

For the Love of Artifice 2: Attachment.

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An extension of the paper ‘For the Love of Artifice: Why we need robot sex dolls and why there is a growing sub culture of real people trying to become them.’

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Abstract. This work is an extension to the original paper written for the AISB 50 Conference Symposium by the author ‘For the Love of Artifice: why we need robot sex dolls and why there is a growing subculture of people trying to become them’ where evolutionary sexual strategies were introduced (Buss and Schmidt 1993) as a lense for discussing relations with artificial humans. In addition, this paper has combined ‘Love Mapping’ (Money, 1986) with theoretical approaches to attachment (Schwartz and White, 2005) as a framework to explore our individual sexual strategies with artificial partners. It is argued in this extended paper that such theoretical approaches should be combined to facilitate discourse on the impact of robotic and technological intimacy on the end user. This need not necessarily be solely seen in terms of psychological aspects, but also in relation to contemporary participatory culture (Jenkins 2006), associations with multi-mediated geek fandoms and fetishes, and concepts of social acceptance. As a consequence of this, elements of attachment explored as a sexual project rather than an emotional one, as in erotic countertransference on-to robots and technology for example, will be developed.

Keywords: attachment, cybersex, intimacy, geeks, fetish, love maps, nerds, sex robots, sexual strategies, technology.

1. **Introduction:** According to Ferguson, the contemporary sex doll or “fully functioning feminized android [...] appears to have arrived at the threshold of the boundary between pleasure and science.’(2010, p3) As a consequence then, this paper will not re-visit popular associated discussions of misogyny, surrealist representations of the female form (Bellmer 1902 - 1975), nor the female robot through science fiction and fantasy narrative (Barber 2009) – but will explore in a similar fashion as to what has been argued as the “spectre of necrophilia,[a] lens through which the sexualisation of artificial humans has been viewed” (De Fren, 2009, p.409) In this light, this paper wishes to contrast the notion of making the artificial human as a sex toy - and it’s associations with a deconstruction of what this paper

terms the *datafication* of pleasure and, in this instance, the *geekification* of the end user - with what could be described as the 'lens' of an evolutionary 'Sexual Strategies Theory' (Buss and Schmitt, 1993), combined with the construction of a psychological 'Love Map' (Money 1986) and 'Attachment Theory' (Schwarz and White, 2005). This combination will be used as a framework for exploring the construction of, and sexual engagement with, artifice.

2. **Contemporary Context:** For some, the idea of solitary engagement with high-tech artifice consolidates elements of intimate relations and possible emotional ties. Khan et al explain "that to understand deep parts of human-robot interaction – and of what it means to be a human – we need to assess the possibilities and limits of psychological intimacy with robots." (2010, p.124) This in-turn reveals the potential capabilities of depth (or lack of it) of human to human intimacy. If this can be explored in terms of love and sex, we could also use artificial humans to understand sadism, cruelty, fear and violence. In which case would creating the features of hatred, anger, and sexual sadism for example be further challenging in the context of the Uncanny Valley? Hanson (2006) has argued that the "identification of fundamental principles of robot aesthetics can greatly accelerate the successful deployment of robots." So there needs to be specific fundamental principles that would be needed to develop sexual interaction and engagement in which contemporary robots would be categorised – similar to other forms of entertainment such as movie or TV genres. The artificial robot created for sexual entertainment then, through a *process of datafication* of its various programmable responses and behaviours, can be branded and launched as a consumer product aimed at specific sections of market preference. The robot doesn't just need to overcome our reactions to the Uncanny Valley, but also needs to satisfy a more sophisticated and transmediated (Jenkins 2006) contemporary clientele who are used to having their specific inclinations and predilections catered for.

3. **Evolutionary Sexual Strategy.** 'A key ingredient of Sexual Strategies Theory is that mating strategies are context dependant, and in particular highly sensitive to the temporal context of short-term versus long-term mateships.' (Buss and Schmitt, 1993, p205) In the quotation above, Buss and Schmitt begin to lay out their Sexual Strategies Theory. Should this viewpoint be applied to a sexual strategy of 'mateship' with artificial humans, the appreciation between long term commitment, versus short-term sexual release is revealed. This appreciation can vary from the type of investment made for the specificities of artificial interaction – both emotionally and financially; and also reveals the context dependant on such participation with artificial humans. Buss and Schmitt postulate that 'long term mating, like all sexual strategies, carries costs when contrasted with alternative strategies.' (1993, p216) Evolutionary psychologists contest elements of such discussion (Buller 2005) and tend to argue around notions of *homogamy* and *assortative mating* mainly from a

heterosexual standpoint and suggest that 'people tend to mate with those similar in race or ethnic background, age, socioeconomic status, educational background, and religious orientation.' (Buller, 2005, p213) If this is applied to our relationship with technology and artificial humans and robots then, this also reveals something further about how our perceptions of intimacy have developed over time and technological design time. Our understanding of a socially embedded technological otherness is now articulated as part of our very sense of self and how we engage with our intimately and selectively mediated construction of identity. Part of that construction and our sense of attachment both sexual and romantic, it is argued, also involves love mapping. This would also apply to building our relationship with technology and interaction with robots.

4. **Love Mapping:** their 'Lovemap'; sexologically described as 'a developmental representation or template of the mind and in the brain depicting the idealized lover and idealized program of sexueroetic activity projected in imagery or actually engaged in with that lover' (Money, 1986, p.290) It is argued that this constant search for the creation of an individual's 'Lovemap' is how and why contemporary and emerging digital media is used, as it provides a tool with which to sublimate many forms of deviant, experimental or usual sexual practices, relationship tinkering, or to explore identity formation and gender.

In light of our current relationships to the artificial, it would appear that connections and attachments to technology is an amplification of a long standing and traditional argument surrounding deviancy that Money has discussed in detail. Downing (2010) reviews this and suggests that Money, through his hypothetical constructionist theory surrounding *Lovemaps* and the genesis of paraphilias, argues that this is evidence of 'social developments that have gone awry', which it is argued, is different from more traditional 'nineteenth-century understanding of *nature* gone awry.' (2010, pp277-278). It can therefore be suggested that the argument against the love of robots and our attachment to technology in general can be compounded by the concept of 'nature' against 'social developments' that deviate from tradition or what is considered a 'normative' understanding of human relationships – which in itself is contested. So the concept of 'lovemapping' in this context of humans doing so with robots for example, can be argued in terms of a manifestation of deviated social development, which this paper argues, can lead to even more original approaches to innovation and technological development.

In our 'desire to be wired' there is also a revelation that openly displays our need to be connected. The examples in this paper explain how deviant sexual practices instigated by our push to find our individual sexual strategy and our love map extend the boundaries of technological development and emerging media engagement. However, it is not solely the hardware that needs to be developed it is also the content of such mediated behaviour that inspired attachment that needs to be considered.

5. **Attachment:** Schwarz and White (2005, p.7) argue that ‘Attachment is seen as a source of human motivation as fundamental as those of food and sex.’ They go on to contest Bowlby’s (1979, p. 129) postulation ‘that attachment behaviour is any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to some other preferred and differentiated individual.’ They suggest that ‘Sexuality was not a focus of theoretical concern for Bowlby’ and that ‘he emphasized that attachment was a motivational system in its own right, apart from sexuality and feeding.’ Like other relational theories, Schwarz and White argue that Attachment Theory has been criticized for its failure to theorize sexuality adequately in light that ‘it has come to be understood that attachment is a bodily experience’. They cite Mitchell as evidence here, and argue that ‘within contemporary relational theories, sexuality has come to be seen as the central arena in which the dramas of attachment are played out— in which “emotional connection and intimacy is sought, established, lost and regained” (Mitchell, 1988, p. 107).’ It is also suggested therefore, that intimacy and attachment to a robot or technological other for example, adds a new dimension to what had been discussed and theorized as ‘adult attachment styles’ (Hudson-Allez, 2010), and should be considered as value potential for integrative theoretical models for advancing relationship science, as well as providing insight into attachment related behaviors such ‘as safe-haven and secure-based functions’, similar to those of a human attachment figure (Birbaum et al, 2016, p.417)
6. **Summary:** This paper argues that through the use of robots, stimulation and communication technology or artificial humans for sexual interaction, an individual can test out their own issues surrounding attachment and intimacy. This is inclusive of the continuous recreation, re-affirmation and performance or ‘acting out’ of a psychological love map that induces attachment to the object or device concerned as part of an individual and personalized sexual strategy and a manifestation of a deviant form of social development that some may find awkward. This is all to easily associated with another conceptual context articulating that such behavior is ‘against nature’ and part of the Frankenstein approach to technology that has the potential to be ‘out of control’. There is a feminist movement – The Campaign Against Sex Robots – that aims to to ban sex and technological activities and anthropomorphic and animistic articulations which are redolent of radical Dworkinite fears and the demeaning of sex workers in general and women in particular. However, it is argued that this can also be seen a contemporary example of deviation as key to innovation (Barber 2005) and as a blatant opportunity to explore sexuality and the human condition in even more depth and reveal more about our need to be creative, innovative and inventive as part of our human evolutionary sexual strategy as a whole.

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