

Dildonics, Dykes and the Detachable Masculine

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ABSTRACT By exploring various cultural implications of the dildo in relation to representations of lesbian sexuality, this article seeks to examine the influences of psychoanalysis on our cultural understanding of 'dildonics'. This examination, moreover, seeks to reread the dildo through the lens of an alternative interpretive model that relies on Donna Haraway's 'Informatics of Domination', or 'the translation of the world into a problem of coding'. By shifting our attention to information theory, which emphasizes pattern and randomness over absence and presence, this article shows how the dildo operates as a technological extension which mutates (rather than castrates) its lesbian user and rearticulates dildonics in post-gender terms. Such a transformation is capable of disrupting any sense that the dildo operates as a simulacral penis or as indicative of a lesbian's repressed desire for a male lover.

KEY WORDS cyborg ♦ dildo debates ♦ phallus ♦ post-lesbian

Cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other.
(Haraway, 1991: 175)

Mike: Well, I have a penis.

Nikki: Don't make me get my purse.
(*Spin City*)

I started researching dildos after a man told me that he thought lesbians were lesbians because they 'hadn't had good penis'. At the time I did not know how to respond, and as I later thought of all the things I wish I had said, I made some interesting discoveries. What if I told him I did not think 'good penis' existed? What if I said, 'I just bought a "good penis" for \$14.95, and it's teal with little silver sparkles'? What if I reversed the causality of his claim and argued that lesbians have not had good penis because they are lesbians? But none of these remarks really address my

point. Of course good penis exists, for straight and bi-women, and even for lesbians, that is, if we mean the penis as a pleasure-giving device rather than as a synechdochal extension of manness. And if I have just bought a 'good penis', aren't I confessing that I am something akin to a 'heterosexual in denial' – repressing my 'true heterosexual self'? And even if I reverse the causality of his argument, I deny the possibility that women can be lesbians and enjoy penetration, or that women can be bisexual – can have 'good penis' and enjoy sexual encounters with women as well. I soon realized that I had some serious work to do.

In this article, I attempt to liberate the dildo from the negative and repressive connotations it normally evokes, namely as representative of the penis, and hence, the phallus. Although the dildo implies a (male) gender, I assert that it has the potential to be recoded as a post-gender, non-phallic signifier if we can think beyond the implied genders of neutral objects. I want to confront the history of the phallus as a universal concept of power, which acts as a self-legitimizing myth or grand narrative that has sustained itself for so long as evidence of a masculine order. Finally, I aim to show how reinscribing the dildo can, in turn, reinscribe lesbianism as something other than an emulation of heterosexuality.

The dildo scandalizes identity categories of gender and sexuality because it reveals that the penis is always separate from the body, that the dildo is separate from the penis, and that sexual pleasure can be disconnected from sexual identity as well as from essentialist ideas of the self. By examining the narratives that accompany the dildo, I want to suggest that the dildo does not, in fact, indicate a lesbian's lack, but offers evidence of her ability to disrupt the confines of gender by introducing this potentially rogue object into sexual identity performance. In short, the dildo offers a lesbian gender flexibility as a cyborg, and this 'tool' can be recoded in a way that does not invest it with phallic significance.

The title of Colleen Lamos's essay, 'Taking on the Phallus', indicates her double intent, of challenging the phallus and defying the authority of the penis, and also to 'take on' the phallus as a prosthesis (Lamos, 1995: 111). Thus Lamos claims that the dildo is telling a clever joke:

The dildo may be said to mark the difference between the phallus and the penis. But, as we know, the phallus and the penis are continually mistaken for each other, and so the dildo can at any moment be taken (on) either as a faithful substitute for the penis or as a parodic mime of its phallic pretensions. (Lamos, 1995: 111)

Yet it is not so clear that this joke, this parody of the penis's phallic pretensions, does anything other than reinforce the cultural authority of the phallus. The strap-on dildo may confirm that the penis is an imitation of the phallus, but it also confirms the dildo's own imitation of and aspirations to be the phallus. So in 'taking on the phallus', a lesbian must still

contend with being read as a parody herself. In her examination of the dildo as fetish in 'The Lesbian Dildo Debates', Heather Findlay points out that parody is 'a fundamentally fetishistic strategy' (Findlay, 1995: 337). Using as her example, a pornographic video piece, *Clips*, Findlay asserts that the feminist-lesbian makers of the video 'know very well that what they are doing is phallogentric, but, with a subversive laugh, they are doing it anyway' (Findlay, 1995: 338).¹ While the dildo may offer a lesbian the power to subvert phallogentrism through parodies of hetero-normative behavior, the ideological vigor of subversion is highly contestable and politically tenuous. By seeing the dildo as a transformative object, even as a fetishistic 'attachment', it potentially takes on the qualities of supplement – as a prosthetic. And the underlying implication of supplementarity, even in Findlay's account, is that, in the very instance we view the dildo as capable of signifying an extra-phallic desire, we also confront masculinist assertions that this transformation of the lesbian body indicates a woman's envy for the penis, and hence her need to supplement it artificially. While one must certainly concede that some lesbians do employ the dildo as a fetish, sometimes as subversion, sometimes not, I am slow to concede that others do not employ the dildo for other ends having nothing whatsoever to do with castration anxiety or political potency.

One can certainly argue that the dildo, as a cultural sign, demystifies the penis as a source of male dominance; any lesbian can go out and buy a better penis than any man possesses. They can buy a dildo in basically any size, shape, texture and color they desire. Women can even buy dildos that glow in the dark. A dildo never suffers from impotence or premature ejaculation and most perform feats men only fantasize about (such as vibrating or always being in the right place at the right time). If, then, the dildo acts as a phallic simulacrum, it appears to be potentially superior to the flawed organic penis. In this sense, one could suggest that the dildo actually supplements the male, acting as a technologically enhanced extension of the penis. Even more radically, the dildo, it could be argued, becomes that which transforms or threatens to transform the male, the penis, into the 'secondary' supplement. Yet the very fact that the dildo is persistently reinforced as a phallic signifier in this economy of presence and absence always undoes the potential to reinscribe it as anything else. In other words, even if the dildo improves upon the penis, they are both granted the same significance due to their relationship to the phallus.

Representations of dildos have materialized this sign as a simulation of the penis and a signifier of the phallus, to the point that to name the dildo's specific function in the lesbian sex act is to indict a history of regulatory significations which erase or exclude lesbian desire, or render it as an imperfect version of desire for the penis. However, if representations of the dildo are understood as citational practices, room still exists at the

excluded sites or boundaries of discourse to read and write signs differently, to disrupt and rearticulate lesbian identities in ways that prove fruitful to lesbian/feminist agendas to undo hetero-normative articulations of lesbian sexual practice.

The dildo as cultural icon provides a locus within narratives of lesbian sexual experiences through which the male body/identity gains entrance into an exchange which supposedly defines itself by his absence. The problem, however, is not the object, but how the object is culturally and historically coded as representative of the male body. According to Donna Haraway, 'No objects, spaces, or bodies are sacred in themselves; any component can be interfaced with any other if the proper standard, the proper code, can be constructed for processing signals in a common language' (Haraway, 1991: 163). I want to demonstrate how the dildo can be interfaced and coded as something other than a signifier of the phallus, and to do this, I make the shift from a psycholinguistic model of absence and presence to a model Haraway has called 'The Informatics of Domination', defined as 'the translation of the world into a problem of coding' (Haraway, 1991: 164). It is this move to coding that informs my analysis of the dildo as a potentially rogue object/sign, not as a means of transgressing gender, but as a means of overthrowing gender as a definitive category, opting instead for a post-gender, cyborg identity.

GENDER TRANSGRESSION: SWITCHING TEAMS BUT PLAYING THE SAME GAME

The purpose of this section is twofold: first, to interrogate the conversations of the dildo at the academic level, which recently have labeled the dildonic lesbian as transgressive and therefore liberated; second, to examine some of the current discourses of corporeal feminism and the implications these discourses have for the lesbian dildo debates. The dildo debates, developing in American queer theory circles, as well as in ongoing discussions in lesbian periodicals such as *On Our Backs* and *Girlfriends*, have for a long time been divided into two positions: those who see the dildo as a representation of the penis and therefore phallogentric, and those who see the dildo as independent from the penis and therefore non-phallogentric. A third position, espoused in the critical works of scholars such as Findlay and Lamos, has also arisen in academic discourse as a result of these debates. This stance, which Findlay refers to as the 'yes, but . . .' position, posits the dildo as an 'affirmation' and 'negation' of the dildo's relation to the phallus (Findlay, 1995: 337; Lamos, 1995: 103). Cathy Griggers, like Lamos and Findlay, locates the lesbian body within the cultural shift in subjectivity to an identification with technology, a significant aspect of this shift being the appropriation of the penis/phallus

through the mass production of the dildo, thereby exposing the penis/phallus as consumable, undermining the 'illusion of a natural link between the cultural power organized under the sign of the phallus and the penis as biological organ' (Griggers, 1994: 121).

Enlisting the rhetoric of Deleuze and Guattari, Griggers writes, 'the lesbian assimilation of the sex toy industry is reterritorializing the culturally constructed aura of the phallic signifier' (Griggers, 1994: 121). This reterritorialization of the phallic signifier certainly demonstrates that the penis is commodifiable, yet fails to disinvest it (deterritorialization) as a signifier of power, control and domination; even if the phallic signifier, and it is unclear here whether Griggers means the dildo, the penis, or both, is 'reterritorialized', the dildo's associations with the phallus as the privileged signified remain intact. Her focus on reinvesting the penis as reproducible, in other words, does not necessarily disrupt the connection the penis (or dildo) has with masculinized domains of power and control articulated through the notion of the phallus.

According to Griggers, the dildo offers the potential to subvert the power dynamics of heterosexuality, because the lesbian can, with considerable ease, transform her phallic absence into a phallic presence. However, because this presence is inextricable from a privileged male subjectivity, any narrative of lesbian dildonic sexuality is inevitably read as a simulation of heterosexuality, where the dildo supplements her absent penis. Griggers asks, 'Should we know [a lesbian] by the absence of the penis or by the presence of a silicone simulacrum?' (Griggers, 1994: 120). I want to point out, however, that either way the reproduction of the penis empowers the male body by shifting the phallic signifier from the male body part to another male 'body like thing'. Granted, the lesbian body and the male body parts are reterritorialized in this shift, but not necessarily in any liberating way.

The economy of male organs as parts to be (re)produced for the consumer transforms the material (male) body into a sign of culture. It becomes clear that within this economy the dildo maintains itself as a phallic signifier precisely because it is constituted as a site of heterosexuality through its associations with the penis, and any attempt to use the dildo to empower lesbian sexuality within this existing regulatory regime actually indicts the lesbian as either appropriating a masculine identity and temporarily abandoning her identification as female or exposes her as a covertly heterosexual woman augmenting her lacking sex life – in each case, however, the logic of supplementarity is invoked.

One key characteristic of this economy of body parts is that it always privileges phallic presence over absence, male over female. In addition, the perpetual fear of castration for males and the always already presence of castration for females sustains this economy. Katherine Hayles points out, 'The catastrophe in the psycholinguistic development corresponding

to this absence in signification is castration, the moment when the (male) subject symbolically confronts the realization that subjectivity, like language, is founded on absence' (Hayles, 1991: 77). In more practical terms, the fear of castration, the devaluation of absence, sustains the privileging of the male over the female; to castrate is to transform from male to female – from presence to absence. Within the logic of this system, the female possessing a dildo transforms herself from female to male – from absence to presence. As she transgresses this gender boundary, s/he relinquishes the potential to empower herself as anything but male. Instead she has, as lesbians are often accused, 'switched teams', which works to reinscribe the male body as more valuable by insisting that through a dildonic presence, the lesbian has 'become a man' via a supplemental or prosthetic penis.

According to Derrida, supplement suggests both addition to and substitution of the originary text: 'The movement of signification adds something, which results in the fact that there is always more, but this addition is a floating one because it comes to perform a vicarious function, to supplement a lack on the part of the signified' (Derrida, 1978: 289). This, then, indicates an originary lack of that which needs to be supplemented. If humans can supplement their biological bodies with synthetic prostheses, they both inscribe onto their bodies the presence of the prosthesis and admit the absence of that which they supplement by prosthetic means. This logic of the dildo as a supplement always contains the trace of the male body, the presence/absence of the originary penis.

With this in mind, it seems necessary to problematize the very notion of technologically supplementing our biological constraints. Anne Balsamo asserts that technologies have offered us ways of looking at the various parts of the body separate from the body as a whole: 'In the process the body is fractured and fragmented so that isolated parts can be examined visually: the parts can be isolated by function, as in organs or neuron receptors, or by medium, as in fluids, genes, or heat' (Balsamo, 1994: 56). According to Balsamo, this anti-feminist fragmenting of the body 'disciplines the unruly female body by first fragmenting it into isolated parts – face, hair, legs, breasts – and then redefining those parts as inherently flawed and pathological' (Balsamo, 1994: 56). But this disciplining does not apply to the fragmented male body in terms of his penis. Instead, the dildo is often correlated directly with the penis as a synecdochal extension or representation; it signals a phallogentric conceptual framework to rationalize its function. So although technologies of the body deem the fragments of the female body as pathological and flawed, the dildo as a fragment of the male body overdetermines the lesbian body as lacking; she transgresses her role as female because she possesses a simulacral penis. The potential for the dildo to act as a transgressive gender technology is clear, but so are the limitations the lesbian persistently confronts

within gender hierarchies which reinscribe her as a representation of female masculinity rather than transgressive femininity.

Hence a woman with a dildo is defined in one of two ways. If she claims the dildo as a form of gender transgression, she becomes a male body and must confess the higher value of that male body, in turn, devaluing her own female body. In popular culture, this is demonstrated by the abundance of images found in numerous pornographic magazines which show a leather-clad 'dominatrix' donning an enormous dildo crafted to look exactly like a penis. Her role as dominant (she usually has a whip or paddle in hand) asserts her position within the sexual economy as male. On the other hand, if a woman asserts her feminine identity, she is disciplined back into her role as heterosexual and must confess her desire for a penis/man.

GENDER MUTATION: FROM LESBIAN TO POST-LESBIAN

Donna Haraway makes the case that by adopting the provisional and partial position of cyborg, we can permeate the boundaries and fore-closures established by patriarchal domination. This is possible, according to Haraway, because the cyborg has nothing invested in its connection (or lack of connection) with its masculine history: 'The main trouble with cyborgs, of course, is that they are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism. But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential' (Haraway, 1991: 151). The dildo, of course, has a long history in which it has been inflected by phallogocentric narratives of supplementarity and penis envy. Yet as a technological, cyborgian apparatus, the potential available for lesbians to abandon that history, to be unfaithful to the origins of masculinist, heterocentric rhetoric about the penis/phallus as they have been articulated in relation to the dildo, seems provocative enough. Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto*, moreover, is a political position predicated on blasphemy – on an ontology of identity that undoes binary distinctions between male and female, human and machine, in an undeniably material way. This blasphemy, while on the one hand compromising the firmly grounded position from which feminists often articulate their politics, also opens up the possibility to speak from a position that is mutable, plural and difficult to regiment. In this way, Haraway writes, the cyborg 'changes what counts as women's experience' and opens avenues for non-gendered, non-hierarchical relations previously dominated by heterocentric and masculinist regimes (Haraway, 1991: 150). One such relation, I would argue, is sexual.

In order to undo heterocentric narratives of the dildo, an alternative model needs to be explored, one that, as Elizabeth Grosz points out,

'think[s] desire as a "proper" province of women' (Grosz, 1994: 70). Vital for a non-phallogocentric reconceptualization of the dildo, and subsequently the women who use them in their sexual encounters, is to disconnect the dildo from the penis as interchangeable cultural signs and to disconnect the woman with a dildo as suffering from a Freudian masculinity complex. Certainly, not all lesbians have an aversion to the penis. Nor do all lesbians feel a strong desire to separate the association of the dildo from the penis. But to suggest that using a dildo indicates a lesbian's desire for the penis, or even to usurp the 'power of the phallus' is to invest the penis with an authority it does not have in itself. Therefore, gender theorists must articulate a new model which does not define desire based on essentialist notions of presence or absence, a model that, according to Grosz (1994: 79), is based on 'machinic connections a body part forms with another'.

In her exploration of Haraway's 'Informatics of Domination', found in 'Virtual Bodies and Flickering Signifiers', Katherine Hayles demonstrates the shift in signification that has taken place with the onslaught of a new paradigm of information circulation that has surfaced in the last decade of the 20th century, seen most clearly through the recent reliance on computerized technological productions of texts. This development of information theory, Hayles suggests, shifts the dominant model of signification away from a dialectic of presence and absence toward a dialectic of informatics which interplays between pattern and randomness (Hayles, 1991: 70). Not only does this development affect information theories. As Hayles argues, this dialectic of pattern and randomness has impacted critical theory as well, by displacing presence and absence as the central concept of discourse, psycholinguistics and epistemology (Hayles, 1991: 72). This displacement offers a way of 'seeing difference' within any system not as castration (absence and presence), but as mutation – patterns that randomly diverge to create new forms. As the chain of flickering rather than floating signifiers interplays between randomness and pattern, information mutates rather than becomes ineffectual or castrated, allowing for the production of new information rather than a disruption in the information flow. Hayles explains:

Mutation is crucial because it names the bifurcation point at which the interplay between pattern and randomness causes the system to evolve in a new direction. Mutation implies both replication of pattern – the morphological standard against which it can be measured and understood as a mutation – and the interjection of randomness – the variations that mark it as a deviation so decisive it can no longer be assimilated into the same. (Hayles, 1991: 78)

The implication here is that mutation demonstrates a movement in our understanding of gendered bodies and gendered subjectivities that can be

located outside gendered terminologies. According to Hayles, 'The operative transition is not from male to female-as-castrated-male, but from human to something radically other than human. Flickering signification brings together language with a psychodynamics based on the symbolic moment when the human confronts the posthuman' (Hayles, 1991: 79).² This offers the opportunity to read the dildonic narrative not as one of gender transgression, female to male, as offered by the castration model, but as a technological mutation from human to post-human. Moreover, this is a reading that was, perhaps, anticipated by Monique Wittig who, as Judith Roof points out,

... insists on the material basis for any challenge to gender oppression, locating the lesbian at the point of that challenge. Perceiving the oppressiveness of the gender system as a system, challenging the very epistemological basis of naturalized gender categories, Wittig pits the material experience of lesbians against the heterosexual hegemony. (Roof, 1994: 55)

Although, at the time, Wittig's theory of 'lesbian' proved problematic, in conjunction with Hayles's theory of mutation, it may be worthy of further examination. As a cultural construct that supposedly inhabits counter-hegemonic spaces, the dildo-donned lesbian offers feminist lesbian theorists a provocative cultural sign – she both has the phallus, not biologically but technologically, and does not have it, able to leave it behind at will. The dildo acts as a post-gender prosthetic and the lesbian, then, acts a cyborg, post-human, and therefore not male, nor castrated. She functions, then, as an unaccountable gender-bending sign.³ In this sense, the dildo acts as a disembodied prosthetic, not as a supplement to a woman's lacking penis, a reproductive representation of the male body, but as a productive mutation of the dildonic body as altogether different.⁴

To demonstrate this point, I want to look at a surprisingly different narrative of the dildo, one which disrupts the previous narratives through a series of subversions/mutations. Unlike the negative and masculinist representations of the dildo, the 'Socket Science Labs' advertisement (see Figure 1) suggests a positive representation in a variety of ways that works to undermine other phallic narratives. The company name indicates, not the object, but the subject of their product; it directs the reader's focus upon the female (lesbian) body, privileging it over focus on the dildo, as a phallic representation. The image of a power outlet – a 'socket' – offers the metaphor of both a source of power and a port, a site of connection, rather than an absence or hole that is to be filled. More importantly, this advertisement dislocates the penis away from its biological or 'natural' position. Notice that this harness attaches the dildo on the woman's thigh rather than locating it to mimic the male appendage. This 'unnatural' relocation of the dildo offers, for one, the possibility for two women to use the product at once, creating the potential for a mutual

exchange of pleasures – two women rather than one woman and her lover in male costume. Moreover, this placement of the dildo on the user's thigh disrupts the possibility of reading the dildo as a supplemental penis and the woman as a simulated man. In other words, this repositioning of the dildo, and by association the penis, acts as noise in the rigid system of male and female anatomy, which causes that system to reorganize into a more complex system of partial and mutated gender patterns. Because the dildo acts as a prosthetic, but not as penile prosthetic, it undermines the possibility of reading the woman as simulating the male body; this is not a female to male transformation, but a move toward another, third position.⁵

FIGURE 1

The Thigh Harness (*Girlfriends*, Nov./Dec. 1994).
Reprinted with kind permission of Socket Science Labs.

**TWO WOMEN, TWO HARNESSSES:
TOO GOOD!**

THE THIGH HARNESS

The THIGH HARNESS: hand-crafted from supple black leather with velcro straps (fits 17-28", add \$9 for extension straps). Specify harness socket size: Std (1 3/4") or XL (2 1/4"). \$48.00

The THIGH HARNESS PLUS: with snaps to hold latex dams across surface for easy clean-up. Std or XL socket. With 6 dams, \$54.00

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Not only does this image reimagine sexual anatomies of male and female bodies, it also redefines sexual intercourse. When two women use this device, penetration occurs, but not according to the traditional

heterosexual paradigm. It allows both partners to operate in both sexual positions, blending the previously binary sexual roles of heterosexual sex, again, mutating the traditional narrative of heterosexuality, and one could argue, improving upon it.⁶ Within the dialectic of absence and presence as it applies to the sex act, man must operate as presence and woman as absence, yet according to this model, both women have the opportunity to operate as both. Furthermore, she also operates as neither, because the dildo does not act as an anatomical extension – a simulation of the penis – but as something radically different, non-male and non-female. Unlike narratives which see the crisis of castration as transformative, this narrative which demonstrates a mutation of the biological body provides a new, technological narrative which resists being read as gender transgression.

Although it is not a far reach to think of a dildo as indicative of penis envy, which is certainly a difficult concept to escape, it proves problematic for a variety of reasons. Other than in the case of female to male (F2M) sex change operations, which involve far more complexities than penis envy, women who use dildos do not necessarily make use of them as masculine extensions of their bodies, but as aids to sexual enjoyment for themselves and/or their partner, as indicated by the Socket Science advertisement, which disrupts the representation of the dildo as a masculine object. A dildo is only present on certain occasions and for specific reasons and is not a vital part of the woman's body outside those specific instances – it is temporary and contextual.⁷

I want to question exactly what gets castrated in the context of the lesbian sex act. Although, according to psycholinguistics, a woman's recognition of her lack of penis suggests her own, already castrated sex – the female castration complex – and hence, the dildo acts as a fetish and becomes supplementary to her always already absent penis, I want to assert that what perhaps becomes castrated is the male body and the phallogentric baggage it carries. What I propose is lacking in the lesbian sexual scenario, then, is the man, not the penis.

My goal here is not to articulate a fourth position in the lesbian dildo debates regarding the dildo's relation to the phallus, but rather to ask different questions that may circumvent the critical impetus to elevate the phallus to object status – to act as if the phallus possesses some essential authority which exists outside the patterns and systems of power relations that construct and mobilize this sign as evidence of masculine and heterosexual cultural imperatives. Rather than inquire into the relation between the dildo and phallus, I want to question how the phallus continues to enter into narratives of lesbian sexuality. Moreover, I want to describe a post-human sexual scenario in which, through the cyborgian coupling of sex toys and body parts, the phallus ceases to register as a relevant or intelligible sign.

In focusing on the historical and ideological embeddedness of the dildo/phallus relation, whether to deny that relation or to appropriate it for political purposes, we fail to recognize the perpetual discursive reconstruction in the lesbian dildo debates of binaries of presence and absence, as well as the legitimation of the phallus as a privileged sign. By shifting our attention away from the phallus altogether and toward a paradigm of mutation, perhaps we can finally acknowledge and articulate the permanently partial cyborg genders that are 'exceedingly unfaithful' to the notion that the presence of a dildo must always bring with it the baggage of the phallus.

NOTES

1. *Clips* (1988) is a pornographic production of Fatale Video. The specific sequence Findlay refers to is 'When Fanny Liquidates Kenny's Stocks', directed by Nan Kinney and Debi Sundahl.
2. Hayles defines 'human' and 'post-human' as 'historical specific constructions that emerge from different configurations of embodiment, technology, and culture' (Hayles, 1991: 78).
3. This suggestion to reread Wittig is in particular reference to her theoretical concept of the 'lesbian' as 'beyond the categories of sex (woman and man)' (Wittig, 1981: 53).
4. Hayles implies a certain horrific reaction to confronting oneself as post-human. She relies on the grotesque image found in the science fiction horror film *The Fly*, when the protagonist's penis falls off in the midst of his metamorphosis (Hayles, 1991: 78–9). However, I see the potential for bodily/textual mutation to also occur as a positive rethinking of one's biological constraints, as in the case of lesbianism and dildonics.
5. Note it can also attach to the male body with equal ease if one so desired.
6. In addition to this dislocation of the penis, the advertisement's graphic offers a very positive and feminine image of the lesbian who uses such a device. The graphic shows a nude female body, in a feminine pose, in direct contrast with the harnessed dominatrix I mentioned previously. Whereas some less than positive representations of dildos assert this device as a simulacrum women use to supplement their lack of penis, as a penile prosthetic, the narrative offered to the lesbian reader by the Science Socket Labs advertisement reinscribes the dildo as a positive lesbianist object engineered by women for women as an object of enjoyment, rather than as a penile simulation.
7. It is important to note that not all dildos resemble the penis, and although some simulate the look and feel of a penis, others are deliberately designed not to resemble a penis. For example, they may have a texture or color that is far from representative of the penis. And, of course, some vibrate, which, as far as I know, penises do not.

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