
Building Poetic Community with Textual Dildo Play

Claire Finch*¹

¹Laboratoire d'études de genre et de sexualité (LEGS - UMR 8238) – Université Paris 8 - Vincennes - Saint-Denis – France

Abstract

In this communication, I define the textual dildo as an emancipatory queer citational practice. I propose that the dildo can be used in the present as citational tool for fucking with texts in ways that expose and refigure their exclusionary uses, creating a good-feeling experimental textual toy around which we can organize poetically and politically. In a search to find examples of how the dildo has been thought and used in textual play, I return to a history of lesbian and queer pro-sex explorations of dildo use that took place in the US publications *On Our Backs* and *Black Lace*, in sex shops and in sex scenes, as well as in texts like Pat Califia's *Sapphisty* and Susie Bright's *Susie Sexpert's Lesbian Sex World*. I read through descriptions of dildo use, in order to locate it as material and metaphoric object. The dildo, I argue, lives in the sticky zone between the physical sensations it can be used to provoke, and the ways in which it has been attached to the production of raced and sexed bodies. I further analyze how "dildo debates" have been read by Heather Findlay, Ariane Cruz, and Kai M. Green, and emphasize how these readings situate queer sex practice as energizing political acts that extend the erotic potential of the body, preparing it for activism. Throughout, I pull from examples of textual dildo play in the works of Audre Lorde, Héléne Cixous, Violette Leduc, and Kathy Acker.

Claire Finch is a writer, researcher, and performer whose hybrid work samples theory and poetry to write funny and tragic nonbinary pornography. They're a member of the lesbian-nonbinary-queer autrix collective RER Q. Some of their recent projects include "My Construct: A Cunt" in *Kathy Acker: Get Rid of Meaning* (Buchhandlung Walther König, 2022), "AsshOle" in *Moan Petitx Poney* (Snack, 2022), and the introduction and editorial notes for *Kathy Acker (1971-1975)* (Editions Ismael 2019).

*Speaker