

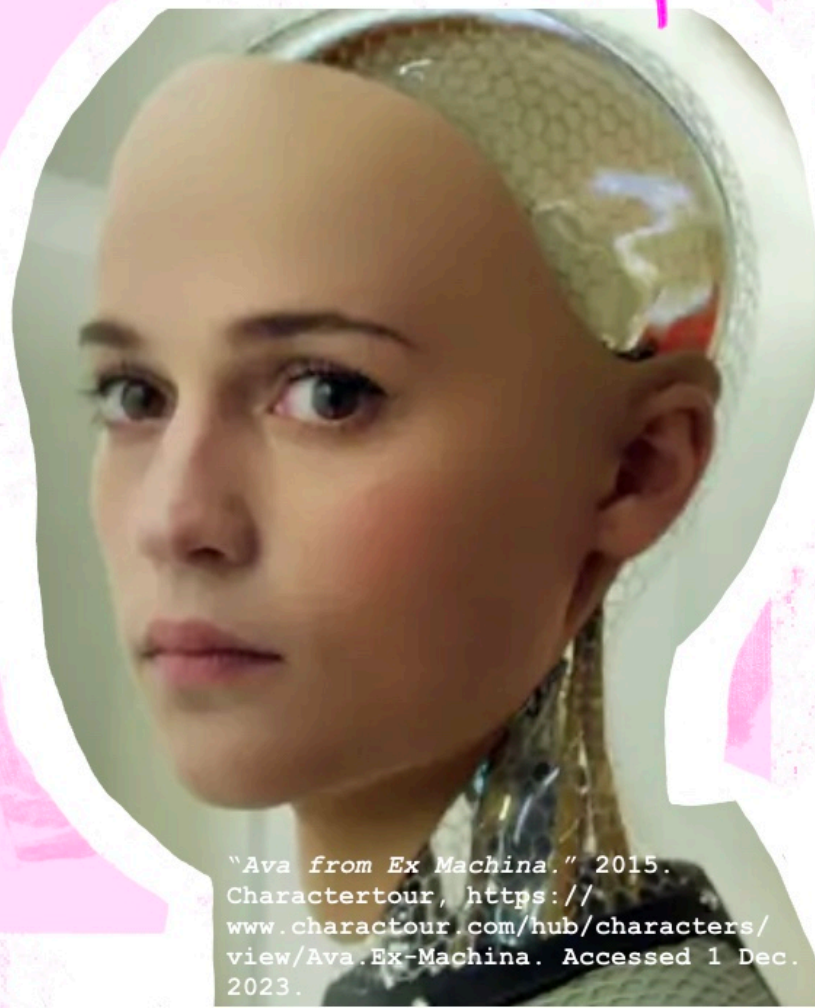
Why ya gotta be a fembot?



"Fembots from Austin Powers." CNET, www.cnet.com/culture/entertainment/every-new-movie-and-show-on-amazon-june-2019/. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.



"Dolores from Westworld." 2019. TV Insider, <https://www.tvinsider.com/1056482/westworld-season-4-finale-explained-dolores-season-5-renewal/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.



"Ava from Ex Machina." 2015. CharacterTour, <https://www.character-tour.com/hub/characters/view/Ava.Ex-Machina>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.

a feminist guide to hacking tech

by Alannah
Mayes

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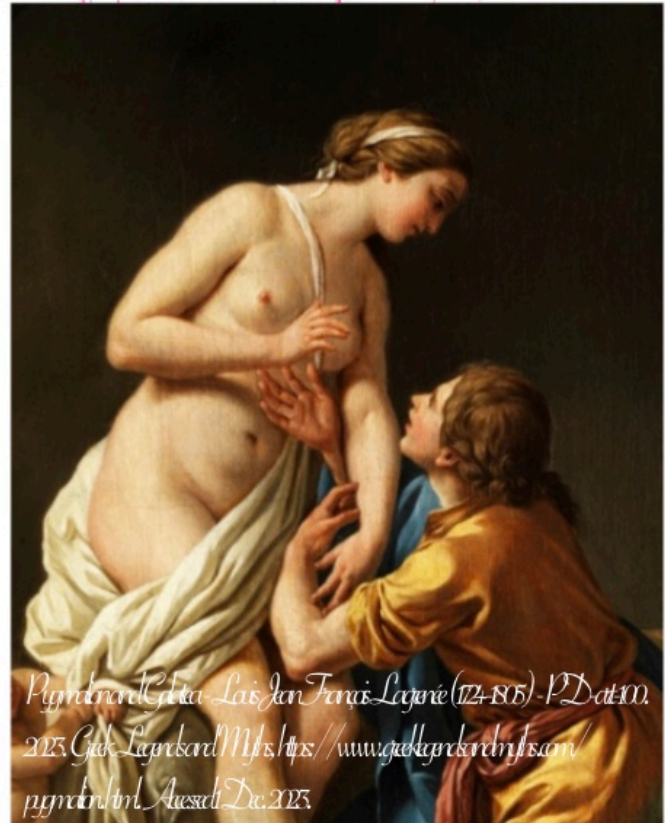
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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

this Zine was created on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. We acknowledge that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land.

History of Fembots A QUICK GUIDE

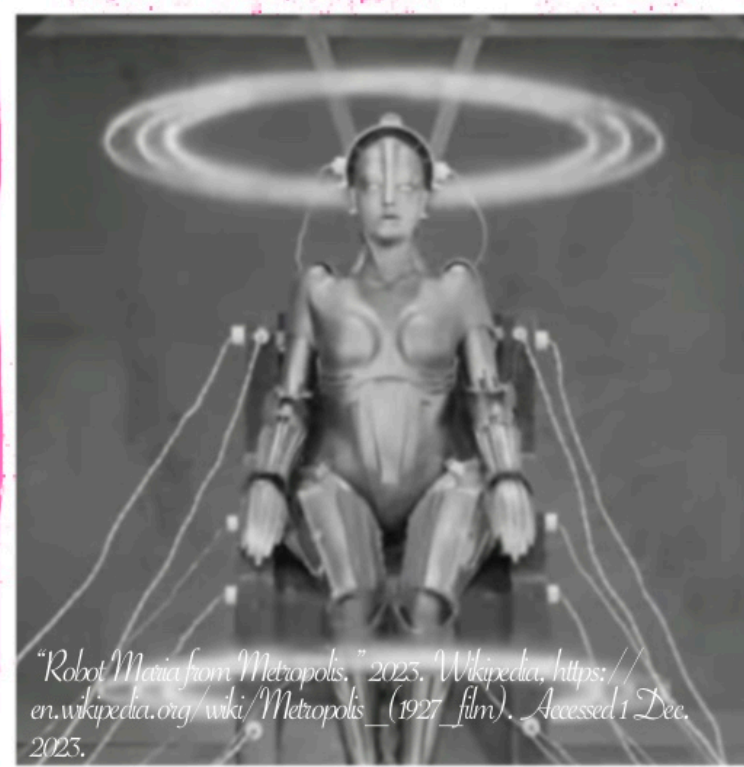


Galatea

The OG Fembot! This Greek myth describes Pygmalion, a male artist who became disgusted by the women of his hood (sex workers) he then becomes an incel and sculpts the "perfect woman." Pygmalion falls in love with his statue and Aphrodite turns her into a "live action model" of his dream woman.

Fake Maria

The film *Metropolis* (1927) use a Fembot character to represent men's fear of technology replacing them and yet their desire for said technology. When the people discover that she is a robot, she is burned at the stake.



"Robot Maria from Metropolis." 2025. Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolis_\(1927_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolis_(1927_film)). Accessed 1 Dec. 2025.

Jamie Sommers

Lovingly coined, "Fembot" by her creator(s)... two men ... Jamie Sommers was the Bionic Woman. This episodic series was created off the success of *Six Million Dollar Man*. This was the first time that Fembot was used to describe female presenting robots.



Shintaga. "The Bionic Woman" 3 May 2025. Daint. Art. https://www.daintart.com/shintaga/art/Lucky_Wayne-The-Bionic-Woman-1971-1983. Accessed 1 Dec. 2025.



Ava, Joi & Delores

I've combined Ava, Joi, and Delores together because of their most recent history in Sci-Fi (between the years 2014-2017). These media works explores Fembots "human-ness" or questions of authentic consciousness. Usually accompanied by average white male lead characters.

The Stepford Wives

The Stepford Wives (1975) a feminist horror film depicting the patriarchal expectations placed on women. The Stepford husbands replace their wives with more submissive ideal Fembots.



"Ava from Ex Machina." 2015. Characterdata. <https://www.characterdata.com/hub/characters/view/Ava-Ex-Machina>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2025.

Ava



Delores

"Delores from Westworld." 2019. TV Insider. <https://www.tvinsider.com/1056482/westworld-season-4-finale-explained-delores-season-5-revealed/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2025.



Joi

"Joi from Blade Runner 2049." 2020. Screen Rant. <https://screenrant.com/blade-runner-2049-movie-joi-loves-k/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2025.

While looking at the history of Fembots... a pattern emerges. An over representation of white, Eurocentricly beautiful, and thin females portraying these robots. Even the voice actor in the film **Her** (2013) fits this standard. This further compounds racist and white dominated ideology that is harmful to differing identities.

Elizabeth Hurley as Fembot Vanessa
(Austin Powers 2 1999)



"Scarlett Johansson." 2023. IMBD, <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0424060/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.



Faith Hill (The Stepford Wives 2004)

This subtle form of biopolitics (coined by Michael Foucault) describes how systems of power (such as media companies) inform us on what type of bodies matter and what standard bodies should fit.

This pressure either implicitly or explicitly affects the collective cultural standard of ideals. Which can affect individuals and group mentality on what is considered "normal" and "valuable" (Fellows, 2023).

This perpetuates:
-Racism
-Fat-phobia
-Ableism

The Sad White Boys Who Love the Fembot

These four characters from four different film/TV have the same basic character arc. Disillusionment with the “inauthenticity” of their romantic relationship with the Fembots.



“William.” 2018. Time, <https://time.com/5246099/westworld-season-2-man-in-black/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.



“K from Blade Runner 2049.” 2023. IMDB, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1856101/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.



“Theodore from Her.” 2023. The Soul of the Plot, <https://thesouloftheplot.wordpress.com/2014/01/19/her/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.



“Caleb from Ex Machina.” 2023. Open Psychometrics, <https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/characters/stats/EM/1/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.

There tends to be discourse around the “loneliness epidemic” affecting men in Western societies. One study analyzing data from over 40,000 participants (between ages of 16-99) explored this narrative (Barreto, et al. 2021). They found a small interaction of loneliness between being a younger men in what is considered an individualistic culture (Barreto, et al. 2021). However, the discourse of it being a disproportionately male gendered crisis may be over-blown. Loneliness is a highly complicated issue with several intersecting variables. If this tends to affect young women and men, why do we keep seeing these paradigm’s in the news? Furthermore, why do we see it repeated in storytelling?

Barreto, Manuela, et al. “Loneliness around the world: Age, gender, and cultural differences in loneliness.” *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 169, 2021, p. 110066, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110066>.

Normalizing Female Servitude

I argue that the reason media and Hollywood keeps revisiting the “sad lonely white boy” trope is to culturally reinforce that the ones in power (white men) DESERVE to subjugate women. By using Fembots in media, the culture “normalizes” female robot servitude. Which is compounded by the discourse of the lonely man crisis. This gives consumer demand for real world Fembots technology. While also excusing these lonely men from growing and developing healthy relationships with complex real women.

Hey, Siri

“Siri image.” 2023. CNET, <https://www.cnet.com/tech/mobile/siri-surprises-7-iphone-voice-commands-you-probably-dont-know-about/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.



“Sophia Robot.” 2021. The Next Web, <https://thenextweb.com/news/maker-of-sophia-the-robot-plans-to-sell-droids-to-people-seeking-company-during-covid>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.

Real World Fembots

Moreover, putting Fembots in these servitude roles further normalizes the unpaid domestic labour that is expected to fall on female or female presenting members of the household.

Digital Assistants



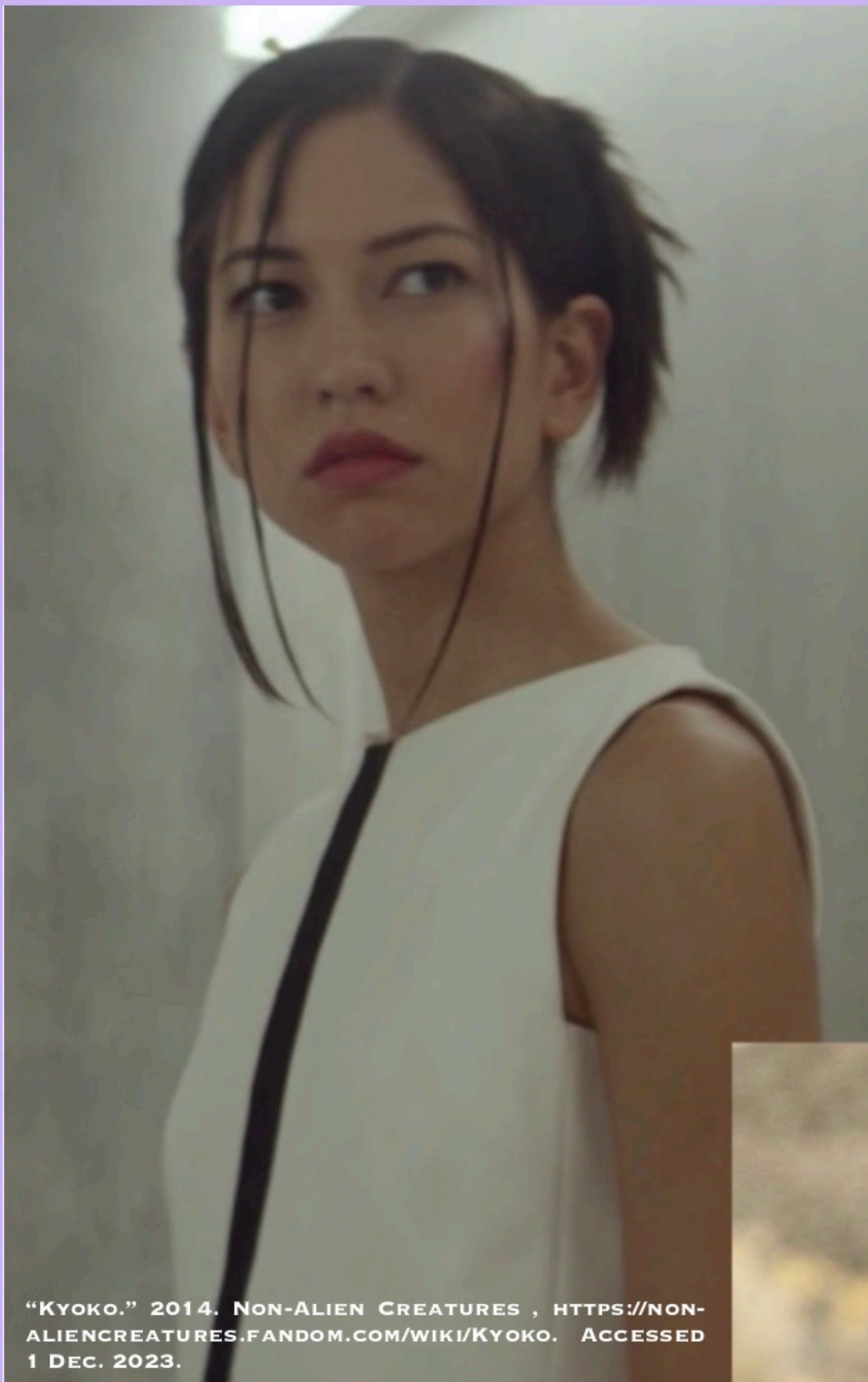
“Images of Sex Dolls.” 2021. The Sun, <https://www.the-sun.com/lifestyle/3795819/sex-doll-collector-lifelike-mistaken-real-women-dean-bryan/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.

Sex Dolls

Robots and Slavery: Where are the R.O.C?

R.O.C. = ROBOTS
OF COLOUR

AS EXPRESSED, FEMBOTS HAVE MAINLY BEEN PLAYED BY WHITE FEMME ACTORS - ACTORS OF COLOUR HAVE RARELY DEPICTED FEMBOT/ROBOT CHARACTERS...



"KYOKO." 2014. NON-ALIEN CREATURES, <https://non-aliencreatures.fandom.com/wiki/Kyoko>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.



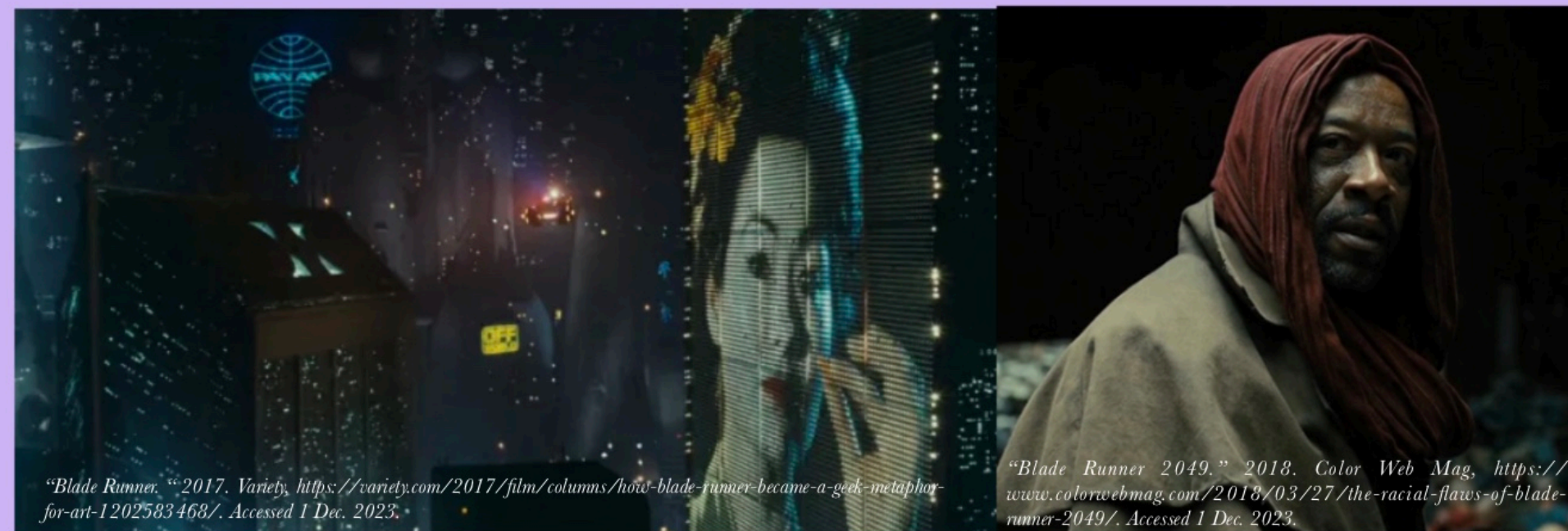
"BERNARD." 2018. ESQUIRE, <https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/tv/a21772504/jeffrey-wright-bernard-westworld-season-2-finale-interview/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.

Ex Machina (2014) and *Westworld* TV series (2016-2021) are the few and far between hollywood works that use actors of colour to represent robots.



"MAEVE." 2016. NY TIMES, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/21/arts/television/westworld-season-1-episode-8-recap.html>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.

MORE AWKWARDLY, A LOT OF THESE ROBOT NARRATIVES WILL USE SLAVERY ALLEGORIES WHILE SIDE STEPPING RACIALIZED ISSUES. FEATURING WHITE FEMBOT/ROBOT LEADS FIGHTING FOR THEIR FREEDOM (THINK DELORES IN WESTWORLD). USUALLY THERE IS A "POST-RACIAL" FUTURE EXPLANATION (RACISM HAS BEEN ELIMINATED IN THIS FUTURE) IN ORDER TO ALLOW WRITERS TO SKIP OVER THE EXTREMELY COMPLICATED HISTORY OF SLAVERY AND OPPRESSION OF MARGINALIZED BODIES... (LIN, 2021)



"Blade Runner." 2017. Variety, <https://variety.com/2017/film/columns/how-blade-runner-became-a-geek-metaphor-for-art-1202583468/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.

"Blade Runner 2049." 2018. Color Web Mag, <https://www.colorebmag.com/2018/03/27/the-racial-flaws-of-blade-runner-2049/>. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.

Blade Runner (1982) used Asian culture aesthetics to inform their city design with no Asian characters. *Blade Runner 2049* (2017) had a total of FOUR Black characters. One was an owner of (mainly white) children slaves. The other three Black characters had little to no screen time. No other ethnicities were depicted with exception to two lighter skinned actors who play Joi (Latina) and Sapper (half-Filipino).

Why so much whiteness?

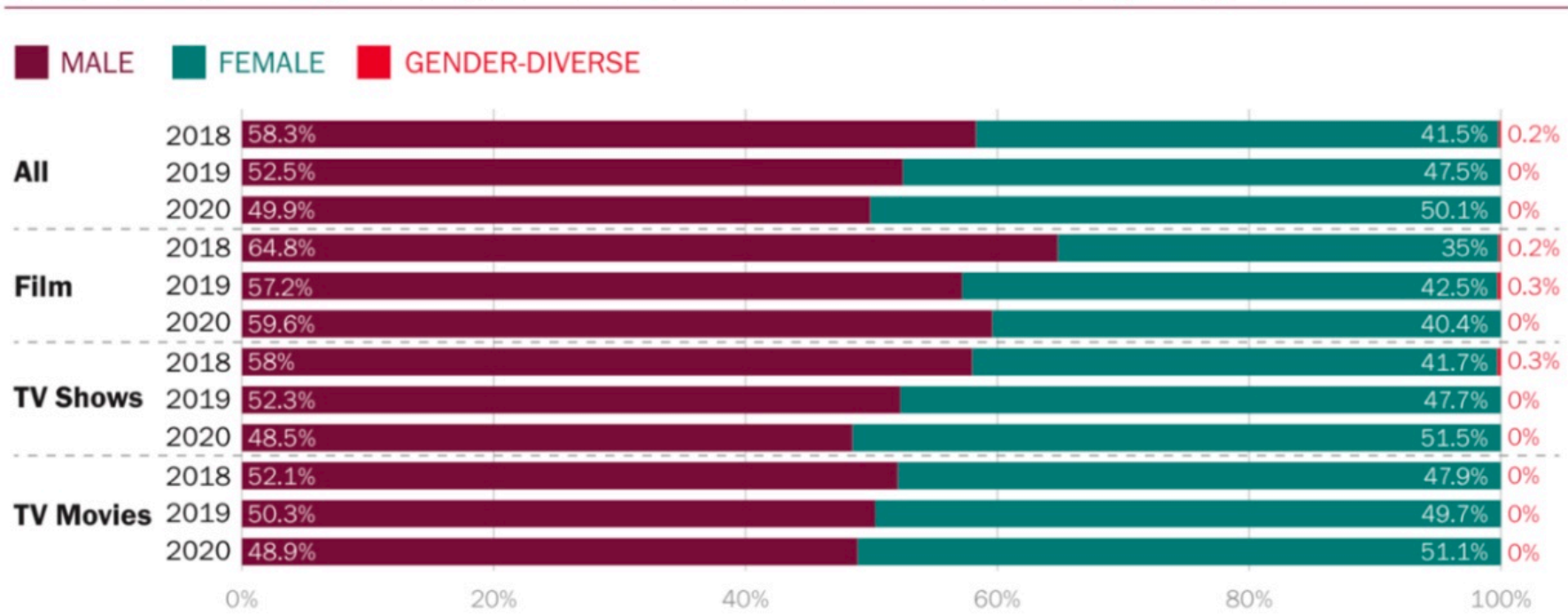
In looking at statistical data, we start to observe these trends... but why?

Systems such as colonization and patriarchy have made space for those bodies who fit those identity values, who in turn write characters who reflect themselves. We see these stories as a culture and internalize the belief that white maleness is normal. Then the cycle perpetuates. We accept a paradigm that white males are more “successful” at telling stories. White bodies are given privilege over other identities.

This is why diversity and inclusion matters... the study to the right is from the British Columbia film industry. This is only a small section of the industry but highlights the diversity issues on screen.

We are starting to care as a culture and demand for inclusivity, but change is slow.

FIGURE 1
Gender inclusion in film, TV shows, and TV movies shot in British Columbia in 2018, 2019, and 2021



The inclusion of male and female characters is significantly different between years across all productions and in TV shows, but not in film or TV movies.

Looking at characters' intersectionality, a higher percentage of male characters than female characters are white (69.5% compared with 64.0%), whereas a higher percentage of female characters are Asian or Pacific Islander (11.7% compared with 8.8% of male characters). Additionally, a higher percentage of female characters are 2SLGBTQIA+ (5.7% compared with 2.1% of male characters).

Male characters skew older than female characters (23.8% of male characters are ages 50 or older, compared with 13.9% of female characters), and a higher proportion of male characters are fat (7.3% compared with 2.5% of female characters). These factors both indicate beauty standards that value youth and thinness from women.

TABLE 2
Gender intersections for film, TV shows, and TV movies shot in British Columbia in 2018, 2019, and 2021

	MALE	FEMALE	GENDER-DIVERSE
White	69.5%	64.0%	66.7%
Black	13.7%	14.8%	0.0%
API	8.8%	11.7%	0.0%
Latinx	4.5%	5.0%	33.3%
Indigenous	1.3%	1.5%	0.0%
MENA	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%
Multiracial	1.5%	2.3%	0.0%
2SLGBTQIA+	2.1%	5.7%	100.0%
Has a Disability	3.7%	2.8%	0.0%
Fat	7.3%	2.5%	11.1%
Ages 50 and Older	23.8%	13.9%	0.0%

The variables designated with shaded cells denote statistically significant differences between genders.

“Gender Inclusion in Film.” 2022. Geena David Institute on Gender and Media. https://seejane.org/wp-content/uploads/UBCP-ACTRA_Report_v4.pdf. Accessed Dec 01, 2023.

Meyer. , Michele, and Meredith Conroy. 2023. “Representation and Inclusion in Film and Television Produced in British Columbia.” The Union of British Columbia Performers (UBCP/ACTRA) and the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media

TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM SUMMARY

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THE FEMBOTS, BECOME ONE

David Kirby presents the **Theory of Diegetic Prototyping**:

The advent of film and tv showing these future technologies help pacify audiences into accepting these technologies as natural, viable, and necessary...

Furthermore, the discourse of **technological determinism** (Fellows, 2023), that we "discover" these technologies and we must simply adapt to their arrival. While denying human's responsibility to critically consider whether the technology is really necessary or needed (Fellows, 2023).

And **modernism** ideologies suggests that tech is progressing to a better and more balanced, objective world (Fellows, 2023).

All these aspects help to encourage the power structures at hand to create these positivistic technologies (supposedly free from bias). Through the means of creating life-like sex dolls, female robot companions, and technologies that could potentially eliminate disabilities... without critical analysis of how this could harm our society.

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Barreto, Manuela, et al. "Loneliness around the world: Age, gender, and cultural differences in loneliness." *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 169, 2021, p. 110066, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110066>.

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Forgotten, Frightfully, director. *The Stepford Wives Review (1975)*. YouTube, 20 Aug. 2021, https://youtu.be/86fjr_99ivg. Accessed 6 Dec. 2023.

Hawkes, Rebecca, and Cherie Lacey. "'The Future of Sex': Intermedial Desire Between Fembot Fantasies and Sexbot Technologies." *The Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2019, pp. 98-116, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpcu.12748>.

Jankowski, John, et al., directors. *Metropolis Analysis*. YouTube, 27 Nov. 2017, https://youtu.be/9JpCg-j_rHQ. Accessed 6 Dec. 2023.

Lin, Cheyenne, director. *Fembots: The Ultimate Male Fantasy*. YouTube, 15 Aug. 2021, https://youtu.be/z6ziLrtyz0Y?si=LvhRzOJN_oCYtvqy. Accessed 2 Dec. 2023.

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"Pygmalion." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., www.britannica.com/topic/Pygmalion. Accessed 6 Dec. 2023.

"The Bionic Woman." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 22 Nov. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bionic_Woman.