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PLATFORMING VIBES: TECHNICAL, INTIMATE AND POLITICAL PRACTICES OF THE EVERYDAY

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In Susanna Paasonen's (2021) *Dependent, Distracted, Bored: Affective Formations in Networked Media*, she traces a common narrative of loss which has come to permeate much of the popular and scholarly discourse on platforms and platformization in recent years: "that we are hopelessly addicted to devices and apps that distract us to boredom" (4). Drawing on affect theory, Paasonen does not completely refute this general description, but rather, uses it as a starting-point to highlight the various other potentials existing alongside and in relation to boredom, distractedness, and dependency. Scholarly research on platforms which follows this general approach must, as Paasonen writes, "be both contextual and attuned to ambiguity" (8-9).

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In this panel, we offer four papers on some of the complex ways in which sound, sensation, affect, and embodiment shape, and are shaped *by*, digital platforms. This approach does not eschew questions of power as a key concern, but rather foregoes broad dystopian (or utopian) generalizations, pointing instead to specific instances of platformized and platform-adjacent cultural production to see how power manifests in complex and contextually specific ways. As these papers demonstrate, this approach does not forego the possibility of insights which might achieve a broader scale of applicability, but merely acknowledges the micro- as a crucial site for approaching and, to whatever degree necessary, revising prior understandings of the macro-.

'Anti-caste reverberations of Haryana's DJs and their trucks' analyzes DJ trucks, an urban entertainment technology popular in Haryana, India. By deploying site-specific physical and digital ethnographic methods, it attempts to articulate sensory and affective relations, connections and intensities that emerge as DJ trucks move about on the streets. However, the paper makes an argument to read this practice along with its extensions enabled through platform-based circulations. It contextualizes routine practices of sharing of tunes, playlists and other recorded media, commenting utilizing other interface affordances to build anti-caste political mobilization. Tensions emerge as DJs coming from marginalized caste communities seek to occupy, assert and celebrate their presence online or offline. The paper draws attention to the many "force-fields" (Jhingan, 2013) of Bahujan and Dalit (self-asserted marginalized caste categories) reverberations that are facilitated by platform-based affordances and subjective and affective connections.

"Monstrous Toys and Sensory Play on TikTok," looks at the repurposing of children's toys in the creation of sensorially stimulating videos for adults on TikTok. While these toys and videos seem to suggest a playful and experimental orientation to aurality, visibility, and tactility, they also frequently involve characters and figures which, throughout Western popular and literary culture, have been framed as hostile and threatening Others: dinosaurs, aliens, and monsters. Thus, these videos seem to, on one level, embody the quintessential Western liberal-humanist orientation to the senses as unruly, disruptive, and even "monstrous." At the same time, these videos also seem to celebrate, and necessitate, a more distinctly posthumanist approach to the ways in which digital platforms and bodily-sensation have become interrelated in recent years into complex techno-ecologies.

"AI.Go.Rhythms: Technology, Race, & Culture in the Mix" explores the interplay of bodies and material technologies, by planning an event that uses immersive sonic technologies such as thermal image sensors, large-format projections and DJ equipment alongside listeners, audience, watchers and feelers of dope tunes and neon. It is interested in shifting attention from technical sonic manipulation and storage by DJs towards embodied aspects of race and culture, community building, remixing, and algorithmic self-styling that ultimately become a 'platform' honoring Black/Brown bodies, aesthetics, and world-making practices. Further, it leverages critical-making strategies towards the Mix, exploring a dynamic and emergent site— a multimedia event— where

affective relations are built and platformed instead of being rehearsed and commercialized.

“Building Intimacy in Virtual Reality” offers an autoethnography of the presenter’s personal encounters in virtual reality with a romantic partner. Despite the dominance of visibility in virtual reality, the embodied experiences of sound, interaction, and shared (digital) space most significantly contributed to feelings of intimacy. On the other hand, feelings of intimacy were disrupted by issues associated with mediation by platforms and infrastructures, such as technological failure and concerns over data leaks. As such, the presenter argues that the politics of platforms and infrastructures also become the politics of digitally mediated intimacy.

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ANTI-CASTE REVERBERATIONS OF HARYANA’S DJS AND THEIR TRUCKS

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A landmark farmer protest started on the borders of Indian capital New Delhi as the Covid-19 pandemic had just picked up speed in 2020. To mobilize a long-term sit-in involving tens of thousands of protesting farmers, a large list of supplies moved across the country. Among this was an unlikely entertainment technology: a DJ truck. A modified truck, retrofitted with giant speakers on its back, brings blaring sound to North Indian streets. DJ trucks are sound-based space making media. As an assemblage, they combine the body of the DJ, dancers clustering around the truck, inscriptions on the truck, the electrical apparatus (generators, batteries), and the embodied memory of precedent mobile musical forms. These come together in modifying the street space into a lively and dynamic site. They also affect corporeal force and presence as they vibrate through streets and neighborhoods, eliciting a range of feedback ranging from excitement, rage, distraction and aspiration. This has made them contested technologies, often attacked, and even challenged by legal restrictions¹.

Interestingly though, DJ trucks have been appropriated by a number of marginalized—Dalit and Bahujan— caste groups, proudly using the trucks for spatial reclamation, affirmation, and celebration². However, their popularity is not just limited to the streets

where contests on who is most loud and forceful play out. They articulate their corporeal force conjunctively with circulation of songs, playlists, tunes, discourses, and affect through content circulated via Youtube and Facebook among other platforms.

This paper attempts to articulate this complex interplay by approaching it from the lens of caste-based power dynamics that play out in practices both online and offline. Drawing on physical and digital ethnographic work carried out in Haryana (Indian state that surrounds Delhi) I argue that in observing the potential of DJ trucks as resistant space-making media, it is important to read together the site-specific negotiations of caste relations with the affective, intimate and networked potential that social-media based circulation enable. The circulation of playlists and comments extend the range of the corporeal force that DJ trucks as a medium bring to the streets. However, they also enable sensory and affective relations, connections and intensities made possible by the affordances of the screen, common invocations— to Bhim (Ambedkar), minority caste pride, etc— and the historical energies of anti-caste resistance and social movements.

This is best exemplified in one of the Chamaar DJ mixes uploaded on Youtube by channel called “Deewane Bhim Ke” (Crazy for Bhim). The tune begins with a fast pace percussion loop constantly pitch-bending, followed by a muffled auto-tune voice saying, “*chamaar ka khoon bolta nahi, khaulta hai*” (Chamaar Blood does not speak, it boils). The bravado, pride and anger in being ‘chamaar’ – a historically marginalized caste – is palpable in the audio. Many similar pithy phrases and metaphors are narrated within the soundtrack, often coupled with chants of Jai Bhim on different pitches and speeds. Chants of Jai Bhim, Jai Chamaar (Hail Bhim, or Ambedkar, and Hail *Chamaar*) also resonate in the comments, connecting Dalit and Bahujan listeners. While the reach of these videos on Youtube is not particularly sizable (often in the range of 20-50 thousand views), the songs and playlists become part of minority caste events, especially anniversary celebrations of Dalit social reformers—particularly Sant Ravidas and Dr. BR Ambedkar, when it comes to Haryana³. These events and parades are attended by thousands of followers. This is where makeshift DJ practices—particularly through aforementioned trucks— come into play.

The trucks and the emergent sites in which they appear get implicated in contested spatial and temporal politics of the site⁴. This exercise of agency— in being able to modify the soundscape of the street— and risk in challenging the static politics of the street, resembles tensions within another sonic form called “pharmaish” that Duggal (2018) analyzes from the 1950s to 1970s⁶. While *pharmaish* paves the way for contests on song selection and requests even in contemporary DJ practices, with Duggal, I am more interested in the emphasis on the material-infrastructural affordances of the medial form. In this case this includes the physiological force of reverberations, the dynamic emergence of the street as a site of performance, as well the circulation ecologies enabled through screens, platforms, mobile internet, and community networks that draw on the tunes, playlists and other recorded and visual media.

Jhingan (2013, 104) in her work on Bollywood's sonic extensions from the 1980s, brings attention to cassette technologies and imitation artists that replicate and dub voices of popular artists. She witnesses the "force-fields" where "sensuous knowledge and embodied memory" are dispersed, drawing on several affect theorists. DJ trucks operators import and expand affective intensities, anti-caste aesthetics and a dynamic "force-field" when they tap on to tunes popular in the Dalit or Bahujan corners of Youtube or Facebook. Further, affective buildup and sensory attunement, has been observed in other ethno-religious sonic contests (Larkin, 2014). More recent and enhanced technological mediations in sound aimed at generating affective discomfort, or 'bad vibes' but simultaneously being capable of mobilizing embodied rhythms has also been articulated by Goodman (2010).

This paper, then, poses a question: can anti-caste embodied technological practices be studied under the purview of decolonial media? Ramon Grosfoguel (2012, 101), drawing on the work of Enrique Dussel, argues that decolonial alliances can be explored by carrying out "conversations with those subjects that reunite in their epistemic-ethic-political projects" with a negative universality, that combines anti-patriarchal, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, anti-imperialist or other other hegemonic universalisms. Anti-caste scholars, such as Gail Omvedt (2011) through empirical and historiographical work have attempted to find alternative traditions and sites which resist the universality of Brahmanism, caste-based political and social domination, oppression and violence. Could the acoustic and affective vibrations (Goodman, 2010) of Dalit- and Bahujan-operated DJ trucks that reverberate on streets and mobile phone speakers, that echo in Youtube comments, that channel the historical, bodily and sensory oppression into space-making techniques, be read as local decolonial media practices?

Notes:

1. Clashes are commonly reported in news media and dealt with by law enforcement agencies.
2. Later on I discuss the Youtube channel "Deewane Bhim Ke" that uploads music videos and graphics along with the tunes played by Bahujan DJs.
3. Sant Ravidas is a mystic and saint believed to have been a prominent social revolutionary of caste and gender in the Bhakti movement starting from the 15th century.
4. Historical work on how caste-based spatial organization in North India, including Haryana has been discussed by historian William Glover (2007).
5. Jaats are relative mobile castes who are predominantly landowners in Haryana.
6. 'Pharmaish' is a practice that involves requesting songs by sending postcards and letters to radio stations. These were very common in the time after Indian independence, in the 1950s to 1970s.

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MONSTROUS TOYS AND SENSORY PLAY ON TIKTOK

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The TikTok account MysteryRips, which currently has over 10 million views on its channel, features dozens of short one- to three-minute close-up videos of toys being played with with no additional audio or visual accompaniment. The videos *do* typically feature multiple cuts in order to showcase the various distinct phases and features of each toy, but, aside from the video creators' hands manipulating the toy (typically on a blank tabletop), and the sounds of the toy being played with, nothing else is added in the way of commentary or explanation. Most of the toys featured in MysteryRips videos are from the Australian toy company Moose Toys, whose products are divided up into various subsidiary brands, each of which offering a distinctive line of products involving consistent modes of direct interaction or "play." Notably, the specific toys most consistently featured on the MysteryRips channel seem to be those brands whose products entail a kind of play which particularly lends itself to a more spectatorial orientation - and thereby, networked audiovisual transmission. For example, the "Treasure X" brand, a common feature on the MysteryRips channel, is described on the Treasure X site as "the ultimate surprise-reveal collectible with a multi-layered reveal

process." Potential Treasure X customers are encouraged to "[r]ip, chip, drill and dig to reveal the layers and discover the secrets hidden within!" Similarly, the Magic Mixies brand under Moose Toys, also prominently featured on the MysteryRips channel, features potion kits, which require the player to assemble and apply ingredients in some suggested order. Or lastly, in the case of the Little Live Pets brand's "Cutie Cuts" line of products, a toy animal of some kind comes with long artificial hair, which the player/user then removes using a plastic toy shaving kit that comes with the corresponding toy animal.

In this paper, I begin by comparing and contrasting the Moose Toys website and other marketing materials to the various instances of their being circulated as audiovisual content on TikTok, to consider the manner in and extent to which the respective audiences, and associated modes of use/play, potentially differ. Notably, much of the extant marketing materials surrounding Treasure X, Magic Mixies, and Live Pets brands suggests an anticipated audienceship or body of users composed of young children, whereas the MysteryRips channel seems to be, at least in part, composed of adults. Bearing this apparent partial discrepancy of userbase in mind, I point to notable aesthetic similarities between the audiovisual content of MysteryRips videos and other closely related kinds of "adult" content on TikTok and other online video-hosting and streaming video websites, such as ASMR, pornography, slime videos, and sound-healing videos. This broader constellation of at-times overlapping micro-genres and associated aesthetic categories generally involve potentially confounding entanglements of the symbolic and the sensorial. While they always seem to include - if not in the sounds and images presented, then in the titles, descriptions, and comments adjacent - some suggested explanation or associations via which viewer-listeners might consciously note or register an appropriate schema of "use," they also, at the same time, utilize the affordances of digital platforms, and the audio- and visual- hardware via which they are made perceptible to viewer-listener bodies, to engage viewer-listeners in ways that are more distinctly sensorial, vaguely defined, or to varying degrees undetermined. As Gallagher (2016) describes in work on ASMR video-culture, viewer-listeners "feel out" the content of such videos, as much as they read, look, or listen for some clearly stated explanation. These networked videos all seem to toy, in one way or another, with what Paasonen (2011), in her work on online pornography, has described as "the simultaneous sharpness and shapelessness of sensation" (26) - both invoking and blurring socio-linguistic categorizations in ways that can be disturbing. After all, as Mowlabacus (2018) observes in his work on unboxing videos, such videos frequently draw on the "visual (or, perhaps, visceral) language of pornography" in their emphasis on a sequential multi-shot revealing - even at the same time as that which is being gradually revealed is a toy frequently marketed to children.

Perhaps fittingly then, in the case of the MysteryRips channel, many of the toys featured in the channel's more popular videos are also those which include figures or characters which, in the history of much Western popular and literary culture, have frequently been depicted as hostile or threatening others, such as aliens, dinosaurs, and simply "monsters." These sorts of figures have often stood in to represent a fear of the unknown and the unknowable, which, for the (typically white, male) Western liberal

human subject, serves as the impetus and rhetorical justification for the continued development of media which define “enemies” in whatever environment they might be encountered (Packer and Reeves 2020). In this case, these threatening and hostile entities have been rendered less threatening, or contained, both in their being cartoonish “toys” marketed to children, and also in their being circulated on TikTok as a kind of novel entertainment and sensory stimulation for adults. Here, I also draw on Sianne Ngai (2012) who, in her work on vernacular aesthetic categories, points to a general shift in aesthetic experience from the powerful and engrossing aesthetics of the sublime and the beautiful, toward more mundane low-affect aesthetic categories such as the zany, the cute, and the interesting, which serve to constitute much of everyday existence and cultural production under late capitalism.

With respect to sensation, I argue that these toys, *and* the videos of them featured on accounts like Mystery Rips, point to a lingering fascination and experimentation with the potentially threatening nature of sensory experience. By watching these videos, viewer-listeners take pleasure in the aural, visual, and tactile dimensions of these playful encounters with a “monstrous” sensory other. This basic framework - that of a playful sensorial experimentation with a potentially threatening but ultimately contained object - can, on one level, be understood as rooted in the Western liberal-humanist orientation to the world as it informs much of our historical and contemporary networked media culture. Treasure X’s command to “[r]ip, chip, drill and dig to reveal the layers and discover the secrets hidden within” can be extended to the role of TikTok viewer-listeners, who, in encountering video after video, enjoin not just their thoughts, but also their bodies and sense-perceptions, in an ongoing cybernetic process of platformized production, circulation and consumption. By the same token, I argue that these videos also necessitate a more thoroughly posthumanist approach, wherein the nonhuman and the “monstrous,” at both the bodily-sensorial and socio-technological level, contribute to the emergence of new aesthetic trends and tendencies which confound and complicate the liberal model of the human upon which so much of contemporary global platformized media continues to rely.

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AI.GO.RHYTHMS: TECHNOLOGY, RACE, & CULTURE IN THE MIX

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AI.Go.Rhythms are about technologies and practice, human and nonhumans – and those folks who mill about between both distinctions. This project asks how DJs, emphatically being a part of the Black cultural and technological tradition of music making with found objects, implement algorithms as a technocultural practice of self- and style-making. In other words, How do DJs do Black life as a mediation between technology and culture? Furthermore, AI.Go.Rhythms assumes the DJ to be an archive of practice, technologies, texts, time (BPM) and aesthetics. For us, the DJ represents a truly cross-platform, and platform crossing modality of Black rhetoric and digital practice. Our goal here is not theorization but presentation. We seek to allow listeners/watchers/feelers/readers to take in the human haunting concentric circles of chunky technologies, hidden wires, neon platforms, and churning algorithms. If only for a moment, we wish to allow audiences to “listen around the corner,” (Weheliye, 48.) as DJ’s do, for that next beat drop, next blend, next Oh Shi!t moment. Moreover, we wish to interrogate the assumed disembodiment of digitality through music. AI.Go.Rhythms supplants this for the more productive phenomenal realm of the Groove, that gap between Blackness and technology, “how race and technology reconstruct each other” (Banks pp. 11 2011).

In *Digital Griots: African American Rhetoric in a Multimedia Age*, Adam Banks (2011) writes, “The scratch is an interruption. It breaks the linearity of the text, the progressive circularity of the song. It takes the listener or reader back and forth through the song, underneath the apparatus that plays it, either to insert some other song or for the sheer pleasure of the sound of the scratch itself. What was noise, what was seen as the sign of a broken record or stylus, an unwelcome interruption in the continual march of text, groove, history, became a purposeful interruption, became pleasurable, became a way to insert other voices in a text, to redirect one’s attention” (pp. 1-2). The author’s theorization of the scratch helps us sketch our goals in this project. First, we see this work as an intentional interruption to the typical scholarly – read a lot, write a lot –

production style for a more sensual mode of theorizing. Furthermore, as a multimedia experience where audiovisual rendering happens alongside the tangible and sensually ephemeral Booms, Baps, and, yes, Scratches. Through this work, we wish to ask not what is a DJ, a blend, a mix, a scratch but how do these things reflect and perform embodied aspects of race and culture? How do these exist as technologically and racially saturated becomings? Secondly, we see this production as expanding and critiquing prevailing ideas and theories of platforms. DJs often use the platform of Serato to store/manage/manipulate audio files. But what happens if we consider the DJ as platform, a medium of “elevation and amplification” (Singh pp. 18 2020). However, what if this elevation and amplification did not treat data and knowledge through logics of an extractable “raw material” but through community building, remixing, and honoring Black/Brown bodies, aesthetics, and world-making practices (Srnicek pp.41 2017)

Based around a one-night event created in conjunction with the NC State University library, this work explores, through the use of audio/visual technologies, the intersection between sonics, affect, and space as media. *Al.Go.Rhythms*, as an event, leverages large-format projection, thermal imaging sensors, and DJ equipment, providing novel and creative participation opportunities to enrich the sonic and immersive experience of audience-partners. This event stimulates a collective listening experience and implements cutting edge sound and visual technologies to showcase the DJ as an interfacing medium between networked platforms and culture. This interfacing medium creates an affective space - one where sonic media encounters material bodies with which it interacts. Drawing upon Spinozian notions of affect and affection, this work considers the interfacing of both the bodies of the DJ and the crowd, alongside the interfacing of the bodies and material technologies.

Utilizing the work of Ratto and Hertz in critical making, this project understands production as a mode of scholarly inquiry and evaluates DJing technologies within a visually enhanced and aurally curated environment. “The primary aim of Critical Making...” Ratto and Ree (2012) assert, “...is to connect technological systems and practices to critical scholarship and ideas.” Event production has not often been linked to critical making, however, Cramer et. al (2017) note the expansion of critical making as a site of inquiry, stating, “Critical Making in this sense is not confined to particular sites. While Critical Making, in Ratto’s and Hertz’ original perspective, had the Maker movement and its Maker spaces (i.e. FabLabs, hacklabs and other public workshop facilities for distributed, personal digital fabrication) as its points of departure, their concept has become highly inclusive and therefore emancipated itself from this specific context” (p. 2). This work extends critical making into the Mix, where affect, technology, and race manifests through dope tunes and neon, as a methodological tool to fabricate

and explicate the entanglements between sonic/visual media and our audience-partners.

Al.Go.Rhythms: Technology, Race, & Culture in the Mix presents the intersections of sonic media, DJing, Blackness, and platformization. This multimodal account offers viewers and creators an opportunity to consider critical making as a tool for an alternative practice of scholarly production and theory, while also commenting on the nature of reconstructions of race and technology.

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PRODUCING INTIMACY IN VIRTUAL REALITY

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A 1,799 mile (2895km) network of roads and highways connect his home to mine. It used to be only 30. Instead of regularly traversing that distance to see one another, we now send data packets to be routed non-circuitously across internet and cellular networks. When it was only 30, our mobile phones primarily served for micro-coordination (Ling & Yttri, 1999): [him] *"Still wanna hang tonight. I can go to yours if you want?"* and [me] *"Yeah, that's totally fine. I'm also fine to go to yours if you're not in the mood to drive."* Our phones also created a telecocoon (Habuchi, 2005), allowing us to stay in contact throughout the day by sharing the mundane details of our individual lives: [him] *"I was supposed to go the game today, but it got canceled"* and [me] *"Nice. My Sunday was laid back. Did some cooking and baking."* These digitally mediated communicative acts punctuated the moments between our physically co-present interactions, when seemingly the work of building intimacy was done. The digital did not feel intimate. Yet, now, our relationship (and the production / maintenance of intimacy) is almost entirely digitally mediated, except for when one of us can catch the occasional flight to see the other.

Yet, still, the sense that text messages and phone calls do not feel sufficiently intimate persists. As such, we have expanded our digital repertoires—integrating additional means of communication into our routines (Donner, 2016)—to include the Oculus Quest 2 virtual reality headset. In this headset, we still talk with one another but we also play games and occupy virtual environments together. At one point, he text messaged me to say, *"I think there's definitely some merit to Oculus dates. I'd say equally as intimate as FaceTime [a video call] but also interactive."* Likewise, in the Oculus, I noted *"Wow, your voice sounds so clear in here"* to which he responded *"Yeah, it's like you're whispering in my ear."* These reflective moments have led me to question and attempt to understand the affective quality of virtual reality for producing intimacy.

Drawing from my personal encounters in virtual reality with a romantic partner, recorded in a journal, I perform autoethnography to answer the following research questions: (i) how do contemporary experiences of virtual reality produce feelings of and/or contribute to the maintenance of intimacy for me? and (ii) how do we understand the nature of relational intimacy in our contemporary digitally networked landscape? As an approach, autoethnography refers to "research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (Ellis et al., 2011). To this point, scholars have primarily addressed digitally mediated intimacy—broadly defined—from critical cultural (Baym, 2015; Munn, 2012; Ley & Rambukkana, 2021) and ethnographic perspectives (Watson

et al., 2021; Hjorth et al, 2018). I contribute to this body of scholarship by sharing my embodied experience—both physical and emotional—during our virtual reality dates. Since both intimacy and VR experiences are highly individualized, it is important that we also individualize the sensemaking and interpretive processes of those experiences. Autoethnography enables such individualized sensemaking and interpretative processes, particularly with regard to those “moments of everyday experience that cannot be captured through more traditional research methods...allowing what we see, hear, think and feel to become part of the field” (Adams et al., 2017, p. 4)

Over the course of these virtual reality dates, the embodied experiences of sound, interaction, and shared (digital) space produced heightened feelings of intimacy, comparable to those experienced in person. In addition, these experiences enabled relationship maintenance between in-person visits. Surprisingly, visibility (the primary appeal of virtual reality) did not factor as important, particularly because the avatars poorly represented our physical bodies. That is, gestural expressions were limited to head movements, like nodding, and hand movements, like waving. There were moments when we would try to intuit emotions from these limited expressions. For example, when I lost a game of ping-pong, he could read my frustration because my (avatar's) head was tilted up. This follows the basic argument of cues filtered out theory, which suggests that users must continuously compensate for the lack of physical and social cues in digitally mediated environments. Nevertheless, I argue that intimacy is built through these acts of compensation, as relational partners work to overcome the perceived deficiencies that shape their interaction.

A more significant limitation stems from the fact that digital intimacy can be a precarious achievement, resulting from mediation by platforms and infrastructures. Specifically, feelings of intimacy can quickly be disrupted by technological failure, such as one evening when slow internet caused a lag in our conversation. Likewise, the awareness of sharing intimate thoughts—whether sexual, controversial, or just simply confidential—in a “private” digital space can feel risky given pervasive data collection and the persistence of data leaks. On multiple occasions, I found myself questioning what and how I would say things, due to my awareness of this risk. Given this, I conclude by discussing how the politics of platforms and infrastructures, in this case, also become the politics of digitally mediated intimacy. That is, we shape our intimacies around the affordances, limitations, and power relations at play through their use. As such, we cannot eschew understandings of mediation (and what shapes that mediation) from explanations of the embodied experiences that produce intimacy.

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