LIVING AND THINKING IN THE POSTDIGITAL WORLD

THEORIES EXPERIENCES EXPLORATIONS

Edited by

Szymon Wróbel
Krzysztof Skonieczny

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Publikacja dofinansowana przez Wydział „Artes Liberales”
Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego

Publication co-financed by the Faculty of „Artes Liberales”,
University of Warsaw

ISBN 978-83-242-3690-9
e-ISBN 978-83-242-6537-4
TAiWPN UNIVERSITAS

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Cover design
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Photography
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www.universitas.com.pl

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Posthuman and Post-Cinematic Affect in ASMR "Fixing You" Videos

ABSTRACT
This article analyzes the popular media phenomenon called ASMR, which has been flourishing on YouTube for several years, especially one genre of video called "Fixing You", in the context of affect theories proposed by Steven Shaviro, Holly Willis, Gregory J. Seigworth, and Melissa Gregg. "Fixing You" videos, following the science fiction aesthetics where the viewer is cast as a broken robot to be repaired by an artist playing the role of a mechanic or a doctor, give expression to free-floating feelings pervading contemporary, soon-to-be posthuman, reality. Making use of numerous post-cinematic tools, these artworks fit into the posthumanizing trend visible in the latest cinematic and media art, proposing reflection on the assemblages of human and non-human orders and pointing to alternative, non-rational, affective ways of experiencing the world. Interestingly, ASMR experiments which do not treat the anthropocentric perception of reality as the central axis – neither in the context of human agency nor perspective – instead of emanating fear of the current/future position of man, they are a source of considerable pleasure and joy for the audience.

KEYWORDS:
ASMR roleplay videos, "Fixing You" videos, media-based artworks, affect, post-cinematic, posthumanism

Why ASMR? Why Affect? Introduction

ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) is a relatively new cultural and media phenomenon that despite being a remarkable sensation in recent years, still awaits an in-depth scientific analysis. This seems quite surprising since the type of videos published on numerous YouTube channels visited by millions of viewers certainly provides a cultural researcher with a lot of extremely rewarding material. There is a large variety and abundance when it comes to subgenres,

aesthetics, and reception protocols used within a genre of ASMR, which are requesting a closer look from different research perspectives.

ASMR is an umbrella term which covers videos intended to cause a specific tingling sensation described as "silvery sparkle in the brain", "tingling in the scalp", or "weird head sensation" (Young and Blansert 2015, 78). This feeling is most often referred to as brain/head tingles, and it appears as a response to various stimuli, especially of visual, auditory, olfactory, and/or cognitive nature (Sadowski 2016, 32). The most popular triggers include: whispering in a soft voice, slow and calming hand movements, clicking and brushing sounds, crisp sounds, paying attention to another person, sounds made by lips (e.g., while eating or speaking), and other (Barratt and Davis 2015, 1; Sadowski 2016, 32). In their works, ASMR artists use a combination of various popular stimuli designed to have a relaxing and calming effect on the viewer who usually watches their favorite videos before bedtime, treating them as a way to relax but also as a cure for insomnia and depression (Poerio et al. 2018).

The abundance of various conventions and ideas used in ASMR is striking, especially in the roleplay subgenre which is "an artificial scenario designed to re-create a real or imagined situation" (Young and Blansert 2015, 124), where the performer plays a role of a professional (e.g., a hairdresser, a makeup artist, a doctor, a salesperson) taking care of their customer/patient. It seems that the imagination of authors creating these types of videos knows no bounds. Every day, ASMR artists post new videos online, showing more and more original, sometimes controversial, performances where the actor-author plays a selected role on the screen trying to make the viewer feel the sensations of tingling, drowsiness, and relaxation.[1] What is characteristic for the ASMR roleplay videos is that the actor-author of the video is constantly present on the screen – we always see parts of their body in the frame (e.g., hands providing us with different treatment) and sometimes their whole face. The person visible in the foreground of the screen puts on a kind of performance for us, while using a mix

[1] YouTube contains videos where the artist pretends to be a private detective conducting an investigation, a customs officer performing a customs check at an airport, a taxi driver, a tailor making clothes, a barista preparing drinks or… a pathologist performing an autopsy on our body. All this for our pleasure.

of selected stimuli (with the so-called "personal attention" stimuli being the most important ones) to cause a tingling sensation in our body. The most popular elements of the performance include: tapping various objects with fingernails and/or fingers, scratching and rubbing their surface – to produce some interesting, crispy sounds from the props, as well as running fingers over the edges (stimulus known as "finger tracing"), shaking containers with liquids, brushing various surfaces, and other. The selection of gadgets in a given performance depends mainly on the role the artist has decided to play.

This article will look at one of the subgenres of roleplay videos using science fiction aesthetics in various ways, which, to my knowledge, has not been the subject of a more extensive analysis yet. It will be a subgenre of videos that, for the purpose of this text, are referred to as "Fixing You" videos. The performer in a "Fixing You" film plays the role of a futuristic doctor, mechanic, or engineer, who is supposed to repair a broken device, usually a robot or android that represents the viewer. The artist carefully carries out various tasks on us, the viewers, to repair the malfunctioning machine – they want to find all our faults and fix them so that we can achieve peace of mind and total relaxation, and as a result, fall into a blissful sleep.

We will carry out our analyses of selected ASMR videos that adhere to the abovementioned convention using the optics suggested by researchers dealing with the concept of affect in their work. Affect will be used as a key concept helpful in attempting to conceptualize the ASMR phenomenon, including the description of "Fixing You" films, with Steven Shaviro's take from his book *Post-Cinematic Affect* serving as one of the most important proposals. The book defines affect as a certain "structure of feeling" (Shaviro 2010, 1) exhibited by given works of art, mainly the latest films and videos, showing "*what it feels like* to live in the early twenty-first century" (Shaviro 2010, 2; the emphasis is his). Shaviro is interested in the ways the mentioned media, called by the researcher "machines for generating affects" (Shaviro 2010, 3), are expressive, i.e., how they reflect the voice of a kind of "free-floating sensibility that permeates our society today" (Shaviro 2010, 2), which, since it drifts freely, does not want to be assigned to any specific entity. According to Shaviro, the artworks discussed create the so-called affective maps which "actively construct and perform the social relations, flows, and feelings" (Shaviro

2010, 6). We view the ASMR phenomenon as part of this type of understanding of the affective nature of media, which we will try to discuss further in the article.

Another, equally important, version of affectiveness in ASMR will draw additional attention to the posthuman nature of affect evoked by a given work of art. In her book *Fast Forward. The Future(s) of the Cinematic Arts*, Holly Willis (2016) offers a reflection on new practices and emerging paradigms in 21st-century cinematic and media-based arts. The researcher points out that the "post-cinematic moment" we are currently living in provides "the myriad reconfigurations of the cinematic", and the media-based artworks "that grapple with new forms of subjectivity and interpellation" (Willis 2016, 17) are more common than ever. Willis sees these facts as a reflection of a kind of broadly understood posthuman sensitivity revealed in post-cinematic artworks being a testimony to "a culture in transition" – a culture switching, as the researcher wants, from representation to information, "from the visual to the networked, from the seen to the tracked" (Willis 2016, 160). Such understanding also means that it is a slow, but inevitable, move from a very humanist, rational, anthropocentric reality that is centered around humans as the crown of all creation, to one that is more inclusive, affective, assemblage-like, hybrid, and, last but not least, posthuman. According to Willis, works of the most contemporary art that are beyond conventional genres and do not fit in traditional media containers often use various methods to offer the viewer a posthuman perspective, allowing them to enter an alternative (affective) mode of experiencing and sensing reality.

The two aspects of affect mentioned above need one more definition. This article also understands affect as described by Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg (2010), editors of *The Affect Theory Reader* – as "*force* or *forces of encounter*" other than conscious, rational comprehension and knowing, "born in *in-between-ness*" which is like "accumulative *beside-ness*" (Seigworth and Gregg 2010, 2; the emphasis is theirs). According to Seigworth and Gregg, affect is an intensity – something fluid and indefinite, which is born when bodies meet (human and non-human, interacting with each other), which falls outside the most familiar conceptual apparatus related to the rationalist human agenda of "thinking" and "acting".

We understand "Fixing You" videos as proof of affective forces in the sense described by Seigworth and Gregg, as well as Shaviro, i.e., they point to some feelings and sensations accompanying our existence in the 21st century. These media-based artworks also evoke what Willis describes as an alternative, posthuman mode of sentience, allowing us to experience reality from wider-than-human perspectives, manifesting itself in the current post-cinematic moment. Let us see how it looks like in practice.

"You Poor Broken Android… I'm Gonna Fix You!"

First, we see a black screen. After a while, we hear a gentle female voice coming from a distance and a sound of accelerating footsteps – as if someone were approaching us fast. We hear the voice again, this time very close. We hear it from one side and then from the other as if someone was leaning towards our head and whispering soothing words in our ears. The person who is still hidden says that it is time for our activation. The next moment we see a flickering, blue and green caption: "Initializing ASMR", and then the frame shows the head of a young woman wearing fancy makeup (her lips are purple and her face is specked with glitter). In the background, we can see bodies of humanoid robots standing against the walls of the room, bathed in a pink and golden glow – the woman says that they are my friends. It quickly turns out that I, the viewer, am the subject of her visual inspection – the ongoing performance casts me as a malfunctioning android that needs to be repaired before the next day's sale of robotic home appliances.

The repair process, as well as the entire video published on the *ASMR Glow* (2019) channel, takes about forty minutes – this is how long it takes for the futuristic engineer to check my basic functions (hearing, eyesight, motor skills) and restore my perfect condition so that I would be ready for the big day tomorrow when "a new wonderful family" will buy me. Of course, the performer cannot go without using numerous gadgets to cause a tingling sensation in the viewer's body, including vigorously shaken bottles with liquids, a blinking flashlight, rubber gloves, a makeup brush stroking my face (or the camera). The artist visible on the screen deals with the silent and immobile body of the android who, at her mercy, relaxes and slowly falls asleep.

Another interesting video – published on the *VisualSounds1 ASMR* (2018) channel as *Android Analysis ASMR* – starts just like the previous one. The frame shows a woman leaning towards the camera, tapping it with her fingers to turn on an android while asking: "Hello? You're awake?" It turns out that this time I play the role of a war robot returning from a battle, seriously damaged. The young woman in my field of view, looking a bit like a mad scientist straight out of a steampunk story, will carry out numerous operations on my body, especially on my head. She refers to them as "maintenance and diagnostics". She will measure me with a tape measure, tell me to follow the "laser light" with my eyes, and even make me more beautiful using artificial eyelashes – all this leading to her saying that she has to "knock me out" with a large syringe (but I should not worry about it at all – it is all for my own good).

It is already apparent from the descriptions above that the "Fixing You" films usually offer only my own point of view, i.e., the robot being repaired. This is evidenced not only by the artist being focused on the camera which is located where my head is supposed to be, but also by numerous graphic elements appearing on the screen as if it were a user interface, intended to represent what the robot might see in front of it when turned on. According to Anneke Smelik and her reflections on the cybernetic point of view (POV) often used in science fiction films, "[cyborg's] eye functions like a camera with superior vision enhanced by technology" (Smelik 2017, 111). These types of shots "simultaneously establish both the mechanicity and the subjectivity of the cyborg" (Smelik 2017, 111), which allows the film viewers to be empathetically involved and identify themselves with the hero.

The cybernetic POV is also used in the video called *Annual Checkup Robot Mechanic ASMR* published on the *Dana ASMR* (2018) YouTube channel. At the time of writing these words, the video has almost six million views. The situation in this film is slightly different than in the previous ones, because, at the beginning, the plot of the video (if we can call the simple system of events in the world depicted there that) casts us as a human – the owner of a robot the customer service representative (mechanic named Dana) is talking to, and it is only in the second, much longer, part of the video that we take the place of the robot that requires servicing. The video starts

with a simulation of our online conversation with a consultant who discusses with us the details about servicing the robot. During the conservation, we have the impression of full interactivity – Dana presents us with various machine upgrade options, from which we choose one, confirming the decision by putting an unusual signature – the imprint of our wrist applied to the screen.

We now swiftly move to the scene where the engineer activates the robot by pressing its buttons. At first, the black and white image emerging on the screen is blurred – Dana wakes the robot from "sleep". After activating the device, we can see the colorful surroundings through the eyes of the robot and, surprisingly, we can hear how it starts speaking. Unfortunately, Dana does not want to talk to us – right after the robot (= I) greets her with a simple "Hello!", she decides to deactivate the speech function so that I do not interrupt her at work. Therefore, from the very beginning, the relationship between the human and the robot is clearly defined. It is Dana who is the active party here – she is supposed to take care of the robot being "only" a passive object of her attention that, however, gladly subjects itself to all of the procedures.

The mechanic begins her work on restoring the machine to full functionality. In the background, we notice numerous tools hung on the walls of her workshop, including pincers, saws, adjustable wrenches, and screwdrivers. The woman might find some of them useful when repairing my broken robotic body – she will use them as instruments producing various interesting clicking sounds right next to my ear, intended to produce the tingling sensation. The technician takes the longest to check my hearing with a mysterious device, somehow connected to my software, in the shape of a rectangular box with ears mounted on it. Of course, this focus on the sense of hearing playing the key role in the ASMR phenomenon is not accidental, and the mysterious box is, in fact, a 3Dio binaural microphone – an extremely popular device among members of the whispering community, used by many artists on the set of their videos. The characteristic shape of the box with two silicone ears in the shape of human ears, located on opposite ends of the device, allows the artist to create the impression of total immersion of the viewer-listener in the auditory experience, who can feel sonic vibrations triggering shivers in both ears interchangeably.

Dana finalizes the process of repairing the robot by upgrading the software. We recognize it by the graphic elements appearing in the frame – various captions, including a timer counting down the minutes to complete the update, which is hard to read at first glance, because they are put on the screen located on the cover of our head, so it is like we can see them from the inside. All this emphasizes the non-human point of view of the robot trapped in its housing in the smallest details.

The last video I would like to mention is the one published on the *ASMR Claire* (2019) channel, where the actress plays the role she refers to as "a mechanic doctor" who is about to conduct a routine examination and give treatment to a broken robot. The video differs from the previous ones in that the artist creates a clear, sensual atmosphere, streaked with certain erotic tension. The viewer is once again cast as a device undergoing repairs, and it is its viewpoint that dominates the screen. This is evidenced by things like small scratches visible on the left side of the frame, that are intended to imitate traces of broken glass on the cover of the robot's head. After giving me a quick checkup, the doctor says in a firm, commanding tone that something is definitely wrong with me, but, fortunately, "there's nothing she cannot fix". The repair/healing process begins, during which the woman uses various accessories, more or less consistent with her role, such as a screwdriver, a metal oil can, a makeup brush wiping off the dust from my housing, a nail file, a mascara tube which, twisted on and off, makes specific pumping noises (considered very pleasant by many ASMR enthusiasts). When performing various activities around my body, the doctor often stares in my eyes, sensually whispering different calming or stimulating words. Finally, when she deemed the repair process completed, she simply turns off the robot, hopefully leaving the viewer in a deep sleep.

We will now try to briefly present the understanding of an affect that we think emerges from the artistic creations in the form of "Fixing You" videos and then place them in a post-cinematic/post-human context.

"I Didn't Know Being Dehumanized Was So Relaxing"

We need to point out that the discussed videos from the "Fixing You" subgenre are significantly different from an average ASMR video

which usually shows a young woman cast in a stereotypically feminine role. The majority of videos published on YouTube by ASMR artists show them in the home space in roles like a sensitive friend, a tender lover, or as a makeup artist, a hairdresser, a stewardess, or carrying out other jobs associated by today's society with emotional work performed by women. "Fixing You" films, on the other hand, start with a significant problematization of those simple representations, showing women in spaces and professions usually reserved for men, and as part of the stereotypically male science fiction discourse. These artists-actresses are mechanics, engineers, or inventors, and their surroundings are far from homely – we see them in a repair shop, a futuristic laboratory, or a storehouse with humanoids. Therefore, the viewer is immediately encouraged to leave certain beaten tracks they might want to follow and revise the habits they have already acquired through watching typical ASMR videos. We see this throw-off as strictly affective in the sense that it creates some anxiety in the viewer since they find themselves in a new situation, playing with the convention they already know.

The affectiveness of "Fixing You" videos also involves an arousing of strong, initially unspecified, feelings-intensities related to doubts, that are later gradually dispelled – doubts such as "what is actually going on here?", "what am I doing here?", "what is my role in this bizarre process?" At first glance, we cannot see anything familiar, nothing we could match with our previous experiences – after all, we have found ourselves in the rather unusual position of a broken robot, at the mercy of a human, and it is difficult for us to predict what might happen. The very position of being immobilized is confusing – it can be associated with a number of extreme circumstances and emotions, ranging from fear of imprisonment (e.g., torture) to excitement at the prospect of being restrained in an intimate BDSM encounter (this erotic nature seems to be emphasized in the mentioned video published on the *ASMR Claire* channel). Therefore, we do not know the proper code of conduct, so to speak, in this situation, and we rely solely on the master of ceremony – the artist inviting us to an intriguing game.

We should also mention that ASMR, as a new media-based genre (this machine for generating affects, as Steven Shaviro calls it), is still young enough that its reception protocols, the associated conventions, and means of expression are quite flickering, they are in constant

motion and are not established clearly enough to feel comfortable in every situation we are thrown in as recipients and, at the same time, participants of a given show. The potential of ASMR videos to cause different, not fully identified intensities is therefore enormous and the affective dimension of a given experience consisting in causing astonishment with the situation and knocking the viewer out of their fragile balance is one of the most important elements in the "Fixing You" subgenre.

In addition, the conversations (if we can call them that) in these types of videos are often a pretext, and they are meaningless from the strictly human – i.e., rational, logical – point of view. The affectiveness, according to Shaviro, is not directly related to "*what* something is, but how it is – or, more precisely, *how* it affects, and how it is affected by, other things" (Shaviro 2009, 55; the emphasis is his). Therefore, the content of the conversations itself – the "what" mentioned above – does not matter here; what is even more important are the artist's gestures and facial expressions, as well as the manner of producing sounds, especially whispering – including the type that makes it impossible to distinguish individual words (the so-called "inaudible" or "semi-inaudible whispering" is the flagship stimulus of ASMR). The plot in ASMR videos is pretext-based as well – we can enter the presented world and join the story at any time, which is encouraged by video makers themselves who put timestamps in their descriptions, that will take us to a specific moment in the video which could be of particular interest to the viewer.[2]

In the aforementioned *Fast Forward*, Holly Willis describes numerous works of post-cinematographic art, that somehow depict a posthuman mode of experiencing the world perceived as a cultural assemblage "that we are embedded in" (Willis 2016, 160), a mode that is different from the traditionally anthropocentric approach. The author might not mention ASMR works, which were not that popular when the book was being written, but, what is more important, she points out that alternative possibilities of feeling and

[2] Examples of timestamps from the description of the cited video published on the *ASMR Claire* channel: (01:47) Opening Robot – Screw and Scratching Sounds, (04:15) Putting Latex Gloves on, (04:50) Mic Brushing – Face Brushing, (06:30) Putting Mask On, (06:45) Spray Sounds.

experiencing our soon-posthuman reality can be manifested in works of art through various cinematic techniques.

One of the more important tools of post-cinema identified by Willis is an interface that acts as a marker of the transition from a classic linear story to showing the very process of interaction in contemporary artistic works, and encouraging the recipient to interact with them in a variety of ways. The interface often appears in the analyzed ASMR videos as a visible, tangible element of the represented world – for example, at the moment when a transparent, quasi-touch computer screen (de)materializes in front of the performer, and she uses it to enter some commands to the system. The interface is then one of many elements of the imagined, posthuman environment, which also includes visualizations of other futuristic devices and tools, as well as non-biological or semi-biological creations (androids, robots) and attempts to imagine their existence in the presented world. Here, the only things that limit the artists are their imagination, cultural sensitivity, and experience – of course, acting within the framework of the current capabilities of the equipment and software used when making the video. The interface also seems to be one of the key elements of the ASMR phenomenon in general. The interface of a laptop screen used by the viewer to watch the video is at the same time a transmitter and amplifier of affects-intensities flowing through it, and it often allows (even if only illusory) interactivity in those moments of the video that invite the viewer to have an alleged control over the course of events. Our conversation with consultant Dana about servicing of our robot shown in one of the videos discussed above is an example of that, since it simulates full interactivity.

Another post-cinematic technique used in ASMR is to point to the pretext nature of the fragmentary narrative "that does not presume the human as the central axis for both agency and perspective" (Willis 2016, 142). As we mentioned, the linearity of the narrative in ASMR films is by no means the most important aspect – we can leave the story at any time and get back to it another time that will cause a more intense tingling sensation in our body. On the other hand, the video casting the viewer in the role of a robot and sticking to this non-human perspective may indicate a kind of intensified modern desire to explore this type of sensitive, non-human approach to reality. What is more, this desire is associated with the

anticipated considerable pleasure resulting from the renunciation of strictly human agency. One of the viewers of the video published on the *Jellybean Green ASMR* (2018) channel said in the commentary left under the video: "I didn't know being dehumanized was so relaxing". This dehumanization means a temporary riddance of the burden of human existence and going beyond the human agenda regarding rationality, intellectualness, purposefulness, and reasonableness; it shows that experiencing the world can be grounded "through affect and senses" (Willis 2016, 142), which is equally valuable.

The mentioned portrayal of non-human points of view in the videos is an important post-cinematic tool in ASMR. Willis speaks on this occasion about the work of the camera that "no longer represents an authorial perspective (…). It does not communicate a story through the logic of 'this is what happened'. Instead, it communicated in the present, 'this is happening'" (Willis 2016, 144). It is difficult to find a truer statement when it comes to ASMR. The point of view belongs to me – to the robot subjected to human activity – and supports the key impression in ASMR that a given activity is performed live. The artist playing a role in a "Fixing You" film seems to be saying: "It is happening right now, at this very moment". Because only right now, at the moment of experiencing (watching, listening) a given video, you can physically feel the intensity coming from the screen that touches your body and causes shivers. In these very moments, in these "passages of affect", "a body's *capacity* to affect and to be affected" is revealed (Seigworth and Gregg 2010, 2; the emphasis is theirs).

The camera's work in an ASMR video always points to the here and now – as you are the camera yourself. You decide when you enter a given world and when you are ready for the affective event to happen. New media practices, especially those with visible post-cinematic experiments with camera work imitating non-human viewpoints and evoking the feeling of "happening here and now", go hand in hand with what Willis (2016, 161) calls "an increased attention to fostering a sense of presence", "our desire to be seen, heard and known" in the modern world. It seems that ASMR is eager to satisfy these needs, playing out posthuman scenarios where we remain the focus of attention, while – perhaps paradoxically – being hidden, invisible on the screen. This corresponds to the posthuman understanding of the subject as an indefinite, relational being that is "part of a flow" (Willis 2016, 16)

composed of a multitude of entities – in contrast to understanding it as an individualistic, very specified, self-centered human individual.

It seems that works of contemporary media art, such as "Fixing You" videos, fit into the posthuman trend noticed in cinema-related arts and described by Willis. For example, they point to somehow more blurred boundaries between the categories that used to be strictly separated (e.g., the mixing of "human" and "robotic" orders) and alternative possibilities of experiencing the world (in an affective and sensual way instead of a rational one). In addition, they indirectly suggest a revision of the definition of "subject" that turns from an individual to part of an affective assemblage of beings, dependent on others and remaining in various relationships with them.

"Everything's Gonna Be Ok" – Conclusions

This attempt to describe a single mesh in an extremely vast net, which can be used as a metaphor for ASMR, is merely an invitation to further discussion on this fascinating and insufficiently studied phenomenon.

The videos we have analyzed, classified into the "Fixing You" subgenre, are one of the examples of media-based works of art showing the posthuman and post-cinematic affect flowing through them reflecting the feelings accompanying the transition from a strictly human, restrictive, anthropocentric approach to the world towards a posthuman experience of the reality we live in. The said videos illustrate the moments of blurring the boundaries between existing, previously separate categories in an interesting way and using various technical solutions. This way they encourage reflection on our place in today's world, on our agency, on our relationships with other entities, on the affectiveness of our bodies and bodies of others.

The hypothetical blurring of boundaries, e.g., between a human and a robot, shown in ASMR is not a source of fear but great pleasure, unlike in many new science fiction films that react to mixing of these categories with some terror.[3] The reverse order celebrated in

[3] Anneke Smelik, in her text analyzing human and machine love relationships in contemporary science fiction cinema, writes that "recent films seem to be haunted by a humanist impulse: humans are ruled by the desire to love

ASMR becomes an opportunity for joyful experimentation with the concepts of subjectivity and agency. It is where the specific free-floating posthuman sensitivity finds its expression, serving as an accessible way to calm down the viewer, allowing them to breathe a sigh of relief and to shed the burden of living as a human being for a moment.

These feelings find its summary in the words directed at the author of the video published on the *ASMRSleepyHead* (2020) channel, left in the comments section by one of the viewers:

> You're like a mechanic. All of the messed up, mixed up, broken wires in my head get put back together when I listen to you. You pull out your tools and I know that everything's gonna be ok.

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the machines they live with, but with strict boundaries between them reinstated" (Smelik 2017, 118). According to Smelik, what is missing here is a truly posthumanist approach to reality and a reflection on possible multi-faceted relationships between humans and non-human subjects.

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