

MAKING ROOM FOR POST-AUTHENTIC DOMESTICITY

ANTONIA HERNÁNDEZ MCGILL UNIVERSITY

This creative response interrogates the persona that seems to inhabit sex webcam platforms, online services where people can stream and monetize amateur sexual performances (Henry & Farvid 2017; Jones 2020). If the perception of authenticity has been a crucial feature of camming since its inception (Senft 2008), this impression is no longer conveyed only through amateur signifiers (Hernández 2019). Domesticity on the sexcam platform oscillates between two poles. One of them is incarnated by the professional webcam studio, where uninhabited rooms are presented as private yet generic spaces (Korody 2019). The other pole is the personal space, staged for its transmission through the platform. Decorative trends and habits crossover between these extremes, creating a new type of domesticity with no other purpose than the sexual spectacle. The product of this mutual influence is referred to as ‘post-authentic domesticity’ in this article. Drawing upon literary studies, post-authenticity implies a fiction that engages with an ‘authentic’ referent but does not aim to replicate it (Geftter Wondrich 2020). As such, domesticity in the sexcam platform is both a second-hand reference and a space where its online persona unfolds.

The exploration of this post-authentic domesticity is conveyed by means of a website that replicates some of the graphic conventions of sexcam performers’ profiles. The website is divided into different pages that address distinct aspects in the form of short poems. The images accompanying the texts, created by the author, were made using ASCII characters and they reference empty webcam rooms observed in the sexcam platform Chaturbate during 2022. The abstract character of the images aims to emphasize the role of the audience in the construction of online intimacy and meaning.

WORKS CITED

- Geftter Wondrich, R 2020, ‘Biofictional Author Figures and Post-authentic Truths’, in ML Kohlke and C Gutleben (eds) *Neo-Victorian Biofiction: Reimagining Nineteenth-Century Historical Subjects*, Brill, Rodopi, pp. 103–133, <<https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004434356>.>
- Henry, MV & Farvid, P 2017, “‘Always hot, always live’: Computer-mediated sex work in the era of camming”, *Women’s Studies Journal*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 113-128.
- Hernandez, A 2019, “‘There’s something compelling about real life’: Technologies of security and acceleration on Chaturbate”, *Social Media + Society*, vol. 5, no. 4, <<https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119894000>.>
- Jones, A 2020, *Camming: Money, power, and pleasure in the sex work industry*. NYU Press.
- Korody, N 2019, *Intimate Distance: The Technosexual Architecture of Camming - Architecture, e-flux*, retrieved 9 February 2022, <<https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/positions/280819/intimate-distance-the-technosexual-architecture-of-camming/>>
- Senft, TM 2008, *Camgirls: celebrity and community in the age of social networks*, Peter Lang, New York.