

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.

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), and various interpretations of fetishism (Mulvey, Fernbach), 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 perfect artificial human as a sex toy - and it’s associations with a deconstruction of what this paper shall term the *datafication* of pleasure responses - with what could be described as the ‘lens’ of an evolutionary ‘Sexual Strategies Theory’ (Buss and Schmitt, 1993), which will be used as an approach to exploring behaviour surrounding the construction of, and sexual engagement with, artifice.

This theoretical approach will be used to contest the role that the Uncanny Valley (Beck et al 2012) has to play in our appreciation of and identification with arousal inspired by the artificial human. The question of realism and aesthetics has been put forward as a *path of engagement* in the pursuit of a new theory for robot design as a replacement paradigm for notions of the uncanny (Hanson 2006), which in turn may alter our reactions of revulsion or excitement when confronted by notions and visions of sex with robots. Gates in her exploration of deviance has suggested that mechanical dolls and robots “represent some of our ambivalence about sexuality itself; in a sense we have no control over it; that we respond mechanically to stimuli; and that our sexual programming makes us helpless.” (Gates, 2000, p, 228)

In the time of so much mediated ‘upgrade culture’ (Lister et al 2009) at the time of writing, it is argued that part of our evolutionary sexual strategy demonstrates that not only will we wish to fall helplessly in love with our current technologies (Latour 1996) but we will also wish to become them. Expanding on from earlier empirical research into home-made teledildonics and adventures with virtual gender (Barber 2010), this paper will also provide evidence of a sub culture of people not only trying to make amateur sex robots, but actually wishing to become robots and dolls explicitly through narcissist forms of sexual arousal and a cult of techno body fascism. This will take the form of a discussion surrounding fans of *androidism* such as the UKs Venus Angelic with her scleral lenses and ‘morph suits’ or musician ‘Cindi Mayweather’ (android alter-ego of Jonelle Monae) for example, and conclude with further anticipated developments such as those already being created for teledildonic sex with Oculus Rift and Virtual Reality.

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