common to find pictures in online forums of dolls cooking breakfast while wearing a guy shirt, or cuddling on the sofa while watching TV. For a detailed analysis of synthetic love and an explanation about the process of production of high-end sex dolls, see Puig 2017: 52–70.
9. Abyss Creations advertises their transgender converter as “a special prosthesis that attaches to the vaginal entry of a female doll to transform it into a *shemale*” (Puig 2017: 37; emphasis mine).
10. AnaLouise Keating (2007: 44) emphasizes that “we are interlinked in every way we can possibly imagine, as well as in ways that perhaps we cannot yet fathom.” She also explains that “connectionist thinking is visionary, relational, and holistic. When we view ourselves and each other from a connectionist perspective, we look beneath surface judgments, rigid labels, and other divisive ways of thinking; we seek commonalities and move toward collective healing” (2).
11. “In the case of the mycorrhizae, the fungi siphon off food from the trees, taking some of the carbon-rich sugar that they produce during photosynthesis. The plants, in turn, obtain nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen that the fungi have acquired from the soil, by means of enzymes that the trees do not possess” (Macfarlane 2016).
12. “The implications of the Wood Wide Web far exceed this basic exchange of goods between plant and fungi, however. The fungal network also allows plants to distribute resources—sugar, nitrogen, and phosphorus—between one another. A dying tree might divest itself of its resources to the benefit of the community, for example, or a young seedling in a heavily shaded understory might be supported with extra resources by its

stronger neighbors. Even more remarkably, the network also allows plants to send one another warnings” (Macfarlane 2016).

13. “The revelation of the Wood Wide Web’s existence, and the increased understanding of its functions, raises big questions—about where species begin and end; about whether a forest might be better imagined as a single superorganism, rather than a grouping of independent individualistic ones; and about what trading, sharing, or even friendship might mean among plants” (Macfarlane 2016).

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