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Publication Date

2009-12-12

Peer reviewed

Sensuous Extimacy: Sexuation and Virtual Reality. Taking on a Gender Identity in Second Life

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ABSTRACT

When people meet they apologize for their bodies: their bodies are never perfect, never adequate, and never quite behave exactly how people want them to. Today it seems that the virtual reality of cyberspace offers itself as an effective medium that can transport its users into a different universe, freed from the burden of the body and from the necessity of any such apology. The quickly growing number of the networking users demonstrates the rising demand for a new kind of symbolic realm, whether it be in the form of the user-friendly layout of a website or the appealing architecture of a simulated space, where one can easily *inscribe* oneself by obtaining a two-dimensional profile or a three-dimensional digital body.

This paper addresses one of today's myths about cyberspace that pictures it as a realm where users can discover their "true selves" or acquire new identities (and especially sexual identities), and by performing them, users may eventually become what they have created on-line. Today we inquire about the role of digital media in shaping and channeling sexual desires, dynamics and identifications attached to encounters with and through media technologies. I use Jacques Lacan's theory of a subject and his theory of the three orders of the imaginary, symbolic and real to interpret the logic of sexuation (or taking on a gender identity regardless of biological sex) in virtual reality. Drawing on Lacan's concept of "extimacy" that helps to escape a bipartition between interior and exterior, my paper focuses on a series of displacements occurring in and through cyberspace, exploring the dynamics of sexuation as it occurs in the 3D world of Second Life (www.secondlife.com).

Categories and Subject Descriptors

D.2.7 [Software Engineering]: User Interfaces – *theory and methods, user-centered design*: General.

General Terms

Performance, Design, Experimentation, Human Factors, Theory

Keywords

Avatar, cyberspace, virtual reality, desire, sexuality, sexuation, gender, sex, Lacan, Second Life, identity, psychoanalysis, new media, technology

1. CYBERSPACE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS OF LACAN

...it is the absence of the penis that makes her phallus, the object of desire. Evoke this absence in a more precise way by having her wear a cute fake one under a fancy dress, and you, or rather she, will have plenty to tell us about...

Jacques Lacan, "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire" [1: 699]

One of today's myths about cyberspace pictures it as a realm where users can discover their "true selves" or acquire new identities (and especially sexual identities), and by performing them, users may eventually become what they have created on-line.¹ Such notions seem to allow the possibility of subverting or resignifying identities,² and this is why today we inquire about the

¹ An increasing level of augmentation and the impact of on-line experiences on the users' real life behavior described by Stanford University's research team of Nick Yee and Jeremy Bailenson as *the Proteus Effect* [2: 3]. They state that a constructed on-line identity affects one's identity in reality. This effect, in the words of Lacanian scholar Renata Salecl, is described more precisely as a result of "the tyranny of choice" imposed by "the push to new enjoyment from the media" that leads to "increasing plasticity in terms of identification." I refer readers to her talk available on the website of *Slought Foundation Online Content* <http://slought.org/content/11318>.

² According to Judith Butler in *Bodies That Matter*, performativity is a regularized and constrained repetition of norms which is not performed by a subject, but "this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject" [3: 95]. Drawing on Foucault's theory of "regulative discourses," Butler suggests that sexuality is a disciplined product of history and culture. It certainly is hard to object to the role of the social where the question of sex and gender is concerned: sexuality itself "has a history, and one that isn't over," Tim Dean reminds us. Assuming Lacan's distinction of different modalities of the speaking being's relation to the body, Eric Laurent suggests that "the Butlerian community of the sexual performativity of bodies would have to be added as one of the varieties of possible relations to the body" [4: 153].

role of digital media in shaping and channeling sexual desires, dynamics and identifications attached to encounters with and through media technologies. I find Jacques Lacan's theory of a subject and his theory of the three orders of the imaginary, symbolic and real particularly helpful in addressing the logic of sexualization, to use a Lacanian term for taking on a gender identity regardless of biological sex, as it happens in virtual reality.

In the language of Lacanian psychoanalysis, a human subject is the subject of desire that comes from the social realm of culture or the depersonalized Other. He defines desire as "neither the appetite for satisfaction nor the demand for love, but the difference that results from the subtraction of the first from the second, the very phenomenon of their splitting" [5: 580]. Therefore, desire cannot be satisfied—which, however, does not stop a subject from desiring.

Given that humans are present in the physical world as bodies, the body, as Paul Verhaeghe says, becomes that "surface upon which the Other writes" [6: 3]. Lacan emphasizes the role of the social for the acquisition of the body image by a subject and claims that the Other determines the very appearance of the body and also, the ways in which the body enjoys. Therefore, according to the Lacanian ontology of a subject, the core of human identity resides "outside."

1.1 Virtual reality and Lacan's *l'hontologie*

In his seminars, Lacan alters the spelling of the word "l'ontologie" to "l'hontologie," playing with the French word for "shame," *l'honte*. That is why when people meet, Jacques-Alain Miller says, they "apologize" for their bodies: their bodies are never "perfect," never adequate, and never quite behave exactly how people want them to. "It is not to his consciousness that the subject is condemned, it is his body," Lacan noted.³ Given that, it is only logical that many seem to expect the virtual reality of cyberspace to become an alternative universe where the user can be freed from the burden of the body of flesh and from the necessity of any such apology. As statistics suggest, cyberspace is seen as a reservoir for possibilities to easily inscribe oneself into the alternative symbolic realm of social networks by selecting the traces of one's real life appearance, sex, gender, and social status that one chooses to either exhibit or hide⁴. Virtual reality "screens" us. And if it does, with the help of fiber optics, it is seen that, in the words of Tim Dean, "the subject of desire emerges not

³ This is Paul Verhaeghe's translation of the original "Ce n'est pas à sa conscience que le sujet est condamné, c'est à son corps" from Lacan's 1966 text "Réponses à des étudiants en philosophie sur l'objet de la psychanalyse" published in *Cahiers pour l'analyse* 3, p. 8.

⁴ According to the 2008 Digital Future Project conducted by the University of Southern California, "Internet users reported a wide range of reasons for visiting video sharing services [...], with relaxing or filling time at the top of the list. Users also report several reasons involving personal values, such as gaining insight into themselves or other members, looking for a sense of belonging, or finding models of behavior" [7: 8]. The USC 2009 Digital Future Project informs us that "fifty-two percent of users said the Internet was important or very important in helping them maintain their social relationships—up from 45 percent in 2007" [8: 7].

when an identification (with the father, the mother, or a signifier) is made, but when it fails to be made" [9: 187]. Therefore, cyberspace cannot be considered a pacifying field; it neither permits the forgetting of castration nor reduces anxiety. It "screens" us by allowing temporary identification with an on-line character and also temporary *passing as an other* in the public eye. As Wendy Hui Kyong Chun observes, "passing is a form of agency, which brings together the two disparate meanings of agency: the power to act, and the power to act on another's behalf. In doing so, it reveals the tension inherent to agency, the ways in which it is compromised even when it is effective, the ways in which agency is most forceful when mediated" [10: 56]. Identification fails; an identity, and especially a gender identity, isn't stable.



Figure 1. An avatar in front of the virtual mirror.

1.2 "We are all in drag"

In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Sigmund Freud noted that "psycho-analytic research has found that all human beings are capable of making a homosexual object-choice and have in fact made one in their unconscious" [11: 145]. Tim Dean and Christopher Lane comment on this important essay of Freud in their introduction to *Homosexuality and Psychoanalysis*:

Rather than simply revealing homosexuality as a normal and natural expression of human erotic potential, Freud's connecting sexuality to the unconscious instead makes all sexuality perverse: 'The disposition to perversions is itself of no great rarity but must form a part of what passes as the normal constitution' [12: 171]. The idea of the unconscious dramatically changes how we can and should think about human sexuality. [13: 4]

In other words, as early as in 1905, Freud already came to a conclusion that 1) one can actually *make* an object-choice and 2) one can make a choice regardless of one's biological sex and even regardless of one's assumed gender identity (on and off screen). Therefore, an identity cannot be "complete." Even an imagined identity in the simulated worlds (one of them, Second Life, is the subject of this paper) cannot be brought to a completion. Moreover, given the imaginary nature of virtual reality, it actually demonstrates some of the key mechanisms of human, "all too human," relations maintained "only by the way of mediating images, illusions of gender, irrespective of whether the sexual relationship in question is heterosexual, homosexual, or of some other kind" [14: 83]. An avatar, a digital puppet, a user's vehicle

in the virtual worlds, fails in the same way a “meat puppet” does⁵. Contrary to the assumptions of the posthuman discourse about the mind/body split, this failure demonstrates the fixity of the ego in the imaginary realm of relationships, and its dependence on the symbolic realm (of culture, law, and language) as well as, of course, the impossible realm of the real. Behind the virtual mask of an avatar, a user does not cease feeling the lack of consistency (of the identity and of the body) and has to, again, “apologize” for this virtual body, finding excuses in the limitations of the language of visual representation, and of course, in the limitations of language as such that prevent one from articulating desire. Therefore, cyberspace does not allow learning anything about the so-called “true self,” which, of course, is an imaginary concept. And yet, cyberspace can help a user visualize a fantasy. As André Nusselder has noted, “This imaginary self-representation is where the ‘inner self’ and the ‘outer self’ coincide. Fantasy as such an interface obviously presents itself in the computer-interface” [15: 134]. Lacan explains, fantasy helps to sustain desire and is only another “screen,” another layer on the way to learning one’s unique way of enjoyment and life, one’s *jouissance*. Regarding gender and sex, the practices of cyber-embodiment in the virtual world, similar to what Judith Shapiro says about transsexuals, “make us realize that we are all passing,” [16: 257] or, in the words of Tim Dean, that “we are all in drag, whether or not we’re aware of it” [17: 70].

1.3 Extimacy

It’s important for the discussion of sexualization in cyberspace that Lacan’s theory takes into consideration both the individual realm of a user’s subjectivity and the public realm of social reality manifested by networks. The relation between the two realms can be described with the help of Lacan’s concept of “extimacy” (*extimité*), introduced in his 1959-60 Seminar VII, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. The term is formed by applying the prefix *ex* from *exterieur* to the French word *intimité*, meaning “intimacy;” it was meant to question a bipartition between inside and outside. Although the term reappeared in his texts, it remained undeveloped until Jacques-Alain Miller’s 1985-86 Seminar, in which he unraveled Lacan’s understanding of the subject as “ex-centric,” with its center being outside. Miller explains Lacan’s phrase “the unconscious is outside”⁶ as the real being in the symbolic [18: 75]. He refers to the three orders tied into the Borromean knot—the imaginary, the realm of *imago* and relationships; the symbolic, the realm of language, culture and law; and the real that lacks mediation, absolutely resists symbolization and therefore is “impossible.” The (symbolic) realm of a network community behind the opaque window of a computer screen is a materialization, or rather, virtualization, of the Other whose presence and whose discourse are always “at the very center of intimacy” [19 77]. As Alexander Stevens points

⁵ In the longer version of this essay I discuss N. Katherine Hayles’ theorizing of the posthuman, which helps me to address another popular understanding of cyberspace as what allows foreseeing the end of the human. I refer my readers to pages 2-3 of Hayles’ book *How We Became Posthuman. Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*, where she lists several assumptions typical for posthuman discourse.

⁶ It should not be confused with “the prosthetic unconscious” typical, according to Lacan, of a psychotic.

out, for Lacan “the problem of sex is presented in terms of the choice of identification, and that the subject is happy if his identification allows him to be part of a community” [20: 213]. Establishing an interpersonal connection, Second Life operates on the premises of anonymity. Unless one wishes to reveal one’s real life identity, the subject communicates with another subject by means of representations—avatars that have been given last names by the system.

1.4 Second Life

Now that the theoretical framework and the main concepts are introduced, I can discuss the 3D world of Second Life to explore the interconnections of sexualization and digital media. Second Life was launched in 2003 and has attracted the devotion of a great number of users, to the extent that many of these users truly perceive it to be their *second life* as they actually contend that its significance outweighs their “first” life. To introduce the site, Second Life is a real-life implementation of the Metaverse, a fictional virtual world and successor to the Internet imagined by Neal Stephenson in his renowned 1992 science fiction novel *Snow Crash*. Inspired by the idea of a three-dimensional virtual environment inhabited by and operated through avatars (the digital representations of users), the team of Philip Rosedale, founder and CEO of Linden Lab, “adapted” the novel into X3D format, “an ISO ratified standard that provides a system for the storage, retrieval and playback of real time graphics content embedded in applications, all within an open architecture to support a wide array of domains and user scenarios” [21] by combining virtual, mirror and augmented realities with the web.⁷ As of today, over 20 million accounts are registered, 1.5 million users are logging in monthly, more than 250,000 people daily, and about 70,000 users are typically online at the same time.

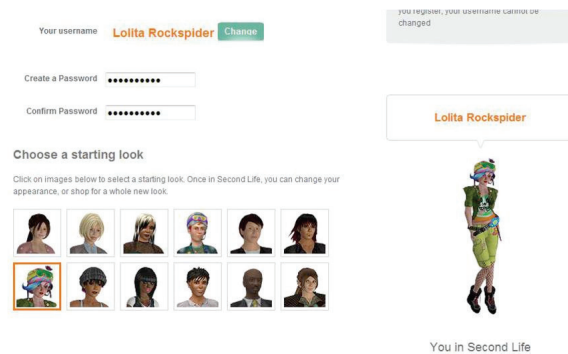


Figure 2. Basic avatar patterns in Second Life.

As Philip Rosedale noted in his talk solicited by *Technology, Entertainment, Design*, one of the most important features of Second Life is that it is entirely user-generated and the creators make “no attempt to structure the experience” [22], so that basically all features of Second Life are created by users. The users design their avatars, as well, altering and adjusting the suggested basic patterns to embody their imaginary “selves.” Initially, a user was able to choose between several human

⁷ Later, however, Rosedale claimed that he had envisioned the virtual space inhabited by digital puppets long before reading Stephenson’s novel.

avatars, but could also choose to be an animal or a cyber creature. With the evolution of the avatar design, the number of human-like basic patterns increased (they now represent different occupations and possibly different social statuses as well as races), while the animal and cyber types disappeared⁸. From the beginning, all basic avatar patterns—animal or human—have been gendered: a clear distinction between male and female shapes applies even to fantastic cyber types. To avoid direct sexual implications of the site, avatars are without genitals despite the default male and female patterns. However, as Rosedale explains, “the presence of sex as an aspect of creative expression and playful behavior in a place like this is healthy, because it indicates we’re doing something right” [23].

From the very beginnings of the Internet, online chat rooms solicited and hosted the discourses of various gender practices. Second Life is, of course, no different, though unlike in text-based chat rooms, the subject in Second Life performs a gender identity in several ways—discursively (instant messages) and by means of representation (graphics). The discourse employed is not new. In many ways it borrows the techniques (cyber sex slang, rhythm and timing of typing, symbols, etc.) from chat rooms. As for graphics, in the majority of cases, the default gendered shapes of “male” and “female” seem to be insufficient to embody gender. In addition to the default shapes and digital clothing, a user is invited to purchase attachable genitals. As of today, attachable genitals of all sorts are among the best-selling products in Second Life.



Figure 4. A sexual act in Second Life.

1.5 Organs without bodies

Although Second Life external digital organs usually have realistic textures, both male and female genitals are, in most cases, oversized, awkwardly-shaped, unmatched to an avatar’s texture and skin color, and attachable both to the “naked” body and the clothed. Male genitals are even more conspicuous: they are, overall, a rather comic detail of an avatar that despite its somewhat cartoonish quality still aims to achieve some realism. To engage an avatar in virtual sex, a user clicks on a sex animation ball, which causes two or more avatars to perform a sexual act on screen. Digital genitals are almost never in synchronicity with sex animations, yet their apparent inability to

⁸ Although an animal avatar is no longer a basic pattern, one can still purchase it as an alternative avatar to wear under same identity.

function effectively does not prevent them from being a must-have addition to a default avatar. These attachments are mostly interactive. Touching them (by a simple mouse manipulation) brings up an on-screen description of erotic sensation that our imagined on-screen character experiences for us or performs instead of us. A term introduced by Slavoj Žižek could be helpful for defining the relation between the user and an avatar in such cases.



Figure 3. Attachable genitals on sale in Second Life.

Drawing on Lacan’s interpretation of the role of the Chorus in Greek tragedy⁹, Žižek describes it as “interpassivity,” that is, the subversion of “the standard opposition between activity and passivity: if in interactivity, I am passive while being active through another, in interpassivity, I am active while being passive through another” [25: 105]. The complexity of the avatar-based interaction might be broken down to the following: 1) an on-screen interactive user–avatar connection; 2) an on-screen interactive avatar–avatar connection; and 3) an off-screen interpassive avatar–user connection. While the last chain, an off-screen user–user connection, remains opaque and manifests itself only as undefined *presence*, it still strongly impacts the intensity of on-line communication¹⁰. This leads us back to the function of digital genitals: the description of the sensation that appears on the screen is a function of the genitals assumed by the avatar, thus guaranteeing the interpassivity of the user, who witnesses the articulation of desire by the Other, to which one submits.

In Lacanian vocabulary, Second Life digital genitals might be described as *the imaginary phallus*, or “the role the [biological]

⁹ In *The Ethic of Psychoanalysis*, Jacques Lacan writes on the role of the Chorus in Greek tragedy:

And what is a Chorus? You will be told that it’s you yourselves. Or perhaps it isn’t you. But that’s the point. Means are involved here, emotional means. [...] Your emotions are taken charge of by healthy order displayed on the stage. The Chorus takes care of them. The emotional commentary is done for you. [...] It is just sufficiently silly; it is also not without firmness; it is more or less human. Therefore, you don’t have to worry; even if you don’t feel anything, the Chorus will feel in your stead. Why after all can one not imagine that the effect on you may be achieved, at least a small dose of it, even if you didn’t tremble that much? [24: 252].

¹⁰ See Myron Kruger’s visualization of this communication in his 1983 book *Artificial Reality*, p. 128.

organ plays in fantasy” [26: 143], that, as Lacan says, “can be better understood on the basis of its function” [27: 579]. As Ellie Ragland writes in her book on the logic of sexuation, “the phallus is the abstract signifier of difference whose function—and this is crucial—is to give a person access to Other via the fantasmatic constitution of desire whose lack pushes one to reach out to the other across the solipsistic wall of one’s own desirous Other” [28: 20-21]. However, what is abstract in reality takes a “concrete” shape of an attachable genital in the imaginary realm of Second Life that regulates the ways an avatar performs a sexual act in the virtual realm—and becomes a manifestation of gender that a user is willing to take on in given circumstances.

Another important observation I have made is that Second Life users do not think of digital genitals as what “completes” their avatar as “male” or “female.” The “male”/“female” identifications are assumed by the users regardless of the attachable genitalia and the original basic male and female patterns. The two observations may seem to contradict one another, until one realizes that virtual reality does not bare a direct correspondence with reality. It exhibits only traces, which may not be accessible to an observer in real life. Therefore, the default male and female shapes do not entirely correspond to real life biological sex, but they are, perhaps, the closest thing to it. As well, digital genitals may be, in some cases, manifestations of gender.

The process of sexuation employs both the default shapes and digital genitals. Renata Salecl explains, “...both mirror image and phallus *qua* signifier are ‘prosthetic’ supplements for the subject’s foregoing dispersal or failure, for the lack of coordination and unity [...]. The opposition between ‘true,’ ‘natural’ phallus and the ‘artificial,’ prosthetic supplement (‘dildo’) is thus false and misleading: phallus *qua* signifier is already ‘in itself’ a prosthetic supplement” [29: 6]. In this sense it is quite similar to real life, with the only difference being that the process of identification is transmitted on the screen whereas, in real life, it may be, despite some cases, less visualized. Second Life displays gender identities as unfixed and inflexible. Although it still considers the Other of the network or certain community, its playful anonymous practice allows articulation of desires and establishing gender identities beyond the symbolic realm and normative masquerade of real life. In Second Life, one can often meet “shemales,” cross-gendered characters, “genderqueers” who identify themselves as straight in real life, and vice versa.

From this point on, the generalization of the relationship between on-line and real life gender identities may become utterly problematic since it depends on the uniqueness of each case. This is where clinical analysis comes in, because the real life identifications do not exhibit much about a person either; in fact, they are as imagistic as those in the virtual world. This is the main lesson given by Second Life: it mirrors real life in the process of sexuation yet allows the user to go beyond biological sex, supplying a user with attachable genitals and erogenous zone applications. What gender is performed by a female avatar that has several male genitals in the inventory (or male and female genitals, or none, or only attachable erogenous zone applications)? As Eve Misfit, a Second Life resident, complained to me, “I wish I could be a girly girl in RL [real life] too. But that’s my SL [Second Life] avi.” In Second Life, she was a female, obviously on the feminine side of Lacan’s sexuation graph, while in reality,

she seemed to be on a masculine side.¹¹ The research on gender identities in the virtual realm shows that, in the words of Ellie Ragland, “the masculine is not opposed to the feminine but, rather, is defined as being asymmetrical to the feminine, this asymmetry itself functioning as a signifier that constructs the way desire evolves within language” [30: 26-27].



Figure 5. A user who identifies himself as a heterosexual male in reality is using a female avatar “for aesthetic reasons.”

1.6 On-screen fantasy

For Lacan, the phallus is a signifier for a lack in being or a loss caused by the human’s entry into the symbolic order, and it has to do with the manner of enjoyment. Digital women and men acquire digital genitalia (or prefer not to) in order to mark a certain kind of sexual relation that they want to simulate on- and through the screen, and consequently, a certain mode of *jouissance* that they seek to find through their fantasy. Lacan understands fantasy as protecting against the impossible Real. He “compares the fantasy scene to a frozen image on a cinema screen, just as the film may be stopped at a certain point in order to avoid showing a traumatic scene which follows,” Dylan Evans explains [31: 61]. In the techno-age, when technology supplies us with some sort of fulfillment of desire, fantasy is what mediates interiority with exteriority, private and social; or as Tom Boellstorff observes in his book on Second Life, “virtual worlds could augment actual-world capabilities, social networks, and concepts,” and therefore, “the most significant shift is not from augmentation to immersion or vice versa; it is the shift from sensory immersion to social immersion as *techne*’s assumed effect” [32: 115, 116]. The study of Second Life sexuality and sexuation involves fantasy as it stages desire on screen. Lacan saw fantasy as defensive against lack and castration, and as such, it maintains both fears and pleasures, uncertainty and fulfillment; it fuses inside and outside, intimate and social/cultural/communal, in what Lacan calls *extimacy*.

When, in *The Second Life Herald*, Peter Ludlow and Mark Wallace discuss the ways sex is performed in the virtual worlds, they assume that the questions raised have to do with “how to take advantage of the technology to simulate sex in an environment devoid of physicality” [33: 127]. This assumption does not seem

¹¹ For more on Lacan’s sexuation graph and sexual difference see his 1972-73 seminar *Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX, Encore*.

entirely correct, however, since we should not presume the posthuman mind/body split. The mind does not travel in cyberspace on its own. Instead, today's scholarship acknowledges the importance of discussing the logic of augmented, or mixed, reality.¹² According to this logic, even in simulated cybersex, the body is, nevertheless, present, since actual "there" becomes virtual "here." "It is not to his consciousness that the subject is condemned, it is to his body," Lacan noted in 1966, and so, it is the body that becomes the arena for a simulated sexual act on the computer screen performed by means of fantasy. With a little stretch, it is implied that the body extends to the avatar—whether by interpassivity or as contemporary prosthesis feels to me less important than deciding whether or not this operation graphically represents what before had been individual fantasies of the phallus that one can either be or have.

1.7 All-too-human cyborgs

As revealed in psychoanalytical practice, sexual identity can be assumed by means of *imago*¹³ and relationships, and within language, culture and ethical tradition (what in Lacan's vocabulary is called the imaginary and the symbolic), but, of course, not without participation of the real. Ragland emphasizes in *Logic of Sexuation* that "sexuality is a system of meaning that includes negative elements of uncertainty about one's value as an object, as well as a positive slope of pleasure and orgasmic fulfillment" [36: 21]. With this in mind, Second Life appears to be an interesting case for interpretation as it allows virtualization of the logic of sexuation or taking on an identity as gendered. Attachable genitals are an imaginary attempt to interpret sexual difference. In the digital world of Second Life, the symbolic positions of a man and a woman are embodied by the male or female basic shapes one chooses at the stage of creating an avatar. This choice, however, does not determine whether the avatar will wear male or female genitals or whether a user will engage it in hetero-, homo-, or bisexual practices. To conclude, sensuous extimacy by means of new technologies does not make us less human; on the contrary, it demonstrates the fixity of the ego and its resistance to the coming-into-being of the subject by exploring new possibilities to multiply and alter the imaginary projections. For those who foresee the end of the human in the age of fiber optics, it should be a reminder that the posthuman is, in fact, all too human.

2. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank the 2009 DAC Committee and the theme leaders Dr. Susanna Paasonen and Jordan Crandall for including my paper in the panel on Sex and Sexuality. I thank the anonymous reviewers, my dissertation committee members Dr. Elisa Glick

¹² As Tom Boellstorff points out, we witness the potential conflict between two cultural logics of the virtual world, "a logic of immersion predicated virtually on a one-way transfer of analogies from the actual to the virtual. A logic of augmentation accepted analogical traffic between the virtual and actual; it presumed that virtual worlds could be one among many 'platforms' for computer-enhanced sociality and work (in line with things like email or a web browser)" [34: 115].

¹³ Or, as Renata Salecl calls it, the "prosthetic" mirror image [35: 7].

and Dr. Carsten Strathausen, as well as my colleagues Andrew Warburton and Hugo Blumenthal, and also Dr. Anne Myers and all participants of the Professional Writing Seminar at the University of Missouri for their comments on this essay. I am also deeply grateful to my in-world friends Fulham Swindlehurst, Andrzej Mizser, Philip Durant, Gamow Alphabet, Who Shot, and Perdita Boccaccio, together with whom I learned a lot about the virtual realm of Second Life. My special thanks go to Professor Ellie Ragland, my dissertation director, for introducing me to the theory of Jacques Lacan and guiding me through it.

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